



HEARTWORK

WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT THE HEART

IPHC CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM

THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 18:23-30, 32-33 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

Jesus wants to make our hearts pure.

FOCUS VERSE

"Create in me a pure heart, O God." Psalm 51:10a (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Crown | Red Construction Paper | Laminator and Lamination Sheets (Optional) |
| Dry Erase Markers |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What are your plans for the rest of the day?
- What is the funniest thing that has ever happened to you?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

God wants us to worship Him with our whole selves. We have talked about raising our hands, dancing, or kneeling in worship, but did you know we can also worship Him with our minds (our thoughts)? Before we sing today, let's think of the reasons we love God and then say those things aloud to one another. Then, we'll worship Him through music!

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Gather the children together for prayer.

SAMPLE PRAYER: "Jesus, thank You for being a God who loved us before we ever loved You, and thank You for welcoming us into Your family when we were still sinners. Father, now, would you make us more like You? Change our hearts and make them pure, and help us understand what You want to teach us today. In Jesus' name, Amen."



REMINDE THE CHILDREN THAT THERE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A SCRIPT FOR OUR PRAYERS. TEACH THEM THAT THEY CAN PRAY WHILE KNEELING, STANDING, LAYING, OR WALKING. GOD WANTS TO HEAR FROM US ALL THE TIME!

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES



IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASS WHO DON'T COMPLY WITH YOUR DIRECTIVES, TRY GIVING THEM "LEADERSHIP ROLES." FOR EXAMPLE, SAY, "I NEED YOUR HELP WITH SOMETHING THAT'S SUPER IMPORTANT." YOU CAN HAVE THEM HELP BY LETTING THEM PASS OUT PAPERS, STACK CHAIRS, CLEAN UP, ORGANIZE TOYS, PREPARE LESSON MATERIALS, ETC.

BACKGROUND: Say, "This is our final 'Heartwork' lesson for the month. In this series, we've been talking about what it means to have a pure heart! In our first week, we discussed the story, 'Who is the Greatest?' and how we need God's help to become humble instead of prideful. In the second week, we learned about the rich young ruler's greed and how Jesus uses generosity to help us have purer hearts. Finally, last week, we talked about how Martha should've been content sitting with Mary at Jesus' feet, but she wasn't. She needed Jesus to transform her heart, too, didn't she? Let's put up our last puzzle piece for the month! Who wants to place it on the wall?"

TRANSITION: Say, "Alright, let's play a game as we prepare for God's story!"

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Crown (Plastic or Paper) |

Say, "In today's story, Jesus talks about a king, and we know that when kings declare something, it has to happen! So today, we will be playing a game like Simon Says, but we're going to call it King Says! Who wants to be our first king?"

GAME GOAL: Each child must follow the king's actions. If they do not obey everything the King says, they're out!

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Choose one person to be the "king" and give them the crown to wear.
2. The "king" will call out actions like "touch your head," "jump up and down," "clap your hands," etc.
3. When the "king" uses the words, "The king says..." everyone must comply.
4. When the "king" does not use "The king says..." in front of the command, no one should comply.
5. If someone even starts an action without the king saying, "The king says..." then they're out!
6. When there is one child left, they are declared the winner of that round and can become the next "king" or choose another "king."

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job, everyone! Let's read our story together about a good, good king!"

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

Say, "Jesus is the best teacher, and He explains the most important things in ways His followers can understand. That's why he talks about a king in today's story! He is trying to teach His followers a valuable lesson about their hearts, and He uses a king as an example of this. Let's read to see what God

wants to teach us about our hearts today.” Read from Matthew 18:23-30, 32-33 (ICB).

23 “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who decided to collect the money his servants owed him. 24 So the king began to collect his money. One servant owed him several million dollars. 25 But the servant did not have enough money to pay his master, the king. So the master (king) ordered that everything the servant owned should be sold, even the servant’s wife and children... 26 “But the servant fell on his knees and begged, ‘Be patient with me. I will pay you everything I owe.’ 27 The master felt sorry for his servant. So the master told the servant he did not have to pay. He let the servant go free. 28 “Later, that same servant found another servant who owed him a few dollars. The servant grabbed the other servant around the neck and said, ‘Pay me the money you owe me!’ 29 “The other servant fell on his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me. I will pay you everything I owe.’ 30 “But the first servant refused to be patient. He threw the other servant into prison until he could pay everything he owed. 32 “Then the master (king) called his servant in and said, ‘You evil servant...33 I had mercy (forgiveness) on you. You should have had the same mercy on that other servant.’

Say, “That’s an interesting story. It sounds like the servant had a pretty big heart problem. The king forgave his servant of a tremendous amount of money, yet the servant man couldn’t forgive the man who owed him just a little bit of money. That doesn’t seem right, does it? The servant had an unforgiving heart. But Jesus wants more than that for us. **He wants to make our hearts pure.** Instead of holding grudges and refusing to forgive, Jesus wants us to have forgiving hearts. He wants us to forgive as this king forgave. More importantly, He wants us to forgive because He forgives us.”



BE HONEST AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT FORGIVENESS CAN BE HARD, BUT REINFORCE THE TRUTH THAT IT IS ALWAYS WORTH IT AND ALWAYS POSSIBLE WITH GOD’S HELP! JESUS WANTS TO HELP US FORGIVE PEOPLE THE WAY HE DOES!

TRANSITION: Say, “Forgiveness is a trait of a pure heart, and **Jesus wants to make our hearts pure.** Instead of refusing to forgive, Jesus teaches that we will find freedom, joy, and peace when we forgive others.”

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Discuss the story: Say, “Let’s discuss our story from today.”

1. How much money did the King forgive the servant?

Response: Several million dollars (that’s a lot!)

2. What did the servant do that was wrong?

Response: Even though he had been forgiven much, the servant didn’t forgive the small debt of the other servant.

3. Why did the king call the servant “evil”?

Response: The servant didn’t forgive as He had been forgiven. He repaid good with evil.

4. Does the king in the story remind you of anyone?

Response: Yes! The king sounds a lot like Jesus, doesn't He?

5. What kind of pure heart does Jesus want us to have?

Response: He wants us to have a forgiving heart.

6. Have you ever had a hard time forgiving someone? What happened?

Response: Answers will vary.

7. What do we do if we are having a hard time forgiving someone?

Response: First, remind yourself of the truth: Jesus promises to forgive us of ALL of our sins when we ask, even though we don't deserve it. Secondly, ask God to forgive you for holding a grudge, and then ask Him to help you forgive. Try praying for the person you're angry with too. It's amazing how God can heal our bitter hearts.

8. What do we learn about God in this story?

Response: God is our king; God is forgiving; God is merciful; God is loving; God is patient, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "What a good discussion! Let's make sure we pursue forgiveness even with people who aren't kind to us. Now, let's do an activity to help us remember this powerful story."

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Red Construction Paper | Laminator and Laminator Sheets (Optional) | Dry Erase Markers (1 per child) |

LEADERS: Prep this activity ahead of time:

Cut hearts in the red construction paper by folding the paper in half. The hearts should be about as big as your palm. Laminate the hearts.



IF YOUR CHURCH DOES NOT HAVE A LAMINATOR, AMAZON HAS SOME FOR AROUND \$25-\$30 AND, THEY WORK GREAT! IT WILL BE WORTH YOUR INVESTMENT.

MODIFICATION: If you do not have a laminator, the children can write on the construction paper hearts with a pencil instead of a dry erase marker.

Say, "We heard a wonderful story today about how Jesus wants to give His followers hearts that forgive. Our next activity is going to help us explore that idea a little more."

- Give each child a laminated heart and dry erase marker (or heart and pencil).
- Tell them to think about a time when someone hurt them and write that person's name or a word that reminds them of the situation on their heart.
- Explain that God wants to give us forgiving hearts, but that when we don't forgive, we suffer from feelings of bitterness that separate us from others.
- Ask volunteers to share what they wrote down.
- When each person has a word written, ask the children to repeat the following prayer together:
"Jesus, forgive me for my unforgiveness. Help me become more like You, and with a pure heart, forgive this person who has hurt me."

- Once you have prayed, have everyone wipe their heart clean (or erase the heart).
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** This activity has the potential to unearth tender feelings. You may want to have the children spread out, so they can write in privacy. Also, be present to the children during this exercise. If you see that thinking about hurtful situations is causing unusual emotion (anger, sadness, etc.), go to the child. It is always essential for there to be at least two adults in a room with children, so while one of you spends time with the hurting child, the other can be available to continue class.



EXPLAIN THAT WHEN WE FORGIVE OTHERS, WE FEEL SET FREE. ONCE WE FORGIVE, WE NO LONGER HAVE TO CARRY THE WEIGHT OF ANGER AND BITTERNESS. THAT'S WHY WE WIPED OUR HEART CLEAN!

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

By this time, most of your regularly attending children should be able to say the verse by memory. Say, "Let's practice our verse for the month. It's a fantastic reminder that **Jesus wants to make our hearts pure.**"

"Create (pretend you are shaping a piece of clay) in me a pure heart (make a heart shape with your hands), O God (point up)." Psalm 51:10a (NIV) (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: Since this is the last lesson with this memory verse, have children go around one-by-one repeating the verse with actions. Celebrate together once everyone has recited the verse from memory! By practicing this verse, you are hiding God's Word in the hearts of the children you disciple. Pray that the words and truth of this verse will never leave them.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Because Jesus loves us, He wants our hearts to be pure. God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, can transform us into people who look increasingly like Him, people who forgive. Jesus wants us to encompass all the traits we've discussed over the past few weeks: humility, generosity, contentment, and forgiveness. Let's pray that Jesus makes us quick to forgive."

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, we praise You for Your love and kindness. Thank You for forgiving us, not just once, but over and over. Would you help us better understand and receive Your forgiveness? In return, help us forgive others, even when it's hard. Finally, help us remember that when we sin, we can come to You, ask for forgiveness, knowing You love us and will wipe away the wrong we've done. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

RELEASE —

If there is extra time before parents arrive, you can replay "King Says" or review the story by playing Hangman with words from the Bible passage you read today.

