

The journey of Lent – Prepare yourself to Fast.

The lesson outline is broad so attached is a really long powerpoint that goes through the Lent readings which you could use to summarise from and below is a focus on the key messages out of the pre-lent reading Matt 6:19-33)

The Gospel reading before Lent (Matt 6:19-33) outlines how we are meant to live our entire lives so the church picks this reading at this time suggesting that Lent be a motivator to put the theory into practice especially as we fast.

1. Build up your treasures in Heaven v19-21

Get the children to first go through the list of earthly treasures and put up their hands if they have it (counting the number of people on the board)

Treasures on Earth	#
PS3	
Xbox	
iPhone	
Designer Clothes/Shoes	
Sporting skills	
Academic skills	
Social skills	
etc	

Now this should not make you feel bad that you possess these earthly things but should make you think how much value do I place on these things. Ask yourself these questions

- Do I dream and wish for more of these things and other such things?
- Are these things the source of my satisfaction/contentment?
- Do I hope in these things or put your trust in them? Eg. I think that my money will be what guarantee my future

Instead be content with things to get through life but rely on, trust in & hope that your heavenly possessions will be the definition of a prosperous life

In His wisdom God knows wherever our treasures are so will our heart. Since God wants your heart 100% he offers us treasures in Heaven so our heart will be there too.

Brainstorm with the kids how one might accumulate heavenly treasures, get them thinking that if earthly possessions come by taking; heavenly treasures come by giving. Eg. Giving money, time, service, praise

2. Eye is the Lamp of your Body (v22-23)

God created us with the tools to learn. The eye is the most powerful tool we can use to learn. Eg. In studying you use your eyes to read, view experiments. When learning to play a sport you will first watch how it's done before you attempt to do it yourself. But unfortunately the same eye can be used to learn how to do the wrong things. So we must be careful what we allow our eyes to see so we don't learn the wrong things

Link below is a recent advert that shows that kids will imitate what they see. Something you could show in class if you think it's appropriate.

Monkey SEE Monkey DO: <http://youtu.be/5xlaAkD15Gk>

Ask the kids what do you let your eyes see?

- In movies
- In books/magazines
- In the company they keep (ie. friends)
- Etc

Give them examples of the type of things they should let their eyes see

3. God V Riches (Mammon)

Similar to point one - God knows that where our treasures are so will our heart be. So if we love our material things, constantly strive to gain more of these things we then become a SERVANT to these things. Kids might ask how.

Well you can use Apple Computers as an example – ask the kids why they think Apple sell's millions and millions of iphones, ipods & ipads. Sure that they are easy to use and look cool will help sell some but the fact that many fanatical customers have turned into servants of apple has made them sell millions of products. They tell all their family and friends how good apple is, demonstrate the product features to them. Now apple don't need to demonstrate their products to everyone they just demonstrate it to their fanatical customers and let them do all the hard work. So essentially these customers have now become servants to apple because they are doing something of very high value for FREE.

So God would become jealous seeing millions of people running around serving Steve Jobs, reading his biography converting windows users to apple by their demonstrations and they don't give God the time of day.

What should we be doing is serving God, reading God's biography and converting non-Christians to Christians by demonstrating the Great gifts He has given us like:

- Love, peace, kindness etc

4. Do not worry

Jesus wraps up this chapter nicely. He's taught us above how to live our lives and what to concern ourselves with then tells us what we don't have to worry about. Of course we need to remind the kids that this doesn't mean you don't work hard and plan. The example of how God provided for Elijah (bird bringing him food) & the people of Israel (manna from heaven) comes to mind and although it is unlikely we would reach the spiritual heights of Elijah it serves as an example that there is no limit to how much God provides for us