

# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Epiphany

Jan. 23, 2023–  
Jan. 29, 2023

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Corinthians 1:26–31

**THEME:** Trust in God's Strength

**SONG:** CW21 617/ CW93 334 – Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

**VISUAL:** Pictures of Thomas Edison, Oprah Winfrey, and a member of the British royal family

## OBJECT LESSON

Ask the children if they would like to invent something new that would be used all over the world. Show the picture of Thomas Edison, and explain that he had patents for over a thousand things that he invented, including inventions in the areas of electric light, batteries, and the telephone. Point out how smart Edison must have been, and ask the children to raise their hands if they have come up with over a thousand new ideas to patent.

Show the picture of Oprah Winfrey, and ask the children if they can identify her. Point out that she is very famous and that she is an influencer—when she shares her thoughts, millions of followers are interested in hearing what she has to say. Ask the children to raise their hands if they have millions of people following them and listening to them.

Show the picture of a member of the royal family, and ask the children to identify the person in the picture. Ask the children to raise their hands if they are living in a castle because they were born into a royal family.

## BIBLE TRUTH

Read verse 26. Explain that Paul was telling the people long ago that most of them weren't very wise or influential or born into royal families either.

Read verses 27–28a. Point out that God still chose those people to be in his family. Ask what kinds of people God chose to be in his family according to those verses.

Read verses 28–31. Ask whether the people could boast, or brag, that they were in God's family because they deserved it. Ask whom they could boast about. Point out that they could only boast

about how wonderful God is because he gave them faith in Jesus.

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

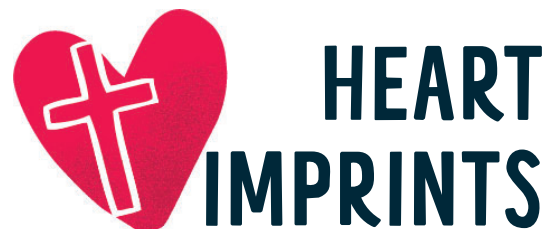
Ask:

- Are you considered super wise, or smart, for a human being?
- Are you extremely famous and influential?
- Are you of noble birth, part of a rich and royal family?
- But what do you have that's better than any of that?
- Who gave you faith in Jesus and made you part of God's family?
- Did God (the Holy Spirit) give you faith because you were great?
- So should you brag about how great you are because God chose you?
- Whom can you brag about?
- What can you trust God to do for you and everyone who has faith in Jesus as their Savior?

Point out that the God who can give faith to us can also be trusted to take us to heaven because of Jesus' saving work. Encourage the children to thank God for giving them faith and trust God's strength to forgive them and help them in time of need and weakness.

## PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for giving me faith in Jesus. I know that it wasn't because I'm super wise, or influential, or great in any way, but because you are great. Lead me to trust in you and your strength to save me. Amen.



# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Epiphany

Jan. 30, 2023–  
Feb. 5, 2023

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 5:13–16

**THEME:** You Are . . . So Be

**SONG:** CW21 713 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

**VISUAL:** Two shakers of salt; two small bowls of popcorn, one with salt, and one without; a working flashlight; a dark, solid wastebasket or bucket that will fit over the flashlight

## OBJECT LESSON

Place a salt shaker next to each bowl of popcorn. Have volunteers taste each of the popcorns—which tastes better? Point out that one of them doesn't taste as good because it has no salt. If this salt for that popcorn got so old that it didn't work, we should throw it away.

Now ask the children to pretend that it is night, and there is a power outage. Everything is dark, so you are going to turn on a flashlight to help them see. Turn on the flashlight, show it to the children, and then set it down and cover it with the wastebasket or bucket. Listen to their reactions, and talk about why that was a silly thing to do.

## BIBLE TRUTH

Point out that in today's Bible lesson, Jesus compares his followers to salt and light.

Read verse 13. Ask how salt changes food—does it usually make food taste better or worse? If it doesn't make food taste better, what should we do with it? Jesus has made us his followers. He says that his followers are like salt. Jesus' followers are like salt because they can make things better. They can be kind and helpful to other people. This is a way Jesus' followers share his love in the world.

Read verses 14–15. Jesus has made us his people and he says that we are to be like light in the world. Ask how Jesus' followers can be like lights shining in this world. Discuss how Christians' actions can affect how people think of God. If God's followers hide their faith by being unkind and unloving, people who don't know God might believe that he is also unkind and unloving. But if people who say that they are God's followers are kind and loving people, then people who don't know God will be more likely to believe that he, too, is kind and loving. That can lead them to want to learn more about him.

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Ask for a volunteer to come up and do a role-play with you. The volunteer will pretend to be

someone who doesn't know much about God but lives next door to your church. Say that you are pretending that it is winter, and the person living next door hasn't shoveled their sidewalk after a recent snowfall. (If you live in a climate without snow, adjust the role-play to say that the neighbor hasn't taken care of their yard, and it looks overgrown and full of junk.)

Ask the children to watch how you talk to the neighbor in two different ways. First time: "Hi. I'm from (name of your church) next door. I'm here to tell you that you need to get that snow on your sidewalk shoveled as soon as possible. It's making the path to our church slippery. If you don't get it done soon, we're going to call the city and complain."

Second time: "Hi. I'm from (name of your church) next door. I've noticed that you haven't been able to shovel that snow off your sidewalk yet. Would you like me to do that for you?"

Discuss what the neighbor might think about Christians and about God based on their experience each time. Which way is being good salt and a shining light for God? Which is more likely to lead the neighbor to be interested in learning about God and, eventually, glorifying him? Encourage the children to show how much they love Jesus by being good salt and shining lights for him in everything they do.

## PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me and saving me. I want to be good salt and a bright light for you. Help me to act in ways that lead others to you. Lead me to find opportunities to be kind and loving to everyone, especially people who don't know you, so that they will glorify God in heaven. Amen.



# HEART IMPRINTS

# 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Epiphany

Feb. 6, 2023–  
Feb. 12, 2023

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 5:21–26

**THEME:** Live a Holy Life

**SONG:** CW21 696/ CW93 469 – Take My Life and Let It Be,  
st. 1,2,5,6

**VISUAL:** Offering basket full of money and empty offering basket; two children who can pretend they are angry at each other and then act as good friends

## OBJECT LESSON

Show the two offering baskets. Ask which one would be more helpful for doing God's work. Pick two volunteers who would be good at role-playing to come to the front. Ask them to act out being angry with each other using words and body language only. Then ask them to show how they would look together and sound if they are close friends getting along well. Point out that God prefers us to act in the second way.

Now have one of the volunteers hold the full offering basket while making an angry face. Have the other volunteer hold the empty offering basket while making a friendly face. Tell the children that as they listen to the Bible today, they should think about which is more important to God: a big church offering or his followers being kind and forgiving toward one another. (Have the volunteers remain up front.)

## BIBLE TRUTH

Read verses 21–22. Explain that in these verses, a “brother or sister” doesn't mean your parents' other child, but another person who believes in Jesus—another Christian. What actions does Jesus say are sinful, just as murder is?

Read verses 23–24. Have the volunteers make their angry and friendly faces again while holding their offering baskets. Ask which is more important to God: the big offering (point to the angry volunteer with the full basket) or his people being kind and forgiving to one another (point to the friendly child with the empty basket). Explain that God wants his people, first of all, to be kind and forgiving to each other. (Have the angry child look happy again.) Then they can show their love for God by giving him offerings. (Have the happy child with the full plate bring that plate over by the other child. Afterward, they can return to their seats.)

Read verses 25–26. Ask what God says about staying angry with each other for a long time. Emphasize that God wants his people to settle disagreements quickly.

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Explain that Jesus tells us to live a holy life. Living a holy life means doing what God says. Ask the following:

- Who has led a perfect, holy life? (only Jesus)
- What are some ways you can live a holy life? (various answers)
- Whom does God especially want you to be kind and forgiving toward? (other Christians)

Encourage the children to remember that Jesus says that Christians who are having disagreements are to settle things quickly. This is part of living a holy life out of love for God.

## PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to live a holy life on earth for me. Help me live a holy life too by settling disagreements quickly and lovingly, especially when they are with other Christians. When I am angry with someone, lead me to forgive them, just as you have forgiven me. Teach me to show kindness in all situations, as you are always kind to me for Jesus' sake. Amen.



# HEART IMPRINTS

# 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Epiphany

Feb. 13, 2023-  
Feb. 19, 2023

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 5:38-48

**THEME:** Love Your Enemies

**SONG:** CW21 729/ CW93 492 - Son of God, Eternal Savior,  
st. 1-3

**VISUAL:** Picture to represent an art project, two one-dollar bills, and two volunteers

## OBJECT LESSON

Hold up a picture to represent an art project. Say, "Imagine you and a classmate are working on the same art project. You've worked on it for a long time and you're proud of it. Then your classmate rips yours up and laughs." Rip up the picture. "What will you be tempted to do?"

Ask two volunteers to come in front of the group. Have one make a very mean face and hold up a fist. Have the other smile and look friendly and relaxed. Indicate the first volunteer, and ask the children to imagine that this classmate is always mean to them, bullying them. Indicate the second volunteer, and ask the children to imagine that this classmate is always kind and helpful to them. Ask, "When you go out for recess, which classmate will you probably ask to play with you?"

Hold up a dollar bill. Ask, "What if you have a dollar in your coat pocket, and you see a classmate steal the dollar bill while your coat is hanging up? What will you probably do?" Ask the children whether they would be likely to tell the thief to keep the dollar and then give the thief another dollar to go with it!

In Jesus' teaching today, he tells us how he would like us to handle situations like these.

## BIBLE TRUTH

Read verses 38-42. Ask the children to think about what Jesus said, and then think back to the classmate stealing the dollar bill. How would Jesus respond? Hold up the second dollar bill, pointing out that he would give him the person more than he stole. Jesus isn't saying that trying to take other people's things is ok. But he is saying to be kind to those who do wrong things. This is a way to teach them about God's love and mercy.

Read verses 43-45. Ask the children to think about the classmate who deliberately tore up the art project. Would Jesus want them to get even by tearing up that person's art project? What would he want the children to do instead? Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for them.

Read verses 46-48. Ask the children to think about recess time and deciding whom to ask to play with them. Jesus says that even people who don't believe in him are nice to people who are nice to them. But how do Christians do even more than that?

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Jesus tells us to do things differently than what most people expect. What does the world say to do if someone is hurtful to us? (Stop being friends, stop talking to them; get even, etc.) What does Jesus say to do if someone is hurtful to us? (Love them, pray for them, help them, be kind to them, etc.)

This sounds really hard, doesn't it? If it's hard to imagine being so nice to someone who is mean to you, try thinking about Jesus. Do we sometimes act like his enemies by the way we act? Does he get even with us, or does he love us and pray for us? Jesus loves us so much that he suffered a horrible death on a cross just so that he could save us! And he prayed for us while he was here on earth and still speaks to the Father on our behalf in heaven. We want to show love to our enemies because Jesus has shown so much love to us!

Let's pray for Jesus to help us love our enemies!

## PRAYER

Dear Jesus, sometimes it's so hard to be nice to people who are cruel to me! Teach me to demonstrate how loving you are by the way I act, even when it's the opposite of what the world says. Help me love my enemies and pray for them, just as you have always loved me and prayed for me. Amen.



# HEART IMPRINTS