



Date: _____

Series: God is Our Rescuer
Fall Year 2, Lesson 16

We Go To Church Not to Impress Others, but to Let God Impress Us

Primary Scripture: Acts 5:1–11

Key Verse: Acts 5:4b, "...You didn't lie to people but to God."

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

Often kids attend church because their parents do or a friend has brought them. If they are having a great experience, they are usually excited about being there. But kids, like adults, tend to lose focus as to what they need to get out of the experience. Sometimes attending church is reduced only to giving the appearance of looking good to others. It is especially easy for kids, who are very aware of adult approval, to make others think well of them as a primary objective of attending church. Kids need to know that the primary objective should be experiencing a relationship with God. His Word comes to us, and we respond to him with our worship. God wants to impress *us*. He doesn't want us to come to *his* house to impress others.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus never tried to impress others just so he would look good in their eyes. Instead he pointed with his entire life to the glory of his Heavenly Father. In obedience to his Father, Jesus gave his life for us so that through his forgiveness he might impress upon us just how much he loves us.

Jesus in us: God wants to impress us with his presence so much that he promised that by his Spirit, Jesus himself would live in our hearts.

Jesus through us: Though we are not to seek others for the sake of our own credit, we are to reach out to others so that through our lives Jesus might impress them and draw them to him.

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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.

Have labeled on poster board or large sheet of newsprint, "WHY PEOPLE GO TO CHURCH."

Have a video camera hooked up to the projection system and pretend you're a news anchor about to get a big story. (This can be done effectively without the video camera and hookup – kids can pretend and it will be just as effective. But if you procure a spotlight and video hook-up for the activities later, you might want to use them here for added effect.)

Have a camera person videotaping you so your image is up on the screen. Have someone else turn the spotlight on you, then say in your best *TV-anchorperson's* voice into a microphone:

Good morning! We're here at _____ Church to find out why people go to church. I wonder if any of these handsome young men and women would like to be interviewed on TV....

Call a child forward and ask:

Why do you think people go to church?

Have someone record the child's answer on the poster board or butcher-block paper prominently displayed somewhere in the room. Thank the volunteer as you dismiss them, then ask:

I wonder if someone else might be able to think of another reason why people go to church.

Have several kids come up for this question, one at a time, recording their answers on the poster board/paper. Try to lead the kids into including some or all of the following:

- To worship God
- To sing the songs
- To hear good sermons
- To see their friends
- To play games at church
- To impress others

After the “impress others” reason is listed and several other responses are recorded, have the spotlight and camera focus on a cross. The camera should zoom in so the cross fills the screen. If you’re not using a camera, it might be effective to dim the lights of the worship center so the light on the cross stands out even more. Call everyone’s attention to focus on the cross.

While some people go to church to impress *others*, God wants to impress *us* when we come to worship. He wants us to look to him and see how big he is, how wonderful he is, and how much he loves us. When we worship, we are telling God how wonderful he is. We are telling him that he is the most important thing in our lives. Let’s think of God now and let him impress us with how wonderful he is.

Dear God, we come to worship you. Impress upon us who you are. You are God the Father who has created us and everything. You are God’s son, Jesus, who has given your life for us so we might be forgiven and accepted into your family. You are God, the Holy Spirit, who comes to live in our hearts right now. Fill us with your presence as we worship you.

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.

When you were singing and worshiping God, were you thinking about him? Or was your mind wandering? Were you thinking of yourself or someone else in the room? Sometimes that is easy to do. But God wants us to have special time with him, when we just think about him.

Every day God wants us to do that. At some time every day we need to worship him. We can do that when we stop and think about him and pray and tell him just how wonderful he is.

Refer again to the spotlight on the cross. It might be helpful to lower the lights. Say:

It is just like this light shining on the cross. The light reminds us of how wonderful God is and how much he loves us. He wants to be our best friend, so he sent Jesus into the world. Because he did that we need to give glory to Jesus and thank him for all he's done.

Look what sometimes happens.

Step into the light or take a child from the audience and have that child step into the light.

Sometimes we get so busy thinking about ourselves that we don't think about God. And sometimes we don't like to think about him because we have done something wrong. Maybe we've been selfish or unkind; maybe we hurt someone or said mean words, and we do that because we want to be in our own spotlight. We say to ourselves, "I only want to do what I want to do; I don't want to even think about what God wants me to do." When that happens our lives become sad.

Anyone who thinks only of himself is usually a very sad person. It's because they are trying to be the only one in the spotlight. Instead Jesus needs to be in the center of our spotlight. How do we change that? We need to tell God about our selfishness or the wrong things we do and then look to him and ask for forgiveness. Then we'll see Jesus in the spotlight again.

Move the child out of the spotlight to expose the cross alone.

When we see Jesus alone we are forgiven, and he gives us power to keep him in the middle of our lives.

Lead the kids in a prayer of confession and announce God's forgiveness.

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.

Direct the attention of the children to the spotlight on the cross. As kids place their offerings at the foot of the cross, say:

Offerings help remind us that Jesus is the center of our lives, and our offerings remind us to keep him first. When we prepare to bring our offerings, we should always take the very first part of our allowance, at least ten percent, and give it to him.

Describe the current offering project as the offerings are collected.



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.

Today's game, "**What Do Other People Think?**" will have the desired outcome of helping kids not worry too much about what others think of them.

Divide participants into groups of four to six kids, giving each group three 8½ x11-inch pieces of paper and a pen. Have three volunteers come forward. Introduce each of them to the audience by name. Have these three "contestants" either go behind a divider or leave the room so the other kids can't see them.

Name each "contestant" one at a time and ask three to five questions about that contestant's appearance. Have each group discuss their answers and record them on paper to determine which group could remember the most details. Make the questions difficult enough that most of the groups will miss at least some of the questions. Modify the following questions according to the uniqueness of each contestant:

- **What color of shoes was _____ wearing?**
- **Did _____ shoes have laces or buckles?**
- **Was he wearing a belt?**
- **What color was his watchband?**
- **How many braids were in _____ hair?**
- **Did _____ have any freckles?**
- **What color is _____ eyes?**
- **Did _____ have any missing teeth? How many?**
- **What is the design on _____ dress?**
- **Was _____ wearing any jewelry? What?**

The final question for each of the contestants needs to be,

- **What was he or she thinking while standing up front?**

Of course the kids can't tell another person's thoughts; it will be interesting to see how closely they can guess. After questions are asked about all three contestants, have them return to give the correct answers. Have each group stand up if they correctly

answered a question. Then have the contestants share what they were thinking when first asked to come up front. Have contestants return to their seats and say:

Sometimes when we come to church we are worried about what other people think about us and how we look to them. That's not something to worry about. We shouldn't even try to guess what others are thinking about us. Instead we should think about what God sees when he looks at us. He sees us as his children because of our faith in Jesus as our Savior. God can look inside our hearts and see the ways that we love him and obey him.

Bible Reading:

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.

Acts 5:1-11 can be told using the video *The Visual Bible: Acts* or it could be told as a story while incorporating various characters from the audience. Then say:

Ananias and Sapphira had done a wonderful thing in bringing the money they received from selling some property to give at church. They had told everyone that they had given it *all* to church and the Lord's work, but they really hadn't. They held back some of the money. They were more concerned about what other people thought and how good they looked to other people than about giving to the Lord. They weren't just lying to *people* and pretending to be generous, they were lying to the *Holy Spirit* — to *God*. God wants us to put him first and not do religious things just to impress other people.

After explaining the Bible event, use a video camera that is hooked up to a TV or video projector so that whatever the camera is pointing at comes up on the screen. Pan the camera around the room at the children and say:

This camera can sometimes be like us in church. We might look around at other people and think to ourselves, "I wonder what they're thinking about me?" or "I wonder if everyone thinks I'm having a good time because I'm going to church?" Are we then really listening to what God has to say to us, and are we really telling God how wonderful he is?

Look what else can happen. We can take this camera and pan it all over different parts of the room. Sometimes it's easy to let our minds wander and not pay attention and if we do that we really might miss something important. But if we focus on the cross and if we turn the spotlight on, it helps us think just how wonderful God is and how he gave up his son, Jesus, to be our Savior. That's where we need to keep our attention.



Witness

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.

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.

Blessing:

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

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. 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.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- a spotlight
- video camera hooked up to VCR and monitor(optional)
- marker
- cross
- poster board or large sheet of butcher-block paper labeled "WHY PEOPLE GO TO CHURCH"

Learning Game:

- approximately 100 sheets of 8½ x11-inch paper
- 30 pens or pencils

Bible Reading:

- video: *The Visual Bible: Acts* (International Bible Society, 1984). Show Acts 5:1-11
- video camcorder hooked up to VCR and monitor