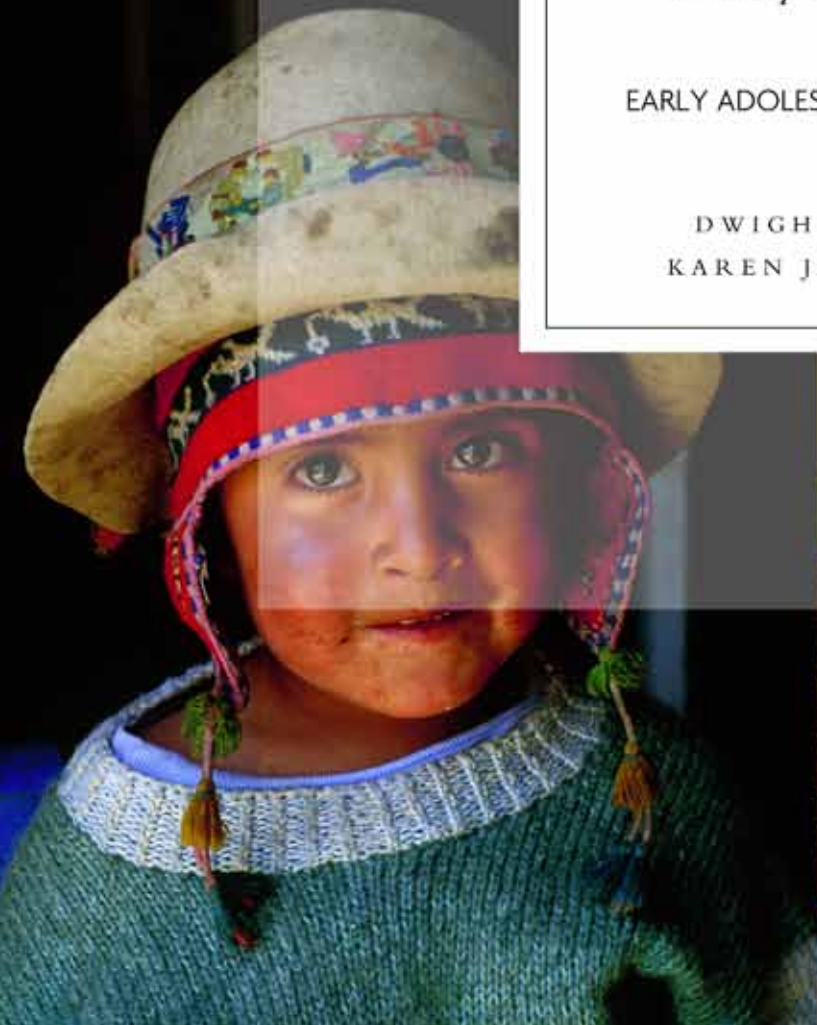


FOOTINGS
for
CHILDREN

*Imparting a Biblical Worldview
So They Can Thrive*

EARLY ADOLESCENT VERSION

DWIGHT VOGT
KAREN JACOBSEN



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DWIGHT VOGT
KAREN JACOBSEN

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Available online: footingsforchildren.com

Footings for Children is a curriculum designed for teaching children in any cultural context, including settings where teaching aids and tools are limited. The lessons are appropriate for beginning teachers as well as those more experienced. The curriculum can be used in:

- After-school clubs
- Sunday schools
- Christian camps
- Home devotionals

Because children are at different ages and education levels, *Footings for Children* is available in four different versions. They are:

1. Early Adolescent Version (this version)
2. Young Readers Version
3. Nonreaders Version
4. Devotional Version

The other versions, along with the Teacher's Guide are available online as downloadable documents at footingsforchildren.com.



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Dwight Vogt



Contents

Why Footings / Using this Material	ix
Unit 1 – About God	1
Lesson 1 God Is the Creator of Everything!	3
Lesson 2 God Holds Everything Together and Sustains It	13
Lesson 3 God is Good – All Good Comes from God	21
Lesson 4 God’s Character and Power Is Revealed in Creation.	29
Lesson 5 God’s Design for Life Is Good – We Can Trust His Instructions.	39
Unit 2 – Made in God’s Image	47
Lesson 1 Made in God’s Image	49
Lesson 2 Made in God’s Image – Uniquely Made	57
Lesson 3 Made in the Image of God – Women and Men	67
Lesson 4 Made in the Image of God – Every Person	81
Unit 3 – God’s Purpose for Mankind	93
Lesson 1 God is a Purposeful God – He Has a Purpose for Your Life	95
Lesson 2 God’s Purpose for Your Life – Love God and Your Neighbor	115
Lesson 3 God’s Purpose for Your Life – To Have Dominion Over Creation.	125
Lesson 4 God’s Purpose for Your Life – Blessed to Be a Blessing.	135
Unit 4 – Our Problem and God’s Solution	147
Lesson 1 Our Lives and World Are Broken	149
Lesson 2 Sin: Missing the Mark	163
Lesson 3 Jesus – Our Solution	177
Lesson 4 Life Eternal – What Is It?	193
Lesson 5 Experiencing Life Eternal – Follow Jesus (Believe, Obey, Depend)	203
Lesson 6 Experiencing Life Eternal – Follow Jesus (Revere, Worship, Thank).	217
Unit 5 – God’s Design for the Family	229
Lesson 1 Marriage is Sacred	231
Lesson 2 Sacred Intimacy within Marriage	243
Lesson 3 The Building Blocks of the Family	259
Lesson 4 Headship	271

Lesson 5 Husbands, Love Your Wives	283
Lesson 6 Wives, Respect Your Husbands	295
Lesson 7 Children, Honor Your Parents	305
Unit 6 - God's Design for Money	317
Lesson 1 Money!	319
Lesson 2 God's Purpose for Our Money	329
Lesson 3 Managing Your Money	341
About the Author	351



Why *Footings* for Children?

As parents and teachers, we want our children to thrive in life, to grow strong, and to flourish in every circumstance. We desire for them to prosper in the best sense, developing and using their abilities to bless others and the world around them all their days.

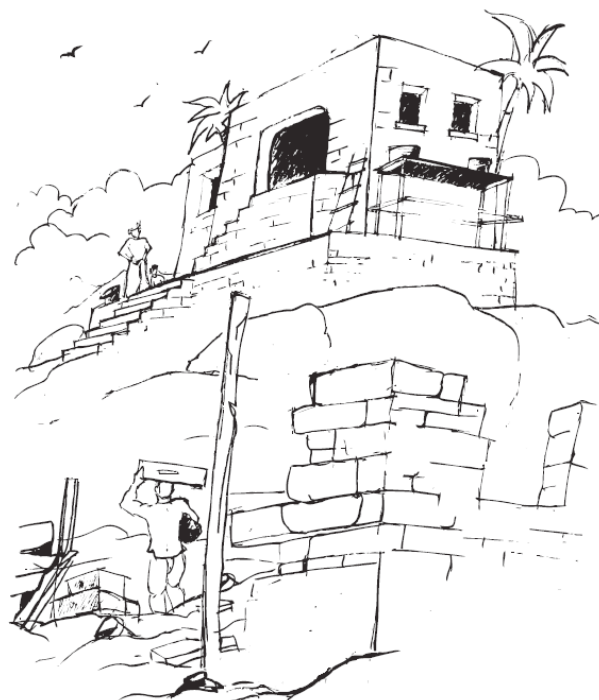
Yet, most would agree that the conditions for raising children are as intense and difficult as ever. While statistics highlight this fact, they are unable to portray the pain and disillusionment experienced. As parents and teachers of today's youth, we understand this challenge.

How can we equip children to grow strong and actually thrive and flourish in this world? We must impart to our children a foundational understanding of truth and reality upon which all future viewpoints will be formed and decisions will be made. We must give them the footings on which they can understand all of life clearly and accurately. In short, today's youth need a Biblical worldview.

Jesus was well aware that there were competing worldviews – underlying comprehensive ideas about life – that were either false or true. He said building on false ideas was like building a house on sand that would eventually fall in the storms of life. These ideas originate with Satan whom Jesus called “a liar and the father of lies”¹. Satan began his work of deception in the garden and continues to this day, wreaking havoc and suffering in every facet of life and culture.

In contrast, Jesus said building on the truth was like building a house on rock which would stand strong amidst the storms of life. The rock, he said, was his word – the truth. This is why we impart a Biblical worldview to our children, to give them a sure *footing* for building strong lives and withstanding the storms of life.

The word “*footing*” is also a construction term. Before building a house, the first step is often to dig a trench or hole and fill this with cement – called a footing. This footing provides a strong solid base on which the foundation walls and structure can be built. It takes much time and money to make this unseen solid base below the surface, but the builder knows that without it the house will eventually fall.



1 John 8:44

This illustration applies equally to our children. They need a foundational understanding of God, themselves, and all of life based on God’s truth. With this, they will more accurately see their world, more perceptively understand their choices, and more diligently apply themselves to live out God’s greater purposes. They will thrive!

This is my constant prayer for my children: that God will give them his light and truth so that they are not deceived and can make good decisions day-by-day to flourish as God intends.

Footings for Children is a curriculum for those who teach children both inside and outside the home to help them provide this world-view footing.



How to Use this Curriculum

Footings for Children was designed to be adapted and applied in any cultural context. It is a curriculum for those who teach children in after-school Bible clubs, Sunday Schools, camps, and even home devotionals. It is designed to be easily used where teaching aids and tools are limited.

We encourage the teacher to work through the **Teacher’s Guide** in each lesson. Children respond to enthusiasm and passion. The most effective teachers are those who are passionate about their subject and have mastered it. This flows from knowing and embracing the subject. So, please take time to carefully read and think through this section before diving into the lesson plan.

The **Lesson** section is designed to provide basic content and some ways to illustrate and communicate this content. Because every situation is unique, in terms of the children and their culture, you, the teacher, are strongly encouraged to make adjustments in the lesson to fit your situation while staying true to and communicating the core points and concepts.

Finally, it is the Holy Spirit that ultimately works truth into the human heart, so stay prayerful and depend on him.

Realize also that many of these truths strike at the core of a cultural lie that Satan and his demons are promoting 24 hours a day to deceive us and our children. Therefore, it is important to reinforce these truths continuously with the children and the best way to do this is to impart them to parents as well.

Regarding parents, they are designed by God to have the greatest influence in the life of a child. So, it’s right and natural that parents invest significant time and energy imparting truth and knowledge to their children. Mothers tend to do this naturally, but many fathers feel like their role is only to provide for their children and discipline their behavior. Yet, God has given to fathers a unique and amazing influence in the lives of their children. It’s God’s plan that fathers also engage in teaching their children through their words and their actions. In Deuteronomy 6, fathers and mothers are instructed to first embed truth into their own minds and hearts. Second, they are to diligently impart them to their children *that their lives will go well*. As parents, we are to impart truth to our children in everything we do: when we sit in our house, when we walk by the way, when we lie down, and when we rise up, posting them on the doorposts, on our gates, etc.²

If you are teaching *Footings* to children and you can also help the parents learn to teach and live it out for their children, by all means do so. The parents’ influence, coupled with yours, will be huge.

² Deuteronomy 6:7,8

UNIT 1



About God

For children to develop well and thrive, they need to understand life and how best to live it. Understanding life starts with understanding God because God is the ultimate reality. God is reality. Therefore, this first unit is *About God*. Each lesson highlights one or more fundamental truths about the existence, character, and nature of God and how creation reveals these. The truths presented counter the lies that God does not exist, is not good, is not rational, and does not care about us. The final lesson in the unit draws out the conclusion that since it is evident in creation that God is good, all-wise, and all-powerful, we should be able to trust him and what he says in the Bible about our lives and how best to live them.

Student Journal – Unit One

You will use this journal each day at the end of the lesson to record your action statements. Action statements are things you decide to do based on what you learned in the lesson.

Lesson One

Because God is all-powerful, I can trust him to...

Because God is all-wise, I can trust him to...

Lesson Two

Because God holds the whole world together and keeps everything moving, I can trust him to...

Since God gives me life each day, I will...

Lesson Three

Since God gives me every good thing in life, I will...

One good thing I can thank God for is...

Lesson Four

Since God has revealed himself to me in creation, I will...

Since I learned more about who God is today, I can trust him to...

Lesson Five

Since God's design for life is perfect, I will...

Since God's design for life is perfect, I need to find out more about his design for...

Since God's design for life is perfect, I know that he...

UNIT ONE – LESSON 1



God is the Creator of Everything!

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: God created the universe and all that is in it. As such, creation is evidence that God is all-powerful, all-wise, and all-knowing.

The Deception: A powerful lie of Satan is that the world and life just happened: that the life and creation we experience evolved from non-life and the simplest form of matter. Satan wants to deceive us into thinking that there is no creator God who is all-powerful, all-wise, all-knowing, and ruler over all the earth. There is no God, period.

The importance of this truth and all its implications is why it is under the full attack of Satan and his forces.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Upon this truth hinges all other understanding and reality about God, his acts, and his purposes as revealed in the Bible. Without Genesis 1 being true and real, there can be no grounds for believing that everything else the Bible reveals about God and life, from Genesis 2 to Revelation 22, is more than just a story.

Encouragement for the Teacher

God has a purpose for your life. You have been blessed to be a blessing. You were ultimately designed to live for the benefit of others. Right now, these others are the children in this community and class. God wants to help you succeed as a teacher in this environment. He wants to use you to bless these children and shape their lives. He has placed great potential in the life of each child, and you are his tool to help develop this potential.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Children choose to learn. Learning is taking in information, struggling to understand it, and making it part of who you are, what you know, and how you think. You cannot make children learn. You can make them sit still and you can reward or penalize them for not knowing facts, but you cannot make them learn. Learning is a choice of the will. A teacher cannot make children learn or change their thinking. A teacher can force them to remember facts and ideas, but the child must choose to learn in a way that changes the way they think and behave. Each lesson moving forward will include a practical tip to help you become the best teacher that you can be for these children.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare for this lesson, ponder the words of this song:

***You Are Creator* by Daniel Lehmann, 2002**

We are a people without excuse
All that's created and all that is good
Speaks of the wonder of God

All that is seen and all that is heard
Is proof of his unending love for the world

Their voices will never be heard
But the unspoken truth will endure

You are creator the brilliant God
Creation's an echo of all that you are

The night and day whisper words from afar
And they speak of the glory of God
And they speak of the glory of God

How can I hide from your presence oh God
You're with me wherever I go

I look to the sky and I'm wondering why
We ever thought we're in control
How could we ever think we're in control

Glory, Glory, Glory to the Almighty God
Glory, Glory, Glory to the Almighty God
Glory, Glory, Glory to the Almighty God
Glory, Glory, Glory to the Almighty God

As you teach this lesson, there are three ways that the children may respond to the truths of God that you are teaching.

1. The child can grow to ignore (or not believe) that God made everything. Instead of worshipping God (giving God worth and full credit for what he has done), the child will learn to worship (or put his or her value and faith in) the things that God has made but not the God who made them.

Romans 1:25 speaks of people who do just this: "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised Amen."

2. The child can grow in awe of and respect for God. As a result, the child will seek to know this awesome God better.

Acts 17:24-28 speaks of this kind of person: “God made the world and everything in it ...he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else ...he made every nation of men ...he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live ... *God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.*” (emphasis added)

3. The child can continually be impressed with the greatness and goodness of God. The child will then respond to God with admiration, trust, service, and worship.

Psalm 148:1-14 speaks of the person whose understanding of the creator God leads to profound praise and worship:

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created. He set them in place forever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away. Praise the Lord from the earth ... *young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.* He has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his saints, of Israel, the people close to his heart. Praise the Lord. (emphasis added)

Pray that your children will respond with the latter two responses.

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures that speak of God creating the world. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you in these verses.

Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Genesis 1:27 – “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

Genesis 2:1-2 – “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

Psalms 89:12 – “You created the north and the south; Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name.”

Psalms 139:13 – “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”

Isaiah 42:5 – “This is what God the Lord says – he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it.”

Jeremiah 10:12-13 – “But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes

clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.”

John 1:1-3 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

Colossians 1:16-17 – “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

Romans 1:25 – “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen.”

1 Timothy 4:3-4 – “They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.”

Revelation 4:11 – “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Revelation 10:6 – “And he swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, ‘There will be no more delay!’”

SEE ALSO: Genesis 1:16, 2:9; Deuteronomy 4:32; Job 33:4; Psalm 102:18, 148:1-5; Proverbs 8:21-28; Isaiah 45:8-9, 11, 18; Isaiah 54:16; Mark 13:19; John 1:10; Acts 17:24-31; Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:1-3

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God is the creator of everything. It all comes from God!

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that God is the creator of everything. As such, God is all-powerful, all-wise, and all-knowing.
- ***Understand** that creation is proof that God is all-powerful, all-wise, and all-knowing.
- ***Live** with a greater sense of awareness, awe, respect, and trust in the Creator God.

Supplies/Materials

Strips of paper, broken device or machine, eggs, oil, flour, group worksheet, verse strips, 4 Bibles, drawing pencil for each child

Scripture References

Genesis 1:1, 3, 9, 11, 16, 20; 2:9, 19a

Welcome Time

Introduce yourself to each student, and greet each young person by name. Let them know you are glad to see them.

Attention Grabber

Divide the students into four groups. The students will remain in these groups for all the lessons in Unit 1. Each group will be given materials and verbal directions to complete a task. They will have two minutes to complete the task.

These are the groups you will remain in for the first two lessons in this unit. Each week, you will pick a new recorder, who will write down your answers on the worksheets, and a new spokesperson, whose job it will be to report your group's answers to the whole class.

Today, you will be given materials and a task to complete. You will have two minutes to complete the task without any help from me. You may not ask questions, but please work as hard as you can to complete the task. When I call time, you should fill out the debriefing sheet that I will give you. When you are finished, we will discuss how well you were able to complete your tasks.

The four groups' tasks are the following:

Group One – Give the group an empty box (a “box of air”) and tell them their task is to make something out of what is inside the box. Also give them the group worksheet to debrief their task.

Group Two – Give the group strips of paper. Their task is to make a basket out of the paper strips without using their hands or feet. Also give them the group worksheet to debrief.

Group Three – Give the group an old device that is broken and has been taken apart into many pieces. Their instructions are to re-make the device. Also give them the group worksheet to debrief.

Group Four – Give the group simple cooking ingredients and ask them to make bread (or any other culturally appropriate food). Also give the group the group worksheet to debrief.

Ask the groups to start and allow them two minutes to struggle with their tasks, then allow them approximately five minutes to complete their task debrief sheets.

After five minutes, end the group time.

Please keep your worksheets ready. I am going to call on each group to share their findings with the rest of us.

The Lesson

Turn to the first group who was given a “box of air.” Ask the spokesperson to share the group’s findings from their worksheet. They should tell the group what they were given, what they were able to make, what was missing, and how they felt during the task completion time. Discuss the group’s findings.

Give Group One the Genesis 1:1 verse strip.

Group number one found out that they are completely unable to make something out of nothing. There is, however, someone who is able to do exactly this. Throughout the lesson today, we’re going to look at observations, what we see in a Bible verse, what we can infer, and the conclusions we can draw about God from that verse. These verse strips will help you complete the activity. Group One was given the Genesis 1:1 verse strip. Spokesperson, please read this verse.

If children have their own Bibles, please have them follow along.

Here the Bible says that God created the heavens and the earth. Can someone give me a description of the heavens and the earth? In this verse, what do you observe God using to make the heavens and the earth? What does this tell us about God?

Allow for the students’ responses. If possible, make a chart on a board or a large sheet of paper listing the Bible Verse, Observations, Inferences, and Applications.

Though this group was unable to create something out of nothing, we learn in Genesis 1:1 that God was able to create the heavens and the earth, really everything in creation, out of nothing. Even to make a drawing we need a pencil and paper. No one can make something out of nothing – with the exception of God. This can only mean that God is amazing and incredibly powerful. That is our first big idea of today: God is all-powerful.

Turn to the second group who was given paper strips. At this time, give Group Two the Genesis 1:3 and Genesis 1:9 verse strips. Ask the spokesperson to share the group’s findings from their task debrief sheet. They should tell

the group what they were given, what they were able to make, what was missing, and how they felt during the task completion time.

Group Two found out that they were unable to make anything unless they used their hands. Can you think of any other ways that the second group might have been able to create a basket without using their hands or feet?

Allow for students' responses.

Group Two, please read your verse strip, Genesis 1:3. Allow the spokesperson to read the verse. **What do we observe happening in these verses? What can we infer about God from what he does in these verses?** Allow for the students' responses. **You're right. We observe in these verses that God created things just by speaking. We learn a lot about him by this. This further shows that God is incredibly powerful.**

Turn to the third group who was given a broken machine. At this time, give Group Three the Genesis 1:11 and Genesis 2:9 verse strips. Ask the spokesperson to share the group's findings from their task debrief sheet. They should tell the group what they were given, what they were able to make, what was missing, and how they felt during the task completion time.

Group Three found out that they were unable to make anything unless they had instructions or a model.

Turn to the fourth group who was given the ingredients to make bread but no instructions. At this time, give Group Four the Genesis 1:16, Genesis 1:20, and Genesis 2:19 verse strips. Ask the spokesperson to share the group's findings from their task debrief sheet. They should tell the group what they were given, what they were able to make, what was missing, and how they felt during task completion time.

Group Four also found out they were unable to make anything unless they had instructions or a recipe.

Group Three, please read your Genesis verse strips, Genesis 1:11 and Genesis 2:9. Allow the spokesperson to read the verses. **What do we observe God creating in these verses? Where do we see God getting his design or instructions to make grass, plants, and trees? Who do we observe him talking to or consulting? What can we infer about God since he consulted no one and had no model or design to create all that he created?** Allow for the students' responses. **You're absolutely correct. Because all of God's ideas for creation came directly from himself and he consulted no one when creating, we can infer that he is super intelligent or what we would call all-wise. That is the second big idea of the day: God is all-wise.**

If possible, record their observations and inferences on the board.

Group Four, please read your Genesis verse strips, Genesis 1:16, Genesis 1:20, and Genesis 2:19. Allow the spokesperson time to read the verses. **What do we observe God creating in these verses? Where do we**

see God getting his design or instructions to make the sun, moon, stars, fish, and animals from? If God consulted no one and had no model or design to create all that he created, what else can we infer about him? Allow for the students' responses. **You're absolutely correct. We really do have a very powerful, intelligent, and creative God.**

Group Discussion/Artistic Project

In their small groups, students should complete the "God's Amazing Creation" activity page. In this activity, students will each draw a picture of one of God's amazing creations and tell why they chose it. Show them an example you created. For example:

I chose the chameleon. The chameleon can change the color of its skin based on its environment so it can hide itself.

After a short time, bring the groups back together to share what they feel is one example of God's most amazing creations. Praise their findings and continually stress that we have a powerful and very wise God who can create these amazing things out of nothing without consulting anyone!

Group Discussion/Application

In their small groups, students should answer the two questions provided on the group worksheet.

Thinking about God as the one who made everything out of nothing, with no instructions, let's ask ourselves two questions:

Question 1: *How does it make you feel that God is so intelligent and so powerful?*

Question 2: *What if a friend of yours had never heard what we talked about today? What would you tell them about God?*

After five minutes, ask the group spokesperson to share their group's findings with the entire class.

Prayer and Reflection

Let's bring this down to a more personal level. God is all-powerful and all-wise. Knowing this has great implications for our lives, I'd like each one of you to finish these sentences in your journal.

Because God is all-powerful, I can trust him to...

Because God is all-wise, I can trust him to...

For example, I might write, "Because God is all-powerful, there is no force or spirit or problem stronger or bigger than God. I can trust him." Or, "Because God is all-wise, I can be comforted by the fact that there is no problem or situation that he does not understand or have the answer to." Please take a few minutes to complete these sentences in your journal. Think about how knowing God is all-powerful and all-wise affects your everyday life. When you finish, we'll close in prayer.


Task Debrief

What were you asked to do?

What were you given?

What were you able to make?

What were you missing?



How does it make you feel that
God is so smart and powerful?

What if a friend of yours had never
heard what we talked about today?
What would you tell them?

God's Amazing Creation

This is the most amazing example of God's creation:

Group One

Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Group Two

Genesis 1:3 – “Then God said, ‘Let there be light.’”

Genesis 1:9 – “And God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.’
And it was so.”

Group Three

Genesis 1:11 – “Then God said, ‘Let the land burst forth with every sort of grass and seed bearing plant.’”

Genesis 2:9 – “And the LORD God planted all sorts of trees in the garden—beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit...” (NLT)

Group Four

Genesis 1:16 – “God made two great lights – the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.”

Genesis 1:20 – “And God said, ‘Let the waters swarm with fish and other life.’”

Genesis 2:19a – “Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky.”

UNIT ONE – LESSON 2



God Holds Everything Together and Sustains It

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: God holds the universe and everything in it together. God sustains it all, giving the gift of life to everything - everyday. We are totally dependent on God for a functioning universe and everything in it, including life itself - our daily breath. The entire universe and our daily life are dependent on God and are a gift from him.

The Deception: Satan deceives us to minimize or forget God's incredible power, wisdom, and ongoing work in sustaining everyday life and the universe. He tells us that the orderly function of the universe and the earth, the energy of life that is present in all living things including our own minute-by-minute breath and life, all this just "is". There is no God behind it. We are unaware and ignorant of our total dependence on God for life itself. We live each day with a false sense of independence and pride that we do not need God.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Understanding the truth of our dependence on God - even for our daily breath - will help children live with great awareness, confidence, and trust in God. They will have greater security, strength, and peace.

Encouragement for the Teacher

Each child is made by God in his image. The life of each was planned by God before they were conceived. There are no ordinary children! Each is a unique creation and special to God. Each has great potential and has a gift to give the world. Each child is designed and put here for a purpose in the plan of God - no child is ordinary. No child is a mistake.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Relationship is the key to a child learning. Children choose to learn, and they choose to learn from a teacher they trust. When they sense a teacher really knows them and cares for them, they open up their minds and hearts to what the person is sharing and teaching. The teacher opens the child's door of learning by loving the child!

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures that speak of God giving us life and sustaining us. Prayerfully study these scriptures, and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Job 33:4 – “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”

Job 38: 31-33 – “Can you direct the movement of the stars—binding the cluster of the Pleiades or loosening the cords of Orion? Can you direct the sequence of the seasons or guide the Bear with her cubs across the heavens? Do you know the laws of the universe? Can you use them to regulate the earth?”

Psalms 3:5 – “I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.”

Isaiah 40:26 – “Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”

Isaiah 42:5 – “This is what God the Lord says – he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it.”

Isaiah 46:3-4 – “Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all you who remain of the house of Israel, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”

Jeremiah 10:12-13 – “But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.”

Acts 17:24-31 – “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone – an image made by man’s design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”

Colossians 1:16-17 – “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

Revelation 4:11 – “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

SEE ALSO: Isaiah 57:16; John 6:33; 1 Timothy 6:13-15

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God holds everything together and keeps all of life going. He sustains it.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that God holds everything together and sustains all of life – He keeps it going.
- ***Understand** that God is powerful, wise, and constantly working in order to do this.
- ***Live** with greater awareness, respect, and trust in God.

Supplies/Materials

Cutouts of the sun, moon, and earth, and a worksheet for each of your small groups, pencils

Scripture References

Job 38:31-33; Colossians 1:16-17; Acts 17:24-28

Welcome Time

Greet the students and play the Icebreaker Game “Come to Order.” To play this game, the children should line up in the ways that you will tell them to. It will take them some time to order themselves in these ways. Ask the students to line up in the following ways:

1. **Biggest to Smallest Feet:** The students with the biggest feet should be at the front of the line and the students with the smallest feet should be at the back of the line. They will need to measure their foot size against one another to be sure whose is bigger or smaller.
2. **Smallest to Largest Hands:** This time the children with the smallest hands should be at the front of the line and the students with the largest hands should be at the back of the line.

Each time the students line up they should turn to their neighbors and share with them one thing they learned from the last lesson. The goal is to have the students interacting with all of their classmates instead of only their small circle of friends.³

Attention Grabber

Have the students get in the same four small groups they were in the last lesson. Today, they should choose a different spokesperson and recorder. The spokesperson’s job is to share the group’s answers with the class, and the recorder’s job is to write down the group’s answers.

Hand out the “What we know about the Sun, Moon, Earth, and Universe” worksheets. Ask each group to think about the sun, moon, earth, or universe. Ask the group to discuss and write down things they know about that created thing. No fact is too small or insignificant.

3 The inspiration for this game comes from the website, *Sunday School Ideas for New Teachers*, www.sunday-school-ideas-for-new-teachers.com/group-icebreaker-game.html

Allow students about five minutes to work. Recorders should be writing down all ideas. When the groups have recorded what they know, the spokesperson should share their information with the class.

Facilitate each group's spokesperson sharing their ideas with the whole class.

You've talked about and told the class about many great things you know about the sun, moon, earth, and the universe. Today, we're going to learn more about them. We're learning about them not for the sake of learning science, which is very important, but to learn about what creation reveals about God. All of creation reveals something important about God, and today we're going to think about what the sun, moon, and earth reveals about him.

The Lesson

Concept Number One: God Holds Everything Together

Hand out one set of sun, moon, and earth figures to each small group.

I'd like for you to stay in your small groups. We're going to do a hands-on activity that will demonstrate how we can learn about God from observing the sun, moon, and the earth. Would three of you in each group hold up the sun, moon, or the earth? The sizes of the sun, moon, and earth in this activity represent their relative⁴ sizes – meaning the moon is the smallest, and the sun is the largest.

Will the moon and the earth please stand about two meters apart? This represents the relative distance the moon is away from the earth. The moon rotates slowly around the earth every 27 days. Will the person holding the moon in each of your groups please walk slowly around the earth?

The moon is in the perfect location within the universe. It's not too far away or too close to the earth. It rotates at the exact perfect speed around the earth in order to control the tides. How does the moon stay in this perfect orbit? Allow for the students' responses.

It is God who holds the moon in its perfect orbit. Does anyone know what would happen if God's laws didn't hold the moon in its perfect place, and it moved a little bit closer to the earth? Allow students to share their ideas. Reducing the distance between the earth and the moon would cause massive high tides and would drown millions of people who live near oceans.

If God holds the moon in its perfect orbit by the laws he put in place, what does this tell us about him? Allow for the students' responses, praising their thoughts.

You're right! God not only holds these in orbit, but he is incredibly powerful and wise in his ability to do this.

⁴ In reality, the earth is about 4 times the diameter of the moon, and the sun is about 100 times the diameter of the earth. In the cutouts, the earth is about 3.5 times the diameter of the moon (close to accurate), but the sun is only 2.5 times the diameter of the earth (far from 100 times).

Now will the person holding the earth and the sun stand about nine (30 feet) meters apart from each other? In reality, the sun is much larger than this in proportion to the earth (100 times the diameter of the earth), and it is much further from the earth than this. With the earth this dimension, the sun would actually be about 900 meters away. But, we'll pretend here that the sun is about nine meters from the earth. We also know that the earth rotates very slowly around the sun every 365 days. I'd like for the earth to very, very, very slowly begin walking in a circle around the sun. You should walk much slower than how the moon walked around you.

Who knows what would happen if God had placed the earth just a little bit closer to the sun? Allow for the children's responses. **That's right; we would all burn up from the intensity of the sun!**

Conversely, if God had placed the earth just a little bit farther away from the sun, what would have happened? Allow for the children's responses. **Again, you're right! We would freeze to death because we were too far away to receive heat from the sun.**

Since clearly God has put the earth in its perfect location relative to the sun, what does this tell us about him? Allow for the children's responses. **He holds the planets in their place. He is wise and powerful, and he obviously must care a lot about us also.**

I'm going to read two scripture passages to you. They are written at the bottom of your group's Sun, Moon, Earth, and Universe worksheet. This is what Job 38:31-33 says, "Can you direct the movement of the stars—binding the cluster of the Pleiades or loosening the cords of Orion? Can you direct the sequence of the seasons or guide the Bear with her cubs across the heavens? Do you know the laws of the universe? Can you use them to regulate the earth?"

The second passage is found in Colossians 1:16-17, "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him *all things hold together.*"

I'd like for you to discuss in your groups what these verses tell about God and what they tell about us. Your recorder should write down all of your ideas. Please take a few minutes, and then I will ask the spokesperson in your group to share your ideas.

Allow students several minutes to share their ideas. Ask for the students' answers to these questions.

Clearly, in these verses we see that God holds and keeps everything in the universe in its perfect place and holds it all together. God is the one who holds the whole world together.

Concept Number Two: God Sustains All of Life

Please find a partner for the next activity. I'd like for you to find your pulse. Demonstrate how they can find their pulse in their wrist or their neck. **One of you will count the number of times your heart beats while the other person counts slowly to ten. When they say stop, tell your partner the number of beats in that ten seconds. If you multiply the number of beats in ten seconds by six, you'll be able**

to find the number of times your heart beats in a minute. You'll each get a chance to do this. OK, begin! Allow students enough time for both to complete this activity. Assist wherever necessary.

How does your heart know to keep on beating every minute of every day? Allow for students' responses. Depending on the students' response you may want to say: **Our hearts don't just beat on their own yet we don't have to remind them. In Acts 17:24-31, the Bible says, "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth...He himself gives all men life and breath and everything else...For in him we live and move and have our being." God is the one who keeps our heart beating every minute of every day! He is the one who gives us life! Our ability to live and move comes from God.**

Some people believe that there is no God. Yet, even while they are thinking this way, God is keeping them alive, giving them the ability to breathe and move and even the ability to say that he doesn't exist!

Please turn to the partner that you just worked with and talk about the following questions:

If we only are able to live and move and have our being because of God giving these to us each second of the day, what does this say about us?

What does it say about God?

Allow the children time to discuss these questions and to share their thoughts with the group.

You're right when you say we can do nothing apart from God. He is incredibly powerful, but he's also very loving and gracious to give us life every single day. God holds everything together and keeps everything going. He is awesome, and we can love him and trust him!

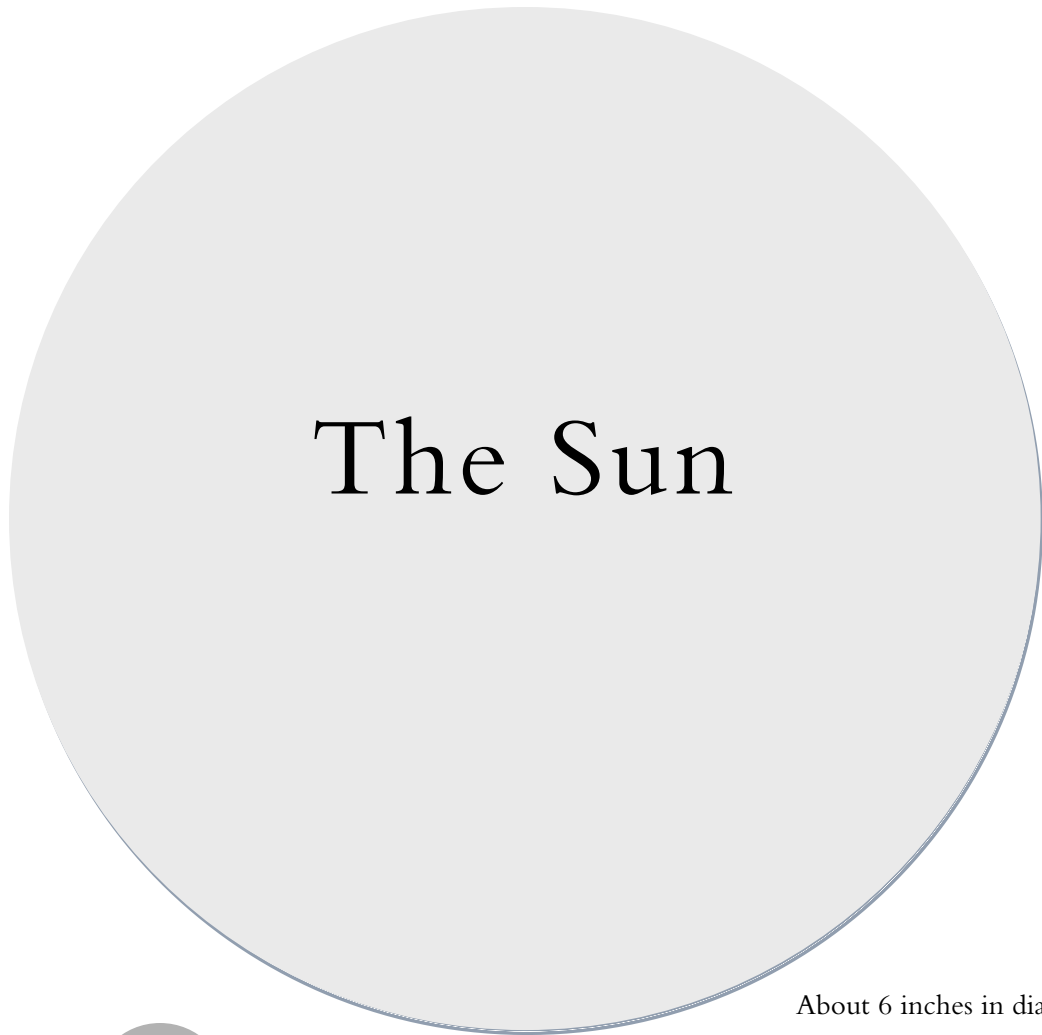
Closing Reflection and Prayer

I'd like for you to think about this question as you turn to your journals that we'll be keeping throughout our time together. If God holds the whole world together and keeps it working, how should I respond to him?

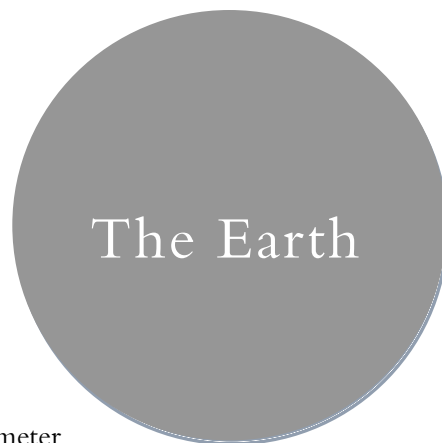
Please complete the following two statements in your journals:

Because God holds the whole world together and keeps everything working, I will...

Since God gives me life each day, I will...



About 6/8 inch in diameter



About 2.5 inches in diameter

When the students have completed their journals, close in a prayer, thanking God that he is so wise and powerful and thanking him that he gives us life each day.

What We Know about the Sun/Moon/Earth/Universe

Job 38:31-33, “Can you direct the movement of the stars—binding the cluster of the Pleiades or loosening the cords of Orion? Can you direct the sequence of the seasons or guide the Bear with her cubs across the heavens? Do you know the laws of the universe? Can you use them to regulate the earth?”

Colossians 1:16-17, “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

What do these verses say about God?

UNIT ONE – LESSON 3



God is Good – ALL Good Comes from God

TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: We often struggle with the truth that God is both “all-powerful” and “all-good.” We ask ourselves, “If God is all-powerful and all-good, why did he let my friend die in an accident?” Though we might not say it out loud, we reason that maybe God is not 100% good, or he is not 100% powerful. As a result, we struggle to fully love and trust in God and his word because to fully trust in God we need to believe that he is both all-powerful and all-good.

Lessons 1 and 2 in this unit looked at God’s power and wisdom. This lesson begins to look at God’s goodness. It is not enough to just to tell children “God is good.” Each day, God gives us abundant evidence of his goodness that we can personally see, touch, and experience. Our challenge is to help children see and recognize that ALL that is good comes from God. If we do this well, then the many good things God puts in their lives can be constant reminders to them of his perfect goodness and love for them.

The reality is that God made everything. All that is good and helpful comes from God because God is the creator of it all. If it is good, it originates with God and is evidence of God’s goodness and care for us. For example, we easily recognize that God made the sky and the rain, and normally we experience these as beautiful and good. But, do we also see that God is the one who created and provided other good things such as friendship, love, beauty, smiles, warmth, the feel of a cool breeze, music, engineering, science, etc.? These too are from God and are gifts from him to us. Every single good thing we experience, no matter how small, is evidence of God’s goodness. Can we help children see and recognize that ALL that is good comes from God? If so, the many good things God puts into our lives can be continuous reminders of his perfect goodness and love for us.

The Deception: Satan’s deception is to make us blind and ignorant, so that we do not see all the good that God puts into our daily lives for us to enjoy and benefit from. Or, when we do see and experience good things, Satan deceives us to think “it just is.” We do not connect this good to its ultimate source – God. We fail to recognize that everything good comes from or originates with God and therefore is evidence of God’s goodness and love for us.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children will come to understand that God is the source of everything good, including relationships, beauty, science, math, art and language. They will recognize more and more each day all the good that God put into the world and our lives for us to benefit from and enjoy. Ultimately, the children will live more aware, convinced, and amazed of God’s goodness and his good purposes for their life. This

will fill the children with a greater sense of wonder, joy, and gratitude. It will give them increased confidence and hope.

Encouragement for the Teacher

God has given you special power and influence in the life of a child. You may feel ordinary, weak, and overwhelmed by your own problems and troubles. But to a child in this class, you are an important person – someone with power and influence, someone they look up to. Having such regard in the eyes of a child, you have the power to encourage them, to build them up, to bring life to their spirits and ideas to their minds that will transform them.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Relationship is the key to a child learning.

Get to know your children. Quickly get to know each child by name. Also, help the children get to know one another if they do not already. When new children show up from week to week, welcome them to the class and help them feel at home. Your sincere interest in each child will greatly enhance their desire, willingness, and ability to learn.

Another good way to get to know the child is to visit them in their homes and meet their parents.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through these scriptures that speak of God giving us everything that is good. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Genesis 1:31 – “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (ESV).

James 1:16-17 – “Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

1 Timothy 4:4 – “For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving” (ESV).

THE LESSON

The Main Point

All that is good and helpful comes from God and is evidence of his goodness because God made everything.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

***Know** that God is the source of everything good, including relationships, beauty, science, math, art, and language. All that is good comes from, or is made by, God.

***Understand** that God is good and recognize all the good that God put into the world and our lives for us to enjoy and benefit from.

***Live** more aware of God's goodness, recognizing all the good that God gives to us each day. As a result, live with a greater sense of awe, gratitude, and trust in him.

Key Verses

James 1:16-17; Genesis 1:1 (math); Genesis 2:21, 1 John 4:8 (love and friendship); John 14:6, John 8:44 (truth); 1 Timothy 6:17 (pleasure and joy); Psalm 118 (success); Psalm 4:8 (safety); Exodus 31:2-5 (ability, skill, creativity); Psalm 90:17 (beauty)

Supplies/Materials

Worksheets for each group, pencils

Welcome /Review Time

Welcome the students. Count the number of students and ask them to get in ten (or less if your class is smaller) groups of an equal number. Hand each group their worksheet for the day.

At the top of your worksheet is the Bible verse that is the theme for this topic. James 1:16-17 says, "Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

Ask the groups to work together to memorize the verse quickly. When they think they have memorized the verse, they should turn over their papers, stand up, and say the verse to the group. Allow all groups the chance to recite the verse.

Attention Grabber

Underneath the Bible verse are ten good things that come from God: math; science; friendship; kindness and compassion; truth; pleasure, laughter and joy; true success; safety, security, and peace; ability, skill, and creativity; and beauty. These are all good gifts from God. I'm going to whisper one of these things to each of your groups. You are to quietly discuss and practice how you will act out this thing in front of the rest of the class. We will then guess which good gift you are acting out. After each group's skit, we will discuss that good gift from God.

(Teacher: Depending on how much class time you have, you may want to limit the time for each skit to one minute or reduce the number of skits and topics assigned. If so, select the topics you believe would most spur the students' thinking.)

Allow students about five minutes to plan their skit. Then call on each group one by one to come up. Groups should come up in a random order so the rest of the group can guess what they are acting out. Modify your explanations for whatever order the groups come up in.

The Lesson

Explain each of these concepts in any order, after each group comes to the front and performs their skit.

The Concept: All that is Good Comes from God

Math

We use math all the time. This building, the preparation of your food – they are all made using math or measurement. Math comes from God. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning...” The word “beginning” is a math word. It took God six days to create the earth and on the seventh day, he rested. God was counting and using numbers from the first day of creation. Math was the language of creation and is why scientists use math to understand how the world works. Math is good. It helps us. It comes from God!

Science

Just as math is from God, so is science and all knowledge. We use science to study many things: horticulture (trees), people (sociology) or even emotions (psychology). Science is the study of everything that God created. Since science is the study of what God made, science itself comes from God. Since God is the source of science, he knows everything before scientists discover it. God wants us to discover the secrets and knowledge he put into the universe. He probably smiles when a person finally figures out what he knew and designed in the beginning. God is the greatest scientist. Science helps us. It is good. It comes from God.

Friendship

We all need friends and the feeling of belonging and being loved. God formed the first human relationship and friendship when he created Adam and Eve. Genesis 2:21 talks about how God created Eve to be with Adam. Since friendship, love, and relationships came from God, we can see that God is the source and provider of good relationships. God provides love and friendship to us through the people that he puts into our lives. Friendship and love are good gifts from God that show his loving-kindness. 1 John 4:8 even says, “Dear friends, let us love one another, *for love comes from God.*”

Kindness and Compassion

The Bible says that God is the “father of compassion.” To be the father of something is to be the beginning of something, the head of it, or the source. Kindness and compassion are good gifts from God. Because God is a compassionate and loving God, he brings people into our lives to show us kindness and compassion.

Truth

Truth and everything that is true comes from God. In John 14:6, Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” Everything that isn’t true comes from Satan who is called the father of lies. In John 8:44, the Bible says, “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.

When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” Lies are bad and hurt us. Truth is good and helps us. Truth and everything that is true comes from God and is proof of his goodness. The greatest way God revealed truth to us is through his son Jesus Christ.

Pleasure, Laughter, and Joy

Even pleasure, laughter, and joy come from God. 1 Timothy 6:17 says, “Put your hope in God, who richly provides everything for our enjoyment.” God provides us with pleasure and enjoyment by giving us good experiences and caring people. Pleasure, laughter, and joy show how much God delights in and enjoys us and wants us to enjoy other people he created. They are proof of his goodness.

True Success

All of us like and want success. We want to excel at what we do and be able to provide for ourselves and our families. Success that comes from God and benefits others is true success. However, there is success that doesn't come from God; it is selfish and can hurt people. Sometimes people experience success by stealing, cheating, or hurting others. True success is only from God “since in him we live and move and have our being.” God gives us the ability to work hard and the talents and skills to experience success. God also brings people and resources into our lives to help us to be successful. The writer in Psalm 118 prays to God and says, “O, Lord save us; O Lord grant us success.” He knows that the only true success comes from God. True success is a gift from God and is evidence of his kindness and generosity.

Safety, Security, and Peace

Safety, security, and peace are all good things. We all need them and work very hard to get them. When we have safety, security, and peace, our lives work better and we are able to reach out and help others. There are many verses in the Bible that talk about how God is the one who grants us safety. Listen to one of them: Psalm 4:8, “I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.” God often gives us safety and security through people. Loving parents, a policeman, or even a good guard dog are things that God provides for us to grant us safety and security. The peace and safety that we enjoy are good gifts that God graciously gives us. The policeman and guard dog that keep us safe are evidence of God's goodness.

Ability, Skill, and Creativity

Ability, skill, and creativity ultimately come from God. God is their source. On top of ability and skills, God also gives us a will to work to develop them. In Exodus 31:2-5, God is speaking of a blacksmith who practices his craft well. He says, “I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts.” The abilities and skills that God gives us are varied. He gives us the ability to think, solve problems, create and do many other things. The abilities, skills, and talents God gives us show us how much he loves us. They are evidence of his goodness.

Beauty

When we see a beautiful flower, the mountains, or something else in nature, we are inspired by it. We all need beautiful things. God made beauty because God is beauty: he is the source of everything that is beautiful. He also gave us the ability to experience all of the beautiful things around us. Psalm 90:17 speaks of God being the source of beauty when it says, “And let the beauty of the Lord our

God be upon us.” The fact that we have so many beautiful things around us shows how good God is: how much he enjoys being a loving father and lavishing us with beautiful things. Beauty is from God and is evidence of his goodness.

We have talked about so many good things that we enjoy in life and the fact that they all come from God. James 1:16-17 calls us to always remember that these many good things come from God. It says, “Don’t be deceived my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like the shifting shadows.” Whenever we experience something good in life, no matter how big or small, we always need to remember that it comes from God. God is good and he is the source and provider of all good things. Often he chooses to bring us good things through people that he created, but they are not the source – God is. All that is good and beneficial to us is evidence of his goodness and loving kindness.

Closing Discussion

In light of all you’ve learned, I’d like for you to get in the groups that you performed the skits in and discuss the questions at the bottom of the page. I’ll give you several minutes to discuss them and then we’ll come together as a group to share our ideas. Choose one person in your small group to be the spokesperson, and a different person to be the recorder. Please think about what good thing you are most appreciative of that God gives. Also try and come up with an answer to the question, “*Why would God give us all of these good things even though we don’t deserve them?*” Finally think about how we should respond to God’s goodness to us.

Allow the groups several minutes to discuss and debate their answers. Call on group spokespersons to give their answers to each of the questions as time allows.

Reflection and Prayer

You’ve all had some great discussion about these questions. I’d like for you to take what you’ve learned today and make it more personal and applicable to your life.

Please complete the following two statements in your journals:

Since God gives me every good thing in life, I will...

One good thing I can thank God for is...

When the students have completed their journals, close in prayer. Thank God for loving us, for being good, and for showing us that through the many good things he gives us.

James 1:16-17 – “Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

God's Good Gifts

Math

Science

Friendship

Kindness and Compassion

Truth

Pleasure, Laughter, and Joy

True Success

Safety, Security, and Peace

Ability, Skill, and Creativity

Beauty



What good gift from God are you most appreciative of?

Why would God give us all of these good things?

UNIT ONE – LESSON 4



God's Character and Power Is Revealed in Creation

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

This fourth lesson further builds on the truths discussed in Lessons 1 to 3 – that we can know about God's character and power through his creation.

The Truth: Everything God made reveals something about his existence, character, and power. Does God exist? What is God like? These are critical questions that shape all of life. The Bible says that the answer and evidence for these questions is right in front of us every day – they are plain to see in the things that have been made (Romans 1:19-20). We can see and discover God's character and power in what he created.

The Deception: Satan's lie is that creation reveals nothing about God – because God did not create it. Instead, the world was created by mythical figures and events, or it all came about through evolutionary processes of random chance and natural selection over billions of years. Satan continuously deceives and blinds people to the reality that God's existence, his character, and power are plain to see in the things God has made.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children will increasingly see and discover God's character and power revealed in what he created. They will grow in their awareness, understanding, and awe of God. They will live their lives with greater trust, security, strength, and confidence.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have a high calling and purpose. As a teacher, you are called by God to steward these children. A steward is one who manages and develops the resources that are "owned by another" but are temporarily placed in the steward's care. In this class, you are the steward. The children are the resources: God's possessions that he has placed in your care. You are accountable in this class not just to the organization, church, or parent, but most of all to God for how you teach and develop the spirit, mind, and ability of the children in your class.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Relationship is the key to a child learning.

Know your children's abilities and needs. Refresh your memory about what it is like to be the age of the children you lead by reviewing the age. Learn more about the needs, wants, and abilities of the children you'll be teaching. Be sensitive to children with special needs – children who are especially shy, who may learn slowly, or have some handicap. These are children of God who have something special from God to give.

Make your class a “safe zone” for all children – including those with special needs. Don’t embarrass anyone.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures that speak of God revealing himself through creation. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space under each verse to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Genesis 2:1 – “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.”

Romans 1:20 – “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

Everything God made reveals something about him.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that everything God made reveals something about his existence, character, and power.
- ***Understand** how to see or discover God's character and power in what he created.
- ***Live** with increasing awareness, awe, and wonder at who God is and how he reveals himself.

Supplies/Materials

Eight objects from nature, eight group worksheets, a flower, a rock, fruit, pictures of a waterfall, and a snowflake

Scripture References

Romans 1:20

Welcome Time

Play "Come to Order" again. To play this game, the children should line up in the way that you tell them to. It will take them some time to order themselves in the way that you ask them.

1. In the first round, ask students to order themselves alphabetically by the starting letter of their first name: students whose names begin with letters at the front of the alphabet will be at the front of the line, students whose names begin with letters at the back of the alphabet will be at the back of the line. After they line up, they should tell the people next to them one good gift they observed in the last week.
2. For the second round, ask students to order themselves by the greatest number of siblings to the least number of siblings: the students who have the most number of siblings will be at the front of the line, and those with the least amount of siblings will be at the back of the line. After students get in line, they should talk to their neighbors and discuss what good gifts they observed from God this past week. Ask them to name both big things and small things. They should come up with as many good gifts as possible.

The goal is to have the students interacting with all of their classmates instead of only their small circle of friends.⁵

Attention Grabber

Put the eight natural objects that you have brought with you to class in front of the classroom. Ask the students to get into eight small groups. In their groups, they should record as many observations as they can about the natural objects on their group worksheets. No observation is too insignificant and small. Allow the groups about five minutes to complete this task. Ask each group to choose one person to be the recorder and write their group's observations, and another person to be the spokesperson who will share their group's observations with the class.

5 The inspiration for this game comes from the website, *Sunday School Ideas for New Teachers*, www.sunday-school-ideas-for-new-teachers.com/group-icebreaker-game.html

You've just taken a few minutes to observe something that God made. You became very acquainted with this object and noticed many interesting things about it. However, I could venture a guess that none of you observed that this object reveals some aspect of God's character. You see, all of creation reveals something about God's character. It tells something about who he is. Today we're going to find out all about what God's creation says about him.

The Lesson

What do all of the items you observed have in common? Allow for the students' responses. If none answer that God created them, give the explanation below.

Those are all great commonalities, but the most important thing they have in common is that God created them all. Even more, all of these created objects reveal something about the God that created them. There's a verse in Romans that shows us that all of these items, as well as everything that God created, tells something about him. Romans 1:20 says, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

What does this verse tell us about God? Allow for the students' responses. **This verse tells us that God reveals himself through the things that he has made. It also says that because of the evidence of creation, we are without excuse and can't possibly say that we didn't know that God exists. We just have to take one good look at all of the amazing things in creation and realize that God definitely exists. God reveals himself through the Bible, but he also powerfully reveals some of his attributes through creation.**

Go ahead and get back into your groups and take a look at your objects again. In reality, you all are becoming scientists today, making detailed observations. See if there's anything that this object reveals about God. For example, if I was looking at a flower (make sure that one of the groups' objects is not a flower. If so, come up with another example.), I might say that because it is beautiful, the flower reveals that God is a God of beauty. Think hard and try to infer what God is revealing through your object that he created.

After the students have had several minutes to work on their observations and record them on their worksheets, ask each group spokesperson to share their group's ideas with the class.

Creation reveals so much about the character and nature of God. Let's look at a few more objects together and see what they reveal about God.

A Flower – Creation reveals God as the master designer:

Take a look at this intricate flower. This plant was designed. It did not happen by random chance. It took someone with a lot of wisdom and intelligence to design and put this flower together. This flower is evidence that God was the master designer. Nothing this intricate could happen just by evolution over billions of years by random chance. The chances of this happening would be like throwing a bunch of television or radio parts into the air a million times and expecting finally that those parts would come together and become a working television or radio.

A Rock - Creation reveals God's strength:

Take a look at this rock. A rock doesn't go away and does very little changing. God is like this but even better. He is as solid as this rock, never changes, and is everlasting. He will never go away. We can see his character revealed in something as simple as a rock.

A Piece of Fruit – Creation reveals God's love:

Now take a look at this piece of fruit. Fruit and vegetables are good to eat and contain the nutrients that our bodies need to stay healthy and grow. When our mothers prepare nutritious meals for us to eat, it is evidence that they love us and take care of us. In the same way, because God provides us with healthy fruit and vegetables to eat, it shows us how much God loves us and wants to take care of us.

Picture of a Waterfall – Creation reveals God's majesty:

Take a look at this picture of a breathtaking waterfall. It reflects God's majesty. Majesty is another word for greatness and power. Sometimes a powerful waterfall or massive mountain takes our breath away. They are so amazing and show such strength. This is really a reflection of who God is. He is even more amazing and powerful than a gushing waterfall or breathtaking mountains. We can't help but think of him when we see things like this.

Picture of a Snowflake – Creation reveals God's rational mind and nature:

Take a look at this picture of a snowflake. Did you know that many snowflakes are symmetrical? This means that if you could fold a snowflake in half, each half would exactly match. They are identical. It is the same way with the butterfly. Each wing is symmetrical. This reminds us that God has a rational mind and is a God of order. In him, there is no confusion. He is a God of order. He is not chaotic or out of control.

The next time you see something amazing that God made, ask yourself: "What does this show me about God's character and power?" As you increasingly do that, you will become more aware of what God is like and will appreciate and love him more.

Closing Discussion Point

Please turn to a neighbor and discuss your answer to the following question: *Which aspect of the character of God that you see revealed in creation do you appreciate the most and why?*

Reflection and Prayer

I heard some great discussion about God's character and how it is revealed in creation. Let's bring this down more personally to your own life. I'd like for you to open your journal and write down your answers to the action statements:

Since God has revealed himself to me in creation, I should...

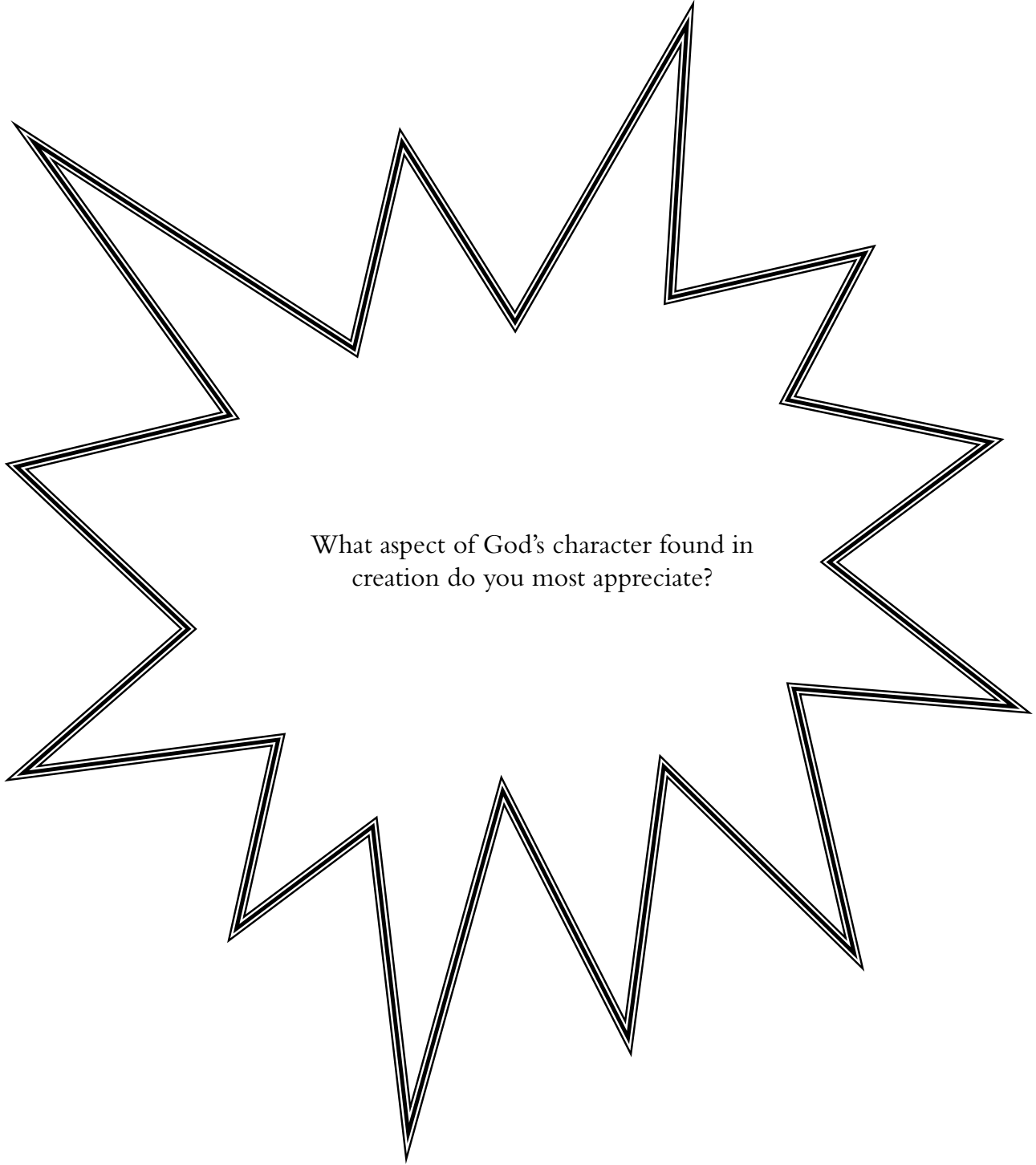
Since I learned more about who God is today, I can trust that he...

After the students have had time to record their responses in their journal, close in prayer. Praise God for several aspects of his character, and thank him for revealing himself in the Bible as well as in creation.

Our Object:

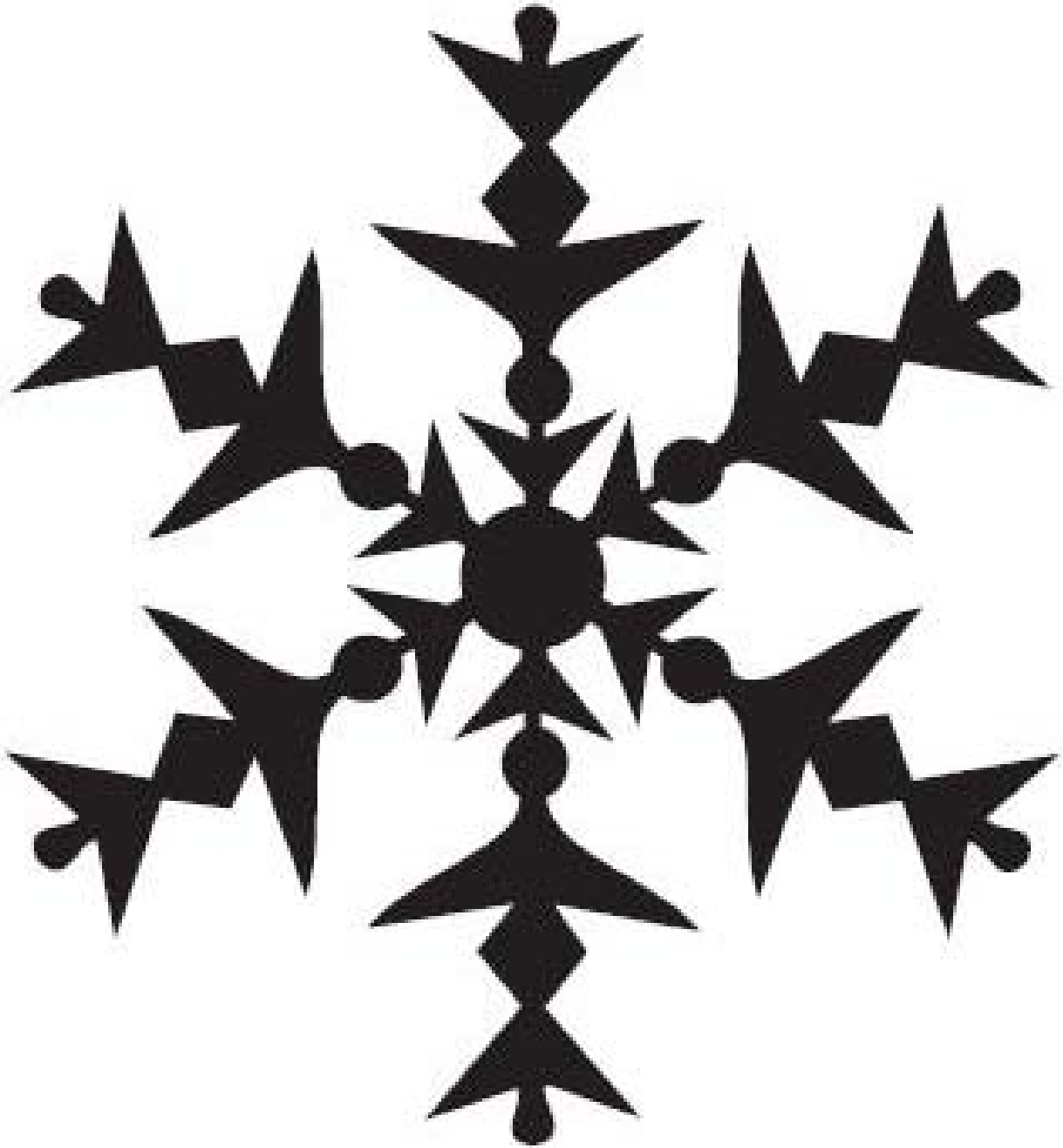
Observations

What this object reveals about God:



What aspect of God's character found in
creation do you most appreciate?





UNIT ONE – LESSON 5



God’s Design for Life Is Good: We Can Trust His Instructions

TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: In Lesson 3, we looked at how all that is good comes from God and is evidence that God is good. In this lesson, we want to help the children see that God’s design for how to live life is also good, and they can trust his instructions. In studying creation, we can see how God has designed things to work and function in amazing ways. Creation makes it clear that God’s design for how things can best function, work, and live is very good. This includes God’s design for our own lives as well.

The Deception: One of Satan’s greatest deceptions is that God’s way to live is not the best way. One of the first lies of Satan to Adam and Eve was to challenge God’s good intentions for them – to make them question whether God really wanted what was best for them. The serpent said, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God...” Satan and the world continuously tell us that God’s design for life is second-best or even worse. The deception is that there is a much better way to live, thrive, and flourish than God’s way.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Every person, young and old, wants to live a good and successful life. The point of this lesson is to help the child recognize and embrace the key truth that God’s design for how things can best function, work, and live is very good. This especially includes our lives. The very best and surest way to have a good and truly successful life is to follow God’s design and plan.

This does not mean we have a life free of difficulty and pain. But, the Bible does say that God’s way to live will always bring the truest joy, the greatest peace, the deepest contentment, the most fulfilling purpose, and the most genuine love that each of us seeks. Knowing the wonderful truth of this reality, children can live convinced that God’s way to live is the very best possible way. Therefore, it makes perfect sense to follow his instructions. Helping children understand and embrace this truth will give them great confidence and will positively shape every aspect of their life.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children that can profoundly shape their entire life. You may think that your education is limited, your skills are inadequate, you lack a proper classroom, and you do not have good teaching aids or materials for the children. All of these may be true, but you do not lack what is most important for impacting the children in your care.

You have a conscience – the ability to know what is right and wrong, and how to best live your life and use your skills to bless others. Listen to your conscience and follow it. It is a valuable gift from God. He speaks to you through it.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Relationship is the key to a child learning.

Engage, interact, and laugh with the child. Really love them.

Teacher Devotional

God’s design for life is good. Secular surveys even show this, as reflected in the USA cover story mentioned in the lesson section below.

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through the list of scriptures below that speak of everything that God created as functioning well and good. Ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

God’s Design is Good

Genesis 1

Verse 4: “God saw that the light *was good*, and he separated the light from the darkness.”

Verse 10: “God called the dry ground ‘land,’ and the gathered waters he called ‘seas.’ And God saw that *it was good*.”

Verse 12: “The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that *it was good*.”

Verses 17-18: “God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that *it was good*.”

Verse 21: “So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*.”

Verse 25: “God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that *it was good*.”

Verse 27: “So God created people in his own image: God patterned them after himself, male and female he created them.”

Verse 31: “God saw all that he had made, and *it was very good*. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day.”

Why we can trust God’s instructions for living

2 Samuel 22:31 – “As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless.”

Proverbs 3:13-18 – “Blessed is the man who finds wisdom⁶, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant

⁶ Wisdom – the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment from God of his ways, and then applying it.

ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed.”

Psalm 19:7-8 – “The Law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.”

James 1:25 – “But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

In all of creation, we can see that God’s design and plan for every aspect of life is good. Therefore, we can be confident in God and know that his instructions for living will lead to the best life we can live.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that in creation we can clearly see that God’s design for the way things can best function, work, and live is very good.
- ***Understand** how God’s good design especially includes our lives.
- ***Live** convinced that God’s way to live is the very best possible way, so it makes sense to trust and follow his instructions.

Supplies/Materials

Bible, box of fresh tree leaves (enough for two for every group), 4 group worksheets, pencils

Scripture References

Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 27, 31; Psalm 18:30; Mark 11:25; Colossians 3:15-16

Welcome Time

Greet the students and ask them to think about a food they like and a subject they enjoy in school.

We’re going to play another icebreaker game called, “What We Have in Common.” When I say “go” you should find one or two people who enjoy the same food. When you find those people, and are in a group of no more than three people, you should share one aspect of God’s character that you noticed in creation in the past week.

Allow students a few minutes to complete this activity. After all members of the group have had time to share, ask the students to now find one or two others who enjoy the same subject in school. When they find those people they should again share what aspect of God’s character they saw in creation this week. After students have had time to share, play two more rounds of the game asking students to find classmates who have two other interesting things in common.

Use your discretion to think of commonalities that would be applicable to your culture and children.

Attention Grabber

Divide the students into four groups and ask the groups to choose a spokesperson and a recorder. They should try to find students who haven’t had the opportunity to do these things yet. Give each group two tree leaves and the Group Worksheet. Ask the students to write down everything they know about leaves and plants on their worksheets. Give them about five minutes to complete this exercise, and ask the group spokesperson of each group to share their ideas.

You’ve shared many great facts about leaves and plants. They do reveal something about the character of God, but they also reveal something about God’s perfect design for the earth. Today, we’re

going to talk about God's perfect design for the earth and how that causes us to trust God's design for our lives.

The Lesson

God's Perfect Design for the Earth

Take a look at the leaves I've given your groups. God's design for the leaf is absolutely amazing! Each leaf uses light, carbon dioxide gas, and water to produce oxygen for the air and food for the plant. The roots of the plant take in water. The water travels up the root to the stems and to the leaves. Then each leaf takes in or "breathes" carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is what you and I exhale or breathe out every time we take a breath.

What's so amazing about God's design for plants is that he designed them exactly opposite of how we are designed. Plants need carbon dioxide in order to live and grow. That's what we exhale. Conversely, plants breathe out and give off oxygen which is what we need to live and grow. God designed plants perfectly to take from us what we don't need and give to us what we do! God is a creative and amazing God!

Genesis 1:11-12 says, "Then God said, 'Let the land produce vegetation; seed bearing plants that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.' And it was so. The land produced vegetation; plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit according to their kinds. *And God saw that it was good.*"

Everything that God created is good. Not only is what he created good, but his design for these things and how they interact with the rest of creation is good. His design for everything is amazing!

Please go back to your groups and answer the discussion question on your worksheet. "Which of God's creations do you think has the most perfect design and why?" This may be a difficult question, but if you think about it, even the most simple things that God created have an amazing design. Bend your finger. God made your finger flexible and he put joints in it that allow it to bend. He added muscle that will actually bend your finger. Then he made nerves that go from your finger to your brain so that when you think the thought to bend your finger, the message goes to your muscle to actually bend your finger. It's an amazing design that could have only come from God! Go ahead and think and discuss other amazing things in your groups.

Allow students time to discuss and record their decision. After all groups have completed the exercise, ask each group spokesperson to share the group's finding with the whole class. If students have trouble thinking of something, suggest an animal like a bird who is designed to fly in the air or a fish who is perfectly designed to be able to swim and survive under water.

All of God's design for creation is good and perfect. You saw that in your group discussion. The Living Bible's translation of Genesis 1:31 says, "Then God looked over all he had made and he saw that it was excellent in every way."

God's Perfect Design for Us

If God's design for creation is perfect, then we can trust that his instructions and design for our lives is perfect too! He created all of us and everything he created is good. His design for everything is also very good. King David in the Bible knew this when he said, "As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless." (Psalm 18:30) David also said, "Oh, how I love your law (God's instructions for living). I meditate on it all day long." David knew that God's design for living was perfect and helpful for living the best life that God intends for us.

We see that God's design for life is perfect in so many ways. Even researchers have found that to be true! In 2002, a large survey was done and reported in a popular newspaper. Over 10,000 people, in ten countries, from all walks of life and all income levels (rich and poor) were interviewed. The purpose of the study was to find out what things most lead to happiness in life. Was it money, status, or a big house? When the answers were in, the researchers analyzed the results.

What they found out from the results was that for all people, whether rich or poor, living in different cultures and countries, two things most contributed to their happiness:

1. The ability to forgive others.
2. The ability to be thankful or grateful.

God already knew this truth thousands of years ago because he was the one who designed life! Over 2000 years ago, Jesus taught, "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins" (Mark 11:25). Jesus knew that forgiveness was the key to living a good life. Plus, he demonstrated forgiveness and promised us the power to forgive through his Spirit.

God also understood the importance of gratitude in living well as he designed life in the first place. This is why Colossians 3:15-16 says, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. *And be thankful.* Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs *with gratitude in your hearts to God.*"

God's design for life is perfect. It is the best possible way to live and thrive. Through his word and Spirit, God reveals the best way to live life – which is what he wants for us.

Closing Group Activity and Discussion

Have the children complete the following activity:

Think of a game that the children know well. Split the class into two teams. Take one team aside and give them a different set of rules to play by. The other team is to play by the normal rules. Play the game and see what happens! Talk about what happened, and have the children explain what it was like or how it felt not to follow the rules created by the designer of the game.

After the children are finished playing, direct their attention back to you for a brief discussion:

It's clear that when we play by the correct rules in a game, the game goes well and works for everyone. Or, when a sports team has a great coach and follows his instructions, they play well and experience success. It's the same way with our lives. God has a good design and instructions for all areas of our lives. He wants us to experience this. If we follow his good instructions, our lives and community will work well. I'd like for you to go back to your groups and talk about one area of life you'd like to find out what God's instructions are so you can live by them. If you think you know what his instructions are, please write down what your ideas are. I'll use these items for discussions later on when we meet together.

Allow the children several minutes to complete this activity on their group worksheets. After they have finished, ask the spokesperson in each group to share what their group talked about. Promise the children that you will talk more about their concerns in further lessons. If you have time, you may want to begin sharing what some of God's principles and instructions are for the areas of life that they have identified.

Closing Prayer and Application

We can see and trust that God's design and instructions for all areas of our life are good! We can trust that when we live the way that God intended for us, we will live the best life that he wants us to live. It doesn't mean that we will never have problems or difficulties; rather, God will use whatever comes our way for good in the end. I'd like for you to think about this for your life personally.

Turn to your journals and complete the following action statements:

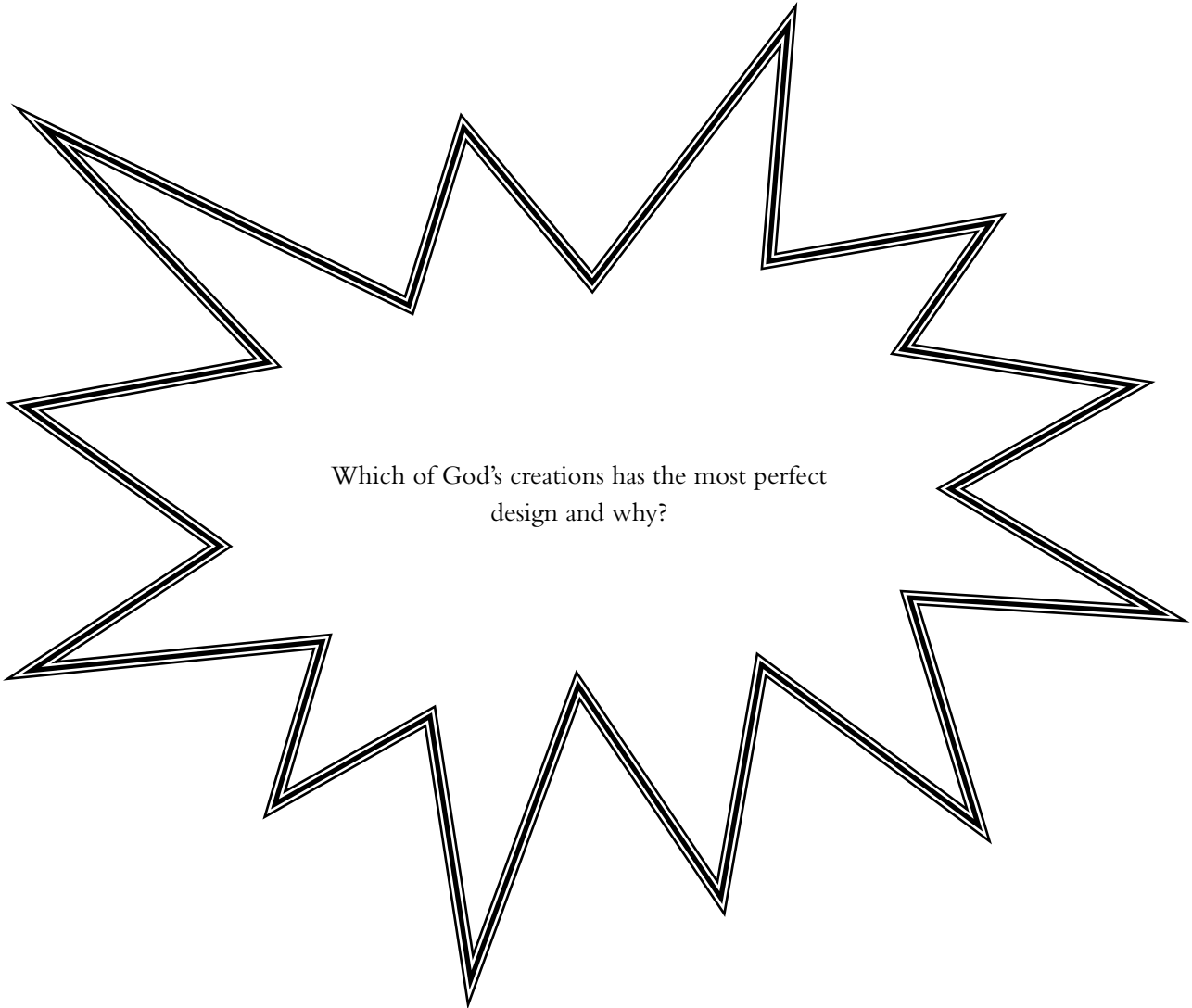
Since God's design for life is perfect, I will...

Since God's design for life is perfect, I need to find out more about his design for...

Since God's design for life is perfect, I know that he...

Once students have had a chance to complete their journals, close in prayer. Thank God for his perfect design for life and for loving us enough to give us good instructions.

What we know about plants and leaves:



Which of God's creations has the most perfect design and why?

We need to find out God's instructions for.....

We already know that some of his instructions are.....

UNIT 2



Made in God's Image

Who am I? What is my value? Am I important? Are boys superior to girls? Are some groups superior to others? Does skin color matter? What about the value of a handicapped person? Why should I value and respect others? The lies and deception surrounding these questions has caused more suffering, death, abuse, and heartache than possibly any other area. Every child needs to know and embrace the true answer to these questions. This unit looks at these questions and gives the answers.

Student Journal – Unit Two

You will use this journal each day at the end of the lesson to record your action statements. Action statements are things you decide to do based on what you learned in the lesson.

Lesson One

Because I'm made in God's image, I will...

Because others are made in God's image, I will...

Lesson Two

Because I am uniquely made by God, I will develop my talents in this way.

Because God cared to make each of us uniquely, I will respond to him by...

Lesson Three

Because God created men and women in his image and values them equally, I will change my thinking about...

Because men and women are both created in the image of God and have equal worth and dignity, I will...

Lesson Four

Because God looks at the heart and not at outward appearance, I need to repent of...

Because God looks at the heart and not at outward appearance, I will...

UNIT TWO – LESSON 1



Made in God's Image

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: We are each created by God in his image. Each person bears the divine imprint of God.

The Deception: Satan recognizes the power and implications of this critical truth for our lives. Therefore, he and his forces work hard to distort this truth and/or replace it with many lies. His most basic lie is that we evolved first from a pool of chemicals and then from animals. God did not form or make us. We are not made in the image of God. Or, we are created by some spiritual being but not in his image. We're just another form of animal. The implications of these lies are grave. Not understanding this truth opens the door for people to view themselves as inherently superior or inferior to another group based on skin color, gender, age, height, weight, social or economic status, nationality, ethnicity, and physical and mental ability. It opens the door for all forms of discrimination, tribalism, racism, oppression, abuse, and bullying. It even paves the path to justifying murder and genocide.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: To know, understand, and embrace the truth that each of us is made in God's image – patterned after God's likeness – will transform lives and cultures. Children will live aware of the honor, potential, and purpose they have as people who bear the divine imprint of God. It will also open their hearts and minds to other important truths. This truth from God can profoundly shape their life for good and lead them to success.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children that can profoundly shape their entire life. For example:

1. You have a **spirit** and, with this, the ability to give encouragement, vision, and a sense of purpose to children.
2. You have a **mind** and, therefore, the ability to continue learning new knowledge and skills to better teach the children.
3. You have **creativity** which you can develop and use to solve problems and improve your life and teaching work.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Value your relationship with each child. Then affirm, believe in, and inspire them. Children need to know that their contributions are important and that you believe in them. They need your inspiration.

Affirm: Address each child by name. Verbally recognize their strengths or achievements (nice picture, good use of color, etc.). Compliment them for their good behavior or hard work. A week should not pass without each of the children in your life being recognized or complimented in some way.

Show them kindness and respect as you would an adult. Treat them as individuals uniquely made in the image of God. Treat them according to the Golden Rule which calls us to treat others as we ourselves would want to be treated.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this scripture that speaks of God creating us in his image. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has given you to influence and teach. Write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Genesis 1:27 – “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

New Living Translation: “So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.”

Psalms 8:4-6 – “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

We are each created by God in his image. Each person bears the divine imprint of God.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that they are made in God's image.
- ***Understand** what being created in God's image means for their lives.
- ***Live** life aware of the honor, potential, and purpose they have as people who bear the divine imprint of God.

Supplies/Materials

Plastic bottle with "God's design for life is perfect" written on a sheet of paper and taped on the outside, 4 group worksheets, pencils

Scripture Reference

Genesis 1:27, 6:6; Exodus 4:14, 20:5, 34:6-7; Psalms 8:4-6, 92:5; Isaiah 65:19; Matthew 22:15-22; John 4:24; I John 1:5

Welcome Time

Greet the students. Tell them that they will play a new review game today called "Spin the Big Idea." Before class, write the big idea from the last lesson: "God's design for life is perfect," on a piece of paper and tape it to the outside of an empty bottle.

Ask the students to sit in a circle. A volunteer who is "It" sits in the center. He or she must first say one big idea from the last lesson (e.g. evidence of God's design for creation being good) and say one thing that he or she learned. Then he/she spins the bottle. When the bottle stops spinning, the person who it is pointing at must say another big idea from the last lesson (e.g. evidence that God's design for people and life is also good) and tell a different thing he or she learned from the last lesson. That person then switches places with the person in the middle and becomes "It." Continue playing until all children have had the chance to play.

Attention Grabber

Divide the students into four groups and hand out the worksheets. These will be the small groups they will use for this lesson. Ask the group to choose a spokesperson and a recorder. The group's task is to draw a picture of what something or someone would look like who is made in the image of God. They should draw this picture in the rectangle on their group worksheet.

After groups have had time to draw, have each spokesperson share their pictures with the group. They should explain their drawings and why they drew them the way that they did.

You all have made interesting drawings. If you drew a picture that resembled one of you or another person, you are absolutely correct. We're going to find out today that we have all been made in the image of God. Knowing that affects our lives greatly. Let's find out more.

The Lesson

Genesis 1:27 says, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” In a different Bible translation this verse says, “God patterned us after himself.”

In your groups, talk about what you think it means to be made in the image of God or to be patterned after him. Allow children a couple of minutes to talk about their ideas and then have the spokesperson share with the group.

Today, I'll tell you about a few ways we are made in the image of God, but I'll also share with you right now what it doesn't mean to be made in the image of God. This does not mean that we were created to be an idol. An idol is an image of something that people create to worship other than God. (Note: There have been situations where the word “image” in the Bible has been wrongly translated “idol image.” This gave the wrong meaning and thus led to misunderstanding.) **To be made in the image of God means that we resemble God. We are not created to be worshipped like an idol, but we resemble God so we can have a relationship with him and bring him glory. To bring God glory means that we make him look good and make him famous.**

We Resemble God

There are four ways we are made to resemble God that we are going to talk about today. None of them are in appearance. We don't resemble God in the way that we look because God does not look like us. He does not have a body like us. Instead, the Bible says that God is spirit and light (John 4:24; I John 1:5).

There are four ways we resemble God listed on your group worksheet. I'm going to whisper one of those four ways to your group, and you all will be responsible for acting out an example of that way in front of the group. We'll stop after each group's skit and talk about how we resemble God in the way that the group just modeled for us.

Whisper one way we resemble God to each group and then give each group several minutes to plan their skit. Give groups assistance and explanation where necessary as the concepts may be difficult for them. Call each group up one at a time to show an example of people acting out the way we resemble God. Each of the four ways can be acted out in any order. After each skit, lead the group in the suggested discussion below (vary the order dependent upon the order the children perform their skits in).

God Feels Emotions

Your group showed one example of a feeling that we commonly feel. Did you know that God feels many of the same emotions that we do? I'm going to read you a few Bible verses that talk about an emotion that God is feeling. I'd like for you to listen carefully and then tell me what emotion you think he's feeling. However, as you listen to these verses, I want you to keep one thing in mind. Because God is God, he is perfect. He may feel some of the same emotions that we do but he expresses them perfectly. We do not. Oftentimes, we feel emotions and choose to act on them in a sinful way. God never does this. He feels and expresses emotions perfectly.

Read the following verses, allowing time for student responses. Make sure the correct emotion is noted.

Compassion and love

Exodus 34:6-7: “And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness...’”

Joy

Isaiah 65:19: “I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people.”

Sadness

Genesis 6:6: “The Lord was grieved...and his heart was filled with pain.”

Anger

Exodus 4:14: “Then the Lord’s anger burned against Moses.”

Jealousy

Exodus 20:5: “You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.”

We resemble God in the fact that we are created to have emotions and feelings.

God Reasons and Thinks

This group showed us a great example of reasoning and thinking. God gave us the incredible ability to think. Our ability to think through situations and problems, and to create tools and use them, is what makes us superior to animals. Without our ability to reason and think, we wouldn’t be able to solve problems. The fact that we can reason and think are evidence that we are made in the image of God. Listen to this Bible verse that talks about God’s perfect ability to reason and think: Psalm 92:5, “How great are your works, O Lord, how profound your thoughts.” God’s ability to think and reason is perfect, which is why we can always trust what he says and what he calls us to do.

God Has a Will

This group showed a great example of the ability God gives us to make decisions and choices and follow through with them. This is what is called our will. God gave us a will because we resemble him. We see God showing his will when he sent his son, Jesus, to die for us on the cross. Jesus also decided to obey his Father and willfully went to the cross. Because we are made in God’s image, we also have a will. We can will, or make the choice, to love our neighbor as ourselves, or we can will and decide to live selfishly. Our will is extremely valuable as it is what causes us to make the right decisions. Our will is an important way that we bear the image of God.

God Knows Right from Wrong

Our last group showed us a great example of how we can know right from wrong. It is God who gave us this ability. It has been said that our ability to know right from wrong, or what is called our conscience, is our most valuable possession. If we weren’t able to tell right from wrong, we would hurt others without feeling guilty or bad about it at all. That is what happens to people who choose to ignore their conscience and eventually lose their ability to tell right from wrong. God is able to tell right from wrong because he is the truth and he has set the standard of what is right and wrong.

Jesus even said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” The Bible also tells us, “Be perfect because your heavenly Father is perfect.”

We resemble God. Because of this, God has given us the ability to tell right from wrong. It is our job to use our God-given ability and listen to our conscience!

We Resemble God and We Belong to Him

We just talked about four ways that we resemble God. Of all the creatures that God created, we are the only ones that resemble him. I’d like you to discuss the first group discussion question on your group worksheet, “How does God think about us, look at us, or consider us if we are made in his image?”

Allow groups time to discuss. After a few minutes, ask each group spokesperson to share their group’s ideas.

You’re right when you say that God must consider us very special because he made us like himself. Psalm 8:4-6 says, “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet.” God does consider us to be very special.

Closing Group Discussion

Listen to this Bible story that will help explain not only how special we are, but also who we belong to:

Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him (Jesus) in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” But Jesus, knowing their evil intent said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, “Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. Then he said to them, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away. Matthew 22:15-22

If Jesus said that the coin made in Caesar’s image belonged to Caesar, and we are made in God’s image, who do we belong to? Allow for students’ responses. You’re right when you say that because we are made in God’s image, we belong to God.

Please discuss in your groups the final group discussion question on your worksheet, “*If I belong to God, how does that change my life?*” I’d like for you to think hard about this and have a good discussion in your groups. When you’re finished discussing, I’ll ask the group spokesperson to share your ideas.

Allow groups time to discuss and call for each group spokesperson to share the group’s ideas.

Reflection and Prayer Time

Each one of you is made in the image of God and belongs to him. The realization of that should

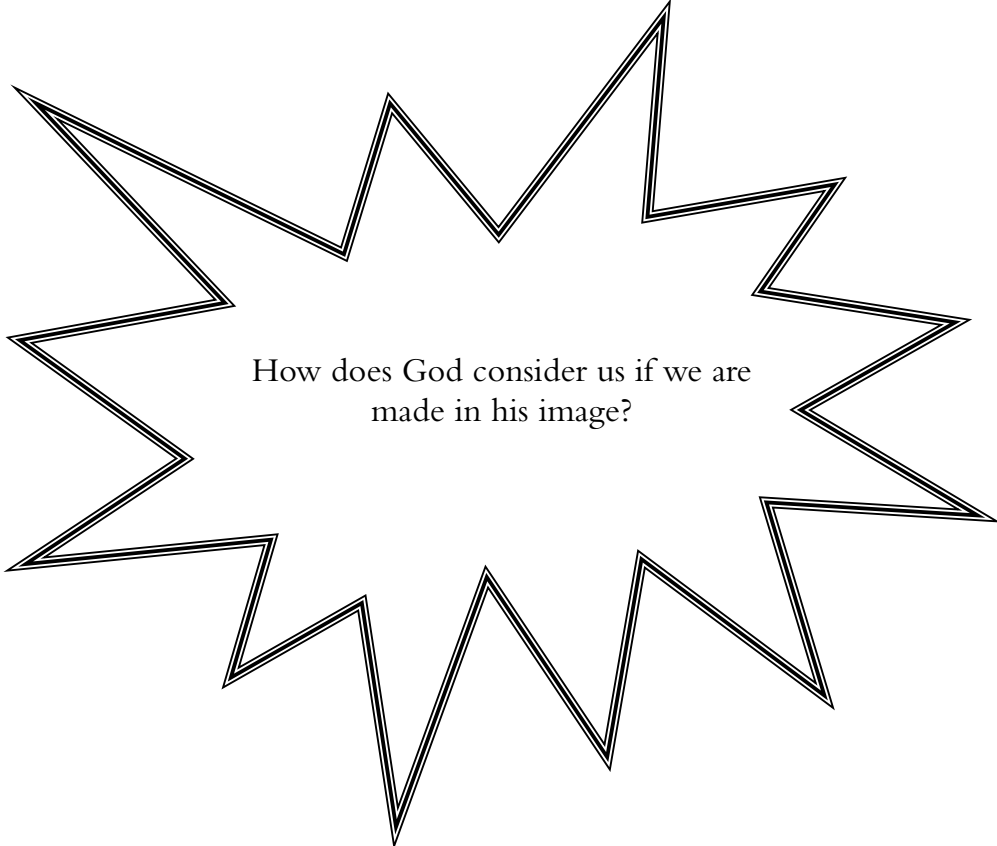
change your life! God considers you to be incredibly special! If we are all made in God's image, it should affect the way you live your life and the way you treat others. Go ahead and think about what this means to you personally. Turn to your journals and fill out the action statements for today's lesson:

Because I am made in God's image, I will...

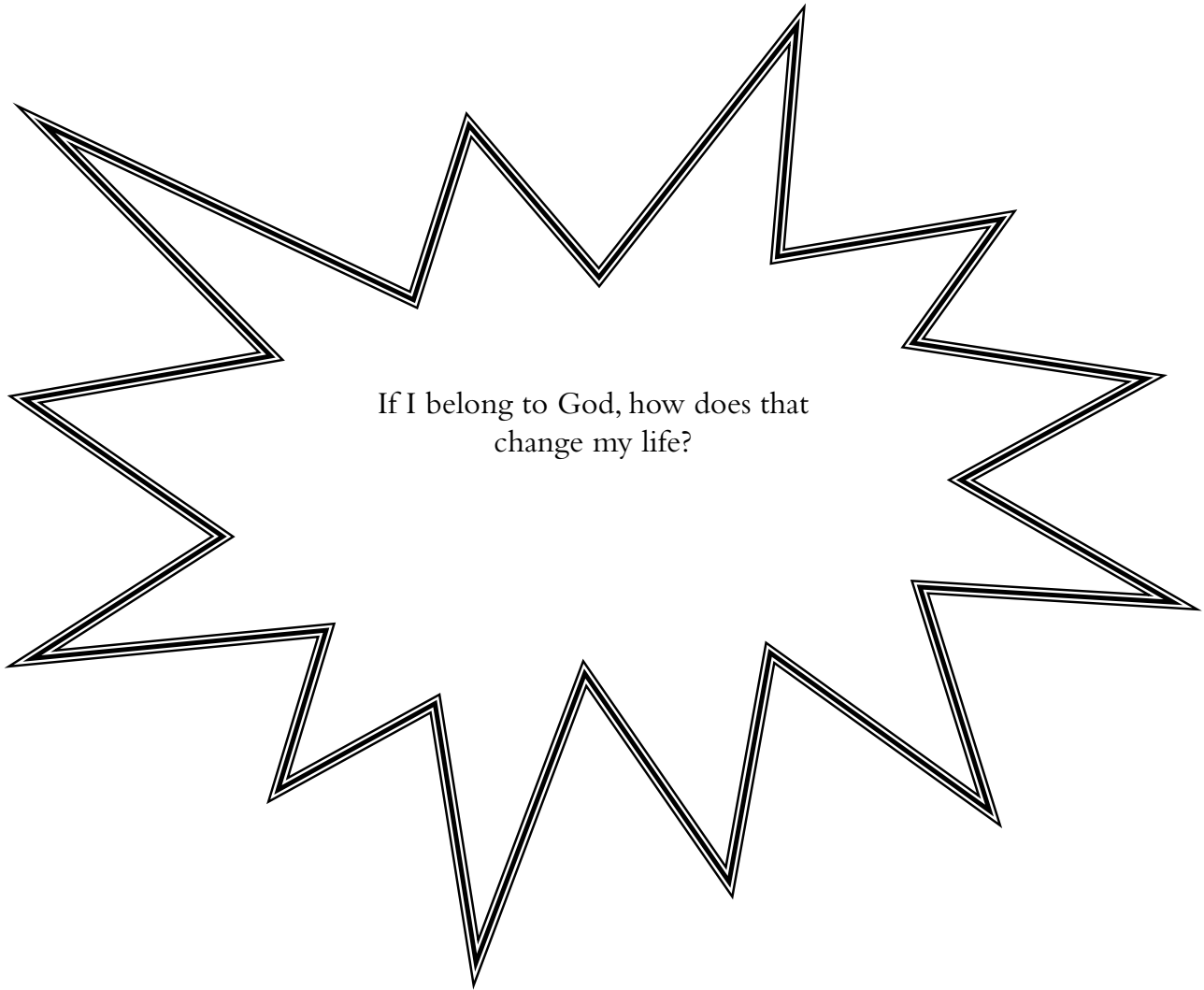
Because others are made in God's image, I will...

After students have had time to write in their journals, close in prayer. Thank God for creating us in his image and for giving us emotions, a will, a conscience, and the ability to reason and think. Thank him for loving us so much that he created us in his image.

Someone or Something Who is Made to Resemble God



How does God consider us if we are made in his image?



We are made in God's Image:

God feels emotion...

God reasons and thinks...

God has a will...

UNIT TWO – LESSON 2



Made in God's Image – Uniquely Made

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: Every child is created by God in his image. Each child is created wonderfully unique – a special reflection of God's incredible diversity. Therefore, each person is very special to God, very valuable to God, and very loved by God. Each child needs to know that no other person can be who they are or who God created them to be. You cannot be me. I cannot be you. Each of us is special. You are special!

The Deception: We are not patterned after God. The way we are made is simply the result of genetic chance. Few children are special. The majority of children are ordinary and common with no special value. Children do not each have unique potential, gifts, and creativity from God to be developed. They are all blank slates and empty vessels to be filled. God loves and values some people more than others.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children can live with confidence knowing that no matter how the world defines their worth, the truth is found in how God defines them. They can be confident that they are created wonderfully unique in God's image – a special reflection of God's diversity with a unique calling and potential. They can live confident that God loves them individually as a very special person with great value to him.

With this reality fully grasped and embraced in their hearts, children can live confidently with their heads high. They can live fully – striving to be all that God made them to be, and not trying to be or look like someone else. They can appreciate and celebrate one another's uniqueness.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children that can profoundly shape their entire life.

- You have **health** and **energy**, so you can come to the classroom each day, arrive on time, and give the children your best even when tired and discouraged.
- You have your **education** and **natural abilities** – use them and develop them.
- You have **passions** and **desires** that are good – fan them into a strong flame.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Value your relationship with each child, then affirm, believe in, and inspire them. Children need to know that their contributions are important, and that you believe in them. They need your inspiration.

Believe: To believe in the child is to share your vision of that child with him. Let the children see what you see when you look at them; your confidence and belief in them. Communicate your belief in who God has made them to be and the calling God has given them.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures that speak of God uniquely creating us in his image. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space under each verse to write down your thoughts and what God impresses upon your heart.

Psalms 139:13-16 – “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

Jeremiah 1:5 – “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart.”

Isaiah 49:5 – “And now the Lord says— he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and my God has been my strength.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

Each child is uniquely made by God in his image. Therefore, each is special to God and loved by him.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that they are each created wonderfully unique – a special reflection of God's diversity.
- ***Understand** that God loves each of them as a very special individual with great value to him.
- ***Live** life believing these truths and seeking to be fully who God made them, rather than trying to be or look like someone else.

Supplies/Materials

3 small pebbles for each child, 4 group worksheets, Certificates of Uniqueness and Worth, inkpad or black marker (4), tissue

Scripture References

Psalm 139:13–16; Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 49:5; Matthew 10:29–31

Welcome Time

Greet the students by name.

We're going to play a game called, "What We Have in Common." When I say "go," you should find two other students who like the same color as you do. When you find those people, you should each share one way that you are made to resemble God and are made in his image. Allow students a few minutes to complete this activity.

Now I would like for you to find two other people who like the same sport as you. When you find those two people, you should again share a way that you are made in the image of God and resemble him.

After students have had time to share, play two more rounds of the game asking students to find classmates who have two other interesting things in common. (*Teacher: Use your discretion to think of commonalities that would be pertinent to your culture and children.*)

Did you know that God created us to share things in common with each other, but he also created us very uniquely to have characteristics about us that only we have?

Attention Grabber

Today, we're going to find out how God has made us each uniquely. We're going to discuss several ways, but first, we're going to play a little game now that shows us how God has made each one of us with different tastes and preferences. The game is called, "I Like." Please move into your four small groups that you met in for the last lesson.

I will give each of you three small stones. One at a time, you should take turns saying, "I like..." and share one thing that you think you uniquely like, or "I don't like..." and share one thing that

you think you uniquely don't like. If you can say something unique about your like or dislike that no one else has said yet, you can throw a pebble into the center. The goal is to get through three rounds and throw all your pebbles into the center.

Allow children several minutes to play so that all players in the group can have a chance to list their unique preferences. The purpose of the game is for the students to see that they are unique – that there are certain likes and dislikes that are unique to only them.

The Lesson

As you played the game, "I Like," I hope that you were able to see how God has made each one of you uniquely. We're going to find out today just how uniquely He has made us!

You and I Are Each Uniquely Made by God

In the Bible, in the book of Psalms, King David said, "For you created me in my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well" (Psalm 139:13-14). Another man, named Jeremiah, wrote in the Bible, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5).

You see, God created us all uniquely before we were born and even created us with a unique purpose that only we are to fulfill. God knew us before we were born and cared about us even then!

In our game, we looked at ways that we are each created internally unique: our likes and dislikes. Let's show a way that we were all created physically unique, before we were even born!

Hand out an inkpad or a black marker to each group. Ask each group member to put their right thumb in the ink or cover their thumb lightly with black marker and press it on their group worksheet in the "We Are all Uniquely Made" box. After all the students in the group have had a chance to make their thumb print, ask them to compare them. Ask them to see if they can find any matching thumbprints of people in their group (of course they will not be able to!) If time does not allow for all children to make their thumbprint, have two students in each group make their thumbprint.

So, our fingerprints are one of the ways that God has uniquely designed us. None of us have the same fingerprint. As a matter of fact, it is the uniqueness of fingerprints that oftentimes allows detectives to solve a crime. If a criminal leaves their unique fingerprint at a crime scene, a detective can often tell if the suspect has actually committed the crime they are accused of by comparing the fingerprints at the crime scene with those of the suspect.

We are physically unique in so many ways! None of us have the exact same voice, fingerprints, number of hairs on our head or body shape.

In your groups, I'd like for you to think about many of the wonderful ways that God has made us uniquely. There are six billion people in the world, and no two people look exactly the same. We are different internally and externally. I'd like for your group to discuss that. On your group worksheets, there is a box to start making a list of Internal (Inside) and External (Outside) Uniqueness.

Be creative and try and think of as many ways as you possibly can that God has made us different on the outside and the inside!

Allow students time to discuss in their groups. When students have all finished, have the spokesperson in each group share their group's findings. If you have a chalkboard or whiteboard, make a list of all of the unique characteristics that the children think of.

If students do not share these items feel free to add them to the group list:

- No two people think exactly the same. If five people are asked to sit quietly and think about anything, they all would think about something different!
- Each person has a unique personality.
- Each person has a unique will.
- Each person has unique gifts and talents. One person may be a better dancer, another may be better at math. God has gifted us all uniquely!

What is so amazing is that God has made us all different. However, what is the same about all of us is that we are loved and valued by God because we are made in his image. We learned that before we were even made, God knew us! That's amazing and proves that we must be very special to him!

Closing Group Discussion

Today, we have looked at a lot of the ways that God has uniquely made each of us. I'd like you to think about the following question in your groups: *"Why do you think that God bothered to make each person uniquely?"*

Allow time for groups to discuss and for each group spokesperson to share their ideas. Close with the following ideas:

One of the reasons God made us all uniquely is to show our great worth to God. Matthew 10:29-31 says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are *worth more* than many sparrows." If God has the very hairs on our head numbered, we know that we are incredibly valuable to him and he loves us very much! God made us unique to show us how special and valuable we are to him!

There's another very important reason why God made us all uniquely. If we are all unique, we can all contribute to the world and give glory to God in our own special way. To bring glory to God means to cause or help people to recognize God's greatness, his power, and goodness, and then to live humbly before him. You do this by fully being the special person God intends you to be. No other person can be who you are, or who God created you to be. You cannot be me. I cannot be you. Each of us is special to God. Each of us has a special place and role to play in this world. You are special! Through following Jesus and having his spirit living in you, each person, through their personality and gifts, can contribute something important to this world that no one else can. Each can bring glory to God.

Think about the personality and abilities God has gifted you with and think about how you can bring glory to him by developing and using these to bless others.

Reflection and Prayer

I'd like for you to think now about how being uniquely made by God affects the way you live your life. Please open your journals and answer the following reflection questions:

Because I am uniquely made by God, I will develop my talents in this way...

Because God cared to make each of us uniquely, I will respond to him by...

When the students have had time to write in their journals, close in prayer. Thank God for the ways that he has uniquely made all of us and ask for wisdom on behalf of the children to know how they best bless others and bring glory to God through their unique qualities.

Optional Activity

The end of this lesson contains a Certificate of Uniqueness. You may enjoy presenting a personalized Certificate of Uniqueness and Worth to each student. Read each certificate out loud, and, if possible, give one special characteristic about each child as you present the certificate to him or her. A special characteristic could be that they arrive on time, write well, have a beautiful smile or a great laugh, etc. This may take some effort, especially if you have many children, but it will be remembered by all.

We are all Uniquely Made by God

External (Outside) Uniquenesses

Internal (Inside) Uniquenesses



Certificate of Uniqueness and Worth

This is to recognize that

_____ (Child's name) _____

Is uniquely made by God in every way

Is uniquely precious and valuable to God

Is uniquely loved by God

*Is uniquely set apart by God to live a life of purpose
that only _____ (Child's name) _____ can live.*

**For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Psalm 139:13**

Date: _____

Signed: _____ Teacher's name _____

UNIT TWO – LESSON 3



Made in the Image of God – Women and Men

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: Women and men are both made in God's image. Girls and boys are of equal high worth and value before God. Each girl and boy, each woman and man, equally bears the divine imprint of God. In God's eyes, girls are not inferior to boys, and men are not superior to women. Both are of equal high worth and value in the sight of God.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- Women are inferior to men.
- Women do not deserve the same opportunities as men.
- Women are second-class citizens.
- Men have inalienable rights that women do not have.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: One of the greatest causes of poverty in the world today is the attitude toward, and treatment of, women. Many girls and women are abused and/or denied the opportunity to develop and fully express the gifts God has given them. Knowing women and men are both made in the image of God and all that this implies, girls and boys can live convinced of this truth and treat one another accordingly. They can fully support one another as girls and boys in developing all their potential and become all that God intends for them.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children that can profoundly shape their entire life.

You have some **material possessions** that God has given you (e.g. clothes, food, shelter). Always be grateful for what God has already given to you. This characteristic of gratefulness will be caught by the children. **Gratitude** is a good starting point for peace, joy, and creative energy that you can share with the children.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Value your relationship with each child. Affirm, believe in, and inspire them. Children need to know that their contributions are important and that you believe in them. They need your inspiration.

Inspire: Inspire the child.

- Reveal God's truth, goodness, and beauty to them.

- Help them see that God has given them a most valuable possession in their passion (heart), their conscience (sense of right and wrong), their ability to think and reason (mind), and their ability to create.
- Let them see God’s good purposes and care for all aspects of their life.
- Impart to them Biblical principles for leadership, marriage, economics, work, agriculture, and health.
- Inspire them to practice honesty, diligence, generosity, kindness, and self-sacrifice.

Additional Information

This lesson includes a skit that some of your children will perform, based on the story of the Samaritan woman at the well found in John 4:3–27. The skit is found in the appendix to this Unit, and you will need to recruit children for the following characters: Jesus, twelve disciples, Samaritan woman, narrator. You should gather your actors together for a practice at least one time before teaching this lesson.

As you prepare for this lesson, please read the following background information and think about the treatment and attitude toward women in your area of the world.

Who works the most hours: oxen, men, or women?

In one country, a study was done to see how many days or hours were worked on a one-hectare farm in one year. They counted the days or hours for a pair of oxen, for a man, and for a woman. Which one of these do you think worked the most hours or days in a year?

The study in one area of the Indian Himalayas showed that on a one-hectare farm in one year, a pair of oxen worked 106 days (1,064 hours), a man worked 121 days (1,212 hours), and a woman worked 348 days (3,485 hours).⁷ Are you surprised by this?

Who works the most hours each year in your country, men or women? What do you think about this?

Boys and girls literacy rates

In the whole world, do you think more boys go to school or do you think more girls go to school? Or is it 50/50?

Of the world’s nearly one billion adults who cannot read, two-thirds are women.⁸ This means that there are two women who have not gone to school and cannot read to every one man.

How many girls go to school in your community or country? What about secondary school? How many girls compared to boys? Why do you think this is?

In a country where the organization *Food for the Hungry* works, one national staff manager wrote: “In villages and slums (here), girls are always treated as a burden on their family. Parents are not properly aware of the importance of girls’ education. In poor communities, girls do not have equal opportunity with boys. Parents involve their daughters in household chores all day and a large number of girls never go to school. Of those who do go, 50%

7 *The Hunger Project Online Briefing Program: The Condition of Women in South East Asia; The Cycle of Malnutrition*, 15, www.thp.org, 7/21/03

8 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Adult and Youth Literacy: Global Trends in Gender Parity*, September, 2010, http://www.uis.unesco.org/FactSheets/Documents/Fact_Sheet_2010_Lit_EN.pdf

(of the girls) fail to complete their primary education. There are many reasons for this including religious beliefs, poverty, and the need for family income. They believe girls are only suitable to work at home and so don't need academic knowledge and skills."

Here is a short poem written over a thousand years ago in one country. It offered this advice to new parents:

When a son is born
Let him sleep on the bed,
Clothe him with fine clothes.
And give him jade to play..
When a daughter is born,
Let her sleep on the ground,
Wrap her in common wrappings,
And give her broken tiles to play.⁹

Consider Jesus' treatment and attitude toward women:

Women in Jesus' time:

- Regarded as second class citizens
- Separated from men in worshipping at the synagogue
- Not taught by Rabbis – women were not considered worthy to be taught
- Not given any role in Jewish worship
- Not acknowledged by men in public – not even wives by their husbands
- Treated by the Romans as inferior

Jesus lived in a climate of hostility and prejudice against women. His attitude toward, treatment of, and teaching about women was revolutionary for its time and won him many enemies as well as friends.¹⁰

Attitude and practice of Jesus toward women:

In contrast, Jesus refused to follow the behavioral rules established by the three major Jewish religious groups of the day: the Essenes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. Jesus' actions towards women were revolutionary.

- Jesus healed women as well as men.
- He taught women (Luke 10:38-42).
- Jesus spoke to women, including non-Jewish women (John 4:7).
- After his resurrection, Jesus talked to women first.
- He included women among his followers (Matthew, 27:55; Luke 23:27; Mark 15:40-41).
- Women were the first to discover that Jesus had risen from the dead, and told the disciples (John 20:11-18).
- Jesus allowed himself to be touched by women, and chose to associate with them (Matthew 14:3-9).
- He forgave women as well as men.
- Jesus expressed concern for widows.

9 *The Book of Songs*, 1000-700 B.C., <http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/understanding-chinese-women.htm>

10 Re:Quest Issues, *Issues: Prejudice and Discrimination: The Role of Women*, 2007, <http://www.request.org.uk/issues/topics/prejudice/prejudice12.htm>

- Jesus saw men and women as equally valuable (John 4).
- Jesus included women among his inner circle of followers (Luke 8:1-3).

For an in-depth look at this topic, we encourage you to read *Nurturing the Nations: Reclaiming the Dignity of Women in Building Healthy Cultures*, by Darrow Miller, with Stan Guthrie. It is available at: www.disciplenations.org. This book deals with the intersection of three seemingly very different subjects: women, poverty, and worldview.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures that speak of men and women both being made in God's image. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Genesis 1:26-27 – “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; *male and female he created them.*”

Galatians 3:26-29 – “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

Women and men are both made in God's image. Girls and boys are of equal high worth and value before God.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that each girl and boy, each woman and man, equally bears the divine imprint of God.
- ***Understand** that in God's eyes, girls are not inferior to boys and men are not superior to women.
- ***Live** life convinced of this truth and treat one another accordingly.

Supplies/Materials

“Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree” signs, 4 sets of Genesis 1:27 verse strips cut into pieces, 4 copies of group worksheet

Scripture References

Genesis 1:26-27; Galatians 3:26-29; John 4:3-27

Welcome Time

Welcome each child and ask the children to form the four groups they worked in during the last lesson. Ask the groups to choose a new spokesperson and recorder for the lesson today. As you hand out supplies, ask the groups to discuss what they learned during the last lesson. Hand each group a set of Genesis 1:27 verse strips.

Each piece of paper contains one word or phrase from the Bible verse that we talked about in the previous lesson. Try to put the words and phrases in the correct order. When you think that you have put the verse together correctly, the spokesperson of your group should stand up, recite the verse and say one thing that your group learned from the last lesson.

Allow ample time for the activity and for each group to get a chance to recite the verse and say one thing they learned. Genesis 1:27 should read, “So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

This is going to be a very important verse for today. You will find out why it is going to be so important in just a little while.

Attention Grabber

Before class, put the following signs in four corners of your meeting room or on the ground in four different places in your meeting area: “Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.”

We're going to play a little game called, “You Decide”. I'm going to read a statement. You should decide whether you think the majority of people in your country strongly agree with the statement, agree with the statement, disagree with the statement or strongly disagree with it. Go to the place with the sign that corresponds with how you think most people feel about what I have said. I may call on a volunteer from each corner to tell the group why they decided what they did.

Read the following statements, giving the children time to move to their chosen corner before reading the next one.

1. **Men are generally smarter than women.**
2. **Women are generally smarter than men.**
3. **A man is much more valuable than a woman because he makes more money.**
4. **A woman is much more valuable than a man because she raises the children.**
5. **Boys are better children to have than girls.**
6. **It doesn't matter if you send girls to school.**
7. **Girls are more valuable than boys.**

No matter what decision you made on each of those statements, the reality is that in God's eyes, we are all equally valuable because we are made in the image of God!

Remember the Bible verse you put together earlier in the lesson? Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man (meaning all people: men and women) in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." The way that God sees men and women and boys and girls, is the correct way, because God created us and is perfect. Therefore, we need to see each other the way that God sees us. Let's watch and listen to a Bible story that will illustrate the amazing way that God sees each one of us. It is a story about Jesus that reveals the truth. Remember that Jesus is the son of God and the ways that Jesus acted and interacted with people is a mirror of who God is.

The Lesson

Begin this section by having children perform the *Samaritan Woman Skit*.

When the skit is over ask, **what did Jesus do in this story?** Allow time for discussion.

Does anyone know why it was so significant that Jesus talked to this Samaritan woman? Allow the children to share their ideas. **In Jesus' time, the Samaritans were viewed as dogs by the Jews, and were to be avoided at all costs. As a matter of fact, if Jews had to go through Samaria, they would make their trip significantly longer and go around Samaria, where the Samaritans lived, just to avoid coming in contact with Samaritans. Jesus made it a point to go through Samaria, to stop for a drink, rest, and talk to a Samaritan woman there. Also, in Jesus' time, Jews did not consider women as equals and would never have talked to or interacted with a woman in this way. Yet, Jesus sat down and talked with this woman who had a very mixed-up past – she had several husbands already! Jewish men thought they were better than women and a very religious person never would have talked with such a *sinful* woman. But Jesus talked to this woman and even asked her for a drink.**

In your groups, I'd like you to discuss the first of the group discussion questions on your group discussion sheet:

Because Jesus chose to talk to the Samaritan woman, what does this tell us about him?

Allow students time to discuss in their groups and share their ideas. After they have finished discussing, have the group spokesperson share their responses.

You are correct when you say that Jesus is showing that men are no better than women and that he loves men and women equally! Remember what our Bible verse says, “So God created man in his own image, male and female he created them.” If both men and women are created in the image of God, then they are both equally as valuable to God!

If God says that both men and women are created in the image of God and are both equally as valuable, are we smarter than God? Do we know more than God does? Allow for response. Of course not! If God sees men and women and boys and girls as equal in worth and value, if we see differently than God we are deceived and believe something that is false!

Closing Group Discussion

There is a Bible verse written on your group discussion sheets. I'd like a volunteer to read it to us. It is found in Galatians 3:26-28. “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, *male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*”

Please discuss these questions in your groups:

What does it mean that there is no male or female, but we are all one in Christ Jesus?

What are some examples you have seen of men being preferred over women or women over men?

If God sees men and women as being equal in value, how should you treat one another? How should you view yourself?

Please take several minutes to discuss your answers to these questions. Then I will call on the group spokesperson to share your responses with the class.

Allow groups time to work and interact. Circulate among the groups, sharing your ideas and input as necessary. Make sure that children understand that God views both men and women as equal in worth and value. After groups have had time to share, close with the following thoughts.

Men and women may have different jobs given to them by God in families (we'll learn more about that later on), but in his eyes they are both equal in worth and value. The reason why they are equal in value is because they are both created in his image. Men are not better than women and women are not better than men! This is good news, especially if you have been treated wrongly because you are a boy or a girl. No matter how someone may treat you, you can always know that you are valuable to God. You are just as valuable as the boy, girl, man, or woman sitting next to you!

Reflection and Prayer

Sometimes we all fail in our efforts to see and treat people as God sees and treats them. We are weak and sinful and we need God's help. The good news is that change can begin with each one of us. We can all choose to think and act differently. God wants to help us! If we put our faith in God's son Jesus, confess our sin, and ask for God's forgiveness, he will help us. We can ask for God's help

today. Let's turn to our journals, look at what we may need to repent of, and think of a way that we will change our behavior. Please answer the following questions in your journal, and then we will close in prayer:

Because God created men and women in his image and values them equally, I will change my thinking about...

Because men and women are both created in the image of God and have equal worth and dignity, I will...

After students have had time to write in their journals, allow them time to silently pray, confessing what they may need to regarding how they have treated and viewed each other or themselves wrongly. Close in prayer asking that God would give them the courage and the strength to obey him this week, and to view everyone the way that he views them.

Genesis 1:27	So God created	man
in his	own image,	in the image
of God	he created him;	male and female
he created them.		

I Strongly Agree

I Agree

I Strongly Disagree

I Disagree

Samaritan Woman Skit

John 4:3-27 – Mini Drama (suggestions for a script):

Setting: Jesus and his 12 disciples are walking along, looking a little hot and tired. A couple of them are walking with Jesus. Three others (Disciples 1, 2, and 3) are further back.

Disciple 1: I understand that Jesus wants to get to Galilee and this is the quickest route, but I still don't like it that he is taking us through Samaria. I just do not like this country or these people. Doesn't Jesus know this is Samaria and that no good Jewish person (especially a teacher like him) should get his feet dirty on the dirt of Samaria? These people are so below us.

Disciple 2: Of course Jesus knows this is Samaria. I feel the same way you do. I don't like being around these people. But look at Jesus. He looks perfectly at ease and seems to be enjoying the scenery and the walk just like any other place.

Disciple 3: Hey, look ahead. There's a well. I sure am thirsty. It is really hot today. Do you think we can stop and rest awhile?

Disciple 1: I hope so. I believe this is called Jacob's Well. It is near the town of Sychar, which is over there (*pointing*). Oh, good. Jesus is stopping.

Jesus: Let's take a break here and rest. It's noontime and we have many hours yet to walk today. We also need to eat. James, John, Peter, Levi, and several others, why don't you go into town and buy us something to eat?

All but three of the disciples decide to go to town to buy food. They talk about how much money they have and how many burritos they should buy, etc. as they leave.

Jesus: (*Turning to the three disciples who remain*) I am going to rest a bit over here (*indicating he would like to sit separate from them*). Let's rest.

The three disciples move away and sit down.

Disciple 1: (*Talking to the others*) I still do not like taking this shortcut through these people's area. I hope we don't get sick or something.

Disciple 2: Relax, brother. Look at Jesus. He is fine.

Just then a woman is seen in the distance approaching with a bucket to draw water from the well.

Disciple 3: (*Seeing her coming*) Oh no. Now there is a woman coming to draw water here. I hope she keeps her distance. Surely she knows that Jewish men do not talk to Samaritan women. It is not right

for Jewish men of our status to be seen sitting at a well with a woman – especially a Samaritan woman!

Disciple 2: Maybe she will see us and turn around and go back. Maybe we should shout at her from here so that she sees us, and we can tell her to leave.

Disciple 3: I think she already sees us here. I would not shout at her because that would be like talking to her. Let's let Jesus handle this. He will know what to do.

Disciple 2: Well, whatever Jesus does, I just hope the woman leaves quickly so we can relax.

The woman is now approaching the well. Jesus glances her way.

Jesus: *(To the woman)* Would you give me a drink?

The woman looks stunned but nods, and proceeds to dip her bucket into the deep well. She pulls the water up and pours it into a drinking vase, which she then gives to Jesus.

Disciple 1: *(Talking in a loud whisper to the other two)* Did you hear that?! Jesus talked to the woman and asked her for a drink! Does he not know it is totally wrong for him – a Jewish man – to be talking to this...a Samaritan woman?

Disciple 2: Of course Jesus knows. He knows more about the law and our tradition than we do. I cannot believe he is doing this. What must God think of him now?

Disciple 3: I do not understand this either. Sometimes Jesus goes completely against what everyone else thinks.

The woman has now finished pouring Jesus a drink and hands it to him.

Woman: You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?

Jesus: If you knew the gift of God and the one who is asking you for a drink, you would have asked this person and he would have given you living water.

Woman: Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?

Jesus: Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Woman: Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water. I know that the Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.

Jesus: I who speak to you am he.

At this point the disciples who went into town come back. They see Jesus with the woman.

Disciple 4: Look! Jesus is talking to the Samaritan woman! Can you believe that? How strange!

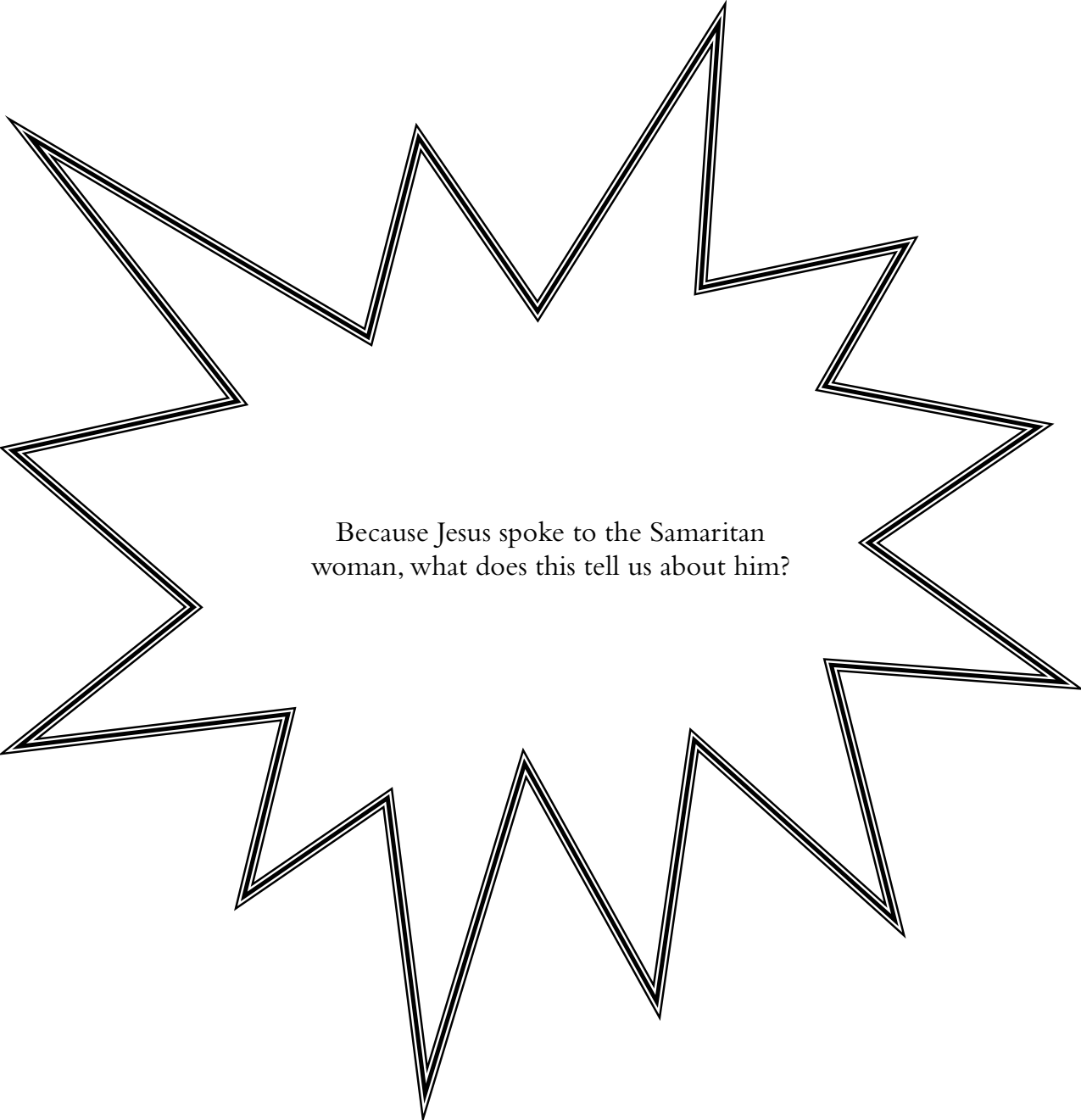
Narrator: Though all the disciples were surprised to find Jesus talking with a woman, no one asked Jesus why he was talking with her.

Galatians 3:26-28 – You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

What does it mean that there is no male or female but we are all one in Christ Jesus?

What are some examples you have seen of men being preferred over women or women over men?

If God sees men and women as being equal in value, how should you treat those of the opposite sex? How should you view yourself?



Because Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman, what does this tell us about him?

Genesis 1:27 - “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

UNIT TWO – LESSON 4



Made in the Image of God – Every Person

TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: Every person is made in the image of God and of equal value and worth in his eyes. Every person from every race and nationality is made in God’s image. Every skin color is beautiful in God’s eyes. Every nationality is special. Every disabled person is made in God’s image. Every handicapped person is equal in value to a non-handicapped person. Every poor person is made in God’s image. Every person is of equal value, dignity, and worth in the sight of God.

The Deception: A cruel deception of Satan is that skin color, ethnicity, nationality, physical appearance, social status, ability, intelligence, and wealth determine a person’s value and worth. This is a huge lie that leads to untold discrimination, neglect, stolen opportunity, and abuse. For children to thrive, it must be exposed. Children must know the truth.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children will know the reality that every person is made in God’s image; therefore, God is no respecter of skin color, nationality, wealth, physical make-up, etc. Accordingly, they will respect and treat one another as equal in worth and value.

Encouragement for the Teacher

All truth and knowledge comes from God. Math, science, art, geology, literacy, and good literature all ultimately flow from, or find their source in, the mind of God. Creation reveals God’s character and nature. He created it all. He created everything for a purpose.

Here are two questions that will bring light, energy, and meaning to every subject you study:

- 1) How is God’s character and nature revealed through this topic?
- 2) What is God’s purpose in providing this area of study or specific lesson? What about it can we use to love God more or make the world a better place for our neighbor?

Tip for Successful Teaching

Class Management

Set clear, reasonable rules of conduct, expectations, and consequences from the beginning. Repeat them when new students join the group. Write them on the wall. Enforce them. Make it clear that the reason for the rules is not to limit them but to provide a good atmosphere for not only them but their classmates to learn. By following the rules, they are helping their classmates. By not following the rules, they are hurting their classmates who want to learn.

Additional Information

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read through the following additional information. There are two great stories of people who understood they were made in the image of God and were able to face big challenges as a result. One of the stories (taught in this lesson) is about a child born into slavery, George Washington Carver. Another is the story of Helen Keller (1880–1968).

Helen Keller was a great woman who was born on June 27, 1880, in the southern part of the United States. When Helen was one and a half years old, she got a terrible disease. She had a high fever that lasted a few days. After her illness, Helen was left blind and deaf. Helen’s parents thought she would regain her sight and her hearing, but she never did. Helen remained blind and deaf.

Being blind and deaf was very difficult for Helen. When she was young, she was frustrated and angry and she did bad things. One time, she locked her mother in the pantry. Another time, she pushed over a cradle with a baby in it. She also cut off some of her friend’s hair.

Helen’s parents did not know what to do. They finally went to see a friend who found a teacher named Anne Sullivan to help Helen. Anne patiently taught Helen how to read by spelling words on her hand and by using the Braille alphabet. Anne made a huge difference in Helen Keller’s life by teaching her how to communicate.

Helen was very smart and eventually went to college. When she was older, she joined many foundations for the blind, gave lectures, and wrote a lot of books. Many famous people came to meet her. During World War II, Helen visited soldiers in the hospital who had been blinded by fighting. Helen went all over the world to talk to people.

Helen Keller was a great person who helped people realize that they could overcome their handicaps as she had. Helen Keller had the ability to help people by giving them hope that they could live a wonderful life with a disability.

- Note some of the obstacles Helen faced. She was blind, deaf, and did not know how to communicate. She was very angry and frustrated.
- Think about how people initially viewed Helen: They may have felt sorry for her and assumed she would never be able to have a good life. She was not valued.
- How did Helen overcome these obstacles? She came to see herself as God had made her: with a future and a purpose. She had potential to develop and use her obstacles in order to bless others. She accepted help from Anne. She worked hard to study and learn, and she persevered. She did not view herself as helpless and hopeless.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this scripture that speaks of God looking at the heart. Prayerfully study this scripture and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

1 Samuel 16:1-8 – “The Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have

chosen one of his sons to be king.’ But Samuel said, ‘How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me.’ The Lord said, ‘Take a heifer with you and say, “I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.” Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.’ Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, ‘Do you come in peace?’ Samuel replied, ‘Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.’ Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord’ But the Lord said to Samuel, **‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’** Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, ‘The Lord has not chosen this one either.’”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

Every person from every race and nationality is made in God's image. Every disabled or handicapped person is made in God's image. Every poor person is made in God's image. Therefore, they are all of equal value, dignity, and worth to God.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

***Know** that every person is made in the image of God and is of equal value, dignity, and worth in his eyes.

***Understand** that in God's eyes:

-Every skin color is beautiful.

-Every nationality is special.

-Every handicapped person is of equal value.

***Live** convinced of the above truths and treat themselves and others accordingly.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, sunglasses or glasses that are covered over with paper except for a small hole, Bibles, bottle with the words of Genesis 1:27 taped around it

Scripture References

1 Samuel 16:1-8; Psalm 117:1-2; John 3:16; Luke 14:12-14; Galatians 3:26-28

Welcome Time

Greet the children and explain that we will play a variation on the review game that we played before: "Spin the Big Idea."

Let's all stand in a circle. Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." I need one volunteer to come to the middle of the circle and say our Bible verse. If you need help saying it, it is taped to this bottle. Allow the volunteer to say the verse. You did a great job saying the verse. Now, I need you to spin the bottle again. Whoever the top of the bottle is pointing to is the next person who will come to the center, say the verse, and spin the bottle again. Continue playing in this manner until many children have had the chance to say the verse. Close the game by having all children recite the verse one last time.

Being made in the image of God is one of the most important things we could ever understand. It affects how we view ourselves and how we view and treat others. As we deal and interact with people who are different than us, keeping this in mind is one of the most important things we can do. Remember that because all people are created in the image of God, he considers all of them to be valuable.

Attention Grabber

Prepare several true/false statements dealing with differences in people's outward appearance. You may choose to use the statements below or write different statements that are more applicable to your particular culture and context.

We're going to play a game similar to the game we played last time we were together. However, this time you're going to decide whether you think the majority of people in your community think the statement is true or false (rather than how strongly they agree or disagree with it). When I read the statement, if you think most people in your community think the statement is true, you'll move to the right side of the room. If you think most people think the statement is false, you'll move to the left side of the room. Again, the idea is to reflect the thinking of people in your community. Let's begin.

1. People who have lighter skin are usually more intelligent than those with darker skin.
2. God considers people who are poor to be more valuable than wealthy people.
3. Wealthy people are more important than poor people.
4. Handicapped people naturally have less dignity and value than those who are completely healthy – because they are disabled.
5. It is OK and patriotic to think that those from your ethnic group are better than those who are from a different group.
6. Some people deserve more respect and honor than others because of their name or family background.

Allow for some discussion.

Thank you. Now we're going to find out how God would decide – how God judges people.

The Lesson

God Looks at the Heart

Please get into the groups that you have been meeting in for this unit and choose someone different to be the group spokesperson. Also, choose a recorder who will write down your group's ideas on the group worksheet. Distribute worksheets.

In your groups, think about the first question that is at the top of your group worksheet: *“Think of a time when you were ignored, shamed, or mistreated by a person for no good reason (meaning they just did not like you or you were seen as too young or too poor, etc.). Write down all of the words that you can think of that describe how you felt.”*

Allow students time to discuss and describe how they felt. When the groups are finished, ask the group spokesperson to share all of the words that describe how they felt.

In this world, people often see and judge others by the way they look, by the ethnic group they belong to, by their age, or by their abilities. Our true/false statements in our game centered on four ways that people judge one another:

- **Skin color:** Through history people have considered lighter skin better than darker skin.
- **Nationality or ethnic group:** Sometimes people think that if someone is from a particular group, tribe, or country, the person is superior.
- **Wealth:** Usually people consider someone who is poor to be inferior to someone who is rich.
- **Physical appearance or ability:** If someone is handicapped or doesn't look a certain way that is considered to be beautiful, they are usually seen as inferior.

We know that the way that we see people and life is usually distorted by Satan. It is like looking through these glasses. Call up a volunteer to put on the blocked out sunglasses (or other glasses), and ask them to describe what it is like for them to see. **Satan distorts the way we see people and life. He doesn't want us to see people the way that God sees them and love them as God does. To see people clearly, we need to see them the way that God does, through his glasses.** Hold your Bible up to your eyes to represent seeing people through God's eyes.

Hold up your Bible. **The Bible has a lot to say about how we are to see other people. One great example is in 1 Samuel 16. God had sent the prophet Samuel to the town of Bethlehem to the house of a man named Jesse who had many sons. God was going to tell Samuel which son he was to anoint to be the king of Israel. Samuel went to Jesse's house and the first son came before Samuel. He was probably the first-born, tall, handsome, and well-educated. Samuel said to God, "Surely this must be the one you want me to anoint king" (verse 6).**

Listen to what God says to Samuel in verse 7! **"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. *The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*'"**

In this verse what does "heart" mean? Allow for students' responses. **It means the internal character, will, spirit, and attitude of a person – those things that come from within. What does this verse tell us about the way that God looks at each person? What things do you think are important to God if our outward appearance is not?** Allow for the students' responses.

Seeing Ourselves and Others through God's Word

The Bible is the word of God and it is the lens through which we should view people and ourselves. Written on your sheets are four scriptures that tell us how God views us. I'm going to assign one scripture passage to each of your groups. As you read your verse in your groups, please think about how God views people based on what you read. Write down what the verse tells you.

Allow children time to read and discuss their verse together. When all have finished discussing and recording their ideas, ask each spokesperson to share their group's ideas. As groups share, reiterate or share the following thoughts:

Psalm 117:1-2 – "God loves all people – all nations and all ethnic groups. No nationality or ethnic group is excluded from God's love."

John 3:16 – "God loves people from every ethnic group and sent his only son to die for them. No person is excluded from God's love and offer of salvation."

Luke 14:12-14 – "Jesus places a high value on caring for and befriending those who are disadvantaged. God respects and welcomes the poor, crippled, lame, and blind."

Galatians 3:26-28 – "In Christ Jesus, we are all one. It is God's plan and desire that there is absolutely no difference between a Jew and Greek" (one race or ethnic group and another)." There is no difference between poor people and rich people. All of us have a high value in the sight of God.

Examples of Discrimination and Overcoming Obstacles

(NOTE, to save time, you may need to shorten this example)

We're going to talk now about people who faced discrimination based upon their appearance. We'll see how they overcame those obstacles and how we can too. I'm going to read the story of a man named George Washington Carver. He overcame his obstacles and made great contributions to society. Please listen carefully to the story. At the end, I'm going to ask you to get into your groups and discuss several questions based upon the story that I read.

George Washington Carver was born a slave in the state of Missouri (in the United States) in 1864 or 1865. This was right at the end of the civil war. His father and mother both died or disappeared when he was an infant, leaving him an orphan.

After the war, slaves were freed. George stayed with the Carvers, a white couple he had been living with. The Carvers did not go to church, but young George went to Sunday School in a local white church.

As a young boy, George loved to learn and he loved nature. He said his soul "thirsted for education," and he spent much time outdoors. He wanted to know about every flower, insect, bird, and animal.

As a black child in that time, George could not attend the local white school. There was no school for black children. The only book he had was a spelling book, which he memorized. Finally, at the age of 13, George was able to start school. He moved to a town 12 kilometers away where he could live with a local family and attend classes at a school for black children.

To pay for his books and fees, George did chores for local families.

When he was 21, George applied to a small college and was accepted. But, when he arrived at the college to attend classes, he was told they did not allow black students. George was crushed. He kept doing different jobs to support himself. He ended up as a cook in a hotel in the state of Iowa. Here, he met a couple at a church who recognized his creative skills and ability. They encouraged him to apply again to a nearby college. This time, he was accepted and able to attend. To support himself at college, he worked in a laundry.

George worked hard in school and proved himself an excellent student. He went on to get his master's degree in agriculture and gained recognition for his expertise.

At this point in his life, George made a very important decision. He could have become a professor and scientist at an important university, but he chose to work at a training institute that helped poor black people gain an education, learn trades, become better farmers, and generally improve the quality of their lives. George said,

“I want to do all I can, through Christ who strengthens me, to better the conditions of our people.”

George worked to show poor farmers how to break the cycle of debt by adopting effective, inexpensive ways to increase production. He encouraged families to plant gardens and save some of their produce for the winter months. He encouraged people to save and work to own their own farm or home.

George was very effective as a teacher and at helping people change their lives so they could progress. But George was probably most famous as a scientist who demonstrated the value of the common peanut – something many people grew in the region. He said he took a handful of peanuts one day, looked at them, and said, “Great Creator, why did you make the peanut? Why?” God helped George go on to scientifically examine the peanut and discover or develop over 200 products made from peanuts.

George Washington Carver was an amazing person who overcame his obstacles and fully used the gifts and talents that God uniquely gave him. In your groups, please discuss the following questions on your group worksheet: “How was George disadvantaged?” “How did most people view George?” “How did George overcome his obstacles?” “What can I do to overcome the obstacles I face?”

Allow students time to discuss the questions in their group and for the group spokesperson to share the group's ideas. Stress the following lessons to be learned from George's life:

George's obstacles were many:

- He was born a slave.
- He was an orphan.
- He was black in a country where to be black meant you were viewed and treated as inferior.
- He didn't start school until he was 13.
- He was poor.
- He always had to work and go to school at the same time.
- He was rejected from college due to his skin color.

George overcame all of these obstacles by always remembering that he was made in the image of God. He knew that his desire to discover and to learn was given to him by God. He always trusted God and asked him for help. He worked hard, studied hard, and developed his mind. He persevered and always saw himself as God saw him – not as people saw him.

Sometimes there will be times when people refuse to see you and treat you as God sees you. This happened to Jesus too. People wrongly judged him and rejected him. In Isaiah 53:2-3, the Bible says, “He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not.”

Because Jesus experienced rejection, judgment, and discrimination, we can always remember that he understands the way we feel when similar things happen to us. We also need to remember that it is the other person's problem and not ours. The unkind actions and words of others can be very painful, but we always need to remember that God sees us and loves us in a whole different way.

Closing Group Discussion

Judging people based on outward appearance is a real problem in our world. The solution can start with each one of us as we trust in God. There are three things we can do to make our world a better place and stop the judgment of people based on their outward appearance:

1. We need to be aware of the wrong way we see ourselves and others.
2. We need to see ourselves the correct way as God does.
3. We need to ask God to forgive us, heal us, and change us from thinking and feeling that we are less than or better than others.

It's so important that change begins with us. I'd like for you to discuss in your groups this closing question, *"How will we act and treat people differently in light of what we've learned in this lesson?"*

Allow groups time to discuss and ask the group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

Reflection and Prayer

You've come up with some great group ideas as to how you are going to act differently based upon what you learned. Please open up your journal and complete the two action statements:

Because God looks at the heart and not outward appearance, I need to repent of...

Because God looks at the heart and not outward appearance, I will...

After students have had time to write in their journals, close in prayer. Thank God that he looks at the heart, pray for forgiveness for the ways we judge others wrongly, and ask for his help to see everyone the way that he does.

Think of a time when you were ignored, shamed or mistreated by a person for no good reason. Write down all of the words you can think of that describe how you felt:

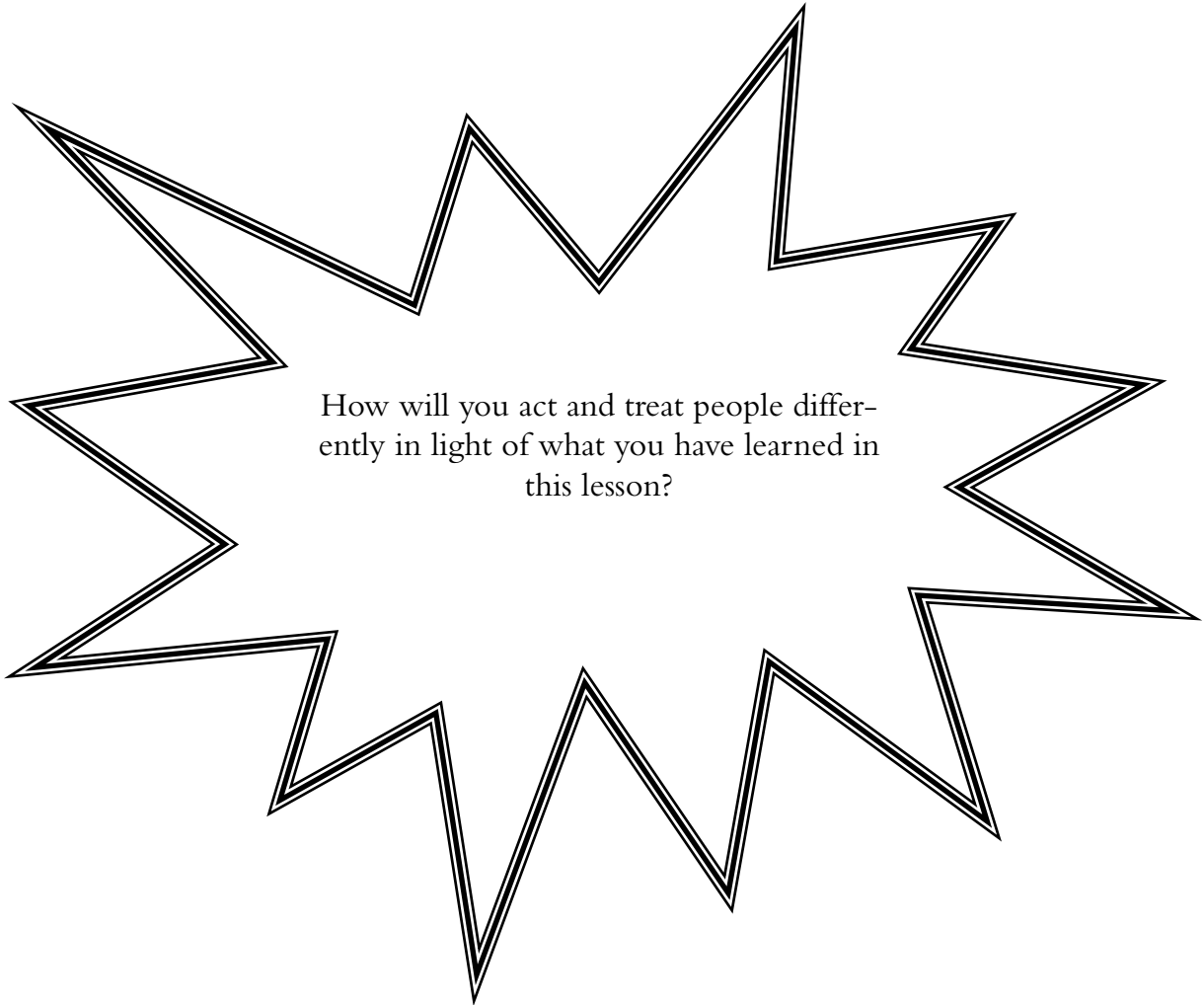
How does God view people based on these verses?

Psalm 117:1-2

John 3:16

Luke 14:12-14

Galatians 3:26-28



Lessons from George Washington Carver's Life

How was George disadvantaged?

How did most people view George?

How did George overcome his obstacles?

UNIT 3



God's Purpose for Mankind

Does life have a purpose? Do I have a purpose? Why am I here? Why are you here? What does my life have to do with God's purposes? Here too, deception and lies pervade cultures and individuals, resulting in wasted lives, frustration, and loss. God, in the second chapter of the Bible, begins to reveal the truth about our purpose in life and summarizes it in the great commandment. When understood and embraced by a child, the answers provide an indispensable footing for building a purposeful and meaningful life.

Student Journal – Unit Three

You will use this journal each day at the end of the lesson to record your action statements. Action statements are things you decide to do based on what you learned in the lesson.

Lesson One

Because God has a plan for my life, I will...

Because God has had a plan throughout history and a special place and plan for my life, I can trust that...

Lesson Two

Because God calls me to love him with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, the area that I will work on loving him more is...

To fulfill God’s purpose for my life and love my neighbor as myself, I will...

for _____

Lesson Three

Since God calls me to have dominion over all aspects of creation, I will...

Since God calls me to have dominion over creation, one problem in my community I will try to solve is...

Lesson Four

Since God has blessed and entrusted me with _____, I will thank him for this.
I will further develop it and put it to good use by _____

Since God has blessed me to be a blessing, I will bless _____
by _____

UNIT THREE – LESSON 1



God Is a Purposeful God – He Has a Purpose for Your Life

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: God is a purposeful God. God has a plan and purpose for this world, and he is carrying it out. Each child, each person, is a part of this plan and has an important purpose or role to play that only he or she can fulfill.

Our individual purpose is rooted in the truth that God is a purposeful God. He has a purpose for all mankind and for this world, and he is working his purpose out. This is the main point of this introductory lesson. It is said that history is actually his (God's) story as it is God who is working to achieve his ultimate ends in history. As a result, history is going somewhere, and our lives contribute to and create history.

The Deception: Satan's deception is that there is no ultimate purpose for living. Life begins at birth and ends at death: there is nothing more. Or, life is on a wheel of repetition with no beginning, end, or ultimate meaning. In both cases, each of us is left to search for and try to find our own purpose. Or, Satan and the world tell us a lie, and we each assume a purpose and meaning that was never intended by God.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children need to know that God is ultimately in control and is achieving his purposes. He has a critical part for each of us to play in his eternal plan and purpose. Knowing this truth and living by it will give children much confidence, hope, fulfillment, and the type of success that comes only from God.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have adversaries in Satan, in the world, and in your flesh. These are very real adversaries! They will oppose you and seek to hinder your ability to be a blessing to the children and a tool in their development. You are weak compared to these, but God is greater. He will help you. Recognize your dependence on God, ask for his help, and then go forward with confidence.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Teach with passion and enthusiasm.

Learning about God and his plan for living the best possible life in relationship with him is the most exciting and important thing we can do. A key to successful teaching is having passion for your subject. Children respond to enthusiasm and passion. But, you can only teach well and be passionate about what you experience and know well. The more a person knows about a subject, the more passionate they are about it. Just ask

someone who has an area of expertise to talk about that area – they quickly get passionate about it! One of the primary aims of the *Footings* material is to help you gain a solid understanding and personal mastery of some foundational truths.

Participate with the children! Don’t just observe. Your enthusiasm will draw children into an activity and help them see you as a person, not just someone in authority. Get down to children’s eye level so they see you as accessible and caring.

Additional Information

Before the lesson, you will need to prepare a timeline of your life, showing events such as your birth, siblings’ births, first day of school, last day of school, first job, date of your marriage, or any other significant events in your life. You will be using this as an example to show students as they create their own timelines.

You will also need to prepare a long roll of paper that will serve as your timeline of the world. Draw a line from the left side of the paper all the way to the right. You will be adding events to this timeline as you teach this unit.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read through these scriptures that speak of God fulfilling his purpose. Select several to pray through and meditate on. Then, prayerfully ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space at the end of the verses to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Job 36:5 – “God is mighty, but does not despise men; he is mighty, and firm in his purpose.”

Job 42:1-2 – “Then Job replied to the Lord: ‘I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.’”

Psalms 33:10-11 – “The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.”

Psalms 57:2 – “I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills his purpose for me.”

Proverbs 21:1 – “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.”

Isaiah 14:26 – “This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations.”

Isaiah 14:27 – “For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?”

Isaiah 14:24 – “The Lord Almighty has sworn, ‘Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand.’”

Isaiah 46:9-10 – “Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’”

Isaiah 46:11 – “From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.”

Jeremiah 29:11 – “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

Jeremiah 51:12 – “Lift up a banner against the walls of Babylon! Reinforce the guard, station the watchmen, prepare an ambush! The Lord will carry out his purpose, his decree against the people of Babylon.”

Romans 8:28 – “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Ephesians 1:11 – “In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose_of his will.”

Philippians 2:13 – “...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”

Revelation 17:17 – “For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God’s words are fulfilled.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God is a purposeful God who has an important purpose for your life.¹¹

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

***Know** that God has a plan and purpose for this world and that he is carrying it out.

***Understand** that each child is a part of this plan and has an important purpose or role to play that only he or she can fulfill.

***Live** with confidence that God is ultimately in control and working out his purposes, both in the world and in the lives of individual people.

Supplies/Materials

Four group worksheets, pencils, blank paper and index cards for each student, timeline pictures, prepared personal and class timelines, tape

Scripture Reference

Genesis 50:20

Welcome Time

We’re going to play the game called “Come to Order.” I’d like for you all to get into a line from oldest to youngest. This means that the oldest students should get at the front of the line and the youngest students should be at the back of the line. Some of you may be born in the same year so be sure to ask about the month and date of your birthdays if you’re not sure who is older or younger. Allow students time to arrange themselves in birth order.

Now that you are in order from oldest to youngest, I would like for you to turn to the person behind you and share with that person what you learned during the last lesson. The student at the end of the line should work with the two in front. Ask students to stay in their line.

Right now, you are in a living timeline. You have put yourself in order of your ages. You all were born at the exact perfect time. God has appointed you to be born at this particular time and place to fulfill his purpose for your life. We’re going to look at several timelines today as well as our living timeline to show how God has had a purpose all throughout history and for all of our lives.

Attention Grabber

Hand out blank paper and pencils to each student. Ask students to make a timeline of their life, putting in the highlights and important events of their lives. Show them the timeline of your life that you prepared before class to help them get started. Share your timeline with them showing how each event represents a point in time on

¹¹ The inspiration for this lesson came from a lecture by Darrow Miller of Disciple Nations Alliance and a lecture and handout, *Children of the Promise Timeline*, given by Dr. Elizabeth Youmans at a workshop for Food for the Hungry staff, May 27-30, 2002 in Lima, Peru.

the line. Give the students examples of events they may want to include in their own timelines: birth, births of siblings, first day of school, etc.

Allow students several minutes to make their own timelines. When students have completed their timelines, assign them to different small groups that they will utilize for the entire unit. You should have a total of four small groups. Ask students to share their timeline with their small group members.

The Lesson

God has a plan for each one of our lives. We can see that in the timelines we shared in our groups. But did you know that God has had a timeline, a special purpose for the events that have happened all throughout history. Do you also know that God has given us a special place on his timeline of history? Today, we're going to find out all about God's timeline, his story, otherwise known as "history." Distribute group worksheets.

On your group worksheets, I have a challenge activity for you to complete. There are seven events written out of order on your worksheet. I'd like for you to work together and try to put these events in the order in which you think they occurred.

Allow students several minutes to complete this activity. When they have finished, bring them together as a large group and unroll the long paper that you have prepared to be your timeline.

This very long line represents all of history. God has planned very important events for all of history. Now we're going to find out what the correct order of all of the events on your worksheets are. There is a picture that we'll put up on the timeline and a motion that we'll learn for each event.

As you discuss each picture, tape it to your class timeline in order, and write the accompanying title.

Eternity Past

This picture of a Bible represents Eternity Past. God's plan started even before the creation of the world. Before the world was created God, the Son, and the Spirit existed. John 1:1-3 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." "Word" here means Jesus, who is the living message of the Father. He also is God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit existed before time began.

God's Plan Begins in a Garden

This picture of the garden represents the Garden of Eden. God's plan for mankind started in a garden when he created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden.

In the Beginning

This picture of the planets stands for the beginning when God created the world.

Who remembers how God created the earth? He spoke it into existence; he created it from nothing.

After God created the earth, he created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden. However, Adam and Eve didn't listen to God's instructions not to eat from the Tree of Life in the Garden. They listened to the serpent, Satan, and disobeyed God. Sin, and all of its evil effects, entered the world. However, God made a promise. In Genesis 3:15, he promised that he would free mankind from the rule and control of Satan.

Abraham

Take a look at this picture of the stars. Let's put it up on the timeline. Part of God's promise was that he would bless all nations. He chose a man named Abraham and said that all the nations would be blessed through his descendants. God told him that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky. Eventually God sent Jesus through the family, or descendants of Abraham, to save and bless the entire world.

David

This picture of a young boy killing a giant is a picture of David killing Goliath. You see, throughout the Bible, God used children and young people as well as older people to accomplish his purpose and bless others. David was one of them. When he was a young man, God enabled him to kill the giant Goliath, who was opposing God and his people, with just a slingshot and some stones. Eventually, he was anointed king over Israel. Even though you're young, God has a purpose for your life also.

Esther

This picture of a crown represents the young woman, Esther, who God used to save his people. God has always had a plan to bless others through his people. He used Esther, who became queen when she was a young girl, to save God's people, Israel, from destruction.

Jesus

This picture of the cross represents Jesus. Jesus, the only Son of God came to the earth as a baby. He grew in stature and wisdom and revealed God to people. He healed and forgave sin, and then was cruelly put to death on a cross, paying the full penalty for sin of every kind. He was buried and then, three days later, arose again to life. Now he sits at the right hand of God the Father as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

There are many empty places on the timeline which we will fill in between Jesus' life and death on the cross and eternity future. We're going to find out in the rest of the lesson what God's plan is for your lives on his timeline and how he used others to bless people. But let's continue with a few more pictures and motions for our timeline.

Eternity Future

Tape this picture close to the end of the timeline, with plenty of space between it and Jesus for you to add more events.

This picture of a beautiful gate represents Eternity Future, for what God will do in the future when he returns to judge mankind and create a new heaven and a new earth where there is no more pain

and no more tears. The gates of this city will never be shut because it is the City of God. God's plan ends in a city, the city of God. If you believe in God's Son, Jesus, and that he paid the penalty for all of your sins, you can join him someday in the City of God. If you haven't done that yet, you can make that decision today!

We are missing several spots on our timeline between Jesus' life and death on earth and Eternity Future. In your groups, you are going to work on filling in the missing spots on your timeline. There are five empty spaces on the timeline. Each one of your groups will be responsible for drawing a picture of the event and coming up with a motion that will help us all remember the event.

Choose two dates from the timeline of the history of the world to have the groups represent. For ideas, please see the "Table of Events for Your Timeline" at the end of this lesson. Also choose two significant events from the history of your students' country and the history of the gospel coming to their nation and community.

Allow students several minutes to work on their pictures and motions. When they have finished, have them come up to the front of the class, tack their picture on the timeline, and teach their corresponding motion to the class.

Closing Group Discussion

We have seen now that God has had an incredible plan for his people all throughout history. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." I'd like for you to think about, and discuss in your groups, the following discussion question found on your group worksheet: *"If God has a plan for each one of us, for his people, and for our country in history, what does this say about his character?"*

Allow students time to discuss this question. Ask each group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

We also have a place in God's plan. There is one missing spot on our timeline. That is our space for our special place in God's plan. I'm going to give each one of you a small piece of paper to write your name and your date of birth. Feel free to decorate your paper if you'd like. This spot is called "My Place." Please come and place your cards on the timeline when you are finished, and then we will go through each of the events on the timeline of God's story.

1. Eternity Past.
2. In the beginning, God created.
3. Abraham is promised blessing.
4. The young man, David, kills a giant.
5. Esther saves her people.
6. Jesus comes to die for our sins.

Fill in the timeline with the students' events.

7. My special place in God's story.
8. Eternity Future.

Reflection and Prayer

As you can see, God has had a special plan all throughout history. He is a purposeful God and our lives are a special part of his grand purpose. As we trust in him, he will use each of the events in our lives for good. I'd like for you to turn to your journals and answer the following action statements:

Because God has a plan for my life, I will...

Because God has had a plan throughout history and a special place and plan for my life in this, I can trust that...

After students have had time to complete their journals, close in prayer. Thank God for his perfect plan throughout history and each of our lives.

These events in God's story are out of order. See if in your group you can put them in the correct order of how they occurred in history. Number the events in the correct order:

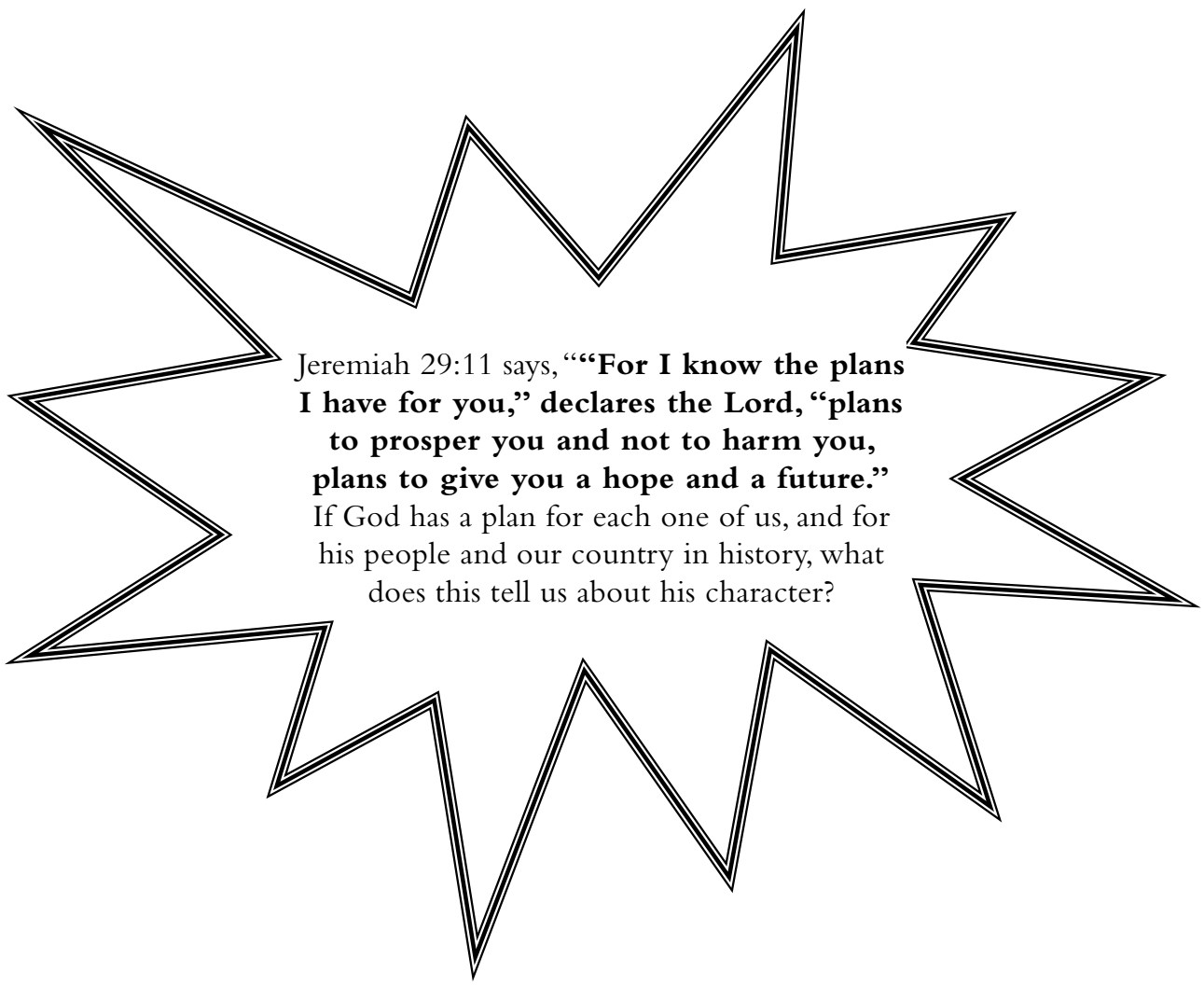
The young man David kills a giant _____

Eternity Past – God the Father, Son and Spirit always existed _____

Esther saves her people _____

In the beginning God created the earth _____

Eternity Future – Jesus will return _____



Jeremiah 29:11 says, “**For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.”**

If God has a plan for each one of us, and for his people and our country in history, what does this tell us about his character?



Eternity Past



God's plan begins in a garden with the creation of Adam and Eve



Creation of heavens and earth



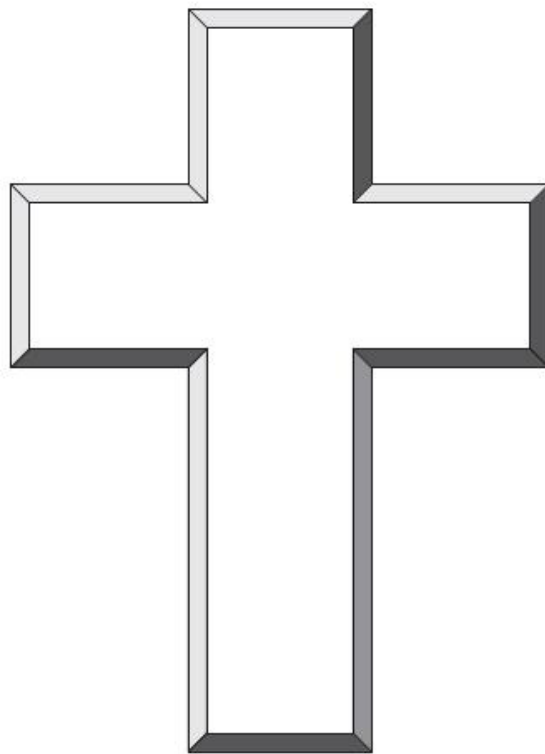
Abraham – his descendents would be as many as the stars



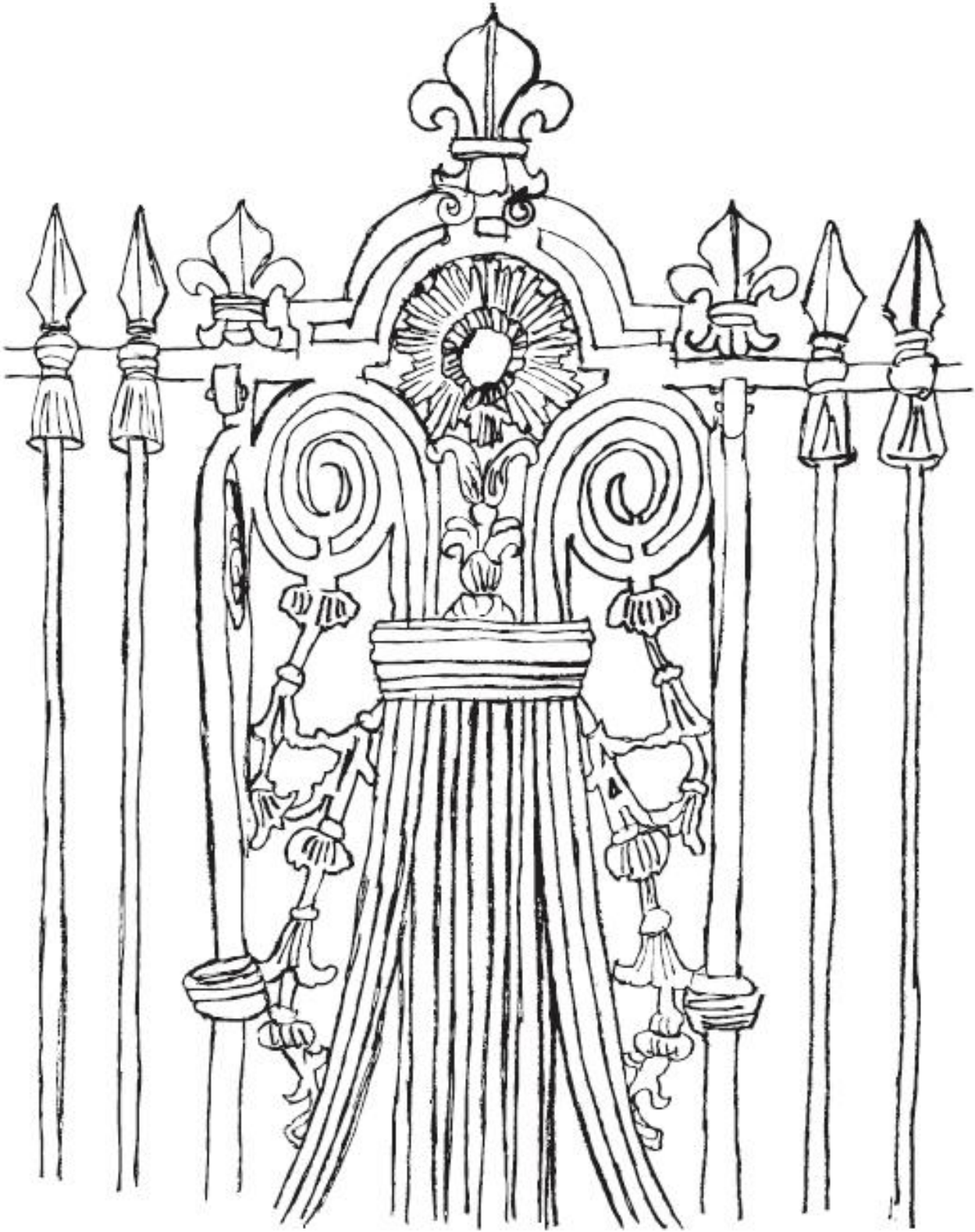
David



Queen Esther



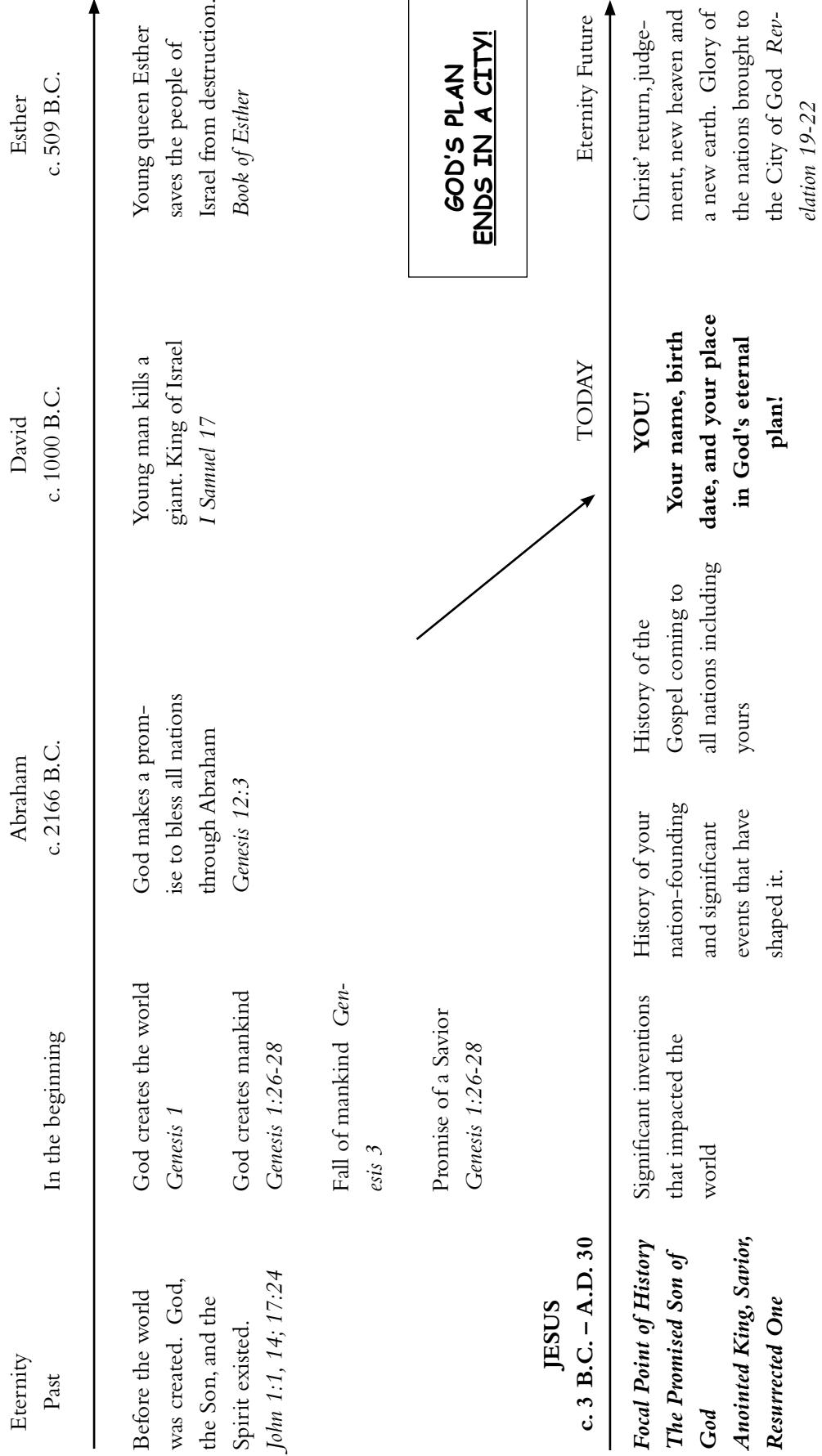
Jesus



Eternity Future – City of God

GOD'S PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR THIS WORLD

**GOD'S PLAN BEGINS
IN A GARDEN!**



Year	Event	Suggestions to share during Exploration and Application Time
History of Inventions	Select several dates and events from this table to include in your timeline. The idea here is to recognize and communicate to the children how God has worked in history to bless people with good things. God is the author of all that is good. He made people in his image and gave them creative ability like himself. He inspired and gave people the ability to create wonderful inventions that have improved life for all mankind. The record of good inventions is the record of God’s provision to us through people in history.	
1045	Movable type printing by Bi Sheng in China	Many of the important early inventions came from China.
1268 - 1289	Invention of eyeglasses	What a wonderful invention that allowed people with bad vision to see.
1280	Mechanical clocks invented	
1285 - 1290	Windmills invented	
1295	Modern glassmaking begins in Italy	Can you imagine a world without glass? What a wonderful invention and blessing from God.
1629	Giovanni Branca invents a steam turbine	The steam turbine was the forerunner of the gasoline or diesel engine that drives cars, pumps, and many other things.
1790	First patent for a machine that rolls and spins cotton	This machine made it possible to make cloth and clothing.
1796	Edward Jenner creates a smallpox vaccination.	One of God’s wonderful gifts through the people he made in his image is the medicines that have been discovered and invented that heal disease.
1814	Joseph Nicéphore Niépce was the first person to take a photograph.	Do you have a photo of your family? If so, you can thank God for Mr. Joseph Niépce.
1861	Pierre Michaux invents a bicycle.	
1866	Alfred Nobel invents dynamite.	
1876	Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone.	
1886	John Pemberton invents Coca Cola.	
1893	W.L. Judson invents the zipper.	
1901	The first radio receiver, successfully received a radio transmission.	
1903	Edward Binney and Harold Smith co-invent crayons.	

<p>History of your nation - founding and significant events that have shaped it</p>	<p>Identify and include key dates related to the founding of your nation as well as significant events that have shaped it.</p> <p>The point is to illustrate and communicate to the children how God worked in history to establish your country and your community. God is sovereign over all the nations and people.</p> <p>Key verses:</p> <p><i>“He makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them.” Job 12:23</i></p> <p><i>“He changes the times and the seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them.” Daniel 2:21</i></p> <p><i>“Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.” Isaiah 40:21-24</i></p>
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<p>History of the Gospel coming to all the nations including yours</p>	<p>Select several dates and events to include in your timeline.</p> <p>The point is to demonstrate and communicate to the children that our sovereign God has been guiding people and spreading his truth to the nations. Like the history of inventions, the spread of the Gospel throughout the world is also “His Story.”</p>	
<p>180</p>	<p>India</p>	<p>Pantaenus preaches in India.</p>
<p>208</p>	<p>Britain</p>	<p>Tertullian writes that Christ has followers in Britain where the Roman army and legions have not yet penetrated.</p>
<p>250</p>	<p>Paris, France</p>	<p>Denis is sent from Rome along with six other missionaries to establish the church in Paris.</p>
<p>328</p>	<p>Ethiopia</p>	<p>Frumentius takes the gospel to Ethiopia.</p>
<p>340</p>	<p>Romania</p>	<p>Ulfilas begins work with Goths (present-day Romania).</p>
<p>432</p>	<p>Ireland</p>	<p>Patrick goes to Ireland as a missionary.</p>
<p>c. 500</p>	<p>Arabia</p>	<p>A church is planted in Arabia.</p>
<p>c. 528</p>	<p>Italy</p>	<p>Benedict is in Monte Cassino (Italy).</p>
<p>542</p>	<p>Sudan</p>	<p>Julian, from Constantinople, begins evangelizing Nubia (Sudan).</p>
<p>551</p>	<p>Scotland, North England</p>	<p>Saint Columba, an Irish missionary, helped re-introduce Christianity to Scotland and the north of England.</p>
<p>596</p>	<p>Britain</p>	<p>Missionaries settle in Canterbury and, within a year, baptize 10,000 people.</p>
<p>629</p>	<p>Germany</p>	<p>Amadus of Elnon evangelized the region of modern day Germany.</p>
<p>635</p>	<p>China</p>	<p>First Christian missionaries (Nestorian monks from Asia Minor and Persia) arrive in China.</p>
<p>692</p>	<p>Holland and Belgium</p>	<p>Willibrord and 11 companions cross the North Sea to become missionaries to the Frisians (in modern Holland and Belgium).</p>
<p>864</p>	<p>Bulgaria</p>	<p>Conversion of Prince Boris of Bulgaria.</p>
<p>957</p>	<p>Russia</p>	<p>Queen Olga of Russia baptized.</p>
<p>1000</p>	<p>Greenland</p>	<p>Leif the Lucky evangelizes Greenland.</p>
<p>1266</p>	<p>Mongolia</p>	<p>Mongol leader Kublai Khan sends Marco Polo’s father and uncle – Niccolo and Maffeo Polo – back to Europe with a request for the Church to send 100 Christian missionaries. Only two men responded and <u>they turned back</u> before reaching Mongol territory.</p>

1276	North Africa	Raymond Lull opens training center to send missionaries to North Africa.
1510	Haiti	Dominicans begin work in Haiti.
1555	Brazil	John Calvin sends Huguenots to Brazil.
1564	Philippines	Legaspi begins Augustinian work in Philippine Islands.
1655	Angola	Jinga, princess of Matamba in Angola is converted.
1670	Venezuela	Jesuits establish missions on the Orinoco River in Venezuela.
1782	Jamaica	Freed slave George Lisle goes to Jamaica as missionary.
1797	Tahiti	The <i>Duff</i> , carrying 37 lay and pastoral missionaries, drops anchor in Tahiti.
1804	Sierra Leone	Church Missionary Society enters Sierra Leone.
1812	Burma/Myanmar	First foreign missionary, Adoniram Judson, arrives in Burma (now Myanmar).
1814	China	First recorded baptism of a Chinese convert, Cai Gao.
1814	New Zealand	First missionaries arrive in New Zealand.
1818	Madagascar	Missionary work begins in Madagascar.

<p>TODAY Your life and important place in history</p>	<p>You! God has a purpose for your life!</p> <p>Give each child a small card titled “My special time and place in God’s plan.” Have them put their name and date of birth on the card. Invite them to decorate the card and attach it to the timeline under “Today.” (See Closing Action Point.)</p> <p><i>“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10</i></p>
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UNIT THREE – LESSON 2



God's Purpose for Your Life – Love God and Your Neighbor

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

What is God's intention or purpose for my life? What am I supposed to be doing with my life? This is a very big and important question. Bob Moffitt of the Harvest Foundation came up with a wonderful teaching that addresses this question entitled *God's Intentions – Their Irreducible Minimum*.¹²

The Truth: God's main purpose for each of our lives is to love him and to love our neighbor. When Jesus was asked, "What is the most important or the greatest commandment (or thing we should do)?" he responded that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second is to love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus said that all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. He also said, "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." Our main purpose here on earth is to love God. The best way to show our love for God is by loving our neighbor.

In order to thrive in their life, family, and nation, children need to know this truth. They need to know that the fundamental purpose of life is not just to survive or to acquire wealth, power, security, or even gain love. Rather, the purpose we are designed and placed on this earth by God is to love him and our neighbor. The life we live is not ultimately about ourselves but those around us.

The Deception: The lie of Satan and our fallen nature is to think the exact opposite: It is to believe that to be happy one needs to focus on, and ultimately live for, oneself. All of life becomes about taking care of and meeting your own needs, even at the expense of others.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: This truth, this great commandment, provides a foundation upon which all of God's other commands or purposes for us stand and fit. It connects them all together. For the child, understanding God's grand purposes gives her or him meaning, confidence, and energy for working hard in school, doing their chores, serving their friends, and developing their abilities.

Encouragement for the Teacher

God will help you succeed as a teacher with the simple gifts and abilities he has given you. He will take your five loaves and two fishes, your two pennies, your last bit of flour and oil, or your vase of perfume and

¹² *God's Intentions-Their Irreducible Minimum, Leadership Development Training Program: Level I*, Harvest Foundation, 1997, 47-49.

bles and use it to impact children for good. Your job is simply to offer your service and whole-hearted effort to God. He will help you. True success comes from God!

Tip for Successful Teaching

Repeat the “Main Point” or main idea frequently. Repetition is the key to learning.

Studies show that all people, including children, need to hear new information numerous times to learn it. You may think you are being redundant, but by presenting the main point or idea in different ways, you are actually reinforcing it and making sure children see how it applies to their lives.

Think up various activities that teach and refer to the main point or idea you want to impart.

Teacher Devotional

Bible Interpretation (Hermeneutical) Principles applied in this lesson:

1. **Progressive Revelation:** God’s revelation becomes more complete and mature as we progress from the Old Testament to the New.
2. **Scripture Interprets Scripture:** The *whole* of Scripture is the context and guide for understanding any individual passage of Scripture.

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures that speak of God’s desire for us to love him and our neighbors. Prayerfully review these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God impresses upon your heart.

Old Testament

Deuteronomy 5:32-33 – “So be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.”

Deuteronomy 6:5 – “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

Deuteronomy 10:12 – “And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. . . .?”

Joshua 22:5 – “But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.”

New Testament

Matthew 22:36-40 – “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 7:12 – “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

Mark 12:28-31 – “One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, ‘Of all the commandments, which is the most important?’ ‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.’”

Romans 13:9 – “The commandments, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not covet,’ and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Galatians 5:14 – “The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

James 2:8 – “If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right.”

Why we can trust this instruction and all of God's instructions for living:

Proverbs 3:13-18 – “Blessed is the man who finds wisdom¹³, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed.”

James 1:25 – “But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does.”

13 Wisdom - The quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment from God of his ways, and then the will and ability to apply it.

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God’s main purpose for each of our lives is to love him and to love our neighbor.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that their main purpose here on earth is to love God.
- ***Understand** that the best way to show their love for God is by loving their neighbor.
- ***Live** life focused on loving God by loving and serving others.

Supplies/Materials

Four group worksheets, pencils, Bibles, blank paper (8 sheets – 4 with Mark 12:30 and 4 with Mark 12:31 written at the top)

Scripture References

Mark 12:28-31

Welcome Time

Welcome the students and have them review the key items on the timeline in the previous lesson.

Attention Grabber

I’d like for you to get together in the four groups that you met in during our last class time. Allow students time to form into groups.

Your group worksheet has a very interesting question for you to discuss and present your opinion to the class. What if to be successful in life you only had to worry about and keep one rule? Wouldn’t this make life a lot easier? Instead of having hundreds of rules in school and at home, and lots of laws to keep, there was only one? How would you feel about this?

The instruction on the worksheet is to decide what the most important rule in life is to follow. Give at least three good reasons as to why you think this is the most important rule. Have a member of your group present your group’s one rule as convincingly as possible so we would want to adopt it.

Allow the students time to discuss and write their opinions. Call groups up one at a time to give their arguments for their rule.

Jesus was once asked this very question. He was asked by a teacher of the law, “Of all the commandments (God’s laws) which one is THE MOST important?” Jesus gave an interesting response that we will be talking about today.

The Lesson

Loving God

We're going to play an action game called "Verse Relay,"¹⁴ that will introduce us to Jesus' response to the question of what is the most important life rule or commandment. I am going to give each group a Bible, a pencil, and a sheet of blank paper. (Before class, have four sheets of paper prepared with the verse Mark 12:30 written at the top.) You are to line up in a straight line behind your paper, pencil and Bible. When I say "go," you are to turn to the verse that is written at the top of the paper. The first person in line is to turn to the verse and write the first word. That person then moves to the back of the line. The second person then writes the second word and goes to the back of the line. You continue on, each person writing one word of the verse, until the verse has been completely written out. The first group to finish writing the verse is to sit down and I will call on one person in that group to read the whole verse. When I say "go," you may begin.

The verse written at the top of their page is Mark 12:30. Allow students time to play this action game and then when they have finished, get the attention of the class for a group discussion.

I'm going to read the verse that your groups found one more time. This is a critical verse since it is the most important command of God that we are to follow. Mark 12:30 says, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'"

Jesus was quoting from the law of the Old Testament in Deuteronomy. God's law tells us four ways we are to love him – with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. We're going to talk about each one of these ways and then I'm going to ask you to get into your groups and brainstorm practical ways that you can love God in that way.

Love God with All Your Heart

When you love someone with all your heart, it means you feel gratitude and devotion to that person and you express this to them. When we love God with all our hearts, we acknowledge his greatness and goodness and express our gratitude to him. We devote ourselves to him and worship him.

Love God with All Your Soul

Our soul is who we are on the inside: the part of us that will live for all eternity. It is the part of us that knows right from wrong and makes decisions. If you love someone, you do what is right by them. When we love God with all of our soul, it means that we make decisions and live our lives in the way God wants us to.

Love God with All Your Mind

We love God with our minds by developing and using them well and by thinking the way God thinks. When we develop our minds – a resource that God gave us – we are loving God with our

14 The inspiration for this game comes from the Mission Bible class website at <http://missionbibleclass.org/bright-ideas/games-to-play/memory-verse-activities/>

minds. This means that each day that we go to school and learn to read, write, do math, learn about God's creation through science, and study his work in history, we are loving God with our minds. When we learn about God from the Bible and learn from our parents, we are loving God with our minds.

When we think good thoughts and see the world and others as God does, we are loving God with all our mind.

Finally, we love God with our minds when we use our minds to solve problems and help others. We love God the most with our minds when we develop and use them to the best of our ability.

Love God with All Your Strength

Your strength is the energy that God gives you each day. God gives each one of us life, breath, and movement each day. We can either choose to use that energy only for ourselves or use it for God. We love God with all our strength by using all of our energy to do what is good and best for others and ourselves.

We've talked about the four ways that you can love God. I'd like for you to get into your groups and I will assign each of your groups one of these ways to discuss. Please come up with at least five practical and realistic ways that you can love God with either your heart, soul, mind, or strength.

Tell each group which way to love God they should discuss. Allow groups time to discuss and ask each spokesperson to share the ideas that their group came up with.

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

God gave a second part to his commandment. After loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, there is another important thing we are to do. In your groups, let's play "Verse Relay" again, this time finding out what the second part of the most important commandment is.

Lead students in the same relay that they performed before, this time writing down Mark 12:31. As a reminder: students line up behind a Bible look up the verse and take turns writing down one word at a time until the entire verse has been written out.

As you found out, the second most important command is: "Love your neighbor as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these." God calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Who is your neighbor? Allow for the students' responses.

Our neighbor is indeed the person who lives by, but it is also the people that God puts in our lives each day. Our neighbor includes our father, mother, sister, brother, teacher, and friend. When Jesus tells us to love our neighbor, he is telling us to love everyone the way we love ourselves.

What does it mean to love our neighbors as ourselves? Allow for the students' ideas.

What Jesus meant was for us to treat others the way that we want to be treated. The best way that you can love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength is by loving others. To love others is to treat them in the way you want to be treated.

Closing Group Discussion

We've now talked about what God's most important purpose for your life and command is: To love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second most important command is to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is the great purpose God has for us. It is what God calls us to do. But what do we do when we don't feel love for someone? Maybe we don't even like them at all and God calls us to love them. Get into your groups and discuss what the solution is to this problem.

Allow students time to discuss in their groups. Call on each group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

You've come up with some great ideas and suggestions for how to solve this very difficult and common problem. The reality is, we all do things each day we don't feel like doing. Our parents may ask us to do something that we don't want to do. We do it because we know it's the right thing to do. It's the same way with loving others. We can obey God and love others in our actions even when we don't feel warm and loving inside. God is so gracious and often he blesses us with loving feelings towards that person when we choose to obey God and love them anyway!

Reflection and Prayer

Let's bring this down to a more personal level. I'd like for you to think and journal about ways that you can love God more fully. Also you'll write about a specific way to show love towards a neighbor – including a family member, teacher, or friend. Please open your journals and answer the following questions:

Because God calls me to love him with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, the area that I will work on loving him more is...

*To fulfill God's purpose for my life and love my neighbor as myself, I will _____
_____ for _____*

Allow students time to write in their journals. When they have finished writing, let them know that you will ask them next week about how their plans went to show love to one of their neighbors.

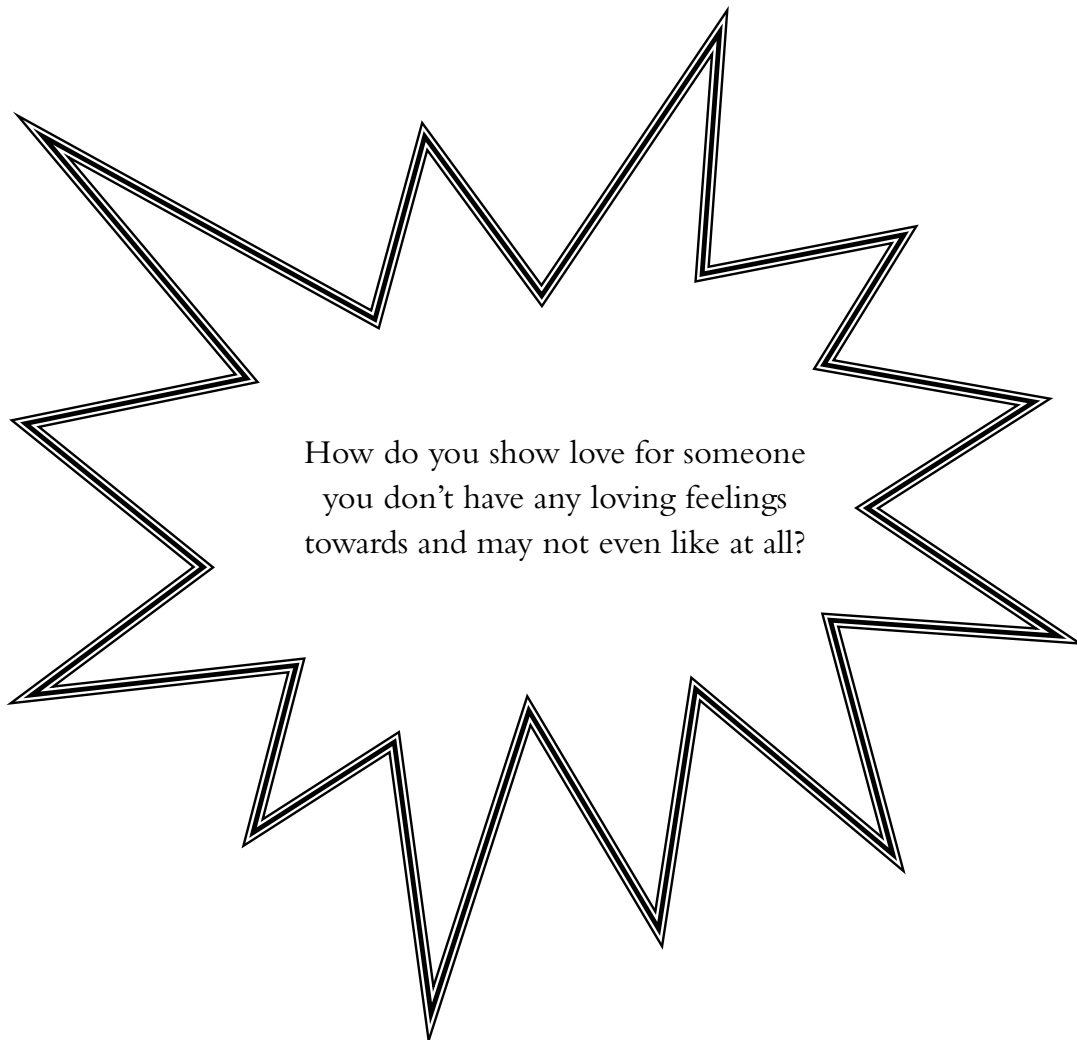
Close in prayer. Thank God for making his purpose and plan for our lives so simple. Confess and ask for forgiveness for the many ways we all fall short of following God's simple commands. Ask God for his help to live out this command each and every day.

Decide what the most important rule in life is. Give at least 3 good reasons why we all should follow this one rule. Your spokesperson will present your group's opinion as convincingly as possible so we would want to adopt your group's rule.

The Rule:

3 Good Reasons to Follow this Rule:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



**Love God with all my heart, soul, mind or strength
5 Practical Ways**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

UNIT THREE – LESSON 3



God's Purpose for Your Life – To Have Dominion Over Creation

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: God has given each person the calling and unique responsibility to exercise dominion and stewardship over creation. Creation includes not just land, water, air, and animals but also our health, minds, abilities, the money we earn, our lives, and the lives of others.

The Deception: This truth answers the deception of fatalism – which disempowers people from exercising power and responsibility over nature and their own lives.

This truth addresses the following counterfeit ideas:

1. Nature and events rule over us. We are at the mercy of whatever nature, the physical world, or the gods of nature throw at us. We must learn to accept the whims of nature and situations without trying to prevent them or protect ourselves from them.
2. We have no resources and are trapped in our situation.
3. We are not responsible to God for how we handle our life and treat creation. I can treat my mind, my body, my money, however I want to. We can treat the land, natural resources, farm animals, and water that God has given us however we choose.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Knowing and living by the truth that God has called each of us to have dominion over life and nature will give children confidence to develop their abilities and resources. It will empower them to apply their abilities and resources to overcome the challenges of life – including drought, sickness, poverty, pestilence, setbacks, failure, loss, etc. It will encourage them to turn to God and his wisdom for help and not to spiritual forces or the gods of nature when confronted by disease, sickness, or physical calamity.

Encouragement for the Teacher

God has a purpose for your life. You have been blessed to be a blessing. You were ultimately designed to live for the benefit of others. Right now, these others are the children in this community and class. God wants to help you succeed as a teacher in this environment. He wants to use you to bless these children and shape their lives. He has placed great potential in the life of each child and you are his tool to help develop this potential.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Engage the child in active learning.

Research shows that children don’t learn by being lectured! They learn best by being actively involved in lively experiences that bring home the lesson’s point. They need to be active learners.

To really learn, children must engage with the ideas taught. Design your lesson to present important content and also help children interact with this content.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through these scriptures that speak of having dominion over creation. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space under each verse to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Genesis 1:26-28 – “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them *rule over* the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, *over all the earth*, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth *and subdue it. Rule over* the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’”

Genesis 2:15 – “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden *to work it and take care of it.*”

Psalms 8:3-9 – “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him *ruler over* the works of your hands; you put *everything under his feet*: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”

Psalms 115:16 – “The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has *given to man.*”

As you prepare for this lesson, please read the following background information and consider these quotes:

We are called to be co-creators with God. Bringing forth the potentialities the Creator has hidden. Creation is full of secrets waiting to be discovered. Riddles which human intelligence is expected by the Creator to unlock. The world did not spring from the hand of God as wealthy as humans might make it.¹⁵ –*Michael Novak*

From Darrow Miller¹⁶:

There are two errors in life, to abuse nature and to under develop it.

God did not create the world with the intention that it should dominate man.

God's desire is for growth and progress to occur in all of each person and in each sphere of life.

The bounty that is created is to be saved and shared, not merely consumed and dissipated. It is to be used to produce more bounty.

Work hard (not just to get ahead or survive) ... but to create!

There is a living God who made the universe for man to explore. Man, as God's vice regent, is to act with creative stewardship to develop his world. Part of the fruit of this bounty is to be saved and given as seed capital for others' development.

God created the earth to provide for the needs of man.

Creation is embedded with the capacity to grow and expand. Man can take the material of creation and invent things that are both beautiful and useful. He can invent new resources and create abundance.

Human creativity, not natural resources, is the source of wealth in this world. God has given creativity to each one of us because we are each made in his image and he is a creative God.

From Abraham Kuyper:

Wherever man may stand, whatever he may do, to whatever he may apply his hand, in agriculture, in commerce, and in industry or his mind, in the work of art, and science, in whatsoever it may be, he is constantly standing before the face of God, he is employed in the service of his God, he has strictly to obey his God, and above all, he has to aim at the glory of his God.¹⁷

15 Michael Novak. *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, (New York, Simon and Schuster Inc., 1982), 39

16 Darrow Miller, Co-founder of the Disciple Nations Alliance, notes from lecture, January 1987

17 Abraham Kuyper. *Lectures on Calvinism*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983) 53.

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God has given each person the unique responsibility and the necessary gifts to exercise dominion and stewardship over creation, including the area of health and wellbeing.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ★**Know** that God has given each of them the responsibility to rule, develop, and care for the world around them.
- ★**Understand** that they each have special gifts that will enable them to fulfill this responsibility.
- ★**Live** a life of hope and action motivated by this truth to create, solve problems, and improve the world around them.

Supplies/Materials

Four group worksheets, pencils, a piece of traditional art or a traditional craft from your country

Scripture References

Genesis 1:26–28, 2:15; Psalm 8:6

Welcome Time

For a creative icebreaker game, you will have the children get into groups according to their number of siblings and discuss a question together.

I’d like for you to get into groups based on the number of siblings that you have. This means that all those who have only one brother or sister will get into a group together, those who have two siblings will get into a different group and so on.

Allow students time to form their groups. (If forming groups in this way does not create many small groups, use another arrangement.)

Now that you are in your groups, I would like for you to share with each other how your plan went (from the last lesson) to show love to one of your neighbors this week. Share how the person responded and what it felt like when you made an effort to show love to that person.

Allow students time to discuss these questions together.

Attention Grabber

I need for you to get into the four groups that you have met in during the past lessons. Allow students time to form their groups.

Please choose a different spokesperson and recorder for today’s lesson.

Though you are still young and may have older brothers and sisters, it’s fun to think of the day when you will be in charge! For our activity today, you’re going to imagine that you are in charge and have

become the boss over your communities. What practical rules would you make up for your community? In your groups, discuss and record the rules that you would make on your group worksheets.

Allow the students time to discuss the rules that they would make for their communities. When they have finished, ask the spokesperson in each group to share their group's ideas.

You all have come up with some great rules for your communities. Though you are young and may not rule, have dominion over, or be in charge of your families or much else, there is something that God has called each one of you to rule over. You can and should have dominion and be in charge of this thing, even when you are young. Today we're going to learn about how God has given each one of us the purpose to rule over all creation, including our lives.

The Lesson

Last week, we learned that God's main purpose for our lives is to love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. The week before that, we learned that God has created each one of us to fulfill a special purpose at this time in history, in his eternal story (point to the timeline posted in the classroom). God also gave us another very important purpose for our lives. This purpose can be found in the first two chapters of the Bible. As you read these passages in your groups (Genesis 1:26, 1:28, 2:15), look for the purposes that God has for us as it concerns creation and the resources God has given us. The passages are found on your group worksheets. Please read the passages together and record the answers to the questions on your group worksheets.

Allow students time to read and discuss what God's purposes are in these passages. When students have completed the questions, ask them to share the purposes that they found together.

I would like to highlight three related purposes that God has for us in relationship to creation. These are:

- 1. We are to rule over all the earth (creation) (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8:6).**
- 2. We are to work the earth (creation) (Genesis 2:15).**
- 3. We are to take care of the earth (creation) (Genesis 2:15).**

We'll talk about each one of these purposes today and discuss practical ways we can fulfill the purposes that God has for us.

God Calls Us to Rule Over Creation

When God calls us to rule over the earth, he asks us to take control of it and make it do what we want it to do: to have dominion over it. We are not to dominate creation and take control of it in order to ruin it and use it carelessly. Rather, we are to rule over creation in order to care for and improve our lives and the lives of others. We are actually to improve creation itself. Here are a few examples of people who rule over creation well:

- 1. A farmer rules the land by cutting back weeds that crowd out good plants and using safe products to get rid of bugs that would eat the crops.**
- 2. A doctor or nurse rules over disease, sickness, and injury and helps sick people get well.**

3. A carpenter rules over rain, wind, and heat by making houses to protect us from the weather and elements.
4. A bridge builder rules over a river or deep valley by making a way for people to cross safely over.

God Calls Us to Work the Earth

When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he asked them to work the earth. Work is not a result of the curse! It is what God has called us to do – even before there was any sin in this world. God has specifically called us to work the earth, to work the resources God has given to us.

To work the earth means to take the resources God has put into creation and to develop them: to take something simple and make it into something really special. We can turn God’s creation into something that produces abundance, beauty, and usefulness.

(Point to the timeline if you used the event of the invention of glasses, or point to someone’s glasses.) **For example, the person who invented eyeglasses took God’s creation (raw sand), made this sand into glass, and turned the glass into lenses which correct vision. This is something amazingly useful for many people. All inventors do exactly this. They take God’s creation and “work it.” They turn it into something amazing. God has put millions of secrets and incredible potential into the earth. His purpose is for us to discover these secrets and develop the earth’s incredible potential.**

In the same way, artists work the earth or develop it by creating beauty through color, texture, and design found in creation. Every color is based on the colors red, yellow, and blue. Artists take these colors that God has given us and “work them” to paint amazing pictures, weave wonderful rugs, or make brightly colored baskets. Show students an example of traditional art from your country. Allow them to look at it and help them to recognize that these colors and the ability to create a piece of art all comes from God. It is the result of working the earth (creation) and ruling over it. **Writers rule over, or work, creation by taking sounds, letters, and words, and turning them into compelling stories and inspiring messages. Musicians rule over, or work, creation by taking sounds and musical notes that God has given and turn them into beautiful music.**

There are so many examples of the incredible ways that people have worked with what God has given them in creation and turned it into something special. In your groups, please discuss what you think is the most amazing example of someone turning God’s creation into something special. After you’ve had time to discuss what you think, we’ll share our ideas together.

Allow students time to discuss and share their ideas with the group.

God Calls Us to Care for Creation

The third thing God calls us to do is to care for his creation. This means all of creation: not only the earth, but also our own lives! When we take care of something, we protect and nurture it. God wants all of his creation to remain a beautiful place and to benefit everyone. The same applies to our bodies and minds. God calls us to care for them too and not abuse them.

What things do we do to abuse our bodies? Allow students to share their ideas. **If we are to care for our bodies that are God's creation, what should we do to follow God's good instructions?** Allow students to share their ideas.

God gives us these instructions – to rule over or have dominion, to work or develop, and to care for creation. This includes not just the earth but our lives, minds, and abilities. God gives us this instruction for our own good, so that we can live a good life and bless one another. When we follow these instructions, we are able to enjoy God's good creation fully.

Closing Group Discussion

God gave us so much when he gave us the earth to rule over, to work, and to take care of. We have so many resources in our communities right now that we can develop into something special. In your groups, I'd like for you to make a list of all of the resources that God has given us and a way that we can develop them and turn them into something special. We'll share our ideas in a few moments. Give the students one example to help them get started. For example, their mind, creative ability, the school building, classroom, desks, pencils, paper, food, clothes, water supply, etc.

Allow students time to work in their groups. As they share their answers, make a large list on the chalkboard or whiteboard if you have one. Possibly even decide as a class to carry out some activity together to exercise dominion over creation with the resources given you.

Reflection and Prayer Time

You've had time to talk about the resources in your community. I'd like for you to think about this more personally and consider the resources you have right now. In your journals, please answer the following questions:

Since God calls me to have dominion over all aspects of creation, I will...

Since God calls me to have dominion over creation, one problem in my community I will try to solve is...

After students have had time to write in their journals, close in prayer. Thank God for the amazing earth that he has given us to have dominion over, work, and take care of. Thank him for the ability that he gives us to do what he has called us to do. Ask for his wisdom to exercise dominion, work, and care for the earth well.

After prayer time, give students the challenge to actually do the action they identified in their journal this week. Encourage them that caring for creation could be as simple as picking up trash in their community. Having dominion could be as simple as pulling a weed. Working or developing creation could be as simple as going to school and developing the greatest resource God has given them – their mind!

Genesis 1:26 – “Then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

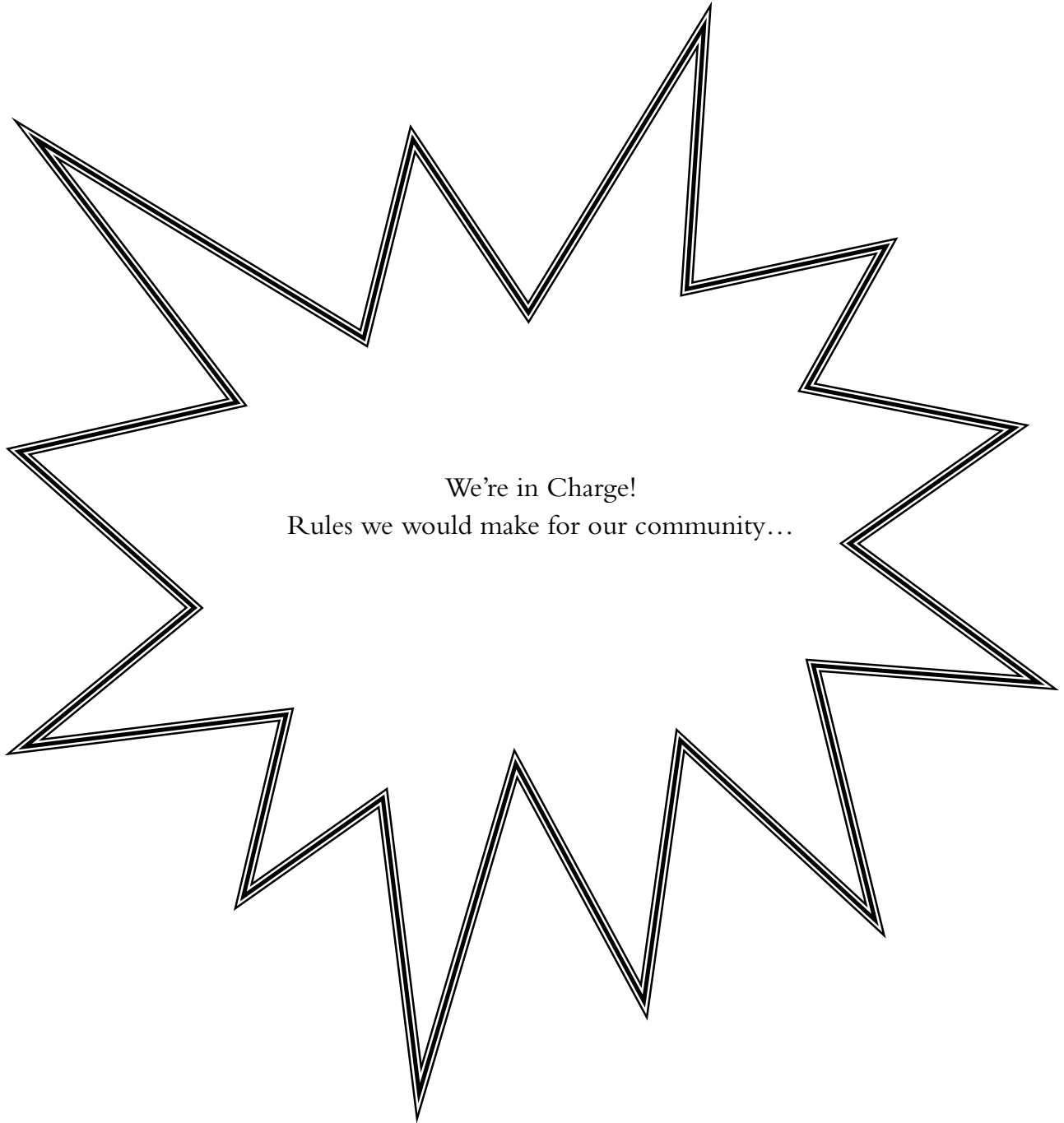
Genesis 1:28 – “God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Genesis 2:15 – “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”

God’s 3 Jobs for Man in Relationship to the Earth Are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Resources in the Community	Ways to Develop these Resources



UNIT THREE— LESSON 4



God's Purpose for Your Life – Blessed to Be a Blessing

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: God entrusts us with resources for the purpose that we are to steward them and use them to bless others.

While we may not always recognize it, God has given each of us many resources as individuals. He intends for us to diligently steward (to develop and wisely use) these resources. For example, God has given each of us an amazing mind that we are to develop and use for good.

The Deception: This lesson addresses the following counterfeit ideas or lies:

- I am not blessed.
- I have no resources. Or, I have very few resources. Or, they are of little value.
- Spiritual resources like faith and hope come from God. However, everything else that I have comes from nature or the world I live in. They are mine to have and do what I want with. They are not blessings from God that I have been given by him for the purpose of blessing others.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children who embrace this truth will be much more conscious of how many valuable resources and abilities God has blessed them with. They will live with greater confidence and purpose in developing these gifts and using them to bless others.

Encouragement for the Teacher

Each child is made by God in his image. The life of each was planned by God before they were conceived. There are no ordinary children! Each is a unique creation and special to God. Each has great potential. Each has a gift to give the world. Each child is designed and put here for a purpose in the plan of God. No child is a mistake!

Tip for Successful Teaching

Engage the child in active learning.

Feel free to shape your lesson and illustrations to best engage the children in learning.

In each session or learning time, the ideal is that children participate in a fun and memorable learning experience that helps them understand one important point. The aim is that they discover and internalize Bible stories and Biblical truths. Because they are *doing* instead of just listening, children will remember what they learn.

Work hard to engage the children in active learning through activities, questions, discussion, drawing pictures of the main point, etc.

Additional Information

The following table is simply to prompt thinking about some of the things we are blessed with by God, and how these things can ultimately be used to bless others. Please note that not all these blessings will apply to everyone.

BLESSED...	...TO BE A BLESSING
Examples of the resources God has entrusted to us to steward, develop, and use wisely.	Examples of ways I can use this resource to bless others – with the result that they experience God’s goodness.
Every breath	Walk humbly before God and others knowing that God gives me my very breath and being.
Each new day	Express gratefulness for each new day.
Life eternal	Share Jesus with others.
A mind	Solve problems for people. Think up and make improvements. Create things that help people.
My conscience (ability to know and choose right from wrong)	Make good decisions that help others. Encourage what is good and right. Discourage what is bad and hurtful.
My emotions	Share my joy, laughter, excitement, and love with others. Mourn with those who mourn. When appropriate even share righteous anger when it will lead to good.
Physical skill or ability such as weaving, farming, playing soccer	Teach others my skill so they can succeed also. Use my skill to make or provide something good to another.
Artistic ability	Create beauty that others can enjoy and speaks to their heart.
Ability to read	Learn new things and then use this knowledge to benefit others.
Ability to do math	Become an engineer that builds a bridge that serves others, or become a scientist who creates something useful for others’ benefit.
Ability to sing or play an instrument	Create and share music and words that bring beauty and truth to the lives of others.
Ability to write	Share helpful information with people. Encourage someone through a note.
Ability to dance	Dance in a way that honors God and causes others to reflect on God’s beauty and grace.
Ability to speak well	Become a politician or lawyer who brings justice and righteousness to the lives of people and your country.
Food, clothes, water	Make foods taste their best for others. Keep my well clean so that it will be safe for others.
School books	Take good care of my books so that when the next person uses them they will be in good condition.
House and surrounding area	Keep my house and surrounding area clean and make it beautiful so that others can enjoy it.

Tools	Use a tool to help another person.
My children	See my children not as possessions but as persons owned by God and entrusted to me to nurture and train for a few short years.
My wife or husband	See my wife or husband as someone put into my life by God for me to care for, love, and support.
My friend	See my friends as someone God has put into my life to encourage, support, and help.
My employees	See my employees not as my servants but people whose boss is really God. He has entrusted them to me for me to treat fairly and to help them succeed and be productive in the company or workplace.
My teacher	View my teacher as a person provided to me by God to help me learn, and respond by showing respect, paying attention, and working hard.
My students	See my students as God's students, not mine, and that he has entrusted them to me to help them develop and learn.
Conclusion: We all have been entrusted by God with many things to steward and develop in order to bless others.	

This lesson will include a “reader’s theater” with ten children. Before class, you should give six students their portion of the reading of Matthew 25:14–29. You also should have asked four other students to read through the story and think about how they would silently act out this story as the readers read. You may want to prepare this a week in advance and ask ten responsible students to prepare to perform this the following week. The four characters necessary are three servants and one master.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through these scriptures that speak of God blessing us in order to be a blessing to others. Prayerfully study these scriptures, and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Genesis 1:27–28 – “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. *God blessed them...*”

Genesis 12:1–2 – “The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household, to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, *and I will bless you*; I will make your name great, *and you will be a blessing.*’”

Genesis 18:18 – “Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth *will be blessed through him.*”

1 Chronicles 29:1–16 – A great passage in which David acknowledges that God is the one who provides everything. The only reason we can give something is because God has given it to us or made it possible for us to have it in the first place.

Then King David said to the whole assembly... “Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple...” Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king’s work gave willingly. They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the Lord in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly.

David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, “Praise be to you, O Lord, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, *for everything in heaven and earth is yours*. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. *Wealth and honor come from you*, you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.”

“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? *Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand*. We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. O Lord our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, *it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.*”

Acts 3:6 – “Then Peter said, ‘Silver or gold I do not have, but *what I have I give you*. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’”

Acts 20:35 – “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*’”

Romans 12:6-8 – “*We have different gifts, according to the grace given us*. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

Ephesians 2:10 – “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus *to do good works*, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

James 1:17 – “*Every good and perfect gift is from above*, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God entrusts us with resources that we are to steward in order to bless others.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** and recognize the many resources God has given each of them
- ***Understand** that God intends for them to diligently steward (develop and wisely use) these resources.
- ***Live** a life with the intent and desire to bless others – to be a blessing.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, six copies of reader's theater reading, small ball

Scripture References

Genesis 12:1-2; Matthew 25:14-29; Ephesians 2:10

Welcome Time

The game that you will play with the students this week is called "Hot Seat."

We're going to play a game today called "Hot Seat." I need for you all to sit in a circle. Give students a moment to get into a circle.

I have a ball in my hand. I'm going to throw this ball to someone. Whoever catches the ball is on the "Hot Seat" and should share one thing that they did this week that fulfilled God's purpose for them to have dominion, to work the earth, or develop and use the resources God has given you. Maybe you helped your parent cultivate your field. Maybe you made or created something. Maybe you fixed something or cleaned something. Maybe you exercised and ate well (dominion over your body). Maybe you studied (dominion over your mind). Think carefully about how you had dominion over creation this week and be ready to share it. Try not to repeat what someone else said.

After the person who I toss the ball to shares, that person will throw the ball to another student. Then that student is in the "Hot Seat" and should share with us. We'll continue throwing the ball, and being in the "Hot Seat," until many of you have had the chance to share.

Throw the "Hot Seat" ball to a student that you know is comfortable with sharing in front of the group to begin playing the game. Play several rounds of the game until many students have had the chance to share.

Attention Grabber

Please get into the four small groups that you have been meeting in during this unit. Choose a different spokesperson and recorder from the last time. In your groups, discuss and be ready to share the following questions found on your group worksheets:

If money and resources were not a barrier and you could give the ultimate gift to someone, who would you give that gift to and what would it be?

Since money and resources limit us all, what gifts (not always physical and tangible) can you realistically give to those you care about (with what you already have)?

After students have had ample time to talk and discuss, have each spokesperson share their group’s ideas with the class.

Today we’re going to learn more about God’s purposes for our life. So far in this unit, we have learned that God has given each of us a special place and role in his eternal story (point to timeline if it is displayed in your meeting area). Each of us has a unique role to play. We’ve learned that God’s great purpose for us is that we love him with every part of our being, and we do this by loving our neighbor. In the last lesson, we learned from the first chapters of the Bible that we are to rule over creation, to develop and improve it, to create abundance, and to overcome disease and hardship.

Today, we are going to pull this all together. In your groups, you just thought about what gifts you can give to someone with the resources that you have right now. This relates to what we’re going to learn about now. Today, we’re going to talk about all of the resources that God gives us and why he gives them to us. He blesses us with resources so we can be a blessing to others. We’ll talk more about how we can specifically be a blessing to others.

The Lesson

Blessed to Be a Blessing

In your groups I’d like for you to read Genesis 12:1-2. It’s found on your group worksheets. As you read, I want you to look for the reason why God blessed Abram.

Allow students time to read and discuss the verse. When they have finished, call on a volunteer to share the reason why God blessed Abram.

The reason why God chose to bless Abram was so he could be a blessing to others. God does the same for us. He blesses us with so much, but he doesn’t bless us so that we will keep these blessings for ourselves. He blesses us so that we will in turn share those blessings with others. Each one of us on earth – whether rich or poor – has been given blessings. Some of these blessings are material but others of them are blessings that you can’t see – things like talents, gifts, and abilities.

In your groups at the beginning of the lesson, you started thinking about the resources you have that you can share with others. Now we’re going to talk about the gifts that God gives us and how we can best use them to bless others. We’re going to start learning about this by doing a “reader’s theater” reading of a story in the Bible. I’ve asked six students to be our readers and four students to be actors who will silently act out the story while the readers are reading. As you watch the actors perform and listen to the readers, I want you to observe what each of the servants did with what the master entrusted them.

Call your volunteers up to the front of the room and ask them to begin. They will be reading from Matthew 25:14-29.

- Reader One: (verses 14-15) **“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents (bags of money), to another two**

bags of money, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.”

- Reader Two: (verses 16–18) “The man who had received the five bags of money went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two bags gained two more. But the man who had received the one went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.”
- Reader Three: (verses 19–21) “After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five bags brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of money. See, I have gained five more.’ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”
- Reader Four: (verses 22–23) “The man with the two bags also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of money; see, I have gained two more.’ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”
- Reader Five: (verses 24–25) “Then the man who had received the one bag came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your money in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’”
- Reader Six: (verses 26–29) “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the bag of money from him and give it to the one who has the ten. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.’”

Our Resources Are Entrusted to Us by God

In our story, a man going on a journey entrusted his property, or money – called talents – to his servants.

What does it mean to entrust something to someone? Keep in mind it is different than just giving someone a gift with no expectations. Allow for the students’ ideas.

To entrust a belonging is to take something that is yours and give it to another person for them to wisely manage and use according to the way that you intend for them to use it. For example, perhaps your teachers have entrusted books to you at school. They are not giving you those textbooks as a free gift to use any way that you choose. Rather, they are entrusting those books to you to use in the way that they intend for them to be used – to further your education and to complete the assignments they ask for you to complete. In this story, the man who was traveling entrusted money to his servants to use wisely and do something important with it.

We Are Entrusted with Blessing

In the story that Jesus told, the man entrusted money to his servants. God, however, doesn’t just entrust us with money and material blessings. He entrusts us with a lot more. In your small groups,

I'd like you to think about all the things that God has entrusted you with. You may come up with physical blessings like food or shelter, but you may also come up with blessings that you cannot see like your mind, abilities, skills and talents, or relationships. Be creative. Try to think of all of the blessings that God has given you. Please only fill out the left column right now. Later on, you'll think about how you can use or steward the blessings that God has entrusted you with.

Allow the students several minutes to work in their small groups and name as many of the blessings as they can that God has entrusted to them. When they have finished compiling their list, ask the spokesperson of each group to share their lists. Make a large list on a chalkboard or whiteboard at the front of the room if you are able.

We Are Entrusted with Resources in Order to Steward Them

You found out in your groups that God has entrusted us with so much! He entrusts us with these blessings to steward them. To steward something means to develop it or use it *to its fullest potential*.

The servants in the story were expected to steward the money that the man gave them. What was the response of the three men who were entrusted with money to steward? Allow for the students' responses.

You're right. Two of the men stewarded the money that the man gave them wisely; they developed the money to get more money. A steward develops or manages something of value or worth that has been entrusted to them by someone else. They use this in the best possible way to achieve the fullest purpose intended by the owner or the one who gave it to them.

God is the master or owner of all that we have. He has entrusted it to us. (Point to the large list you have made on the board.) He has given us our life, abilities, and relationships to steward or use to the fullest and best potential.

This story also teaches us a great deal about God and his expectations for us.

What was the master's reaction to the third servant in Jesus' story? What does this mean he wants us to do with the resources he has given us? Allow for students' responses.

How did the master respond to the first and second servants? Why was he pleased with what they did? What can we infer God expects us to do with what He has entrusted us? Allow time for students to answer.

You are correct when you say that God expects us to use and develop all of the talents, abilities, and resources that he has given us. God in no way expects us to be lazy and not develop the blessings he has entrusted to us to steward. I'd like for you to get back into your small groups and discuss how you can steward, or develop and use to the fullest potential, all of the resources you identified in your lists. Think creatively and realistically. Come up with ways that you really can steward the resources God has entrusted to you right now. For example, God has blessed you with an active and quick mind. You can steward this amazing blessing by going to school and learning as much as you can.

Allow students time to work in their groups. When they have finished, ask the group spokesperson to share their group's ideas. Add a second column to your list on the board based upon the students' ideas.

Closing Group Discussion

We Are Entrusted with Blessings to Bless Others

Do you remember the verses that you looked at in the beginning of class – Genesis 12:1-2? God told Abram he was going to bless him in order for him to be a blessing to others. God wants us to do the same thing. You have a group discussion question that I'd like for you to think about personally and then share with the group. It is, "Think of one thing, one blessing, that God has entrusted to you. How will you develop this and use it to bless someone else?"

Think of an example you can personally share. Perhaps you will be able to share something like: God has entrusted me with a house to live in and food to eat. This week I will use these blessings to bless someone else by inviting them into my home for a meal. Or, God has entrusted me with a mind to think and use. This week I will further develop it by reading a book and use this knowledge to better teach you. (Note: Help children make the connection between God entrusting them with a mind to develop and them going to school every day for this purpose, not just so they can get a better job, but so they can better serve others.)

Allow students time to come up with their own ideas and share them with the group. Tell them that you will be asking them to share next week about how they blessed someone with the blessings God has given them.

Reflection and Prayer

You've already begun thinking about how this lesson applies to you personally. Remember, we all have something to develop and use to bless others – at all times! No matter who you are, or how much or how little you think you have, God has entrusted many resources to you that he wants you to steward and bless others with. Being used by God to bless others is an awesome privilege and a great purpose of God for our lives. It also turns out to be a great big blessing to us! I'd like for you to open your journals and answer the following journal questions:

Since God has blessed and entrusted me with _____,

I will thank him for this, further develop it, and put it to good use by _____

_____.

Since God has blessed me to be a blessing, I will bless _____

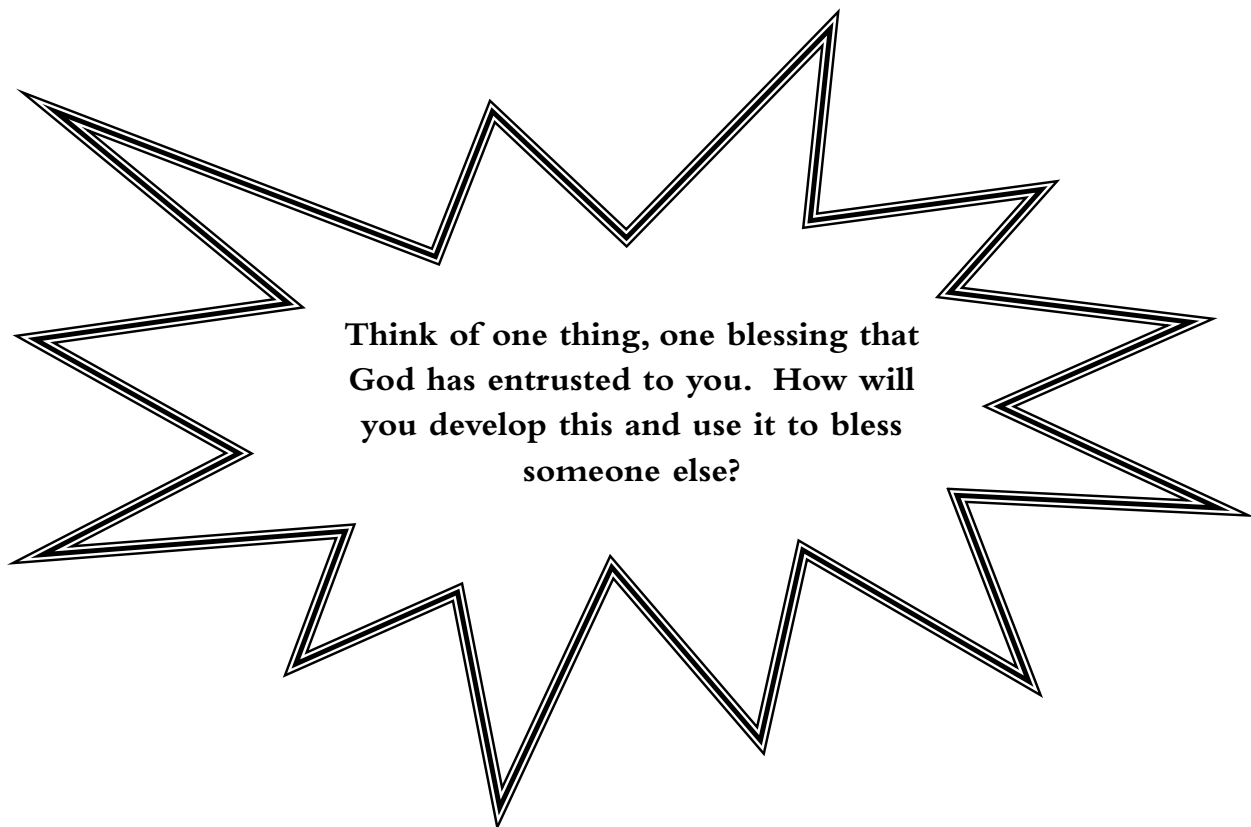
by _____

After students have had a chance to write in their journals, close in prayer thanking God for some of the things the students listed as blessings. Ask for God's wisdom to steward these blessings in the best way possible.

Genesis 12:1-2 – “The Lord had said to Abram, Go from your country, your people and your father’s household, to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.”

-If money and resources were not a barrier and you could give the ultimate gift to someone, what gift would you give them?

-Since money and resources limit all of us, what gifts can you realistically give to those you care about with what you already have? Don't think only about gifts you can physically give to someone....think about things you can do or say also.



Our Blessings

How we can Steward these?

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UNIT 4



Our Problem and God's Solution

Evil does exist. The world is broken. Life is broken and difficult. We do not live up to our own standards. There is a just and holy God to whom we are responsible. We all fall woefully short of God's standard. Yet, God loves us. God, in Christ, offers us his life and the opportunity to begin living this new life while here on earth through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The lessons in this unit aim to provide helpful clarity to these fundamental truths that a child can understand and embrace.

Student Journal – Unit Four

You will use this journal each day at the end of the lesson to record your action statements. Action statements are things you decide to do based on what you learned in the lesson.

Lesson One

Today I learned about how my relationship with God, the earth, others, and myself is broken because of sin. The area of my life that is most broken and needs a solution from God is...

Lesson Two

Because I sin so easily and miss the mark in so many ways, I will pray that...

Lesson Three

Because Jesus died on the cross to take away my sins, I will...

Because Jesus loves me so much, I will...

Lesson Four

Because God's life is for all areas of my life, I will pray to experience more of his life in...

Because God gives life as soon as I believe, now I will...

Lesson Five

Because God calls me to believe him, I will...

Because God calls me to obey him, I will...

Because God calls me to depend upon him, I will...

Lesson Six

Because I want to revere God more, I will...

Because I want to worship God in my heart more, I will...

UNIT FOUR – LESSON 1



Our Lives and World Are Broken

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

Children need to know why there is so much suffering and evil in their world if God created everything good. They need to know that each one of us has sinned or fallen short of God's glorious standard and thus added to the problem. They need to see how every area of life is broken by sin. They need to see how God's solution therefore applies to every area of life as well.

The Truth: The world and our individual lives are broken. Every aspect of life is broken.

The Deception: This lesson addresses the following counterfeit ideas and lies:

- There was no event in the history of the world called "the fall" where Adam and Eve disobeyed God's instruction resulting in death, disease, trouble, and difficulty. The world and life simply evolved this way into its current troubled, difficult, and challenging state.
- It is Adam and Eve's fault that the world and our lives are broken. Each of us is an innocent victim of their bad decision.
- The problem of sin is only a problem between God and people.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children will understand the cause of evil and suffering in the world around them and in their own lives. They will understand that everything is affected by sin and that God's solution for sin is therefore also comprehensive and affects everything. They will know and understand their need for and the benefit of God's solution.

Encouragement for the Teacher

God has given you special power and influence in the life of each child. You may feel ordinary, weak, and overwhelmed by your own problems and troubles. But to a child in this class, you are an important person – someone with power and influence, someone they look up to. Holding such a position in the eyes of a child, you have the power to encourage them, to build them up, to bring life to their spirits, and ideas to their minds that can transform their lives.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Engage the child in active learning.

Discussions – When you have an activity, illustration, or object lesson, focus on discussing this with the children. Don't skip over the discussion in favor of doing more lecture or activities. The discussions teach children how to

apply the experiences to their lives. Ask simple questions or make simple statements and have the children react to them. Help the children explore their feelings, discover important principles, and decide how to apply these principles to their lives. If your class is large, don't think every child must answer every question. Children will learn from those who share even if only two or three answer each question.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through these scriptures that speak of sin and our brokenness. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. Use the empty space to write down your thoughts and what God impresses upon your heart.

Genesis 2:25–3:23

The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Now the serpent was craftier than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

Romans 5:12 – “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.”

THE LESSON

This lesson is very important but fairly lengthy. Manage the time by rehearsing the lesson in advance and make modifications or, if needed, divide the content into two lessons.

The Main Point

The world and our individual lives are broken.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** the cause of evil and suffering in the world and in their lives.
- ***Understand** that everything is affected by sin.
- ***Live** with an awareness of their need for God's solution.

Supplies/Materials

Prepared timeline from previous lesson, group worksheets, pencils, two clay pots that you can break, four relationship pictures to rip in half

Scripture References

Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 3:23

Welcome Time

Today's icebreaker game is called "Count Off."

I need for you to count off one at a time and remember your number. Then form a circle in any order. One of you will be my volunteer and will stand in the center. Allow one student to come to the center of the circle. **Volunteer in the center, you should share with us one way that you blessed someone last week. Share what you did, how that person responded and what it was like to bless another person.** Allow the volunteer time to share. **Now, you need to call out a number. The person with that number will switch places with you and share their experience. Then they will call out another number.**

Continue playing until a good number of students, or all who wish to, have shared.

Attention Grabber

Up until this point, we have learned about God, his character, and his good intentions and purposes for people and the earth. Creation shows that God is good, wise, and powerful and has a good design for all of life. Therefore, we can trust God and his instructions for living that are found in the Bible. We know that God made each one of us in his image. Because we are all created in his image every person has great value, dignity, and worth. We are all unique in our creation and have been placed on the earth by God as part of God's special plan that extends from Eternity Past to Eternity Future (point to timeline used in Unit Three). God's great purpose and plan for our life is that we love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and do so by loving our neighbor as ourselves. We also learned that we are to have dominion over all creation by ruling it, working it, and caring for it. Finally, we learned that God has blessed us with so much so that we can be a blessing to others.

Our World Is Broken

Ask children to form into four groups. Each group should choose a group recorder who will write down their group's ideas on their group worksheet and a group spokesperson who will share the group's ideas with the whole class.

But there's a huge problem! Our world doesn't work the way that it should. At some point, things have gone terribly wrong and we don't live out the plans and purposes that God has for our lives. Your first group discussion point asks you to think about one of four questions about how the world has gone terribly wrong:

Where do you see things in our world working contrary to the way God intended?

Where do you see suffering and evil in the world?

How do we all live opposite of the way God intended?

Where do you see God's purposes being carried out poorly or in the wrong way?

Assign one group discussion question to each group. Allow students time to think about and discuss these issues. The point for them to grasp is how terribly broken our world is. They should be able to point out many ways that our world is broken. After groups have had time to discuss, ask each group spokesperson to share their question and group's ideas.

I think you realized in your groups that something is terribly wrong! We have a really big problem. Drop one of the clay pots on the ground hard enough so that it shatters to pieces.

The world is terribly broken. It has many problems. When God created the world he said everything was "very good." Yet the world just doesn't work the way we wish it did. Sickness and disease kills, people get hurt in accidents, bad weather destroys homes, and earthquakes and other natural disasters harm people.

We are terribly broken as well. Drop your second clay pot on the ground. **We do not live as God intended. We don't love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We certainly don't love our neighbors as ourselves. We don't steward creation but, rather, abuse it. We don't use what God has given us to bless others but, rather, become selfish, working only to bless ourselves. So what happened? How did our lives and our world become so broken?**

Today we're going to learn all about how this mess happened. We'll hear a story from the Bible about how life became broken and how all these terrible things began to happen.

The Lesson In the Garden of Eden¹⁸

If you have pictures or items that can illustrate aspects of this story, please feel free to use them to help make the story come alive to the children. Actions are suggested to make the story more interesting, but if they would distract, feel free to not use them.

18 The wording for this story is taken nearly verbatim from Anni Dyck and Ruth Laufer, *Creative Bible Lessons*, Primary Year 1, Lessons 4, (The Netherlands: Surya Foundation) 20-22.

The first man and woman God created were Adam and Eve. They lived together in what was a beautiful place, probably located somewhere in what is now the Middle East. If you have a map, point to this area. This will make the reality of this story more clear to the children.

God called this place the Garden of Eden. God wanted Adam and Eve to take care of the garden and look after everything in it. Pretend you are pruning. Adam and Eve walked in the beautiful grounds with joy and gladness. Walk with a smile. They looked after the animals and enjoyed the flowers. Pretend to pick a flower. They picked the different kinds of fruit and ate them. Pretend to pick a piece of fruit and take a bite out of it. God had given them permission to eat *all* the fruit except the fruit of a certain tree, which grew in the middle of the garden. God called it the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” God had said to Adam, “You may freely eat fruit from all the trees in this garden, but don’t eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because on the day you eat the fruit of that tree you will surely die.” Say this with authority! Adam and Eve did not understand what it meant to die, as they had never seen anything die. They only knew that it was a fearful thing.

Satan Tricks Eve

There was someone who did not like Adam and Eve’s happiness in the Garden of Eden. This was Satan. Long before, Satan had lived in harmony with God. That was when he was still a beautiful angel. But he rebelled against God, and God cast him out of heaven. The beautiful angel became Satan, who hated God, so he looked for an opportunity to spoil the perfect work of God and tempt and trick the two people God had made in his image.

Satan knew that Adam and Eve would always be happy and at peace if they were faithful and followed the instructions and guidance that God gave them. In order to destroy their happiness, Satan used a snake as a tool. At that time, the snake was the most clever and cunning of God’s creatures.

One day, Eve was walking by herself in the garden. She came close to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. From its branches came a soft voice. Bend your head as if hearing an unseen voice. It was the voice of a snake which asked, “Did God *really* say ‘Don’t eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden?’” “No,” replied Eve. Shake your head. “That is not what God said. We may eat from all the trees in the Garden of Eden, except from the tree in the middle. God only forbids us to eat from that tree. We must not even touch its fruit. If we eat from that tree we will surely die.”

But the snake answered, “It’s not true. You will not die if you eat that fruit. In fact you will become like God and you will know what is good and evil.”

Have your piece of fruit within reach.

Was Satan, right? Were they allowed or not allowed to eat the fruit? Wait for the children to answer. Eve listened to the words of the snake. She looked at the forbidden fruit and it looked so beautiful, as if it would taste so delicious. Take the piece of fruit and turn it over in your hand, admiring it. Set the fruit back down, away from you. The snake had said it would make them clever so she went closer. Go close to the fruit again and lean in. Suddenly, she reached out, took the fruit, and ate it. Grab the fruit and take a big bite. She also gave some to Adam, and he ate it, too. Give the fruit to one of the children and say, “Here Adam, eat this. It is delicious.”

Adam and Eve Are Afraid of God

After eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve began to tremble. Pretend to be shaking. Before that, they had felt safe in God's love, but now it was very different. They were afraid of God because they had disobeyed him. All at once they became self-conscious.

Adam and Eve didn't feel a need to wear clothes before, now they were aware that they were naked, and they were no longer comfortable with this. So they hid in the bushes and made clothes from the leaves of the fig tree to cover themselves. But they were still afraid and self-conscious. Crouch and pretend to be hiding. What would God say? He would surely find them. No one can hide from God, because he knows and sees everything.

God Punishes Adam, Eve, and the Snake

In the evening, God came to look for Adam and Eve. Usually they were glad when the Lord came and walked and spoke to them. But after they had disobeyed God, they were ashamed and afraid. How do you feel when you do something wrong or are disobedient to your parents? Allow the children to share. When we do something wrong, we often try to run and hide, so that no one will find us.

At that moment, God called to Adam, "Adam, Adam, where are you?"

Adam could not be silent any longer and answered, "When I heard that you were in the garden, I was afraid because I was naked."

"Who told you that you were naked?" asked the Lord. "Have you eaten the forbidden fruit?"

Immediately Adam defended himself, "Eve gave it to me and I ate." Eve answered, "The snake tricked me."

God was very sad that Satan, in the disguise of a snake, had succeeded in causing Adam and Eve to sin. For this reason, the first punishment was given to the snake.

God said to the snake, "Of all the animals of the earth you will be cursed. For the rest of your life, you will crawl on your belly and eat dust. You and the woman will always hate one another. From Eve's descendants will come your enemy. He will crush your head, and you will bite his heel."

Then God said to Eve, "You will have pain in bearing children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

Then God said to Adam, "You listened to the words of your wife and ate the fruit which I forbade you to eat. For this reason, the soil will be cursed. You will have to struggle all your life to make a living from it. Then you will return to the dust you came from."

Then the Lord himself made clothes for Adam and Eve from animal skins. But they were not allowed to continue living in the Garden of Eden. God sent Adam and Eve out of that beautiful garden. Angels and a flaming sword guarded it, so that Adam and Eve could not return to the Garden of Eden.

This is when the world and life was first broken. After Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God, there were four main areas of life that became broken. Have your four lesson pictures that illustrate these areas ready: the relationship with God picture, the beautiful nature scene, the friends picture, and the picture of a smiling person. As you teach each of these points you will rip the pictures in half. Please save these ripped pictures, as you will use them later on in the curriculum when you teach about God restoring all of these areas of life through the work of his Son.

Our relationship with God was broken. Rip your picture of the “relationship with God” in half. **We experience brokenness in our relationship with God in so many ways. Even though God is good, all-knowing, and always wants what is best for us, we don’t trust him or his ways. Even though God created and sustains everything, we forget this important fact and sometimes even completely deny it. We decide to do what we think is best instead of what he says is best.**

Our relationship with creation was also broken. Rip the picture of the “relationship with creation” in half. **After Adam and Eve sinned and sin entered the whole world, famine, drought, disease, and death entered the world. Many terrible natural disasters happen now.**

Our relationship with each other was broken. Rip the picture of “relationship with others” in half. **After sin entered the world, people began to become suspicious of one another and began to dislike and hate people who were different than themselves. They no longer looked out for each other’s best interests.**

Our relationship with ourselves was broken. Rip the picture of the “relationship with self” in half. **You saw in the story that Adam and Eve became fearful and self-conscious. We now struggle with fear, self-consciousness, worry – so many personal issues – because of sin. We forget how valued and loved by God we are. Instead, we struggle with envy, shame, self-doubt, and feelings of false pride or inferiority.**

So much in our world became broken when sin entered the world. In your groups, I’m going to ask you to discuss one of these broken areas further. There are four broken areas listed on your group discussion sheets, so, I’d like for each of your groups to discuss one broken relationship. I’d like for you to discuss more examples of brokenness in this area. After you have had time to discuss, I’ll ask you to share your ideas with the group. What I want for you to realize is that sin has completely broken our world and we have a huge problem. Discover in your groups how far reaching the effects of sin are.

Assign one broken relationship to each of the four groups. Ask them to record their ideas on their group worksheet. After students have had time to discuss and record, ask each group spokesperson to share their ideas with the class.

As you can see, sin has ruined everything! Every aspect of our world and our lives is completely broken, just like the clay pots I dropped that shattered all over the floor. Sometimes it is easy to think that we would not have sinned like Adam and Eve and listened to the deceptive words of the snake. Then we would have avoided the huge mess that we are in!

The reality is, Satan continues to speak lies to all of us and tries to make us ignorant. He deceives us into thinking and doing the wrong thing. Just like Adam and Eve, each day we listen to his voice. Sometimes Satan whispers deception or darkness into our minds so that we say or do something

that we know isn't right. Other times Satan speaks deception and lies to us through a friend (like he did with Eve to Adam) who prompts us to do something wrong.

Would any of you like to share an example of how Satan has spoken a lie or deception to you (tempted you) or someone else you know to do something wrong? Please, no names.

Allow time for children who would like to share to give their examples to the class.

You see, we all listen to Satan at times and act accordingly; therefore, we sin. The Bible says in Romans 3:23, "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." (NLT) Because of sin, everything in life is affected and broken. Hold up all the pictures that have been ripped in half. We may try now to fix what has become broken and try to meet God's glorious standard, but we aren't able. We are in a huge mess! Point to the broken clay pots on the floor.

Closing Group Discussion

Our world, and even our community is in a huge mess! In your small groups, I'd like for you to discuss our closing group discussion question found on your group worksheet:

Of the four areas that have been broken by sin that we discussed today, where do you see the most brokenness in our community?

Allow students time to discuss. When they are finished, ask the group spokesperson to share their ideas with the group.

As you can clearly see, our lives and our world are incredibly broken. No matter how hard we try to fix this brokenness, we cannot succeed. The Bible says that the payment for sin is living a life separated from God both here on earth and eternally after we die. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death." This is a huge problem requiring a huge solution! God does have a solution to this problem. Soon, we'll learn what that solution is and how we can have it in our lives.

Reflection and Prayer

This was a tough lesson to hear today. It's never easy to hear about and reflect upon how broken our lives and world are. I will share with you soon what God's glorious solution is to this problem. If you want to know the solution today, instead of waiting for a future lesson, please come talk to me after class. For guidance on what to share, please see Lesson 3 in this unit.

In your journals, I'd like for you to reflect and journal about one thing. Please think about your answer to the following question, and write your response in your journals:

Today I learned about how my relationship with God, the earth, others, and myself is broken because of sin. The area of my life that is most broken and needs a solution from God is...

After students have had time to write in their journals, close in prayer, asking God to bless each student and understand their need for God's solution to sin in their lives.



Relationship
with God



Relationship with Self



Relationship with Creation



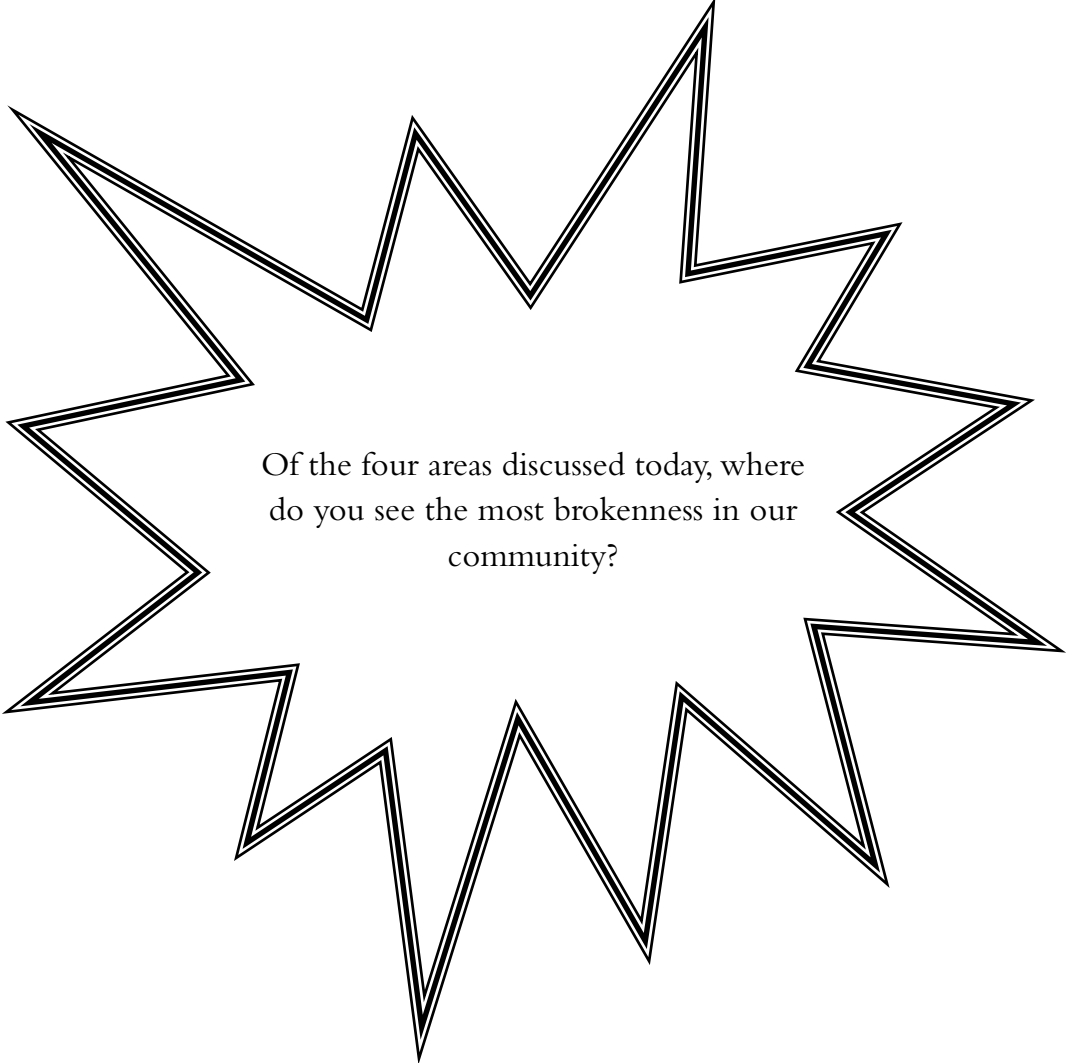
Relationship with Others

Things Don't Work Right!

What are some examples of things not working the way that God intended?

What are examples of suffering and evil in our world?

What are examples of people not living the way that God intends?



Of the four areas discussed today, where do you see the most brokenness in our community?

We are Broken!

How is our relationship with God broken?

How is our relationship with others broken?

How is our relationship with each other broken?

How is our relationship with ourselves broken?

UNIT FOUR – LESSON 2



Sin: Missing the Mark

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: Sin is anything less than God's standard of perfection.

Children need to know that sin is not just doing really bad things and rebelling against God. The concept of sin in the Bible is comprehensive and includes anything that falls short of God's perfect standard. God's standard is perfection¹⁹. Even if we are doing our very best, if this falls short of God's perfect standard, then it fits in the sin category. Because God is perfect and just, he cannot change or overlook his standard for perfection. He must provide a solution that fully meets it.

The Deception: This truth addresses the following counterfeit ideas or lies:

- People are inherently good.
- God should not require perfection.
- Only really bad people are sinners.
- The idea of sin only applies to willful acts of evil and rebellion.
- Doing something wrong because of ignorance is not in the sin category.
- Doing something wrong because of a mistake or being deceived is not in the sin category.
- If you try to do your best but fall short of God's standard, this does not fit into the sin category because your intentions were right.
- If someone sins against you and hurts you, and this leads you to sin, then your sin is not in the sin category.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children will not have incorrect or false ideas about how God views sin and God's requirement. They will recognize that it is impossible for any person to be perfect, no matter how hard they try, and will understand their need for God's gift of salvation. Embracing this truth, they will live with a sense of dependence on God and also with total confidence and freedom in his provision to meet his own standard in their lives.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have a high calling and purpose. As a teacher, you are called by God to steward these children. A steward is one who manages and develops the resources that are "owned by another" but temporarily placed in the stew-

¹⁹ Interestingly, because we are made in the image of God, we too have a natural bent towards achieving or having perfection. An example is when we reject buying new clothing that has a stain or tear. We desire perfection.

ard's care. In this class, you are the steward. The children are the resources, God's possessions that he has placed in your care. You are accountable in this class not just to the organization, church, or parent but most of all to God for how you teach and develop the spirit, mind, and abilities of the children in your class.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Engage the child in active learning. Ask – Don't Tell.

When it comes to applying a principle or fully understanding its meaning, *ask* rather than tell. As you lead discussions with the children (or a parent), ask open-ended questions rather than rephrasing questions as statements and asking the children to agree. Open-ended questions are those questions that cannot be answered with a "yes" or a "no." They often start with the words *What* or *Why*. Open-ended questions help children make discoveries. They learn more deeply when they discover.

Don't worry if the children give "wrong" answers. They need to have freedom to answer incorrectly. They'll learn from the answers other children give. And you can gently provide the correct response if someone is very wrong.

Encourage the children to express themselves as fully as possible. Ask, "What did you mean?" Or say "Tell me more."

Teacher Devotional

The Greek word for *sin* in the New Testament is *hamartia*. *Hamartia* is translated in English as: sin, trespass, offense, or fault. It literally means: to miss the mark (like an arrow shooting at a target and missing the target). Other meanings are to err, be mistaken, to miss or wander from the right or honorable, to do wrong, and to wander from the rule.

Here is a story that captures some of the meaning of this word *hamartia* or sin in light of today's lesson.

In 2004, at the Olympic games in Athens, Greece there was a man competing for a gold medal in pistol shooting. In the competition, he had hit the bull's-eye of the target every single time. His score was perfect. He had one more shot to make. If he hit the bull's-eye one more time, the gold medal – the ultimate prize – was his. Years and years of practice and hard work would finally pay off. He took aim the final time, slowly squeezed the trigger, and BAM! Looking through his eye scope he could see that he had hit the bull's-eye. However, when the judges checked the target, they could find no hole in it. The shooter knew he had hit the bull's-eye, so he appealed to the judges. They checked again and discovered that the shooter had somehow gotten confused and mistakenly aimed at the target *next* to his. He had indeed hit the center, but he had clearly missed the bull's-eye on the correct target.

The shooter had no more chances. Despite all of his effort and good intentions, because he had missed his target completely on the final shot, he did not win the gold medal. In fact, he did not win *any* medal at all. He went home without a prize. The reason: *hamartia*.

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures that speak of sin. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. Write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

God is perfect, his ways are perfect, and his standard or requirement is to be perfect.

Deuteronomy 32:3-4 – “I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.”

2 Samuel 22:31 – “As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.”

Matthew 5:48 – “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Rebellion Resulting in Sin

Deuteronomy 1:25-26 – “Taking with them some of the fruit of the land, they brought it down to us and reported, ‘It is a good land that the Lord our God is giving us.’ But you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God.”

Isaiah 63:9-10 – “In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.”

Lamentations 1:18 – “The Lord is righteous, yet I rebelled against his command.”

Ezekiel 20:21 – “But the children, too, rebelled against me. They refused to keep my laws and follow my instructions even though obeying them would have given them life.”

SEE ALSO: Deuteronomy 1:42-43, 9:23; Psalm 106:7; Ezekiel 20:8

Ignorance Resulting in Sin

Ephesians 4:17-20 – “So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.”

1 Timothy 1:13 – “Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.”

SEE ALSO: Acts 3:13-18

Deception Resulting in Sin

Genesis 3:13 – “Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’”

2 Kings 19:10 – “Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: ‘Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, ‘Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.’”

Matthew 24:5 – “For many will come in my name, claiming, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many.”

2 Corinthians 11:3 – “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

Revelation 20:2-3 – “He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.”

Revelation 20:7-8 – “When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison. He will go out to deceive the nations...”

SEE ALSO: Jeremiah 29:8; Matthew 24:10-11; Revelation 20:10

Blindness Resulting in Sin

2 Corinthians 4:4 – “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Colossians 1:13 – “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.”

Ephesians 4:18 – “They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.”

Revelation 3:17-18 – “(To the church of Laodicea) You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.”

SEE ALSO: Matthew 23:16-19; Revelation 3:17-18

Inability Resulting in Sin

Romans 7:14-25 – “We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

Irrespective of the reason, all have sinned, missed the mark, and fall short.

Romans 1:18-22 – “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Romans 3:10-18 – “As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.’ ‘Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.’ ‘The poison of vipers is on their lips.’ ‘Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.’ ‘Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.’ ‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

Sin is anything less than God's standard of perfection.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that sin is “missing the mark” of God's perfect standard.
- ***Understand** that it is impossible for any person to be perfect, no matter how hard they try.
- ***Live** with a sense of utter dependence on God and confidence in his provision to meet his standard.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, three targets, sealed envelope with note, small objects to shoot at the target like beans or paper clips – using a rubber band, a straw, or any simple toy that shoots; three slices of bread (perfect, burned, smashed and crumbling), stained shirt, piece of chalk, card that says “wrong target,” a towel or sheet large enough to cover over lesson objects, sheet of paper with the word “Hamartia” written on it

Scripture References

Matthew 5:48; Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthians 4:4

Welcome Time

As the last lesson was all about sin and introduced students to Romans 3:23, for the welcome time, students will play “Verse Relay.”

Please get into the four groups that you met in for the last lesson. When you find your groups, please stand in a straight line. We will play a game called “Verse Relay.” This is the game we played in the last unit. About fifteen feet in front of each group, place a blank sheet of paper, a pencil, and a Bible. Your team is responsible for writing down Romans 3:23. When I say “go,” the first person in your team will run to the sheet of paper, write down “Romans 3:23” and turn to it in the Bible that is next to the sheet of paper. Then they will run to the end of the line. The next person in line will run up to the paper and write the first word of the verse. Then they will run to the end of the line. The next person in line runs up to the paper and writes the second word of the verse then runs to the end of the line. You will continue on in this manner until your team has written all the words of the verse on the sheet of paper. When your team finishes writing the verse, you should all sit down. The first team to correctly write the verse is the winner. Are you ready to play?

Attention Grabber

The following activities focus on our natural desire to have things done perfect or made right. This will eventually illustrate a point made later in the lesson.

Place a tray of the three slices of bread, the stained shirt, and a piece of chalk under a towel or sheet on a table at the front of the room so the students cannot see them.

Suppose you go to a shop and you are hungry for a really nice piece of bread. Lucky you! I have this bread here today. Pull out a tray with the perfect, burned, and smashed slices of bread. Offer the bread to

one student and let him/her pick one. The child should pick the perfect one. Show the students which bread was chosen and ask why he or she did not choose the other two.

Last week my shirt got really dirty, so I had it laundered. I heard of this person who does the best job, works really hard, and uses really good soap...so I took my dirty shirt to him to clean. I would now like to show off my shirt. Pull the stained shirt out from under the sheet and show it to the students. Ask the students what they think of your nice clean shirt. They will tell you it is not clean. Banter with them, suggesting that the shirt is clean enough and maybe you will wear it to church or some other important event soon. Ask them if they think this is a good idea. Accuse them of being a bunch of perfectionists!

Okay, so you don't like my shirt. I have something else under my sheet. Pull out a piece of chalk. Go to the chalkboard and write down $30+40=$ a) 5 b) 69 c) 70. **If I gave this problem to you on a test and asked you to answer it together as a class, which answer would you choose?** Allow for response. The students should choose "c) 70." **Are you sure? Why would you choose this answer? What about 69? It is only one number off! Isn't that close enough to be correct?**

You see, God is a lot like you...or more correctly...you are like him in that you like things to be perfect or 100% correct. We can learn something about sin from these examples too. Sin is not only when you do something completely and obviously wrong, it's also when you don't do something quite right: like the burned bread, the shirt that's not really clean, or the math problem where the answer is only one number off. Today, we're going to look more closely at this.

The Lesson

Sin Is Missing the Mark

Hold up your visual bearing the word "Hamartia."

Does anyone recognize this word or know what it means? Allow for the students' responses. **Who can try reading it for me?**

This word is *hamartia* and it is the Greek word used in the Bible for "sin." You see, the Bible wasn't written in our language. It was written in the language spoken in Jesus' time. The Bible that we have in our language now is a translation of the Greek. The literal meaning of this word, *hamartia*, is "to miss the mark." This is like a person who shoots an arrow or another object at a target but misses the goal – the bull's eye. As you say this, shoot a small object at the target you have set up before class. For this lesson you may choose to act out the role of shooting the target yourself, or engage the students, choosing several of them before hand and prepare them in acting out each role.

Sin is similar to being in an archery contest. (Archery is the sport of shooting arrows at a target.) You win the prize if you hit the absolute center: the bull's eye. If your arrow lands outside the bull's eye, you will not win the prize. You may come really, really close to hitting the center, but you are only given a prize if your arrow hits the bull's eye.

God's standard is perfection. His expectation is that we always hit the bull's eye, all the time, every day of our lives. Hitting the bull's eye is when you love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and

strength every minute, every day of your life. It's always loving your neighbor as yourself. It's never saying anything hurtful or having bad thoughts about someone. It's always doing your best in school and never being envious or jealous. The center is God's wonderful, perfect standard for us.

Yet, we can't achieve this wonderful, perfect standard that God has for us. Matthew 5:48 says, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." God expects us to be perfect and cannot accept sin because he himself is perfect. In this way, we are similar to God. We demand perfection in parts of our lives. Remember the bread, the shirt, and the math problem in the opening illustration? We wanted a perfect product or answer and would accept nothing less. It's the same way of God. He cannot accept anything that is less than perfection.

The fact is, we can't be perfect. We miss the mark over and over and over again. We sin. Today we're going to look at five ways and reasons we completely miss the mark and sin against God.

We Miss the Mark Because We Are Rebellious

I'm going to do a few demonstrations with one of the bull's eyes to show you the many ways that we all sin and miss the mark. The goal is for me to perfectly hit a bull's-eye. That's the only way I can win this game.

Set up one target at the front of the room and one target close to it. Make it clear to the children which target is the correct one. Also lay out a sealed envelope with your prepared note inside (see visuals). Go up to the front near the correct target.

So, tell me, what do I need to do? Students will respond to hit the bull's-eye.

Hit a bull's-eye? Why would I want to do that? This game is dumb! I'm not going to play anymore! I'm going to do things my own way! (Turn and shoot at something completely different).

What was the reason that I wasn't able to hit a bull's-eye in this demonstration? Allow for student's responses.

You're right. I wasn't able to hit a bull's-eye because I refused to. Sometimes a person can willingly choose to miss God's mark by rebelling and choosing their own way. They can choose to do exactly opposite of what God says. Let's see another reason why we sin and miss God's mark.

We Miss God's Mark Because of Ignorance

Get set up and act out that you're ready to shoot. Practice a couple of shots aiming at the wrong bull's-eye.

Make a big production out of shooting and hitting the wrong target as if it is the correct one.

I did a really great job right? Allow for the students' incredulous responses.

What do you mean I didn't hit a bull's-eye? That's a bull's-eye that I hit right?

End the demonstration.

We all do this sometimes. We do something wrong because we don't know any better. In our demonstration, I didn't know which the correct bull's-eye was so I wasn't able to hit it. But that doesn't matter. I still didn't hit the right bull's-eye. In First Peter, the Bible says, "As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires that you had when you lived in ignorance." You see, the Bible even tells us that we can sin because of ignorance, because we don't know. Sometimes we miss the mark because we are ignorant and don't even know what the right thing to do is. But we're still sinning anyway because we're missing the mark: God's perfect standard.

We Miss the Mark Because We Are Deceived

Pick up the envelope that you have laid down at the front of the classroom.

Students, in the beginning of class I got this letter. Now it's NOT exactly from the maker of this game and the one who made the rules of the game, but I'm sure it will be helpful since I'm not making any bull's-eyes. Open the envelope and pretend that you're reading the letter. Ok, this letter says that the target that I'm shooting at isn't the right target. It says to shoot at this target back here. Walk to the target that you have placed at the back of the room. Next to the target should be a small card that is turned over so that no one can see the words written on it. I'm sure this must be right... Ok, cheer for me!

Shoot at the bull's-eye at the back of the room. After you have finished turn over the card that's next to the bull's eye. Read aloud what it says while you hit your forehead and moan in disgust.

UGGHH! I've been tricked and deceived. This card next to the bull's-eye is from the maker of the game and it says "Wrong Target!" I didn't even shoot at the right target!

Stop the demonstration.

Sometimes we are just like the person in this demonstration. We miss the mark and sin because we are deceived. We choose to listen to directions from someone other than God. I chose to listen to directions from someone besides the maker of the game. Eve was deceived into sinning. She chose to listen to Satan instead of listening to God, and she missed the mark. The Bible tells us that, "Satan was a murderer from the beginning, not holding onto the truth, for there is no truth in Him." Satan can deliberately deceive us and cause us to sin and miss God's mark – his bull's-eye.

We Miss the Mark Because We Are Blind

Go over and stand by the correct target again. Put on a blindfold and prepare to shoot at the bull's-eye. Ask the children to cheer for you:

Shoot at the target. Of course you will not be able to hit the bull's-eye because you are blindfolded.

Stop the demonstration.

Why wasn't I able to hit a bull's-eye? Allow for the children's responses.

You're right. I wasn't able to hit a bull's-eye because I was blindfolded. This too is like us. The Bible says we are blind at times. Because we can't see clearly, we sin and are guilty of missing the mark.

Second Corinthians 4:4 says, “The god of this age (Satan) has blinded the mind of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” Satan tries to blind us so we can’t live according to God’s plan, so we don’t hit a bull’s-eye.

We Miss the Mark Because of Inability

Ask for a volunteer to come up to the front of the room and spin you around five times. Ask the children to cheer for you.

Shoot at the target. Of course you won’t be able to hit a bull’s-eye because you are dizzy. If you want to be even more theatrical, fall down as you’re shooting because you’re dizzy.

Stop the demonstration.

Why wasn’t I able to hit a bull’s eye? Allow for the children’s responses.

I didn’t hit a bull’s-eye because I wasn’t able. I was too dizzy. This is just like us. No matter how hard we try, we are not able to perfectly make the mark, to hit God’s bull’s-eye of perfection all the time. Unfortunately, because God’s standard is perfection, we don’t get a prize or get credit for being close. The Bible says that no matter how hard we try, we cannot perfectly hit the mark all the time. Doing good things and getting close to the mark is not good enough. This reminds me of our Bible verse found in Romans 3:23. “For all have sinned and fall short of God’s glorious standard.”

We have just learned five reasons why we miss the mark and sin against God. Let’s look at the first example: We miss the mark because we are rebellious. I’m going to give you a practical example from our everyday lives of this happening. God’s word tells children to obey their parents. Let’s say that your parents have forbidden you from spending time with a group of your friends because they are a bad influence on you. But you decide to spend time with them anyway. This is missing the mark because you are rebellious. You have deliberately decided to go against what God says and disobey your parents.

In your groups, I’d like for you to think about practical examples of the other four ways we miss the mark. Come up with one example from real life and record it on your group worksheets. Be ready to share with the group. Each one of your groups will look at one of the other four ways that we miss the mark.

Assign one of the four remaining ways that we sin to each group. Allow groups time to discuss and record their example. The goal is for the students to see how every day all of us sin in these ways. It’s not someone else... it’s us sinning and missing the mark in these ways! When all students have had the time to discuss, ask the group spokesperson to share.

Closing Group Discussion

This was another very discouraging lesson. Last lesson, we learned that we and our world are completely broken and sin is to blame. This week we learned the many ways that we sin and miss the mark. I want you to realize that we all are sinners and have a very big problem. Sin infects our

communities, our families, and our own lives. In your groups, please discuss the final group discussion question on your group worksheets: *In what way do you think that children in your age group sin most commonly and why?*

Allow students time to discuss and share their answers with the group.

As you can see from what your groups discussed, it is very easy to sin and fall short of God's glorious standard. We all are sinners who have a huge problem! We are very fortunate, however, that God has provided an amazing solution to this problem that we are going to learn about next week.

Please turn to your journals and think about how what you have learned today affects you personally. Answer the following action question:

Because I sin so easily and miss the mark in so many ways, I will pray that...

Allow students time to write in their journals. When they have finished, close in prayer asking God to bless the children and help them to become aware of their need for his presence and help in their lives.



Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned and fall short of God’s glorious standard.”

What is a practical example of missing the mark and sinning by:

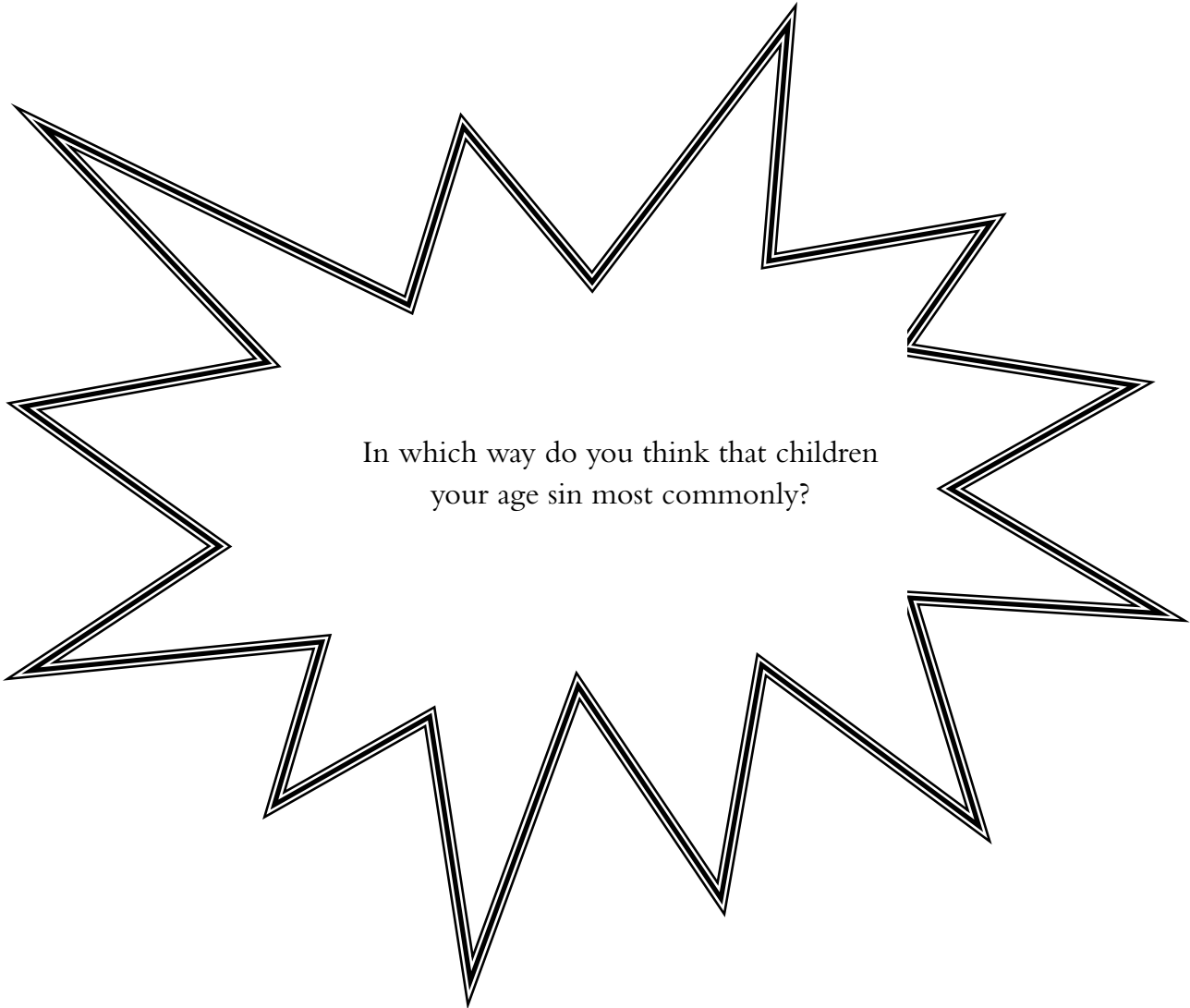
being ignorant...

being deceived...

being blind...

being unable.....

How is our relationship with ourselves broken?



UNIT FOUR— LESSON 3



Jesus – Our Solution

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: Jesus is God's wonderful, all-encompassing solution to sin and brokenness.

The Deception: The counterfeit ideas or Satan's lies are:

- If we work hard enough, or we are good enough, we can meet God's requirement for life both on this earth and in heaven.
- There are many ways to God and eternal life. There is no one way alone to be right with God.
- A child is too young to come to Christ. You need to be an adult to believe in Jesus.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children will know that God has provided them with the solution for the sin and brokenness in their lives through Jesus Christ. They will know that Jesus died for their sins in their place, and is now alive. They will realize how much Jesus loves them. They will respond to Jesus' love by believing and following him – the living God.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children that can profoundly shape their entire life. You may think that your education is limited, your skills are inadequate, you lack a proper classroom, or you do not have good teaching aids or materials for the children. All of these may be true, but you do not lack what is most important for impacting the children in your care.

You have a **conscience** – the ability to know what is right and wrong – and you know how to best live your life and use your skills to bless others. Listen to your conscience and follow it. It is a valuable gift from God. He speaks to you through it.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Engage the child in active learning.

Let children and youth teach each other. Don't hesitate to have them work together in small groups for discussions and projects. They'll learn valuable skills to help them work with others. Often what they learn about God sticks in their minds even better when they've learned it from a classmate.

Additional Thoughts and Ideas Related to this Lesson

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read these two stories. If you have time, you may choose to share one of them with the children as they are powerful examples of an innocent person paying the penalty for a guilty person, just as Jesus did for us.

Skit 1: The Judge and the Murderer

The scene is a courtroom. A judge in a black robe is sitting behind a big table. The courtroom official brings in the accused person. The accused has his head down and looks scared. They stand before the judge. The judge looks the man over and asks the prosecutor to present the man's crime and the evidence against him.

The prosecutor makes his presentation.

The man is accused of breaking into a house with a gun and stealing jewelry. In the midst of the robbery, the owner appeared and the accused man shot the owner. The owner later died in a hospital. The accused man fled but was later captured by the police. He had the jewelry, the gun, and scratches from the rose bush outside the house window from which he fled.

The judge turns to the defense attorney and asks what the man's defense is. The defense attorney says there is no defense argument. The man is guilty and has acknowledged this by pleading guilty.

The judge looks down at the accused and says that by the laws of (name of local state or country) the man is guilty of the crime of burglary and murder. The punishment for this crime is death. Therefore, you will be put to death on (date).

Then the judge does something very strange. He gets up from the table and comes and stands next to the guilty man. He looks at the prosecutor, the court official, and all others present and says the following:

I have known this man since he was a baby boy. He was adopted into our family when he was 6 months old. I loved him and cared for him. My eyes never left him. I am very saddened at the route he has taken in life.

I know he has committed this horrible crime. I know that he is guilty. I know that the penalty for this crime is death. I know that this penalty must be paid.

But, this man is very dear to me. I love him! Therefore, I will take his place and take the punishment for his crime by being put to death myself.

The prosecutor yells, "No, sir, you cannot do this! You are innocent and he is guilty!"

The judge responds, "That is exactly why I *can* take his place. The state says someone must die for this crime. Because I am innocent, I can take this man's place. If I were also guilty of it, I would need to die for myself."

The prosecutor turns to the court official: "This is totally unheard of and unusual. Nonetheless, take the judge away. If he loves this man enough to take his place, then so be it."

The prosecutor then says to the accused: “You are now free. The penalty for your sin will be paid by an innocent man – the judge himself.”

Skit 2: The Boy and His Teacher²⁰

Scene or story:

Bobby was buying something for his mother in the supermarket.

While the cashier was counting how much money he had to pay, Bobby saw his favorite toy lying close to the counter. He looked at the cashier. She was busy. He quickly reached out and took the toy. But, before he could slip it into his pocket, his hand was caught by someone from behind. The owner of the shop who was checking the shelves had seen Bobby stealing the toy.

“What is your name and telephone number?” he demanded angrily. “I will call your parents.” Bobby cried, because he was afraid and ashamed of himself.

Suddenly a man stepped forward and said, “I will pay for that toy.”

It was Bobby’s teacher who was shopping in the same store. He paid the price for Bobby’s toy. The shop owner couldn’t say anything more. The toy was paid for and Bobby would not be punished. He was free to go home.

Jesus was willing to suffer and die for us. He paid the price for all that we did wrong, just like the teacher paid for Bobby. The teacher paid for Bobby’s stolen toy with his money, but Jesus paid for our wrongdoing with his life. God can forgive our sins. When Satan tells God, “This child has done many wrong things. He cannot have eternal life,” Jesus will answer, “I have already paid for all his sins with my life, so he is free.”

Teacher’s Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures that speak of Jesus and the gift of eternal life that he offers us. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

John 3:17-18 – “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

Acts 16:31 – “They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.’”

Romans 3:22 – “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”

20 Anni Dyck and Ruth Laufer, *Creative Bible Lessons*, Lesson 14, (The Netherlands, Surya Foundation, 2000), 14-15. Story taken verbatim from this lesson.

Romans 10:9-10 – “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

1 John 5:13 – “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

1 John 1:8-9 – “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

John 1:12 – “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

Jesus is God's wonderful, all-encompassing solution to our brokenness.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that Jesus died for their sin in their place, and is now alive.
- ***Realize** how much Jesus loves them.
- ***Respond** to Jesus' love by believing in and following him—the living God.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, pictures of the life of Christ, bag of small pebbles, four bags, large rocks

Scripture References

Hebrews 9:22; Romans 3:23; John 1:12, 3:16, 14:6; Acts 16:31

Welcome Time

Today's icebreaker game is called "Talking Stones." Before your meeting time, fill a paper bag with small stones. Put enough stones in the bag so that every student can have at least four or five.

I have a bag of stones that I have brought with me today to class. I'm going to pass this bag around and I'd like for you to take as many as you think you will need. And that is all the instruction I am going to give you! Pass bag around.

The stones that you took are going to help you review what you learned in the last lesson. For as many stones as you took, you should say one thing that you learned in the last lesson. So if you took one stone, you only need to share one thing. However, if you took many stones you need to share many things!

Lead the children in playing the game. When they have finished, gather up the stones and divide them into four equal amounts. Place them in the four corners or places of your meeting area to prepare for the next activity. With the small stones, also put larger and heavier stones.

Attention Grabber

Ask the students to get into the four groups that they met in for the last lesson. Ask each group to go to one of the four corners of the room where they will see a pile of stones. Give each group a bag, and ask each student to pick up a few stones. After you read each statement below, you will ask a different child to place his or her stones into the bag.

For this illustration, I'd like one person in your group to volunteer to hold the bag. Kids, the volunteer in each of your groups is like all of us. We are all born with a natural capacity to sin. Ask each volunteer to show the inside of the bag. Really though, we have a much bigger capacity to sin than the inside of that bag! And pretty much from the beginning of our lives, we start sinning.

- **We focus on ourselves and don't love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.** Students drop a stone into the bag.
- **We don't love our neighbor.** Another stone in the bag.
- **We disobey our parents: we are disrespectful and rude to them.** Another stone.
- **We are mean to our brothers and sisters.** Another stone, etc., etc.
- **We don't tell the truth. We lie.**
- **We cheat on a test or assignment.**
- **We don't do our best work in school.**
- **We don't give our best effort.**

Ask the volunteers, **“How does all of this sin feel?”** Allow the child to answer that it's very heavy. If it's not heavy enough, name a few other sins and have the students put more stones in the bag.

Our sin becomes like a heavy weight in our lives. We can't handle it on our own and we can't get rid of it on our own either. That's why God sent Jesus to die for our sins on the cross. Jesus' death paid the penalty for our sins. If we believe in Christ's payment for forgiveness, he takes our sins away. (Take the bags away one at a time from the volunteer) **We can live a new life. We don't have to be weighed down by sin. We can live freely.**

We've talked so much about sin over the last two lessons. Today, we're going to talk about God's solution to that sin – Jesus!

The Lesson

I'm going to give each of your groups an aspect of Jesus' life to present to the class. You may choose any creative way to present it to the class. You can decorate a picture (I already have some printed pictures for you to decorate), or you can perform a skit, sing a song, write a poem, or do an acrostic. I'm going to give you a picture as well as some facts that I would like for you to include in your presentations. Please be as creative as possible and make sure that you try to include all of the information that I've given you, especially if you are doing a skit or a poem.

Hand out the pictures found in the appendix for this unit, as well as the group information sheets which contain the bullet points from the teaching lesson below. Allow students ample time to work. Circulate among the groups clarifying when necessary and making sure that all students have a part in the group work. Give each group a time limit of 4-5 minutes to present.

The Birth of Jesus

Ask the group who had “The Birth of Jesus” to come to the front of the classroom and give their presentation. They should include these points.

- God sent Jesus as a tiny baby.
- God chose Mary, who was a virgin, to birth Jesus by placing the baby in her womb – this was a miracle!
- God chose Joseph to be Mary's husband and help raise Jesus.
- Jesus was just like you and me! He got hurt, played with his friends, helped his parents, etc.
- Jesus was *perfect*. He never sinned because he was God's Son.

After they have finished, cover any points missed.

The Ministry of Jesus

Ask the group who had “The Ministry of Jesus” to come to the front of the classroom and give their presentation. They should include these points.

- Jesus told people how much God loved them, and he taught people to love each other.
- He told parables about God and his Kingdom (story of the three stewards, etc.).
- He did miracles (calmed a storm, fed 5,000 people with two loaves of bread and five fish, raised people from the dead, healed the sick, etc.).
- Because so many people liked and followed Jesus, the religious leaders started to get jealous and made plans to kill Jesus.

When they finish, summarize and cover any concepts missed.

The Death of Jesus

Have the group who were assigned “The Death of Jesus” come to the front of the class and give their presentation. They should include these points.

- The religious leaders sent people to arrest Jesus.
- They took him to their ruler, Pilate.
- The religious leaders beat him badly, put a thorn of crowns on his head, and made fun of him – he went through *a lot* of pain.
- They crucified Jesus (killed him by nailing him to a cross).
- Jesus had not done anything wrong; he was perfect.
- Jesus could have stopped it, but he knew it was part of God’s perfect plan.
- By dying on the cross, Jesus took the punishment for our sins and those of the whole world so that we all could be forgiven by God. Hebrews 9:22: “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

After they have finished telling the story of Jesus’ death, summarize and cover any concepts missed.

The Resurrection of Jesus

Ask the group who have “The Resurrection of Jesus” to make their group presentation. They should include these points.

- Jesus’ followers put his body in a tomb and rolled a giant stone in front of the doorway.
- Early in the morning on the first day of the week, some women who were friends of Jesus came to put spices on his body.
- When they got there, they saw that the stone had been rolled away and Jesus’ body was gone!
- An angel sent by God told them that Jesus had risen from the dead. He sent them to tell the disciples.
- Jesus later appeared to the disciples.
- He stayed with his disciples and close friends for many weeks.
- Over 500 people saw that he had risen from the dead.
- One day Jesus rose into the sky and returned to heaven where he still watches over us.

- Someday he will return and we will live with him forever.

After they have finished telling the story of Jesus' resurrection, summarize and cover any concepts missed.

Jesus was God's gift to the world to provide a way for anyone who believes in him to be forgiven of their sin. They will be "saved" or given a new life that never ends. Do you remember the illustration in the beginning of class with the heavy bags of sin? Jesus is the only way that we can be forgiven and set free to live a new way.

If you choose to read either of the stories provided in the teacher's guide, now would be the best time to do so.

Here is what you can do to be forgiven of your sin and given new life – God's eternal life.

1. Agree

The first step is to admit or agree with God that you "miss the mark," you sin and need help. You cannot save yourself by trying harder to be good, inflicting some pain on yourself, going to church, taking the sacraments, being baptized, fasting, helping the poor, giving money, or trying to please God with your words or actions.

Romans 3:23 (New Living Translation) says, "For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard."

John 14:6 says, "I (Jesus) am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father (God) except through me."

2. Believe

The second step is to believe. The Bible says, "Believe in Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). To believe in Jesus means to believe that Jesus is God, that he died and paid the price for all of your sins (past and future), and that he is alive today. God says there is only one way to be saved, and that is through believing in his Son, Jesus, and the salvation he provided through his death and resurrection.

Closing Reflection and Prayer

Gather the students around you in a circle. Explain that we are going to pray first and then you will give them a chance to write in their journals and talk to you if they wish.

If you believe that Jesus is the son of God and that he died for your sins, you can tell this to God right now and ask him to forgive you of your sins and give you his new life. Maybe some of you have never done this before. I am going to say a prayer that you can repeat after me, either out loud, or in your hearts, if you want to express your belief in Jesus today and receive his forgiveness and life. Let's talk to God together. Say one line a time, leaving a few seconds between lines for the children to respond:

Dear God,

I believe that Jesus is your Son.

**Thank you that Jesus died on the cross for all the wrong things I think, say, and do.
Thank you that Jesus rose from the grave to give me life.
Please forgive me for my sins and give me your eternal life.
Help me to live as you want me to live.
Amen.**

John 3:16 promises that, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” God also promises that, “to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). If you prayed to God today, expressing your belief in Jesus’ death and payment for your sin and his gift of forgiveness and eternal life, you can trust God’s promise that he loves you, that he has saved you from your sin, and that Jesus will always be with you.

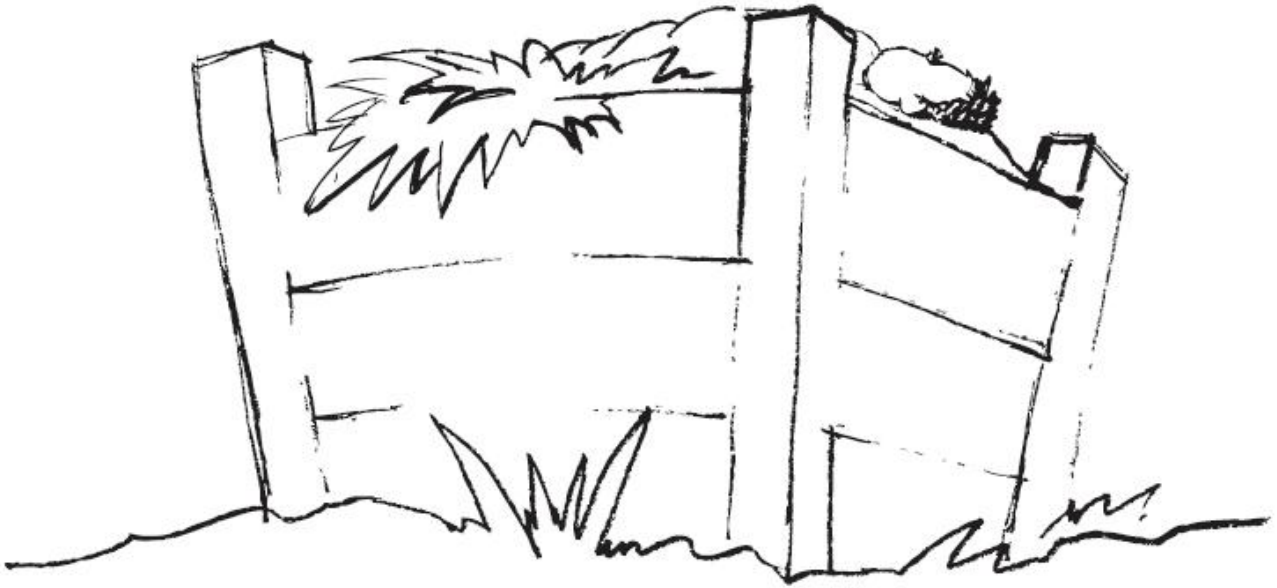
Now, I’d like for you to open your journals and answer the following action statements that will help you to apply what you’ve learned today to your life. You will see how Jesus’ death on the cross affects you too:

Because Jesus died on the cross to take away my sins, I will...

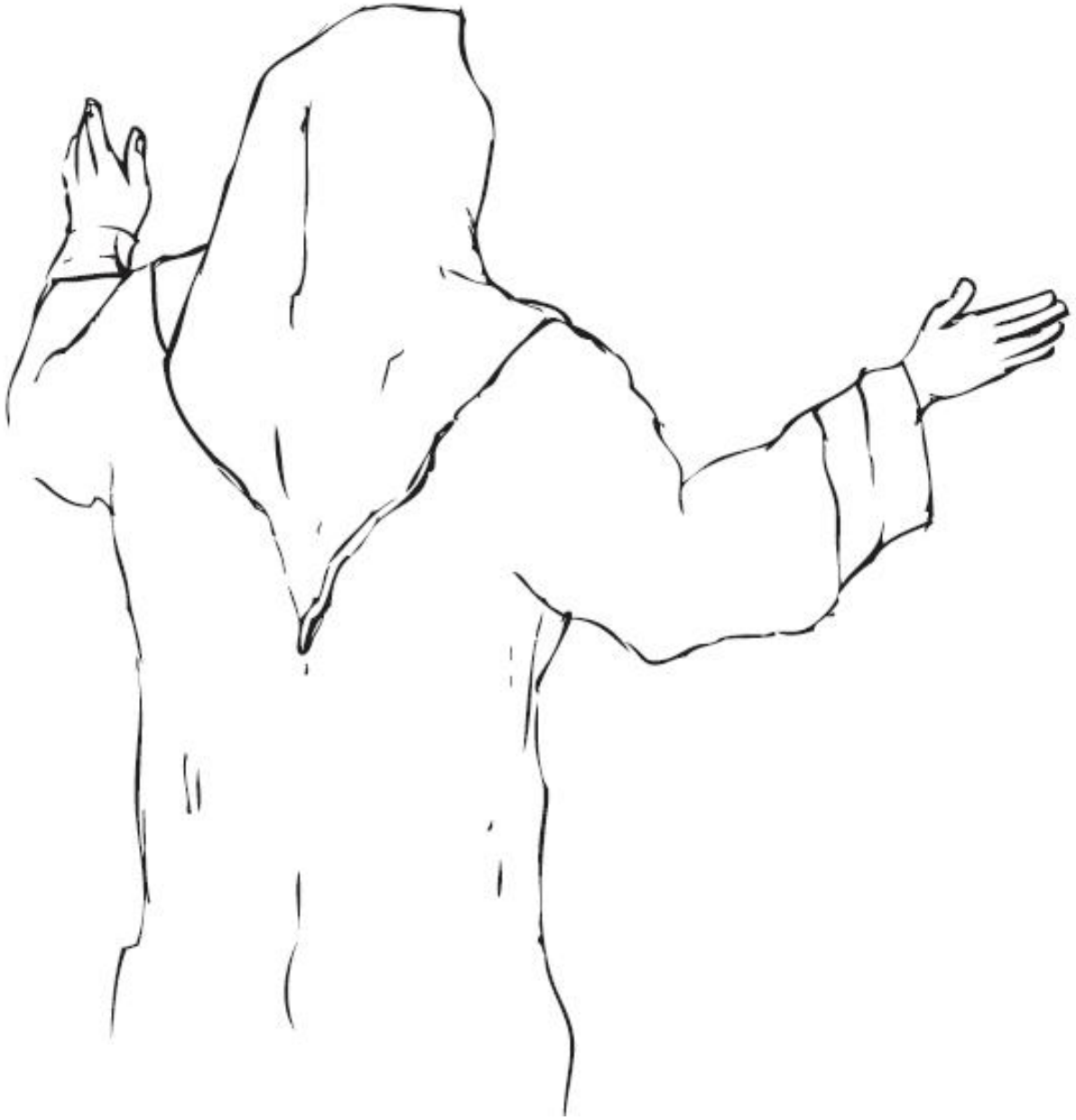
Because Jesus loves me so much, I will...

While you are writing in your journals, I’d like any of you who prayed the prayer today for the first time to come and talk to me. It’s good to tell someone like your dad or mom, grandparents, or a friend about what you prayed. You can also tell me and I’d like you to. If you weren’t ready to pray this prayer today, you can ask God to help you to believe in Jesus. If you have any questions or want me to pray for you about this, please come talk to me. I want you all to know Jesus and have his wonderful gift of forgiveness and life.

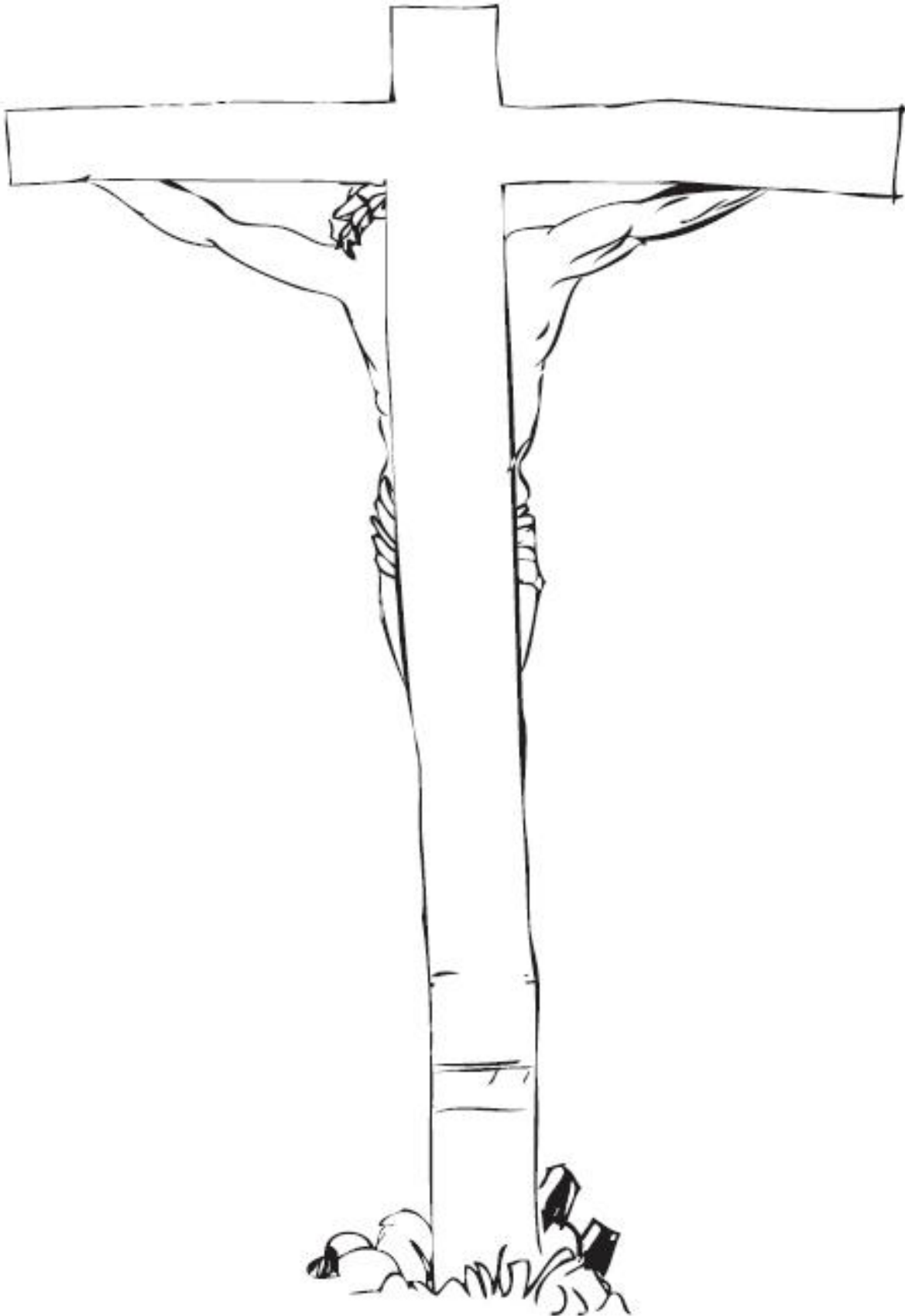
Allow students time to write in their journals and come talk to you if they would like to.



The Birth of Jesus



The Ministry of Jesus

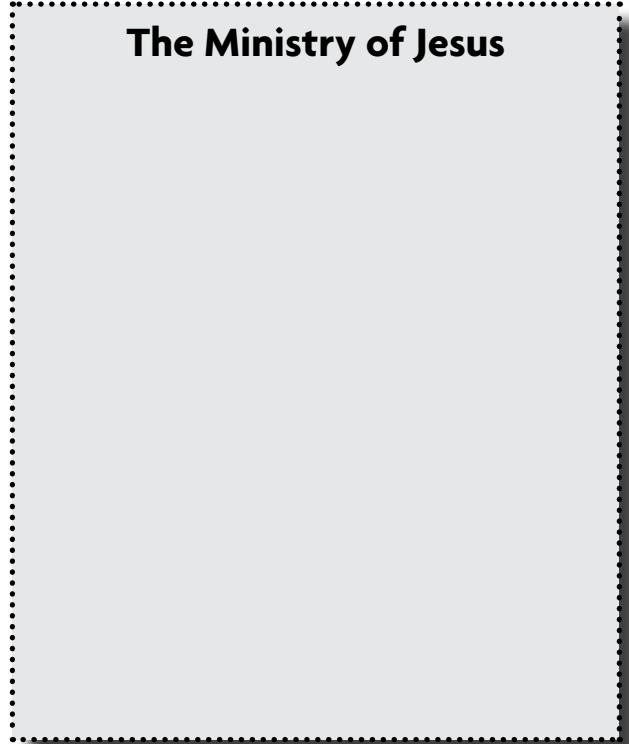


The Death of Jesus



The Resurrection of Jesus

JESUS



J E S U S



The Birth of Jesus

- God sent Jesus as a tiny baby.
- God chose Mary, who was a virgin, to birth Jesus by placing the baby in her womb – this was a miracle!
- God chose Joseph to be Mary's husband and help raise Jesus.
- Jesus was just like you and me! He got hurt, played with his friends, helped his parents, etc.
- Jesus was perfect. He never sinned because he was God's Son.

The Ministry of Jesus

- Jesus told people how much God loved them and he taught people to love each other.
- He told parables (story of the three stewards, etc.).
- He did miracles (calmed a storm, fed 5,000 people with two loaves of bread and five fish, raised people from the dead, healed the sick, etc.).
- Because so many people liked and followed Jesus, the religious leaders started to get jealous and made plans to get rid of Jesus.

The Death of Jesus

- The religious leaders sent people to arrest Jesus.
- They took him to their ruler Pilate.
- The religious leaders beat him badly, put a thorn of crowns on his head, and made fun of him. He suffered greatly.
- They crucified Jesus (killed him by nailing him to a cross).
- Jesus had not done anything wrong, he was perfect.
- Jesus could have stopped it, but he knew it was part of God's perfect plan.
- We deserve to be punished for our sins, but Jesus took this punishment for us when he died on the cross.
- Jesus was the only person who could take this punishment for us because he was perfect.
- Because Jesus took our sins upon himself, we can be forgiven by God.
- Hebrews 9:22 – Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

The Resurrection of Jesus

- Jesus' followers put his body in a tomb and rolled a giant stone in front of the doorway.
- Early in the morning on the first day of the week, some women who were friends of Jesus came to put spices on his body.
- When they got there, they saw that the stone had been rolled away and Jesus' body was gone!
- An angel sent by God told them that Jesus had risen from the dead. He sent them to tell the disciples.
- Jesus later appeared to the disciples.
- He stayed with his disciples and close friends for many weeks.
- Over 500 people saw that he had risen from the dead.
- One day Jesus rose into the sky and returned to heaven where he still watches over us.
- Someday he will return and we will live with him forever.

UNIT FOUR – LESSON 4



Life Eternal – What Is It?

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The previous lesson looked at Jesus as God's solution to our sin and brokenness. We receive God's forgiveness and his promise of life when we admit our need and believe in Jesus.

This and the next lesson look at our next step. Much has been written and said about how to know and live the life that God gives through his Son, Jesus. The aim of this lesson is to further define and clarify what the life eternal that God gives us through Christ is.

The Truth: God gives us his life – new life, abundant life, eternal life – when we believe in Jesus. This life is from God the Son (John 14:6) – who is eternal. It is described by Jesus as abundant or full (John 10:10). It begins here on this earth when we trust in Jesus. It is everlasting and continues after our earthly death (John 3:16).

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- The life that God promises when we believe in Jesus starts only after we die and go to heaven. It is not experienced here.
- The life that God gives us when we believe in Jesus Christ is strictly about our soul and spirit. It does not actually touch or affect all the aspects of our life here on this earth.
- Because the life that God gives us starts when we die and go to heaven, our job for the rest of our earthly life is to be grateful and prove that we are sincere in our belief by obeying God's commandments as best we can and living up to his expectations for us.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children will know that the life God promises us through Christ actually begins when we believe in Jesus. They can experience its benefits already here on earth. They will understand that the abundant and eternal life Jesus promised us are the same thing. They will realize that abundant life touches every facet of our lives from work to play, from studying to resting, from cleaning the house to painting a picture. All of life is touched by God's Spirit and is lived before the face of God (Coram Deo). Children will respond with hope, confidence, and a desire to live and experience God's life in every area of their lives – starting today.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children.

- You have a **spirit**, and with this the ability to give encouragement, vision, and a sense of purpose to children.

- You have a **mind**, and with this the ability to continue learning new knowledge and skills to better teach the children.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Engage the child in active learning.

Pause. Wait at least 30 seconds for children to respond when you ask an open-ended question. Try offering a controversial answer to spark more responses.

Additional Thoughts and Ideas Related to this Lesson

“Life” Defined/Described

In the original Greek New Testament, there were two words for “life”. One word was *psuche* and meant the breath of life or physical life that showed itself in a beating heart or in breathing. The other word for life was *zoe*, pronounced “dzo-ay.” This is the word in the Bible used to describe the life that God gives us when we believe in Jesus.

In *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*²¹, *zoe* is defined as:

- the state of one who is possessed of vitality or is animate
- of the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God, and through him to the eternal word made flesh (Jesus)
- life real and genuine, a life active and vigorous, devoted to God, blessed, in the portion even in this world of those who put their trust in Christ, but after the resurrection to be fully realized in new or additional ways - among them a more perfect body, and to last forever.

Eternal Life

Often when Jesus spoke of life, *zoe*, he added the descriptive adjective “eternal.”

The Schofield Reference Bible has this to say about *life (eternal)*:²²

1. This life is called “eternal” because it is from the eternity which is past to the eternity which is to come - it is the life of God revealed in Jesus Christ, who is God (John 1:4, 5:26; 1 John 1:1-2).
2. This life of God, which was revealed in Christ, is imparted in a new birth by the Holy Spirit, acting upon the word of God, to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:3-15).
3. The life thus imparted is not a new life except in the sense that the human now possesses it new. This life is still “that which was from the beginning.” But the recipient (experiences it as new) is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15).
4. The life of God which is in the believer is an unsevered part of the life which eternally was, and eternally is, in Christ Jesus - one life in him and in the believer; Vine and Branch, Head and Members (John 15: 1-5; 1 Corinthians 6:17, 12:12-14; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27, 3:3-4; 1 John 5:11-12)

21 *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship), s.v. “zoe.”

22 Schofield Notes: NIV. Rev. 22:19. “*Eternal Life*” is footnoted Life (eternal)

Abundant Life in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, a Hebrew word used to describe this type of abundant life was *shalom*, translated “peace.” *Shalom* means completeness in number, safety, soundness in body, welfare, health, prosperity, peace, quiet, tranquility, contentment, friendship of human relationships, and especially friendship with God in covenant relationship.

“Life (Eternal)” and the “Kingdom of God”

Jesus prayed, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven...” In the NIV version of the New Testament, the phrase “kingdom of God” is found 65 times. The phrase “kingdom of heaven” is mentioned 31 times. “Gospel of the kingdom” or “good news of the kingdom” is mentioned six times. The word “kingdom” is found 149 times.

When we receive God’s life eternal, we enter into the kingdom of God. A kingdom is the territory and people who are under the rule of a king. The “kingdom of God” is every part of creation that is in submission to God’s will. When we receive God’s life eternal through Jesus Christ and live out this life, we are living in submission to the King and his kingdom has come to us. “Life (eternal)” and the “kingdom of God” are related like different sides of the same coin.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through these scriptures that speak of life eternal. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space after each verse to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

John 1:4 – “In him was *life*, and *that life* was the light of men.”

John 3:15-16 – “that everyone who believes in him may have *eternal life*. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that *whoever believes* in him shall not perish but have *eternal life*.”

John 3:36 – “*Whoever believes* in the Son has *eternal life*, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

John 5:24-26 – “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and *believes him* who sent me *has eternal life* and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those *who hear will live*. For as the *Father has life in himself*, so he has granted the Son to *have life in himself*.”

John 11:25-26 – “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection *and the life*. *He who believes in me will live*, even though he dies; and *whoever lives and believes in me will never die*. Do you believe this?’”

Romans 6:4 – “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too *may live a new life.*”

Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death, but the *gift of God is eternal life* in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

SEE ALSO: Matthew 7:14; John 4:14, 5:21, 5:39–40, 6:48, 6:63, 12:50, 17:3; Acts 11:18; Romans 5:18; Galatians 2:20

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God gives us his wonderful life – life eternal – when we believe in Jesus.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that God gives us his life (new life) when we believe in Jesus.
- ***Understand** that this new life, which can start today, and “eternal life” are the same.
- ***Respond** with a desire to live and experience God’s life in every area today.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, prepared God’s Life poster (instructions for how to make this poster are in the appendix), gift wrapped box with wrapped boxes one inside the other – the last box should contain the words “Eternal Life,” small ball, assembled lesson cube found in appendix, ripped ‘relationship’ pictures from Unit 4, Lesson 1

Scripture References

John 3:16,36, 5:24, 10:10, 11:25–26, 14:6, 20:31; 1 John 5:11–12; Colossians 1:19–20; Titus 3:5–6

Welcome Time

Today’s beginning game is called “Never Ending Story.”

I’d like for you to get in a circle and sit next to someone who is the same age as you. Right after you sit down, you should tell the person sitting next to you about the most important event that has happened in your life. Allow students to share briefly.

Now that you have had the chance to share about your life, we are going to review the important events we learned about Jesus’ life in the last lesson. I am going to begin the first sentence of a story about the life of Jesus. “God loved us so much that he sent his one and only son named Jesus to earth as a tiny baby.” I am going to throw the ball to someone. That person should continue the story of the life of Jesus by saying one more sentence. Then that person will throw the ball to another person who will continue the story by saying another sentence. We should continue to throw the ball and tell the story until all of you have had the chance to share one sentence of the story of the life of Jesus, and we have told many wonderful things about his life.

Students should continue passing the ball and sharing a sentence of the story until all students have had the chance to share and/or the story of Jesus’ life has been told. Try to help them say something about his birth, life or ministry, death, and resurrection.

Attention Grabber

Have students remain in their circle. Pass around a box wrapped like a gift. This box should have several small boxes inside of other boxes and be wrapped as well. Have the first student begin by taking off a piece of the outer wrapping paper and pass to the next student who should continue unwrapping. The boxes should continue being passed and unwrapped until the final box is unwrapped. In this box is the card reading, “Eternal Life – God’s Life.”

We learned in the last lesson that Jesus is the only way that we can be forgiven and be released of the heavy load of sin in our lives. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins. We need to agree with God that we are sinners and cannot save ourselves from our sin. Next we need to believe in Jesus, that he is the Son of God who came to die for our sins and that he is alive today. If we tell him this and ask for his forgiveness, we receive God's amazing gift of eternal life. Today, we're going to talk all about God's amazing gift of eternal life, what it is, and how we can experience it even now!

The Lesson

As you teach this lesson, you will be creating a "God's Life" poster. The appendix includes an example of a finished poster. You may either copy this or create one of your own. Make sure the three verses are inside a scroll picture, with space on the paper to add the four arrows. You will also use the pictures that you ripped in half, in Lesson 1 of this unit. Plus four original untorn copies of each of these "relationship" pictures.

I'd like for you to get into the four groups that you have worked in, in our previous lessons. Your group should choose a new spokesperson and recorder. I have several verses for you to read about God's gift of eternal life. As you read them, I'd like for you to make a list of what you find out about the life that God gives. These verses are found on your group worksheets along with a leading question. They are John 14:6, John 1:4; 1 John 5:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 John 5:11; John 3:36; Colossians 1:19-20; and John 10:10.

Please read them aloud in your groups, and then make your lists.

Allow students time to read and discuss all the verses. When they have finished, ask the spokesperson in each group to share.

You found out that when we believe in Jesus, we get new life from God. This life from God comes only through Jesus. In fact, it is the life of Christ – the life of God. John 1:4, 14:6; 1 John 5:12.

1. **God's LIFE is free** – Stick the word "free" on the God's Life poster. **We receive God's wonderful life when we admit our need and believe. There is absolutely nothing we can do to earn it or work for it. It is a free gift of God given in love to everyone who believes in Jesus.**
Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast."
Titus 3:5-6 says, "God saved us, *not because of the good things we had done*, but because of his mercy. He saved us through...Jesus Christ our Savior."
2. **God's LIFE is eternal** – Stick the word "everlasting" on the God's Life poster. **If you remember the timeline we used before, the timeline has an arrow on both ends. That means that this line extends on forever into eternity both in the past and in the future. God had no beginning and he will never have an end. This means that he is eternal. He will go on forever into Eternity Future. Because God's life is eternal, when he gives us his life – it too is eternal. It will go on and on, never ending.**
1 John 5:11 says, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

In John 11:25-26, Jesus said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. “Do you believe this?””

3. **The new life that God gives begins today** – Stick the word “today” on the God’s Life poster. **The moment you admit that you are a sinner and believe in Jesus you have God’s gift of life. It begins right now. You can experience it today, not just when you die physically.**

John 3:36 says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life...” **The moment you believe, you receive this gift.”**

4. **God’s life is not just spiritual but affects all areas of our lives.** Stick the word “Every Area of Life” on the God’s Life poster.

Colossians 1:19-20 reads, “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself *all things*, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.”

The life that God gives touches every area of our lives. God reconciles all things to himself. “All things” means every aspect of our lives – eating, sleeping, working, playing, going to school, and studying. To reconcile means to restore something into harmony with its original plan and design. God’s desire and plan is to restore every aspect of our life into harmony with his very good plan and design.

When Adam and Eve sinned, their lives and the world became broken. Our world and lives are also broken in every way. Remember the broken clay pots? Remember all of the pictures that I tore in half to represent all of the areas of our lives that are broken because of sin? Take out the pictures that were torn in half. Through Jesus’ death on the cross and the life that God gives us, all of these areas of our life can be restored.

Pick up the “relationship with God” picture that was torn in half and tape it back together. **Through Jesus and the life that God gives us, our relationship with God is restored.** Print out a new copy of the torn picture and replace the taped one with this one, showing God does not just tape back together but truly restores the areas of our lives. **Jesus gives us life and makes it possible to know the greatness and the majesty of God. He also makes it possible for us to enjoy friendship with God and to truly love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.**

Pick up the “friends or relationship with others” picture that was torn in half and tape it back together. **This life from God restores our friendships with other people. It enables us to see all people as created in the image of God, uniquely made and gifted, equal in value before him. It enables us to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

Take out the ripped “relationship with creation” picture. Tape it back together. **God’s life also helps us rule over all creation and our physical life as God intended. God’s life enables us to unlock creation’s potential as he designed. God helps us to solve problems, fix things, produce many helpful things, and make the world a better place.** Again, print out a new copy of the picture as well and show this as the end result that God can do.

Take out the ripped “relationship with self” picture. Tape it back together.

God's new life also heals us from the inside, freeing us from bad feelings about ourselves, fear, shame, self-consciousness, and guilt and instead giving us peace, hope, confidence, and a purpose. God helps us develop the gifts and potential he has given us and use these to bless our families and others.

Every area of our lives is affected by God's life: doing our chores, cooking, cleaning, going to school, doing our homework, playing with our friends, etc. All these are touched by God's life in us.

Can you think of an area of life, not yet mentioned, that is affected by the life that God gives us through Jesus? Allow for the students' responses.

When Jesus said he was the life and came to give us life, this life covers every single part of our lives.

5. **God's life is abundant. It is the very best life!** Post the phrase "Life Abundant and Full" on the God's Life poster. Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). The word used for life in Greek in the New Testament (*zoe*) didn't simply mean alive and breathing. It meant life that is vital, real and genuine. The word used for full and abundant in the Greek meant remarkable, excellent, or extraordinary.

Remember the target that we used in one of our previous lessons when we talked about missing the mark or missing the bull's-eye. God's full and abundant life is like the bull's-eye on that target. It is God's perfect and best plan for our lives. This is the life that we can experience through Jesus.

We've learned that the life that God gives is free – we cannot earn it – can begin today, is eternal, it touches all areas of our life, and it is abundant or full. The next time we meet, we'll talk about how we can more fully experience this free gift of life each and every day.

Closing Group Discussion

In your groups, please discuss your answer to the following question: *If a friend of yours had never heard about God's eternal life before, what would you tell them. How would you describe this life to them?*

Allow children time to discuss their ideas. When they have finished, call on the group spokesperson to share the conclusions.

Reflection and Prayer

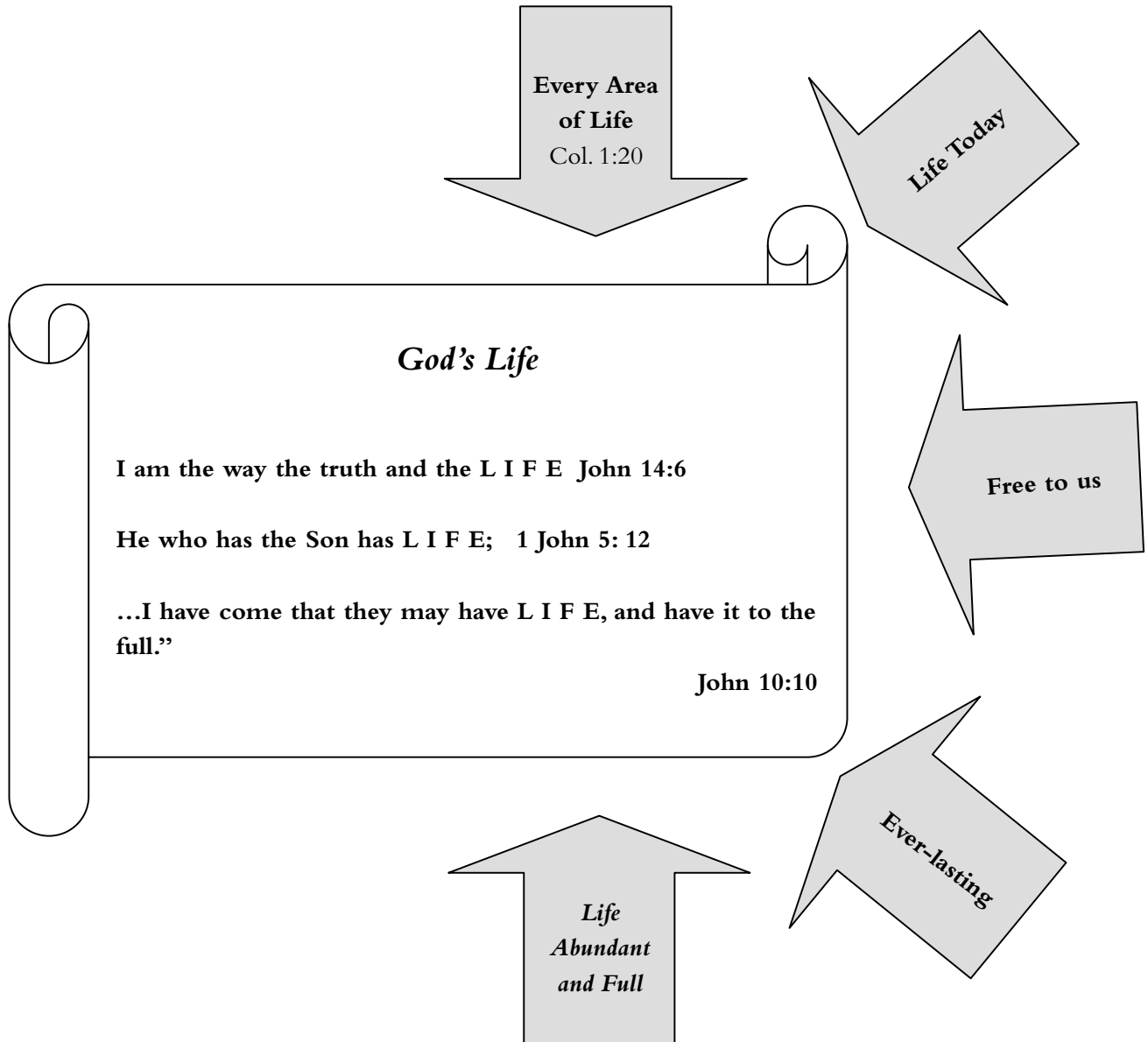
You've thought about what you would tell a friend of yours about what you learned today. Let's think now about what you need to do about what you learned today. Please open your journals and complete the following action statements:

Because God's life is for all areas of my life, I will pray to experience more of his life in...

Because God gives life as soon as I believe, now I will...

After the students have had time to write in their journals close in prayer. Ask God to bless each of the children and give them an understanding of the life that God gives through belief in Jesus Christ. Pray for a desire to experience this in their daily lives.

1 John 14:6 – “I am the way, the truth and the life.”



Duplicate these scriptures on a flip-chart sized poster. Duplicate each of the words in the arrows separately so that they can be added one at a time as directed in the lesson. **Keep this posted in the classroom as it will be used in the next lesson (lesson 5).**

In John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

John 20:31 “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

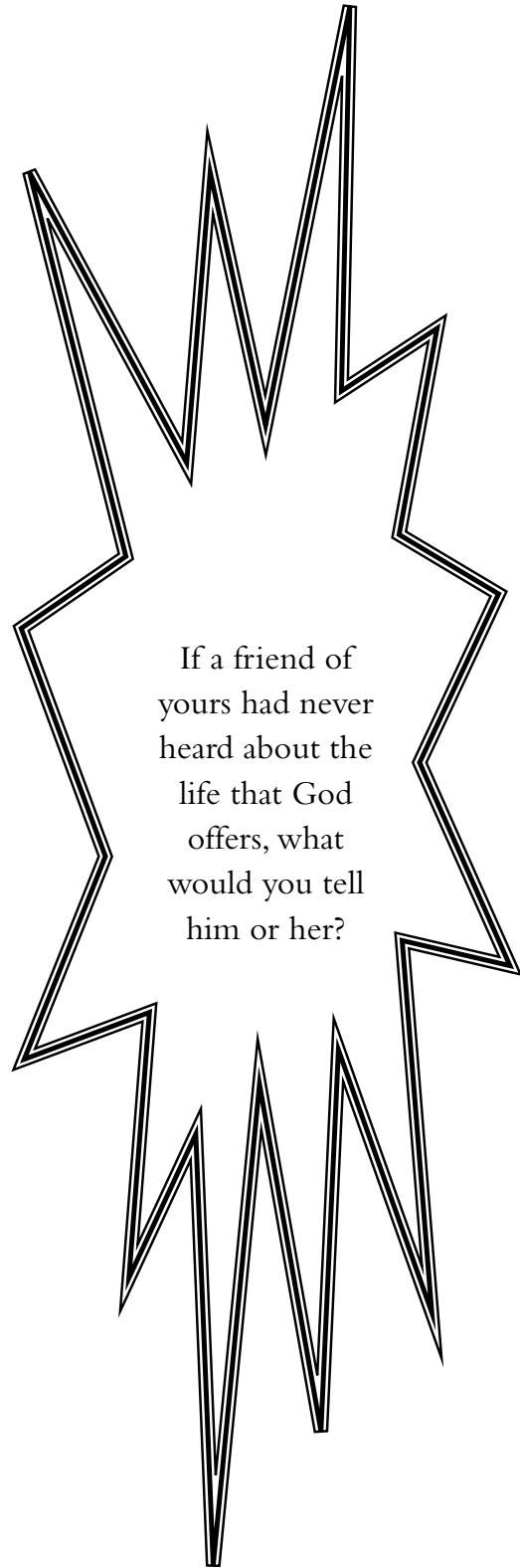
1 John 5:12 “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life...”

John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life...”

1 John 5:11-12, “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

What do these verses tell you about the life that God gives?



UNIT FOUR – LESSON 5



Experiencing Life Eternal – Follow Jesus (Believe, Obey, Depend)

TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: The previous lesson explored the life God gives us when we believe in Jesus. This life is a free gift; we cannot earn it. It is eternal from God and thus never ends. It begins the moment we admit our need or sin and believe in Jesus and his payment on the cross for our forgiveness. It touches all aspects of life today. It is abundant and full – the best possible way to live.

The question of this lesson is that once we have this life from Jesus, how do we actually live it and experience it? The answer Jesus gave to his disciples was very simple: He just said “Follow me.”

We cannot physically walk alongside Jesus like his disciples did, so, in this lesson and the next, we look at how we actually follow Jesus today. We follow him by doing what he did.

This lesson presents three important things Jesus did that we can do in order to follow him.

1. Jesus believed or trusted in God and his word.
2. Jesus obeyed and did what God said.
3. Jesus depended on God. Even though he was God the Son, Jesus knew he needed God’s help and strength each day to live the life God had called him to live.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- We cannot experience God’s abundant life on this earth.
- Belief only means agreeing with an idea, nothing more.
- A person can experience an abundant life without actually following God’s life instruction from the Bible.
- It is not good to be dependent on someone or to need help. Asking for help reveals our weakness and only makes us vulnerable to others.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: As children apply these truths, increasingly believe and trust in God, obey his word and leading, and depend on his Spirit for wisdom, power, and help, they will experience the confidence that comes with following Jesus. They will flourish and thrive in their lives the way God intends.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children.

- You have **creativity**, which you can develop and use to solve problems and to improve your life and teaching work.

- You have **health** and **energy** with which to come to the classroom, arrive on time, and give the children your best even when feeling tired and discouraged.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Show your outline. If the children are older and can read, you may want to write your basic teaching outline and discussion questions on a large piece of paper or a chalkboard. This is a great way to prepare the lesson, and it will allow you to interact with the children.

Teacher Devotional and Additional Information

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please think through the following ideas and read and pray through these scriptures that speak of following Jesus. Prayerfully study them and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with.

The concept: God has freely given us his life through Jesus. We experience the fullness of this life when we *follow Jesus*.

To **follow** means to copy after, imitate, to accept as authority, to obey, to watch steadily, or to keep your mind on. Those who followed Jesus were called his disciples, which is "one who follows" or "learner."

Luke 9:23-25 – "Then he said to them all: 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and *follow me*. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?'"

Luke 9:59 – "He said to another man, '*Follow me.*'"

Luke 14:27 – "And anyone who does not carry his cross and *follow me* cannot be my disciple."

John 1:43 – "Finding Philip, he (Jesus) said to him, '*Follow me.*'"

John 10:27-29 – "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they *follow me*. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."

John 12:25-26 – "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me *must follow me*; and where I am, my servant also will be."

John 21:21-22 – "When Peter saw him, he asked, 'Lord, what about him?' Jesus answered, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? *You must follow me.*'"

1 Corinthians 11:1 – "Be ye *followers of me*, even as I also am of Christ." (KJV)

Matthew 28:19 – "Therefore go and make *disciples* (followers/learners) of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

We follow Jesus today by doing what he did.

Jesus **believed** or trusted in God and his word.

Believe means to know and put trust and confidence in something: to firmly know and be convinced that something is true or real. When we believe in something, we act accordingly. For example, if we believe a chair will hold us, we will sit in it. To not sit in it because you are afraid it will collapse, is to not believe in it.

Psalms 119:66 – “Teach me knowledge and good judgment, *for I believe in your commands.*”

Psalms 106:24 – “Then they despised the pleasant land; *they did not believe his promise.*”

Psalms 78:32 – “In spite of all this, they kept on sinning; in spite of his wonders, *they did not believe.*”

Hebrews 11:6 – “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him *must believe* that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

1 Thessalonians 2:13 – “...when you received the word of God... you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you *who believe.*”

We follow Jesus today by believing and trusting in God’s truth, turning away from Satan’s lies and the world’s deceptions. For example, from previous lessons:

- **God exists.** He created all things. He is the all-powerful, all-knowing creator God.
- **God is good.** Every good thing we experience in our daily lives comes from God and is tangible evidence that God is good (e.g. good food, friendship, a cool breeze, sweet candy, the warmth of a fire on a cold day, cool rain on a dry hot day, an opportunity to study, parents who take care of you). All are evidence of God’s goodness and that God is good.
- **God gives life to everything and keeps everything going.** He gives you life and breath each second, each minute, each hour, and each day. He holds the stars in place. He sustains all things.
- **God’s way is always best.** Know and trust that God has the best plan for how to live life. We can look at God’s creation and see evidence of how he made life to work well. We can trust that his commands regarding how to best live are equally good and wise.
- **God loves you and values you greatly:** Each person is unique and special to God, equal in value, worth, and dignity no matter who they are.
- **God has a special purpose for your life in this world.** Each person has a purpose that only they and no one else can fulfill.
- **Mankind and the world is broken because of sin. God sent Jesus to save us. Jesus is the only way to God and life.**

Jesus **obeyed** God’s instructions and commands.

The Old Testament word in the Hebrew language for “obey” is *shama* which means to listen and hear, and then submit to and do. We follow Jesus today by hearing and obeying the truth that God gives us.

1 John 3:20-24 – “...*because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.* And this is *his command:* to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he *commanded* us.”

1 John 5:1-4 – “This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and *carrying out his commands.* This is love for God: to *obey his commands.* And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”

Hebrews 3:18-19 – “And to whom was God speaking when he vowed that they would never enter his place of rest? He was speaking to those who *did not obey him*. So we see that they were not allowed to enter his rest because of their unbelief.”

Jesus **depended** on God's Spirit

To *depend on* means to rely on someone or something. In scripture, we see Jesus continuously relying on or depending on God the Father to give him wisdom, strength, power, etc. To follow Jesus is to depend on the Father and his Spirit as Jesus did.

John 5:30 – “*I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me*” (ESV).

John 8:28 – “So Jesus said to them, ‘When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and *that I do nothing on my own authority*, but speak just as the Father taught me.’” (ESV)

Mark 14:38 – “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. *The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.*”

Luke 5:16 – “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places *and prayed.*”

John 14:16 – “And I will ask the Father, and *he will give you another Helper*, to be with you forever.”

John 14:26 – “But the *Helper, the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

John 15:26 – “But *when the Helper comes*, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”

John 16:7 – “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for *if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you*. But if I go, I will send him to you.”

Romans 8:26 – “In the same way, *the Spirit helps* us in our weakness.”

Examples of relying and depending on God

Judges 13:8 – Manoah, the father of Samson, *asks God for wisdom and help* in how to raise the child.

Daniel 2:17-19 – Daniel urges his friends to *ask God for help* with interpreting a vision.

Nehemiah 1:11 – Nehemiah *asks God to give him success* as he goes to the king and asks for permission and support to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.

Mark 9:24 – “Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’”

Examples of NOT relying and depending on God

1 Chronicles 10:12-13 – Saul lost his kingdom because he consulted a medium for guidance and not God.

Joshua 9:14-15 – The men of Israel were tricked into making a bad treaty because they did not ask the Lord for insight or wisdom.

Jeremiah 10:21-22 – Jeremiah says the spiritual leaders do not inquire of the Lord and so the land does not prosper.

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God's life is a treasure that we experience when we follow Jesus. We follow Jesus by doing what he did: believe, trust, obey, and depend.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that we are given the treasure of God's life when we believe in Jesus. We fully experience this gift of abundant life by following Jesus.
- ***Understand** how we can experience this life by following Jesus – doing what Jesus did.
- ***Respond** by doing what Jesus did: believe (or trust) God's word, obey or do it, depend or rely on the Holy Spirit for help.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, four copies of the "Following Directions" worksheet, four cups of water, four blind-folds, game cube from Unit 4, Lesson 4

Scripture References

Psalms 18:30; 1 John 5:30; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Micah 6:8; James 4:6

Welcome Time

Review all five aspects of God's Life covered in the last lesson.

For reference, the following statements about God's life correspond to the following numbers:

1. God's life is free.
2. God's life is eternal.
3. God's life begins today.
4. God's life covers all areas of our lives.
5. God's life is abundant and full.

Also review the memory verse: "I am the way the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

For today's welcome activity the students will play "Seat Swap".

We're going to play the game called "Seat Swap." Please get into a circle, with one person standing in the center of the circle. The person in the center will say the memory verse and point to one other person. That person should say one of the facts about God's life (free, abundant, covers all aspects of life, etc.) then the person in the center should say "go," and everyone must find a chair. One chair will be removed leaving one person without a chair. They now take their place in the center and repeat the process.

Attention Grabber

Ask students to get in the four groups they have worked in for previous lessons. Give each group one of the directions worksheets provided at the end of this lesson. You should *turn the worksheet to the back side so that students cannot read it.*

I'd like for you to complete those worksheets as a group and carefully follow the directions that are found on the worksheet. I will not be able to answer any questions about the activity. You must follow the directions as they are printed on the worksheet. Please turn over your papers and begin.

Allow students several minutes to complete the activity. Do not answer any questions. When all students have finished, start a short discussion.

The point of that activity was to see how well you were able to follow directions. If you followed directions you should have seen that the first thing you were supposed to do was to read through all the directions. Number nine on the worksheet tells you not to answer questions 1-8 and only to answer number 10.

The last time we were together, we talked all about God's life. We found out that it begins the moment we admit our sin and believe in Jesus. We know that he died to take away our sin and rose to give us life. We also found out that God's life touches everything, and that God seeks to restore all areas of our life. What we're going to find out today is how we can actually experience this life that God gives more and more each day.

Jesus answer to how we experience this life was very simple.

Jesus said to Levi, Matthew, Peter, Barnabas, and many others, "Come and FOLLOW me." Jesus asked people to FOLLOW him. Jesus calls us to FOLLOW him as well. It is by following Jesus that we experience the life he has given us. Following Jesus isn't always easy, but he will not try to trick you with his instructions like I did!

The Lesson

How do we follow Jesus today? We follow Jesus by doing what he did:

Jesus believed and trusted in God and his word.

Jesus obeyed God's instruction and word.

Jesus depended on God's Spirit.

Doing these things enabled Jesus to live his life in the amazing way that God intended. By following Jesus in the same way, we can do the same. We can live life in the amazing way God intends for us.

We are going to work in groups and talk about each one of the ways to follow Jesus. We will do an interactive activity, illustrating each way.

How Do We Follow Jesus? Believe God and His Word

I want you to all get in your groups and then send the oldest person to me. I will give them a cup of water and an instruction. Whisper the following instruction to them. They are to pick any person in the

group and then tell that person they will count to five and then pour the whole cup of water over their head. They should then slowly count to five and pour the water on the person's head. If the person ducks and pulls away, the person pouring is to let them go and stop pouring the water.

Tell the groups you have given the instruction and they can react however they think best.

Ok, go!

Allow each group to follow this activity to its conclusion. Most likely students will get out of the way of the other pouring the water.

If you were chosen and chose to get out of the way before the person poured water on you, it is because you believed what they said and didn't want to get wet! You knew the students well and knew they do what they say they are going to. You trusted they were telling the truth when they said that they were going to pour the water on your head. You acted accordingly. It's the same way with God. Believing in God is believing and trusting, and then acting accordingly. We choose to believe God and trust in his word. Like David we believe, "As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless" (Psalm 18:30). This belief then affects how we live. If we know God and believe that what he says is true and good, we will confidently want to follow his instructions in all areas of our lives. This is believing and trusting in God and his word. It is the first way that we follow Jesus.

How Do We Follow Jesus? We Obey God. We Follow His Instructions for Living

I am now going to give each one of your groups a blindfold. I would like you to choose one person in your group to put it on. The rest of your group will need to get the blindfolded person from one side of the room to the other without touching them. That means that the blindfolded person is going to have to listen very carefully to what you say. Please begin.

Allow the students time to complete this activity. You may need to help where necessary in spacing the groups out so they do not hit one another as they complete this activity. After they have finished, have them sit down in their groups and lead them in a short discussion.

The only way the blindfolded person was able to cross the room was by obeying their group's instructions. It is the same way with us and following Jesus. The only way we are able to fully experience the life Jesus has given us is if we obey God's instructions. Jesus believed and trusted in God the Father. Because of his belief and trust, he also obeyed God the Father. He spent his whole life here on earth doing exactly what God designed for him to do. In John 8:28, Jesus says, "...I do nothing on my own behalf but speak just what the Father has taught me."

We follow Jesus by obeying God's word. To obey God, we simply follow the truth about God and how to live life. God's instructions in the Bible are for every area of our lives. For example, if we obey God, we love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves. We obey him when we carefully rule over creation and over all of life, to defeat sickness, to make the earth produce, and to care for it. Another great way we obey God is to steward or develop all the things God has entrusted to each of us – life, energy, abilities, a mind – and use these to bless

others. To obey God is to follow all the instructions he has given us in his word. In doing so, we experience the life he has given us through Christ.

How Do We Follow Jesus? Depend on God

I am now going to ask each of you in your groups to work with a partner. One of you in your partnership will close your eyes. The other partner must guide you by taking your arm and leading you across the room. The partner with your eyes closed may not open your eyes at any time. Please go to the opposite side of the room and partners please lead the other while their eyes are closed. You must lead your partner safely across the room without bumping into anything or anyone. Please begin.

Allow students time to complete this activity. After each pair has finished, please ask them to sit back down in their groups.

In order for the person with their eyes closed to get to the other side of the room safely, they had to depend upon the person who was guiding them. If we want to experience Jesus' abundant life by him, we will rely and depend on God as he did. The lies of this world say that the strong person, the real leader, the macho man and even the godly person doesn't or shouldn't need help. People often think that admitting weakness, or needing or asking for help, is the first step to failure or defeat. But that's not true!

Jesus, the strongest person who ever lived and the most effective leader, acknowledged his need for his Father God and asked for the Father's help. In John 5:30, Jesus said, "By myself I can do nothing." Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed to ask God for help. Often our cultures and those around us tell us that it is bad or weak to depend on anyone or anything. It is not macho. Instead, we should be strong and self-sufficient. But, if Jesus, the greatest most powerful person who ever lived, had to depend upon God, how much more we need to!

We need God's help each and every day! This help is available to us through God's Spirit. Because Jesus died to cover all our sin, God will give us his Spirit to live in us and help us. Without God's Spirit, we will not succeed in fully living the life God gives us through Jesus. Daily we need to ask for God's help to live the life that he gives us. We have to depend upon his Spirit!

In your groups, I'd like you to think of some practical ways that you can follow Jesus and experience his abundant life by believing God's word, obeying his commands or instructions for living, and depending upon God's Spirit for help. Please record your ideas on your group worksheets. When you are finished, we will make a big list as a class.

Allow students time to work on this activity. When they have finished, have the group spokesperson share their group's ideas. If you have a chalkboard or whiteboard, record all of the answers in a large list under the headings Believe, Obey, and Depend.

If time allows – unpack some of the following about our Helper – God's Spirit

Without God's Spirit we will fail in following Jesus and fully living the life God gives us through

him. We need God's Spirit to give us wisdom, insight, encouragement, patience, perseverance, and mercy. Jesus said in John 15:5, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; *apart from me (his Spirit) you can do nothing.*"

How does the Spirit help us?

Sometimes God's Spirit will work through people. The Spirit may give you an encouraging word through a friend or wise advice through a respected mentor.

The Spirit may use nature – reminding you of God's strength and goodness when you see a beautiful sunset.

The Spirit often uses scripture – speaking directly to us through his word.

Sometimes God's Spirit may help or speak to others through you.

God freely gives his Spirit to help us. "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

We experience the power of God's Spirit as we humble ourselves and ask for help.

The prophet Micah wrote, "Do justice, love mercy, and *walk humbly with your God*" (Micah 6:8). To walk humbly is to walk aware of our need and dependence on God: to continually ask him for help.

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote: "God resists the proud but *gives grace to the humble*" (James 4:6).

Jesus humbled himself. Humbling ourselves and asking for help is not easy, but God promises to bless us when we recognize how awesome he is and how small we are. Humbly asking for help and depending on God's Spirit will make us the strongest people we can be!

Closing Discussion

We've talked a lot today about how we can experience God's abundant life by following Jesus. We follow him by believing, obeying, and depending upon God. To do this requires humility and often isn't easy. In your groups, I'd like you to think about and answer the following group discussion questions: *Why is it so hard to believe, obey, and depend upon God? What can you do daily to make it easier?*

Allow students time to think and discuss. When they have finished, ask the group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

Reflection and Prayer

You've already talked in your group about your ideas to make believing, obeying, and depending upon God easier. I'm sure you have some ideas for how to do this personally. I'd like for you to take out your journals and answer the following questions:

Because God calls me to believe him, I will...

Because God calls me to obey him, I will...

Because God calls me to depend upon him, I will...

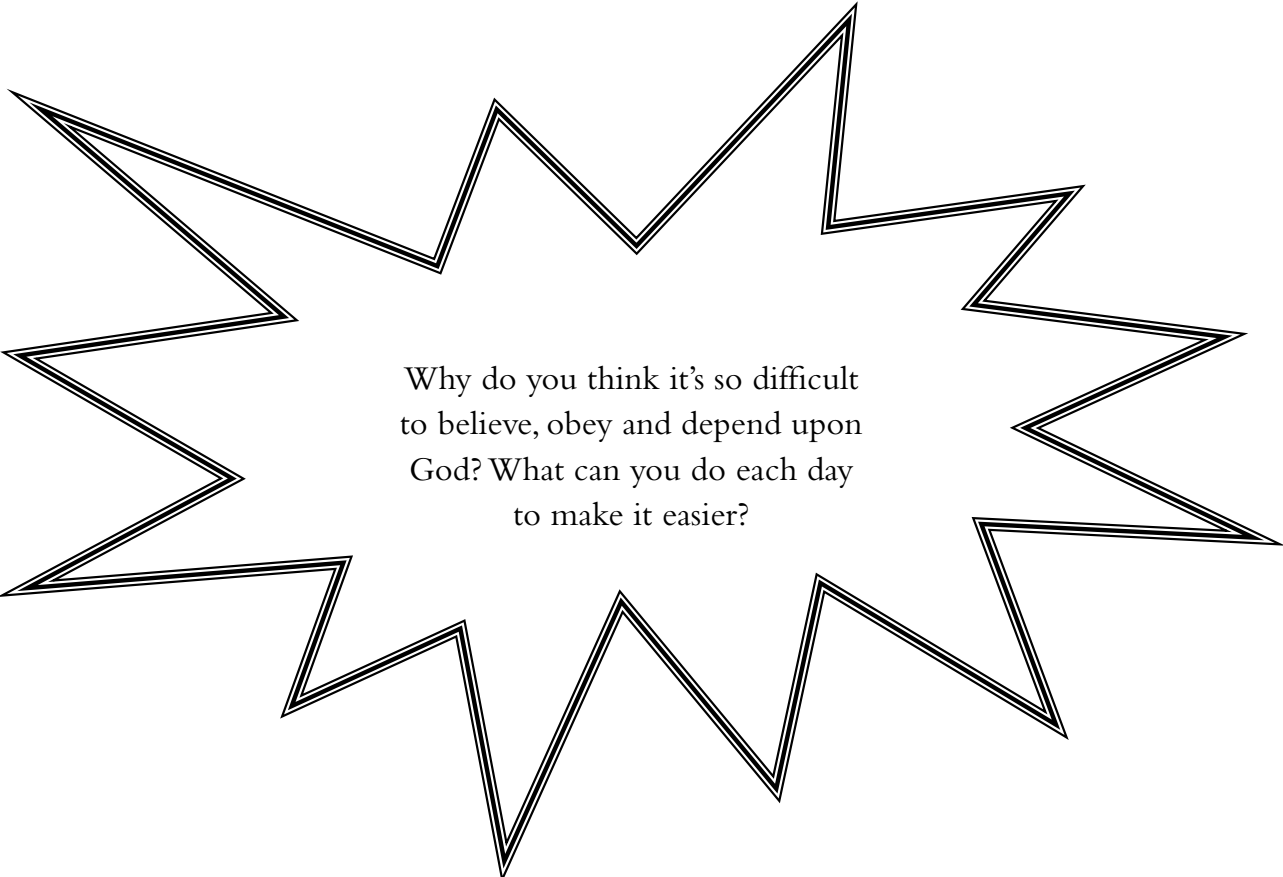
After students have had the chance to reflect and write in their journals, close in prayer. Thank God for each of the students and for his amazing grace. Ask God to give the students the desire to follow him every day of their lives.

**God calls us to believe, obey and depend upon him.
Make a list of the practical ways you can:**

Believe in Him:

Obey Him:

Depend upon Him:



Why do you think it's so difficult
to believe, obey and depend upon
God? What can you do each day
to make it easier?

Following Directions Exercise

Read every item carefully before beginning this exercise.

1. If the oldest person in your group had one more brother or sister than they already do, how many would they have? _____
2. Write one sentence about what you've learned so far in our class.

3. Add together the number of brothers and sisters everyone in your group has. The total is _____.
4. Exchange this paper with the group that is working next to yours. Write all of your names on the back of their paper. Exchange papers to get yours back.
5. List the members of your group from oldest to youngest.

6. What can you do to earn God's gift of eternal life? _____
7. Rewrite the following Bible verse:
I am the way the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father except by me. _____

8. Write your answer to number 6 here: _____
9. Do not answer numbers 1-8 on this exercise. Complete only number 10.
10. Write all of your names and today's date in the top right corner of this exercise, and turn it in to your teacher.

UNIT FOUR – LESSON 6



Experiencing Life Eternal – Follow Jesus (Revere, Worship, Thank)

TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

This lesson continues to address the question “How do we experience the life eternal that God gives us when we believe in Jesus?” In other words, “How do we follow Jesus?”

The Truth: Jesus lived fully aware of God the Father’s greatness and goodness. His unswerving trust in God was based on this. His response was reverence, worship, and thankfulness. To follow Jesus is to do what he did. As we become aware of God’s greatness and goodness, we too will naturally respond with reverence, worship, and gratitude.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- To fear God is a negative thing – it is similar to fearing a corrupt policeman, an angry teacher, an unpredictable employer, an abusive parent, or an undisciplined soldier.
- The only way to worship is by singing, bowing, kneeling, raising your hands, reciting a liturgy, or praying.
- God commands us to fear, worship, and give thanks to him because he wants to keep us in our place, and remind us that he is the boss. He is selfish and needs this from us.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children will have great confidence, hope, joy, and peace as they grow in their awareness of God’s greatness and goodness. As they respond with reverence, worship, and gratitude, this awareness and confidence will increase even further.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children.

- You have your education and natural abilities – use them and develop them.
- You have passions and desires that are good – fan them into a strong flame!

Tip for Successful Teaching

Memorize Scripture. Include Scripture memorization that connects to the main point or idea. This will help the children remember and apply key truths to their lives in a way that will really make a difference today, tomorrow, and throughout their lives.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through these scriptures and Biblical principles that speak of recognizing and responding to God appropriately. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you

how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

God's Goodness and Greatness – the Basis for Reverence, Worship, and Gratitude

Nehemiah 9:5-8 – “Stand up and praise the Lord your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you. . . . You have kept your promise because you are righteous.”

Psalms 95:1-8 – “Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.”

Isaiah 40:10-26 – “Yes, the Sovereign Lord is coming in all his glorious power. He will rule with awesome strength. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes. He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young. Who else has held the oceans in his hand? Who has measured off the heavens with his fingers? Who else knows the weight of the earth or has weighed out the mountains and the hills? Who is able to advise the Spirit of the Lord? Who knows enough to be his teacher or counselor? Has the Lord ever needed anyone's advice? Does he need instruction about what is good or what is best? No, for all the nations of the world are nothing in comparison with him. They are but a drop in the bucket, dust on the scales. He picks up the islands as though they had no weight at all. All Lebanon's forests do not contain sufficient fuel to consume a sacrifice large enough to honor him. All Lebanon's sacrificial animals would not make an offering worthy of our God. The nations of the world are as nothing to him. In his eyes they are less than nothing – mere emptiness and froth. To whom, then, can we compare God? What image might we find to resemble him? Can he be compared to an idol formed in a mold, overlaid with gold, and decorated with silver chains? Or is a poor person's wooden idol better? Can God be compared to an idol that must be placed on a stand so it won't fall down? Have you never heard or understood? Are you deaf to the words of God – the words he gave before the world began? Are you so ignorant? It is God who sits above the circle of the earth. The people below must seem to him like grasshoppers! He is the one who spreads out the heavens like a curtain and makes his tent from them. He judges the great people of the world and brings them all to nothing. They hardly get started, barely taking root, when he blows on them and their work withers. The wind carries them off like straw. “To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?” asks the Holy One. Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out one after another, calling each by its name. And he counts them to see that none are lost or have strayed away” (NLT).

Revelation 4:10-11 – “The twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives forever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.’”

Revelation 14:6-7 – “Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth – to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.’”

SEE ALSO: Job 38 and 39; Psalm 104

Fear God –

1. To fear, to stand in awe of, be awed, reverence, honor, respect, to dread, be astonished, to hold in awe
2. To be inspired with reverence or godly fear or awe
3. To be afraid of

Benefits of Fear and Reverence for God

Deuteronomy 6:1-3 – “These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and *so that you may enjoy long life.*”

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 – “And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today *for your own good?*”

2 Chronicles 26:3-5 – “Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years... He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord... He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the Lord, God gave him *success.*”

Psalm 25:14 – “*The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.*”

Psalm 33:18-21 – “But *the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him.*”

Psalm 103:13 – “As a father has compassion on his children, so *the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.*”

Psalm 111:10 – “The fear of the Lord *is the beginning of wisdom*; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.”

Psalm 128:1 – “*Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways.*”

Psalm 147:10-12 – “His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man; *the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.*”

Proverbs 1:7 – “The fear of the Lord *is the beginning of knowledge*, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.”

Proverbs 19:23 – “The fear of the Lord *leads to life*; Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.”

Proverbs 22:4 – “Humility and the fear of the Lord *bring wealth and honor and life.*”

Acts 9:31 – “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was *strengthened; and encouraged* by the Holy Spirit, *it grew* in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.”

Worship God –

To bow, bow down, reverence, fall down, prostrate oneself.

Exodus 34:14 – “Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”

Deuteronomy 4:39 – “Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.”

1 Chronicles 16:29-31 – “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. Tremble before him, all the earth! The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns!’”

Psalms 29:1-3 – “Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, Give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the Lord is over the waters; The God of glory thunders; The Lord is over many waters” (NKJV).

Psalms 95:6 – “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

Psalms 99:5 – “Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy.”

Matthew 4:10 – “Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”’” (Also Luke 4:7-8)

Thank God (Gratitude) –

God does not need our thanks. Being made in God's image, we were made to experience and express gratitude. It is actually good for us. (A growing body of research shows that being grateful contributes to more satisfaction with our lives, family, friendships, better sleep, fewer physical complaints, increased productivity, and more desire to give to others.)

1 Chronicles 16:4-12 – “He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, to make petition, *to give thanks*, and to praise the Lord, the God of Israel: ... That day David first committed to Asaph and his associates this *psalm of thanks* to the Lord: *Give thanks to the Lord*, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced.”

Daniel 6:10 – “Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, *giving thanks* to his God, just as he had done before.”

1 Chronicles 16:34 – “*Give thanks* to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.”

Nehemiah 12:31 – “I had the leaders of Judah go up on top of the wall. I also assigned two large choirs to *give thanks*.”

Psalms 75:1 – “*We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks*, for your name is near; men tell of your wonderful deeds.”

Isaiah 12:4-6 – “In that day you will say: ‘*Give thanks* to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted.’”

Matthew 15:36 – “Then he (Jesus) took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had *given thanks*, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people.”

Matthew 26:27 – “Then he (Jesus) took the cup, *gave thanks* and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you.’”

Romans 1:21 – “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God *nor gave thanks to him*, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God gives us his abundant life (eternal) when we believe in Jesus’ and his full payment for our sin. We experience this life by following Jesus. We follow Jesus by doing what he did. Jesus lived fully aware of just how great and good God is. His natural response was to fear (or revere) God, to worship him, and to give thanks. We can experience the same.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** the importance of recognizing God’s greatness and goodness and responding to this with reverential fear, worship, and thankfulness.
- ***Understand** what it means to fear, worship, and thank God and why this is good to do.
- ***Live** life recognizing God’s greatness and goodness each day and cultivating a spirit of reverence, worship, and gratitude.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, a book, a cup, a light bulb, an oddly shaped “mystery item”, a cloth, sets of cards that say either Believe, Obey, or Depend

Scripture References

Genesis 2:1; 1 Samuel 12:24; 1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 16:11, 95:6, 96:4, 99:5, 105:5, 111:10, 136:1; Isaiah 42:5; Matthew 5:48, 26:27; John 4:23–24; Acts 17:24–31; 1 John 4:28

Welcome Time

In our previous lesson, we talked about how we can fully experience the abundant life God has given to us in Jesus. We simply follow Jesus. To follow Jesus is to do what he did. I have given you a card that has one word on it. Your card will either say: Believe, Obey, or Depend: three things that Jesus did very well. I’d like for you to get into groups of three. Each of you should have a different card so that someone in your group is holding a believe, obey, and depend card. Allow students time to assemble in their groups. Prepare sets of cards beforehand and hand these out.

Now that you are in your groups, I would like each one of you to name one practical way you can do what it says on your card. The person who has the believe card will share one practical way that he or she can believe and trust in God and his word. The person who has the obey card will share one practical way that he or she can obey God’s instruction for living. Finally, the person who has the depend card will share one practical way that he or she can depend on God. Please begin sharing.

Attention Grabber

Before class, place a book, a cup, and a light bulb separate from each other on a table where the students can easily see them. Cover each item with a small cloth. Also place your mystery item separate from the other three items underneath its own cloth.

Ask the students to guess what is underneath each cloth. If necessary pick the item up and show its shape while still covered by the cloth. They should be able to guess at this point. If not, uncover the item. Repeat for the next two items.

Once an item is recognized, ask the children what they would do with it now that they know what it is. For example, a book is for reading, a cup is for drinking, and light bulb is for placing in a socket to light a room.

Now point to the mystery item. This item should be something with an odd shape that the children will not recognize covered or uncovered but should be something that you are familiar with. After you have finally uncovered the item, have at least three of the students guess what the purpose of the item is. Have fun with this! When you are ready, tell the class what the item is called and what it is used for.

It is very important that we recognize something before we can know how to respond to that item: before we know what to do with it! Today, we are going to talk about how we can further follow Jesus by doing what he did. We are going to talk about how we can *recognize* God’s greatness and goodness, and respond to him as a result.

In Psalm 105:5, the Bible calls us to, “Think of the wonderful works God has done.” We’re going to do just that today. We’re going to look at all of the amazing things God has done and recognize just how great God is. Then, we will learn what Jesus did and what we can do in response.

The Lesson

Recognize that God is Great and Good

I’d like for you to get in the four groups that we have been working in for the past lessons. Please try to pick a different spokesperson and recorder for today. In your groups, I’d like for you to make a list of answers for each of these questions on your group information sheets: *What did God make? What does God do? What does God provide for us?* Write down as many things as you can.

Allow students time to work in their small groups. When they have finished, ask the group spokesperson to share their group’s list. If you have a chalkboard or whiteboard, write their lists under the headings “What God Made,” “What God Does,” and “What God Provides for Us.”

There is so much that God made. Do you remember what Genesis 2:1 says? “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.” Everything in heaven and on earth was made by God. You all identified so many amazing things that were made by God.

Listen to this verse from the Bible. Isaiah 42:5: “This is what God the Lord says – he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it.” God created everything and he also gives life and breath to everything living on the earth. This is one of the many things that God does, in addition to what you listed in your groups.

Not only did God create everything in our world and keeps everything alive, he also gives us so much each day. Listen to Acts 17:24-31, “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.”

Everything we have comes from God: everything! He provides us with everything that we have to enjoy and everything that we need. All that you listed on your lists are things that he gives us because all that we have comes from him!

We can easily see and know that God is great and God is good. We can always “think of the wonderful things that God has done” (Psalm 105:5).

Respond: Fear, Worship, and Thankfulness

The Bible teaches that we can respond to God's greatness and goodness in three important ways: reverence, worship, and gratitude. We'll look at each of these and then I'll ask you to come up with practical ways that you can do them in your everyday lives.

Fear God

In 1 Samuel 12:24, the Bible calls us to, “...be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart.” The Bible calls us to fear God more than 60 times, yet in other passages God says “fear not.” For example, 1 John 4:28 says, “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

So what does it mean to fear God? Allow for the students' responses.

In the Bible, to fear God means to revere him with great trust. To revere means to hold in awe and respect. It's not anxiety because we know that he is a good God. It includes great trust because we know that God loves us and will always do what is best for us.

Fearing God is good for us! The Bible says that the Son of God (Jesus) delighted in the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:3). This fear is similar to the fear that a young son has for a loving Father whom he trusts and loves, but whom he also knows can (and does) discipline him when needed. It's similar to the fear you have for a favorite teacher in school. You love and respect this teacher and do not want to disappoint him or her. The Bible says that similarly we are to fear God in response to his greatness and goodness.

Worship God

The second response we have to the greatness and goodness of God is to worship him. Psalm 99:5 says, “Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy.” The literal meaning of the word *worship* in the Old Testament is to “bow down,” “fall down before,” or to “reverence” someone. Psalm 95:6 says, “Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” We worship God when we recognize how great and good he is and then bow in our thoughts and hearts before him. We give him the respect, honor, glory, and praise that he deserves.

Worship starts in our hearts and minds and then is expressed in word, song, or service. This is why the Bible says we are to worship God in “spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). We can get down on our knees or bow our heads, but worshipping God really starts in our hearts. Did you know that it is possible for a person to be on their knees yet not truly worshipping God because their heart is not kneeling before him? Discuss this with the students until you think they have grasped this important truth.

We also do not need to be in a church building, Sunday school class, or Bible study to worship God. We can recognize God's greatness and goodness throughout the day and then respond in our hearts with respect, thanksgiving, and a desire to serve him. This means we can worship God at the market, in the classroom, on the job, on the playground... everywhere!

Thank God

The most natural way that we can respond to God when we see his greatness and goodness is to thank him.

Chronicles 16:34 says, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." Matthew 26:27 says, "Then he (Jesus) took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them..." We are called by God to thank him at all times for everything. We thank him for the specific things he gives us each day and because he is good!

Even though we are clearly commanded by God to thank him, he doesn't need our thanks! Jesus said his heavenly Father was perfect (Matthew 5:48). The Bible says that God is perfect, complete, and lacks nothing!

Even though God lacks nothing and does not need our fear, worship, and thanks, he deserves it. Psalm 96:4 says, "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; He is to be feared above all Gods!" Psalm 136:1 says, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good."

God doesn't need our thanks and praise. We are the ones who have the need. We have a need to fear, worship, and thank God. God's command for us to do these things is for our good, not his.

Application

In your groups, I'd like for you to discuss and list times you have had when you have felt and expressed reverence, worship, or gratitude toward God. You'll make your lists in your small groups and then we'll come together as a large group and share a few of these.

Allow students time to work in their groups. When they have finished, call on each group spokesperson to share one or two things from their list.

The Benefit to us:

Fearing God

There are so many benefits to fearing God. Psalm 111:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts (his laws) have good understanding." When we fear God, we gain wisdom because we realize how awesome God is and know that he is in control of our world and our lives.

Worshipping God

When we worship God, we enter into his presence and see that God is great and we are so small. Yet, we still are very important to him. We also see that God is strong and we are weak, yet we are loved very much by him. We see that God is all-important, yet he knows our name. Finally,

we see that God is the provider of all things and we are the recipients of all of the wonderful things that he gives. Worshipping God is a good thing. Psalm 16:11 says, “...you fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

Thanking God

When we are thankful, it lifts our spirits. Research shows that people who are grateful tend to feel better and do better in life. Pay attention each day to *every good thing* God has done for you and around you. Doing so, you can't help but have a positive outlook on life!

Closing Group Discussion

In your groups, I'd like for you to make circles of gratitude. I'd like you to sit in a circle and go around and say, “*I'm thankful to God for....*” Fill in the blank with anything you're thankful for. Let's see which group can be last and thank God the most for all of his wonderful blessings!

Allow students time to interact and thank God in their small groups. When they have finished, call them together for the closing reflection and prayer.

Reflection and Prayer

You've already spent time thanking God for his goodness. In your journals, I'd like you to think now about how you need to fear and worship him. Please complete the following action statements:

Because I want to revere God more, I will...

Because I want to worship God in my heart more, I will...

Allow students time to write in their journals. When they are finished close in prayer, praising and thanking God for who he is and what he has done. Ask God to give each of the students a worshipful and thankful heart towards him.

What did God make?

What does God do?

What does God provide for us?

Ways we can:

Fear God:

Worship God:

Thank God:

UNIT 5



God's Design for the Family

God created three primary social institutions to serve and support society – the church, the family, and the government. Each has a unique and important role to play. The family is the first and most basic social institution created by God. The lessons in this unit aim to help a child understand God's good and perfect design for their family and relationships.

Student Journal – Unit Five

You will use this journal each day at the end of the lesson to record your action statements. Action statements are things you decide to do based on what you learned in the lesson.

Lesson One

Since marriage is a special gift, I will...

Since God created marriage to symbolize his relationship with us, I will...

Lesson Two

Because sexual intimacy is a gift from God only to be enjoyed in marriage, I will...

Lesson Three

Since God is the head of my family, I will trust him to...

Since God calls me to show love and put the needs of my family first, I will...

Lesson Four

Because God calls a man to love his family by leading and providing for them, I will pray for my father for...

Lesson Seven

Since God calls me to honor and obey my parents, I will...

Since God calls me to honor and obey my parents, I need to change from...

UNIT FIVE – LESSON 1



God’s Design for the Family: Marriage Is Sacred

TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

God created and established the family as the core unit and fundamental institution of society. It is the family that most forms and equips the individual in society. God’s design for the family begins with marriage.

Young people need to know that marriage is a very serious and important commitment with God. They need to know that God wants people to have good marriages, and that he will help them. Young people need to have a clear understanding of what marriage is according to God’s word, as this is foundational to the development of strong, healthy families.

The Truth: Marriage is sacred. It is a God-established union of a man and a woman. God established marriage to be a life-long commitment of love and fidelity between a man and a woman.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- Marriage is not sacred. It is not God-established.
- Marriage is an institution created and governed by societies and communities. Therefore, society and governments can define it as they wish.
- God does not care about helping people marry well or have good marriages. He is only concerned about keeping married people from divorcing.
- Divorce is a good solution if two people are not getting along in marriage.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Young people will understand that marriage is a covenant made with God. They will have confidence that God wants to help them to establish a healthy marriage someday. They will respond by making a personal commitment to seek God’s guidance and help regarding this very important life decision.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children.

- You have material possessions that God has given you (clothes, food, shelter). Gratitude is the starting point for peace, joy, and creative energy. Always be grateful for what God has already given to you.
- You have the ability to love and care for others.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Rely on the Holy Spirit to help you. Ultimately, God is the teacher who impresses truth on the mind and heart of a student. You are a vessel that can only give your very best. Leave the results to God!

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read through this article that speaks of the covenant of marriage: [Christian Marriage Covenant](http://globalchristiancenter.com/marriage-matters/christian-marriage-covenant.html), By David Martz, Ed.D., <http://globalchristiancenter.com/marriage-matters/christian-marriage-covenant.html>

Also, as you prepare, please read and pray through these scriptures that speak of the sacredness of marriage. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Genesis 2:20-24 – “So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called “woman,” for she was taken out of man.’ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

Malachi 2:15-16 – “Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. ‘I hate divorce,’ says the Lord God of Israel, ‘and I hate a man’s covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,’ says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.”

Matthew 19:4-6 – “‘Haven’t you read,’ he replied, ‘that at the beginning the Creator “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.’”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

Marriage is the sacred, God-established union of a man and a woman in lifelong love and fidelity.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that God established marriage to be a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman.
- ***Understand** that marriage is also a covenant made with God and that he wants to help us establish healthy marriages.
- ***Respond** by viewing marriage as the sacred union that it is and by making a personal commitment to seek God's guidance and help regarding this very important life decision.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, three thin cords or strings for each student to braid, three larger cords to use as a teaching example

Scripture References

Genesis 1:27, 2:7,18, 21-23; Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:14; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Malachi 2:15-16; Matthew 19:6; Luke 5:34-35; Revelation 19:7

Welcome Time

Today, you will play a game with the students called, "Question/Answer Match." Divide the students into groups of three and have them sit down. Before class, prepare question and answer cards from the last several lessons. See examples at the end of this lesson. Write down a question from the lessons on a card. On a different card, write down an answer to that question. Make at least eight sets of cards. Hand out one card to each group.

I have prepared different cards. Some of the cards have questions on them and other cards have answers that correspond to the questions. I have given one question or answer card to each group. One at a time, I will call on the groups with questions to read them. The group that thinks they have the answer to that question should stand up and read the answer. Then the whole class will decide if they are correct. Our goal is match all the questions with their correct answers.

Lead children in playing the game until all of the questions have been matched with their correct answers.

Attention Grabber

I think you saw in your groups how valuable it was to have two other players to help you listen and decide on the correct question if you were holding an answer card. It is easier to work together.

Bring out three cords or strings. Ask one of the students to come to the front of the class and hand him or her one of the cords. Ask him or her to pull on it as hard as he or she can until it breaks. Hopefully, your student will be able to break it! If not, take it and break it yourself, thanking the student for "getting it started."

Now braid three pieces of the cord together (knot them at each end) in front of the class and hand it to the same student. Ask him or her to pull as hard as they can until the cords break. Hopefully, they will not be able to break the cords! Ask two other students to come forward to help break the cords, pulling like a “tug of war.” After a time, thank the students for such a good effort and ask them to return to their seats.

In Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, it says, “Two people can accomplish more than twice as much as one; they get a better return for their labor. If one person falls, the other person can reach out and help. But people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble. And on a cold night, two under the same blanket can gain warmth from each other. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a *triple-braided cord is not easily broken*” (NLT).

You found out in your game that it is advantageous to work in a group rather than to work by yourself. Today, we’re going to learn about God’s incredible gift of marriage. Marriage is one of the ways that God may give us community and form us into a “triple-braided cord” that is stronger than a cord by itself. However, since marriage is with two people, we’ll learn that in order for any marriage to be successful, it must have at its center, the third cord, which is God. When God is involved in any marriage, those two people are as strong as they can be. Let’s learn more about God’s gift of marriage.

The Lesson

We have learned so much about our great God. Would anyone like to share one thing that they have learned about him so far? Allow for the students’ responses.

One of the really important and valuable things we have learned so far is that God is both all-good and all-wise. Therefore, we know that his plans for our life are perfect. We have learned that we can trust his instructions. He loves us and he wants us to experience the abundant life that he gives us through his Son. We can do this when we know and follow God’s design for life.

If we are to follow God’s design for life, then we all need to begin learning about what his design for the family is since family is such a big part of our lives. God has placed all of us in families. You have a role to play in your family right now, and someday, if God gives you your own family, you will have a different role to play. So, it’s important that you know what God says about the family and what his roles are for each member.

God Created Marriage

In the Bible, we learn that God is the one who created marriage and the family. In Genesis 1:27, we learn, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Before God could create marriage, he needed to create the people who were first to be married. So, God created man and woman, telling us that the starting point of any marriage is a man and a woman who have equal value and worth in the sight of God because they were both created in his image. Let’s learn more about the creation of man by God and how he brought the first married couple, Adam and Eve, together in the Garden of Eden.

I have an activity for you on your group worksheets. I have the events of the creation of man and of Adam and Eve being brought together on your worksheets. The events are out of order. In your groups, I'd like you to work together and see if you can put the events in order. We'll need to form four different groups now as we're starting a new unit. For this whole unit, I need your groups to be all boys or all girls. So, girls divide into two groups, and boys please do the same thing. These will be your groups for this whole unit. Make sure that you choose a spokesperson and a recorder for your group today.

Allow students several minutes to work on putting the events in order. When they have finished, begin telling the story of the creation of Adam and Eve.

Listen now as I tell you the story of God creating Adam and Eve. Check to see that you put the events in order on your worksheet. If you did not, you may make corrections to it as I tell the story. Genesis 2:7 says that "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." Wow! Close your eyes a moment and try to imagine God using the dust of the ground to make a *man* and then breathing *life* into him! What an amazing God we have!

Before God made Adam, he made all the fish of the sea, birds of the air, and animals of the land. After Adam was created, God brought the creatures to Adam and asked him to name them. What a job! Even though the animals were wonderful, God knew that Adam still did not have a companion. Adam did not have someone to stand with him, to share life with him, to help him. In Genesis 2:18, God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him."

So God did something amazing AGAIN...he made a woman! Let's hear how he did that. Read Genesis 2:21-22 (or have one of the students read this if possible): "So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man."

Can any of you guess what Adam said when he first met Eve? What would you have said? Allow for responses. The Bible tells us exactly what Adam said! Let's hear it: Genesis 2:23: "At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of a man" NLT).

How does it sound like Adam felt when he met Eve? Allow for response. He sounds pretty happy to me! That was the first marriage, and God was the matchmaker in the Garden of Eden.

Marriage Is Very Special and Sacred

God created marriage. That alone makes it very special and very good since all that God created was good. However, there are two other reasons that marriage is very special and sacred. You see, God intends for marriage to be a picture of his love for Israel and for the church.

In the Old Testament, God uses the picture of marriage to illustrate his love and undivided commitment to the people of Israel. Let’s look at some verses that talk about this:

Isaiah 54:5: “For your Maker is your *husband*—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.”

Jeremiah 3:14: “‘Return, faithless people,’ declares the Lord, ‘for I am your *husband*.’”

Through the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, God is telling the people of Israel that he is “married” to them. What this means is that God loves them dearly and is deeply committed to them. He will not break his promises to them.

In the New Testament, God uses the picture of marriage to illustrate his love and undivided commitment to the church, to those who believe and follow Jesus. Let’s hear what he says:

Luke 5:34-35: “Jesus answered, ‘Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the *bridegroom* will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.’”

Jesus is talking about himself and describing himself as a bridegroom.

Revelation 19:7: “Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the *wedding of the Lamb* has come, and his *bride* has made herself ready.”

Here the church is described as the bride of Christ. When Jesus (the bridegroom) comes for his bride (the church or those who believe) there will be a big wedding feast.

There is a discussion question on your group worksheets that I’d like for you to discuss and think about now. Please talk about the following: *If God uses marriage as a way to illustrate his relationship to us, what does that tell us about him?*

Allow students time to discuss their ideas in their groups. Call on each group spokesperson to share their group’s ideas.

God is using the idea of marriage to explain how much he loves us and is committed to us. And we KNOW that God NEVER breaks his commitments. The fact that God uses marriage as a way to describe his relationship to those he loves, shows us just how special and sacred marriage is to him!

God Intends for Marriage to Be a Covenant

Marriage is meant by God to be a covenant. A covenant is a “formal, solemn, and binding agreement.”²³ It is not just an ordinary agreement or arrangement. It is a very special and sacred promise. Because God created marriage, he takes marriage very seriously, just as he takes his relationship with us very seriously. He takes it so seriously that he sent his son, Jesus, to die a terrible death on a cross for us so that we could be forgiven and have a relationship with him.

23 Webster’s 1828 Dictionary of the English Language, s. v. “covenant”

The Bible describes marriage as a covenant that is binding and sacred. God commands husbands and wives to be very careful about their marriage covenant:

Malachi 2:15-16 says, “Didn’t the Lord make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. And what does he want? Godly children from your union. *So guard yourself; remain loyal to the wife of your youth. ‘For I hate divorce!’* says the Lord, the God of Israel. ‘It is as cruel as putting on a victim’s bloodstained coat,’ says the Lord Almighty. *So guard yourself; always remain loyal to your wife*” (NLT).

God says he hates divorce because it involves breaking a covenant that is just as binding and sacred as a covenant that God makes with his people.

In your groups, I’d like for you to think about another group discussion question: *If marriage is a covenant, how should we treat our marriages, and what should we do if God gives us a husband or a wife someday?* Please take the time to think about this question, and then I’ll hear from your group spokespeople.

Allow several minutes for groups to discuss and share.

Closing Group Discussion

We have learned some very important things about marriage today. I’m going to give each of you three cords now to make your own triple-braided cords like I made in the beginning of class. These triple-braided cords will remind you of the important lessons we’ve learned about marriage.

Hand out three cords to each student. As they are braiding them say,

Look at your three cords. They remind you of the three people who are involved in a marriage: a husband, a wife, and God. With God at the center of a marriage, it will be as strong as it can possibly be.

Pause.

Look at the three cords you’re braiding now. They remind you of the three important things we learned about marriage today: God created marriage, marriage is special and sacred, and marriage is a covenant.

Pause.

Finally, look at the three cords you’re braiding again. They represent three agreements that a man and woman make in marriage. First, they make an agreement to each other to be faithful. Second, they make a contract between themselves and the community. Third, they make a three-fold covenant between themselves and God.

In Matthew 19:6, Jesus said regarding marriage, “What God has joined together, let no man separate.” Those three cords braided together represent marriage and they should never be separated.

Just as you braided three cords together, I’d like for you to share three things that you learned about marriage with the people in your groups. After you are finished sharing, we will move to reflection and prayer time.

Allow students time to share in their groups.

Reflection and Prayer

Though none of you are married now, and God may not call each one of you to be in a marriage, there are things you can do to view marriage the way that God calls you to. There are also ways that you can encourage those who are married. Let’s turn to our journals and complete the following action statements:

Since marriage is special, I will...

Since God created marriage to symbolize his relationship with us, I will...

Allow students time to write in their journals. When they have finished, close in prayer. Thank God for the wonderful covenant of marriage. Ask him to help the students remember how special and important marriage is as they continue to grow and mature. Thank him that he always gives us what is best, and someday if marriage is what is best for us, God will bring along a spouse. He will show us what his best path is for our lives.

Eight Question and Answer Card Examples

(This first question card could have five answer cards)

1. Q: When we believe in Jesus death and payment for our sin, God gives us new life. We talked about five special things about this life gift. What are these five things?

A: It is free – we don't have to do anything to earn it.
It is eternal – it lasts forever.
It starts immediately when we believe in Jesus.
It is amazing and good – abundant.
It affects or touches all aspects of our earthly life (school work, health, our job, our relationships, etc.).

2. Q: We get God's life as a free gift, but what does Jesus call us to do to fully experience this life? What did he ask all of his disciples to do? (Hint, this word also means "disciple")

A: Jesus asked people to follow him. We follow Jesus today by simply doing what Jesus did.

3. Q: One of the ways we said we can follow Jesus – or do what Jesus did – is to **believe** God and his word. What is an example of how we can do this?

A: We can believe that God created every person in his image and so every person is equal in value, dignity, and worth – and every person is amazingly special to God.

4. Q: One of the ways we said we can follow Jesus – or do what Jesus did – is to **obey** God and his word. What is an example of how we can do this?

A: We can obey God by studying hard and doing our homework. In this way, we steward and develop our minds so that we can bless others.

5. Q: One of the ways we said we can follow Jesus – or do what Jesus did – is to **depend** on God and his word. What is an example of how we can do this?

A: We can depend on God by taking responsibility. We can say we are wrong and sorry when we do what is wrong. We depend on God's help to do this and he will bless us eventually for doing so.

6. Q: One of the ways we said we can follow Jesus – or do what Jesus did – is to **fear** God? Give one reason why we would fear God? How do we do this?

A: One reason to fear God is because he is the one who gives us our heartbeat each day. We can fear God by doing the right thing even when no one is looking – out of respect for God.

7. Q: One of the ways we said we can follow Jesus – or do what Jesus did – is to **worship** God? Give one reason why we would worship God? How do we do this?

A: One reason to worship God is because he is the one who knows more math than anyone else in the world – because he created math. We worship God by bowing our hearts before him and voicing our praise.

8. Q: One of the ways we said we can follow Jesus – or do what Jesus did – is to **thank** God? Give one reason why we would thank God? How do we do this?

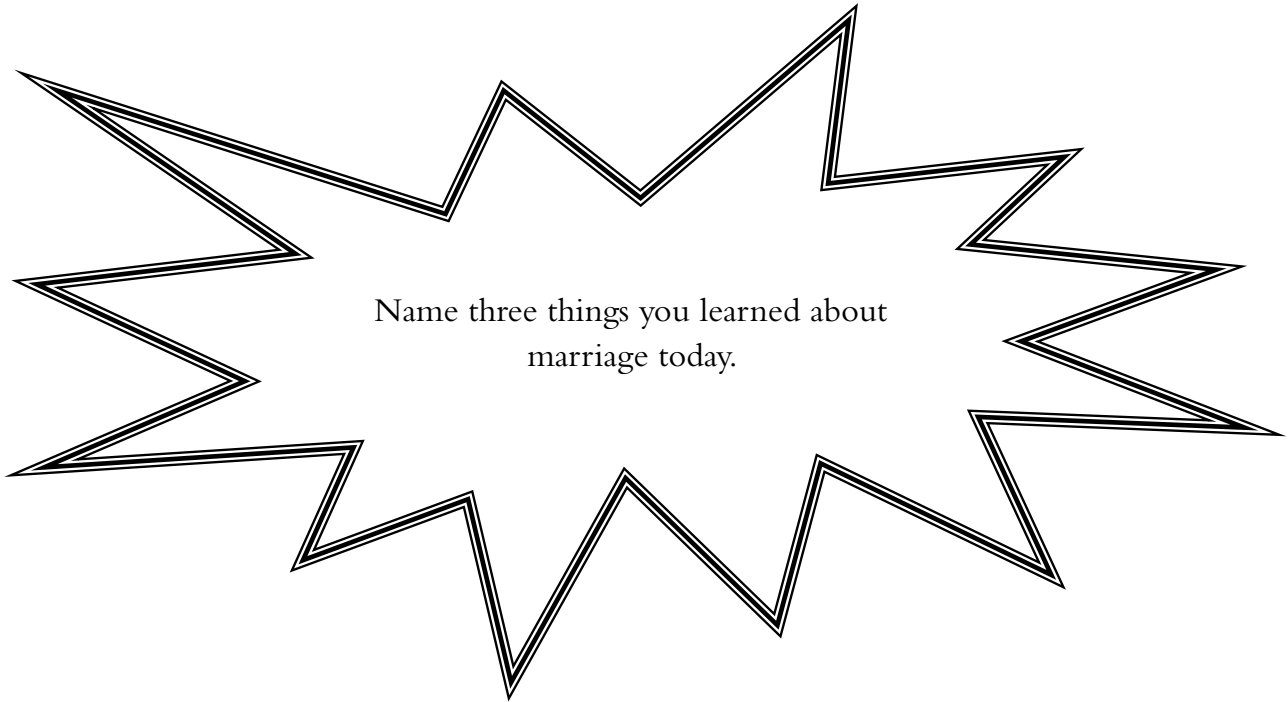
A: One reason to thank God is because he is the one who made good food and gave us the ability to taste and enjoy it. We thank God by simply saying thank you to him.

The Creation and Marriage of Adam and Eve

Please put the following events in order:

- ___ God creates Adam from the dust of the Earth.
- ___ Adam can't find a suitable companion from all of the animals.
- ___ God creates Eve from Adam's rib to be a companion for him.
- ___ God creates all of the animals.
- ___ Adam names all of the animals.

God uses marriage as a way to describe his relationship to us. What does this description tell us about God?



If marriage is a covenant, how should we treat our marriage and our husband or wife if God someday allows us to be married?

UNIT FIVE – LESSON 2



God’s Design for the Family: Sacred Intimacy within Marriage

TEACHER’S GUIDE

Note to the teacher: This is an optional lesson intended for older youth. Use your own discretion regarding the particular age group and manner of presentation for these materials.

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

Young people need to understand not just the “thou shalt not” of sexual intimacy outside of marriage, but the very real and special benefit of this instruction. They also need to know the harmful social and relational effects of sex outside of marriage as well as the physical risks.

The Truth: God created sexual intimacy to be a blessing within the marriage relationship. It is a wonderful gift from God to be enjoyed between a husband and his wife. Outside the marriage relationship, sexual intimacy is ultimately hurtful and destructive to all involved.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

Human sexual intimacy is not a special design of God for marriage. It’s just a natural physical function.

1. Human sexual intimacy is not sacred. In this respect, people are just like animals.
2. Sex outside of marriage is harmless as long as both partners agree. There are no emotional or physical effects that would hurt one or the other.
3. Limiting sexual intimacy to marriage limits its potential expression.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Young people can respond by living sexually-pure lives and enjoy the confidence, emotional well-being, and all the other benefits that come with handling sexual intimacy as God designed it.

Encouragement for the Teacher

All knowledge and truth come from God. Math, science, art, geology, literacy, and good literature all ultimately flow from, or find their source in, the mind of God. Creation reveals God’s character and nature. He created it all. He created everything for a purpose.

Two questions that will bring light, energy, and meaning to every subject you study:

- 1) How is God’s character and nature revealed through this topic?
- 2) What is God’s purpose in providing this area of study or specific lesson? What about it can we use to love God more or make the world better?

Tip for Successful Teaching

Class Management

There is a difference between good and bad noise. Good noise is learning noise – children discovering and sharing new insights. Bad noise is disruptive and destructive. Put an end to bad noise by using your attention-getting signal and separating students who tease or talk to each other.

Additional Information

As you prepare for this lesson, please consider the following thoughts and articles. Consider how you might share these truths with the children that you teach.

Sex is like a river. With strong riverbanks, the river brings life. Without strong banks, it floods and brings destruction. The two “riverbanks” for sexual intimacy are love and lifelong marriage commitment. Sexual intimacy outside of a loving marriage will bring a flood of pain, shame, and regret. Only within a loving marriage can the sexual relationship be safe.

The following on healthy friendship, love, and lust, and how to say “no” in a sandwich is taken from Design for the Family’s *Adventure Unlimited Picture Cards*,²⁴

HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

We need to think sensibly about our friendships with people of the opposite sex. You probably know people who have made mistakes in relationships. Your friendships with the opposite sex are good if:

1. You have many friends. You are friends to all and lovers to none! You take part in group activities together. You are encouraging one another to be better people. You are encouraging one another to be better people and be diligent in your work. Your friendship gives you new energy, strength, zest for life, a sense of responsibility, and joy in living.
2. You talk sensibly together about a lot of things. You understand. You listen. You enjoy discussing facts, thoughts, ideas, dreams, and hopes. You can share failures and help each other to overcome them.
3. You respect the fact that we are male and female and you do not demand physical involvement. You are not using or abusing one another. You do not say, “If you really loved me you would...” It’s the greatest lack of love to trifle with the affections of another person.
4. You have the blessing of your parents. They enjoy your friends. You can enjoy being in one another’s home. You respect each other’s family. You help one another to think the best of parents, brothers, and sisters. You don’t run them down even where there may be difficulties.
5. You are unselfish. Your desire is to give and not to get.

LOVE AND LUST

We sometimes make the mistake of confusing love and lust. They are very different things.

24 Design for the Family *Adventure Unlimited Picture Cards*, 45, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 21-23

Lust is destructive but love is positive and good.

Love takes time to know each other and to give. Love is a growing thing and growing takes time.

Lust is always in a hurry. It is a super big rush for acceptance and affection. The big hurry leads to a big burn out.

Love always believes the best and is thoughtful, sensitive, caring, and creative. It wants to serve and to see you grow and develop.

Lust wants to be served. It tries to change your personality to fit itself. When its demands are not met, it rejects the whole relationship.

Love encourages freedom to develop and enjoy other activities and friends. It allows you space to be yourself and helps you to grow. It strengthens other relationships.

Lust is upset and angry over any person or activity that interferes with your time together. It sulks and gets its own back. It cuts off other relationships.

Love's greatest desire is to see you grow as an individual person with all your needs met. It aims to build you up and make you a better person. Love cares about you.

Lust says "You must satisfy my emotional needs." Lust wants for itself and always aims to get. It centers on "me."

HOW TO SAY "NO" IN A SANDWICH

Sometimes you will find yourself wanting to say "no" to something a friend wants you to do. Here is a good and easy way to say "no."

It is a "no" sandwich. The negative, the "no", comes between two positives. How does it work? Well, if a friend asks you to do something that you don't want to do and you feel is not right...

1. Start with a positive – "I really like you, and I am glad you are my friend."
2. Then the negative – "But I don't want to do that."
3. Finally another positive – "Why don't we go to youth group with our other friends instead?"

Saying "no" in a sandwich helps you to avoid doing the thing you feel bad about while still keeping the friendship. Try it!

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures that speaks of sexual intimacy. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Job 31:1 – "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl."

Acts 15:28-29 – "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things."

1 Corinthians 6:13 – "'Food for the stomach and the stomach for food' – but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body."

Galatians 5:19-20 – “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions.”

Hebrews 13:4 – “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”

Account of How Joseph Resists and Stays Sexually Pure:

Genesis 39:5-20:

From the time he put him (Joseph) in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. So he left in Joseph’s care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said, “Come to bed with me!”

But he refused. “With me in charge,” he told her, “my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, she called her household servants. “Look,” she said to them, “this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.”

She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. Then she told him this story: “That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.”

When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.

Account of How Amnon Did Not Resist Temptation:

2 Samuel 13:1-19 (NIV):

In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David.

Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.

Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. He asked Amnon, "Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?"

Amnon said to him, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

"Go to bed and pretend to be ill," Jonadab said. "When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.'"

So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand."

David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him." So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat.

"Send everyone out of here," Amnon said. So everyone left him. Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, my sister."

"Don't, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing. What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you." But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!"

"No!" she said to him. "Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me."

But he refused to listen to her. He called his personal servant and said, “Get this woman out of here and bolt the door after her.” So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing a richly ornamented robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore. Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornamented robe she was wearing. She put her hand on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went.

Forgiveness and Healing

Joel 2:12-13 – “‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.’”

Joel 2:17-19 – “Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, ‘Spare your people, O Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?”’ Then the Lord will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people. The Lord will reply to them: *‘I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.’*”

THE LESSON

Main Point

God created sexual intimacy to be a blessing within the marriage relationship.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift from God to be enjoyed between a husband and his wife.
- ***Understand** that sexual intimacy is hurtful and destructive outside the marriage relationship.
- ***Respond** by living sexually-pure lives.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, two raw eggs and a bowl, Secondary Virginitiy chart, pledge for each student, picture of aspirin, glass jar with James 1:17 written on it with name slips for each child in the jar

Scripture References

Genesis 1:31; Romans 1:20; James 1:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:6b; 1 Timothy 6:17

Welcome Time

To review the last lesson and introduce the theme of today's lesson, the students will play a game of "Lottery Review". As the students arrive, have them write their name on a slip of paper, fold it, and put it into a large glass jar. On the jar have the verse written: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights who does not change like shifting shadows" James 1:17.

Please sit in a circle. I have a glass jar with your names in it and the verse, James 1:17, written on it. It says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights who does not change like shifting shadows." I need one volunteer to come to the center of the circle. Choose one student to come to the center.

Volunteer, you will read the Bible verse and say one thing you learned about the gift of marriage from the last lesson. Then you will take a slip with a name from the jar. This person will then come to the center and say the Bible verse. We'll continue saying the Bible verse and picking names until all of you (who want to) have had a chance to say the verse and share one thing that you learned.

Continue playing the game in this manner until all students who wish have had the chance to say the verse and tell one thing that they learned.

Attention Grabber

Show the class the eggs you are using for this illustration. Break one or two of them into a bowl. Discuss the following:

How many of you would like to come to the front of the class and eat these eggs like they are right now? Allow for students' responses.

Why not? Allow for students' responses.

How do you think they would taste? Allow for students’ responses.

If you really, really wanted to eat eggs would you eat them like this or would you be willing to wait until they are cooked? Allow for students’ responses.

What would happen if you decided not to wait? Would your desire for eggs truly be satisfied if you ate these eggs raw? Allow for students’ responses.

The truth is, raw eggs do not taste very good. They can also make you sick! We are going to talk today about a very special gift that God has created for us. It is only good for us (it is a blessing), when we wait and enjoy it in the way God intends.

The Lesson

We already know that God is good and wise, and he wants us to experience the very best life possible. He offers this through his son. However, the only way to experience that life is to know and follow God’s ways. We can trust that God’s ways are good and perfect because the Bible says creation itself reveals these and other qualities of God. (Romans 1:20)

Sexual Intimacy is a Special Gift from God

One way in which God’s ways are perfect is regarding sexual intimacy. Sexual intimacy is a special gift from God. God created everything. When he was done creating everything, what did he say in **Genesis 1**? Allow for the students’ responses.

You’re right. God said that it was very good. Listen to Genesis 1:31, “God saw all that he had made and it was very good.” If God created everything, then he also created sexual intimacy between a man and a woman. If he said that everything he created was very good, then he created sexual intimacy to be very good also. Sexual intimacy is a gift from God. It is good and perfect when enjoyed within God’s parameters. Do you remember our Bible verse from the opening activity? James 1:17 says, “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

Sexual intimacy is a good and special gift from God to mankind. God’s intention is for people to fully enjoy it and be blessed by it. 1 Timothy 6:17 says, “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, *who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.*” But, like everything good that God made, sex can be wrongly used. When it is wrongly used, it becomes destructive and hurtful instead of a blessing.

Sexual intimacy can only be blessed by God and be very good under certain circumstances. When we follow God’s loving instructions for sexual intimacy, it will result in our good. The key is to follow his instructions. His instructions are simple. Sexual intimacy is only to be enjoyed in marriage!

Sexual Intimacy Will Be a Blessing Only Within the Marriage Relationship

God’s instruction for sexual intimacy is very simple. It is to be experienced only within the context

of marriage. God created sex. Within marriage, sex is pure, holy, spiritual, and sacred. He designed sex within marriage for different purposes:

- For procreation (having children)
- For pleasure
- To bind a husband and wife together

God created sexual intimacy in such a way that it affects a person's mind and heart as well as his or her body. It is the closest relationship two people can have. As designed by God, sex is the emotional and spiritual glue that binds a man and woman together for life. Sex is meant to be shame-free. When kept within marriage, sexual intimacy brings much joy, peace, and satisfaction.

God designed sexual intimacy in such a way that its *perfection, full goodness, and benefit* can only be realized within the marriage relationship.

Sexual Intimacy Outside of Marriage Is Destructive

Conversely, sexual intimacy outside of marriage will never achieve the good that God intends for his people. Instead, it becomes destructive. When people are sexually active outside of marriage, they expose themselves to much heartache and suffering. Sex outside of marriage will hurt self confidence and self-esteem, diminish the spirit, and damage relationships with others. It can also result in the creation of a child that will not have the benefit of a father and mother living together and caring for the child in a loving relationship. Wrong use of sexual intimacy or intercourse can also result in serious diseases that may sometimes bring about an early death.

It's very similar to medicine. Show the picture of the bottle of aspirin. When used according to the instructions given, aspirin, like any medicine, can be a very good thing. It can relieve pain and even help your heart. However, if used outside of the given instructions, it can be a very bad thing! Not following the instructions can lead you to bleed too much if you have a serious health problem, or, if you take too much, it can even kill you! When taking medicine, it is very important to follow a doctor's instructions in order to avoid harming yourself. Sexual intimacy is the same way. If we don't follow God's instructions, what God designed to be very good can be very harmful! It is because God *loves us and knows what is best for us and others* that he gives this clear command and direction regarding sexual intimacy.

God knows the harm and suffering that sexual intimacy can bring outside of marriage. Therefore, he hates and will judge this sin like he does other sins. Listen to what he says in 1 Thessalonians 4:6b, "The Lord will punish men for all such sins (sexual immorality), as we have already told you and warned you." Sex outside of marriage completely misses God's best, displeases God, and ultimately hurts everyone involved.

Why Wait?

It's clear that God intends for all of us to wait and enjoy sexual intimacy only within the context of marriage. There are benefits of waiting and saving sex for marriage. There also are dangers of being sexually impure and practicing sexual intimacy outside of marriage. I would like for you to get into your groups for this unit. On your group worksheets, I've provided two lists for you to fill out: The Benefits of Sexual

Purity and the Dangers of Sexual Impurity. I’d like for you to discuss your ideas in your small groups. When you are finished, I’ll ask anyone who is comfortable sharing, to share their ideas. I’ll then add to your lists with the benefits and dangers that God’s word talks about and that are evident in society.

Allow students time to work in their groups, and, for those who are comfortable, to share when they are finished. To the students’ list add the points that you feel are most important from the following chart. If you have a chalkboard or whiteboard, post the lists there; otherwise, it may be helpful to prepare a poster ahead of time:

Benefits of Sexual Purity	Dangers of Sexual Impurity
<p>Honor God and experience his blessing <i>Confidence</i> High self-esteem <i>Peace</i> Clear mind <i>Sexual well-being</i> Ongoing respect for men/women <i>Physical health</i> Safety of future children <i>Healthy, growing relationships</i> Honor Parents, family <i>Honor future spouse</i> Safeguard against darkness <i>Unburdened personal/career growth</i> Unburdened finances <i>Security and Love</i></p>	<p>Dishonor God and miss his blessing <i>Guilt, shame</i> Low self-esteem <i>Regret</i> Haunting memories <i>Potential sexual dysfunction later in life</i> Growing disrespect for men/women <i>Potential illness or death (STDs, HIV)</i> Possible untimely pregnancy <i>Damaged relationships</i> Dishonor parents, family <i>Betray future spouse</i> Potential sexual addiction, perversion <i>Hindered potential and opportunity</i> Financial stress with illness, child <i>Emptiness and Desolation</i></p>

How Do I Wait?

If God wants us to wait and save sexual intimacy for marriage, we should talk about how to wait. On your group information sheets is a chart entitled “How Do I Wait?” Let’s talk about each one of those points. I’ll then ask you to get in your groups and discuss a practical way that you can practice one or more of these tips.

HOW DO I WAIT?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BELIEVE in and follow Jesus. 2. KEEP your thoughts pure. (Philippians 4:8) 3. GUARD your eyes and heart (no sexually immoral movies, pornography, and sex-filled novels). (Psalm 101:1-4, Job 31:1) 4. AVOID people and places that will lead you into sexual involvement. 5. If in a critical situation – FLEE! (1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22) 6. KEEP GOOD COMPANY. Spend time with guys and girls in a group. 7. Make a COVENANT WITH GOD regarding ongoing sexual purity.

After you have taught the seven ways to wait, allow students to meet in their guy/girl groups to discuss practical ways they can implement these seven steps. Allow students who are comfortable to share their ideas with the group.

Secondary Virginity – Making Wise Choices from this Point Forward

We all make mistakes and sin every day. None of us follows God perfectly and his instructions for life. Some of you may have already made the wrong choices regarding sexual intimacy. It's not too late. We have a very forgiving God who wants to forgive all of our sins and help us to follow him. I'd like to share with you six things you can do if you've already committed sexual sin.

Ahead of time prepare this chart to show to the students. Go through each point, answering the students' questions if necessary.

SECONDARY VIRGINITY <i>It is never too late to regain your virginity.</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. CONFESS your choices to God and to someone you trust. (1 John 1:9)2. REPENT—decide to turn away and make healthier choices.3. STOP sexual involvement outside of marriage, as well as watching immoral movies, reading immoral books, looking at pornography, etc. Destroy any of these things that you have in your possession that will lead you into sexual involvement.4. FORGIVE yourself and the persons who have taken your virginity. (1 John 1:9)5. GET HELP if needed. Find someone to help you change your life and follow God.6. BELIEVE in God's forgiveness and healing. (Joel 2:25)

Closing Reflection and Prayer

We've talked a lot about very sensitive and important information. I'd like to tell you a story in closing:

There was a family who raised chickens. At one time, they had several hens that had laid fertilized eggs, and they were caring for the eggs until they hatched baby chicks. Hold up the unbroken egg for illustration. This family had a daughter who loved animals but had a reputation for being very impatient. She looked forward with great anticipation to the day when she could hold the soft little chicks.

The girl waited and waited, and her impatience grew. She knew if she talked to her mother about her impatience it would help her be strong (it always did!), but she decided to wait on her own strength this time. She went to the hen house every day and sat by the eggs, feeling her heart struggle and yearn with temptation.

Finally, the girl could wait no longer. She knew the chicks were within days of hatching...surely a little help would not hurt them! So she carefully broke open the eggs, revealing the precious little babies inside. But it was too early...the time was not right for the chicks to be born.

The girl ended up bringing much sorrow upon herself as well as upon her family when the chicks died shortly after she helped them out of their shells. What could have brought life and happiness to her had ended in death and regret.

Our sexuality is precious, too. If we open that part of ourselves up before we are married, we will bring great sorrow upon ourselves as well as upon whomever we are sexually involved with. Don’t put yourself in places of temptation. Don’t try to live this challenging life on your own. Make healthy choices. Talk to trusted family and friends. Above all, ask God for help to walk with him each new day. He loves you dearly and wants to keep you safe and healthy.

I’d like to give you some time now to think and journal about what we talked about today. While you’re journaling, if any of you need to talk to me about something you’re unsure of or have concerns about, please come and chat with me. I’ll allow you time to complete the action statements in your journals, and then we’ll close in prayer asking for God’s help to follow his good instructions. The action statement is:

Since sexual intimacy is a gift from God only to be enjoyed in marriage, I will...

Allow students time to write in their journals and to come talk to you if they wish. When they are finished, hand out the “Pledge to God and Myself” papers. Ask the students to take them home and spend some time later carefully reading and contemplating the words. When they are ready to make a commitment to sexual purity, they can sign the sheet and put it away for safekeeping. Remind the class that you understand their struggles and would be honored to talk with, or pray with, any of them who would like to do so.

Close in prayer, thanking God for his great love for each of us. Ask him to give each of the youth a vision of how special they are. Ask God to give them the conviction and the will each day to safeguard this very important part of their life, as well as the determination to protect the purity of those around them.

A Pledge to God and Myself

Dear Father in Heaven,

Because...

- You created everything, including my life, and are all-powerful, all-wise, and all-knowing (John 1:3).
- You sustain everything - including my life and breath (Acts 17:24).
- Your design for all of creation, including my life and sexuality, is good and perfect (Genesis 1:31; 2 Samuel 22:31).
- I am made in your image and bear your divine imprint. I am wonderfully made and special (Genesis 1:27)!
- You love me with a perfect love, and always want only what is best for me (Psalm 23; John 15:9).
- You have put me on this earth for a purpose. You have good plans for me, plans to prosper me and not harm me, plans to give me a hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).
- The most important thing you ask me to do is to love you with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my mind, and with all my strength, and the second is to love my neighbor (others) as myself (Mark 12:28-31).
- You call me to have dominion over creation, including my own body, and you give me the grace to do this (Psalm 8:6; 1 Corinthians 3:16,17).
- Through the death of Jesus and believing in him, I have new life (1 John 5:12).
- Sexual intimacy is good and a special gift from God for the purpose of blessing my wife/husband and myself (James 1:17).
- You made it clear in your word that sexual intimacy is a gift only to be opened and enjoyed in the safety and holiness of marriage. I know that its perfection, full goodness, and benefit can only be realized within the marriage relationship. I believe that sex outside of marriage harms me and the other person, and is ultimately destructive (1 Corinthians 6:18).
- I revere and trust you.

I pledge to:

- Abstain from premarital sex and from behavior that would lead to premarital sex.
- Protect the sexuality of others, even if they do not want to protect themselves.
- Trust you to guide me and give me the marriage partner you have for me.

Please help me. Give me strength and grace to live uprightly. Protect me from Satan's lies about sex. Give me good friends of both sexes who will respect me, encourage me, and love me. Please be my joy, my hope, my fulfillment, and my salvation. Thank you.

Signed:

Benefits of Sexual Purity	Dangers of Sexual Impurity

James 1:17 – “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

How Do I Wait?

1. BELIEVE in and follow Jesus.
2. KEEP your thoughts pure (Philippians 4:8).
3. GUARD your eyes and heart (no sexually immoral movies, music, pornography, and sex-filled novels) (Psalm 101:1-4; Job 31:1).
4. AVOID people and places that will lead you into sexual involvement.
5. If in a critical situation – FLEE (1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22)!
6. KEEP GOOD COMPANY. Spend time with guys and girls in a group.
7. Make a COVENANT WITH GOD regarding ongoing sexual purity.

Practical Ways I can do this:



UNIT FIVE— LESSON 3



God's Design for the Family: The Building Blocks of the Family

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

Each child is a part of a family. Most children will someday marry and start a family of their own. We often take the family for granted, but it is one of God's special creations for the well-being of individuals and society in general. Children need to know this and understand God's plan and good design for the family.

The Truth: The family is one of God's very special creations. God has a wonderful design for families, one that benefits and serves every member.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- God's design for how family members should relate to one another is limiting and oppressive. It does not give every member the individual liberty or freedom to flourish.
- The father/husband alone rules the family and is not accountable to God.
- The father and family must first follow the community's norms and expectations, then God.
- The father is superior in value to the mother, who is superior in value to the oldest child, who is superior in value to the younger children.
- Submission is always a negative and self-limiting position. We should never submit to anyone.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: By knowing God's good design and plan for family, children can better pray for their own family. They can do their part to help their family function as God designed. They can also look forward to creating a strong, healthy, thriving family of their own some day following God's design.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have adversaries in Satan, in the world, and in your flesh.

These are very real adversaries! They will oppose you and seek to hinder your ability to be a blessing to the children and a tool in their development. You are weak compared to these, but God is greater. He will help you. Recognize your dependence on God, ask for his help, and then go forward with confidence.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Class Management

If noise and activity can be good, how does a teacher keep control?

Keep things moving! To hold the attention of young adolescents, design lessons that include a full range of

sensory experiences including music, smell, touch, and emotion. Engaging the senses and emotions will increase student attention span and heighten memory. Another strategy is to build lessons using inquiry or problem-based learning in which students are encouraged to ask questions that interest them. Another strategy is to ask students to write reflectively. This gives time for students to consolidate learning and seek meaning between various activities.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures and information that speaks of God’s design for marriage. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Different Roles in the God-head

Unique Roles of the Father and Son:

John 5:19-23: – “Jesus gave them this answer: ‘I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.’”

Unique Role of the Spirit:

John 14:23-26: – “Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.’”

Roles in the Family - Christ Is Head Over All

1 Corinthians 15:27 – “For he ‘has put everything under his feet.’ Now when it says that ‘everything’ has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.”

Ephesians 4:15 – “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”

Colossians 2:9-10 – “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”

Unique Roles in the Family:

Colossians 3:12-21 – “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and

forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. *Wives*, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. *Husbands*, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. *Children*, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. *Fathers*, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.”

1 Corinthians 11:3 – “Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”

THE LESSON

Main Point

The family is God’s very special creation!

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that God made the family and it is very special to him.
- ***Understand** God’s design for having a great family.
- ***Respond** by thanking God for their family and committing to follow his design for living within their family.

Supplies/Materials

Pencils, two jars with name slips for lottery review with the boys’ names all in one jar and the girls’ names in the other, one set of building block visual cutouts, four building block group discussion worksheets, “Love your Families” bookmark – one for each student

Scripture References

Matthew 19:14; Mark 12:28-31; John 5:19-23, 14:23-26; 1 Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 5:21

Welcome Time

Briefly review the content of the last lesson (if used): Sexual intimacy is a good gift created by God to be practiced only within the boundaries of marriage. Otherwise, it is hurtful, and potentially destructive, falling far short of God’s best for us. To review the concept of the lesson, play several rounds of “Lottery Review” in gender-separate groups. Pick a name from the jar, and have this student share one thing they learned about sexual intimacy. This person then chooses the next name from the jar. Continue playing until many of the main points of the lesson have been shared.

Attention Grabber

Continue with the “Lottery Review” game. In their gender-separate groups, students should continue picking names to determine who gets to share. This time students should share a sentence or two about their families: who they live with, how many siblings they have, etc. Continue playing until all students have had the chance to share.

The Lesson

God Made the Family

I hope that you learned some interesting things about each others’ families because we’re going talk about this very special gift from God today. We’ve learned so far that God created everything, and every good and perfect gift is from above. One of the greatest gifts that God created is the family. He gave the family a special calling and blessed it. God created the first family in the Garden of Eden: Adam and Eve and their children. Their first son’s names were Cain and Abel. From this first family in the world came all of our families up until now.

The family is the most basic and important group in the world. It is more important than the government, the school, business, or any other group. Let’s make a big list together that will show us

why a family is so important. We'll title this list: **My Family Provides**. Call out as many things as you can think of that your family provides. If you have a whiteboard or chalkboard, make a list of as many things as you possibly can.

Just like every other good thing that God made, God has a wonderful design for the family. Because God is good and perfect, his design for the family is also good and perfect. God's design for the family is that it be a place where each person can grow, experience his goodness, feel safe, thrive, and become all that God wants them to be. This is God's calling for the family. If we think of the family like a house, there are important building parts of each family that make it a safe house and shelter for all who are in that family. Let's look at each one of the building blocks of a healthy family.

God Is the Head of the Family

1 Corinthians 15:27 says, "He (God) has put everything under his (Christ's) feet." This includes everything: dads, moms, brothers and sisters – the entire family. Ultimately, God is the head over everyone in the family. Take out the "God is Head" roof and tack it to the board or the wall. Normally, we don't start with the roof when we are building a house, but the fact that God is the head over everything is the most important building part of a family. The truth that God is head over everyone in the family is good news. As we will learn later, God calls children to obey and respect the authority of parents and love their brothers and sisters. This may be very hard to do when our parents, brothers, or sisters don't act the way they should. However, because God is the head of the family we can have confidence that God will take care of us when we follow his ways, even when others may not. Because God is the ultimate head of the family, each member is ultimately accountable to God for the way that they act.

I'd like for you to meet in the four small groups that we have used in the previous two lessons. Please choose a new group spokesperson and recorder for the day. Distribute worksheets. In your groups, I'd like you to think about this idea further. On the roof part of the family house, please answer the following question, *How does the reality that God is the head of each family give you comfort and confidence?*

After students have had time to share, call on the group spokesperson to share their ideas with the whole class.

Every Family Member Is Equal in Value (Worth and Dignity)

We know that God created every person, male and female, in his image. We also know that Christ died for each person. Because of this, we know that God highly values each person. In God's eyes, one person is *never* inferior to another. Likewise, every family member is worth the same in the sight of God. The youngest child, the oldest child, the father, the mother, the grandfather, the handicapped family member – they are all of equal value, dignity, worth, and importance in God's sight. Take out the "Equal in Value" building block and put it on the wall, near, but separate from, the "God is Head" roof. Each family member is a unique soul that God created. Children are equal in value as their mother and father. This is why Jesus said, "Don't prevent the children from coming to me" (Matthew 19:14).

This is such an important building block of a healthy family. It is important that we realize that even though family members are different in age, personality, giftings, potential, and role or responsibility, each is equal in value! In your groups, please discuss the question in the building block

worksheet, *How is this truth understood (or not) understood in your community or culture. How does this truth affect how you see yourself and your other family members?*

Allow students time to discuss this question in their groups. After they have had time to discuss, ask them to share their ideas with the whole class.

Submission Is for Everyone in the Family!

As family members, we are all called to submit to one another. Ephesians 5:21 says, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” God calls us to submit to one another, and this includes submitting to the members of our family. Take the “Submission is for Everyone” block out and tack it next to the “Equal in Value” block.

What do you think it means to submit? Allow for the students’ responses. The word “submit” in the New Testament means to voluntarily have an attitude of cooperating, yielding, serving, carrying a burden, and taking responsibility. It means that you put the needs of someone else before yours.

Ephesians 5:21 says we are all to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. It is easy to see how a child would submit to their father or mother. But how does a father submit to his wife or child? The father submits *to the responsibility God has given him to care and provide for the child’s various emotional and physical needs.* The father and husband submits or yields *to the interests of the wife and children.*

So, submission in the family is not just for the wife and children as we often think. Submission is a two-way street that includes all family members submitting to each other. God calls us *all* to submit to one another out of reverence (fear with great trust) for Christ.

In your groups, I’d like for you to answer the following question in the building block worksheet: *Name some specific ways you can submit to your family members, putting their welfare first and cooperating with them.*

After students have had time to discuss, call on the group spokesperson to share their group’s ideas with the whole class.

As Family Members, We Are to Follow the Greatest Commandment

As family members, we are called to love God and one another. Take out the “Love” block. Tack it above the “Equal in Value” block. Remember when we talked about God’s great purposes for our lives – the reason he put you and me here on this earth? The greatest or most important of those purposes was spelled out by Jesus. Let’s review it:

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:28-31).

This command applies to you and your family as well! Your family is your closest neighbor. One of the ways you can love God is by loving your family. Love is not all about feelings however. It is about action. In your groups, I'd like for you to discuss and answer the following discussion question on the building block worksheet: *How can you specifically show love to your family this week?* After you are finished discussing, I'll be very interested to hear your creative and practical ideas.

Allow students time to discuss. When they finish, call on the group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

Each Family Member Is Unique!

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are all equally God and equal in importance, but each has a different role. In a similar way, in the family each of us is equally important but has a unique or different role. Take out the "Unique Roles" block and place it on top of the "Submission is for Everyone" block. **When we look at the three-in-one God, or Trinity, we see the Father, Son, and Spirit are all fully God and yet each has a different role (John 5:19-23, 14:23-26). The Father is the sovereign ruler over the universe. The Father sent Jesus the Son to earth to show us who he is and to die for us so that we could have life eternal. When Jesus left the earth, he sent the Holy Spirit to reveal God's truth to us and empower us until Jesus' return.**

When we look at the family that God designed, we see that the members are all equal in value before him, but different in character and gifts. We each have a different role. In the coming weeks, we will look at these roles. However, I'm interested to find out now what your knowledge and thoughts are on what God says the different roles are in families. This way I will be informed when we talk about this in upcoming lessons. Please answer the following group discussion question found in the Unique Roles box on your group worksheets, *What roles do you think God has established for each member of the family?*

When students have finished discussing, ask the group spokesperson to share their ideas with the whole class.

Move the "God is the Head" roof on top of the blocks.

Now we can use this roof! This roof symbolizes the truth that God is the head over every person and over everything. He will ultimately cover you and meet your needs when you follow him.

Love Your Family – Some Practical Tips

We've learned about God's design for a family. When we build our families according to the way that God designed, we will experience a great family life. Of course, life won't be perfect, but we will experience more healthy relationships with our family members. There are some practical things that you can do even as a child. I'm going to give each one of you a bookmark to help you remember these practical tips to living by God's design and loving your family well. Hand out a bookmark, pictured below, to each child. Go through and explain each tip on the bookmark.

Group Discussion and Activity

After you have finished explaining each point, ask the students to meet back in their groups. Ask each student to write a prayer request for their family on their bookmark. Ask the students to switch bookmarks and pray in

their groups for each others’ families. When they are finished praying, they should give the bookmark back to the owner.

Reflection and Prayer

I’m glad that you have had time to pray for each others’ families. I hope that you will remember to pray for your families this week and do all of the things that are found on your bookmarks.

Now let’s make this a bit more personal. In your journals, please answer the following action statements:

Since God is the head of my family, I will trust him to...

Since God calls me to show love and put the needs of my family first, I will...

After students have had time to write in their journals, close in prayer thanking God for each one of the students’ families. Thank God for making each family member different and for placing each child into their particular family for a specific purpose. Ask God to help the students love their family members as God calls them to.

God is head

How is God as the head of each family a comfort and important to you?

Love - How can you specifically show love to your family this week?

Unique Roles What roles do you think God has ordained for each member of the family?

Equal in Value - How is this truth understood in your community? How does this truth affect how you see yourself and your other family members?

Submission is for Everyone - Name some specific ways you will submit to other family members and put their needs first.

God is head

How is God as the head of each family a comfort and important to you?

<p><u>Love</u></p>	<p><u>Unique Roles</u></p>
<p><u>Equal in Value</u></p>	<p><u>Submission is for Everyone</u></p>

LOVE YOUR FAMILY!

PRAY

COMMUNICATE

SERVE

FORGIVE

ENJOY

LOVE YOUR FAMILY!

PRAY

COMMUNICATE

SERVE

FORGIVE

ENJOY

LOVE YOUR FAMILY!

PRAY

COMMUNICATE

SERVE

FORGIVE

ENJOY

LOVE YOUR FAMILY!

PRAY

COMMUNICATE

SERVE

FORGIVE

ENJOY

UNIT FIVE – LESSON 4



God’s Design for the Family: Headship

TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

First, it is clear in the Bible that God has a special care and concern for the woman who heads up a home – whose husband has died (widow) or abandoned her. In this lesson, the concept of headship is presented in the context of a husband or father being present as this is the context the Bible most speaks to. However, the concept and principles of headship fully apply where the mother is the head because the father is absent. Assuming you will be working with children whose father is absent, please make this point clear and make adjustments in the narrative where appropriate in consideration of those children. Yet, make it clear to the boys and young men that God’s plan for them, should they father children, is for them to always stick with and serve their children as a good husband and father.

The children and youth you teach will soon be grown up and most will establish their own families. It is important that they begin to understand now what it means to be a good husband or wife: a good mom or dad. One area often misunderstood is that of the father being the head of the home. The Bible makes it clear that the husband is the head over the wife and children, but what does this mean? Getting the answer right to this question is critically important. It is an answer that every young man and boy needs to internalize, believe, and practice if he wants to be a successful husband and father with a wife and children who flourish and thrive.

The Truth: Headship over a family is a special calling of great responsibility and service that includes loving, leading, and providing holistically for one’s family.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- Headship means that:
 - o the husband/father is the “boss” of his wife and children and can control them however he wishes.
 - o the wife and children are the property or possession of the husband/father. The wife and children have no rights, voice, or say unless the husband/father gives it to them.
 - o a man is the “king”; therefore, he can do whatever he wants, go wherever he wants, spend money however he wants, give attention to other women, and be selfish, lazy, and irresponsible.
 - o it is okay for a man to beat or abuse his wife or children because he is superior to them.
- There doesn’t need to be any “head” in the family. All family members have equal leadership responsibility. There is no need for a head.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Knowing what it means to be the Biblical head of the family, children will be able to pray for the heads in their family and incorporate this truth into their own family someday.

Encouragement for the Teacher

God will help you succeed as a teacher. He will take your five loaves and two fishes, your two pennies, your last bit of flour and oil, or your vase of perfume and bless and use it to impact children for good. Your job is to simply offer your service and whole-hearted effort to God. He will help you. True success comes from God!

Tip for Successful Teaching

Class Management: Establish attention-getting signals.

Raising your hand or flashing a card will let children know it’s time to stop the activity they’re doing and look at you. Change the signal occasionally and rehearse it with your children at the beginning of each class. Once your children become familiar with the signal, regaining their attention will become an automatic classroom ritual. Be creative!

Additional Information

Some things to think about:

1. “Heads” are leaders who stand up and fight for what is right, good, and true for their communities and families. They “rebuild the walls” like Nehemiah did despite many challenges

Nehemiah 4:14 – “After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, ‘Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes’” (NIV).

What are some important areas that are broken or missing in your community or family? These are the “walls” that need rebuilding and fighting for. Maybe the broken wall in your community or family is strife, distrust, a spirit of fatalism, unforgiveness, or dishonesty, etc.

2. In their role as head, men often err in two ways:
 - 1) They think being the head means they are a domineering authority. It means telling people what to do because they have the right to give orders.
 - 2) They err by being passive. They are afraid, so they fail to take responsibility and lead. Adam, the first man, was passive and failed to take responsibility.

In Genesis 3:11, God finds Adam in the garden after he ate the forbidden fruit. He asks Adam, “Have you eaten the fruit I commanded you not to eat?” Adam said, “Yes, but it was the woman you gave me who brought me the fruit, and I ate it.” In other words, Adam says “it was her fault.” First, Adam passively accepts the fruit even though he knows it is wrong. Then he passively does not take responsibility for his action and blames his wife.

Men have been struggling ever since with passivity and lack of responsibility in the face of temptation and deception.

3. Men fear losing respect and honor. They think that if they humble themselves and serve their wife and children, especially if it means doing a “demeaning” task, they will lose their respect and honor.

They do not realize the truth that true respect and honor comes from God and cannot be lost because they wash dishes or do a task normally done by women or children.

Our world was turned upside-down when Adam sinned. The right-side-up world is where Jesus reigns and rules in people's hearts and lives. In his world, people with leadership responsibility are most respected because they sacrifice and do what is best for those they are responsible for. They serve others and "wash feet" as Jesus did.

4. Providing holistically. Many fathers think that it is enough for them to provide for the physical needs of their families – food, clothing, and shelter. These are certainly critical and first on the list. However, dads especially need to realize that God's design for them is to also provide for the emotional and intellectual needs of their children. They should help their children know God and see themselves and the world as God sees them. Providing holistically for their children is a great responsibility for fathers.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and consider these thoughts and pray through these scriptures that speak of Biblical headship in the family. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Philippians 2:3-8 – "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!"

1 Corinthians 11:3 – "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."

THE LESSON

The Main Point

Headship over a family is a special calling by God of great responsibility and service.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** the truth about what it means to be head of the family.
- ***Understand** that headship is a calling and a responsibility that includes loving, leading, and providing holistically for one’s family.
- ***Respond** by praying for their fathers. Respond by becoming the person God intends them to be in their family now and in the future.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, four signs: Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree; good idea/bad idea strips on headship; job description cutouts of heart, foot, hand; four “houses” cut apart (from previous lesson)

Scripture References

Mark 10:42-45; John 13:13-17; 1 Corinthians 15:27; 1 Timothy 5:8; Philippians 4:19

Welcome Time

Students should get into the groups they met in during the last lesson. Give them four copies of the house diagram from the previous lesson. Have them put the houses together and explain each piece.

Attention Grabber

Students will play the game “Four Corners”. In each corner of the room, you should post signs reading: Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. After you read each statement below, instruct the students to move to the corner that best describes how they feel. Use the statements written below. Before class, be sure to cut each of these statements out (found at the end of this lesson).

We will play the game “Four Corners.” Please move to the corner of the room with the sign that indicates how you feel about the statements that I will read. You may either strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. As you do this exercise, you may want to ask several students to explain their choice.

1. **Most people in my country would say that the husband/father is the boss of his family and can control them however he wishes.**
2. **Most people in my country believe that since a man is the head of the household his family should serve him by doing whatever he wants.**
3. **Most people in my country believe that God is the head of everyone and the husband is accountable to God for the way he treats his wife and children.**
4. **Most people in my country believe that the father should provide for the emotional and intellectual needs of his children.**
5. **Most people in my country believe that headship means that the wife and children are property of the man.**

The Lesson

In case you haven't guessed by our game, we are going to talk about what it means to be the head of the family. There are many counterfeit, or false, ideas about what headship or leader of the family means. We are going to look at a few of these counterfeit ideas and then look at the truth of what God says about this.

Hold up the first of the two conflicting ideas, "God is the owner of all. A man's wife and children are a gift from God rather than his own personal property." versus "Headship means that the wife and children are the property or possession of the husband/father."

Which of these ideas is not true? Allow time for students' answers.

You're right when you say that a wife and children are not the property of a husband and father. In general, something is owned by the person who created it or made it. Because God created each of us and gives us breath and life, we all belong to him! God is our owner. We are all his property! God created the family and declared that the father or husband would be the head, but he did not give the father or husband ownership of the wife and the children. They are not the property of the man. They remain God's property.

If the husband and father as the head of the family is not the owner of the wife and children, then what is his responsibility? Allow for students' responses.

He is the steward. He is like the servants who were entrusted with the master's money in the parable of the three servants. Do you remember this passage? "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents (bags of money), to another two bags of money, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey."

In this parable, God entrusted his property to the servants. If you remember, to entrust something is not to transfer ownership. It is to take what is yours and lend it to another person to care for according to your specific wishes. When you entrust something, you don't just give it to someone to do with as they wish. You give it to them for a very specific purpose which they are to follow or carry out. In the same way, God has entrusted a wife and children to a husband and father. They are not the man's property to treat as he wishes. Rather, they are God's property, entrusted by God to the husband and father to care for and treat as God instructs.

In your groups, please answer the following discussion question: *How should a father and husband care for his family as God instructs?* When you are finished discussing, we will come together so you can share your answers.

Allow students time to discuss. When they are finished, call on the group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

(These are similar to the first two.)

I'm now going to hold up two ideas again and I'd like for you to identify which is the counterfeit idea (the lie, the deception) and which is the truth. The two ideas are, "Headship means that the husband/father is the owner and boss of his wife and children and can control them in whatever

way that he wishes” versus “God is the head over everyone. Headship means that the man is accountable to God to treat his wife and children as God commands.”

You’re right. The truth is that God is the head over everyone. A man may not control his wife and children in whatever way he wishes. He is responsible and accountable to God for how he treats his wife and children. 1 Corinthians 11:3 says, “Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” In this verse we see that God is the head, then Christ, and then the husband. The husband is not the one who appoints himself as head. Rather, it is God who appoints him as head of his family. Therefore, since God is the one who appointed him as head, he is responsible to God, his heavenly boss, for performing this role well. The man is not superior in a family. God gives him an important job and he must always keep in mind that he will answer to God for how he cares for and treats his family.

I’d like for you to discuss the following questions in your groups: *How does the husband and father being accountable to God for how he treats his family make you feel? Does it change how you may act in the future?*

Allow children time to discuss the questions in their groups. When they have finished, ask their group spokesperson to share their ideas with the group.

We’re now going to look at another two ideas. Please pick out the idea that is counterfeit. “The man is called by God to serve his family.” versus “Headship means that a man’s family should serve him by doing whatever he wants because he is the ‘king.’”

You’re right if you think that a man is called by God to serve his family. The other idea is counterfeit. Listen to this passage that talks a great deal about a leader being a servant. It is found in Mark 10:42-45, “So Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that in this world kings are tyrants, and officials lord it over the people beneath them. But among you it should be quite different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others and to give my life as a ransom for many.’” (NLT)

It’s interesting that what Jesus says goes against what our culture says. Jesus said that in order to be the leader or head means you must be the one who serves the other. Jesus defined headship by responsibility and service, not by privilege. *Normally, leaders expect the people they oversee to serve them and make sacrifices for them.* Jesus did the opposite. He served those who were under him.

Another time, to prove this point, after Jesus had dinner with his friends, he got out soap and water and washed his disciple’s feet! This was the lowest and most humble task that any person, much less a leader, could have performed in that day! Listen to what Jesus said when he was finished:

“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things you will be blessed if you do them” (John 13:13-17).

Jesus told these men who would go on to lead others as heads of families and groups that they should be ready to do the most humble of tasks in order to serve others. To fathers he was saying, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have done this extremely humble task for you, you should also be ready to do humble and lowly tasks to serve your wife and children.” Of course a husband and father should receive honor and respect from his family. But the man has no right to demand this from his wife and children. Rather, God tells the man to serve by being willing and ready to do even the most humble task. Furthermore, because God is the one who gives a person their dignity, a man does not lose his dignity when he serves them humbly.

In your small groups, I'd like you to answer the following question for boys and another for girls. *Boys, when you grow up how can you lead and serve your family as God designed for you? and Girls, how do you think a man should serve his wife and family according to God's design?*

Allow students time to discuss the questions in their groups. When they have finished discussing, ask the group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

A Family Head's Job Description

We've talked quite a bit about how the head of a family is not to act and that he is to serve his family. Let's talk a little bit more about God's specific job description for the head of a family. We actually can show God's specific job description in pictures. We'll start out by this heart. Point to the heart picture.

Loving. This heart represents love. The greatest commandment to love God and love our neighbors applies to fathers and husbands in a family. The head of a family is to love God first and then love his family. When a family head loves God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, God gives that man all that he needs to love his family. The head should show his love both in actions and in an attitude of the heart. The head of a family shows his love for his family by performing the other two parts of his job description.

Point to the foot picture. This foot stands for leading. A head is to lead his family in love.

Leading. He can lead his family by following Jesus. Real men follow and obey the one who is over them – the God of the universe. They worship God and give him thanks. They recognize their sin and need for salvation. They believe in Jesus and accept his salvation. They obey him. They depend on him for guidance and wisdom. Real men follow Jesus and encourage their families to do so.

Another way a man leads is by walking on a pure path. A good leader stays away from anything that will destroy him and others.

A good head leads by standing up for what is true and right. A good leader is a warrior for truth, goodness, and mercy. Nehemiah, a leader in the Bible said, “Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the leaders and the people and said to them, ‘Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious

and fight for your friends, your families and your homes’” (NLT). In the same way, good leaders aren’t afraid to do the right thing for their families and for God. They stand up and fight for what is right.

Serving. Point to the hand. **This hand represents the third part of a family head’s job description. It is to provide for the family.** 1 Timothy 5:8 says, “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” God makes it clear that he wants men to provide for their wife and children! Many fathers think that it is enough for them to provide for the physical needs of their families such as food, clothing, and shelter. These are certainly critical and first on the list. However, dads especially need to realize that God’s design for them is to also provide for the emotional and intellectual needs of their children. They should help their children know God and see the world and themselves through God’s eyes. This is all part of providing for their family.

This is a big job but God will help men do this. Philippians 4:19 says, “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” God wants the head of a family to look to him for help and trust in God to help him provide for him, his wife, and his children.

Group Discussion

In your groups, I’d like for you to work on a list found on your group worksheets. I’d like for you to make list of all of the things that a head should provide for their families. There are four headings of that list: Spiritual, Emotional, Physical, and Mental. Try to think of all the things that God calls a man to provide.

Allow the students time to discuss. When they are finished, ask the group spokesperson to share their group’s list. If you have chalkboard or a whiteboard, make a large list of all of the items they mention.

Reflection and Prayer

The head of a family has a big job given to him by God! It is important that we always remember to pray for our fathers as they do their best to do the job that God has called them to do. That’s what your action statements are all about today. I’d like for you to turn to your journals and answer the following action statement:

Because God calls the man to love his family by leading and providing for them, I will pray for my father for...

Please take the time to write down some prayer requests for your fathers. We will then meet together as a large group. If you would like to share your prayer requests, I will pray for them in our group.

Allow children time to write down their prayer requests. When they are finished, allow students to share their prayer requests. Close in prayer thanking God for all of the students’ fathers. Pray for the requests the students mentioned. Ask God to give all of the fathers of the students the wisdom, strength, and grace to do the job that God has called them to do. Pray for the salvation of fathers who do not yet believe in Jesus.

Good and Bad Ideas

“God is the owner of all. A man’s wife and children are a gift from God rather than his own personal property.”

“Headship means that the wife and children are the property or possession of the husband/father.”

“The man is called by God to serve his family.”

“Headship means that a man’s family should serve him by doing whatever he wants because he is the “king”.

“Headship means that the husband/father is the “boss” of his wife and children and can control them however he wishes.”

God is the head over everyone. Headship means that man is accountable to God to treat his wife and children as God commands.

How should a father and husband care for his family as God instructs?

How does it make you feel knowing that the husband and father are accountable to God for how he treats and cares for his family?

Does it change how you may act in the future?

Boys, when you grow up, how can you lead and serve your family?

Girls, how do you think a man should serve his family and wife?

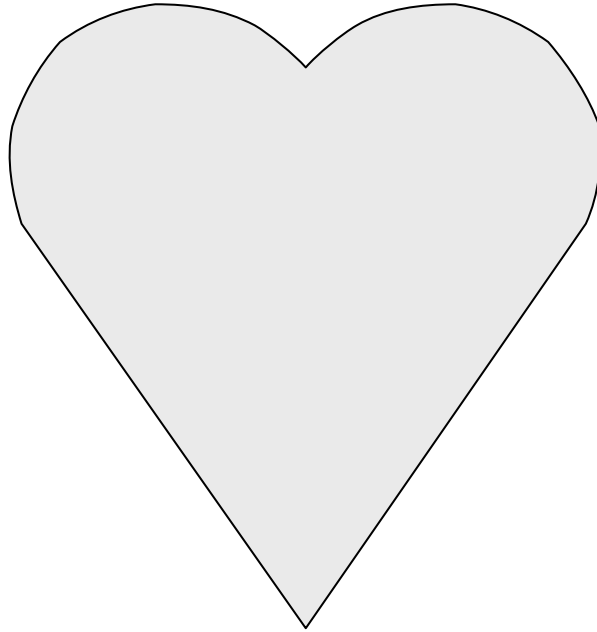
What the Head is to Provide

Spiritual

Emotional

Physical

Mental



UNIT FIVE – LESSON 5



God's Design for the Family: Husbands, Love Your Wives

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

Every child is part of a family. The majority of children will someday marry and start a new family. Children need to understand God's plan or design for the husband. It is especially important that young men understand this so that, with God's help, they too can be successful husbands and fathers with a wife and children who flourish and thrive.

The Truth: God gave the husband a very unique and special instruction for how to treat his wife. This instruction to the husband is perfect and good – benefitting him, his wife, and his children. God's design for men in marriage is that they love their wives with the same love that God loves them. This is an unconditional, sacrificial, giving love.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- We should stick to and follow how our culture, friends, and the community define the role of a husband. We should not go against what they say or believe even if it does not agree with God's design.
- A husband should love his wife, but only if she is a good wife by his standards; otherwise, he is rewarding wrong behavior.
- A husband needs to make sure he establishes his authority over his wife and rules over his wife. It is more important that she knows he is the boss than that she feels loved.
- The husband's needs and wants take priority over his wife's. This is right because she was created by God to serve the man.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: The end result of applying this truth will be a thriving and rewarding marriage and family. Knowing this truth, the young men can commit to someday love their wives in the manner God designed for them.

Encouragement for the Teacher

God has a purpose for your life. You have been blessed to be a blessing. You were ultimately designed to live for the benefit of others - and right now these others are the children in this community and class. God wants to help you succeed as a teacher in this environment. He wants to use you to bless these children and shape their lives. He has placed great potential in the life of each child and you are his tool to help develop this potential.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Make it relevant! Whether we are young or old, we learn most and best when something is relevant to our lives. Help the children see the relevance of the subject – how it relates to them and their life, both now and in the future.

As a parent or teacher, look for teachable moments. For example, when you see a beautiful flower, you can give credit to the Creator for its amazing and intricate design and how it reveals God’s goodness, wisdom, and beauty. Or if something bad happens, you can reflect on how life is broken as a result of the Fall, but God loves us, sent his Son to break the curse and bring restoration, and now wants us to play a part in this restoration.

Additional Information

Why should we take God’s command for husbands to love their wives so seriously? Here are four good reasons:

1. God is the one who created us and gives us life and breath each day. He holds our lives in his hands. Therefore, it will benefit us to revere and follow his life instructions.
2. God is perfect, all-wise and all-knowing. He knows what is best, perfect, and good in every situation. Because of this, we trust in the wisdom of his life instructions.
3. God loves us and wants what is best for our lives. His love is evident in all the good he puts into our lives – including loving relationships, and wives. Because of this, we trust in the goodness of his life instruction.
4. If we ignore the command for husbands to love their wives, husbands and their families will miss out on something very good and wonderful that God, in his love, intends for them. Psalm 128:1-2 says, “Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.”

Every marriage is going to experience some challenges and difficulties. One of the primary reasons for the break-up of many marriages is the failure of men and women to understand and apply the specific role God has given to them as a husband or wife. Instead, they try to fix their partner – when they should focus on their own role. The husband, in particular, should focus on his own role which is to love his wife unconditionally. Jonah, the Old Testament prophet, just about brought a whole ship down because he chose to do things his own way. Many husbands do the same to their marriages. Their marriages are in trouble because they do things their own way instead of trusting in and following God’s plan for them to love their wives sacrificially and unconditionally.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and consider the following thoughts and principles. Pray through these scriptures that speak of the job of a husband in marriage. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God impresses upon your heart.

Ephesians 5: 21 – “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Ephesians 5:25 – 30 – “For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his

wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body” (NLT).

Ephesians 5:31-33 – “As the Scriptures say, ‘A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’ This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (NLT).

1 Corinthians 13:4-13 – “Love (agape) is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

Colossians 3:19 – “Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.”

(The root idea of the word “harsh” here means “to cut” i.e. do not use words that cut or deflate your wife’s spirit.)

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God’s perfect design for men in marriage is that they love their wives with the same unconditional sacrificial love that God loves them.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that God gave the husband a very unique and special instruction for how to treat his wife.
- ***Understand** that God’s instruction to the husband is perfect and good for the husband, and also for the wife and the whole family.
- ***Respond** – The boys and young men will earnestly seek to someday love their wives as God designed for them to.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, four sets of headship good idea/bad idea strip sets from last lesson, football, letter from God to boys (one for each boy in your group)

Scripture Reference

Ephesians 5:25–33; Colossians 3:19

Welcome Time

In the small, gender-specific groups that students have been working in during this unit, hand out one full set to each group of the counterfeit and good idea headship strips used in the last lesson. Have the groups separate the strips into good ideas and counterfeit ideas. After they have correctly separated the statements, each person in the group should say one thing they learned in the last lesson.

I’m going to give you the statements about the head of a family that we used in the last lesson. I’d like for you to work in your small groups to put them into two groups: counterfeit ideas and good ideas. After you have correctly grouped them, each one of you should share one new thing that stood out to you from the last lesson.

Attention Grabber

If your students are not familiar with the game of football/soccer, adapt the following to another team sport that your class knows well where players must play different roles and positions for the team to succeed.

1. **How many of you have watched the game of football (soccer) and know how it is played?**
2. **How many of you have played football (soccer)?**
3. **What is your favorite position to play?**
4. **What is the role of the Forward** (may also be called Wing Forward, Striker, Center Forward)? **What particular skills does he or she need to have and master?** (speed, passing, goal kicking, heading, scoring)
5. **What is the role of the Goalie? What particular skills does he or she need to have or master?** (hand speed, lateral mobility, quick reflexes, etc.)

I need three volunteers. Choose three students. **Two of you are going to be goalies, and one of you is going to be the forward or striker. I am going to be the other forward. We are going to play a little game of football.** Clear a large space in the meeting area for a small game of football, or take all of the children outside if possible.

Establish a field with goal boxes at each end. Set up the game with each goalie at opposite ends of the field. Place yourself and the other forward in the center with the ball. Ask the class to pay close attention to the game you are about to play. Start the game.

Unknown to any of the students, you (the teacher) are going to act a little differently than a normal forward would act. Instead of paying attention to your own skills and role of trying to make a goal for your team, you are going to be constantly concerned about how well the goalie is doing his job. You are to stand next to the goalie, watch the goalie, give the goalie correction, express disappointment in the goalie's performance, complain about the goalie, etc. Be dramatic and have fun, making sure the students do not think you are really upset with the goalie. Play like this for about three minutes and then stop the game.

Ask the following questions, allowing for responses from the students.

1. **What just happened?**
2. **How did it work out?**
3. **What would have made this a better, more enjoyable game?**
4. **If you were a coach and one of your team members was playing this way, what would you say to this person? Would you reward the forward for being so concerned about how well the goalie did their job while he or she failed in his/her own role?**

This is what some husbands and wives do in marriage. God designed the family perfectly. He gave the husband and the wife different roles so that they, and each member of the family, could develop, flourish, and live an abundant and good life as God intends. Sometimes, like the forward in this game of football, the husband is tempted to focus on and criticize the wife rather than paying attention to their own role in the marriage relationship. When they do this, neither of them are successful (or, in the game of football, score any points)!

Today, we look specifically at our creator God's perfect design for how a husband is to treat his wife in marriage. So boys, pay attention. Someday God may call you to marry and you need to know his perfect design and plan for you as a husband.

Girls, you will hear about God's perfect plan for the role of a wife next week, but it is important that you listen this week too. What you hear will help you find a Godly husband when, and if, the time is right.

But, this week it is the boys' turn. Boys, are you ready?

The Lesson

This week's lesson has a lot to do with the word *love*. In your groups that you've been working in for the last few lessons, I'd like for you to answer the first group discussion question: *What is love?*

Think of as many descriptive words and phrases that you can to describe what love is. When you finish, we will share all of our ideas as a group.

Allow students time to work in groups. When each group finishes, ask each spokesperson to share their group’s ideas. **Love is so important. The first and greatest command is to love the Lord with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength and the second is to love our neighbors as ourselves. This command applies to all people: men, women, boys, girls, and husbands and wives. We are all called by God to love each other. However, God especially commands husbands to love their wives. This is their special role in marriage. Listen to what God calls husbands to do:**

Ephesians 5:25 – “For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her” (NLT).

Ephesians 5:28-29 – “In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church” (NLT).

Colossians 3:19 – “And you husbands must love your wives” (NLT).

The New Testament was written in the language of Jesus’ day: Greek. There were many words that could have been used for love when the Bible calls husbands to love their wives. However there was a specific word for love that the writers of the Bible used. It is the word *agape*. The word *agape* means unconditional and sacrificial love. Unconditional love means you love someone regardless of what they say or do, and you are willing to put their needs before yours. In essence, the Bible is saying: “Husbands live out *agape* love for your wives. Love them, encourage them, seek their best no matter what they say or do, and always put their needs first. Be willing to give up what is important to you in order to love them.” This is a big challenging job!

There are other words for love in the Greek language that God did not use in his instruction for husbands to love their wives.

Optional: If helpful for visual learning, you may want to write the words: romantic love, family love, and friendship love on the blackboard as you talk about them. Then cross them out to indicate this is not the word God used in commanding husbands to love their wives.

One such word means romantic love. Though this is very important in a marriage relationship, and God created this type of love for our good, he did not use this word here. He did not command husbands to love their wives in this way.

A second word for love God could have used in this passage means family-type love. This is the love of a parent for children or the love between close relatives. This type of love is also created by God and is a good thing. However, this is not the word God used. It is not the type of love God is commanding in these verses.

Another word for love God that could have used means friendship-type love. This type of love is often described in the Bible and is dictated by feelings and how likeable we find another person or object. Though this type of love is created by God and is a good thing, it is not the type of love that God is commanding husbands to love their wives with.

God is commanding husbands to love their wives with *agape* love – unconditional and sacrificial love. It is a commitment on the part of husbands to love their wife no matter what!

Agape love is giving of yourself for the good or well-being of another. It is doing what is best for the other person even if it is inconvenient or uncomfortable for you. It is not based on whether someone is loveable or lovely. It is not based on feeling or emotion. It is unconditional, and is the kind of love that God shows us. God loves us even when we sin against him and grieve him. This is the same type of love that God commands husbands to show their wives. A husband is called by God to put his wife's likes, desires, preferences, and welfare before his own, when necessary, in order to do what is best for her.

When a husband does this and loves his wife with agape love, he will have a strong and healthy family and a wonderful relationship with his wife. When a husband fails to love his wife with agape love, many problems result.

It is very difficult to show this type of love towards a person – to always do what is best and good for them, especially when you are tired or the other person isn't behaving in a way that is deserving of this love. When it is difficult, a husband should call upon God for his help because this type of love only comes from God. It is constantly shown by God in the way that he loves us.

In your groups, I'd like for you to come up with examples of a husband showing agape, sacrificial and unconditional love, for his wife. For example, a husband comes home from working and he is very tired. As he walks in the door, his wife says that she really needs to talk with him about several problems that have happened during the day. The husband really just wants to take a few moments to relax since he has been working all day. But instead of sitting down and relaxing, he takes the time to talk with his wife and listen to her concerns and problems. This is an example of agape love.

I am very interested to hear your examples of agape love. Please work on them now in your groups. I will ask your spokesperson to share your group's ideas with the whole class.

Allow students time to work in their groups. When they have finished, ask the group spokesperson to share with the class.

Here are some possible examples:

- A husband does something that he knows will make his wife happy or feel loved.
- A husband encourages his wife. He thanks her for clean clothes, a decorated and well-ordered home, and well-prepared food. "*Death and life are in the power of your tongue*" Proverbs 18:21.
- A husband helps his wife do a chore such as cooking or cleaning even when he is tired and just wants to rest.

- A husband works hard and provides for necessities. “*If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever*” 1 Timothy 5:8.
- A husband prays for and with his wife.
- A husband is faithful. “*Drink water from your own cistern and running water from your own well. Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. . . . May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth*” Proverbs 5:15, 17-18.

You have given some very good examples of a husband loving his wife with agape love. I’d like to close our teaching time with these verses from the Bible that show how a husband is to love his wife.

First, God calls us to “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:31).

Specific to husbands, God says in Ephesians 5:25, “And you husbands must (agape) love your wives with the same (agape) love Christ showed the church. He (God) gave himself up his own life for her” (NLT).

And again in Ephesians 5:28-29, “In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church” (NLT) (shared previously in the lesson).

In Ephesians 5:33, “So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband”(NLT).

Closing Group Discussion

Husbands are commanded by God to give up their lives for their wives and to love them and care for them as much as their own bodies. This is not a burden. Rather, it is how God calls them to care for the wonderful gift he has given them in a wife. Remember that from God’s perspective, he is entrusting one of his precious daughters to a husband. Proverbs 18:22 says, “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.”

Optional: If helpful, include this reminder of a point made in earlier lessons. **Some guys have the idea that when they marry a girl, this girl who is now their wife becomes their property. This is not true. Every person is strictly the property of God. God did not set up the world for one person to be the property of another. When God brings a wife into the life of a man, she does not become his property. She is God’s property and is a blessing entrusted to the husband. His role is that of a steward. A *steward* develops or cares for something of value or high worth that has been *entrusted* to them by someone else. In marriage, God entrusts one of his precious daughters to the husband to love and care. He is to help her be all that God intends her to be.**

In your groups, I’d like for you to discuss ways this lesson from the Bible is different from how the role of the husband is viewed by other people in your country or community. Please discuss and list what is different.

Allow students time to work in their groups. When they are finished, ask each group to share their lists, compiling a large list on a chalkboard or whiteboard if possible.

Reflection and Prayer

Someday, God may call each one of you boys to be husbands, and girls for you to be wives. God's instructions are best and I hope that if God gives you the opportunity to be married, you will choose to follow his instructions for marriage. It may not always be easy to follow God's perfect design, but as you do, God will bless you with a healthy marriage. Today, we are going to do something slightly different. We're not going to write in our journals as normal. Instead, boys, I'm going to give you each a note written to you with God's instructions. You're going to fill in your names and I will pray with you about someday being the husbands that God calls you to be.

Girls, I would like for you to take the time to pray for the husbands that God may someday give you. Pray that God would make them into the Godly leaders that he wants them to be, and that they would begin learning, even now, how to love their wives.

Hand out the notes to each of the boys, asking them to insert their names. Pray with them after they have filled in their names, asking God to make them into the Godly leaders he wants them to be. Ask God to show them how great his unconditional love for them is now, so they can someday show this love to their wives.

For the Boys

Dear _____,

When you get married,

Remember,

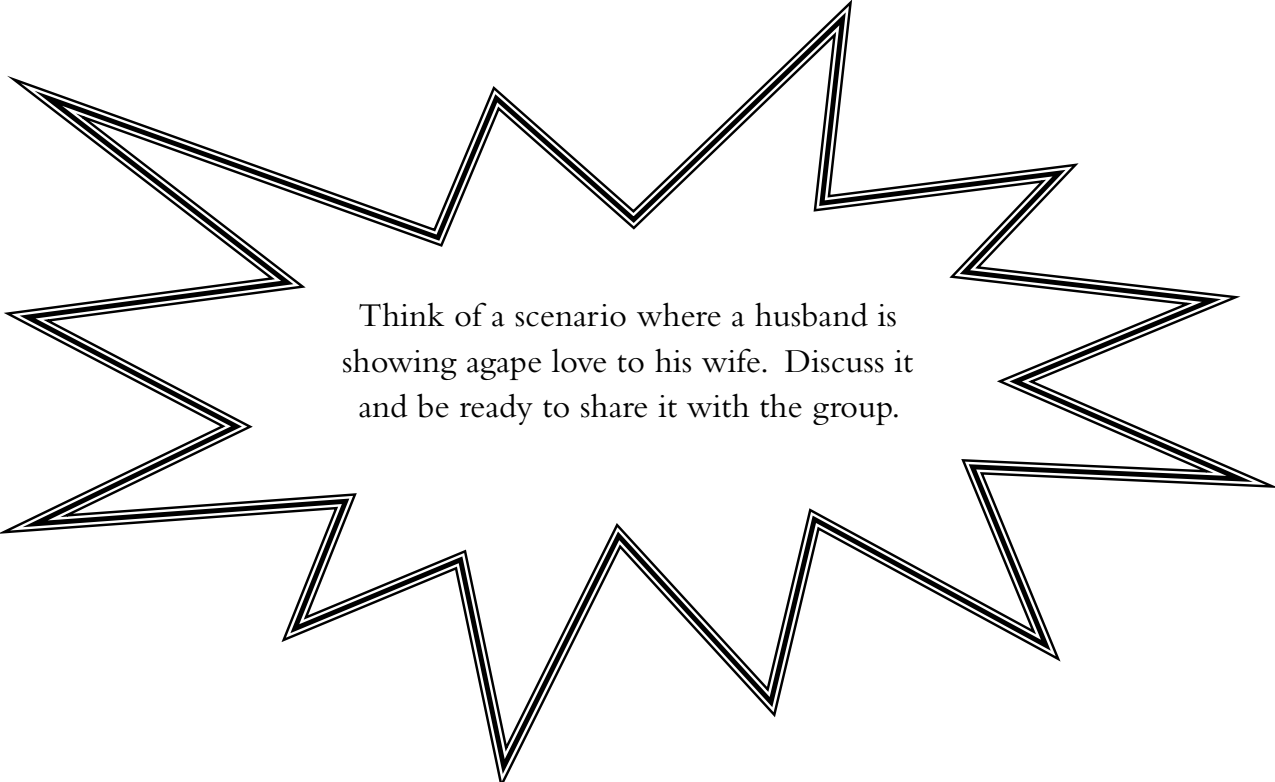
Love (agape) your wife!

And I will bless you and your family.

Signed,

The God of the Universe

Love is:



Think of a scenario where a husband is showing agape love to his wife. Discuss it and be ready to share it with the group.

UNIT FIVE – LESSON 6



God’s Design for the Family: Wives, Respect Your Husbands

TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

Each child is part of a family. Most children will someday marry and start a new family. Children need to understand God’s perfect plan or design for the wife. It is important to explore this principle with everyone – including men in leadership positions in the church or community. Some men may have a very limited understanding of, or wrong ideas about, this subject. Both boys and girls should understand this topic and what it means for their future role as husband and wife.

The Truth: God’s perfect design for women in marriage is that they respect their husbands. It is critical for both men and women to understand the meaning of respect from God’s perspective as this concept is often misused and abused.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- Submission means that wives have no rights or say in the running of the family.
- God’s command to wives to respect their husbands is no longer relevant or applicable today.
- God’s design for women to honor or submit to their husbands makes them inferior to men and lower in value and worth.
- A husband must live in a respectful and honorable way for his wife to respect and honor him.
- Honoring and respecting only applies to public places.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Following God’s design is the best and surest way to flourish and thrive in any situation. This is especially true of marriage and the family it underpins.

Encouragement for the Teacher

Each child is made by God in his image. The life of each was planned by God before he or she was conceived. There are no ordinary children! Each is a unique creation and special to God. Each has great potential. Each has a gift to give the world. Each child is designed and put here for a purpose in the plan of God. No child is a mistake!

Tip for Successful Teaching

Class Management—Take a Break.

If your children seem restless, take a break. Burn up their excess energy with action songs or exercises. Then, lead a few stretches and return to the lesson.

Special Note about This Lesson

There are many positive ideas behind the words “respect” and “submit” in this lesson. However, it’s important that as the teacher you are clear as to what God’s design that *the wife respect and submit to her husband* does not mean. It does not mean:

1. The wife becomes the husband’s property or slave.
2. The wife gives up all rights in her home.
3. The wife tolerates physical or emotional abuse.
4. The wife allows the husband to physically or emotionally abuse the children.

No place in Scripture has God called wives to endure violence, physical battering, or habitual infidelity. In such cases, the wife should seek help and protection from a trusted wise couple in her church or community.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through these scriptures and Biblical principles that speak of the role of a wife in marriage. Prayerfully study these Scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

God’s perfect design for the well-being of the wife and her fruitfulness in life is complementary to his design for the husband. God made the wife equal in value to the husband, but different in role. Her relationship to her husband is to be one of respect and honor.

As you learned in Lesson 3 of this unit, the word *submit* means “a voluntary attitude of yielding to, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.”

Ephesians 5:21 – “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Ephesians 5:33 – “However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

Colossians 3:18 – “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

Ephesians 5:22-24 – “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God's perfect design in marriage for wives is that they respect their husbands.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that God commands wives to respect their husbands.
- ***Understand** the meaning of respect from God's perspective.
- ***Respond** by committing as girls to honor God by honoring and respecting their future husband, and, as boys, committing to sacrificially love their future wives and be worthy of their respect.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, puzzles, letter to girls (enough for each girl to have one)

Scripture References

Ephesians 5:21,33, 6:8; Philippians 2:4; Colossians 3:8,18

Welcome Time

If possible, get several age-appropriate picture puzzles and have these available for the students to work on as they arrive. Or, create your own puzzle and several copies of this, and have students assemble them as they come in. One idea would be to create a puzzle of the child's country divided by provinces or districts.

As they do this, ask them to share one thing they learned from the previous lesson, or something that stood out to them about the husband's job in marriage.

Attention Grabber

As we're going to find out today, God's perfect design for husbands and wives is like a puzzle where pieces fit together perfectly. Today, we're going to learn about a second piece of that puzzle: the wife's role in marriage.

Do you remember the last lesson when we played the football game? The first time, one team lost miserably. Why did that team lose? Allow for the students' responses.

You're exactly correct. When the team's forward focused on the job of his goalie instead of on his own job, they lost. The game was also very un-enjoyable because of the critical spirit of the forward. In the same way, a husband and a wife in marriage should only be focused on their own role. Someday, if you all get married, you should only focus on the part of the game or puzzle that is your responsibility. You should only focus on doing the job that God has given you. You are to perform that job well regardless of how well your husband or wife is doing his or her job.

The Lesson

God designed the family perfectly so that each member can grow and live the best life that God intends for them. Each person in a family has a different job...a job that fits together just like a

puzzle. God’s job for a wife is different than that of a husband, but it is complementary to the husband’s job. This means that what God commands the wife to do fits perfectly with what he commands the husband to do. Together they make a terrific team – just like a football (soccer) team with all its unique position players! Their roles are different, but they fit together perfectly like a puzzle!

There are verses in the Bible that help us understand what God wants the wife to do in the marriage relationship. Ephesians 5:33 says, “However, each one of you (husbands) must also love his wife as he loves himself, and *the wife must respect her husband.*” Similarly, in Colossians 3:18, God says, “*Wives submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*”

What two things does God call wives to do in marriage?

You are correct when you say that God calls wives to respect and submit to their husbands.

Wives Are to Respect Their Husbands

We’re going to talk about the first command to wives: To respect their husbands. Can you tell me what respect means? Allow for the students’ responses.

You have given some great answers. Respect can be described with words like honor, admiration, esteem, and high regard. Respecting someone begins in our minds and not in our feelings. If a wife is to respect her husband, she must remember some very important things:

1. A husband is a valuable person just like the wife is a valuable person. He was created in God’s image and Christ died for him. He has worth and dignity in the sight of God.
2. Just as the wife is a special gift from God to the husband, so the husband is a special gift from God to the wife. It is a blessing for a woman to have a husband.
3. A husband is ultimately accountable to God for his job to care for his family.

When a wife remembers these things about her husband, it is easier for her to respect him. The more a wife realizes that her husband is a special gift from God, she will be able to do the job that God calls her to do better.

In the groups that you have been working in, please come up with five reasons why a husband is a special gift from God. I’ll give you time to work in your groups, and then I’ll ask you to share your ideas with all of us.

Allow students time to discuss and record their answers on their group worksheets. When they have finished, ask the group spokesperson to share their group’s ideas with the whole class.

Though respect starts with an attitude, it ends in actions. One of the most important ways that a wife can show her husband she respects him is by submitting to him. The idea of submission is an idea that unfortunately has been greatly misunderstood by both men and women. The only way we can see submission correctly is to look at what God says about submission.

God Calls Wives to Submit to Their Husbands

What do you think the word “submit” means? Allow for the students’ responses.

To submit means to voluntarily yield to another person. It is when someone cooperates with and follows another person. Keep in mind that the command to submit is given to both husbands and wives. Ephesians 5:21 speaks to everyone, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Philippians 2:4 also says, “In humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also the interest of others.”

God makes it clear that he has designed both husbands and wives to submit to one another and to God. Biblical submission means we are to be humble in our relationships, surrender our will to the will of God, serve the needs of others, and respect those placed in a position of authority over us. When we submit, we consider the other person before ourselves.

God’s command to the wife is similar to the command of husbands in marriage. God calls all people to love one another, but he especially commands husbands to love their wives and to make this their most important job in marriage. Likewise, God commands all to submit to one another, he especially commands the wife to submit to her husband and to make this her most important job in marriage.

God did this because he knows exactly what women’s and men’s greatest needs are. Women have a strong need to be loved and cared for, and men have a strong need to be honored and respected.

Girls, if a wife is called by God to submit to her husband, it’s important that you know what healthy and unhealthy submission is. Let’s first look at unhealthy submission.

This is what submission is not:

1. The wife becomes the husband’s property or slave.
2. The wife gives up all rights in her home.
3. The wife tolerates physical or emotional abuse.
4. The wife allows the husband to physically or emotionally abuse the children.

A wife is never called by God to endure abuse at the hands of her husband. If she does, she should seek the protection and counsel from a wise and trusted couple in her church or community.

Instead, submission is:

1. Recognizing the husband’s God-given responsibility to be head of the home.
2. Encouraging the husband to lead well, and allowing him to do so.
3. Not talking or acting in a way that devalues the husband.

In your groups that you have worked in during the past few lessons, I’d like for you to talk about and come up with one example of healthy and one example of unhealthy submission. We’ll then come back together and share our examples with the group.

Allow students time to work in their groups. When they have finished, have each group spokesperson share their ideas with the whole class.

Other Ways to Respect Husbands

You’ve given some great examples of what healthy submission is. God calls wives to submit to their husbands but also to respect them.

As we talked about before, respect begins as an attitude. A wife needs to view her husband the way that God does: as a highly valued person loved by God and accountable for his actions. When she views her husband in the correct way, she will be able to express her respect to her husband in a healthy way.

Here are some additional ways that a wife can show respect to her husband:

- 1. Recognize.** The wife can recognize her husband’s accomplishments and express this to him.
- 2. Kindness.** The wife can recognize that her husband is loved by God and can say kind things to him and about him to others.
- 3. Thankfulness.** The wife can recognize all that God gives her through her husband (home, children, food, etc.) and express thankfulness to God and her husband for these.
- 4. Faithfulness.** The wife can recognize God’s call on her life to be faithful to her husband, staying committed to him alone.
- 5. Prayer.** The wife can recognize that God cares for and has a plan for her husband’s life. She can pray for her husband regularly, that God will give him the strength to support and provide for his family.

In your groups, I’d like you to think of a scenario where a wife shows healthy respect to her husband. The question is found on your group worksheet. Talk about the scenario in your groups and then be ready to share it with the whole class.

Allow students time to work in their groups. When they have finished, have each group spokesperson share their ideas with the whole class.

These are some great scenarios of a wife respecting her husband!

The Promise

Take out two pieces of a puzzle that was used in the Welcome Time. Put the pieces together.

Here is the great news. When each person in a marriage does the job that God calls them to do, God will bless them. Ephesians 6:8 says, “You know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does.” God rewards the good that we do. This is the only thing we are to be concerned with – what we individually are to do!

For the husband, this means that the Lord will reward him for doing his job by fulfilling the command God gave to him to love his wife. For the wife, this means that the Lord will reward her for doing her job by fulfilling the command God gave her to respect and submit to her husband. The

Lord will not reward the husband for dominating his wife, and he will not reward the wife for shaming her husband.

Doing what God commands isn't always easy, but it is not impossible! Plus, we can ask for God's help. Wives can ask God to help them see their husbands as God sees them. They can be respectful and submissive even when their husband does not appear to deserve such respect. In this case, a wife respects her husband not because he deserves it but because she loves and reveres God. She can say "I love God and therefore I am willing to do what he tells me to do in his love and wisdom." When a wife respects and submits to her husband, she is primarily honoring the Lord. She does so not because her husband necessarily deserves it, but because she respects and reveres the Lord (Colossians 3:8).

When we are motivated by a desire to honor God, we are freed to love and serve others, regardless of whether they deserve it or not. We can put them before ourselves regardless of whether they respond favorably to whatever we say or do. We serve the Lord Jesus Christ not human beings. If we do what is right because our loving Creator asks us to, we will always have our reward in heaven as well as here on earth.

Closing Group Discussion

Have students share with one another, boys with boys, girls with girls, what their role in marriage will be someday according to God's good design.

What does the fact that God designed men's and women's roles in marriage to work together say about him? Please talk about this idea and be ready to share this with the whole class.

Allow students time to discuss in their pairs. Then ask a few volunteers to share their ideas.

Reflection and Prayer

Today we're again going to do things a little bit differently. We won't write in our journals; instead, girls you will personalize a letter written to you from God. I will pray with you about being the wife that God wants you to be if he calls you to be married someday. Boys, while the girls are meeting together, I'd like for you to pray for your future wives – that God would be making them now into the women he wants them to be. If you'd like to pray with someone else please do.

Hand out one of the letters to each of the girls. Meet with them and pray that God would enable each of them to be the wives that God may someday call them to be. Ask for God's help to enable them to someday respect and submit to their husbands in a way that is pleasing and honoring to God.

For the Girls

Dear _____,

When you get married,

Remember,

Respect your husband!

And I will bless you and your family.

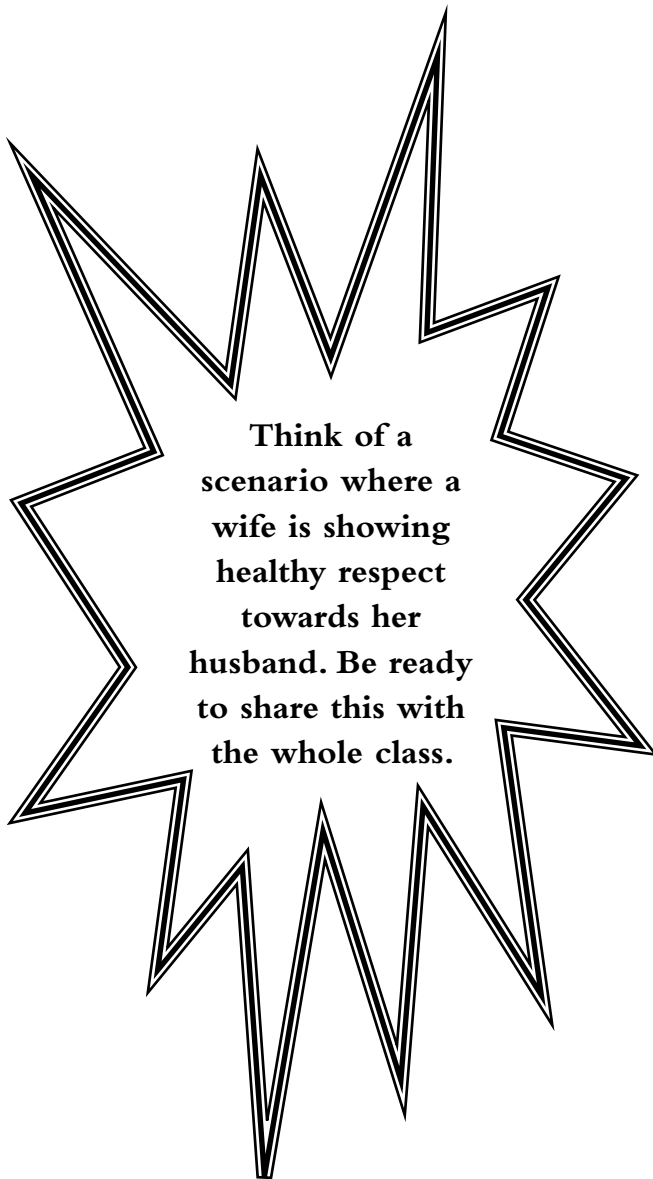
Signed,

The God of the Universe

**“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”
(Colossians 3:18)**

5 Reasons Why a Husband is a Gift from God

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Healthy Submission:

Unhealthy Submission:

UNIT FIVE – LESSON 7



God’s Design for the Family: Children, Honor Your Parents

TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The value and importance of this principle for children is evident by the fact that it is included in the Ten Commandments. One of the greatest challenges facing every child and young person as they grow is how they will view and respond to authority. Will they recognize and live under the all-encompassing authority of God and, as a result, experience the freedom and success God gives? Will they recognize and live under the human authority God places in their lives for their protection and well-being? Authority is a reality and it is a very good thing when it is carried out according to God’s design. God is the authority over all creation. For the protection and good of people, God has instituted human authority on this earth.

God knows that the *starting point* for a child recognizing and living under God’s authority *begins* with the child living under the authority of the parents or guardian. This is why God says, “honor your father and mother and it will go well with you.” This is why this principle and lesson is so important for children to grasp.

The Truth: God commands children to honor their father and mother.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- This command gives parents the right to harshly discipline or, worse, abuse their children.
- The reason for this command is to make life easier for parents and give them control over their children. It is not for the child’s benefit.
- The main reason you should obey your parents and authority figures is so that they will favor you and not discipline you harshly.
- This command, if obeyed, will take all the fun out of a child’s life.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: God knows the goodness and benefit of authority when properly administered because he ordained and designed it. This is why God promises that it will go well for children who learn to honor and respect their parents.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have a high calling and purpose. As a teacher, you are called by God to steward these children. A steward is one who manages and develops the resources that are owned by another but temporarily placed in the steward’s care. In this class, you are the steward. The children are the resources: God’s possessions that he has placed in your

care. You are accountable not just to the organization, church, or parent but, most of all, to God for how you teach and develop the spirit, mind, and ability of the children in your class.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Class Management – Change Settings

You may be very limited in terms of where you can meet with children (or with parents if you are working with them). But, if possible, try new settings such as under a tree or in a different room or building. *Children love variety; a different setting can bring new life and excitement to your lessons.*

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through these scriptures that speak of children honoring their parents. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Exodus 20:12 – “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

Ephesians 6:1-3 – “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother – which is the first commandment with a promise – that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Colossians 3:20 – “Children obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”

The Hebrew word for honor in the Old Testament is *kabad*. It means to give weight to, to make heavy, to make honorable. In the New Testament, the Greek word is *timao* and means to fix the value, to revere.

In the New Testament, the word obey is *hupakouo*. It means to listen; to hearken as one who, at the knock at the door, comes to listen to who it is; or to hearken to a command.

Ephesians 6:4 – “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

John 8:49 – Jesus said “but I honor my Father...”

Romans 5:19 – “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man (Jesus) the many will be made righteous.”

Hebrews 5:8-9 – “Although he (Jesus) was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”

Nehemiah 9:16 – “But they, our forefathers, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and did not obey your commands. They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them.”

Nehemiah 1:5 – “Then I said: ‘O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his command...’”

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 – “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse – the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.”

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 – “If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God.”

Psalms 119:44-45 – “I will always obey your law, forever and ever. I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts.”

Hebrews 13:17 – “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

1 John 5:3 – “This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome...”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God commands children to honor their father and mother.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** what it means to honor their father and mother.
- ***Understand** how they are to honor their parents.
- ***Respond** by honoring and respecting their parents each day.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, foot item that needs to be cut with knife and fork, one favorite fruit and one less liked vegetable that needs to be cooked to eat, four sets of Scripture Scramble cards

Scripture References

Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20; I John 3:24

Welcome Time

As a fun review of the last two lessons, choose two students – a boy and a girl – to demonstrate how to cut a piece of food and eat it. The catch is that they each can only use one hand – the left hand of the boy and the right hand of the girl (with the boy holding the fork and the girl the knife.) They must put the other hand behind their back. It should be fun. Watch and then point out that it was only by each doing their own complementary role that they were able to successfully cut the food and eat it. The same is true in a good marriage with a man unconditionally loving his wife and the wife respecting the husband.

Second, do the following involving everyone.

I’d like for you to come together in the same small groups that you have worked in for the last few lessons. We’re going to play a game called “You’re Out of Here!” I’m going to whisper to each of your groups either, “good example” or “bad example”. If you get “good example” you and your group are to act out one or more examples of a wife respecting her husband or of a husband loving his wife. Girls, you’ll act out examples of wives. Guys, you’ll act out examples of husbands. If I tell you “bad example” you’ll need to act out one or more examples of a wife not respecting her husband or a husband not loving his wife. The audience needs to decide whether this is a good example or a bad example. If it’s a good example they’ll tell why. If it’s a bad example they’ll all yell, “You’re out of here!” and you’ll all have to go and sit down.

Allow students time to plan their skits and perform them for the class, allowing the class to decide if it’s a good example or a bad example.

Attention Grabber

God has a good design for the family so that each member can thrive and flourish. Just as he has a specific command and role for the husband and the wife, he also has a specific instruction for the

children. Today, we are going to look at this instruction to children. But first, I'd like to show you a piece of fruit and a vegetable. Bring a fruit that everyone likes and looks very ripe and good. Bring a vegetable that is not well-liked by many and must be cooked to eat.

If I told you that if you eat this piece of fruit every day you would have great success in your life – you would finish school, get a good job, marry a good person, have good friends, etc. – would you eat it every day?

What if I told you the same for this vegetable (and you would have to eat it uncooked); would you eat it every day?

Allow students time to respond.

God wants us to thrive and flourish: to succeed. He gives us instructions on how to do this. Sometimes, his instructions are easy to follow, like eating a good piece of fruit. Other times his instruction is more difficult to follow, like eating the uncooked vegetable.

The Lesson

Even though you're still children in your parent's household, you also have a very important role to play. Husbands and wives have roles in the family, but children have roles as well. Let's listen to three scriptures that tell what your important job is as children:

Exodus 20:12 – “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

Ephesians 6:1-3 – “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother – which is the first commandment with a promise – that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Colossians 3:20 – “Children obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”

What are the two ways children are to respond to parents in these verses? (honor and obey) Allow for the children's responses. **You probably know and understand what it means to obey your parents, but what does it mean to honor your parents?** Allow for the students' responses.

Children Honor your Parents

Honor is a hard concept to understand, but it can best be defined by this situation: Suppose the ruler of this country were to walk in the room right now. How would you feel? Allow for the students' responses. **You would probably feel a bit fearful and nervous. So how would you act?** Allow for the students' responses. **You would probably be respectful, quiet, and polite and would be very quick to do anything that they ask of you. You would act this way because our ruler is an important person.**

It is the same way with honoring your parents. Your parents have an important position in your life. They are the authority that God has placed over you. They are very important people. Based upon

their position, God calls you to respond to them in a certain way. When you honor someone, you recognize his or her importance and you respond to it. You treat them with honor. God calls you to honor your parents: to respect them, submit to them, and to revere them. Even though you know your parents very well and know their weaknesses and challenges, God still asks you to treat them as if they have the same honor and weightiness as the president. God wants us to respond to the importance he has given parents. It doesn’t matter what age we are, God calls us all to honor our parents.

Honoring our parents may be difficult at times – but God commands us to do this because it will help us have the best life possible. Remember, all of God’s designs for life are perfect, including his design for the family. We can trust his instructions because we know that he is good and his design for all of life is good.

I’d like for you to think about the concept of honor in your small groups. If honoring someone is treating them with the importance that God has given them, please make a list of ways that you can practically show honor to your parents.

Allow students time to work in their groups. When they have finished, ask the spokesperson to share their group’s list. If a blackboard or whiteboard is available, write all of their answers down on the board.

Honor, Obedience and a Promise

If you honor someone, you will obey what they ask you to do. God commands children to honor and obey their parents. Obedience is the response to honor. Listen to Ephesians 6:1-3 again, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother – which is the first commandment with a promise – that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

This is an important verse and an interesting one, as it is a commandment that is directly connected to a promise. God commands you to obey and honor your parents but he promises something when you do this: “*That it may go well with you and you may enjoy long life on the earth.*”

Let’s take some time learning this verse since it is the commandment that applies to all of us and is the first commandment with a promise. We’ll play a game called “Scripture Scramble.” I am going to give each of you an index card with one of the words of Ephesians 6:1-3 on it. I’m handing out the index cards out of order. When I say “go,” you are to put yourselves in the correct order. Those who do not get a card with a word of the verse on it may get a card that says “judge” or one that says “caller.” When the students who have words on their cards have put themselves in what they believe to be the correct order, the judges will determine if they are correct. If you are not in the correct order, the judges will switch the position of students as necessary. When the judges determine that the verse is correct they will turn to the caller whose job it is to say, “Scrambled students, say your verse!” Each student holding a word card should call out their word, thus saying the scripture verse in order.

(Note to teacher: Prepare enough cards ahead of time based upon the number of students you have. You may have several judges if necessary. If you have a very large group, play the game twice so that all students get a chance to play.)

Since this is the first commandment with a promise, let's look at each of the parts of the wonderful promise that God has given us when we obey our parents:

1. *That it may go well with you.* God promises that when you honor and obey your parents, things will go well. What do you think this means? Allow for the students' responses. **Very simply this means that generally things in your life and in your family will work out well. Of course, life will not be perfect all the time but you'll notice less conflicts with your parents and siblings, and other areas of your life will work well.** If you are able, share examples of older students and youth who have obeyed their parents and where they are today. Contrast that with examples of older youth and adults who have not obeyed their parents and where they are today. The students may be able to give examples as well.
2. *That you may enjoy life on the earth.* God promises that when you honor and obey your parents, you will be able to enjoy life. You will find that your attitudes and actions of honor and obedience towards your parents will result in a more enjoyable life overall. When you have a positive outlook towards anything, even honoring your parents, life generally is sweeter and more enjoyable. Your life may be more enjoyable because your family gets along well and your parents give you more freedom because they trust you. In what other ways do you think life is more enjoyable when you obey your parents? Allow students time to share.
3. *That you may enjoy long life on the earth.* God promises that when you honor and obey your parents, you will enjoy a long life on the earth. Because parents work to protect us, we won't be putting ourselves in a place of danger. Can anyone think of a time when you didn't obey your parents and you ended up in trouble or getting hurt? Allow students time to share.

God has given your parents to you to protect you and make good decisions that will enable you to grow up wise and strong. They do know what's best for you and it is important to listen to them and follow what they say. When you honor and obey your parents, you are promised that life will go well, you will enjoy life, and you will live as long as you are meant to live on this earth.

Even though God gives us a wonderful promise when we honor and obey our parents, it is not always an easy thing to do. God knows that it can be hard to honor our parents and live under their authority especially when we become teenagers. But he wants to help us succeed in this area. God knows that as we recognize and honor the authority of our parents, it becomes easier to honor and recognize his authority. So, if you are having difficulty honoring and obeying your parents, ask God for his help. He will always answer you when you ask for his help.

How Do We Honor and Obey Our Parents?

How can we better honor and obey our parents each and every day? In your groups, I would like to give you an idea to develop and create a one minute skit that you can perform for others that demonstrates a way to honor and obey your parents.

But before we do this, I'd like to talk about one very important thing. Some of you may be having a very difficult time at home with your parents. Some parents don't follow God's good plan for their lives. Instead, they may drink too much, be angry a lot, and may even become abusive. God never wants children to be abused or to be forced to do things that are not according to his good plan.

If you are in a situation like this, you need to talk with another adult you trust in your family, your community, or your church. You can always talk to me and I will help you. God is always watching and always loving you. He will show you what to do. Don’t suffer alone.

Give each group one of the following explanations. Ask them to depict all of the points in each idea as fully as possible. You can give this to them on a card or share it with them verbally.

Assign groups their tips and allow them time to plan their skits. When they have finished, call groups up one at a time to perform their skit. When they finish each skit, ask the others what they saw and heard.

1. Idea and Skit: *Be Responsive. Obey in full.* When your parents ask you to do something or not to do something, respond to them *immediately* and *fully*. Don’t wait until they ask several times and are tired and frustrated. Don’t do only a part of what they have asked you to do and leave the rest undone. Let them know you hear them and value their instruction.
2. Idea and Skit: *Be Thankful.* Your parents work very hard to provide food, a bed, a roof, and other things for you. They train you and protect you. It is easy to take this for granted, but don’t! Think about every small thing they do for you, and honor them by thanking them on a regular basis. They are not perfect, but they love you very much and are doing their best to meet your needs. Especially thank them when they do something special for you.
3. Idea and Skit: *Be Helpful.* Don’t wait to be asked to help out. Honor your parents by offering to help them on a regular basis. This can be simple things like helping with dinner, picking up trash on the floor when you see it, helping wash dinner dishes, or entertaining a younger brother or sister when you see that your mom is trying to get something done. Pay attention and ask God to give you opportunities to bless your parents!
4. Idea and Skit: *Be Open.* Honor your parents by communicating with them. Talk to them and *listen* to them. Tell them about the good in your day and share with them about the hard things you go through. Ask them questions. Be willing to talk to them when you are upset and things need to be worked out between you and them. Be respectfully honest when you feel misunderstood or when you are upset about a decision they have made. Give your parents a chance to hear your heart and work things out with you. If they don’t hear from you, they won’t know what is in your heart. Remember, they were kids once too. Maybe they will understand better than you expect. Trust their love for you.
5. Idea and Skit: *Be Forgiving.* Your parents are not perfect and will definitely make mistakes sometimes. They may forget something that is important to you. They may get angry and lose their temper. They may not do something you want them to do, may seem unfair, may misunderstand you, or even blame you for something you did not do. Remember, **none** of us are perfect. We **all** make mistakes. Honor your parents by being forgiving toward them. Remember that they are doing the best they know how to do to take care of you. If you ask God, he will help you forgive them when you are disappointed or upset.

Those were great skits! They showed very good ways you can better honor and obey your parents.

Closing Group Discussion

Honoring and obeying our parents is a very good thing though it's not always easy. In your groups, I'd like for you to discuss the closing group discussion question: *Which of the tips of how to honor and obey your parents is most difficult to do and why? What can you practically do to make it easier?*

Allow students time to discuss this question in their groups. When they have finished, have the group spokesperson share their ideas with the class.

Never forget that God wants to help you honor and obey your parents. As you obey them, you are obeying God himself. Listen to the promise found in 1 John 3:24, "Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them."

Reflection and Prayer

I'd like for you to think now about how this lesson applies to your life. What can you do to increasingly honor and obey your parents? Please open your journals, and complete the following two action statements:

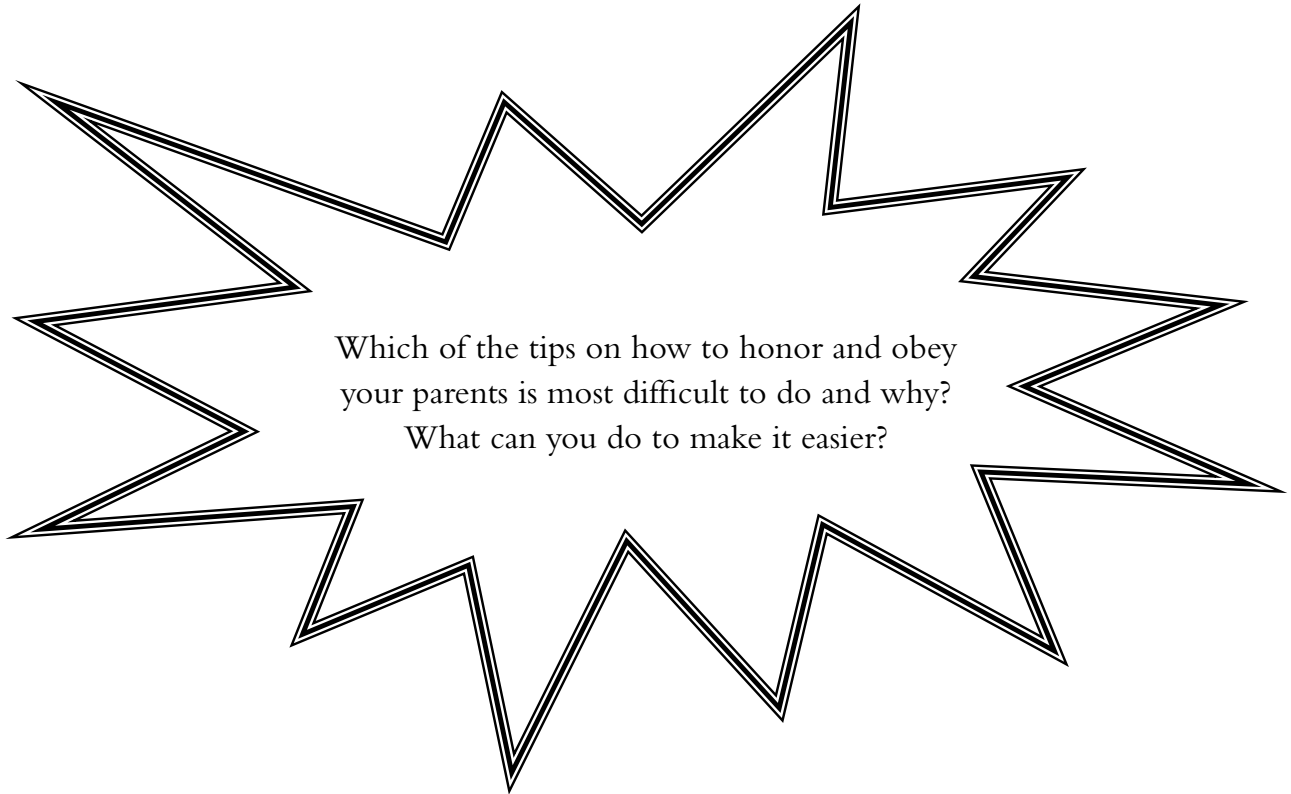
Since God calls me to honor and obey my parents, I will...

Since God calls me to honor and obey my parents, I need to repent of...

Allow students time to write in their journals. When they have finished, close in prayer. Thank God for all of the students' parents and for the wonderful things he promises when they obey them. Ask God to help each of the students follow his command to honor and obey their parents.

Ephesians 6:1-3 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother – which is the first commandment with a promise – that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Ways we can Honor our Parents



Ephesians 6:1-3	Children	obey	your parents
in the	Lord,	for this	is right.
Honor	your father	and mother -	which is
the first	commandment	with	a promise -
that it	may go	well	with you
and that	you may	enjoy	long
Life	on the	earth.	

UNIT 6



God's Design for Money

From early on, children learn from their parents, friends, and others the role money plays in all aspects of life. Building on the previous units, the lessons in this unit aim to help children understand and embrace God's good and perfect design for the place and use of money in life.

Student Journal – Unit Six

You will use this journal each day at the end of the lesson to record your action statements. Action statements are things you decide to do based on what you learned in the lesson.

Lesson One

Because everything belongs to God, I will...

Because God calls me to trust in him and not in money I will...

Lesson Two

Make a plan to bless someone with the resources God has given you this week. Write your plan below:

Who:

What:

When :

Where:

How:

Why:

Lesson Three

Since God wants me to give back to him, I will...

Because God calls me to trust in him, one way I will manage my money differently is...

UNIT SIX – LESSON 1



God's Design for Life: Money!

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The all-knowing, all-loving creator God has the only answers for living a truly abundant life. Money is a big part of everyone's life! Awareness of money and its role in life starts at a young age. This usually occurs when a child asks for something and the parent says "no" because they do not have money for it. Therefore, if we want to impart a Biblical worldview to our children so they can thrive, we need to help them know how God thinks about or views money.

The Truth: God owns everything, including our money. Therefore, we need to see and think about money the way God does.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- Any money we earn or receive belongs to us and we can use it however we wish.
- The more money we have, the more value we have as a person.
- Money is the measure of success.
- To be close to God and to be a good disciple, you must not make or have too much money, because money is the root of all evil.
- If you can get enough money, all your problems will be solved.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: For children, having God's perspective on money, and making this perspective their own, will free them up to handle money in the best possible way. Money will be a blessing and not a curse.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children that can profoundly shape their entire life. You may think that your education is limited, your skills are inadequate, you lack a proper classroom, or you do not have good teaching aids or materials for the children. All of these may be true, but you do not lack what is most important for impacting the children in your care.

You have a **conscience** – the ability to know what is right and wrong. You know how to best live your life and use your skills to bless others. Listen to your conscience and follow it. It is a valuable gift from God. He speaks to you through it.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Class Management – Be aware of the attitudes and emotions children bring into class.

Some children may walk in after fighting with their siblings or being reprimanded by their parents. Encourage them and help them work to overcome their bad day.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through these scriptures that speak of God’s view of money. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God impresses upon your heart.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 – “Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.”

Psalm 52:7 – “Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others!”

Psalm 62:10 – “Though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.”

Proverbs 11:28 – “Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.”

Jeremiah 48:7 – “Since you trust in your deeds and riches, you too will be taken captive, and Chemosh will go into exile, together with his priests and officials.”

Luke 12:15 – “Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’”

Luke 12:21-47 – “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”

1 Timothy 6:17 – “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.”

James 4:13-15 – “Now listen, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.’ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.’”

Revelation 3:14-19 – “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write... You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

Because God owns everything, including our money, we need to think about money the way he does.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** how God views money.
- ***Understand** the truth about money and how God intends money to affect our lives.
- ***Respond** by living life with a more accurate perspective on money including the money God gives them.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, Scripture Scramble Cards from last lesson, Agree/Disagree signs utilized in previous lessons

Scripture References

Genesis 2:7; Deuteronomy 8:17-18; I Chronicles 29:11-14,16; Psalm 24:1; Proverbs 8:18, 22:1-2; Ecclesiastes 5:10; Isaiah 43:3-4; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Matthew 6:21-24; 1 Timothy 3:1-5, 6:10; Hebrews 13:5-6; James 1:17

Welcome Time

I have the word cards that we used last lesson for the Scripture Scramble game up front. I'd like each of you, one at a time, to come to the front of the room and take a card. As you take your card, please say one thing you learned from the last lesson about obeying your parents. After each person has taken a card and said one thing they learned, I would like you to look at the word on your card and put yourselves in order so the verse Ephesians 6:1-3 is correct. Please begin.

Depending on the size of your group, you may want to limit this activity to one set of participants or volunteers.

Attention Grabber

Today's lesson is going to be about a topic that we are all very familiar with: money. I'm going to read a series of statements. In the four corners of the room, I have four signs posted: Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

After I read the statement, decide how you think most people in your community or nation feel about that statement, and go to the corner that best describes their feelings. Be ready to share why you think most people would think this way.

1. Money solves all problems.
2. Money is evil.
3. God loves poor people more than the rich.
4. The fact that some people are rich is evidence that God loves them more.
5. If you have a lot of money, you have no worries.
6. Too much money is the start of all kinds of trouble.

7. If you have a lot of money, you are more important and valuable.
8. A person’s value and importance is not measured by the amount of money they have.

The Lesson

Most of the world does not think about money in the way that God thinks about it. This causes a lot of problems. In order to think correctly about money, we need to go to God and his word to hear what he says about money. Remember God is good and his instructions for life are always good. This includes his instructions for money. He wants what is absolutely best for us. Today, we are going to find out about what he says about money so we can follow his instructions in this area of our lives and thrive. There are four important things we can learn from God about money.

1. Money Is from God.

Everything we have in life comes from God. Everything belongs to God!

The Bible teaches this very clearly:

- “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it...” (Psalm 24:1).
- “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for *everything* in heaven and earth is yours... *Wealth* and honor *come from you*; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all... *Everything* comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand... as for all this *abundance* that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.” (I Chronicles 29:11-14,16)

Can you think of anything that is not included in “everything” and does not belong to God? Allow for response. That’s right! Nothing is excluded or left out. So, what belongs to the Lord? That’s right! Everything. Would our money be included in this? Of course! Our money belongs to God.

Also, our ability to earn money comes from God. Someone might say, “But I earned this money! I worked hard and earned a fair wage. It is not God’s money...it is MY money!” Or they might say, “My uncle gave me this money. It was his money, he gave it to me, and now it is MINE.”

Guess what? God has heard this argument before. Way back in Old Testament times people were saying the same things! Listen to this:

- “You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, *for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth*” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).
- “...the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...*” (Genesis 2:7).

These verses remind us that God gives us everything. He gives us power, strength in our hands, ability, skills, even the very breath that we live by. God gives us the skills, abilities, and energy we need to earn money. We can do nothing apart from what he has given us. We have a lot to be grateful for! Those who think that the money they earn is 100% from their own doing are only fooling themselves.

It's time for us to form new groups since we're starting a new unit. In your new groups, be sure to choose a group spokesperson and recorder for today. I'll divide us into four groups, and then I'd like for you to discuss the following group discussion question: *If our money belongs to God and he gives us the ability to earn it, what are some ways we can give it back to him in serving and giving to others?*

Count off and divide the students into groups. Allow students time to discuss this question and call on the group spokesperson of each group to share their group's ideas when finished.

2. Money Is a Revealer of Our Hearts – It Reveals the Master We Serve

Did you know that money reveals what is in our hearts? This is another very important truth we need to know about money. How you use your money in life says something very important about who you are on the inside. The way you think about money and how you use it reveals what is in your heart and what is important to you.

Let's look at what Jesus said about this in Matthew 6:21-24: "...where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Jesus said you cannot serve both God and money. What do you think he meant? Allow for response.

If we forget that our money comes from God, it will begin to rule our lives. Money can become the master we serve. This can happen without us even being aware of it. It's like a weed growing in the garden. It starts small and you don't see it, but eventually it will take over the entire garden. Discuss this further, applying it to your particular culture and the children you are teaching.

God wants us to live free of having money be our master. When we focus on God and follow in his good and perfect way, we will see the truth that the creator God alone is our good master.

In your groups, I'd like for you to explore this idea further. Please think about and answer the following two discussion questions: *Why is God a better master to serve than money?* and *How can we develop more of a heart for God and less of a heart for money?*

Allow students time to discuss these questions and then call on each group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

3. Money Is NOT to Be Loved!

God says money is not to be loved. Let's look at some scriptures where God warns us about loving money just like you would warn someone about doing anything that would be harmful for them (like eating spoiled food!).

- "For the *love of money* is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).
- "There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be...*lovers of money*..." (1 Timothy 3:1-5).
- "Keep your lives free from the *love of money*..." (Hebrews 13:5-6).
- "Whoever *loves money* never has money enough; whoever *loves wealth* is never satisfied with his income" (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

God is not saying that money itself is evil. We know that money ultimately comes from God, so it must be a good thing. The Bible even talks about riches and wealth as being a blessing from God:

- **“With me (God’s wisdom) are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity” (Proverbs 8:18).**
- **“Every good and perfect gift comes from God” (James 1:17).**

So, money by itself is not deceptive or harmful. It is the love of money that will deceive us and lead us into evil and harm. What do you think it means to “love money”? How do we recognize when we “love money?” I’d like for you to explore this idea further in your groups since it is so easy to love money. Please come up with a short skit that shows someone loving money instead of God and others. Be ready to share this skit with the whole class.

Allow students time to plan their skits in their groups. After they have finished, call on each group, one at a time, to share their skit.

Here are some ideas you can give the children that they can plan a skit around.

We know we are “loving” money when we...

1. make it the most important thing in our lives.
2. think about it all the time.
3. are stingy and not generous.
4. are constantly envious of those who have more money than we have.
5. are willing to hurt other people to earn or get more of it. For example, cheating someone, lying to someone, stealing from someone, working so much (to make money) that you are not spending any time with your family or others who need and love you.

You performed some great skits that showed how easy it is to love money too much. But here is an interesting question: Why does God warn against loving money? Allow for responses. According to the verses we just heard, the love of money leads to evil, and evil results in pain, hurt, distrust, discontent, and fear. Do any of you want any of these things? Of course not! We must all be careful not to “love” money.

We all struggle with loving money at times. God wants us to admit and agree with him that we struggle in this area. We should ask him for his perspective and help when we need it. He will help us to not love money but instead to love him, the giver of life and everything we have. He promises to help us live free. Making money our focus will end up hurting us, and God always wants to protect us from such pain.

4. Money Is NOT a Measure of Our Value or of Our Success

Lastly, God wants us to know that money is not a measure of our value or of our success. Many people believe that the more money a person has, the more valuable that person must be. But our creator God has made it clear that our true value has nothing to do with how much money we have or earn. We are valuable because God has created each of us in his image, and has made each of us unique and with a purpose. He assigns each of us great value because he sent his Son, Jesus, to die for us. A person’s value is never determined by how much money he or she has. Listen to these verses that explain how valuable we are:

- “Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all” (Proverbs 22:2).
- “For I am the Lord, your God...you are precious and honored in my sight...” (Isaiah 43:3,4).

In the same way, many people believe that the more money a person has, the more successful that person is. But there are many other more important ways to measure success:

1. There is the successful teacher who faithfully teaches children each day and impacts their lives with truth and wisdom. He or she is very successful, but may not make much money.
2. There is the successful wife and mother who provides for her husband and children and they call her blessed. She is very successful, but may not make any money at all!

We see that money is a very poor way to measure success. God says that a good name, integrity, and understanding and knowing God are much better indicators of success than money is:

- “A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold” (Proverbs 22:1-2).
- “This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

We are successful when we follow Jesus and live life in the good way God teaches us to live.

In your groups, I’d like for you to discuss this further. Please come up with one example of someone in the community (no names please, just a general scenario) who is valuable and successful but doesn’t have, or make, a lot of money. Please record your answer on your group information sheet and then be ready to share it with the rest of the group.

Allow students time to discuss their ideas in their groups. When they have finished, ask each group spokesperson to share their example with the group.

Closing Group Discussion

What is most important is that we recognize that money and the ability to earn it comes from God. In God’s eyes, a person’s value and success is not measured by how much money they make. God wants us to live free from the love of money and trusting in money. He wants us to trust in him. What are ways we can respond to this lesson or put it into action in our lives?

Allow students time to discuss this in their groups. When they have finished, call on the group spokesperson in each group to share their conclusion.

Reflection and Prayer

God is so much more valuable and trustworthy than money. He loves us so much and never changes or fades away. Money can vanish quicker than we’d care to admit. In your journals, I’d like for you to complete the following action statements:

Because everything belongs to God, I will...

Because God calls me to trust in him and not in money, I will...

Allow students time to reflect and respond in their journals. When they have finished writing, close in prayer thanking God that all things come from him, including money. Ask God to help each one of the students and yourself to keep the proper perspective about money and to always cultivate a love for God instead of a love for money.

Group Worksheets

If our money belongs to God and he gives us the ability to earn it, how can we give it back to him in service and giving to others?

How can we develop a heart for God and less of a heart for money?

Why is God a better master to serve than money?

Name an example of someone in a community (no names please)
who is valuable and successful but does not have a lot of money:

UNIT SIX – LESSON 2



God's Design for Life: God's Purpose for Our Money

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

In Unit 3, we looked at how God has a magnificent and wonderful purpose for our lives. In this lesson, we recognize that money is just one of the resources God puts into our lives so that we can live out his greater purposes for us. God's purpose for our money is the same as his purpose for our lives.

Do we know and are we seeking to live out God's purpose for our life? If so, how can we use the money God provides us with to help us live out this purpose?

The Truth: God's purpose for our money mirrors God's purpose for our lives.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- Money is the most important thing in life!
- Money is not important to God. It's just something we need to help us survive on this earth.
- Money has nothing to do with God or spiritual matters.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: This truth reminds us to integrate all of life under God and his purposes. The tendency is to compartmentalize our lives and treat one box separately from the other. We are especially tempted to do this with money! Children need to know early on that their money and God's commandments for how to live an abundant life are integrated and inseparable.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children that can profoundly shape their entire life.

You have a **spirit** and, therefore, the ability to give encouragement, vision, and a sense of purpose to children.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Children choose to learn. Learning is an act of the child's will to take in information, to wrestle with it, to make it part of who they are and how they think. You can make children sit still, but you cannot make them learn. You can reward or penalize them for knowing or not knowing facts, but you cannot make them really learn. Learning is a choice of the will. A parent or teacher can force them to remember facts and ideas, but the child must choose to really learn in a way that changes the way they think and behave.

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures that speak of God’s purpose for money in our lives. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God impresses upon your heart.

Mark 12:29-31 – “‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. *Love the Lord your God* with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: “*Love your neighbor as yourself.*” There is no commandment greater than these.”

Genesis 1:26 – “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and *let them rule* over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, *over all the earth*, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’”

Genesis 12:1-2 – “The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, *and you will be a blessing.*’”

Ephesians 4:28 – “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must *work*, doing something useful with his own hands, *that he may have something to share with those in need.*”

Matthew 6:25-26 – “Therefore I tell you, *do not worry* about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God's purpose for our money aligns directly with God's purpose for our lives.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** God's good purpose for their money is the same as his purpose for their lives.
- ***Understand** how to use their money to accomplish God's purposes in their life.
- ***Respond** by using their money and other resources to further God's purposes in their life and the lives of others.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, small ball, lesson pictures of people giving food, buying medicine, purchasing books, and tithing

Scripture References

Genesis 1:26, 2:15, 12:1-2; Matthew 6:25-26; Mark 12:29-31; Ephesians 4:28

Welcome Time

Today's welcome time will review and reinforce the concept of last week's lesson found in the verse Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." This is perhaps one of the most important concepts that the students can keep in mind as we discuss money during this whole unit.

You will play the game "Hot Seat" in order to help children review this verse. Have the students repeat the verse several times with you. Take out a small ball that you have brought to class with you.

I think that you know this verse well. We are going to play the game called "Hot Seat." I am going to toss the ball to someone. Whoever catches the ball is on the "Hot Seat" and must say Psalm 24:1. When that person has finished saying the verse, he or she should throw the ball to someone else. The person who catches the ball is now on the "Hot Seat" and should say the Bible verse. We'll continue tossing the ball and repeating the verse until all of you who would like to say the Bible verse have had the chance.

Attention Grabber

Please get into the four groups that you worked in for the last lesson. Be sure to choose a new spokesperson and recorder for today. In your groups, discuss what you would do if the following happened to you: *You have just come into a very large sum of money. What would you use that money for?* Record all of your group's responses. Distribute worksheets.

Allow students time to discuss and record their group's answers. When they have finished, call on the group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

The Lesson

Money is an important resource that God has given us. Many of you came up with excellent ideas with what you would do if God blessed you with a lot of money. But why does God give us money? Allow for the students' responses.

God has given each of us money for an important reason or purpose. He gives us money so that we can accomplish God’s great purposes for each of our lives. Who remembers what the three purposes for our lives are that we learned about several lessons ago?

God’s three great purposes for our lives are that we are:

- to fulfill the great commandment of loving God and others,
- to have dominion over all creation and make it better,
- and, in general, to bless others because that is why we are blessed.

We use the money God gives us to fulfill these purposes. Let’s review them again.

1. God’s Purpose Is that We Use Our Money and Resources to Fulfill the Great Commandment

Show the students the pictures of the person buying medicine at the pharmacy, the person buying a book, the person giving their tithe, and the people giving away food. Explain what each of the people in the pictures is doing.

Who can tell me what common thing the people in these pictures are doing? Allow for the students’ ideas.

They are using their money and resources to fulfill the Great Commandment. Do you remember what the Great Commandment is? Allow for the students to respond. The Great Commandment calls us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

God’s good design for our money is that we use it in ways that are loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. The best way to do this is by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Buying medicine is a good way to love God with all your strength as you are using money to keep yourself or someone else healthy.

Buying books is a good way to love God with all your mind as you are using money to learn about the world God created and about God himself.

Tithing, or giving back the first 10% of the money God gives us, is a good way to love God with all your heart. In this, we show that we love him more than money and depend on him to provide.

Finally, when we use our resources to bless someone else, like giving them food, we are showing that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

There are so many ways that we can use our money to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves. In your groups, I’d like for you to come up with three more ways you can use money to fulfill the Great Commandment.

Allow the students time to work in their groups. When they have finished, call on the group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

2. God's Purpose Is that We Use Our Money and Resources to Have Dominion Over All Creation

Who remembers what job God gave Adam in the Garden of Eden? Allow for the students' responses. **You're right. God told Adam to have dominion over the earth and to work it or make it produce bounty. In Genesis it says, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over the creatures that move along the ground'" (Genesis 1:26). "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15).**

God wants us to have dominion over all creation. This means we are to use our money to manage, steward, and make the best possible use of all the resources that God has put into our lives and into the earth. We are to use our money to improve life, fix things, solve problems, and make the earth a better place to live. For example, we can use our money to buy seeds and plant crops that will feed our families. We can use it to pay taxes that build roads and clinics. We can use it to go to school and develop our minds so that we can contribute more to society. All these are ways to use money to have dominion or rule over creation.

In your groups, I'd like for you to think of three more ways you can use your money to have dominion over creation and make the world a better place. When you have come up with three good ideas, I'll ask the group spokesperson to share your ideas with all of us.

Allow students time work in their groups and for group spokespeople to share.

3. God Wants Us to Use Our Money and Resources to Bless Others

God blesses us so that we can bless others. Do you remember God's promise to Abraham, "I will bless you....and you will be a blessing" (Genesis 12:1-2)? God blessed Abraham so that people all over the world would know and experience God's blessings.

In order to bless others well, we need to steward the resources God has given us. Remember the parable of the five talents? Who can tell me what it means to steward something? Allow for students' responses.

To steward something is to use what another has given you according to their wishes to make the best possible use of it. This is what God does with money. He entrusts it to us so that we'll make the best possible use of it to ultimately bless others.

Ephesians 4:28 says, "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need." God commands us to earn money honestly and usefully, then share what we make with those in need.

In this way, God himself is providing for the needs of others through us. When we do this, they get to experience God's love and goodness too! It is a great privilege to be used by God in this way!

God says he will always provide for our needs. Listen to this verse from Matthew 6:25-26 where Jesus says, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

Jesus is not telling us that we shouldn’t work or do anything to take care of ourselves. His design is that we all work and do something useful, but then not worry! It is very hard to not worry about having your needs met. What are some of the things that you or your family worries about? Allow students to share their responses.

God knows what we worry about and does care. Sometimes he meets our needs in a very unusual way. Does anyone have a story to encourage the rest of the group of how God provided when your family really needed something? Allow the students time to share. If they can’t think of a story, share one from your own experience.

We are all encouraged by hearing how God works in peoples’ lives. God wants to use all of us in the work of helping to meet others’ needs. In your groups, I’d like you to work on the group discussion question that is found on your group worksheet. *Think of three ways you can use money or your resources to bless someone else. Make it something you can really do.*

Allow the students time to work in their groups. When all groups have finished, call on the group spokesperson to share their group’s answers.

Closing Group Discussion

We just learned about the purposes that God has for money: to love God and our neighbor, to have dominion over all creation, and to bless others. Did you know this applies to you even now? You may think you are unable to do this because you have very little or no money. However, you can still fulfill God’s purposes in your life with the abilities and resources God has given you. I’d like you to think about this idea further. Please answer the following group discussion question: *What prevents you from using your money and resources to bless others, love your neighbor, and have dominion over all the earth?*

Allow students time to discuss in their groups. When they have finished, call on each group spokesperson to share their ideas.

Reflection and Prayer

In your journals, I’m going to ask you to complete an action statement, but it will look a little different than normal. I’d like you to come up with a plan of how you can bless someone this week using the resources that you have. Fill out “Who you will bless,” “What you will do,” “When you will do it,” “Where you will do it,” “How you will do it,” and “Why you chose this person and way to bless them.” Think of someone in your life who is in need. God can use you to bless them and help meet their needs! Don’t think only of physical needs. Perhaps there is someone you know who needs encouragement. God has given you the ability to speak and write. Perhaps

you can speak or write a word of encouragement to them. Be creative and sincerely try to bless someone! We will share how this went next week, so be sure to do this during the week.

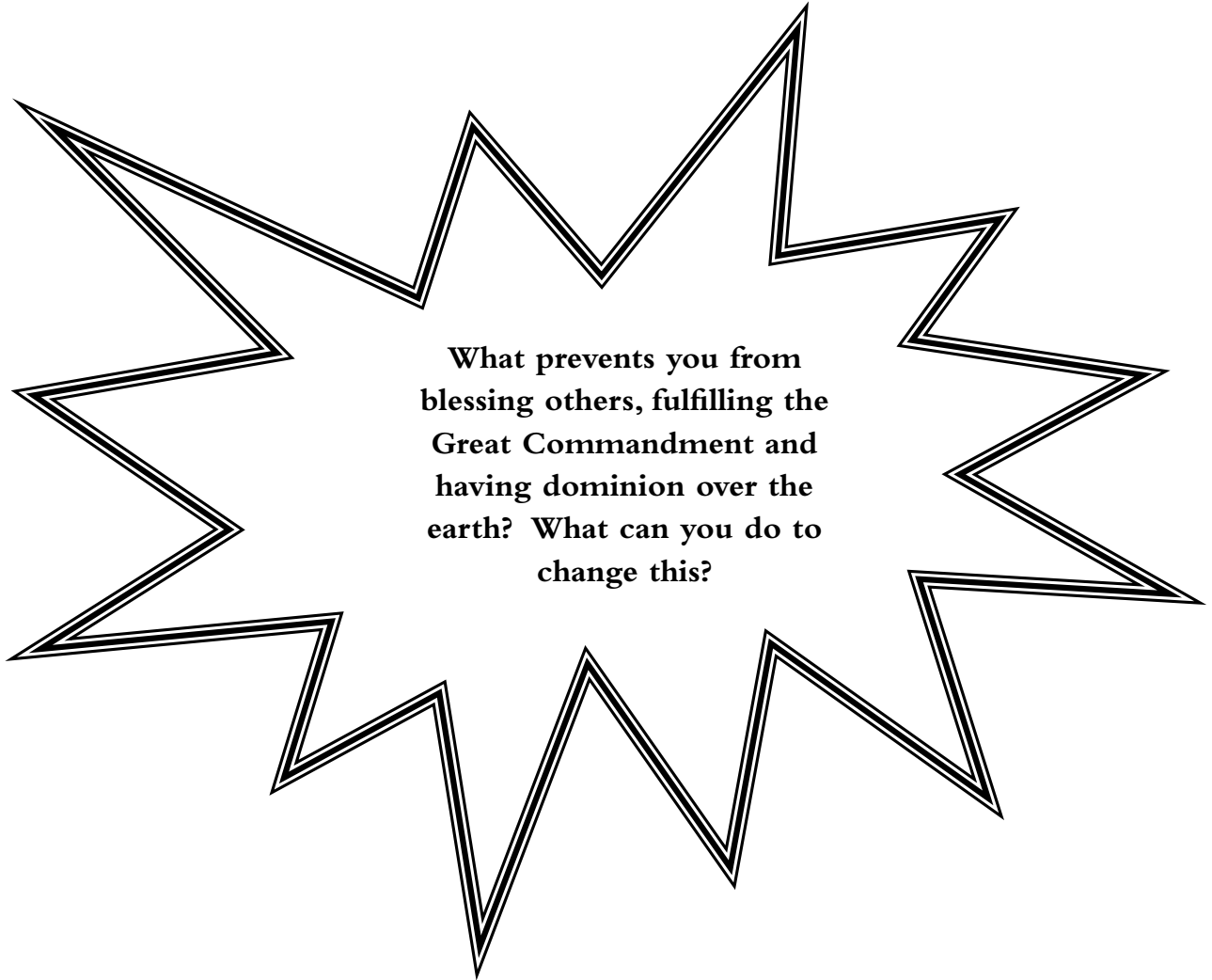
After students have had time to fill out their action plan, close in prayer. Thank God for the money and resources he gives all of us. Ask for wisdom from him to know how best to fulfill his purposes: blessing others, fulfilling the Great Commandment, and having dominion over the earth.

Imagine you have just received a very large sum of money. What would you use that money for? Record all of your group's responses.

Name 3 ways you can bless someone with the money and resources God has given you.

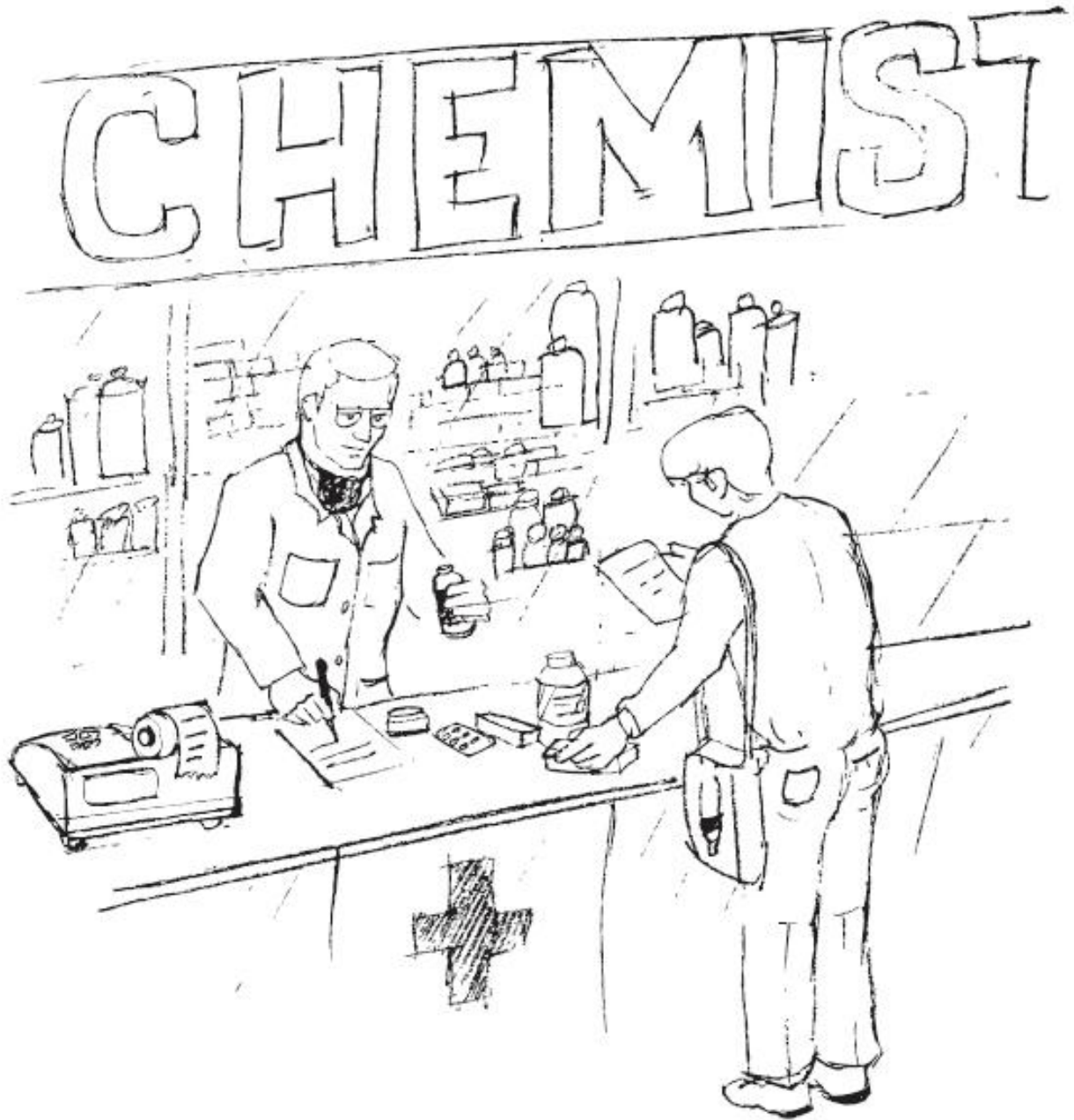
Name 3 ways you can fulfill the Great Commandment with the money and resources God has given you.

Name 3 ways you can use your money and resources to take dominion of the earth.



**What prevents you from
blessing others, fulfilling the
Great Commandment and
having dominion over the
earth? What can you do to
change this?**







My Tithe

UNIT SIX – LESSON 3



God's Design for Life: Managing Your Money

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

There are more than 2,000 verses in the Bible concerning money and how to use it. Clearly, God cares about money and wants us to be successful in how we handle it. This lesson focuses on four keys to managing our money: giving to God (tithing), giving to others (generosity), planning before we spend (to avoid debt), and saving.

The Truth: God has given us special instructions for how to use and manage the money he gives to us.

The Deception: This lesson challenges the following counterfeit ideas:

- Giving to God (tithing) is like buying protection insurance. If you do it, then God will take care of you. It is like paying the youth who offers to watch your vehicle. If you don't pay him, he will let something bad happen to it.
- Giving to God is like paying taxes to the government. He requires it and needs it to keep the church running. And, if you don't pay tithe, you may eventually get into big trouble with God.
- I cannot be generous toward others because I hardly have enough for myself and my family.
- Most people give to others or act generously in order to get something in return. This is the underlying reason to be generous.
- Planning and budgeting is for businesses. It is not for people like me.
- I cannot afford to save.
- Tomorrow is uncertain so why save? Spend money and live for today. Besides, God says he will take care of tomorrow.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children can take confidence in the fact that God cares about their money and has given instructions for how to best use the money he entrusts to them. They will have confidence in God's instructions and will follow them. As a result, their lives will flourish and thrive as God designed.

Encouragement for the Teacher

You have important and valuable resources to share with children that can profoundly shape their entire life.

You have a **mind**, which gives you the ability to continue learning new knowledge and skills to better teach the children.

Tip for Successful Teaching

Trust is the key to a child learning.

Children choose to learn and they choose to learn from a person they trust. When they sense a parent or teacher really knows them and cares for them, they open up their minds and hearts to that person’s ideas and teaching. You open the door of learning by loving the child!

Teacher Devotional

As you prepare to teach this lesson, please read and pray through this list of scriptures and information that speaks of managing your money. Prayerfully study these scriptures and ask God to show you how you can best share his truth with the children he has blessed you with. There is an empty space to write down your thoughts and what God shows you.

Genesis 41:34-36 – “Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”

Psalms 24:1 – “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”

Psalms 112:5 – “Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice.”

Proverbs 11:24-26 – “One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.”

Proverbs 6:6-8 – “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.”

Proverbs 21:26 – “...the righteous give without sparing.”

Malachi 3:8-10 – “Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘And see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.’”

Matthew 6:21 – “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Luke 3:10-11 – “‘What should we do then?’ the crowd asked. John answered, ‘The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.’”

2 Corinthians 9:7 – “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 8:7 – “Now I want you to excel also in this gracious ministry of giving” (NLT).

2 Corinthians 9:11 – “...your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.”

THE LESSON

The Main Point

God has given us special instructions for how to use and manage the money he has given us.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- ***Know** that God has special instructions for how to best use the money he gives or entrusts to them.
- ***Understand** why it is important to use or manage God’s money according to his good ways.
- ***Respond** by managing their money according to God’s good plan.

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, small ball, blank paper, markers or crayons

Scripture References

Psalms 112:5; Proverbs 6:6-8, 11:24-26, 22:9, 21:26; Malachi 3:8-10; Luke 3:10-11; 2 Corinthians 8:7 (NLT), 9:7, 11

Welcome Time

Have the children sit in a circle.

I hope you all had very positive experiences blessing someone with the resources that God has given you! Let’s take the time now to share about those experiences. I am going to toss the ball to one of you. Whoever catches the ball is to share about how they blessed someone else and how they responded. Also share how you felt if you can. After you’re done sharing, toss the ball to another student who wants to share. We’ll keep tossing the ball and sharing until everyone has had the chance to share.

Attention Grabber

Please get into the four groups that you have worked in for the last two lessons. Be sure to choose a new spokesperson and recorder for your group. In your groups, I’d like for you to think about the discussion starter found on your group worksheet. *Pretend that you are given a \$100 paycheck. What will you do with the money and how will you spend it?* Please come up with a specific plan for the \$100. For example, I’ll spend \$20 on food and \$50 on housing, etc.

Hand out worksheets. Allow students time to work in their groups. When they are done, call on each group spokesperson to share their group’s plan for their money.

The Lesson

In the previous lessons, we looked at how God views money and his purpose for money – why he entrusts it to us. Today, we want to look at how God instructs us to manage our money. You just made good plans for managing \$100. Let’s see how closely they line up with God’s guidance for managing money.

We’ll look at four ways God gives us to successfully manage our money. They are:

1. Give back to God,
2. Be generous to others,
3. Plan and budget to avoid debt, and
4. Save.

To help us remember these, I would like each of your groups to come up with a slogan, short rap or poem, or a motion that depicts one of these ways. I'll come around to your groups and let you know which way I'd like you to work on. Assign one way to each group.

Allow students time to work in their groups. When they have finished, explain that you will call on their group during the lesson.

1. Successfully Managing Money God's Way – Give a Percentage Back to Him

Ask the group who designed a rap, poem, slogan, or motion about this way to successfully manage our money, to come up and share it with the group now.

God calls us to first give a tithe from the “first fruits” of our earnings.

It is clear in the Bible that God calls us to give. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says, “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” In the Old Testament, God called his people to give 10% of their crops or earnings to his work or temple. But here's the secret, God doesn't ask us to give back to him because he needs the money. God asks us to do this for our own good and to further his work around the world.

Giving back to God:

- reminds us that God is the source of all of our money.
- breaks the power that money can have over all our lives.
- helps us to develop a generous spirit.
- results in our blessing.

Did you know it is very possible to rob God? Listen to what Malachi 3:8-10 says, “Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, “How do we rob you?” In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the Lord almighty, ‘And see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.’”

What does God promise when we tithe? Allow for students' responses. You're right; God says in Malachi 3 that he will greatly bless us when we tithe. God knows how beneficial it is for us that we give back to him. He is so concerned about this that he says not tithing is like robbing him. He promises to bless us when we tithe and withhold blessings when we don't tithe.

If you have a story of how God has honored tithing in your life, please share it with the students.

In your groups, I'd like for you to discuss the first group discussion question: *Why is tithing important?*

Allow groups time to discuss, and then call on each group spokesperson to share their group’s ideas.

2. Successfully Managing Money God’s Way – Be Generous

Ask the group who designed a rap, poem, slogan, or motion about this way to successfully manage our money, to come up and share it with the group now.

The second part of God’s design for successfully managing money is to be generous. Over and over again in scripture, God asks us to be generous and give freely to others. Listen to these verses where God calls us to be generous:

“...the righteous give without sparing” (Proverbs 21:26).

“‘What should we do then?’ the crowd asked. John answered, ‘The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same’” (Luke 3:10-11).

“I want you to excel also in this gracious ministry of giving” (2 Corinthians 8:7, NLT).

It is interesting that God promises to bless us and provide for our needs, yet two of his clear instructions for how to best manage money involve giving it away! You might say, “This may make sense and be a good way to live if you have lots of money and can afford to tithe and be generous with others, but what if you are poor like me and are barely getting by?”

God does not ask us to give so much that we suffer from having too little. But he promises to meet our needs when we give to him and to others. Listen to God’s promises about being generous:

“Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice” (Psalm 112:5).

“One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed” (Proverbs 11:24-26).

“A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor” (Proverbs 22:9).

God calls us to be generous with others. In the end, he will bless us and “your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God” (2 Corinthians 9:11).

In your groups, I’d like you to discuss the second group discussion question: why is being generous important?

Allow groups time to discuss, and then call on each group spokesperson to share their group’s ideas.

3. Successfully Managing Money God's Way – Plan and Budget Carefully to Avoid Debt

Ask the group who designed a rap, poem, slogan, or motion about this way to successfully manage our money, to come up and share it with the group now.

One of the biggest problems we have with money is that we often spend more than we have. Then we become indebted to someone. When this happens, we live with anxiety and a cloud hanging over our heads until the debt is repaid. To avoid this problem, it is important to plan ahead for how you will spend and save your money. This is what we call budgeting. When you make a budget you do three things:

- 1. Think about what your needs are.**
- 2. Know how much money you receive.**
- 3. Decide how you will spend the money you receive to pay for those needs.**

When you do this, you have a clear picture of how much money you have left over to spend on things that you don't need but want. It is so important to pay first for what you need instead of spending your money on the things that you want. If you spend your money out of order, you may end up at the end of the month without the money to pay for the things you really need. Then you have to borrow money and you end up in real trouble!

God wants us to be wise and carefully spend our money. The Bible says, "the borrower is servant to the lender." When we aren't careful and end up in debt, we are in the service of whoever we borrowed from and we aren't free. We need to avoid borrowing as much as possible and only borrow for things that are absolutely critical. When we do borrow, we should pay back that money as soon as possible. We are free in our spirit and heart when we aren't in debt to anyone.

In your groups, I'd like for you to discuss the following question, *Why is budgeting and planning so important?*

Allow groups time to discuss, and then call on each group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

4. Successfully Managing Money God's Way - Save Part of Your Money

Ask the group who designed a rap, poem, slogan, or motion about this way to successfully manage our money, to come up and share it with the group now.

God instructs us to save part of our money. In the Bible, God uses the tiny ant to talk to us about saving, "Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest" (Proverbs 6:6-8).

What does the ant do that is so wise? Allow for the students' responses. The ant gathers and stores up food in the summer when there is an abundance, so when the winter comes and there is no food available, he has something to eat. In the same way, God calls us to save part of our money so that when we have unexpected expenses like illnesses or accidents, or opportunities like furthering your education, you can meet them. When that happens, you will be able to use the money you have saved to meet your needs.

There is another wonderful story in Genesis that teaches us this same concept. God gave Joseph an interpretation of the ruler, Pharaoh’s, dream. In this dream, God warns Pharaoh that his country will have seven years of abundant food followed by seven years of famine (no food). With this warning, Joseph comes up with a plan to save food and store it for when they will not have enough.

“Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine” (Genesis 41:34-36).

Pharaoh liked this idea and appointed Joseph to oversee this plan. Joseph was obedient, and Egypt not only had enough food for itself during the difficult years, but it also was able to share with other countries that needed food.

Some people say that following Joseph’s plan to save one fifth (20%) of the resources is a good model to follow. You can decide what works best for you! Either way, it is important to save your money!

In your groups, I’d like for you to discuss the group discussion question, *Why is saving so important?*

Allow students time to share and discuss in their groups. When they are finished, call on each group spokesperson to share their group’s ideas.

Closing Group Discussion

We have learned four ways that God wants us to wisely manage our money. Let’s look at the slogans, rap poems, and motions that our groups used to help us remember each of the ways: Give back to God, Be Generous to Others, Plan and Budget to Avoid Debt, and Save.

Have the groups share these again.

Let’s look back at the activity that you completed in the beginning of the class. Do you remember your \$100 paycheck? What adjustments would you make in this plan based on today’s lesson? Keep in mind that a good rule to follow is to tithe 10% of your money and save 20% of your money. Make any adjustments you wish and when you are finished, I’ll ask each group to share their plan.

Allow students time to work. When groups have finished, call on each group spokesperson to share their group’s plan.

Reflection and Prayer

God calls us to be wise with our money. I’d like for you to think about what God is calling you to do even today with the money that you have, or how he wants you to use your money in the future. Please complete the following action statements in your journals:

Since God wants me to give back to him, I will...

Because God calls me to trust in him, one way I will manage my money differently is...

Allow students time to write in their journals. When they have finished, close in prayer thanking God for the clear instructions he gives us on how to use our money. Ask for his help to trust him and to use our money in the best possible way even when it is difficult.

Imagine you have just received a \$100 paycheck. How will you use this money? What will you spend and how will you spend it? Make a plan below:

Why is tithing important?

Why is being generous important?

Why is carefully budgeting important?

Why is saving money important?



About the Authors

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The Disciple Nations Alliance exists to help the church rise to her full potential as God's principal agent in the restoration, healing, and blessing of broken nations. We accomplish our purpose by equipping God's people to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their families, communities, and through their vocations.

Our vision is to envision churches with a biblical worldview and equip them to practice a wholistic, incarnational ministry affecting all spheres of society. We provide simple tools that enable churches to begin the transformation process immediately, with existing resources - no matter how materially poor they may be.

If you would like more information about the Disciple Nations Alliance or our teaching and training resources, please visit our website: disciplenations.org.

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