

Focus: Making Good Choices

Materials:

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD-Toddlers 20 Favorite Bible Songs
- Bible: Children's Everyday Bible
- Red/Green Cards
- 10 Commandments Poster

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

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about being kind to others. By making this our choice we will grow to have lives that are happy and filled with God's peace. This week we are going to hear a story about Jesus making the right choice.

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 God, during this season of Lent, fill our hearts with love. Help us to follow Jesus in all we say and do. In the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen.

Song/Movement

Just Praise the Lord (To the tune of the People on the Bus), track: 7, from Toddler 20 Favorite 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
Go to church Go to church.
The driver on the bus says Go to church
all through the town.

The mommy on the bus says God loves you
God loves you God loves you.
The mommy on the bus says God loves you
all through the town.

The daddy on the bus says Pray every day
Pray every day Pray every day.
The daddy on the bus says Pray every day
all through the town.

The baby on the bus says Wah-wah-wah,
Wah-wah-wah, Wah-wah-wah.
The baby on the bus says Wah-wah-wah
all through the town.

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.

Memory Verse

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

Jesus was tempted in the desert.

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

Say: *This is the First Sunday of Lent. Lent is 40 days long. This reminds us of the time that Jesus spent in the desert right after he was baptized. Just like Jesus, we have to make choices every day that show we are following God's rules. During Lent we try even harder than we usually do to make good choices and change our hearts.*

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: Childrens' Everyday Bible, pp. 224, *Jesus in the Desert*

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *What happens to Jesus in the desert wilderness?*
- *How long is Jesus there?*
- *How does the devil try to tempt Jesus?*
- *What does Jesus do?*

Reflection on Reading:

Today's Gospel story takes place right after Jesus' Baptism. Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, goes to be by himself to pray and strengthen his relationship to God. The Devil, who is full of hate and lies, tries to get Jesus to ignore God. Jesus knows that God is full of love and truth and that the only way to be truly happy is to be a child of God and follow God's ways.

Jesus stands up against temptation and he resists the devil. Jesus shows all his followers how to deal with temptation.

We have temptations too. A temptation is some that attracts us toward something that looks really good, but really isn't. It might look good because it's the easier way. Or maybe it's another serving of our favorite dessert, after we already had an extra one. Sometimes we think of doing something that we know is wrong. We might even think that doing the wrong thing will bring us happiness, but that is wrong. We have to remember that God is the source of goodness and love and by making the right choice we are spreading God's love all around.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Let's practice making good choices that help us get ready for Easter, during Lent we clear a place in our hearts to make room to let the love of God grow.

All good things come from God. Without God there is no goodness. Who would want to live in a world without goodness? Those who love God are filled with his love and goodness.

Even the simplest prayer or smallest kindness to someone else, if it is done in the name of Jesus, becomes an act of love for God.

Let's play a game to see if we know how to be kind to someone else.

Red Light-Green Light

(Use the colored paper squares) Have children raise Red for a bad idea (STOP), Green for a good idea (GO). These are just a few examples. Please make up some more of your own. (Can also use Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down)

- You see a friend crying so you just walk right by.
- You hear your parents talking so you wait patiently before asking a question.
- It is very late and you are tired, so you cry loudly and complain about everything.
- You don't really like peas, but you eat two more bites for mom.
- Time for bed, so you stomp your feet and say, "NO!"
- 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
- A friend asks to play with your new game and you won't share.
- You help your mom and dad deliver food to the food bank
- A child at the playground makes a mistake and you make fun of them.
- There is a new kid at school and you ask him to play with you on the playground.
- You throw a temper tantrum when you don't get what you want
- 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
- 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
- Visit someone in a nursing home
- Make a card for a sick friend
- You get mad and hit your brother or sister

Activity 2:

This week we heard the story of Jesus being tempted to make choices that would take him away from God. Jesus was able to recognize the devil's lies because he knew the scriptures well and had learned the will of God that they contain. It is good for all of us to know the Word of God. Lies and confusion are always in our lives and they can be difficult to see if we aren't firmly grounded in God's truth.

--Use the Ten Commandments poster to review the children's version. This version isn't numbered as we do in the Catholic Church, but it is not important that the children memorize which commandment is which number, just that they are ways we show our love

for God and others. The first ones show how to show our love for God and the rest show how to love others.

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 gives us His Word so that we can be happy?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who teaches us to follow God's rules?

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

Sending Forth

Say: Lent is a time of sacrifice, giving up stuff we have or do to help others. Something like giving someone else a chance to choose first or pick the game you will play. Helping your mom or dad clean up the house instead of doing something you want to do. Practice doing good deeds this week.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*The Lord is My Shepherd*" track 5 from Toddler 20 Favorite 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.