

Focus: Turning Away from Sin

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest’s vestment) and Altar Cloth

Materials:

CD America’s 25 Favorite

Gospel in Lesson

Light and Darkness signs

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

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about taking care of God’s house and being respectful in church. Remember, coming to church is a special place and we should act respectfully, it different than being in school or on the playground. It is a place to be quiet and prayerful and praise God. This week we are going to learn why Jesus came down from heaven and how we can be with Jesus forever.

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,

Thank you, God, for sending Jesus into the world to save us. Help us to share the light of your love with others. 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.

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.

Whoever is good comes to the light of Jesus.

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

Say: In the time of Jesus, long before there was electricity, lamps, lights or especially flashlights, people valued light much more than we do today. They couldn’t make it artificially. Light is needed to see and without it people stumble and fall, bump into things and get hurt. Jesus was like light because he helped people see what was good. He made it possible for people to go through life

without falling into sin, bumping into great temptation (times when we really want to do something, but know it is the wrong choice to make) and hurting their souls forever.

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: None, pp. n/a,

Jesus said:

[Chatty hands, thumb against fingers]

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake,

[Hold and imaginary pole, and lift it high]

so must I be lifted up.

[Turn hands palms up and raise them in praise]

so that all who believe will have eternal life.

[Point heavenward]

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.

[Hold an imaginary gift and give it away]

so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.

[Point heavenward]

God did not send his Son to condemn the world,

[Thumbs down, shake head dejectedly]

but to save it.

[Point heavenward]

Whoever believes in Jesus is not condemned,

[Shake head emphatically]

but whoever doesn't believe has condemned himself.

[Hands on heart shake head sadly]

The light came into the world,

[Raise arms in a circular fashion, as if depicting the rising sun]

but some people preferred the darkness of sin.

[Thumbs down]

Those who do bad things hate the light of Jesus.

[Pretend to shield your eyes from a bright light]

Whoever is good comes to the light of Jesus.

[Raise arms in a circular fashion, as if depicting the rising sun]

The work of good people is clearly done in God.”

[Point heavenward]

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *Why did God send Jesus into the world?*
- *What will happen to those who believe in Jesus?*
- *How can people come to the light?*
- *How do you know when you have made a good choice?*
- *How do you know when you have made a bad choice?*
- *Who are the people that help you to make good choices and choose light over darkness? Those are the people we need to choose to be our friends.*

Reflection on Reading:

Today's gospel tells why God sent Jesus into the world. The world needed someone special to show us the way to God. God had asked many prophets to tell the people what they needed to do to show their love for him. But the people weren't listening to Him or the prophets. God so loved us that he gave us his only Son to teach us the way to heaven. God sent Jesus so we can live with God forever, if we believe in him.

This gospel makes clear that believing in Jesus is our choice. We can choose to live in darkness and not have eternal life, or we can make good and loving choices and live in the light of Jesus forever. The gospel today reminds us that God is kind and forgiving. God's grace makes living in the light possible for all believers.

Gospel ActivityActivity 1:**The Light and the Dark** (a variation of red light/green light)

Instruct the children to move either to the right side of the room (toward the window –the light) or left side (toward the bathroom –the dark) when a choice is called out. Use a selection of 12-15 of the following: Mix up from each side.

LIGHT:

Help grandma up the stairs
 Listen to our parents
 Going to church
 Doing what your teacher tells you
 Helping mom set the table
 Helping dad rake the leaves
 Pray at dinner time
 You hear your parents talking so you wait patiently before asking a question.
 You don't really like peas, but you eat two more bites for mom.
 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

You 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

DARK:

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

You help a friend who is hurt on the playground

Join with others to pick up trash in the community

Mix up the choices so that the children can move from one side of the room to the other.

Discuss:

- Who helps you to make good choices?
- How can you help others make good choices?
- How does Jesus help us to make good choices?

Activity 2:

Rhyme Time:

Show the children how to make "binoculars" of their hands by curling their thumbs and fingers and holding them to their eyes. Teach them the following rhyme and instruct them to hold their "binoculars" to their eyes every time the rhyme says: "look"

Look to Jesus. Look I say, Look to Jesus every day.

Look to see what he would do, Look and learn that he loves you.

Once they get the hang of it, speed up the recitation, saying it faster and faster until no one can keep up any more. Remind the children that Jesus does love us and we should always look at how he lived and what he taught so we can learn how we should live. Living like Jesus is a great joy.

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 sent Jesus to teach us the way to eternal life?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who is the gift of God that saves us?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who leads us into the light?

Sending Forth

Say: By helping others, saying thank you, telling the truth, praying, taking care of someone who doesn't feel well, we share the light of Jesus with others. Make sure your choices make others feel better about themselves.

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.