

THE LORD OF THE SABBATH

Matthew 12; Mark 2-3; Luke 6



One day, Jesus and His disciples were passing through some fields of grain. His disciples were hungry and began to pick and eat some of the grain. The Pharisees saw this and said, “Why are Your disciples breaking the law by doing work on the Sabbath?”

Jesus replied, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his men were hungry? They entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which was against the law for them.” Only priests were allowed to eat that bread.

Jesus also said, “Do you know what the prophet Hosea meant when he said that God desires mercy and not sacrifice? If you did, you would not have told My disciples they were doing wrong. The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

On another Sabbath day, Jesus entered the synagogue and began teaching. He saw a man who had a shriveled hand. To accuse Jesus, the religious leaders were watching Jesus closely to see if He would heal on the Sabbath.

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and He was angry and sad at the hardness of their hearts. Jesus reminded the religious leaders that it was right to do good and save a life

because this actually kept God’s law.

Jesus said, “If you had a sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn’t you lift it out? A person is worth far more than a sheep, so it is lawful to do what is good on the Sabbath.”

Then He told the man, “Stretch out your hand.” The man stretched out his hand, and it was completely healed! The Pharisees were filled with rage and left, thinking about how they might put Jesus to death.

Christ Connection: Jesus showed that God gives us commands to help us, not to hurt us. Jesus rules over all. Jesus died on the cross and rose again to show God’s love and do good by rescuing sinners.



1 WELCOME TIME

Greet each preteen as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

• **What kind of rules do you have in your home? Are they all easy to follow? Which ones do you struggle with?**

2 SESSION STARTER

☐ OPTION 1: GATHER IT

Lead kids to spread out throughout the room. Explain to the kids that you are going to do something, but they are not to move. Throw the craft pom-poms into the air. Give a small pause and then tell the kids they will have one minute to see how many pom-poms they can gather into the bucket. If time allows, play again with less time to gather.

SAY “Great job gathering the pom-poms! In our session today, we will hear about a time when Jesus’ disciples gathered grain to eat on the Sabbath. Today we’ll learn that **JESUS RULES OVER ALL**, including the Sabbath.”

☐ OPTION 2: IF I RULED



Give each kid a piece of paper and something to write with. Tell them that they are now in charge of their own country. They must write down the name of their new country, design a flag, and write down one law. Give kids a chance to share their laws with the group.

SAY “Those were some interesting laws! In the Old Testament there were many rules to follow God. Jesus said He didn’t come to get rid of the law, but to fulfill the law through Himself. **JESUS RULES OVER ALL.**”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Today we are going to hear about the Lord of the Sabbath. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Read from Matthew 12; Mark 2-3; Luke 6.

•What does this story teach us about God?

When Jesus came to earth, He taught that two commands are the most important.

These commands didn't get rid of the other commandments and laws; they just summarized them as: love God and love others (Matthew 22:36-40). When Jesus' disciples were picking grain, they were caring for their bodies so they would have energy to continue in God's work. When Jesus healed the man's hand, He was loving the man and bringing glory to God.

•What was the difference between God's view of the Sabbath and the religious leaders' view of the Sabbath?

The Sabbath is important because after creation God rested on the seventh day and blessed it (Genesis 2:2-3), and later God gave the command to His people to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy (Exodus 20:8-11). The religious leaders, however, had made up extra, man-made rules about things people could and couldn't do on the Sabbath. **Jesus reminded the leaders that the Sabbath was made for humans to rest and focus on God, but the religious leaders were more worried about keeping their extra, made-up laws.**

Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

2 MISSIONS MOMENT

Share that many Brazilians were not sure what to think when Erik Nelson began selling Bibles up and down the Amazon River. Erik gave Bibles to the people who could not afford to buy them. Erik and Ida never hesitated to teach the people about Jesus.

Form two teams and lead them to line up on one side of the room. On the opposite side of the room, place two Bibles, along with an adult leader. The first kid in each line will run to their team's Bible, find one of the Gospels, show it to the leader, close the Bible, and then race back to their team. At that point, the next team member can run and do the same. First team to have everyone complete the race wins.

Explain that Erik continued telling the Brazilians about Jesus. Erik was sad when he passed by villages he could not get to with his boat. He bought a canoe so he could paddle wherever he wanted. He paddled more than 700 miles and told thousands of people about Jesus. Later, Erik acquired a small boat with a motor. This boat still did not meet all of Erik's needs. He prayed about a need for a new boat, and a church in Murray, Kentucky, donated \$3,000 for a proper motorboat. Erik launched the boat called the Buffalo in 1920 and used it until just before his death in 1939. Pray, thanking God for helping missionaries meet the needs to tell people about Jesus.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

When God created people, He made us differently than any other part of creation. He created us in His image, to love Him and to want a relationship with Him as Lord and Savior of our lives. Unfortunately, sin separates us from God, and God cannot be around sin because He is holy. But God never stopped wanting a right relationship with us. Have you turned from your sin and called on Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

4 PRAY

God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our example for how to live a life that honors You. Help us choose to follow that example and love others well. Amen.

THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news—the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

				
GOD RULES	WE SINNED	GOD PROVIDED	JESUS GIVES	WE RESPOND
Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.	Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.	Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.	Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.	Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

1 THINK ABOUT THE STORY

- **Why did the Pharisees not believe, even though they saw Jesus' miracles?**
- **How can you know that Jesus is who He says He is?**

2 GROUP DISCUSSION

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to Matthew 12. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 12:6-8. Remind preteens that during Jesus' time on earth, He was in Capernaum often, teaching and healing people. In today's story, Jesus was teaching in the synagogue again. This wasn't uncommon for Him. In fact, Jesus would often teach in different synagogues as He would travel among cities. People were often amazed at what Jesus taught, because He taught in a different way than the other teachers they had heard. Jesus taught with a unique authority, because He is the Son of God.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Matthew 12:6-8 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. Why did Jesus refer to the Old Testament when speaking to the religious leaders?

The religious leaders would have known the Old Testament Scriptures very well. They thought they were doing the right thing by holding firm to their man-made rules for the Sabbath, but Jesus wanted them to remember that God's rules and His heart behind those rules are most important. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matthew 12:3-5.)

2. What does it mean when God says He desires mercy, not sacrifice?

God desires our love. He doesn't just want us to follow rules for the sake of following rules or checking off a "to-do list". God specifically wanted the religious leaders to understand that loving others by showing them mercy was more important than their extra, made-up rules about giving up certain things on the Sabbath. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Hosea 6:6.)

3. Why did God create the Sabbath?

God created the Sabbath because He knew that humans would need to rest. He modeled it for us when He created the world. Observing a day of rest gives us an opportunity each week to remember that God is in control and we can rest in Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Mark 2:27.)

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

What did Jesus teach when He was on earth?
Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

1 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Matthew 5:16. Lead them in reading the key passage aloud together. Write each word of the key passage on individual sticky notes and stick them around the room. Lead the kids to sit in a circle. Have the first kid jump up, find a sticky note, then run back to the circle and tag the next kid who will do the same. Continue until all the words have been gathered. Once all of the sticky notes have been gathered, the kids can work together to put the verse in order.

Share that Jesus expressed the importance of shining our light before others so that they can see God. In our lesson today, Jesus reflected God's goodness when He reminded the religious leaders that caring and loving others brings glory to God.

2 PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for demonstrating His love for us and showing us how to care for others.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

THAT'S A COMMAND

Open your Bible to Exodus 20:1-17. Lead all the kids to stand on one side of the room. Explain that you will say a command. If it's one of the Ten Commandments, kids can take a step forward. If it's not, kids must stay where they are. If they mistakenly take a step forward or stay where they are, they must take two steps back. The first kid to get to the opposite side of the room wins.

JESUS RULES OVER ALL. The Ten Commandments are important because they show us the best way to live for God's glory.