



Date: _____
Series: Godly Actions Count (Summer)
Year 4, Lesson 14

Imitate Christ—Not Worldliness

Primary Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Samuel 16:7

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.”

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

Kids are looking for models to follow. It is easy to follow the ways and standards of this world. But is that God's best for them? Of course not. Jesus invites us to imitate him. We not only learn of him in his word, but we also see his example lived out in the lives of others. As kids follow him, they more truly become who they were meant to be as Christ lives in them. This is not fashioned by outer appearance. Instead, it is by the inward work of Jesus in their lives.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus freed us from the standards of worldliness through his death and resurrection on our behalf. Through his forgiveness, we have new life in him.

Jesus in us: Before we are imitations of Christ, we are habitations of Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, he dwells in our lives.

Jesus through us: As we imitate Christ, we can become models for others to follow 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.

In advance, work with another adult or child to practice the mirror game.

This is how the game is played: Two people face each other a few feet apart, and the lead person makes an action, such as moving an arm, head, foot, or leg. As the lead person moves, the partner moves with him, giving the appearance of standing in front of a mirror. So if the lead person holds up his right hand, his partner holds up his left hand in front of the lead person's right hand just as it appears in a mirror. The motions occur simultaneously. Practice ahead of time so the actions can be made both slowly and rapidly. For example, if you agree to pat your head three times, then your partner will know what to expect and can more accurately mimic your actions.

Invite your pre-selected partner to come forward.

We are going to play a game, and after we are done, I'd like the rest of you to guess what we were doing.

Play the mirror game for about one minute.

Okay kids, what were we doing? Yes, this is called the mirror game. We mirror back just what the other person does. Another word to describe this is "imitate." When we do something just like someone else, we imitate what he or she does.

Would someone else like to come up here and play the mirror game with me and imitate what I do?

Invite a child up. Begin slowly, but then frustrate the child with actions that are a little bit too fast to follow. It should be similar, however, to what you just demonstrated with your partner.

Now, I wonder why the first person had an easier time following my actions than the second person. Do you want to know the secret? It's because my first partner and I practiced. When you spend time together practicing, it is easier to imitate the other person.

I wonder how this might apply to our friendship with Jesus. Do you think that we are supposed to imitate him? Of course we are. But our imitation is not just the way we move, or the way we dress, or the way we style our hair. We imitate Jesus on the inside. On the inside, we, too, love our heavenly Father, and we love others. But for us to be a better imitator, we need to spend time with Jesus.

That is why our worship time this morning is so important. We are spending time with Jesus so that we might better imitate him. Let's worship God today. As we give him our worship, and as he speaks to us in his word, we will become better imitators of Jesus.

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!

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 cool pair of sunglasses for an adult, a cool pair of sunglasses for a child

Say to the kids:

What do you think we would look like if we imitated some of the bad things in the world around us?

Take answers from the kids. *(We might be greedy, jealous, cruel, etc.)*

That is what it means to be worldly. 1 John 2:15 says, “Don’t love the world and what it offers. Those who love the world don’t have the Father’s love in them. Not everything that the world offers – physical gratification, greed, and extravagant lifestyles – comes from the Father. It comes from the world...”

Invite a child forward. Put on a pair of cool sunglasses. Give the child some cool sunglasses and a handful of money.

Now imitate me. This is an example of worldliness.

Act real cool (*chic and trendy*). Walk real cool. As you are acting out your coolness, reach over and steal some of the child's money, and then continue acting cool.

The way I am acting is sometimes the way people in the world want to appear cool on the outside. I am also demonstrating how the world chases after things like money. Some people in the world may even try to steal it away from others. We don't want to imitate what the world does, do we? Of course not.

Thank the child and let him/her return to his/her seat.

Invite another child forward, and face the child directly.

Let's continue to play the mirror game, and let me demonstrate something Jesus did so that we can truly imitate him. He did this.

Hold your arms out wide. Your partner also stretches his arms out wide.

What does this remind you of? Yes, Jesus stretched his arms out wide to die on the cross for us. His death on the cross paid the price for all of our sins. Then Jesus did this.

Embrace the child with a hug.

That's right! Jesus died on the cross, but he didn't stay dead. Instead, he comes to each one who has an open heart for him. He gives us his love and a hug. He even goes one step further – he comes into our hearts by the power of his Holy Spirit. When we trust him as our Savior, we know that he is right here with us in our hearts. Now we can imitate Jesus not just by the way we move our bodies or dress or style our hair, but we can imitate him through the thoughts and desires in our hearts and our actions. Let's pray.

Dear God, thank you for giving us Jesus who gave his life for us on the cross. Thank you that Jesus lives in our hearts as we trust in you. Help us to imitate Jesus on the inside. Help us have his kind of love and care for others. Help us have his kind of courage and willingness to obey you in everything. Help us to truly be ourselves and not try to be like the standards of this world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want 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.

Did Jesus ever give an offering? Yes, he did. But it was not because he had to. After all, Jesus was God, so all offerings went to him anyway. But he did give an offering because he wanted to set a good example.

Let's bring our offerings up today. Jesus gave us a good example to follow.



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.

“Mirror Game”

Have the children choose partners and practice the mirror game. Explain that you will choose three of the best pairs to compete to see who can do this the most creatively and accurately.

After choosing three pairs of kids, let each pair take turns performing the mirror game for one minute. Afterwards, have the kids vote on the group that did this the most creatively and accurately.

Learning Point:

Point out again that the mirror game is much easier when we spend time with each other practicing the moves. This is also true of our relationship with Jesus. As we spend time with him and as he lives in us, we become more and more like him on the inside. As we become more like Christ, we become better examples for others to imitate.

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.

Supplies needed: outdated clothing such as hats and glasses no longer in fashion, or have an adult dress up and visit in clothes that once were in fashion when he/she was young

Say:

Sometimes, when we think about imitating, we just think about imitating styles or clothes. Have you ever seen old pictures of your parents? Did it seem like they dressed funny?

Show the kids some outdated clothes, hats, and glasses from many years ago. If you want, have someone walk in as a special guest wearing clothes from a previous era. If possible have them wear the kind of clothes they actually wore as their normal attire.

Ask them why they wore such funny-looking clothes. They can answer, "They didn't seem funny-looking back then, because that's what everybody wore."

Well, they were imitating the clothes and styles of their time when they were younger – just like people do today. We imitate clothing styles and hairstyles. Are these the things that really make us who we are? No, these things just fix our appearance on the outside.

Here is a verse from the Bible where the prophet Samuel described the way in which God sees people.

1 Samuel 16:7, "...God does not see as humans see. Humans look at outward appearances, but the Lord looks into the heart."

So God looks at our hearts, not at our outward appearances. In Colossians 1:27, it says, "God wanted his people throughout the world to know the glorious riches of this mystery – which is Christ living in you, giving you the hope of glory."

If you have faith in Christ, Jesus himself lives in your life. He helps you to imitate him and live like him.

In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul, who knew Christ, said, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." What does that look like? Here's a description in Philippians 3:17, "Brothers and sisters, imitate me, and pay attention to those who live by the example we have given you." So Christians who imitate Christ set good examples for others to follow.

Let's watch a movie about Nick in *McGee and Me*. We'll see what Nick discovers about himself as he imitates his friend, Rex Rogers, who is one of the coolest guys in school.

Application:

Supplies needed: the video, McGee and Me: The Blunder Years. Order from http://www.visionvideo.com/111-1111111-1111111_405.vhtml

*Show the video *McGee and Me: The Blunder Years*, produced by Tyndale Entertainment, 1993, ISBN 0-8423-6511-7.*

The video is 28 minutes 36 seconds after the previews and credits. The previews are 3 minutes 20 seconds, and the credits are 1 minute.



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.

Ask the kids to give examples of someone who imitated the presence of Christ in their lives and how that influenced them to become more like Jesus.

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:

Power of the Cross

- cool pair of sunglasses for an adult
- cool pair of sunglasses for a child

Bible Reading

- outdated clothing or fashion accessories

Application

- video: *McGee and Me: The Blunder Years*, produced by International Bible Society, Tyndale Entertainment, PO Box 80, Wheaton, IL 60189. Copyright 1993. ISBN 0842365117. Thirty three minutes long. Order from http://www.visionvideo.com/111-1111111-1111111_405.vhtml.