

A Clean Slate

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Jesus erases our mistakes and gives us a clean start.

Scripture: Jeremiah 2:22

Memory Verse: For though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, declares the Lord God. - Jeremiah 2:22

The Children's Sermon

We are about to begin a new year. It is time to erase the mistakes of the past year and begin again with a clean slate. Some of the mistakes we have made are more than simply making a wrong decision. There are some things that we have done that God has told us in the Bible not to do. We call that sin. Some of those sins we have done time and time again and they have left a stain upon our lives which we cannot erase. In the Bible, God said, "Even though you wash yourself with a lot of soap, the stain of your guilt is still there." We must have God's forgiveness to take away those stains – and we can have God's forgiveness because of Jesus. Jesus is like this special whiteboard cleaner. If we turn to Jesus and ask him to forgive us of our sins, he will wash away our sin and we will be as white as snow. Then we can truly start the new year with a clean slate!

Imagine you have a big, beautiful whiteboard in your room. You draw pictures, write words, and sometimes, you even make mistakes on it. When it gets really messy, you wish you could just wipe it all away and start fresh. That's what the new year feels like. It's like getting a brand new whiteboard to draw on.

But what about those tough stains on our hearts from the times we didn't listen, or we hurt someone's feelings, or we didn't do what was right? Those are like the stains that soap can't wash away. That's where our sermon comes in. It teaches us that no matter how big our mistakes, God's love and forgiveness through Jesus can make our hearts clean again.

You see, every time we say sorry to God and ask Him to forgive us, it's like He takes a magic eraser and wipes our hearts clean. This doesn't mean we won't make more mistakes, but it means we get a chance to try again, with a clean slate.

Now, you might wonder, "How do I ask for this forgiveness?" It's simple. You just talk to God. Tell Him what you're sorry for, ask Him to help you do better, and thank Him for loving you so much that He sent Jesus to make a clean slate possible.

Remember, this isn't just for the new year. It's for every day. Every morning when you wake up, God gives you a new day, like a mini new year. So, every day, you have the chance to start with a clean slate.

Let's imagine our lives as a storybook. Each day, we write a new page. Sometimes, we scribble, we make errors, and our pages get messy. But the sermon reminds us that God's forgiveness through Jesus is like getting to turn to a fresh, blank page where we can start writing a better story.

And the best part? God doesn't keep a record of the messy pages. He doesn't flip back and remind us of our mistakes. Once He forgives us, those pages are gone, like they were never there. That's how powerful God's forgiveness is. It truly gives us a clean slate.

So, as we step into this new year, let's remember the sermon. Let's remember that no mistake is too big for God's forgiveness. Let's be brave and ask for that forgiveness, and let's help others know they can have a clean slate too.

God's forgiveness is better than any toy or game because it brings real happiness to our hearts. And when our hearts are happy and clean, we can spread that happiness to others. We can be kinder, more patient, and more loving. That's how we make the world a better place, one clean slate at a time.

Dear Lord, thank you for giving us a clean slate every day. Help us to remember to ask for your forgiveness and to forgive others too. Help us to live each new day with a clean heart, ready to love and serve you better. Amen.

So, kids, let's get excited about this new year and every new day. Let's remember the Clean Slate Sermon and know that with Jesus, we can always start fresh. Let's fill our whiteboards with love, kindness, and good choices, knowing that when we make mistakes, God is always ready to give us a clean slate.

Bible Memory Verse

For though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, declares the Lord God. -

Jeremiah 2:22

You Will Need:

- White T-shirts (one per child)
- Washable markers

-Buckets of water and soap

Get Ready:

-Gather all materials before the class.

-Set up a washing station outside or in a space that can get wet.

Do This:

1. Give each child a white T-shirt and ask them to write or draw something on it with the washable markers that represents a mistake or sin (e.g., lying, stealing, being unkind). Explain that these marks represent our sins and how they stain our lives.

2. After everyone has finished, lead the children to the washing station. Have them try to wash their shirts with soap and water, observing how the marks don't easily come off.

3. Explain that just like the soap and water can't completely remove the marks from the shirts, we can't remove the stain of our sins by ourselves. Share how only Jesus can cleanse us from our sins completely, relating back to the memory verse from Jeremiah 2:22.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Washable markers

- A large whiteboard or poster board

- Wet wipes

- Bible or printed verse of Jeremiah 2:22

Get Ready:

- Write Jeremiah 2:22 on the whiteboard or poster board at the top or bottom where it's visible.
- Ensure each child has access to washable markers and a few wet wipes.

Do this:

1. Read Jeremiah 2:22 together as a class. Discuss what it means in terms of how no matter what we do, we can't clean our sins by ourselves; only God can cleanse us.
2. Ask each child to think of a mistake or sin they feel comfortable sharing. Using the washable markers, have them write or draw it on the whiteboard or poster board.
3. After everyone has had a turn, discuss how the board looks now - messy and full of mistakes. Relate this to how our lives can be messy with sin.
4. Hand out wet wipes. Invite each child to erase a mistake on the board, not necessarily their own, symbolizing how Jesus cleanses us from our sins.
5. Once the board is clean, discuss how this represents the clean start Jesus gives us when we ask for forgiveness. Reinforce that just like the board, our lives can be made clean through Jesus.

Snack Activity: Clean Slate Cookies

You'll Need:

- Sugar cookies (pre-baked and cooled)
- White icing
- Edible markers
- Small bowls and spoons for icing
- Paper towels or clean cloths

Get Ready: Prepare a clean, flat surface for decorating cookies. Place a sugar cookie on a paper towel or clean cloth in front of each child.

Do this:

1. Read Jeremiah 2:22 together: 'Although you wash yourself with soap and use an abundance of cleansing powder, the stain of your guilt is still before me,' declares the Sovereign LORD. Discuss how this verse shows that we can't remove our own sins, but Jesus can cleanse us and give us a fresh start.
2. Give each child a sugar cookie and white icing. Explain that the white icing represents the clean slate Jesus gives us when we ask for forgiveness. Have them spread the icing over the cookie to 'cover' their mistakes.
3. Once the icing is set, let the children use edible markers to write or draw something they are thankful for about their new start or a promise from God about forgiveness. This symbolizes how Jesus not only cleanses us but also writes a new story in our lives.

Game Activity: Clean Slate Relay

You'll Need:

- A large roll of white paper
- Washable markers
- Water spray bottles filled with water
- Sponges
- Buckets filled with water
- Tape to secure the paper on the ground

Get Ready: Roll out a long strip of white paper across the playing area and secure it with tape. Divide the children into two teams and give each team a set of washable markers, a sponge, and a spray bottle filled with water. Fill buckets with water and place them at the start line for each team.

Do this:

1. Have each team line up at the start line. The first player in line takes a marker and writes a word on the paper that represents a mistake or sin (e.g., 'lying', 'envy'). They then run to the end of the paper and back to tag the next player in line.
2. The next player then has two options: write another 'mistake' or choose to 'erase' a mistake written by spraying it with water and wiping it away with the sponge before running back. This represents Jesus' forgiveness and cleansing of our sins.
3. The relay continues until the paper is filled with words and all have been erased. The first team to erase all their mistakes and return to the start line wins.

This game illustrates Jeremiah 2:22, showing that no matter how much we try on our own, it's only through Jesus that our sins are truly washed away and we are given a clean start.

Craft Activity: Clean Slate Scrolls

You'll Need:

- White fabric strips (about 2x12 inches)
- Washable markers
- Small bowls of water
- Permanent markers
- Wooden dowels or sticks (2 per child)
- Rubber bands or string

Get Ready: Cut the fabric into strips, prepare small bowls of water, and set out markers.

Do this:

1. Have each child write or draw mistakes, worries, or sins they want to let go of on the white fabric strip using washable markers.
2. Read Jeremiah 2:22 together, discussing how even when we try to clean our sins by ourselves, only God can truly cleanse us.
3. Let the children dip their fabric strips into the water, watching as their marks disappear, symbolizing how Jesus washes away our sins and gives us a clean start.
4. Once the fabric is dry, have them write or draw with permanent markers something positive they want to remember or focus on, like a promise from God or a personal goal.
5. Attach the fabric to the wooden dowels or sticks with rubber bands or string to create a scroll. Encourage them to display their Clean Slate Scroll somewhere they will see it daily as a reminder of the fresh start God gives us.

Prayer Activity: Clean Slate with Jesus

You'll Need:

- A whiteboard or large sheet of paper
- Washable markers
- A small cloth or whiteboard eraser

Get Ready: Write Jeremiah 2:22 at the top of the whiteboard or paper. Prepare a short explanation of how this verse shows that even when we try to clean our own sins, only Jesus can truly cleanse us and give us a fresh start.

Do this:

1. Ask each child to think of a mistake or sin they want to ask forgiveness for. Let them know it's between them and God, and they won't have to share it out loud unless they want to.

2. Have them come up one at a time to the whiteboard or paper and write down their mistake using the washable markers. Explain that this act represents how we often try to fix our own mistakes.

3. After everyone has written something, read Jeremiah 2:22 together. Then, using the cloth or eraser, wipe the whiteboard or paper clean, demonstrating how Jesus erases our sins and gives us a clean start. Finish with a group prayer, thanking Jesus for His forgiveness and clean slate.