

# NAZARENE ESSENTIALS OVERVIEW

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## LESSON ONE LEADER'S GUIDE

For the next thirteen weeks, children and their parents will learn about the Church of the Nazarene.

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Week One is an overview of the Church of the Nazarene's purpose and mission to fulfill the Great Commission and to spread scriptural holiness.

Week Two will include a brief overview of the history of the denomination, John Wesley's influence, and what it means to live a holy life.

Week Three will cover the Church of the Nazarene's three core values: Christian, missional and holiness.

Weeks four through ten will focus on each of seven characteristics in kid-friendly language. These traits depict what we believe should characterize every local Nazarene church.

1. Meaningful Worship (Week Four)	We worship God through many ways because of our relationship with Him.
2. Theological Coherence (Week Five)	We understand God better because of scripture, the Church, our minds, and our experience.
3. Passionate Evangelism (Week Six)	We follow Jesus' example of sharing God's love and the good news of salvation with others.
4. Intentional Discipleship (Week Seven)	We grow as Christians by spending time with God through participating in Church, reading the Bible, praying and listening for God to help us make good choices.
5. Church Development (Week Eight)	We create new churches around the world. A church is a group of people who gather regularly to learn about Jesus and share his love.
6. Transformational Leadership (Week Nine)	We become leaders that make a difference by following Jesus' example.
7. Purposeful Compassion (Week Ten)	We lovingly serve others because Jesus loves us and all people.

Week Eleven, "Our Wesleyan Theology," explores the view point and influence of John Wesley on Nazarene beliefs.

Week Twelve focuses on how our church is organized to accomplish its mission.

Finally, in Week Thirteen, we will explore what it means to be a global church.

No matter where we go in the world, The Church of the Nazarene shares these common beliefs and the message of holiness.

As you prepare to present the first lesson, consider the Church of the Nazarene's role in building God's Kingdom on earth. Nazarenes are on a mission to share Jesus' love and to be Jesus' hands and feet, making Christlike disciples in all the nations and here at home as well. We have a message of holiness to share, bringing hope to all. Our children need to understand that they are part of God's work in the world. Ask God to guide you as you teach them the importance of willingly joining Him and using their gifts and abilities to share His love with others.

**Objective:** To understand that the Church of the Nazarene exists to fulfill the Great Commission and teach people to live holy lives. Students will learn they are a part of the body of Christ within a local Church of the Nazarene and that they can join God at work in the world around them by using their gifts and abilities to share God's love.

### Material Needed:

- 1 or 2 puzzles with fairly large pieces for early arrivers' activity
- New puzzle to hand out during the object lesson. Don't let students see the picture on the box.
- Blank Paper
- Scissors
- Markers
- Ziploc baggies

### Early Arrival Activity:

Have one or two puzzles available to work on as a group, taking turns placing pieces. As you are working on the puzzles, discuss that it is easier to work on the puzzles with others helping; we can reach our goal to finish more quickly. It is better when we work together.

**Bible Story with Discussion:** "Jesus Gives the Great Commission" - Matthew 28  
*Begin by asking your students the questions printed in bold. Answers will vary, but some prompts are provided if needed.*

**What is a church?** A group of Christians, who gather to worship God, learn about and serve Him.

**What do you think it means to be a Church of the Nazarene? How did we become the church of the Nazarene and why?**

In the next few weeks we will be learning about the Church of the Nazarene, which started because several groups of churches got together in 1895. They all believed in the same mission: to make Christlike disciples and to live a holy life. These churches realized they would be able to accomplish their mission more effectively if they joined together. They decided to call themselves the Church of the Nazarene. Did you know today there are many churches all over the world that are part of the Church of the Nazarene? These churches may look and sound different in different places, but they all have the same mission: to tell others about Jesus and His love and to follow His example in our daily lives. We call this the Great Commission, and it comes from the Bible. The word "commission" means a job you are given or a special assignment. Have you ever been given an assignment or a job that seemed really big? Maybe you weren't really even sure how to do it or that you could do it? Did you ever need help doing a job or an assignment you were given?

At the end of the book of Matthew we find the story about the Great Commission. After Jesus was raised from the dead, the disciples followed Jesus' instructions to go to Galilee. Here is what happened next from **Matthew 28:16-20 (NIV)**:

**16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."**

This is a short but very powerful story. What did we learn? First, the disciples follow Jesus' instructions. Jesus tells the disciples He has been given all authority over heaven and earth. In other words, He has power over everything! Because of this, He is giving them an important job – to make disciples. He doesn't leave them wondering how to do this. He knows they have never done this before. So, He gives them specific instructions; and He says they won't have to do this alone! He promises to go with them. Where? He tells them they are to go everywhere – to all nations, not just in their own neighborhood, city, or country, but to go to all nations everywhere! How could they possibly do this? Because He was going too! He also told them exactly what to do when they got there. They were to make disciples. How? By baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But they were not supposed to stop there. They should then teach those who have been baptized to obey "everything I have commanded you." In other words, just share what you learned from me—which was a lot! But Jesus also reassured them by saying, "I will always be with you." He didn't give them a job that was impossible or too big for them because He was going to be with them to help them. Jesus gives us this command today. He wasn't just talking to His disciples then; He is talking to us, as well. And just like He promised to go with His disciples, He goes with us too.

**Wrap-Up Object Lesson:** Hand each child one piece of the new puzzle. Now ask them to tell you what the whole picture looks like. Ask them why they can't do what you asked them to do? Say, "If we work together, we will be able to figure out what the picture is by fitting our pieces together. By working together we can be more effective at completing the job of putting the puzzle together and creating a beautiful picture. By sharing what we have with others and working together and with Jesus, we will be able to accomplish what God asks of us. Now let's put the puzzle together!"

### **Scripture Memory Verse:**

#### **The Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20):**

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

### **Memory Verse Activity:**

**Option 1:** Learn this verse by splitting children into groups and dividing the verse into sections, giving each group a section. The groups make up a motion to reflect their section and teach it to the rest of the class. Repeat the verse after each new section's movement is taught. Afterwards, challenge students to repeat the entire verse.

**Option 2:** Pass out blank paper and markers. Have students write out the verse with decorative lettering or illustrate the verse. Pass out scissors and have them cut the verse apart as if it were a puzzle or word by word. Practice saying the verse and putting their puzzle together again. Place the pieces in baggies to take home and practice teaching it to their families.

**Review Game: Play a version of Charades.**

Talk about how the students think Jesus would want them to live in order to show His love to others. Play the game in pairs and ask children to strike a pose or act out a scene with their partner to illustrate Jesus' love in action.

**Personal Challenge or Take Away Prayer:**

*How does our local church, \_\_\_\_\_ Church of the Nazarene, follow Jesus' instructions and share His love with others?* Telling people about God and His love, worshiping, praying for people, giving money, serving people in need, practicing hospitality, sending missionaries, building churches, hospitals, and schools around the world.

*How can I be a part of my church's mission and share Jesus love?* Helping and being kind to others, telling people God loves them, praying for people who need help, offering to serve others.

*Who can I share the good news of Jesus' love with?* Have children name people with whom they will share Jesus' love. Remind them to begin by praying for these people and that God will begin now to prepare hearts to receive the good news of Jesus' love.

**PRAYER:**

Dear Father, help us to obey You, to go and make disciples, and to remember that You always go with us and help us accomplish what You ask us to do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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