

One Thing Leads To Another

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: The nature of sin.

Scripture: Mark 6:26-27

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

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

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

You Will Need:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Markers
- Glue sticks
- Stickers or decorations

Get Ready:

- Cut the construction paper into crown shapes ahead of time.
- Set up a table with markers, scissors, glue sticks, and stickers for decoration.

Do This:

1. Give each child a pre-cut crown shape and explain that we will make our own crowns to remember how the king felt in Mark 6:26.
2. Encourage the children to decorate their crowns using markers, stickers, and other materials provided. While they work, discuss the importance of making promises carefully and the consequences of our decisions.

3. Once everyone has finished, gather the children in a circle and have them share why they chose their specific decorations and what they learned about making promises and decisions from the story of the king.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Paper and pencils for each child
- A Bible or printed copies of Mark 6:26-27
- A small wooden cross or any visual representation of a cross
- Sticky notes
- Pens or markers

Get Ready:

- Familiarize yourself with Mark 6:26-27, understanding the context of King Herod's regret after making a promise that leads to John the Baptist's beheading.
- Write down key points about sin's nature from the passage: regret, consequences, and the influence of others.
- Set up a quiet space for reflection with the cross placed centrally.

Do this:

1. ****Introduction to the Scripture****: Start by reading Mark 6:26-27 together. Discuss the context of the passage, focusing on King Herod's regret after being influenced by others to make a decision that led to sin.

2. ****Reflective Writing****: Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to quietly reflect on a time they made a decision they regretted, how it made them feel,

and what consequences it had. Emphasize that this is a personal reflection and won't be shared with the group.

3. **Linking Sin with Consequences**: Discuss as a group (without sharing personal stories) how sometimes decisions can lead us away from what God wants for us, and how those decisions can have consequences for ourselves and others.

4. **Prayer and Forgiveness Activity**: Hand out sticky notes and pens. Ask each child to write a prayer asking for forgiveness for a time they've made a wrong choice or for help in making good decisions in the future. They can then stick these notes to the cross as a symbol of handing their regrets and requests for forgiveness over to Jesus.

5. **Closing Discussion**: Conclude with a conversation about how God forgives us when we ask for it and how we can learn from our mistakes to make better choices in the future. Reinforce the lesson that while sin has consequences, forgiveness and redemption are always possible through Jesus.

Snack Activity: Heart of the Matter Cookies

You'll Need:

- Sugar cookie dough (store-bought or homemade)
- Heart-shaped cookie cutters
- Red icing
- Knife or dough cutter
- Baking sheets
- Parchment paper

Get Ready: Preheat your oven according to the cookie dough package instructions.
Line your baking sheets with parchment paper.

Do this:

1. Roll out your cookie dough on a flat surface until it's about 1/4 inch thick. Use the heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut out heart shapes. Place these hearts on your prepared baking sheets.
2. Reflecting on Mark 6:26-27, discuss how sometimes, like King Herod, people can make poor choices because of pride or fear, leading to sin. As you talk, use the knife or dough cutter to cut a small piece out of each heart cookie, representing how sin can leave a mark on our hearts.
3. Bake the cookies according to the package instructions. Once cooled, use the red icing to fill in the cut-out part of each cookie, symbolizing how God's love and forgiveness can heal the 'sin' marks in our hearts. As you eat the cookies, remember that God's love is powerful enough to heal and forgive.

Game Activity: The Path of Righteousness

You'll Need:

- Chalk or tape for marking the ground
- Small stones or bean bags
- Cards with scenarios based on Mark 6:26-27 and other scriptures about making right choices

Get Ready: Use the chalk or tape to create a large hopscotch grid on the ground. Each square should be labeled with numbers from 1 to 10. Write or print scenarios on the cards that depict various situations where one might face a choice between right and

wrong, inspired by the scripture Mark 6:26-27, where Herod faced a moral dilemma but made the wrong choice due to pride and peer pressure.

Do this:

1. Players take turns tossing their stone or bean bag onto the hopscotch grid, aiming for square one and progressing to square ten.
2. When a player's stone lands on a square, they must pick a scenario card and read the situation aloud. The group then discusses what the right choice would be according to biblical principles, focusing on the lesson from Mark 6:26-27 about the consequences of sin and the importance of making Godly decisions.
3. After discussing the scenario, the player hops through the hopscotch grid, skipping the square where their stone landed. If they complete the course without stepping on the lines or losing their balance, they earn a point.
4. The game continues until each player has had multiple turns or until all the scenario cards have been discussed. The player with the most points at the end of the game is recognized for their understanding and application of biblical principles in making righteous decisions.

Craft Activity: The Heart of Decision: Understanding Right from Wrong

You'll Need:

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Glue sticks
- Template of a heart

Get Ready: Print or draw a large heart template on a piece of paper. Each child will need one heart template.

Do this:

1. Discuss Mark 6:26-27, focusing on the decision made by the king and its consequences. Explain how every decision we make can be influenced by our understanding of right and wrong.
2. Have each child trace the heart template onto a piece of construction paper and cut it out. This heart represents their own heart and the decisions they make.
3. Inside the heart, ask them to draw or write situations where they have to choose between right and wrong (they can be hypothetical or real situations they've faced).
4. On the outside of the heart, have them decorate with symbols or words that represent good influences (such as family, friends, Bible verses) that can help guide them to make the right decisions.
5. Share and discuss the hearts within the group, focusing on how we can seek guidance and strength from God and others to help us make decisions that are pleasing to Him.

Prayer Activity: Understanding Choices: A on Sin

You'll Need:

- A Bible or a printed copy of Mark 6:26-27
- Small stones or pebbles (one for each child)
- A clear jar filled with water

Get Ready: Read Mark 6:26-27 to familiarize yourself with the scripture. Prepare a short explanation of the passage, focusing on the nature of sin and the importance of making godly choices.

Do this:

1. Begin by reading Mark 6:26-27 aloud to the children. Discuss the context of the scripture, explaining how Herod made a poor choice because he didn't want to go back on his word, even though he knew it was wrong. Emphasize that sometimes, we face tough decisions, but it's important to choose what's right in God's eyes.
2. Hand out a small stone or pebble to each child. Explain that the stone represents sin or a bad choice. Have each child think of a time they made a choice they knew wasn't right, silently reflecting on it.
3. After a moment of reflection, invite the children to come forward one by one and drop their stone into the jar of water as a symbol of releasing that sin or bad choice to God. Lead the children in a prayer, asking God to help them make choices that please Him and to forgive them when they falter.