



JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

MATTHEW 21:12-27, MARK 11:15-19,
LUKE 19:45-48, & JOHN 2:13-16

GOAL

- ▶ To help children understand righteous anger and that Jesus desires His temple and His reputation to be clean and pure.
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CHARACTERS

- ▶ **Jesus:** He was angry that the temple, God's house, was turned into a place of business. He drove out the thieving merchants and traders.

Merchants and Traders: They had made a mockery of the temple's holiness by bringing in dirty animals and conducting shady business.

MEMORY VERSE

- ▶ **Matthew 21:13:** He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."
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OVERVIEW

- ▶ **Read over Matthew 21:12-27:** Jesus saw the temple being dirtied and desecrated with animal waste and money changers. He took action and drove them out, restoring order and sanctity to God's temple. After, Jesus healed blind and sick people, which angered the priests and scribes.



SUGGESTIONS

▶ **These Scriptures offer us an example of anger and when it is appropriate to act on this emotion. This story also discusses the temple and how Jesus' sacrifice changed how we worship.**

1. Righteous Anger: In this story, Jesus was angry. There are many examples in the Old Testament of God expressing anger and acting upon it. Sin and disrespect produced the Lord's righteous anger.

2. Temple Worship: In Jesus' time, God's presence was found in the temple. This location was where people came to worship and make sacrifices for their sins. John 2 verses 19-21 show that Jesus is the new temple. Because Jesus' mission was to restore our relationship with God, we no longer have to go to this particular temple to speak to God; we can speak to Him wherever and whenever we want.

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

▶ **Clean It Up! | Supplies:** two buckets and a number of different cleaning supplies.

Divide the class into two teams. Fill two buckets with an equal number of containers of cleaning supplies. Have the children line up at one end of the classroom, and place the two buckets of cleaning supplies at the other end of the classroom. On "Go!" children race, one at a time, toward their team's bucket, grab one item, return to their line, and tag the next player in line who goes to retrieve another item from the bucket. The first team to empty their bucket completely wins. For an added twist, have the children clean an object in the room (e.g., wipe off the blackboard, empty the trash) as part of the relay.



MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING

- ▶ **Matthew 21:13:** Anger is an acceptable emotion when it is righteous. Acting on anger is acceptable when it is done with a motivation to bring people back into a right and loving relationship with the Lord.
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POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY

- ▶ **Worship from A to Z**
- Ask students to sit in a circle. This game is a variation on the Alphabet Game, commonly played during road trips. For each letter, students must think of a name that starts with their letter, the name of a city that starts with their letter, and a way they can worship with that letter. Demonstrate for the students how to play and what to say by taking the letter A. For example: My name is Alexander, I can worship in Apple Valley, and I like to worship by acting. Offer to skip the letter X if it's too hard. This is meant to be fun, so if students get stuck, offer them suggestions to help avoid getting embarrassed.
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TAKE
HOME

- ▶ **1. Righteous Anger:** It is right to feel angry when we see sin and injustice in the world. Anger is a God-given emotion, meaning it is okay to get mad; however, it is not okay to act on our anger if it causes us to sin. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." Before we act, we should ask ourselves, "Am I doing this to be right, or to be righteous?"
- 2. Temple Worship:** We don't have to go to church to hear from God. No matter where we go, God is with us. We can pray, worship, or just talk to God anywhere and at any time. Church is a place for us to worship and connect with other believers. Church is a place for us to learn more about God and develop a greater love for Him.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: What did the temple officials start doing in the temple to make money?

A1: They started selling animals and other things.

Q1b: Where do you like to go shopping?

TN: It is important that students understand why setting up shop in the temple was wrong. Buying things is not a sin. Selling things is not a sin. Buying and selling animals to sacrifice for the atonement of sin was not bad; however, selling animals for this purpose within the temple was inappropriate. The temple was meant to be a place of worship that should have been kept holy. Instead, the temple officials allowed merchants to profit from sin and conduct business within the temple.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: Where did Jesus celebrate the Passover?

A2: In Jerusalem.

Q2b: Would it be okay to set up a picnic on a baseball field right behind the pitcher's mound during a baseball game?

TN: The flat, grassy area seems ideal for a picnic, but the field was built, and is being used, for a different purpose. Just as a picnic blanket covered with people and food would hinder the baseball players from doing a good job, the merchants and their animals detracted from the purpose of the temple: worship and prayer.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: With what kind of anger did Jesus use to drive out the animals and shop keepers?

A3: Righteous anger

Q3b: True or False: The best way to respond to someone cutting in line is to physically push him or her to the back of the line.

TN: No! That response is worse than the offense! No matter what we have seen or has been committed against us, responding in sin is not justified. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be angry and do not sin." When Jesus drove the merchants out of the temple, His reaction was not a sin, and it was not an overreaction to what was occurring.

SLIDE 4



Q4a: Jesus said the merchants had changed the temple into what?

A4: A den of thieves

Q4b: Who in this class luves Jesus?

TN: Does it matter that the words "class" and "loves" are spelled wrong in the question? The misspelling doesn't make it impossible to understand the meaning of the question. While the words should be corrected, in some situations, it isn't necessary to point out the error. When we see sin, it can make us mad, but merely pointing out that someone is wrong just to show that we know what is right isn't the correct motivation for saying anything. In order for our anger to be righteous, we must act in a way that helps the person see what he or she has done, why it is wrong, and help lead him or her back into relationship with God.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: How did people react to Jesus' action in the temple?

A5: They were surprised.

Q5b: When someone tells you you're doing something wrong, how does it make you feel?

TN: Sometimes we feel ashamed or foolish, but sometimes, we feel angry. We question the person's ability to know more about this than we do. Jesus' actions called out the merchants and temple officials for disgracing the temple. Being told that you've done something that big can be hard to accept. In situations like this, it's important that we don't just dismiss the claims that we've done something wrong. Through prayer and studying Scripture, we can determine if we have done something wrong, in which case we can ask God to help us correct our actions.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: Who became upset when they saw Jesus healing people in the temple?

A6: The priests and the scribes.

Q6b: What is your favorite part of a church service?

TN: From worship to fellowship to taking Communion, going to church offers many wonderful ways for us to show our adoration for God and reflect that love on to our fellow churchgoers. Jesus turned out the merchants who were defiling the temple and quickly began using the space for what it was intended: prayer and worship.



**MEMORY
VERSE**

- ▷ **Matthew 21:13:** He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."
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BIG IDEA

- ▷ Anger is a God-given emotion, but we must be careful not to sin because of it.
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**CLOSING
PRAYER**

- ▷ Dear God, thank You for showing us what appropriate anger looks like. Help us to determine when it is right to be angry and how we should act on it. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



During Passover, many people came to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. They would bring animals with them to sacrifice to God. They did this to ask forgiveness for their sins. Some of the temple officials were dishonest and greedy and saw a great business opportunity. They decided to start selling animals and many other things so they could make a lot of money. The temple became more like a flea market than a holy place of worship.

SLIDE 2



Jesus also celebrated the Passover in Jerusalem, and He went to the temple with His disciples. When He saw how people were turning God's house into a marketplace, He became very angry and sad. The temple was supposed to be a place where God was worshiped, a place where people could pray to God. Instead, these people made a mockery of it.

SLIDE 3



Jesus, filled with righteous anger, decided to put an end to it. He made himself a short whip, perfect for driving stubborn animals, and went inside to clear out all the animals and shop keepers. Once inside, He grabbed tables and flipped them over. He kicked over benches and tossed aside stools. He freed the doves, and set the goats and sheep free. The money changers and merchants were outraged. "What in the world are you doing? Who gave you the right to do this?" they shouted in anger.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 4



"Get out!" Jesus shouted. "Don't turn my Father's house into a den of thieves!" He said. Some of the merchants were furious at Jesus and could not wait to get rid of Him. Jesus knew that they had wicked hearts and that they did not serve God. He wanted to teach them a lesson.

SLIDE 5



When the people saw this, they were very surprised. "Who is this Jesus? With what authority does He do these things?" they said.

SLIDE 6



Once Jesus had driven out all of the animals and merchants, many of the lame and sick people came to Jesus, and He healed them. When the priests and scribes saw this, they were jealous and mad. They were so afraid the people might choose Jesus to lead instead of them. Jesus was not afraid of them. He continued to do God's work, telling people about God's love and doing many miracles.