

Focus: Making Good Choices

Materials:

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD: America's 25 Favorite Praise and Worship
- Red and Green Squares
- Ping Pong Ball

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about how important it is to be a good friend and say prayers for our friends. Today we will hear a story where Jesus was tested to make the right choice.

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 Love, our baptism calls us to share Christ's love with others.

Help us to be loving and caring toward others each day.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Song/Movement

Come Let Us Worship and Bow Down, track:11, from America's 25 Favorite

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. Have children sit on their carpet squares when finished.

Come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our God, our Maker.
(Repeat)

For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture
And the sheep of His hand, Just the sheep of His hand.

Repeat all 3 times

Alternate Creative Movement

Have kids form two equal lines facing each other, or a big circle. To the beat of the music have them take four steps toward each other and clap the hands of the child facing them (or their own), then take four steps back and clap their hands together. Repeat.

Memory Verse

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

Be sorry for your sins.

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

Say: *Every one makes wrong choices from time to time. God does not expect us to be perfect and make the right choice all the time. He sent Jesus to tell us that God loves us even when we don't do the right thing. God forgives us when we say we are sorry and will do better next time.*

Gospel Story

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

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,

After Jesus was baptized,

Pour imaginary water from cupped hand.

The Spirit led him out into the desert.

Point into the distance.

He was in the desert for 40 days.

Hold up ten fingers, four times.

He was tempted to do things that were wrong.

Shake your head 'No'

Jesus didn't do those things, he made the right choice.

Give a thumbs up or similar gesture

There were wild beasts in the desert

Lift claw-like and show teeth like an animal

But the angels took care of Jesus.

Lift arms gracefully and let them drift down ward

After, John the Baptist was arrested,

Open a pretend door, step through and SHUT the door behind you

Jesus went to Galilee

Walk in place

To preach the Good News of God.

Chatty hands (thumb against fingers) in all directions.

He said:

Single chatty hand (thumb against fingers)

"This is the time when promises are being completed.

Cross your heart

The Kingdom of God is at hand.

Raise open arms heavenward and then lower them as you open them wider.

Be sorry for your sins,

Trace tears down cheeks.

And believe in the Gospel."

Press palms together and open like a book.

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *How long was Jesus in the desert?*
- *What happens to Jesus in the desert?*
- *Who helped Jesus when he was in the desert?*
- *What did Jesus do in Galilee?*
- *What should we do? (be sorry and believe in the Gospel)*

Reflection on Reading:

Jesus was a human being, just like us. Making the right choice was hard for him, just like it's hard for us sometimes. Jesus had gone to church while he was growing up and heard the Law of God and the stories of the Prophets. Listening to God's word, praying it and living it is how we make good choices too.

In the Bible, 40 days is used to show that it is a time of getting ready for something important. Jesus spent 40 days in the desert to get ready for his ministry to teach God's people. The Lenten season, that started last Wednesday, is about 40 days long too. We use this time to get ready for Easter; it is a time of prayer and acceptance of the Word of God.

Through the prophets of the Old Testament, God promised to send someone special who would save his people from sin. That someone special is Jesus. When Jesus came, God's promises were fulfilled.

Jesus came to bring love, joy, and peace to the world. The kingdom of God is love, joy and peace.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Green or Red (Right or Wrong)

(Use the colored paper squares) Have children raise Red for a bad idea (STOP), Green for a good idea (GO). (Can also use Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down or Clap hands for good choice/stomp feet for bad choice)

These are just a few examples. Please make up some more of your own.

- 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
- It is very late and you are tired, so you ask nicely if you can lie down and nap or take a rest somewhere.
- 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 after a play date
- Listen to your parents 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:

Spreading the Good News:

There was a time when you could walk the streets of a city and hear the voice of a newspaper boy crying out, "Extra! Extra! Read all about it." He called out to get the attention of people who were passing by so that they would come to him and buy a newspaper. That was the way the news was spread in those days.

How do people get their news today? People get their news in many different ways. For some, the newspaper is still their main source for news and they read it from cover to cover. Some may get their news from the radio; most people get their news on the TV or internet. No matter how we get our news, it is important for us to know what is going on in the world around us.

Did you know that Jesus was in the "news" business? The Bible says that Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God. Remember what he said in the Gospel story today: "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news." Jesus wanted everyone to know that God loves them very much.

How do people get the good news of God's love today? Some may get it from newspapers, radio or television. Some may come to church and hear about God's love. But the best way to spread the good news of God's love is the same today as it was in Jesus' day. The best way is for you and me to tell others about it!

You and I should be like the newsboy standing on the street corner crying out, "Extra! Extra! Read all about it! The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news -- Jesus loves you!"

Use any song on the CD for the opening and closing song. Ping Pong Ball (for the potato)

Have the children sit in a circle, passing the "hot potato" as quickly as possible while the music plays. When the music stops, the player holding the "hot potato" says *Extra! Extra! Jesus loves you!* Then everyone else shouts: *PRAISE GOD!* No one is "out" or has to leave the circle. Play continues as time permits.

End with the following prayer:

Dear Jesus, may we follow your example and share the good news of God's love with everyone we meet. 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 always keeps his promises?
Do you believe in Jesus, who is the one God promised to send to save us?
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us make the right choice?*

Sending Forth

Say: *Remember that the Holy Spirit is always with us. He can help us make the right decision. This week we can remember to stop and think about the choices we make. Our choice should show God's love for others.*

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "Kum Ba Yah" track 12 from [America's 25 Favorite](#) 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.