

Jesus Teaches About Rewards

Luke 6:17-26



Worship Theme:




Seeking God's kingdom honors God.

Weaving Faith Into Life:



Children will honor God by seeking his kingdom.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<p>1 Let's Praise God! (up to 25 minutes)</p>	<p>Sing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" • "Be Strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10) • "Create in Me a Pure Heart" (Psalm 51:10) • "Praise Him" • "The Golden Rule" 	<p>KidsOwn Worship Kit: KidsOwn Worship DVD, Spy Glasses</p> <p>Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, paper, marker, ruler</p> 

Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<p>2 Let's Learn the Point! (up to 25 minutes)</p>	<p>* Out of the Box Guess what parts of pictures are, then see the whole picture.</p>	<p>Classroom Supplies: Bible, construction paper, scissors, pictures</p>
	<p>Kingdom Prayer Learn a prayer with motions.</p>	
	<p>Butterfly Promises Make caterpillar finger puppets to be reminded to look at things the way God sees them.</p>	<p>Classroom Supplies: 1 pompom per child, construction paper, hole punch, white glue, double-sided tape</p>

Elementary

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	Heart Illusions Learn that tricks of the world can be very convincing.	Classroom Supplies: Bibles, paper, pencils, newsprint, marker
	* Treasure Hunt Participate in a treasure hunt.	Classroom Supplies: Cardboard, chocolate coins, scissors, treasures, label, marker
	* Empty Promises Make a choice based on appearances and discover the unreliability of the strategy.	Classroom Supplies: 3 empty soda cans, milk carton, water, salt, 4 clear cups

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
3 Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i>	The Offering Sing a song and offer to place God above everything.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Offering bowls, video equipment
	I Just Seek You Seek the things of God with a prayer poem.	
	Quiet Reflection Pray quietly and listen to God.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, candle, match

* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together.

Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Section 2.

Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

Jesus Teaches About Rewards

Luke 6:17-26

Jesus continued to teach and heal people wherever he went. Luke 6:17-26 records a sermon that closely parallels the Beatitudes recorded by Matthew in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Some contend that Luke's "Sermon on the Plain" recorded here was the same sermon and that the terrain was described differently because Luke was describing the large plain where the people sat and Matthew was describing the place slightly above the people where Jesus stood on the mountain. Others hold that these were two separate sermons and that Jesus may have spoken similar content numerous times in his ministry.

Jesus' sermon was addressed to his disciples, not to the entire crowd (Luke 6:20). The disciples mentioned here were not just the Twelve, but rather a large crowd, as described in Luke 6:17. A greater multitude also gathered behind the disciples and listened, perhaps on the way to becoming disciples.

Jews listening to Jesus' teaching in this passage would have quickly connected this teaching method with that of the prophets. The prophets had pronounced blessing on appropriate behavior and woe on disobedience. *Blessed*, often translated *happy*, means to have an inner quality of life that demonstrates joy and blessing. Woe indicates deep pain or disappointment and conveys a feeling of desperation.

In these Beatitudes, Jesus offers hope to those who suffer: a kingdom for the poor, satisfaction for the hungry, laughter for the weeping, and rewards for those suffering for Jesus. For those who put him first and seek his kingdom, all these things will be added.

The woes Jesus enumerates are opposites of the blessings he lists, but this doesn't mean that it is inherently wrong to have enough money, to be well-fed, to laugh, or to be well-thought-of. Instead, Jesus is pointing out that those living "the good life" may find it easy to ignore God and to depend on themselves rather than on him.

Devotion for Leaders

Times of sacrifice may be expected of us when we follow Jesus, but the blessing of God will be much greater than our sacrifice.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Re-read Luke 6:24-26. How have times of plenty affected your relationship with God? What has your relationship with God been like in times of difficulty? Be thankful for the good times, but also be thankful for the difficult times, which can draw us closer to the Lord. Today, pray for someone who is struggling, that the struggles will draw him or her into a closer relationship with the Lord.

Why We Worship for Leaders

We worship a God whose kingdom is based on a different reality than what we see through eyes limited by human perspective. God operates in a realm of eternal perspective. He sees that the things we place a high value on are temporary. Occasionally, we get a glimpse into his line of vision and realize that all we hold dear may not be all there is. In those moments, we experience a bit of God's perspective and are blessed. We can tolerate being poor, sad, or alienated because we know his kingdom is ahead and what lies behind matters less to us.

The world always has and always will give us flawed feedback about who we are and what we are worth. When we see with God's vision, we can let go of the tokens of approval the world offers and follow Jesus with abandon. We worship a God who longs to clear away the tokens of our life and give us himself in abundance. When we seek beyond the treasures of our earthly kingdoms and enter his heavenly one, God is honored.

Easy Prep for Leaders

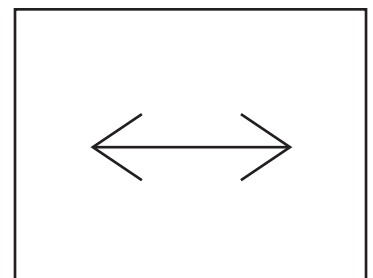
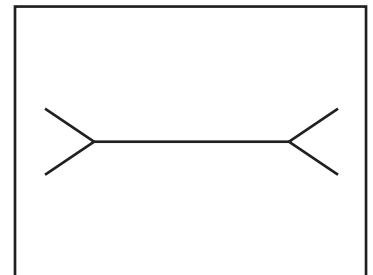
Let's Praise God!

- Make sure your video equipment is ready.
- Watch "Caedmon & Noah's Story" at least once before the session so you'll be familiar with it.
- Use a black marker and ruler to draw two identical lines on two separate pieces of paper. Draw diagonal lines toward the center at each end of one line, making a two-sided arrow. Draw diagonal lines away from the line at each end of the other line, creating an inverse arrow. (See margin diagram.) Put the two papers where they will be available during Let's Praise God!

Treasure Hunt—For this activity, buy chocolate coins. Carefully open the foil coverings and remove the chocolate. Replace the chocolate with cardboard of the same thickness. Replace the foil around the cardboard, and hide the cardboard coins and several other "treasures" in the room. One of the items should be labeled "The Kingdom of God." Other items should represent what people tend to seek instead of the kingdom of God.

Empty Promises—Set up a refreshment station. Place a carton of milk, an empty soda can, a soda can filled with water, and a soda can filled with salt on the table. Make sure each can has a different label and looks as untouched as possible.

Preschool Activities—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.



1 Let's Praise God!

Play music videos from the *KidsOwn Worship DVD* as children arrive. Greet children by name, look through the Spy Glasses from the KidsOwn Worship Kit, and say, "I'm seeking God's kingdom, but I'm having trouble finding it. Would you like to have a look?" Let some of the kids try on the Spy Glasses.



When it's time to start,

Say Hello, everyone! Today we're going to talk about looking for, or seeking, God's kingdom. Let's talk about what happened when you wore the Spy Glasses.

- Ask**
- **What did you see when you looked through the glasses?** (I couldn't tell what I was looking at; the glasses showed me things that were behind me instead of in front.)
 - **Were you surprised by what you saw when you wore the glasses? Why or why not?** (Yes, because I thought I would be looking straight; no, because they're called Spy Glasses.)

Say Today we're going to talk about seeking God's kingdom. We're going to discover that things aren't always what they seem and that you can't always trust the messages that come from society and the world. Those messages can lead us off track just as looking through these Spy Glasses would cause us to bump into things.

We're going to find out that God is pleased and honored when we look past the false messages the world sends us and give our whole hearts to seeking his kingdom.

God's kingdom is more than a place—heaven. It's a way of living that honors God and sees the world through God's eyes. God's way of seeing and doing things—his kingdom—is full of love, joy, and light. Let's sing a song that helps us live with joy.


 Sing "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee."

- Ask**
- **What are some of the things that people look for to bring them love or joy?** (Having a lot of stuff; being friends with a lot of people.)
 - **Do those things make people happy? Why or why not?** (No, because people need Jesus, too; yes, because it's nice to have a lot of friends; no, because it's just stuff.)
 - **Sometimes those things do make people feel happy for a while. But do you think that those things alone will make people happy forever?** (No, because they won't have those things when they die; no, because people need more than that.)

Say People say they want "the good life." They usually mean they want more stuff—money, toys, newer houses, or the right kind of clothes.

- Ask**
- **Who do you think is impressed by stuff?** (People who live on the earth; people who don't know Jesus.)
 - **How do you think God's idea of the good life is different from people's?** (God wants us to be close to him; God doesn't think stuff is important.)

Say See if you get any more ideas from the next song.

 Sing "Be Strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10).

Ask • **What are some of the good things we sang about in the song?**
(Being strong in the Lord; God giving us his power; being ready to fight our enemies.)

Say **God wants us to seek him first. That means we need to try to see God's point of view before we decide what we want. It's kind of like this: If I asked you to pick out any treat you wanted, how many of you would choose a vegetable? Raise your hands. How about meat? How about something sweet and full of sugar?**
Have the kids raise their hands for each choice.

Ask • **What would happen if you spent all your time and energy working really hard to get that sugary treat without ever eating what is best for you?** (We would get sick; we would be weak.)


Say **Now, God's kingdom isn't boring like some people think vegetables and meat are. But it is what's best for us, like healthy food is best for our bodies. When people eat only sugary treats, they feel tired and depressed, and they get sick. When people eat healthy foods, they feel good, and they are strong and healthy.**

Seeking God's kingdom—God's way—is just like that. If we waste all our energy on getting what we want, or what the world tells us is good, we'll be unhappy; we won't live good, productive lives. God wants us to seek his kingdom first. When we do things God's way instead of the world's way, God is honored, and we have the best life we could ever hope to live.

When we seek God's kingdom first, God makes us new. He promises to give us clean hearts and renew our spirits when we ask him to. That's the message of the next song we're going to sing.

 Sing "Create in Me a Pure Heart" (Psalm 51:10).

Say **God's way of doing things—not worrying about what we want or need but letting him give us pure hearts—doesn't make sense to those who don't know Jesus as a loving, caring Savior who wants the best for his children. That kind of thinking seems a little upside down. Let's watch a video about two boys who did that.**

 Show the "Caedmon & Noah's Story" video. It's an interview with two brothers who saved money to help others.

Ask • **What was upside down about the way Caedmon and Noah used their money?** (They didn't buy the gaming system they wanted; they spent money on people they don't know.)

- **What does the world think is important?** (Having a lot of stuff; being rich and popular.)
- **What does God think is important?** (Following him; being kind to others; obeying your parents.)
- **Why do you think God's values are so different from the world's values?** (Because God knows what is best; because God knows that money and stuff aren't important.)

Say ➤ **By the world's standards, God's way of doing things is upside down. But God sees what's real and what's not.**

Here's an example of how the world thinks. Use your imagination a little. Imagine that these pictures represent God's blessing. I'm going to give one to [child's name]. Give the drawing with the arrows pointing out to the child, and have him or her hold it up so that everyone can see it. **This blessing means that [child's name] lives in a really big house and has pretty much whatever toys [he or she] wants. I'm going to give *this* blessing to [second child's name].** Hand the drawing with the arrows pointing in to the second child, and have him or her hold it up.

Ask ➤ • **If that one means a lot of blessing—a lot of stuff—what do you think this one means?** (Being poor; not having much blessing.)

Say ➤ **The first arrow looks longer than the second arrow. So, by the looks of things, the first person has lots of God's blessing, and the second person has not so much, right? But let's find out what's really here.** Ask a third child to come up and measure the lines.

Ask ➤ • **Which line was longer?** (Neither line was longer; both lines were the same.)

• **Who has the most blessings?** (They both have the same blessings; both rich and poor people have the same.)

Say ➤ **Sometimes what we think we see isn't really what's there. It looked like the first arrow was longer. But it wasn't. Sometimes it might seem that people with lots of stuff have lots of blessings. But when you measure things according to God's standards, you see that God cares more about how we act and think than he does about how much stuff we have.**

 Sing "Praise Him."

Say ➤ **One of the biggest upside-down things about God's kingdom is his love. The world says we should only love people who look nice, act nice, and have nice things. Or maybe the world tells us we should love people who are just like us. But God's kingdom is different. God says we are to love people who are grumpy, mean to us, and different from us. That's upside down!**

Ask • How can we love the way God says to love? (By loving people who are mean to us; by loving people who are different.)

Say The only way to love as God says to is to seek God's kingdom—or God's attitudes—first. Then we can love with the love that can only be Jesus. We can treat others with the kind of love we want.

 Sing "The Golden Rule."

Pray God, we want to honor you by seeking your kingdom. We want to see with your eyes and love with your love. In Jesus' name, amen.

2 Let's Learn the Point!

Preschool Activities, pages 163-164

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

Elementary Activities

Heart Illusions

Say During our praise time, we looked at something called an "optical illusion." We saw two lines with arrows drawn at the ends. One line looked longer than the other. But we found out that both lines were the same length. We call things like that optical illusions because they fool our eyes. The word *optical* means "having to do with our eyes."

Ask • Can you think of some other optical illusions you've seen? (Pictures that have two parts to them; mirrors that make things look like they go on forever.)

Say Many tricks fool our eyes. Some tricks fool our ears. Some tricks fool our minds. Let's try one of those right now. Pick a partner. If you're pretty good at math, please choose someone who may not yet know how to do all that you can. For example, a fifth-grader might be able to help a first-grade partner. Give each pair a pencil and a piece of paper.

Here are your instructions.

Write down any two numbers between 50 and 99.

Worship Leader Tip

The "Heart Illusions" activity is one of the few opportunities your mathematically gifted students may have to shine in a church setting. Allow a child who is finding this challenge easy to help others who may be having a more difficult time with the calculations required for this activity.

If you have a group of young children, do this activity together on the chalkboard or newsprint. Complete the exercise several times with different children contributing each time around. Do it until your kids see the answer will always be 99.

$$\begin{array}{r} 76 \\ +87 \\ \hline 163 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 63 \\ + 1 \\ \hline 64 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 163 \\ -64 \\ \hline 99 \end{array}$$

Add the two numbers together.

Looking at your total, cross out the digit that's farthest to the left.

Add one to the number.

Subtract that number from the total of the first two numbers you added. Everyone's answer, if done correctly, will be 99 (see example).

Compare your number with three other pairs.

Ask • **What did you discover?** (They all had the same answer; we all got the number 99.)

Say • **That's a mind trick based on math facts. It's really kind of fun. But there's another kind of trick, or illusion, that isn't funny at all. It's a heart trick. Heart tricks are the things the world tells you are important, when really they're not.**

Ask • **What are some things the world tries to trick you into believing?** (That you need to have a lot of money to be popular; that you need to be pretty and skinny.)

Encourage kids to look up Luke 6:17-26. Write their answers on newsprint.

Ask • **What are some ways we can keep from being fooled by the heart illusions the world wants us to believe?** (Be joyful and thankful for what you have; pray to God; read the Bible.)

Say • **The things you just mentioned are all ways to seek God's kingdom. God is honored when we take the time to ask him what's real and to seek his kingdom.**

* *Treasure Hunt*

Have the children form teams of five.

Say • **Let's have a treasure hunt. This treasure hunt is a little different than most treasure hunts. There are many things hidden in this room that could be the treasure. The key is to discover what the real treasure is. When your team finds what you think is the real treasure, raise your hand and tell us what it is. After each team has found the treasures, we'll decide what the real treasure is.**

Allow time for teams to do their treasure hunt.

- Ask** • **What does it mean to seek things of this world?** (To go after things that the world thinks are important; to not pay attention to what God wants us to seek.)
- **Why do you think people treasure the things of the world?** (Because they make them feel good about themselves; because they become more popular.)
 - **What do they think those things will bring them?** (More friends; more stuff; happiness.)
 - **What does God want us to treasure?** (He wants us to treasure the important things; he wants us to treasure things in the Bible.)

Leader Skillbuilder

When doing a large group activity, such as a treasure hunt, plan creative crowd-control methods. Make sure there are enough items to engage the interest of the entire group. Break large groups into smaller groups, and assign adult leaders to each group if necessary. Set a time limit, and stick to it. Offer noise-level guidelines, such as using "inside voices." Planning ahead, based on your understanding of your particular group of children, helps you avoid pitfalls and have an enjoyable and meaningful activity.

Jesus Teaches About Rewards

Luke 6:17-26

Worship Theme:



Seeking God's kingdom honors God.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Out of the Box—Cut a 2-inch square in the center of a dark piece of paper. Discard the small square, and keep the large piece of paper with the window in it. You'll hold this paper over various magazine or calendar pictures so that a small area of the picture is revealed. Collect some pictures, choosing pictures that show interesting visual details through the window without revealing what the picture is.

Butterfly Promises—Use a hole punch to punch circles from construction paper. Put two tiny dots of white glue on a pompom and attach the paper circles as eyes. Put a piece of double-sided tape on the bottom of the pompom.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo sniff the pompom "caterpillar" in the "Butterfly Promises" activity. Tell Theo it will be a butterfly, and let him struggle with how that could possibly be, since it doesn't look, smell, or act like a butterfly.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



* Out of the Box

Open your Bible to Luke 6:17-26.

Say In our Bible story today, Jesus talked about how things aren't always as they seem. He said that people who really wanted to be with him were happy, and that people who seemed to have everything they wanted might be sad. He said that people who have lots of friends might not be friends with God. He said that people who look rich might really be poor because they don't know God.

I have some pictures to show you. They'll help us understand how things aren't always as they seem.

Show the pictures one at a time through the construction paper window. Ask the children to guess what each picture is based on what they can see. Then reveal the whole picture so they can see it.

- Ask** • What happened when we couldn't see the whole picture?
- Say** We don't always understand all about things that happen to us. We understand little bits, like the little bit of each picture we could see.
- Ask** • Who can always see the whole picture, even the parts we can't see?
- Say** God really likes it when we ask him what he sees. That's what the Bible calls seeking God's kingdom. We can ask God to help us think about things the way he thinks about them. Let's learn a prayer to help us seek God's kingdom.

Kingdom Prayer

Gather the children in a circle. Help the children learn the words and motions for this prayer.

**Dear God, help me
See what you see,**

(Raise both pointer fingers and touch them to your eyes and then to each other at chest level.)

Hear what you hear,

(Raise your pointer and middle fingers and touch them to your ears and then to each other at chest level.)

Think what you think,

(Raise your pointer, middle, and ring fingers. Touch them to your temples and then to each other at chest level.)

And feel what you feel.

(Raise all fingers. Cross your hands over your heart, and then touch the fingers of both hands together to form a peak at chest level.)

In Jesus' name, amen.

(Keep the peak, and bring your palms together in a clap.)

Butterfly Promises

Stick the pompom you prepared earlier to the fingernail of your index finger.

Have the kids all watch to see what happens. Creep your finger up your chest and onto your shoulder, where you will have a conversation with the finger puppet. Occasionally lift your finger to let the "caterpillar" look around.

Ask • What's this little fellow?

• What can you tell me about caterpillars?

Say Boy, if you just looked at him, you'd never know he had much of a future. But God has a plan. God sees this little guy differently than we do.

Little caterpillar, are you rich? Have the puppet whisper in your ear. **He doesn't feel rich! He feels kind of poor and not very pretty. Little caterpillar, are you crying? Oh! Little caterpillar, do you know that God has beautiful clothes planned for you?**

Ask • Boys and girls, what would you say to comfort the caterpillar?

Say Our Bible story says that those who cry will laugh someday. When you said those kind things to the caterpillar, you were seeing some things God's way. You see, caterpillars don't know that one day they'll be beautiful butterflies. But as they follow God's plan, that's exactly what happens.

The world might see this little guy and say he's not worth very much. He doesn't have big, strong muscles or pretty hair, and he can't write his name or prove how smart he is. But you can look at him from God's point of view—you know what God has planned. It won't happen today, will it? But if the caterpillar is patient and keeps following God's path, he will be all God created him to be.

Sometimes children don't know all the things God has planned for them, either. But as children look for and follow God's kingdom, wonderful things happen.

Would you like to make caterpillar puppets of your own to remind you to look at things the way God sees them?

Help the children apply the glue and eyes. It may be easier to apply the tape to their fingernails and then press on the pompoms.

Say Remember that God sees things differently than we do, and he is honored when we seek the ways of his kingdom.

(continued from page 162)

Say We need food, money, clothes, and shelter, but we're not told to seek those things. We're told to seek the kingdom of God. In that way, we bring honor to God by placing him above everything else. The wonderful thing is that, as we seek the kingdom of God, God provides all those other things we need as well.

* *Empty Promises*

Have children form groups of four. Point to the beverage containers.

Say In your group, decide which beverage your group would most like to drink. You can discuss the advantages of each and choose a representative to come and tell me your decision.

As children report their choices, ask kids representing different beverage choices to remain with you. One at a time, have those who chose soda pour from the can they selected into a cup. Invite them to "drink" what's been poured. After contents have been poured from all the cans, lead the children in the following discussion.

- Ask**
- **How do you feel about what's in the container your group chose?** (It wasn't what I expected; I didn't want to drink that.)
 - **What information did you use to make your decision?** (I looked at the can; I chose a flavor I like.)
 - **What information did you really need to make a good decision?** (I needed to see what was in the can; I thought about things that I really like to drink.)

Say On the outside, each can of soda promised something good and sweet, but it was an empty promise. The promise wasn't backed up by the contents.

- Ask**
- **Have you ever bought something that you wanted really badly only to find that it wasn't as good as you expected? If so, raise your hand.**
 - **Have you ever done something that you thought was a good idea at the time but that ended up getting you in trouble? If so, raise your hand.**

Say Jesus wanted the people to know that they needed to be careful when they decided what kinds of things to pursue. Jesus knew that it's really easy to get excited by things that look good but that really aren't good. Sometimes people try to get things that they think will make them happy, such as money, toys, or vacations. But those things won't really make us feel happy or satisfied. That's why Jesus told the people to seek God's kingdom above all other things. Seeking God's kingdom will make us truly happy, and it also honors God.

Worship Leader Tip

By this point in the lesson, some of your kids may anticipate the outcome of "Empty Promises." If some of them make correct assumptions, you can affirm their wisdom in the discussion time with comments such as "I see you are looking beyond the obvious. That's a good step in seeking God's kingdom."

3 Let's Pray!

The Offering

Say Think of some things that you really love having or being. Perhaps you might say your computer games. Or you might really love being the best one in your class at reading or math. God wants us to put our relationship with him above those things. Are you willing to seek God more than the things you love?

As you place your offering in the bowl, tell God that you want to bow to him, not the things in this world. Let's sing "All Around the World" while we give our offering.

 Sing "All Around the World."

I Just Seek You

Say We've seen lots of illusions and tricks today. The world is full of untruths and half-truths—some of them quite believable. We can get very confused by what the world wants us to believe. But God is honored when we seek his kingdom. It's not enough for us to try to understand what's going on. We need Jesus' wisdom. If you want to seek God's kingdom, pray, "I just seek you," when I pause in this prayer we'll pray together.

Pray Lord, I don't always understand what's right, so...[I just seek you].

The world can be a pretty confusing place, so...[I just seek you].

Help me to honor you as...[I just seek you].

In Jesus' name, amen.

Quiet Reflection

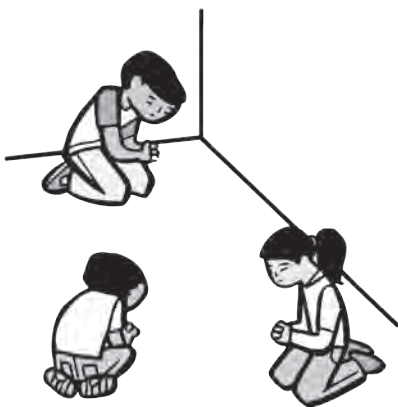
If possible, dim the lights and light a candle for this activity.

Say Sometimes we need to get away from distractions and seek God quietly. When we quiet our minds and seek God, he guides us with his light and love.

Find a quiet spot in the room, and spend a few minutes putting away distractions and asking God to tell you how you can honor him by seeking his kingdom and worshipping him today.

 Play "Crown Him With Many Crowns."

Allow the children to pray quietly for a few minutes before ending the session in prayer.



Pray → God, help us remember to put away the distractions and illusions of the world and seek you this week. Guide us and direct us as we seek your kingdom. In Jesus' name, amen.