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## Be Salty ... the Jesus Way!

Mark 9:38-50 Sunday School Lesson

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These days, being “salty” isn’t much of a compliment...so what does it mean to have “salt” in our lives as Christians? Jesus calls us to flavor and influence the world for Him. He commands us to do all things in His name. Although we struggle on our own, in Christ we can do all things. This lesson focuses on a somewhat tricky passage in the Gospel of Mark, examining what it means to follow the Lord wholeheartedly and impact others as we do.



**Lesson focus:** We will never manage to be “perfect Christians”, but our faith is not about us. Living solid lives for God means recognizing and embracing what He does for us. When we do things in the name of Jesus and for Him, He understands and appreciates our efforts. God wants us to be a positive influence on the world around us, and we can do that when we live in service and love for God and one another.

**Passage:** Mark 9:38-50

**Target Audience:** Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade (Might be better geared toward older crowd)

**Materials Needed:** Construction paper; salt; salt shakers; glue; markers or crayons; flour; water; cookie cutters; tape; scissors; decorative supplies; Bibles.

### More Teaching Ideas

- Watch the [video demonstration of this children’s sermon](#) and related [Bible craft ideas](#)
- Compare our [Salt & Light Sunday School Lesson](#)
- Compare our [preschool lesson on being Salt and Light](#)
- Download the [activity worksheet on good and bad salt](#) for Sunday School classes

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## Games & Activities to Introduce the Lesson

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**Lesson Opening:** There are a few themes going through this passage. Jesus continues to puzzle and surprise His disciples with the way He gives instructions. But He also emphasizes the importance of working together and living for Him. The “salty” element comes into play in this Gospel message, as well. So have fun and choose how you’d like to kick things off! Some possible ideas include:

- Salt it up relay: split the group into two lines. Provide each team with a shaker of salt. Invite students to spread out their lines, and pass the salt from one person to another, stretching to reach the next person in line if necessary. If the salt shaker is not too full, have students at the end of the line shake some of the salt out before running it back to the front of the line. Continue until the salt shaker is empty. \*Alternate water game method: if you need a fun water game, fill the shaker with water, and take turns running the relay until the team reaches a point on a “fill line” of a cup.
- Who’s team are you on? Discuss the pride that we can take in favorite sports teams or nationality. For older students, see if they can identify colors in country flags or sports teams.
- Sticker tag: provide students with several stickers and a large playing field. Have everyone be “it”, and allow them to run to their neighbors and try to tag them with a sticker. When they apply the sticker to the tagged friend, have them provide a compliment of something that friend does well. Play until all have been tagged with a sticker and are out of their stickers.
- Whose line is this? Split the group into two teams, and give each team a name (something simple like apples and oranges, or something more complex to match the theme, like salt and pepper or disciples and leaders). Have students line up a few feet apart, with backs facing each other. Shout one team name. Students on that team will turn around and chase the other line to a designated area on the field, several yards back from the start line. If a team member is tagged, they will join the other team. Play until all people are on one team, or timing forces a “stalemate.”
- Salt is important! Have students sample a tiny pinch of salt or sugar, to see how different they are. You can also allow them to taste crackers or products with and without salt, to note the difference.

Explain to students that today’s lesson involves some challenging things that Jesus told His disciples. Sometimes He gave them difficult instructions because He wanted them to understand the importance of following Him. The passage we will look at in this lesson has some tricky but positive reminders.

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### Bible Lesson:

Although this passage involves dialogue between Christ and the disciples, it is not one that necessarily lends itself to being acted out in skit format. It might be best to read it with your students, or have older students take turns reading passages. Pause at intervals to discuss the action and conversation happening. This passage involves some misunderstandings and questions the disciples had, as well as instructions Jesus provided...

*"Teacher," said John, "we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us." 39 "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, 40 for whoever is not against us is for us. 41 Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward. - Mark 9:38-41*

Explain that the disciples were a little confused here. They sort of wanted to be an exclusive club when it came to following Christ, and they thought they were the only ones capable of doing great things for Him. Jesus tries to explain with these words that living as a disciple was not just for the twelve. All people can serve Him, when they do so in His name and for His purpose. This reminds us that our lives as followers are not about us and our actions, but about Jesus, by whose name we act.

**Ask:** Have you ever been upset because someone else took the credit for your work? How do you think this passage might answer that feeling?

*"If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. -Mark 9:42*

This sounds pretty harsh, but Jesus wants us to know how serious it is to influence other people. We can impact people in positive or negative ways. We want to be Christians who show by our lives how wonderful it is to walk with Jesus. Trying to force people away from faith is harmful to everyone. Jesus is making a rather shocking statement to emphasize how important this matter is. He continues to use startling words as He describes how we also need to be steadfast in our personal walk with Him...

*If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. [44] 45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. [46] 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and*

*be thrown into hell, 48 where “the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched.” -Mark 9:43-48*

Jesus didn't necessarily mean that we should really be chopping off body parts. What He communicates here is that we are easily distracted. We stumble, we mess up, we sin. That's part of being human, and it's okay! But we don't want to rest in that sinfulness. When we make mistakes, we reach out to God. It is impossible to do everything just right on our own power. If we followed this limb-hacking advice, there wouldn't be anything left! We don't want to stumble, but when we do, Jesus is there to pick us back up. It's important to know that He gives us the power and strength for whatever we need to do.

**Ask:** What can we do when things get tough or we mess up?

Explain that Jesus then talked about being “salty.” Remind students that the Gospel of Matthew calls us to be “salt of the Earth”, and here we are told to have “salt” and peace among ourselves...

*Everyone will be salted with fire. 50 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.” -Matthew 9:49-50*

What does salt do? Consider the importance and influence of salt. It provides flavor to things, it can keep food from going bad, and it has numerous other physical and chemical properties that make it valuable and powerful. When Jesus admonishes the disciples to have “salt”, it doesn't mean He wants them to pass the salt packets. He is referring to their ability to impact others. He doesn't want them to be distracted, give up, or lose track of what's most important. Their lives are not about getting credit for service, or about doing things on their own. They should be dedicated to serving Jesus...and so should we! Our “saltiness” keeps things flavorful and fresh when we remember that our power comes from above. We want others to look to us and see the Lord. We want to salt the world in positive ways, reaching out to others and remaining faithful to Christ.

**Close** with prayer, asking God for focus and understanding to best love and serve Him and His people.



Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.

-Mark 9:50 ESV



**Craft:** Consider crafts that will remind students to live focused on Jesus, and to live like “salt”, keeping things fresh and preserved. Have fun with the salt elements! Ideas include...

- Decorate a salt shaker to take home. Tape the verse to the outside to remember to be “salty Christians” for the Lord!
- Create a pin or cap with decorations and elements that advertise being part of “Team Jesus.”
- Salt dough: create salt dough or homemade play-doh, and use for molding and shaping or to make finalized baked shapes.
- Salt art: create raised art by drawing or painting a picture, and then gluing salt over the lines for texture. If desired, use food dye to color the salt like glitter!

### **Bible Verses and Craft Captions to Consider... (Mark 9:38-50)**

*Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another. -Mark 9:50*

*“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. -Matthew 5:13*

*Be “salty” Christians!*

*Faith Brings Flavor and Freshness!*

*Preserve the Word...be salt-like!*

*Don't lose your saltiness! Follow Jesus!*

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## Craft one: “Salt Dough” Creations

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### You will need:

- Salt (plain table salt)
- Flour
- Water
- Mixing tools and measuring cups
- Food coloring (optional)
- Storage bags or supplies
- Cookie cutters (optional)



### Procedure:

1. Measure dry ingredients. You will need a 1:2 ratio of salt to flour. For instance, if using  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of salt, you will have double the amount (1 cup) of flour. Or 1 cup of salt, and 2 cups of flour. Mix the salt and flour together.
2. Add water to the mixture, just enough to create a knead-able dough.
3. If desired, add food dye and/or glitter to color the dough.
4. Play with the dough, molding and squishing as desired.
5. Alternative/additional: use cookie cutters to make shapes. Bake the dough to harden, and paint afterward for a “complete” craft, if you wish.



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## Craft Two: “Salted Artwork”

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### You will need:

- Pens and pencils
- Markers/crayons
- Cardstock/paper
- Glue
- Salt (table salt or kosher)
- Food coloring (optional)
- Captions/verses



### Procedure:

1. Draw a picture or theme onto paper or cardstock. Decorate with colors and verses as desired.
2. If desired, color salt by shaking in a Ziploc bag with a food drops of food dye.
3. Spread glue onto the parts of the drawing that need emphasis.
4. Sprinkle salt (colored or regular) onto the portions of art that you prefer textured.
5. Allow the art to dry. If desired, hang with magnet or pipe cleaner and enjoy!







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This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.



Every week she writes new [Sunday School lessons](#), [Bible crafts](#), and [children's sermons](#).

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

My name is Tony Kummer (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. It is my personal honor to share these resources with churches around the world.



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If you enjoy our material, be sure to [sign-up for my free email newsletter](#) called "Sunday School Works!" Every Tuesday, I send the latest new lessons, crafts, and coloring pages in print-friendly format to make your lesson planning easy.

May God continue to bless your ministry!

*Tony Kummer*