2025-06-08 Zealous

Introduction

Imagine for a moment a soldier on a mission—he is prepared, focused, and ready. He does not go into battle lackadaisically. He's all in. There is no thought of turning back until he reaches his goal. Zeal drives him on.

"Zeal" isn't a word used very often in contemporary culture. When it is used, it's often used in a negative sense. People tend to be put off by a person who seems too passionate and intense. Or, we are rightly alarmed by zealots who are fanatical in their destructive purposes. But when applied to God and His perfect purposes, how right and good that He is zealous! To see God's zeal in action, just look at Jesus' passionate and intense pursuit of sinners. His zeal to save us took Him down a road of selfless humility and unimaginable pain and suffering. Yet He never wavered. Jesus would pursue His goal with His whole heart, until it had been accomplished! But even beyond His zeal for saving us, is God's zeal for His glory—it is ultimate. In this lesson and the next, we will be explaining, as simply as possible, how God accomplished this ultimate goal through the act of loving and saving an unrighteous people.

Pray that the children would have hearts tuned in to receive the truths taught. Pray that their perceptions of Palm Sunday would go far beyond the traditional celebrations and songs. May they come to realize the intense passion with which Jesus pursues sinners.

References

- The ABCs of God - Lesson 28 - Zealous
- The ABCs of God - Application Resources
- The ABCs of God - Classroom Handouts
- The ABCs of God - Optional Activities
- The ABCs of God - Review Activities

Before Service

> Ensure parents take their child to the **restroom** before bringing them to the children's area and use the **QR code** to sign in their child before the service.

Praise and Worship (15 mins)

> **Parents:** The parent and child scheduled for this week will lead us in singing on Sunday. Please take time to practice the songs together at home, helping your child feel confident and joyful as they prepare to lead.

https://www.youtube.com/embed/qTx6gwc5sWo?si=l6oiH5vkAjjkFmCW

https://www.youtube.com/embed/E7Uvg7_42fQ

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1I0F773Xo43LK60MJhJtNQUXpCQV6e5GpGC7y7i9YAHU/embed?start=falseloop=false&delayms=3000

https://drive.google.com/file/d/10kUvVOJESuc_Hprqu-wUjx3f9avBIkho/preview

Prayer and Offering (5 mins)

> **Parents:** Please encourage your children to bring an offering to church. You may help your child prepare by setting aside a coin for them to bring on Sunday. This is a great opportunity to teach them about giving to God with a thankful heart and trusting Him to provide.

> ## What is Offering?
>
> Offering is when we **give something to God** to show our love and thankfulness. In church, we often give money as an offering, but we can also give our time, talents, and kindness to God and others.
>
> ## Why Do We Make an Offering?
>
> 1?? **To Thank God** – Everything we have comes from God! Giving back is a way to say, “Thank You, God!”
> 2?? **To Trust Others** – Offerings help the church teach about Jesus, help people in need, and share God’s love.
>
> The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 9:7,
> *"God loves a cheerful giver!" That means God is happy when we give with a joyful heart!*

Prayer for Offering

> Dear God, thank You for giving us everything we need. We want to give back to You with joyful hearts. Please use our offering to help others and share Your love. Help us to always trust You. In Jesus’ name, Amen!

Review Verse from Last Week

Psalm 145:8 —*"The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."*

Bible Story (10 min): God is Zealous

Introduction (1 min)

(Teacher holds up a piece of candy in one hand and a scrub brush in the other.)

> "Okay, friends! I've got two things here. One is a yummy piece of candy ?… and the other is this scrub brush ?. Now let me ask you:
>
> If I gave you the choice to either eat this candy OR scrub the floor with this brush, what would you choose?"

(Pause and look around. Raise your hand as you ask:)

> "Who would choose the candy? Raise your hand." (Wait a moment.)
>
> "And who would actually choose to scrub the floor?" (Some may laugh—wait for responses.)

(Now, hold up the candy again with a smile.)

> "BUT—what if I told you that if you scrub the floor, you get something way better than this candy? Like… a dream vacation to anywhere you want, a brand-new bike, five awesome new games, $100, and all the candy you could ever want! THEN who would choose to scrub the floor?"

(Let them react again. Emphasize the change in attitude.)

> "See? When something really matters to us—when the reward is big—we go for it with energy and excitement! We give it our best!"

(Now crouch down and dramatically act out two versions of scrubbing: lazy and zealous.)

> "Would you scrub like this—'Ugh, I guess I have to'?" (Slouch and fake scrub slowly.)
>
> "Or like this—'Yes! I'm gonna do my best!'" (Scrub with enthusiasm, big energy.)
>
> "When we care about something, we don't do it halfway—we do it with our whole heart. That's called being zealous."

> "And did you know—God is zealous! That means when He does something, He gives it everything He's got. He acts with His whole heart."

Story Telling (5 min) - The Zealous King (Luke 19:30, 35-38a)

(Props needed: Bible, palm leaf props or visuals, throne chair with cloth, crown, trash can with crumpled paper, jewelry box, "Sin" sign)

> "Okay kids, now I want to tell you a true story from the Bible. It's about the time when Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem—just days before He would die on the cross. Let's find out what happened!"

Scene 1: Jesus Sends His Disciples

> "Jesus had spent three years helping people—He healed the sick, made blind people see, fed thousands of people with just a few loaves and fish, and even raised people from the dead!
>
> But now, something very important was about to happen. Jesus had a special mission—and it would take Him right into the city of Jerusalem."
>
> "Before entering the city, Jesus told two of His disciples something unusual."

(Open the Bible and read slowly with expression)

> Luke 19:30 – "Go into the village ahead of you. There you will find a colt tied up, one that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here."

(Pause and look at the kids.)

> "A colt? That's a young donkey! And that's exactly what the disciples did."

(Continue reading)

> Luke 19:35-36 – "They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As He went along, people spread their cloaks on the road."

Scene 2: The Crowds Celebrate

(Hold up a palm leaf prop or motion to a child holding one.)

> "Crowds of people came to welcome Jesus. They cut palm branches from the trees and laid them on the road. They even put down their coats—like rolling out a red carpet!"
>
> "Let's say what they shouted together—repeat after me:"
>
> 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!' (Say it together 2–3 times, louder each time. Wave palm leaves if available.)

Scene 3: The Throne or the Mission?

(Point to or uncover the throne chair with the crown.)

> "Everyone thought Jesus was going to be king—sit on a throne, wear a crown, and rule with power. That's what they wanted!"
>
> "But Jesus had a different mission. He wasn't going to sit on that throne—at least not yet."

Scene 4: The Garbage and the Treasure

(Now uncover the trash can with crumpled paper, and then the jewelry box behind it.)

> "Do you see this trash? It's gross, right? It represents sin—all the things we do that go against God: lying, disobeying, being selfish."

(Hold up or point to the 'Sin' sign and place it on the trash.)

> "And this beautiful jewelry box? That reminds us of how amazing and perfect God is—His glory."
>
> "God is holy and beautiful and valuable—more than any treasure. But because of our sin, we turned away from Him. And Jesus came to fix that. But it wouldn't be easy."

(Pause and look around the room.)

>

> "The crowd gave Jesus a choice: 'Take the throne! Be our king!' Like giving Him candy."

(Remind them)

> "But remember the choice earlier—scrubbing the floor for a better reward? Jesus did the hard thing because He saw the greatest reward: bringing glory to God by saving sinners like you and me."

Scene 5: Jesus Acts with Zeal

(Display the "Z-Zealous" visual or write the word on the board.)

> "Jesus didn't choose the easy way. He didn't quit when things got hard. He went to the cross. He suffered and died. And He did it with zeal—with His whole heart."
>
> "Because Jesus is zealous to save sinners and show how great God is."

Wrap-up & Discussion (4 min)

(Hold up the Z-Zealous visual again, or point to the word on the board.)

> "Let's remember what this special word means—zealous. Say it with me:
>
> Zealous means doing something with your whole heart."
>
> (Repeat it together.)
>
> "Was Jesus lazy or half-hearted about saving us?"
>
> (Wait for kids to respond: "No!")
>
> "Exactly! He was zealous. He gave everything He had—even His own life—so we could be forgiven and know God."
>
> "Let me ask you a few simple questions."

?Question 1:

> "What does it mean when we say God is zealous?"

> (Let a few kids answer, then summarize:)
>
> "It means He acts with His whole heart—He doesn't hold back. He's strong, determined, and never gives up on His plans."

?Question 2:

> "Why didn't Jesus just sit on the throne and enjoy the crown like the people wanted?"
>
> (Let them respond.)
>
> "Because He had something even greater in mind: showing God's glory by saving sinners like us!"

?Question 3:

> "What is one way you can be zealous for God?"
>
> (Possible answers: praying, helping others, singing with joy, forgiving, being kind even when it's hard.)
>
> "That's right! We can be zealous by giving God our best—loving Him with our whole heart, not just going through the motions."

> "Jesus was zealous for you. He didn't give up, even when it hurt. He acted with His whole heart. And now, we can follow Him and do the same—loving Him and others with everything we've got!"

Memorizing Verse: Isaiah 42:13

Isaiah 42:13
"The LORD goes out like a mighty man, like a man of war he stirs up his zeal; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes."

> "Let's learn our special verse from the Bible. This verse tells us how powerful and zealous God is!"
>
> "Let's say it together with some motions to help us remember it."

Step-by-Step with Hand Motions

(Repeat each line 2–3 times with motions. Encourage the kids to say it with energy!)

> ? "The LORD goes out like a mighty man,"
>
> (Stomp one foot forward and strike a "strong man" pose – arms flexed)
>
> ? "like a man of war he stirs up his zeal;"
>
> (Pretend to stir a big pot with both hands, show a focused face)
>
> ? "he cries out, he shouts aloud,"
>
> (Cup hands around mouth and call out loudly: "Shouts!")
>
> ? "he shows himself mighty against his foes."
>
> (Raise one arm in a victory pose, like holding a sword high)

> "Let's say the whole verse now, with all the motions—ready?"
>
> (Do the full verse once or twice as a group.)

> Ask:
>
> - "Who does this verse say is going out like a mighty warrior?" (The LORD!)
> - "What is He stirred up with?" (Zeal! That means He acts with His whole heart.)
> - "Can you think of something you do with that kind of energy—like playing soccer or finishing a big Lego set?"
>
> "God acts with even more strength and purpose than that—because He's perfect. He fights for what's right, and He never gives up!"

Craft & Game (10 mins)

Craft: Palm Leaf Parade Craft (5 min)

Materials Needed (per child):

- Printed palm leaf colouring page
- Crayons or markers

- Tape
- Stick/straw/chopstick (for the stem)

> "Do you remember what the people waved when Jesus entered Jerusalem?"
>
> (Let kids answer: "Palm branches!")
>
> "That's right! They waved palm branches and shouted, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!' So now, you get to make your own palm leaf to remember that special day."

(Hold up a finished example if you have one.)

> "Go ahead and color your palm leaf however you like—green, rainbow, even glittery if you want! After you finish, I'll help you tape a stick or straw to the back so you can hold it and wave it just like the crowd did for Jesus."

(As children color, move around and help. Tape stems onto leaves when they finish.)

> "These are more than just fun leaves—they remind us that Jesus is the King, but He came to do something much more amazing than wear a crown. He came to save us."

Once all leaves are done:

> "Let's have our own little palm parade! Everyone grab your leaf, stand up, and repeat after me while we wave them:
>
> 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!'
>
> (Do this 2–3 times while marching in place or walking in a circle together.)

Game: Zealous Scrub Challenge (5 min)

Materials Needed:

- Towel, rag, or scrub brush
- A marked area of the floor (real or pretend)
- Optional: stopwatch or fun music for background

>

> (Hold up the scrub brush or towel)
>
> "Remember when I asked if you'd rather eat candy or scrub the floor?"
>
> (Smile and wait for reactions.)
>
> "Well now, it's your turn to show us how someone scrubs the floor when they're zealous—that means doing something with their whole heart."
>
> "I'm going to call one person at a time to come up here and scrub this pretend floor with all the energy and excitement they've got!"
>
> "But no lazy scrubbing! We want to see the best, most determined, hardest-working scrubber ever—like you're scrubbing for the greatest reward in the world!"

(One at a time, call each child up and let them scrub for about 5 seconds. Cheer them on!)

> "Wow! That was amazing! God is even more zealous than that. When He does something—like saving us—He gives it everything. He doesn't quit. And we can follow His example by giving our best, too!"

> "So today we learned that God is zealous. He acts with His whole heart. Jesus didn't take the easy road—He went all the way to the cross to show us God's love and glory. Let's remember to live for Him with our whole hearts too!"

Response Song

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Closing Prayer & Snack Time (10 mins)

> **Dear God,**
>
> Thank You for being so zealous—for loving us with Your whole heart. Thank You for Jesus, who didn't choose the easy way but gave everything to save us. Help us to be zealous for You too—to love You and follow You with all our hearts. Help us remember that You are worth our very best.

> Now, let us thank You for the snack we’re about to enjoy.
> We fold our hands.
> We bow our heads.
> We thank You, God,
> for this daily bread.
> Amen.

Free Time & Children Pickup (15 mins)

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