

The Chief Priests

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
Matthew 21:23-32

Church Season
Pentecost

Lesson Focus
Jesus answers our questions.



Tear here for easy use!

Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Play Time Kids interact with elements of the story The Chief Priests.	Coloring Pages 	Crepe paper (shades of green), masking tape, toy farm set, small artificial greenery, toy people, assorted puppets, markers or crayons
Circle Time Kids play a quiz game as a way to enter the story.	Leaflet	None
Prayer Time Kids pray with a partner during the prayer.	None	None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
The Chief Priests Storytelling Kids wear costumes and act out the story.	Spark Story Bibles	Bible time costumes
Yes and No Kids use stickers and coloring to complete the picture and review the story.	Leaflets, Lesson Stickers	Markers or crayons


Lesson At-A-Glance

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Jesus Answers Kids draw lines from Jesus to the ways Jesus answers our questions.	Leaflets	Markers or crayons
What Would You Ask? Kids create a collage and dictate a question they would like to ask Jesus.	Leaflets, Lesson Stickers	Assorted decorating materials (tissue paper, craft foam, sequins, scraps of ribbon, etc.), glue sticks, markers or crayons
Spark the World Kids sing and dance for Pentecost with ribbons and instruments.	Leaflet, Spark Songbook, Spark Song CD	CD player, rhythm instruments, green ribbons or streamers

Tear here for easy use!

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Good-bye Time Kids review the day and say good-bye with a rhyme.	Leaflet	None
Prayer Time Kids copy the leader's words and actions during the prayer.	Leaflets, Family Pages 	None



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content! Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find four downloadable resources for this lesson: a Coloring Page, a Family Page, and two additional in-class activities.

Gather (10 minutes)

Play Time

Before kids arrive, set the rolls of crepe paper where kids can access them. Place the farm set, greenery, and people in one area of the room and the puppets in another. As kids arrive, invite them to explore the different activity options. **Have you ever seen grapes growing on a vine? Use the crepe paper to make some vines grow around the room. Remember that you are growing, too. Pretend you have a vineyard or farm to grow grapes. What kinds of work will everyone do? Have the puppets talk to each other. Take turns asking and answering questions.** Provide copies of this lesson's Coloring Page for kids to color. Be sure to help them put their names on their papers.

Once all kids have had a chance to play, invite them to help put away the supplies and join you in a circle on the floor. Ask each of the kids the following questions before they sit down as a way to transition to Circle Time.

**Do you like grapes?
What is your favorite fruit?**

Circle Time

Welcome kids enthusiastically! **Hello, everyone. I'm glad to see you! Let's say and play a rhyme to see who's here!** Repeat the following rhyme using each of the kids' names. All clap and cheer at the end.

**[Name]'s here!
[Name]'s here!
Clap your hands and
Give a cheer!
[Name] is in God's house today!
Hooray! Hooray!
Hooray! Hooray!**

What was green and growing around the room today? Invite kids to answer this and the following questions as you point to the lectionary icon on the front of the leaflet. **What is green and growing in this picture? (tree) We are in the church Season of Pentecost. During Pentecost, our faith grows just like grapevines and trees.**

Raise your hand if you played with the farm set. What kinds of work do people do when they grow grapes? What questions did your puppets ask and answer? In today's story, some people try to ask Jesus tricky questions.

I'm going to ask you some tricky questions. See how many you can answer. Have fun asking kids the following questions.

Spark Resources

Coloring Pages



Supplies

Crepe paper (shades of green)
Masking tape
Toy farm set
Small artificial greenery
Toy people
Assorted puppets
Markers or crayons

Spark Resources

Leaflet

Supplies

None

Tear here for easy use!

1. **What do you put in a toaster?**
2. **Which came first, the chicken or the egg?**
3. **What number comes after the number 99?**

Have you answered a lot of questions this morning? What was the trickiest question? In our story today, the chief priests try to trick Jesus with lots of questions. Let's get ready for the story.

Prayer Time

Help kids find a partner to pray with. **Ask your partner this question, "Are you ready to hear God's word?"** Allow partners to answer the question. **Let's ask God to help us.** Have kids echo each line after you.

**Dear God,
Help me to listen
And help me to learn
From your word today.
Amen.**

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

The Chief Priests Storytelling

Gather kids in an open area of the room. Place the costumes where kids can access them. **It's time to hear a story from God's word, the Bible. Today's story is about some people who were trying to trick Jesus with a question. Jesus answered the question by telling a story. Let's read!**

Hand a Spark Story Bible out to each kid. Help kids find The Chief Priests on pages 460-461. Encourage kids to follow along as you read the story the first time through.

Read the story again, inviting kids to act it out. Have kids play the parts of the Chief Priests, Jesus, Father, First Son, and Second Son. Give them a few acting clues with questions like these. **How do you think the Chief Priests were feeling? Where should the father and sons stand?** Encourage kids to choose costumes for their roles. Read the story slowly to allow kids time to act.

Let's talk about the story. Point to the picture on page 461. **Who was asking Jesus a question?** (*chief priests*) **How did Jesus answer the question?** (*Jesus told a story.*) **What is one question you would like to ask Jesus?** Allow kids to respond. **The chief priests tried to trick Jesus, but Jesus answered their question with a story. There are no questions that are too hard or tricky for Jesus to answer. Jesus answers our questions!**

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies
Bible time costumes

Yes and No

Gather kids at a place where they can work and give each one a leaflet. Place the rest of the supplies where everyone can easily access them. Direct kids to the front of their leaflet. **Point to Jesus in this picture. Who is Jesus talking to?** (*chief priests*) **The chief priests asked Jesus a tricky question. How did Jesus answer their question?** (*He told them a story.*)

Jesus told a story about a father with two sons. What did the father ask the sons to do? (*work in the vineyard*) Invite kids to color the picture of the first son and the basket. **The first son said, "No" he would not work in the vineyard. What did that son do?** (*changed his mind and worked in the vineyard*) Invite kids to color the picture of the second son and the basket. **The second son said, "Yes" he would work in the vineyard. What did that son do?** (*nothing*) Give each kid three stickers of grapes. **Whose basket should we put the grapes in?** (*first son's*)

Jesus told the priests they were like the second son because even though they said they were good, they didn't act that way. Jesus answers our questions!

Spark Resources

Leaflets
Lesson Stickers

Supplies

Markers or crayons

Tear here for easy use!

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

Jesus Answers

Direct kids' attention to the activity Jesus Answers on the back of the leaflet. **Jesus told a story to answer the chief priests' questions. Jesus answers our questions in many ways. What is one way Jesus answers some of our questions?** Invite a volunteer to name one of the pictures surrounding Jesus. Discuss each picture in the order they are chosen. Have kids draw a line from Jesus to each picture as you talk about it.

- Spark Story Bible: **Jesus helps us read and understand stories in the Bible to answer some of our questions.**
- Someone praying: **When we pray, Jesus can answer some of our questions in our hearts.**
- Adult talking to child: **Jesus can answer some of our questions by having an older person talk with us.**
- Empty box: **What is another way Jesus can answer some of our questions?** Have kids brainstorm ideas (*storybooks, videos, songs, going to church, etc.*) and then draw something in the box.

Jesus cares about you. Your questions are important to Jesus. Jesus answers our questions.

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Markers or crayons

What Would You Ask?

Direct kids' attention to the activity What Would You Ask? on the back of the leaflet. **Use your finger to trace the symbol on your leaflet. Who knows what symbol this is?** Allow kids to respond. **This is a question mark. We use it to show we have a question. Let's imagine we are with Jesus and the chief priests who asked Jesus a question. What is a question you would like to ask Jesus?** Encourage kids to think of questions in a group. Ask kids if there are things they would like to know about animals or weather, or what it was like to live in Bible times, in order to spark discussion.

These are great questions. Use these materials to decorate the question mark while we keep talking about questions. Questions are great. They help us wonder and learn! Give each kid a Jesus sticker to add also. While kids are decorating, have leaders circulate among kids and write a question they dictate in the space indicated. **One of the ways Jesus answers questions is through prayer. Sometimes Jesus answers right away or sometimes we have to wait a while for the answer. Either way, Jesus answers our questions. Let's ask Jesus our questions in a prayer.** Lead kids in a spontaneous prayer based on their questions. Be sure to leave a quiet moment for kids to listen to Jesus.

Spark the World

Gather kids in an open area of the room. Hold up a leaflet, pointing to the lectionary icon. **What church season are we in? (Pentecost) What is the color for the Season of Pentecost? (green) We use the color green to show how we are growing. We grow every day and we grow when Jesus answers our questions. As we grow, we want to share what we know about Jesus with others. Let's sing and dance for Pentecost!**

Read the words of the song "Spark My World" aloud to kids. It is on pages 4-5 of the Spark Songbook. Pay particular attention to the Pentecost verse. Play the song from track 1 (18) of the Spark Song CD. Encourage kids to play instruments and wave the ribbons or streamers as they dance.

Spark Resources

Leaflets
Lesson Stickers

Supplies

Assorted decorating materials (tissue paper, craft foam, sequins, scraps of ribbon, etc.)
Glue sticks
Markers or crayons

Spark Resources

Leaflet
Spark Songbook
Spark Song CD

Supplies

CD player
Rhythm instruments
Green ribbons or streamers

Tear here for easy use!

Send (5 minutes)

Good-bye Time

Gather kids in a circle on the floor. **Today we learned about the chief priests who asked Jesus a tricky question. How did Jesus answer their question?** (*He told them a story.*) **Jesus talked about two sons who were asked to work in the vineyard. The first said no and then worked in the vineyard; the second said yes, but never went. No question is too tricky or hard for Jesus. Jesus answers our questions.**

Hold up the leaflet. **When you take your leaflet home, ask your family to read the Faith on the Go! idea on the back. There's a fun way to ask and answer questions this week.**

Before we go, let's say good-bye with a rhyme. Repeat the rhyme until all of the kids have been named. Give each kid a hug or high-five following the rhyme.

**Good-bye, [Name],
Our great friend.
God will be with you
Until we meet again!**

Prayer Time

Let's stand for our closing prayer. Copy my words and actions.

Dear God,
Thank you for Jesus. (cross arms)
I know I can ask Jesus any question. (point to mouth)
And I know, Jesus answers our questions! (put hands on heart)
Hooray for Jesus! (jump)
Amen.

Be sure to send leaflets and Family Pages home with kids.

Spark Resources
Leaflet

Supplies
None

Spark Resources
Leaflets
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Tear here for easy use!