

Jesus Clears the Temple Court

Bible Verse

He told them, “The Scriptures say, ‘My house should be called a place of worship.’ But you have turned it into a place where robbers hide.” (Matthew 21:13)

Teacher Enrichment

This is the second lesson in the *Lent* series which explores the Biblical account of the week between Palm Sunday and Easter. As both human and divine, Jesus is our best example of what God wants us to be like as humans. This series examines how Jesus lived and the choices He made for His life.

When Jesus arrived at the temple in Jerusalem He found a bustling marketplace instead of a house of worship and He was angry. But let's step back a bit and think about how it got to this point. Worshippers were likely travelling and may not have been able to bring their own sacrifices. So why not offer animals for sale? Anyone coming from a foreign land might not have the correct money denominations. Why not offer a money changing service? It all sounds fine until greed sets in and merchants begin to take advantage of their captive market by raising prices (think \$8 popcorn at the movie theater) or selling inferior products. What started as providing a service has now turned to something disrespectful of God's house. By clearing the temple court, Jesus shows His extreme displeasure with those who have strayed so far from church being a sacred and holy place. We may not be selling sacrificial animals in the narthex today, but it is still possible to worship badly. Just as Jesus cleared the temple, we must periodically examine our own worship approach to ensure we haven't strayed from God's intentions for His house. At times we can miss the point and worship to serve our own ends rather than God's. Respecting God's house is not only about our outward behavior, but also about the state of our hearts and minds as we worship and fellowship.

In this lesson children will learn that church is a special, holy place and God expects us to show respect while we are here. Children will explore actions and mindsets for church that please God.

Before Class Begins

- ◆ Place the Sign In sheet and a pen where parents can see it upon arrival.
- ◆ Place the Joy & Concern cards, Time & Talent cards and pens where students can see them upon arrival.
- ◆ Check that you have supplies for this lesson:
 - Arrival Activity, Jesus Clears the Temple activity page – 1 per child
 - Respect and Disrespect Signs
 - Things that Belong Church – 1 per child
 - Things that Belong Door cutout – 1 per child
 - Things that Belong item strip
- ◆ Place an arrival activity at each place on the table.

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Sign In sheet, Joy & Concern cards, Time & Talent cards, Attendance chart, stickers, pens, Jesus Clears the Temple activity sheet, pencils, markers

- ◆ Greet each child individually as they arrive. Introduce yourself by name.
- ◆ Help children find or add their name on the attendance chart. Provide each child with a sticker to place in today's column on the attendance chart.
- ◆ Encourage children to complete a Joy or Concern card if they have a particular joy or concern they would like to express. Collect completed Joy & Concern cards.
- ◆ Encourage children to complete a Time or Talent offering card if they gave their time to God or used their talents to serve God or others during the previous week. Children should keep their own completed Time and Talent cards.
- ◆ If children bring monetary offering, they should keep it with them.
- ◆ Direct children to complete **Jesus Clears the Temple activity sheet**.
- ◆ Encourage conversation among the children and with you! Get to know the children in your classroom by asking about their week including school, activities and families. Introduce new children to each other and encourage friendships.

Children's Worship

SUPPLIES: Sign In sheet, Joy & Concern cards, Time & Talent cards

- ◆ The Children's Worship Leader will direct your class to come to Ruth Hall at 9:20 or 11:05.
- ◆ Bring the Sign In sheet and completed Joy & Concern cards to Ruth Hall. Hand the Joy & Concern cards to the Children's Worship leader as you arrive.
- ◆ Have children bring their completed Time & Talent cards and any monetary offering.
- ◆ If additional children arrive while in Ruth Hall, have parents complete the Sign In sheet and remind parents that pickup is in Room 105.
- ◆ Encourage children to participate in Children's Worship and provide re-direction if necessary.
- ◆ Assist the Children's Worship leader as needed.
- ◆ At the conclusion of Children's Worship, have children line up and return to Room 105.

The Lesson

SUPPLIES: Respect and Disrespect signs, Things that Belong craft (church, door cutout, items strip), glue, crayons/markers/colored pencils, scissors

- ◆ Gather all the children on the carpet, but have them remain standing.

SAY: In today's story, some people were not respecting God's church. Jesus was angry because He knew the temple was a special, holy place. Jesus wanted them to respect the temple.

SAY: Jesus wants us to do the same thing today. He wants us to be respectful when we come to church. Church should be a place to worship God and learn about God. We should be thinking about God. We should be thoughtful of others. We should try to learn all we can. We should behave ourselves and not be disrespectful. I'm going to read some behaviors and I want you to decide if the action shows Respect or Disrespect by moving to the appropriate sign.

Read each action and allow children to move to the appropriate sign. For some actions, you may ask children why they chose Respect or Disrespect. Emphasize that respect versus disrespect is not always in our outward behavior. It's also about what's in our hearts and minds when we come to church (e.g. daydreaming versus paying attention). Feel free to add additional actions to this list; maybe actions you've seen in the classroom either positive or challenging.

- ◆ Praying
- ◆ Sleeping
- ◆ Singing
- ◆ Whispering with a friend while a teacher is talking
- ◆ Answering questions
- ◆ Daydreaming
- ◆ Volunteering to help a teacher or classmate
- ◆ Playing tag in the sanctuary (big church)
- ◆ Reading the Bible
- ◆ Pushing someone out of the way to make sure you get a good snack
- ◆ Sitting at the back in Ruth Hall because you don't really want to pay attention
- ◆ Asking questions about God

SAY: When we come to church, Jesus wants us to show respect to God. It makes God happy when we respect His house – the church. We learned about a lot of things that DO belong in church! Today we will make a craft to help us remember some of them.

- ◆ Show children the sample craft. Demonstrate how the doors open.
- ◆ Provide each child with a “Things that Belong” church and door cutout.
- ◆ Encourage children to draw or write things that belong in church inside the doors (or around the church). Alternatively, item strips are provided.
- ◆ Direct children to cut out and attach the door.
- ◆ Children may color and decorate their church as desired.

Closing

- ◆ Lead the children in a closing prayer. You may say your own prayer, ask one of the children to say a prayer or use the one below.

God,

Thank you for providing Jesus as an example. Help us be respectful when we come to church.

Amen

- ◆ If time remains before parents arrive, encourage children to return to their Jesus Clears the Temple activity sheet if they did not complete it. Also encourage conversation between children and with you. This is another opportunity to build relationships with the children in your classroom.

Things that
Belong in
God's House

My house should be called
a place of worship.
Matthew 21:13

