

Focus: Jesus shows us the way to God.

Materials:

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest’s vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD: America’s 25 Favorite Bible Songs
- Gospel: In lesson plan

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about God's gifts and to not get jealous if we think he gives more to others, because God loves us all the same and he gives us everything we need. Today Jesus teaches us that obeying God is important.*

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.

We thank you God for your love and sending Jesus to teach us your ways. Help us to make choices that show our love for you. 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

Refrain:

(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

Repeat the Chorus 2 times

Memory Verse

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

Those who live good lives will enter the kingdom of heaven.

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

Say: *It's not enough just to say you will do the right things, you have to do the right things. Sometimes people will point out others who do something wrong, but then do the same as the others. We have to choose to follow Jesus all the time, in our words and our actions.*

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: None, pp. N/a,

Jesus told this parable:

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]

A man had two sons.

[Hold up two fingers]

He said to the first, “Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.”

[Point to a faraway place]

The son said in reply, “I will not.”

[Shake your head “no”]

Later the son changed his mind and went to the vineyard to work.

[Mime walking in the direction you pointed to above]

The father came to the other son and said, “Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.”

[Point to a faraway place]

This son replied, “Yes, sir.”

[Nod your head “yes”]

But this son did not go out to work in the vineyard.

[Mime walking in the opposite direction you pointed to above]

After telling the story, Jesus asked those listening which son did what the father wanted.

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]

They answered, “The first son.”

[Hold up one finger]

Then Jesus told them about the people who have made bad choices and have asked forgiveness and began to live good lives will enter the kingdom of God before those who pretend to love God, but don’t obey him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *What does the father ask his sons to do?*
- *Do they say they will do what the father asks?*
- *Do they actually do what the father asks?*
- *Which son made the right choice?*
- *What does Jesus teach about God’s love and forgiveness?*

Reflection on Reading:

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us that God wants us to make the right choice and even if we choose the wrong thing at first, we can always choose to do the right thing in the end. Like the first son, he said he wouldn't work in the vineyard, but then he did the right thing and went to work. We don't know why he did said 'no' at first, but then he thought about it and knew he needed to help his father.

We don't know why the 2nd son didn't go to work. Maybe he got distracted or maybe he never planned to go to work, he just said he would. God is happy when we say we will do the right thing, but we have to actually DO the right thing too.

Gospel ActivityActivity 1:**Turn to Jesus**

Sometimes we don't always do what we are asked to do. It's hard to always make the right choice, but we have help. Jesus will help us to make the right choice.

Teach the children to turn around in place in a full circle, while saying, "Lord, we turn to you!" Have them repeat the phrase and action after each of the prompts.

- ✚ When we'd rather play a video game or watch more TV instead of doing what our parents have asked us to do, we say....
- ✚ When we want to stay in bed rather than get up and start our day, we say...
- ✚ When we don't feel like sharing with others, we say...
- ✚ When we talk back to our parents, we say...
- ✚ When we climb under the sheets and say our prayers at night, we say...

Lord God, we ask you to remain in our hearts as we work and play. Help us to turn to you when we are tempted to do the wrong thing. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Activity 2:

Act it Out! -Use this script or the Gospel story.

Choose 3 children to act out the story, one will be the father and the other 2 represent the first and second sons.

Say: "Has your mother or your father ever asked you to help out around the house by doing some chores? "

This is a story about a father who has 2 children named Jenny and William.

One day dad walked into Jenny's room to find her making a beaded bracelet. "Jenny, we had a lot of wind last night and there are leaves scattered all over the yard. Would you please rake the leaves and put them in these trash bags?" dad asked. (Have the father repeat after you, speaking to Jenny)

Jenny said: "Aw Dad, I don't have time to rake the leaves. I am working on this bracelet and I really want to finish it today," (Have 'Jenny' shake her head no and pretend to work on something, turning her back to dad)

After her father left, Jenny began to think about what he had asked her to do. "I can rake the leaves and still have plenty of time to finish my bracelet later," Jenny thought. She went outside and began raking the leaves. (Have Jenny go to a corner and pretend to rake leaves)

The father had gone to look for William. He found William watching TV. "William, there are a lot of leaves in the yard. Would you please rake the leaves and put them in these bags?" dad asked. (Have the father repeat after you, speaking to William)

"Sure, I'd be glad to," William answered. (Have William sit down and watch TV)

"Great!" said the father. "I'll leave the rake and the trash bags in the yard."

When dad returned home, he saw Jenny raking leaves. "Where is William?" dad asked. (Have dad repeat after you)

"I don't know. The last time I saw him he was watching TV," Jenny replied. (Have Jenny point toward William)

When dad went into the house, guess what he saw? There sat William, still watching TV! I wonder which of the two children pleased the father? Jenny, who said she wouldn't rake the leaves, but did -- or William, who said he would rake the leaves, but didn't?

In our Bible lesson today, Jesus told a similar story to show how different people obey what God has called them to do. In Jesus' parable of the two sons, the father asked both sons to go and work in his vineyard. Just as the two boys in my story, one son answered, "No," but went and worked. The other son answered "yes" did not go.

In telling the story, Jesus wanted us to realize that what we do is more important than what we say we will do. Jesus wants us to answer, "Yes," when he tells us to "Love one another," but what he really wants is for us to love one another! Jesus wants us to answer, "Yes," when he says, "Follow me," but what he really wants is for us to follow him!

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 wants us to change our hearts and do what is right?
Do you believe in Jesus, who came to teach us how God is always ready to forgive us?
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to change our hearts when we have turned away from God?*

Sending Forth

Say: *This week when someone asks for your help let's remember what Jesus would want us to do--sau "YES"*

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.