



Pass the Salt!

By Deborah Wassenberg

Introduction:

Children learn about the importance of salt and a little of its history when they visit a diner and meet its owner, Barney. Jesus calls us salt, and early Christians were scattered to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Praise and Worship:

Create a Jukebox! Make a replica from cardboard boxes, or use a picture of one on your big screen. Create a playlist and let the children choose the songs.

Bible Lesson: Christians are Scattered

Bible References: Acts 8:1-2; 11:19-30; 14:5&6

Visuals You Will Need:

1. Salt
2. Roman soldier and salt
3. Jesus teaching the Sermon on the Mount
4. Christian missions and outreach
5. Stephen martyred
6. Early Christians preaching
7. Paul and Barnabas
8. The world



Barney's Diner

Setting: Create 'Barney's Diner' using the photo for inspiration. It can be as simple as a trestle table covered in a tablecloth, with some barstools in front of it. Arrange condiments, salt and pepper shakers, straws and serviettes to sit on top. Create signage. A glowing neon 'open' sign adds an exciting touch! Turn your media screen into a menu board and use it for your PowerPoint presentation.

Character: Barney, the owner of the Diner
He's a happy, generous and encouraging man of faith.

Costume: White apron over t-shirt and jeans, baseball cap or paper cap
White tea towel draped over one shoulder

A big name tag that reads 'Barney'

Words:

Barney: *(Barney enters and takes up position at the counter. He does a flick around with the tea towel and then drapes it back over his shoulder. He holds the salt up and checks the level. Then he notices the children.)*

Hello, welcome to Barney's Diner!
I'm Barney, if you couldn't guess.
I'm just checking that there's enough salt in the salt shaker.
(Places it back down)
Salt adds flavour, and things just don't taste the same without it.
Imagine if salt and vinegar chips were plain vinegar chips.
(Makes a face)
No, sir, salt makes food taste great.

Visual 1: **Food preserved by salt (e.g. ham and pickles)**
Adding flavour isn't the only wonderful thing salt does.
Did you know salt preserves things?
It draws the moisture out of food, and that slows down bacteria and mould, so the food lasts for ages even without refrigeration.
Salt is used to pickle food like... *(thinking)* pickles!
And it makes food ferment, too.
Super salty water sets off a reaction.
I wonder if I should add sauerkraut or kimchi to the menu?
Yep, you've got your rock salt, your sea salt and your kosher salt.
Whatever salt comes into contact with, it flavours and purifies.
I couldn't run Barney's Diner without it.
There'd be no bacon for the bacon and eggs!

Visual 2: Salt has been around since Creation.
And it's always been valuable.
In ancient times, salt was used as money.
Roman soldiers were paid with salt.
It was called salt money, and that's where the word salary comes from.
Those soldiers were worth their salt. *(Laughs)*
(Points at the children)
But that doesn't mean I'll let you buy a hot dog with your Mum's cooking salt!
(Laughs)

Visual 3: Jesus was teaching a huge crowd and He used salt as an example, because everyone knew all about its importance back then.
His teaching was called the 'Sermon on the Mount'.
He told the people listening, 'You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by people.'

Visual 4: Jesus wanted His followers to know that like salt, they were precious and valuable.
That they preserved the world around them because they loved people and were peacemakers.
That they made the world better because they were kind and showed others what following Jesus looked like.
You are salty if you obey Jesus.
If you lose your saltiness, you're no help to anyone.

Visual 5: *(Picks up the salt shaker again)*
This salt shaker reminds me of what happened to Christians in the Book of Acts.
A salt shaker stops salt from clumping together.
Give it a shake, and the salt is scattered across the food.
All the early Christians lived in and around Jerusalem.
No one else in the known world knew about Jesus dying on the Cross for their sins and that He was alive because God had raised Him from the dead.
The Good News was in one place.
But after Stephen was martyred, all that changed.

Visual 6: Christians were being arrested and killed for preaching about Jesus.
Hang on, I'll read it to you from my Bible.
(Put down the salt shaker and pick up a Bible)
Listen carefully, and you'll know why I love this part of the Bible so much.

Acts Chapter 11 verses 9-30
Now those who had been scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message to no one but Jews.
But there were some men from Cyprus and Cyrene among them who came to Antioch and began to speak to the Greeks too, proclaiming the good news of the Lord Jesus.
The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.
A report about them came to the attention of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

Did you hear that?
His name was Barnabas...Barney, like me!

When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with devoted hearts, because he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, and a significant number of people were brought to the Lord.
Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to look for Saul, (that's the Apostle Paul) and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch.

So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught a significant number of people.
Now it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

Visual 7: The scattering didn't stop there.
In Acts Chapter 14 verses 1 to 6
In Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went as usual to the synagogue.
They spoke so well that a great many Jews and Greeks believed.
But some people who did not believe excited the others and turned them against the believers.
Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium a long time and spoke bravely for the Lord.
He showed that their message about his grace was true by giving them the power to work miracles and signs.
But the city was divided.
Some of the people agreed with the Jews, and others believed the apostles.
Some who were not Jews, some Jews, and some of their rulers wanted to mistreat Paul and Barnabas and to stone them to death.
(Pull a shocked face)
When Paul and Barnabas learned about this, they ran away to Lystra and Derbe, cities in Lycaonia, and to the areas around those cities.
They announced the Good News there, too.

Visual 8: It's the same for us Christians today.
Jesus doesn't want us clumped together.
Before He returned to His Father in Heaven, He said to His Disciples...
(Turn to Matthew 28:16-20)
'So go and make followers of all people in the world.
Baptise them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you, and I will be with you always, even until the end of this age.'

We are the salt of the earth.
We are precious and valuable.
Without us, the world is dying.
It is putrid and many people live in horrible conditions.
We must obey Jesus and scatter to let everyone hear the Good News!

Ministry to the Children:

It's not very comfortable to be shaken around, to leave your home, scattered like salt out of a salt shaker. Jesus knew exactly what it felt like. After all He left His home in Heaven to come to the earth to die for the sins of the whole world. He doesn't ask us to do anything alone. He has sent the Holy Spirit to live inside of us. He is our guide telling us where to go, what to say and what to do. You receive the Holy Spirit when you ask Jesus to be your Lord and Saviour. He will never let you down.

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:13

'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?'

You will need:

- A supply of cheap salt shakers (one for each word of the Memory Verse)
- Words of the Memory Verse on small pieces of paper

What to do:

- Place a word of the Memory Verse in a salt shaker.
- Hide the salt shakers around the room or play area.
- Children find them and open them to retrieve the word.
- Assemble the words of the Memory Verse into the correct order.
- Recite the verse aloud together.

Morning Tea: Diner Specials!

There's a variety of foods you could offer the children:

- Popcorn
- Salt and vinegar chips
- Hot dogs and sauce
- Ice-cream float (aka Spiders in Australia!)
- Ice-cream sundaes

Game: Scatter Ball!

1. Indoors, the children start on the edge of the room, touching a wall, or outdoors, on the basketball out of bounds line.
2. The ball is thrown up in the air in the middle of the space.
3. Any child catches the ball, but they only have three steps and 5 seconds in which to throw the ball at someone.
4. If they hit someone, that person is out and has to sit down.
5. If a child is sitting down, and the ball comes to them, they can throw it at someone standing up.
6. If someone sitting, hits someone standing, they standing person sits, and the sitting person is back in the game.
7. When you reach 5 children standing, start over from step 1.

Craft: Raised Salt Painting

You will need:

- PVA glue
- White construction paper
- Table salt
- Watercolour paint or food colouring
- Paintbrush
- Water

What to Do:

- Lay the white construction paper on a flat surface near water and paint colours.
- Use the glue to trace the design on page 7.
- Add a heavy amount of salt to the glue.
- Carefully pour the excess salt off the paper.
- Let the glue and salt design dry.
- Grab your paintbrush, dip it into the watercolour, and begin to dab onto the design.
- It will need time to dry. The salt absorbs the watercolour paint, causing it to spread along the glue lines and creating a unique textured effect.

Note:

You might like to do the PVA glue part of this craft as the children arrive, so it has time to dry.

Alternatives:

Salt dough

Salt paint (in a bag, mix food colouring with salt, and allow to dry)



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