OVERVIEW

Middler	Post 1	Post 2	Post 3	Post 4	Post 5
Title	**At the Junction: God Shows His Love**	**Down the Trail: God Loves All People**	**Over the Plain: God Loves Individuals**	**To Be Wanted: God Loves an Enemy**	**To New Frontiers: God's Love Brings Joy**
References	Luke 23:33–46; 24:1–12; Acts 1:1–12; 2:1–47	Acts 10	Acts 8:1–6, 26–40	Acts 9:1–19; 22:4–16; 26:9–18	Acts 16:6–40
Focus	The Good News changes people's lives.	The Good News is for everyone.	The Good News is for you.	The Good News can reach anyone.	The Good News can bring joy—anytime.
Bible Verse	"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16).	"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1).	"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).	"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).	"We know that all things work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28).
Games	• Gold Rush • Wagon Dash • Cowboy Campfires • Capture the Bandana	• Horse Race • Picture This • Desert Dash Obstacle Course • Workin' on the Railroad	• Cattle Drive • Over the Top • Stampede!	• Giddyup Junction Juggle • Pin the Badge on the Sheriff • Choices Tic-Tac-Toe • Damascus Dodge	• Tin-Can Tumble • Guard the Prisoner • Good News Soccer • Joy Is Contagious • Really Free
Snacks	• Wagon Wheels • Desert Sunrise • Empty Tomb S'mores • Flame Cupcakes	• Log Cabin Snacks • Cowboy Trail Mix • Giddyup Junction Garden Veggies	• Dusty Road to Gaza Pudding • Frontier Fruit • Frontier Fruit Dip • Ropin' Wranglers • Share Good News Treats	• Sheriff Badges • Saul to Apostle Paul Crackers • Rocky Road to Damascus Brownies • God's Forgiveness Melts Away Sin	• Desert Designs • Snake-on-the-Trail Bread • Charlie the Horse's Hay Bale Snacks
Crafts	• Design Your Own Desert Lizard • Good News Bracelet • Sheriff's Badge Bookmark • Bandana Bracelet	• Howdy Pardner Magnet • Color Your Own Bandana • Sand in My Boot • Create-A-Cactus • Wagon Trail Lantern	• Colorful Cowpoke Necklace • Desert Sunset • Slithery Straw Snake • Cowboy Mosaic	• Design Your Own Cowboy Hat • Wild Ridge Sun Catcher • Bandana Treat Bag • Sunshine Streamers	• Prospector Pouch • Frontier Photo Frame • Desert Silhouette • Howdy Note Card

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MIDDLER

TEACHER BOOK

Welcome

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POST 1

AT THE JUNCTION
GOD SHOWS HIS LOVE

Luke 23:33–46; 24:1–12; Acts 1:1–12; 2:1–47
Extra Credit Verses: Rom. 5:8; 8:38–39; 2 Cor. 5:17

TOPIC
God's strong love

THEME
The Good News changes people's lives.

DESIRED STUDENT RESPONSE
Students will know that God loves them and there is saving power in the gospel.

MEMORY VERSE

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16).

- Greet students with enthusiasm. Get to know each student.
- Make sure you have a completed registration card (30208) for each student.
- Distribute nametags (32133) and Giddyup Junction passes (32134).
- Open the class time with prayer.

Option 1: Mighty Magnets

Materials

- Two large magnets; two safety pins; two glasses filled with water; plastic table covering; tarp or drop cloth to protect floor.

Before class: Protect the table with a table covering and the floor with a tarp or drop cloth. Place two glasses filled with water at the front of the room, with a safety pin and a magnet beside each glass.

DEMONSTRATE: Drop the safety pins into the glasses. Place the magnet on the outside of one glass, beside the safety pin. Move the magnet up the glass, showing the students how the safety pin follows. **ACTIVITY:** Allow students to come to the front and take turns racing one another, seeing who can get the safety pin to the top of her glass first.

The force of this magnet is powerful enough to move the safety pin through the glass and the water. Today we are going to learn about the power of the gospel, or "Good News," and God's great love for us!

Option 2: Rock, Paper, Rope

Materials

- *Optional:* whiteboard; dry erase marker.

Before class: Write on the whiteboard, "Rock beats paper, paper beats rope, rope beats rock."

Explain that students will play a game similar to Rock, Paper, Scissors, but using objects they would find on the frontier. Review the explanation on the whiteboard and demonstrate the actions. (Use circle with index finger and thumb for rope.)

ACTIVITY: Players choose a partner and play several rounds of the game.
SAY: In this game, the goal is to use your hand to form a shape that is more powerful than the other player's. The good news of God's love has incredible power. In this lesson, we will find out that it changed the lives of three thousand people in one day.

Option 3: Limited Lasso

Materials

- Video clip of cattle being lassoed; lasso.

DISPLAY: Show video clip of cattle successfully being lassoed. Show students the lasso, explaining that a cowboy could attach one end to his saddle, while using the other end to lasso a cow. This allowed him to use his horse as a "tow truck" to move the cow. The lasso helped him capture heavy cattle or livestock and move them where they needed to go. **ASK:** Do you think there is a limit to what this lasso could pull? What things do you think might be too heavy?

While a lasso was a very helpful tool to the cowboys in the Wild West, there is a limit to the weight this rope could pull. Today we are going to learn about God's great love for us, and how the good news of Jesus is powerful enough to save and make anyone a child of God! That's much better than that rope!

Materials

- News stories cut from newspapers or printed from online sources; scissors.

Every day we hear news about things that are happening. You might hear your family is going on vacation in a couple of weeks. That's exciting! Or a friend might tell you she is moving away. That's sad.

ACTIVITY: Share a story about news you received and how important it was to you. It could be something sad (e.g., someone getting sick), or it could be news that was exciting (e.g., people rescued after a flood). Invite a student volunteer or two to share news that was important to them. Show students the news stories or pass them around class. Collect them before beginning the Explore the Bible section.

Today we're going to hear about the best news ever told and how that news started to spread.

You see, many years ago God did something incredible. God is the creator of everything—including you and me. The Creator and ruler of it all sent His Son, Jesus, to be born as a baby. Jesus came and lived as a man on the earth. But Jesus never said, thought, or did anything wrong. He was perfect.

God had a purpose in sending His perfect, holy Son to earth to live as a man. God's plan was that Jesus would one day die for us.

But when Jesus died, His followers had a hard time imagining how good news could come out of His death. Jesus was dead! Good news did come though. And today we'll hear how it did.

◀ Teacher Tip
Search online before class for a video clip of how to lasso a cow.

Teacher Tip ►
Open in prayer and teach with an open Bible.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE!

Materials

- Bible; lesson 1 visual packet and CD (32107) or visual book PowerPoint download (32107EB); 5 pieces of poster board; online translating tool; paper; printer; thick notebook.

Before class: Using an online translating tool, copy the gospel message in a variety of languages: "God loves you. Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again." Cut out five large speech bubbles from the poster boards. Attach one language of the gospel message to each speech bubble.

Lesson 1 Visual 1

It was a tough three days for a small group of people in Jerusalem. Jesus was gone! His followers had trusted Him. They had given their lives to Him. And now He was dead. It must have felt as if life was over for them too.

But some of them wanted to do what they could, so several women came to Jesus' tomb early in the morning. It was three days after He died. They were going to put spices on His body.

But when the women reached the tomb, they had the surprise of their lives.

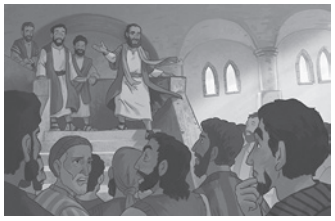
READ: Invite a student volunteer to read Luke 24:2 and 3. **ASK:** What did the women find at the tomb? *(The stone had been rolled away, and Jesus' body was gone!)*

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 1 or PowerPoint visual 1.

Lesson 1 Visual 2

Two shining angels spoke to the women. "Why are you looking for a living person among dead people?" they said. "Jesus is alive!" Soon all of Jesus' followers had heard the good news. Jesus spent forty more days on earth teaching and encouraging those who followed Him. But things were about to change. Jesus would not always be with them on earth.

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 2 or PowerPoint visual 2.



Lesson 1 Visual 3

One day, Jesus was teaching His followers. Suddenly, as they watched in awe, He went up in the air! He was going back to Heaven to be with God His Father again. But Jesus had given His followers an exciting promise: "You will be given power by the Spirit of God, and you will tell the world the good news about Me!"

One of Jesus' followers, Peter, had been watching all this and listening to every word Jesus spoke. God was about to do something amazing through Peter and those who were with him.

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 3 or PowerPoint visual 3.

In the city of Jerusalem, many people had gathered for a festival called Pentecost. These people were from different countries and nations, so they spoke different languages from one another.

Suddenly everybody stopped what they were doing. They listened; then they all started crowding together. Each person heard people talking in his language, telling him about Jesus! People wondered what was going on. They didn't realize that the Holy Spirit of God was helping Peter and Jesus' other followers speak in different languages!

ACTIVITY: Invite five students to come up and hold the five speech bubbles, and ask other students to attempt to read the gospel message in the different languages. **ASK:** Do you understand these languages? Probably not, unless you learned them somehow! Usually it takes a long time to learn to speak a language.

Peter's voice rang out over the whole crowd: "Listen to my words!" Peter shared the Good News with all the people. He told them God had done all these things, which had been prophesied long ago in God's Word. Jesus had died for their sins, the wrong things they thought, said, and did. If they would turn from their sins by believing in Jesus, they would be saved from the punishment their sins deserved. All across the huge crowd, people were sorry for their sins and believed in Jesus!

READ: Invite a student to read Acts 2:41. **ASK:** How many people that day believed that Jesus had died and rose again for their sins? *(3,000!)*

Yes! Three thousand people believed that Jesus died for their sins, and they chose to trust Him for salvation. That's a lot of people. And God forgave every one of those people of all their sins! This was the beginning of what we call the church.

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 4 or PowerPoint visual 4.

Lesson 1 Visual 4

Those who chose to trust Christ were different afterward! They began to serve and encourage one another by helping with needs like food, clothing, and shelter. They began to join together to form what is called the church.

ACTIVITY: Invite a student volunteer to come up front. Hand the volunteer the piece of paper and ask him or her to rip it in half. Then hand the volunteer a thick notebook, asking him to rip it in half as well without opening the notebook. If time allows, invite other students to try. **ASK:** Why was the notebook impossible to rip? *(A single, lonely page is easy to rip in half. But when there are a lot of pages all together, like in the notebook, they become almost impossible to rip.)*

God designed the church to work the same way. He designed it so we would not try to make it alone, like this single sheet of paper, but that we would stick together by loving and serving one another.

God showed His love by working in the hearts of these people in Jerusalem. They trusted Jesus for salvation and came together to become the church. They took care of one another. God kept working, these people kept changing, and they loved others more than they loved themselves!

Materials

- Bible; salvation poster (32136); white, red, and brown paper; black marker; scissors; tape.

Before class: Use the black marker to write a variety of sins on the white paper (such as lying, cheating, stealing, anger, jealousy, and disobeying). Cut each word out and place tape on the back. Cut a large heart out of the red paper and use the black marker to write "GOD'S LOVE." Cut a large cross out of the brown paper and use the black marker to write "THE GOOD NEWS."

SAY: God loves each of us, and He is mighty enough to save us.
ACTIVITY: Invite students to help you place the specific sins on the wall at the front of the classroom. Place them close together so the red heart will cover them all.

Have you ever done any of these? The Bible word for these wrong things is "sin." No sin is too great for God to forgive. God loved us so much that He sent His Son to take the punishment for our sin. Jesus' death can cover every one of these sins. (Place the heart over the sins.) The gospel, or Good News, that Jesus died on a cross for our sins and rose again is powerful enough to save us from the punishment our sins deserve. (Place the cross next to the heart.)

God has saved me from the punishment for my sins. He desires to save you, too, from the punishment your sins deserve. You must simply choose to trust Christ to save you.

ACTIVITY: Use the salvation poster to share the gospel. Ask students to bow their heads and close their eyes. Invite students who want to learn more about salvation to look up at you. Assign workers to pray with and counsel responding students.

If you have already believed the good news about Jesus, are you sharing God's love with others? People wanted to follow Jesus because His followers showed

love to one another. You can show God's love and can help others want to trust Jesus by being kind and thoughtful and by helping others too.

Pony Express

Materials

- Paper; envelopes; pencils.

The Pony Express delivered mail from the east side of the United States to the west side and back again by riders on horseback. Over 150 relay stations were located from ten to twenty-five miles apart. Riders would travel about seventy-five miles a day!

ACTIVITY: Give each student a piece of paper, an envelope, and a pencil. Instruct students to pretend they are writing a letter home about the events of today's lesson which will be carried by Pony Express. They can draw illustrations if they desire. Invite volunteers to share their Pony Express mail with the class.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

◀ Teacher Tip
Hold your Bible open as you teach the verse, emphasizing that the verse is from the Bible.

The word "gospel" means "Good News." The Good News is God loved us sinners so much that Jesus came and took the punishment we deserve for our sins. He did this by dying on the cross and rising from the dead. That took power! Our God is mighty and powerful enough to save anyone who chooses to believe.

Option 1: Covered Wagon Roundup

Materials

- Brown construction paper; scissors; black marker; tape or adhesive putty; cut out copy of covered wagon template from Covered Wagon Journal in the craft ideas book (32128), p. 17.

Before class: Using the brown construction paper and the covered wagon template, create multiple covered wagons. Write a phrase from Romans 1:16 on each covered wagon. Tape the covered wagons in a circle on the wall, in the order of the memory verse.

When the early pioneers traveled out west in covered wagons, they would circle them each evening to create a safe place to spend the night. There would often be a fire in the middle, and children could play safely within the circle.

ACTIVITY: Instruct students to read the verse aloud together multiple times. As students begin to retain the verse, take away one covered wagon from the wall at a time, until students are quoting the verse from memory.

Option 2: Lasso Letters

Materials

- One small picture of a lasso for each word in Romans 1:16; marker; scissors; Romans 1:16 verse PowerPoint from Director Resource CD (32102); stopwatch.

Director Resource CD (32102)

Before class: Write the first letter of each word from the verse in the center of each lasso loop, and then cut out the lassos.

DISPLAY: PowerPoint visual of Romans 1:16. Quote together with the students a few times.

ACTIVITY: Divide the students into teams of four. Each team will take a turn coming to the front of the room. While being timed, teammates work together to put the lasso letters in the correct order of the words that begin with those letters.

Rope Tug

Materials

- Strong rope (long enough to accommodate players); bandanas; painter's tape.

Before class: Cut one 24" piece of tape and place it on the floor to form the line. Tie the bandana in the middle of the rope.

It took strength to settle in the West. First of all, there was the difficult journey to get out there. Once settlers arrived, homes had to be built, and they had to find ways to live off the land.

ACTIVITY: This is a game of strength. Players divide into two teams on opposite ends of the rope. Position the bandana at the middle of the rope so it is directly above the line. On your signal, players pull with all their might and try to pull the other team across the line.

ASK: Name some things that are strong. *(Allow for student responses.)*

The good news of Jesus is stronger than anything! As you go home, think of what you learned today about God's power.