



**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 as the center of their lives.

**EARLY 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 go, I say, the way which Christ Jesus, the eternal word of the Father, full of grace and truth, the Shepherd of the sheep, who is the Life, Himself went, and who went this way and not another, 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 with; and how I am straitened till it be accomplished!' Having passed through, He calls His sheep, and His sheep hear His voice, and follow Him whithersoever He goes; for this is the way of the true fountain.*

(from an old letter in the Martyrs Mirror, page 453-4)

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**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.

"I think that the 'difference' Japanese people feel against the peacemakers is the sign that our work is bringing change into this world," says Naomi. "They don't know God, but God knows them well. We as Christians can love them as neighbors. They can understand Jesus through working with us Christians." Naomi hopes that her life can introduce others in Japan to Jesus.

**FAMILY QUESTIONS**

- ▶ 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?



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**SCRIPTURE**

I Corinthians 3:11

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

**ACTIVITY**

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.

**FIND IT AT HOME!**



SYMBOL: a manger scene  
STORY: Jesus is born (Luke 2:1-7)

SYMBOL: a towel  
STORY: Jesus washing his disciples' feet (John 13:3-5)



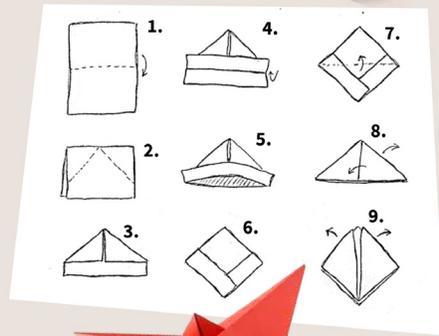
**FIND IT IN NATURE!**



SYMBOL: a heart  
STORY: Jesus says, "Love your neighbor" and tells a story about The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

**MAKE IT!**

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



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

**PRAYER**

Thank you, God, for giving us Jesus, who showed us how to live a life of peace.

Amen

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