



Date: _____
Series: Jesus Is the King
Winter Year 1, Lesson 41

The King Gives Rest

Take Home Point: *The King's burden is light.

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Matthew 11:25-30, Matthew 23:1-8

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

We will help kids know:

- In Jesus' day religious leaders made extra rules that made it too hard for people to get to heaven.
- We don't earn heaven by doing religious things. We receive it through faith as a gift earned by Jesus.
- Jesus invites us to come to him and find rest from earning our way to heaven.




We will help kids feel:

- Lightened hearts since we have received the gift of Jesus' work for us.
- Confident to give our burdens to Jesus.

We will help kids do:

- Identify things that they have done that were hard to do.
- Pray and give to God our efforts of trying to earn our own way to heaven. Instead, we receive from him the gift of Jesus.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	As the kids discuss things they have done that were very hard to do, they will hold their arms straight out from their sides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no supplies are needed
Large Group 	4 7-10 10 10-11	Overview Puppet Presentation with Audience Participation: "Hard Stuff for Gordy" Video: <i>The Visual Bible: Matthew</i> Puppet Presentation Conclusion: "Hard Stuff for Gordy"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gordy 10 to 12 boxes labeled "More To Do," and one box labeled "Done." The latter box contains a cross. These boxes can be shoeboxes or different sized boxes Option: If boxes seem too cumbersome, they might be replaced by labeling large books with a sign "Do More." Then also use a Bible and label it "Done" as a substitute for the box with the cross in it. video, <i>The Visual Bible: Matthew</i> (Visual International and Visual Entertainment, Inc., 1997) cued to Matthew 23:1-8 and 11:25-30
Small Group Application 	4-6	Kids play a game that reminds them how the King's burden is light.	<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.*

Today we will have a contest during our discussion. While we talk, we're going to hold our arms straight out to the side. We will see who can hold his arms out the longest time. We still must talk and have a conversation while we are doing this.

This is what we will talk about. I would like everyone to share something you have done that was really hard to do. Examples would be a very hard hike or walk, a very difficult school project, or a sports game that was very challenging or difficult.

Think of something you have done that was very difficult or hard to do and get ready to share it with the group. As soon as we are ready to start talking, we are going to hold up our arms. We will see who can hold his arms up the longest while we talk about things we have done that were hard to do.

After discussion and the collapse of arms, gather the kids together and ask them the following.

How did your arms feel holding them up so long? Holding your arms out for a long time is one example of doing something hard. What are some other things that are hard to do? For example, how long can you stand on your head? How long can you go without eating? Can you think of other hard things?

How hard do you think it is to get into heaven? Are there some difficult things you must do to get there?

Listen to the kids' responses without evaluating them. This listening time will help you apply the lesson later.

Sometimes the difficult things we have to do can become burdens to us. Today we will learn that **the King's burden is light.*

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 with Audience Participation: “Hard Stuff for Gordy”

Gordy thinks of stuff that is hard to do. He considers all of the hard stuff he might have to do to get to heaven. A volunteer from the audience will help with a visual object lesson demonstrating how Jesus takes our burdens.

Video: *The Visual Bible: Matthew 23:1-8 and 11:25-30*

Puppet Presentation Conclusion: “Hard Stuff for Gordy”---Gordy learns that Jesus’ burden is light because Jesus earns heaven for us.

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?

Have kids refer to Matthew 23:1-8 and Matthew 11:25-30 for the following.

What were the heavy burdens the Pharisees were making the people carry? *(Matthew 23:4. They were teaching that doing religious things would help earn heaven.)*

Jesus said there was another way to heaven and it didn’t mean they had to carry heavy burdens. If people were tired of carrying such heavy loads, where could they go to get rest? *(Read Matthew 11:28. Jesus said, “Come to me... and I will give you rest.”)*

Is Jesus’ burden heavy or light? *(Matthew 11:30. “My burden is light.”)*

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Why do you think Jesus said, “My burden is light”? What do you think he means?

When Jesus said that he thanked God for hiding these things from wise and intelligent people, whom do you think he meant? *(Religious leaders or people who taught that you have to do more religious things to earn heaven.)*

When Jesus thanked God in Matthew 11:25 for revealing these things to the little children, what kind of people was he referring to? *(Children and people with child-like faith who would receive the gift of what Jesus has done.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

We're going to play another game as we talk about some of the burdens Jesus can lift from us when we come to him. First, let's read again the key Bible verse for today: Matthew 11:28,

"Come to me, all who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest."

It can really feel like a burden when we fail to be "good enough." We might think we must always do more so God will love us. The truth is that when we come to Jesus, he loves us just as we are. He helps lift the burdens of the wrong things we have done and gives us his power to do better and better.

Application Activity:

The game we will play is called "Lift My Burdens." We'll play it with one person first and then everyone will have a chance.

I need a person to stand with his arms stiff at his side and his palms flat against his body. Now I need two more people standing on each side of the first person. These people are to hold the first person's arms down so he can not lift his arms straight out to the side.

The person in the middle must continue to keep his arms straight but try as hard as he can to lift his arms out to the side for 30 seconds. Even though his arms aren't moving, he is trying with all of his might to move his arms up.



Encourage this child to keep pushing and exert more pressure with such statements as, "Keep trying! Push harder!"

At the end of one minute, have the people holding the volunteer's arms down to let go. Then say:

Watch and see what will happen to his arms. (His arms feel so light they seem to float upwards by themselves.)

Group the children into teams of three. Have each child take a turn sharing a burden they feel with the other two in the group. This might be something the child worries about or something they try to fix but it just doesn't work. It might also be something they have done wrong that they feel badly about.

After each person shares his burden, he can have the opportunity to see what it feels like to have the other two hold his arms down as he tries to lift them. When his arms seem to float upward, say:

This is a reminder of how Jesus lifts our burdens when we come to him. He take the load from the bad things we have done because he died for us and took the punishment of our sins.

Gather the group back together and read Matthew 11:28.

"Come to me, all who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest."

Just like during our game when your burden became lighter as you shared it, Jesus can share our burden and help us carry a lighter load.

Then say:

Jesus is the King and **the King's burden is light.*

Have kids take turns around the circle, verbalizing *why* the king's burden is light.

Closing Prayer:

Invite the kids to surrender the burdens they mentioned earlier to God in prayer. Have the group take a full minute of quiet time as everyone prays silently to themselves for the burdens they would like to give to God. Close the silent prayer portion reminding kids that Jesus gave his life for each person present and all failures are taken away. Jesus is alive and with each person. Jesus wants us to have his rest.

Then have kids pray aloud for other people who have burdens that need to be surrendered to God.

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“Hard Stuff for Gordy”

Puppet Presentation

During this puppet presentation, two video clips from The Visual Bible will be shown. As well, an object lesson will be demonstrated. The object lesson requires a volunteer from the audience, a stack of 10 to 12 boxes labeled “More To Do,” and one box labeled “Done.” The latter box contains a cross. These boxes can be shoeboxes or differently sized boxes as long as a child would have a difficult time balancing all of them at one time.

Note: If boxes seem too cumbersome, they might be replaced by labeling large books with a sign “Do More.” Then also use a Bible and label it “Done” as a substitute for the box with the cross in it.

Gordy: *(Enters.)* Hi, Mr. King! Boy, are my arms tired.

Mr. King: **Oh, you were doing that contest during small group time.**

Gordy: Yeah! We were talking about hard things to do. I thought of a lot of very hard things that I’ve done.

Mr. King: **Like what?**

Gordy: Like riding my bike without any hands.

Mr. King: **Oh my! Isn’t that dangerous?**

Gordy: No, it’s only dangerous when you crash.

Mr. King: **Gordy, that’s what I meant.**

Gordy: But there are things even harder than that.

Mr. King: **Like what?**

Gordy: Third grade multiplication tables!

Mr. King: **Oh, I see.**

Gordy: And holding back a sneeze when you really gotta sneeze but you don’t want to. But then if you hold it back too much, it will blow out the back of your head.

Mr. King: **I get the point. Gordy, today we’re asking the question, “How hard do you have to work to get to heaven?”**

Gordy: I don't know.

Mr. King: Watch this video clip from the book of Matthew. Jesus is talking to religious leaders called Pharisees and teachers of the law. They were telling the people that they should look very religious and do many hard things if they wanted God to love them and if they wanted to go to heaven.

When I show you the movie, notice the little box that one of these leaders has on his forehead. It is called a phylactery. In it he keeps some special Bible verses. There's another box tied to his arm. This was supposed to remind him that they were to keep God's word close to their mind and heart. But I'm not sure if it worked. Why don't you see as we watch this video.

Show Matthew 23:1-8 from the video, *The Visual Bible: Matthew*.

Gordy: I don't get it, Mr. King. Were these religious leaders teaching the people to do bad things?

Mr. King: Their list of rules was sometimes silly. For example, it is God's commandment that people should honor the Sabbath day by worshiping God and resting. These people made up many rules on how you do that. They said that you could never even have a needle attached to your coat on the Sabbath day because that would be carrying a load or burden. They said this would be wrong because it would be considered work. There were so many rules no one could keep them and many were very silly.

The religious leaders made a long list of rules for people to follow, and before long, they thought that just by keeping all those rules someone could earn God's love and go to heaven.

Gordy: But don't you have to keep the Ten Commandments and what God says so that when you die you'll be able to go to heaven?

Mr. King: Gordy, let's talk about that. To do that, let me call a volunteer up from the audience.

Introduce volunteer and ask her to hold out her hands.

Now this is what the religious leaders were teaching the people. If you just do more, then God will love you and accept you into heaven. But here's the problem—when have you done enough religious things, like going to church on Sundays? Maybe you should do

more, like going to church on Wednesdays too. (Lay a box in the volunteer's arms.)

Maybe you still need to do more. Well, then let's give more money to the church. (Add another box to volunteer's arms.) **But you still must do more. Maybe you should help teach Kingdom Quest.** (Add another box.)

But still you should do more. (Stay with this pattern adding to list until the tower of boxes becomes unmanageable and they fall. Other religious things to add to the list might be praying in the morning, praying at night, reading the Bible every day, telling others about Jesus, and helping in the worship service.)

Gordy: Wait a minute. She can't hold all those boxes. Does that mean she would never get to heaven if she couldn't do all those things?

Mr. King: **In a way that's what the religious leaders in Jesus' day were teaching. They were teaching that if you just do more, do more, do more, do more religious things, you can get to heaven.**

Gordy: But how would you know when you have done enough?

Mr. King: **That's the problem. You wouldn't know. And that's why Jesus said this was a burden too heavy for anyone to carry.**

Gordy: Just like those boxes. Does Jesus have a better way?

Mr. King: **Of course he does. Look at this box.**

Hold up the box that is labeled "Done."

Gordy: Yeah, that says "done" instead of "do more."

Mr. King: **Yes. What Jesus taught was different from all other religions in the world. All other religions say, "just do more, do more, do more, and you can earn your way to heaven or earn God's favor." But Christianity is not "do more" but "done."**

Gordy: What do you mean?

Mr. King: **Let's open the box and see what's inside.**

Open the box for Gordy and take out a cross.

When you see the cross of Jesus, you realize he has done everything for us to have heaven. Jesus died on the cross and rose again. Because of that, he took the punishment of our sin and all the wrong

things we have done upon himself. He also lived a perfect life for us. When we trust him as our Savior, he gives us what he's earned for us on the cross—everlasting life with God.

Gordy: Wow! So we don't have to do those good things, right?

Mr. King: Not quite, Gordy. Of course we would *want* to do the good things. It's just that now we want to do them because it's our way of showing love to God—instead of feeling like we always have to do more so we can earn heaven.

Gordy: Oh, that's not so bad.

Mr. King: Right! It's wonderful! This is what Jesus means when he says, "If you come to me you will find rest."

Why don't you watch another Bible clip, which is Matthew 11:25-30.

Show Matthew 11:25-30 from The Visual Bible video.

"Hard Stuff for Gordy"

Puppet Conclusion

Gordy: I think I got it now!

Mr. King: What's that?

Gordy: Well, there are times that I try to do good, really I do, Mr. King.

Mr. King: Yes, I believe it.

Gordy: But no matter how much I do, I don't think I could ever do enough to earn heaven on my own, right?

Mr. King: Yes, and as a matter of fact, you would always wonder if you've done enough. You would wonder if you needed to "do more."

Gordy: But God doesn't say, "Do more." He says, "Done."

Mr. King: Right! Jesus has done it all. Do you believe that, Gordy?

Gordy: I sure do. It's a done deal. I'm going to heaven. But do all the kids out there believe that too?

Mr. King: I don't know, Gordy. Why don't you lead us in prayer so they can pray along with you? Then they'll know the done deal as well.

Gordy: Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus. Thank you that he died on the cross for our sins but is alive right now. We don't have to do more so that you will like us or take us to heaven. Instead, we can trust that Jesus made it a done deal and that you will take us to heaven. If anyone here doesn't believe that, please let him or her believe now. In Jesus' name, Amen.