

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 sheet – 1 per child
 - White board
 - Check Your Respect Line worksheet – 1 per child
- ◆ 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, Loaves & Fish 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 110.

The Lesson

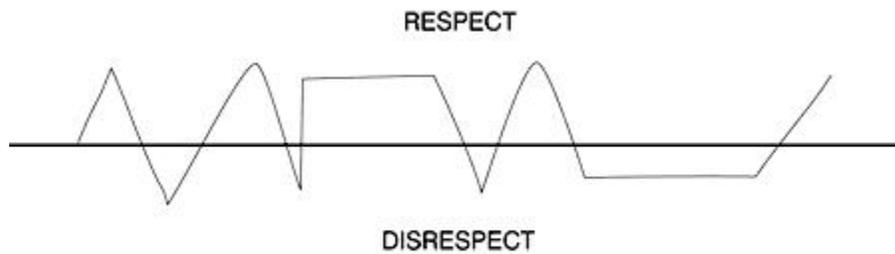
SUPPLIES: White board, Expo marker, Check Your Respect Line worksheets, pencils

SAY: Today we heard about Jesus clearing the temple court. Jesus saw people disrespecting His Father’s house – the temple or church – and He was angry. Jesus said the temple should be a holy, sacred place of worship. I want to talk to you a little about respect.

Draw a horizontal line on the white board. Above the line write the word Respect and below the line write the word Disrespect.

SAY: Let’s pretend a friend is coming to your home. I’m going to draw a “respect line” on the board based on things the friend does when they come to your house. For each thing I mention, we’ll decide if the friend is showing respect or disrespect for you and your home.

As you read the items, draw a continuous line, intersecting the horizontal line, moving up for situation showing respect and down for situations showing disrespect. The line may look something like this:



The friend:

- ◆ Waits quietly outside until invited in.
- ◆ Walks in with muddy feet.
- ◆ Thanks you for the invitation to come.
- ◆ Shouts and yells loudly in your home.
- ◆ Greet your parents politely.
- ◆ Treats your possessions carefully.
- ◆ Demands something to eat.
- ◆ Ignores your parents when they speak to him or her.
- ◆ Invites you to visit at his or her house.

ASK: Was the friend mostly respectful or mostly disrespectful? (*it's about even; one more point on respect side*) How does it feel if someone comes to your home and is disrespectful? (*Hurt, angry, disappointed, don't want to invite them back, if they don't respect my house then they don't really respect me*)

SAY: God feels the same way. If we come into his house and behave with disrespect it shows disrespect for God Himself. If we approach our time here with respect, it shows respect for God. After Jesus cleared the temple, He treated the temple with respect and performed acts of love – healing and teaching.

SAY: I want each of you to take some time to think about your own “respect lines” in different places. Take a moment to answer the first three questions. Does your “respect line” stay completely on one side or the other? Does it bounce up and down from one minute to the next? Does it stay mostly on one side but occasionally dip the other way?

Provide each child with a Check Your Respect Line worksheet. Allow 5-10 minutes for children to answer questions 1-3.

ASK: Is anyone willing to share their response for their church “respect line?”

Tips for the Discussion

- ◆ Encourage conversation and reflection on their respect for God’s house.
- ◆ Are they actively worshipping when they are here?
- ◆ Are they taking the opportunity to learn about God?
- ◆ Or are they checking out or going through the motions?
- ◆ Are they being openly disrespectful?
- ◆ Is their behavior or approach different in Sunday school than “Big Church?”
- ◆ Discuss that disrespect for God’s house is not always outwardly visible. A respectful approach includes what’s in their hearts and heads.

SAY: Now that you’ve thought about your own church “respect lines” I want you to consider how we can keep our church “respect lines” in the top section. Get with a partner and come up with a few ideas together. We will then share with the class.

Allow 5-10 minutes for partners to share ideas. After, have each group share one idea with the large group. If you have a small group, or time is running short, it may make sense to do this entirely as a large group rather than breaking into partners.

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,

Help us to worship God and show Him respect at church and in our lives. Thank you for the example of Jesus to help guide us.

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.

Check Your Respect Line

1. When you visit a friend's home, what does your respect line look like? Why?
2. What does your respect line look like when you're in your own home? Why might it be different from being in a friend's home?
3. When you come to church what does your "respect line" look like?
4. What are some ways you can you're your church "respect line" on the top side?