

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany – year A

Preparation

Read [Matthew 5:21-27](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/epipha6.htm>
http://www.episcopalchurch.org/109452_115820_ENG_HTML.htm
http://www.cyberfaith.com/proclaiming_faith.cfm?id=429
http://www.sermons4kids.com/forgiving_and_forgiven.htm
<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/children/lessons/private.htm>
<http://www.efree.mb.ca/lectionarypuzzles/in-awjj.htm#ep06>
<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/a/6-a/A-6-a.html>

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle and candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Green cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Two small dolls or stuffed toys

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. With the children place the cloth on the table. Have them help you place the candle and the Bible on the cloth. Light the candle. Pray the following prayer together:

**Learning new things, we walk with God;
Loving new ways, we walk with Jesus;
Looking for hope, we walk with the Spirit. Amen.**

Blow out the candle. Bring out the small dolls or stuffed toys. Introduce them to the children as Bobby and Clara. Then do the following skit with them.

Bobby: Clara will you make me a promise?

Clara: What do you want me to promise Bobby?

Bobby: Will you promise to always like me Clara?

Clara: I will always like you Bobby. Why do you need me to promise?

Bobby: So that you won't ever forget.

Clara: I won't forget. You do not have to worry about that. I am not going to promise Bobby. But I will say yes, I just won't make a promise.

Ask the children why they think Clara won't promise Bobby. They probably make promises regularly to their families and their friends. Explain that in today's story they will hear Jesus asking us to make our promises in a different way.

Story Time

Materials

- poster from previous weeks
- YES image at the end of the lesson
- scissors
- wall tack or tape

Instructions

- Copy the YES image at the end of the lesson and cut it out. Place it near the poster with the wall tack or tape. With the children get comfortable to hear the story.
- Teach the children the following call and response.
When you say, "You have heard it said" they respond with "**Yes we have**".

Jesus was still on the mountain with his friends. There were a lot of people there who were listening very carefully to what Jesus was saying. They knew that they were learning much about how to live in God's way. They knew that it was going to change their lives. Jesus continued with his teaching time on the mountain.

Jesus said, "You have heard it said" — "**Yes we have**" — that you shall not kill another person and if you do you will be taken and judged. I say to you that if you are angry with your brother or sister you could still be judged. So when you are getting ready to worship God, go first to your brother or sister and make it right between the two of you, and then go to worship God."

Jesus then said, "You have heard it said" — "**Yes we have**" — that you should you should always love your partner. I say to you that you need to keep your heart pure and not do anything to harm the love you have for each other. Make sure that no part of you does harm to someone else."

Jesus continued teaching his friends about living in God's way.

Jesus said, "You have heard it said" — "**Yes we have**" — that when you promise by God that you will do something you should always do it. I say to you that you should not promise by anything but make your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'. Anymore than that and you are leaving yourself open to doing wrong things."

Point out the poster to the children. Explain that each week that they are going to add a symbol (an object that reminds us of something) to the poster. Bring out the people image. Ask the children why we put 'yes' on for today? To remind us of the need to say what we mean and live well with each other as God wants us to do. Have one of the children tape it onto the poster on the side of the hill/mountain.

Response

Project Idea 1: YES Buttons

This response will be a way for the children to show their affirmative response to Jesus' challenge to all of us to live in God's way.

Materials needed

- YES image from end of lesson
- card stock
- scissors
- ribbon
- markers
- large safety pins
- glitter
- glue

Instructions

Make enough copies of the yes image from the end of the lesson so that each child has one and cut them out. Cut out circles from the card stock that are slightly larger than the yes image. Give each child a card stock circle and a copy of the yes image. Have them colour in the image with the markers and then glue it onto the card stock. Get them to decorate their buttons by attaching on ribbon strips and by adding glitter to the letters by putting glue on the letters and then shaking some glitter on them. When they are done help them to pin them onto their clothes with a large safety pin. Encourage the children to share with others why they are wearing a button that says 'Yes' – that Jesus wants us to act in God's way all the time.

Project Idea 2: Reconciliation Cards

Asking forgiveness is something we all need to do from time to time and it is especially important for those who follow in Jesus' way. These cards will be a way for the children to act on this.

Materials needed

- card stock
- markers
- red construction paper
- scissors
- glue

Instructions

Fold the card stock in half. Depending on the age of the children you may want to make the red hearts out of the construction paper ahead of time or have the children do it. Do this by folding the paper in half and cutting it apart and then folding those halves in half and cutting them apart. Fold the smallest pieces in half and draw a half heart on it – cut it out and then unfold. Give the children the prepared card stock and prepared hearts (or get them to cut out a heart or two themselves). Explain that they are going to make a card for when they need to make things right with someone in their life. Have them print inside the card the following: **'I am sorry. Please forgive me'**. Let them use the heart shapes to decorate the front of the card. Suggest that they keep the card until they need it and then use it to ask for forgiveness.

Project Idea 3: YES Hearts

This week is [St. Valentine's day](#), a day that many think is just about romantic love. Making these hearts will help the children remember that to the followers of Jesus that being loving and acting loving are to walk in God's way.

Materials needed

- red construction paper
- scissors
- markers
- glue
- glitter
- anything else you think will be good to decorate with

Instructions

Show the children how to fold the construction paper in half and draw half a heart with the centre of the heart being over the fold. Have the children cut out the heart. Ask them to print the following in the middle of the heart with a marker '**Yes I will love like Jesus**'. Let them decorate the hearts with the materials that you have provided. If there is time let them make another heart. Suggest to the children that they keep a heart for themselves and give one to someone else who is a follower of Jesus.

Closing

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle.
Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

**Thank you God for being with us;
Thank you Jesus for loving us;
Thank you Spirit for leading us. Amen.**

“Yes” Button

