



Date: _____
Series: Building Christian Character
Winter Year 2, Lesson 40

Trusting God to Take Care of Us

Primary Scripture: Matthew 11:25-30

Key Verse: Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest."

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

Kids need security. Their primary source of security is their parents. The love, protection, and nurturing their parents provide is their basis for understanding God's love, protection and nurturing. Kids need to trust they can call upon their Heavenly Father. In today's lesson, we find Jesus expressing the Father's heart and inviting people who are weak and weary to find rest and security in him. This message will be especially important for children coming from homes with insufficient amounts of love. May God's love be demonstrated through Christians who gather around such children to communicate the love of Jesus. The church needs to be the place where this love is experienced in a real way.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: It was Jesus who took the yoke of our sins on himself when he went to the cross. Because of that, we are not left to our own resources to get right with God.

Jesus in us: Jesus makes his presence personal to us. Through the Holy Spirit, he gives us the simple childlike trust to receive this relationship that Jesus has won for us.

Jesus through us: We can take Jesus' yoke upon ourselves and share his loving and inviting heart with others.

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.

Prop: pillow or blanket

Read Psalm 105:1-3.

"Give thanks to the LORD. Call on him... Sing to him. Make music to praise him. Meditate on all the miracles he has performed. Brag about his holy name. Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice."

Open the service, calling upon God's name and invoking his presence. Calling upon the name of the Trinity reminds us of that very name spoken over us in our baptism. Calling on his name invites his presence.

Using the pillow or blanket, say:

Have you ever had a favorite pillow or special blanket? They are especially handy when you're tired or you want to curl up and rest. Maybe it's especially fun to snuggle up to your mom or dad when they're resting.

Did you know that God commands us to have a special rest with him? He says in his commandments, "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." God wants one whole day that we can think about him and rest with him. That means God wants us to snuggle up with

him. He wants us to know that he will take great care of us. He wants to give us Jesus to be with us in everything we do.

When we worship today, in a way, we are snuggling up with God. We are resting from trying to do everything ourselves. Instead, we trust God to take care of us. That is why we are singing his worship and praise today.

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 needed: a glass jar filled 2/3 with water and 1/3 bleach (be sure the jar has a lid so that the children do not smell the bleach and to prevent spilling), white cloth, red water-based marker, something to place on the floor to protect the carpet from the bleach, and a dry towel or paper towels

Using a red water-based marker, write different sins on the white cloth. Take suggestions from the kids. After a number have been written, place the cloth in the jar with bleach mixture and pray a prayer of confession.

Then read Isaiah 1:18 (NIV):

“Though your sins are bright red, they will become as white as snow.”

Your sins will become “as white as snow” because Jesus’ blood that he poured out when he died on the cross took our sins away.

Carefully remove the white cloth from the jar. (You might want to protect carpeting by laying newspaper or garbage bags on the floor beneath.) Marvel at how the sins are gone!

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.

Prop needed: a dollar bill.

Hold up the dollar bill and ask the kids what they can buy with a dollar. When they put the same dollar in the offering plate, are they trying to buy something from God? What are they getting?

God's word says that we cannot buy or earn our favor from God at all. It is not for sale. God gives us his love and his favor because we know Jesus as our Savior. Jesus already paid for all that we need from God.

When we give a dollar, we are giving it as a gift. We are not trying to buy anything. We are simply saying thank you for all God has already given us.



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.

“Trust Circles”

To introduce the game, talk about the Kingdom Quest lesson for the day. In that lesson, Jesus invited children to come to him. He said that people must have simple trust like a child’s trust. Today’s game will show an example of what it means to trust someone else.

To make trust circles, divide the kids into groups of 11. An adult helper will need to be on the outside of each circle to make sure no one falls through the outer ring or, at least, helps them have a gentle landing.

Have one child in each group stand in the middle of the rest of his group. Tell this child that his challenge will be to not move his feet during this game. The ten other children will make a circle around the middle child and each of these children will place their right foot so it is almost touching the foot of the child in the center. They will then plant their back foot far behind them and hold both hands out, ready to catch the child in the center. When the child in the center leans and falls, they can catch him by the shoulders and arms.

The person in the center is asked to cross his arms and remain as rigid as possible, especially in the waist and knees. This person should also keep his heels firmly on the ground as he falls to the outside circle of kids.

The children in the circle must catch the child in the center and pass him to the person on the left. There should be as many hands as possible on the touring child at all times.

It is usually hard for the person in the middle to trust the kids on the outside and to lean so he is caught in the hands of his friends. It’s a wonderful experience to find that these hands can be trusted.

Teach the learning point of the game:

We can trust Jesus. He will always catch us. His love, as a matter of fact, surrounds us and might even move us to a new place. His love is always safe because he holds us.

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.

Matthew 11:25-30

Part 1: Trust is simple childlike faith

Ask the kids:

What can kids can do that their parents may not be as good at?

Take responses, and then read Matthew 11:25-26. Continue with:

Jesus says that adults sometimes have a hard time trusting in Jesus as their Savior. They need childlike faith. Sometimes adults try to work their way to heaven by trying to do more things to please God. Kids are better at simply trusting that God has done everything for them in Jesus.

Part 2: Jesus shows us the way to the Father

Read Matthew 11:27. Then continue with:

It is God's power that lets us trust Jesus. God's power is working in you right now if you can say, "I trust you, Jesus, to be my Savior."

Part 3: Jesus invites us to come to him, which means to trust him

Read Matthew 11:28-30. Say:

When we give Jesus our lives, he gives us something better back: his life living in ours. The following story is an example of this.

Props needed: an old-looking pearl necklace and a new-looking pearl necklace

Have a young girl come forward to be "Megan." Put each necklace on her at the appropriate time.

There once was a little girl named Megan. Her most important possession was a little necklace of very inexpensive beads. It was her favorite so she wore it everyday until it became dirty. Even the color of the fake pearls had changed. Instead of being bright, white,

and shiny they had turned yellow and cracked. Megan loved her cheap necklace, though, and she wore it all the time.

When her parents asked her to take it off, she began to cry. She did not want to let go of it. Her parents let her wear it.

The day before Megan's birthday, her father took her onto his lap. He asked her in a kind and gentle voice, "Megan, would you take off your necklace and give it to me? I know how much it means to you. Trust me. It is time now for you to give it up. You are getting older and you do not need a toy necklace like this anymore."

Megan knew that she should do what her father asked. Still it was hard for her. Finally, with tears in her eyes, she took it off and gave it to her father. He gave her a hug and told her it would be okay.

The next day was her birthday party. Already she had begun to forget about her necklace. After the cake and ice cream, Megan opened her first gift. It was from her father. In the box was a brand new necklace! It was made of something that looked just like real pearls.

"It's beautiful!" she exclaimed. "Dad, will you put it on me right now?"

Gladly, he fastened it around her neck. You see, Megan did not know it, but her father had already been to the jewelry store before he took away her old treasure – the ugly necklace. He already had planned to give her something far better. He knew that she had to trust him and give up something that was very important to her. In return, she got something much better.

Wouldn't it have been too bad if Megan had refused to give up her old necklace just because she thought it was valuable? She would have lost the real prize – the valuable gift of her new necklace. Sometimes that is the way it is with God and us.

God wants us to come to him and give up those things in our lives that we might think are treasures. In fact, they are worthless. Sometimes we might want to hang onto things that are selfish. This would be like our old necklace. We might treasure our old ways of just thinking about ourselves and not thinking about anyone else. God wants us to give those things to him. That is just like giving our lives to him. When we do, God gives us back a much greater treasure. He gives us back our lives that are filled with Jesus. That is like a bright, new necklace.

Jesus says to us, “Come. You might be weary and tired of hanging onto your old necklaces – your old selfish ways. Give them to me. I have something that is so much better for you – a life filled with me!”



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.

Have kids share a time they gave up an old habit or way of doing things and God blessed them in return.

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:

- pillow or blanket

The Power of the Cross:

- glass jar filled with water and bleach mixture (one-third bleach would be adequate), be sure the jar has a lid
- white cloth
- red water-based marker
- something to place on the floor to protect the carpet from the bleach
- dry towel or paper towels

Offering:

- dollar bill

Bible Lesson:

- old, yellowed pearl necklace
- new, white pearl necklace

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