

# The Chief Priests

## Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference  
**Matthew 21:23-32**

Church Season  
**Pentecost**

Lesson Focus  
**It's not only what we say,  
but what we do.**



Tear here for easy use!

### Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>Arrival Time</b> Kids work silently at classroom tasks and do an Activity Page.	Activity Pages 	Pencils, whiteboard, washable marker, yarn, colored paper, paper towels
<b>Circle Time</b> Kids gather in a circle to greet each other, hear about the lectionary season, and talk about the differences between what we say and what we do.	Leaflet	None
<b>Prayer Time</b> Kids "do" a prayer using American sign language.	None	None

### Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>The Chief Priests Storytelling</b> Leader or kid reads aloud from the Spark Story Bible while kids respond to word cues with actions.	Spark Story Bibles	None
<b>Just Do It!</b> Kids review the story with a "say-and-do" rhyming poem.	Leaflets, Lesson Stickers	None
<b>What Can I Do?</b> Kids discover what they can do to help people.	Leaflets	Pencils, markers

# Lesson At-A-Glance

## Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>A Colorful Answer</b> Kids color in the DOs to find out what Jesus taught the chief priests to do.	Leaflets	Markers
<b>Fancy Clothes for Priests</b> Kids discover what priests wore in Jesus' day.	Leaflets	None
<b>Let's Work Together!</b> Kids work together in an assembly line to create cards for church members.	None	Cardstock, markers, stickers (optional)

Tear here for easy use!

## Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>Good-bye Time</b> Kids select what they will do at home this week, say the lesson focus statement, and gather to say good-bye.	Leaflets	Pencils, scissors
<b>Prayer Time</b> Kids repeat the sign language prayer that they prayed during Gather.	Leaflets, Family Pages 	None



Visit [www.sparksundayschool.org](http://www.sparksundayschool.org) for more Spark content! Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find four downloadable resources for this lesson: an Activity Page, a Family Page, and two additional in-class activities.

# Gather (10 minutes)

## Arrival Time

Before class prepare several jobs for kids to do. Moisten some of the paper towels. Loosely tangle up several different lengths of yarn; mix up different colors of paper to sort; put fingerprints on the windows and a few small washable marker lines on the table. Write a list of these simple jobs on the whiteboard: untangle yarn, sort paper by color, wipe off table, clean off windows. Add or adjust jobs to your classroom.

Set out copies of the Activity Page for this lesson and pencils on a table.

Try to speak as little as possible during this time. This will help kids to focus on “doing.” When kids arrive, greet them with a high five. Point kids toward a list of jobs you have written on the board. Help non-readers by whispering the words to them. Whisper to all kids that we are working silently at our jobs. Continue this quiet job-time activity for a few minutes.

Invite kids to do the Activity Page.

### Spark Resources

Activity Pages



### Supplies

Pencils  
Whiteboard  
Washable marker  
Yarn  
Colored paper  
Paper towels

## Circle Time

**Now we can talk!** Invite the kids to stand in a circle facing out. Hold each other's hands up high. One at a time, turn 180 degrees to the left, crossing your arms so that you are facing into the circle, your right arm over your left. Each person says, **“My name is [name] and I'm in God's family!”** Invite the next kid to your left to turn in to the circle in the same manner. Go around the circle until everyone is facing in. If you do this each week, make sure the kids stand in a different order so that no one is last every week.

Gather kids to sit in a circle, in a small group on the floor, or at tables.

If the kids in your class tried the Faith on the Go! activities from last week's leaflet, be sure to invite kids to share what they did. Ask everyone how they showed love to someone or helped another person during the last week.

Hold up the leaflet, and point to the road and tree on the green background.

**Let's stand up in our circle and pretend we are walking on the road in this little picture.** Walk in place. **I really want to get to that tree up there at the end of the road. Let's pretend we are running on the road.** Run in place. **We're almost there. We'd better slow down so we don't run past the tree.** Resume walking in place. **Okay, let's stop. What are you going to do, now that we're at the tree?** Pause for answers. **Let's all pretend to climb the tree.** Pretend to climb. **Climbing is a great idea, because today's story is about what we DO. Jesus told us that it's not only what we say, but what we do. I can see some things from up in this tree that we can do. I can see lots of jobs that Jesus wants us to do—like help out at home, and clean up at church. Let's climb down from the tree.** Pretend to climb down. **Let's walk on the road back to class.** Walk in place.

### Spark Resources

Leaflet

### Supplies

None

Tear here for easy use!

Here we are, back in our circle. Let's sit down. Thank you for helping out with those jobs when you arrived today. Why do you suppose we worked silently at our jobs? Affirm answers. **Today is Doing Day!**

Jesus tells a story today to remind us that we need to do what we say we're going to do. Promises are great, as long as we keep them. Has anyone ever told you they were going to do something, but then they didn't do it? Pause for responses. Have you ever told your friend "I'm going to play with you on the playground today" and then you didn't do it? Wait for responses. Jesus teaches us that people notice what we do. So, what I say now is that we're going to pray. And what we're going to do now is pray.

## Prayer Time

We're going to use American Sign Language as part of our prayer. Instead of saying words, we are going to "do" words by making hand signs. People with a hearing loss often use this language of signs to communicate instead of listening to words. Watch my hands and copy what they do.

Spark Resources  
None

Supplies  
None

Jesus,

Help us to share love

In our actions.

Amen.



**Jesus**

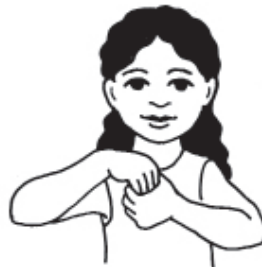
**Help Us**



**Share**



**Love**



**In**



**Our**



**Actions**



**Amen**

# Open the Bible (15 minutes)

## The Chief Priests Storytelling

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

None

Tear here for easy use!

**Today's Bible story is called The Chief Priests. Let's first talk a little about priests in Jesus' time. Priests served God and worked in the temple, which is a place to worship God, like our church. The chief priests were curious about Jesus. They wanted to know why he helped people who were poor or sick or bad. So in our Bible story today, the chief priests begin by asking Jesus a question: Who do you think you are to act this way and spend time with bad people? Jesus answers their question by telling them a story. I can't wait to hear Jesus' story!**

Pass out the Spark Story Bibles and invite everyone to find The Chief Priests on pages 460-461. Wait until all kids have found the story, assisting those who may need help. **Since today is Doing Day, here are things to do while you listen to the story. Whenever you hear the word "Jesus" in the story, stand up and sit back down. Whenever you hear the word "priests" in the story, make your face look like the priests look on page 461.** Give kids time to look carefully at the picture. Practice making priests' expressions.

Read the story aloud, pausing to give kids time to stand up and sit down, and make the priests' expressions.

Have a brief conversation about the story. Ask the kids these questions:

- 1. What did the first son say and do when his father told him to work in the vineyard?** *(He said no, but then he did the work after all.)*
- 2. What did the second son say and do when his father told him to work in the vineyard?** *(He said yes, but then he didn't do the work.)*
- 3. What did Jesus do to help people?** Affirm all responses.

If kids are not already seated at a table, move to one for this activity. Give each kid a leaflet.

## Spark Resources

Leaflets

Lesson Stickers

**Look at the Bible story picture on the first page. Uh-oh. Someone from our story is missing? Can you guess who it is?** (*Jesus*) Hand out large stickers to kids. Pause to give kids time to place their large stickers.

## Supplies

None

**Great! Now that Jesus is back in the picture, let's remember what Jesus taught us in the story. We're sure doing lots of things today, aren't we? I wonder what we will do on page 1. Let's find out:**

**While I read the story rhyme out loud, watch me and do what I do.**

**The chief priests said,**

**"Jesus, we want to know** (Point to self.)

**Why you're so nice**

**To the poor and the low."** (Shrug shoulders with raised open palms.)

**Jesus said, "Okay!**

**I'll give you a clue.** (Touch side of forehead.)

**It's found in the story**

**I'm going to tell you."** (Point to your mouth.)

**The father said, "Go work!"** (Point across the room.)

**The first son said, "No!"** (Shake head "no.")

**The father said, "Go work!"** (Point across the room.)

**The second son said, "I'll go."** (Nod head "yes.")

**Then the first son worked** (Pretend to pick grapes.)

**While his brother didn't do it.** (Shake head "no.")

**The first son obeyed,** (Shake head "yes.")

**But his brother—not a bit.** (Shake head "no" and shake pointer finger.)

**So look at yourselves.** (Hold up open palms, like a mirror, and look at them.)

**God can see you, it's true.** (Point up and look up.)

**It's not what you say,** (Point to mouth.)

**But it's what you do!** (Give every kid a high five.)

**Good work! I have one more thing for us to do, because it's Doing Day. Let's read aloud all of the blue words in each paragraph of the poem. What is the first blue word?** (*know*) **And the next blue word?** (*low*) **Know, low, know, low, know, low.**

**Hmmm. These words are alike in one way. How are they alike?** (*They rhyme.*)

**Let's read the other pairs of rhyming words together.** (*clue—you; no—go; it—bit; true—do*)

**Let's look at the bottom of this page and read about where we can find this story in the Bible. Today's Bible story, The Chief Priests, is from the Gospel of Matthew. In his book about Jesus, Matthew tells us about what Jesus said and did. Jesus used both his words and his actions to teach about God's love.**

Tear here for easy use!

Give kids the three word stickers. **Now look at the bottom of the third page in your leaflet. It has the same words that we just read, but it's missing some important words. Use the word stickers to fill in the blanks. Which word do you think goes where?** (*actions, teach, love*) After attaching the stickers, read the statements together.

If you are interested in teaching your kids a Bible Memory Verse from this story, use this one. Teach it to them by inviting them to echo what you say, one phrase at a time.

**"Which of the two [sons] did the will of his father?" They said, "The first."  
Matthew 21:31**

## What Can I Do?

Invite kids to open to the second page of their leaflets. **Jesus wants us to do kind and helpful things for others. Here's a chance for us to figure out some things we can do!**

**Raise your left hand! Now touch the left side of page 2. I see some kids on the left side of this page who need help. On the right side of the page are some ideas of ways to help each one. Let's look at the first one. Who needs help in this picture?** (*the girl who is alone*) **Why do you think she looks sad?** Affirm responses. **She might feel left out, the other girls may be making fun of her, or maybe they are bullying her. Can you find a picture on the right side that shows one way to help her?** (*The girl who has separated from the group and is now laughing with her.*) **Draw a happy, squiggly line to connect these two pictures.**

**How could you help the little boy in the next picture?** Affirm responses. **Which picture shows someone helping?** (*the boy pushing him in the swing*) **Draw a line that goes up and down like a swing to connect these two pictures.**

**How many of you help out at home? What do you do to help?** Pause for responses. **Look at that big pile of blocks in the last picture. Who is helping this dad?** (*the girl, his daughter*) **Draw a happy, swirling line to connect these last two pictures.**

**Now it's your turn to do something. Inside the empty frame, draw a picture of one thing you can do today to help someone you know.** Pause to give kids time to draw. Invite them to share their drawings with the class. Tell them about something you are going to do today to help someone and encourage kids to do what they have drawn in their pictures.

Spark Resources  
Leaflets

Supplies  
Pencils  
Markers

# Activate Faith (15 Minutes)

## A Colorful Answer

Let's look at the third page of the leaflet. I see a grid with lots and lots of words. We are going to look for only the **DOs**. This is a little bit confusing because lots of the words look sort of like the word **DO**.

Spark Resources  
Leaflets

What did Jesus teach the chief priests to do? Let's find out by coloring in all the boxes with the word **DO**. Choose your favorite colored marker to color in the **DO** boxes. Give kids time to find and color. What word do you see? (*love*) That's what Jesus wants us to do: love each other.

Supplies  
Markers

## Fancy Clothes for Priests

Turn to the back page of your leaflets. What was our story today called? (*The Chief Priests*)

Spark Resources  
Leaflets

Jesus wore a simple robe, but the chief priests wore lots of special clothes. Let's imagine that we all lived in Jesus' time and we were going to the temple to worship. Here are some examples of what the priests and the chief priests may have been wearing.

Supplies  
None

First let's look at what the priests who worked in the temple wore. If you were a priest in Jesus' time, you would have to put on four things. First, white linen underclothes. Linen is a fabric made from a plant called flax. Today we still use linen to make cool summer clothes. Now I see more white. What does the priest put on after his linen underclothes? (*white robe*) The white robe is also made of linen and it is woven with white checks. What's next? (*belt*) The priest's belt was made up of long, long cords that were wound many times around his waist, then tied. What did the priest wear on his head? (*white hat*) This white hat was also made of linen. Whew! We're done with the priest.

Now let's look at what a chief priest would wear. The chief priest would dress just like a temple priest, but then would add four other things. What is the first thing? (*blue robe*) This blue robe had a trim of golden bells along the bottom. And what would he put on next? (*apron*) These aprons were very fancy and colorful. Next the priest put on what looks like a gigantic necklace. How many jewels are in it? (*12*) What is special about his hat? (*It has a headband made of gold.*) Why do you think chief priests wore all of these fancy clothes? Affirm responses.

Tear here for easy use!



## Let's Work Together!

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**It's Doing Day. Let's do something for our church family. One of our pastor's jobs is to visit members of our church family who are in the hospital or who cannot leave their homes because they are sick or have a disability. We're going to make some greeting cards that our pastor can take on these visits and give to our congregation members who can't come to church.**

**We're going to work on an assembly line. This means that when we make our cards, each one of you will have a special job to do. I have the first job. I'm going to fold each piece of cardstock in half.** Make an assembly line at your table, with each kid responsible for adding one thing to the cards. For example, one kid could draw a sun on every card and then pass it to the next kid, who draws a flower, and then passes it to the next kid, who writes LOVE. One or more kids can add stickers if you choose to use them. Be sure that part of every kid's job is to add his or her own name.

Spark Resources  
None

Supplies  
Cardstock  
Markers  
Stickers (optional)

Tear here for easy use!

## Send (5 Minutes)

### Good-bye Time

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**Thank you for coming to class today! What did we do today? If you have an answer, I want you to act out your answer and we will try to guess it. I'll start.** Pretend you are writing and let kids guess what you're doing. **Okay, your turn!**

**What did we do today?** Some ideas include the motions from page 1 of the leaflet, reading the Spark Story Bible, and listening.

Direct attention to the back of the Faith on the Go! slip on the bottom of the back page of the leaflet, and have the kids fill in the blanks with the name of someone they want to give this slip to, their own name, and today's date. Encourage them to mark one or more of the ideas or add their own. Have kids cut the slip off on the line, ready to give to someone else.

**After class, give this slip to someone you want to do the activity with. It's like a coupon for time with you. Next week, we can tell each other what we did to share God's love and remember our Bible story!**

**It's time for our closing circle.** Give kids time to stand with you in a circle facing in. Ask everyone to cross their arms, right over left, and hold hands with the person beside them. Squeeze your right hand, and then invite the kids to squeeze their right hands one at a time. (You will be going clockwise. Say, **"God gives** (name each kid as their hands are squeezed) **a squeeze and a hug today!"** Then shout together, **"It's not only what we say, but what we do!"** Lift your arms up together, turn 180 degrees to the right, and now you will all be holding hands in a circle facing out.

Spark Resources  
Leaflets

Supplies  
Pencils  
Scissors

## Prayer Time

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Invite the kids to turn back into the circle to say the prayer. **Let's do our prayer in sign language again.** Turn back to Prayer Time on page 26 and lead the kids in doing the sign language prayer again.

Be sure to send leaflets and Family Pages home with kids.

### Spark Resources

Leaflets

Family Pages



### Supplies

None

*Tear here for easy use!*