

=SEPARATION=

Lesson 6
Smoking

Scripture: Matthew 18:1-14

Objects to have:

Two or three stones—some large, some small
The figure of the boy or girl
A big advertisement for cigarettes
A picture of a cigarette to put into the figure's mouth
Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

I want you to put on your thinking caps. (All "tie" them on.) I'm going to teach you some hard lessons, but you can learn them. Got your caps tied on? I'm going to tell you how big a millstone is. A millstone is not a little tiny stones like this one. A millstone is not a big stone like this. It's a great big one, as big as the side of some buildings. It is so heavy that not even your daddy or your uncle could pick it up. It's bigger than you are! What's that great big stone called? It's called a millstone.

Now, let's talk about something else. What's loving someone? Think about your mothers for a minute. We all love our mothers. Loving our mothers is wanting them to look pretty. Loving our mothers is wanting them to be happy always. It makes us cry whenever our mothers cry. If our mothers hurt their hands while cooking, we can just feel how that must hurt, and we feel sorry for them. Loving our mothers is wanting to put our arms around them and hug them real close. Loving our mothers is saying, "I love you, Mother." Loving our mothers is wanting to do nice things for them.

I think that there are lots of people who love you. If you have brothers and sisters and they're big enough, they love you. If you have a mommy and a daddy, they love you. If you have aunts and uncles and a grandma and a grandpa, they love you. You all have us teachers in Sunday school—we love you. I love you. There is Someone Who loves you even more than anybody else loves you. That Someone is Jesus. I know that Jesus really loves you and me because I talk to Him everyday and He lets me know of His love. I know that Jesus loves you and me because I've seen how He takes care of you and me. I know that Jesus loves you and me because I have read about His love in the Bible.

I will tell you a story today that will let you know for sure that Jesus loves you. I need every one of you to help me tell the story this morning. Get ready. Leave your head up straight, but close your eyes for a minute. I need you to do this to help me tell the story. With your eyes closed, let's make up a picture that we'll "see" in our minds. Let's put into our pictures some green grass and some hills. Now, we'll need a pretty blue sky. It's such a pretty day! The breeze is blowing a little bit. It's warm outside in our picture. Now we need a lake. Hear the waves gently rolling onto the sand? Our picture is not finished yet. Now we need some people. Put into your picture some children and some grown-up men and ladies. Put into your picture the most important Person—Jesus. Jesus had short hair; He had a good, man's haircut. Maybe He was tall. Now, open your eyes but remember your picture.

Telling the story:

Jesus had been talking with one of His disciples; He had been talking with Peter. Then He wasn't talking with anyone. His disciples were talking with each other. I need some of you to pretend to be His disciples. (Choose some of the class to come to the front.)

Jesus had twelve disciples, but I do not know for sure how many were with Jesus at this time. (You tell the children that you'll decide how many to choose.) While Jesus' disciples were talking with each other, some of them were getting pretty loud. Some of them I think were arguing. One of them might have said, "I think that Jesus would choose me rather than you to be close to Him." Another of them might have said, "I think that Jesus would like to have me do a certain job and not you." Another disciple might have said, "I look better than you do. Surely Jesus likes me better than you." So, the disciples were fussing with each other about who would be more important to Jesus. That's too bad that they were acting like that. Jesus loves each person just the same.

The disciples came to Jesus with their argument. Remember your picture in your mind? There were other people around the disciples and Jesus—maybe some people were walking. Maybe some people were going to the store. Maybe some other people were sitting and looking at the pretty lake.

The disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Jesus, who is going to be the greatest of all of us?" (Beckon to your "disciples" to come to you.) Jesus was displeased to think that they had been arguing. Jesus would have been pleased if they had showed love for each other by saying, "I love you. I would like to see you be honored by Jesus." The disciples asked, "Jesus, who of us is the greatest person?"

Jesus did not say anything right away. He looked at the other people who were near Him. He reached out and chose a little child. (Choose one from your class.) I think that Jesus said to the little child, "Could you come here for just a minute?"

How would you have liked to have been that child? Wouldn't it have been wonderful to have Jesus choose you to stand with Him?

Jesus said to His disciples, "This little child does not want to be the most important person in all the world. Disciples, watch me talk to this little child." (Turn to the child in front with you.) "Little child, I love you. I will always take care of you. There are certain angels whose only job is to take care of you. I see to it that special care is given you. Do you believe that I love you and that I will always take care of you?" (Tell the child to say "yes" to you. Turn to your "disciples.") "See, disciples, this child believes me when I tell him that I will always love him. You ought to be like that. You ought not to worry about anything.

Jesus taught His disciples that one lesson with the little child. Then He taught another lesson with the little child. "See this little child? If you are teaching a little child, be certain to teach him the right thing all the time. If you teach a little child the wrong thing, trouble is waiting for you."

Boys and girls, Jesus thinks that little children need special care. Isn't that wonderful? Aren't you glad that Jesus loves you that much?

Everything that you know was taught to you by somebody. Somebody taught you how to walk when you were a little baby. Somebody taught you how to hold your bottle when you were a little baby. Somebody taught you how to hold a spoon to feed yourself when you were a little baby. Somebody taught you how to say your first words when you were a little baby. You also learn by watching other people. You see how they do things and you try to do them, too. Jesus told His disciples and the big people around Him that day that they need to do the right things so that children would learn to do the right things.

Jesus wants you children to be very happy. Jesus doesn't want you to learn to do wrong things. (Point to your boy/girl figure's mouth, etc. while saying the following.) Jesus doesn't want you to say wrong words. Jesus doesn't want you to tell lies. Jesus doesn't want you to drink liquor. Jesus doesn't want you to go to bad places where you can get hurt. Jesus doesn't want you to read bad books that will hurt your mind.

There is something else that Jesus doesn't want you to do. Jesus does not want you to smoke cigarettes or cigars or pipes. He wants your body to be clean and healthy. Smoking can make your body dirty and sick. (Get out your cigarette ad and hold it so that the class can see it.) On television sometimes there are pretty ladies and big, strong-looking men with big pretty horses, and they are smoking cigarettes. It looks as if it's pretty and clean to

smoke, but it's not. Smoking has caused some people to have to go to the hospital. Once a person starts to smoke they have to keep on. Smoking is like putting yourself in jail and throwing away the key. It is very, very hard to get out of jail without a key to the door. It is very, very hard to quit smoking once a person has started. Smoking is not pretty and it's not fun. Jesus wants us to do only those things that are good for us. Jesus does not want us to hurt ourselves.

Jesus told His disciples that day when he chose a little child to stand with them, "If any of you were to teach a child to do wrong, it would be better for you if somebody wrapped a great big millstone around your neck and dropped you into the ocean and drowned you." That's how bad it is for anybody to teach you to do wrong. Children, don't let anybody teach you to do anything wrong. We're teaching you here in Sunday school how to do right. Always do right.

I think then that Jesus thanked the little child (thank the child who has stood with you) for helping Him teach two lessons to His disciples. (Let the child sit down while saying this.) Jesus and His disciples turned and traveled on from that town after they had talked together. (Thank your disciples for helping you, too.)

Do we want _____ to smoke cigarettes or cigars or a pipe? No, we don't! (Wad up the picture of the cigarette and throw it away without putting it into the mouth of the figure.) Do we want to smoke bad cigarettes or cigars or pipes? No, we don't. God wants the best for us and we want what God wants for us.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: "...God is love...." I John 4:16.