Preschool–Grade 6

The Beatitudes

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus' blessings turn the world's idea of a winner upside down. God's kingdom belongs to people who know they need Him, and His children make peace.
Bible passage: Matthew 5:1–12. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." *Matthew 5:9 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Draw a line down the middle of a second space on the board, and write "The world says" on one side and "Jesus says" on the other.

1. Opening game: Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down (5–10 minutes)

Read each sentence. Kids show thumbs up if they think most people today would say it, and thumbs down if not: *"Being the strongest makes you happy." "Always getting your own way makes you happy." "Getting even when someone hurts you is fair." "Being gentle is weak."* Write their ideas under "The world says." Say: "Jesus sat down on a mountain and taught who is really blessed. His answers may surprise you. Let's fill in the other side."

2. Bible story: Jesus Teaches on the Mountain (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 5. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. After each blessing, write the key words under "Jesus says."

The mountain. Great **multitudes** followed Jesus from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea and from beyond Jordan (Matthew 4:25). **Look up Matthew 5:1–2.** Seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain, and "when he was set," when He had sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and taught them.

Blessed. Every saying starts with "Blessed," which means God is good to them and they are truly happy.

- **Look up 5:3.** The **poor in spirit**, people who know they need God and can't be good on their own, have the kingdom of heaven.
- **Look up 5:4.** They that **mourn**, who are very sad, shall be comforted.
- **Look up 5:5.** The **meek**, gentle and not proud, shall **inherit** the earth, receive it to keep.
- **Look up 5:6.** They which **hunger and thirst after righteousness**, who want to do right as much as a hungry, thirsty person wants food and water, shall be filled.

- **Look up 5:7.** The **merciful**, kind and forgiving to people who don't deserve it, shall **obtain**, receive, mercy.
- **Look up 5:8.** The **pure in heart**, whose hearts are clean and love God with nothing hidden, shall see God.
- **Look up 5:9.** The **peacemakers**, who help people stop fighting and make things right, shall be called the children of God.
- **Look up 5:10.** They which are **persecuted**, treated badly, **for righteousness sake**, for doing what is right, have the kingdom of heaven. It ends just like 5:3!

"Blessed are ye." Look up Matthew 5:11–12. Now Jesus speaks right to His listeners: when men **revile** you (call you bad names), persecute you and say all manner of evil against you **falsely** (untrue things) for My sake, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." The prophets before them were treated that way too.

How did the people feel? Look up Matthew 7:28–29. When Jesus ended these sayings, the people were **astonished**, amazed, at His **doctrine**, His teaching, because He taught them as one having authority.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Look at the two sides of the board. How are Jesus' blessings different from what the world says?
2. Why would someone who is "poor in spirit," who knows they need God, be blessed (5:3)?
3. Being meek means gentle, not proud (5:5). Is meek the same as weak? Why or why not?
4. What is one way a kid your age can be a peacemaker at school or at home (5:9)?
5. Jesus said to rejoice even when people say untrue things about us because of Him (5:11–12). Why can we still be glad?

Recall questions

1. What did Jesus do when He went up into the mountain? *(He sat down, "when he was set," and taught, 5:1–2)*
2. Which two blessings both end "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"? *(The poor in spirit and the persecuted, 5:3 and 5:10)*
3. What shall the pure in heart see? *(God, 5:8)*

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4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the words: **blessed** means God is good to them and they are truly happy, and **peacemakers** are people who help others stop fighting and make peace. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus said the poor in spirit are blessed, people who know they need God. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. God loves you. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? Peter preached it on the day of Pentecost: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus said that being born of water and of the Spirit is how we enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5)." *Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.*

This week: be a peacemaker. Pick one person you have trouble getting along with, and do one kind thing for them.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Matthew 4:25: Name one place the multitudes came from. *(Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea or beyond Jordan)*
2. Matthew 5:1: Who came to Jesus when He was set? *(His disciples)*
3. Matthew 5:4: What shall happen to them that mourn? *(They shall be comforted)*
4. Matthew 5:6: What shall happen to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness? *(They shall be filled)*
5. Matthew 5:7: What shall the merciful obtain? *(Mercy)*
6. Matthew 5:9: What shall the peacemakers be called? *(The children of God)*
7. Matthew 5:12: Who was persecuted before? *(The prophets)*
8. Matthew 7:29: How did Jesus teach? *(As one having authority, and not as the scribes)*

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Or choose the **Beatitudes word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/beatitudes-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/beatitudes-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/beatitudes-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/beatitudes-worksheet).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus taught us who is truly blessed. We know we need You. Make us meek and merciful, give us clean hearts, and make us peacemakers. Help us be glad even when people are unkind because we follow Jesus. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks how many Beatitudes there are: in the King James Bible, "Blessed" starts nine sayings (Matthew 5:3–11). Eight say "they" or "theirs" (5:3–10); in the ninth Jesus speaks to His listeners as "ye" (5:11–12). Some teachers count eight and some nine; just read them as they are written.

If a child asks about being persecuted: keep it gentle. Some people may make fun of us or say untrue things because we love Jesus. Jesus said our reward in heaven is great (5:12). Tell a grown-up you trust if anyone is unkind to you.

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