

Showing Our Love for Jesus



Theme: Obeying the commands of Jesus shows our love for Jesus - 6th Sunday of Easter

Object: A Bible

Scripture: "Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them." John 14:21 (NIV)

How many of you have a pet? What kind of pet do you have? (Give the children a chance to answer.) When I was a child, I had a pet parakeet named Pete. I spent hours playing with Pete and even taught him to talk. He would say, "Pete's a pretty bird. Pretty boy, pretty boy." We usually left the door to Pete's cage open during the day. When I walked in the door after school, Pete would fly to me and land on my shoulder. I loved that bird! Do you know how I showed Pete that I loved him? I took care him. I made sure that his cage was kept clean. I made sure that he had plenty of food and water. One of the most important ways I showed my love was by spending time with him.

Now, if I came over to your house and watched you and your pet together, how could I tell that you love your pet? What kind of things do you do to show your love? (Give the children a chance to answer: petting, feeding, grooming, bathing, walking, etc.) It is important to remember that it isn't enough to say you love your pet. Loving isn't something you say, it is something you show by the things you do. It is the a way you act toward someone or something.

Now, let me ask you a question. Do you love Jesus? How does Jesus know that you love him? What can you do to show Jesus that you love him? That is a hard question to answer, isn't it?

In today's Gospel lesson, Jesus gives his disciples the answer to that question. Jesus said, "Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them."

It isn't enough just to say we love Jesus. Instead, we have to show God our love by **DOING** the right things – just like you show your love to your pets and your parents and your friends.

So, what are some things we can do to show our love for Jesus? The Bible is a good place to find the answer. I have listed a few ways that I found, perhaps you can think of some more.

1. Love one another (John 13:34-35)
2. Worship him (Luke 4:8)
3. Tell others about Jesus (Acts 1:8)
4. Talk to him daily in prayer (Matthew 26:41)
5. Read his Word (Psalm 119:11)
6. Forgive others as you forgive us (Matthew 6:15)

Heavenly Father, we are quick to tell you that we love you — but we know that we need to show our love too. Help us to show our love for you — just as you show your love for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WALK IN ANOTHER'S SHOES: Have the children sit in a circle and put all of their shoes in the middle of the circle. When the teacher blows the whistle, children can run to the middle and find a PAIR of shoes that are NOT their own and run back to their place in the circle and try to put the shoes on their own feet. Children can then be told to WALK in those shoes for a little bit. Then gather in the circle again and talk about our story time today and tell the children that forgiving others is easier when we have "walked in their shoes".

HUNTING FOR GOD'S LOVE: Before the class begins, the teacher/leader will place slips of paper in balloons with ways we can show our love for Jesus written on them. (Praying, going to church, sharing Jesus with others, helping, giving, etc). After the children return to the circle, have them burst their balloons and read what is written on the slips. Discuss the ways we can show love to God.

WALK IN THESE FOOTSTEPS: Give the children sheets of construction paper in which to trace their feet and place all the FEET in a long walking line for children to make a game out of to see how quickly they can WALK without missing or stepping off of the foot trail.

SERVING JESUS WITH OUR HANDS AND FEET: Have the children make hand and foot prints with ink pads or tempera paint as a reminder that the things we do with our hands and the places we go with our feet should SHOW Jesus that we LOVE Him. These hand and foot prints could be taped to the classroom wall for a reminder!

BAD FEELINGS DISAPPEARING: Give each child a coffee filter and markers. Draw pictures or lines of color and then spray with a mist and watch the colors fade or disappear, just as bad feelings do when we forgive others.

FORGIVENESS MAN: Children can add movable eyes and draw on a big round circle representing a face. Tape that face in the middle of a long rectangular piece of card stock about 4-5" by 18" (to look like outstretched arms) . Children can trace their own hands on another piece of construction paper and tape to the end of that long rectangle for outstretched arms. In the middle of the rectangle (below the round face), write words from today's lesson about loving God and forgiveness to a piece of colorful paper and tape to the middle.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER NECKLACE: Provide the children with yarn and small colorful beads to make a necklace with a cut out heart for the middle of the necklace. Children can write LOVE ONE ANOTHER on the heart and add glitter or sequins to decorate.

STOPLIGHTS: Each child will cut out a green, yellow and red circle to put on a long black strip of construction paper vertically to represent a traffic signal. On the green GO light, children will write "GO and tell others about Jesus".

CELL PHONES: Give the children paper and markers to draw a cell phone: Happy face stickers can be added to the phone. The children will write, "TALK TO JESUS" below the picture of the phone. Pictures of a cell phone can be provided to show children ideas for their craft.

GOD'S WORD: Children can cut out a colored piece of paper of one size and a white piece of paper a little smaller. Tape the smaller piece on top of the colored piece and add a red ribbon down the middle to create the look of a Bible. The children can add rick-rack, or other ideas for borders to the edges of their Bibles for decoration. Write or trace letters that will say, "READ GOD'S WORD DAILY" on the white "pages" of the Bible.

LOVE GOD CROSS: Give a construction paper cross for younger children, or a sheet of construction paper for older children to cut into the shape of a cross. The letters for the cross going DOWN will be L O V I N G and the letters going across will be G O D - the O on each word will be in the middle of the cross. Colorful glitter or other decorative trim can make this book marker very special.

The Comforter



Theme: The Holy Spirit is our comforter. (Sixth Sunday of Easter)
Object: A Teddy Bear or security blanket
Scripture: And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. John 14:16 (NIV)

This morning I brought my Teddy Bear. A lot of children have a Teddy Bear or some other stuffed toy that they like to hold close when they are afraid, sick, or upset. Some people may have a favorite blanket called a "security blanket" that they like to snuggle up to when they need some comfort. Have you ever had a favorite cuddly toy or a security blanket? Did it ever help you to feel better when you were afraid or when you were sick?

Some of you may be embarrassed to admit that you have a security blanket or that you ever had one. Well, there is no reason to be embarrassed. Did you know that studies have shown that more than half of all children become attached to a Teddy Bear, a favorite blanket, or some other object that helps to comfort them whenever they are afraid, sick, or upset? Even scientific studies have proven what kids have known for a long time. A Teddy Bear or a security blanket can give great comfort -- especially at bedtime, when you are sick, or when you are separated from your parents.

Jesus understood that we all need help in times of trouble. When he was here on earth, he was a source of help and comfort to his disciples. When he was preparing to return to heaven, he knew that there would be times when disciples would need help and comfort and that he would not be there to give it to them. He told the disciples that he would ask his Father to send them another comforter who would stay with them forever. That is exactly what he did. He asked the Father, and he sent the Holy Spirit. God's Holy Spirit is with us in times of trouble. He is there to comfort and to guide us.

I don't know about you, but I am glad that Jesus asked God to send His Holy Spirit to comfort me when I am afraid or sick. My Teddy Bear may get lost, or become ragged and torn, but Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be with us forever.

We may outgrow our need for a Teddy Bear or a security blanket -- at least, we don't carry it around with us all the time -- but we never outgrow the need for the comfort and guidance of God's Holy Spirit.

Dear Father, we thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to be our comfort and our guide. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SECURE HIDE AND SEEK: Let children play HIDE and SEEK but the twist will be that when the SEEKER finds someone, they will take them to a SECURE place and will continue to seek others to place in the SECURE place until everyone is SECURE!

SECURE THE LINE: Divide the children into two teams. Play this game like the old "Red Rover, Red Rover, Send somebody over". When one team sends one of their team members to run to the other line, the other team will hold TIGHT to each other's arms and keep their line SECURE. If the opposing team member can not push through the SECURED line, then they will become a member of the other team and the game will continue --- each team taking a turn to call somebody over and to see if they can break through the SECURED line.

COMFORTER PULL RELAY: The children can be divided into two or more teams. Each team will be given an old "comforter" (blanket) and will take turns pulling their team mates from their team line to the finish line. Continue to play until everyone has a chance to pull or to be pulled, or as time allows. Tell children to listen to our lesson today and see WHO is "our" comforter!

SECURE COMFORT SCRAMBLE: The teacher will make a paper filled with letters from the SECURE COMFORT letters as well as other letters. Make enough copies of this paper so each child can be given a paper of letters that are scramble all over the paper. Children can then be given bright colored markers to trace the letters as they find them for SECURE COMFORT. Other words can be found in the "scramble" if the teacher desires, such as GUIDING US, THANK YOU, HOLY SPIRIT, COUNSELOR, etc.

SECURE BALLOONS (Or KITES): Let children blow up balloons or put together a simple kite in groups or as individuals. Make sure that children tie a strong string or rope to the kite or balloons and let them know that the balloons (or kites) are SECURE and to listen to the story to see who else is secure in our lesson today!

GARDEN STAKES: Give each child some thin wire to tape some plastic to the wire, to stick into the ground or a small version of the same to stick in a flower pot. Children can use permanent colorful markers to write on the plastic and to decorate with colorful butterflies, lady bugs and words from our lesson such as HOLY SPIRIT/ COMFORTER, GUIDE/COUNSELOR, etc.

COMFORTER BIBLE VERSE: Give each child a small of piece of cotton or felt material to cut into a square. Glue ribbon or trim as desired to the edges of the square "comforter" and let children glue a piece of paper in the middle of the cloth with THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR COMFORTER, Bible verse, or other words as child desires from today's lesson. Children can then roll the "comforter" up and tie a ribbon around the cloth to hold in place. Remind children of Who our COMFORTER is and to use today's rolled up "comforter" to remind and to encourage each child through out the week!

BOOK COVER: Provide children with heavy card stock type of paper and cut to the size of a book or their Bible. Let children wrap the Bible or book with the colorful card stock paper and tape on the edges to SECURE the cover to the book. Let children decorate their book cover with words from today's lesson and today's Bible Verse, etc.

SHOE STRINGS: Give each child a pair or shoestrings and colorful thin permanent markers. Encourage children to write in small letters the words from today's lesson that will continue to encourage them each day and will comfort them when they struggle and need guidance. If children don't use shoestrings for their shoes, they can be used as a necklace to remember today's lesson.

THANK YOU NOTES: Children can be given construction paper and markers, stickers, glitter, etc to make a folded THANK YOU note to our Father for sending the Holy Spirit to be our comfort and our guide.. Stand the Thank You Notes on the classroom table and read them as the final prayer as children prepare to leave the class.