God wants us to honor him.

Bible Verse
“Whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.” (Colossians 3:17).

Growing Closer to Jesus
Children will learn what it means to honor someone, honor God with words and actions, and discover that they can honor God with everything they do.

Teacher Enrichment
Bible Basis
John the Baptist tells about Jesus.

John 1:19-28

The relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus began before either of them was born. We don’t know the exact relationship, but somehow their mothers were related, and thus so were John and Jesus. After Mary was told by the angel that she’d give birth to Jesus, Mary rushed to spend time with Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John at the time. Luke tells us that John even “jumped for joy” in Elizabeth’s womb when Mary greeted her.

The questions asked of John by the priests and Levites grew out of expectations from the Old Testament. The Jews were looking forward to the reappearance of Elijah, and the appearance of “the Prophet” and “the Messiah.” John’s response in John 1:23, a quote from Isaiah 40:3, connected him with the coming of the Messiah, but identified him as the forerunner, not the Messiah himself. He knew that Jesus was the Messiah and that, in comparison to Jesus, he was only a servant.

Your first- and second-graders are reaching an age where they can begin telling their friends about Jesus and what he means to them. Use this lesson to encourage your class to be following John’s example.

Prayer
• Read John 3:27-30. What does this passage show you about John the Baptist?
• How does the principle in John 3:30 exhibit itself in your life?
• Pray: Lord, help me to be more like John the Baptist. May my students be more bold to tell others about you when they...
Before the Lesson

Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart.

Make photocopies of the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.

Pray for your students and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

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Welcome

SUPPLIES: “inching upward” name tags (p. 72), tape, safety scissors, markers or crayons

• Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
• Thank each child for coming to class today.
• As children arrive, ask them about last week’s “Growing Together” activities. Use questions such as “Who in your family did you question about God? What did you learn?” and “Which Bible stories did you read with your family?”
• Say: Today we’re going to learn that God wants us to honor him.
• Hand out the name tags children made during Lesson 5, and help them attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged, or if children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable handout.
• Tell the children that you’ll raise your hand to get their attention. They should respond by raising their hands and focusing their attention on you. Rehearse this signal and encourage the children to respond quickly so you’ll have time for all the fun activities in this lesson.

Attention Grabber

Special Honor

SUPPLIES: marker

Gather enough shiny shapes for every child to have one. Include one shape that you’ve marked on the back with a smiley face. Gather the children in a circle and say: I’ll throw these shapes up in the air. After they fall, pick up a shape.

Throw the shiny shapes up in the air. When the children have each picked up a shape, have them look at the back to find the shape with the smiley face. Say: Congratulations, [child’s name]! You are our special person. We want to honor you today. Collect the shiny shapes from the children.

Tell the children that when you shake the comet ball over the special child’s head, they’re to call out reasons why that child is special. Shake the comet ball over the child’s head for several seconds. If the other children are slow to honor the special child, call out a few praises of your own, such as “Thank you, Nathan, for your bright smile.”

After everyone has honored the special child, say: [Child’s name] isn’t the only special person here today. We’re all special, so let’s honor each other. When we honor people, we treat them nicely and let them know how special they are to us. Come and sit on the floor with me, but before you do, shake a friend’s hand and say, “We’re honored you came to church today.”

Give the children a moment to respond. Put the comet ball out of sight. Then raise your hand to get the children’s attention. When children have raised their hands and stopped talking, have them sit with you in a circle on the floor.

Ask: • What made [child’s name] special? (Nothing; he got the smiley face.)
• [Child’s name], what was it like while we were honoring you with kind words? (I felt good; I was embarrassed; it was funny.)

Say: We made [child’s name] special and honored [him or her] because [he or she] picked up the special shape. There are lots of reasons to honor people. Some people have special jobs, like being the president, and some people have done special things, like saving lives.

Ask: • What do we do to honor people? (We throw parties; we have holidays; we say nice things.)

• How do you think that makes those people feel when we honor them? (Happy; good.)

Say: We can honor God just as we honor people, because that makes God happy, and God wants us to honor him. Because God has done so many great things for us, we’re going to talk about honoring God. We’re going to find out why God deserves honor and what we can do to honor him.

### Bible Exploration & Application

**Listening Closely**

**SUPPLIES:** paper, pen, scissors

Before class, cut the paper into strips, enough for at least one-half of the class, and write the following verse on each strip: “Proverbs 16:20: ‘Those who listen to instruction will prosper; those who trust the Lord will be joyful.’ ”

Say: One way we can honor God is by listening to him and paying attention to what he says. Sometimes we get distracted and it’s hard to hear what God is saying to us. We’re going to play a game where you have to listen carefully.

Have the class form two groups. Give each child in one group one of the following instruments: **inflatable bongo stick, tambourine, bell, clicker, bead ball, or mini-maraca.** If there are more children in the group than available instruments, have children share. Give each child in the other group a strip of paper with Proverbs 16:20 written on it. If you have nonreaders in the class, pair nonreaders with readers or make yourself available to assist nonreaders.

Say: When I clap my hands, everyone who has an instrument should play it as loudly as they can. At the same time, those of you with the Bible verse should start reading it loudly. When I raise my hand, everyone should be as silent as a mouse.

Allow the children to play and read for 30 seconds, and then raise your hand. Switch groups so everyone has a chance to read a verse and play an instrument.

After everyone has had a turn, collect the instruments and replace them in the Learning Lab for later use. Ask the class to sit on the floor and ask:

• When you were playing an instrument, were you able to hear the verse that was being read? Explain. (No, there was too much noise; yes, I could kind of hear; I could hear them but I couldn’t really understand what they were saying.)
• **What were some of the distractions in the room?** (Instruments; noise; other people talking or playing.)

  Say: Noise made it hard to hear words being spoken. Sometimes things in life can distract us, too, from hearing God clearly. Just as it was important for you to listen closely for the Bible verse being read, it’s important to listen to God and understand what he’s telling you to do. When we listen to God, it’s easier to obey him and honor him. ►*God wants us to honor him.*

  Ask: • **What are some things that distract us from listening to God?** (Friends; playing with my toys; watching TV.)

  • **How can we honor God with our listening?** (Listen to his directions; read the Bible; listen to our parents.)

  Say: Another way to honor God is to obey him. Let’s play a game that makes us think about what that means.

## **Opposites**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

Say: We’re going to play a game that’s like Simon Says, except it has one big difference. Instead of doing what Simon says, you’ll do the opposite of what Simon says. I’m sure you all know what “opposite” means. Point to the opposite of up. Pause while children point down. Show me the opposite of a smile. Pause while children frown. Great! This game will be fun!

When I say, “Jump three steps backward,” you really will jump three steps backward. But when I say, “Simon says jump three steps backward,” you’ll jump three steps forward. Any questions? Here we go.

Play the game using commands such as “Reach to the ceiling,” “Face toward me,” “Point to the floor,” and “Hop to the front wall.” Call out commands quickly to keep this game lively.

Play the game for a couple of minutes. Raise your hand to get children’s attention. Wait for children to raise their hands and stop talking. Then gather the children on the floor and ask:

• **What did you like about this game?** (It was fun to do something different from what you told us to do; it was fun because it was fast.)

• **When is it OK to do the opposite of what you’re told to do?** (When my big sister tells me to do something wrong; when someone tells me to take something that’s not mine; when we’re playing this game.)

Say: Turn to a friend and tell about a time you did the opposite of what you were supposed to do. Explain what happened. You’ll have one minute. Go!

After a minute, raise your hand to get children’s attention. Wait for children to raise their hands and stop talking. Then have volunteers tell the rest of the class what happened to them.

Say: Listen to what Jesus says about obeying in John 14:15. Read John 14:15 aloud. When we love someone, we want to obey that person by doing what we’re supposed to do. When we do the opposite of what we’re supposed to do, we say we’ve disobeyed.

Ask: • **Who are you supposed to obey?** (My mom; my dad; my teachers; the principal; my grandparents.)
• When you disobey those people, are you honoring them? Why or why not? (No, because I’m going against them; no, because I’m not paying attention to them.)
• Why does it honor people when we do what they ask us to do? (Because it shows we listen; because it shows we pay attention to them; because it shows we think they’re important.)

Say: God is the most special and important part of our lives. When we obey God, we’re showing him that we think he’s special. That’s honoring God, and God wants us to honor him.

Do you know what is the greatest thing we can do to honor God? Believe in his Son, Jesus. When we admit that we are truly sorry for the wrong things we’ve done—we call those our sins—and we believe in Jesus, who died for our sins so that we could be forgiven, then we bring God great honor.

Listen to what our Bible verse for today, which comes from Colossians 3:17, says about this: “Whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.”

We can honor God through a forever friendship with Jesus, and then we can represent Jesus to others so they can know Jesus, too. Let’s give thanks to God for Jesus! Hooray!

Lead children in a round of applause for Jesus.

HANDS-ON BIBLE

Before class, purchase inexpensive pocket or hand mirrors, enough for each child to have one. You can find them at any discount department store or arts and crafts store. For the activity, you’ll also want to set out colored permanent markers for children to share.

Open your Hands-On Bible to Colossians 2 and show children the “Mirror, Mirror” activity. Have children follow along in their own Hands-On Bibles as you read it aloud. Hand out mirrors and permanent markers, and give children time to decorate their mirrors. Then ask:
• How does a mirror represent you? (It looks like me; it shows my face in the reflection.)
• How do you represent Jesus? (I obey my parents; I go to church; I talk about my friend Jesus.)
• How does representing Jesus to others bring honor to God? (Because God loves his Son; because Jesus always brings honor to God.)

Have the children find a partner and share with their partner one way they will represent Jesus to others this week. Some suggestions might be: holding the door open for an adult; reading the Bible; going to church; or sharing the good news of Jesus’ birth with someone.
The Witness Stand

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, paper, scissors, marker, plastic bowl or bucket

Before class, cut a slip of paper for each child in your class. On each slip write a T (for true) on one side of the paper and an F (for false) on the other side. Use the sidewalk chalk to mark a large T on the chalkboard. Put the sidewalk chalk away but keep the chalkboard handy until it’s time to tell the story.

Have the children sit in a circle. Put the slips of paper in a plastic bowl or bucket. Say: **I’m going to pass around a bowl with slips of paper in it. Each slip of paper has a T for true written on one side and an F for false written on the other side.** Pass the bowl around the circle and let each child choose a paper slip.

I’m going to say several sentences. If what I say is true, hold up your slip of paper with the T facing me. If what I say is false, hold up your slip of paper with the F facing me. Ready? Here we go.

Read each of the following statements and wait for children to respond.

- The moon is made of green cream cheese.
- Most dogs know how to bark.
- Monkeys always fly to school.
- Cat is spelled c, a, t.

Set the chalkboard on the floor in the center of the circle. Say: **You all did a great job of deciding what was true or false. Today we’re talking about honoring God. One way we can honor God is by telling the truth about him. Let’s find out about a man who did just that. Listen carefully. Each time you hear the name Jesus or Messiah, point to the chalkboard with the T that stands for truth on it.**

Open your Bible to John 1:19-28 and tell this story: **John told the truth and honored Jesus when some Jewish priests asked questions about Jesus. The priests wanted to know who John was because John had been doing great things, such as baptizing people and asking them to do good things instead of bad things.**

Some people thought John might be the promised Messiah they’d been waiting for. But John answered their questions carefully and quickly. He said, **“I am not the Messiah.”**

So the priests asked him, “Are you Elijah?” Elijah was a wise man of God, called a prophet, who lived long before John and the priests.

John said, “No, I’m not Elijah.”

So the priests asked, “Well, are you the Prophet we are expecting?”

John said, “No, I’m not the Prophet.”

Then the priests asked, “Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?”

John said, “I am the one who will announce the arrival of the Messiah.”

Some other men who were questioning John asked, “Why do you baptize people if you aren’t the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet?”

John answered, “I baptize with water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize. Though his ministry follows mine, I’m not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal.”

**Bible Insight**

People in Jesus’ day used ceremonial washings for many things, but the most significant cleansing was the baptism of a religious convert; for example, Gentiles were generally baptized when they converted to Judaism. The writer of the Gospel of John may have shocked Jewish readers by reporting that John the Baptist suggested that Jews would need to be baptized in an act of conversion just as a pagan would.
John told the truth to honor Jesus; he said that Jesus was a great person.

Ask: • If you could say something to honor Jesus, what would you say? (I’d say that he’s the Savior; I’d say that he’s God; I’d say that he loves everyone; I’d say that he’s powerful.)

Say: Everything you just said honored God. God is pleased that you said good things about him. When we honor God’s Son, Jesus, we honor God. Do you remember our Bible verse for today, from Colossians 3:17? It says: “Whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.” Everything we say every day can honor God. It’s good to say those things because God wants us to honor him.

Put the chalkboard back in the Learning Lab for use in later lessons.

Sidewalk Pictures

SUPPLIES: Bible, water, dark construction paper

Ask: • Why should we honor God? (Because he deserves honor; because he wants us to honor him.)

• If you could do something for God that would honor him, what would you do? (I’d tell the truth about him; I’d obey him; I’d follow his example; I’d pay attention to him.)

Open your Bible to 1 John 4:7-11 and show children the passage. Say: First John 4:7-11 says that if we love people and do loving things instead of hateful things, we show that we have God’s love inside of us. That honors God. Let’s think of loving actions that bring honor to God.

Ask: • What loving things can you do for people in your family? (Help my mom in the kitchen; take care of my baby brother; make sure my chores get done; say good morning to my dad.)

Say: Those are great ideas! Now let’s make drawings to show God that we want to honor him.

Break the sidewalk chalk into several small pieces. Distribute the chalk pieces among the children. If the weather is nice, go outside and draw pictures honoring God on the sidewalk. Children could draw pictures that show a loving action, such as setting the table, or that explain a characteristic of God, such as a heart representing God’s love. Write “Honor God” above the children’s drawings. Read the words aloud as you write them.

If the weather is bad, or if you can’t get permission to draw on your church’s sidewalks, have the children dip their chalk pieces into water and draw pictures on dark sheets of construction paper. Plan to hang the drawings in a prominent spot in the church entryway for all to see.

Say: Your drawings honor God. Look how beautiful they are! And when all the people come out of church, they’ll see your drawings and know that we’ve been honoring God today. We can honor God with our actions, our words, and our drawings. And we can do it every day. God wants us to honor him, and you can feel good because you’ve done just that.

Collect any remaining chalk pieces.
Closing

Prayer Honors

SUPPLIES: chalk drawings from the “Sidewalk Pictures” activity

Ask: • What did you learn today? (That what I say and do can honor God; that God wants us to honor him.)

Gather your class around the chalk pictures and close your class time with this prayer: God, we learned today that ➤you want us to honor you. God, we know that you are perfect and that you are worthy of being honored. Help us remember to honor you with everything we say and everything we do.

Have the children each pray, “God, I want to honor you.” Have children touch the shoulder of the child next to them when they’re finished or if they want to pass. Then close by saying, “In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage children and parents to use the handout to plan meaningful activities on this week’s topic. Follow up the “Growing Together” activities next week by asking children what their families did together.
Today your child learned that God wants us to honor him. The children discovered that their actions, their words, their artwork, and everything about themselves can honor God. Use these ideas to honor God in your home this week.

Quiet Honor

Darken the room and light several candles during your family’s worship time one night this week. Sing quiet songs that honor God, such as “Alleluia.” Give every family member a chance to complete the sentence, “God, I promise to honor you by...” End your time together with a few moments of silence.

Dinner Honors

Cover your dinner table with newsprint or freezer paper. Tape the edges of the paper to the underside of the table. Have your child use washable markers or crayons to draw a plate at each person’s place at the table. Have him or her draw things that honor each person. Maybe your child can honor Dad for his ability to keep the garden growing. Siblings can be honored for talents such as musical abilities and good grades. Serve sandwiches and relishes that can be eaten on the special tablecloth.

Offerings

Choose gifts with your child to give to God as a symbol of how you honor him. Give clothes to the needy to show you honor his command to give to the poor. Create a terrarium or a floral arrangement to show you recognize God’s creativity in making our world. Give time to your church and volunteer to clean the sanctuary after the worship service to show your respect for God’s house.

Prayer Time

Honor God this week with your prayers. Set aside a daily time to honor God with prayers of praise and thanksgiving. Choose a different setting each day. Pray in the laundry room and thank God for cleansing your sins. Thank God in the kitchen for wonderful food. Thank God in the bedroom for peace and rest. Praise God in the family room for good times and family fun.