

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE¹

Theme: Telling others about Jesus; **Object Needed:** A suitcase

Good morning. How is everyone today?

This is the time of year when many people are going on vacation. If you have ever gone on a trip, you know that it takes a lot of preparation to get ready to go. What kind of things might you need to do? (*Wait for responses.*) You may need to get someone to bring in your newspaper and your mail while you are gone. If you have a dog or a cat, someone has to take care of your pet. An important thing you have to do to go on a trip is pack your suitcase.

I brought a suitcase today. Let's imagine that we are going on a trip and make a list all of the things we will need to pack in our suitcase. (*Let the children respond with suggestions.*) Let's see, we will need socks, underwear, jeans, shirts, shorts, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, comb and brush, and a swim suit and flip-flops for the beach. Have I forgotten anything? (*Allow time for the children to add to the list.*) Oh, I thought of something I forgot. My laptop! I can't go a week without checking my email or surfing the Internet!

When he was on the earth, Jesus traveled around from village to village teaching, healing people, and casting out demons. One day, he called his twelve disciples to him and said, *"I want you to go out two by two. I am giving you all of the authority you need to cast out evil spirits."* That sounds like a pretty big task, doesn't it? That meant that they would have to travel from town to town just as Jesus had been doing. I imagine the disciples thought to themselves, *"Wow! I had better go home and start packing!"* But then Jesus gave them further instructions. He said: *"Take nothing for your journey except a walking stick – no food, no traveler's bag, and no money. You can wear sandals, but no extra clothing."*

No food, no money, no extra clothes? How could the disciples possibly make this journey? They found people who would welcome them and they stayed with them in their homes. These people fed them and gave them everything they needed for the journey. The Bible tells us that the disciples went out telling everyone they met to repent of their sins and turn to God. They also cast out many evil spirits and they healed many sick people. In other words, they did exactly what Jesus told them to do and he gave them the power to do it.

Jesus tells you and me to go and make disciples too. I wonder if sometimes we delay following his command because we think we aren't ready. If we would just go, like the Twelve did, he would give us the ability to share the Good News with others. What do you think? Let's go!

Prayer: Father, we know that many people need to hear the Good News. Jesus has told us to go and make disciples. Help us to be willing to go. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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