

Focus: Joy of New Life in Christ

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
CD-Toddlers 20 Favorite Bible Songs
Bible: Children's Bible Storybook
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 the story of the young man who came back home and was forgiven by his father, just like God forgives us when we say we are sorry. This week we hear another story about forgiving others.

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.

Forgiving God, our Father, thank you for the gift of your forgiveness and love.

Help us to make good and loving choices. In the name of your son, 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 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 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 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 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 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.

Let those without sin cast the first stone.

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

Say: *Jesus uses these words to remind that we all make mistakes. A crowd wanted to punish someone because she had sinned. Jesus doesn't come right out and say he knows they are sinners, he makes them think about it and realize that no one is perfect. No one is better than another person. God loves us all the same.*

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 Bible Storybook, pp. 280, *A Second Chance*

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *Why do the religious leaders bring the woman to Jesus?*
- *What does the Law of Moses say should happen to the woman?*
- *What does Jesus do?*
- *Why do all the people leave?*
- *How does Jesus give the woman the gift of a new life?*

Reflection on Reading:

In today's Gospel reading we hear about a woman who is brought before Jesus because she has sinned, chosen to break one of God's laws. According to the Law of Moses the woman should be stoned. But Jesus has a better idea. He helps the people see that the woman is not the only sinner in the crowd. This causes everyone to leave.

Jesus never sinned. He is all loving and love is kind and forgiving. Jesus forgave the people who wanted to throw stones and helped them figure out for themselves why they shouldn't do that.

Jesus is left standing alone with the woman. Jesus gives the woman the gift of a new start. After her experience with Jesus she is reconciled to God, to her community and to herself.

I am sure the woman must have been very thankful to Jesus for being kind and merciful. God is kind and merciful to all of us and we should be thankful.

The story in the Gospel today shows us that God forgives our sins and loves us unconditionally. When we make a wrong choice, we too are given a chance for a new start.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

This Gospel story shows us that we aren't to judge others. God alone can decide if someone is a sinner. Jesus was the only man without sin, because he was from heaven.

Read page 118, 100 Bible Stories, 100 Bible Songs –Do Not Judge—and play the song (Disc 2, Track 7)

Let the children get up and dance around while the song plays.

Activity 2:

Fresh Start Dance:

Say: Jesus gave the woman in the Gospel story a new life, a fresh start. When God forgives us, he gives us a fresh start too. When we make the wrong choice we get all tangled up and when God forgives us our hearts are fresh and clean.

Have the children stand up and leave space around them. Have them do various moves that will contort them into an uncomfortable position. [Place hand on one foot, move the other foot one giant step forward, look up at the sky] Then yell FRESH START and they can come back to standing. Continue as time allows.

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 is always ready to forgive and forget our sins?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who shows us the path to new life?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who creates in each of us a new loving and forgiving heart?

Sending Forth

Say: *We should be thankful for God's love and forgiveness. We come to Mass each week to thank him for his love. When we go back into church take a quiet moment to say a prayer of thanks to God.*

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.