



# 6

# The Great Commission

## Key Theme

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- God reconciles sinners to Himself through the gospel of Christ.

## Key Passages

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- Matthew 28:18–20; 1 Corinthians 15:1–5; Romans 1:16, 10:13–15

## Objectives

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Students will be able to:

- Explain the Great Commission.
- Explain the importance of obeying the Great Commission.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

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Students will practice the memory verse by completing the Memory Verse Review Sheet using the puzzle piece clues. If time allows, they will recite the verse to a partner or to the teacher.



### Activity 1: The Great Commission Class Notes

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Students will fill out The Great Commission Class Notes as you study the lesson.



### Studying God's Word

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Jesus's last command to His followers was that they preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations. All believers share in that same responsibility and are called to go to all nations with the gospel of truth. This is important because the gospel is the good news, and it alone can bring eternal life.



### Activity 2: Truth Be Told Review Game

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Students will review the lesson by playing the Truth Be Told Review Game.

# Lesson Preparation

## WHAT YOU WILL DO

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED



### COME ON IN

- Print the Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student



### THE GREAT COMMISSION CLASS NOTES

- Print one The Great Commission Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- The Great Commission Class Notes for each student
- The Great Commission Answer Key
- Pencils or pens



### STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Romans 1:16 Memory Verse Poster for Lessons 8–13



### TRUTH BE TOLD REVIEW GAME

- Assemble the Truth Be Told Game Board Posters found in your curriculum kit.
- Print the Truth Be Told Game Components from the Resource DVD-ROM. Keep the Truth Be Told Question Answer Key for your use.
- Cut apart the Truth Be Told Number Cards. These will determine how many spaces to move.
- OR bring in dice or a game spinner to be used to move teams around the board.
- Cut apart the Truth Be Told Question Cards.
- Bring buttons or other small items to use as game pieces for each team. Bring poster putty for adhering game pieces to the game board.

- Truth Be Told Game Board
- Truth Be Told Number Cards OR use dice or a game spinner
- Truth Be Told Question Cards
- Truth Be Told Question Answer Key
- Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team
- Poster putty



## Memory Verse

**Matthew 28:19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

➤ **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





# Prepare to Share

## SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above with this background.

Jesus Christ was delivered up according to the determined purpose of God. He was crucified, put to death, and then raised from the dead (Acts 2:23–24). Through His Resurrection, Jesus destroyed the final enemy—that is death (1 Corinthians 15:26). Now those who believe in Him shall never die (John 11:26).

Jesus appeared to His followers after His Resurrection. In fact, the Bible records no less than ten times that Jesus was seen after He rose. He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3). The Apostle Paul summarized some of these appearances when He wrote that Jesus was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve, then by over 500, then by James, and then by all the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:3–7).

For 40 days Jesus continued to show Himself, teach, and prepare His followers for life without His physical presence. When it finally came time for Him to return to His Father, He gave His parting instructions. This is what is now known as the Great Commission. What was Jesus's message?

He began by once again confirming His authority—ALL authority has been given to Him in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). He was crucified for claiming He was God (John 10:30–31). And this statement declared His claim to be true! Jesus the Messiah is the Great I AM (John 8:58). He is Lord over the entire universe.

He then told His followers to “make disciples.” This is a call that includes evangelism—proclaiming the gospel to others—as well as teaching and guiding these disciples to observe all that Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:20). And this is a commission to ALL believers through the ages. How critical it is that we obey it. We know that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13). But how will anyone call on the Lord if they do not believe in Him? And how will they believe in Him if they have not heard of Him (Romans 10:14)? We must proclaim the truth to unbelievers. The Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). We are to be bold and not ashamed of the gospel. It is the gospel that is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes (Romans 1:16). Without the truth of the gospel, people will perish in their sins.

Jesus told His followers to baptize the disciples in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

(Matthew 28:19.) This external baptism by water is a picture of what happens when people trust in Christ. They die with Christ, are buried with Christ, and are raised to newness of life (Romans 6:4).

Scripture also talks about another baptism. This baptism comes through the Holy Spirit to all believers who are united with Christ through faith in the gospel. This is an internal baptism by which the Holy Spirit makes believers new creations in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is often referred to as being “born again” by the Holy Spirit (John 3:6–7). This baptism seals believers with the Holy Spirit of promise assuring them that they are guaranteed the inheritance that Christ purchased to the praise of the glory of God (Ephesians 1:13–14)!

And the Great Commission does not stop there! It continues beyond a new believer's repentance and faith. You see, a new Christian is like a newborn—unskilled in the Word of righteousness (Hebrews 5:13). There is a new life in their soul, with amazing potential to learn and grow in wisdom and knowledge of the truth. These new believers are to be molded by the truth and trained to do all that Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:20). Those older and more mature in the faith are to instruct the younger Christians so they will continue to grow and bear fruit for the Lord (2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 2:3).

Jesus ended His Great Commission with a promise that gives the encouragement and strength necessary to boldly fulfill His command. He told His disciples, and He tells us, “Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” We can be assured and confident of this promise as we strive to fulfill the Great Commission in our own lives.

## HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

If you've ever been to a missionary conference, no doubt the Great Commission was read aloud or written on a banner. This is the church's marching orders—to make disciples of all nations. Sometimes we think that this was a new idea that Jesus instituted, when in reality, God's heart has always been for the nations. God's covenant with Israel in the Old Testament wasn't for their sake alone. No, God had always intended that Israel would be a light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 60:3). As we look at the Old Testament, there are many clear passages that show this to be true.

As early as Genesis, God's intent to use the nation of Israel as a catalyst to spread His Word to all the world is clear. The judgment for the Tower of Babel scattered

people across the earth, and nations were formed. This was followed by God's promise to Abram that through him and his seed "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). God would use Abraham, the father of Israel, in a way that would be a means of blessing all the nations; from his seed, Jesus Christ would come and provide redemption to the world. This promise of worldwide blessing was later restated to Abraham: "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice" (Genesis 18:18, 22:18). The same promise was then given to Isaac (Genesis 26:4) and then to Jacob as the father of the 12 tribes of Israel (Genesis 28:14). The world would be blessed through Abraham's seed.

God's desire and heart was not just for Israel. But He would use Israel, and His Word to them, to proclaim truth across the earth. We see in many of the psalms that all nations would be included in the praise and worship of the Lord God of Israel. One in particular is Psalm 67. The universal nature of this psalm proclaims that God's way will be known on ALL the earth and His salvation among ALL nations (Psalm 67:2). The psalmist goes on to plead that ALL the peoples will praise God, that ALL the nations will be glad and sing for joy (Psalm 67:3-4)!

We know that Israel was God's chosen nation. And yet God was jealous for all the peoples of the earth—both Jews and Gentiles—that they would worship His name. It is hard to miss the many Gentiles God spoke of in the Old Testament. These men and women were known to be followers of the one true God of Israel. We encounter people like Melchizedek, the king of Salem (Genesis 14:18); Jethro of Midian, Moses's father-in-law (Exodus 3:1); Rahab, the harlot in Jericho (Joshua 2:1); Ruth of Moab (Ruth 1:4); the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:9); and many others like them. These people from many nations responded to the good news of God's reign. And who can forget God sending Jonah to take the message of repentance to the cruel Assyrians of Nineveh? The people of that pagan city believed God, repented of their sins, and turned to the one, true, holy God (Jonah 3:5-10).

You see, God did not ordain that Israel alone would receive the blessing of salvation through the Mes-

siah. No, God called Israel and put her into service to spread His name to the nations of the earth. The decisive fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham—that the nations of the earth would be blessed through his seed—was accomplished in the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the "seed of Abraham." God's plan was that through Jesus Christ ALL people—including those from the most pagan nations—can become sons of Abraham and heirs of all his blessings through faith in Jesus Christ.

So when Jesus left His followers with the Great Commission, He was continuing the purpose of His Father that the everlasting gospel would be preached to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—that they would fear God and give Him glory, and that they would forever worship Him who made heaven and earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

Now and always, Christians have the great privilege and the solemn responsibility to take the message of the gospel to the nations of the world. Matthew 28:18-20 is not called the Great Suggestion, but the Great Commission. May we be found faithful.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord Jesus, I praise you. Your name is above all names. You've told us to go and make disciples. How will they know, if we don't tell them? Make us bold, Lord, to speak of you to neighbors and friends. Help us to love others enough to share the truth of the gospel with them. Move in my heart and in the hearts of my students to seek eternal treasures. Keep us from being ashamed or embarrassed of your Word, and make us evangelists to a lost world. Please draw the students in my class to know you through repentance and faith. And then put a fire in them by the power of the Holy Spirit to go into all the world and make disciples. To you be all the glory!



## COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, have the students recite the verse together, to each other, or to you.

*This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.*



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



## REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



## The Great Commission Class Notes

### MATERIALS

- The Great Commission Class Notes for each student
- The Great Commission Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

### INSTRUCTIONS

*Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study the lesson.*

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible passages. Do not work ahead. We will complete them together.

### CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will see what Jesus's last command to His disciples was and the importance of following it today.



## Studying God's Word

### READ THE WORD

*Refer to Lesson 5 Lesson Theme Poster.* **Jesus Christ rose from the dead! This is such good news! He IS the resurrection and the life! Because He lives, we also can live. Jesus gives every believer the living hope of eternal life with Him—life after our physical death.**

Once Jesus rose, He wanted His followers to know He was alive! And so He appeared to them many times after His death. He remained on earth with His disciples for forty days after His Resurrection. He continued to teach and prepare them for the time when He would finally leave the earth and

- Use the New Testament History Poster included with your teacher kit as you teach the lesson. Emphasize that Jesus ministered only 3 years, and He lived only about 35 years. Yet His life changed the world forever and brought eternal life to all who believe.

return to His Father in heaven. When that day came, Jesus gave them a very important command.

That is what we are going to read about today. What were Jesus’s final words to His followers? What was His last command to them? Turn to Matthew 28:18–20 in your Bibles. Let’s read that. *Choose students to read the verses.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

Look at your Bible closely to answer a few questions about those verses, so we can understand them better.

### Observe the Text

- ? Who is speaking in these verses? *Matthew 28:18. Jesus.*
- ? Jesus is speaking to His disciples. He told them that something had been given to Him. What was that? *Matthew 28:18. All authority in heaven and in earth.*
- ? Jesus had all authority in heaven and earth. This shouldn’t surprise us. After all, who is Jesus? *God.*
- ? Jesus told His disciples to go and do something. What were they to do? *Matthew 28:19. Go and make disciples.*
- ? Hmm! Jesus was talking to His disciples. And He told them to go and make disciples. What is a disciple? *Allow discussion. A follower of Jesus Christ.*
- ? Yes. Jesus was talking to His followers. And He told them to go and make more followers. Where did He say they should to go? *Matthew 28:19. To all nations.*
- ? They were to go to all nations. And they were to baptize them. What else were they to do? Look in **Matthew 28:20**. *Matthew 28:20. Teach them.*
- ? And what did Jesus want them to teach to people in all nations? *Matthew 28:20. To observe the things that He commanded.*
- ? Jesus would no longer be with them physically. He was returning to His Father in heaven. But what did Jesus promise His followers? *Matthew 28:20. He would be with them always.*
- ? This was a simple and clear command. Let’s review a moment. Will someone read #1 on your class notes? *Assign a reader. Jesus. Have students complete #1.*
- ? And will someone read #2? What were the disciples to do? *Assign a reader. Teach, observe. Have students complete #2.*
- ? And what about #3? What was the promise Jesus made to His disciples? *Assign a reader. Always. Have students complete #3.*

### Discover the Truth

Jesus wanted His church to grow. So, He told His disciples to go and tell others about Him and His life. Jesus said to go into all the nations and

➤ As you teach this verse, you may want to explain your church’s position on baptism, how it is performed, and what it signifies.

teach them to do what He commanded. This was His last instruction to His friends. This was what they were to do! Jesus was leaving them now—they would no longer see Him or walk with Him. But Jesus promised something! He promised to be with them. He promised that He would never leave them or forsake them.



## READ THE WORD

Jesus wanted people in all nations to know about Him. He wanted the disciples to go out and preach the gospel—the good news about Jesus Christ. This is how the church would grow.

The gospel is simple—but complicated at the same time. There are different pieces to the gospel. We know that it is the good news about Jesus. The Apostle Paul wrote about the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1–5. Turn there in your Bibles. Let's read that. *1 Corinthians 15:1–5. Choose students to read the verses.*

1 Corinthians 15:1–5

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

? The apostle Paul is speaking in these verses. He is talking to some of the followers of Jesus Christ. What was he declaring or telling these men? *1 Corinthians 15:1. The gospel.*

Yes. Paul had preached the gospel to these people. They had been saved by the truth of the gospel. But what was it that Paul had preached? In 1 Corinthians 15:1–5 Paul includes four things as part of the gospel he was talking about. Let's list them on the board.

? What is the first thing Paul mentions here? It is in 1 Corinthians 15:3. *Christ died. Write it on the board.*

Yes. God promised that a Savior would come, who would die and take the penalty for sin. It was written about in the Scriptures. And Jesus Christ did come and did die just like the Scriptures said.

? And then Paul mentions something else. It's in 1 Corinthians 15:4. What is the second thing he mentioned? *He was buried. Write it on the board.*

Jesus died for sins. He was buried. There are two more parts mentioned by Paul.

? What is the third part? Look in 1 Corinthians 15:4 again. *He rose again on the third day. Write it on the board.*

? And the last part? How do we know Jesus rose from the grave? In 1 Corinthians 15:5. *He was seen by Cephas (Peter) and the twelve (apostles). Write it on the board.*

► As you discuss the components of the gospel, list them on the board. 1) Christ died. 2) He was buried. 3) He rose. 4) He was seen by many.

## Discover the Truth

So, this is the gospel Paul preached! This is what Jesus wanted His followers to tell others. Jesus wanted all nations to know about Him! He wanted them to know the gospel—that He came to die for sinners, He was buried, He rose from the grave, and He was seen by many after He rose. This all happened just like the Scriptures said it would.

But as I said earlier, the gospel is simple—but complicated. These four points are the gospel. But in order for this gospel to save, sinners need to repent of their sins and trust that all of this is true.

- ? Let's go back to the class notes now. How will you complete #4? *Gospel. Have students complete #4.*
- ? And now look at #4a. Will someone read that? How will you answer it? *Assign a reader. Died. Have students complete #4a.*
- ? And what about 4b? What else did Paul include in the gospel? *Assign a reader. Buried. Have students complete #4b.*
- ? Look at 4c. Will someone read that? *Assign a reader. Rose. Have students complete #4c.*
- ? And the last one. 4d. What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Seen. Have students complete #4d.*



## READ THE WORD

The Great Commission in Matthew 28 is an important command from Jesus. It is something all believers should take seriously. But it isn't always easy. And God gave some encouraging instruction to those of us who might be afraid to share the gospel.

This is the memory verse we will start in a couple weeks. So we are getting a sneak peek at the poster!

Let's read the verse together from the Memory Verse Poster. *Read Romans 1:16.*

Romans 1:16

➤ Refer to the Romans 1:16 Memory Verse Poster for Lessons 8–13.

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

- ? First of all, what is this verse about? *The gospel of Christ.*  
Yes. Paul was writing about the gospel. And he wanted everyone to know that he was NOT ashamed of it.
- ? Why was Paul so bold and not ashamed? Whose power is seen in the gospel? *The power of God.*
- ? It is the power of God! What does the power of God give? *Salvation.*
- ? And who gets that salvation through the gospel? *Everyone who believes.*

? **What does this salvation bring to believers?** *Allow answers. Forgiveness, eternal life, heaven, Jesus Christ.*

Salvation brings forgiveness of sins to everyone who believes the gospel of Christ. And along with forgiveness of sins, comes eternal life! Salvation from God through Jesus assures believers that they will go to heaven. They will not face God's wrath and punishment for their sins. That is why we must not be ashamed of the gospel! That is why Jesus commanded that the gospel be preached to all nations! The gospel brings salvation and the hope of eternal life.

? **Let's take a look at the class notes before we move on. Will someone read #5 please?** *Assign a reader. Ashamed. Have students complete #5.*

? **And will someone read #6? How will you finish that?** *Assign a reader. God. Have students complete #6.*

? **And then #7. How will you finish that?** *Assign a reader. Salvation. Have students complete #7.*

Great! Now turn in your Bibles to Romans 10:13–15. This will tell us a little more about salvation and why it is so important to obey the Great Commission and preach the gospel. Let's read it. *Choose students to read the verses.*

## Romans 10:13–15

? **Who can be saved?** *Romans 10:13. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord.*

Those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus to forgive them of their sins will be saved.

? **Before someone calls on Jesus something must happen. What is that?** Look in Romans 10:14. *They must believe in Him.*

? **Of course! How can you call on someone you don't believe in? And how will someone come to believe in Jesus? Look in Romans 10:14.** *They must hear about Him.*

? **And how will people hear about Jesus? Look in Romans 10:14.** *They will hear a preacher!*

Yes! Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord in repentance and faith will be saved. But they can't call on Him if they don't believe in Him. And they can't believe in Him if they never hear about Him. And they can't hear about Him unless someone tells them or preaches the truth to them.

? **Now look at Romans 10:15 again. Will someone read that?** *Assign a reader.*

? **What does the Bible say about people who preach the gospel? It is about their feet!** *Romans 10:15. Their feet are beautiful who preach the gospel of peace.*

Yes! This doesn't mean they have pretty feet. But it does mean that God is pleased with those who go and preach the gospel. Their feet take them to different places and to different people where they share the truth of Jesus's life, death, burial, and Resurrection—the gospel!

## Discover the Truth

Jesus gave the Great Commission to His followers—to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all the things Jesus taught them. This command is for all believers! It is only by hearing the truth about Jesus that sinners will hear the good news that they can be saved because of what Jesus did for them! We should never be ashamed of the gospel. If we know Jesus Christ and have called on His name for salvation, we should be bold to tell others about Him and how He alone can save sinners.

- ? **OK. Let's finish our class notes. Will someone read #8?** *Assign a reader. Calls, saved. Have students complete #8.*
- ? **And what about #9. Will someone read that?** *Assign a reader. Believe. Have students complete #9.*
- ? **What must happen before anyone believes? Read #10.** *Assign a reader. Hear. Have students complete #10.*
- ? **What is the answer to #11? Someone read that.** *Assign a reader. Tells. Have students complete #11.*
- ? **And what about #12? Someone read it.** *Assign a reader. Commands. Have students complete #12.*





# Truth Be Told Review Game

## MATERIALS

- Truth Be Told Game Board
- Truth Be Told Question Cards
- Truth Be Told Question Answer Key
- Truth Be Told Number Cards (or game spinner or dice)
- Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team
- Poster putty

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Divide your class into teams. Teams will take turns drawing a Truth Be Told Question Card. Team members will take turns answering the questions. They will quickly determine an answer and give it. If they are correct, they will draw a Truth Be Told Number Card and move that number of spaces on the game board. As play proceeds, follow the directions on the game board. Alternate between teams as long as time permits.*

We are going to review now by playing “Truth Be Told.” I’ll put you into teams. Teams will take turns picking a question

card and answering the question. If the answer is correct, you will draw a number card and move your game piece that many spaces. All directions on the board must be followed. Place used cards underneath the stacks. *Answers to the questions are provided on the Truth Be Told Question Answer Key on the Resource DVD-ROM.*

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

This game was a fun way to review this challenging lesson about the Great Commission. *Congratulate the winning team.*

Jesus left His followers with one last important command. He wanted them to spread the good news of the gospel to all of the world, teaching others all He had taught them. Jesus wanted them to proclaim the gospel, so others would believe, call on His name, and have eternal life.



## Applying God’s Word

### WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

*Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster.* Jesus commanded His followers to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you are a follower of Jesus, if you have called on His name for forgiveness, and He is your Lord, this command is for you, too! He wants all of His followers to continue to preach the gospel to all nations and to make disciples.

This is a very important responsibility. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news. It is the only truth that will save someone. And it is the only way sinners can have forgiveness and eternal life after they die. If we love God and love others, we will want everyone to know Him! If our neighbors, friends, family, and people in distant lands don’t hear about Jesus, how will they know that He is the only way to eternal life?

## GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

You might be thinking that what Jesus commanded isn't for kids. But even kids can tell others about God's Word and what it says about Jesus. Even kids can tell somebody about the good news of the gospel!

Jesus said to go make disciples of all the nations—that means around the world. But it also means helping others we know, right here in our own community, to know Jesus better. God has put people in your life that need to know more about Him—maybe your friends, neighbors, and classmates.

? *Refer to Romans 1:16 Memory Verse Poster. Why is the gospel important? Romans 1:16 tells us. Let's read that verse together from the Memory Verse Poster. Read Romans 1:16.*

Remember, the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. But people must hear it before they can believe it.

? *Refer to Matthew 28:19 Memory Verse Poster. Jesus commanded all believers—young and old—to share the truth with others! We are to go and make disciples! Let's read the Matthew 28:19 memory verse together. You should know this by heart. This is Jesus's command to all believers. It is known as the Great Commission. Read Matthew 28:19.*



► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.



### MEMORY VERSE

**Matthew 28:19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.



### GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God that He loved us enough to send Jesus who gave His life so that we can live!
- Ask God for courage and love so that we can follow Jesus's command to make disciples by telling others about Him.