



LAZY OR LOVING?

Disciples & Early Church • U5#4 1st-3rd Gr. • Nov.17, 2024

Concept

God will give us the attitude and ability to work hard so we can be His witnesses.

Goal

Students will learn that hard work is a good witness for God and that He will help us to work hard.

Passage

1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Key Verse: "Make it your ambition to... work with your hands...so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders..." 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12 2b

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic cups, 6/every 5 students • String or Yarn, 1 piece (2-3ft.) /child • Rubber bands (medium size), 5-6/class <p>Optional Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten large balloons • Large garbage bag • Twist tie 	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jenga game • Box of toothpicks

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information (for the teacher)

Disciples & Early Church • U5#4 1st-3rd Grade • Nov.17, 2024

We, like the Thessalonians, know that Christ is going to return. However, God's word teaches that we are not to focus on Christ's return to the point that we do nothing while here on earth. Some in the Thessalonian church seem to have been doing just that. They were lazy, not working to support themselves, mooching off others, and meddling in each others' lives, all the while supposedly awaiting Christ's return (2 Thess. 3:11). Paul admonished them for their laziness and emphatically stated "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us... For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat... And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame" (2 Thess. 3:6, 10, 14; NASB).

"It is helpful to remember that God had ordained work before the Fall of man. Adam, when he was created, was given a job to do right from the beginning. God gave him a commission to till and to keep the garden, also to name the animals. He had to work to do that. God gave man a beautiful earth filled with wonderful resources which we have been using up rapidly through all the centuries since. But we are still discovering new things that he has hidden in his cupboard for man to live on. One of the blessings was that man should work. 'Six days shalt thou labor,' God had said, 'and on the seventh shall be a day of rest,' {cf, Exod 20:9-10 KJV}. Work, then, is part of what the Scripture calls the image of God in man. God is a worker. He has devised marvelous things in a universe that is filled with mysteries and marvels; intricate, involved complexities that we are only now beginning to unravel. With all our modern technological advance, we are merely dabbling in the shallows of the great wonders that God has packed into the universe around us, all designed by the working mind of the Creator. Since man is made in the image of God, it means there are abilities, resources, and possibilities within him that need to be put to work. In doing so, man will find a sense of fulfillment for himself.

As witnesses to the world, God makes it clear that we are to work diligently to provide for ourselves and our families (see 2 Thess. 3:7-12). "Even "outsiders," so called because they have no connection with Christ and hence are outside the family of God--cf. 1Cor 5:12, 13; Col 4:5; 1Tim 3:7--recognize winsome conduct. On the other hand, they are repelled by those who do not carry their share of social responsibility." [1] And thus by our actions our voice carries no influence. In Ephesians 4:28 God also makes it clear that if we work hard we'll have enough to give to others.

[1] Expositor's Bible Commentary New Testament, Zondervan Reference Software, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.

Set Up

Object Lesson: After most of the children have arrived, choose 1 child for each team to be the "goof-offs." Cut one length of string (2-3ft.) per child in your classroom.

Optional Activity: Inflate balloons and stuff in bag.

Activity Stations:

- **Construction**

- **Instructions:** Build a structure that is sturdy using the Jenga blocks. While working on the structure, discuss the satisfaction and result of hard work, what happens at the times they want to quit but choose to keep working hard, etc.

- **Mind Challenge**

- **Instructions:** Use 18 toothpicks to make 9 equal-sided triangles. Remove 3 toothpicks to make 6 equal-sided triangles. While working on the structure, discuss the satisfaction and result of hard work, what happens at the times they want to quit but choose to keep working hard, etc.



Object Lesson – Cup Stacking Challenge

Goal: To illustrate that laziness affects others.

Instructions: Before you start, quietly pick the “goof offs” that you would like to be a secret part of the activity. Tell them that as they do their part with the team activity, you will tap them on the shoulder. At that point they should stop doing their part, or start getting distracted (maybe acting like they don’t care) or not trying as hard. Remind them to keep this a secret because you want to see what the other kids will do when they have a lazy person on their team as they are trying to work together to complete the activity.

Divide the class into groups of 5-6 students each. Cut 5-6 (one for each student in the group) pieces of string/yarn and attach them to a single rubber band that is large enough to fit around a plastic cup. The design should look like a sun with 5-6 rays of string, each string being about 2-3 feet long. Challenge each group of 5-6 to stack 6 cups into a pyramid, 3 on the bottom, then 2, and then 1 on the top. They can only use the strong rubber band to stack the cups.

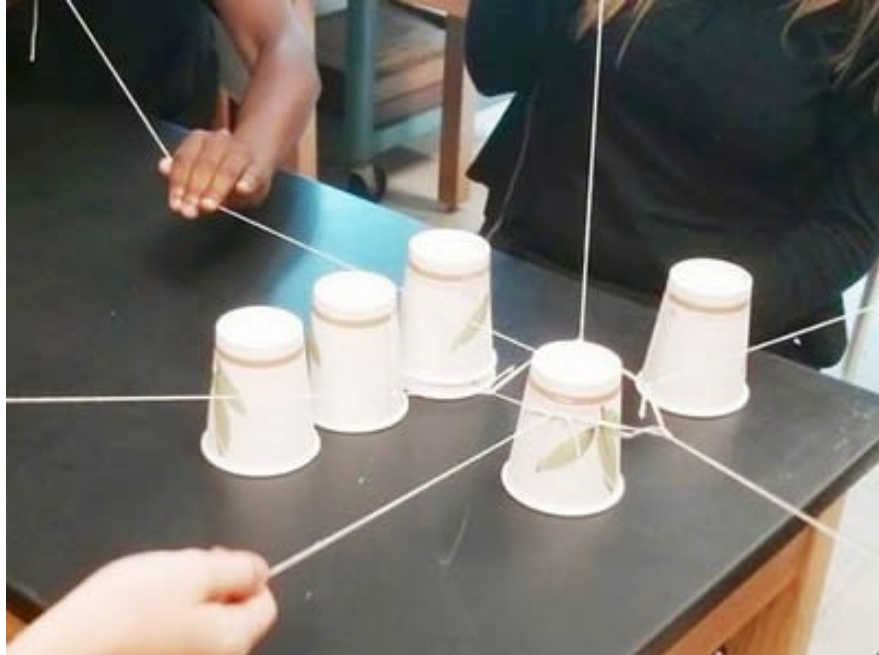
You can change the number of cups used, depending on the ability of the kids. If they are having a hard time with the activity, maybe only have them stack 3 cups. You can also give a time limit for the kids, i.e. have them complete the task in 3 or 5 minutes. Or to make the task harder, have the kids balance something small (i.e. eraser or pen cap) on top of the last cup when they place it on the top of the pyramid, without letting it fall.

Incorporation Lg. Group

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Learning Activity#1 Continued

After giving the kids a few minutes to try the activity together, tap the "goof-offs" on the shoulder to stop doing their jobs. Note the response of the others.



Debrief

So what do you guys think about the person on your team who didn't play his/her part? Did it make you mad that he/she wasn't doing his/her part to help? Did it frustrate you that it was harder to stack the cups? Did you have to work harder to make up the role that person didn't play? We asked a person on each of your teams to quit working so you could see what it would be like for someone to be lazy and not do their work. Do you think God cares about how we do our jobs or our schoolwork? Why? (Allow some time for responses.)

Transition

Now let's come and sit down while we have our lesson.

Lesson Lg. Group

Let's read **1 Thessalonians 4**. Some of the people in the Thessalonian church were bad examples to people who didn't know Jesus because they had a lazy attitude. As we've learned in the past few weeks, they knew Jesus would come back to earth. Some of them believed that since Jesus would probably be back any day, they could just hang around and wait for His return. They didn't think they needed to work. Paul told them they were wrong. He reminded them that he worked very hard when he was with them so he would be an example to them. Our key verse is, "... do your own work. If you do, then people who are not believers will respect you..." (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12). Respect means to value or look up to. As other people watch us work, will they respect us? If we are lazy do you think they will say, "Wow, they're cool. I want to be just like them?" Do you know any lazy people? Do you look up to them? Do you want to be like them?

When we love God and others, we want to work hard so we can share our time and money.

Lesson Continued

When others respect us they want to know how and why we live like we do. This gives us the opportunity to tell people that we work hard because we love God and that God is the one who helps us to work hard.

Do you know that God sent Jesus to this earth to do very important work? Think about His work on the cross. His death on the cross was totally for us. He could have decided it was too hard. But because He loved God and us He died on the cross. On the cross, Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sins. Did His death pay for everyone's sins? (Yes.) So does this mean that everyone is going to heaven? (No.) How can we know that His death counts for our sins? (Tell Him you know you sin and need forgiveness and ask that His death on the cross count for your sins.) Jesus' death on the cross can take away your sins. If you want to be forgiven once for all time, tell God you want Jesus' work on the cross to pay for your sins so you can be His friend.

Transition

Let's break into small groups to see how this applies to our lives and to pray.

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

- What is our key verse? What does it mean? Why do you think it's important that people who don't know Jesus will respect us?
- When we look at the Thessalonians, it's easy for us to see their laziness. It's often harder to see or be honest about our own laziness. Let's think of some times when you choose to be lazy. (Teachers come up with age-appropriate example to get them started. Possible example...your birthday is coming in a week. You decide that you are so special you don't need to keep your room picked up or do your jobs. You think your mom or dad can do those things and they will probably think they should because it is almost your birthday and they can't get mad at you. Do you think this would be like the people in the Thessalonian church who were waiting for Jesus to return? They were waiting for something very special to happen and they decided that they didn't need to do their work. They didn't care how their attitude affected other people.)
- Do you think God cares about how we do our jobs or our schoolwork? Why?
- Has someone who was willing to work hard ever impacted you? How were you impacted? Does that motivate you to want to be a good example to others? If you knew you could influence someone who needs to know Jesus if you were willing to go the extra mile, would you be willing to do that?

Missions Prayer: Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray. We can ask God to remind us that we are examples to others when we choose to work hard. We can thank God that He will use us as witnesses for Him as He strengthens us to work hard.

Optional Activity

Game: Garbage Bag Ball [1]

Instructions: Fill a large plastic garbage bag with blown-up balloons and tie it with a twist-tie. You now have a "garbage-bag ball." All but ten of the kids form a large circle on their knees. The ten kids then form a pinwheel in the center of the circle, lying on their backs, heads toward the center. Everyone should have their shoes off for best results. The garbage-bag ball is then tossed into the circle. The object is for the kids on their backs to kick or hit the ball out of the circle, over the heads of the kids in the outer circle. The outer circle tries to keep it in play. Play for as long as you wish or try this variation: if the ball is kicked over a player's head in the outer circle, then he must take the place of the person in the inner circle who kicked it! See diagram.

[1] Great Games for 4th-6th Graders, Youth Specialties, page 48.

