

Focus: Taking Care of God's House

Materials:

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD: America's 25 Favorite Praise and Worship
- Book: Children's Everyday Bible
- Picture of the Tabernacle
- Paper and Trash Bag for Spring Cleaning Activity
- Book: Teach Me to Pray

Gathering (children sit on carpet/floor-“Criss-Cross Applesauce”)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about listening to Jesus. This week we will hear a story about Jesus' visit to the temple in Jerusalem and what happens when people aren't treating God the Father's house with respect.*

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 Lord, we come to church to sing praise and give thanks to you. Help us to remember that we must treat this special place and all the people here with respect.

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.

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

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.

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

Repeat all 3 times

Memory Verse

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

God's house is a place of prayer.

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

Say: *When we come to church we have to remember that we are there to do special work. The special work includes saying prayers to God, being quiet so we can listen carefully to God's Word and showing God's love to others. We need to show the same respect when we come here to listen to the Gospel.*

Gospel Story

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

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. 296, *Jesus and the Temple Traders*

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *What does Jesus do when he arrives in Jerusalem?*
- *Why is Jesus angry at the people in the temple?*
- *What happens when Jesus finds the moneychangers and sellers in the Temple?*
- *What does Jesus' reaction tell us about how we should act in church?*
- *How can we be respectful of God and the people who worship with us?*

Reflection on Reading:

The temple is like our church, a place where the people of God prayed. It was a sacred, Holy place. Some people were treating like a store or bank AND they were doing it in a way that cheated the people. They were selling things and making money from the prayer of other people.

*Do you think people today always show respect for churches as the house of God?
I think most people do, but some people do or say things in church that don't show respect for God.*

How can we help people show respect for Our Father's (God's) house, the church?

- ✚ *We have to be good examples ourselves.*
- ✚ *We should enter church quietly, with our minds focused on God.*
- ✚ *We bow or genuflect to the tabernacle (the glass cabinet where the Body of Christ is kept) (show picture) before we enter the pew.*
- ✚ *We pray while we are in church.*
- ✚ *We participate in Mass by singing gently and saying prayers and coming to Little Liturgy.*
- ✚ *We put the hymnals (books) back in the racks quietly and raise and lower the kneelers to say our prayers the same way.*

This is the way Jesus taught us to treat God's house.

Gospel ActivityActivity 1:**Spring Cleaning:**

Review today's lesson about being respectful is part of taking care of God's house, but we should also keep it clean. This is the time of year some people do Spring Cleaning. They clean

everything in their house and donate things they don't use or throw out things that are broken. Then they have a "new" place to live.

We can each do some spring cleaning ourselves. I've put small pieces of paper around the room with words of things that we should not have in our lives. Go and pick one of these things that we should take out of our lives.

After you have your 'LITTER', come back and form a circle. Sometimes we need to get rid of the litter in our lives. Sometimes we do things we shouldn't and hurt other people. When we do these things, we say we are sorry and ask for forgiveness from them and from God. God always forgives our sins because of Jesus. Jesus showed us God's love and God's love forgives us when we do something wrong and promise God to not do it again.

Have them crumple up and throw their litter in the trash bag and say the following prayer:

Dear Lord, please us to keep our hearts clean and do the things you want us to do. We love you and always want to show others we love them too. Amen.

Activity 2:

Special Conversations:

When we say prayers we are talking to God. We are going to read a book about praying and what makes it special.

Read the book "Teach Me to Pray"

Prayer is special because we can say our prayers anywhere. We don't have to say them just in church. We can say prayers before meals, when we wake up, at bed time.

See if they can think of other times to say prayers.

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 listens to us when we pray?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who told us to treat God's house (church) respectfully?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us make good choices?

Sending Forth

Say: Remember to be respectful in church today and always. It is God's house. When we go to church, we should sit, kneel or stand quietly and say prayers. We should be focused on God and what is happening on the altar not our brothers or sisters or friends.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "Lord I Lift Your Name on High" track 14 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.