

united kingdom

THE SENDING
OF 72

the Kingdom story from creation to revelation

THE SENDING OF 72

Luke 10:1-4

One day, Jesus ... chose seventy-two other followers and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places He planned to visit. These were His instructions to them: "There are so many people who are ready to know the truth about God's Kingdom – it's like a field ready to be harvested – but there are so few people to tell them. So pray to God, who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into His fields. Now go ... don't take anything with you, and don't get distracted on the way.

Luke 10:5-7

"Whenever you enter someone's home, first say, 'May God give peace to this house.' If those who live there are willing to receive God's peace, they will receive it; if they are not, then God's peace will not remain there. Don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place ... and ... don't hesitate to accept hospitality. ...

Luke 10:8-11

"If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you. Heal the sick, and tell them, 'The time when God will come to rule is near you now.' But some towns will refuse to accept you. ...

Luke 10:16

"But remember this, that anyone who accepts your message is also accepting Me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting Me. And anyone who rejects Me is rejecting God, who sent Me."

Luke 10:17-20

The 72 went out as Jesus had told them. When they returned, they joyfully reported to Him, "Master, even the evil spirits obey us when we use Your name!"

"Yes," He told them, "We are in a battle, and Satan is being defeated! Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy. ... I know this is exciting, but don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because you are citizens of God's everlasting Kingdom."

Luke 10:23-24

Later, Jesus turned to His followers and said, "Listen! Many prophets and kings longed to see and hear what you see and hear, but they didn't. So be happy; you are greatly blessed!"

TELLING THE STORY

Why this story?

God's Kingdom citizens are made up of those who accept the Good News of the coming Kingdom. Not all will accept the news. What is this Kingdom? It's something wonderful and powerful – it defeats the power of Satan. Kingdom citizens are sent out to share the Good News of the Kingdom – and what Good News it is! Bringing it brings joy!

Jesus used people – His followers – to prepare the way for Him to come. The task was urgent. There were so many people ready to hear the Good News about the Kingdom. Jesus trained His followers in what to do when they arrived in a town. All would be given the message, but Jesus warned them that some would accept and some would reject the message ... and ultimately, they would reject God Himself. However, Jesus' followers have authority over evil. But the best part is that they are citizens of God's Kingdom! Finally, this Kingdom long-promised is coming about!

Key concepts to include in your story

- Jesus chooses 72 followers to go ahead of Him into towns where He plans to go
- Many people are ready to hear the message, but there are not enough to tell them. Pray for more workers!
- This is an urgent task; do not get distracted on the way
- Jesus' instructions
 - Speak God's peace on the house – the people of the house can choose if they accept it or not
 - Accept hospitality and do not move from house to house
 - Heal the sick and proclaim the message that God is coming to rule His people
- Those who accept the messengers are accepting Jesus, but those who do not accept the messengers are not accepting Jesus or (ultimately) God
- The followers return, joyful because evil spirits obeyed them in Jesus' name
- Jesus tells them that they have authority over the power of the enemy
- Jesus tells them not to rejoice because of their authority over evil spirits, but because they are citizens of God's Kingdom
- The followers should be happy because they have seen things that prophets and kings before them have longed to see

Notes about how the story was crafted

For more information about God's Kingdom, see the Baptism story.

"The harvest is great" refers to the numbers of people who are waiting to hear the good news about the Kingdom.

When "Lord" refers to God, we have simply said "God" in the example story. When it refers to Jesus, we say "Master" in order to convey the original meaning in a meaningful way.

In Luke 10:4, Jesus tells his followers to not take anything with them and to not greet anyone on the road. In effect, He was telling them that their task was urgent and that they should not be distracted from it. In that culture, greetings along the way would have been time-consuming. The important greeting in this story is the greeting of peace that the followers give when they enter a house.

If those who live there are willing to receive God's peace, they will receive it; if they are not, then God's peace will not remain there. The **peaceful** people in 10:6 refer to people who are destined for or worthy of peace. These people will accept the peace offered them. If they don't, it's not that the peace goes back onto the disciples, but that the household forfeits the peace offered it. The blessing is the peace offered. The Jewish people believed that the spoken word had great power. In the recorded story you will hear that if the people do not accept the peace offered, they can "walk away." This is one way of explaining that Jesus wants

His followers to find a house where God's peace is accepted and then stay in that place.

Jesus significantly tells His followers to **eat whatever is set before you** because in that culture eating together was symbolic of acceptance.

Luke 10:12-16 is not included in this story in order to simplify it.

"Master, even the evil spirits obey us when we use Your name!" The use of Jesus' name refers to His power. Another way to say this is *by the power of Jesus*.

"We are in a battle, and Satan is being defeated!" This is the meaning of "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightening." This phrase refers to Satan's loss of power. Jewish people believed that exorcisms were a sign of Satan's defeat. Scholars believe that this statement has both a present (indicated in the exorcisms) and future fulfilment when Satan totally loses his power on the final day of judgment.

Rejoice because you are citizens of God's everlasting Kingdom. This is the way we have said "rejoice because your names are registered in heaven." This expression alludes to the "Book of Life," which was a Jewish concept of a registry of God's people. Most biblical scholars believe that in this passage the Book of Life refers to individual salvation. In our story set, we are describing those who have been "saved," (i.e. have believed in Jesus, turned from their sins and turned to God, and accepted Jesus' role in bringing them to God) as being citizens in God's Kingdom. Jesus describes those who believe in Him in the same way in our previous stories.

Many prophets and kings longed to see and hear what you see and hear ... Most biblical scholars believe that "what you see and hear" refers to the fact that God's Kingdom has come, and that Jesus is the way into it.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Retelling the story

- Help your group see the different scenes in this story. You may want to "travel" around the room in a circle (beginning and ending in the same place) as you retell the story in order to help your group visualise what happens at each point.
 - Introduction – Jesus explains the mission and the reasons for it (many are ready to hear and need to be told!)
 - As you go, pray and don't take anything with you – don't be distracted from the mission!
 - When you arrive in the towns
 - Find a house and offer God's peace to it
 - When you have found the house that receives God's peace, stay there!
 - While you are there
 - Heal the sick
 - Tell them that God is coming to rule soon!
 - If they reject the message, it's ultimately God they are rejecting
 - If they accept the message, it's ultimately God they are accepting
 - When the followers return
 - They rejoice
 - Satan was being defeated and Jesus says that they have been given power over the enemy
 - Jesus says "Rejoice for the fact that you are a citizen of the Kingdom, and you are seeing what so many others before you longed to see!"

Questions for discussion

You don't have to ask all of these questions in your discussion times. These questions are discussion starters, but you will find that often, once people feel comfortable, they talk about many of these things naturally. However, these questions are helpful to keep a conversation going where needed, and they provide a logical sequence of working through the story. Even if you don't ask all the questions in a group, try to ask people what this story means for them personally. You'll find that as you continue to interact with God's Word at a deep level, God's Spirit will reveal things for your life in a wonderful way!

- What do you like about this story?
- What bothered you about this story?
- What does this story show you about God?
- What does this story show you about people?
- What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- How will you remember this story? *(Tell it!)*
- Is there anyone you would like to tell this story to? Or anyone you would like to practice with? E.g. Your children, your best friend, your wife, your husband, a mum at the school gate, your work colleague, your neighbour. (It's true that the best way to learn a story is to tell it. So why don't you give it a go and chat to each other next week about how you found it?)
- How does this story contribute to our understanding of the Gospel? How is this story part of the Gospel?

Questions people may have

This section can never be exhaustive. Remember that during your group discussion times, you want to focus on the above questions rather than get side tracked by deeply academic issues. Part of the joy of experiencing and studying God's Word in this way is allowing God's Spirit to teach us and reveal His truth to us through the narrative of the individual stories, and ultimately through the narrative of the larger story line. However, we understand that sometimes people feel they need some deeper answers. Sometimes, the storyline has to speak for itself, and we have to trust it to do so. However, if your group needs some deeper answers in order to go on, here are some basics that you can discuss. If you have unresolved questions, please come and ask, and we'll help you find the answers.

- Why won't Jesus let them take anything with them on their journey?
 - *The urgency of the task was so great that He did not want them to be distracted along the way by the things that they took with them. In addition, He was equipping them for their task, so nothing else was needed.*
- How is it that people can see the sick healed and evil spirits cast out and still reject the message of God's Kingdom?
 - *It doesn't seem to make sense – if God's message is so clear, and it is confirmed by the miracles that Jesus and his followers did, why did people still reject God? Remember that our story from Isaiah tells us that people will reject the King. We see in this story that Satan is being defeated, but the fact that he is still around at all means that he is still working to deceive people.*
- The accounts of Jesus sending out the 12 disciples in Luke 9, Matthew 10 and Mark 6 are similar to this story. Are these really the same story?
 - *Luke is the only Gospel that records both the sending of the 12 and of the 72, but the Matthew and Mark accounts of the sending of the 12 are very similar to the sending of the 72 in Luke ... leading some scholars to believe that the two incidents are actually only one. However, Luke does not tend to recount the same story twice, so most scholars believe that the sending of the 12 and the sending of the 72 are two separate incidents. The Matthew 10 and Mark 6 accounts are similar to the sending of the 72, but most likely the things that Jesus said to the 72 were included by Mark in his account of the sending of the 12. Matthew and Mark probably simply collapsed the two separate incidents into one, whereas Luke wanted to emphasize the involvement of the nations (see next note), and so left both incidents intact in his account.*

- Didn't Jesus have 12 disciples? Why are there 72 in this story? And why, in some translations, does it say 70?
 - *Jesus did have 12 followers who went with Him wherever He went and who were very close to Him. In fact, in Luke 9 He sends out the 12 in much the same way. However, in this case, Jesus opens up His ministry and equips an even greater number of people to carry out His mission. Genesis 10 and other early Jewish writings recognise 72 as the number of nations in the world (72 is the number of descendants listed in Genesis 10). It is believed that Jesus chose 72 people as a symbol of His opening the Kingdom up to the whole world – the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The author Luke focuses on this theme of “God’s Kingdom for the entire world” throughout his two books of Luke and Acts. Because of this, although some early texts say 70 (and therefore some modern translations use the number 70), it seems that 72 is more likely number.*

THE SENDING OF 72 – for children

Luke 10:1-4

One day, Jesus ... chose seventy-two other *followers* and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places He planned to visit. These were His instructions to them: *"There are so many people who are ready to know the truth about God's Kingdom – it's like a field ready to be harvested – but there are so few people to tell them. So pray to God, who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into His fields. Now go ... don't take anything with you, and don't get distracted on the way.*

Luke 10:5-7

"Whenever you enter someone's home, first say, 'May God give peace to this house.' If those who live there are *willing to receive God's peace, they will receive it; if they are not, then the blessing of God's peace will not remain there.* Don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place ... and ... don't hesitate to accept *what people give you.* ...

Luke 10:8-11

"If you enter a town and *the people welcome* you, eat whatever *they give* you. Heal the sick, and tell them, 'The time when God will come to rule is near you now.' But some towns will *not* accept you. ...

Luke 10:16

"But remember this, that anyone who accepts your message is also accepting Me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting Me. And anyone who rejects Me is rejecting God, who sent Me."

Luke 10:17-20

The 72 went out as Jesus had told them. When they returned, they joyfully reported to Him, "Master, even the evil spirits obey us when we use Your name!"

"Yes," He told them, *"We are in a battle, and Satan is being defeated! Look, I have allowed you to have power over the enemy. ... I know this is exciting, but don't be happy because evil spirits obey you; be happy because you belong to God's Kingdom which will last forever."*

Luke 10:23-24

Later, Jesus turned to His followers and said, "Listen! Many prophets and kings wanted to see and hear what you see and hear, but they didn't. So be happy; you are greatly blessed!"

TELLING THE STORY – for children

Key concepts to include in your story

The story will need to be simplified at varying levels based on the age group of the children you are teaching. This means that many of the details in the story will need to be summarized. However, you should include the following concepts in your story.

- Jesus chooses 72 followers to go ahead of Him into towns where He plans to go
- Many people are ready to hear the message, but there are not enough to tell them. Pray for more workers!
- This is an urgent task; do not get distracted on the way
- Jesus' instructions
 - Speak God's peace on the house – the people of the house can choose if they accept it or not
 - Accept hospitality and do not move from house to house
 - Heal the sick and proclaim the message that God is coming to rule His people
- Those who accept the messengers are accepting Jesus, but those who do not accept the messengers are not accepting Jesus or (ultimately) God
- The followers return, joyful because evil spirits obeyed them in Jesus' name
- Jesus tells them that they have authority over the power of the enemy
- Jesus tells them not to rejoice because of their authority over evil spirits, but because they are citizens of God's Kingdom
- The followers should be happy because they have seen things that prophets and kings before them have longed to see

Example of a simplified version of the story for children

One day Jesus chose 72 of His followers, and He sent them out in pairs ahead of Him into every town and place where He planned to go. Jesus told them, "There are so many people who are ready to know the truth about God's Kingdom, but there aren't very many people to tell them. It's like a field that is ready to be harvested – the time when farmers gather their crops. God is in charge of the harvest, so pray to Him to send more workers into His fields. Now go. Don't take anything with you, and don't stop along the way. Whenever you enter someone's home, say, 'May God give you peace.' If the people who live there are willing to accept God's peace, your blessing of peace will stay with them. If they are not willing then your blessing of peace will come back to you." Then Jesus told His followers, "Don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place and accept what people give you. If you enter a town and the people welcome you, eat whatever they give you. Heal the sick and tell them that the time is coming when God will come to rule over His Kingdom. There will be some towns that will not accept you, but remember that anyone who accepts your message is also accepting Me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting Me. And anyone who rejects Me is rejecting God, because God sent Me." Then the 72 followers went out as Jesus had told them. When they returned, they were very happy about all the miracles they had performed when they used Jesus' name! Jesus told them, "We are in a battle, but the enemy is being defeated! I have given you power over him. And I know this is exciting, but don't be happy just because of the miracles that you've performed. Be happy because you belong to God's family, and His Kingdom will last forever." Later Jesus told His followers, "Many prophets and kings wanted to see and hear what you now see and hear, but they did not. So be happy, because you are greatly blessed!"

Retelling the story

The following activities can be used to vary your storying sessions with the children and keep the action fresh and exciting. They also help the children learn the stories in different ways. You'll find as children journey through this story set with you, they become more and more capable of learning even complicated stories quickly and well. Varying activities and keeping it fun helps the children write the stories on their heart so that they can pull them out of their toolbox whenever a situation comes up where they can use them!

- **Charades** – Have participants choose one line from the story and use actions to convey that line to the rest of the group. The child that guesses correctly goes next.
- **Skit** – Assign parts to groups and have them act out the story as you or a participant narrates. This can be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, you may choose to have each team act out the whole story, or assign sections and have them perform the skits in chronological order one after the other.
- **Song** – This activity seems to work best in small groups of older and more advanced students. If you believe your group would enjoy this activity, have them write and perform a song based on a story or a portion of a story. To make this task easier, have each group choose a song melody as their foundation and change the lyrics as needed, as opposed to starting from scratch.
- **Sign Language** – This is a great way to incorporate kinaesthetic learning into storying. Work with the participants to develop "sign language" for keywords in the story. This will help them to remember the order and progression of the story. This activity may also be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, have a participant from each team narrate as the group demonstrates their motions. The more creative, the more likely they are to remember it! Sign language is a good activity if younger and more inexperienced storytellers are part of the group.
- **Perspective Shift** – This creative and critical thinking activity works best later in the story set. Assign groups of children different characters in the story. They then adjust the story they have learned to the perspective of that character. For example, they could tell the Fall story from Adam and Eve's perspectives or the Abraham story from Abraham's perspective.
- **Memory** – The storyteller starts this activity by saying the first line of the story. The story then moves around the circle as each participant tells a line. An alternate method is to go back and forth between partners as they tell the story to each other.
- **Popcorn** – The storyteller also starts this activity. As children remember, they raise their hand. When ready, the storyteller yells "pop" and the name of someone with their hand raised. That person will then jump in until more hands are raised and they shout "pop" to pass the story to another child. You will likely need to demonstrate how this works.
- **Interview** – Children are assigned different characters. A child designated as "interviewer" asks the characters questions about what happened in the story and the character answers according to his or her role. For example, the interviewer could ask Adam about what he witnessed or the actions he took in the garden when he ate the fruit, and Adam would give his answer.
- **Action words** – Before telling the story, the storyteller gives instructions associated with particular words. Children listen for those words in the story, and must do appropriate action when heard. For example, the storyteller would tell the participants to wiggle their arm like a snake anytime they hear the word "snake." There should be multiple words associated with actions in the story. This activity also works well with a younger audience.

Children's Teaching Materials

Sunday mornings will begin in the warehouse with a joint children's worship time led by a youth worship band followed by a storying session with the roving storyteller. Then groups will disperse to their usual meeting locations for the age-appropriate teaching of the story and activities that reinforce that story's message.

Sparks

10:30	Look at the cress pots from last week's "Four Soils" activity. Harvest the healthy cress while reviewing the previous story.	Resources Needed: • Cress pots/plants from the previous week
10:35	Retell the story for today: "The Sending of 72." Use a Storybook Bible. ~ Pull out the tea set and talk about welcoming people when come visit ~ Snack: rice cakes	• Storybook Bible • Rice cakes
10:50	Craft: Make a flag ~ The flag can say, "I'm on Jesus' team!" ~ Let the children add stickers and colour	• Pre-cut paper in the shape of a flag with the words already written • Sticks for flag pole • Stickers • Colours/crayons
	Play	
11:15	Music: "Travelling" (sing to the tune of: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star") Travelling, travelling, two by two Telling stories of Good News Jesus is coming, do not fear The Kingdom of God is nearly here Travelling, travelling, two by two Telling stories of Good News	• Music
11:20	Play	

Little Flames

10:30	Begin with prayer. (Don't repeat a specific prayer, but follow the general idea of the prayer below.) ~ Say "Hi" to God, tell Him we're glad He's there with us and ask Him to help us see Him, hear Him and know Him. Invite Him into everything we'll be doing today. Keep today's focus in mind: "Jesus wants me to tell His Good News!"	Resources Needed:
10:35	Retell the story together using big versions of the 8 pictures: 1. Jesus talking to a big crowd 2. Pictures of pairs of people/followers 3. Followers arriving in a village 4. Some sad/cross faces	• Blank black poster board (for storyboard) • Pictures or objects representing different elements of creation

5. Some happy faces
6. Followers healing the sick
7. Excited disciples
8. Jesus talking to disciples about the Kingdom

~ Use a simplified version of the story, such as ...

Today's story is about telling people about Jesus. It can be exciting when they want to hear the message or difficult when they don't want to hear. But we should be really happy – not because things go well but because we are in the family/Kingdom of God.

10:40 "Knowledge Harvest" conversation: (use similar questions as below; the questions asked will depend on how detailed you get with telling the story)

~ What did Jesus want His closest followers to do?

~ What did Jesus want His followers to tell people?

~ What does Jesus want people to be happy about?

10:45 Biscuit break – Use this relatively calm opportunity for a little chat and prayer time.

- Biscuits

Discussion: "What are some things that we can tell people about Jesus?"

10:50 Popcorn Prayer

~ Have simple prayers, popcorn style: "Thank you, Jesus, for _____!"

10:55 Game: Two By Two

~ Let the children go around the room in groups of two to find the pictures (spread around the room/floor) that were used earlier while telling the story

~ Have the children help put the pictures in the correct order after they find them all

- The pictures used earlier in the retelling of the story

11:05 Music: "Travelling" (sing to the tune of: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

Travelling, travelling, two by two

Telling stories of Good News

Jesus is coming, do not fear

The Kingdom of God is nearly here

Travelling, travelling, two by two

Telling stories of Good News

- Music

11:10 Learn the words of the week: "Jesus wants me to tell His Good News!"

- Visuals to help learn the phrase

11:15 Craft: Story book

~ Make a small book using the same eight pictures from the previous activities

~ Pre-cut and stapled booklets; allow the children to glue the pictures to their booklet and colour the pages

- Pre-cut and stapled booklets (blank pages)
- Sets of the 8 pictures for each child
- Glue sticks
- Crayons/colours

11:30 If there is any remaining time (or the previous activities finish early), allow the children to freely choose to do whatever they want to do. Play story-relevant music in the background. Leaders should engage with the children during this time: celebrate them, pray for them, love them.

- ~ Play with story-oriented toys
- ~ Role play
- ~ Play-dough creations
- ~ Colouring station
- ~ Sing the "Travelling" song from earlier

- Story-oriented toys
- Play-dough
- Colouring sheets
- Blank paper
- Crayons/colours
- Music

Blaze

Resources Needed:

10:35 Welcome and straight-forward telling of the story

- ~ Remind them of the rules
- ~ Ask if anyone remembers last week's story
- ~ Retell this week's story

10:40 Retell the story; activity:

- ~ Divide kids into teams; one box of soil will be "assigned" to each team
- ~ Ask questions about the story
- ~ Each time a team gets a question correct they can "plant" a twig in their box of soil
- ~ The team with the most twigs at the end wins

- One box of soil per team; at least two
- LOTS of soil (so the twigs/willows can stand up)
- Twigs or sticks of willow

10:50 Break into small groups ...

Discuss the questions:

- ~ What do you like about this story?
- ~ What bothered you about this story?
- ~ What does this story show you about God?
- ~ What does this story show you about people?
- ~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- ~ How will you remember this story? *Tell it!*
- ~ Who will you tell this story to? *Pray for those people!*

11:05 Game: "Two by Two"

- ~ Children are put in pairs; an adult will need to play if there is an odd number of children
- ~ Tie one leg from each person/partner together with a scarf or string or wool
- ~ Printed letters spelling "Good News" are randomly placed around the room. There need to be enough letters for each team to spell the entire phrase. (Optional: add additional letters that are not needed to make it more difficulty.)
- ~ Pairs must work together to get around the room and gather the different letters that they need to complete the words, "Good News!"
- ~ Each team must then tack their words together in a designated space
- ~ The winning team is the one that finishes first

- Scarves/wool/string to tie the legs of pairs together
- Pieces of paper with the letters needed to spell the words "Good News!" (There needs to be enough letters for each pair to be able to complete the task.)
- Tack or masking tape

- 11:20 Craft: "Forever Friends"
 ~ Have the children make craft puppets to remind them that God wants friends to reach out together to tell others about Jesus. Use Styrofoam cups, craft sticks, crayons, tape, glue and printouts of people.



- Styrofoam cups
- Craft sticks
- Crayons/markers
- Tape
- Glue
- Printouts of people
- Scissors
- Printed words "Jesus sent them two by two."

- 11:30 Circle Time: praying, reflection, responses and offering

- Container for the offering

TNT

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- One box of soil per team; at least two
- LOTS of soil (so the twigs/willows can stand up)
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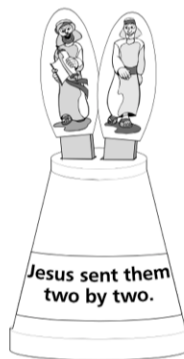
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- Styrofoam cups
- Craft sticks
- Crayons/markers
- Tape
- Glue
- Printouts of people
- Scissors
- Printed words "Jesus sent them two by two."

11:30 (As they leave) Activity pages

- Word search
- Colouring pages