



Date: _____
Series: Holiday
Fall Year 1, Lesson 15

Labor Day: Jesus Lifts Our Burdens

Take Home Point: *Jesus lifts our burdens.

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Matthew 11:25, 28-30

Key Verse: Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me, all who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Place my yoke over your shoulders, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble. Then you will find rest for yourselves because my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

We will help kids know:

- Jesus can lift our burdens and worries.
- We don't earn heaven by just trying to do more good things. We receive heaven because Jesus gave his life for us.




We will help kids feel:

- Released from the load of their worries and fears.
- Uplifted by Jesus' presence in their life.

We will help kids do:

- Love others in response to God's love for them.
- Pray about their worries and fears.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3-4	Who can hold his burden the longest? The children will learn today to trust Jesus to lift their burdens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no supplies are needed
Large Group 	5 8-10 10-12 12	Overview Puppet Presentation: "Gordy—Down In the Dumps" Interactive Drama: "Jesus Lifts Our Burdens" Puppet Presentation: "Gordy—Down In the Dumps" Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gordy small bucket with a few small stones two five-gallon buckets filled with something heavy such as rocks, sand, or weights rope yoke made from a 6' two-by-four or a broom handle two crosses that will fit into the buckets
Small Group Application 	5-7	Kids play another activity about holding on to your burdens. But this time, the kids will ask Jesus to take away their burdens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no supplies are needed

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction! Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.*

There are children in greater numbers than we know carrying intensely heavy burdens in silence. Our goal in both small group settings today is to help children talk about their burdens and turn those burdens over to God. Through Jesus, God has an answer. Jesus lifts our burdens!

Children often instinctively turn to Jesus to satisfy their needs. We “smart” adults have much to learn from their simple, childlike faith. Please note Matthew 11:25, the verse leading up to our key verse.

Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from wise and intelligent people and revealing them to little children.”

Today, as children learn to trust Jesus who lifts their burdens, may we learn from their example.

Begin warm-up with the following.

Today we will play a game to see who can hold his burden the longest. Put your hands in front of you and open them. Imagine that some of your worries are placed right there in your hands. Now close your hands into fists and hold your fists together straight out in front of you. See how long you can hold your arms straight out without dropping or moving them, keeping your elbows locked.

Can you guess how many minutes you think you will be able to do this? Let's see.

Time the children, and tell them the minutes as their arms begin to drop. The average child will be able to do this for two to three minutes. Then say:

When you held out your arms for so long, how did they feel? Did you feel like you couldn't hold them up a minute longer and you just wanted to let go?

There was nothing in your hands, but we were imagining that your hands were holding things you might sometimes worry about.

Today in our lesson we will talk about heavy loads that we carry. These loads may not be things people can see like heavy bricks; but

they are things that worry us, that make us sad, or that make us cry. Some of our heavy loads may be secrets that only we know.

Let me tell you about a heavy load I have in my life that sometimes makes me worry and makes me sad. (Share an example from your life.)

Does anyone else want to share something in his life that is a heavy load or burden?

Make sure you let the children know that they do not have to share. You may want to tell them they can talk to you or the pastor anytime they have a heavy burden that they want to talk about in private.

I would like to tell you about one more burden that people sometimes have. It is a burden many people had that Jesus talked about when he was here on earth. The religious leaders told the people that they had to do many, many religious things in order to earn their way to heaven. Even though these leaders were asking the people to do religious things that seemed to be good, those things became heavy burdens.

Do you know that no one can do enough good things to earn his way to heaven? It's impossible. Even one sin is enough to make someone no longer holy or perfect. That's why Jesus said he wanted to lift the burden of trying to do good things to get to heaven. Jesus said, "If you come to me and trust me, I will forgive your sins and lift your burden. You can know for sure you will be friends with God forever."

If anyone here has a worry or burden about whether God could forgive his sins or whether he would go to heaven, I hope you listen to Jesus tell you today "Come to me...I will give you rest." **Jesus lifts our burdens.*

Large Group: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Overview:

Puppet Presentation: “Gordy—Down In the Dumps”

Gordy is burdened with the consequences of getting into trouble.

Interactive Drama: “Jesus Lifts Our Burdens”

A child volunteer is asked to use a yoke to pick up buckets filled with heavy weights. We see how Jesus replaces the heaviness with his light yoke.

Puppet Presentation: “Gordy—Down In the Dumps” Conclusion

Gordy understands how to give his worries to the Lord. Jesus replaces those worries with forgiveness and peace.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Read Matthew 11:28-30. Ask:

What is a yoke? *(A yoke is a wooden bar placed over the neck of work animals so they can pull plows or carts.)*

What does Jesus tell us to do with our heavy burdens? *(Come to him and let him carry them.)*

Read Matthew 11:29.

What does Jesus ask us to do? *(Take his yoke and learn from him.)*

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

What does it mean to take Jesus' yoke and learn from him? *(It means that we trust him as our Savior and trust him to help us with our problems.)*

Read the last part of verse 29. What will Jesus do when we trust him? *(Give us rest.)*

What does Jesus mean when he says his yoke is easy and his burden is light? *(When we trust in Jesus it is just like putting on his yoke, which is empty of worries and our own failures.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Think about some of the burdens or worries you have. Remember in the warm-up activity how holding up our burdens and our fists closed eventually pulled our arms down? Now we are going to see how Jesus lifts those burdens from us. Here is a special trick that will remind us that Jesus lifts our burdens.

Application Activity:

Divide into groups of three. One person stands in the middle with a partner on each side. The middle person puts his arms down at his side with palms open. He is to think about his burdens or worries. Instead of only thinking about those things, he should think about Jesus, who loves us so much that he gave his life for us. As we trust in Jesus as our Savior and forgiver of our sins, we remember he is with every day.

For one minute the person in the middle is to think about Jesus. He can silently ask Jesus to take away his burden. While he is doing that, he must try with all his might to push his arms straight out as his partners are pushing his arms down. The partners hold his hands down to his side while he presses up with all of his might. Even though the child's arms are not moving, he must continue to press for as long as he can. If he can do this for a full minute, the trick works very well.



After a minute, the two partners let go of the child's arms. His arms will float upwards, seemingly all by themselves because his burden seems so light.

Children should trade places within their group and try this again. After all have had a chance, keep the children in their groups of three and have them discuss their experience together.

How did you feel when your hands began to float upwards?

How is this like Jesus taking your burdens?

Have each child share something with his partners that he may at times be sad about or worry about. After each has shared, encourage the children to pray for each other. This takes maturity on behalf of the children and it might not be feasible. If so, gather the children into one group and have a closing prayer in the following manner.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, we thank you that you have given us *Jesus who lifts our burdens. We now think of our burdens in our hearts. (Allow time for silent prayer.) We know that you hear our prayers and you really do care. Please lift our burdens by helping to fix the situation or by helping us feel peace in our hearts. We especially thank you for Jesus who is our Savior and lifts the burden of trying to work our way to heaven. We know we can't do this. Instead, we trust in Jesus as our Savior. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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Large Group Presentation

Gordy—Down In the Dumps

Puppet Presentation

Gordy will need a small bucket with a few small stones. These stones might be the typical kind found in rock gardens.

Mr. King: Good morning, boys and girls. Welcome to Kingdom Quest. This is a special weekend called Labor Day. Does anyone know what that's about?

Rocks that are thrown from behind the puppet stage and land on the floor interrupt Mr. King's opening sequence.

Mr. King: Hey, wait a minute. What's this? Gordy, is that you?

Gordy: *(Using a frustrated tone.)* Yeah, it's me.

Mr. King: What are you doing throwing rocks over here?

Gordy: I have to pick up all these dumb rocks. I was throwing them in my bucket but I missed.

Mr. King: I was just talking to the kids about this weekend being Labor Day. Can you put your rocks down and join us?

Gordy: Well, I need some help picking those rocks up. Can you grab them for me?

Mr. King: Sure. Gordy, do you know what Labor Day is about?

Gordy: Yeah, it's about me having to work! I gotta pick up all these rocks. It's not fair!

Mr. King: No, Labor Day is about us taking a special rest from work. That's why many people don't work on Monday. Instead, we are thankful for God giving us a chance to rest.

Gordy: Well, I'm not thankful for any of it because I'll still be picking up these rocks!

Mr. King: Gordy, what's wrong? What happened with the rocks?

Gordy: I was just playing outside, minding my own business, when I saw this rock in the flowerbed. So I picked it up and threw it.

Mr. King: You threw the rock out of the flowerbed. Did you get in trouble for that?

Gordy: No, I threw another rock.

Mr. King: Oh, so you got in trouble for that.

Gordy: No, I threw another one.

Mr. King: Uh-oh. How many rocks did you throw?

Gordy: Oh, I don't know. Not too many. Maybe a hundred.

Mr. King: A hundred! Gordy, there had to be rocks all over your backyard. No wonder you got in trouble.

Gordy: Well, it's just that my sister Gerdy said she would tell on me.

Mr. King: Did you stop when she said that?

Gordy: Yeah, after I threw a rock at her.

Mr. King: Gordy! That's terrible!

Gordy: But I missed her. I didn't really try to hit her. But, boy, did I get in trouble. I guess I'm always getting in trouble.

Mr. King: You are?

Gordy: Yeah. Now I have to pick up all the rocks in all the backyards in my neighborhood. I'm just tired of getting in trouble and having my mom and dad mad at me.

Mr. King: It sounds to me like you have a burden.

Gordy: Yeah, all these rocks to pick up and a sister who tells on me.

Mr. King: Now wait a minute. I think your burden is your feeling bad about your consequence and you are also having a hard time being kind to your sister.

Gordy: How is that a burden?

Mr. King: It makes you sad in your heart, doesn't it?

Gordy: Yeah, I guess so.

Mr. King: Jesus has something to say about that. I would like you to listen to his words today as we act out what he says about how he can lift our burdens. When he does, our hearts can have rest and peace with him. Watch this.

Go to the interactive drama, “Jesus Lifts Our Burdens.”

Jesus Lifts Our Burdens

Interactive Drama

Supplies needed: two five-gallon buckets filled with something heavy such as rocks, sand, or weights; rope; yoke made from a 6' two-by-four or a broom handle; two crosses that will fit into the buckets



Mr. King: *(Reading from the Bible.)* Jesus invites people to come to him so he can lift their burdens. Matthew 11:25 says, “**At that, Jesus said, ‘I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from wise and intelligent people and revealing them to little children.’**”

I wonder what God showed little children that wise and intelligent people missed. I think it was how to trust God and not worry. Let’s see what Jesus says next.

Verses 28-30: “**Come to me, all who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Place my yoke over your shoulders, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble. Then you will find rest for yourselves because my yoke is easy and my burden is light.**”

Invite a child forward and give him the challenge of lifting the heavy yoke. As you do so, explain the following.

Mr. King: In Jesus’ day, yokes were used to help carry things. This wooden beam goes across someone’s shoulders to help them carry a very heavy load. Most often yokes were used with animals. It was placed on the animals’ shoulders so they could pull heavy loads.

Jesus says that sometimes we carry loads that are too heavy. That’s because our yoke is filled with too many burdens and worries. He has a yoke that he would like us to carry that is much lighter. Let’s look at this.

Our special friend has a yoke that is very heavy. Can she get it off the ground? How long can she hold it? Do you think she could run and play while carrying this? Of course not. Let's take a look inside and see why.

Remove the objects that are weighing the buckets down. As you pull out each weight, talk about one of the following burdens.

Mr. King: I can see what the burdens are that make this very heavy. Here is a burden of:

- **worrying about having enough money.**
- **parents arguing.**
- **problems with friends.**
- **illness.**
- **worrying about someone who wants to hurt you.**
- **having someone close to you get sick or die.**

Pull out the obviously biggest weight and say:

Mr. King: The biggest burden is worrying about not being good enough for heaven or thinking you haven't done enough good things to earn heaven.

Jesus says, "Come to me...and I will give you rest." He wants us to trust him because the only way we can get to heaven is by believing in Jesus as our Savior. We cannot earn heaven by the things we do. The only way we can be perfect in God's eyes is to be forgiven by Jesus.

In Jesus' day, many religious leaders were trying to act perfect. They made up hundreds of rules about how they could keep God's commandments and earn heaven. For example, one of the commandments is to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. The religious leaders knew this should be a day of rest but they added special rules that people couldn't do *anything* that *seemed* like work. For example, if someone had a needle in his cloak, he would be breaking the rule of carrying an extra burden on the Sabbath. Isn't that silly? That's what Jesus thought, too.

Jesus knows that no one can *earn* heaven by following religious rules. Instead, Jesus wants people to come to him and trust him as the one who can forgive them. He wants to live in our lives so we *want* to do all that God commands.

After the weights are removed, put a cross in each bucket. This will remind us of how Jesus empties us of our burdens and worries and gives us a new yoke.

Mr. King: Boys and girls, now you see how this is Jesus' yoke. He wants us to take off our worries and burdens and replace them with Jesus' forgiveness and his power. Jesus' yoke is easy and light.

Gordy—Down In the Dumps

Puppet Presentation Conclusion

Gordy: Wow, Mr. King! There sure were a lot of heavy things in those buckets!

Mr. King: Yes, there were a lot of things to be carried around by that yoke.

Gordy: It would be a lot of work putting all of that in there. That reminds me. I have to go pick up all those rocks.

Mr. King: Do you understand today's lesson, Gordy?

Gordy: Yeah. I think I understand that sometimes when I feel sad or mad, even if I'm in trouble, Jesus can lift that burden.

Mr. King: He sure can! He gives you his forgiveness and he can be right with you. But you have to turn your burden over to him.

Gordy: How do I do that?

Mr. King: You need to pray and tell him about it. Sometimes he fixes the situation and sometimes he gives you peace in your heart even if the situation stays the same.

Gordy: So it really feels like my burden is lifted?

Mr. King: Right. **Jesus lifts your burdens.* If you are especially burdened by your sins and mistakes, then you need Jesus to lift them.

Gordy: How do I do that?

Mr. King: You can pray about it. Why don't you give it a try?

Gordy: Okay... Dear Jesus, you know that sometimes I make mistakes—especially when I'm mad or angry. I know I did the wrong thing by throwing rocks at my sister. Will you forgive me and help me not do it again? Thank you, Jesus, for dying on the cross to pay for my sins and that you're alive to be with me right now. Please empty out the buckets of my burdens so I can carry yours. In Jesus' name. Amen.