



SESSION 3 of 4

The rich man

MEETING AIM

To explore Jesus' challenging teaching to the rich man and to us.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 18:18-30

BACKGROUND

The rich young man came to Jesus looking for answers and security. Instead, he was met with a challenge that came at too great a cost, and he chose to hold on to the 'stuff' he had surrounded himself with. The challenge Jesus offered the man is also offered to us, and to the children with whom we work. Can we give up all our stuff for the promise of treasure in heaven?

5 CIRCLE TIME

As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle. Encourage the children to talk about some of the things that they consider precious to them. Try to encourage them to think about what we mean by 'precious,' and to discuss with each other how some things are more precious than others. Do we mean physical objects or are there other more precious things? Explain that they may find it helpful to think back to these feelings when you get to the story.

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: coins

Ask for a few volunteers to participate in this challenge. Provide each of them with a handful of coins and challenge them to see who can stack them into the highest tower. Explain that they must keep one hand firmly behind their back and only use the other hand to build the tallest tower. Keep going until one player's tower tumbles. You could award a small prize to the person who manages to successfully build the tallest coin tower.

15 BIBLE STORY

You will need: a small toy camel; a needle; building blocks set up to form 'city walls' Arrange the children in a circle with your materials visible and accessible to the group. Explain that when people came to ask Jesus a question he would often answer them by telling a story, using images that would be understandable to them.

Say to the children that there was once a rich young man who came to see Jesus. He had heard Jesus speaking and wanted to know more. The young man asked Jesus what he needed to do to have the eternal life he had heard Jesus speaking about.

"I follow all God's rules," said the man, hoping this would please Jesus.

What Jesus said next surprised the man: "Give away everything you have, then come and follow me!"

The young man paused. He thought about all the beautiful things he had: his home, his animals, his clothes... For the rich young man it was all too much. He walked home with sadness, back to the things he thought were too precious to give up.

Jesus watched the man go, then said: "It would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it would be for a rich man to enter God's kingdom."

Some people think Jesus meant a camel and a sewing needle. *Show them your props.* Others think he was talking about a gate in the city walls. Either way, Jesus was showing the man just how hard it would be to give up the things he was holding on to so that he could follow Jesus and inherit the treasures of heaven.

Hearing what Jesus had said, Peter exclaimed: "We gave up everything to follow you!"

Jesus promised: "Everyone who has given stuff up to follow me will be rewarded with precious treasure in the kingdom of God, treasures that will really last."

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to contribute:

- Why do you think Jesus often answered questions with stories?
- Why was it so hard for the man to give up his riches?
- What does Jesus mean by 'the treasures of heaven'?
- What might you need to give up for Jesus?

15 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: large sheets of paper; scissors; glue; magazines and newspapers; collage materials

Explain to the children that when Jesus told the story of the camel and the eye of the needle he used a metaphor to help teach the man what he needed to do. This image would have been easy to understand for the people of the day. Provide access to the selection of craft materials and pictures in the magazines and newspapers. Challenge the children to work individually or in small groups to create a modern-day image that helps to tell the same story or give a similar warning. What picture do they think Jesus would use nowadays to give this warning?

Once they have had time to complete their pictures, put them up on display for everyone to see. Discuss the images as a group and talk about how they help us understand what Jesus was teaching in the Bible passage.

10 PRAYER

You will need: acrylic gemstones

Give each child a gemstone to hold in their hand. Ask them to look carefully at it as you lead them through this time of prayer. Encourage them to think about the things they consider precious. What 'stuff' is valuable to them?

In the silence, invite the children to share these things with Jesus as you pray together. As you continue in prayer, explain that the challenge Jesus gave the young man is the same challenge we face today: to give up the stuff in our lives so we can inherit the precious treasure of the kingdom. As you pray together, prompt the children to think about whether there are things they may need to give up in response to Jesus' challenge.

As you draw the session to a close, invite the children to talk further with you about any specific issues that may have arisen.

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