

Lesson 8 - A Fig Tree's Demise- Darlene

November 3, 2019

Worship: 10 minutes

DVD:

Points to consider as you think about how to teach this lesson:

- Jesus blesses fruit, curses the lack of it. What fruit is Jesus talking about? What fruit does God expect of me?
- Jesus is looking for true faith, not just going through the motions or (even worse) making merchandise of religion.
- What does Jesus mean by “moving a mountain”? What mountains has God moved for me in the past?
- How is our forgiveness related to God’s forgiveness of us?
- This seems to be the second time Jesus cleanses the temple. Compare Mt. 21:12-13. The Bible does not tell us Jesus was angry – just that He drove out the merchandizers and overturned their tables.

STORY TEACHER:

Mark 11:12-26

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

¹²On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. ¹³And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴And he said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

¹⁵And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹⁶And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. ¹⁷And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." ¹⁸And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. ¹⁹And when evening came they went out of the city.

The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree

²⁰As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." ²²And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. ²³Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. ²⁴Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Lessons that can be drawn from this story:

- God wanted His house to be a place of prayer. It was given to Israel as a place to meet God. Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19, that WE (Christians) are the temple of God. God lives in us, and in our temple (which we should care for) prayer and good deeds should live.
- Because we have been forgiven, we are to forgive. He forgives us for every sin we ever do, so we, following His example forgive people who do wrong to us, too.

Small Group Lesson

Small Group Teachers pick and choose activities:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Questions for older children

1. Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? *It had no fruit.*
2. What do you think Jesus was teaching by cursing the fruitless tree? *If we don't bear fruit we are like dried up trees.*
3. Why did Jesus make a scene in the temple? *They had turned God's prayer house into a place where they robbed people who came to sacrifice.*
4. What big things did Jesus say God would do if we asked in faith? *Move mountains, anything hard.*
5. How can we understand God's forgiveness (grace) to us? *We can ask God's Holy Spirit to help us forgive people who have hurt us.*

Questions for younger children

1. What did Jesus do in the temple. *He drove out the people who were selling animals and overturned the tables of the money changers.* Do you know why He did that?
2. What does it mean to ask in faith? *We trust that God will answer our prayer for our good. We trust that He always loves us and always listens to our needs.*
3. Why should we forgive other people when they hurt us? *Because God forgives us for all our sins.*

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, we see how important it is to bring our needs to God. Help us to trust you - have faith in You - in our hearts so we can see your work in our lives. Help us to forgive those who do wrong toward us. Thank you for forgiving us and bringing us into your family. In Jesus' name, amen.

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 11:24

...I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

For older students, write each word on a separate index card. Shuffle them and pass them out to the kids. Time them as they place them in order as quickly as possible. Have them do it several times, trying to beat their time.

For younger students, place them in three groups. Teach each group one section. *1) Whatever you ask in prayer 2) believe that you have received it 3) and it will be yours.* Have them say their section in sequence about 3 times. Then switch sections. Do this until they have all learned all of the sections and can say the verse without stumbling.

Drama:

This Bible story lends itself to an impromptu drama – but be cautious with the second scene! The characters are:

Jesus	Disciples	Fig tree!
Animal sellers	Money changers	

Scene 1: (verses 12-14)

Disciples and Jesus walking to Jerusalem. Fig tree on side of road.

Scene 2: (verses 15-19)

Temple: sellers and money changers. Jesus may need a strip of cloth to wave as he turns over “tables”. Small tables to turn over. Choose a child who can act the part without destroying the room!

Scene 3: (verses 20-25)

Jesus and disciples walking past the withered fig tree.

ACTIVITIES:

Discuss and role-play scenes where a child needs to forgive. Suggest sibling rivalries, school confrontations, playground squabbles – anywhere a student suggests hurtful behavior. Help students find acceptable words to say. Include students both asking

forgiveness and not asking forgiveness. Emphasize the need for prayer to enable one to forgive.

ART:

Fig Leaf Project

Fig leaves

8 ½ x 11" light weight art paper or letter paper

Crayons

Make an embossed impression of a fig leaf by laying the paper over the leaf, stem down, and lightly coloring across the page. Add any details as there is time and desire. Talk about how the picture will remind them of God's power and his desire to see us grow and bear fruit for him. Talk about what that fruit might be like. Write "ASK" across the top of the page. Write "BELIEVE" across the bottom of the page.

Fig Tree Examples

Using the resource page "Fig Tree Creative Page," have children follow the directions, discussing the lack of fruit. What causes us to be "fruitful" as Christians?