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# “Don’t Let Pride Puff You Up”

Children’s Sermon on Matthew 23:1-12

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Children’s Message: Live with Humility

Main Objective: “Practice what you preach” ....it’s a common saying, but what does it mean? This message explains to children the importance of humility. The Pharisees Jesus warns about in this Gospel passage did not practice what they preached. They trusted in their own strength, and pridefully worked to be seen by others. That kind of pride and self-assurance can only lead to downfall, as the object lesson here illustrates.

Law/Gospel Theme: The Pharisees were headliners of the Law. They told people how to live their lives, and they preached the importance of rules and regulations. Yet their actions were not genuine. They wanted attention for their teaching. The good news of Jesus reminds us that we are forgiven through Him. We don’t have to worry about making ourselves look good, and we shouldn’t! We can’t brag about our own ability, but rest in the work of Christ.

Optional Materials: Stacking blocks or several items to balance; a soft surface (pillow) and hard surface.

Bible Passage: Matthew 23:1-12

Message: 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 your judgment and ideas to best serve students.

- Watch the video demonstration of this [children’s sermon](#) on our [YouTube channel](#)
- Watch the [Sunday School craft project](#) demonstration on our [YouTube channel](#)
- Compare our [Matthew 23:1-12 Sunday School lesson for kids](#)



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# Children's Sermon (Matthew 23:1-12)

## Pride and Humility

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*Greet children, and have at the ready several blocks, such as wooden blocks, a "Jenga" tower set, or large Lego stackers. Act boastful about your block-building ability...*

Hello, children of God! I brought something with me today that I would love to show you. You see, it just so happens I am a fantastic block builder! I have my blocks here, and I plan to build an incredible tower out of these. Have you ever used blocks like this? I'll bet you can't make a tower quite as tall as mine. Here, I'll just prop these up on this pillow to show you a better view... *(As you continue to talk, stack the blocks one on top of the other, balancing on a soft surface like a pillow).*

See, I've made plenty of these block structures before. It's pretty simple, really, you just put them like this, and then add another here.... *(precariously position the blocks to topple)*

Whoa! Okay, let's see, maybe I'll try again. I really am good at this, you'll see. Okay, so I'll put some this way, and then add more on top here, and pile a few more over here....uh-oh! You know, maybe I talked a bigger game than I really knew how to do. Maybe I should try to put my blocks on a more solid foundation, for one thing. Maybe I was too confident in myself, and didn't really know what I was talking about. Let's try this differently...*(Begin stacking the blocks on a more solid surface, explaining as you go).*

You know, the Bible talks a lot about pride and humility. Jesus warns us not to get too full of ourselves. We don't want to brag about our ability or think we're better than other people. If we build our confidence on our own strength and power, it winds up being pretty wobbly, just like putting our blocks on this pillow. It will topple over because it doesn't have a strong foundation! The Pharisees, those church leaders who thought they were pretty special and didn't like Jesus, often tried to tell others how to live their lives. They talked a big game, but didn't really practice what they preached. They didn't truly love other people, but just wanted attention. Jesus told His disciples not to be like that, and we don't want to be like that either. We shouldn't boast about things, especially about our salvation. Nothing that we have comes from our own power, but from God. HE is the source of true strength. He is a more solid foundation than personal pride or ability. So rather than trusting in ourselves, we want to practice humility. That means we think of others as better than ourselves. We treat other



people with kindness, rather than looking down on them or trying to tell them what to do. We recognize that every good thing comes from God. When we build our lives on His solid foundation (*hopefully by now a better block tower has developed*), we are able to do more than we might have ever imagined! And when we don't act like we know it all or can do it all, that's when God can work through us. We rejoice that it's not all about us, but about Him! Why don't we say a prayer and ask God to help us live with humility?

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## Children's Prayer Moment

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Dear God,  
Help us to remember that you are our leader and teacher  
Let us not become puffed up with pride  
But grant us attitudes of true humility  
Help us to live as your Son  
Thank you for your love  
We love you, God!  
In Jesus name, Amen!

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## Bible Verses: Matthew 23:1-12

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*Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, <sup>3</sup> so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. <sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. <sup>5</sup> They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, <sup>6</sup> and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues <sup>7</sup> and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. <sup>8</sup> But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup> And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. <sup>11</sup> The greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup> Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. -Matthew 23:1-12*





This lesson was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

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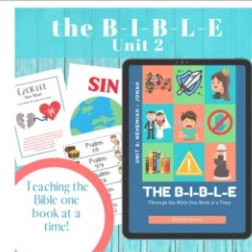
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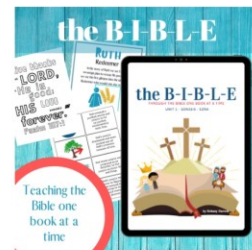
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