Venerable Matt Talbot

The Courage to Begin Again

Ages about 7-11 | Video 9:30 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth God loves us and invites us to begin again. We can ask for help and take one good step today.

Learning goals Recall Matt's first step; explain temperance and making amends; choose a safe, small good habit.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online Open this video on Servus Dei

Before watching | 2 minutes

Introduce Matt, a worker in Dublin who struggled with alcohol addiction. Explain that addiction is a serious difficulty; people need compassion and help, not shame.

Watch and notice

Notice the pledge, prayer, work, repayment of debts, and quiet care for people in need.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. What was Matt's first step toward change?
He asked for God's help, went to Confession, and made a three-month promise not to drink.

2. Did Matt's promise make everything easy?
No. He kept asking for help and taking good steps, one day at a time.

3. How did he make things right?
He repaid debts and tried to help someone whose livelihood he had harmed.

4. What good step can a child practice?
Choose a balanced habit, apologize, ask a trusted adult for help, or offer a kind action.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

Venerable Matt Talbot

Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Draw one good step from Matt's life and a small good choice a child can safely make. Accept spoken answers.

Read & Write Recall the story, explain perseverance or making amends, and name a trusted adult who can help.

Adapt by readiness

Emerging readers: read aloud and accept pictures, pointing, or an adult writing the child's words.

Confident readers: distinguish asking for help from trying to solve an adult's addiction.

One good step today | Optional 4 minutes

Use fictional choices: stop a game when time is up, tell the truth, or say sorry and repair harm. Each child chooses one small, safe habit to practice with adult support.

Look for understanding A child names Matt's first step, explains why he needed help, and identifies one safe good choice.

Closing prayer Jesus, thank you for loving us. Give us courage to ask for help, make things right, and begin again today. Be close to people who are struggling and to their families. Amen.

At home Share one small good step with a trusted adult. Pray for people who need support; children are not responsible for fixing an adult's problems.

Handout answer notes Matt asked for help, practiced prayer and temperance, and made amends. Small-step answers vary.

Teach with care

Discuss addiction and death gently. Do not ask children to reveal family difficulties. Let them pass on personal sharing. Children can seek trusted adults; adults can seek qualified support. Matt is Venerable, not canonized. Temperance means using good things in a balanced way. Addiction never removes a person's dignity; prayer is not a substitute for appropriate professional support.

Words to explain Temperance: balanced choices. Perseverance: continuing with help. Amends: trying to repair harm. Venerable: recognized for heroic virtue.

Sources for the leader

Biography: St. Saviour's Priory, Dublin: Matt Talbot

Pastoral background: Irish Bishops' Drugs Initiative: Matt Talbot

Scripture connection: Luke 15:11–32: mercy and a new beginning (USCCB)