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## “Jesus Cleans the Temple”

### Children’s Sermon from John 2:13-22 on the Purpose of Worship

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This message explores the story of Jesus cleansing the temple, which was being corrupted and not used for proper worship. For this illustration, children will see an object being polluted and used for the wrong reason, and through that they will better understand Christ’s actions. Children will also hear the importance of respecting not only the church, but our own bodies and lives as instruments to worship God.

**Law/Gospel Theme:** Focusing on distractions of rules and regulations, or focusing on the wrong kinds of “idols” in our lives can clutter up opportunities for genuine worship. In this passage, Jesus asserted that HE was the true temple. While it’s important to honor and respect God’s house, we do not worship the church itself, but we worship Christ. He was angry at what was being done to the temple, but knew that He, too, would be beaten and abused. When we trust in and focus on Jesus, our lives can be used for their true purpose, service to Him.

**Optional Materials:** Item of value to be used for the “wrong purpose” (options include a special book, cup, jewelry box, etc.); optional: coins, “whip”.

**Bible Passage:** John 2:13-22

#### More Teaching Ideas:

- Watch the video of this [children’s sermon](#) or [craft demonstration](#)
- Compare our [Sunday School lesson on John 2:13-22](#)
- Compare an [alternate Bible lesson on Jesus cleaning the temple](#)
- Compare the [John 3:13-22 children’s sermon](#) from rfour.org

**Note:** The object lesson suggested in this message involves messing up a special item and using it for a purpose other than the original intent. For this example, a book is described as the item. However, you could also use something like a fancy cup or vase (filled with something dirty), an article of clothing (dress used as a cleaning rag), or anything that you have on hand and would fit the theme. Feel free to be creative in your communication of the message.



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# Jesus Clears the Temple (John 2:13-22)

## Children's Sermon

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*Greet the children, holding a book (or other item of choice) that has been scribbled in or torn in places. If you do not wish to deface a book, feel free to insert a few "faux pages."*

Hello, children of God!

Do you have any special items that are meaningful to you? Maybe a favorite toy, or a blanket or piece of clothing... well, I happen to love reading, and some of my favorite things are important books! I have one of my favorite books with me right here. This is a significant story for me, because my dad read it to me a long time ago, and it's been my favorite book for as long as I can remember. This one is a special edition, and it has some beautiful illustrations I can show you.... Wait. A. minute. *(Stare at the book in shock as you discover it has been marked in)*. Someone has scribbled in this book. Someone has taken a pen and used this book as a drawing board! They've doodled all over it! They probably didn't even read the story, just found paper and used it for spare cartoon pictures and now it's ruined! Oh no!!!! I can't believe this could happen. When I find out who's responsible for this, they are going to be getting me a brand new book, a hardcover special edition with color pictures and...they're going to have to make this right.

Have you ever had something you cared about get ruined? It doesn't feel too good, I understand that now. Do you know who else might understand? Jesus. In the Bible, we learn about a time when Jesus went into the temple, into God's house, and He discovered that people were using the temple for the wrong reason. They had turned it into a marketplace, and they were selling things. You see, people needed animals to sacrifice to god, but the sellers were charging crazy high prices for the animals, and forcing the poor people to pay the high prices just so they could worship. That doesn't sound like what should be going on in a church, does it? Jesus sure didn't think so. He got so upset that He made a whip out of some rope, and He went into the table and turned the tables over! *(feel free to add effect by throwing down some coins, waving arms, or even turning a small table or chair, if you have one handy)*.

He told the people that they were abusing and misusing God's house. Well, some of the people there weren't too happy, since Jesus was disrupting their money-making scheme. They asked Him where He got the authority to tell them what to do. Jesus told them to tear down the temple, and He would re-build it in three days. Well, that sounded pretty crazy to them, because it had taken years and years to build the temple. But guess what? Jesus wasn't talking about the building of the temple. He was talking about Himself. He knew that He was going to get abused and mistreated, but that He would come back to life, and do all of that to give us new life. He wanted to clean out the temple so that people could worship properly in it. But ultimately, He wanted to replace the temple, to provide a new and better temple that anyone and everyone could access, without having to pay for animal sacrifices. He was the ultimate sacrifice, and He died to give us a new and better way to worship.



You see, we were made to worship. God has made us to love and serve Him. Our bodies, in a way, are like temples, because they are where the Holy Spirit can dwell and they are tools to worship the Lord. Our lives get messed up by the presence of sin, but through Christ's death and resurrection, they are cleaned out again! Because we have new life in Him, we want to worship Him with all that we are. We make mistakes still, but we know Jesus promises to take care of that. When we focus our lives on loving and serving God, we are doing what He has made us for. We fulfill our purpose. It isn't always easy, but we can pray and we know that through the grace of God, He helps us every time.

Why don't we say a prayer right now?

**Prayer:**

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for making us

And for creating us to worship you

Please help us focus on living for you

And using the church and our lives for the right purposes

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus's name, Amen!

**Bible Verses/story to Reference:**

*The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. 15 And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. 16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."*

*18 So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" 19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" 21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.*

-John 2:13-22





This message was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

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**Tina Urso** reviewed "Faith Over Fear" 5 Lesson...

★★★★★

#### Faith over Fear

I love how Bethany devoted so much time and energy into what I believe is the most important subject in our Christian walk... FAITH. Without it our talk is just words. How can we witness if we don't have faith in what we share? As the Word says... "Without faith, it is IMPOSSIBLE to please God. Keep up the good..."

02/11/2021



**Holly Worthington** reviewed The LOVE of God: 4-Week ...

★★★★★

#### The L.O.V.E. of God

we did the 1st lesson Sunday the 7th. The lesson was easy to put together and the kids fully understood it all.

02/08/2021



**Heidi** reviewed The BIBLE Unit 1: Genesis ...

★★★★★

#### Life Saver!

I started a new Wednesday Night children's program for kids ranging from 4-12 years old. The only other people to volunteer to help me were my teens! Faced with the challenge to teach a group ranging from twelve to twenty children each week with very little help. I needed a curriculum that would be easy to...

01/13/2021



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