Preschool–Grade 6

The Rich Man and Lazarus

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

Main point: Listen to God's Word now. God's Word is enough to turn us to Him, and it teaches us to care for people in need.
Bible passage: Luke 16:19–31. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." *Luke 16:31 (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. On the other side, draw four simple signs: a stop sign, a "Wet Floor" sign, a "Bridge Out" sign and a "Do Not Touch" sign.

1. Opening game: Read the Signs (5–10 minutes)

Point to one sign at a time. Kids act out what you should do when you see it: freeze for the stop sign, tiptoe carefully past the wet floor, turn back at the bridge, and put their hands behind their backs for "Do Not Touch." Then ask: *If a sign says "Bridge Out," do you need someone to come back from the river to tell you? Or is the sign enough?* Say: "Today Jesus tells about a man who wanted someone to come back from the dead to warn his brothers, and what Abraham said about God's Word."

2. Bible story: Let Them Hear Them (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Luke 16. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words. Jesus told this to the Pharisees, who loved money (Luke 16:14–15).

At the gate. Look up Luke 16:19. A rich man was **clothed in purple and fine linen** (the most costly clothes) and **fared sumptuously** every day: he feasted in rich style. **Look up Luke 16:20–21.** A **beggar** named **Lazarus** was **laid at his gate**, full of **sores**, wishing he could be fed with the **crumbs** that fell from the rich man's table. The dogs came and licked his sores. Say: "This is not the Lazarus of Bethany whom Jesus raised from the dead (John 11). Two men had that name."

Carried by the angels. Look up Luke 16:22. The beggar died, and the **angels** carried him into **Abraham's bosom**, close beside Abraham, the father of God's people. The rich man also died and was buried. Jesus said that in **hell** he was in **torments**, and he saw Abraham far off with Lazarus (16:23). He asked Abraham for mercy (16:24).

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A great gulf. Look up Luke 16:25. Abraham said, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." **Look up Luke 16:26.** A **great gulf** (a huge, deep gap) was **fixed** between them, so no one could cross either way.

Five brothers. Look up Luke 16:27–28. The rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house, because he had **five brethren**, to **testify** to them (tell them the truth), so they would not come to that place of torment.

Moses and the prophets. Look up Luke 16:29. Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." **Moses and the prophets** means the Scriptures God gave through them, God's Word. **Look up Luke 16:30.** The rich man said, "Nay," but if one went to them from the dead, they would **repent**: turn from sin to God. **Look up Luke 16:31.** Abraham answered that if they would not hear God's Word, they would not be **persuaded** (made to believe) even if one rose from the dead. Say: "Jesus Himself later rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:4), and God's Word still calls us to listen."

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. Lazarus lay right at the rich man's gate (Luke 16:20). Who are people near you who might need help?
2. Abraham himself was very rich (Genesis 13:2). So what was the rich man's real problem? (Read 16:29–31.)
3. Why did Abraham say the brothers didn't need someone back from the dead (16:29)?
4. Why is it important to listen to God's Word now, and not wait?
5. What is one way you can "hear" God's Word this week?

Recall questions

1. What color were the rich man's clothes? *(Purple, with fine linen, Luke 16:19)*
2. How many brothers did the rich man have? *(Five, 16:28)*
3. What was fixed between Abraham and the rich man? *(A great gulf, 16:26)*

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

Explain the old words: **hear not** means don't listen to, **Moses and the prophets** means God's Word, **persuaded** means made to believe, and **rose from the dead** means came back to life. 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.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "The rich man's brothers had God's Word. We have it too, and it tells us the good news. God loves you. 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. 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? '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). The Bible calls this being born again (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: read or listen to one Bible story every day. And do one kind thing for someone who needs help.

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. Luke 16:19: How often did the rich man fare sumptuously? *(Every day)*
2. Luke 16:20: Where was Lazarus laid? *(At the rich man's gate)*
3. Luke 16:21: What came and licked his sores? *(The dogs)*
4. Luke 16:22: Where did the angels carry the beggar? *(Into Abraham's bosom)*
5. Luke 16:25: What is Lazarus now? *(Comforted)*
6. Luke 16:26: What was fixed between them? *(A great gulf)*
7. Luke 16:28: How many brethren did the rich man have? *(Five)*
8. Luke 16:29: What did Abraham say the brothers had? *("Moses and the prophets")*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for giving us Your Word. Help us listen to it now and obey it, and help us see the people at our gate who need help. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: this lesson tells the torment and the gulf in the Bible's own words, calmly, and leaves out the flame and the water on the tongue (Luke 16:24). Keep the focus on God's love and hearing His Word.

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