

Working For The Reward

LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Do What You're Told

Scripture: Matthew 21:28-32

Memory Verse: 'I will,' he answered, but he did not go. - Matthew 21:30

The Children's Sermon

When your parents ask you to do work around the house, what do you usually say? What does it mean when you say, "In a minute"? Do you really plan on doing the chore? Or are you hoping your mom will forget she asked? What if you say, "I don't want to" —what does that mean? Aren't you saying, "I don't want to please you, I only want to do that pleases me"? What if you say, "OK," but you don't do it? What does that mean?

The chief priests and elders said the son who told his father "No" but eventually worked in the vineyard did what the father wanted. But did he? The work was done, but did the son give his father the answer he wanted to hear? The son who said yes, but didn't go gave the right answer. But he didn't do the chore the father wanted him to do.

Do you think your mom and dad just want right answers? Or maybe they want you to give right answers and follow through on what you say you'll do. Jesus taught on this too. He said, "Just say a simple 'Yes, I will' or 'No, I won't.'" (Matt 5:37 NLT). Maybe that's when you should get the reward sticker. Not when a job is finished, but when you say, "Yes, I'll do that." And then you do it.

Now, let's talk more about a story Jesus told, called the Parable of the Two Sons. This story helps us understand why it's important to do what we say we will do. In the story, a father asked his two sons to work in the vineyard. The first son said, "No," but later, he changed his mind and went to help. The second son said, "Yes, sir, I will go," but he didn't go at all.

This story, the Parable of the Two Sons, teaches us a big lesson about saying "Yes" and actually doing it. It's like when your parents ask you to clean your room. If you say, "Yes, I'll clean my room," but then you don't do it, it's like being the second son in the story. But if you say, "No," and then decide to do it anyway, you're more like the first son.

But here's the thing, even though the first son did the work in the end, he still said "No" at first. That wasn't very nice, was it? It's always better to say "Yes" and mean it. That's being honest and kind. And when you do what you said you would, it shows you are trustworthy.

Imagine if every time you asked for a snack and your mom said, "Yes," but then didn't give you one. You would feel sad and maybe even a little upset, right? That's how your parents feel when you don't do what you say you will do.

Now, think about your friends. If you tell your friend you'll share your toy but then decide not to, how do you think your friend feels? It's just like the Parable of the Two Sons. Saying something and doing it are both very important.

Sometimes, saying "Yes" can be hard. Maybe the chore seems too big or not fun. But remember, when you help out, you're not just doing a chore; you're showing love to your family. It's like giving them a big hug with your actions.

And guess what? Jesus loves it when we do what we say we will do. He wants us to be like the son who goes to work in the vineyard, even if we're not excited about it at first. Jesus knows it's not always easy, but He's happy when we choose to do the right thing.

So, the next time you're asked to do something, remember the Parable of the Two Sons. Think about which son you want to be like. Do you want to be the one who says "Yes" and means it, or the one who says "Yes" but doesn't do anything? It's always better to be honest and do what you said you would do.

And here's a little secret: when you do things without being asked or after saying "Yes," you might find that you get more than just a sticker. You might get extra playtime, a special treat, or even just a big smile from your parents. And those things feel really good.

Let's try to be like the first son, but even better, let's say "Yes" and then do it! That way, we're not just talking the talk; we're walking the walk. And that's what Jesus wants us to do. He wants us to be helpers, to be kind, and to follow through on our promises.

Remember, the Parable of the Two Sons isn't just a story. It's a lesson for us to learn about being honest and doing what we say we will do. So, let's try our best to say "Yes, I will" and then really do it. That's how we can make Jesus, our parents, and ourselves happy.

Bible Memory Verse

'I will,' he answered, but he did not go. - Matthew 21:30

You Will Need:

- Colored paper
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons

Get Ready:

- Cut the colored paper into large heart shapes, one for each child.
- Write 'I Will' on each heart with a marker.

Do This:

1. Give each child a heart and ask them to think of something they can do this week to obey God or their parents. It could be anything from doing their chores without being asked to being kind to their siblings.
2. Have them write or draw this promise on their heart. Younger children can draw a picture, while older children can write a sentence.
3. Share in a circle, letting each child explain their 'I Will' promise. Encourage them to pray over their hearts, asking God to help them keep their promise.
4. Create a 'Promise Wall' where all the hearts are displayed. Remind the children to do what they said they would, just like the lesson teaches us to do what we're told.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A simple version of the Bible story from Matthew 21:28-32 printed out or summarized.
- Two large cardboard cutouts of trees labeled "Yes Tree" and "No Tree."
- A basket of fruit (can be real, plastic, or paper with loops for hanging).
- Sticky notes and pens.
- A "Vineyard" sign to designate the play area.

Get Ready:

- Set up the "Vineyard" area by placing the "Yes Tree" and "No Tree" at opposite ends.
- Place the basket of fruit near the trees.
- Write simple tasks on sticky notes (e.g., "Sing a song," "Jump 10 times," "Say 'please' and 'thank you'") and stick them to the fruit.
- Review the Bible story to be ready to tell it in an engaging way.

Do this:

1. **Story Time**: Start by gathering the children and telling them the story from Matthew 21:28-32. Emphasize the two sons' responses to their father's request and the importance of doing what we're told, not just saying we will.
2. **Vineyard Adventure**: Explain that the kids will now have a chance to be like the son who did what he was told. They will go to the "Vineyard" (play area) and choose a piece of fruit from either tree. Each fruit will have a simple task on it.
3. **Yes Tree, No Tree Game**: Children should decide if they want to be like the first son (saying 'no' but then doing the task - picking from the "No Tree" and then doing the task anyway) or like the second son (saying 'yes' but not doing - picking from the "Yes Tree" but not doing the task). After everyone picks, discuss the importance of our actions matching our words, just like the better choice in the story was to do what was asked.
4. **Reflection and Sharing**: After the game, gather the children and encourage them to share what they learned from the activity. Ask them how they can be more like the son who did what his father asked in their daily lives.

5. **Closing**: Conclude with a prayer, asking for help to be obedient and to do what we're told, just like the lesson from Matthew 21:28-32 teaches.

Snack Activity: Obedient Orchard Cups

You'll Need:

- Clear plastic cups
- Vanilla yogurt
- Green grapes
- Blueberries
- Small pretzel sticks
- Plastic knives or spoons for spreading

Get Ready: Wash all the fruit and set out all your materials on a clean table.

Do this:

1. Fill the bottom third of your clear plastic cup with vanilla yogurt to represent the ground. This is where our story starts, with a father asking his sons to work in the vineyard.
2. Next, use the green grapes to create a bunch of 'grapes' on top of the yogurt. Place them gently so they look like a little hill of grapes. This represents the vineyard that the father wanted his sons to work in.
3. Add a few blueberries around the grapes to represent other fruits of obedience, showing that when we listen and do what we're told, we can produce good things.
4. Finally, break small pretzel sticks in half and stick them upright into the yogurt around the grapes and blueberries to represent the fence around the vineyard, reminding us of the boundaries and responsibilities we have.

As you eat your Obedient Orchard Cups, think about the son who said he wouldn't go work in the vineyard but then changed his mind and did what his father asked. Let's remember to be like him and do what we're told, even if we don't want to at first.

Game Activity: Vineyard Helpers Tag

You'll Need:

- A large open space (either indoors or outdoors)
- Cones or markers to define boundaries
- A bell or a whistle

Get Ready: Set up a large rectangular play area using cones or markers to represent the vineyard. Designate one child to be the 'Owner' of the vineyard, and all other children are 'Workers'.

Do this:

1. The 'Owner' stands at one end of the vineyard, and the 'Workers' line up at the opposite end. The 'Owner' calls out commands related to tasks in the vineyard, such as 'Pick grapes!', 'Water plants!', or 'Dig around the trees!'. For each command, the 'Workers' must run to the 'Owner' performing an action that mimics the task (e.g., pretend to pick grapes). If the 'Owner' rings the bell or blows the whistle, the 'Workers' must freeze in place.
2. The 'Owner' then selects one task and announces it, such as 'I need someone to pick grapes!'. The 'Workers' who reach the 'Owner' first, performing the correct action, win a point for doing what they were told quickly and accurately.
3. After several rounds, switch roles so every child gets a chance to be the 'Owner'. The game emphasizes listening and quick response to instructions, reflecting the theme

'Do What You're Told' from Matthew 21:28-32, where one son says he will not go work in the vineyard but then does, showing actions are more important than words.

Craft Activity: Obedient Heart Garden

You'll Need:

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

Get Ready: Cut out heart shapes from the construction paper. These will be the 'flowers' for our garden. Prepare a large piece of blue or green paper to be the 'garden'.

Do this:

1. On each heart, have the children write different acts of obedience or good deeds they can do, inspired by the story of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-32. Examples could be 'helping with chores', 'listening to my parents', or 'sharing with my friends'.
2. Glue a popsicle stick to the back of each heart to create a 'flower stem'.
3. Arrange cotton balls on the bottom of the large paper to make 'clouds' or 'bushes'. Then, have the children 'plant' their obedient heart flowers by gluing the stem to the paper, creating a beautiful garden of good deeds.

Prayer Activity: Listening Hearts

You'll Need:

- A small plant or a picture of a vineyard
- Heart-shaped cutouts
- Markers or crayons

Get Ready: Before the class, read Matthew 21:28-32 and prepare a simple summary.

Write each child's name on a heart-shaped cutout.

Do this:

1. Show the children the small plant or picture of a vineyard and tell them the story from Matthew 21:28-32, focusing on listening and doing what we're told, just like the son who went to work in the vineyard after saying he wouldn't.
2. Ask the children to think of a time they did something they were asked to do, even if they didn't want to at first. Have them draw or write about it on their heart-shaped cutout.
3. Gather the heart cutouts and attach them around the plant or picture. Lead a prayer asking God to help us have listening hearts, willing to do what He asks of us, just like in the story. Encourage the children to say a simple 'Amen' after the prayer.