

The Homework Race

A 20-minute lesson for Sunday school, VBS or midweek kids • Colossians 3:23

AGES	Best for 5–10. Adaptations for younger and older classes are on the last page.
YOU NEED	20 minutes • a screen with sound and internet • about 20 paper or plastic cups • a basket with a cloth in it • a worksheet or coloring page and crayons • printed family guides to send home
EPISODE	The Homework Race (2 min) — youtu.be/_hw-Yx7DDKA
MEMORY VERSE	Colossians 3:23
GRANDMA'S BIBLE STORY	Mary and Martha — Luke 10:38–42

THE ONE THING THEY TAKE HOME

Rushing and working are not the same thing. God isn't asking children to be the fastest or the best — He is asking for their **whole heart** on the thing in front of them. Work done that way is worship, and the fun afterwards is better for it.

Class plan

MIN	WHAT HAPPENS
0–2	Open with the race. Hold up the cups. "Who can build the tallest tower in 30 seconds?" Let one child try — while you interrupt them constantly with questions. Let the tower wobble and fall. "What went wrong? You were hurrying. And I kept bothering you."
2–4	Watch the episode. Play The Homework Race (2 minutes).
4–9	Talk about it. Use the three questions below.
9–13	Open the Bible. Read Colossians 3:23, then tell the story of Mary and Martha (teaching notes below).
13–18	Do the activity. The Cup Tower, run properly this time, plus the basket (below).
18–20	Pray and send home. Pray the prayer below and hand out the family guides.

Talk about it

- Why was LJ rushing through his homework? (He wanted to get to his tablet. Not wicked — just hurried. Say so; the children need to know this isn't a scolding.)
- Londyn told LJ to focus while she was scrolling her own phone. Has anyone ever told you to do something they weren't doing? What did LJ do about it? (He spoke up — and then they fixed it together, which is the part that matters.)
- What is one thing this week you could do with your whole heart instead of racing through it?

Open the Bible

"And whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord, and not for men."

Colossians 3:23 (World English Bible)

How to tell it. Jesus came to visit two sisters, Mary and Martha. Martha was thrilled — and immediately busy. Cooking, carrying, setting out, fixing. Mary just sat down at Jesus' feet and listened. Martha got frustrated and asked Jesus to send her sister to help. And Jesus said something surprising: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is needed." Mary had chosen the good part.

Be careful here. Jesus was not telling Martha that work is bad — someone had to cook. He was telling her she was so busy *doing for* Him that she was missing *being with* Him. Ask the class: what is the one thing you don't want to be too busy for?

GOING DEEPER WITH OLDER KIDS

Read Colossians 3:23–24 in full: the reason to work with your whole heart is *who you are really working for*. Ask them what changes about homework, chores or practice when the audience is God rather than a grade or a coach. Pair it with Proverbs 13:4.

Activity: the cup tower and the basket

5 minutes · cups and a basket

- **Round one (already done at the open):** one child builds while you interrupt. The tower falls.
- **Round two:** the same child builds again — but first, everyone puts their distraction in the basket. You put your phone in first. Then quiet. Let them build slowly. It stands.
- Ask: "Which tower took longer?" (They usually say round two. It almost never did.) "Which one is still standing?"
- Send the basket idea home: one basket, everyone's devices in it — grown-ups first — until the work is done.

THE GROWN-UP GOES FIRST

The moment this lesson lands is when the teacher puts their own phone in the basket. Children have heard "put it away" plenty of times. They have rarely watched an adult do it first. Don't skip that beat.

Close in prayer

God, help us slow down and do our best. When we want to rush, help us give our whole heart to what matters most — and help us not be too busy for You. Amen.

Adapting it

Ages 3–5: do the cups only, no talk of homework. Ask: "Is it better to hurry, or to be careful?" Let them build a tower together and clap for it.

Ages 10–12: talk honestly about phones and attention — theirs and their parents'. Ask what they lose when they do homework with a screen glowing beside them, and let them set their own house rule for the week.

Large group: run cup towers in teams of four; one team gets a designated "distractor". Compare results out loud.

Short on time (10 minutes): cups, watch, question 3, Colossians 3:23, prayer.