

THE LORD OF THE SABBATH

MATTHEW 12; MARK 2-3; LUKE 6



KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 5:16

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus showed that God gives us commands to help us, not to hurt us. Jesus rules over all. Jesus died on the cross and rose again to show God's love and do good by rescuing sinners.

STORY POINT: Jesus rules over all.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Jesus rules over all creation and cares deeply for His people's needs. From satisfying their hunger to healing their ailments, Jesus intervened in the lives of His followers. He defended His place as the Lord of the Sabbath and the one who fulfills God's laws.

While the Pharisees viewed their obedience to God's rules as a means of self-righteousness, Jesus demonstrated that His Father's commands are to help us and to point to our need for a Savior.

Jesus quoted the words of Scripture back to these experts of the law. In doing so, Jesus made weighty claims about Himself that would not please many in His audience. He once again claimed to be God, to be greater than the temple—God's dwelling place—and to be Lord over the Sabbath.

The Pharisees set their hearts on condemning Jesus and ridding themselves of the problems and competition they felt Jesus was continually creating for them. They stood ready to accuse Him of any perceived wrongdoing. They even tried to use Jesus' selfless acts of healing to discredit Him!

Considering this, Jesus proposed a theological question about legalism and ethics to His dissenters: "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4). Sadly, the men viewed Jesus' healing on the Sabbath as a greater offense to the Lord than the murderous schemes they would soon devise against the Son of God.

The hardness of the men's hearts grieved Jesus. Yet, He restored the man's shriveled hand and met a tangible need through healing. In this simple Bible story, we witness Christ's power and willingness to redeem and restore, even amid others' doubts and criticism.

Pray that the boys and girls who hear this story would be moved by Christ's heart for our needs—which includes salvation for those who have not yet responded to Jesus in faith. Pray that kids see themselves like the hungry and hurting ones in this story who recognize their need for the Savior.



Scan the QR code to listen to The Gospel Project for Kids Weekly Leader Training Podcast.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Under His Rule" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ index cards

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ blocks



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ crown

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "The Lord of the Sabbath" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 23, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Erik and Ida Nelson Photo" printable

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ sticky notes
- ☐ "Shine (Matthew 5:16)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ If you could make one rule for everyone to follow, what would it be? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Under His Rule” activity page.

| **SAY** “ Everyone did a great job using the word search to find things that Jesus rules over. Today’s story will remind us that **JESUS RULES OVER ALL** His creation. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: AUTHORITY CHARADES



Using index cards, write down the roles of several people who have authority. Some ideas include police officer, teacher, president, parent, coach, grandparent, judge, etc. Invite the kids to sit down on the floor. Call on a volunteer to select the first card. Challenge the kid to act out the role of the person listed on the card. Encourage the other kids to guess what role their classmate is acting out. Whoever guesses correctly may draw the next card. Ask the kids to consider what all these people have in common.

| **SAY** “ Listening to and respecting those who are in charge is important. But did you know that there is someone who has authority over everyone and everything? In today’s story, we will learn that **JESUS RULES OVER ALL!** ”

☐ OPTION 2: I'M IN CHARGE

Before the session, put together a simple block building or design and take a picture of it. Divide the kids into two teams. Invite only one volunteer from each team to come and look at the picture. Provide each team with the materials to replicate what was in the picture. Explain that each team must use the blocks to rebuild the design. Challenge the kids to trust the instructions of his or her teammate who saw the picture. The first team to build the design successfully wins.

| **SAY** “ Being in charge can be fun, however it can also feel like a lot of pressure. But there is someone who is in charge of everything and His rules are for our good. Today we will learn that **JESUS RULES OVER ALL.** ”





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome! My name is [your name], and I’m happy you joined us today! Together, we have been learning about how Jesus taught and healed during His early ministry. Last week we read that Jesus called twelve men to be His disciples. Today’s story can be found in three of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These books all share similar stories of Jesus’ life on earth. If you brought your Bible to class, hold it up high where I can see it! **[Distribute a Bible to any kid who needs one.]** As we read, we will see that Jesus shared wisdom about a special day that happens each week, called the Sabbath. Let’s pray together before we open God’s Word. ‘God, we trust that You rule over all of creation and give us instruction for our good. Give us understanding as we read Your Word together. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Let’s review our big picture question: **What did Jesus teach when He was on earth?** Who can share the answer we have learned? **[Allow responses.] Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.** Scripture points to Jesus’ identity as God’s Son. The Son was with the Father in the beginning, and all creation is under His rule. We can trust that Jesus rules over everything for our good and His glory.

Let’s say the big picture question and answer aloud together. **What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.** ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ God showed His compassion for people through His Son, Jesus. When Jesus forgave and healed the man who could not walk, He showed the religious leaders His authority and power over sin. Jesus revealed our need for a Savior by inviting sinful men like Levi to follow Him. As the crowds and His fame grew, Jesus appointed disciples to go out and preach about God’s kingdom, too. Today we will learn that Jesus is Lord over everything. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 12; Mark 2–3; Luke 6. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Lord of the Sabbath.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE LORD OF THE SABBATH

“One day, **Jesus and His disciples were passing through some fields of grain. His disciples were hungry and began to pick and eat some of the grain. The Pharisees saw this and said, “Why are Your disciples breaking the law by doing work on the Sabbath?”**

Jesus replied, “**Haven’t you read what David did when he and his men were hungry? They entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which was against the law for them.**” Only priests were allowed to eat that bread.

Jesus also said, “**Do you know what the prophet Hosea meant when he said that God desires mercy and not sacrifice? If you did, you would not have told My disciples they were doing wrong. The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.**”

On another Sabbath day, **Jesus entered the synagogue and began teaching. He saw a man who had a shriveled hand. To accuse Jesus, the religious leaders were watching Jesus closely to see if He would heal on the Sabbath.**

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and He was angry and sad at the hardness of their hearts. **Jesus reminded the religious leaders that it was right to do good and save a life because this actually kept God’s law.**

Jesus said, “**If you had a sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn’t you lift it out? A person is worth far more than a sheep, so it is lawful to do what is good on the Sabbath.**”

Then He told the man, “**Stretch out your hand.**” The man stretched out his hand, and it was completely healed! **The Pharisees were filled with rage and left, thinking about how they might put Jesus to death.**

Christ Connection: Jesus showed that God gives us commands to help us, not to hurt us. Jesus rules over all. Jesus died on the cross and rose again to show God’s love and do good by rescuing sinners. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Swap spots: Challenge the kids to pay close attention as you read. Invite them to switch between sitting and laying down each time they hear the word *Sabbath*.

Change locations: Inspire interest by teaching the lesson in a different location such as outside or from a different side of the room.

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “The Sabbath was considered a day of rest, and any work done on this day was seen as breaking God’s law. How did the Pharisees respond when they saw the disciples eating the grain? [Allow responses.] God gave His people laws



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

to protect them and demonstrate His great care for them. The grain the disciples were eating was left unharvested, according to God's law, for the needy and poor. What an amazing display of God's compassion! By sharing the story of David and his men, Jesus reminded the Pharisees that God's law was designed to serve His people.

What do you think it means for God to desire mercy, not sacrifice? **[Allow responses.]** The Pharisees added to God's Word and were so caught up in obeying extra laws they created for themselves, that they missed the point of God's law. The Sabbath was created to show God's mercy to His people by allowing them to rest like God rested after He created the world and everything in it in six days.

What animal did Jesus use in His example to the Pharisees? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus explained that the Pharisees would save a hurt sheep on the Sabbath, and God's people are much more valuable than any animal. By healing the man's hand, Jesus demonstrated that He has the authority to interpret the law because He is God.

Jesus showed that God gives us commands to help us, not hurt us. **JESUS RULES OVER ALL.** Jesus died on the cross and rose again to show God's love and do good by rescuing sinners. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ God gave us the law because He loves us. But every one of us has broken His commands. Jesus lived in perfect obedience to God, and through His death, He has fulfilled the law. When a person repents and trusts in Jesus as Lord, He forgives their sin. To learn more about what it means to trust your life to Jesus, you can speak to one of your parents or a church leader. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 23, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why did the Pharisees not believe, even though they saw Jesus' miracles?
2. How can you know that Jesus is who He says He is?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Show the “Erik and Ida Nelson Photo” printable.

SAY “Many Brazilians were not sure what to think when Erik Nelson began selling Bibles up and down the Amazon River. Erik gave Bibles to the people who could not afford to buy them. Erik and Ida never hesitated to teach the people about Jesus.”

Form two teams and lead them to line up on one side of the room. On the opposite side of the room, place two Bibles, along with an adult leader. The first kid in each line will run to their team’s Bible, find one of the Gospels, show it to the leader, close the Bible, and then race back to their team. At that point, the next team member can run and do the same. First team to have everyone complete the race wins.

Explain that Erik continued telling the Brazilians about Jesus. Erik was sad when he passed by villages he could not get to with his boat. He bought a canoe so he could paddle wherever he wanted. He paddled more than 700 miles and told thousands of people about Jesus. Later, Erik acquired a small boat with a motor. This boat still did not meet all of Erik’s needs. He prayed about a need for a new boat, and a church in Murray, Kentucky, donated \$3,000 for a proper motorboat. Erik launched the boat called the *Buffalo* in 1920 and used it until just before his death in 1939. Pray, thanking God for helping missionaries meet the needs to tell people about Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Matthew 5:16 together.

SAY “Our works cannot save us; only Jesus can. But when we trust in Him, others can see His love through our desire to serve Him!”

Give each kid a sticky note and something to write with. Encourage them to write the key passage on their sticky note and then think of a place in their home that they pass by frequently. Challenge them to place the sticky note there and read it each time they pass the key passage.

Lead kids to sing “Shine (Matthew 5:16).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to fulfill the law and offer us rest through salvation. Help us share Your light with others as we seek to live for You each day. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Matthew 12. Explain that in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus often refers to Himself as the Son of Man. Share that this description of Jesus refers back to the book of Daniel, showing that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

Consider pointing out the location of Galilee [C5] on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 12:6-8 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Think about how you feel when you get a good night’s sleep. Rest allows us time to relax from the previous day’s work so that we are ready for each new day. God made rest a part of His law because He cares for us. The Pharisees were striving to keep God’s law, but Jesus came to fulfill God’s law. Through His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus has given us the ultimate rest. Because of Jesus, believers have rest from the impossible task of striving to earn salvation. By trusting in Jesus as Lord, believers are promised a new life marked by peace that is only found in Him. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Is trying to keep God’s law bad? ”

Explain that Jesus did not challenge God’s law; He was challenging the Pharisees incorrect understanding of it. Share that Jesus fulfilled the law and those who trust Him are under the new covenant. Our good works cannot save us; only Jesus’ death on the cross saves believers. But when a person comes to know Jesus, they will seek to honor His commands. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 2:3.)

SAY “ What does it mean for someone’s heart to be hard? ”

Share that there are many places in Scripture where someone’s heart is described as being hard. Explain that a hard heart doesn’t describe something physical. A heart becomes spiritually hard when a person refuses to trust and obey God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ephesians 4:18.)

SAY “ What does it look like to honor God, not just on the Sabbath, but every day? ”

Answers will vary. Remind kids that the Sabbath shows God’s kindness in giving people time to pause and focus on Him. Challenge kids to think about things they do that help them focus on God, such as praying, reading their Bibles, or being kind to others. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Corinthians 10:31.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: A-Z, AND EVEN ME!



Guide the kids to sit down in a circle. Begin by placing the crown on one of the kid's heads. Challenge him or her to name something that Jesus rules over that starts with the letter A. Next, have the kid pass the crown to the kid on his or her left. Now encourage this kid to put on the crown and name something Jesus rules over that starts with the letter B. Give each kid around 30 seconds to answer. If a kid is stuck, have him or her pass the crown to the next person. Play until the kids have gone through the entire alphabet.

SAY “**JESUS RULES OVER ALL** things, from A-Z, including you and me! Jesus reminded the religious leaders that His laws are for our good. He invites us to repent of our sin and to trust Him as Lord over our lives.”

☐ OPTION 2: SABBATH VERSES

Write down several verses about Sabbath on separate pieces of paper. Some verses might include Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 20:8-11, Isaiah 56:2, Matthew 12:5-8, and Mark 2:27-28. Create small groups of kids and give each group a verse and a Bible. Lead them to look it up in the Bible. Once each group has found their verse, encourage them to say the reference to the class and whether it's found in the Old Testament or the New Testament. Read the verse to the class and then ask them what it teaches about the Sabbath.

SAY “Jesus reminded the religious leaders that His rules are for our good, including His command for us to rest. Jesus came to fulfill the law through His death and resurrection. Jesus has saved all those who trust in Him for His glory and our good.”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.