

Making Choices

LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: The choices we make determine how we grow

Scripture: Luke 8:11

Memory Verse: The seed is the word of God. - Luke 8:11

The Children's Sermon

Hi kids! Today, we're going to talk about a very special seed. But it's not just any seed—it's the Seed of the Word. This seed is like the tiny seeds we plant in the ground, but instead of growing into plants or flowers, it grows inside our hearts. It's the seed of faith in Jesus Christ.

Imagine you have a tiny cotton seed in your hand. You want it to grow into a big, strong cotton plant, right? To do that, you have to make the best choices for it. You need to put it in good soil, give it enough water, and make sure it gets plenty of sunlight.

Just like the cotton seed, the Seed of the Word needs special care to grow. Did you know that we have to make choices to help this seed grow so we can become mature Christians? What do you think some of these choices are? (Pause for answers) That's right! We need to choose to pray, study God's Word, and go to church.

Now, let's imagine our hearts are like little gardens. When we hear about Jesus and decide to follow Him, it's like planting the Seed of the Word in our heart-garden. But for it to grow, we need to take care of it every day.

One way to help the Seed of the Word grow is by talking to God through prayer. Just like plants need water to grow, our faith needs prayer. When we pray, we're watering the Seed of the Word, helping it to sprout and grow stronger.

Another way to help it grow is by reading the Bible. The Bible is like sunlight for our seed. It helps us understand how much God loves us and teaches us how to live. When we read the Bible, it's like shining light on our Seed of the Word, making it grow tall and strong.

Going to church is also important. Church is like the garden where many seeds grow together. When we go to church, we meet other people who have the Seed of the Word growing in their hearts. We can learn from them, and they can learn from us. It's like all the plants in the garden getting stronger together.

Sometimes, just like in a real garden, weeds can try to grow around our Seed of the Word. These weeds can be things like unkind words, bad choices, or not listening to what God says. We need to pull these weeds out, so they don't stop our seed from growing.

Remember, even when it's hard and the weeds seem big, God is always with us. He gives us the strength to take care of our heart-garden. And the amazing thing is, the more we take care of the Seed of the Word, the more it grows, and the more it can spread to others.

Our Seed of the Word can grow so big that it starts to show in our actions. We become kinder, more patient, and more loving. People can see the beautiful plant that has

grown from the Seed of the Word in our hearts, and it might help them want to plant their own seed too.

Let's say a prayer together:

Dear God, please help us to make wise choices so the Seed of the Word can grow in our hearts. Help us to pray, read the Bible, and go to church. Show us how to pull out the weeds and be kind to others. Thank you for loving us and helping our seeds grow. Amen.

Bible Memory Verse

The seed is the word of God. - Luke 8:11

You Will Need:

- Several small pots or cups
- Potting soil
- Bean seeds
- Watering can or cup
- Stickers and markers for decorating
- Printed pictures of plants and weeds

Get Ready:

- Gather all the materials on a large table.
- Print out pictures of various plants and weeds, and have them ready to show the children.

Do This:

1. Start by showing the children the pictures of plants and weeds. Discuss how plants grow strong and healthy when they are taken care of, but weeds can take over if we're not careful. Relate this to how listening to God's word helps us grow, but making bad choices can lead us away from Him.
2. Give each child a pot or cup, potting soil, and a few bean seeds. Let them fill their pots with soil and plant the seeds. While they work, talk about how the seed represents God's word and how we need to 'plant' it in our hearts by listening and following what it says.
3. Allow the children to decorate their pots with stickers and markers. As they decorate, encourage them to think about the good choices they can make to help their 'seed' grow. Remind them to water their seeds and watch them grow at home, just like they should nurture their faith by making good choices and following God's word.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Potted plants from the Bible Memory Verse
- Markers and stickers for decorating pots
- A printed picture of a heart with Luke 8:11 written on it

Get Ready:

- Prepare a short story or explanation about Luke 8:11, focusing on how our choices are like seeds that can grow into something beautiful or be wasted.
- Set up a table with the decorating materials.
- Have the printed hearts and a sample decorated pot as an example.

Do this:

1. ****Decorate the Pots****: Start by letting each child decorate their pot with markers and stickers. Encourage them to think about the kind of "heart" they want to have—open and ready for God's words, like good soil ready for seeds.
2. ****Taking Care****: Conclude by encouraging them to take their plant home, care for it, and watch it grow. Remind them that just like they are taking care of their plant, they should also take care of their heart by making good choices and letting God's word grow within them.

Snack Activity: Garden of Growth Snack

You'll Need:

- A small bowl of hummus or peanut butter (soil)
- Pretzel sticks (to plant)
- Sliced cucumbers, carrots, and celery (plants)
- A plate (your garden)

Get Ready: Wash all the vegetables and place them on a plate.

Do this:

1. Spread a layer of hummus or peanut butter on the bottom of another plate. Explain that this is like the soil where we plant seeds. Just like in Luke 8:11, our hearts are like soil where God's word is planted.
2. Let the children 'plant' their pretzel sticks in the hummus or peanut butter. Discuss how the choices we make are like deciding what to plant in our garden. Good choices help us grow strong and healthy, like beautiful plants.
3. Use the sliced vegetables to create a garden scene on the plate around the pretzel sticks. As they do this, explain that choosing to listen and follow God's word helps us

grow just like these plants. Each vegetable can represent a good choice we make, such as being kind, sharing, or listening.

4. Enjoy your edible garden! As you eat, remind the children that just like we need to eat good food to grow, we need to feed our hearts with good choices and God's word to grow spiritually.

Game Activity: Seedlings of Choice

You'll Need:

- A large open space, preferably outdoors
- Sidewalk chalk
- Small stones or beanbags for each player

Get Ready: Draw a large flower on the ground with the sidewalk chalk. Each petal should have a word or picture representing a choice (e.g., sharing, lying, helping, yelling). The center of the flower represents growth, and you can draw something that symbolizes growth like a sun or a tree.

Do this:

1. Have the children stand at a starting line a few feet away from the flower. Explain that the flower represents our lives and the choices we make. The petals are different choices we can make every day.
2. Each child takes a turn tossing their stone or beanbag onto the flower. Wherever it lands, discuss as a group whether that choice helps us grow (like the seed in Luke 8:11) or stops us from growing. Use simple terms like, "Helping others makes our friendship garden grow," or "Lying is like a storm that hurts the garden."

3. After discussing, the child retrieves their stone or beanbag and the next child takes a turn. The aim is to help children understand that our choices are like seeds that can either grow into beautiful flowers or get lost among the weeds, just like in Luke 8:11.

Craft Activity: Planting Choices Garden

You'll Need:

- Popsicle sticks
- Construction paper (brown, green, and yellow)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers or colored pencils
- Small gems or beads

Get Ready:

1. Cut the brown and green construction paper into small rectangles, about 2 inches by 1 inch.
2. Cut the yellow construction paper into small squares, about 1 inch by 1 inch.
3. Cut the popsicle sticks in half.

Do this:

1. Give each child a popsicle stick and have them write "Luke 8:11" on one end and "The Parable of the Sower" on the other end using markers or colored pencils.
2. Have the children glue the small brown rectangle onto the bottom of the popsicle stick, covering about an inch of the stick. This will represent the soil.
3. Next, have them glue a small green rectangle on top of the brown one, covering half of the brown rectangle. This will represent the shallow soil.

4. Then, have them glue a small yellow square on top of the green rectangle, covering half of the green rectangle. This will represent the thorny ground.
5. Lastly, have them glue a small gem or bead on top of the yellow square, representing the good soil.
6. Allow the glue to dry and have the children share with each other what their craft represents.
7. Hang the completed crafts in a visible place as a reminder of the lesson on how our choices determine how we grow as individuals.

Prayer Activity: Growing With God

You'll Need:

- Construction paper, cut into flower shapes
- Markers or crayons
- Glue stick
- Scissors

Get Ready: Before starting the prayer activity, cut out several flower shapes from construction paper that are large enough for the kids to write on. Also, make sure each child has a glue stick, markers or crayons, and scissors at their station.

Do this:

1. Begin by introducing the prayer activity and reading Luke 8:11 to the children. Explain to them that this Bible verse teaches us that just like plants grow, we also grow in our faith based on the choices we make.
2. Give each child a flower shape and have them write one good choice they have made recently on it. For example, choosing to help a friend in need or choosing to say a kind word instead of a mean one.

3. Once they have written their choice on the flower, have them cut it out and glue it onto a large piece of paper or poster board.
4. Encourage the children to continue writing and cutting out flower shapes with different good choices they have made. They can then glue them onto the poster board to create a whole garden of choices.
5. As they work on their flower garden, have them reflect on how each choice they make helps them to grow in their faith and become more like Jesus.
6. Once all the children have completed their flower gardens, gather them together and have them share one good choice they made and how it helped them to grow.
7. Close the prayer activity by saying a simple prayer with the children, thanking God for guiding us in making good choices and helping us to grow in our faith.