

Don't Miss Out

LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Don't miss out on God's invitation.

Scripture: Luke 14:16-24

Memory Verse: 'Come, for everything is now ready.' - Luke 14:17b

The Children's Sermon

Have you ever given a party and at the last minute no one you invited showed up? How did you feel? What did you do?

When we have a party or plan a special dinner we only send one invitation to each person we want to invite, but in the time that Jesus lived, people sent out two invitations. The first was to tell everyone about the event and let them know they were invited. The second was to tell them everything was ready and it was time for them to come.

Once upon a time, a man was having a big party and he invited a lot of friends. But when the party day came, all his friends started making excuses. One friend said, "I just bought a farm and need to go see it. Please excuse me." Another friend said, "I have bought some new oxen and I need to try them out." Yet another friend said, "I have just gotten married, and I can't come."

The man who was throwing the party, the host, became very upset. He told his servant to go out into the streets, the alleys, and the fields and invite everyone they found there. He wanted the blind, the crippled, and the poor to come until every seat at the

table was filled. Guess who didn't get to come? That's right. The ones who had been invited first. "Not one of those I first invited will get one bite of my food," the host said.

In this story, the host is like God, and the big party, the Heavenly banquet, is like a special place God has prepared for us. The first people invited were very special to God, but when Jesus came to invite them again, they were too busy. They thought other things were more important than being with God. So, God decided to invite everyone, not just the special few. That means God has invited you and me to His Heavenly banquet!

God's invitation to His Heavenly banquet is the most important invitation we will ever get. We don't want to miss it because we're too busy doing other things. Imagine if you were invited to the biggest, most fun party in the world, but you said, "No, thank you. I have to stay home and sort my socks." That would be silly, right? Well, missing God's Heavenly banquet for any reason is even sillier than that!

Sometimes, we might think we're too busy playing, or maybe we're upset or just don't feel like it. But God's Heavenly banquet is more amazing than the best game, the coolest toy, or the yummiest ice cream. It's a place where everyone is happy, where there's no sadness, and where we can be with God forever. It's like the best party ever that never ends!

Now, you might wonder, "How do I make sure I don't miss God's Heavenly banquet?" It's simple! You just need to say "Yes" to God. Saying "Yes" to God means we listen to Him, we try to do what He tells us in the Bible, and we talk to Him through prayer. It's like if someone sends you an invitation and you check the box that says, "Yes, I will come," and then you show up to the party.

Also, it's important to share about the Heavenly banquet with others. Just like the host in the story told his servant to invite everyone, we can tell our friends and family about God's love and His Heavenly banquet. Imagine how great it would be to have all your friends and family at the best party ever with you!

Remember, there are no excuses that are good enough to miss God's Heavenly banquet. Not sports, not TV shows, not even the busiest, busiest day. Nothing is more important than being with God. Sometimes, we might forget and think other things are more important, but we have to help each other remember. We can help our friends and family remember too.

Praying to God is like sending Him a letter back saying, "Yes, I want to come to Your Heavenly banquet." You can pray anytime, anywhere. You don't need fancy words. You can just talk to God like you talk to your best friend. You can tell Him you want to be at His Heavenly banquet and ask Him to help you remember what's really important.

Heavenly Father, thank you for inviting us to your Heavenly banquet. Help us to remember how important Your invitation is. Help us not to be too busy or too distracted by other things. We want to say "Yes" to You and be with You forever. Amen.

Bible Memory Verse

'Come, for everything is now ready.' - Luke 14:17b

You Will Need:

- Construction paper
- Scissors

- Markers or crayons
- Stickers (optional)

Get Ready:

- Cut the construction paper into invitation card shapes ahead of time.
- Set up a table with markers, crayons, scissors, and stickers for decoration.

Do This:

1. Tell the children they are going to make their own 'Invitation to God's Feast' cards. Explain that just like in the story, God invites us to be with Him and we shouldn't make excuses to miss out.
2. Have each child decorate their invitation card using markers, crayons, and stickers. Encourage them to write the memory verse on one side of the card.
3. Once everyone is done, gather the children and have them share their invitations. Discuss the importance of accepting God's invitation and not being too busy with other things.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Invitation cards (enough for each child)
- Markers or crayons
- Stickers for decoration
- A large "banquet table" setup (a long table with some chairs, pretend food items, and decorations)
- A simple costume for the teacher (something to signify a banquet host, like a fancy hat or apron)
- Bible or a children's Bible storybook

Get Ready:

- Write out simple, child-friendly invitations beforehand that say, "You're invited to God's Great Banquet!" Leave a space for the children to write their names.
- Set up your "banquet table" in one area of the room with pretend food items and decorations to make it look inviting.
- Dress in your simple costume to get into the role of the banquet host.

Do this:

1. **Story Time:** Start by telling the story from Luke 14:16-24 in simple terms. Explain that Jesus told this story to show us that God invites us to a special celebration (like the best party ever!), but we need to accept His invitation and not make excuses.
2. **Invitation Creation:** Give each child an invitation card, markers, and stickers. Ask them to write their names on the card as if they are accepting God's invitation. They can decorate their invitations with stickers and drawings to make them special.
3. **Banquet Participation:** Once everyone has finished their invitations, gather the children and have them bring their invitations to the "banquet table." As the host, warmly welcome each child to the table, thanking them for accepting God's invitation. Pretend to enjoy some of the food and talk about how wonderful it is to be part of God's special celebration.
4. **Reflection:** After the banquet, sit down with the children and discuss how it feels to be invited and to participate in something special. Emphasize that God's invitation is for everyone and how important it is not to miss out because of excuses.

5. **Closing Prayer:** Finish with a simple prayer, thanking God for His invitation to be with Him and asking for help to always accept His invitation with a happy heart.

Snack Activity: Feast of Invitations

You'll Need:

- Graham crackers
- Assorted fruit (grapes, strawberries, blueberries)
- Cream cheese or frosting
- Plastic knives
- Small plates

Get Ready: Wash all the fruit and lay them out on a plate. Place cream cheese or frosting in a small bowl.

Do this:

1. Spread cream cheese or frosting on a graham cracker using a plastic knife. This represents the tablecloth of God's great feast.
2. Choose fruits to decorate your graham cracker. Each fruit represents the different people invited to God's feast. Explain how God invites everyone to His feast, just like in Luke 14:16-24.
3. As you eat your snack, remember that God invites us to His special feast and we shouldn't make excuses to miss it. Talk about how we can accept God's invitation every day.

Game Activity: The Great Banquet Race

You'll Need:

- A large open space (indoors or outdoors)
- Cones or markers to set up stations
- Invitation cards (can be simple paper cards)
- A bell or whistle

Get Ready: Create several 'invitation stations' around the play area using cones or markers. Each station represents a different part of the story from Luke 14:16-24, such as the banquet table, the farm, the business, and the road. Write simple tasks on the invitation cards that relate to the excuses in the story (e.g., 'Help at the farm', 'Check on my business', 'Take care of my family'). Place these cards at the corresponding stations.

Do this:

1. Explain the story of the Great Banquet from Luke 14:16-24, emphasizing the importance of accepting God's invitation and not making excuses. Tell the children they will be racing to accept God's invitation.
2. Divide the children into teams. Each team starts at the banquet table without an invitation card.
3. When you say 'Go', one child from each team races to a station, completes the task on the card, and returns to the banquet table to 'accept the invitation'. The first team to collect an invitation from each station and return to the banquet table wins.
4. After the game, gather the children and discuss how it felt to race to accept the invitation and the importance of not missing out on God's invitation to us.

Craft Activity: God's Invitation Party Hat

You'll Need:

- Construction paper (various colors)

- Markers or crayons
- Stickers (optional)
- Glue or tape
- Scissors
- Ribbon or elastic string

Get Ready: Cut the construction paper into a large circle. This will be the base of the party hat.

Do this:

1. Explain the story from Luke 14:16-24, focusing on how God invites us to a special celebration, just like a party. Emphasize that we shouldn't make excuses to miss out on God's invitation.
2. Have the children decorate their large circle with markers, crayons, and stickers to represent the joy and excitement of accepting God's invitation. They can draw symbols like hearts, crosses, or even a banquet table.
3. Once the circle is decorated, help the children form it into a cone shape and secure it with glue or tape. Make two small holes on opposite sides of the base of the cone, and tie a piece of ribbon or elastic string to fit around their chin, so they can wear their party hat. This represents being ready and excited to join God's celebration.

Prayer Activity: God's Special Invitation

You'll Need:

- Colorful invitation cards (or paper to make them)
- Markers, crayons, and stickers for decoration
- A 'mailbox' (can be a shoebox or a simple box with a slot cut into it)

Get Ready: Before the activity, read Luke 14:16-24 to understand the story of the great banquet and God's invitation. Decorate the 'mailbox' together and place it in the center of your activity area.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that God invites us to a special gathering, just like in the story of the great banquet. God's invitation is for us to be with Him, learn from Him, and share His love.
2. Ask each child to think about what it means to accept God's invitation. Encourage them to think about ways they can show they are accepting God's invitation, like being kind, praying, reading the Bible, or helping others.
3. Have each child create their own 'invitation' from God. They can decorate it with markers, crayons, and stickers. On the card, they should write or draw one way they will accept God's invitation this week.
4. Once everyone is done, have them 'mail' their invitations to God by placing them in the mailbox. Finish with a prayer, asking God to help each child follow through with their commitment to accept His invitation.