



Date: _____

Series: The Best Gift of All – Jesus
Winter Year 4, Lesson 33

Bow Before the King

Primary Scripture: Revelation 4:8b-11; Revelation 5:11-14

Key Verse: Matthew 2:11b, "...So they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Children in American culture are not used to bowing. However, bowing in Biblical cultures communicated with body movement a position of the heart. It is the act of humbling oneself but also exalting the person bowed before. This position of the heart is one that kids need to experience today. Just as the wise men bowed before the infant king, so kids need to act and feel humility before the king of the universe, Jesus. By exalting Christ as King and Savior, one also then exalts the Father. This humbled position of the heart, while exalting God, is foundational for growth in the Christian faith.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus is God's gift to us. Though he came as our Savior to give his life for us, he is *the King*, as well.

Jesus in us: Jesus' character is one of humility before the Father's will. Through faith in Christ, God gives us that same humility.

Jesus through us: As we humble ourselves to worship the King, the act itself begins to point others to him, as well.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols, such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies: Treasure chest, or something resembling one, with miscellaneous "treasure" inside (trinkets, costume jewelry, coins, etc.).

Here is a treasure chest that reminds me of some special visitors who came to see Jesus when he was just an infant. Who can guess what people I'm thinking about?

Correct! It was the wise men. They had traveled hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of miles to find the Baby Jesus. And when they did find him, the Bible says this about what happened: "*They opened their treasure chests and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*" (Matthew 2:11b.)

Those were all very expensive items. But before they opened their treasure chest to offer Jesus the gifts, the Bible says they did something else. Who wants to guess what it is that they did? (*They bowed down and worshiped him.*)

The beginning of verse 11, says this: "*When they entered the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary. So they bowed down and worshiped him.*"

Before we give our gifts to God, such as our offerings or even our works of service for him, there is something important that we must

do. This is even more important than the gifts that we bring. We must worship God.

To show that they thought he was a great king and they were humbled in their hearts, the wise men bowed down all the way to the ground. It probably looked something like this.

If possible, demonstrate bowing all the way to the ground with your face to the ground or invite a child to demonstrate it for you.

When you bow down you are saying in your heart, “I’m not most important, God... you are!” and, “God, you are great and wonderful. I humble my heart before you.”

Today let’s bow before the king in our worship. Even when we stand to sing in our hearts, let’s keep ourselves humble and recognize how wonderful God is. Let’s worship him now.

If some of the songs are suitable, you might have kids sing while on their knees, or practice bowing between songs.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Supplies: a robe with easily distinguished hemline

Show the hem at the bottom of a robe or dress.

In Luke 8:43-44, we read about Jesus moving through the crowds. People were all around him. But one lady who had been sick for many years came and touched just the hem of his robe. We don’t know exactly where it was, but it might have been right down here at the bottom.

Point out hem location at the bottom of a garment or robe.

She would have had to bow down low to sneak just this tiny touch. She believed that if she could touch even just the very edge of his clothes, she would be healed. In her heart, this woman was bowing low to recognize that Jesus truly is God’s Son and had the power to

heal her. When she did this, Jesus turned around and declared to her that she was healed because she trusted him.

We need healing today not just from sickness, but also inside our hearts when we have disobeyed God or acted in unloving ways to others. We need healing when we feel unaccepted or all alone. But what or who will we touch?

Touching Jesus' garment is not necessary. In our hearts, when we bow before him and ask him to heal us from our own sin and forgive us, it's just like touching the cross. Then we have the power of Jesus' forgiveness while saying, "I'm not most important, God, you are!" When we pray, let's put ourselves in a position of bowing.

Prayer

Dear God, we worship you as our God and thank you for loving us. We especially thank you for sending Jesus. Because Jesus gave his life for us and paid the price for our sin, please forgive us. We can think of ways that we might have disobeyed you or acted unloving to others. We can also think of ways that we might be feeling lonely inside or maybe even feel that you don't want anything to do with us. We know that is not true. You want us to be close to you and filled with your love. So please forgive us. Just like the lady who reached out to touch Jesus' robe hem, we reach out to touch Jesus and know that he brings healing. Heal our hearts from any sinfulness and fill us with your love. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Use the treasure box as an offering basket and when kids bring their offerings up, have them bow before the Lord. If they haven't brought offerings, they can still approach the offering box to act out and imagine that they are placing their hearts in the treasure box and are still included in this process.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Leap Frog

Divide the kids into teams of five and have some groups race against each other in Leap Frog fashion, while other groups watch.

The Leap Frog Race is when kids bow into a tight little ball on the ground and space themselves a few feet apart from each other in a line. These kids become the “rocks.” Other kids are the “frogs” who leap over them by placing their hands on the backs of the “rocks.” Once the “frog” makes it over all the “rocks,” he/she is at the front of the line and bows down to become a “rock.” Once in this position, the last “rock” in the line becomes the new “frog” and leaps over each member of the group. As a result, the entire group moves along the assigned path.

The first group to complete the course wins.

Variations:

- *Make teams larger so that the Leap Frog line is longer.*
- *If you have many teams competing, you can have playoffs or “jump offs,” where winners of different heats compete.*
- *Kids watching groups compete might judge the best form and give special points for the best form of leapers and not just those with the quickest speed.*

Gather kids together for the learning point:

How did we create movement with this game? *(Some jumped, some bowed down and formed a “rock.”)*

If some had refused to be “rocks,” would this game have been successful in moving? *(No.)*

What does “bowing” indicate? *(It indicates worship, respect, honor, and obedience. Listen for any of the similar characteristics.)*

So, let’s remember to bow to Jesus, who gave himself for us. That bowing of our hearts can be shown by worship, honor and respect... by our offerings... and by obedience to what he says. We learn about God’s thoughts from the Bible.

Bible Presentation:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Props:

- Cross
- Large name tag style signs labeled:
 - Christian
 - Non-Christian

Invite two participants to the front and place a name tag sign on each. One volunteer will represent a Christian and the other will represent a non-Christian.

God doesn’t force us to bow to him.

These two volunteers each have a name tag to describe their role for this demonstration. Let’s use our imaginations and pretend that (gesture to one) this person is a Christian and (gesture to the other) this person is a non-Christian. A Christian is someone who trusts in Jesus as his/her Savior and follows him. A non-Christian is one who does not believe in and has not received Jesus as his/her Savior.

Hold up the cross and say:

Let’s imagine this cross represents Jesus. If Jesus truly is God, could he make both of these people bow before him? He could, couldn’t he? But no, he gives them the choice.

It says in Matthew 19 that a rich young man thought he could earn his way to heaven by doing good things. At one point, he was invited to follow Jesus. But the rich young man chose not to do that, instead he chose to follow his riches and money. So he did not bow down to Jesus, but he walked away.

Do you think Jesus would force him to bow down? No.

Would Jesus *force* a Christian to bow before him or would a Christian *want* to? Right, a Christian would *want* to.

So, let's see what this looks like.

Have the "Christian" student bow or kneel on one knee before the cross, which symbolizes Jesus. After a few seconds, let him/her stand back up. The other person, or "non-Christian," remains standing.

When Jesus returns, every knee will bow.

But did you know that a time will come when Jesus will return on the last day and every believer will be gathered around him? How do you think Christians will feel on that last day?

Take guesses.

Yes, they will feel happy and excited because they get to see Jesus. Will they want to bow before him? Of course, they will.

Hold the cross and let the Christian volunteer bow again.

But when all the non-Christians who don't know Jesus see him on the last day, how do you think they will feel? (*Sad.*) They chose not to bow down to him before and now it is too late. But will they bow down? Yes. They will bow down in fear, not in love, because they will be judged and not brought into heaven.

Read Philippians 2:10-11:

"...so that at the name of Jesus everyone in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will kneel and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

Jesus gave his life for us on the cross. Then God gave him a special honor. At the name of Jesus, everyone in heaven and earth will kneel and confess the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord. So even the non-Christians will admit the truth. Jesus IS God's Son and paid the price for all of our sin. Though they will admit it is true, it will be too late for them to receive it, but they will still bow.

So, then all of those who have received Jesus as their Savior, and all of those who have willingly bowed before him, will be together in heaven. Let's take a look at the book of Revelation to paint a picture of how this looks.

Revelation 4:8b-11; Revelation 5:11-14 paraphrased:

In these verses, it says that there are many different heavenly creatures. Day and night they are singing, “holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty, who was and is, and is coming.” Then, some of the people who have gone to heaven will bow and place their crowns before the throne. They, too, will sing that God is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power because he created everything. There is the picture of millions and millions of angels, and all creatures in heaven and on earth, singing to God who sits on the throne and to Jesus, the Lamb of God. They sing praise, glory, honor, and power forever and ever and bow down and worship him.

Conclusion

So we have a choice today. We can bow and worship him now and recognize that Jesus is truly God’s Son who gave his life for us. We can receive his forgiveness and ask him to live in our lives. Then we can look forward to being part of that big group in heaven who will also worship and bow down to him there. Or, we can refuse to bow down to him now, but then when we see him on the last day, we will bow down because we will have to. In that case, we will never be able to be with him and worship him in heaven.

Who Will Bow Before the King?

Supplies needed:

- *Sign #1 that says:*
Praise and honor to our King,
The one to whom we sing.
We gladly bow down before
The one whom we adore.

- *Sign #2 that says:*

You’re telling us a lie,
There is no king.
We’ll not bow down
Or do any such thing.

Divide the room in half. Assign one group of kids to recite the poem on sign #1. Assign the other group of kids to recite the poem on sign #2. Have them practice parts and have a visual “cue” that tells them when to say their parts during the story.

Audience participation teaching

There once was a mighty and noble king who ruled over a vast land. He was well-loved by all the people in his kingdom and his castle doors were oftentimes open and welcoming. He even invited the common people to feast at his table and play games in his courtyard. When his people were not eating or having fun, the king sometimes could be found taking time to help with whatever problems they presented to him. Regardless of the peoples' circumstances, the king ruled over the land with justice and kindness. The people revered him with such respect and wanted to recognize his royal post, that it was a well-practiced routine to bow down as low as they could whenever they came into the king's presence.

Have first group recite:

*Praise and honor to our King,
The one to whom we sing.
We gladly bow down before
The one whom we adore.*

But the king did not just host the people in his home. He was often out in the village meeting and greeting them in and around their own humble homes. When they heard him close by they rushed out to welcome him.

Cue group one to say:

*Praise and honor to our King,
The one to whom we sing.
We gladly bow down before,
The one to whom we adore.*

After reverently bowing so low, they stood up in excitement! They raised their voices in cheers and shouts to greet the king. They also raised their arms in praise and motioned eagerly toward him to welcome him into their lives!

However, there was part of his great kingdom separated from the rest of the land by a river. At one time, it was considered to be more like a stream or a creek, sometimes barely managing a trickle of flow. But as the years went by, the river had grown and the water flowing had deepened. Faster and faster it became so that fewer and fewer people dared to cross it. Soon, the people on the other side of the river visited the king no more. Many even forgot that they were once part of his kingdom.

Unfortunately, the conditions of the land and health of the people deteriorated until sickness and plague spread among many of the people. When a drought caused the crops to fail, the whole area turned into a dusty wasteland with hungry and sick people. To those living there, it was like a curse had been cast over their land and, with the ever deepening river dividing them from the king, they had nowhere to turn for the kind of encouragement and help he offered.

Each year as the river continued to deepen, widen and become more treacherous, the conditions of this far away land seemed to be under a curse that also continued to deepen, widen and become more treacherous. The people were filled with harshness toward one another while looking out for their own interests in order to survive.

Even with all this hardship, nothing seemed to improve and the river still rose and soon overflowed beyond its banks and flooded their land. All would be lost. The people would be swept away and the land ultimately destroyed.

There WAS a bright spot of hope for the people of the land, however. They could still manage to cross the river before it was too late and the land flooded. The king desired that these people would come to his side of the river and know him again. So he sent his servants to cross the river and invite the people to come live close to him in his kingdom. One by one his servants returned to tell him that his people refused to come and would not even listen.

The king thought to himself, “There is ONE person to whom they will surely listen. I will send my own son. I KNOW he can bring them back.”

The son left the castle that day. As he walked the streets, people bowed down low before him because he was the son of the king even though he was not dressed in his royal clothes but in his traveling clothes.

*Praise and honor to our King,
The one to whom we sing.
We gladly bow down before
The one whom we adore.*

He looked like any of the villagers, but the people still recognized who he was and cheered him on the way.

When he arrived at the treacherous river, he built a boat to cross it and found the land on the other side to be as bad as he had heard. It was dusty and dry. The crops had failed and there was little to eat. The people were covered with sores from disease. But worst of all, their hearts had grown hard. They were cruel to each other as they looked out for only themselves.

When the king's son approached the village, he announced that he was the son of the king and warned them of the coming doom. He said that if they would recognize that he was the son of the king and bow down, he would offer them his boat, which he built by himself, to save them. He was such a remarkable carpenter that the boat was durable enough make it across the treacherous river. He invited them to follow him to the land of his father, the king.

Unfortunately, a strong group of dissenters began to form when the village mayor came to him and said, "You don't look like the son of a king. Show us some proof if you want us to follow you. Even if we did follow you, we don't have any money to pay our way there."

Have group two recite the following:

*You're telling us a lie,
There is no king.
We'll not bow down
Or do any such thing.*

The king's son replied, "You don't need any money. All I ask is that you bow down and recognize that I am a son of the king."

The mayor replied, "I bow to no one!"

Cue group to again say:

*You're telling us a lie,
There is no king.
We'll not bow down
Or do any such thing.*

Another man standing nearby said, "I'd rather live in a dying land than bow down and serve any other man. I am my own king here and no other king will I fear."

*You're telling us a lie,
There is no king.
We'll not bow down
Or do any such thing.*

But even as the people argued against him, the king's son persisted in continuing his invitation. He said, "But all you need to do is believe me and cross the river in my boat. Hurry! Before it's too late!"

*You're telling us a lie,
There is no king,
We'll not bow down
Or do any such thing.*

With his royal touch and compassion, some of the people with hard hearts began to melt. They hoped there was such a kingdom as he described, and some even fell down at the son's feet. As they touched him, they felt new hope. Some who touched him even saw their diseases lift. Others who saw this, felt their hard hearts soften.

When the mayor saw others bowing to the king's son and recognizing that he was indeed the royal one, he became jealous. He brought the others to grab the son of the king and accused him of being a spy from another land so that they could watch them and conquer this land.

Group two:

*You're telling us a lie,
There is no king.
We'll not bow down
Or do any such thing.*

Quickly others gathered around and they dragged the king's son away. Those who bowed to him were left behind.

Group one:

*Praise and honor to our King,
The one to whom we sing.
We gladly bow down before
The one whom we adore.*

But they were left with one thing and that was hope. They remembered the boat as described by the king's son and made their way to the river to find it. They could tell that the river was already beginning to rise and was coming over its banks. They found the boat tied to a tree and quickly untied it and rowed out into the river. Now, the river was really pouring out of its banks and flooding into the land. All those who had listened to the son of the king and bowed before him, were now crossing the river. When they reached the

other side, they were surprised to find the people of that land eagerly welcoming them.

*Praise and honor to our King,
The one to whom we sing.
We gladly bow down before
The one whom we adore.*

Over their shoulder they looked, in hopes of some sign that the king's son was close behind. But they feared the worst. He had given his life to show them the way out of their land and back to the kingdom.

The people of the land met the people who just arrived. They were brought to the king. They were presented to him and had the privilege of bowing low.

*Praise and honor to our King,
The one to whom we sing.
We gladly bow down before
The one whom we adore.*

But these people felt so sorry to report to the king that his son had been lost. They speculated that he must have drowned in the flood and all must have been lost in the great flood over the land. But the king gladly welcomed them to the kingdom anyway, and ordered that the trumpets be sounded.

Then all of a sudden, the son of the king appeared seemingly out of nowhere and was presented to the royal court.

Have everyone say:

*Praise and honor to our King,
The one to whom we sing.
We gladly bow down before
The one whom we adore.*

All knelt and bowed before him. He approached his father and sat down on the throne next to him. Though the water swept through the countryside, the water could not sweep the king's son away. In the end, he never needed a boat to cross the river because he was the strongest swimmer in the land. And when the water had risen and flooded the land, it was a safe passage for him back to home.

The application story must remind you of someone. Who came to your mind when you heard about the king's son?



Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Encourage kids to share how they act when they bow down to Jesus in their hearts.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- treasure chest or something resembling one with miscellaneous “treasure” inside (trinkets, costume jewelry, coins, etc.)

Power of the Cross:

- a robe with easily distinguished hemline

Bible Presentation:

- cross
- large name tag style signs labeled:
 - Christian
 - non-Christian
- Sign #1 that says:
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Sign #1 that says:

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