

LESSON 12: JESUS IS SELFLESS

Leader Guide for Grades 5 & 6

Classroom: Deeply Rooted

 Philippians 2:1-11

11/08/2020

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Philippians 2:1-11
- In This Passage: In a letter to the church in Philippi, Paul advises the people to have a selfless attitude like Jesus. That means thinking of others as better than ourselves and looking out for the interests of others. Jesus was selfless when he came from heaven to earth and died for us.
- Bible Point: Jesus is selfless...
- Application: ...so we're selfless.
- Summary Verse: "A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power" (Ephesians 6:10).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *Jesus is selfless*. It's natural for people to be self-centered. That's especially true for kids! However, Jesus showed us a better way. He gave up his divine privileges and the glory of heaven so he could come to earth and die for us. That's the ultimate selfless act! Encourage kids to appreciate the selfless gift Jesus gave them and to reflect his selfless heart in how they live.
- Think About: What's the most selfless thing another person has ever done for you? How does that help you see Jesus' heart?

Dig In to Prayer

- Ask God to give you a selfless heart and elevate your kids above yourself.

Quick Tip

- Showing genuine humility is one of four radical ways to change the culture of your church...and it can impact the way you talk to kids. "Would you want to be invited to someone's home only to have the host tell you that everything you think and do is wrong? We all have flaws and misdirected beliefs. We're all sinners. But most of us don't respond well when we're impugned rather than loved. Instead, recognize that we're all in this together. You're on a journey full of flaws and mistakes, just as much as the kids are, so be honest with them and approach them with love more than criticism." (Read the book this quote came from, *Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore*. You can order it [here](#).)

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids explore what Jesus gave up to come to earth.

Supplies

- Bible
- paper
- yellow construction paper
- scissors
- markers
- transparent tape



OBJECT LESSON

Kids blow on strips of paper.

Supplies

- Bible
- paper (1 half-sheet per child)
- tissue paper
- scissors (1 per child)
- rulers
- markers



DEEPER BIBLE

Kids explore how Christians can be selfless with one another.

Supplies

- Bibles
- paper
- pens
- Velcro (1 piece)



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids race to restack cups.

Supplies

- 12-ounce plastic cups of 1 color (20 for every 3 kids)
- 12-ounce plastic cups of a different color (1 for every 3 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- For every 3 people, make a stack of 20 same-colored cups.
- Set the stacks right-side up, and nest 1 cup of a different color inside the cup at the top of each stack.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids compete to get across a path.

Supplies

- painter's tape
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- For every 10 kids, tape a winding path of X's on the floor from one end of your room to the other. If possible, tape the paths so they span the longest length of your room.



CRAFT

Kids make spirals to visualize lowering themselves.

Supplies

- 20-gauge floral wire (one 18-inch piece and one 9-inch piece per child)
- washable markers
- foam cups
- duct tape
- "Jesus & Me" handout, printed on card stock (1 for every 5 kids) (download [here](#))
- scissors
- transparent tape
- permanent markers

Easy Prep

- Cut the "Jesus & Me" handouts into 5 columns so each child has 1 Jesus square and 1 blank square.
- If you purchased 18-inch floral wire, cut some of the wires in half so each child has 1 full-length piece and 1 half-length piece.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids pray for each other.

Supplies

- paper
- markers

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids give a high-one (high-five with just one finger) to three friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids say, "Long live [name of birthday child]!"
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we're going to learn that Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless. *Selfless* means putting others' interests first. For example, if you want to do one thing but your friend wants to do something else, you do what your friend wants to do.**

Share

- Tell kids about something a friend or sibling of yours likes to do that you don't like to do.
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to share about what *their* friend or sibling likes to do that they don't.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to share with the whole group.

Summarize

Open a Bible to Philippians 2, and say: **When people want to do things we don't really like to do, we can be selfless and put what they want ahead of what we want. Jesus showed the ultimate selflessness...and we're going to find out how in the Bible! The Bible isn't like other books; it's God's special book. The Bible is one way God is selfless; he gave us a book to help us know his love! As we read his Word today, let's see how he changes our attitudes. Let's praise him for being selfless.**

Pray, praising Jesus for being selfless.



Supplies

- Bible
- paper
- yellow construction paper
- scissors
- markers
- transparent tape

Give Context

Say: **Today's Bible story is actually part of a letter. Most of the New Testament part of the Bible is made up of letters to churches. A guy named Paul wrote a whole bunch of those letters.**

Our story today comes from the Bible book of Philippians. It's a letter written to the church in a city called Philippi. Think about what advice *you'd* write in a letter to our church.

After kids have a moment to think about that, let them share their advice.

Say: **The people of the church in Philippi loved Jesus and loved Paul, but they had some problems. They fought with each other and were really competitive. They all wanted to be the best. And people who seemed "important" would never eat or spend time with lowly servants. But that behavior didn't reflect Jesus' heart, so Paul had some advice for them. Let's see what it was.**

Make Supplies

Set out paper, scissors, markers, and tape.

Say: **We'll read Paul's letter, but first we need to know what life was like for Jesus in heaven. He had so much! He's God, so he is equal with God. And God is the king of *everything*! Let's make crowns to remind us of how important Jesus is.** Have kids cut strips of paper that fit around their heads and quickly decorate them like crowns. Kids can help each other tape the crowns together on their heads.

Say: **Jesus also had *divine privileges*. That means he had all of God's power! We'll make lightning bolts to show that.** Have kids draw lightning bolts on pieces of paper, write "all-powerful" on the lightning bolts, and tape them to their shirts.

Say: **In heaven, Jesus also probably didn't *look* like a human. He must've looked so much more glorious! We'll make glorious masks to help us imagine that.**

Have kids each cut six strips of yellow construction paper. They can tape three on each side of their faces to show glory shining.

Say: **And Jesus lived in a place where no one ever dies. Let's make a leaf to remind us of life. Write your birthday on your leaf to remind you of when *you* started your life.**

Have kids make paper leaves and tape those over their hearts. (It's okay if they're under the lightning bolts.)

Give It Up

Say: **Our Bible passage says Jesus is selfless. Here's how we know that.**

Read Philippians 2:5-6.

Say: **We're not God, so that's not something we have to give up. But sometimes we might have status or popularity that makes us feel like we're better than other people. Think about a time you felt better than someone else.** Pause for reflection, and then say: **Jesus had divine privileges, but he gave them all up.**

Have kids remove their crowns and toss them in a pile as they say, "Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless."

Ask: • **What would it look like to be selfless when others see you as important? What specific things would you do?**

Give your own example, then let a few kids share.

Say: **Let's see what else Paul said about Jesus.**

Read the first line of Philippians 2:7.

Say: **We definitely don't have divine privileges or power. But there are times we're in charge or we have control. For example, if you get to the TV before your brother and he wants to watch something else, you can choose to give him his way. Or maybe you have a toy or privilege that your siblings or friends don't have. Think of a way you feel in control.** Pause for reflection, and then have kids crumple up their lightning bolts and throw them in the pile as they say, "Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless."

Ask: • **What other choices do you have control over?**

• **What would it look like to be selfless when you have those privileges?**

Say: Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless. He gave up his godly power to put us first. And he also did this.

Read the rest of Philippians 2:7. Have kids remove their glorious masks and toss them in the pile as they say, "Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless."

Say: **Jesus gave up his glorious presence in heaven to be a human on earth. He went from a place better than we can imagine to a poor place on earth—a barn! That showed humility, which is one way to be selfless. Humility means lowering yourself to make others more important.**

Say: Jesus is selfless, so he became human. And then...

Read Philippians 2:8. Have kids remove their leaves and tear them up, throwing the pieces in the pile as they say, "Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless."

Say: **You don't have to literally give up your life for others like Jesus did. But you can show selflessness by giving up your own interests for others.**

Ask: • **Give one example of a way to give up your own interests.**

Give your own example, then let kids share their responses.

Say: Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless. He set an amazing example for us of how to be selfless. When we truly appreciate what Jesus did for us, it's easy to pass that on and be selfless, too. Let me read another part of our passage.

Read Philippians 2:3-4.

Ask: • **Remember, the church in Philippi fought a lot and competed to be the best. When you think of what Paul wrote to them about Jesus' example and the verses I just read, why was this an important message?**

• **Why is it an important message for us today?**

Say: The Philippians weren't the only ones who fought and tried to be the best. That's a big part of our culture, too! But Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless. Jesus can help us reflect his heart by putting others first.

Bow

Say: **After Jesus gave up everything, he received something awesome.**

Read Philippians 2:9-11.

Say: Jesus is selfless, even though he deserved the highest honor. Eventually he got that honor! We can show how important Jesus is by bowing before him. Let's get on our knees. Pause for kids to do so, and do the same. Pause for a moment of reverence and prayer.

Say: Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless. We can honor him by being selfless and putting others first.



OBJECT LESSON

He Will Raise You Up

[10 min]

Supplies

- Bible
- paper (1 half-sheet per child)
- tissue paper
- scissors (1 per child)
- rulers
- markers

Blow on a Paper Strip

Say: **Jesus is selfless.** When we're selfless, it's like we lower ourselves. Let's see what happens when we lower a piece of paper.

- Give each child a half-sheet of paper and scissors.
- Have each child cut a strip of paper that's approximately 2x6 inches.
- Have kids hold one end of the paper just under their mouth and blow down and across the paper, as if trying to lower it to their chin.



Experiment with Paper

Ask: **What did you observe? What happened when you tried to lower the paper?**

Say: **Blowing down onto the paper actually lifted it up! The speed of our air makes the pressure on the top of the paper go away. But there's still air pressure underneath the paper, so it lifts up! This is called *Bernoulli's principle*, and it's how airplane wings help airplanes fly. Let's experiment with this principle some more!**

- Make tissue paper available to kids.
- Have kids cut strips of regular paper or tissue paper with different lengths and widths and guess which one will lift the highest.
- Let kids experiment for several minutes to test their hypotheses.

Talk About It

Ask: • **How does this experiment remind you of Jesus selflessly humbling himself and coming to earth to die for us?**

Say: **Philippians 2 says that Jesus humbled himself when he came to earth as a human. Verse 9 says, "Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all**

other names.” **Jesus is selfless, so we’re selfless.** When we’re friends with Jesus, we follow his example and we lower ourselves, too, trusting that God will lift us up. Have kids choose one of their paper strips to draw on.

Ask: • **Tell about a time being selfless lifted you up and made you feel good. But first, draw your answer on one of your paper strips.** Share an example from your own life to begin. Perhaps you gave money to help someone in need, or you offered to let your friend borrow something of yours and it made you happy that he or she enjoyed it. Give kids about two minutes to draw, and then ask for some to share their answers.

Say: **Jesus is selfless. We can be selfless, too, and trust that God will lift us up!** Invite all the kids to blow on the strips that they drew on one last time.



How Can Christians Be Like Jesus When We Disagree?

Supplies

- Bibles
- paper
- pens
- Velcro (1 piece)

Set It Up

Say: **I'm going to read a verse from our Bible passage today that we didn't read earlier.**

Read Philippians 2:2.

Ask: • **This verse says that everyone should agree wholeheartedly with each other. Why do you think Paul wanted the Christians to agree with each other?**

- **When have you experienced *everyone* agreeing on something?**

Say: **There are definitely things Christians agree on. We agree that Jesus is God and that he loves us. But there are also a lot of things we *don't* agree on. So how can Christians be like Jesus when we disagree? Let's dig in to that.**

Disagree

Say: **Let's think about some things that we disagree about. Let's start with this: What's the best ice cream flavor?** Allow time for kids to have a lighthearted debate about which ice cream flavor is best. Kids could even divide into groups to show their preferences. Then repeat with the following categories:

- best pizza topping
- best sports team
- which is better: dogs or cats?

Ask: • **What happened in our room when we disagreed?**

Say: **We can't even agree on ice cream and pizza! And Christians disagree about things that are a lot more serious than that. But you know what? Christians disagreeing isn't something new. In fact, it happened in the Bible! Let's look at a few times people disagreed and see what we can learn from how they handled their conflicts.**

Dig Deeper

Have kids form three groups, and give each group a Bible, a piece of paper, and a pen. Assign each group one of the following passages to look up. After reading the passage, each group will make a poster to show what the disagreement was about, how it was resolved, and what we can learn from it. Kids can either just write their observations or add pictures, too.

- 1 Corinthians 8 (the full chapter)
- 1 Corinthians 1:10-17
- Acts 15:6-19 (For this group, you'll need to explain what the conflict was. To avoid getting into what circumcision is, you can simply explain that they were fighting over whether non-Jewish people had to become Jewish in order to follow Jesus.)

Allow about 10 minutes for kids to read their passages and make their posters. Then have kids share what they learned. Some possible takeaways, if kids struggle with that, are listed below. (Don't feel like these are the answers kids have to come up with...this is just to help if kids feel stuck.)

- 1 Corinthians 8—Paul said not to eat meat if people were offended. His response was more about respecting other people than about being right. It's better to be loving than right.
- 1 Corinthians 1:10-17—Keep it about Jesus! It's not about people.
- Acts 15:6-19—Don't make it hard for people to love God (see verse 19).

Be United

Say: **Earlier we were divided about topics like ice cream and sports. But you know what? Even**

though we don't all agree about some things, we still have other things in common. For one, we're all here in this room. And when Christians disagree about specifics, we can remember that we're all together in God's love. It's kind of like Velcro.

Pull the Velcro piece apart, and show kids the two halves.

Ask: • **Why would I say this Velcro is like Christians?**

Say: **The two sides of Velcro look really different. But they're still both Velcro, and they can still stick together.** Stick the Velcro back together.

Say: **So how can we be selfless when we disagree with other Christians?** Use kids' posters to review what they discovered. Say: **We can focus on what we *do* agree on, and we can focus on loving Jesus. We can listen well to others to understand their side. We can set aside being *right* and focus on being *loving*. And we can stick together because we're all still Christians. Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless—even when we disagree. Let's pray for Christians to stick together right now.**

Pull apart the Velcro, and pray: **Dear God, help us when we disagree with other Christians. Help us find what we agree on and focus most on showing your love. In Jesus' name, amen.** Stick the Velcro back together.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

From Top to Bottom

Supplies

- 12-ounce plastic cups of 1 color (20 for every 3 kids)
- 12-ounce plastic cups of a different color (1 for every 3 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- For every 3 people, make a stack of 20 same-colored cups.
- Set the stacks right-side up, and nest 1 cup of a different color inside the cup at the top of each stack.

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Race to Restack Cups

Say: **Today we're learning an important part of what makes Jesus so special—Jesus is selfless.**

Let's dig in to what it means to be selfless with a game where you'll race to go from top to bottom.

- Form teams of three, and give each team a stack of cups.
- Have teams each place their stack of cups in front of a wall and then stand in a line together about 10 feet across from their stack.
- Help the teams adjust their distance so all the teams are an equal distance away from the cups.
- At your cue, teammates will take turns running to their stack of cups, moving one cup from the bottom of the stack to the top, and then running back to their team to tag the next person.
- This way, one cup at a time, the odd-colored cup in each stack will gradually move to the bottom of the stack.
- Teams can race to see who can get the odd-colored cup to the bottom of their stack first.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play as many rounds as time allows.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What made this game different from most games?**

Say: **In a lot of games it's a race to the top or a race to be the best. But this game was upside down; it was a race to the bottom. Jesus deserves a place at the top, but he lowered himself to show his amazing love and care. Jesus turns things upside down from what we're used to by being selfless instead of self-serving.**

Ask: • **What are some ways you're sometimes self-serving?**

• **How could Jesus help you turn that upside down?** Share an example of your own, such as praising a teammate's effort instead of highlighting your own or letting a friend or family member get the bigger portion of a special treat.

Say: **Jesus is selfless, and when we spend time talking with Jesus and getting to know him better, he'll help us see ways we can be selfless.**



LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

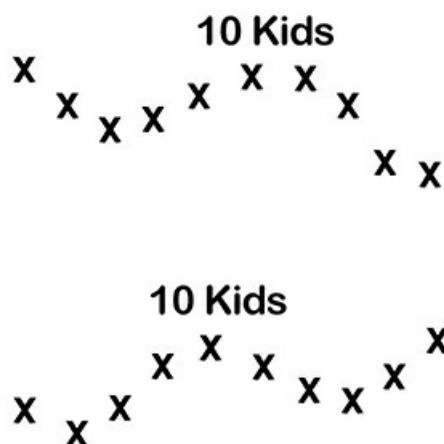
Humble Hops

Supplies

- painter's tape
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- For every 10 kids, tape a winding path of X's on the floor from one end of your room to the other. If possible, tape the paths so they span the longest length of your room.



Tips

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).
- We're providing a handy visual of how to play this game. Once you see the game in motion, it'll quickly make sense. Watch the video [here](#).

Hop a Path and Play Rock, Paper, Scissors

Say: **We're exploring how Jesus is selfless and what being selfless might look like for us. Let's play a game where you'll get some super-fun practice being selfless!**

- If you have more than 10 kids total, divide into a couple of smaller groups.
- Groups can choose a path of X's on the floor and split in half, so half of the group stands in a single-file line at one end of the path and the other half stands in a line at the other end.
- At your cue, the first two people in each line will start hopping along the X's in the path until they meet.
- When two people meet head to head in the path, they'll play a round of Rock, Paper, Scissors.
- The *winner* of the Rock, Paper, Scissors round will run back to the end of the line where he or she started, and the person who lost the match can continue hopping and advancing along the path.
- When the winner of the match starts running back to the line, the next person in that line can start hopping the path.
- Each time two people meet in the path, they'll play Rock, Paper, Scissors and the winner will move to the back of his or her line.
- The goal is to make it across the path to the other side. It'll likely take a few rounds for kids to achieve the goal.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What did you notice was different about this game when you won a round of Rock, Paper, Scissors?**

• **What was it like to give your win to someone else?**

Say: **Normally when you win something, you get the prize! But in this game, when you won**

Rock, Paper, Scissors, you let the *other* person keep playing. That's a great picture of selflessness. It means letting other people go first even when we feel like we deserve to win. Jesus is selfless, and as our friendship with Jesus grows, our hearts become more like his so that we're selfless, too.



CRAFT

Selfless Spirals

[20 min]

Supplies

- 20-gauge floral wire (one 18-inch piece and one 9-inch piece per child)
- washable markers
- foam cups
- duct tape
- “Jesus & Me” handout, printed on card stock (1 for every 5 kids) (download [here](#))
- scissors
- transparent tape
- permanent markers

Easy Prep

- Cut the “Jesus & Me” handouts into 5 columns so each child has 1 Jesus square and 1 blank square.
- If you purchased 18-inch floral wire, cut some of the wires in half so each child has 1 full-length piece and 1 half-length piece.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Make Selfless Spirals

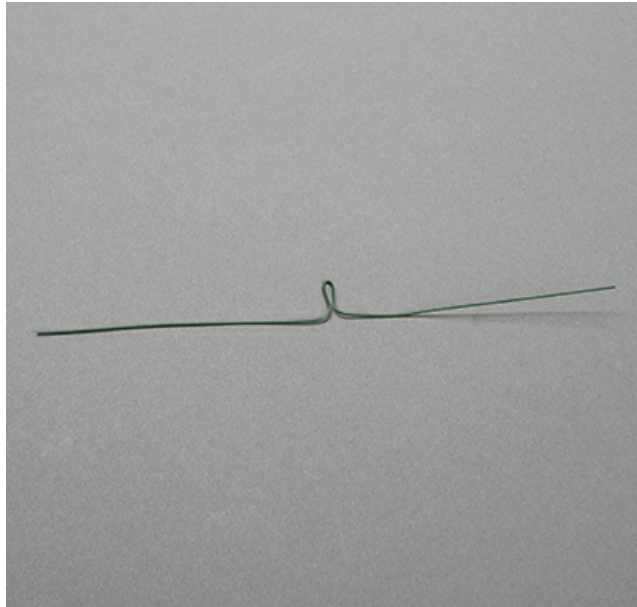
Show kids the sample craft you made. Hook the hanger part on the top of the spiral, and let it spin around until it gets to the cup.

Say: **We're learning that Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless. Being selfless is kind of like lowering ourselves. Instead of putting ourselves as top priority, we hang out at the bottom so we can put others first.**

These spirals remind us that when we're connected to Jesus, he helps us be selfless!

Give each child a cup and one column from the “Jesus & Me” handout. Set out the remaining supplies to share, and have kids follow these directions to make selfless spirals.

- Wrap an 18-inch piece of floral wire around a marker to make a coil.
- Remove the coil from the marker, and stretch it so it's still coiled but is much taller.
- Turn your cup upside down. Poke a little bit of the coil through the bottom of the cup.
- Duct-tape the coil in place so it stands straight up out of the upside-down cup.
- Bend the 9-inch piece of floral wire in half. Then bend the ends back out so you have a hook in the middle of the wire. This will be your hanger.



- Color the Jesus figure on your handout. Draw a picture of yourself in the empty square. Then cut out the two squares and tape one on either end of your hanger.
- If you have extra time, use permanent markers to decorate your cup.

Lower Yourself

- Have kids hook their hangers on the top of the coils.
- The hangers should spin around down the coils until they get to the bottom.
- If the hangers aren't going or get stuck, that means the coils aren't steep enough. Kids will need to stretch their coils a little more so they have a steeper decline.
- If the hangers fall off, kids will need to pinch the hooks tighter.

Talk About It

Ask: • **Tell about a situation where it's hard for you to put others first.** Share your own example first. For example, it might be hard to let someone get ahead of you in line when you're in a hurry, or it might be difficult to share food when you have just enough for yourself.

- **Share a way you want Jesus to help you lower yourself so there's room to put others first.**
- **How does your craft help you picture what selflessness means?**

Say: **Jesus is selfless, so we're selfless.** If you just try to be more selfless on your own, it'll be really hard! That's because it's natural to want to put yourself first. However, when you stay connected to Jesus the way your picture is connected to the picture of Jesus across the hanger, Jesus can help you be selfless like he is.

Have kids take their Selfless Spirals home and show them to their friends and families as they share about how to be selfless and lower ourselves.



See the Need

Supplies

- paper
- markers

Write and Pray

- Give each child a piece of paper and a marker.
- Have kids use big letters to write one or two words that describe something they need prayer for. For example, “aunt – cancer” or “math test.”
- Have kids sit in a circle and hold their signs in front of them.

Say: **Jesus is selfless, so we’re selfless.** We’re going to practice looking at other people and seeing their needs. It will be easy, since they’re holding signs with their needs! Take a moment to look around the circle. Pick someone to pray silently for, but don’t say who you pick. Just pray for that person. When you finish, look around and pray for someone else! Allow about two minutes for silent prayer.

Wrap Up

Pray: **Jesus, thank you for showing us how to be selfless by putting us first! Help us be selfless this week. In your name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.