May Lessons

Unit 29, Session 4: Jesus Has Power Over Evil

Dear Parents,

Thank you for continuing this journey of The Gospel Project® for Kids. In today’s Bible story, Jesus displayed His power over evil. In the midst of His public ministry, the Jewish religious leaders began plotting to kill Jesus. (See Mark 3:6.) So one day, Jesus went to a land on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, where Gentiles lived. In that land was a man who needed help. (Note: The Gospel of Matthew describes two men.) An evil spirit was inside the man, and he suffered greatly. The people had tried to control the man by tying him up with chains, but the man broke free. So he lived alone in the tombs, crying out day and night.

When Jesus stepped ashore, the man ran to Him and kneeled down. Jesus commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man, and the evil spirit spoke: “What do You have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You before God, don’t torment me!” (Mark 5:7). Many evil spirits were in the man, and Jesus gave the evil spirits permission to go into a herd of pigs. They did, and the man was healed.

The healed man wanted to follow Jesus, but Jesus told the man to go home to his own people and tell what the Lord had done for him. The man obeyed Jesus. He testified to the cities in that area about the Lord’s mercy, and the Gentile people were amazed.

In His teaching, Jesus said, “If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you” (Matt. 12:28). Jesus—as well as the Bible—is clear that Satan exists, and he and the demons work against God and His purposes. Jesus has power over evil. Only Jesus had the strength to control the man with the evil spirits. Jesus used His power to free the man. He has power over everything. Jesus came to earth to destroy the Devil by dying on the cross. One day, Jesus will end evil forever.

Unit 29, Session 5: Jesus Has Power Over Death

Dear Parents,

Thank you for continuing this journey of The Gospel Project® for Kids. In today’s Bible story, Jesus received word that His friend Lazarus was sick. Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha. They lived in the town of Bethany, about two miles away from Jerusalem. Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus, likely expecting Him to come right away.

Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. (John 11:5) Yet He stayed where He was, and Lazarus died. Why would Jesus do such a thing? Jesus said that Lazarus’ sickness was “for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it” (John 11:4). He said that He was glad He wasn’t there when Lazarus died so that the disciples may believe. (John 11:15) Jesus’ timing is always perfect, and He acts or doesn’t act so that God will be glorified.

By the time Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. Decay had set in, and Mary and Martha were grieving. Martha went to meet Jesus. She said to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died.” Jesus had shown His power to heal people who were sick. Even still, she believed He could do a miracle.

Jesus told Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). Jesus is the source of life—eternal life that cannot be destroyed by death. Believers do not need to fear death because physical death is not the end. (See John 11:25-26.) Jesus endured death for us so that when we die and are absent from our physical bodies, our souls are with the Lord. (See 2 Cor. 5:8.)

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Jesus interrupted Lazarus’s funeral knowing His would soon follow. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Jesus died on the cross for our sin and rose from the dead. He gives eternal life to those who trust in Him.

Unit 30, Session 1: Parable of the Vineyard Workers

Dear Parents,

Thank you for continuing this journey of The Gospel Project® for Kids. Over the next five weeks, kids will be learning five parables that Jesus taught about God’s kingdom. The religious leaders who listened to and watched Jesus had some problems with the things He said and did. He taught about a righteousness that comes by faith rather than works, and He was friends with tax collectors and sinners. So Jesus told a parable to make clear that entering God’s kingdom was not a matter of merit but of grace.

The parable of the vineyard workers is about a landowner who hired workers to work in his vineyard. The first group agreed to work for a denarius, a fair wage for a day’s work. Throughout the day, the landowner hired more groups of workers. At the end of the day, the landowner paid every worker one denarius. The workers who had put in 12 hours did not think it was fair that those who worked just 1 hour were paid the same.

In Jesus’ parable, the second, third, fourth, and fifth groups of workers represent people who are not a part of the nation of Israel. The Israelites had been following God for generations. They faced trials, paralleling the men who worked through the heat of the day. God promised blessings to Abraham’s family, Israel. (See Gen. 12:2-3.) God kept His promise, yet He also poured out blessings on tax collectors, sinners, Gentiles.

Like the landowner and his wealth, God is free to share His grace as He desires. Jesus gave salvation to the criminal who was crucified next to Him and to Saul, who persecuted believers. Does God act fairly in saving people who have not followed Him their entire lives? The reward—eternal life—is God’s grace to those who believe, whether they believe at the first or at the last.

God does not owe us anything, yet He pours out blessings on us. He makes salvation possible for us, regardless of our abilities or efforts. The last will be first, and the first last. Jesus’ parable teaches about God’s grace. God is generous, and He loves us. We deserve to die for our sins, but God gives us what we don’t deserve—salvation through His Son, Jesus.

Unit 30, Session 2: Parable of the Wedding Feast

Dear Parents,

This week in The Gospel Project® for Kids, kids will learn about the parable of the wedding feast. Jesus’ parable of the wedding feast is more than a simple story about a king’s rude guests. The parable reveals the King (God the Father) who seeks to honor His Son (Jesus) with a banquet. Though many people are invited to the kingdom of heaven, few will choose to come.

When Jesus told this parable, He had been teaching for three years. Many people who heard Jesus opposed Him, including the religious leaders. It was to this audience that Jesus told such a shocking story in which the attitudes and actions of the people who rejected the king’s invitation clearly paralleled the religious leaders.

In the parable, the religious leaders are represented by the guests who refused to come to the wedding banquet. They had been invited, but when the king’s servants told them the feast was ready, they did not want to come. Instead, they went about their lives—to their farms and businesses. Some of them even killed the king’s messengers!

What an insult to the king! These people had turned down an invitation to the most wonderful and joyous event they could imagine. The king would have given His best to honor his son, and the king reacted justly. He punished those who rejected him and invited others instead—those not in the city, both the good and the bad.

Likewise, God invites Gentiles into His kingdom. No one is refused based on his or her economic or social standing. The King Himself provides the required attire—robes of righteousness, like those given to Joshua the high priest. (See Zech. 3:3-4.) The King rejects those who try to come by their own merit—in their own clothes—as the man without wedding clothes did.

Salvation is a free gift. We can’t earn our way into heaven. Jesus did all the work when He died for our sins on the cross. This story reminds us that we need to be clothed in Christ's righteousness. Jesus invites us to join Him in heaven—the great wedding feast. When we receive His invitation, Jesus gets us ready by clothing us in His righteousness.