

Lesson #4-18

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

John 2:13-25



Key Verse:

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”
John 2:19

The Point:

Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection bring life in a way that human actions cannot.



INTRODUCTION

Jesus comes to the temple and finds the merchants selling animals to be sacrificed and the moneychangers exchanging common currency for the kind that could be used at the temple, presumably making a lot of money off of the exchange. Jesus fashions a whip and drives them out of the temple, demanding that God’s house not be a marketplace. The religious officials asked for a sign that Jesus has this kind of authority. Jesus answered them by saying “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Jesus was speaking not of the physical temple in Jerusalem, but the temple of his body. Many people in Jerusalem began to believe in Jesus, and his disciples remembered what he said.

The Point

Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection bring life in a way that human actions cannot. While the sacrificial system in the temple was intended to bring people closer to God, it became twisted and promoted greed and injustice. Jesus’ teachings promise a new way of living that brings abundant life, which will be fully realized through the hope of his resurrection. This new way, different than the practices of the temple, allows people to experience God’s love as a God who has chosen to dwell among us and will stop at nothing, not even a cross, to be in direct relationship with us.

ACTIVITIES A LA CARTE

ACTIVITIES

SUPPLIES

INTRODUCTION

WHAT'S IN A HOME

Introduce the purpose of the temple.

10 MIN. † Paper
† Pen or pencil

LEARNING THE STORY

BUILD IT UP, TEAR IT DOWN

Stack cups to destroy and raise up.

10 MIN. † Bible
† Plastic cups

ACTIVITIES

WHAT DOESN'T BELONG

Remove what does not belong.

10 MIN. † Pennies
† Dimes
† Cups

MORE BELIEVED

Play a game of attraction.

5 MIN. † Paper clips
† Magnets

PRAYER



GOD'S STORY @ HOME



INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

WHAT'S IN A HOME

Introduce the purpose of the temple.

Supplies:

- † Paper
- † Pen or pencil

Preparation:

1. Put a piece of blank paper in the center of your meeting area with a pen or pencil.

Instructions:

1. We are going to brainstorm the kinds of things that belong in each room in our home.
2. Talk about or move through the various rooms in your home. What belongs in these rooms? What would not belong in each room? Make a list for each room.
3. **Rooms in our homes often have specific purposes. There are things that usually belong there, and other things that do not.**
4. **In today's lesson, Jesus visited the temple. What he found happening in the temple, God's house, made him angry. There were merchants and moneychangers engaging in practices that were unfair and benefitted only themselves instead of helping people to experience God in the temple. Jesus knew right away that those kinds of things did not belong in God's house.**

LEARNING THE STORY (10 MINUTES)

BUILD IT UP, TEAR IT DOWN

Stack cups to destroy and raise up.

Supplies:

- † Bible
- † Plastic cups

Instructions:

1. Read today's lesson from John 2:13-25.
2. **Let's listen closely to the end again and what Jesus said.**
3. Read John 2:18-22 again.
4. **The leaders asked Jesus to show them a sign that he had the authority to drive the moneychangers out of the temple. He said that if they tear down the temple, he can rebuild it in three days. The temple took dozens of years to build, so for Jesus to say that it could be rebuilt in three days would have sounded crazy to the Jewish leaders.**
5. **Let's do a quick challenge about building and rebuilding.**
6. Hand a stack of 21 cups to one person.
7. **One of us will serve as the timer using either a watch or phone. We will take turns and start the timer with the cups in one stack. Build a tower with six cups on the bottom, then five, then four, going all the way to one at the top. Then put the cups all back into a stack.** Allow each person to have a turn, and see how fast it can be done.
8. **It would have been crazy to think of building a whole temple in three days, but Jesus was not talking about the actual temple. He was talking about himself.**
9. **What would make Jesus compare himself to the temple?** [*God now dwells in Jesus, just as God dwelt in the temple.*]
10. **What is Jesus promising?** [*That even if they destroyed him by killing him, God would raise him up in three days.*]
11. **Do you think the religious leaders or the disciples understood what Jesus was saying? Why or why not?**

12. **Work together to turn your cups into a cross as a reminder that Jesus has promised that even if he is torn down, he will rise again in three days.**
13. **Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are a lot bigger than the temple. Jesus brings life and shows God's power in a way that human actions could not.**
14. **In Jesus, people will experience God in an even closer way than worshipping at the temple and giving sacrifices to God. In Jesus, God is doing something new!**

ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

WHAT DOESN'T BELONG

Remove what does not belong.

Supplies:

- † Pennies
- † Dimes
- † Cups

Preparation:

1. Fill a cup with 25 pennies and 5 dimes.

Instructions:

1. **Let's see how hard it is to remove what does not belong. You will have five seconds to reach into the cup, either looking away or with your eyes closed, and try to pull out one of the five dimes in the cups. You can only pull out one coin at a time. When you pull it out, the rest of us will tell you if you got a dime or a penny, since you will not be looking. Put the pennies back in, and place the dimes aside if you get one.**
2. **You may pull out more than one coin during your turn, if you have time. I will be the timekeeper. When your five seconds is up, I will let you know and you will have a few seconds to pass the cup to the next person before the time will start again.**
3. **Announce the start and time five seconds, give one to three seconds for each person to pass the cups, and time five seconds again, announcing each time.**
4. **Sometimes it is hard to know what belongs and what does not, much less remove it in time!**
5. **How many pennies are in a dime? [Ten.]**
6. **Imagine in the temple you could only use pennies, but you had only dimes. You would give the moneychanger a dime. How many pennies should you get? [Ten.]**

7. **But instead, they might only give you eight pennies and keep the extra two pennies.**
8. **In today's story, Jesus knew right away that what the merchants and moneychangers were doing did not belong in God's house. That is why he got angry and drove them out. What they were doing had little to do with worshipping God and was just a way for them to make extra money. That is not what God's house is about.**
9. **Throughout Jesus' ministry, as he encounters all types of people, Jesus helps us know what kinds of behaviors belong in God's kingdom, and what kinds do not. As followers of Jesus, we should strive to act in ways that belong in God's kingdom.**

ACTIVITY (5 MINUTES)

MORE BELIEVED

Play a game of attraction

Supplies:

- † Paper clips
- † Magnets

Instructions:

1. Hand out one magnet and 15 paper clips to each person.
2. **It says at the end of our story today that more and more people started believing in Jesus. News was spreading of Jesus' identity, and when people encountered him, many started to believe. He was sort of like a magnet.**
3. **Try to see how many paper clips you can get to follow your magnet. Try to get as many paper clips to stick at one time as you can.**
4. Allow everyone to have a chance to try to collect paper clips on the magnets.
5. **When people encountered Jesus, they knew something was different about him. People were drawn to him, like the paper clips to the magnet. Now some people did not like Jesus, especially the religious leaders, but lots of people realized Jesus was someone very special.**
6. **Even though Jesus had not shown many signs yet, more and more people were attracted to his ministry and began to believe in him during his stay in Jerusalem.**

PRAYER

Before ending, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

Let's pray:

Loving God, you sent Jesus to draw us closer to you, to remove some of the barriers that distracted us from worshipping and loving you. We thank you for sending your Son, for keeping your promises to send a Savior, and for raising Jesus to new life after his death with the promise of new life for us all. With you, nothing is impossible. Help us remember that promise! Amen.

If you have the “Living the Word: Sharing God’s Story @ Home” sheet, remember to use it throughout the week as a part of your family devotions!