Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

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

Main point: God's house is for worshipping God.
Bible passage: John 2:13–17. Read it yourself before class.
Memory verse: "make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." *John 2:16 (KJV)*. The old words mean: **my Father's house** means God's house, and **merchandise** means buying and selling. God's house is not a store.
You need: a Bible, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at John 2.

1. Opening game: Animal Sounds (5 minutes)

Say an animal, and the kids make its sound and move like it: sheep (baa, crawl), oxen, which are big cows (moo, stomp), doves (coo, flap your arms). Go faster and faster. Say: "Today we will hear a true story about Jesus in God's house. There were sheep, oxen and doves in it!"

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to John 2. 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.

Jesus went to Jerusalem for a feast (John 2:13). *(Walk in place.)*
He went into the temple, God's house (2:14). *(Make a roof with your hands.)*
People were selling oxen, sheep and doves there (2:14). *(Moo! Baa! Coo!)*
Men sat at tables with money (2:14). *(Pretend to count coins.)*
Jesus made a whip out of little ropes (2:15). *(Twist your hands.)*
He drove them all out, with the sheep and the oxen (2:15). *(Point to the door.)*
He poured out the money. Clink, clink! (2:15) *(Wiggle your fingers down.)*
He turned the tables over (2:15). *(Flip your hands over.)*
Say it with me: "God's house is for God!"
Jesus said, "Take these things hence" (2:16). Hence means away. *(Sweep your arms.)*
God's house is not a store (2:16). *(Shake your head no.)*
Jesus loved God's house so much (2:17). *(Hug yourself.)*
Say it with me: "I love God's house!"

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. Where did Jesus go? *(Into the temple, God's house, John 2:14)*
2. What animals were in the temple? *(Oxen, sheep and doves, 2:14)*
3. What did Jesus do to the tables? *(He turned them over, 2:15)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "Jesus said, 'make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.' That means: God's house is not a store." Teach the motions: shake your finger on "make not," make a roof with your hands on "my Father's house," and pretend to hand someone money on "merchandise." Say the verse with the motions three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "John 2:16" 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: Tables Turned Over (5–10 minutes)

Give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw a table turned upside down with its legs in the air, and coins all around it. While they color, ask: "Whose house is the temple? What is God's house for?" Kids who finish early can play Animal Sounds again.

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Dear God, thank You for Your house.
Help me worship You there. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: keep the story moving and the animal sounds happy. The whip is only a quick twisting motion; the Bible says Jesus drove them out (John 2:15) and doesn't say He hit anyone, so don't add it. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

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