

Focus: Loving like a holy family

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
CD-Songs 4 Worship: Kids Christmas
Bible: Beginner's Bible
Baby doll
Book: 100 Bible Stories, 100 Bible Songs

Gathering (have children sit on the floor-“Criss-Cross Applesauce”)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about getting ready for Jesus and Mary's visit to Elizabeth. Today we are going to hear a story when Jesus travelled with his family to Jerusalem and the special adventure he had.

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.

Loving God, you have called us to be holy, like the Holy Family. Help us to be kind to one another, patient and always tell the truth. We want to be holy and always follow you. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen

Song/Movement

Songs 4 Worship: Kids Christmas, track: 12, from Joy to the World

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.

Joy to the World , the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and
nature sing.

Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills
and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

Memory Verse

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

I am in my Father's House.

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

Say: Mary and Joseph knew that Jesus was special because the angel Gabriel told them that before he was born. Jesus was their son, but he was first, The Son of God. Jesus left the temple with his parents and

returned to Nazareth. He was respectful of his parents. We are also God's sons and daughters. We belong to the Lord God first. God calls us his beloved children.

Gospel Story

Say: Today we are reading from the Gospel of Luke.

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: The Beginner's Bible, pp. 304-309, *Lost!*

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *Where did Jesus grow up?*
- *How old was he when they traveled to Jerusalem?*
- *What happened on the journey home?*
- *Where did Mary and Joseph look for Jesus?*
- *What was Jesus doing when they found him in the temple?*
- *What did Jesus say to them?*

Reflection on Reading:

In today's Gospel, Jesus said: “I had to come to my Father's house.” Jesus knew that God was his Father. Joseph was his father on earth, sort of like a foster father. Joseph was trusted by God to take care of Jesus until he was grown. Jesus knew that he was to serve his heavenly Father above all else. The temple was the place where the Israelites believed God lived. Jesus was in the temple talking to the wise teachers about God.

The teachers were surprised that Jesus understood the Word of God so well, because he was so young. They did not yet understand that Jesus was the Son of God.

When they went to Jerusalem, they went as a big family, Joseph, Mary and Jesus as well as many aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors. So when this large crowd of people headed home to Nazareth, it was easy to miss one little boy. When they realized that Jesus was missing they went back looking for him. Jesus didn't mean to be left behind, but he was so interested in talking about God's Word that he forgot he had to leave. I am sure Jesus didn't ask to be able to stay behind because Mary and Joseph were worried when he was lost. The bible tells us that Jesus returned home and obeyed them and grew in wisdom. Like all children, Jesus knew that God wanted him to obey his parents and learn from them.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Carry the Baby: To help the children realize that just as Jesus was a special gift to Mary, they are special gifts to their parents

Directions:

- Tell the children that this activity will allow them to share stories about the love in their families.
- Invite the children to gather around the prayer table. Remind the children that they know of the love expressed in the Holy Family, and they know how their own family members love and care for each other. Their family is a Holy family too. Give the child to your right the baby and invite them to take turns sharing a favorite family baby story about themselves.
- When all the children have shared, carefully passing the baby from one to another, tell them how wonderful and full of love their stories were. Remind them how much their families do for them every day.
- Conclude by telling the children to follow the example of Jesus and Mary in loving and caring for family members.

Activity 2:

100 Bible Songs Jesus in the Temple

Read the story on pages 106 and 107, "Jesus in the Temple" and play the song, "We're Going to God's House Today" Disc 2 Track 1

Remind them that when we are in church we are respectful and use our best listening ears and talk only if it's VERY important.

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 loves us and cares for us like loving parents care for their children?
Do you believe in Jesus, who is our light and shows us the way to be holy?
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to be kind and patient, honest and gentle,
forgiving and loving?*

Sending Forth

Say: *Remember that each of us lives with a Holy Family. A holy family doesn't mean a perfect family, it means it is full of love for God and each other and everyone wants to help one another be happy.*

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "The First Noel" track 5 from Songs 4 Worship: Kids Christmas 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.