

Small Group Experience

LESSON 1 - "The Pharisee & The Tax Collector"



Whatchagaddaknow?:
"I Gotta Humble Myself Before The Lord!"



Power Verse:
"...For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

-Luke 18:14

Retelling The Bible Story

SUPPLY LIST:

* Bible

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS:

Before small group begins, review the story so you are familiar with the main points and order of events. When small group begins, turn to Luke 18 in the Bible. To review the Bible Story, hand the open Bible to one kid and have them read Luke 18:9 and then pass the Bible to another kid, who will then read the next verse. Continue passing the Bible and allowing the kids to read until verse 14 is reached and the story is complete.

Say - Today is all about being humble, so we are going to get right to the point and practice including and thinking of others right out of the gate! My Bible is opened to Luke 18, which is where our story is found. To review our story, I will hand the Bible to one of you and have you read Luke 18:9 aloud. When you complete that verse, you must think of others and include someone else by passing the Bible on to another person. That person will then read the next verse. We will continue this way until we reach verse 14 and complete the story!

-Pass the Bible to the first reader and begin. Remind the kids to pass the Bible on after each verse-

Say - That was great! I love hearing you guys read God's Word! The Pharisee and the tax collector prayed very different prayers. Let's talk a little bit more about those prayers and see what we can learn from their examples.

Ask - Why do you think the Pharisee felt the need to make such a scene when he prayed?

-Allow time for the kids to answer; discuss their answers with the group-

Ask - How do you think God felt about the prayer of the Pharisee?

-Allow time for the kids to answer; discuss their answers with the group-

Ask - Why do you think the tax collector prayed the way that he did?

-Allow time for the kids to answer; discuss their answers with the group-

Ask - How do you think God felt about the prayer of the tax collector?

-Allow time for the kids to answer; discuss their answers with the group-

Game/Activity

SUPPLY LIST:

- * Balloons (seven per team for each round played)
- * Whatchagaddaknow Print Piece (provided; one set per team)
- * Tape (for the teams to share)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS:

Before activity time begins, print and cut out the Whatchagaddaknow Print Pieces. Once activity time begins, divide the group into teams. To play the game, teams will race to blow up seven balloons, tape one word of the Whatchagaddaknow to each balloon, and place them in the correct order. When this is complete, they should sit down and say, “Whatchagaddaknow!” The first team to complete the task wins. Play this relay as many rounds as time allows. This will be a fun lesson concept reinforcing activity.

Say - We are learning about being humble. A huge part of humility is learning to NOT be full of yourself. I have a bunch of balloons, and, currently, they are not full. Sadly, they are prideful balloons, and they are about to fill up. This is where you come into play! When I say, “Go,” each team will race to fill and tie seven balloons. Tape one piece of the Whatchagaddaknow to each balloon and place the words in the correct order. When this is complete, as a team, sit down and say, “Whatchagaddaknow!” The first team to complete this task wins! Don’t forget - it’s not all about you. Work together and include everyone on your team.

-Play the game; this can be played multiple rounds as time allows-

Group Sharing

SUPPLY LIST:

- * Danger: Pride Ahead Print Piece (provided; one half-sheet per group)
- * Colored pencils, crayons, or markers

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS:

Before small group begins, print and cut the Danger: Pride Ahead Print Piece. Group sharing is focused on encouraging the kids to open up and discuss the lesson concepts and relate those concepts to their lives. Help facilitate and guide the discussion time.

Say - I am not sure if you noticed, but the person in our story that God warned us to NOT be like was the religious person. He was supposed to be the follower of God, the one setting the example, but we are warned to NOT be like him! Instead, Jesus pointed out the sinner and encouraged us to follow his humble example. We might think that once we become followers of Christ we can ignore spiritual warning signs, but this couldn’t be further from the truth. We are going to talk more about that, but first, let’s lay some groundwork.

Ask - What does it mean to be humble?

Allow time for the kids to answer; discuss their answers with the group-

Ask - Why does humility matter?

Allow time for the kids to answer; discuss their answers with the group-

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Say - It isn't easy to stay humble; it takes work! Being humble by putting others first, including everyone, and giving God the number one spot in our hearts is the exact opposite of what human nature tells us to do. Our nature is bent towards pride. Let's discuss why pride can be so dangerous.

Ask - What is pride?

-Allow time for the kids to answer; discuss their answers with the group-

Say - There is a difference between being proud and full of pride and having a prideful heart and attitude. Your mom and dad can be full of pride and so proud of you when you accomplish a goal. There is nothing wrong with that kind of pride. When we talk about pride in this situation, we are addressing a prideful attitude and heart. Someone with a prideful attitude treats others like they are lesser, is arrogant, and puts themselves first and God and others last. This kind of pride is a sin.

Ask - Have you ever been treated as though you were lesser? How did that make you feel?

-Allow time for the kids to answer; discuss their answers with the group-

Say - Reflect on this next question privately. I do not expect you to answer aloud.

Ask - Have you ever been the one to treat someone else as lesser, be arrogant, or brag? How did you feel about your actions?

-Allow time for the kids to reflect -

Say - I would like you to divide into small groups. Each group is being given a copy of the Power Verse. Read and discuss it together. Write your thoughts on the blank lines on the page.

-Allow time for the groups to read and discuss the verse-

Ask - What did the verse mean to you? Please share your thoughts with the group.

-Allow time for the kids to share; discuss their answers with the group-

Say - It's just like our balloons from the game. Being humble means that we leave room for God and others. When we leave space for God, He can fill us with all the great and amazing things He has for our lives. However, pride fills us up and leaves no room for anything else. It convinces us that we don't need God or others. God has assured us that if we fill ourselves up with pride, He will burst the balloon and humble us, which is not at all what He wants for our lives.

Ask - Why is it important for a follower of Christ to stay away from a prideful heart and attitude?

-Allow time for the kids to answer, discuss their answers with the group-

Prayer Time

Say - Being humble is something that requires help from God. As we pray, ask God to help you have a humble heart and attitude. Ask God to create space in your life for Him and others!

Pray

Closing

Say - The Pharisee was enjoying hearing himself pray that day in the temple. He hoped that everyone heard his boasting and that the tax collector picked up on his not-so-subtle hints: “You are less than me; I am better than you.” The Pharisee floated his own praises to God and everyone else like an overly full balloon. The tax collector’s heart was full of space, which he offered to God, humbly asking Him to fill the void. God was pleased, and He answered his prayers. The Pharisee’s balloon of pride was burst, and his prayers were denied - not at all the outcome he expected. Pride kept the Pharisee from being close to God and having any influence with people. We can certainly learn a lesson from these men and learn to watch for the spiritual warning signs in our lives. We should immediately take action when we see, “Danger: Pride Ahead!” Why? Because pride keeps you from being close to God and accomplishing the plans that God has for your life. Don’t allow pride to have a place in your heart! Don’t allow pride to have a place in your actions! Don’t allow pride to have a place in your attitude! Stay humble! Thank you for coming today. I will see you again soon.

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