

Focus: Everyone is invited to God's Kingdom

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
Book: Adam Raccoon and the King's Big Dinner

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about taking care of God's creation. This week Jesus tells us a story that shows us that God is very generous with his love.*

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.

Dear God, you have given us great things. We offer you our thanks and praise. Help us to be generous to others and celebrate your love. In Jesus' name, 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.*

All are invited to God's Kingdom.

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

Say: *In the bible we hear all about God's goodness in all of creation. Because God is good, he wants everyone to live with him always. God's love and goodness are never-ending. God is faithful and loyal and will never give up on his people. He keeps inviting and forgiving, inviting and forgiving, throughout our lives.*

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. 278, *The Big Party* (This is from Luke, but comparable to this week's assigned reading)

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *What does Jesus say is like a banquet or party?*
- *What does the king do when the first guests do not come to his special banquet?*
- *Why does the king tell his servants to go out and invite everyone to the banquet?*
- *Who came to the feast?*

Reflection on Reading:

Jesus invites everyone to follow him, but some people don't follow him. Jesus was telling this story to the leaders of the church of long ago. Many of the leaders were jealous of Jesus because more people listened to him than to the leaders. These leaders were more interested in their power than in learning from Jesus. They didn't want to listen to what Jesus had to say.

Jesus told the people that God loves them and they should turn away from bad choices and turn toward God's goodness. The leaders wanted the people to follow their own rules, not God's rules. These are the people who don't follow Jesus. These are the people who don't come to the banquet that God gives for us.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Read the book "**Adam Raccoon and the King's Big Dinner**"

Follow-up questions are located on the last page of the book. (Ignore the last one (about the Gospel of Luke))

Activity 2:

Jesus Says:

This game is played like Simons Says, but instead of saying “Simon Says”, you say “Jesus says”

Pick a few actions ahead of time when you won’t say – Jesus Says.

The gospels tell us what we should do to be like Jesus. We should pray, listen to and learn from the stories of Jesus, love and serve God and each other. We can say “yes” to God’s invitation to be in the Kingdom by following Jesus.

Let’s practice what Jesus has taught us to do.

Sample Actions-. No one is out, everyone gets another chance:

Hug your neighbor

Close your hands in prayer

Pick up your toys

Bow your head

Jesus says, make the sign of the cross

Clap your hands!

Go to Church-(March in place)

Say peace be with you to your neighbor

Say Alleluia

Jump one time

Shake hands with your neighbor

Praise God-Raise your hands up high

Jesus says, Look around you to find Jesus (put your hands to your like looking thru binoculars)

Feel free to make up some more on your own.

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 invites us to be a part of His Kingdom?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who tells everyone that God loves them and invites them to God's heavenly banquet?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who fills us with God's love?

Sending Forth

Say: Every Sunday, just before communion, the priest says, “Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.” Let’s go back into church and see if we can listen for Father to say this and in our hearts we can say, “Yes, Lord, I am happy. Thank you for inviting me.”

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.