Preschool–Grade 6

The Rich Young Ruler

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

Main point: Love God more than things. Nothing we own is worth more than following Jesus, and with God all things are possible.
Bible passage: Mark 10:17–27. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." *Mark 10:27 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: What Would You Keep? (5–10 minutes)

Give each child paper and a pencil. Say: "Write down the five things you own that you like best." Give them two minutes. Then say: "Cross one off. You have to give it away." Then: "Cross off another one." Keep going until one thing is left. Ask: *Which was the hardest to cross off? Why is it hard to let go of things we love?* Say: "Today we will meet a man who had to choose between his things and following Jesus."

2. Bible story: One Thing Thou Lackest (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Mark 10. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

The question. Jesus was going out on the road when a man came running and kneeled down in front of Him. **Look up Mark 10:17.** He asked, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" **Master** means teacher, and to **inherit** means to receive something as a gift, the way children receive what their father leaves them. **Eternal life** means living forever with God.

The commandments. Jesus reminded him of the commandments, God's laws, like "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness" (do not lie about someone) and "Honour thy father and mother" (10:19). **Look up Mark 10:20.** The man said he had **observed** them, which means kept them, since he was young.

The one thing. Look up Mark 10:21. Jesus **beholding** him (looking at him) loved him. Jesus said, "One thing thou lackest," which means "You are missing one thing." Jesus told him to sell whatever he had, give to the poor, and he would have **treasure in heaven**. Then: "Come, take up the cross, and follow me." To **take up the cross** means to be ready to give up anything, even our own life, to follow Jesus.

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He went away. Look up Mark 10:22. The man was sad and went away **grieved** (very sad), "for he had great possessions." **Possessions** are the things a person owns.

The camel and the needle. Jesus looked around at His disciples and said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (10:23). **How hardly** means how hard it is. The disciples were **astonished** (amazed). Jesus called them "Children" and said it is hard for those who **trust in riches** (10:24). **Look up Mark 10:25.** It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. The eye of a needle is the tiny hole the thread goes through.

With God. The disciples were "astonished out of measure" (more amazed than ever) and asked, "Who then can be saved?" (10:26). **Look up Mark 10:27.** Nobody can save himself, not even the richest or best person. But God can do what men can't: "with God all things are possible."

The name. Mark doesn't give the man's name, or call him young or a ruler. Matthew calls him "the young man" (Matthew 19:20), and Luke calls him "a certain ruler" (Luke 18:18). That is where the name "the rich young ruler" comes from.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. The man came running and kneeled (10:17). He really wanted an answer. Why do you think he still went away?
2. Mark 10:21 says Jesus loved him before He told him the hard thing. Why does that matter?
3. Jesus said the danger is to "trust in riches" (10:24). What does it look like to trust in things instead of God?
4. What things could get in the way of following Jesus for a kid your age?
5. The disciples asked, "Who then can be saved?" (10:26). What is Jesus' answer, and why is it good news?

Recall questions

1. What did the man call Jesus? *(Good Master, Mark 10:17)*
2. How many things did Jesus say the man lacked? *(One thing, 10:21)*
3. What did Jesus say is easier than a rich man entering God's kingdom? *(A camel going through the eye of a needle, 10:25)*

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

Explain the words: **saith** means says, and **impossible** means it can't be done. 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 man asked, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Jesus loves you just as He loved him. 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). On the day of Pentecost people asked almost the same question: 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' (Acts 2:37). Peter answered: '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: give away or share one thing you like, and thank God that He matters more than anything you own.

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. Mark 10:17: What did the man do when he came to Jesus? *(He came running and kneeled to Him)*
2. Mark 10:20: Since when had he kept the commandments? *(From his youth)*
3. Mark 10:21: Where would he have treasure? *(In heaven)*
4. Mark 10:22: Why did he go away grieved? *(He had great possessions)*
5. Mark 10:24: What did Jesus call His disciples? *(Children)*
6. Mark 10:26: What did the disciples ask? *(Who then can be saved?)*
7. Matthew 19:20: What does Matthew call the man? *(The young man)*
8. Luke 18:18: What does Luke call him? *(A certain ruler)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for loving us, just as Jesus loved the man who ran to Him. Show us anything we love more than You, and help us let go of it and follow You. Thank You that with You all things are possible. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks whether being rich is a sin: answer simply. Jesus didn't say that. He said it is hard for those who "trust in riches" (Mark 10:24). Things are not bad; loving them more than God is.

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