

Focus: God's ways are different from ours

Materials:

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD: Bible Songs for Kids-Vol 1
- Gospel: Children's Everyday Bible
- Book: Miggy and Tiggy- A book about overcoming jealousy
- Bag of Coins

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about how the cross is a sign that God's love wins all the time. This week Jesus tells us a parable story about a farmer and the workers in the field. This story shows that God is very generous.

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.

God of kindness and love, you created us and we belong to you. Help us to live as your children.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Song/Movement

Praise Him, Praise Him, All Ye Little Children, track: 29, from Bible Songs for Kids Vol. 1

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.

Praise Him, Praise Him
All ye little children
God is love, God is love

Replace Praise Him, Praise Him for verses 2-4 and repeat Praise Him on the final verse.

Praise Him, Praise Him
All ye little children
God is love, God is love

Love Him
Serve Him
Thank Him
Praise Him

Memory Verse

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

The last will be first and the first will be last.

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

Say: This verse isn't really about people standing in a line one behind the other and the last person moving to the front and the first person going to the back. This verse is telling us that everyone is equal in God's eyes, no one is any better than another person. This bible verse helps us understand God's generosity. God never gives us less than what's fair, but sometimes he gives more.

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. 267, *The Generous Farmer*

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *What does the landowner need?*
- *What does he pay the men he hires?*
- *Why do some of the workers feel they have been treated unfairly?*
- *How is the landowner like God?*

Reflection on Reading:

In the parable we heard Jesus tell, the people who started working at the beginning of the day were mad. Even though they were getting paid what they agreed to be paid, they didn't think it was fair for the people who had not been working as long as they did to receive the same amount. The people who just worked for a few hours were very surprised that they were getting the same amount as the others. They were probably not expecting to receive such good pay. They were probably very happy.

The land owner told those who worked all day they received the amount they deserved. They shouldn't get mad because he was extra generous to those who hadn't worked as long.

In a parable the people usually represent God and us. Who do you think God was in this parable? --The vineyard owner.

Who do you think represents us? -The workers.

Jesus is telling us that God will be generous with us. We shouldn't feel jealous about the generosity and love that God has for others, he loves us too. We should be happy that he is generous to others, just as we are happy that he is generous to us.

Gospel ActivityActivity 1:**Celebrating With Others**

Engage the children in conversation regarding the following topics:

- *How do you think the people who had been working all day felt when they saw that the people who came later in the day were paid the same about they were?*
- *How do you think the people who worked a few hours felt when they received the same amount as those who had worked all day?*

- *Why do you think Jesus told this story? Sometimes, even when we have all we need, we still think God isn't fair because someone else has more than we do. Jesus wants us to trust God, to be happy with what we have, and to celebrate with those who benefit from God's generosity.*

"I'm going to read a story about how wanting what others have can lead to big problems."

Read the Book "Miggy and Tiggy-A Book About Jealousy"

Discussion Questions:

- What happened when Miggy got jealous of what Tiggy had?
- How could Miggy have reacted to Tiggy's new puppy without being jealous?
- What could Tiggy have done to make Miggy feel better about not having a puppy?

Activity 2:

God is Giving:

This morning I have something for you. (Begin passing out pennies, commenting as you go.) "There's one for you, two for you, one for you. Here are three for you, and one for you." (Continue until all of the children have been given one or more pennies.)

Did you notice that I gave some children one, others received two, and some even got three pennies? I imagine that some of you were thinking to yourself, "That isn't fair! He gave some children three pennies and I only got one!" Well, maybe it wasn't fair, but they were my pennies -- don't I have the right to give them to whomever I please?

What is the point of the story that Jesus told? The point is that there are some people who trust in Jesus and serve him all the days of their life, like the workers who were hired in the morning. What is their reward? Their reward is a good life on earth and the big reward of eternal life in heaven with Jesus.

There are other people who live most of their life making bad choices. They don't serve the Lord at all. And they will probably not have a very good life. But when they get very old, they change their hearts; they put their trust in Jesus and follow him. Kind of like the workers who were hired at the end of the day. What is their reward? Their big reward is the same as one who has served the Lord all their life -- eternal life in heaven.

Is that fair? We might think that's not fair, but if we got what was fair, I don't know anyone who would go to heaven. The Bible says, "All have done wrong and haven't earned the glory of God." No one can do the right thing all the time. But God forgives us all the time. I don't know about you, but I'm glad that God doesn't give me what is fair, but gives me his love and grace, even when I don't deserve it.

Father, we thank you for your love and grace that gives us everlasting life. Amen.

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 sees things differently than we do?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who shows us God's way of being generous and kind?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who lives in us and helps us to be fair and generous with one another?

Sending Forth

Say: When we go back to church say a special prayer thanking God for being fair and generous beyond our needs.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*His Banner Over Me is Love.*" track 15 from Bible Songs for Kids Vol 1 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.