

No Substitute

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: There is no substitute for God.

Scripture: Exodus 20:2-3

Memory Verse: Exodus 20:3 'You shall have no other gods before me.'

The Children's Sermon

It is that way with God. There is only one God and nothing can take his place. Nothing comes close. God comforts us and makes our lives sweet.

People try to substitute a lot of stuff for God. It may be new cars, new toys, new clothes, or new games. And all that stuff can make us feel good for a while, but only God can satisfy us and make our lives sweet.

He is the real thing, don't settle for anything less.

Imagine you have a big, beautiful puzzle. This puzzle is your life. There's one piece that fits perfectly in the middle. That piece is God. You can try to put other things in that spot - like video games, TV shows, or even friends and family. But remember, there's only one God, and He's the piece that fits just right. Without Him, the puzzle isn't complete.

Now, think about when you're really thirsty. You might dream of a cold, sweet drink to make you feel better. God is like that drink, but even better. He quenches our thirst in a

way nothing else can. Just like there's only one God, there's only one thing that can truly satisfy our hearts and souls, and that's God's love.

Sometimes, we might feel lonely or sad. We might think that if we have the newest toy or the latest game, we'll feel better. And it might work for a little bit. But those feelings come back. That's because there's a special place in our hearts that only God can fill. Because there's only one God, He's the only one who can make us feel whole and truly happy.

God's love is like a superpower. It can make us feel strong when we're weak, and it can make us feel loved when we're lonely. Remember, there's only one God, and His love is the biggest and the best. No superhero or TV character can match up to how amazing God is. He's the ultimate friend and hero.

And here's something really cool about God: He's always there for us. No matter what. Even when we mess up or forget to talk to Him, He's still there. Because there's only one God, He's able to be everywhere, for everyone, all at once. That's something no one else can do.

God also has a plan for each of us. He made us all special and unique. Sometimes, we might not understand His plan, but we can trust Him. He knows what's best for us because He loves us more than anyone else could. Remember, there's only one God, and He's got the whole world in His hands, including you and me.

Praying to God is like talking to your best friend. You can tell Him anything - your secrets, your wishes, and even the things that make you sad. God listens because He

cares. And because there's only one God, He has the power to help us in ways we can't even imagine.

Now, let's think about sharing. We share our toys, our snacks, and our stories. God wants us to share something very special, too: His love. Because there's only one God, sharing His love is like sharing the most precious gift we have. When we show kindness, help others, and speak gently, we're sharing a piece of God's love.

Remember, even though we have fun toys and games, and we love our families and friends very much, there's only one God who can make our hearts truly happy. He's the best friend we could ever ask for. So, let's make sure to keep Him in the center of our lives, just like the centerpiece of a puzzle. That way, our lives will be as sweet and complete as can be.

Let's pray and thank God for being the one true God who loves us, listens to us, and is always there for us. And let's ask Him to help us remember that He's the most important part of our lives. Amen.

So, kids, always remember: there's only one God, and He's the best part of everything. Keep Him close, and your life will be filled with joy and love.

Bible Memory Verse

Exodus 20:3 'You shall have no other gods before me.'

You Will Need:

- Construction paper
- Markers or crayons

-Stickers with various themes (animals, stars, sports, etc.)

Get Ready:

-Gather all materials and set up a work area for each child.

-Write the memory verse on a large piece of paper and display it where all the children can see.

Do This:

1. Ask the children to think about things that are important to them and discuss how sometimes we can let these things become too important, like 'gods' in our lives.

2. Have each child choose stickers that represent things they enjoy or find important and use the markers or crayons to draw or write these things on their construction paper.

3. Encourage the children to place the memory verse at the top or center of their paper. Discuss how keeping God first in our lives helps us keep everything else in perspective.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Paper and pencils for each child

- A variety of small objects (toys, stones, shells, etc.)

- A box or container to hold the objects

- Bible or printed copies of Exodus 20:2-3

Get Ready:

- Write out Exodus 20:2-3 on a large piece of paper or board where all the children can see it.

- Place all the small objects into the box or container.
- Prepare a space where children can sit in a circle.

Do this:

1. **Introduction to the Scripture**: Start by reading Exodus 20:2-3 aloud to the group. Discuss the meaning of having no other gods before God, emphasizing the importance of worshiping only God and not substituting Him with anything else.
2. **Object Lesson - "No Substitutes"**: Pass the box around the circle, allowing each child to take one object from it without looking. Once everyone has an object, ask them to think about how sometimes people can make the mistake of valuing things or even other people more than God. Discuss how the object they picked might represent something that people sometimes wrongly put in God's place. Encourage sharing and discuss why God is irreplaceable and why we should put Him first in our lives.
3. **Creative Response**: Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to draw or write about something they can do this week to show that they are putting God first in their lives, inspired by the scripture Exodus 20:2-3. This could be a promise to spend time in prayer each morning, to read the Bible every day, or to help someone in need as an act of service to God. After they're done, if time allows, invite children to share their plans with the group as a form of commitment.

Snack Activity: No Other Gods Edible Craft

You'll Need:

- Plain cookies (large enough to write on, like sugar cookies or round shortbread cookies)
- Edible markers or icing pens in various colors
- Small plates and napkins

Get Ready: Lay out all the cookies on a clean table or counter. Make sure each child has access to at least one cookie, and place the edible markers or icing pens where everyone can reach them.

Do this:

1. Read Exodus 20:2-3 together: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.' Discuss what it means to have no other gods but the one true God.
2. Ask the children to think of symbols or words that remind them of God's uniqueness and why there is no substitute for Him. They can think of things like a heart for love, a cross for Jesus, light for guidance, etc.
3. Have each child use the edible markers or icing pens to decorate their cookie with the symbols or words they've thought of. As they work, encourage them to share why they chose each symbol or word.
4. Once everyone is done, gather the children to share their cookies and explain their designs. This is a great time for a group discussion about the importance of keeping God first in our lives.

Game Activity: God is #1 Relay

You'll Need:

- A large open space (indoor or outdoor)
- Two sets of objects to represent modern 'idols' (e.g., toy money, smartphones, game controllers, etc.)
- Two baskets or containers
- Bible verse cards with Exodus 20:2-3 written on them

Get Ready: Before the activity, set up a start line and a finish line. Place the baskets at the start line, and scatter the 'idol' objects near the finish line. Write Exodus 20:2-3 on cards and place them in each basket.

Do this:

1. Divide the children into two teams and line them up at the start line. Explain that in this relay, they will learn that God should be first in our lives, with no substitutes.
2. When you say 'Go,' the first player from each team races to the pile of 'idols,' picks one item, and races back to place it in their team's basket. Before returning to the line, they must pick a Bible verse card from the basket and read Exodus 20:2-3 aloud to their team.
3. The game continues until all the 'idol' objects are collected and all team members have had a turn. Conclude the activity by discussing how the objects they collected can sometimes become 'idols' or distractions from putting God first in our lives, as reminded by Exodus 20:2-3.

Craft Activity: No Other Gods: A Commandment

Craft

You'll Need:

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Markers or crayons
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Magazines or printed images (optional)
- Template of tablets (provided by teacher)

Get Ready: Prepare a template of the two tablets of the Ten Commandments for each child. If possible, print or make available images that represent modern 'gods' (like money, fame, technology) for the kids to choose from.

Do this:

1. Have each child cut out the template of the two tablets. On one tablet, they should write 'Exodus 20:2-3' at the top. Below this, they will draw or glue pictures that represent modern-day 'gods' or things people might put before God.
2. On the second tablet, they should write 'There is no substitute for God.' Below this, they are encouraged to draw or write about ways they can honor God above all else in their daily lives.
3. Once completed, each child will share their tablets with the class, explaining the modern 'gods' they chose and how they plan to honor the true God in their lives. This encourages reflection on the commandment and how it applies today.

Prayer Activity: No Other Gods: Crafting Our Prayers

You'll Need:

- A Bible
- Colored markers or pencils
- Blank paper or prayer journal pages

Get Ready: Gather all materials and open your Bible to Exodus 20:2-3.

Do this:

1. Read Exodus 20:2-3 together, discussing what it means to have no other gods before the Lord. Emphasize that God delivered His people and wants to be first in our lives.
2. Ask each child to think of things in their lives that might accidentally become more important than God (like video games, sports, or even friendships) and write or draw them on one side of the paper.
3. On the other side of the paper, invite them to write a prayer or draw something that represents their commitment to putting God first, asking for His help to keep Him as their number one priority.
4. Share a moment of prayer together, asking God to help everyone remember to put Him first in all things. Encourage children to keep their paper as a reminder of their commitment and prayer.