

Focus: Doing God's Work

Materials:

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD: Toddler Bible Songs
- Gospel: Children's Bible in 365 Stories
- Toolbox
- Book: Adam Raccoon and the Mighty Giant

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about church being a place of prayer and worship. This week Jesus tells a story about how we all have different gifts, but one job. Our job is to do God's work and make the Kingdom of heaven bigger.

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, Help us to discover the gifts and talents that you have given us. Guide us so that we may use our gifts to help others. We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Song/Movement

Praise the Lord., track: 7, from Toddler 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.

The people on the bus say, "Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord"

The people on the bus say, "Praise the Lord", All through the town

The driver on the bus says, "Go to church"

The mommy on the bus says, "God loves you"

The daddy on the bus says, "Pray each day"

The baby on the bus says, "Waa, waa, waa"

The children on the bus are full of joy

The people on the bus say, "Praise the Lord"

Memory Verse

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

You are good and faithful servants.

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

Say: *Jesus is our Master and we are his servants. We follow his teachings and do as he has taught us. This makes us good and faithful servants to him. We use our gifts to make the Kingdom of God-our world-a better place.*

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: The Children's Bible in 365 Stories, pp. 353, *The Three Servants*

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *What does the master give the three servants?*
- *How does he divide the coins among the servants?*
- *How do the servants use their gifts?*
- *Why is the master disappointed with the servant who buried his gift?*
- *What does Jesus want us to do with our gifts?*
- *What gifts and abilities has God given you?*
- *What do you do with the gifts that God has given you?*
- *Who helps you to discover your gifts?*

Reflection on Reading:

In this parable, the master is like Jesus, away for a time in heaven, until he returns to settle things with his followers. When Jesus comes again, he will see if we have used our gifts for good. In the story the servants' rewards and punishments are meant to remind listeners of the importance of using God's gifts wisely and well.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

The Three Toolboxes

OBJECT: A toolbox.

Look what I have with me this morning -- a tool box. My toolbox is full of useful things. Many of the tools can be used for building things and some of them are great for mending things that are broken. Our Gospel story today talked about 3 servants getting some money from their master. It's sort of like a boss giving a toolbox to 3 of his employees.

The man gave each of his employees a tool box. The tool boxes contained all the tools the employees needed to do what the man expected of them, but since the three employees didn't all have the same abilities, each toolbox was different. Each employee would take the toolbox and do what he could with the tools he had been given.

The first man built a house for people who had no home and had to live on the street.

The second man fixed up houses for people who are not able to take care of their houses because of sickness or age.

The third man put his toolbox on a shelf and never used any of them. They were in a safe place and he returned them to his boss as good as new.

I think this story is a good picture of what God has done in us. He has given each of us tools to use in building His kingdom. We don't all have the same tools, but God expects us to use whatever tools He has given to us. If we do, He will give us even more, but if we don't, He may take them away and give them to someone who will use them. Listen to the words of Jesus, "For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than he can imagine. Whoever does not use what I have given him, it will be taken from him." God has given each of us gifts to use in His kingdom.

Dear Lord, help us to be faithful in using the gifts that you have given to us to help others and to build up the kingdom. Amen.

Activity 2:

Read the story: Adam Raccoon and the Might Giant

- After the story ask: What was Adam's talent?

(It might be hard because it is not a visible one like dancing or art. His talent is telling stories that teach others about God. We have that talent too. When we hear the bible stories, we can tell the stories to others and they can learn about God too.)

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 created us and gave us each unique talents?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who teaches us to use our talents to help others?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us use our talents to help others?

Sending Forth

Say: *Think of one of your talents and try to use that talent this week to show others God's love.*

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*Father We Thank Thee*" track 13 from Toddler 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.