

Focus: Making good choices

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
CD: America's 25 Favorite Bible Songs
Gospel: Children's Everyday Bible
Red and green squares

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about trusting God to help us to have what we need. This week we will hear a story when Jesus had to trust that God would give him all he needed even though it was hard.*

Opening Prayer

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: *Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

Let us pray.

Loving God, during the season of Lent help us to pray each day and turn our hearts to you. Thank you for always loving us. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Song/Movement

I Will Call Upon the Lord, track: 17, from America's 25 Favorite Bible Songs

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

*I will call upon the Lord
Who is worthy to be praised
So shall I be saved from my enemies*

(Echo in parentheses)

*I will call upon the Lord (I will call upon the Lord)
Who is worthy to be praised (Who is worthy to be praised)
So shall I be saved from my enemies (So shall I be saved from my enemies)*

Chorus: *The Lord liveth, and blessed be the Rock
 And let the God of my salvation be exalted
 The Lord liveth, and blessed be the Rock
 And let the God of my salvation be exalted*

(Echo in parentheses)

*I will call upon the Lord (I will call upon the Lord)
Who is worthy to be praised (Who is worthy to be praised)
So shall I be saved from my enemies (So shall I be saved from my enemies)*

Repeat the Chorus 2 times

Memory Verse

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

Worship the Lord, your God.

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *God's words are words of love and goodness. God gives us parents, grandparents and teachers to help us learn how to be loving and good—to make good choices. If we live the way God teaches us, then we will share the good news of Jesus and his saving ways. We will be happier and the world will become a better place if we all could hear and obey God's Word.*

Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *“Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it.”*

Read: Children's Everyday Bible, pp. 224, *Jesus in the Desert*

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion Starters:

- *What is a desert like? How do you think Jesus was feeling? Would you be hungry if you didn't eat for a day, or a week (imagine 40 days!)?*
- *Where does Jesus go for forty days and forty nights?*
- *What did he do in the desert?*
- *What does Jesus do when the Devil asked Jesus to turn rocks into bread?*
- *What does Jesus do when the Devil promised him all the kingdoms of the world?*
- *What does Jesus do when the Devil told Jesus to jump from the temple and ask God to save him?*
- *What happens when we make the right choices to follow God? We make the world a peaceful place?*

Reflection on Reading:

Sometimes we are tempted to disobey our parents or teachers and do things we aren't supposed to do. That's when it is important to remember that Jesus showed us that we should always obey God and listen to our parents and teachers.

Do you remember when the Holy Spirit appeared like a dove when Jesus was baptized? When we make the sign of the cross—In the name of God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert. The Holy Spirit helped Jesus do the right thing even though he was tempted to make the wrong choice. The Holy Spirit helps us to make the right choices too.

Jesus said we should only serve God, we should try to do what is good and right all the time.

- *What kinds of things have you learned about love and goodness?*
- *What are some things we can do that are loving and good?*

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

In today's Gospel we heard a story about how Jesus kept choosing to do what was right even though it was hard to do it. Let's play a game to help us practice making the right choice.

Red Light-Green Light

(Use the colored paper squares) Have children raise Red for a bad idea (STOP), Green for a good idea (GO). These are just a few examples. Please make up some more of your own. (Can also use Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down)

- You see a friend crying so you just walk right by.
- You hear your parents talking so you wait patiently before asking a question.
- It is very late and you are tired, so you cry loudly and complain about everything.
- You don't really like peas, but you eat two more bites for mom.
- Time for bed, so you stomp your feet and say, "NO!"
- It is morning and everyone is waking up. You still feel tired, but you give a big smile and a hug good morning to your mom and dad.
- You give your unused toys to the homeless shelter
- A friend asks to play with your new game and you won't share.
- You help your mom and dad deliver food to the food bank
- A child at the playground makes a mistake and you make fun of them.
- There is a new kid at school and you ask him to play with you on the playground.
- You throw a temper tantrum when you don't get what you want
- Before you go home from a play date you help clean up
- Listen to your parent when they tell you it's time to clean up your room
- You don't pay attention at the grocery store and you hit someone with a shopping cart
- You run or skate around inside a store
- Visit someone in a nursing home
- Make a card for a sick friend
- You get mad and hit your brother or sister
- You help a friend who is hurt on the playground
- Join with others to pick up trash in the community.

Activity 2:

I can choose

Have children sit in a circle. Ask what choices they made before coming to church—getting up when called, eating breakfast, deciding what clothes to wear. Ask if they made any choices that were loving to others or to God, such as a morning prayer, being kind to a sibling, doing what a parent asked without whining. Be sure to ask what other way they could have acted so they get the idea they make choices all the time.

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

Closing Prayer

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who sent Jesus to teach us to make good choices?
Do you believe in Jesus, who shows us the way to make good choices and serve only God?
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us do what is good and loving?*

Sending Forth

Say: Being kind and loving as Jesus taught us is hard work. We can use prayer to ask the Holy Spirit to help us make the right choices. When we go into church say a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to help you make good and loving choices. Try and do this everyday all week--find a quiet spot and say a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to help you make good choices.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*Change my heart o' God.*" track 23 from [America's 25 Favorite Bible Songs](#) while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.