

TAXES FOR CAESAR

LUKE 20:1-26, ROMANS 13:1-7, & I PETER 2:13-25

GOAL

- ▶ **To teach students that God is the final authority over all things, and no authority exists except from God.** He is the one who places kings and kingdoms, moms and dads, pastors and teachers, and law givers and enforcers, for protection and general well-being. (Romans 13:1). The only time it is okay to disobey authority is when it makes us disobey God. We are called to trust God by obeying the law, praying for our leaders, and showing honor and respect to those in authority over us.
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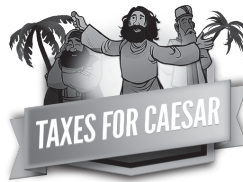
WORDS TO KNOW

- ▶ **Authority:** comes from the word author. God is the author and creator of all things. Every power in heaven and on earth has been given its authority by God, including government, church, and family. Even the powers in rebellion against God and His Kingdom are given their authority by Him.
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MEMORY VERSES

- ▶ **Luke 20:25:** He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Romans 13:1: Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.



OVERVIEW

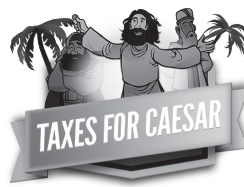
▶ **Read Luke 20:1-26, Romans 13:1-7, and 1 Peter 2:13-25:**

The religious leaders asked Jesus a difficult question hoping that they could make Him look bad and belittle his authority. They asked if it was right for the people of God to submit to the authority of a worldly kingdom—the kingdom of Rome—by paying them taxes. Jesus knew that they were trying to trick him, so he gave them a cautious answer by telling a story. He told them about a group of wicked land tenants, left with a vineyard to manage, who tried to rob the vineyard's owner. After being under the care of the tenants for awhile, the owner sent his servants to the vineyard to collect his rightful dues, but the tenants beat each servant and threw them out of the vineyard. Finally, the owner sent his own son. Surely, the tenants would respect the heir to the vineyard, but instead, they killed him. Jesus pointed out to the religious leaders that by rejecting Him, they had rejected the very authority that appointed them as managers and overseers. Jesus asked, "What do you think the owner of the vineyard will do to the tenants?" Answering His own question, Jesus said, "He will come and destroy them and give the vineyard to someone else."

SUGGESTIONS

▶ All authorities on earth are instituted by God. These authorities are appointed by the Master to serve and care for those placed under their authority. Ask the class to come up with a list of legitimate authority figures instituted by God, and as they do, confirm each answer with a verse:

1. **God:** "Oh Lord God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you" (2 Chronicles 20:6).
2. **Moms and Dads:** "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."
3. **Pastors and teachers:** "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-12).
4. **Government leaders:** "Let every person be subject to governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." (Romans 13:1).



PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY



Ages 5-7 Red Light, Green Light

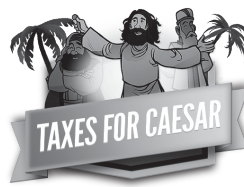
Pick one person to be the “traffic light,” and place the rest of the group in a line about 15 feet away. The person designated as the “traffic light” faces away from the group when calling out “green light” and toward the group when calling out “red light.” Every time “green light” is called out, the kids in line move forward; every time “red light” is called, they must all stop. If the designated “traffic light” sees anyone moving after calling out “red light,” that person is sent back to the starting line. The first person to the front wins!

Ages 5-7 Line up and Listen Carefully

Designate a “leader” for the group, and line the other children behind him or her. The leader will either call out instructions or simply demonstrate what he or she wants the rest of the group to do. Instructions can include things such as “everyone skip,” “everyone whistle like a bird,” “everyone jump in place 10 times,” and so on.

Ages 8-10 **Floating Phrases** | **Supplies:** Several foam sheets, tubing, or shapes that float in water, long tubs of water, and a permanent marker.

This game is especially nice on a hot, summer day. Write each word of the Bible verse on a separate foam shape. Write out one complete set for as many teams you need. Split the kids into teams, and give each team a long tub of water and a complete set of foam shapes. On “go,” each team will work together to put the foam shapes in order. The first team to place the entire verse in perfect order wins.



MEMORY VERSE MEANING



Luke 20:25: To those governing over you, obey their laws and respect their authority; and give to God your life.

Romans 13:1: The Bible teaches that those in authority are God's servants and are set in place to accomplish His will. Even evil rulers exist to carry out judgment, to move people to repentance, or to create strength in those affected by them. The only time it's okay to resist or disobey authority is when doing so would cause us to disobey God. Trust God by honoring authorities placed over you—parents, police, government leaders, teachers, coaches, etc.

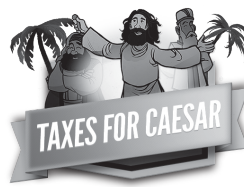
Post-Lesson Activities

POST-LESSON ACTIVITY



Ages 5-7 Captain of the Crew

This game is the same as "Mother May I" except that the teacher is the "captain," and the kids are the "crew." The goal of this game is that each child makes their way across a large space by respectfully asking permission of the captain. The first to reach the captain wins. Post creative action requests on the board such as "take three bunny hops forward," or "take two large steps forward," or "take four giant frog hops forward," and so on. Each child gets a turn to make the request, and each request must be preceded by "Captain May I," or they will have to go back to the beginning. Instruct the children that they must use all action request posted on the board at least one time each.



Ages 8-10 Respectfully Played

Write down different scenarios that demonstrate real life situations with authority figures and give each child the opportunity to act the role of the authority, or to act out the proper response to that authority. Here are a few ideas:

1. A security guard at a football game notifies you that you are in the wrong seat.
2. You are in the middle of a conversation with your best friend at school, and the teacher reminds you to work on your assignment.
3. A furniture store owner asks you not to sit on the sofas in the window display.
4. Your mom and dad are concerned about some bad grades on your report card.
5. The police officer asks you not to skateboard anywhere on any downtown sidewalks.
6. The coach questions you on a bad play.
7. You are in the middle of an exciting board game or video game, and your dad or mom tells you it's time to get ready for bed.

Ages 8-10 Vanishing Verse

Write today's verse on the board. Have the group, in unison, read the verse several times. Then erase a word and have them recite the verse again. Continue the exercise until all the words are erased from the board, and the group has successfully recited the verse from memory.

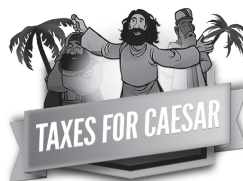


TAKE
HOME



What are ways we show honor and respect for the authorities God places over us?

1. **God:** Without faith, it is impossible to please God. We must trust that God has our well-being in mind concerning the authorities placed in our lives.
2. **Moms and Dads:** We should obey our parents and treat them with respect. What are some ways we can obey willingly and respectfully?
3. **Teachers:** Pray for them, show them respect, listen and respond to their instruction. What are some ways we can respect and obey our teachers?
4. **Government leaders and law enforcers:** Pray for them, obey the law, and be respectful. What are some ways we can respect government officials in our actions and conversation?



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: How did Jesus teach the Scriptures?

A1: Jesus taught the Scriptures as if He had written them and that He could fulfill them.

Q1b: Can someone else tell you how you are going to end a story that you haven't even started to write?

TN: No one can read people's minds or tell the future. If we haven't written it, then there is no ending to the story because there is no story yet. When Jesus taught the Scriptures, He had an insight that no one else had: He was there at the beginning of everything, He witnessed all the histories detailed in Scripture, and He knows how the whole thing ends. The religious leaders didn't believe that Jesus was who He said He was, so to them, it felt like Jesus was making up stories and background information and making a mockery of their faith.

SLIDE 2

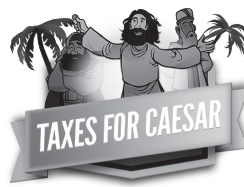


Q2a: What did the farmhands do to the vineyard owner's son.

A2: The farmhands killed the vineyard owner's son.

Q2b: What is your favorite food?

TN: Let students answer. Pose the following questions to students next: What if a friend asked them to watch this favorite food while he or she left to get something else; would they be tempted to eat a little bit? While tempting, most of us wouldn't eat it because it's not ours. But what if we hadn't eaten in days? The temptation would probably be too much. In this case, our decision to take what isn't ours would be driven by hunger and actual, physical need. The farmhands' decision to take what wasn't theirs was driven by greed.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: What did Jesus say the vineyard owner would do after the farmhands killed his son?

A3: Jesus said the vineyard owner would destroy the farmhands and give the vineyard to someone else.

Q3b: Has anyone ever trusted you to take care of something important?

TN: Let students answer. Whether it was something as big as babysitting or as seemingly small as saving someone's seat at the movies, people ask us to do things because they trust that we can handle the task. The religious leaders were tasked with helping to guide the Jewish people in their faith, but these men were greedy and power hungry. They used their power to guide the people to what they thought the faith should be rather than what God wanted it to be.

SLIDE 4



Q4a: What question did the spies ask Jesus?

A4: The spies asked Jesus if it was lawful for them to pay taxes to Caesar.

Q4b: To earn some money, you decide to start a lemonade stand, but you don't have any money to buy supplies. How could you open this business?

TN: Let students answer. This is an example of a catch-22 situation. We couldn't start a lemonade stand without money; we'd have to borrow some, which means that until that loan is paid off, we're not actually making any of the money we set out to earn. Another example of a catch-22 is needing experience to get a job, but not being able to get a job without experience. The religious leaders' spies were trying to put Jesus into a catch-22 situation in which He could not answer their question without getting into trouble.



SLIDE 5

QUESTION & ANSWER



Q5a: Who's face was on the coin Jesus asked to see?

A5: Caesar's face was on the coin Jesus asked to see.

Q5b: Someone has been eating your cookies. How could you set a trap to find out who it is?

TN: Let students answer. Then ask if there is any way that the person could get out of falling for the trap. The spies thought they had come up with a great way to trap Jesus into saying something that would get Him into trouble. Jesus saw that the question was a trap, and using His great wisdom, He was able to answer the question without offending the Jewish people or getting into trouble with Caesar.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: What was Caesar asking for, and what was God asking for?

A6: Caesar was asking for taxes and coins; God was asking for trust, obedience, and love.

Q6b: Do people in positions of authority always make godly decisions?

TN: No, as humans, we often make mistakes. As godly people, we do our best to make decisions that take us in the same direction that the Holy Spirit leads us, but we often fail. Some people in positions of authority are not godly people at all, and they often make bad decisions; however, that does not mean that we should not continue to honor and respect these leaders. Mistakes and poor decisions made by humans cannot undo or derail God's plan for our lives.



SLIDE 7

QUESTION & ANSWER

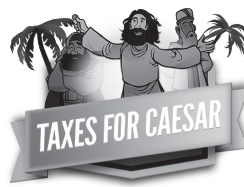


Q7a: What did the religious leaders do to protect their power?

A7: The religious leaders sent Jesus to die upon a cross to protect their power.

Q7b: Is it more important to have authority and power than it is to be right?

TN: Let students answer. Turning our backs on the truth for the sake of maintaining power or a position of authority is not okay. Despite all the miracles Jesus performed, the religious leaders would not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. The truth stared them in the face, and they denied it. They claimed that Jesus was wrong and that they were right so they could remain in their positions of authority and power over the Jewish people. If we are wrong about something, we should have the courage and humility to admit it. We should always embrace the truth.



MEMORY VERSES

▶ **Luke 20:25:** He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”

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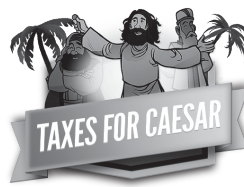
BIG IDEA

▶ All authorities were put into place by God, but none is above God.

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CLOSING PRAYER

▶ Dear Father, help us to show respect to the authorities You've placed in our lives—to honor our moms and dads, to listen and obey the instruction of our pastors and teachers, and to pray for and respect our government leaders. We are comforted by the fact that all authority in heaven and on earth is in Your hands! We pray this all in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



The temple was filled with curious listeners as Jesus taught. These people were eager to hear the man who had cast out demons, forgiven sins, and raised the dead! Amazingly, Jesus taught as if He had written the Scriptures and that He could fulfill them. Soon the religious leaders in the crowd grew angry; who did this man think He was?! The religious leaders asked Jesus, “Who gives you the authority to teach and act like this?”

SLIDE 2



Jesus responded by telling a story about a man who left his vineyard in the care of farmhands while he went on a journey. The man expected these farmhands to care for his vineyard and make it profitable. After some time had passed, the man sent servants to check on his vineyard, but the farmhands beat them and chased them away. Finally, the man sent his own son, sure the farmhands would respect him, but they killed his son and tried to steal the vineyard for themselves.

SLIDE 3



Jesus looked at the religious leaders and asked, “What do you think the owner of the vineyard will do next?” Without waiting, Jesus answered His own question: “He will come back and destroy the farmhands and give the vineyard to someone else!” The religious leaders realized that Jesus was comparing them to the evil farmhands in his story. This filled them with so much rage that they decided to destroy Jesus.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 4



Watching for a chance to trap Jesus, the religious leaders sent spies through the crowds where He taught. These spies pretended to respect Jesus, but their real mission was to trick Him into saying something that would get Him in trouble. The spies asked Jesus, “Good teacher, is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar?” If Jesus said yes, the Jewish people, who hated Caesar, would turn on Him, but if He said no, Caesar’s officials could have Him arrested for disobeying Roman law.

SLIDE 5



Jesus saw through the spies’ evil plan. “Show me a coin,” He instructed them. The men fumbled around until they found one. Jesus asked them, “Tell me, whose face is on this coin?” “It’s Caesar’s,” the spies replied. “Well then,” Jesus said, “give to Caesar what is his, and give to God what is His.” This answer stunned the spies; not only had Jesus escaped the spies’ trap, but He also answered their question with incredible wisdom.

SLIDE 6



By saying “Give to Caesar what is his,” Jesus made it clear that people must honor and respect those with earthly authority. By saying “Give to God what is His,” Jesus reminded the crowd that their biggest concern should be giving God the things He asks for. While Caesar was asking for taxes and coins, God was asking for trust, obedience, and love. Jesus’ answer was so amazing that the spies didn’t dare ask Him any more questions.



SLIDE 7

LESSON TRANSCRIPT



Sadly, no matter how many amazing things Jesus said or did, the religious leaders would not turn their hearts to God. These men refused to give up their power and influence for anyone, even the Son of God. Later, to protect their power, they sent Jesus to die upon a cross. But three days later, Jesus rose from the dead and showed—just as He had taught—that the power and authority of God is far above all others!