
Imitate Jesus

Children's Sermon from Ephesians 4:17-5:2

This message addresses a beautiful passage in Ephesians, which reminds us to “put on Christ” as we focus on living in ways that are kind and truthful, rather than lashing out in anger. The key principle of this message focuses on what it means to imitate Jesus. When we imitate something, we mimic or copy it, recognizing that we are not the thing itself, but that we can represent it. When we imitate Jesus, we know we are not perfect as He is, but we can consider how He loved and lived and so communicate that love to others.



Law/Gospel Theme: When we imitate or try to be like someone, it usually indicates that we care for and respect who we imitate. We encourage children to imitate Christ because He is worthy of copying. We should always strive to be more like Him. Jesus gave us a perfect example to follow, constantly demonstrating love and care for those around Him. Although we cannot be exactly like Him, we can do our best to share His love with others and care for those around us.

Optional Materials: Costume or mask (optional); imitation versions of products or brands; pictures of items or imitations.

Bible Passage: Ephesians 4:17-5:2

More Teaching Ideas:

- Watch the video of this [children's sermon](#) and related [Bible craft ideas](#)
- Download our full [Sunday School Lesson on Ephesians 4:17-5:2](#)
- Compare another [Sunday School Lesson from Ephesians 4](#)

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. For the purposes of describing imitation, it might be helpful to wear some sort of costume or disguise. You might even consider dressing up like the pastor or another worker in the church.

Ephesians 4:17-5:2 (Children's Sermon) Imitate Jesus

Greet the children, wearing some sort of costume elements or disguise...

Hello, children of God! Can you guess who I am today? Can you tell? I was just trying on some different costumes, and of course this one is (*state who you are dressed up as*). Now, of course I am not really (Spider Man/the pastor/etc.), but I have his outfit on, and I am pretending to be him. This is called imitating. When you imitate something, you act or dress like it, or maybe make the kinds of sounds it makes. Hey, why don't we try some imitating right now? How might you act or sound if I told you to imitate.... A frog? How about a bird? (*Provide several animals, people, or objects, and allow students to act them out*).

Sometimes we hear the term "imitate" as something that is very similar to another thing. For instance, I have this margarine here (*hold up whatever product or products you choose as examples of imitation*)...now, this is not butter. However, it sort of "acts like" butter in a way. I can use this in recipes and on things, instead of using butter. It's not exactly the same but it does what butter might do. Or I might use this imitation meat if I can't or choose not to have meat. These products help out if I don't have the "real thing."

Well, how might you behave if you were going to imitate...Jesus? It's not a trick question. The Bible invites us to be imitators of God, walking in love as Christ loved us. When we imitate something, it might mean that we greatly admire or value the original. It might also mean that we want to have something that can stand in for the original. Both should be true in the case of imitating Christ. We know that we cannot actually be Jesus, of course. We don't wear sandals and loin cloths or speak Greek and Aramaic. On our own, we can't heal people with a touch or turn a few loaves of bread into a meal to feed thousands. We are not God, after all. However, the spirit of God lives in us, and calls us to carry His love to others.

When we think of imitating Jesus, God wants us to consider how He loves and serves others. We "put on Christ" like we put on clothes, covering our own natural habits and interests with His. We want to give to others and to treat them with kindness and forgiveness. In this way, we can act like Jesus and imitate Him. When we do that, others will see who Jesus is and how His love can transform our hearts and lives. We can bring His love to one another when we imitate Him and act like Him. How do we know how to imitate Him? Well, just as we might watch another person or study a product to make an imitation, we can read God's Word and pray to know how He wants us to act towards one another. We are God's dear

children, and we follow His example to communicate love with those around us! Let's say a prayer to ask for God's help as we imitate Him and share His love.

Prayer:

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for teaching us how to live

Help us to be your people and imitate you

Help us speak truth and lift each other up in love

Help us to be kind and loving

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Bible Verses/story to Reference: [Ephesians 4:17-5:2](#)

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. -Ephesians 4:17-5:2



Thank you for downloading these free materials. Our team is grateful for your trust and pray that God will bless your ministry.

This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.



Every week she writes new [Sunday School lessons](#), [Bible crafts](#), and [children's sermons](#).

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

My name is Tony Kummer (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. It is my personal honor to share these resources with churches around the world.



[Reader donations](#) and your support at [The Sunday School Store](#) fund these free materials. Please keep us in mind when you are choosing your next children's ministry curriculum.

If you enjoy our material, be sure to [sign-up for my free email newsletter](#) called "Sunday School Works!" Every Tuesday, I send the latest new lessons, crafts, and coloring pages in print-friendly format to make your lesson planning easy.

May God continue to bless your ministry!

Tony Kummer