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# “Don’t Hope in Ground Hogs!”

Children’s Sermon Object Lesson  
on the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:1-12

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## Children’s Message: Don’t Hope in Ground hogs!

The Beatitudes and finding strength in God alone

**Main Objective:** Today’s culture seems to say that we should seek happiness in pleasures or find success in our own power. The words and actions of Christ clearly defied those ideas, emphasizing that our hope and strength are found in God. This message communicates the same to children, reminding them that hope should be placed not in things that can change with circumstance, but in our unchanging Lord.

**Law/Gospel Theme:** God’s view of life is different than the priorities people often hold. Jesus died to rescue us so that we can follow what truly matters. We can rest in the comfort that God is in control and He loves us. Even when things in life seem hard, He promises to take care of us.

**Optional Materials:** “fun” items (candy, books, pictures, toys, etc); animal puppet; deck of cards or dice. Don’t miss our [Beatitude crafts](#) and [Sunday School lessons on the Beatitudes](#)

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 5:1-12

**Note:** As with most messages, the details of how you choose to communicate this are adaptable and should cater to timing as well as to your audience and student needs. Use what best suits you and those you teach. To make this message extra fun (and if it is allowable), consider bringing in a live animal for the “groundhog prediction” component. You might even let the animal “pick” something or “predict” something.

You can watch our teaching example of this [children’s message](#) on [YouTube](#).



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# Children's Sermon on the Beatitudes: Don't Hope in Ground Hogs!

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*Greet the children, possibly with an animal, or at least some toys.*

Hello, children of God! Let me ask you: what makes you happy? What kinds of things do you look forward to, or do you find joy in? *(Hold up various items as you offer suggestions.)*

Maybe you feel happy when you play with a fun toy...or when you have a special treat or candy! Maybe you enjoy reading a story, or watching a movie, or playing with a friend...you know, one thing that makes me happy is spring time. I love it when the sun comes out and the flowers start to bloom, and things are warm. Did you know that there are some people who say we can predict when spring will begin?

Now, technically spring does have an official calendar start. But there's this tradition called "Groundhog Day." On that day, people bring out a groundhog to "guess" the weather. A groundhog is an animal that lives underground, and looks kind of like a beaver *(hold up puppet or stuffed animal, if applicable)*.

So on groundhog day, this critter comes out. People say that if it stays above ground, out of its hole, that means we will have an early spring. However, if the groundhog gets scared by its shadow and slips back into its hole, that is supposed to mean winter will last longer. Wow, if that works with a little rodent, I wonder what else I could use to predict things that are coming up! Hmm, let's say I want to know... *(Insert your predict-able element here: a sports game, the weather, who will win an upcoming competition or election, etc.)*

I think I'll figure out what that outcome will be with my... *(choose a "predicting force": an animal, deck of cards, coin toss, dice roll)*. So, if *(example)* my guinea pig here wanders to the green cloth, that means that the San Francisco 49ers will win



the Super Bowl! If squeaky heads for the red cloth, it means the Chiefs will win...ready? Let's try it.... (*act like you are trying to adjust the results to get the outcome you want*).

Well, that might seem a little silly, maybe even sillier than doing it with a groundhog. But sometimes people put their faith in the wrong things. They try to figure out life, and they often grow disappointed or upset when they don't get their way.

Sometimes we get upset if we don't get our way. But you know, the Bible has something different to say about what we should rely on for happiness. The way Jesus views success and value is much different from our definitions. In fact, Jesus was talking to some people, and He said that we would be "blessed" if we were sad, or shy, or poor in spirit, or even if others hurt us!

He said that mourning people would be comforted, and peacemakers would see God. He wanted to let people then and now understand that He is the way to life and peace. The world might tell us that we should look for happiness in things, or in power or fame or importance. But God tells us that we are at our best when we rest in Him. We may not know what the future holds, but we certainly know who holds the future! God has our best in mind, even when we don't know exactly what that looks like.

We can rest in His hope because He promises to be with us and take care of us. So just remember that when things get challenging, or you feel upset, or maybe something seems unfair to you. God has a plan. Spring might not come early, but it will come. We still hope and trust in Him for each breath and part of life. That is something we can take joy in! Why don't we say a prayer and thank God for that, and maybe we can think about this special sermon from Jesus?



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# Children's Prayer Moment

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Dear God,  
Thank you for providing help and hope.  
Help us remember that you are near.  
And help us to count on you for our peace and happiness.  
Let us seek what truly matters.  
Thank you for your love.  
We love you, God!  
In Jesus's name, Amen!

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## Matthew 5:1-12 (NIV) The Beatitudes

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*5* Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, *2* and he began to teach them. He said:

*3* "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*4* Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

*5* Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

*6* Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

*7* Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

*8* Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

*9* Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

*10* Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*11* "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. *12* Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. [Matthew 5:1-12](#)



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