

LESSON PLAN

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

Matthew 21:12-32

Lesson Memory Verse: Matthew 21:13 - My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.

Lesson Aim: To teach respect for the house of God as a place for worshipping and serving God.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): We should take care of God's house better than we take care of our own houses. Do we? Let's see. Does your mother or father let you run all over your house with dirty, muddy shoes? No! Should we run all over God's house with muddy shoes? No! What should we do? We should wipe them off as clean as we can. Better yet, wear rubbers and take them off when you enter God's house.

Does your mother or father let you throw paper and trash on the floor of your home? No! Should we do this in God's house? Never! What should we do? We should find a waste basket to put our trash in or put it in our pockets or purses until we find a waste basket.

Does your mother or father let you steal things in your house? No, of course not. It is wrong to steal anywhere. Yet, some boys and girls steal things in God's house. Do you think God sees them? Yes, He does. What happens when you steal at home? You get punished. What does God do? Yes, He punishes people who steal. Sometimes He allows them to get beat up, or to get very sick, or to get in an accident, or to get something stolen from them that was even more precious than what they stole. God has many other ways to punish boys and girls who steal.

HE (for Authority): Our memory verse tells us that God's house is a house of prayer, so we should be careful how we behave in a church building that is dedicated to God.. It is a place where people worship God: people are talking to God in prayer and God is talking to them through Biblical sermons and Bible studies.. That means we should respect God's holy house where His business is conducted. We should make God's house beautiful and do our part to keep it that way. Let us worship God in His house. If we commit any sin, ever so small, in God's house, we do dishonor Him and His house. We are no better in God's sight than the thieves that Jesus chased out of the temple in His day.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. In today's lesson we will learn about some people that did not respect God's house, but also there was one person who did respect God's house.

I. The People that did not respect God's House - Matthew 21:12-16

A. Those who bought and sold in the temple (21:12-13). Some people made God's house a business place. They used it to make money for themselves as they bought and sold doves and animals in the temple as sacrifices. They would overcharge for their birds and animals, because they were the only ones that the priests would accept as perfect sacrifices. Jesus said the house of God was to be a house of prayer, not a house for thieves practicing crooked business.

WE: Sometimes we may misuse God's house, too. Maybe we do not make it a business place, but we may make it a fun house. Now there are special places where we can have fun when it is a part of a children's program, but to run around and play tag in the church, to box and wrestle in the church and to throw things around the church are not the right things to do in the church.

B. Those who were money changers in the temple (21:12-13). Money changers would change common money into "holy" money to be used only in the temple. Worshipers needed to give "holy" money to God; they could not give common money to Him. When these money changers sold "holy" money to worshipers, they charged a very high price and made a big profit. A share of the profit went to the priests. That is why Jesus said that they had made the house of God a den of thieves.

WE: I hope we are not making the house of God a den of thieves, but if any of us takes something in the church that does not belong to us, whether it is big or small, whether it is ten dollars or a penny, we are a thief. If we encourage others to steal, we are making the church a den of thieves. God's house is supposed to be a holy place and He will severely punish all thieves.

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C. The chief priests and scribes (21:14-16). The religious leaders did not love Jesus. They did not like the good things He did for people because it made them look bad, and they did not like to hear the children who were in the temple say nice things about Jesus.

WE: I hope we are like the children who like to sing and praise Jesus, but if we do not like to sing to Jesus and we do not like others to praise Him, we are like the chief priests and scribes.

II. The People that did respect God's House - Matthew 21:12-16

A. Jesus (21:12-13). Jesus cleaned up the temple by chasing the wicked people out of the temple that were making lots of money by robbing honest worshippers of God.

WE: We can keep God's house clean, too! Maybe we cannot chase out bad adults, but we can warn children who are doing bad things in the house of God. We also can keep it clean by picking up scrap paper on the floor and by keeping our Sunday school room neat. This is God's house and we should do everything we can to show our respect for it.

B. The blind and lame people (21:14). Sick people came to Jesus in the temple and were healed.

WE: When we know Jesus as our Savior, we are healed of our sin by Jesus. Many have received Jesus and have been healed of their sins in God's house; they have been saved in a church meeting. We must keep the church building a holy place where sinners can be saved.

C. The children (21:15-16). These children were praising Jesus in the temple.

WE: We need to be known for our praise of God. He has done so much for us that it should be easy to praise God. This is a very good thing for us to do in God's house. We can sing praises to God and give testimonies of what He has done for us. What are some things for which you want to thank God?

III. Other things Children can do in the House of God – Matthew 21:18-22, 28-32

A. Children can pray (21:18-22). Jesus taught His disciples about the power of prayer on the way to the temple.

WE: We should not limit our praying to the house of God, but certainly, we should spend time praying in the church building because it is supposed to be a house of prayer (21:13).

B. Children can work for God (21:28-32). Jesus taught the people about a father that had two sons. The father asked them to work in the garden for him. The first boy said he would not work in the garden, but later he repented and went to work for his father. The second boy said he would work in the garden, but he did not. Which of the sons did the will of his father? (The first son)

WE: We need to do the work that God has asked us to do. If you told Him that you would not do His work, tell God that you are sorry for your disobedience, and then do what He asked you to do. If you said you would do the work that God asked you to do, but never did it, you also need to repent and then do His work.

BE (for Action): Ask the children if they can tell you about the different kinds of bad people in the temple who did not respect God's house. What kind of children would be like those bad people that were cast out of the temple?

Who were the people that respected God's house? What would children need to do to be like them?

Now ask them to name at least one thing they can do to show that they really respect God's house. Have them bow their heads and ask them to tell God what they want to do to show their respect for His house. Then close the lesson in prayer asking God to help all of them to respect His house all the time.