



Children's Resources Following Jesus

Young children and families

Simple Signs

Kids can create “MAKE IT SIMPLE” signs to attach to the refrigerator, cupboards, the Bible, drawers, the washer, and various closets around their home. Families can make signs to give to another family. Signs should be made from recyclable materials. Start the sign-making by asking children to letter and/or illustrate Matthew 6:33: *Seek first God's ways and all these things will be given to you as well.* As an option, create similar signs for the kitchen at your church. Another option: Use a Bible translation that is geared to children's vocabularies, such as *The Contemporary English Version (CEV)*. (See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_English_Version for background on this Bible translation.)

Make a Banner

Use small (8 x 14 inch) rectangles of felt to make banners filled with flowers and birds. Attach small pieces of Velcro® to the backs of the birds so that they can be removed, fly around, and return to the sky of the banner. Read Matthew 6:25-29 as a preface to beginning the activity.

Lower Elementary

Consider the Lilies

God doesn't call us to be a bird or a lily, just to observe them. The Matthew passage contains a wisdom tradition of appealing to common sense and observing nature. You can foster appreciation for nature by moving children outside. Take a class walk with notepads or sketchbooks. Watch for birds and flowers. Invite children to write or draw some things they notice about how birds and flowers look and act. Get kids excited by offering ideas. "Hey, those birds are flying all together." "Those flowers are pointing toward the light." Talk together about the things you observed. God made all those birds and flowers. What do they show us about God?

The lilies in Jesus' story could have been *Chamaemilum nobile*, a daisy-like chamomile plant. (See <http://www.plantcare.com/encyclopedia/chamomile-2154.aspx> for further background.) Kids could assemble daisies, chamomile tea bags, and cards with Matthew 6:33 written on them, and deliver these items to particular groups in the congregation—new parents, homebound, or teens leaving for college.

Upper Elementary

Birds of the Air

Bird life in the Middle East includes well over 400 species. (See <http://www.wildlife-pal.org/Birds.htm>.) Migratory birds (including large raptors) pass through in vast flocks as they make their way to winter homes in Africa. The birds take to the air in the daytime to ride on warm currents. Birdwatchers make a pilgrimage to the area to observe thousands of birds.

Upper elementary kids can research the birds in their part of the world. (For a good start on the Web, visit <http://birdix.com/> or <http://www.fws.gov/birds/>.) They can make a video of birds as seen from the ground and a video as though from a “bird’s eye view” of the people on the ground watching the birds. What can each group learn from the other about God and about making it simple?

Watching for Worriers

Engage children in a Bible search: Go through the Gospel of Matthew to find examples of ways that Jesus taught and lived simply in service to others. Search for all the worried characters in Matthew. Cartoon them with really worried faces and draw in Jesus and his messages for them. Post the cartoons on a bulletin board at church. (Some examples: Matthew 12:1-8; Matthew 13:54-58; Matthew 16:24-28; or Matthew 20:20-28.)

Survey Says....

Send kids out with clipboards to interview church members about Matthew 6:25-33. Interviewers can give respondents a few words and see if they can remember the rest. For example, “So do not worry about your life, what you will ____ or what you will _____. But strive first for the _____.” After presenting the fill-in-the-blanks questions, ask the respondents, “What does God say is enough?” “How do you make your life simple by trusting God?” and “Name one thing you could do to simplify your life.” Bring answers back to class for tallying and for conversation. Ask students to report their findings in an article for your church newsletter.