

Support Your Team!

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Standing up for Christ

Scripture: Matthew 10

Memory Verse: Matthew 10:32 - 'Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.'

The Children's Sermon

Today, I want to talk about something really important and a bit brave. Imagine if I walked down the street holding this big cross. What do you think this big cross tells people about me? That's right, it says I'm a Christian. But why is holding a cross and showing I'm a Christian a brave thing to do? Well, just like some people might get upset if they see someone cheering for a sports team they don't like, there are people who might get upset when they see someone showing they love Jesus. This is what we call Christian persecution. It means being treated badly because you follow Jesus.

Now, you might wonder, why would anyone be mean to someone just because they love Jesus? Well, some people might believe in different things, or sometimes, they might not understand what being a Christian is all about. They might think it's strange or different, and sometimes, people get scared or angry about things that are different. That's why being open about being a Christian can sometimes be a bit scary because of Christian persecution.

But here's the thing - being a Christian is all about love, kindness, and treating others well, just like Jesus taught us. Jesus was all about helping people, being kind, and

showing love to everyone, even those who weren't always nice to him. And that's what we're called to do too, even if it's hard sometimes because of Christian persecution.

Now, imagine if every Christian decided to hide their cross, to not show their love for Jesus because they were afraid. What do you think would happen? It would be really hard for others to learn about Jesus's love, right? That's why it's so important for us to be brave, to carry our crosses, and to show the world that being a Christian is all about love.

But how can we do that, especially when we're afraid of Christian persecution? Well, we can start small. Maybe it's saying a prayer before eating, even if we're at school or somewhere public. Or maybe it's being kind to someone who is not always nice to us, showing them the love of Jesus through our actions. It's these little things that can make a big difference.

And remember, even when things get tough, Jesus is always with us. He knows what it's like to face hard times and Christian persecution. After all, he carried his cross, knowing it would lead to him being hurt because he loved us so much. So, when we carry our little crosses, whether it's actually wearing a cross necklace or just showing love like Jesus did, we're never alone. Jesus is right there with us, helping us be brave.

It's also really important to stick together. Just like being on a sports team, being part of a church means we're part of a team. And teams support each other, especially when things get tough because of Christian persecution. We can pray for each other, help each other, and remind each other that we're all loved by Jesus, no matter what.

And guess what? When we show love, even to those who might not understand us or who might be mean to us because we're Christians, we're showing them what Jesus is all about. Sometimes, our kindness and love can help change their minds and hearts. That's pretty powerful, isn't it?

So, let's be brave together. Let's carry our crosses, not be afraid of Christian persecution, and show the world the love of Jesus. It might not always be easy, but it's so, so important. And remember, Jesus is with us every step of the way, cheering us on, loving us, and helping us be brave.

In the end, being a Christian isn't just about facing tough times or Christian persecution; it's about spreading love, kindness, and hope everywhere we go, just like Jesus did. And that's the most important and bravest thing of all. Let's be brave, carry our crosses, and show the world what being a Christian is all about.

Bible Memory Verse

Matthew 10:32 - 'Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.'

You Will Need:

- Colored paper
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors

Get Ready:

- Cut the colored paper into small, card-sized pieces.

-Write the memory verse on a large poster board and display it where all the children can see it.

Do This:

1. Ask each child to choose a piece of colored paper and write the memory verse on it using markers or crayons. Encourage them to decorate their card with drawings that represent what the verse means to them.
2. Once everyone has finished their cards, gather the children in a circle. Ask volunteers to share their card and explain their drawings.
3. Conclude the activity by discussing the importance of acknowledging Jesus in our lives. Encourage the children to place their cards somewhere they will see them every day as a reminder of their commitment to acknowledge Jesus before others.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A Bible or printed copies of Matthew 10
- Large sheets of paper
- Markers or colored pencils
- Sticky notes
- A small cross or religious symbol for each child
- A "mailbox" (any box or container will do, with a slot cut in the top)

Get Ready:

- Read through Matthew 10 and familiarize yourself with the key themes, especially those about standing up for Christ, the cost of discipleship, and the promise of reward for those who persevere.
- Prepare the "mailbox" and place it at the front of the room.

- Set up a station with the large sheets of paper and markers/colored pencils.
- Write out some key verses from Matthew 10 on sticky notes.

Do this:

1. Start by reading Matthew 10 together as a class. Encourage the children to listen for verses that talk about being brave and standing up for their beliefs.
2. After the reading, ask the children to reflect on a time they had to stand up for something they believed in or imagine a situation where they might have to. Have them draw a picture or write about this on the large sheets of paper using the markers or colored pencils.
3. Next, hand out the sticky notes with the key verses to the children and ask them to stick these around their artwork, connecting the Scripture to their personal reflections or stories.
4. Invite the children to come forward and place their artwork around the room, creating a gallery of bravery and faith.
5. Finally, give each child a small cross or religious symbol. Ask them to write a prayer or a pledge on another sticky note about how they plan to stand up for Christ in their daily lives. Once they've written their pledge, have them fold it and place it in the "mailbox" as a symbolic offering of their commitment to God.
6. Close with a group prayer, asking God to give each child the strength to stand up for their faith and to remember the lessons of Matthew 10 in their daily lives.

Snack Activity: Shepherd's Staff Pretzels

You'll Need:

- 1 package of breadstick dough
- 1 container of baking soda
- 1 large pot of water

- Coarse salt
- Parchment paper
- Baking sheets

Get Ready: Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C). Line your baking sheets with parchment paper for easy clean-up.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that in Matthew 10, Jesus sends out his disciples like sheep among wolves, instructing them to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Discuss how a shepherd uses a staff to guide and protect his sheep, symbolizing Jesus' guidance and protection over us.
2. Divide the breadstick dough into strips. Let each child roll a strip into a long, thin rope, then curve the top to form a shepherd's staff shape, symbolizing their commitment to stand up for Christ and follow His guidance.
3. Boil a large pot of water and add a few tablespoons of baking soda. Carefully dip each 'staff' into the boiling water for 30 seconds, then place on the prepared baking sheets. Sprinkle with coarse salt to represent the 'salt of the earth' as Jesus' followers.
4. Bake in the preheated oven for about 15 minutes or until golden brown. While the pretzels bake, continue the discussion on Matthew 10, focusing on the courage and faith required to stand up for Christ in the world today.
5. Allow the pretzels to cool slightly before enjoying this snack together, reinforcing the lesson that, as followers of Christ, we are called to be both gentle and strong in our faith.

Game Activity: Discipleship Tag

You'll Need:

- A large open space, preferably outdoors
- Pieces of cloth or paper (enough for each participant)
- Markers
- A loudspeaker or a way to play music

Get Ready: Write different challenges based on Matthew 10 on each piece of cloth or paper. These challenges should be actions that represent standing up for Christ, such as 'Share a time Jesus helped you', 'Name a way you can help someone this week in Jesus' name', or 'Pray for someone you know needs it'. Scatter these pieces around the play area.

Do this:

1. Divide the children into two groups: Disciples and Crowds. The Disciples are trying to spread the word of Jesus (represented by the pieces of cloth/paper), and the Crowds are trying to ignore or avoid hearing it.
2. When the music starts, Disciples try to tag members of the Crowds. If tagged, the Crowd member must pick up one of the pieces of cloth/paper, read the challenge aloud, and perform it if possible.
3. After a set time, stop the music. Discuss as a group how it felt to share and stand up for their faith, and how the challenges relate to the teachings in Matthew 10.

Craft Activity: Courageous Messengers for Christ

You'll Need:

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

- String or yarn
- Hole punch

Get Ready: Read Matthew 10 together as a class, focusing on verses 16-33. Discuss what it means to be a messenger for Christ and the courage it requires.

Do this:

1. Each child selects their favorite verse from Matthew 10. They write it on a piece of construction paper with markers or crayons, decorating it with drawings that represent the message of the verse.
2. Using scissors, the children cut out their decorated verse in the shape of a dove, symbolizing peace and the Holy Spirit.
3. They punch a hole at the top of their dove and thread a piece of string through it, creating a hanging decoration. Encourage them to hang their dove in their room or somewhere at home where it will remind them to stand up for Christ and be courageous messengers of His love and truth.

Prayer Activity: Courageous Witnesses for Christ

You'll Need:

- A Bible or Bible app
- Small stones (one for each child)
- Permanent markers

Get Ready: Gather all materials and set up a comfortable space for the activity. Choose specific verses from Matthew 10 that focus on standing up for Christ and being witnesses to His teachings.

Do this:

1. Start by reading selected verses from Matthew 10 together, focusing on the theme of standing up for Christ and not being afraid. Discuss what it means to be a witness for Christ in everyday life.
2. Give each child a small stone and a permanent marker. Have them write a word or draw a symbol on the stone that represents their commitment to being courageous for Christ.
3. Encourage each child to share their stone and explain their chosen word or symbol. Conclude with a group prayer, asking God to give them strength to stand up for Christ and be His witnesses in the world.