**Inappropriate Wreaths**

*What is Jesus looking at?*

**PREP**

Get a standard wreath (made of green branches) and place it on the table. Also get one that is made of a different material—something interesting, but not too unusual. For example, one made of ornaments or twigs. Place this “different” wreath out of sight but near the teaching area.

In addition, make one or two “inappropriate wreaths” out of material that really should not be used for a wreath. For example, make them out of bacon or doll heads or toilet paper rolls. You can accomplish this by gluing the “inappropriate” material to a cardboard ring. Place these 2 “inappropriate wreaths” out of sight near the teaching area.

Also, make a sign that reads, ““IT LOOKS LIKE A WREATH, BUT IT’S NOT RIGHT” Place this sign out of sight near the teaching area.

Mark a Bible at Matthew 23:27.

**DEMONSTRATION**

Show the students the standard wreath and ask if anybody knows what it is called. After getting the answer (wreath), ask “What is it that makes something a wreath?” Take responses and then show your “different” wreath. Ask “Is this considered a wreath also?” (Sure) Say “According to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, a wreath is either ‘something intertwined or arranged in a circular shape.’ Or ‘something having a circular or coiling form.’ According to those definitions, these are both wreaths.”

Explain, “I would gladly hang either of these wreaths in front of my house, even though they are made of different materials. However, some materials just shouldn’t be used to make a wreath. Look at this. (Pull out one of the “inappropriate wreaths” and enjoy the students’ response) Or how about this? (pull out the second “inappropriate wreath”).”

Ask, “What’s the problem with these wreaths? I mean, they’re in the right shape, right? They meet the definition of a wreath that we read earlier. What’s the problem here?” Take response, and then show your sign “IT LOOKS LIKE A WREATH, BUT IT’S NOT RIGHT”

**OBJECT LESSON**

Say, “On Christmas, we celebrate that God came to Earth 2000 year ago as a baby named Jesus. As Jesus grew up, he explained that He came to save the lost. And, He desires to CHANGE us on the inside. See, Jesus is more concerned with what “we are made of” than how we look. Listen to what Jesus said to some of the religious leaders when he was around 30 years old.” **Read Matthew 23:27**.

Say, “The same problem that Jesus saw with the religious leaders then, is the same problem that these wreaths have. They are made of the wrong stuff. The religious leaders of Jesus’ day tried to walk around DOING the right thing, but Jesus says, ‘No. It’s not enough to look right.You’ve got to be made right from the very core of who you are.’ (Hold up sign) I really hope Jesus doesn’t look at me and say, ‘IT LOOKS LIKE A CHRISTIAN, BUT IT’S NOT RIGHT’”

Challenge the preteens to look at themselves a little more deeply this Christmas. It’s not enough to DO the right things at Christmas time—come to Church, sing Christmas songs, etc. What Jesus is really concerned with is what’s happening inside us. What really matters is what we are made of.

**WRAP UP**

 Say, “This Christmastime when you see a wreath, think about what the wreath is made of. And remember that when Jesus looks at you, he’s thinking about the same thing.” *(Share your wreath at* [facebook.com/inappropriatewreath](http://www.facebook.com/inappropriatewreath). *Challenge your students to create their own. You could win $50)*