object lessons

Teach kids to be “penny wise,” bake some “Sure-to-Flop Cookies” or let your kids’ imaginations enrich your story! Choose one of these suggestions to create a fun lesson on the importance of following instructions.

shining for Jesus [science with a twist]

You will need some dirty pennies, two small bowls, salt, vinegar, cotton swabs (the double-ended stick swabs) and a copy of these paragraphs to serve as your “instructions.”

- Begin by telling your children that you need to clean some pennies and you have read that you can use vinegar to clean them.
- Put some pennies in the bowl. Dip a cotton swab in vinegar and try to clean the pennies. (You might see a slight cleaning effect, but nothing significant.)
- Pretend that you are disappointed in the results. Then say, “I guess I should have read the instructions more carefully.” Consult your instructions and then say, “Now I understand! I was supposed to mix salt into the vinegar.”
- Now have your children help you stir 1 tsp. of salt into ¼ cup of vinegar. Have them stir until the salt is dissolved.
- When the salt is completely dissolved, allow your children to put the pennies into the mixture. You may need to stir the solution a bit, but the results will be startlingly different – your efforts will produce some clean and shiny pennies.
- Explain that we are like the vinegar and the salt is like the Holy Spirit. We can try to be obedient on our own, but it is hard to obey when we try to do it in our own strength. It is much easier to obey when we ask God for help from His Holy Spirit.
- Give each of your children a shiny penny to remind them how brightly their righteousness shines when they obey God.
- Pray with your children, asking God to give them a desire to obey.

question for discussions

- What did I do wrong the first time?
- Which instruction did I not follow at first?
- Where do we find God’s instructions?
- Who can help you obey God’s instructions?
- What does the Bible say about children obeying their parents?
- What does God promise to children who do obey their parents?
- What does God say He will do for those who choose righteousness?

relevant Scripture

John 14:15-17 “If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth . . .”

John 14:26 “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”
Psalm 37:5-6  “Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.”

Ephesians 6:1-3  “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ – which is the first commandment with a promise – ‘That it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth.’ ”

Colossians 3:20  “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”

“flopped” cookies [fun with food]

Make oatmeal chocolate chip cookies with your children. Use the recipe for “Family Favourite Oatmeal Cookies” provided below, or another recipe of your own choosing.

Next, make a second, smaller batch of cookies that don’t turn out well. Use a recipe of your own, being sure to double the quantity of oil, or follow the recipe for “Sure-to-Flop Cookies” provided below. The increased proportion of oil will make the cookies meld together on the cookie sheet. (Don’t worry, the “flopped” cookies won’t be wasted; they can be crumbled up and used as an ice cream topping.)

When you are making the second batch, tell your children that you are “making it up as you go.”

After you have compared the success of the two batches of cookies and while you are sampling the cookies, talk to your children about the importance of following instructions. Use this to lead into a discussion on the importance of following God’s instructions. Close your time by praying that God would help you follow His instructions found in the Bible.

questions for discussion
- What did I do right the first time?
- What went wrong with the second batch?
- Where do we find God’s instructions?
- What does the Bible say about children obeying their parents?
- What is the promise for children who do obey their parents?

relevant Scripture
Ephesians 6:1-3  “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ – which is the first commandment with a promise – ‘That it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth.’ ”

Family Favourite Oatmeal Cookies
¾ cup butter or margarine
¾ cup apple sauce
2 cups brown sugar
4 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs
⅔ cup milk
2 cups whole wheat flour
6 cups quick cooking oatmeal
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
2 cups chocolate chips
Mix the first six ingredients in a large bowl with a hand mixer.

Add flour and oatmeal, then sprinkle the salt, baking powder and baking soda on top.

Mix with the hand mixer again. Stir in chocolate chips. Drop in teaspoonfuls on a cookie sheet.

Bake at 375 °F for 15-20 minutes.

**Sure-to-Flop Cookies**

- ¾ cup oil
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup milk
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- 1 ½ cups rolled oats
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. baking soda
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ cup chocolate chips

Mix the first five ingredients in a large bowl with a hand mixer.

Add flour and rolled oats, then sprinkle the salt, baking powder and baking soda on top.

Mix with the hand mixer again. Stir in chocolate chips. Drop in teaspoonfuls on a cookie sheet.

Bake at 375 °F for 15-20 minutes.

**precious obedience [drive time / any time]**

Ask your children to imagine a table filled with all kinds of delicacies. Have your children add their favourite foods to the story.

Alternatively, describe a toy box filled with all kinds of wonderful toys, again having your children suggest some favourites.

Now ask your children, “How do you think you could please Mom and Dad the most: by giving up the whole table of treats [box of toys] for them, or by obeying their instructions?”

Of course, the correct answer reflects the truth of 1 Samuel 15:22, which emphasizes that obedience is better than sacrifice. Direct your children’s attention to this passage of Scripture.

**relevant Scripture**

1 Samuel 15:22  “But Samuel replied: ‘Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.’ ”