

Unit 21: Early Responses to Jesus

Unit Description: As Jesus began His ministry of miracles and teachings, not everyone responded in the same way. Some rejected Jesus outright. Others were amazed by Jesus but didn't understand Him. But some came to place their faith in Him and worship Him for who He is: the Son of God.

Big Picture Question: How can we be saved? We are only saved through faith in Jesus.



SESSION 1: People Rejected Jesus

Luke 4



SESSION 2: People Were Amazed by Jesus

Luke 4



SESSION 3: Peter Worshiped Jesus

Luke 5



SESSION 4: We Are Saved by Faith in Jesus

Hebrews 11



UNIT 21 | SESSION 1

PEOPLE REJECTED JESUS

LUKE 4

KEY PASSAGE: *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*
Hebrews 11:6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How can we be saved? We are only saved through faith in Jesus.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Jesus read Isaiah's words and announced that He is the promised Messiah. The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because of their unbelief. God invites us to trust in His Son, Jesus. Jesus came into the world to rescue sinners.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

Some have described the journey of walking with Jesus as one of highs and lows, mountain tops and valleys. Even as a believer, there are good days and bad days. There are times when remaining faithful comes easy. There are days when doors open for sharing the gospel and other days when a door is slammed shut.

Two truths remain in every moment of every day for the believer: God remains faithful, and Jesus has been there.

In the highs and the lows, God is faithful. He is present and active in all circumstances. He is involved and working out His plans in all things. There is not a moment of past, present, or future that God is not intricately involved in. And in addition to this, He is working for our good and His glory in all things. He has promised to not leave or forsake those who trust in Him.

The believer can also find great hope in knowing that when we are tempted, rejected, or discouraged, Jesus Himself has been there. In Luke 4, we find Jesus experiencing the high of widescale praise and affirmation at His teaching followed immediately by a gut-wrenching dismissal by those in His own hometown.

After Jesus taught in the synagogues of Galilee, news of His teaching spread and

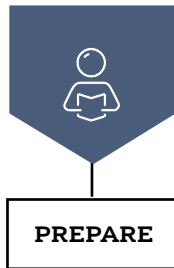
people gathered to hear from Him. They praised Him as He read from the Scriptures. But the response He found upon entering Nazareth was quite different.

Jesus stood up to read from the scroll of Isaiah and teach how the Scriptures pointed to Himself. Rather than being received with praise, He was questioned. Though they were amazed at the power of Jesus' words, they doubted that Jesus—the son of Joseph who had grown up among them—could be the Savior of the world. They became even more enraged by His claims as Jesus confronted their unbelief with His unwillingness to perform signs, and His desire to take the good news to all people. Jesus' next stop? Capernaum to share the same message.

Some people will accept Jesus, but many will reject Him. Regardless of how people respond to the gospel, believers can find encouragement in knowing Jesus remains faithful to His purpose and plan. In our highs and in our lows, we can find comfort in the Lord's presence with us.

PLACES TO KNOW

Nazareth: a small village located in lower Galilee about halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea. This hometown of Jesus did not have a good reputation. (John 1:46)



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- “What to Reject?” activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- straws, 8



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- “People Rejected Jesus” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- index cards, 1 per kid

Questions from Kids

- “Unit 21, Session 1” questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- “George Liele: His Life and Mission” missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- “Without Faith (Hebrews 11:6)” song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- inflated balloons, 10



LOVE

Review & Bible skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- world map



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- assortment of materials such as craft sticks, cardboard tubes, cardboard, scraps of fabric, empty egg cartons, and paper plates; 1 set per group

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- Big Picture Question Poster
- white construction papers, 1 per kid
- white crayons, 1 per kid
- watercolor paints, 1 per kid
- paintbrushes, 1 per kid
- cups of water, 1 per table

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- “Isaiah’s Prophecy” activity page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “What does it mean to reject something? Why is facing rejection from others hurtful?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “What to Reject?” on the activity page.

| **SAY** “Sometimes there are things we should reject like loving something else more than God or harmful beliefs that go against God’s Word. But not everything is to be rejected. In today’s Bible story, we will learn about a time people rejected Jesus.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE



Invite kids to form a large circle in the center of the room. Lead kids to link arms and face outward. Choose a volunteer to be outside the circle. Direct the volunteer to try to get inside the center of the circle. Instruct the kids forming the circle to move closer together or lower their arms to block the volunteer from getting in the circle. Play several rounds allowing others to try to get in the circle.

| **SAY** “How did it feel when others tried to keep you outside the circle? [Allow responses.] Rejection is hurtful and can make us sad. We might be able to think of a time we felt rejected by others and how it made us feel. Jesus understands what it is like to be rejected. In our Bible story, we will read how people became angry with Jesus and forced Him away.”

OPTION 2: SCROLL HUNT

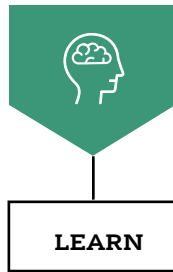
Before the session, create four sections of Luke 4:18-19 and write each section on a sheet of paper. Tape straws to the ends of each paper and roll them up to create four scrolls.

Hide the scrolls around the room. Direct kids to search for the scrolls. Once they have all been found, lead the kids to put the scrolls in order of the verses. Provide kids with a Bible and tell them they can use Luke 4:18-19 for help.

| **SAY** “God’s Word was originally written on individual scrolls. In today’s Bible story, we will learn about the time Jesus read from the Isaiah scroll in a synagogue. Let’s see how people reacted when Jesus explained that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hello, everyone! My name is [your name], and I am excited to read our Bible story with you! Raise your hand if you have ever read God’s Word and could understand how a person in a Bible story might have felt. Sometimes people felt afraid, or sad, or even happy. Jesus knew what it was like to feel all of these things too. Today, we will learn about a time Jesus was rejected by people. Maybe you have felt rejection by others as well. We can be encouraged to know that Jesus understands our hurts, and that He will never reject us when we come to Him by faith.

If you brought your Bible, take it out. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Let’s open our Bibles to the book of Luke. [Guide kids to find Luke in their Bibles.] The Gospel of Luke is another account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY “ As we begin a new unit, we will learn a new big picture question. The big picture question is, **How can we be saved?** When we ask this question we do not mean how can we be saved from a bear, or from a burning building, or even saved from doing your homework. To be saved in the spiritual sense means to be rescued from sin. We all sin, and our punishment for sin is death. God is just and will punish sin. We can do nothing in our own efforts to be saved from sin.

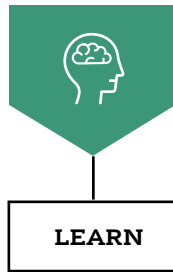
But God is gracious and merciful! He has provided the way for us to be saved. The answer to our big picture question is, **We are only saved through faith in Jesus.** We are not saved by going to church, or being good, or trying to do more right things than wrong things. Only faith in Jesus will save us from our sin. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ We have spent many weeks learning about the life of Jesus. We learned that Jesus was born, baptized, tempted, and then called His 12 disciples. Jesus never sinned and came to live a perfect life for us.

As Jesus began His public ministry, He taught people God’s Word and revealed more about who He is. Today, we will learn that Jesus taught that He came to fulfill the prophet Isaiah’s words, but not everyone accepted His testimony. Let’s read our Bible story to learn more. ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 4. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “People Rejected Jesus.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

PEOPLE REJECTED JESUS

“ Jesus went to the town of Nazareth where He had lived when He was a boy. He traveled all around, teaching people about God. **On the Sabbath day, Jesus went to the synagogue in Nazareth.** The synagogue was a special building where Jews met together to pray, worship, and learn about the Scriptures.

Jesus stood up to read Scripture. He unrolled the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and read: “The Spirit of the Lord is on Me. He has chosen Me to tell good news to the poor. He has sent Me to tell the captives that they are free, to tell the blind that they can see, to free people who have been treated badly, and to announce that the Lord’s favor is on us.” Then Jesus rolled up the scroll. He gave it to the attendant and sat down.

Everyone in the synagogue stared at Jesus. **Jesus said, “Today as you listened to Me reading these words, they came true.”**

The people said good things about Jesus, and they were amazed at Him. But some of the people in Nazareth had known Jesus from His youth. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked. They expected the Messiah to be someone else.

Jesus said, “No prophet is accepted in his hometown.” Jesus told the people about times when God used prophets to help people who were not Jews. **He reminded them of Elijah and Elisha. When there was a terrible famine in Israel and no rain fell there for three and a half years, plenty of widows in the country needed help. But the prophet Elijah did not help the widows in Israel. Instead, God sent Elijah to help a widow in another land.**

And when Elisha was a prophet, many people in Israel had leprosy. They wanted to be healed, but Elisha did not heal them. Instead, he healed a man named Naaman (NAY muhn), and Naaman was from Syria—a country that hated God’s people.

The people in the synagogue were angry. They forced Jesus out of town. They wanted to throw Him off a cliff, but Jesus walked right through the crowd and went on His way.

Christ Connection: Jesus read Isaiah’s words and announced that He is the promised Messiah. The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because of their unbelief. God invites us to trust in His Son, Jesus. Jesus came into the world to rescue sinners. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Choose the emotion: Provide kids with an index card and ask them to draw a smiley face on one side and a sad face on the other. Direct kids to hold up the side that best fits how they would feel if they were Jesus in the moments of the Bible story.

Use movement: Act out the movements of Jesus as you tell the story, such as walking to the synagogue, unrolling the scroll, standing up to read, rolling up the scroll, etc.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Jesus is fully God, but He is also fully man. Living on earth was not easy for Him. Not everyone wanted to hear His words or believe in Him. Even the people of His hometown did not believe the words He spoke or that He was the Savior they needed.

Jesus shared good news with the people of His hometown. How did some of the people respond when Jesus said the words of Isaiah had come true in Him? Look at Luke 4:22. **[Choose a volunteer to read Luke 4:22.]** Some people were amazed and spoke well of Jesus. They were happy to hear the news about freedom and miracles. But their hearts did not accept Jesus as their Savior.

Jesus knew the people did not believe in Him. What did Jesus say the people wanted? Look at Luke 4:23. **[Choose a volunteer to read Luke 4:23.]** They wanted proof that Jesus really was the Messiah. The people of Nazareth had known Jesus as a boy and demanded that He perform miracles before they would believe.

Jesus reminded the people of Nazareth of how God’s people in the past did not believe either. He spoke about how the prophets Elijah and Elisha had helped people who were not Jews because the people of Israel had rejected the Lord. How did the people of Nazareth respond? Look at Luke 4:28-29. **[Choose a volunteer to read Luke 4:28-29.]** The people became very angry. They even tried to throw Jesus down a cliff!

The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because they did not believe He is the Messiah. When we read God’s Word and the truth about Jesus, we can either receive Him by faith or reject Him. **We are only saved through faith in Jesus.** ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ Jesus read Isaiah’s words and announced that He is the promised Messiah. The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because of their unbelief. God invites us to trust in His Son, Jesus. Jesus came into the world to rescue sinners. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 21, Session 1” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What should you do when your friends or other people reject you?
2. Why can you always trust Jesus when you feel rejected?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ An important man in the history of mission work is George Liele (LIGH uhl). He was a freed slave who trusted Jesus as his Savior and Lord at the age of 23 in the year 1773. In 1782, he and



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

his family left the United States on a ship and went to Jamaica. George Liele told people in Jamaica about Jesus. Sailing to another place was most likely challenging for George and his family. But George trusted God would take care of him and his family. George was obedient to tell others about Jesus even when he experienced some difficult times in Jamaica. ”

Show the missions video. Then explain that George Liele was the first ordained African Baptist preacher in America and first missionary from America to another country. Tell the kids that George Liele’s life provides us with an example of obedient faithfulness to share the gospel with those who do not know Jesus. Explain that George started a church in Jamaica and hundreds of people believed in Jesus as their Savior. Share that 30 years later, there were 20,000 believers in Jamaica.

Pray, thanking God for people like George Liele, who faithfully served God by telling people in Jamaica about Jesus. Pray that many more people will follow God’s call to teach all nations about Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Hebrews 11:6 together.

SAY “ When we believe in Jesus, we do so by faith. This means that even though we don’t see God or His Son, Jesus, our hope is firmly placed in Him. We confidently trust that only Jesus can save us from our sin. ”

Write words from the key passage on 10 scraps of paper and tape the paper to 10 inflated balloons. Scatter the balloons on the ground and direct the kids to line up the balloons in the correct order of the key passage. Invite kids to read the key passage aloud once the balloons are lined up correctly.

Lead kids to sing “Without Faith (Hebrews 11:6).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

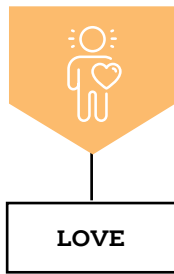
7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, You love us so much that You sent Your Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. We ask that You will help us share the good news of Jesus with others. Open people’s hearts to accept Jesus by faith. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Luke 4. Remind kids that Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth (E5). Explain that we can either have one of two responses to Jesus: We can accept Him by faith, or we can reject Him in unbelief.

Consider comparing the New Testament Israel Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where these stories took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Nazareth.) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 4:23.

SAY “ Jesus’ words and the truth that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy pointed to Him as the Messiah. But the people wanted more proof. They wanted miracles and signs. During His ministry, Jesus did perform miracles which proved He was the Messiah. But even with signs, people still did not believe because of the hardness of their hearts.

Jesus’ good news included physical miracles like giving sight to the blind and healing the lame. But ultimately, the good news is the truth that Jesus is the only way to be saved! He provides us freedom from the slavery to sin and opens our eyes to see Him as our Savior. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** “ Should we demand proof from God about something before we believe Him? Why not? ”

Answers will vary. Discuss how sometimes we can act out of unbelief and want God to show us a sign before we will believe Him. Give some examples such as wanting God to give us something before we believe He is good, or wanting Him to answer a specific prayer before we believe He knows what is best. Encourage kids to remember that without faith it is impossible to please God.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Cor. 5:7.)

| **SAY** “ How does our Bible story remind us that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament? ”

Remind kids that all of the Bible points to Jesus and how the prophets, like Isaiah, wrote about what Jesus would do. Discuss how the Bible is one story about how God made the way for people to be saved. Remind kids that the only way to be saved is through faith in Jesus.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Acts 18:28.)

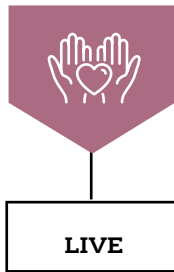
| **SAY** “ Will Jesus ever reject us? Why not? ”

Encourage kids to remember that Jesus welcomes sinners and longs for us to come to Him by faith. Help kids understand that it is not Jesus who rejects us, but we who reject Him in unbelief. Discuss how through Jesus we can be saved and have eternal life with Him forever.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 6:35-37.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: BUILD A SHIP



Form kids into small groups. Provide each group with a variety of materials to build a ship such as empty toilet paper rolls, craft sticks, cardboard, scraps of fabric, tape, empty egg cartons, and paper plates. Direct each group to work together and build a ship. Encourage kids to try to construct a ship they think would float. Invite kids to decorate their ships. If time allows, test the buoyancy of each ship by placing it in a sink filled with water.

SAY “ George Liele sailed on a ship from the United States to Jamaica. Sometimes missionaries travel far distances to tell others about Jesus. Even the apostle Paul sailed on a ship to share the gospel with others. God may call us to sail to faraway places or He may have us stay close to home. However, wherever God asks us to go, we can be faithful to share the gospel like George Liele. ”

OPTION 2: MYSTERY SCROLL



Provide each kid with a piece of white construction paper and a white crayon. Direct kids to write or draw something on the paper using the crayon. Lead kids to roll up their papers like a scroll. Then collect the scrolls and distribute them randomly, trying to avoid giving a kid his scroll.

Provide kids with watercolor paint, paint brushes, and cups of water. Lead kids to paint over the crayon to reveal the writing or picture. Invite kids to see if they recognize their scroll.

SAY “ Before you painted your scroll, the contents on the scroll were a mystery. You knew there was something on the paper, but you could not see the whole picture or writing. The people of Nazareth knew about Jesus and had read the scroll of Isaiah, but they didn't fully understand who Jesus is or why He came. Rather than believe in Him, they rejected Him. But by faith, we can believe in Jesus and trust in Him for salvation. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, asking God to help us live by faith and trust in Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Isaiah's Prophecy” on the activity page.



JOURNAL PAGE

1. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
2. What does this story teach me about myself?
3. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
4. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
5. How does this story help me to live on mission better?



Unit 21 • Session 1

PEOPLE REJECTED JESUS

Luke 4

HOW CAN WE BE SAVED? WE ARE ONLY SAVED THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS.

On the Sabbath day, Jesus went to the synagogue in Nazareth. Jesus stood up to read Scripture. He unrolled the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and read: "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me. He has chosen Me to tell good news to the poor. He has sent Me to tell the captives that they are free, to tell the blind that they can see, to free people who have been treated badly, and to announce that the Lord's favor is on us."

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And when Elisha was a prophet, many people in Israel had leprosy. But Elisha did not heal them. Instead, he healed a man named Naaman (NAY muhn) from Syria.

The people in the synagogue were angry. They forced Jesus out of town. Jesus walked right through the crowd and went on His way.

Christ Connection: Jesus read Isaiah's words and announced that He is the promised Messiah. The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because of their unbelief. God invites us to trust in His Son, Jesus. Jesus came into the world to rescue sinners.

FOLD

Isaiah's Prophecy | Look up and read Luke 4:18-19 in your Bible. Then write five things Isaiah said Jesus would do.



What to Reject? | Cross out the things we should reject and circle the things we should accept.

selfishness

loving others

pride

loving other things more than God

salvation by works

God's Word

finding our worth in popularity

Jesus





NAME:



People Rejected Jesus

BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- Jesus went to His hometown of Nazareth and read the good news about the Messiah from the scroll of Isaiah.
- Jesus told the people, “Today as you listened to Me reading these words, they came true.” The people were amazed at Jesus’ words.
- Jesus told the people that He knew they would not believe He was the Messiah unless He performed miracles. The people became angry and rejected Jesus.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Jesus read Isaiah’s words and announced that He is the promised Messiah. The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because of their unbelief. God invites us to trust in His Son, Jesus. Jesus came into the world to rescue sinners.

KEY PASSAGE: Hebrews 11:6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How can we be saved? We are only saved through faith in Jesus.