

Show Us Your King

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: 5th Sunday in Lent

Scripture: John 12:20-33

Memory Verse: John 12:24 - Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

The Children's Sermon

It's been a long time in America since we have lived under the rule and power of a king. It's been more than 200 years! That's a long time before you were born. In fact, it is a long time before anyone here was born. It is hard for us to understand what life with a King or a Queen is like.

What do you think of when you think of a KING. (Let the children answer you.)

Jesus is sometimes called a King, yet he didn't look like one. He didn't wear a crown. He wore the same kind of clothes everyone else was wearing. He didn't live in a palace or a castle. He lived in an ordinary house and often slept on the road as he traveled with his disciples. He didn't sit on a throne with lots of guards and servants watching out for his safety and well being. He wasn't married to a Queen. He didn't seem to come from a Royal Family.

When Jesus and his followers talked about Jesus and the Kingdom of heaven, they were puzzled. If Jesus is a king, why doesn't he look like a king? they wondered.

In today's Bible story, a group of people who were interested in Jesus but weren't quite sure about him came to the disciples and asked questions about this new KING. They wanted to see Jesus in all his kingly splendor.

Jesus answered them in a way which would not make sense to them at the time, but would become clearer in the very near future. His words were hard to understand.

(Show the children a picture of Jesus either in ordinary attire or perhaps wearing a crown of thorns) Jesus told them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." He said some other things, too. We just read the story from the Bible. But not much of it made sense to the people who asked the question. They must have been thinking, "Why doesn't he answer our question? What's the big secret?"

His words can still puzzle us. What Jesus is saying to these curious people is "Wait and see." Jesus knew that something important was about to happen. If he told them exactly what was to happen, it wouldn't have made it any easier for his listeners. They might have been even more curious and confused... and maybe a bit scared.

Now, let's talk more about when Jesus predicts his death. It sounds very sad, doesn't it? But Jesus was trying to tell everyone something very important. He was trying to tell them that even though things might look really bad, there's always hope and something good can come out of it.

Jesus predicting his death was his way of telling us that he was going to do something very brave. He was going to sacrifice himself because he loves us so much. He wanted to make sure we could be with God forever. That's a really big kind of love, isn't it?

Let's keep that in our hearts, especially in the next two weeks as we get ready to celebrate Easter. We'll see that Jesus really is a King, but not the kind of king we might expect. He's a king of love, hope, and new beginnings.

Bible Memory Verse

John 12:24 - Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

You Will Need:

- Paper cups
- Soil
- Wheat seeds

Get Ready:

- Gather all materials and set up a table where each child can work.
- Print out the memory verse on small cards, one for each child.

Do This:

1. Give each child a paper cup, a handful of soil, and a few wheat seeds.
2. Have them fill the cup with soil and then plant the wheat seeds in the soil.
3. While they are planting, discuss the meaning of the memory verse. Explain how a seed must be buried in the soil (die) in order to grow and produce more seeds (bring forth life). Relate this to how Jesus died and was buried, but then rose again to give us eternal life.

4. Place the cups in a sunny spot and encourage the children to take them home and watch the seeds grow, reminding them of the lesson of the seed dying to produce many seeds, just like Jesus.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A small pot for each child
- Soil
- Wheat seeds
- Watering cans or cups
- Paper and markers
- A cross made of any material
- Bible or printed copies of John 12:20-33

Get Ready:

- Set up a table with pots, soil, seeds, and watering cans.
- Place the cross at the center of the activity area.
- Distribute paper and markers on another table.
- Have the Bible passage ready to be read aloud.

Do this:

1. ****Introduction****: Start by reading John 12:20-33 aloud to the group. Emphasize verses 24-26, where Jesus talks about the grain of wheat dying to produce many seeds and following Him.

2. ****Seed Planting Activity****: *(You can use the pots and seeds from the Bible Memory Verse activity)* Each child gets a small pot. They fill it with soil and plant a wheat seed.

As they plant, discuss how the seed represents Jesus, who died and was buried, and through His death and resurrection, brought eternal life to many. This action symbolizes our faith in Jesus' sacrifice and how we grow by following Him.

3. ****Watering and Reflection****: After planting their seeds, children water them. Explain how water is essential for the seed to grow, just as prayer and following Jesus' teachings are vital for our spiritual growth. Ask the children to think about what they can do to follow Jesus more closely in their lives.

4. ****Crafting Our Commitments****: At the table with paper and markers, invite each child to write or draw something they can do to follow Jesus better. It could be being kinder, helping others, praying more, etc. Encourage them to place their commitment paper near their planted seed at home as a reminder.

5. ****Closing with the Cross****: Gather the children around the cross. Lead a short prayer asking for God's help to follow Jesus more closely, to grow in faith like the seeds they planted, and to remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us. Encourage them to check their seeds daily as a reminder of their commitment to grow in faith and follow Jesus.

Snack Activity: Grain of Wheat Snack Cups

You'll Need:

- Clear plastic cups
- Chocolate pudding (pre-made or ingredients to make it)
- Crushed graham crackers
- Gummy worms
- Candy corn (to represent grains of wheat)
- Plastic spoons

Get Ready: If making pudding from scratch, prepare it ahead of time according to the package instructions. Set up a work area for each child with all the materials they will need.

Do this:

1. Fill the bottom third of the clear plastic cup with chocolate pudding to represent the earth.
2. Add a layer of crushed graham crackers on top of the pudding to represent the soil.
3. Place a few candy corn pieces (grains of wheat) into the 'soil'. Explain how in John 12:24, Jesus says, 'Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.' Discuss the meaning of this scripture as they work.
4. Add a gummy worm to the cup to represent the life within the soil.
5. Encourage the children to reflect on the importance of sacrifice and how Jesus's teachings and sacrifice can bear fruit in our own lives as they enjoy their snack.

Game Activity: Seeds of Glory Hopscotch

You'll Need:

- Sidewalk chalk
- A small stone or beanbag for each player
- A Bible or printed copy of John 12:20-33

Get Ready: Use the sidewalk chalk to draw a hopscotch grid on the pavement. Each square should represent a key theme from John 12:20-33. For example, the first square could be 'Greeks Seeking Jesus,' the second 'The Hour Has Come,' the third 'Grain of

Wheat,' and so on, ending with 'Glorify Your Name' and 'When I am lifted up.' Write these themes inside the squares.

Do this:

1. Before starting the game, gather the children and read John 12:20-33 together. Discuss the meaning of the passage, focusing on the themes you've drawn into the hopscotch squares.
2. Each player takes a turn tossing their stone or beanbag onto the first square. If it lands within the boundaries, they hop through the squares on one foot, skipping the square with their stone or beanbag. When they reach the end, they turn around and hop back, picking up their stone or beanbag on the way.
3. After each turn, the player shares a thought or prayer related to the theme of the square they reached. This could be a hope for understanding Jesus better, a way they can 'die to themselves' like the grain of wheat, or a commitment to help lift Jesus up in their lives.
4. The game continues until each child has had multiple turns and the group feels they've reflected on each aspect of the scripture passage.

Craft Activity: Seeds of Faith: A Lenten Growth

Chart

You'll Need:

- A large poster board or roll of paper
- Markers, crayons, or paint
- Seed packets or pictures of seeds and plants
- Glue or tape
- A Bible

Get Ready: Read John 12:20-33 together, focusing on the metaphor of a seed dying to produce many seeds. Discuss how Jesus uses this image to teach about life, death, and resurrection.

Do this:

1. On the poster board, draw a large tree with branches but no leaves. At the base of the tree, draw or glue pictures of seeds. Label the tree with the title 'Seeds of Faith: A Lenten Growth Chart'.
2. Have each child select a seed packet or picture. On the back, they write a personal growth goal for Lent related to the scripture, such as 'showing more kindness' or 'praying every day'.
3. Each week of Lent, have the children reflect on their goal and their growth in faith. As they report progress, they can draw or glue a leaf on the tree branches to represent their growth. Encourage them to think about how, like a seed, their faith can grow and produce good in the world.

Prayer Activity: Seeds of Faith: Praying and Growing with Jesus

You'll Need:

- Potted plants from a prior activity

Do this:

1. Start with a discussion on John 12:20-33, focusing on the metaphor of a grain of wheat dying to produce many seeds. Explain how this relates to Jesus' sacrifice and how our faith can grow from His teachings.

2. Encourage each child to say an internal prayer inspired by the scripture, asking for their faith to grow like the seeds they are planting.
3. Conclude with a group prayer, asking God to help each seed and each child's faith to grow strong and healthy, reflecting on Jesus' sacrifice and love.