



**Session 14**  
**Winter 2015–16**  
**Middler**

# Jesus in the temple

**LUKE 19:45–48**

## prepare

### PRAYER

*God of overturned tables, help me know when it is time to take action against injustice. Amen.*

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

To understand Jesus' passion for justice and prayer

### STORY SUMMARY

Jesus went to the temple in Jerusalem. Merchants were selling animals and exchanging money. Jesus began to drive out people who were selling things in the temple courts. Jesus quoted the prophets: "My house is a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers." Jesus taught in the temple every day and many people listened. The leaders looked for a way to kill Jesus but could not arrest him because of the people.



### teaching tips for middler

Today's session is about the importance of being people who worship truly and act justly. Worship and prayer can seem very different from acting for justice. This session can help middlers understand that God calls us to combine our worship and our daily actions. Middlers are beginning to understand the inequalities in our world and often welcome chances to make a difference; draw on this attitude in today's session.

Decide which Explore activities you will do. For *Glow*, you may want to do some advance research on the Coalition of Immokalee Workers ahead of time. For *Retell*, bring in a variety of objects to create sound effects. Check Supplies and To do throughout the session to see what needs to be prepared.

## Claiming authority

Jesus' entrance into the temple in Jerusalem is a dramatic scene, even if remarkably terse in Luke's Gospel. The last time Jesus was in the temple was when he was 12 years old, but already then he claimed it as his "Father's house" (Luke 2:46-47). Since 9:51, Jesus has been journeying toward Jerusalem, the place of his suffering and death. As he nears Jerusalem, Jesus weeps over the city, predicting its destruction and lamenting its inability to recognize "the things that make for peace" (19:41-44). When he finally enters the city (19:45), the first thing Jesus does is pronounce judgment on the temple and claim authority over it.

The setting of Jesus' action was probably the outer court of the temple, the Court of the Gentiles, where temple-goers could exchange their Roman coins for acceptable Jewish coins and could purchase animals needed to offer sacrifices. We should not think of this scene as taking place in a modern church, but in a large institution with many social, economic, political, and religious functions. The exchange of coins and purchase of animals was necessary for the sacrificial system to operate and for the commandments to be obeyed. Yet Jesus "drives out" those engaged in such activity, the same word used earlier for Jesus "driving out" demons (9:40, 49; 11:14-20). Something about the activity in the temple is also fundamentally at odds with God's will. Luke's Gospel only says that Jesus drove out those who were selling things, omitting any references to overturning tables of moneychangers and seats of dove sellers (Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15-16) and any reference to a whip or violent action (John 2:15). In Luke's version, Jesus' objection to the temple activity seems to be primarily the commodification of worship: turning a place of prayer into a marketplace. Such a critique would be consistent with the Gospel's faithful use of wealth, and justice for the poor.



## House of prayer

Jesus' prophetic words also shed light on the meaning of his symbolic action. The first line of the quotation is from Isaiah 56:7, and the phrase "den of robbers" comes from Jeremiah 7:11. According to Jesus the temple should above all be a "house of prayer." Prayer is another significant emphasis in Luke's Gospel. It is a source of divine guidance, and strength in time of trouble (1:10-13; 2:37; 3:21; 6:12; 9:28-29; 11:1-2; 18:1-11; 21:36; 22:32, 40-46). Prayer is also intimately connected to repentance, humility, and justice (18:1-8, 9-11). Jesus' critique of the temple suggests it is a locus for none of these things. In fact, it has become a

"den of robbers." When Jeremiah used this phrase he was harshly criticizing the people of Judah and pronouncing judgment on the temple, because their pious theology was simply a cover-up for social injustice, oppression of the poor, and worship of other gods (Jeremiah 7:1-15). So also the temple hierarchy in Jesus' day wielded economic, political, and religious power that undermined true worship and just social practices.

Jesus is not only critiquing the temple and its priestly administration but also claiming rightful authority over it. In the following verses and chapters, Jesus uses the temple as a setting for his teaching, a purpose more in line with God's desires (19:47; 20:1; 21:37-38). Although Luke does not specify the content of Jesus' teaching, the fact that it was "good news" (20:1) suggests that it was consistent with what Jesus preached in the synagogue in Nazareth earlier in his ministry (Luke 4:18-19, 43). Jesus' message sharply divides Israel, however, just as Simeon predicted (2:34-35). While the people hang on every word, the temple aristocracy become increasingly hostile and look for a way to kill him (19:47-48). Just as he has so often done throughout his ministry, Jesus fearlessly reclaims a human institution for its God-intended purposes. Such faithfulness brings him into conflict with the unjust powers of the world, however, and ultimately leads to the cross.

# gather

## supplies

- Glow magazines
- Shine Songbook and CD
- Year Two Songbooks (optional)
- CD player
- Prayer envelopes
- Slips of paper

## poster pack

- Bible memory poster (Luke 4)

## to do

- Review any sign language learned to accompany the Bible memory passage (pages 100–101 of this guide).

## media connections

- “Jesus Cast Out the Moneychangers” by Marshall Ballew on ReverbNation website
- *Jesus Cleansing the Temple* art by Jeffrey Weston
- *Cleansing of the Temple* art by Alexander Ivanov
- *A World of Prayers* by Jeremy Brooks
- CIWvideo YouTube channel (videos from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers)

## BUILD COMMUNITY

Greet children warmly as they arrive. Create a welcoming space by having worshipful music playing, your own or from the Shine CD. Invite each person to name a song or part of a typical worship service that they enjoy. Say that today’s story takes place when people are gathering at their place of worship.

## WORSHIP TOGETHER

Sing “Come into God’s Presence” (track 4 on the Shine CD, page 9 in the *Year Two Songbook*).

Pray:

**God, we come to worship you and to learn from Jesus. Help us to see the things you want us to do in your world. Amen.**

## SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Pass out the prayer envelopes used in previous sessions. Invite children to each think of something wrong that is happening in the world or in their community. What groups of people are looked over or treated badly? Share some suggestions if needed. They can create slips for these situations and put them in the “for others” envelope. (Some things might also fit in the “for myself” envelope.) Lead in a brief prayer for God’s justice to come to each of the situations.

## Bible memory

Review any sign language children learned. See if anyone can recite the verse from memory while others sign along.

**When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”**

—Luke 4:16–19

# experience

## SHARE THE STORY

Show the group where today's story is found in Luke 19. Jesus has been teaching and healing and has now entered Jerusalem with his disciples. Ask what children remember about the temple, where today's story takes place. They can remind themselves by looking at the illustration on page 17 of *Glow*.

Open *Shine On* to page 182. Do not show children this picture; rather, lay the book open and cover the pages with advertisements and coins. Read today's story from page 250 of *Shine On*. (Bring an extra copy.) Add more paper ads and coins to completely cover the open book as you read the beginning of the story. Push the ads and coins off the book when Jesus overturns tables. Now you can show children the uncovered picture of Jesus teaching on page 182; show this while reading the rest of today's story.

## WONDER AND REFLECT

First, direct attention to the Bible search poster. Younger children can look for an image from today's story picture, while older children can search for similar words to those Jesus quoted. Have volunteers read Jeremiah 7:11 and Isaiah 56:7 from the poster. Then invite further reflection on the story.

- I wonder why Jesus quoted these scriptures.
- What do you expect grownups to do if they see something happening that is unfair, mean, or wrong?
- I wonder how Jesus' actions in this story make you feel.
- I wonder what you want a house of prayer to be like. What helps you pray and worship God? What do you want to hear and see in a church or place of prayer?

## PEACE NOTES

Jesus didn't act very "peacefully" in today's story. But true peace does not mean keeping quiet when things are wrong. Mention that Jesus may have been angry because the temple moneychangers were cheating people.

Invite the children to think of things that make them truly angry or upset—more than just an annoying pet peeve. When have they seen someone treated unfairly (or been treated unfairly themselves)? Share examples of people in history who have worked so that all are treated fairly, such as African American civil rights leaders in the United States or Indigenous leaders in Canada.



## Jesus in the temple

### Luke 19:45–48

## supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible* (two copies, if possible)
- *Glow* magazines

## storytelling props

- Paper advertisements
- Coins

## poster pack

- Bible search poster

## to do

- Collect advertisements.
- Read through the story to become familiar with it.
- Locate an extra copy of *Shine On: A Story Bible*.

# explore

## CREATE

Invite children to make pictures of a peaceful world, perhaps illustrating God's kingdom, using the Crazy comparisons poster for inspiration. They should use light, bright colored pencils, covering most of the surface with a color. Then children should color over their images with black crayon to represent the negative things that often overshadow God's way. Finally, children can scratch a design into the crayon using a craft stick or paper clip. They could scratch a message about peace or a design that shows God's love. The bright colors underneath should show through. If desired, children can rub their illustrations with wax paper to give it a polished look.

### supplies

- Crazy comparisons poster
- Blank paper
- Colored pencils
- Black crayons
- Craft sticks or paper clips
- Wax paper (optional)

## MOVE

Have the children create "thirty-second scenes" to review the quarter. Read the title of each session from the inside cover of this guide and remind the group of a few details of the story if needed. Give the group thirty seconds to create a scene to represent that story. If possible, take a photo of each scene.

### supplies

- Watch or clock with second hand
- Camera (optional)

## RETELL

Children can read about Foley sound effects on page 39 of *Glow*. Then they can retell the story, adding sound effects, such as money clanking, doves flapping, sheep baaing, and tables overturning. Encourage them to experiment to discover which items make the best sounds.

*Option:* Make an audio recording of the story with sound effects.

### supplies

- *Glow* magazines
- Variety of items for sound effects (gardening gloves, metal washers, shoes, stalks of celery)
- Audio recording device (optional)

## GLOW

Turn to "Fair food for all" on pages 40–41 of *Glow* and read about how the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and church members made a difference for farmworkers in an unjust situation.

*Option:* Provide supplies for children to write letters to supermarkets or restaurants asking them to join the Fair Food Program. Children's drawings are often especially effective in these kinds of campaigns.

### supplies

- *Glow* magazines
- Blank or lined paper (optional)
- Colored pencils/markers (optional)



## other ideas

- Pick favorites from the Praise poster and say (or sing) the verses listed in the different ways of praising.
- Make or serve upside-down cake or turnovers to celebrate Jesus turning things upside down so that life would be right side up.

# bleSS

## PRAY

Sing or listen to “C’est une Belle Chose” (It Is a Great Thing), track 2 on the Shine CD. Music and lyrics are on page 6 of the *Year Two Songbook*; lyrics are also at the back of *Glow*.

Invite children to say one-sentence prayers asking God to give them strength to follow Jesus’ way in every part of their lives.

## SEND

Invite children to sit in a circle and recall the stories they heard this quarter as you read the Journey with Jesus blessing from page 103 of this guide.

Encourage children to take home their prayer envelopes and continue using them on their own. You can also send home *Glow* magazines and any other materials.

## supplies

- *Glow* magazines
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- CD player

## poster pack

- Praise poster
- Crazy comparisons poster

### leader’s closing prayer

What unlikely lessons has this quarter offered you? Have any of your ideas or expectations been turned upside down?

*God, thank you for working in unexpected and completely surprising ways. May I always be open to your leading, even if it means turning over some tables! Amen.*

*I think that teaching children spiritual practices like prayer and learning scripture is very important. As teachers, we can encourage children to take these practices with them to their home environment and throughout their lives to have a resilient, ongoing expression of faith.*

—Vicky Roeder Martin  
Breslau, Ontario

