Preschool–Grade 6

The Great Supper

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: God's invitation is open to everyone, and nothing in our lives is worth an excuse when He calls us to come.
Bible passage: Luke 14:1, 14:12–24. Students read Luke 14:12–24 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready." *Luke 14:17 (KJV)* and "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." *Matthew 11:28 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Luke 14:1–24. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: What Comes First? (5–10 minutes)

Write on the board: phone, sports, friends, homework, video games, family, sleep, prayer, church, Bible reading. Students copy the list and number it from most time to least time in a normal week, not the order they think is right. Then ask: *Did anything surprise you? What would you say no to if something better came along?* Say: "Jesus told about people who said no to the best invitation ever, and their reasons sounded good."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Tell the setting first: Jesus was eating bread on the sabbath day in the house of one of the chief Pharisees (Luke 14:1). He had just watched the guests choose the best seats (14:7).

Read out loud: Luke 14:12–24. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **bade** (14:12, 14:16): invited; **kinsmen**: relatives; **recompence** (14:12): pay back
- **the maimed** (14:13): people missing a hand or foot or badly hurt; **the halt** (14:21): people who cannot walk well
- **the resurrection of the just** (14:14): when God raises the righteous from the dead
- **sat at meat** (14:15): sat at the table eating
- **bidden** (14:17): invited; **with one consent** (14:18): all alike, every one of them
- **must needs** (14:18): have to; **five yoke of oxen** (14:19): five pairs, ten oxen; **prove**: try out
- **shewed** (14:21): told; **compel** (14:23): urge strongly; **taste** (14:24): eat even a bite of

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3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Jesus told this story right after a guest said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" (14:15). Why do you think Jesus answered with a story about people who wouldn't come?
2. A field, oxen and a marriage are all good things (14:18–20). How can good things become excuses?
3. The invitation was, "Come; for all things are now ready" (14:17). The guests didn't have to earn a seat. How is God's invitation like that?
4. Jesus had just told His host to invite "the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind" (14:13), and then the master in the story did exactly that (14:21). What does that show about who God wants at His table?
5. "Yet there is room" (14:22). Who do you know who needs to hear they are invited? What could you say to them?
6. "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (14:23). What does it look like to invite people to church warmly and boldly, without being pushy or unkind?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Matthew 11:28: **labour** means work hard; **heavy laden** means carrying a heavy load. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Luke 14:17 this week; keep working on Matthew 11:28 next week too.

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "God's invitation is for you, and all things are ready. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

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6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What is one excuse I make when God calls me to pray, read His Word, obey or come closer to Him?
2. Who is someone I could invite, especially someone others leave out?
3. Write a short prayer answering God's invitation, using Matthew 11:28.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: say yes to God in one place where you usually make an excuse, and invite one person to church or youth.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for inviting us when all things are ready, and for having room for everyone. Forgive our excuses. Help us come when You call, and help us bring others with us. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teaching the hard parts gently: the master was "angry" (14:21) because the people he invited refused him, and "none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (14:24). Say it plainly and gently: turning down God's invitation means missing what He has made ready. Keep the focus on the open door: "yet there is room" (14:22). **About the guests:** speak of "the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind" with respect; God wants them at His table.

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