**September 27th, 2020: Elementary Sunday School Lesson
THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE lesson 2: the temptation**

***After completing this lesson, the children will understand that our spiritual growth can be hindered by our sinful desires.***

**AS KIDS ARRIVE**

As children arrive, have them compete in friendly games of thumb wrestling.

**OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE AND MEMORY WORK**

**"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Mark 14:38 NIV**

**SCRIPTURE READING AND DISCUSSION**

**Introduction:** Today, we will learn that our spirit and flesh are in conflict with each other. We will also learn that God provides a way for us to stay spiritually strong and alert, which will help us avoid the sinful temptations that are in the world around us.
 **Read Mark 14:32-42

Discussion Questions:**
1. How long had Jesus been praying before He returned to find His disciples sleeping?*(One hour. Mark 14:37)*
2. After Jesus discovered His disciples sleeping, what did He tell them to do? *(Watch and Pray, so they would not fall into temptation.)*
3.Why didn't the disciples have the same urgency to pray? *(They were unaware of the spiritual battle that was taking place around them.)*
4. How does our flesh get in the way of seeing the spiritual threats around us? *(Self-confidence, physical limitations, cares of the world.)*
5. What are some ways we can combat falling asleep while praying or keep our fervor for meaningful prayer? *(Allow for discussion.)*
6. What happens when we fail to pray? *(Failing to pray leaves us in a weakened spiritual state when temptation comes.)*
7. What did Jesus say about the body in verse 38?*(The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.)*

**GAME: STAY AWAKE (Materials: stay awake cards, scissors)**

***A fast paced game that teaches children the importance of staying spiritually alert.***

**PREPARATION:** Before class, print three or four sets of the "Stay Awake" cards on medium card stock. Cut out the cards. Thoroughly shuffle the cards before each game.

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Have the children sit in a large circle facing each other. Explain that you will be flipping cards face up in the center of the circle. When a "Praying Hands" card is played, the first player to cover the card with his or her hand collects the card. In the event that more than one player has a hand on the "Praying Hands" card, the player who covers the majority of the card collects it. If a player touches a "Yawning Man" card, he or she falls asleep and is ineligible to play the next card. The player that collects the most "Praying Hands" cards wins the game. For a tiebreaker, have all the players with "Praying Hands" cards in their possession play additional rounds until a winner emerges.

Once a winner has been declared, say, "During the game we all had to be physically alert, but for the next couple of minutes we are going to discuss what it means to be spiritually alert."

**Discussion Questions:**
1. Why is it important to be spiritually alert?*(Allow for discussion. Some possible options are: Jesus may return at any time, the Bible tells us that our struggle is not against flesh and blood but rather the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms, being spiritually alert will help us resist evil desires, and being aware of God's blessings provides us with reasons to be thankful, etc.)*
2. How can we stay spiritually alert? *(Pray, read our Bibles, listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, attend church, have Christian friends.)*3. What happens when we become spiritually lazy? *(Our interest in praying, reading our Bibles, and other spiritual activities diminishes. We become self-centered.)*
 **OBJECT TALK: JELL-O SURPRISE (Materials: Jell-O, Jell-O mold)**
***An illustration that compares Jell-O to our fleshly (sinful) desires.***

**PREPARATION:** Before class, make the Jell-O. If possible, use a Jell-O mold to add some height to the Jell-O, which will make it easier for the children to see.

**WHAT YOU WILL SAY:** Jell-O is a good illustration of our fleshly nature. Jell-O has artificial coloring, sweeteners, and flavoring. In other words, it looks good, but it is not the real thing. Likewise, when we satisfy our fleshly desires, we are only getting artificial pleasures. It might seem good at the time, but it is all fake. In addition, Jell-O is weak, unstable, and it melts when it gets hot. Our fleshly desires are also weak, unstable, and they lead to death. We were not created to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, but rather we should live according to the Spirit.

The Bible tells us that our flesh and spirit are continually at odds with each other. Our fleshly desires (sin) lead to death, whereas the mind controlled by the spirit has life and peace. Mark 14:38 says, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." You wouldn't build your house on a foundation of Jell-O, nor should you build your life on the artificial pleasures the flesh has to offer.

Ask several volunteers each to read one of the following scriptures: Romans 8:6, Galatians 5:17, Galatians 6:8.

**Discussion Questions:**
1. Do the Spirit and the flesh have the same desires? *(No, they are in conflict with each other.)*
2. What happens to the mind controlled by the flesh?*(It reaps death and destruction.)*
3. What happens to those who live to please the Spirit? *(They will reap eternal life.)*

 **APPLICATION**

In today's lesson, Jesus' example showed us that the best way to avoid temptation is to pray to God. When we are spiritually alert, it is easier to see the world's temptations for what they are, which is sin. We cannot do whatever we please, but rather, we should weigh our choices against the Word of God to see if we are living in accordance with God's Will. If we live to please the Spirit, from the Spirit we will reap eternal life.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**What we learned:** Today, the children learned about Jesus and His disciples praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus told His followers to pray so that they would not fall into temptation, but instead they all fell asleep. Today’s lesson emphasized that praying will help us avoid temptation as well. (Scripture used: Mark 14:32-42)

**Memory Work:** "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Mark 14:38 NIV Practice this verse several times with your child during the week. This will not only help him or her remember the verse, but it will also help to reinforce what he or she learned during class.

**Suggested Parent/Child Activity:** Thumb wrestle with your child several times, and then discuss how our spirit and flesh wrestle against each other for control of our lives. Discuss Mark 14:38 with your child. Help your child compile a list of ways to stay spiritually strong and alert.

**Daily Prayer:** Dear Jesus, thank You for teaching us to pray so that we do not fall into temptation. Please help us stay spiritually strong and alert. Give us a hunger to please You with the way we live. May the Holy Spirit help us pray fervently each day. Amen.