



Jesus Defends God's Honor

8

Key Theme

- Jesus rebukes false teachers.

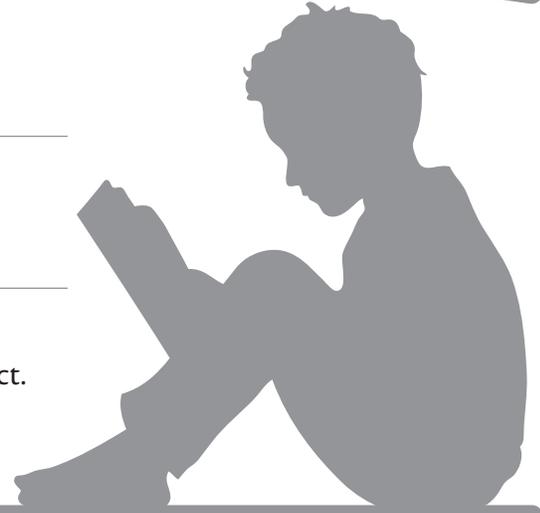
Key Passages

- John 2:13–16; Matthew 23:23, 23:25, 23:27

Objective

Students will be able to:

- Describe what Jesus did when God was not treated with respect.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will practice the memory verse by completing the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, have them recite the verse to a partner or to the class.



Activity 1: Jesus Defends God's Honor Class Notes

Students will fill out the Jesus Defends God's Honor Class Notes as you study the lesson.



Studying God's Word

Jesus defended God's honor when He drove the sellers and money changers out of the Temple and when He confronted the religious leaders because they were hypocrites—pretending to be holy while their hearts were wicked.



Activity 2: Pick a Point Review Game

Divide students into teams. Teams will take turns answering questions. They will earn points for correct answers by picking numbers from the cup.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print the Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student
- Pencils



JESUS DEFENDS GOD'S HONOR CLASS NOTES

- Print one Jesus Defends God's Honor Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- Jesus Defends God's Honor Class Notes for each student
- Jesus Defends God's Honor Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one Lesson Illustration from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use during the lesson.
- Print one "Woe to you!" Sign from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use during the lesson.

- One Lesson Illustration
- One "Woe to you!" Sign
- Student Take Home Sheets



PICK A POINT REVIEW GAME

- Print the Pick a Point Review Game Components from the Resource DVD-ROM. Keep the Questions sheet for your use.
- Cut apart the Game Point Cards, and put them into a cup, bag, or basket.

- Pick a Point Review Questions sheet
- Game Point Cards in a cup, bag, or basket



MEMORY VERSE REVIEW GAME (OPTIONAL)

- Print, preferably onto cardstock, and cut out one copy of the Memory Verse Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Save the cards for use in future lessons.
- This is an optional activity to use in some or all of the lessons to review the memory verse if time allows.

- Memory Verse Cards printed on cardstock
- Tape or poster putty



Memory Verse

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read Matthew 5–7 along with this background.

In Lesson 7 we discussed and studied Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount. In it Jesus addressed the religious leaders who had distorted the Law and made it a list of good works by which self-righteousness could be attained. Many of the Jews perceived God’s laws as a call to outward appearance only. But Jesus called attention to the heart issues. He insisted that real holiness comes from a heart that is striving toward obedience and holiness inwardly—a heart desiring to please God. Such a heart comes only through being born again.

We have discussed that Jesus came to earth to do the will of the Father. He was God in the flesh, possessing all of the attributes of deity, though veiling His glory. Christ’s divine attributes include justice, holiness, and truth. The passages we are examining this week present Jesus as one who continued to defend the honor of His Father and who showed God’s anger against the sin of distorting and maligning God’s Word.

Much of the corruption Jesus encountered was among the religious leaders. They had set aside God’s Law, invented their own rules, and oppressed the people in the name of God. Jesus was not afraid to address these leaders in the name of His Father. One such rebuke came in the Temple during a Passover celebration (John 2:13–25). Jesus entered the Temple where He encountered money changers and merchants selling animals (John 2:14). But why were these people in the Temple?

Those selling animals were there to provide a service to God’s people. The merchants were providing animals for sacrifice during Feast time. This was a convenience for Jews traveling great distances. They would not need to bring livestock with them; they could buy the necessary sacrificial animals right at the Temple. The money changers were also there for a service. A tax was collected from every Israelite twenty years old and up (Exodus 30:11–16). When Jews came to Jerusalem to pay their Temple tax, they could only pay it with a special coin, the half-shekel. It was the only silver coin at that time without the image of a pagan Emperor, and therefore to the Jews it was the only coin acceptable to God. The money changers exchanged unacceptable coins for these shekels. While our text does not mention it, these animal sellers and money changers were probably overcharging the pilgrims and extracting a hefty profit.

When Jesus entered the Temple, He was enraged at what He saw. God’s House, His Temple, should have been a house of prayer, worship, and devotion, but they had made it into a house of merchandise. So Jesus made a whip of rope and chased them out of the Temple, overturning their tables and stools. He also verbally rebuked them for the way they were dishonoring God and His Temple (John 2:15–16).

Matthew 23 records Jesus’s last public message before He died on the Cross. Here again Jesus showed His righteous anger at the dishonoring of God, His laws, and His Word. Jesus’s rebuke was directed toward the religious leaders—the scribes and Pharisees and their religious hypocrisy (Matthew 23:27). Jesus had some very strong words for these religious leaders, calling them blind guides, fools, sons of hell, hypocrites, and whitewashed tombs full of dead men’s bones! These leaders had put off God’s righteousness and instead were seeking to establish their own means of righteousness (Romans 10:3). And they were demanding others do the same—burdening the common people by insisting they abide by the rules and regulations they had developed as a means of achieving salvation.

Jesus would not have it. He would not allow His Father’s name to be dishonored by these false teachers. They focused on the externals of religion—looking pious, saying long prayers, giving tithes—but Jesus said they had “neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith” (Matthew 23:23).

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Throughout the Gospels we see a number of Jewish religious groups mentioned. These include the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes (or lawyers). Who were these groups, where did they come from, and why did many of them oppose Jesus and His teachings?

Pharisees

The Pharisees were the keepers of the Law. They believed the entire Hebrew Bible (what we call the Old Testament) to be the Word of God. They emerged from the Babylonian Exile as the chief religious faction. They understood that Israel’s exile was a result of forgetting God’s Law and living in disobedience. As a result, the Pharisees sought to present God’s Law and impose it on the people so the nation would never again be exiled as punishment for their disobedience.

However, many of the Pharisees presented a law

that was greatly compromised by their belief that oral traditions of their culture passed down for generations held the same significance and authority as God's Word. This is clearly forbidden in Scripture (e.g., Deuteronomy 4:2). These Pharisees sought to strictly obey these traditions themselves and demanded the same from others. Many of the traditions they held to are seen throughout the Gospels (Matthew 9:14, 15:1–9, 23:5, 23:16, 23:23; Mark 7:1–23; Luke 11:42).

Many of the Pharisees were not fully devoted to all of God's Law and had added their own beliefs and traditions to it. Because of this, they missed the Messiah when He was in their very midst. They saw Jesus's miracles and heard His words, but instead of believing in Him, they did all that they could to stop Him, eventually calling for His crucifixion because He claimed to be the Son of God, making Himself equal with God.

Sadducees

Not much is known about the Sadducees, since the only historical information we have comes from the New Testament and some writings from the Jewish-Roman historian Flavius Josephus. Sadducees were more affluent than the Pharisees. They tended to be wealthy and held powerful positions, including that of chief priest and high priest. They also made up a majority of the 70 seats of the ruling council called the Sanhedrin. The Sadducees were more sympathetic to the Hellenistic movement, a movement seeking to combine Jewish religious tradition with elements of Greek culture. They were more willing to submit to the prevailing powers (Rome) because they realized it was economically and politically advantageous for them to do so.

Religiously, the Sadducees were more conservative than the Pharisees in that they did not give oral tradition equal authority to the written Word of God. However, they were misguided on a few other issues. For example, they denied God's involvement in everyday life. They denied the resurrection of the dead. They denied any afterlife, believing that the soul perished at death, and they denied the existence of a spiritual world (i.e., angels and demons).

Because the Sadducees were more concerned with politics than religion, they were unconcerned with Jesus until they became afraid He might bring unwanted Roman attention. Finally, they joined with the Pharisees in their opposition to Jesus.

Scribes

The earliest scribes of Israel served as official secretaries, writing and issuing royal decrees (e.g., 2 Samuel 8:17, 20:25; 1 Chronicles 18:16, 24:6; 1 Kings 4:3). After the return from the Babylonian captivity,

the scribes concentrated their activities on the Law, becoming "teachers of the law," or "lawyers."

Scribes in Jesus's time were men whose primary occupation was writing out copies of the Jewish Scriptures and teaching the people the Law. Because they copied the Old Testament books, they were familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures and were respected in society for their literacy and knowledge. The scribes took their job of preserving Scripture very seriously; they would copy and recopy the Bible meticulously, even counting letters and spaces to ensure each copy was correct. We can thank God for using the Jewish scribes in preserving the Old Testament.

The scribes were closely associated with the Pharisees and are often mentioned together in the Gospels. Throughout the life of Christ, the scribes were among His most vigilant and determined opponents. Their many accusations are recorded in the Gospel accounts.

The scribes complained that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners (Mark 2:16; Luke 5:30). When Jesus pronounced forgiveness of sins, the scribes charged Him with blasphemy (Mark 2:5–7). When Jesus cast out demons, the scribes said that He cast them out by Beelzebul, "the ruler of the demons" (Mark 3:22). They sought to accuse Jesus if He healed on a Sabbath day (Luke 6:7). And finally, the scribes took counsel with the chief priests as to how they might destroy Jesus (Mark 11:18), and when Jesus was brought before Herod, they vehemently accused Him (Luke 23:10).

These three sects of Jewish leaders often went beyond the written word of God, incorporating their own doctrines, beliefs, and traditions. And in so doing, they were blinded when the Messiah they had read about and waited for finally came.

What we can learn from these leaders is that we need to make a commitment to God's Word, with a heart for God, as our final authority by which our lives and decisions are made.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord Jesus, you are strong, mighty, and wonderful! You defended your Father's honor. Help me to be more vigilant to defend your honor in my home and sphere of influence. May my students come to understand the importance of loving you with all their heart, mind, and strength. Use this lesson to show them that it's not enough to look good on the outside. Change their hearts by the power of the gospel to desire to please and glorify you in all they do.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will review the memory verse by completing the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, they will recite the verse to a friend or to the class.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Jesus Defends God's Honor Class Notes

MATERIALS

- Jesus Defends God's Honor Class Notes for each student
- Jesus Defends God's Honor Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study the lesson.

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible passages. Do not work ahead. We'll complete them together during the class.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will see what Jesus did and said when people did not honor God.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Refer to Lesson 7 Lesson Theme Poster. We learned in our last lesson that Jesus did not teach the same as the scribes and Pharisees. The Pharisees wanted to look good and holy to other men. But they didn't really love God.

Jesus taught that we must obey out of love for God. Even then, we will never be perfect—we will still sin. That sin keeps us separated from God. And that is why we need Jesus, the Savior. We can only get to heaven through Him—not by any works or good deeds we do.

➤ The class notes are designed and written simply. Please encourage and help your students to read them as the class progresses. They are an excellent means to review important lesson principles.

John 2:13–14

One lesson Jesus taught was about murder. When someone commits murder, it usually begins with the sin of anger. And Jesus said when we get angry at someone else, it is sin—the same as murder is sin!

Today we will hear about some of the people and Pharisees who were not respecting God and His ways. They were dishonoring God's name. Jesus did not like that! And He let them know He didn't like it. We are going to read about that now. I'm going to start with John 2:13–14. Listen as I read.

John 2:13–14. Read the verses enthusiastically.

EXAMINE THE WORD

► Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we have written these lessons for you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, please encourage your students to bring Bibles to class. And if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.

Observe the Text

? **What Jewish holiday was mentioned? Did you hear it?** *Re-read John 2:13. The Passover.*

? **What city was mentioned?** *John 2:13. Jerusalem.*

Yes. The Passover was a big celebration for the Jews of Jesus's time. It included coming to the Temple in Jerusalem and making animal sacrifices to God. The Jews did this to remember God's faithfulness when He led them out of Egypt.

? **Where did Jesus go in Jerusalem? Where did this take place?** *John 2:14. In the Temple.*

? **And what did Jesus find going on in the Temple?** *John 2:14. People selling oxen, sheep, and doves—and money changers doing business.*

That's right. Because it was the Passover, people came from far away to worship God. They worshipped God by sacrificing animals in the Temple. But many of them traveled a long way to get to Jerusalem. And instead of bringing their animals from home, they would buy them at the Temple. They also had different money. And their money would need to be changed to the Jewish money that was used there. The animals were sold and money changed right inside the Temple of God! This is what Jesus saw when He came to the Temple—to the place where God was to be worshipped.

What would Jesus do? He wasn't happy about this. And He wanted to defend God's honor—especially here in the Temple! I'm going to read John 2:15–16. Listen carefully. *Read John 2:15–16.*

? **When He saw all this going on, Jesus made something for Himself. What was it?** *Re-read John 2:15. A whip of cords.*

? *Refer to Lesson Illustration.* **What did Jesus do with that whip?** *John 2:15. He drove out the sellers and money changers.*

? **Then what did Jesus do to the tables the money changers were sitting at?** *John 2:15. Jesus poured out the changers' money and turned their tables over.*

John 2:15–16

Refer to Lesson 8 Lesson Theme Poster and Lesson Illustration. **Right.** And Jesus said, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!” And He drove the men and their animals out of the Temple. He turned the money changers’ tables over! God’s Temple was supposed to be a place to worship God. Jesus did not want the Temple to be a noisy, smelly marketplace—a place to make money!

Discover the Truth

- ? Take a look at your class notes. They are a little different today. The answers are jumbled in each question. Use the word bank to find the right answer. Will someone read #1 for us? What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Temple. Have students complete #1.*
- ? And what about #2? What did Jesus see in the Temple? Will someone read that? How will you finish that sentence? *Assign a reader. Animals. Have students complete #2.*
- ? And what about #3? Who will read that for us? How will you answer that? *Assign a reader. God. Have students complete #3.*

The people in the Temple were not honoring God. Jesus became angry. He was angry because God’s Temple was a holy place where God was to be worshipped and praised. Jesus was defending God’s honor. And it was OK for Jesus to drive out the sellers and their animals along with the money changers.



► Use the New Testament History Poster included with your teacher kit as you teach the lesson. Emphasize that Jesus ministered only 3 years, and He lived only about 35 years. Yet His life changed the world forever and brought eternal life to all who believe.

READ THE WORD

Jesus came to earth to obey His Father. He loved God the Father very much, and when the people He met did not treat God with respect, Jesus was not afraid to say something. He defended God’s honor!

Refer to the “Woe to you!” Sign as you read. The teachers in the Temple were the scribes and Pharisees. These teachers thought they were in charge. They thought they had authority over the people. These teachers were adding their own ideas to God’s Word. Jesus did not like it, and He let them know!

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 23, verses 23, 25, and 27. *Read Matthew 23:23, 23:25, 23:27 enthusiastically. Lift up the “Woe to you!” Sign each time you repeat those words.*

► As you read the words, “Woe to you!” lift up the “Woe to you!” Sign for the students to read.

**Matthew 23:23,
23:25, 23:27**

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Which words did Jesus say three times? *Lift up the “Woe to you!” Sign. Woe to you.*
 - ? What do you think Jesus meant when He said “woe to you”? *Allow discussion.*
- Refer to “Woe to you!” Sign or Lesson Theme Poster. “Woe to you” was Jesus’s way of saying, “How dare you?!” Jesus knew the truth about these men. They*

did not truly love God. They were the teachers and leaders; they should have been showing the people how to honor God. But Jesus knew that the good works they did on the outside did not match what was really in their hearts.

? Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Jesus even had a name for these men. What was that name? What did Jesus call these men? Listen again as I read. Re-read the first sentence in each verse: Matthew 23:23, 23:25, 23:27 emphasizing "hypocrites."

? What did Jesus call them? *Hypocrites.*

? What is a hypocrite? *Allow discussion.*

A hypocrite is someone who says one thing but acts in a different way. A hypocrite pretends to be something that he isn't. A hypocrite is someone whose outward actions do not match his heart. Jesus said these religious leaders were hypocrites. They pretended to be holy and righteous, but Jesus knew their hearts were not right toward God.

? Let's go back to the class notes. Remember, I want you to use the word bank to unscramble the words that are missing. Who can read #4? What is the answer? *Assign reader. Dare. Have students complete #4.*

? And what about #5. What is a hypocrite? Will someone read that? *Assign a reader. Pretends. Have students complete #5.*

Jesus said these men reminded Him of something. Listen for the answer. I'm going to read Matthew 23:27 again. *Matthew 23:27 emphasizing "whitewashed tombs."*

? What did Jesus say the scribes and Pharisees were like? *Matthew 23:27. Whitewashed tombs.*

? And how did Jesus say whitewashed tombs appear on the outside? *Re-read Matthew 23:27. They are clean and beautiful.*

? But what did Jesus say is inside a whitewashed tomb? *Matthew 23:27. Dead men's bones and uncleanness.*

Jesus said these men were like tombs, or graves, that are nice and clean on the outside, but there is darkness and deadness on the inside. The Pharisees looked like good, righteous men on the outside. But Jesus knew what was in their hearts: hypocrisy and lawlessness. They were pretending to be good, but they were really sinful because their hearts were not right with God.

Hypocrite:
Someone who says one thing but acts in a different way; he pretends to be something he isn't.

Matthew 23:27

Discover the Truth

Jesus defended God’s honor. He wanted the people to love God on the outside and the inside! The religious leaders were not doing that! They wanted to look good to the people. But how they acted on the outside was not what was in their hearts. They were not friends of Jesus or God! They were hypocrites—pretenders! They were pretending to be very holy, but their hearts were not right with God. So, Jesus said to them, “Woe to you!” or “How dare you?” God would judge them based on what was in their hearts. Jesus wants us to love God on the outside AND on the inside!

? Will someone read #6 on the class notes? What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Love. Have students complete #6.*

? Will someone read #7 on the class notes? What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Heart. Have students complete #7.*



➤ If time allows, do a quick review of each point on the class notes.



Pick a Point Review Game

MATERIALS

- Pick a Point Questions Sheet
- Pick a Point Game Point Cards in cup, bag or basket

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a number card from the basket. If no one can answer the question, you may want to allow teams to look the answers up on their class notes. Allow the first team to get the answer to draw a point!

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. The effort to earn points will keep the students tuned into the game. Keep a list of the team’s points to determine the “winner” for the day. If time allows, repeat the questions!

OK. Now you are going to get into teams. We are going to play “Pick a Point.” Each team will take turns answering questions from the lesson. If you get the answer right, you will draw a point card for your team. I’ll keep score here on the board.

Get together with your team, and let’s get started. *Play the game.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Good job, everyone! Jesus wanted the people to know that God deserves our love, honor, and worship. He was not afraid to defend God’s honor in the Temple or to the Pharisees.





Memory Verse Review (Optional)

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

If you find you have extra time, please consider reviewing the memory verse with your class.

MATERIALS

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Cards printed on cardstock
- Tape or poster putty

INSTRUCTIONS

Print, preferably onto cardstock, and cut out one copy of the Memory Verse Cards. Tape the cards in order on the wall or board as you recite the verse together. Review the verse as you point to each card. Choose a student to remove one card of his choice. Recite the verse again. You can use these cards for Lessons 7–12.

We’re going to practice our memory verse. Let’s say the verse together as I place these

cards onto the board. *Show each card as you read it, post it on the board, and have the students repeat.*

Good job! But wait! I’m going to ask one of you to come up and take one of the cards down. Then we’ll say the verse without that card! Are you ready? *Continue to choose students to remove cards one at time, reciting the whole verse between each one.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Jesus is the only way to the Father. He promises eternal life to those who believe in Him and know Him as their Savior. Jesus is the truth; we can trust everything He says—we can believe Him! Jesus is the life; He alone can give eternal life. It is only through Jesus that any of us can get to the Father and spend forever in heaven.



Applying God’s Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. When Jesus went to the Temple, He saw how that special place—that beautiful place of worship—had been turned into a marketplace. He was furious, so He did something about it. Jesus made a whip and drove out those who weren’t supposed to be there. He was right to defend God’s honor when He told the sellers and the money changers to get out. They were wrong to do these things in the Temple of God.

Jesus also defended God’s honor when He told the Pharisees they were wrong. These men were religious leaders and teachers who were supposed to be showing the people the right way to live before God. Yet, they were not pleasing God at all. They were trying to prove that they were

good and righteous by the things they did. But they were not obeying from their hearts. They were pretending to be good on the outside. But their good works were no good because in their hearts they did not love God or the people; they were hypocrites. They were proud and arrogant instead of loving and humble. And Jesus knew their sinful hearts.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

The Pharisees of Jesus's time appeared to be holy on the outside, but their hearts were wicked, and they were sinful. But what about us? Do we obey just so we look good to our parents, our teachers, or our friends? In my case, do I obey to look good to the Pastor here at church or to my boss at work?

We know we should obey. And if we don't we can get in trouble. I have to get my work done or get fired. You have to obey your parents or get grounded! We get rewarded if we are "good" in class or in the car or while mom is shopping.

? But why are we being good? *Allow discussion.*

Most of the time, we are being good because we don't want to get in trouble, or we want to be rewarded. That is just the way our hearts are . . . until we learn about Jesus. When we understand who He is, what He has done, and why He's done it, our hearts will begin to change. When we know Jesus better and understand how much He loves sinners, then we will want to be obedient. Not because we are afraid of getting in trouble, but because we want to please God who loves us enough to die for us!

Jesus knew the hearts of the Pharisees. He knows our hearts, too. And He knows even if we are squeaky clean on the outside, we can be covering up darkness and sin on the inside. Only Jesus can change our hearts to want to obey just because we love Him. And He promises to change the hearts of all who will come to Him and repent because they are truly sorry for their sins against God, turn away from their sins, and trust Him completely.



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God for His Word which shows us how we can enter the kingdom of God.
- Thank Jesus for being with us through His Word and the Holy Spirit.
- Ask God to help us honor Him with our actions and our hearts.

