

LESSON 2—JESUS PULLS A COIN FROM A FISH'S MOUTH

Bible Reference: Matthew 17:24-27

Key Verse: Philippians 4:6-7--In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

OVERVIEW

- Bible Story
- Key Verse
- Prayer Part
- Small Group Activities
- Review

ITEMS NEEDED:

- Signs for: *Jesus, Peter, Fish*, and two signs that say *Religious Tax*.
- Signs for: *George Mueller*
- Key Verse Signs for: *In nothing be anxious / but in _____ / by _____ / and _____ / with _____, / let your requests be made known to God. / Philippians 4:6*
- A piece of cardstock that is blank on one side but says, "Pray" on the other side.
- The Lord's Prayer sign
- Each small group will need a plain piece of copy paper, scotch tape, a book or Bible, one copy of the "Worry Tree", a prayer request page, and items for the "Fish & Coin" craft.
- A place where students can turn in prayer requests

BIBLE LESSON

(Based on Matthew 17:24-27)

SAY: Good morning. We are so glad that you're here today. Today we're continuing a new series called "Way Beyond Myself" which is all about the idea that God has the power to do things that are "Way Beyond" what you and I could ever do on our own.

CONTROL TOOL

Anytime I say, "That's impossible!" I want you to say, "Not for God!"
Practice a few times. If you want have a boys verses girls competition to see who can be louder.

REPEAT after me: *All things are possible for God.*

Review

SAY: Last week we learned that Jesus can do amazing things.

ASK: **Who remembers last week's story?** (*Jesus healing the paralyzed man.*) **Someone tell me about it.**

REPEAT after me:

- "Jesus can heal."
- "Jesus can forgive sins."

“Jesus can do the impossible.”

SAY: Today we have a great Bible story from the Gospel of Matthew—a story that you might have never heard, so I want you to listen closely. I also need five volunteers.

Act-It-Out

Read Matthew 17:24-27 from your Bible. As you read each verse, help the kids to act out the story. Use the following as an explanation guide.

Choose five volunteers...

Give one volunteer the “Jesus” sign, one the “Peter” sign, two the “Religious Tax” sign and one the “Fish” sign.

Read Verse 24

SAY: Jesus and Peter were up north in Capernaum. This was the area of Peter’s home and the Bible says that those who collected the “two-drachma tax” came and ask Peter if Jesus was going to pay the tax.

(Bring the “Religious Tax” volunteers to Peter to ask, “Does your teacher not pay the tax?”)

ASK: Raise your hand if you think Jesus was going to pay this tax?

Read Verse 25a

SAY: In the story Peter answered “Yes.” *(Ask your Peter volunteer to say, “Yes.”)*

ASK: Raise your hand if you have heard other stories about Jesus and tax collectors?

Tell me about them. (Take a few answers...about Jesus calling Matthew the tax collector to be one of his disciples or Jesus and Zacchaeus. Both of these men were tax collectors.)

SAY: The people in this story are very different than the other “tax collectors” you find in the Bible. You see, this was a different kind of tax. The other tax collectors you read about in the Bible were working for the Romans—that means that they were traitors against their own people and the way they collected taxes made it possible for them to get rich by over-taxing countrymen. But this tax was a Jewish tax, not a Roman tax.

SAY: *(Call your Religious Tax people to the front.)* Once a year a “religious tax” for Temple service was taken by people in their home cities. This tax was not something that God had commanded but something that had become a tradition among the people but not everyone had to pay it. There were certain wise men, scholars and family of the royal line that didn’t have to pay it.

ASK: So what do you think Jesus said about this tax? (Take a few answers.) Do you think He paid it?

Read Verse 25b-26

SAY: He said to Peter: “What do you think...From whom do the kings of the earth receive toll or tribute? From their sons, or from strangers?”

Have the “Peter” volunteer answer: “From strangers.”

SAY: Jesus said to him, “Therefore the sons are exempt.” In other words, sons don’t have to pay this tax. *(Have the “Jesus” volunteer say, “Sons don’t have to pay.”)* Jesus, being who He

was, the Son of God, shouldn't have to pay this tax but to cause them not to stumble or not to be offended, He said they were going to pay it.

ASK: (Call your "Fish" volunteer forward.) **So what does a fish have to do with this story? What do you think?**

Read Verse 27

SAY: Here's the miracle. Apparently Jesus and Peter didn't have two drachmas, which was about the value of two days of work.

ASK: **So what do you think Jesus did?**

SAY: He told Peter, "...go to the sea (*which wasn't far from Capernaum*), and cast a hook, and take up the first fish that comes up. When you have opened his mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that, and give it to them for me and you."

SAY: Jesus didn't worry when He didn't have enough money. He simply told Peter to take it out of a fish's mouth and to pay a shekel for them—this was twice the amount of the tax. A shekel was worth four drachmas.

CONTROL TOOL

Leader: "*That's impossible!*" Students: "*Not for God!*"

SAY: We want you to see that God can do the impossible—even pull money from a fish's mouth.

REPEAT after me:

"Jesus can heal." / "Jesus can forgive sins." / "Jesus can do the impossible."

SAY: Let's give our volunteers a hand for helping us.

KEY VERSE

ASK: In today's story Peter and Jesus didn't have enough money for the tax. **Did they worry about this?**

KEY: A lot of people worry about money but instead of worrying about what we can't do, God wants us to trust in what He can do.

CONTROL TOOL

Leader: "*That's impossible!*" Students: "*Not for God!*"

SAY: What is impossible for you and me is possible with God.

PART 1—GEORGE MUELLER STORY

Choose one volunteer...and give him the "George Mueller" sign.

SAY: George Mueller lived about 150 years ago. He was a believer in Jesus who was known for his faith and his ability to trust God. This is NOT a story in the Bible but a story about a man living for Jesus, just like you and me.

SAY: George Mueller took care of orphans in England.

ASK: **What are orphans?** (*Children who have no parents or family and have no place to live.*)

SAY: One day there was no money to buy bread or milk for the following morning. And two of the orphan houses needed coal to keep warm. Mueller wrote in his diary: "Truly, we are poorer than ever; but, through grace, my eyes look not at empty stores and the empty purse, but to the riches of the Lord only."

SAY: George was responsible for the lives of two thousand children as well as to pay nurses and teachers and other people who cared for the kids. **How would you feel if this many people were counting on you but you had no money—not even for the next day's breakfast? Do you think you'd worry about it? What would you do? What do you think George Mueller did?** *(Take a few answers.)*

SAY: He did what he always did—He prayed and told God their needs. On this occasion God laid on the heart of a lady in town to deliver plum cakes that evening and the next morning a businessman left for work but God so burdened his heart he had to turn around and go to the orphanage to see what "Mueller's children" might need.

SAY: For over 60 years George Mueller took care of orphans. He took care of some ten thousand children and never once did any of them lack for food or the things they needed. Even more amazing is that NEVER ONCE did he ask anyone for anything. He wanted "something that would act as a visible proof that our God and Father is the same faithful God as ever he was...to all who put their trust in Him." So this Christian man decided to demonstrate that God "had not in the least changed" by the fact that "the orphans under my care are provided, with all they need, only by *prayer* and *faith*, without anyone being asked by me or my fellow-laborers, whereby it may be seen, that God is faithful still, and hears prayer still." 1

SAY: Let's give our volunteer a "round of applause" for helping us.

1Mosley, Steven R., *God: A Biography*, (Phoenix: Questar Publishers, Inc., 1988), p. 230-232.

PART 2—FILL IN THE BLANK (v.6)

ASK: What do you think we should do when we're worried? *(Take a few answers.)*

SAY: The Bible tells us what to do and today I'm going to need your help filling in some blanks...

Choose 7 volunteers...

Give them the Key Verse signs that say: *In nothing be anxious / but in _____ / by _____ / and _____ / with _____, / let your requests be made known to God. / Philippians 4:6*

SAY: There are four key words missing from this verse that I need your help with, but let's start at the beginning: "In nothing be anxious." In other words, don't worry about anything.

REPEAT after me: Don't worry about anything.

ASK: But in "blank"...**What word do you think goes in the first blank?** *(Everything)*

Continue to help the kids discover today's key verse by filling in the blanks and if they have trouble with one, give them hints. Also, use this opportunity to explain a few key elements of this verse to them—i.e.:

- God didn't say, "But in **SOME** things by prayer but in **EVERYTHING**."
- Prayer is talking to God. God wants us to talk with Him about everything.
- Petition is giving our requests to the Lord. It's okay to ask God for things but don't let your prayers only be asking God for this or that—pray for other people, praise God, give Him thanks, tell Him what you're thinking and feeling and even tell him about your day.
- You can give thanks in everything. Some people pray about situations that might worry them but they don't give God thanks—God is so good, you can pray with thanksgiving even in situations that might worry you.

Read the verse together once your kids have discovered all the missing words.

SAY: Let's give our volunteers a hand.

PART 3—THE GUARD (v.7)

Choose one volunteer...

SAY: This verse also comes with a promise. IF you don't worry about anything but in **EVERYTHING** by **PRAYER** and **PETITION**, with **THANKGIVING**, you make your request to God. This is what God says will happen...

Ask the volunteer to stand in front of you.

SAY: The Bible says, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus."

SAY: Not only will you have the peace of God but that peace will be a guard to your heart and a guard to your mind.

ASK: Let's pretend that [your volunteer] is a guard. **What does a guard do?** (He protects something.)

SAY: When you do what our verse today says, God's peace will be your guard to protect your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. So, when you feel worried, you can pray and trust God and His peace can guard your heart and mind. And you can trust God because there's nothing that's impossible for Him.

CONTROL TOOL

Leader: "*That's impossible!*" Students: "*Not for God!*"

SAY: Give yourselves a hand for doing such a great job with our verse today.

PRAYER PART

SAY: Everybody bow your heads and close your eyes. I'm going to call out a few of the prayer requests that were turned in this morning and as I do, I want you to ask Jesus to help these situations. Then throughout the week, when you remember any of these requests, keep praying for them.

***Pray** specifically for your students to trust Jesus and have His peace. Thank the Lord that He answers prayer and that what is impossible for us is possible for Him....*

SAY: I need your help. I have a missing word. *(Hold up the blank side of the piece of cardstock paper—Don't let them see the side that says, "Pray.")* You see, LAST WEEK we learned that the disciples came to Jesus and they said, "Teach us to...blank."

ASK: What did we discover goes in the blank? *(Don't take answers. Instead you're going to have kids raise their hands.)*

SAY: Raise your hand if you think the disciples ask Jesus:

"Teach us to Heal"

"Teach us to Give"

"Teach us to Teach"

"Teach us to do Miracles"

"Teach us to Pray"

SAY: After being with Jesus, the disciples wanted to know how to pray. They probably saw that everything Jesus did was connected to His time with His Father—that prayer was at the heart of it all. So this is how Jesus taught them to pray.

Choose 2 volunteers to hold the "Lord's Prayer" sign. Ask your kids to say it with you.

SAY: This is how Jesus taught them to pray and it is our example too. I want to encourage you to ask your parents to say this prayer with you each night before you go to bed and in the weeks to come, we'll be learning more about prayer too.

Dismiss to Small Groups

SAY: Right now it is time for our small groups, so I'm going to dismiss you one row at a time.

Dismiss rows of chairs to the tables in the rooms.

SMALL GROUPS

SAY: Last week we had a challenge to see if something was impossible. *Make an "OK" sign with one hand. Do you see the circle that your index finger and thumb make? Can you poke your head through that hole?*

SAY: We learned that this is *NOT* impossible at all. Anybody can poke their head through this hole...just by poking your head with a finger from your other hands through the hole; not actually squeezing your head through the hole—*(Show them what you mean.)*

SAY: Some things just seem impossible but there are other things that are totally impossible for you and me.

SAY: Today I have a new challenge for you—Can you make a plain piece of paper hold up a book or a Bible?

Put the paper in front of you and a book or Bible. If you use a Bible be careful that they don't actually drop it. Let a few kids try to figure this out. Then show them that if you roll up the paper and put a piece of scotch tape on it to keep it as a cylinder, it can easily hold up even a big book.

SAY: Again, this is *NOT* impossible. You can do it.

SAY: The things we know we can do usually don't worry us. We get worried when there's something we can't do or can't control.

SAY: Today we're going to make a "Worry Tree" that is going to list the things that worry us and other people our ages.

ASK: What are some things that students your age worry about? (*Take a few answers and write them on the Worry Tree.*)

ASK: What would you say is your biggest worry? (*Take a few answers and again write them on the Worry Tree.*)

SAY: Take a look at all the things that worry us.

-Is there anything here that worries God?

-Is there anything here that God can't control?

-Is there anything here that is bigger than God?

-Is there anything here that we can't give over to God by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, so that we can have His peace guard our hearts and minds?

Craft

SAY: Today's Bible story was about how Jesus told Peter to pull a coin from a fish's mouth. And our craft is going to act this out.

Use or make a cut out of a fish and a coin. Let your students decorate these. Then use yarn to connect the coin to the fish. Tape the yarn to the backs of your cut outs. If you want, you can also add another fish and coin on the opposite side with the yarn taped between them. Then see which person in your class can make it look like the coin is going in and out of the fish's mouth.

Prayer—Take prayer requests and pray with your students.

REVIEW—True or False

Ask your students true or false questions about today's lesson. Make this fun by creating a competition. You can have a boys vs girls competition or a this-side against that-side or a this-grade against that-grade competition. You can also give treats or prizes for correct answers.

EXTRA TIME

FOR OLDER STUDENTS—Ask your students to write a letter to God about something that worries them.

FOR ALL STUDENTS—Use Matthew 6:25-31 (below) as a Mad Lib

*(IMPORTANT NOTE: If you do this activity, be sure to emphasize the *real* words and the *real* meaning of the Scripture passage. For example, you might say, "You said, 'don't be anxious*

for your BANANAS,' but Jesus said, 'don't be anxious for your LIFE...' You can also use this copy to have them try to guess the correct words.)

6:25

Therefore I tell you, don't be anxious for your

[something a person can have: _____] (Real word: *life*):

what you will [something you do] _____ (*eat*),

or what you will [something you do] _____ (*drink*);

nor yet for your [something a person can have] _____ (*body*),

what you will [something you do] _____ (*wear*).

Isn't life more than [something a person can have] _____ (*food*),

and the body more than [something a person can have] _____ (*clothing*)?

6:26 See the [kind of creature] _____ (*birds*) of the [place] _____ (*sky*),

that they don't sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you of much more value than they?

6:27 "Which of you, by being anxious, can add one moment to his lifespan? 6:28 Why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin, 6:29 yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. 6:30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, won't he much more clothe you, you of little faith?

6:31 "Therefore don't be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?', 'What will we drink?' or, 'With what will we be clothed?' 6:32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 6:33 But seek first God's Kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well.