**☐** Matthew 22:34-40; 23:1-36

Leader Guide for Grades 1 & 2

# **Teachers Dig In**

# Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Matthew 22:34-40; 23:1-36
- <u>In This Passage:</u> The Pharisees often try to trick Jesus into saying something wrong. In this story, they try to trick him by asking him what the most important commandment is. Jesus gives a great answer and then talks about how hypocritical they are. He calls them "whitewashed tombs"—beautiful on the outside but dead on the inside. Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him by how we act. He wants us to genuinely love him.
- Bible Point: Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him.
- <u>Summary Verse:</u> "But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).

# **Dig Deeper**

- You'll Be Teaching: Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him. Kids usually
  know the "right" answer. It's easy for them to talk about making the right choices
  in Sunday school. Help kids see that talk—or even actions—isn't what loving
  Jesus is all about. He wants us to genuinely love him from the inside out.
- Think About: What does your faith look like on the outside? on the inside?

## Dig In to Prayer

 Pray that Jesus will capture kids' hearts so their love for him is what motivates their actions.

## **Quick Tip**

 One way we may inadvertently encourage Pharisaical behavior in kids is through Bible verse memory. Storing God's Word in your heart out of love for him is great! Memorizing the words to earn a lollipop may be more about show than love. And being strict with kids about getting every word exactly right rather than understanding the point of the verse can lead to surface-level Christianity.

### This Lesson at a Glance



### **MUSIC VIDEO**

Kids sing songs of praise to God.

# **Supplies**

- "Nothing That Can Separate Me" (watch or download <u>here</u>)
- "A Friend We Can Trust" (watch or download <u>here</u>)
- "Thanks, God" (watch or download here)



# **TALK-ABOUT VIDEO**

Kids watch a video and discuss the Bible Point.

### **Supplies**

"100% Real Fruit" teaching video (watch or download here)



# **OPENING**

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

# **Supplies**

Bible



# **DEEPER BIBLE**

Kids give each other "gifts."

# **Supplies**

- clean "trash" items (1 per child)
- gift wrap supplies
- variety of stickers (1 per child)
- Bible

## **Easy Prep**

- Choose trash items that are clean, such as wrappers, small empty boxes, broken CDs (avoid ones with sharp edges), or old crayons. Choose gift wrap supplies such as wrapping paper, gift bows, gift bags, colorful tissue paper, and tape.
- Create 2 stations for wrapping the trash items by dividing the trash items and gift wrap supplies in half and placing a set of supplies on each side of your room.



## **CORE BIBLE AT HOME**

Only available in One Room class format.



# **CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY**

Kids play a game of pretend and real, and they explore what Jesus said about loving others.

## **Supplies**

- Bible
- clear cups (1 per child)

- washable markers
- wet wipes
- small snack or candy (1 item per child)

# **Easy Prep**

Use the washable markers to mark up the insides of the clear cups.
 (Even just a few marks will work.)



# **LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP**

Kids use their bodies to show love to Jesus.

# Supplies

Friends With God Story Bible (optional) (order here)



# **OBJECT LESSON**

Kids use a UV black light to observe tonic and regular water.

# **Supplies**

- bottle of water (1 for every 5 kids)
- bottle of tonic water (1 for every 5 kids)
- portable UV black light (available for \$8-\$10 at stores like Walmart or Target)

# **Easy Prep**

 Remove labels from both the tonic and regular water bottles so you can't see a difference between the two.



# **HIGH-ENERGY GAME**

Kids try to keep a balloon in the air.

### Supplies

- inflated balloons (1 for every 4 kids)
- music
- music player



# **LOW-ENERGY GAME**

Kids play Charades.

# **Supplies**

"Animal Charades" handout (1 for every 10 kids) (download here)

### **Easy Prep**

Cut apart the handout to create cards.



### **CRAFT**

Kids make masks.

# Supplies

- paper plates (1 for every 2 children)
- craft sticks (1 per child)
- crayons
- gems
- craft feathers
- alitter

- washable glue
- Glue Dots
- box cutters

# **Easy Prep**

- Cut the paper plates in half. On each half, use a box cutter to create 2 eye holes (approximately 1¾ inches wide and ¾ inches high) near the straight edge of the plate and about ½ inch apart. Make sure to place a piece of wood or thick piece of cardboard under the plates while using the box cutter to avoid damaging the surface beneath.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.

\*Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery
Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



[10 min]

# **Supplies**

- "Nothing That Can Separate Me" (watch or download <u>here</u>)
- "A Friend We Can Trust" (watch or download here)
- "Thanks, God" (watch or download here)

## Tip

 Don't have internet in your classroom? That's okay! You can choose your own worship songs from our Best Of Dig In Music DVD here.

# **Sing Songs to God**

Sing the three songs in any order.



[10 min]

## **Supplies**

"100% Real Fruit" teaching video (watch or download <u>here</u>)

# **Tip**

 Don't have internet in your classroom? That's okay! You can download the videos before class using the "download" button at the link provided, or purchase DVDs <u>here</u>.

Discuss and Watch "100% Real Fruit"

Say: Today we're learning that <u>Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him</u>. The Pharisees acted like they were the best and loved God a lot. But really, they just wanted to show off.

In our video today, we'll see how some fruits and vegetables try to show off and act like they're the best.

Watch "100% Real Fruit."

Ask: • How were the fruits and vegetables showing off?

- Why wouldn't you want to fall for a fake fruit pretending to be real?
- How were the fruits acting like the Pharisees?

Say: The Pharisees acted like they had a real love for God. But Jesus knew it was all fake. <u>Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him</u>. He wants our love for him to be about *him*, not about impressing others.



[5 min]

### **Supplies**

Bible

#### Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids high-five three of their friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids whisper the "Happy Birthday" song.
- Collect the offering.

### Introduce the Lesson

Say: Today we'll learn that <u>Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him</u>. Jesus wants us to love him *for real*. We'll hear about some men who pretended to be good friends with God when they really weren't. Let's talk about pretend things we wish were real.

#### **Share**

- Share about something pretend that you wish was real. You might wish the fake
  fruit in a church decoration was real because you're feeling hungry, or you
  might wish a toy car was real because your car is having some mechanical
  issues. You might also wish that the broom in the fairy tale Beauty and the
  Beast was real so it would sweep your room for you.
- In leader-led small groups, have kids share about something pretend that *they* wish was real. They might wish an animated character in a movie was real, that their favorite stuffed toy was a real animal, or that their fort in the backyard was a real space station.
- After small groups have discussed, have adult or teen helpers share with the whole group what they talked about in their small groups.

### **Summarize**

Open a Bible, and say: Jesus wants our love for him to be real. He doesn't want us to pretend to love him. He wants us to be real friends with him. The Bible helps us know what it means to be real friends with Jesus. It's one way Jesus talks to us. Let's listen to God as we hear from the Bible today.

Pray, thanking Jesus that he doesn't want us to pretend to love him.



[15 min]

### **Supplies**

- clean "trash" items (1 per child)
- gift wrap supplies
- variety of stickers (1 per child)
- Bible

# **Easy Prep**

- Choose trash items that are clean, such as wrappers, small empty boxes, broken CDs (avoid ones with sharp edges), or old crayons. Choose gift wrap supplies such as wrapping paper, gift bows, gift bags, colorful tissue paper, and tape.
- Create 2 stations for wrapping the trash items by dividing the trash items and gift wrap supplies in half and placing a set of supplies on each side of your room.

# **Gift Wrap Items**

Say: Giving presents to people we care about is so fun! Today we're going to wrap presents for each other. I have the gift items already picked out for you to choose from, and you'll get to wrap the presents and make them look really nice for someone else in our class.

- Divide kids into two groups. You and a helper can each lead a group to one of the gift-wrapping stations. Remind kids to talk quietly to keep the gifts a surprise. As kids realize what the "gift" items are, explain that they'll get to pretend the presents are really exciting and wrap the presents to look really nice.
- Help each child choose one of the items and wrap it as nicely as he or she can with the supplies you've provided.
- After everyone has finished wrapping, help kids each find a child from the other group to exchange gifts with. When kids receive the gifts, have them share what fun gift items they hope might be inside before unwrapping the items.
- Allow time for both partners to unwrap their presents.

Ask: • What fun gifts did you get, friends? Allow kids to show you the items they unwrapped.

Say: Those aren't very fun presents after all. But they looked so nice on the outside with the beautiful wrapping paper and bows! That reminds me of our Bible story today. The Pharisees made themselves look really good on the outside, just like your presents looked really good on the outside. They wore the right clothes and did all the right things to make other people think they were really good people. But in their hearts, the Pharisees didn't care about people. Jesus didn't like that—he doesn't want us to pretend to love him or other people. He wants us to really love and not hide mean things in our hearts.

Read Matthew 22:37-39.

Say: The Bible says when we love God and love others, we should love with all our hearts.

# **Exchange Stickers**

Say: Now let's really show love to each other like Jesus wants us to.

Have each group of kids gather back at their gift station, and let each child choose a sticker to give to his or her partner from the other group. Encourage kids to choose a sticker that they think the other child will want. When kids give their partners the stickers, have them give a hug and say, "Jesus loves you!"

Say: We can show God's love on the outside with our words and our actions, and we can also have God's love inside us in our hearts!



[20 min]

To use this feature, please ask your DIG IN Director to create a **One Room** classroom. For instructions and tips on creating a classroom for at-home lessons, click <u>here</u>.



## **CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY**

Matthew: Jesus Talks to the Pharisees (Matthew 22:34-40; 23:1-36)

[20 min]

### **Supplies**

- Bible
- clear cups (1 per child)
- washable markers
- wet wipes
- small snack or candy (1 item per child)

## **Easy Prep**

 Use the washable markers to mark up the insides of the clear cups. (Even just a few marks will work.)

# Play a Pretending Game

Show the Bible. Say: The Bible says <u>Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him</u>. Jesus wants us to really love him and be friends with him. If we're just pretending and we don't really love Jesus, that makes him sad. Let's do something to help us think about that.

Find one object that you don't love in the room. For example, you might pick up a roll of toilet paper, a pencil, or a toy you don't particularly enjoy playing with. Say: In the Bible, there were some people called Pharisees (FARE-ih-seez) who said they loved people, but they weren't telling the truth. They only said it with their mouths, but they felt something different in their hearts. That's like if I said, (show a big smile) "I love this [name of the thing you picked up]." Pause. I don't really love it. I'm only pretending to love it.

Have the kids each find something *they* don't love in the room. It might be a toy they don't enjoy playing with, or it might be something random, like a carpet square or a basket. Ask kids to practice pretending by smiling and saying, "I love this lobiectl."

Share how it felt for you to pretend to love something that you don't really love. You might share that you felt funny saying you love the object, knowing it wasn't true. Or you might've felt sad or guilty about not being honest.

Ask: • How did you feel, pretending you love something you really don't love?

Say: Pretending can be fun when we're pretending to be a princess or a king in a castle. It's okay to play pretend. But it's no fun to pretend we love someone we really don't love. And <u>Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him</u>. Jesus wants us to really love him. Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to be good friends with him; he wants us to *really* be good friends with him. Let's do our activity again, but this time we'll each find something we really love.

Have the children each find something or someone they "love." It might be their favorite toy, a family member or good friend in the class, or a favorite snack you have in your class. If there's nothing they love in the room, they can share about something outside the room. It's okay not to get into the technical definitions of love. The idea with this activity is to help children understand the concept of being genuine. Kids may feel like they really "love" a toy, and this is a steppingstone to help them make a connection to the idea of being authentic.

Invite children to smile, say "I love [object or person]," and briefly explain why.

Ask: • How did it feel to tell what you really love?

Say: It's much better to tell what we really love. We know we're telling the truth, and the things we love can help us feel happy inside. Jesus also wants to know we really love him inside our hearts, too.

## **Practice Real Love**

Say: The Bible says the Pharisees looked good on the outside, but Jesus said some of their hearts were mean and ugly. It's kind of like the Pharisees had a big mess inside their hearts. They pretended to be kind and loving on the outside, but inside their hearts they were selfish. Jesus said he wants us to really be kind and loving, not to pretend. Let's practice really being kind and loving.

We can be loving by giving hugs and high-fives. Lead children to give hugs or high-fives to a few other children in the class.

Say: We can be kind by telling someone something nice. Encourage children to say nice things they think about another child in the class. You can ensure every child gets a compliment by giving compliments to any children who didn't get one from another child.

Say: We can show love by happily sharing things we enjoy with others. Sometimes we want to keep stuff all to ourselves, but when we give it away, that shows love. Give each child a snack or candy that he or she can share with someone else. Encourage kids to share happily.

Say: Jesus says we can be kind and loving without making a big show of it. The Pharisees wanted everyone to see and praise them when they did something good. They liked to do kind things so they could look good to others. They didn't care as much about really helping others. When we help others, we can do it quietly and with real kindness in our hearts.

## Clean a Cup

Say: Let's hear one more thing Jesus said about the Pharisees. Give each child a cup and a wet wipe, and encourage children to "clean" *only* the outsides of the cups. After a minute, say: You've been working pretty hard, but your cups look the same. Why do you think the cups aren't getting clean?

The insides of the cups are dirty, and you cleaned only the outsides of the cups. Jesus said the Pharisees were like that. They made themselves look good only on the outside so people would think they were great, but their hearts were really dirty. That's like if Mom tells me to clean up my toys, and I shove all of them under my bed. I know Mom wants me to put the toys back in my toy box or on the shelf. And it looks like I cleaned, but there's still a big mess. I just moved the mess where no one could see it. The Pharisees didn't try to clean their hearts. Inside they were mean and dirty. Have kids use the wet wipes to clean the insides of the cups.

Say: Jesus wants our hearts to be clean, too. And when we love Jesus, he'll clean our hearts so we're clean and shiny on the inside. He'll help us be loving and kind. He doesn't want us to pretend to love him. He wants us to really love him and to really love and care for others.



[5 min]

### **Supplies**

Friends With God Story Bible (optional) (order <u>here</u>)

### Pose

Say: Today we heard about some men who hid what was really and truly in their hearts. Lead kids to show a pose that's not loving. You might have them strike a pose with crossed arms because that makes them seem unfriendly. But Jesus didn't want them to pretend. He wanted to show who they really were. Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him either. Instead of crossing our arms, let's strike a pose to show Jesus our real love for him.

- Show kids several poses they might use to show their real love for Jesus. For example, they might hug themselves, reach for Jesus with their hands in the air, or put their hand over their hearts.
- Invite children to choose the pose they want to use to show Jesus they really love him.

# **Pray**

Say: Let's talk to Jesus while we hold these poses. Lead children in a short prayer, thanking Jesus for knowing who we really are. Ask Jesus to help you not to pretend but to show him your love with the words you speak and the choices you make.

If you have extra time, spend some time reading today's Bible story, "A Gang of Snakes—by the Pharisees," from the *Friends With God Story Bible*.

Say: This week, remember that you can talk to Jesus and show him your real love anytime. Show him your love by spending some time talking to him, singing to him, or listening for him to talk to you. Come back next week so we can learn more about Jesus' love together.



[10 min]

### **Supplies**

- bottle of water (1 for every 5 kids)
- bottle of tonic water (1 for every 5 kids)
- portable UV black light (available for \$8-\$10 at stores like Walmart or Target)

### **Easy Prep**

• Remove labels from both the tonic and regular water bottles so you can't see a difference between the two.

#### **Observe Water**

Form groups of five, and give each group a bottle of water and a bottle of tonic water. Begin by demonstrating with your own bottles.

Ask: • What do you think is inside both of these bottles? Invite kids to look closely at their bottles and share their thoughts.

Say: It looks like both are filled with water. But let's do an experiment to see if one is special.

- Place both bottles on a table in front of you so kids can see.
- Dim the lights, and shine the UV black light on both bottles.
- The regular water will look the same, but under the UV black light, the tonic water will glow!
- Pass the UV black light to each group, and let kids take turns discovering which
  of their bottles has tonic water.

#### Talk About It

Say: Without the special light, both waters look the same—but they're not! The glowing water is called *tonic water*. Tonic water has a special ingredient that makes it glow.

Ask: • How is that like the Pharisees in our Bible story?

Say: In our Bible story, the Pharisees *looked* kind and helpful, but Jesus knew the truth. Jesus knew that they were just pretending. The Pharisees needed Jesus' love to help them *really* be kind to others.

Hold up the UV black light to the tonic water again. Say: This special light showed how the water was different. When we really love Jesus, people can see that we're different, too!

Point out behaviors of kids in your class that show their love for Jesus. Perhaps you saw them share toys, help pass out snacks, or give their parents a hug.

Ask: • How can people see that we're different because we love Jesus? Help kids with answers such as people seeing us be kind and helpful with friends or quickly forgiving brothers or sisters who hurt our feelings.

Say: <u>Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him</u>. When we really love him, people will see that we're different.



[10 min]

### **Supplies**

- inflated balloons (1 for every 4 kids)
- music
- music player

### Tip

 You can purchase downloadable music and other items to enhance your DIG IN program here.

#### Move the Balloons

Say: Let's try to keep these balloons moving around our room without letting them touch the floor. It may seem easy, but we can use only our heads!

- Show kids how to hold their arms behind their backs and use their heads to keep the balloons in the air.
- Play high-energy music as they work together to keep the balloons up.
- When the music stops, call out a different body part that they can use. Repeat, calling out different body parts. Ideas include elbows, knees, and shoulders.

Say: Using just part of our bodies is hard. This time, we can use our whole bodies to keep the balloons in the air. Play one more time, and cheer for kids as they use their whole bodies however they choose to keep the balloons in the air.

## **Talk About It**

Say: In our game, we tried to keep the balloons in the air with just part of our bodies. But Jesus wants us to love him with everything we are! We love Jesus with our mouths when we tell others he loves them.

Ask: • What kinds of things can we say or not say to love people with our mouths?

Say: We can love Jesus with our minds when we think about Jesus throughout our day. And we can love Jesus with our hands when we help others. Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him or others. He wants us to love with our whole selves!



[10 min]

## **Supplies**

"Animal Charades" handout (1 for every 10 kids) (download <u>here</u>)

### **Easy Prep**

Cut apart the handout to create cards.

# **Play Charades**

Say: In our Bible story, the Pharisees were good at pretending. Let's play a game where we'll pretend to be animals.

- Choose a volunteer to go first. He or she will choose a card and then pretend to be that animal. Encourage the child to move like the animal without making noises.
- The other kids will guess the animal.
- Have kids take turns choosing and acting out the other cards. Continue until
  everyone gets a turn to pretend. If needed, use cards more than once.

#### Talk About It

Say: In our game, we pretended to be something we're not. In our Bible story, the Pharisees pretended to be something they weren't, too. They pretended to love people, but they really didn't. They pretended to be kind, but they really weren't very nice to people. Jesus didn't like that because Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him. Jesus wants us to really love him.

Let's do the opposite of pretending now. We won't pretend to be animals. We'll be ourselves, and we'll use our real body parts to tell Jesus that we love him. Without talking, show kids how to say "I love you" to Jesus with motions. Have them:

- point to themselves (I)
- give themselves a hug (love)
- point up, as if pointing to Jesus (you)

Have kids practice several times.



[20 min]

# **Supplies**

- paper plates (1 for every 2 children)
- craft sticks (1 per child)
- crayons
- gems
- craft feathers
- glitter
- washable glue
- Glue Dots
- box cutters

# **Easy Prep**

- Cut the paper plates in half. On each half, use a box cutter to create 2 eye holes (approximately 1¾ inches wide and ¾ inches high) near the straight edge of the plate and about ½ inch apart. Make sure to place a piece of wood or thick piece of cardboard under the plates while using the box cutter to avoid damaging the surface beneath.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.



### Make a Mask

Say: The Pharisees pretended they were really good people on the outside. But in their hearts, they didn't really love God. It was like they were wearing masks and hiding who they really were inside. Show kids the sample craft.

Say: <u>Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him</u>. It's fun to use our imaginations and play pretend, but we don't have to pretend to be someone we're not with Jesus. He knows our hearts and that we really love him. Let's make masks to remember how the Pharisees tried to hide the unkindness inside them.

- Give each child a paper plate half, and have kids color the bottom of the plates with crayons.
- Then help each child flip over the plate and attach a craft stick to a corner of the plate with a Glue Dot to create a handle for the mask.
- Let kids decorate the front of their masks by gluing on gems and feathers or drawing designs with washable glue and shaking glitter over the glue.
- While they work, ask kids about a favorite costume they've gotten to wear to play pretend.

Say: We made masks to remind us how the Pharisees tried to hide themselves. They pretended to be loving and kind, but they were ugly inside. When we play pretend with our masks, we're just doing it for fun. We're not trying to pretend we're loving or kind. We know Jesus can see what's behind our play masks. We know Jesus doesn't want us to pretend to love him or others. When we're being loving or kind to others, we're being real.