

Memorial Day

We remember and celebrate the sacrifices others make for our freedom and safety

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

God wants us to put him and others ahead of ourselves.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn what it means to sacrifice for God and others.

KEY PASSAGE:

Romans 12:1-2, Living sacrifices.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” - John 15:13 (NIV)

“No one has greater love than the one who gives his life for his friends.” - John 15:13 (NIRV)

SUMMARY:

Sacrifice is not natural for us, especially in our world today. We are selfish people who think only of ourselves. Jesus wants us to be different. He wants us to be living sacrifices that will put God and others ahead of ourselves.

OBJECT LESSON:

Mini American Flags (these will be delivered to you)

Memorial Day is a big holiday for flag waving and flag displays. Where have you all seen American flags on display this weekend?

Why do you think we display the American flag for Memorial Day?

Memorial Day is a special occasion to remember the men and women who served this

country in the military. We remember the sacrifices they made, leaving their homes and families behind, to put their lives on the line. Some of those heroes were wounded. Some of them died. For all of them, we lift up our flags and we wave them in salute, thanking them for their service. We can also celebrate nurses, doctors, and first responders, or anyone you see that makes a sacrifice.

What do you think drives a person to make such a sacrifice?

For the people who served our country, it was a belief in something bigger than themselves - America. They were willing to put the needs of others - their country and the people they defended - ahead of their own.

That's the same reason Jesus came - to put our needs ahead of his, and die for our sins. On Easter Sunday, we raise a different symbol to remind us of what Jesus did. We look to the cross, and we remember what it means to put God and others first.

Optional: As the lesson ends, pass out mini-flags to all the kids and place them around your neighborhood.

On this Memorial Day, whenever you see these flags, I hope you will remember the sacrifices our veterans made. Take a moment to thank God for their sacrifice, then thank him again for the cross and the sacrifice Jesus made for us!

LARGE GROUP LESSON (online)

INTRO: Memorial Day means many things to many people. To sports fans Memorial Day is a great weekend for baseball. Basketball playoffs are going on, and this afternoon, there's a little car race in Indianapolis you might have heard of. For movie fans, Memorial Day is a big weekend, the official start to the summer blockbuster season.

For kids and teachers, Memorial Day is a happy day because you get the day off. It also means that summer and summer break is about to start. Memorial Day is kind of a sad day for parents for the same reason - it's almost summer, and the kids will be home all day instead of at school. (Well normally, we have a very unique situation this year with covid-19)

Everyone looks forward to Memorial Day for the long weekend and summer fun, but that's not the reason the holiday began. Memorial Day was created so we could remember those who sacrificed for our freedom. On Memorial Day we honor the

veterans of foreign wars, active military members, and especially those who paid the ultimate price and died for our country.

From the very beginning of this country's history, men and women have willingly laid down their lives for our nation. They died to win their freedom in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Mexican War. They died to keep our country together in the Civil War. And they died to protect the freedoms of others in two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, and the Middle East.

The brave heroes who died for our country remind us that, sometimes, we need to put the needs of others ahead of ourselves. They remind us that God wants us to put serving him and serving others ahead of serving our own interests. Paul wrote about this when he sent a letter to the Christians in Rome.

READ Romans 12:1-2

MAIN POINT

What does it mean to be a living sacrifice? Jesus set the standard for us when he sacrificed Heaven to come live among us. Jesus never sought any personal gain. He wasn't rich, he wasn't powerful, and he wasn't popular with those who had power. Jesus spent his time with the sick, the poor, and the needy. He chose sinners as his best friends. In fact his disciples included a traitor, a hot head, a doubter, a political radical, and a tax collector.

That wasn't all Jesus did. When he was betrayed by one of his own, he died on a cross for our sins. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, the one man who could die for all. He put us first, and he showed us how we need to put others first. If we want to call ourselves Christians, we need to do the same. (End of online video)

DRIVE IT HOME As a family

Sacrifice doesn't come naturally to us. We are sinners, and sin is a selfish act. We want to take care of our wants. We want to do what we please. We don't want to listen to someone else, and we definitely don't want to put the needs of others ahead of our own.

There's only one cure for that kind of selfishness. We need to remember what Jesus did for us. Jesus didn't die because he had something to gain. He did for us what we could never do for ourselves. Because of Jesus, we can have our sins forgiven, and we can have eternal life. When we consider what Jesus did for us, how can we not sacrifice for others?

Sacrifice doesn't mean we will lay down our lives as he did. Sometimes sacrifice means giving money. It may mean holding off buying something for ourselves so we can give to God. It may also mean sacrificing our time, choosing to serve God instead of playing video games.

Whatever you do, don't do it for personal gain. Do it because of what Jesus did for you. Being a living sacrifice means putting God and others ahead of ourselves. When we do that, we show the world just how much Jesus loves us!

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Forgive us for our selfishness. Teach us to put others first so that we can be of service and giving.

Amen

CRAFT IDEA:

Have kids color this coloring page for Memorial Day. Online copy on slack

Age appropriate questions:

GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)

ICEBREAKER:

Do you have any military veterans in your family?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Why do we celebrate Memorial Day?

Read Romans 12:1-2

What did Jesus sacrifice for us?

What does God want us to do for other people?

What are some simple ways we can sacrifice for others?

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Thank you for sending Jesus to sacrifice for us. Teach us to love others so that we can be living sacrifices ourselves.

In Jesus' name, Amen

GROUP DISCUSSION (3RD-5TH)

ICEBREAKER:

Do you have any military veterans in your family?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Why do we celebrate Memorial Day?

What's so important about honoring our veterans?

Read Romans 12:1-2

What does it mean to be a living sacrifice?

Why is sacrifice unnatural for us?

How can we sacrifice for God and for others?

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Thank you for sending Jesus to sacrifice for us. Teach us to love others so that we can be living sacrifices ourselves.

In Jesus' name,

Amen