

Activity: Eye of the Needle



FAMILY TIME
TRAINING

Teaching Goal: You cannot take material possessions to heaven.

Scripture: Matthew 19:23-24 Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

Materials: Chairs or bricks and boards to make a low tunnel
Backpack for each child or share a backpack
Favorite toys, books, items to fill the backpack
Sewing needle

- I. Play theme song
- II. Pray
- III. Review last lesson
- IV. Lesson and discussion

✓ Words written in **bold** are when the leader is speaking. Feel free to use your own words.

NOTE: There is a popular story being told in churches about a gate in Jerusalem called the “Needle.” The story suggests that a camel can go through the Needle gate if its cargo is removed. This story appears to be a myth. If you find a legitimate source for the story, we would love to hear about it at info@famtime.com. Whether the Needle gate is true or false, the message of this verse is the same.

A. **ACTIVITY #1: We are going to pretend that we have to leave our house quickly. We only have 5 minutes to gather up our favorite toys, books, stuffed animals, and items from our rooms. Everything you are going to take with you must fit in your backpack or be tied to the outside of the backpack. You must be able to wear the pack on your back when it is full. Ready, set, “Go! You have 5 minutes.”** Take time to look at the different items they packed and ask why they selected each item.

Before doing the next activity, set the backpacks aside and invite a volunteer to read Matthew 19:23-24. Hold up the needle. **It is impossible for a camel to get through this hole in the needle! Jesus is saying that it is impossible for a rich man to get to heaven. Why? Because when the rich man dies, he is no longer rich as the world defines rich, he cannot take his stuff with him! The rich man and the poor man go to heaven with the same amount of material possessions—nothing.**

B. **ACTIVITY #2: Make a small tunnel using a line of chairs or bricks and boards. The tunnel needs to be small so that the children will need to remove their backpack to successfully navigate the tunnel. Not too small and not too large. Create rules that will cause the children to go slowly and cautiously. For example, you can’t move the chairs. Or, if you don’t**

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mind a little mess, place glasses of water on top of the chairs and if any water is spilled, they must start over.

Put on your backpack and get ready to play a game. You each have three attempts to get through this tunnel. We are going to see if you can get through faster on your third attempt. If you move the chair, your turn is over. Get ready for your first attempt! They may try to go through wearing their backpack. In order to succeed they will need to take it off. If they ask, it is okay to take off the backpack. They just need to leave it behind. They cannot push it in front or drag it behind as they go through the tunnel. If they don't ask to take off their backpack, you might want to give them a hint before their third attempt.

How was this activity like the verse we read? How did it feel to leave your things behind? *Listen to answers.*

Jesus talks a lot about money and possessions. He warns us not to fall in love with "things" or to treat money as more important than people. Jesus warns us not to love money, toys, cars, our home, more than God. Give examples of loving money and people more than God. Not giving to the poor. Reading all kinds of books but never the Bible. Complaining about going to church where we worship God with others.

Did you pack anything in your backpack that reminds you of God or represents your spiritual faith? *Listen to answers.*

If there is a fire in the house, you want to stay low and crawl along the floor to an outside door or window. People who try to escape a fire and cling to things may not get out safely. How is this strategy for escaping a fire like the activity of crawling under the chairs? *Listen.*

Jesus' story is about a man not just trying to get out of a burning house, but a man wanting to get to heaven. We need to be careful not to let "things" become more important than people or God.

VI. Close in Prayer

VII. Pass it On. Make an extra copy of this lesson and *pass it on* to another family.