Preschool–Grade 6

# The Sermon on the Mount

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

**Main point:** Jesus taught us how to live for Him. His followers are salt and light: we love others, even enemies, we treat people the way we want to be treated, and we trust God instead of worrying.
**Bible passage:** Matthew 5–7. Read Matthew 5:1–16, 5:43–48, 6:25–34 and 7:12 before class.
**Memory verse:** "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." *Matthew 5:16 (KJV)*
**You need:** a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), plain unsalted crackers and salted crackers, a flashlight, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, paper and a pencil for each child, and one take-home sheet for each child.
**Before class:** check for food allergies before you serve the crackers. Write the memory verse on the board.

## 1. Opening game: Taste Test (5–10 minutes)

Give each child one plain unsalted cracker and then one salted cracker. Ask: *Which one tastes better? What did the salt do?* Then ask: *Could you taste the salt even though it was just a little?* Say: "Today Jesus sits down on a mountain and teaches His disciples. One of the first things He tells them is, 'Ye are the salt of the earth.'"

## 2. Bible story: Jesus Teaches on the Mountain (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 5. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

**Up the mountain.** Jesus went about all Galilee teaching, preaching and healing, and great **multitudes**, big crowds, followed Him from many places (Matthew 4:23–25). **Look up Matthew 5:1–2.** Jesus went up into a mountain, and when He **was set**, which means when He sat down, His disciples came to Him, and He taught them. This teaching fills three whole chapters, Matthew 5, 6 and 7. We call it the Sermon on the Mount.

**Salt and light. Look up Matthew 5:13.** "Ye are the salt of the earth." Salt that has **lost his savour**, its taste, is good for nothing. **Look up Matthew 5:14–15.** "Ye are the light of the world." A city set on a hill can't be hidden. Nobody lights a **candle** and puts it under a **bushel**, a basket used to measure grain; they put it on a **candlestick**, a stand, so it gives light to all in the house. **Look up Matthew 5:16.** Our **good works** are the good things we do. When people see them, they **glorify**, or praise, God.


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**Love your enemies.** People had heard it said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy" (5:43). **Look up Matthew 5:44.** Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," and pray for them. **Despitefully use** means treat badly on purpose. **Look up Matthew 5:45.** God makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on both.

**Don't worry. Take no thought** (6:25) means don't worry. **Look up Matthew 6:26.** The **fowls**, the birds, don't **sow** (plant) or **reap** (harvest), but God feeds them, and we are much better than they. **Look up Matthew 6:28–29.** The lilies don't **toil**, work hard, or **spin**, make thread for clothes, yet Solomon in all his glory was not **arrayed**, dressed, like one of them. If God clothes the grass of the field, He will much more clothe you (6:30). **Look up Matthew 6:33.** "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Put God first, and He gives what we need.

**The golden rule. Look up Matthew 7:12.** Do to others whatever you would want them to do to you; **the law and the prophets** means this is what the Old Testament Scriptures teach. People call this verse the golden rule.

**The end of the sermon.** Jesus also taught who is blessed (5:3–12), how to pray (6:9–13) and about two builders (7:24–27). **Look up Matthew 7:28–29.** The people were **astonished**, amazed, at His **doctrine**, His teaching, because He taught as one having authority. When He came down, great multitudes followed Him (8:1).

## 3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. Salt changes the taste of food even when it is just a little. How can one kid make a difference in a classroom or on a team?
2. What are some "good works" kids your age can do so others see God's light (5:16)?
3. Why is it so hard to love an enemy? What is one way to "do good to them that hate you" (5:44)?
4. What do kids worry about? What do the birds and the lilies teach us about God (6:26–30)?
5. Think of a time someone treated you the way you wanted to be treated. How did it feel (7:12)?

**Recall questions**

1. What did Jesus do before He began to teach? *(He went up into a mountain and sat down, 5:1)*
2. Where do people put a candle so it gives light? *(On a candlestick, 5:15)*
3. What should we seek first? *(The kingdom of God, and His righteousness, 6:33)*

## 4. Memory verse: Pass the Light (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **so shine before men** means shine in a way people can see; **good works** means the good things we do; **glorify** means praise and honor; **your Father which is in heaven** means God. Read the verse together three times. Then sit in a circle and pass the flashlight (turned on) around. Each child says the next word of the verse as the light comes to them. Erase two words from the board each round until the kids can say it all from memory.


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## 5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus taught us how to live for Him, but none of us can do it on our own. 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:** learn Matthew 5:16 by heart. Pick one teaching from today (salt and light, love your enemies, don't worry, seek God first, or the golden rule) and do it every day.

## 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. For early finishers: the **Sermon on the Mount crossword** (vbshq.com/puzzles/sermon-on-the-mount-crossword) or **worksheet** (vbshq.com/worksheets/sermon-on-the-mount-worksheet).

1. Matthew 5:1: Where did Jesus go when He saw the multitudes? *(Up into a mountain)*
2. Matthew 5:13: Ye are the what of the earth? *(Salt)*
3. Matthew 5:14: What cannot be hid? *(A city that is set on an hill)*
4. Matthew 5:44: Who did Jesus say to love? *(Your enemies)*
5. Matthew 6:26: Who feeds the fowls of the air? *(Your heavenly Father)*
6. Matthew 6:28: What flowers did Jesus say to consider? *(The lilies of the field)*
7. Matthew 7:28: How did the people feel about Jesus' teaching? *(They were astonished)*

## 7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for teaching us how to live. Help us be salt and light, love even people who are mean to us, treat others the way we want to be treated, and trust You instead of worrying. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

**If a child says someone is hurting them:** loving your enemies does not mean keeping a secret or staying where someone hurts you. Pray for them (Matthew 5:44), and tell a parent, teacher or pastor. Follow your church's child safety policy.


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