Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: God's house is for worshipping God. We honor God's house.
Bible passage: John 2:13–17. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." *John 2:16 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, 6 paper circles (paper "coins"), a marker, a small table, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 paper coins (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at John 2:15.

1. Opening game: What Is It For? (5 minutes)

Name a place, then an action. Kids give a thumbs up if the action fits the place and a thumbs down if it doesn't: 1) Kitchen: cook dinner. 2) Bathtub: plant a garden. 3) Bed: sleep. 4) Playground: take a nap. 5) Library: read a book. 6) God's house: sing to God and pray. Say: "Every place is made for something. Today we will hear what Jesus did when He found God's house being used for the wrong thing."

2. Bible story: Jesus Cleans God's House (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to John 2, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

It was almost time for the **passover**, a big feast when God's people remembered how God saved them in Egypt (John 2:13; Exodus 12:27). Jesus went up to **Jerusalem**. He went into the **temple**, God's house, where people came to worship God.

But what did Jesus find there? People were selling **oxen** (big cows), **sheep** and **doves**. And the **changers of money** were sitting there at their tables (John 2:14). Changers of money traded one kind of money for another. God's house was full of buying and selling!

Jesus made a **scourge of small cords**, a whip made of small ropes. He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen. He poured out the changers' money, clink, clink, and He **overthrew** the tables. That means He turned them over (2:15)!

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The story continues: **Read John 2:16 from your Bible:** "And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." Say: "**Hence** means away from here. **My Father's house** means God's house, the temple. **Merchandise** means buying and selling. Jesus was saying, 'Take these things away. God's house is not a market!'"

Jesus' **disciples**, His helpers, saw it. They remembered words written in the Bible long before: "The **zeal** of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17; Psalm 69:9). Say: "**Zeal** is a strong, burning love. Jesus loved God's house so much He could not stand to see it used for the wrong thing."

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Where did Jesus go? *(Up to Jerusalem, into the temple, John 2:13–14)*
2. What animals were people selling in the temple? *(Oxen, sheep and doves, 2:14)*
3. What did Jesus make? *(A scourge of small cords, a whip of small ropes, 2:15)*
4. What did Jesus do to the tables? *(He poured out the money and turned the tables over, 2:15)*
5. What did Jesus call the temple? *("My Father's house," God's house, 2:16)*

4. Memory verse: Clear the Table (5 minutes)

Put the 6 paper coins in order on the small table: *And said unto them that sold doves, / Take these things hence; / make not / my Father's house / an house of merchandise. / John 2:16.* Explain the old words: **hence** means away from here, **my Father's house** means God's house, and **merchandise** means buying and selling. Read the verse together. Then a child takes one coin off the table, and everyone reads it again. Keep taking one coin away until the table is clear and the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus loved God's house. God loves you very much, and He wants you to come to Him. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (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.
This week: when you come to God's house, come to worship. Sing to God, listen to His Word and pray with all your heart.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Jesus Cleanses the Temple word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/jesus-cleanses-the-temple-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/jesus-cleanses-the-temple-craft), or **Out of the Temple:** one wall is the temple door. Call out an animal from the story, and everyone moves like it: "Sheep!" (crawl and say baa), "Oxen!" (stomp slowly), "Doves!" (flap your arms). When you call "Out of the temple!", everyone goes to the door wall. Then ask a question from part 3, and play again.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Your house, where we can worship You. Help us love Your house like Jesus did, and come to worship You with all our hearts. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: John 2:15 says Jesus made a scourge of small cords and "drove them all out." The Bible does not say He hit anyone, so don't add it. Jesus never sinned (Hebrews 4:15). If a child asks whether it's OK to turn over tables when we are mad, say: "Jesus did this because He loved God's house, and He never did wrong. When we are upset, we tell God and a grown-up."

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