

5

Teacher Enrichment

“I Focus My Attention on God”

Overall Intention

The intention of this lesson is to understand why it is more powerful for our lives to allow our inner Christ presence to guide us rather than paying so much attention to the outer world.

Bible Basis

“Mary & Martha,” Luke 10:38-42

Jesus comes to visit Mary & Martha. Martha has spent all day preparing and Mary sits at Jesus’ feet.



Metaphysical Interpretation

This story invites us to consider how we choose to live our lives. A special guest, Jesus, was coming to visit. This represents how our Christ presence makes an appearance in our lives each time we invite it to take center stage. Each of us reacts to the arrival of Jesus in a different way. Mary stopped what she was doing when Jesus arrived and focused her attention on him. Martha was distracted by all she had to do and paid little attention to Jesus. She was also upset that Mary was listening to Jesus and not helping her. Each time we invite our Christ presence to shine forth we have choices to make. We can be like Martha and pay more attention to the outer world and disregard our inner knowing and then become angry with those around us. Or, we can be like Mary and stop all outer activity and focus our full attention on our inner Christ presence.

Spiritual Points

- God is always with us guiding us to the best choices for our lives.
- We can pay attention to this inner guidance and make our way through our lives with less difficulty.
- We can also choose to let what is happening in the world around us take our attention away from the power within us. Where we choose to focus our attention is up to us.

Ages & Stages Focus

Younger children can understand the importance of honoring our friends when they come to visit. You can focus your lesson on this aspect of the story.

Lesson-At-A-Glance

BIBLE STORY FOCUS			
Age Group	Bible	Bible Story	Lesson Focus
Tween	Luke 10:38-42	“Mary & Martha”	Understanding that we have a choice as to where we focus our attention.
Unikids	<i>The Children’s Illustrated Bible, p.236, first 2 paragraphs</i>	“Mary & Martha”	Understanding how to honor both our friends and ourselves.
Unitots	<i>The Lion Storyteller Bible, p.106</i>	“The Two Sisters”	Understanding how to be like Jesus and be a good friend.

CREATION STATIONS			
Activity	Interactive Drama Studio	Permanent Game	Fun with Food & Science
Age Group(s)	Twins	Tween & Unikids	All Ages
Titles	<u>Life’s a Balancing Act!</u> The purpose of this activity is to explore how to create balance in our lives.	<u>Many Things at Once!</u> The purpose of this activity is to explore what it is like to try to juggle many things at once.	<u>Giving & Receiving</u> The purpose of this activity is to understand that being a giver and being able to receive are both important in our lives.
Supplies	<i>For every 3 children:</i> • 6 x 18 inch piece of heavy cardboard • 1 empty rolled oats type container • 1 ball	• Balloons, 4 or 5/child • Permanent markers	• Snack of your choice, 1/child • Bottles of Juice • Paper cups, 1/child • Small paper plates, 1/child • 2 short stories of your choice about Jesus



"With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matthew 7:2

Sample

Lesson #5

“I Focus My Attention on God”

Lesson Intention

The intention of this lesson is to understand why it is more powerful for our lives to allow our inner Christ presence to guide us rather than paying so much attention to the outer world.

Welcome

Greeting

As the students enter the classroom ask, “How would you like to be greeted?”

Service

Invite the students to choose an area of service. (*Prayer leader; candle lighter; love offering collector; celebration leader; etc...*)

Sacred Circle

Sacred Breath

Lead the group in a centering breathing exercise. (*Just focusing on the breath brings the mind's attention back to the present moment.*)

Share the Bible Quote

“With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged, for with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.” *Matthew 7:2*

Check-In

Invite the “Affirmation Leader” to create an affirmation that affirms the lesson of the day, for example: **My name is** _____. **I am** _____. The rest of the circle then affirms the first child by saying, “(Name), you are _____.” The next child then repeats the affirmation and is affirmed by the circle. This continues until all of the children and teachers have been affirmed.

Add a blessing for all members of the group that could not be here today.

Celebrations

Invite the students to share something they would like to celebrate.

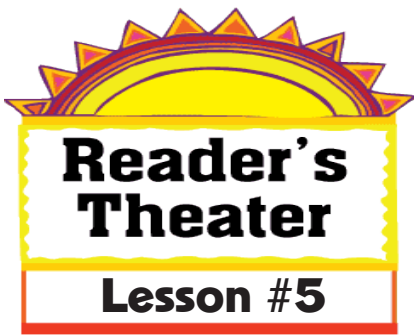
Love Offering

The “Love Offering Angel” leads the class in blessing the love offering by inviting the students to hold their offering in their hand (*their offering can be money or can be anything they would like to bless the world with, such as: love, joy, peace*) and pray the blessing of your choice. Then pass the basket and invite each student to add their offering.

Class Commitment

Create a class motto or chant to recite or review the Heart Agreements.

Copyright © Diane Venzera, 2009, All Rights Reserved



"I Focus My Attention on God"

Tweens

"Mary & Martha," Luke 10:38-42

Jesus comes to visit Mary & Martha. Martha has spent all day preparing and Mary sits at Jesus' feet.

Story Focus/Interpretation

Understanding that we have a choice as to where we focus our attention.

Discussion

- Who was Jesus visiting?
- What was Mary doing?
- What was Martha doing?
- What did Martha say to Jesus? What did she want Jesus to do?
- How did Jesus answer her?
- What was Martha focused on? What was she paying attention to?
- What was Mary focused on? What was she paying attention to?
- Who do you think Jesus loved more, Martha or Mary?
- How do you think Jesus might have felt about Martha's actions? Mary's actions?
- What was the difference between Martha & Mary?
- What other choice could Martha have made?
- What might Mary have known that Martha did not?
- How can we keep our attention focused on what we need to be paying attention to?
- How can we shut out all the things that distract us?
- What benefit do we receive from paying attention to the things that need our attention?
- How does this story show up in your life?

Unikids

“Martha & Mary,” (*The Children’s Illustrated Bible*, p.236, first 2 paragraphs)

Jesus comes to visit Mary & Martha. Martha has spent all day preparing and Mary sits at Jesus’ feet.

Story Focus/Interpretation

Understanding how to honor both our friends and ourselves.

Discussion

- Where was Jesus going?
- How did Martha respond when she saw Jesus?
- What did Mary do?
- Jesus was a guest in their home. How was Martha treating him?
- How was Mary treating him?
- What advice did Jesus have for Martha?
- How was Mary being a good friend?
- What had Martha forgotten about friendship?
- What are some qualities of friendship that you have?
- How do you treat your friends?
- If you have a friend who is upset by something, how can you be a good friend to them?
- Why is it important to be the best friend we can be?

Sample

Unitots

“The Two Sisters,” (*The Lion Storyteller Bible*, p. 106)

Jesus comes to visit Mary & Martha. Martha has spent all day preparing and Mary sits at Jesus’ feet.

Story Focus/Interpretation

Understand how to be like Jesus and be a good friend.

Discussion

- What was Martha complaining about?
- What did she want Jesus to do?
- What did Jesus tell her?
- What did Jesus want Martha to do?
- How was Mary being a good friend?
- How was Jesus helping Martha to be a good friend?
- How is being a good friend being like Jesus?
- How are you a good friend?
- Tell me about how important it is to pay attention to your friends when they come over.

Tweens



Life's a Balancing Act!

The purpose of this activity to explore how to create balance in our lives.

Supplies

For every 3 children:

- 6 x 18 inch piece of heavy cardboard
- 1 empty rolled oats type container
- 1 ball

Share

Share with the children that there are many things that pull at us. Our friends want us to do things with them, our parents have chores for us to do, we have school requirements and our Christ-self is constantly calling us to listen.

Ask

- What expectations are pulling at you?
- How much time do you spend focused on the outer world?
- How much time do you spend focused on your inner Christ-self?
- How often do you feel like there are too many things you have to do?

Action

- Divide the children into groups of three. Give each group the container with the cardboard placed on top as a balance board.
- Invite 2 children to sit facing opposite ends of the balance board (facing the short ends). Invite the third child to be "it" and sit facing the long end of the board holding the ball. (See diagram to the left.)
- Person 1 represents our inner Christ (the Mary character) & person 2 represents the things on the outside that call us (the Martha character). Person 1 and 2 each hold their end of the cardboard so that it is level.
- Person 3 places the ball in the middle of the cardboard, where it should stay balanced.
- Person 1 (the Christ) says things like, "Be still, go inward, hear me" and lowers their end of the board so the ball rolls toward them.
- Person 2 (the outer) says things like, "Come out and play with me, do your work, you're too busy to pray" and lowers their end of the board so the ball rolls back to them.
- Person 3 is in the middle observing how the tug of war is affecting them.
- Continue for a few minutes with the ball rolling back and forth. Then switch roles.

Discussion

- What does it feel like to be pulled in two directions?
- How can we fill both the need to be with friends, do what is expected of us and still have time for God?



Tweens & Unikids



Many Things at Once!

The purpose of this activity is explore what it is like to try to juggle many things at once.

Supplies

- Balloons, 4 or 5/child
- Permanent markers

Action

- Give each child 4 or 5 balloons and markers. (*Warn the children to be careful of the markers because they will stain hands and clothes.*)
- Before blowing up the balloons write words or statements on them showing all of the things that must be balanced in life. Example: School, friends, family, fun, etc...
- Then blow the balloons up and tie them off.
- One at a time encourage the students to try to keep 4 or 5 balloons in the air at one time.
- Then have everyone try to keep their balloons in the air at the same time.

Discussion

- How hard was it to keep all of your balloons in the air?
- What might happen if you just stop and let your balloons fall around you?

Sample

- Since the children are out around the room. Invite them to throw their balloons into the air again but this time just notice them and then sit down in the midst of them.
- Once they are seated, invite them to arrange their balloons around them.
- Lead the children in the following exercise:
 - ◇ "Close your eyes and begin to breath slowly. Focus your mind on something that makes you feel good. Imagine this and the good feelings it brings up in you. Feel it strongly in your body. Now keep that feeling going and shift your attention to your heart. Send that good feeling inward to yourself and outward to the world. Continue in this space for a few minutes."

Discussion

We have so many things pulling at us that we sometimes feel out of balance.

- How do you feel now?
- What happened to your balloons after you sat down and did the exercise? (*They will still be there and can be better managed when you spend time caring for yourself.*)
- What did you discover about yourself and about balance from this activity?



Giving & Receiving

The purpose of this activity is to understand that being a giver and being able to receive are both important in our lives.

Supplies

- Snack of your choice, 1/child
- Bottles of Juice
- Paper cups, 1/child
- Small paper plates, 1/child
- 2 short stories of your choice about Jesus

Share

- Tell the children that we are going to take turns listening to the story and serving one another.

Action

- Divide into two groups. Invite one group to sit in a circle at your feet. You are going to read one of the stories about Jesus to them.
- The other group will go to the table area and prepare the snacks for the first group. (*Adult supervision may be necessary. Let the children do the work on their own as much as they are able.*)
- The second group will need to pour each child in the circle a glass of juice and put the snack on a plate for them.
- As soon as the snack is ready, the second group delivers the snack to the children in the circle.
- As soon as the snacks are finished, the two groups switch roles.

Discussion

- What was it like to serve someone?
- What was it like to receive from someone?
- Which did you enjoy most?
- Why is it important to be able to give and to receive?

Sample

Closing Celebration Circle

Lesson #5

Quick Tips...

- Each Youth Ministry program is unique as to how the morning is closed. Some programs end with the students joining the adults in the Sanctuary and some close on their own,
- No matter how your program is designed, offering a closing to the students helps them find completion with the lessons, helps them create a bridge to next week and gives them an opportunity to share what they have experienced.

Reconnecting Activity

- Create a ritual that invites the students back into the circle. You might use a song, ring a bell, or create a clap.

Closing Song

- Using a song of your choice, invite the students to sing together. The purpose is to assist them in bringing their attention back to the circle.

Random Acts of Kindness

- Share all the kind acts experienced today.

Sacred Sharing

- Invite the students to share what the day's experience meant to them.

Sacred Breath

- Close with a centering breath or a brief meditation.

Closing Commitment:

- Invite the class to close with the class motto or a "Yea, God!"

Sample