Preschool–Grade 6

Dagon and the Ark

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: God is the one true God. He is greater than anything.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 5:1–12. Read it yourself before class.
Memory verse: "Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD" *1 Samuel 5:3 (KJV)*. The old words mean: **fallen upon his face** is fell flat on his face, and **the ark** is God's special gold box.
You need: a Bible, a small toy or block tower that can fall over, a shoebox covered with yellow paper (optional), crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at 1 Samuel 5. Build the block tower on a table.

1. Opening game: Up and Down (5 minutes)

Show the block tower. Let a child gently tap the table until it falls. Ask: "Can the tower get up by itself?" No! Let the kids build it up again. Then play Up and Down: when you say "Up!" everyone stands tall; when you say "Down!" everyone sits on the floor. Say: "We can get up by ourselves. Today we will hear a true story about a statue that fell down and could not get up by itself."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to 1 Samuel 5. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

God's people had a special gold box. It was called the ark (Exodus 25:10–11). *(Draw a box in the air.)*

Some men took the ark away (1 Samuel 5:1). *(Pretend to carry a heavy box.)*

They put it next to Dagon. Dagon was a statue, not a real god (5:2). *(Stand stiff like a statue.)*

In the morning, Dagon fell down on his face (5:3)! *(Bend over and touch the floor.)*

Say it with me: "Dagon fell down!"

The men had to pick Dagon up (5:3). *(Pretend to lift something heavy.)*

The next morning, Dagon fell down again (5:4)! *(Touch the floor again.)*

This time Dagon broke (5:4). *(Shake your head no.)*

Say it with me: "God is greater!"

The men said to send the ark home (5:11). *(Point far away.)*

God's ark went home to God's people (6:12). *(Clap, clap, clap!)*

Say it with me: "There is one God!" *(Hold up one finger.)*

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. What happened to Dagon in the morning? *(He fell down on his face, 1 Samuel 5:3)*
2. Could Dagon get up by himself? *(No! The men had to pick him up, 5:3)*
3. How many true Gods are there? *(One! Deuteronomy 6:4)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "The Bible says, 'Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD.' That means Dagon fell flat on his face in front of God's ark." Teach the motion: stand stiff like a statue on "Dagon," bend over and touch the floor on "fallen upon his face," and point up on "the LORD." Say the verse with the motions three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "1 Samuel 5:3" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
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.

6. Activity: The Gold Box (5–10 minutes)

Give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw God's ark, a gold box, and color it yellow. While they color, ask: "What happened to Dagon? Who is the one true God?" Kids who finish early can take turns building the block tower and saying, "Only God is great!"

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, God, that You are the one true God.
You are greater than anything. I love You. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: keep the story moving. If they get wiggly, do the "Dagon fell down!" motion again. Keep it simple: Dagon was only a statue, it fell down, and it broke. Leave out the sickness in the cities. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

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