

# Jesus Clears Merchants From the Temple

John 2:13-22



**Worship Theme:**




God deserves our sincere worship.

**Weaving Faith Into Life:**






Kids will worship God from their hearts.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<p><b>1</b> Let's Praise God! (about 25 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Sing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "King Jesus Is All" (track 13)</li> <li>• "Praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6) (track 11)</li> <li>• "I Believe" (John 1:12) (track 5)</li> <li>• "Children of God" (track 7)</li> <li>• "To God Be the Glory" (track 16)</li> </ul>	<p><b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>Songs From FaithWeaver; KidsOwn Worship DVD: "The Insinceres"</i></p> <p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Bible, CD player, TV, DVD player</p> 

**Preschool**

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<p><b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! (about 25 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Silly Stories</b> Listen to silly stories, and identify what's not right.</p>	
	<p><b>The Merchants Who Didn't Worship</b> Experience the scene at the Temple to learn why Jesus cleared the Temple.</p>	<p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Bible, 2 quarters per child</p>
	<p><b>* Meaning What We Say</b> Think of things they can do and say to worship God.</p>	

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! <i>(about 25 minutes)</i>	<b>* "A Sincere Worshipper"</b> Watch a video that tells the Bible story from the perspective of a Temple worshipper.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD: "A Sincere Worshipper"</i>  <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> TV, DVD player
	<b>* What's the Difference?</b> Sing a worship song two different ways to see the difference between sincere and insincere worship.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>Songs From FaithWeaver: "King Jesus Is All"</i> (track 13) <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> CD player 
	<b>A Revealed Heart</b> Create a piece of artwork, cover it with crayon, and scratch the crayon away.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>Songs From FaithWeaver</i> <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Paper, crayons, markers, paper clips, CD player 

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>3</b> Let's Pray! <i>(about 10 minutes)</i>	<b>The Offering</b> Offer their gifts to God.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Offering bowls, tissue for each child
	<b>Friend Prayers</b> Say a prayer with a friend.	
	<b>Closing Prayer</b> Listen to a prayer and benediction from 1 Chronicles 28:9.	

\* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together. Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Section 2. Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

# Jesus Clears Merchants From the Temple

John 2:13-22

Strict regulations guided the activity that was to take place in the Temple. This was to remain a holy place, the dwelling place of God. Unfortunately, the Jewish leaders, who strictly upheld laws that were convenient for them, saw an opportunity for profit in the animals to be sacrificed at the Temple. Any animal to be offered as a sacrifice was to be perfect, free from blemish. And people bringing animals for sacrifice surely chose the best from the flocks and herds. But when Jewish pilgrims brought their animals for sacrifice, the Temple inspectors always found something wrong with them. Then they would conveniently offer animals they had approved—for 25 times the going price outside the Temple.

They also were exchanging money—giving people the Temple currency in exchange for their Roman or other foreign coins. The Temple currency was required for paying the Temple tax. From Jesus' disdain of this practice, it is easy to assume that people were also being cheated in this process.

John paints a dramatic picture of Jesus clearing the Temple. With a whip, he drove people and animals alike from the Temple courts. The Greek word used here to describe Jesus' action suggests the use of strong force. One might even suggest that Jesus physically threw the merchants out of the Temple. We don't know if only the animals felt the sting of his whip or if the people did, too.

Jesus had seen the conditions in the Temple the night before (Mark 11:11). So it's likely that Jesus' response was not a purely emotional outburst. He saw what was going on in the Temple, he decided overnight what to do about it, and then he took appropriate action. Jesus was angry, and rightly so, but not out of control.

The Jews' response is interesting. They didn't deny that they had been doing wrong. No one asked Jesus why he did what he did. No one angrily struck back at Jesus out of righteous indignation. Their only response was to ask, "How can you prove you have the authority to do this?" When people know they're in the wrong, they often resort to legalistic maneuvering to try to blur the clarity of their guilt.

Obviously, the Jews in the Temple had a distorted idea of worship. Psalm 95:6 gives us a brief definition of true worship: bowing humbly before our God. God wants us to acknowledge him and our dependence on him. He wants us to serve him out of genuine gratitude for all he's done for us. And he wants us to love him in the best way we can, even though our love falls so far short of his unconditional love for us.

## **Devotion for Leaders**

Jesus' passion in this account reveals that he desires a *real* relationship with his people. Nothing—no money-changers or legalism—can get in the way of his love for you!

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** Does Jesus need to "drive out" wrong worship from your life? How have distracting thoughts, efforts to appear spiritual, or focus on self hindered your own sincere worship? Take a moment to physically bow down before God. Spend time silently clearing out the "temple courts" in your life and praising God with a sincere heart.

## Why We Worship for Leaders

Sincerity can be a hard concept to explain, but every child in your children's church knows the difference between being sincere and insincere. Every child has politely thanked an adult for a gift he or she didn't really want. And every child has been on the receiving end of insincerity, too. Children know that insincerity rings hollow and false. It's easy to make the jump from children's personal experiences with sincerity and insincerity to explaining that God deserves our sincere worship.

God doesn't skimp when it comes to us. God loves us fully. God saves us completely. God has provided revelation in abundance so that we might find him. God has provided an abundant and beautiful creation that sustains us and delights us. In return, we shouldn't skimp when it comes to worship. God deserves our allegiance; our hearts; our love; and our sincere, undistracted worship. Worship God today with a pure, sincere heart.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

**Let's Praise God!**—Before the worship session, set up a TV and DVD player. Cue the *KidsOwn Worship DVD* to the segment titled "The Insinceres." Watch the segment before you show it to the children.

**"A Sincere Worshipper"**—Watch the DVD segment titled "A Sincere Worshipper" before you show it to the elementary children.

**Preschool Activities**—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.



## 1 Let's Praise God!

Play *Songs From FaithWeaver, Spring 2012* as kids arrive. Greet children by name, and say to each one, "Is your heart ready to worship God today?"

When you've asked all the children if their hearts are ready to worship God, begin the session.

**Say** **Welcome to children's church, everyone! Today we're here to worship God. Let's start with a song that recognizes who Jesus is.**

Sing "King Jesus Is All."

Lyrics are in the back of this book.



**Say** **Great singing, everyone! God is pleased when we sing our hearts out for him. God is pleased when our hearts sincerely worship him. We sincerely worship when we really mean what we say. Let's watch a video about being sincere.**

Show the DVD segment titled "The Insinceres." The segment shows a family that does everything insincerely.

**Ask** • **Have you ever known people who were insincere? What did you think about them?** (I didn't think they cared about me; I thought they were fake; I felt unappreciated.)

- Ask** • **How do you think people react to us when we're insincere? when we're sincere?** (They don't like us when we're insincere; they don't think we mean what we say when we're insincere; when we're sincere, people feel accepted and important.)
- **Why do you think God wants us to be sincere when we worship him?** (God deserves our sincere worship; God wants us to worship from our hearts; it shows God that he's important to us.)

**Say** **Being insincere tells people that we don't think they're important. God deserves our sincere worship because he's important. By worshipping God with sincere hearts, we're letting him know that we recognize who he is and that we want to truly give him honor. Let's worship God right now with sincere hearts.**

Sing "Praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6).



**Track 11**

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Say** **Part of worshipping with a sincere heart is honestly telling God exactly what we think of him, exactly what we know to be true about him. Let's do that right now. Think about the things God has done. Think about all the things that make our God so good. Once you've thought of something, raise your hand. When I call on you, call out your answer to God. Tell him why you want to praise him.**

Give all the children an opportunity to call out their praises.

**Say** **The Bible tells us to shout aloud to God. That's just what we've been doing by calling out our praises. Let's sing about shouting our belief in God.**

Sing "I Believe" (John 1:12).



**Track 5**

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Say** **It's good to sing about God, to recognize his power and majesty, and to give him praise. But the most important part of worship is to really mean what we say. When we sing, "I believe in Jesus, and I know that I'm where I belong," it's important that we truly believe. When we sing these songs during our worship sessions, pay attention to the words and remember to sing them with sincere hearts. But there's another side to being sincere. Listen to what the Bible says.**

Read aloud Hebrews 10:22 from an easy-to-understand Bible translation such as the New Living Translation.

- Ask** • **Have you ever had a guilty conscience? How does it feel to have a guilty conscience?** (I felt awful when I hurt my brother; when I lied to my parents, I knew I shouldn't have done that.)
- **When you've wronged someone, are you eager to spend time with that person or would you rather hide? Why?** (I'd rather hide, because I feel bad for what I've done; hide, because I know

that person's going to be mad at me; spend time with that person, so I can apologize and feel better about it.)

**Say** When we've wronged someone, we often feel dirty inside. We want to hide from the person we've wronged. The Bible says our relationship with God works the same way as our relationships with people. When we've sinned against God, it can be hard to spend time with him and worship him because we feel guilty and dirty. But God sets us free from our guilty consciences when he forgives us. When that happens, we can draw near to God with sincere and pure hearts. Let's thank God for making us part of his family.

Sing "Children of God."

Lyrics are in the back of this book.



Track 7

**Say** Now let's thank God for all the great things he has done. Remember to sing your hearts out for God.

Sing "To God Be the Glory."

Lyrics are in the back of this book.



Track 16

**Pray** God, thank you for all the great things you have done. We thank you for sending your Son, Jesus. We thank you for forgiving us. God, we want to sincerely worship you today. Our hearts are full of praise for you. Help us learn more about worshipping you with sincere hearts. Amen.

## 2 Let's Learn the Point!

### Preschool Activities, pages 25-26

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (\*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

### Elementary Activities

#### \* "A Sincere Worshipper"

**Say** There's a story in the Bible about a time Jesus encountered people who weren't worshipping God sincerely.

**Ask** • What do you think Jesus thought about these people? (He was angry with them; he was probably sad that they weren't worshipping God.)

**Say** Let's watch a video that'll help us understand what happened.



Check out the FaithWeaver Worship DVD included with your KidsOwn Worship

Kit! Use these segments to help you lead worship with your children each week.



Show the DVD segment titled "A Sincere Worshipper." The segment tells the story of John 2:13-22 from the perspective of a worshipper who was subjected to the exploitation of the Temple merchants.

- Ask**
- **Why was Jesus so angry about what happened?** (Because God's house is a place of worship; because people weren't sincere in their worship, they were selling things for their own benefit.)
  - **What did the merchants do that was wrong?** (They used the Temple to sell their own things; they weren't worshipping God.)
  - **What do you think the merchants felt and thought about God?** (It doesn't seem like they cared; they might not have thought God deserved their worship; they thought selling things was more important than worshipping God.)

**Say** **Worshipping God is one of the most important things we can do as Christians. How we worship God shows him how we feel about him. God cares about the state of our hearts when we worship him. God wants us to worship him with pure and sincere hearts. Let's learn more.**



### \* *What's the Difference?*

**Say** **Let's contrast sincere and insincere worship to help us understand why God wants our worship to be sincere.**

**Let's sing a worship song. While we sing, let's be insincere and distracted. Think about what you'll do this afternoon. Don't pay any attention to the motions, and pay a lot of attention to what your friends are doing. Whatever you do, don't focus on God. Ready? Let's sing "King Jesus Is All."**

Sing "King Jesus Is All."

Lyrics are in the back of this book.



- Ask**
- **What did you think about while we were singing?** (What I'll have for lunch this afternoon; about inviting my friends over for a sleepover next weekend; I thought about the birthday presents I got yesterday.)
  - **How did you feel while we were singing?** (I didn't feel anything; I was distracted by different things; I felt bored.)
  - **How would you have felt if we'd been singing this song to you?** (I would have been annoyed; I would have felt like no one cared about me.)
  - **How do you think God would feel if this were the way we sang our worship songs to him?** (He'd feel sad that we weren't really worshipping him; God would probably want us to focus more on him.)

*(continued on page 27)*

# Jesus Clears Merchants From the Temple

John 2:13-22

## Worship Theme:



God deserves our sincere worship.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

None is necessary.

## Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo suggest ideas for worshipping God during "Meaning What We Say."
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



## Silly Stories

Gather the children on the floor.

**Say** I'm going to tell you a story. Listen carefully because something silly will happen. When you hear something silly in the story, raise your hand. Ready? Here we go.

One night I was getting ready to go to sleep. I put on my pajamas. Then I hung up my clothes neatly. Then I went into the bathroom to brush my teeth. I squeezed some spaghetti sauce onto my toothbrush and brushed my teeth.

By this time the children will have raised their hands.

**Ask** • What was silly about this story?  
• Why was it silly?

**Say** That's right! We don't use spaghetti sauce to brush our teeth. We use toothpaste. Now listen to another story.

One day I decided that it was time to clean the house. First I picked up all the coats and toys that were all over the living room floor. Then I got out my dust cloth. I dusted all the furniture.

Then I got out the lawn mower because the grass in the living room was getting too long.

**Ask** • What was silly about this story?  
• Why was it silly?

**Say** That's right. Grass doesn't grow in living rooms. We don't need to use the lawn mower inside. Now here's one more story.

One day I decided to go to the grocery store to buy food for dinner. I was so hungry. But it took me forever to get to the store because the turtles in the car in front of me were driving so slowly.

**Ask** • What was silly about this story?  
• Why was it silly?

**Say** That's right. Turtles don't drive cars. These were silly stories. In each story something happened that we didn't expect. Something happened that wasn't right. These stories were just silly stories to make us giggle. But sometimes in real life, things happen that just aren't right. Let's listen to a story from the Bible that talks about something that happened at the Temple that just wasn't right.

## The Merchants Who Didn't Worship

**Say** The Bible story I'm going to tell you happened at the Temple in Jerusalem. In Bible times people went to the Temple to worship God. But we go to church to worship God.

**Ask**

- What do we do at church to worship and learn about God?
- What kinds of things would be silly to do at church?

**Say** When we come to church, we're coming to worship God and to learn about him. But some people in our story didn't understand that. They did something at church that was very wrong.

Open your Bible to John 2:13-22.

**Say** One day Jesus went to the Temple in Jerusalem. He was saddened by what he saw. In those days, people brought animals to give to God just as we bring money today to put in the offering plates for God. People bought their animals when they got to the Temple.

Let's pretend that you are all worshippers who have traveled a long way to the Temple. Each of you has decided to buy a sheep to give to God. So you all brought a quarter because you know that a sheep costs exactly one quarter. You also know that it'll cost you another quarter to buy food in Jerusalem, so you've decided to take two quarters with you to Jerusalem.

Distribute two quarters to each child.

**Say** The people in Jerusalem knew that many people came to the Temple needing to buy animals to give to God. So there were shops and merchants who sold animals to the people. But the merchants cared more about making money than they did about helping people worship God. I'll pretend to be the merchant with sheep to sell. Each of you can come to me and pretend to try to buy a sheep.

Have each child come to you to buy a sheep. But tell each child that in Jerusalem, sheep cost two quarters. Tell children you'll sell them a sheep only if they'll pay quarters.

**Say** The people traveled many, many miles just to worship God at the Temple. But buying a sheep would cost all the money they had. They wouldn't have enough money left to buy food. But the merchants didn't care. They knew that the people had traveled all this way to worship God. The merchants knew that it was so important to worship God that the people would give them more money than the sheep was worth.

**Ask**

- How do you think the people felt when the merchants wanted so much money for the sheep?
- Do you think the merchants cared very much about God?

**Say** The merchants really wanted to make money. They decided to take advantage of the people who wanted to worship God. The merchants didn't really care about God, so they did something that wasn't right. Instead of helping people worship God, they tricked people out of their money. This made Jesus very sad and very angry.

When Jesus saw what was going on in the Temple, he made all of the merchants leave. That's because Jesus wants people to worship him with their whole hearts. God should be more important to us than anything. Jesus wants us to care most about worshipping him. That's called worshipping God with a sincere heart. Let's worship God right now with sincere hearts.

Collect the quarters from the children. Count them carefully; coins can be a choking hazard for children age 3 and younger.

### Preschool Leader Tip

Watch carefully throughout this activity to make sure children don't put the coins in their mouths. Coins can be a choking hazard for children age 3 and younger. You may want to use larger play money coins to prevent this possibility.

## \* Meaning What We Say

**Say** When we worship God with sincere hearts, we really mean what we say about God. God doesn't want us to pretend to worship him. God wants us to really worship him with our whole hearts. So let's worship God right now. Let's think of things we can do and things we can say to worship God. We'll take the time to do everything we can to worship God right here and right now.

**Ask**

- What can we do and say right now to worship God?

Encourage the children to think of things such as singing a song to God or telling God how much we love him. Take time to do each child's suggestion.

**Say** God is pleased when we worship him with sincere hearts. God is pleased right now because we've been worshipping him with sincere hearts. Let's tell God that we want to worship him one more time. Ready?

Lead the children in saying, "God, we want to worship you."

(continued from page 24)

- **Why do you think God wants our worship to be sincere?** (He deserves our worship; it shows him that we love him.)

**Say** ▶ **Let's sing the song again, but this time, let's have sincere hearts.**

**Ask** ▶ **What will be the difference when we sing this time?** (We'll think about God; we'll focus on him; we won't look around.)

Sing "King Jesus Is All!"

Lyrics are in the back of this book.



**Track 13**

**Ask** ▶ **What was the difference in how you felt and what you thought about when we sang the second time?** (I thought about what the words meant; I felt closer to God the second time.)

- **How do you think God liked our second version of the song?** (He knew we meant what we were singing; he was happy with our worship.)

**Say** ▶ **The way we feel and what we think is so important when we worship. God wants us to focus on him. God wants us to remember his wonderful deeds and to praise him for them. God wants our worship to be sincere and heartfelt. Let's talk to God about our hearts.**

## *A Revealed Heart*

**Say** ▶ **The Bible says God knows what's inside our hearts. If we worship God sincerely, he knows that. If we're only pretending, God knows that, too. This next activity will be an opportunity for you to talk with God about what's really in your heart.**

**I'll give you paper and markers. Draw pictures or big blocks of color that represent what's in your heart. You might draw hearts to represent love, or you might draw with the color yellow because you feel sunny. Then take a dark-colored crayon and color over what you've drawn. Press hard, and cover your whole picture with crayon.**

Distribute the supplies, and give the children five or six minutes to work. Play the *Songs From FaithWeaver, Spring 2012* CD while kids work, and encourage them to listen to the music and to draw without talking. Also encourage them to work quickly.

**Say** ▶ **While you're drawing, tell God what you really think. You can't lie to God because he already knows what you're thinking. You might come to realize that you haven't been sincerely worshipping God. If that's true, tell God. Ask for his forgiveness.**

After five or six minutes, call time. Each child's entire picture should be covered with crayon. Distribute paper clips. Have the children bend one end of the paper clip out and gently scratch away the crayon to reveal a brightly colored design underneath.



**Say** While you're scratching away, thank God for knowing your heart. Ask God to help you worship him sincerely with a pure heart.

Give kids a few minutes to scratch away the crayon from their pictures.

**Ask** • **Were your pictures prettier when they were covered up with crayon or when you scratched the crayon away? Why?** (When I scratched the crayon away, because the bright colors showed through; I made a pretty design by scratching the crayon away; I only used one dark color of crayon, but when I scratched it away, I could see the many colors underneath.)

• **How is scratching the dark crayon away like being honest and sincere?** (When we're not sincere, we're covering something up; when we're honest, it's like showing our true colors.)

**Say** God wants us to worship him sincerely. That means God wants us to be honest with him when we worship. We can praise God when we're happy or when we're sad or angry. We can say, "God, I'm so happy that I want to praise your name." Or we can say, "God, right now I'm angry. I don't know what to do, but I know you'll help me. I worship you for that." We don't have to be perfect to worship God. We just have to worship God with honest and sincere hearts. Let's worship sincerely right now.

### 3

## Let's Pray!

### *The Offering*

Give each child a tissue. Have children tear the tissues into heart shapes. Tissues generally come in two-ply thicknesses. Have the children separate the layers of the tissues so they have a heart shape that's only one ply thick.

**Say** See how easily we can see through these hearts? The Bible tells us that God sees inside our hearts. He knows what we're thinking and feeling. He knows when we're worshipping him with sincere hearts. And he knows when we're just going through the motions. God has done so much for us, and he deserves our honest, sincere worship. As we take the offering this morning, talk to God. Think about promising God that you'll worship him with a sincere heart. If you're ready, you can make that promise to God.

Take the offering. Have the children take their hearts home as reminders to worship God with sincere hearts.

### *Friend Prayers*

Have children form pairs. Pair younger children with older children. Have pairs decide who will pray first and who will pray second. Then help the children pray

for each other by guiding them through the following prayer.

Have the children bow their heads. Then have them repeat what you say.

**Pray** ▶ **Dear God,**  
**Thank you for my friend, [child's name].**  
**Thank you for loving my friend.**  
**God, help my friend to love you and to worship you with a sincere heart.**  
**Help my friend to know that you are always close by.**  
**Help my friend when things are hard this week.**  
**Help me to remember to pray for my friend this week. Amen.**

Then repeat the prayer for the other partner.

## *Closing Prayer*

**Pray** ▶ **God, today we've learned to be honest when we worship you. We've learned to be sincere when we worship you. Help us to always remember your goodness to us. And help us to remember all the good things you have done. Let these things motivate us to worship you with sincere hearts. Amen.**

Close with this benediction, paraphrased from 1 Chronicles 28:9.

**Say** ▶ **And you, children of God, acknowledge God and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek God, you will find him. Amen.**