

“Do Not Be Afraid” Preschooler Lesson about Halloween

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Halloween can be a frightening season for small children, with its skeletons, ghosts, witches, monsters, and the like. Even if a child is not exposed to Halloween celebrations at home, the stores are inundated with gory displays. It is almost impossible to ignore.

But Halloween (I don't think) should be ignored. It is the second highest grossing commercial holiday besides Christmas and strongly integrated into American culture. The Halloween season is a perfect time to talk about fear and trust. Rather than ignore the celebration altogether, use it as a springboard to talk about real issues that children are facing. Real issues like fear.

Bible Story: “Do Not Be Afraid. He has Risen”

Scripture: Matthew 28: 1-10

Target Age Group: Preschool and Kindergarten

Time: 45-60 Minutes

Learning Context: Children's Church

Supplies: *The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything* book by Linda Williams, Bible, white paper plates (with “Do not be afraid – He has risen” on the back), orange tissue paper squares, diluted glue, paintbrushes, brown construction paper stems, green construction

paper leaves, yarn/ribbon/string for hanging, optional black triangles, optional “You are my Hiding Place” song by Selah

Alternate Ideas:

- We also have free [“Fear Not” Halloween coloring pages](#) to support this lesson plan.
- Watch the [Itsy Bitsy Spider song](#) by Go Fish
- Check out this spider web snack pretzels idea [from Mom Endeavors](#)

Introduction: *With Halloween coming up, there are a lot of scary decorations around. Have any of you seen them? They make me very afraid! Do any of you ever get scared? (Be the first to raise your hand and admit fear.) Today we’re going to read a story about a woman who was not afraid of anything. I wonder if it’s going to be a true story or not. Can you help me read it today? Here is what I need you to do.*

Learning Activity #1: Read *The Little Old Lady Who Wasn’t Afraid of Anything* by Linda Williams. Pick up a copy at any library, bookstore, or online. The story is about a woman who runs from a scarecrow and then realizes that she doesn’t have to be afraid.

Before reading, teach the motions from the book so that your students are engaged. For example, when the shoes go CLOMP CLOMP, have everyone stomp their feet. When pants wiggle, have them wiggle. When the shirt shakes, have them shake their hands.

Alternative: If you do not have access to the book, the Harper Collins website allows you to preview the book pages online. Knowing the story would still allow you to do a dramatic retelling of it.

Ask the following questions.

1. *In the story, was the Little Old Lady afraid? (Yes, in the beginning. Why?)*
2. *What makes her not afraid? (She tries to be brave. Maybe she knows she doesn’t have to be scared of a scarecrow.)*
3. *Was this a real or pretend story? (Pretend.) Are there really pumpkin people who chase us at night? (No!)*
4. *Are there things that make us afraid? (Yes!)*
5. *What sorts of things make people afraid? (spiders, snakes, the dark, monsters, something hiding under your bed, big dogs)*
6. *Have you ever been afraid? (Yes!)*

I have been afraid too. Sometimes I am afraid a lot. Let’s play a quick game to see that we can all be afraid sometimes. You are not alone! Follow along with me as I teach you a new song!

Learning Activity #2: Sing: "If You're Scared of _____, Clap Your Hands" to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It". (The purpose of this interactive song is for children to identify their fears and understand that they are not alone in feeling that way.)

- *If you're scared of spiders, clap your hands.*
- *If you're scared of spiders, clap your hands.*
- *If you're scared of spiders, then your face will surely show it (scared face and scared noise!)*
- *If you're scared of spiders, clap your hands.*

Repeat with common other fears, especially child fears. Replace clapping with other motions such as stomp your feet, jump up and down, slap your legs, wiggle around, shout, "Oh no!"

- (Last verse) *If we're all scared of something, turn around.*
- *If we're all scared of something, turn around.*
- *If we're all scared of something, then we are not alone.*
- *If we're all scared of something, turn around. Sit down!*

We can learn from this song that everyone is afraid sometimes. God knows that we will be afraid, but He doesn't want us to stay that way. The Bible says so many times, "Do not be afraid!" Today we're going to learn how we can do that.

Learning Activity #3: Bible Teaching (Matthew 28: 1-10)

Prior to the reading, assign half of the students to listen for any mention of the word "**afraid**" in the text. When they hear "afraid," they should look scared. Have them practice first.

The other half of the students will be listening for the words, "**He has risen.**" When they hear those words, they should stand up and sit back down. Have them practice also.

Let's look in the book of Matthew for our answer. This book is a true story, NOT like the first pretend one we read. This book tells about Jesus' life. It talks about how he was born, tells about His teachings, and even of His death on the cross for our sins. But Jesus' life does not end on the cross. Let's see what happens after He died.

Now listen closely for your part. Let's practice one more time. Do not be afraid. He has risen. (Have students do accompanying movements.) *Okay, ready. Set. Listen!*

Read Matthew 28: 1-10. (Please note: I have added parenthetical explanations for preschoolers to ensure vocabulary comprehension.)

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb (the place where his dead body was.)

*There was a violent earthquake (the ground shook!), for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so **afraid** of him that they shook and became like dead men.*

*The angel said to the women, "**Do not be afraid**, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified (killed). He is not here; **he has risen** (He is alive!), just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: '**He has risen** (He is alive!) from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."*

*So the women hurried away from the tomb, **afraid** yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "**Do not be afraid**. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

Congratulate students for their good listening ears! Consider repeating the story for emphasis (if time allows) and switch students listening roles.

Ask the following questions:

1. *How did the women feel when they got to the tomb? (Afraid.) Why? (They didn't know where Jesus' body was!)*
2. *What did the angel tell them? (Do not be afraid.) Why? (He has risen!)*
3. *So what did they do then? (They ran to tell others.)*
4. *Who did they meet along the way? (Jesus!)*
5. *What did Jesus say to them? (Do not be afraid!)*

I LOVE what happened here, so many years ago. People were afraid, just like we are today. But they didn't have to be, because Jesus had risen from the dead. See? That's the answer! Today, we are afraid of so many things. But we don't have to be, because Jesus has risen from the dead. He is alive and He is with us when we are afraid.

Does anyone know what the word TRUST means? Trust means to believe. We can believe in a lot of things, but God says that the MOST IMPORTANT thing is to believe in HIM. When we put our trust in God, He helps us to not be afraid anymore.

Let's learn God's Words in Psalm 56: 3-4. Teach the verse with motions to the tune of "Happy Birthday."

When I am afraid (hands on mouth, mouth open wide in fear);

I put my trust in You (point straight upwards to God.)

In God (point up again), *whose word* (fold open hands like a Bible) *I praise*

In God I trust (point up) *and am not afraid* (shake head).

Sing the song through multiple times. At first, sing it slowly. Every time after, continue speeding up until you can barely get the words out.

Learning Activity #4: Pumpkin Art

Prepare: Write "Do not be afraid. He has risen. (Matthew 28)" on white paper plates (1 for each student.) Cut up orange tissue paper squares, a brown stem and a green leaf out of construction paper. Punch a hole in the top for hanging and thread with a ribbon, yarn, or string. Optional: black construction paper triangles

1. Paint the paper plates with slightly diluted glue. (Do not cover the verse.)
2. Stick orange tissue paper squares to make it look like a pumpkin.
3. Glue on the brown stem and green leaf.
4. Encourage the students to hang it on their doorknob at home so they can remember to smile at the silly pumpkin story we read and remember to not be afraid because of Jesus.
5. (Optional) Have black construction paper triangles to make a Jack O Lantern.

Optional Song (to teach or listen to during the art project)

"You are My Hiding Place," by Selah

I will trust in You
Let the weak say
I am strong
In the strength of the Lord
You are my hiding place
You always fill my heart
With songs of deliverance
Whenever I am afraid
I will trust in You

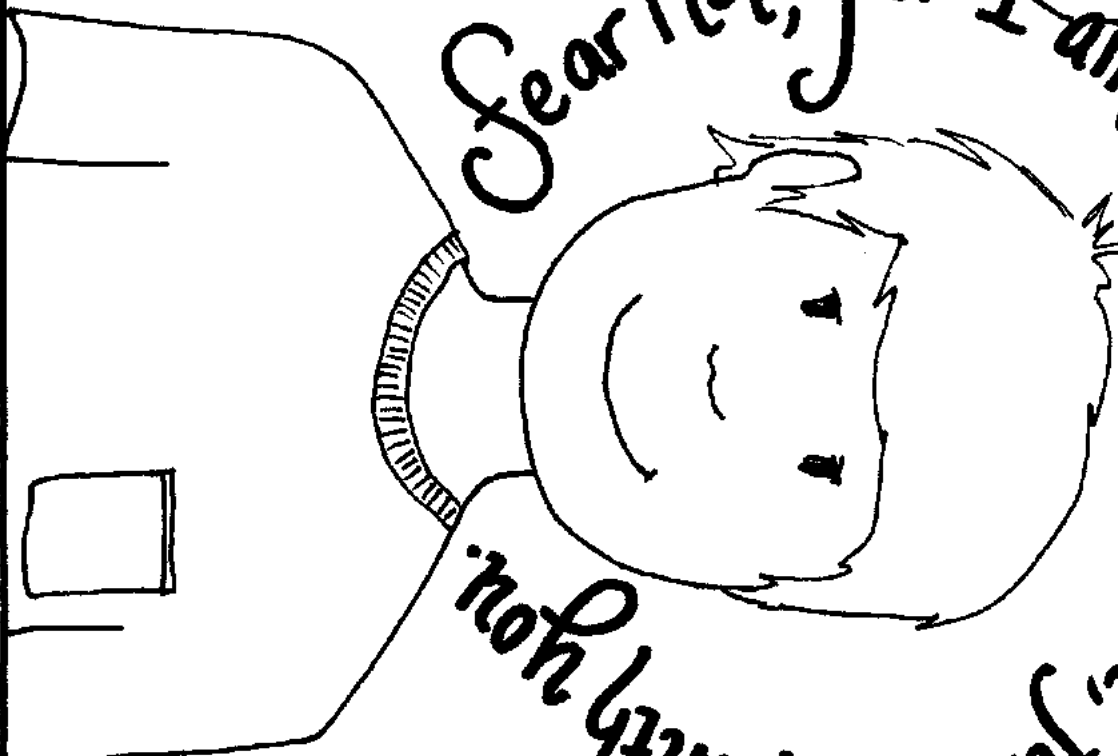
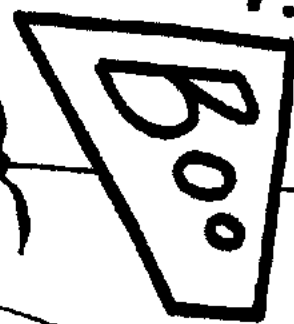
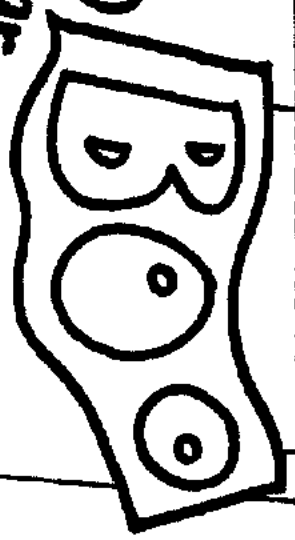
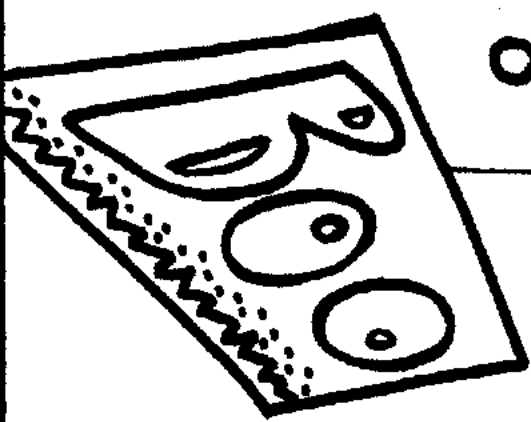
I will trust in You
Let the weak say I am strong
In the strength of the Lord
I will trust in You



Trick or
Treat

I am with
you for I

Fear Not, for I am with you. fear not, for I am with you.



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