

One Thing Leads To Another

LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: The nature of sin.

Scripture: Mark 6:26-27

Memory Verse: The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. - Mark 6:26

The Children's Sermon

I have a bag of potato chips and I would like to share them with you. I'm not sure that I have enough to go around, so just take one chip until I make sure there are enough for everyone. (pass the chips around until each child has one)

Hmm...I think I'll have one too. (eat a chip) Would anyone like another one? You know, that's the trouble with potato chips – if you eat one, you want another, and another, and another. In fact, there is a company that makes potato chips whose slogan is, "Bet you can't eat just one."[®] They know that one chip leads to another and before you know it, you have totally lost control and you have eaten the whole bag of chips.

That's the way it is with sin. Satan tempts us to do something wrong by telling us that it won't hurt anyone to do it just one time. Satan knows that if he can get us to do something once, he will be able to get us to do it again, and again, and again. Soon, we have totally lost control.

That's what happened to Herod and Herodias in our Bible story today. Herod had married Herodias and wanted John the Baptist to tell him that it was okay. John would refuse to tell him it was okay, because Herodias was the wife of Herod's brother.

On his birthday, Herod gave a big feast. He asked the daughter of Herodias to dance for him and his guests. When she danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests so much that he told her that he would give her anything she wanted.

The girl didn't know what to ask for, so she ran and asked her mother. Herodias saw her chance to get rid of John the Baptist, so she told her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. The girl hurried in to Herod and said, "I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

Herod was very sad, he didn't want to kill John, but he had promised the girl that he would give her anything she wanted.

This is what we call Herod's Dilemma. Herod was stuck between doing what was right and keeping his promise. It's like when you promise your friend you'll keep a secret, but then you find out it's something your parents should know about. It's hard to decide what to do.

Herod's Dilemma started even before the birthday party. Herod liked to watch Herodias, even though she was his brother's wife. That was not a good thing. Watching her led to wanting her, which led to making bad choices. That's how trouble starts - with one small bad choice.

When Herodias's daughter danced at the party, Herod was so happy that he made a big promise without thinking. Sometimes, when we're really happy or really sad, we might say things without thinking too. That's why it's important to always take a moment and think before we speak.

Herod's Dilemma got even worse when the girl asked for John the Baptist's head. Herod knew John was a good man. John had been telling people to be good and to follow God. But Herod had made a promise in front of all his guests. He felt trapped by his own words.

This story shows us how one bad choice can lead to another. Herod made a bad choice by liking someone he shouldn't. Then he made another bad choice by making a big promise. And then, he made the worst choice by hurting John the Baptist.

Herod's Dilemma teaches us to be careful with our choices. Every choice we make can lead us to the next choice. If we start with a good choice, it's easier to keep making good choices. But if we start with a bad choice, it can be hard to stop making more bad choices.

It's like when you're building with blocks. If the first block isn't placed right, the whole tower can lean and fall. But if you place each block carefully, you can build a strong and tall tower.

Dear Father, when Satan tempts us, help us to remember that one sin leads to another, and another, and another. Help us to make good choices from the start, so we don't end up in a dilemma like Herod. Help us to think before we speak or act, and to always choose what's right. Amen.

Remember, kids, every choice has a consequence. Like in Herod's Dilemma, one bad choice led to a very sad ending. Let's learn from Herod's mistakes and try to make good choices every day. When we're not sure what to do, we can pray and ask God to help us choose the right path.

Bible Memory Verse

The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. - Mark 6:26

You Will Need:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Stickers (optional)

Get Ready:

- Cut the construction paper into large heart shapes, one for each child.
- Write the memory verse on a whiteboard or large piece of paper where all the children can see it.

Do This:

1. Give each child a heart-shaped piece of construction paper and markers or crayons. Explain that the heart represents our choices and how sometimes we can feel pressured to make bad choices, just like the king did.
2. Ask the children to think of a time they felt pressured to do something they knew was wrong. Have them draw or write about that experience on one side of the heart.

3. On the other side of the heart, have them write or draw what they think would have been a better choice to make. Encourage them to decorate their hearts with stickers.
4. Gather the children in a circle and invite them to share their hearts if they feel comfortable. Discuss how making good choices, even when it's hard, helps keep our hearts happy and healthy.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A jar filled with clear water
- A small bottle of food coloring
- Paper and pencils for each child
- A large spoon or stick for stirring

Get Ready:

- Write Mark 6:26-27 on a large piece of paper or a whiteboard where all the children can see it.
- Prepare a small area where the jar can be placed and where spills won't be a problem.

Do this:

1. ****Introduction****: Start by reading Mark 6:26-27 aloud to the children. Explain that sometimes people make bad choices, which can be like adding something unwanted to something pure and clean.
2. ****Demonstration****: Show the children the jar of clear water and explain that it represents our hearts when we make good choices and are kind to others. Then, show them the food coloring and explain that this represents sin or bad choices, like being mean, lying, or not listening.

3. **Activity**: Let each child come up and add a drop of food coloring to the water for a mistake or sin they want to share or talk about. They can write it down on their paper first if they want. Stir the water slowly to show how sin changes our hearts.
4. **Discussion**: Talk about how the water looks different now. Ask them how they think we can make our hearts "clean" again (leading to a discussion on forgiveness and making better choices).
5. **Conclusion**: Remind them that everyone makes mistakes, but it's important to ask for forgiveness and try to do better next time. Finish with a prayer asking for help in making good choices.

Snack Activity: Sinful Snack Mix

You'll Need:

- A bag of mixed snacks (pretzels, popcorn, chocolate candies, etc.)
- Small bowls or cups
- A spoon for mixing

Get Ready: Pour the mixed snacks into a large bowl. This mix represents our world, filled with different people and choices.

Do this:

1. Read Mark 6:26-27 together. Explain that sometimes, even good kings make bad choices because of sin. Just like King Herod made a bad choice because of his pride and fear.
2. Use the spoon to pick out all the chocolate candies from the mix. As you do this, explain that sin can seem tempting and sweet like the candies, but it separates us from what is good, just like we're separating the candies from the rest of the snack mix.

3. After separating the candies, discuss how our actions can affect others and lead us away from God, just like how the snack mix looks different now. Then, pray together, asking God to help us make good choices and stay close to Him.

Game Activity: Sin Hurdles

You'll Need:

- Chalk or tape for marking the ground
- Small bean bags or soft balls
- Cards with simple 'sins' written on them (like 'lying', 'being unkind', etc.)

Get Ready: Use the chalk or tape to create a start line and several lines on the ground about 2 feet apart from each other, making a path. Write simple 'sins' on the cards and place one before each line on the ground.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that in Mark 6:26-27, we learn about the consequences of sin and how it separates us from God. Just like the hurdles, sin can stop us from getting closer to God.
2. Each child takes a turn at the start line. They throw the bean bag or ball to land on any of the 'sin' cards.
3. The child then hops over the 'sin' (line) where their bean bag landed, saying a simple prayer like 'Help me, God, to overcome [the sin they landed on]!' This teaches them that with God's help, we can overcome sin.
4. The game continues until all children have had a turn. Encourage them to support and cheer for each other, reinforcing the idea that we can help each other overcome sin with God's help.

Craft Activity: The Sin Chain

You'll Need:

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Stapler or tape

Get Ready: Cut the construction paper into strips about 1 inch wide and 6 inches long.

Do this:

1. On each strip of paper, have the children write or draw something that represents sin (e.g., lying, stealing, being unkind). Discuss how these actions can separate us from friends, family, and God, similar to how King Herod's wrong choices led to bad consequences in Mark 6:26-27.
2. Link the strips of paper together by looping them into each other and securing them with a stapler or tape to create a chain. This chain represents how one sin can lead to another, creating a longer chain that can be hard to break.
3. Finally, discuss how asking for forgiveness and making better choices can 'break' the chain of sin. You can demonstrate this by cutting the chain apart. Emphasize that God's love and forgiveness through Jesus can free us from the 'chains' of sin.

Prayer Activity: Sailing Away from Sin

You'll Need:

- A small paper boat for each child (pre-made or a sheet of paper for each child to fold their own)
- A large bowl of water

- Permanent markers

Get Ready: If using pre-made boats, have them ready. If not, prepare a simple paper boat folding instruction sheet for each child.

Do this:

1. Start by reading Mark 6:26-27 together, explaining that sometimes, like the king in the story, people make bad choices because they don't want to admit they were wrong. This is a kind of sin - when we do things that are not pleasing to God.
2. Give each child a paper boat and a marker. Ask them to think of a time they made a wrong choice or did something they knew was not right (explain this could be a lie, not sharing, being unkind, etc.). Have them write or draw this on their boat.
3. Gather around the bowl of water. Explain that just like we can choose to turn away from our bad choices and ask God for forgiveness, we can 'send away' our sins to God because Jesus died for our sins. One by one, let the children place their boats in the water, watching them sail away, symbolizing God taking away our sins when we ask for forgiveness.