

Focus: God's House of Prayer

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
CD: Toddler Bible Songs
Gospel: Children's Everyday Bible
Book: 100 Bible Stories/100 Bible Songs
Book: Our Father, the prayer that Jesus taught us.

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about how Jesus shows us the way to heaven. Love and kindness are perfect in God's kingdom. Today we are going to hear about a story when Jesus gets angry about the way people are using God's temple (like our church).

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.

Loving God, you have given each of us a place to call our own--a home in your house. Thank you for the love you share with us. 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.

God's house is a place of prayer.

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

Say: Last week we talked about following Jesus. We have to make a space in our hearts for Jesus so that he can live in us and help us to know what is good and right. When we go to church we carry Jesus with us in our hearts. Jesus said that God's house (the church) is a place for prayer. We don't run around making lots of noise and distraction. We pray with everyone so God knows that we love his son.

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:

- *Where did Jesus go when he arrived in Jerusalem?*
- *Why was he surprised when he got to the temple?*
- *What were the traders doing?*
- *What did Jesus do?*
- *Why did Jesus drive them out?*

Reflection on Reading:

Jesus was a teacher. As a teacher, He traveled to different towns sharing the good news of the kingdom of God. He taught and healed and forgave many people. He carried the news of God's kingdom everywhere He went. He visited the temple in Jerusalem and found it to be a place of wicked and bad people.

The temple was a place set aside by God for the purpose of worshipping Him and meeting with Him. In Jesus' day the people had to use temple money to buy their offerings to God. They would come to the temple to take the roman coins they used to buy food and drink and change them for temple coins.

We see that the traders in the temple no longer had hearts for God they were only interested in their own gain. They were using God's temple as a way to get rich. The traders were robbing the people in God's name.

Instead of the temple being a place to come into contact with God, they had turned it into a business to make them rich. The traders had forgotten that they were supposed to serve the people in God's name. God was forgotten and self was on the throne.

Worshipping the Lord became nothing more than a way for the traders to make money. the traders liked making money off of the people. As a result, no one worshiped God at the temple anymore; the wicked traders and their behavior kept the people from truly worshipping the Lord. Jesus drove them out, so that the people could come back and worship God in prayer.

Gospel ActivityActivity 1:

This Gospel story isn't the only one about Jesus in the temple. There is another story when Joseph and Mary (mother and father) found him preaching in the temple—he was teaching the elders about the Word of God and he was just 12 years old!

Read **Jesus in the Temple**, from 100 Bible Stories, 100 Bible Songs, page 106

Play the song, Disc 2, Track 1, We're going to God's house today!

Activity 2:

Jesus says that God's house is a house of prayer. When we go to church we say a special prayer every week. It is a prayer that Jesus taught us in the bible.

Read the Book: Our Father-The prayer Jesus taught us.

As you read through the book ask the children for their thoughts:

- Our Father: when do they dream they are close to God
- Who art in heaven: What do you wonder when you look at all the stars in the sky? Do you think of God?
- Hallowed be they name: What parts of creation help you know that God is all powerful and loves us?
- Thy kingdom come: What do you think God's dwelling place is like?
- Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: What do you think it would be like if everyone acted like Jesus taught us?
- Give us this day our daily bread: How can we show that we set our hearts on God?
- And forgive us our trespasses: How does it feel to know God always forgives us when we make a wrong choice?
- As we forgive those that trespass against us: We know that it feels good to be forgiven when we say we are sorry. Do you forgive others that say they are sorry to you?
- And lead us not into temptation: How can we stay on the path of the light of Jesus?
- But deliver us from evil: How does it feel to know that God protects us wherever we go?
- For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.: What picture do you have of God as our Father?

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 provides for us?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who gave his life so that we can live with God always?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to give to others as Jesus gave to us?

Sending Forth

Say: Take a quiet moment in church today to pray to God for help making good choices, or thanking him for creation and caring for us.

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