

This lesson was written to coincide with the Amazing Grace project of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. Please see the website to learn more about this project. One aspect of the project is connecting people together and making a gift to the Council of the North. In order to connect the children of our parishes with this project a lesson using the gospel of the day has been developed. It will take seriously our mission within the Anglican Church of Canada.

Preparation:

Read the Gospel for the day over – Matthew 25:31-46 it can be found [online](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump out at you.

Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. Look at the following websites to learn more about the mission of the Anglican Church of Canada:

[Council of the North](#)

[Partners in Mission and Ecojustice](#)

[Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples](#)

[Indigenous Ministries](#)

[Primates World Relief and Development Fund](#)

Read over the [Mission Statement](#) for the Anglican Church of Canada.

Amazing Grace is the hymn that got this project started please look [here](#) for some history on John Newton and the hymn. The words to the hymn in English and translated into a number of indigenous languages is found in *Common Praise* - #352.

Gathering:

Materials needed:

Small table or end of one table

White candle

Bible & Bookmark

White cloth (optional)

Anglican Church of Canada map – available on the [website](#)

Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. If you have the white cloth, put it down and place the candle in the middle of it. Place the Bible and the map on the table as well. Light the candle.

Pray the following prayer together:

For the changing of the seasons, thank you God.

For the time to be together, thank you God.

For the life of Jesus, thank you God.

For the love we share between us, thank you God.

Amen.

Blow out the candle. Take a look at the map together. Ask the children if they can find where they live on the map. Point out your own diocese (make sure you know which one it is) and comment that the church in Canada goes from coast to coast to coast. Ask the children if they know any other churches – either in your community or ones that they have visited. How are they the same or different from your own church? Ask the children if they know how big the Anglican Church is. Explain that it can be found all over the world. Suggest to the children that as they hear today's story they listen for how Jesus wants us to be with each other.

Story Time:

Materials needed:

A comfortable place to tell the story – either around a table or on the floor with blankets and cushions as is appropriate for the group.

Teach the children the first verse of “Amazing Grace”; the grace that we live out each day and the grace that is described in today’s gospel story:

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound

That sav’d a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind, but now I see.

Jesus had been with his friends for a long time. They knew each other well. Jesus still had things to teach them about God. Jesus still had things to teach them about loving each other.

They decided that it was time to go to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, God’s holy city, they spent a lot of time together at the temple; a place God’s people came to worship and to pray. While in the temple so many different people came to Jesus. They all had questions for him. They wanted to know who was going to get into God’s kingdom. They wanted to know which law of God was the greatest. They wanted to know how to love each other. They all had questions for him.

One of the key questions that everyone had for Jesus was how people were to act with each other. Jesus who loved to tell stories told them this story.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound

That sav’d a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind, but now I see.

When the Kingdom of God arrives it will be a wonderful day. All the people of the world – every boy, girl, man and woman – will come before God.

God will separate the people like a shepherd separates sheep and goats. Some of the people God will put on the right side and the rest of the people God will put on the left side.

To the people on the right side God will say, “You are my blessed people. You are to come and live with me forever and ever. A place has been prepared for you since the beginning of time.”

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound

That sav’d a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind, but now I see.

God went on to say, “When I was hungry you fed me. When I was thirsty you gave me a drink. When I was a stranger you welcomed me. When I was without clothes you gave me some. When I was sick you took care of me. When I was in prison you came and visited me.”

The people on God’s right side will say, “When did we feed you? When did we give you something to drink? When did we welcome you? When did you need clothes? When were you sick? When were you in prison?”

In response God will say, “When you took food to the hungry; when you gave a drink to someone who was thirsty; when you welcomed the stranger into your community; when you gave clothes to those who needed them; when

you visited and took care of the sick; when you visited someone in prison; it was then that you took care of me. When you cared for the least of my people then you took care of me. “

***Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.***

To the people on the left side God will say, “You are the lost people. You are too far away from me. A place far from here has been prepared for you.”

God went on to say, “When I was hungry you did not feed me. When I was thirsty you did not give me a drink. When I was a stranger you did not welcome me. When I was without clothes you did not give me any. When I was sick you did not care for me. When I was in prison you did not visit me.”

The people on God’s left side will say, “When did we not feed you? When did we not give you a drink? When did we not welcome you? When did we not give you clothes? When did we not care for you when you were sick? When did we not visit you when you were in prison?”

In response God will say, “You did not care for anyone who was hungry, thirsty, needed clothes, was a stranger, sick or in prison. So you did not care for me.”

***Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.***

Jesus told his friends this story so that you would know the kind of life to live. A life of caring. A life of loving. A life of sharing.

***Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.***

Response:

Idea #1: Mission Statement & Project

This response will probably work best with children who are 10 years old and older. The idea is to generate their response to the concept of being a missional church. As we get to the end of the church year and are preparing for Advent it is a good time to be thinking about a mission project that the whole group can do together. You may want to suggest to others in the congregation that they join your group for this activity.

Materials needed: Anglican Church of Canada [mission statement](#), church mission statement (if your church has one), PWRDF [mission statement](#), and words to *Amazing Grace*, pencils, newsprint, and markers

Instructions: Make copies of the various mission statements and the words to *Amazing Grace* so that each pair of children has a copy. Invite the children in pairs to read over the mission statements and the hymn and to underline the 4 words that they think are the most important in each. Bring the children back together. Invite them to share the words that they thought most important. Write them up on the newsprint. Work with the children to develop a

mission statement of their own for their group. Suggest some ways that the group can present this to their congregation; for example – during the announcements, in the following week's bulletin, in your church newsletter. Once they have developed their mission statement, a discussion about how to make the statement a reality will be a good idea. Begin plans with the children about a project that they can take on for the Advent season. It might be a local, national or international project that they are interested in. You may want to take a look at PWRDF's youth [website](#) or the national youth [website](#) for some ideas. This week may just be the beginning of the conversation and it might be necessary to continue this next week. If the group does come up with an idea be prepared to follow up on it next Sunday.

Idea #2: Outreach Coupon Booklets

This response will probably work best with children at least 7 years and older. It will be a concrete idea that the children can share with their families and members of the parish. It can also be continued during the weeks of Advent.

Materials needed: construction paper, plain white paper, magazines, scissors, glue, staples, fine line markers, a copy of the lyrics from *Amazing Grace*, newsprint, markers and anything else that might be fun to decorate the booklets with

Instructions: Cut the white paper into quarters. Cut the construction paper into quarters. Make up packages of 6 pieces of white paper and two pieces of construction paper for each child. If time is short, prepare the booklets ahead of time by stapling the construction paper, as front and back covers, with the white paper on the inside. Print up the words to *Amazing Grace* on the newsprint. Explain that the hymn was a response to God's love by the writer a long time ago. Give each child a prepared package or booklet. Explain that today they are going to make "Outreach Coupons". Ask the children if they have ever made coupon gifts (for example for Mother's or Father's Day) where they promise to do a certain activity when asked by the person who is given the gift. Invite the children to come up with some ideas for the coupons – print them up on the newsprint for them all to see (*some possible ideas – collecting food for the food bank, taking warm clothes to a shelter, finding out about the work of a church organization*). Encourage the children to look through magazines to find pictures to illustrate their coupon pages. Help those that need it to write out their coupon selections. Suggest that they use some of the words from the hymn to write up their coupons. The wording might go like this: *Let's share God's grace to do Jesus' work in the world by...* Help the children to think of who they could give the coupon books to – someone who would be willing to do the activities outlined in the coupons.

Idea #3: Mission Flowers

This response will be good for the 6 and under members of the Sunday School. It will encourage the children to share their concerns about God's world with their families. It will also assist them to make the connections between God's grace and our need to act like Jesus in the world.

Materials needed: small ceramic pots or small plastic containers, floral foam or plasticine, drinking straws, construction paper, markers, flower shape (found at bottom of lesson) scissors and stapler

Instructions: Copy the flower shape, cut out and use as a template to copy four (4) flower shapes for each child in the group. Print on the flowers the following loving actions: *Help around the house; Go for a walk with a friend; Pick up the litter in the neighbourhood; Send a card to someone who is sick; Sing Amazing Grace with my family, or any others that might be of interest to the children.* Put floral foam or plasticine in the bottom of the container that will be used. Give each child four flowers and read them the different loving actions on the flowers and show them the words *Amazing Grace* printed in the middle of the flower. Invite them to decorate with the markers provided. When

they are done decorating the flowers help them to staple to one end of a straw and help them to place the flowers into the floral foam or plasticine. Encourage the children to share the loving, mission actions with their families and friends at home.

Closing:

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

Loving God, help us to remember to act in loving ways,

Loving God, help us to reach out to others,

Loving God, help us to follow Jesus,

Amen.

Flower Shape

