



Teacher—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends,” or the Story, or the Puppet Script based on your time and preference.

Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Paul had to sell ten candy bars to raise money for his Sunday school class play. He had just finished convincing his two brothers and his sister to each buy two candy bars when his dad walked in. Paul asked his dad to buy a candy bar and explained his plan—if he could get everyone in his family to buy the candy bars, he’d sell them all in one day! Paul’s dad spoke to Paul alone. He explained that he did not approve of Paul’s plan. Why didn’t Paul’s plan honor God? He was supposed to raise money, wasn’t he?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Paul’s dad explained to Paul that by selling the candy bars at home, Paul was not giving God his time or his effort. He was also not reaching out to his neighbors, telling them about the play and giving them a chance to be a part of it. Paul realized that some of his neighbors might even come see the play because they had purchased a candy bar. The more Paul thought about it, the more impressed he was how something as simple as selling candy bars could have a lasting impact for God’s Kingdom.

Pastor Shepherd walked by the living room and saw his four children. His youngest son, Paul, was talking to Mike, Mark, and Susan. He looked excited. Mr. Shepherd wondered what Paul was up to. Just then, Paul noticed his dad watching from the doorway.

“Dad! I’m glad you’re here!” said Paul, smiling. “Do you think you could do me a favor?”

“What do you need, son?”

“Our Sunday school class is selling candy bars to raise money for our Passion Play,” Paul explained. “Would you buy one? They’re only two dollars.”

“I might,” said Paul’s dad. He looked at his kids’ smiling faces. “What were you guys discussing in here?”

“Oh, it’s great!” said Paul. “Mark, Mike, and Susan all agreed to buy two candy bars each—that’s six. If you and mom both buy one, that’s eight. Then I can buy the last two and I’ll have sold all ten candy bars! Without even leaving my house!”

Pastor Shepherd could see that Paul was proud of himself. Paul’s dad asked Susan and the twins if he could have a moment alone with Paul. Paul’s shoulders sagged and his smile disappeared—he knew something was wrong.

“What did I do, Dad? I’m gonna take out the garbage before dinner. I promise!”

Paul’s dad smiled. “It’s not that, son. I want to talk to you about this candy bar plan of yours.”

“What’s wrong with it?”

“Well, I think you could go about selling them in a better way.”

Paul scratched his head. “What’s better than this? I sell all the candy bars and get the money back to the church in record time! I don’t have to go through the neighborhood asking people to buy them.”

Mr. Shepherd sat on the couch and thought about the best way to explain his point to his son.

“The problem is, by not going through the neighborhood, you aren’t investing the right things for God’s Kingdom.”

“But I’m turning the candy bars into money.” Paul was still confused. “I thought the money is what’s important.”

“The money will help the church, and that’s important,” explained Pastor Shepherd. “But you haven’t given God your time or your effort.”

Paul nodded, but he still looked skeptical. His dad pressed on.

“Think about it this way. When you talk to your neighbors about the candy bars, you are also telling them about our church and what your class is doing. You give them a chance to be a part of that.”

Paul smiled and sat down beside his dad. “That’s right. And some of them might even come to the play!”

“Now you understand!” Paul’s dad was relieved. “Going door to door is about much more than raising money.”

“Wow,” said Paul, shaking his head. “I had no idea I could give so much to God’s Kingdom just by selling some candy bars to my neighbors.”

“From God’s perspective, little things go a long way.”

Paul stood up. “I better go tell my brothers and sister. I think they’re going to be disappointed.”

Paul’s dad laughed. “They won’t be glad they can keep their money?”

“I think they were looking forward to eating those candy bars!”



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Introduction (5 minutes)

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Cy’s mom took Paul and Cy to see a town parade. They had trouble seeing at first until they found a bench to stand on. Marching bands, clowns, and floats went by as the people cheered. Suddenly the crowd started cheering louder as a black car came around the bend. Why was everyone cheering so loudly? Who was in the black car that was so special?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

The boys soon realized that the mayor of their town was in the black convertible. He waved to the crowds, and Paul and Cy even saw people throw flowers towards the car. Everyone loved the mayor because he was a good leader. Paul realized that the people in Jerusalem had done a similar thing for Jesus. They laid down branches and shouted praises because they loved Jesus, and He was the best leader of all!

As they got out of the car, Paul shook his head. “I just don’t understand what our Sunday school teacher was talking about. Why would people lay down branches and cheer when Jesus came into town on a donkey?”

“Don’t worry about it,” said Cy. “C’mon! It’s time to watch the parade!”

They followed Cy’s mother down the street toward the crowd of people. Cy jumped up and down trying to see over the crowd. “Who’s coming next? Who’s there?” he asked.

“I can’t see!” said Paul. “There are too many people in the way!”

Cy and Paul both tried to squeeze between the people in front of them to get a closer look at the parade, but Cy’s mother stopped them.

“Stay here, boys; I don’t want you two to get lost!” she said.

“But we can’t see!” said Paul.

She looked at the tall people standing in the way of the boys and nodded. “Okay. Let’s go to another spot where we can see better. But stay close!”

They tried to push their way through the crowd. It seemed like everyone in the city was there to watch the parade! As they walked, Paul and Cy could hear the cymbals and trumpets of the marching band as they went past, but they could barely see them.

Then they heard everyone laughing when a clown went walking past on stilts, throwing candy. Paul and Cy each caught two pieces that flew over the crowd.

Cy’s mother led the boys down the sidewalk and up a small hill where they found a park bench. She helped the two boys climb on top of it. “There!” she said. “Now you can watch the parade go past!”

Paul and Cy stood on the park bench and peered over the crowd of people. In the street they could see a giant balloon shaped like an elephant as big as a bus! And then came a carriage being pulled

by two white horses! Cy clapped his hands and Paul cheered.

“I wonder who’s going to come next!” said Cy.

There were acrobats and baton twirlers and flower-covered floats of all sizes. Then, Paul and Cy began to hear the biggest cheer of all from the people down the street.

“Who could it be?” asked Cy.

A long black car slowly came into view.

“Oh,” said Cy’s mom. “It’s our mayor, the leader of our town! He gets to ride into town in that special car so that everyone knows he is our leader. And people are cheering because he’s a very important man!”

Some people in the crowd even threw flowers in front of his car as it drove past.

Cy and Paul watched as the long black car slowly moved down the street and finally disappeared out of sight.

“Wow!” said Cy. “People really must like that mayor!”

Suddenly, Paul’s face brightened. “Hey! That’s it! He’s an important leader and the people really like him!” Paul said.

Cy looked confused. “What are you talking about?”

“Jesus!” said Paul. “When Jesus came into town, the people cheered and welcomed him and threw branches down in front of him—just like people are doing for the mayor!”

Cy smiled and said, “I get it! Too bad Jesus had to ride on a donkey instead of in a big fancy car! That would have been neat!”

“Shhh, boys,” said Cy’s mom. “You’ll miss the juggler!” And with that, they all went back to watching the parade. And Paul didn’t wonder about Jesus on the donkey any more.



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Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Dee and her family had been visiting her dad’s cousins in the country. While they were there, they went to a church where her dad’s old friend was a pastor. Dee was surprised to see how run down the church looked—it was in the middle of a field and the parking lot wasn’t even paved. Dee felt sorry that the people had to worship God in such poor conditions. She wondered how they could do any good with their limited resources.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

After a beautiful and inspiring service, Dee began to change her mind about the church. The people were very caring and friendly, and they went out of their way to help each other. The congregation was even getting together that afternoon to help a poor family build a barn. Dee asked her mom and dad if they could stay and help. Even though it would make them late getting home, Dee believed they should also give what they could to help others in Jesus’ name. Mr. and Mrs. Morgan thought it was a very good idea.

“Wow,” said Dee. “This is it, huh?”

“This is it!” said Dee’s dad, excited. “My friend’s church.”

Mr. Morgan pulled their car into a dirt parking lot. Dee looked at the church building again. It looked a bit like a small warehouse, with a simple wooden cross hung over the door. Paint peeled from the walls, and Dee saw a plastic sheet taped over one of the windows. Cows mooed in the field behind the building.

“Okay, everybody out!” Dee’s dad was smiling.

Dee noticed another family walking into the church. Dee and her parents had dressed in nice clothes, but not their nicest. They were visiting her dad’s cousins in the country, and had come to visit this church where her dad’s old friend, Mr. Fletcher, was a pastor. The family Dee saw walking into the church were in their nicest clothes, but the outfits were still older and more ragged than Dee’s dress. They obviously did not have much money.

The inside of the building wasn’t much nicer than the outside. The church didn’t have a Sunday school, so Dee sat in an old wooden pew that was uncomfortable and splintered. The room seemed a little warm, too. Someone had made banners praising Jesus that had once been very pretty, but now they were old and worn. Dee felt sorry that these people had to worship God in such poor conditions. Then the service started.

At the end of the service, Dee said a quick prayer, thanking God. It had been beautiful—the singers leading worship songs had been so humble, the people in the congregation were enthusiastic and friendly, and Pastor Fletcher’s sermon about reaching out to others had been inspiring.

Before Pastor Fletcher dismissed everyone, he made a few announcements.

“And don’t forget the barn-raising for the Conner family this afternoon. It’ll be a small barn, but we need everyone there. My wife’s apple pie will be waiting at the end of your labors.” The congrega-

tion laughed and made appreciative sounds. “We also still need someone to bring a tractor to pull the lumber.”

After the service, Dee and her family waited to greet her dad’s old friend. He was talking to an older man in blue jean overalls with patches on the knees. Dee heard the man say as she walked up:

“An’ I can bring my John Deer tractor today. It’s old, but it still runs well. The Conners can have it, too.”

“You don’t have to do that, Jim,” said Pastor Fletcher. “You need that tractor for the fall!”

“The Conners need it more—they’re just starting out. Me and my family—we’ll trust God to help us in the fall.”

Pastor Fletcher shook Jim’s hand and Jim walked away. The Pastor Fletcher turned and hugged Dee’s dad and mom. He hugged Dee, too! He invited them to come to the barn raising, but warned them they’d get dirty. Dee’s dad had to decline the invitation—they had a long drive to get back home.

Dee tugged on her dad’s shirt. “Dad, can I talk to you?”

“Sure, honey,” replied Mr. Morgan.

“I think we should go help at the barn raising.”

“You do?”

“Sure,” said Dee. She looked at the ground. “When I first got here, I thought this church wasn’t much good because it looked run down. But now I see that these people love God just as much as we do, and they give everything they have to worship Him and help each other.”

“I agree with you.”

“Well,” said Dee. “I think we should do what we can to help the Conner family, even if it means we get back home late. We should give God what we have.”

Mr. Morgan bent down and hugged his daughter. “I’m so proud of you, Dee. Let’s go talk with your mom and make the decision together, but I think we can look forward to Mrs. Fletcher’s pie!”



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Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Cy was playing at the park and listening to his CD player through headphones. While he balanced on a wood beam, he suddenly felt the beam shaking. He looked over and saw the empty swings on the swing set shaking also. Cy lost his balance and fell to the ground. What was happening? Was it an earthquake? Was Jesus coming back like He said?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Dee ran up to Cy and said something, but he couldn't hear her because of his music. When he removed his headphones, Dee asked Cy why he had yelled about an earthquake. When he explained, Dee laughed and told him it was just the freight train passing through town—the train usually made the old swing set shake as it passed by. Cy was glad it was not an earthquake, and realized that he was not really prepared for Jesus to come back. Dee agreed. Both kids decided to devote time to prayer and to talking with Pastor Shepherd so they would feel more prepared when Jesus finally returned.

Cy adjusted his headphones and stepped onto the wood plank that framed the playground. He bobbed his head to the music of his CD player as he tried to balance walk on the old railroad beam. It was a great day to be at the park. He saw his friend, Dee, on the monkey bars and waved. She waved back, letting go of the bar with one hand while hanging on with the other. Cy was impressed.

The CD got to Cy's favorite song, and he turned up his music a little. He knew he wasn't allowed to listen to it so loud at home, but no one was here to scold him, and he did love that song!

Just then, he felt the wood beneath his feet shaking. He could also see the empty swings across the playground shaking. Cy lost his balance and fell in the grass, rolling.

“Earthquake!” Cy yelled. He looked for Dee, ready to run to the open field where there were no power lines and buildings. He found Dee, still hanging from her monkey bars.

Dear Jesus, prayed Cy, Help me be ready for Your coming.

“Dee, c'mon!” shouted Cy. “It's an earthquake!”

Dee just looked at Cy. He saw some other kids staring at him, too. Then he noticed the ground was not shaking.

Dee came up to Cy and said something. He couldn't hear her—his CD player was still blasting music into his headphones. He turned the player off and removed his headphones.

“What?” asked Cy.

“I said, what were you talking about?” asked Dee. “Is this a new game or something?”

“No,” said Cy. “It was an earthquake. Didn't you feel it? Jesus must be coming soon.”

Dee stared a moment, then laughed. “Oh, Cy. That wasn't an earthquake, that was the train.” Just then Cy heard a train's horn blowing in the distance. Train tracks ran through town just on

the other side of the park, behind the hedgerow of bushes. “Remember? When a freight train comes by, it shakes the old swing set.”

Cy felt red. “It shakes the wood frame around the playground, too, apparently. I'd forgotten about the train, and I didn't hear it because I had my headphones turned up. I'm so embarrassed.”

Dee clapped Cy's shoulder. “You don't need to feel embarrassed. Everyone thought you were pretending.” Dee cocked her head. “But what did you mean about Jesus coming soon?”

“Our Sunday school lesson,” explained Cy. “Remember? Jesus said there would be signs before He came back, like earthquakes and storms. I thought maybe it was time—you know, Judgment Day?”

“Earthquakes do happen all the time,” said Dee. “But Jesus said those things would start happening more and more.”

“I know,” replied Cy. “And we've never had an earthquake here. That's why I was so worried!”

“Well, are you ready for Jesus to come back?”

“I thought I was,” said Cy. “But now I'm not so sure. I guess I need to pray about it more.”

“Great idea,” agreed Dee. “I don't know how ready I am either, but Jesus said He could come at any time!”

“Like now,” said Cy.

“Or now,” said Dee.

“Or now,” said Cy. Both kids laughed.

“Now we're just being silly,” noticed Dee.

“You're right. Let's go see if Pastor Shepherd will tell us more about when Jesus comes again.”

“Okay,” said Dee. “Race you!”

Cy laughed. “I think I twisted my ankle when I fell.”

“You did not! You're just afraid I'll beat you!”



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Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Paul was very excited. It was his older sister, Susan’s, birthday and they were throwing her a surprise party. Paul was in the kitchen with his mom. They were letting him light the birthday candles for the very first time! When Paul’s mom went into the other room to find out when Susan was coming, Paul decided to go ahead and light the candles. They burned down so fast! Had Paul lit them too soon? Had he ruined his sister’s birthday?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Paul’s mom came back in and blew out the candles, but it was too late—they had already burned down. Paul made excuses, saying he was excited about Susan, but his mom knew the truth—he just wanted to light the candles for himself. As they searched the kitchen for more candles, Paul remembered Jesus’ story about the ten maidens. The foolish maidens had run out of oil waiting for the bridegroom, and Paul had “run out” of candles waiting for Susan. He had only been thinking about himself, instead of focusing on Susan and waiting for her to come. Paul resolved to be less selfish and to make sure he didn’t do the same thing with Jesus. Mrs. Shepherd found more candles just in time, but this time Paul was not allowed to light them.

The pink and white birthday cake sat on the table in front of Paul. It said, “Happy Birthday, Susan” in yellow frosting. Twelve unlit birthday candles in swirling colors sat in the frosting. Paul held a candle lighter tight in his hands.

“Is she here, yet?” asked Paul.

“Not yet,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“When’s she coming?” asked Paul. Susan was Paul’s older sister, and today was her birthday. They were surprising her—her friends and family were gathered in the living room, waiting for her and her dad. Today his parents were letting Paul light the birthday candles for the first time.

“I’ll go see if I can find anything out,” said Paul’s mom. “I’ll be right back.”

Paul was alone in the kitchen. He really wanted to light the candles. He pressed the lighter’s button, and a flame sprang on. He stared at the flame.

I could go ahead and let the candles, thought Paul. They’ll burn down a little, but they’ll be ready when Susan gets here.

Paul paused another moment, then lit the birthday candles. He was surprised to see how fast they burned down! They were almost down to the cake when Mrs. Shepherd came back in.

“Paul, what are you doing?!” She rushed over and blew out the candles. Paul was about to cry.

“I was excited that Susan was coming,” he explained.

His mom removed the candle stubs from the cake. “No, son. You were excited to light the candles for *yourself*, not for Susan. You weren’t thinking of her at all.”

Paul knew his mom was right. He felt horrible.

“And to make matters worse,” Mrs. Shepherd continued. “I think those were the last of the birthday candles! Susan will be here any minute.”

Paul did start to cry. “What can I do, Mom?”

“Help me look in those drawers for more candles. Maybe there are some old ones I’ve forgotten about.”

Paul thought to himself as he searched the drawers. He knew that he had been selfish, doing what he wanted to do instead of being patient and ready for Susan to come. He remembered Jesus’ story about the ten maidens—how the foolish ones had no oil for their lamps. Paul had no candles for Susan’s cake. He knew how they must have felt.

Jesus, Paul prayed. Please forgive me for being so selfish. Help me focus on others and always be focused on You.

“Ah ha!” cried Paul’s mom. “Found ‘em!” She held up an old pack of birthday candles.

“I’m sorry, Mom,” said Paul. “I should have been focusing on Susan and her birthday, not on myself.”

Mrs. Shepherd rubbed Paul’s head. “It’s okay, son. I forgive you, but we’ll talk more about this later. Susan’s coming any minute, and we need to be ready. Help me put these candles in the cake.”

Paul and his mom put twelve new birthday candles right where the old ones had been. Paul looked up at his mom and asked a question, even though he knew the answer already.

Paul’s mom shook her head. “No, Paul—you already had your chance to light birthday candles. But you can help me carry in the cake!”



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Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

The kids had gathered together at their church to participate in the Jewish Passover Meal, the *Seder*. They learned how all the different foods were symbols for different parts of the slaves’ escape from Egypt. As they discussed their favorite parts of the meal, Paul mentioned that he loved how Jesus had transformed the Seder into Communion.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

When Jesus took the bread, it was during the Jewish Seder. He broke the bread just as the Jews always had, but He explained that it was His body, broken for all. And when He took the cup at the end of the meal, He said it was His blood, shed for all for the forgiveness of sins. He was telling His disciples that He was the Messiah, and that from now on they would celebrate a meal together to remember what He had done. The Passover Meal was now Communion, the meal Christians celebrate to remember Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Dee, Cy, and Paul sat around a table at church. Their plates all held different portions of half-eaten foods. Around each plate sat four empty paper cups.

“Gee,” said Paul. “I had no idea that the Jewish Passover Meal, the *Seder*, was so complicated.”

“It’s amazing!” said Dee. “Each cup and food stands for a different part of the Hebrew slaves’ escape from Egypt!”

“This is very similar to what I remember,” said Cy. “I ate a Seder at my friend’s house back in first grade.”

Pastor Shepherd had invited John Feinman, a Jewish Christian, to show his church the Seder. Mr. Feinman had taken them through each step of the meal. It was over now, and the adults were mingling.

“What was your favorite part?” asked Dee.

“I liked the vegetables dipped in salt water,” said Paul.

“I still like the *charoset*,” offered Cy. “The apple-nut-cinnamon mixture that represents the bricks the slaves had to build in Egypt.”

“My favorite was the *matzo*,” said Dee. “The flat bread God’s people ate as they escaped.”

“I could do without the bitter herbs,” said Cy. “Even though it reminds us how hard slavery was for the Jews.”

Dee looked at the food leftover on her plate. “I’m so glad your dad knew someone who could present and explain this meal to us, Paul. It really showed me how connected we are to the Jewish people.”

“I was amazed,” said Paul. “How Jesus transformed this meal into Communion.”

“I know!” exclaimed Cy. He grabbed a piece of matzo from his plate. “The Jews break their bread during a special part of the meal. When Jesus came to that part, He said the bread was His body, broken for all of us.”

Dee picked up the fourth empty cup near her. “And when Jesus raised the cup at the end of the meal, He said it was His blood, shed for all for the forgiveness of sins.”

“When the Jews celebrated Passover,” said Cy. “They remembered what God did for them. And they looked to the coming of the Messiah.”

Paul ate another piece of celery. “Jesus was showing the disciples that He had come to deliver them from slavery, too.”

“The slavery of sin and death,” added Dee.

“Now we celebrate Communion,” said Paul. “To remember what Christ did for us.”

Cy stood up from the table. “Jesus sure was brave. He ate the meal with His friends, knowing it would be the last meal they’d share together. He was going to die!”

“And He was preparing His disciples,” said Dee, standing, too. “That final supper was so important.”

Paul nodded and joined them. “And now that we know more about the Passover Meal, it seems even more important. God’s plan was coming together in a beautiful way.”

“I’m pretty full,” said Cy. “And it didn’t even seem like that much food.”

“But it was rich food,” said Paul.

“Rich in calories,” said Dee. “But also rich in meaning!”



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Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Dee was in her kitchen, frustrated. She had wanted to bake cookies, but her mom had not given her the right recipe. There were several recipe cards, but none were for her mother’s special lemon-chunk shortbread cookies. When Dee complained to her mom, Mrs. Morgan just told her to use one of the recipes and “wing it” to make the cookies she wanted. Dee couldn’t believe it. Didn’t her mom know that different recipes led to different cookies? She needed the one that would show her how to make lemon-chunk shortbread cookies!

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

When Dee became upset, her mom told her it was okay. She was trying to teach Dee a lesson. Earlier in the day, Dee had talked about her friend at school who thought all religions led to God. Dee had mentioned that she thought that theory made sense. Dee’s mom explained that just as following a recipe leads to one specific cookie, only following Jesus leads people to the one true God. Other religions only lead to false gods. Dee asked her mom to forgive her and said she’d ask for God’s forgiveness, too.

“Mom!” yelled Dee from the kitchen.

Mrs. Morgan stepped in from the living room. “What, honey?”

“I thought we were going to bake cookies.” Chip whined when he heard the word “cookies.”

“You go right ahead,” said Mrs. Morgan. “I laid out some recipes for you on the counter. Pick one and start baking!”

Dee looked down at the recipe cards. “But your recipe isn’t here.”

“What do you mean, Dee?”

“I wanted to bake your special lemon-chunk shortbread cookies,” whined Dee. Chip barked, wagging his tail.

Mrs. Morgan walked over to the counter and scratched Chip’s head. “Well, cookies are cookies,” she said. “All these recipes lead to fresh-baked cookies...”

Dee shook her head. “But only *one* leads to your lemon-chunk shortbread cookies! And it isn’t here. Plus all these cookies have chocolate in them.” Dee looked at Chip, who licked his chops. “Chip can only eat cookies without chocolate in them.”

Dee’s mom picked up a card. “Well, what if you followed this recipe, but only took the ingredients you liked and added some of your own.”

Dee stared at her mom. Her mouth hung open. “That won’t work! Why are you doing this to me?”

“It’s okay, Dee,” said her mom, smiling. “I wanted to teach you a lesson.”

“What lesson?” asked Dee, exasperated. “How *not* to bake cookies?”

“Kind of,” said Mrs. Morgan. “Remember this morning, when you talked about your friend from school?”

“You mean Cindy?” asked Dee.

“Yes, Cindy,” said Dee’s mom. “What did Cindy tell you?”

Dee thought for a moment. “Oh, she told me that all religions led to God.”

Dee’s mom nodded her head. “Do you remember what you told me as you walked away?”

“Um,” Dee shuffled her feet. “I think I said that what she said made sense.”

“You did,” said Mrs. Morgan. “Your exact words were, ‘I think Cindy may be right. Why shouldn’t there be a bunch of ways to God?’”

“But what does that have to do with— Oh...”

“Mm hmm,” said Dee’s mom, nodding. “How many of these recipes lead to my cookies you love so much?”

Dee hung her head. “Only one.”

Mrs. Morgan held up some recipe cards. “And what does following these recipes give you?”

“Other cookies.”

“Religion is like that, Dee,” her mom explained. “Following Jesus is the only way to get to the one true God. Other religions lead you to other gods—false gods.”

“I see,” said Dee, smiling. “God gave us His recipe book, the Bible.”

Mrs. Morgan laughed. “That’s right. Following His Word leads you to the best life, and ultimately to God Himself.”

Dee tugged at her ponytail. “Mom, I’m sorry I listened to Cindy.”

“I forgive you, Dee. But the next time you pray, you may want to ask God to forgive you, too.”

“I will!”

Just then Chip barked three times in a row.

Dee laughed. “I think Chip is telling us to start baking those cookies.”

Dee’s mom laughed, too. “I think you’re right. Let me get my recipe.”



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Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Dee, Cy, and Paul were playing a game that Cy had made up. They were throwing a flying disc and receiving points for how far they threw it. Chip was having fun chasing after the disc. Dee threw the disc as hard as she could, and it sailed straight through the air. It was starting to drop when the wind picked it up and carried it over the whole field. Dee was excited—her throw was worth five points! Cy didn’t think Dee should get five points. Why was Cy breaking his own rules? Was he trying to cheat?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Cy explained that because the wind carried Dee’s throw, she shouldn’t get the points. Dee didn’t agree. Paul interrupted them both to talk about the Holy Spirit. He explained that just like the wind carried the disc much farther than Dee could throw it on her own, the Holy Spirit empowers believers to do great things for God that they could not do on their own. The kids all agreed—Jesus sent a great helper when He sent the Holy Spirit. Dee decided that, because she gives God the credit and glory when He helps her, she should give the wind credit for her throw and not accept the points. Chip made the whole discussion moot by grabbing the disc from Cy and running away with it!

“That one went past the oak tree! Three points!” Cy clapped his hands.

“Good throw, Cy!” yelled Dee. Chip ran across the field.

Paul walked over and picked up the disc. “Yeah, but I didn’t catch it, so no extra point.”

Chip barked for Paul to throw the flying disc. Chip couldn’t run fast enough to catch it, but he like chasing after it. Paul threw the disc to Dee. It sailed through the air, but then turned on its side and dropped to the ground, rolling. Dee ran to where it rolled and picked it up.

“Oh, a ground roller!” yelled Cy. “That’s only one point.”

Cy was great at making up games, and he had created this one. Each player received different points based on the throw and the catch. It was a sunny day at the park, and everything was green and beautiful.

Dee backed up and wound her arms—she was going for a big throw. Cy took some steps forward. He knew that Dee couldn’t throw the disc very far, even when she tried her hardest. Dee whipped her arm, and the disc flew perfectly straight. It started to come down near Cy, but then it lifted back into the air! Cy and Chip turned and chased it. The disc sailed all the way to the edge of the playground and landed in the grass.

“Alright!” shouted Dee. “That’s five points!”

Cy jogged back to Dee and Paul. “I don’t know.”

The three kids came together so they didn’t have to yell. Chip ran in circles around them, barking.

“What do you mean?” asked Dee. “Past the last tree is five points!”

“I know,” said Cy. “But the wind carried the disc. That wasn’t where it was going to land if there had been no wind.”

“But there was wind,” argued Dee. “Paul’s throw wouldn’t have rolled if there was *no ground*.”

Chip rolled in the grass.

“You know,” said Paul. “Dee’s throw reminds me of the Holy Spirit.”

“Huh?” said Dee and Cy together.

“We know Dee can only throw the disc so far. (Sorry, Dee.) But the wind carried her throw much farther. We can only do so much under our own power, but the Holy Spirit empowers us to do so much more!”

“I get it,” said Cy. “That’s why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples.”

“And to us,” added Dee.

“He knew we’d need His power to do great things for Him!” continued Cy.

“So where does that leave my throw?” asked Dee.

“I don’t know. What do you think?” replied Cy.

Dee stared at the grass. “Well, when God helps us, we give Him the credit and the glory, so I guess in this case we better give the wind the credit for carrying the disc.”

Paul shook his head. “I have to say, that sounds right.”

“I guess,” said Cy. “But it is just a game, after all. I can’t remember how many points I have anyway!”

Just then Chip grabbed the disc from Cy’s hand with his mouth. He ran across the field.

“It looks like Chip is ready to play his own game,” said Dee. “Get him!”

All three kids ran across the field, laughing.



Teacher—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends,” or the Story, or the Puppet Script based on your time and preference.

Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Paul was excited. His basketball team had been practicing a play and everything went perfectly. All his teammates were right where they needed to be and all the passes were timed precisely. After getting praised by their coach, Mr. Diaz, they ran the play again. This time they still made the basket but Paul didn't feel as if things had gone as well. After practice, he went to talk to his coach with his friend, Jason. Why was the first time so great? Why couldn't Paul and his teammates repeat what they had done?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Coach Diaz explained that teamwork was important and effective, but what the boys had experienced was on a different level. He called it “synchronicity”—when everyone is in the right place, and everything happens when it is supposed to happen. He said that synchronicity is very rare, but it makes everyone seem like one person. Paul and Jason realized that synchronicity is similar to what Jesus prayed for His followers—that they all be one. They acknowledged that without God's help, being one would never happen. They resolved to pray for “oneness” in the Church more often.

Paul grinned from ear to ear as he and his basketball teammates ran over to their coach.

“All right, guys!” said coach Diaz, “No *that's* the way to play as one unit! If you can pull that play off in a real game, no one will be able to beat you.”

Paul silently agreed. He couldn't believe how smoothly everything in that play had happened. All his teammates had been exactly where they were supposed to be and the passes had been perfectly timed. When Jason had made the basket, Paul had felt like all five players had made the basket together.

“Okay,” said Paul's coach. “Let's practice that play again.”

Paul and his teammates ran through the play again. This time, Jason still made the basket, but Paul didn't feel nearly as good about the play. Coach Diaz praised their hustling, but he wasn't as enthusiastic as he was the first time.

After practice, Paul went over to talk to the coach. Jason was there, too.

“Coach?” asked Paul. “What happened to make us play so well that one time?”

“Yeah,” agreed Jason. “I was going to ask the same thing.”

Coach Diaz pulled off his baseball cap and scratched his head. “Well, guys, that's not so easy to answer. Sometimes a team plays so well together that it seems like one person.”

“That's teamwork, right?” said Jason.

“It's more than teamwork,” replied the coach. “Teamwork is great—everyone works together and knows the part they play. But every once in a while something better happens. It's a big word called ‘synchronicity.’”

“Synchronicity,” repeated Paul.

Mr. Diaz nodded. “It's when everyone is in the right place, and everything happens just when it is supposed to happen.”

“That's what it was like during the play!” said Jason.

“I felt that way, too,” said Paul. “It was almost perfect.”

“Synchronicity is very rare,” said Paul's coach. “Enjoy it when it happens, but keep working hard to play as a team. See you boys on Thursday.”

“Thanks, Coach,” said Paul.

“Yeah, thanks,” echoed Jason. He turned to Paul. “You know what syncopation reminds me of?”

“Synchronicity,” corrected Paul.

“Yeah, synchronicity. It reminds me of Jesus' prayer that we learned about in Sunday school, that the Church would be one.”

“Wow, you're right!” said Paul. “When people in the church act as one, they can do so much more than they could do on their own. But it takes God to show everyone where they need to be and when things are supposed to happen.”

“So God and Jesus are part of that one—they make cinco-de-mayo happen.”

“Synchronicity,” corrected Paul again.

“Whatever. Coach Diaz says it doesn't happen often, but it should—Jesus prayed for it, and we should, too.”

Paul put his arm around his friend's shoulder. “Gee, Jason. I didn't know you were such a spiritual guy.”

“Well, we should talk more,” said Jason, walking with Paul to the locker room. “I love Jesus just like you do!”

“We're one on that!”



Teacher—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends,” or the Story, or the Puppet Script based on your time and preference.

Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Dee, Cy, and Paul had all just watched part of a movie about Jesus in their Sunday school class. Dee was sniffing—the movie made her very sad to see what Jesus had suffered at His arrest. Cy and Paul agreed. They all thought the movie was very good. Their Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Anita, came over to see if they were okay. They explained how the movie had made them sad. Cy wanted to know if the Jewish leaders had really struck Jesus, but Mrs. Anita wouldn’t tell him. Why did she refuse to answer Cy’s question? Had Cy said something wrong?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Mrs. Anita explained that the kids should go to their Bibles for answers. She told them that no matter how good a movie or book was, only the Bible contained the truth about Jesus. The kids agreed, saying that the movie made them want to read their Bibles. Paul thought that no matter what, Jesus must love them very much to suffer like that for their sins. Their teacher said that Jesus loves them more than she or any movie could say. Dee realized the Bible was the place to really find out how much Jesus loves them, but she promised that next time she watched that movie, she would bring tissues!

The lights in the room came back on, and Dee was sniffing. Paul and Cy were silent. Their teacher had a few more words for the class, then Sunday school was over. While the other kids filed out to meet their parents, Dee, Cy, and Paul hung back.

“I can’t believe what Jesus went through, just for us!” said Dee, still sniffing. “It’s so sad.”

“That was quite a movie,” said Paul. “Even though we only watched a small part of it.”

“Yeah,” agreed Cy. “I never realized how much happened to Jesus before He was crucified.”

Their teacher, Mrs. Anita, came up to the kids and saw Dee’s tears.

“Is everyone okay, here?” She knelt down to look the kids in the eyes. “Can I do anything for you?”

“It was just the movie,” explained Paul. “It made us sad to realize how much Jesus suffered to pay for our sins.”

“It is a very well-made movie,” said Mrs. Anita.

“Say,” asked Cy. “Did the Jewish leaders really hit Jesus?”

“I could tell you,” replied their teacher. “But you know the best place to find the answer?”

“Our Bibles!” said all three kids together.

“I was just thinking about that,” said Dee. “The movie was good, but it made me want to read the Bible to see if it was all true.”

“That’s the best reaction you can have,” said Mrs. Anita. “Even some of the best movies and books about God or Jesus can have mistakes or things added. We should always check with God’s Word to know what parts of a movie or book are true and which parts are made up.”

“I know one thing that’s true,” offered Paul.

“What’s that?” asked their teacher.

“Jesus must love me very much to let Himself be arrested, made fun of, and beaten up.”

“He does, Paul,” said Mrs. Anita. She looked at all three of them. “He loves all of you more than I can tell you. More than any movie could tell you.”

Dee held up her Bible. “But not more than the Bible can tell us!”

Mrs. Anita laughed. “You bet! Some people say the Bible is the longest love letter ever written.”

“Will we see more of the movie next time?” asked Cy.

Mrs. Anita nodded. “I think we’ll have time to show you what happens next.”

“Well, next time I’m bringing tissues,” said Dee.

“Me, too,” agreed Paul. Dee and Paul looked at Cy.

“Aw, me, too,” admitted Cy. “But don’t tell anyone else I said that!”



Teacher—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends,” or the Story, or the Puppet Script based on your time and preference.

Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Cy was excited—his Sunday school class was doing an Easter egg hunt! Some kids may have felt they were getting too old to hunt eggs, but Cy loved it. The first plastic egg he found felt especially light. He shook it and realized it was empty. He thought it was an accident, but then the next egg he found was also empty. And the next one, and the next one. What was going on? Why were all these eggs empty? What was the point hunting for eggs with no candy?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Cy’s teacher, Mrs. Anita, said she knew all the eggs were empty. She wanted the kids to remember something that really made Easter special—the empty tomb that showed Jesus is alive! Cy realized that without Jesus’ resurrection, nothing else He had done would have mattered. Cy was happy to have those empty eggs to remind him, but that didn’t mean he wasn’t glad when his teacher explained their Easter treats were waiting inside!

Dee, Cy, and Paul were all excited. Today was Easter and their Sunday school teachers always planned something special for them on Easter. Last year, they’d made a neat craft project that looked like the tomb Jesus had been in. The year before they’d all made angels out of cardboard tubes and cotton balls.

This year they didn’t know what to expect!

Mrs. Anita smiled, “Okay, kids! Today we’re going to have an Easter egg hunt in the field beside our church.”

“All right!” yelled the kids. Mrs. Anita handed out a little basket to each child.

“Now, outside in the field are lots of plastic Easter eggs,” explained Mrs. Anita. “Your job is to find as many as you can before I call you back inside. Is everybody ready?”

“Ready!” yelled the excited children. Mrs. Anita threw open the door and stepped out of the way. And it was a good thing she did. All those children rushed out the door as fast as they could.

“Yippee!” yelled Cy. He was especially excited! He loved Easter egg hunts—someday he might be too old for them, but not yet. Usually, there was some kind of special treat in the plastic eggs. Cy ran out into the field and saw a yellow egg on the ground. Cy raced over, picked it up, and shook it. The egg felt empty!

He opened it up and sure enough, nothing was inside. “Oh, well,” thought Cy. “Mrs. Anita must have forgotten to put some candy in this egg.”

Cy ran over by the bushes and found a green egg stuck on a branch. But that egg was empty, too!

Cy found five more eggs before he heard Mrs. Anita call everyone to line up by the door. But every one of Cy’s eggs was empty! He looked over at Dee and Paul—they were both confused, too.

Slowly, the children lined up and Mrs. Anita said, “Well, kids! Did you have a good time searching for your eggs?”

Some of the kids nodded. A few complained. “All my eggs are empty!” someone said.

Mrs. Anita nodded. “Raise your hand if all your eggs are empty!” All the children raised their hands. Some held up their empty eggs.

“There is a reason all your eggs are empty,” said Mrs. Anita. “On Easter when Jesus’ friends went looking for Him, they were surprised to find that His tomb was...” she let her voice trail off and all the children said, “EMPTY!”

“Right!” she said. “It was empty because Jesus wasn’t dead anymore. He was alive again!”

Some of the kids still looked a little disappointed—not that Jesus was alive, but that there wasn’t a treat in their eggs. Mrs. Anita noticed and smiled again. “Don’t worry, kids! You’ll each get a treat. Inside the classroom I’ve got a great snack ready for each one of you. Because your eggs were empty, we’re going to have our special treats inside the classroom. And because Jesus’ tomb was empty, all who trust Him have special rewards waiting in heaven! How many of you are glad the tomb was empty?”

All the arms shot up.

“How many of you are ready for your snack?” said Mrs. Anita.

All the arms shot up again.

“Good! Let’s go!” said Mrs. Anita.

And as Dee, Cy, and Paul followed the rest of the children back toward the classroom, Cy thought, *This is the best Easter surprise ever. No...the second best ever. Jesus coming back to life was the best surprise of all!*



Teacher—These special Dee-Cy-Paul application stories reinforce the Bible lesson. Choose the “Bookends,” or the Story, or the Puppet Script based on your time and preference.

Dee-Cy-Paul “Bookends”

Introduction (5 minutes)

Use this “hook” to introduce the lesson.

Dee and Cy were feeling bored. Easter was over and all the excitement had passed. They tried kicking Dee’s new soccer ball around, but they still wondered why they felt so down. Paul joined them, and he was pretty excited. He asked them what was wrong, and they explained how they felt. Paul told them to cheer up—Easter wasn’t over! Dee and Cy thought Paul was crazy. Hadn’t he looked at a calendar? Easter was weeks ago!

Conclusion (5 minutes)

If you used the introduction to begin your lesson, use this to conclude.

Paul explained that Easter was like a new gift that you enjoy and share with others. Knowing Jesus is alive was a gift that they could share with people all the time. To people who didn’t yet know Jesus, any time could be Easter. Dee and Cy felt so much better—now they were excited, too! Cy wondered if they could now enjoy playing soccer. Dee thought maybe later—there were some friends from school that needed to hear the Easter story.

Dee sighed. She was a little bored. Easter was over. The fun was over. The Easter egg hunt was over. All her excitement of hearing the Resurrection story was over.

Dee had decided to go to the park and kick her soccer ball around for a while. Her dad had just given it to her and she’d been waiting for a chance to use it and show it to her friends.

So Dee was out in the field kicking her soccer ball when Cy walked up.

“Hey, Dee, what are you doing?” asked Cy.

“Oh, nothing much. I was just trying to find something to do now that Easter is over and my candy is gone. My dad gave me this new soccer ball and I thought I’d play for awhile,” explained Dee.

Cy asked if he could join her. Dee nodded and they kicked the soccer ball back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

“It was fun learning about Jesus at Easter,” said Dee. “But now, it seems like things have all gotten back to normal again.”

“Yeah,” said Cy. “I guess that’s just the way things go. Once Easter is done, everything just goes back to normal.”

Just then Paul came running up. “Hey, guys, what are you doing?”

“Nothing much,” they said.

“Is that a new soccer ball?” shouted Paul. Dee nodded. But neither she nor Cy seemed very excited. Paul watched them for a few minutes and then said, “Is something wrong?”

“Oh, nothing much,” they said. “It’s just that we’re kind of bored now that Easter is over,” said Dee. Cy agreed.

“But Easter is never over!” said Paul.

Dee and Cy looked at Paul like he was crazy or something. “What do you mean? Of course Easter is over,” said Dee. “Check out a calendar—we celebrated it a few weeks ago and learned about how Jesus rose from the dead, and now it’s just...over!”

Dee kicked the new soccer ball toward Paul and he kicked it toward Cy. “But you guys, Easter is just the beginning!” Paul said. “It’s not like everything is supposed to go back to normal again! Everything is supposed to be different forever!”

Cy shook his head. “I don’t understand, Paul. You go to church on Easter, you hear about Jesus, and you go home. How could Easter change everything?”

Paul sighed. He looked over at Dee’s new soccer ball. “Dee, when you got your new soccer ball, did you want to play with it?”

“Of course!” she said. “When you get a new present, you want to play with it right away! And you want to show it to other people.”

“That’s what Easter is all about!” said Paul smiling. “Jesus offers each of us a gift of new life when we believe in Him!”

Cy came running over. “Oh, I get it! The story of Jesus’ love is like a new gift that we get to share with others! Easter changes everything because Easter changes you!”

Paul nodded. “It can be Easter every day that we tell someone else that Jesus is alive!”

Dee ran over to get her soccer ball.

“Okay, let’s play some more soccer!” called Cy.

“Umm, not right now,” she said. “There’s some kids from school who don’t know the truth about Easter yet. I need to go and tell them it isn’t over. It’s just the beginning!”

“We’ll come with you!” said Paul and Cy.