Ideas for children's time

8. CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

A disciple is someone who learns from a teacher. Anabaptists learn from Jesus and commit to live a life shaped by the life of Jesus. They look to scripture to see how Jesus acted and related to others. Anabaptists seek to keep Jesus at the center of their lives.

EALY STORY

Anna Jansz was a young Dutch woman from a wealthy family who joined the Anabaptist movement in 1534. She was arrested for Anabaptist activity, and while in jail in 1539, she wrote a letter to her young son. This letter has been beloved by Anabaptists for many years. Anna speaks of the importance of following Jesus, even in difficult circumstances:

“I the Father, all of grace and truth, the shepherd of the sheep, not one born of the flesh, but who went this way and who had to drink of this cup, even as he said: ‘I have a cup to drink of, and a baptism to be baptized by.’” Having his voice, and marks of His blood forever. He goes for this is the way of the true fountain.

GLOBAL STORY

Naomi Tamura is a young Mennonite Christian from Japan. In Japan there are very few Christians, so Naomi and others in her church often feel different from those around them. Some people think that those who seek to follow Christ are weak or poor. But Naomi thinks that the differences of her faith are good. “I gave up being in the norm to live together with God,” says Naomi. Naomi likes the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:9): “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” Because of Jesus’ teachings and the ways he lived out peacemaking, Naomi knows that her difference as a Mennonite Christian is a good thing. When she acts as a peacemaker in the way of Jesus, people notice.

“What is your favorite story of Jesus?”
“Can you think of stories of Jesus as a baby, a young person, and a grownup?”
“What stories of Jesus are you talking about in Sunday School or church?”
“Why do you think Christians tell the stories of Jesus?”

SHARE THE STORIES OF JESUS with each other.

What symbols would help you remember the stories of Jesus that you named during your “Family Questions” conversation? For example, a fish might help you remember the loaves-and-fishes story from Matthew 14:13-21; a boat might help you remember when Jesus calmed the storm in Matthew 8:23-27.

Create or gather symbols for as many stories as you would like. Consider gathering a symbol for each family member’s favorite story.

MAKE IT:

SYMBOL: a boat
STORY: Jesus calms the storm (Matthew 8:23-27)

1. Once you’ve gathered all your symbols, can you go back and name each story?
2. What if you look at the symbols tomorrow? Would you still be able to name and tell the stories?
3. Where can you place these symbols in your home to look at during the week?