



THE BROKEN

POT

A CHILDREN'S MESSAGE SERIES STUDYING THE SEASON OF

LENT

Guide for Presenters

The following is a 7 -week children's message series for the season of Lent. Lent is a period of 40 days in which Christians focus on the sin that so easily entangles us. It begins with Ash Wednesday and concludes on Easter Sunday. In some traditions people will give up a certain food or habit for the season to keep reminding themselves of their sin and their need for a Saviour.

This series walks children through that same process through the example of a broken clay pot.

The overall theme idea comes from Isaiah 30, where God speaks out against the people for their disobedience, but later in the chapter speaks of sending a Saviour to redeem his people.

Materials needed for each week:

Week 1

A clay pot. These can be found at any garden centre.

A hammer to smash the pot with

Bucket for the broken pieces of the pot to fall into

Week 2

A roll of string or twine

The broken pot pieces from Week 1

Week 3

Elastics or rubber bands

The broken pot pieces from previous week

Volunteer to offer help with the pot

Week 4

Poster putty

The broken pot pieces from previous week

Week 5

Clear tape

The broken pot pieces from previous week

Week 6

This is Palm Sunday. This can be used to make up for a week missed or take a quick break from the series and look at the peace Christ brings.

Week 7

Gorilla glue (dyed red)

The pot

*A note: It is helpful to work on this ahead of time and have the examples ready to go on the Sunday. You may also notice you need a few pots depending on how the first one breaks.

Let's journey through Lent together this season and may God open our hearts and minds to what he is saying to us.

Week 1 - Broken Pots

What do I have here? That's right a clay pot. We use clay pots to plant flowers or vegetables or fruit. This pot looks like it could do that, doesn't it? (*Smash pot with a hammer*)

How about now? Could we plant something in this pot? No, there is no way.

This pot is like us. In the beginning God created humans, whole. There was no marks or brokenness. But then sin entered the world. And sin makes us broken, just like this pot.

Our Bible says this about our sinfulness in the book of Isaiah

Therefore, this what the Holy One of Israel says:

"Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression, and depended on deceit, this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant. It will break in pieces like pottery, shattered so mercilessly that among its pieces not a fragment will be found for taking coals from a hearth or scooping water out of a cistern."

That kind of sounds like our broken pot this morning, doesn't it? What are we going to about it?

Over the next few weeks, we are going to try to fix this pot. So, I'll bring some materials and we will see if we can fix it, okay?

Let's pray together

Dear God,

We have sinned against you. Our lives are broken. We need fixing God! We ask for forgiveness for those things we do that upset you. And help us to show that forgiveness to others this week on the playground and at home. We love you! Amen.

Week 2 Fix it Now!

Here is our broken pot again. And I brought something I think we might be able to fix it with. (*pull out string*). Let's see if this will fix it. (*The string will not work, pieces will not fit together*)

That did not work. But I wanted it fixed now, didn't you? Let me try again. (*string still does not work*) I'm mad I thought this would fix it right away!

That reminds me of a story about the people of Israel in the book of Exodus. Then Moses led Israel away from the Red Sea. They went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert. They didn't find any water there. When they came to Marah, they couldn't drink its water. It was bitter. That's why the place is named Marah. The people told Moses they weren't happy with him. They said, "What are we supposed to drink?"

Then Moses cried out to the Lord. The Lord showed him a stick. Moses threw it into the water. The water became fit to drink.

There the Lord gave a ruling and instruction for the people. And there he tested them. He said, "I am the Lord your God. Listen carefully to me. Do what is right in my eyes. Pay attention to my commands. Obey all my rules. If you do, I will not send on you any of the sicknesses I sent to the Egyptians. I am the Lord who heals you."

The people came to Elim. It had 12 springs and 70 palm trees. They camped near the water.

The people of Israel wanted water, right then. And they complained about it when the water was bitter.

Sometimes we are like that we want our brokenness fixed right now. But we have to be patient to wait for God and his plan to rescue us.

So, this week we can be patient and come back next week to fix our pot.

Let's pray together

Dear God,

We are not always patient. We want our brokenness fixed now! Help us this week to trust in your great rescue plan. We love you! Amen.

Week 3 I Can Do it All by Myself

Okay, this week I think I may have our solution to this broken pot! I've got elastics!
(show elastics to children) Here we go, I think I'm going to have a fixed pot after this.
(attempt to fix pot with elastics, does not work)

Another person comes forward

Do you need help? *(volunteer says)*

No, I can do this all by myself. I said I would fix the pot and I'm going to do it, myself!
(Try to fix pot again and fail.)

This is so frustrating! And it reminds me of a story in our Bible of someone who wanted to do things his own way without God. That man's name was Jonah.

Jonah was told by God to go to Nineveh to share God's words with them. But Jonah thought he knew better he could do it all by himself. Well we know how that went. Jonah was swallowed up by a big fish after he was thrown off a boat headed for somewhere other than Nineveh. God did rescue Jonah and Jonah did eventually go to Nineveh.

But we are kind of like Jonah. We think we can save ourselves, we can fix all our brokenness. But we need God. And God's plan of rescuing us is way better than what we could ever come up with.

Let's pray together:

Dear God,

Sometimes we like to think we can save ourselves and don't need you. Please forgive us for when we think that way. We do need you! In fact, without you we are nothing. Open our hearts and minds to your great rescue plan. We love you! Amen!

Week 4 - Will God Really Notice?

Okay for three weeks we have been trying to fix this pot and nothing has worked. But today I think I have a great idea.

I brought this. (*show poster putty*). This stuff is really sticky and if I do a good job no one will notice. (*point to congregation*).

Attempt to fix the pot.

There that looks good, don't you think. I don't think anyone will notice the pot is not completely back together, do you?

Wait, you do think they will notice? Oh no!

This reminds me of a story from the Old Testament where King Saul was told after a battle to not leave anything alive from the enemy. But King Saul was sneaky and thought no one, especially God, wouldn't notice if he kept some of the enemy's animals. Do you think God noticed? You bet he did and he punished Saul for not listening to his instructions.

Sometimes we are like that too. We think God won't notice if we do a really small bad thing. But God does notice and he tells us that we must obey him fully. There is no fooling God.

Let's pray together:

Dear God,

We are sorry for the times we think you won't notice our sins. We try to be sneaky, but you see it all. Help us to listen to you and obey you with all our hearts, minds and souls. Amen!

Week 5 - The Cost of Following Jesus

Today I think I may have got it! I think I fixed the pot! Ta da! (*reveal pot "fixed" with clear tape*)

What do you think? Do you think we could use this pot? Does the pot look like it did a few weeks ago?

No. It's still incomplete. And that tape probably won't hold it together for very long. But you know what I think that's good enough. Yeah, a little water may leak and dirt may fall out of it, but oh well, that's as good as it's going to get. Do you think that is a good idea?

No, you are right, we should try again.

And you know in our Bible Jesus talked to his followers in the book of Matthew about what it means to follow him.

"Jesus saw the crowd around him. So, he gave his disciples orders to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Then a teacher of the law came to him. He said, "Teacher I will follow you no where you go."

Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens. Birds have nests. But the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

Another follower said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

But Jesus told him, "Follow me. Let the dead bury their own dead."

We can get like that. We think to follow Jesus we can do it, but if something more important comes up we can do that. But Jesus says it will cost us everything to follow him.

It sounds scary. But Jesus' way is much, much better than ours!

Let's pray together

Dear Jesus,

We say we are going to follow you, but we quickly get distracted and do our own thing. Help us to stay on the path of following you always. We love you! Amen!

Week 6 Palm Sunday

We take a break from the pot and focus on cheering for peace.

Week 7 (Easter)- Because He Lives

Today is a special day! What is today?

You are right, today is Easter! And on Easter we celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead to defeat sin once and for all.

Now I bet you are wondering what our pot looks like. Well I had some special help this week and take a look at this- *(reveal pot fixed with gorilla glue)*

Our pot is fixed! Yes, there are some little holes and it's not perfect but we can use this to put a plant in now. And does anybody see what colour the special material is that we used to fix it.

Yes, it is red. And that's because it is only by Jesus' blood that we can live. He has saved us from our sin! That is a reason to celebrate! That sin we have been talking about is forgiven. Jesus has won!

Let's read about that wonderful day from this book:

(Read portion from The Jesus Storybook by Sally Lloyd Jones. Pages 310-316- God's wonderful surprise)

Christ is risen. He has risen indeed!

Let's pray together

Dear Jesus,

We are so excited today! We celebrate today, because you have risen! We thank you for your sacrifice so we, a broken people could be saved from sin and death. Put a pep in our step today God and help us to share the good news that Jesus is risen! We love you! Amen.