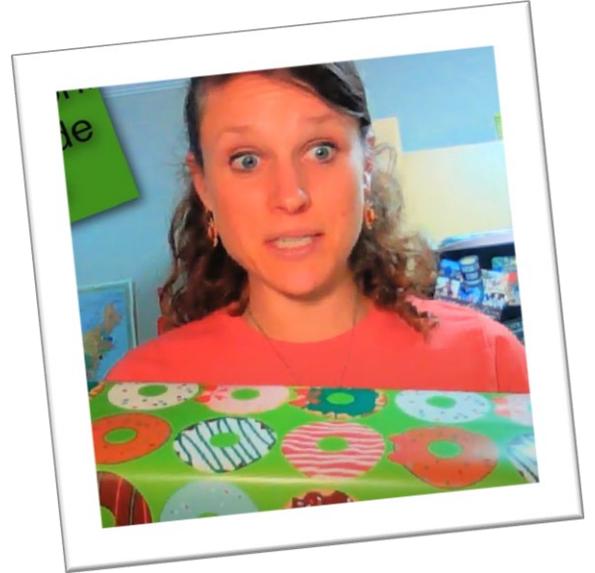

What's on the Inside?

Children's Sermon from Luke 3:7-18



As Christians, it's essential to live in a way that shows others who we are. We want to not only call ourselves Christians, but act like it by demonstrating love and sharing with others. John the Baptist admonished people to share their faith authentically, and the same message speaks to us. While we are saved by faith alone, we should act in a manner that reflects the Holy Spirit within us. This message uses a disappointingly empty Christmas gift to illustrate the importance of what is inside us.

Law/Gospel Theme: It's important to note with this passage doing good is not required for salvation. The work that Jesus did frees and saves us, and we cannot do anything that will make God love us more or less. Some people in John's time thought that they could be saved simply because of lineage or just saying they would do good. John wanted them to know true repentance should be evidenced by change. As people who love Christ, it should be obvious that we are His people in the way that we live and how we love and serve others. Because we are thankful for Jesus, we live that out and influence people around us.

Optional Materials: Nicely decorated "gifts" that are empty inside, or boxes advertising items, but not containing them.

Bible Passage: Luke 3:7-18. **More Teaching Ideas:**

- Watch our teaching example of this [children's sermon lesson](#) and related [Bible craft ideas](#)
- Download a full [Luke 3:7-18 Sunday School Lesson](#). See more [Christmas Bible Lessons](#)
- View all the [Advent and Christmas resources](#) at the [Sunday School Store](#)

Message Note: As with most messages, the details of how you choose to communicate this are adaptable and should cater to timing as well as to your audience and student needs.

Children's Sermon Lesson (Luke 3:7-18) What's on the Inside?

Greet children, with a nicely decorated package or gift...

Hello, children of God!

Well, we are almost there...the Christmas countdown is nearly complete! I can't wait for Christmas to finally be here. One fun thing about Christmas, of course, is gifts! Do you like receiving presents? I sure do. Now, I just so happen to have this gift here that someone gave me. I wonder what might be in here...I tell you what, I can't wait for Christmas. Let's just go ahead and open it now! (*Unwrap the gift, revealing some sort of box, perhaps for a specific product*). Oh boy! This looks amazing! I love this...what an awesome present, let me open it up and—(*open the box, revealing it to be completely empty inside*). What?! There's nothing in this box? This is a major disappointment...who would do such a thing? Why would someone give me this box and wrap it so beautifully, only to have nothing in it? This is EMPTY!

I'm sure you would be upset and disappointed if you got something like this for a Christmas present, wouldn't you? As strange as it might seem to get a gift that turns out to be an empty box, there are unfortunately times when we might act like empty boxes! We might say that we love the Lord, but we don't always live it out like we should. We don't demonstrate any evidence that God is part of our lives.

In the Bible, a man named John the Baptist was sent to prepare people for Jesus. John criticized those who emphasized family connections as a way to God, or who didn't really act on their faith. He admonished people to not only say they were repentant, but live it through sharing with others and being truthful and responsible.

Now, it's important to note that we all sin and make mistakes. Doing good things for other people is not a way to be saved from our sins. Jesus does that for us, and His saving blood is all we need for Heaven. We recognize that all we do and say should point to Him and honor Him. However, if we truly love the Lord, we should want to do what He values. We want others to be able to see evidence of our faith. If we love God, we should love and care for people. We should want them to know the power of Jesus and His love, too.

If we say we love God, but don't show kindness, it's kind of like that empty box. We might have a label or fancy wrapping on the outside, but that means nothing if we don't have Jesus inside, too! We want to be authentic people: that means that we are real and genuinely show Christ's love. We can pray that God would help us do that, and read His Word to know how we can be authentic, inside and out!

Let's pray now and thank God for Jesus, asking Him to help us honor Christ in how we live.

Prayer:

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Please help us to demonstrate your love to others

May our lives reflect the work of Jesus within us

Thank you for cleansing us on the inside

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Bible Verses/story to Reference:

He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 9 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

10 And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" 11 And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." 12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" 13 And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." 14 Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

15 As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, 16 John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

18 So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. [-Luke 3:7-18](#)



Thank you for downloading these free materials. Our team is grateful for your trust and pray that God will bless your ministry.

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.



[Reader donations](#) and your support at [The Sunday School Store](#) fund these free materials. Please keep us in mind when you are choosing your next children's ministry curriculum.

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