

**Focus:** Making Good Choices for Jesus

**Materials:**

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

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

*Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Last week we talked the stories of Jesus healing people who are sick and that Jesus wants us to help sick people too. Today we a story about Jesus talking about the Kingdom of God.*

**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 each other every day. We pray this in Jesus' name. 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; 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; 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.*

*Be sorry for your sins.*

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

*Say: Everyone 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 us to tell us that God the Father 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, 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 forty 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 hands claw-like and show teeth like a wild beast.*  
But the angels took care of Jesus.  
*Lift arms gracefully and let them drift downward.*  
After John the Baptist was arrested,  
*Open a pretend door, step through and SHUT (SLAM) 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 time when promises are being completed.*  
*Cross your heart.*  
The Kingdom of God is near.  
*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 in the desert? Who sent the angels?*

- *What did Jesus do in Galilee?*
- *What should we do? –be sorry for our bad choices and believe in what the Gospel teaches.*

### Reflection on Reading:

*Jesus was a human being just like us, except he never sinned. That doesn't mean he had it easy. It was hard for him, just like it is sometimes hard for us. Jesus had gone to church while he was growing up and heard the Law of God and the stories of the Prophets that God sent to tell the people how he wanted them to live. He made good choices because he cared more about what God wanted than what other people wanted. 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 to start his ministry of teaching God's people. The Lenten season, that we are remembering right now, 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 their sins. That someone special is Jesus. When Jesus came to the world, God's promises were completed.*

*Jesus came to bring love, joy and peace to the world. The Kingdom of God—the Reign(Rule) of God is love, joy and peace.*

### Gospel Activity

#### Activity 1:

#### **Making Good Choices**

In the beginning of the Gospel story Jesus tells us to change our lives. He wants us to always make good choices. We are going to play a game to practice making good choices.

(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.

#### **GREEN:**

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| ✓ Help grandma up the stairs        | ✓ Ask a new child at school to play with you and your friends                   |
| ✓ Listen to our parents             | ✓ Share your toys   |
| ✓ Going to church                   | ✓ Give someone a hug  |
| ✓ Doing what your teacher tells you | ✓ Forgive someone who is unkind.  |
| ✓ Helping mom set the table         | ✓ Hold the door open for someone.   |
| ✓ Helping dad rake the leaves       | ✓ Pray at dinner time   |
| ✓ Say something kind                | ✓ You hear your parents talking so you wait patiently before asking a question. |
| ✓ Be willing to help others         | ✓ It is morning and everyone is waking up. You still feel tired, but you give a |
| ✓ Tell the Truth                    |   |
| ✓ Help without being asked          |   |
| ✓ Let others choose a game to play  |   |

- big smile and a hug good morning to your mom and dad.
- ✓ You give your unused toys to the homeless shelter
  - ✓ Help your mom and dad deliver food to the food bank
  - ✓ There is a new kid at school and you ask him to play with you on the playground.
  - ✓ Before you go home from a play date you help clean up
  - ✓ Listen to your parent when they tell you it's time to clean up your room
  - ✓ Visit someone in a nursing home
  - ✓ Make a card for a sick friend
  - ✓ You see a friend crying so you stop and ask what is wrong

**RED:**

- Not including someone at playtime
- Say mean words to a friend
- Making fun of someone
- Hitting someone
- Not sharing toys

- You see a friend crying so you just walk right by.
- It is very late and you are tired, so you cry loudly and complain about everything.
- Time for bed, so you stomp your feet and say, "NO!"
- A friend asks to play with your new game and you won't share.
- A child at the playground makes a mistake and you make fun of them.
- You throw a temper tantrum when you don't get what you want
- 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
- You get mad and hit your brother or sister
- Staying mad at someone who said they were sorry
- Telling a lie
- Refusing to Share

**Activity 2:****Spreading the Good News:**

There was a time when you could walk the streets of a big 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 those walking by so that they would buy a newspaper from him. That was the way news was spread in those days.

How do people get their news today? Some still get newspapers, but most people watch TV or from the internet on a computer or smartphone or tablet. So many ways to spread the news.

Did you know that Jesus was in the "news" business? The bible says that Jesus went to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God. Remember what he said in the Gospel today? "The Kingdom of God is near. Be sorry for your sins, and believe in the Good News." Good News is another name for the New Testament of the bible that tells about Jesus' rising from the dead. Jesus wants everyone to know that God loves them very much.

How do people get the Good News of God's love today? From us, followers of Jesus. We tell others about Jesus when we do kind acts with great love. We should be standing on the corner like the newsboy crying out: "Extra! Extra! Read all about it. The Kingdom of God is near. Be sorry and believe in the Gospel of God's love!"

Use any song on the CD that is used for the opening/closing song.

Have the children sit in a circle, passing the “Hot Potato-Ping Pong ball” as quickly as possible around the circle while the music plays. When the music stops, the player holding the “potato” says “Extra! Extra! Jesus loves you!” Then everyone else replies: “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 from sin?*

*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. The Spirit can help us make the right choice. This week we can remember to stop and think about the choices we make. Our choice should always show God’s love to 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.