Preschool–Grade 6

The Sermon on the Mount

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Living for Jesus shows on the outside: we shine as salt and light, love even our enemies, treat others the way we want to be treated, and seek God first instead of worrying.
Bible passage: Matthew 5–7. Students read it out loud themselves.
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)* and "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." *Matthew 6:33 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Matthew 4:23–5:16, 5:38–48, 6:19–34 and 7:12–29. Write both memory verses on the board.

1. Opening game: Would You Want It? (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Students give a thumbs up if they would want someone to do it to them, or a thumbs down if not. 1) Someone saves you a seat when you are new. 2) Someone shares a funny photo of you without asking. 3) Someone helps you carry your things. 4) Someone tells everyone your mistake. 5) Someone stands up for you when others leave you out. Ask: *Was it hard to decide? Why do we know right away how we want to be treated, but forget it when we treat others?* Say: "Jesus gave one rule that covers all of these. Let's find it."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Matthew 5:1–2, 5:13–16, 5:43–45, 6:25–34, 7:12 and 7:28–29. Students take turns, two or three verses each. Old words in these passages:

- **multitudes** (5:1): big crowds; **when he was set** (5:1): when He sat down
- **lost his savour** (5:13): lost its taste; **thenceforth**: from then on; **trodden under foot**: walked on
- **bushel** (5:15): a basket for measuring grain; **candlestick**: a stand that holds a light up high
- **glorify** (5:16): praise and honor; **despitefully use** (5:44): treat badly on purpose; **persecute**: hurt or attack for what you believe
- **take no thought** (6:25, 6:34): don't worry; **raiment**: clothes; **meat**: food
- **fowls** (6:26): birds; **sow** and **reap**: plant and harvest; **toil** (6:28): work hard; **spin**: make thread for clothes; **arrayed** (6:29): dressed
- **morrow** (6:34): tomorrow; **the law and the prophets** (7:12): the Old Testament Scriptures; **doctrine** (7:28): teaching

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

Talk through what happened: Jesus had been going about all Galilee, teaching, preaching and healing, and great multitudes followed Him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea and beyond Jordan (4:23–25). Seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain, sat down, and taught His disciples (5:1–2). The sermon starts with the Beatitudes (5:3–12), teaches how to pray (6:9–13), and ends with the wise and foolish builders (7:24–27). Today we focus on four teachings in between.

Light that comes from Jesus. Look up John 8:12. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." In Matthew 5:14 He told His followers, "Ye are the light of the world." Our light comes from following Him, and it is meant to be seen, like a city on a hill or a candle on a candlestick (5:14–15), so that people glorify God, not us (5:16).

Love that goes further. Jesus said love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them (5:44), because God sends His sun and rain on the evil and on the good (5:45). Even the publicans, the tax collectors, love the people who love them (5:46).

Trust instead of worry. No one can serve two masters (6:24). God feeds the fowls and clothes the lilies, so His children don't need to worry about what they will eat, drink or wear (6:25–32). Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness (6:33), and take no thought for tomorrow (6:34).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Salt that loses its taste is good for nothing (5:13). What could make a Christian's "salt" lose its taste?
2. Why does Jesus say people should glorify God when they see our good works (5:16), and not praise us?
3. Jesus said even publicans love people who love them back (5:46). What makes loving an enemy different? Who is hard for you to love?
4. What do people your age worry about most? How do the birds and the lilies answer that worry (6:26–30)?
5. What does it look like to "seek first the kingdom of God" (6:33) on a busy school day?
6. Matthew 7:12 says the golden rule sums up "the law and the prophets." How would your week change if you lived it every day?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Matthew 5:16: **so shine before men** means shine where people can see; **good works** means the good things we do; **glorify** means praise and honor; **your Father which is in heaven** means God. In Matthew 6:33, **his righteousness** means God's right way of living, and **added unto you** means given to you. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Matthew 5:16 this week; keep working on Matthew 6:33 next week too.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Jesus' teaching shows us how high God's standard is, and none of us lives up to it on our own. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where is one place my light could shine this week (home, school, team, online)? What good work could I do there?
2. Who is hard for me to love? Write one way to do good to them, and pray for them by name.
3. What am I worried about? Write a short prayer giving it to God and asking Him to help you seek Him first.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence. Early finishers can do the **Sermon on the Mount crossword** (vbshq.com/puzzles/sermon-on-the-mount-crossword).

This week: memorize Matthew 5:16. Each morning, read Matthew 6:33 and name one way to put God first that day.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for teaching us how to live for You. Help our light shine so people praise You, help us love even people who are hard to love, and help us seek You first and trust You instead of worrying. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student 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.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post