

**11.23.09 – Mark 6:14-29**

Materials Needed: Print off enough copies for each kid in the group of the corresponding activity, *Focusing Our Eyes on Jesus*.

Opening Activity

- Have the kids sit in a circle and pass out the activity, “Focusing Our Eyes on Jesus”.
- Read the instructions out loud and make sure that everyone understands what to do.
- Time the activity and let everyone know when to begin and call out “time” when 30 seconds has passed.
- Ask the kids what they saw and have them talk about it.

Discussion

How neat was it to see an image of Jesus through this activity! Even though we don’t visually see Jesus every day, we can still keep our eyes focused on him as we read the Bible, pray and try to live life the way he asks us to. Let’s dive into tonight’s passage and we’ll talk more about this as we go.

Read Mark 6:14-20 & 26

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.” But others said, “He is Elijah.” And others said, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.” But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.” For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. For John had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.” And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.

[Break in the passage] “And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her.”

King Herod heard of Jesus and the miracles he was performing and thought that he was John the Baptist, a man who God had sent before Jesus to prepare people’s hearts for Jesus’ coming. (You can read about this in Matthew 3:11.) Now it seems funny to us that even though John the Baptist was dead, King Herod still thought that he had come back to life.

Question One: If you were in King Herod’s town when this happened, who would you have said Jesus was? *Allow the kids to come up with their own answers, and then move on quickly to the next question.*

Question Two: Who do you say Jesus is today? Have the kids answer this for themselves. Then, make sure they understand the following (they may give some of these same answers or variations of them): *Jesus is God. Jesus demonstrated God’s very power as He healed. Jesus is God’s Son who came to earth to die for me and to rise again to save me from my sin and to give me eternal life. Jesus is my friend, my comforter, my Savior, etc.*

King Herod’s mix-up was a little bit more than just a mistake though. His heart, like ours, was broken and filled with sin, and instead of recognizing Jesus as his source for life, direction, and purpose, he looked to himself and sought to bring honor to himself and please others instead of God.



Question Three: Do you know a good solution to help us keep our eyes focused on Jesus rather than on ourselves? *We're sinful people, so we're never going to quite get there in this life, but the Bible gives us the instruction we need to become more and more like Jesus. 1) We must spend time reading the Bible so that we can learn more about Jesus and how He calls us to live. By doing this, we will come to understand the gospel – the good news about Jesus. 2) We must discipline ourselves to not only listen to what the Bible says, but actually do what it says too (James 1:22). 3) As we do this, and immerse ourselves in Jesus' word, we begin to live and breathe the gospel, and when we are confronted with situations that tempt us to look to ourselves and things other than God instead of Jesus, God can use the knowledge of the gospel within us will turn our eyes back to Jesus.*

John the Baptist tried to point King Herod back to the truth as he explained that he was living disobediently toward God and needed to stop. We see this in verse 18: "For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." King Herod seemed to entertain the truth that John spoke of, but he quickly dismissed it for earthly fame and honor.

Question Four: When you disobey God and do things you're not suppose to do, like King Herod did, and then someone tells you what you've done, how do you respond?

Do you ignore what happened like King Herod did, or do you confess and ask God for forgiveness (asking for forgiveness is to tell God that you're sorry for what you've done and ask Him to help you not do it again)? Have the kids answer this for themselves, but make sure they understand this: *Confessing to God and asking God for forgiveness is always what you need to do. We might think that we can ignore our sin and hide it, even if other people can't see it, but God knows our heart and we can't hide sin from Him!*

Acts 10:43 tells us this: "All the prophets testify about [Jesus] that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." This means that if you believe in Jesus and believe that he came to earth (born in a manger), to live among us, to teach us, to die for us, and then rose from the dead to save us from our sin, Jesus has paid the penalty for your sin and has made the people who love him "alive together with [Jesus], having forgiven us all of our trespasses"(Colossians 2:13). What beautiful news! Even when we do sin and lose our way, Jesus is right there saying, "My child, I love you, know that I have already paid the price for your sin. Tell me the sin that you are struggling with and I will bear it for you. Tell me that you're sorry and know that I have already forgiven you. I love you!" Because Jesus loves us so much and has already paid for our sin, we have new life and we should be eager to tell others about it!

Question Five: How can you share Jesus with others and tell them who Jesus really is? *When you believe in Jesus, this belief changes your heart and causes it to overflow with joy and excitement that only Jesus can give, and it causes you to care for others like Jesus does. This joy and excitement flows out of us in all areas of our lives and causes other people to see Jesus in us. How exciting!*

Clarification

From the moment sin first entered the world, we were no longer like God and our hearts became broken and sinful. If we try to look to ourselves for worth and value, we're not going to get anywhere. It only leads to destruction like it did in King Herod's life. Jesus is our only hope. He is the one who can forgive us for the hurtful things we do, and he is the one who gives us new and eternal life. There is much hope in Jesus Christ! We just need to keep our eyes focused on Him!

Wrapping Up

Let's end our time by remembering the love that Jesus has for us and how he treasures us as his children. No sin or hurtful thing we do can keep us from the love that Jesus has for us. All we have to do is come to him, tell him that we're sorry for what we've done, and thank him for saving us from a debt that we could never pay! Pray and ask Jesus to help us become more like him and to have the boldness to tell others about the wonderful things he has done in our lives!