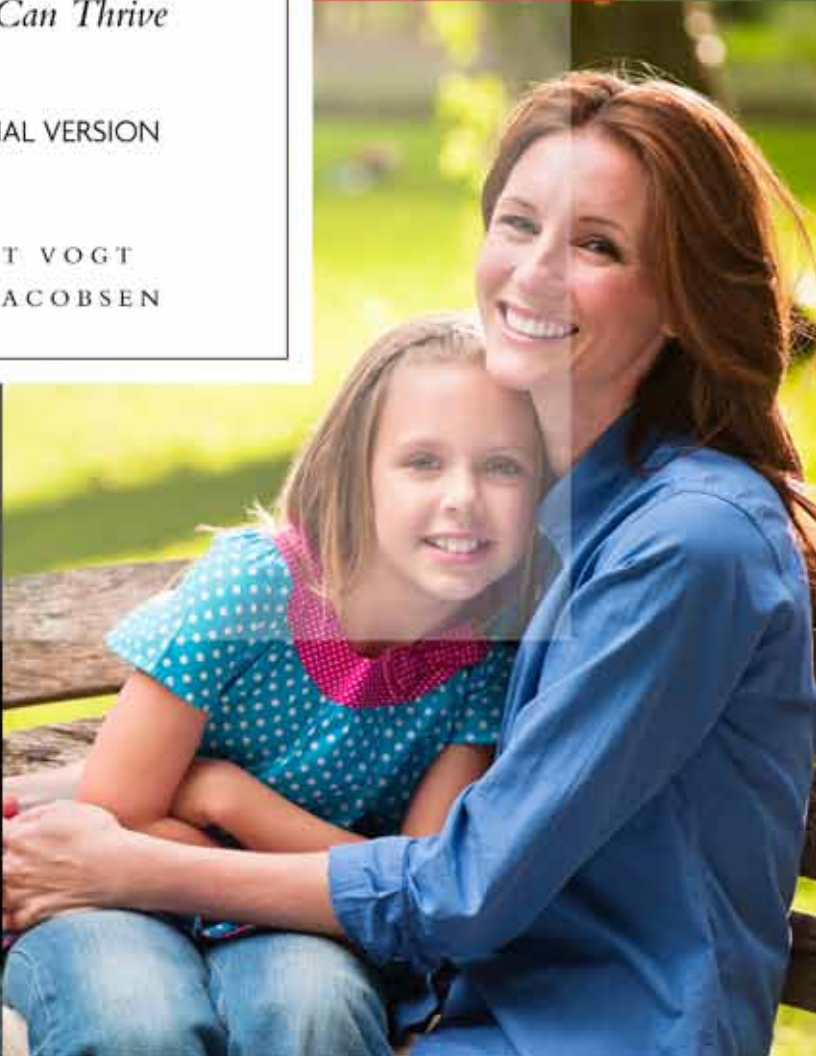
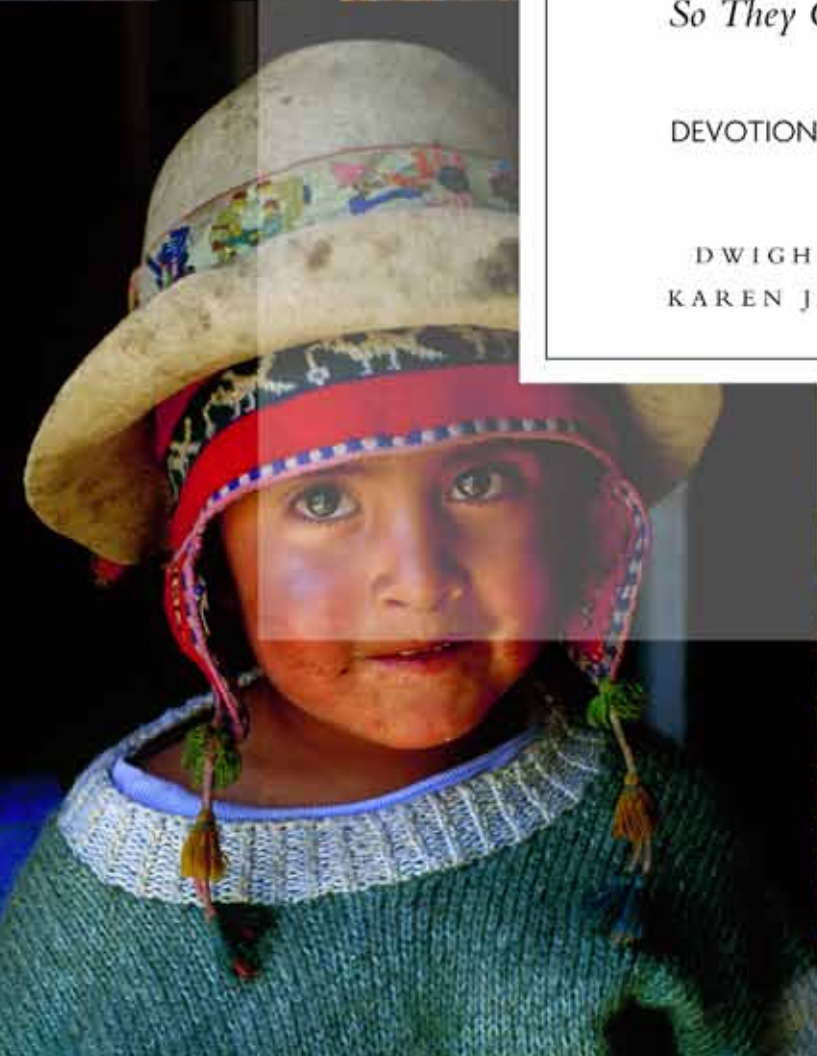


FOOTINGS
for
CHILDREN

*Imparting a Biblical Worldview
So They Can Thrive*

DEVOTIONAL VERSION

DWIGHT VOGT
KAREN JACOBSEN



Footings *for* Children

Imparting a Biblical Worldview
So They Can Thrive

Devotional Version

DWIGHT VOGT
KAREN JACOBSEN

Footings for Children: Imparting a Biblical Worldview so They Can Thrive (Devotional Version)
Copyright © 2012 by Dwight Vogt and Karen Jacobsen
Disciple Nations Alliance 1110 E. Missouri Ave., #393, Phoenix, Arizona, 85014
www.disciplenations.org



While this copy is made available as a PDF download that can be easily transmitted electronically, we encourage you to share it with others by pointing them to the download opportunity at disciplenations.org and footingsforchildren.com.

This work is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 license. You are permitted and encouraged to adapt the work, and to copy, distribute, and transmit it under the following conditions:

Attribution -- You must attribute the work by including the following statement: Copyright © 2012 by Dwight Vogt and Karen Jacobsen. Published by the Disciple Nations Alliance (www.disciplenations.org) under terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 license. For more information, see www.creativecommons.org.

Non-Commercial -- You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

If you are interested in translating this material, please contact info@disciplenations.org.

Cover design by Lisa Lewis (llewis@fh.org).

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

About the Authors

Dwight Vogt is the Director of International Programs of the Disciple Nations Alliance. Before coming to the DNA, Dwight worked for over 25 years at Food for the Hungry, including field leadership roles in Bangladesh, Peru, Thailand and Guatemala. He earned his master's degree in intercultural studies and missiology from Biola University. He lives with his wife, Deborah, and their three children in Phoenix, Arizona.

Karen Jacobsen is the Children's Ministry Director at Grace Redeemer Church in Teaneck, New Jersey. Previously, she served for three years in Rwanda with Food for the Hungry, training Sunday school teachers and local staff, and creating curriculum for child and adult programs. She also has worked as an elementary-classroom teacher and librarian. She received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Cedarville University. Karen enjoys making the Bible real for children and helping the adults who teach them become more effective communicators. She enjoys traveling, coffee, and cooking good food for friends.

Acknowledgements

I have been greatly influenced by the ideas and concepts developed and shared freely by my colleagues Darrow Miller and Scott Allen of Disciple Nations Alliance, Bob Moffitt of Harvest, Elizabeth Youmans of Chrysalis, and others. I want to gratefully acknowledge colleagues working in child development programs throughout the world with Food for the Hungry for their contribution in shaping the ideas covered in this resource. I also wish to acknowledge my co-author, Karen Jacobsen, for taking the original version of Footings and developing it into versions that could be more easily adapted and used by those teaching children in challenging settings. Finally, I'd like to thank my wife, Deborah, for her input and continued encouragement to do this project.

Dwight Vogt

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

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

Footings for Children: Imparting a Biblical Worldview so They Can Thrive

Devotional Version

Contents

Why Footings	1
How to Use this Curriculum	3
Unit 1 – About God	5
Lesson 1 God Is the Creator of Everything!	6
Lesson 2 God Holds Everything Together and Sustains It	10
Lesson 3 God is Good – All Good Comes from God	14
Lesson 4 God’s Character and Power Is Revealed in Creation	18
Lesson 5 God’s Design for Life Is Good - We Can Trust His Instructions	22
Unit 2 - Made in God’s Image	26
Lesson 1 Made in God’s Image – Part One	27
Lesson 1 Made in God’s Image – Part Two	30
Lesson 2 Made in God’s Image – Uniquely Made	33
Lesson 3 Made in the Image of God – Women and Men	38
Lesson 4 Made in the Image of God – Every Person	42
Unit 3 - God's Purpose for Mankind	54
Lesson 1 God is a Purposeful God – He Has a Purpose for Your Life	55
Lesson 2 God’s Purpose for Your Life – Love God and Your Neighbor - Part One	66
Lesson 2 God’s Purpose for Your Life – Love God and Your Neighbor - Part Two	70
Lesson 3 God’s Purpose for Your Life – To Have Dominion Over Creation	72
Lesson 4 God’s Purpose for Your Life – Blessed to Be a Blessing	80
Unit 4 - Our Problem and God's Solution	85

Lesson 1 Our Lives and World Are Broken – Part One	86
Lesson 1 Our Lives and World Are Broken – Part Two	90
Lesson 2 Sin: Missing the Mark	95
Lesson 3 Jesus – Our Solution	101
Lesson 4 Life Eternal – What Is It?	110
Lesson 5 Experiencing Life Eternal – Follow Jesus (Believe, Obey, Depend)	114
Lesson 6 Experiencing Life Eternal – Follow Jesus (Revere, Worship, Thank)	119
Unit 5 - God's Design for the Family	128
Lesson 1 Marriage is Sacred – Part One	129
Lesson 1 Marriage is Sacred – Part Two	134
Lesson 2 The Building Blocks of the Family – Part One	137
Lesson 2 The Building Blocks of the Family – Part Two	140
Lesson 3 Headship	146
Lesson 4 Husbands, Love Your Wives	152
Lesson 5 Wives, Respect Your Husbands	156
Lesson 6 Children, Honor Your Parents – Part One	160
Lesson 6 Children, Honor Your Parents – Part Two	164
Unit 6 - God's Design for Money	167
Lesson 1 Money!	168
Lesson 2 God's Purpose for Our Money	175
Lesson 3 Managing Your Money	183
About the DNA	189

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.

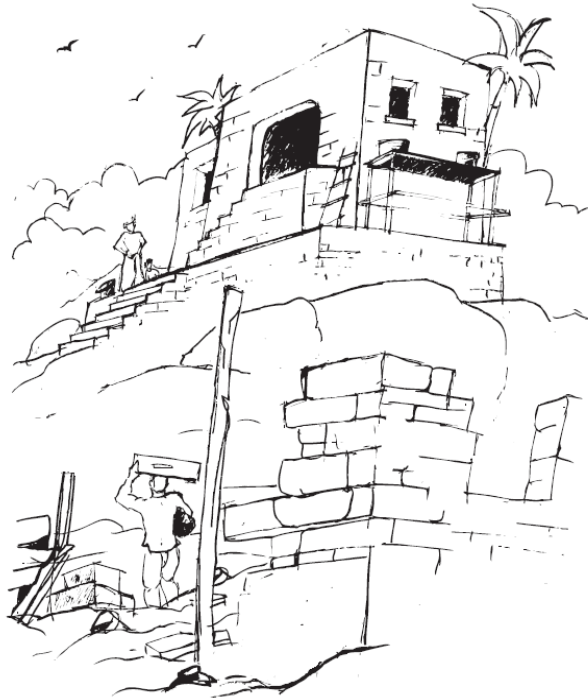
Yet, most would agree that the conditions for raising children are as intense and difficult as ever. While statistics highlight this fact, they are unable to portray the pain and disillusionment experienced. As parents and teachers of today's youth, we understand this challenge.

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



¹ John 8:44

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.

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 worldview 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, we strongly encourage you the teacher adjust the lesson to fit your situation while staying true to and communicating the core points and concepts. For the same reason, as you prepare, we encourage you to look at other versions of this lesson available on-line (Non-reader, Reader, Early Adolescent, and a Devotional version) to get other ideas that may work best for your children.

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

² Deuteronomy 6:7,8

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.

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.

Unit One – Lesson 1

God is the Creator of Everything!

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Table, some of the main ingredients for making a favorite local bread.

Scripture References

Genesis 1:1, 2; Hebrews 11:3

The Lesson

Concept One: God is the Creator

It's important that you be as theatrical as possible when you do this. **I'm just so hungry today children. I think I'm going to make some chapatti (name of local bread or tortilla, etc.) for myself! Ok, here goes!** (Stand in front of the children just doing nothing for about 20 seconds.)

Well that's strange, there's no chapatti here? Why is that? (Allow the children to answer the question.) **You're absolutely right children, in order to make chapatti, I need to have the materials to make chapatti.**

Well it just so happens that I've brought the materials to make chapatti with me today. Take out the ingredients hidden below your table: flour, water, oil, bowl, and spoon.

OK, well, I'm getting really hungry now. I've gotten my materials here for chapatti and I'm ready to make it, so I'll get started. Now stand before the children looking very confused, picking up all of the ingredients and looking at them very strangely. **You know children, I just realized something! I've never made chapatti before. I've never even watched anyone make it! I've only ever eaten it! Children, what would I need now in order to make chapattis?** Allow the children to answer the question. **You're right, I need some directions, a recipe. I need someone to show me how to make chapatti.** Pull out a piece of paper that says "recipe for chapatti".

Ok, now I am ready. I have the materials and I have the recipe. Now there's only one more problem. Somehow, there is glue on this table and my hands are now stuck to it. I cannot use my hands. I am so hungry. I wish I could just say the words and the chapatti would be made. Pretend your hands are stuck to the table, pulling and groaning and tugging to free them.

We know that chapatti does not make itself. Nothing can make itself. Some things can change things about themselves but nothing can make itself. It has to be made or created by someone. That is why I want to create or make chapatti.

Who was the one who created the heavens and the earth, the amazing sun, moon, stars and sky that we look at every day as well as this beautiful earth that we live on? Allow for response. **Yes, it was God. We know this for two reasons: One is that something cannot make itself. It has to be created by someone. There has to be a designer and a maker. The second is that the Bible tells in the very first verse of the Bible that God created the**

heavens and the earth. Let's say that verse together: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

In order to create or make something, we need several things. We need materials. We need some prior model, some idea, or directions or recipe to start with. We need our hands or some tools – we cannot just speak and create.

However, the Bible tells us that when God created the whole universe he did not need or use any of these. Let's look more closely at this.

Concept Two: God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing – He's the most powerful!

We need materials in order to make something. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Hebrews 11:3 also says, "so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."

What does this verse tell us God made the heavens and the earth from? Allow the children to answer the question.

If you said that God used nothing to create the heavens and the earth from, you're right! He created the heavens and the earth from nothing! He's the only one who could do this, because he's God. You and I certainly cannot do this! I couldn't do it when I was hungry and tried to make the chapatti. I needed some materials, some ingredients, which I found under the table. But, God did not need ingredients to make the world. He created the heavens and the earth from nothing. God created the ingredients!

Because God created the heavens and the earth from nothing, what does this tell us about him? The children's answers may include: he's amazing, he's powerful, he's really strong...etc. If the children do not know, you should share that because God did this he's powerful, strong and amazing.

Concept Three: God is the smartest – He created everything on his own!

We all need instructions or some previous know-how in order to make chapatti. I have a hard question for you. Where did God get his instruction and design for creating everything in the universe? Allow the children a moment to try and answer the question.

You're absolutely right children! It was the "beginning" so there was no model, no recipe, no instructions, no idea that God could build on. But, God didn't have to ask anyone for instructions on how to create the heavens and the earth or have to watch anyone else in order to know how to create everything. Every single thing about creation and how it works God thought it up. Everything that all the scientists in the world have ever learned or discovered, God thought up in the beginning on his own. He did not learn from anyone else. He started it. He knows everything! God never has to ask anyone for directions because he already knows everything!

Because God created the heavens and the earth with no instructions, what does this tell us about him? The children's answers may include: he's amazing, he's all-knowing, all-wise, etc.

God is amazing! He is wiser and knows more than we can imagine.

Concept Four: No tools – God is all powerful

I could not make chapatti with my hands stuck to the table. We all need hands or tools in order to create something.

But, the Bible says God simply spoke and by this created things. Genesis 1:2 says, "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." It would be like I said, "Let there be chapatti," and there would be chapatti. Hebrews 11:3 says we understand that everything in the entire universe was formed at God's command.

Because God created the entire universe and everything in it just by speaking, what does this tell us about him? The children's answers may include: he's powerful, amazing.

God is amazing! He is more powerful and awesome than we can imagine.

Before we end, think in your mind about three things that God created. Be specific. If it is a bird, think of the type of bird he created. Then I want to take one minute and together share and name all the different things God created. Give children time to think and then ask them to raise their hands and say things that God created. Children can share more than once.

Let's pray now and thank God for being so amazing!

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you that you really did create the heavens and the earth everything that is beautiful and good. Thank you for being our loving creator. You created from nothing and used only your voice. You are an amazing and powerful God! You know everything. You created the heavens and the earth without asking anyone for directions or help. You are an amazing and all-knowing, all-wise God! Please help us to trust you more and more. In Jesus' name we pray.

We've learned a lot about who God is today. The next time we're together, we're going to learn more about what God created!

Unit One – Lesson 2

God Holds Everything Together and Sustains It

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Coins – enough that every group of 3-5 children can use a coin

Scripture References

Lesson

The last time we were together we learned how to make chapatti! Actually, we learned that God created the heavens and the earth from nothing, all by himself, without asking anyone for directions. We learned that God is all-powerful, he knows everything, and is our loving creator.

Let's play a little game to review. Just as God created everything by speaking with no instructions, I would like you to say things that God created. I'd like to you to stand with a partner. When I say "GO," I'm going to count backwards from ten. As I count, the youngest person in your pair will name everything that he or she can that God created. Then I'll say, "STOP!" When I say "GO," the second time, the older person in your pair will turn to the younger and name as many different things as he or she can that God created and stop when I yell, "STOP!" Ok, let's begin.

Lead the children in playing this short review activity. Regain their attention and begin with today's devotional.

Our review game shows us that God created everything in the universe with all its complexity and he did this just by speaking. This makes God our very wise, powerful, and good creator. Today we're going to learn more characteristics about God.

Concept One: God holds the earth, moon, and sun in their orbit

God created the planet earth that we live on. I'd like for you to get into groups of five.

Allow the children a few moments to gather into groups. If need be, divide their groups for them. Regain their attention and then continue. **I'm going to give each one of your groups a coin. This coin represents our earth that God created. Watch me and see how you can make the "earth" spin.** Show them how they can spin the coin on the ground. Allow each child in the group time to spin the "earth".

What happened a little while after you started the "earth" spinning? Children should answer that the "earth" stopped spinning.

Each day our earth spins, very much like the coin you made spin. Do you know who started the earth spinning like that and keeps it spinning? Allow children time to think and answer and praise answers that show that God is the one who keeps the earth spinning.

What's so amazing about God is that he created our earth, keeps it spinning at the exact right speed, and keeps it going so that it never stops, unlike our coins that we spun before. God keeps our earth turning day after day, year after year and has been doing so for thousands and thousands of years. He also has put the earth in the exact right place. If our earth was any closer to the sun we would all burn up and die, because it would be too hot! If our earth was any closer to the moon, it would cause huge tidal waves from the

ocean to drown millions of people. Our God is incredibly intelligent and holds everything in the world in its proper place, including our earth. He keeps the earth, moon, sun, and all the stars moving and working just the way it is supposed to. This reminds us of a Bible verse in Colossians 1:16 that says, "For by him all things were created and in him all things hold together." Our earth is held in place and kept going by a very intelligent and powerful God!

Concept Two: God sustains all of life

Ok, now let's try another activity. We're going to see now that God not only keeps the earth moving the way it should, but he keeps us moving the way that we should too. I'd like one person in your group to walk to where I am and give me your coin. For the rest of you, please walk in place. Now step back one step but keep walking. Now forward one step but keep walking. Allow children the time to complete this task.

Who can tell me where you got your ability to walk from, to step back and forward? That's right, it's God! He keeps us moving!

Now, move so there is a space between you and the person next to you. Now run in place as fast as you can until I say, "STOP!" Let the children run in place for 20 seconds. Now, please put your fingers on the right part of your neck, right below your chin so that you can feel your heart pulse. Show the children where they can put their fingers on their neck to find their pulse and help those who are having trouble. Lead the children in a short discussion.

What you just felt was your heart beating and working hard. While your heart was beating, your lungs were also working harder.

Who is the one who causes our hearts to beat and our lungs to breathe every day?

That's right, it's God. What if you and I had to constantly remind our heart to beat and our lungs to breathe? What if you forgot? Let's try and imagine what that would be like. Let's say you forgot to breathe for just a minute. Let's see how that would be. Hold your breath now and don't breathe until I say, "Breathe!"

Can you imagine if we had to remind our hearts to beat or our lungs to breathe? Our lives would be pretty terrible! God keeps our heart beating and our lungs breathing every minute and every day of our life. The Bible says, "For in him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28) It also says, "The God who made the world and everything in it...He himself gives all men life and breath and everything else." (Acts 17:25)

God keeps everything in this world, including the earth and us, living, moving, and working the way that it should. He is an amazingly powerful God! Everything we have, including our lives, comes from God! He's awesome!

Prayer

Let's stop and thank him now for keeping everything working and moving and for giving us life.

Dear God, We thank you that in you we live and move. We thank you that you keep our hearts beating and our lungs working. We thank you that you keep the earth in its correct place and that you keep it moving exactly the way it should. You are an amazingly powerful and intelligent God and we thank you for giving us everything we have including our lives and this beautiful earth. We pray in Jesus' name.

Unit One – Lesson 3

God is Good – ALL Good Comes from God

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 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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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.

Key Verses

John 8:44; 14:6; James 1:17

Supplies/Materials

None

Lesson

We have been learning all about God from what he created, how he created it, and how he keeps everything going. What an amazing God he is!

Today, let's learn more about God from what he created. Let's start by doing a short activity. I'd like you to think of something that you really enjoy or like. Maybe it is a place, a flower, or your baby brother or sister, the mountains, a special meal, or anything else that is good or beautiful. Take a bit and think of something and when I say, "GO," share your thought with the person sitting next to you. Ok, "GO." Allow the children time to share with one another and then as they finish allow four or five children to share what good thing they thought of.

You have shared many good and beautiful things with the group. Did you know that every one of these good things comes from God? Let's listen to this Bible verse, which is going to be our theme verse for today. It comes from James 1:17 and says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father...."

Every good thing that we ever experience or enjoy comes from God. In this way we know that God is good.

Let's learn more about God's goodness and love by looking at all the good and perfect things he made in our world.

Concept One: Our friendships come from God

I am sure you have friends in this room, but I'd like you to think of one friend outside this room as well. Think about why they are a good friend – one thing you like or appreciate about them. Next turn to the person next to you and share with them the thing about your other friend that you appreciate. You do not need to share your friend's name. Okay, begin. Allow the children a few moments to share with one another.

In this short activity we were reminded about how wonderful friendship is and how much we need the friends that God gives us. God made the first friendship in the Garden of Eden at creation. Friendship is a very good thing and we learned in our Bible verse that everything that is good comes from God. God knew that we needed others in our lives to love us and be a friend to us, so God gave us friendship. This shows that God is good and loves us. Everything that is good, including friendship comes from God.

Concept Three: Ability, skill, and creativity come from God

Next I would like you to think about something you are really good at doing. Think of one thing but don't say it out loud. Next, turn to the person next to you and without speaking, act out something that you're good at and try to have the person guess what it is. When you guess, let the other person act out what they do well. Allow children time to complete this task and then bring them back together for a discussion.

God has given us all different skills, abilities, and talents. Skills, abilities, and talents are a very good thing. Because they're good we know that they must come from God because remember what James 1:17 says? Allow someone to say the verse. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father." God loves us very much and so he gives us every good thing – including all our skills and abilities to do many things!

Concept Four: Truth comes from God

Now let's try one more quick and important activity. We're going to learn something very, very important from this activity so I want you to pay attention! I'm going to read you several sentences. I want you to put your thumbs up if you think the sentence is true and put your thumbs down if you think the sentence is false (or another gesture that is culturally appropriate to signify yes or no).

Eating candy is good for your teeth. (Thumbs down)

Eating vegetables and fruit helps a person grow strong and healthy. (Thumbs up)

Drinking unclean water makes you healthy. (Thumbs down)

2+2 = 4 (Thumbs Up)

People stealing is good for the community. (Thumbs down)

This may have been a very simple exercise but it shows us something very important. Truth is a good thing. Lies are untrue things and are bad. Our verse tells us that everything that is good comes from God. This means that everything that is true comes from God. Jesus says in the Bible, "I am the way, THE TRUTH, and the life." (John 14:6) Jesus also says, "The devil is a liar and the father of all lies." (John 8:44) This means that all Truth comes from God. Nothing that is a lie or false comes from God but rather is from the Devil. Truth is a good thing. All truth, even if it is something as simple as $2+2 = 4$, comes from God.

We know God is good and loving because every good thing we experience or have comes from God.

Think of all the good things you thought of at the beginning of this lesson. All of them are gifts from God and proof of his goodness and love for you.

Prayer

Dear God, We know that every good and perfect gift comes from you. We thank you so much for all of them: the sun, the mountains, our families, our abilities, a cool breeze on a hot day, a warm drink on a cold day, our friends, everything that is true, and for every child here today. Thank you that you love us so much that you enjoy giving us these good gifts. Help us to remember this and trust you more. In Jesus' name we pray.

Unit One – Lesson 4

God's Character and Power Is Revealed in Creation

The Concept: Why Teach This

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Small stones, fruit or a picture of a fruit, flower or a picture of a flower (enough for each child to have at least one of these items)

Scripture References

Romans 1:20; James 1:17

Lesson

We have been learning so much about God from his creation! We learned how good he is because everything good comes from him. (James 1:17)

Today we are going to learn more about God from his creation. I have pictures of some of the things that God made. You're either going to receive a small stone, a flower (or picture of a flower), or a fruit (or picture of a fruit). Please sit in a circle and I will hand out one item to each of you. I'm going to clap my hands and I'd like you to begin passing the items around the circle. When I stop clapping my hands, stop passing and keep the item you have in your hand. Begin clapping your hands and after about 15 seconds stop clapping. Lead the children in a discussion.

Concept One: Creation reveals God

I want you to keep this memory verse in mind. It's found in Romans 1:20 and says, "For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities have been clearly seen from what he made." This verse means that we can take a look at the wonderful things that God made and learn about him. So let's do just that!

Concept Two: Creation reveals God's strength and unchanging nature

If you're holding a stone in your hand I'd like for you to take a good look at it! What are its qualities? Please try and tell me as many things as you can about the qualities of a stone. Allow the children who have the stones to talk about them.

Those are all really good observations about stones. What's amazing about stones is that they were made by God. Because they were made by God, according to what the Bible says in Romans 1:20 we can learn something about him from them. Touch your stone. It's really strong and very hard to break, isn't it? As a matter of fact, we can use stones to break weaker things. Things like stones tell us that God is very strong. We also know that stones last a long time. They do not change from day to day. Likewise, we know that God is everlasting and does not change from day to day. If you are holding stones, please hold it high up in the air and say, "God is strong. He does not change. He is everlasting."

Concept Three: Creation reveals God is author and source of beauty

Now, if you're holding a flower, take a very close look at it. Tell me all the things you can see and know about flowers. Allow the children time to respond. **These are all really great observations about flowers. Flowers were also made by God so they reveal something about him as well. Flowers are amazingly beautiful aren't they? Not only are they beautiful looking, but they're also beautiful smelling. Flowers tell us that God is beautiful. Everything that is beautiful comes from God because God is beautiful. What are some other things that are beautiful?** Allow children to respond. **All of these reveal that God is the author and source of beauty. Hold your flower high in the air and say, "God is beautiful!"**

Concept Four: Creation reveals God loves and cares about us

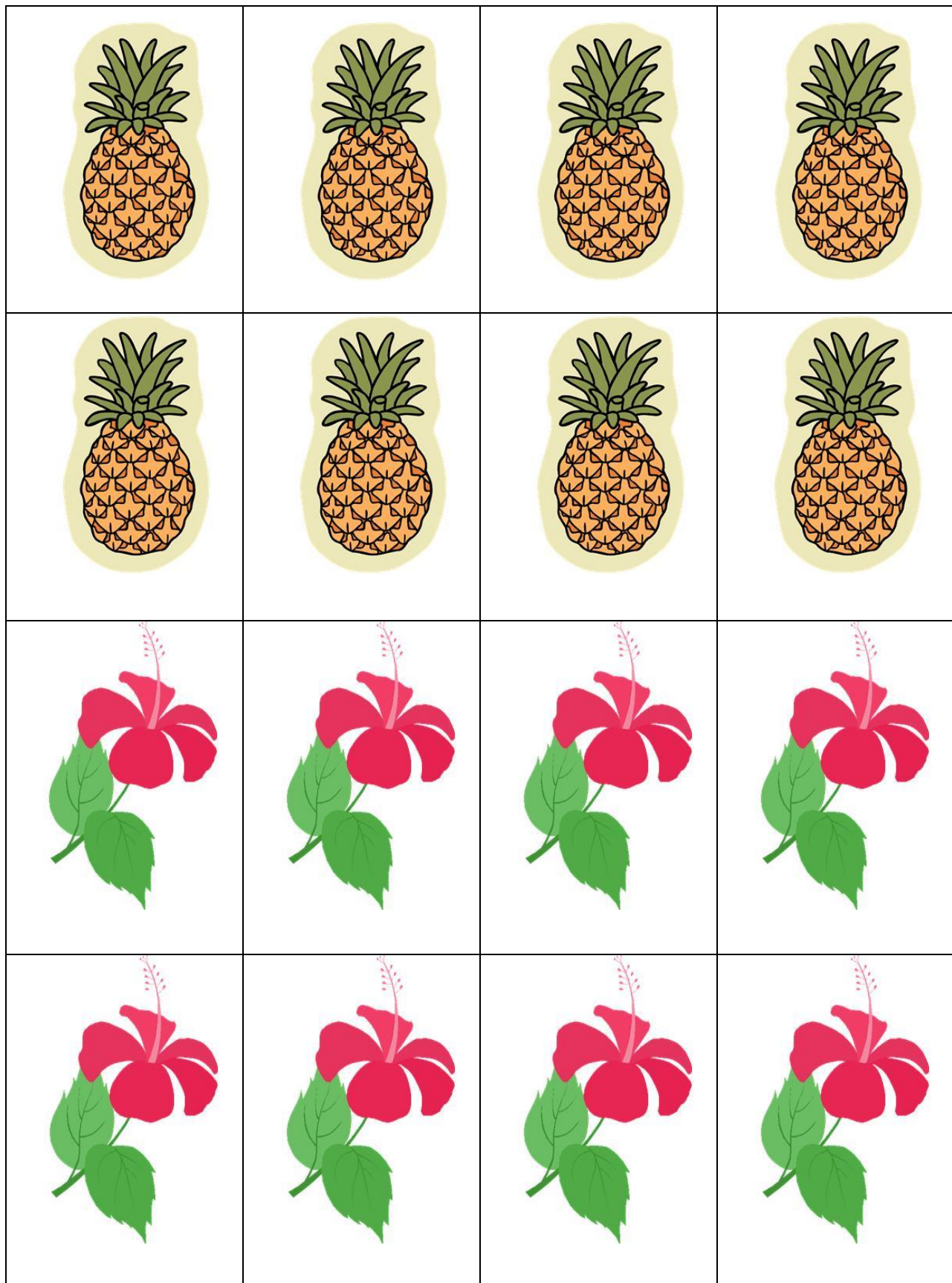
Now if you're holding a fruit, please take a good look at it. Tell me all of the things that you know and observe about fruit. Allow the children time to respond. **These are all good observations about fruit. Because God made fruit we know that even fruit can tell us something very important about God. Fruit is nutritious and helps us grow. This tells us God cares about our health. Fruit is sweet and fun to eat. This tells us that God wants us to experience joy. Fruit trees give us fruit every year at the same time. This tells us that God is dependable. Fruit shows us that God loves and cares about us. If you have a fruit, hold it up and say, "God loves us!"**

Now we're going to play our passing game again. I'll start clapping my hands and when I stop, hold onto the picture or stone that you have in your hand. If I say "Stones show us," all those holding stones will say, "God is strong." If I say, "Flowers show us," all those holding flowers will say, "God is beautiful." If I say, "Fruit shows us," all those holding fruit will say, "God loves us." Let's start playing. Play the game six times, stopping clapping and saying, "Fruit shows us," "Flowers show us," and "Stones show us" two times each. Then lead the children in prayer.

It's not only fruit, stones, and flowers that show us something about God. Everything in creation and everything that God made reveals his qualities and nature. This week, as you see or experience things God created, think about what it shows you about God. Then thank God for it. Let's take the time to thank God now for all of the wonderful things he shows us about himself in creation.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for showing us about who you are in creation. Thank you that just from looking at your creation we know that you're very strong, you're beautiful, and that you love us very much. Thank you for revealing yourself to us, through creation, through the Bible, and through your son, Jesus. Please help us to be good observers this week and learn as much as we can about you from looking at your creation. In Jesus' name we pray.



Unit One – Lesson 5

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

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

One leaf for every child, a brown paper bag

Scripture References

Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 27, 31

Lesson

Bring a bunch of leaves to class and place them in bunches where the children can see and take one. Make sure that you have at least one leaf for every child.

We have been learning about all we can learn about God just from looking at creation. In creation we can see that God exists because creation could not have happened on its own. We can see that the creator is all-powerful and all-knowing. We know that he is good because everything that is good comes from him. We can see how everything in creation reveals something about the creator. So, even if someone does not believe what is written in the Bible about God, if they are honest with themselves, they will know something about God in what he has created. They are without excuse the Bible says.

Today we are going to look at one more very important thing we can learn about God from creation.

Concept One: Plant life has a very good design

Did you notice that I brought in some leaves today? I'd like for you to go and pick one up. During our last lesson we learned that everything in creation can tell us something about

God, so take a moment to look at this leaf and think carefully about what we can learn about God from it.

Allow the children time to find a leaf and observe it. After a minute ask for a few volunteers to share what they think we can learn about God from the leaf. Then lead them in a discussion.

You shared some very good thoughts about what we can learn about God from a leaf. Do you also know how God made the leaf to work? Do you know what it does? Here is a secret. God made them to do the opposite of us and it's a good thing that he did. To demonstrate I will give this brown paper bag to a volunteer. I want them to put their nose and mouth into it and breathe that way while I talk a bit more. Identify a volunteer and have them breathe into the paper bag.

Again, God made us opposite of leaves. When we breathe (take a very loud breath to demonstrate) **we take in oxygen. Then when we exhale, or breathe out** (exhale loudly to demonstrate) **we give off carbon dioxide. We must have oxygen and plenty of it to breathe. If we have to breathe carbon dioxide we will get dizzy, pass out, and even die.** At this point turn to your volunteer and have them stop breathing into the paper bag. Ask them how they are feeling. They should be getting a bit light-headed. **Just like our friend here is breathing his own carbon dioxide and getting dizzy.**

But God is so wise. He designed the leaf to work exactly opposite of us. We cannot see them breathe, but each leaf is constantly breathing in carbon dioxide and then it breathes out the oxygen that we need. God designed it so that people and plants would continuously give each other what they need. What a genius design.

How would you describe God's plan for creating plants? (Listen to the children's answers.) **Yes, God's design in creating plants is very good. His design works perfectly.**

Concept Two: Our bodies are well designed

I'd like to show you another example of a way God designed life that works so well. Please drop your leaf on the ground. Now bend down and pick it up. As you're picking it up, notice what your fingers are doing. Who can describe what your fingers are doing? (Allow for the children's answers.)

You're right children, your fingers are bending. This may be a simple example, but even something as easy as bending your fingers to pick up a leaf is designed perfectly by God. God made your fingers with joints so they could bend. He added tendons and muscles so they could move. Then, he made nerves and communication pathways that go from your eye to your brain and down your arm and into your hand and into the muscles of your fingers and sensors in your fingertips to tell you just how much to bend your fingers and when so that you could successfully pick up a leaf. God designed your fingers very well and they work perfectly.

The fact that creation is designed so well is no surprise to God. The Bible says that after creating everything that “God saw all that he had made and it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31). God’s design for everything that he made and how it should best work was perfect. David knew this and wrote in Psalms, “As for God, his way is perfect.” (Psalm 18:30)

Concept Three: God’s design for our lives is perfect

Here is what’s strange. We can see that God has demonstrated thousands of times in creation, including through the leaf and finger, that his design for life is amazingly good and perfect. Yet, as human beings, we do not trust God’s design for how we can best live life. When it comes to our own lives, we do not believe that God knows best or wants what is best for us. Like Adam and Eve, we do not trust or follow his instructions for living. Instead, we think we know best and choose our own path.

The point of this lesson is that the more we study creation and how it works, the more we see that God knows what he is doing and that his design for all of life is amazing. We also know that God loves us even more than he loves the world that he created. This means we can trust God’s ways and instructions for how to live. If we are wise, we’ll follow them.

Think of one instruction that God gives us for how to live. Please turn to your neighbor and share this with them and then give one reason why you think this instruction would be good for us and others. Allow time for children to share one idea with each other. Bring the group together and have 2 or 3 share with the whole group.

Prayer

Let’s pray, thanking God for his good plans for creation and for all of our lives.

Dear God, Thank you that your plans for all of creation are good and that your plans for our lives are also good. Thank you that you designed everything so well. Thank you also that when we follow your plans our lives work better. Help us to see that your designs for our lives are perfect and we can trust your instructions for our lives. In Jesus’ name we pray.

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.

Unit Two – Lesson 1 (Two Parts)

Made in God's Image

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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.

PART ONE

Supplies/Materials

A pen, crayon or marker, and piece of paper to trace your hand on, a large recognized coin with an image on it

Scripture References

Genesis 1:27; Matthew 22:15-22

Lesson

Concept One: We are created in the image of God

For today's lesson, I need a picture of a hand. I have the paper and pencil. Now, what is the best way to make this picture? I know! I will pattern it after my own hand. Hold your paper up against the wall as you trace your hand.

Step back and admire your drawing. **Not a bad picture of a hand even if I do say so myself.**

This picture reminds us of how we were created. The Bible says in *Genesis 1:27*, "*So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.*" (New Living Translation)

When God decided to create men and women, he looked for a pattern and that pattern was himself. God created us in his own image. He patterned us after himself. We resemble him. We know that God created every living thing but men and women are the only beings that he said he patterned after himself. As much as we may appreciate all the animals and the rest of creation, the fact that God patterned us alone after himself, makes us very special.

The next time we're together we'll learn more about what it means to be made in the image of God, but today I want to look at a story of Jesus involving a coin. It is told in Matthew 22:15-22.

Concept Two: We are created in the image of God – We belong to God

Hold up a large coin that has an image on it.

Some religious leaders of Jesus' day called the Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus in an argument. They sent some of their students to him to say this, "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 (or small coin), and he asked them, "Whose portrait (or image) 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.

Jesus' response was to give to Caesar what was Caesar's. How did Jesus know that the coin was Caesar's? Allow for response. Yes, it had Caesar's portrait on it. The coin was made with Caesar's image on it. Therefore, Jesus said, this coin ultimately belongs to Caesar so give it to Caesar.

Whose image are we made in, and therefore, who do we belong to? Allow for a response and discuss. Jesus said, "...give to God what is God's." Because we are made in the image of God and are patterned after him, this means we belong to him. We belong to God. We are special and important.

Prayer

Let's pray and thank God that each of us is made in his image. Pray for each child by name. (You may pray for 5 or 6 children at a time if you have a large group.) Pray something like, "Thank you God that (name of child/children) is made in your image and belongs to you."

Unit Two – Lesson 1 – Part 2

Made in God's Image

Objectives

Children will:

***Know** that every person is created in the image of God, including themselves.

***Name** two ways that they resemble God and are created in his image: emotions and will.

Supplies/Materials

Money bill to drop on ground

Scripture References

Genesis 1:27, 6:6; Exodus 4:14; Isaiah 65:19

Lesson

The last time we were together we learned that we are made in the image of God, we are patterned after God. We also heard a story about a coin. Who can tell me what the point of the story was? (Call on several children to give their answer.)

Jesus asked whose image was on the coin and the people said Caesar's. Jesus said, give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's. Genesis 1:27 says that we are made in the image of God. We belong to God.

Today we're going to learn about two of the ways that we are patterned after God, that we resemble God. Let's find out how.

Concept One: Patterned after God, with emotions

Let's play a fun little game now. I'm going to read a sentence about something that could happen to you. After I read the sentence I'd like for you to show me with your face how you would feel. Be sure and clearly show me with your face! Ok, let's begin:

You do really well on your exams so your mother buys a few bon-bons for you.

(Children should show happiness.)

Your grandmother dies. (Children should show sadness.)

You study very hard in school and you become the first in your class. (Children should show happiness or excitement.)

Someone at school takes something important that belongs to you. (Children should show anger or sadness.)

One of your friends at school says very mean things about you. (Children should show anger or sadness.)

All of these situations make us feel something. They can make us feel angry, sad, happy, or excited. I see this in your faces. You have emotions. It's the same way with God. God has emotions. We are made in the image of God and because God has emotions, we have emotions also. Let's listen to a few verses in the Bible that tell us about God having emotions:

Exodus 4:14 says, "Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses." God has anger. God patterned us after himself so we too get angry. The difference is that God gets angry for the right reasons.

Genesis 6:6 says, "The Lord was grieved.....and his heart was filled with pain." God experiences grief and pain. God patterned us after himself so we experience grief and emotional pain.

Isaiah 65:19 says, "I will take delight in my people." God has happiness and joy. Because we are made in his image, we experience the same.

One of the ways we are made in the image of God and unique from the rest of creation is all emotions we feel. We are made in God's image and so we too have emotions.

Concept Two: Patterned after God, with a will and a conscience

Let's look at another way that we are made in the image of God. I'm going to read a pretend situation to you and give you two possible choices in how to respond. If you choose the first way, you should move to the right side of our meeting area. If you choose the second way, you should move to the left side of our meeting area. OK, let's pretend we're in this situation and try to make a good decision.

Pretend you are walking and drop some paper money. Have a child following you from a good distance back.

Imagine you are walking to the market one day to buy some oil for your mother. There is a man walking in front of you that you don't know who suddenly drops a 500 franc note.

He keeps walking and doesn't know that he dropped it. What will you do? What will our friend (name of child following you) do?

Your first choice is to look around, make sure that no one sees you and put the money in your pocket. The man will never know that you kept his money.

Your second choice is to pick up the money and run and give it back to the man who lost it.

If you'd make the first choice, please move to the right side of the room. If you'd make the second choice, please move to the left side of the room.

As the teacher, just for variety, make the first choice and move to the left, assuming most of the students will move to the right.

What did we just do? We made a moral decision. One of these decisions was the right decision and one of them was the wrong decision. Which of the decisions was the right decision? (Children should indicate that the second choice was the right decision.)

Because you knew that the second decision was the right one, you show that you are made in the image of God. God has a will and knows right from wrong. God patterned us after himself by giving us a will and a conscience. God gave us the ability to know right from wrong and to decide.

It is incredible that God made us in his image, that God patterned us after himself. He made us very special so that he could relate to us and us to him. This is the amazing story of the entire Bible.

I'm so thankful that we are all made in the image of God and, even though we are so very small in the universe he created, he made us with the ability to relate to him. Let's pray together now and thank God for making us special in his image.

Prayer

Thank you God that each one of us was made in your image with emotions, with a conscience and the ability to choose right and wrong, with the ability to appreciate beauty and goodness, and much more. Thank you for making us special and wanting to relate to us. We pray in Jesus' name.

Unit Two – Lesson 2

Made in God’s Image – Uniquely Made

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.

Please review the Teacher’s Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Thumbprint visual

Scripture References

Psalms 139:13; Isaiah 43:7

Lesson

Concept One: You and I are uniquely made by God

Hold up your large picture of a thumbprint.

Who can tell me what this is a picture of? Accept all of the children's responses and encourage them to guess as much as possible.

Those were all good guesses! This is actually a large picture of someone's thumbprint. Our thumbprints would look similar to this if we dipped our thumb in ink and pressed it against a paper. Take a look at your thumb. Do you see swirls and lines on your thumbprint if you look really closely? Does your thumbprint look anything like this picture here?

Turn to your neighbor and compare your thumbprints side-by-side. Are they different?
Allow children to pair up and compare.

There's something amazing about the way God made our thumbprints. God made each of our thumbprints different. There isn't another person in the world who has the thumbprint of this person (Point to your picture) or who has your thumbprint. Each person's thumbprint is slightly different.

The fact that our thumbprints are all different tells us that God has made each one of us unique. He made each of us special and different. In the Bible in Psalm 139:13, it says, "I praise you Lord because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." God has made every single person special and unique. Let's learn more about this by playing a little game.

Concept Two: We are uniquely made in so many ways!

Find a person sitting close to you to be your partner in this game. To play, think of one thing that you can do well. It might be something very small like wiggling your ears or something bigger like playing a sport. It might be something you do with your mind or

your body. It might be the ability to listen well or feel another person's joy or pain. It can be anything. Think of what it is, but don't tell the person you are partnered with. Now, without talking or making a sound, you will each have thirty seconds to get your partner to guess the one thing you do well. You must act it out without using words or sounds. After 30 seconds you should guess and then we'll switch and the other person can act out their ability. If you're ready, let's play!

After each partner has acted and guessed, stop the game and discuss.

What are some of the abilities you acted out and guessed? Allow for response.

Your ability or talent is another example of how God has uniquely created us. Some of you are very good at football while others of you are good at singing. In school, some of you are good at mathematics while others are good at reading. God has given all of us different talents and abilities. He hasn't created us all to be good at the same things, but rather has made us with talents in different things.

God has also given each of us different personalities, interests, and tastes. You like blue. I like green. You like quiet, I like loud. You like fruit, I like vegetables, etc.

So not only has God created our bodies uniquely, giving us all different thumbprints and making us all to look different from one another, God also created each of us with different talents and abilities, and different likes and dislikes.

Every single person is made by God in his image and important to him. God has also created every person to be totally unique and special! God planned it that way. The Bible says that God knew you even before you were made. Why do you think that God made you special and unique? (Encourage the children to think about and answer this question. Allow as many children as possible to share their ideas.)

Isaiah 43:7 says, "Bring all who claim me as their God, for I have made them for my glory. It was I who created them."

Here God says he made each of us for his glory. That is why he made us different and unique. By developing and fully being the unique person God made you to be, you show how amazing God is. You bring God unique glory by being the special person God made you to be. God does not want you to be like someone else and he does not want someone else to be like you. You are special and you are important to God. We bring glory to God by being the unique person that God created us to be!

In our capital city there is a museum or art gallery with original paintings in it. Do you know why these paintings are worth so much? They are valuable because they are one-of-a-kind.

Prayer

Let's pray now and thank God for making each one of us 'one-of-a-kind' and special.

Dear God, Thank you that you have made each one of us different and unique. Thank you that you value and love each one of us as we are. Help each one of us to fully be the special and unique person you created us to be – for your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Unit Two – Lesson 3

Made in the Image of God – Women and Men

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

None

Scripture References

Genesis 1:27; John 4:3-27

Lesson

Concept: All people are made in God's image. Men and women are equal.

For today's lesson I'm going to tell you a story from the book of John in the Bible. I'd like for you to listen how Jesus treated the woman in this story. We can always learn from the life of Jesus because he is the Son of God. As we see how Jesus treated this woman, we'll know how God wants everyone to view and treat women.

Ok, sit back and listen to this great story about Jesus and a woman that he met at a well.

The story from John 4:

Jesus came to a town in Samaria called Sychar. Jesus was very hot and tired from the journey so he sat down by a well to rest. The disciples went into the town to buy food while Jesus waited. All of a sudden a Samaritan woman came to the well to get water. Jesus asked the woman, "Will you give me a drink?"

The Samaritan woman was startled by Jesus speaking to her and said, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?"

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

"Sir," the woman said, "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 well as his sons and his flocks and herds?"

Jesus answered, "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."

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

“I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands and the man you are living with now is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know but we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”

The woman said, “I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you – I am he.”

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

This is an amazing story about Jesus. We see Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. This was very strange behavior for a Jewish man of this time. First of all, most Jewish people would have never traveled through Samaria because they looked down and even despised Samaritans. If they had passed through the country, they would not have talked to a Samaritan person. Worse yet, they not have talked to a Samaritan woman because women were seen as even lower in value. And even more than that, Jesus is talking to a woman who had a very confused past. No religious leader in Jesus’ time would ever have talked to a woman like this.

We can learn from Jesus in this story. What do his actions tell us about how God views women? (Encourage and allow as many children to answer as possible.)

These are all really great ideas. In Genesis 1:27 the Bible says, “So God created man in his own image, male and female he created them.” The Bible says that both men and women are created in the image of God. Being made in God’s image, we all have equal value, dignity, and worth. We are each equally special and important to God. Men are not more important than women nor are women more important than men! Through the creation account and the example of Jesus, God shows us that both men and women are equally important and valuable to him.

I’m thankful that in this club we have both boys and girls. All of you, whether you are a boy or a girl, are made in the image of God and are important to him.

Even if everybody else decided that they would not respect and honor women as equal to men, you can choose to think and act differently. You will still sometimes fail to see people as God does and treat them as he desires, because we all sin. The good news is that he wants to help us! When we confess our sin and put our faith in God’s son, Jesus, for forgiveness, God helps us. You can each ask for his help today.

Let’s pray and thank God for creating all of us in his image and loving us all the same.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you that you created everyone in your image: men and women and boys and girls. Thank you that you love both boys and girls the same and see us as equal in value, worth, dignity, and importance. We are wrong to see people different from the way you see them. Help us to see everyone as equal in value and as special as you see them. In Jesus name we pray to you.

Unit Two – Lesson 4

Made in the Image of God – Every Person

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

A piece of sugar cane or passion fruit, a piece of fabric to be used as a blindfold, cracked or distorted glasses, lesson pictures

Scripture Reference

1 Samuel 6:17

Lesson

Concept One: In this world people wrongly judge others

Hold up your piece of sugar cane or passion fruit. If you don't have sugar cane or passion fruit in your country, find a fruit or vegetable that looks ugly on the outside but is good and delicious on the inside. **What is this?**

What does it look like on the outside? Allow for response. For sugar cane: it's hard, it's green, it doesn't look very pretty on the outside. For passion fruit: It's dark, wrinkly, and dirty on the outside. **From what you've said we can see and agree that sugar cane/passion fruit is not very pretty on the outside. It does not look very nice on the outside at all.**

But what is on the inside of sugar cane/passion fruit? Discuss. Sweet and delicious fruit/sugar to eat. **Someone who had never seen sugar cane or passion fruit might just look at the outside of the fruit and think it's something bad or not good. They would not know that it is something wonderful and delicious. We cannot look at fruit on the outside and know what it really is.**

The sugar cane/passion fruit reminds me of a Bible verse that is found in 1 Samuel 6:17 that says, "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outwards appearance but the Lord looks at the heart."

As we think about this Bible verse, let's play a game called, "better or the same." I'm going to show you two pictures and give you a short explanation. If you think the first picture is better I'd like for you to raise your right hand. If you think the second picture is better please raise your left hand. If you think they are both equal in value, then I'd like for you to raise both hands. Ok, let's get started.

Repeat for all pictures: **Which one of these people** (pictures, things) **do you think is more important or better? If you think it is the first person** (picture or item), **raise your right hand. If you think it is the second person** (picture or item), **raise your left hand. If you think they are of equal importance, please raise both hands.** Allow the children a few moments to decide and then give them discuss as you go.

Small fruit vs large fruit (second – left hand)

Poor man vs rich man (equal – both hands)

Many times people get judged based on how much money they have. Many times people will treat a rich person better than a poor person. That's wrong! According to God, he loves and values each of us equally, no matter how much money we have.

Mango vs banana (equal – both hands)

They may be different, but some one is not better than the other.

Dark skinned person vs light skinned person (equal – both hands)

Sometimes people judge others and think someone is more or less important based upon the color of their skin. But to God, all people have the same value. Just like it says in our Bible verse, God doesn't look at the outside. Rather he looks at our hearts. It doesn't matter what color a person's skin is, everyone is equal in value, dignity, and worth to God.

4 colas vs 1 cola (first – right hand)

Woman vs man (equal – both hands)

Male and female both created in the image of God – equal in value, worth, dignity, and importance before God.

1+1+1+1 vs 4 (equal – both hands)

Again, the numbers are different, but the value is the same.

Healthy vs disabled person (equal – both hands)

Sometimes people get judged depending on whether they are disabled or healthy. Oftentimes, people who have disabilities are not cared for the same as healthy people. But do you know what? In the sight of God we all have equal value, no matter whether we are healthy or disabled.

It's very easy to judge others by what we see on the outside. But that's wrong to do! Many times the way we see people and the way they see us gets distorted and blinded by Satan. Satan doesn't want us to see life and others clearly. Satan does not want us to see life and people correctly, the way God does. It's like trying to see people but having a blindfold on. Ask a child to come up to the front and put a blindfold on them. Ask another child to come and stand in front of them. The child who is blindfolded should describe what they are able to see.

Concept Two: Seeing ourselves and others through God's word

When we are blindfolded we don't see correctly at all! In order to see clearly we have to look at people the way that God sees them. We have to see clearly through God's eyes. The Bible helps us to know how God sees people. Take the blindfold off the child as you say this and hold the Bible up to their eyes as if they are a set of glasses.

Another way to illustrate this point would be if you have cracked glasses or very dirty glasses, something that distorts the person's vision. Ask them to look at another person and describe what they see.

God sees people in the way he created them. He looks at the inside, not the outside.

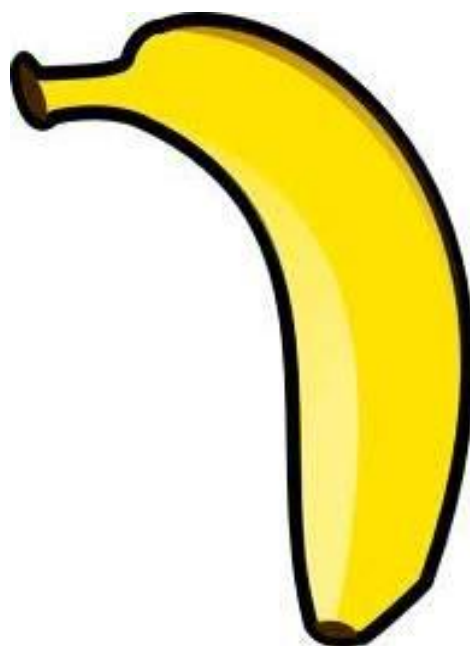
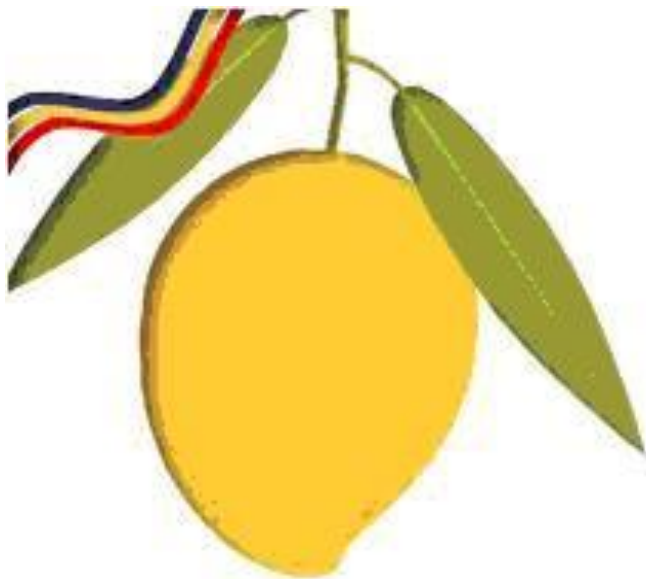
Prayer

Dear God, Help us to see ourselves and all people the way you see them, made in your image, and equal in value, worth, dignity, and importance. You see all people the same whether they are old or young, girl or boy, rich or poor, dark or light, educated or non-educated, healthy or disabled, this tribe or that tribe...all are equal in your sight. Help us not to believe Satan's lie that some people, groups, and tribes are more valuable than others. We want to see and love and value people as you do. In Jesus' name we pray.

small fruit vs large fruit

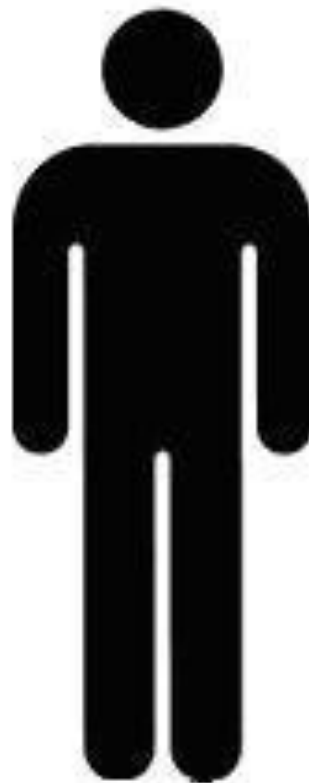












1 + 1 + 1 + 1

or

4



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.

Unit Three – Lesson 1

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

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

The Main Point

God is a purposeful God who has an important purpose for your life.³

Lesson Objectives

³ 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.

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

God's plan pictures. Before class, prepare the pictures in the form of a booklet (if you do not have a wall) or plan to tape them up in a row across the front wall of the room as you share them.

Scripture References

Genesis 1:2; Jeremiah 29:11; John 1:1-3

Lesson

I have a very special book that I'd like to share with you today. What makes this book so special is that it only has pictures but no words. This book tells the story of God's plan throughout history. It begins to explain this wonderful Bible verse found in 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 a hope and a future." Let's take a look at this special book.

Page One: Bible picture representing Eternity Past

This picture of the Bible represents God and his plan that existed even before the creation of the world. Before the world was created God the Father, Son, and Spirit existed. In Genesis 1:2 we see the Spirit of God present. In John 1:1-3 we see Jesus, the Word of God with God in the beginning and creating the world. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit existed in Eternity Past before our world began.

Page Two: Picture of the planets representing Creation

This picture represents the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth. Who remembers how God created the entire universe and everything in it? (He spoke and it was created. He created it from nothing. He did not learn or get instructions from another)

Page Three: Picture of a garden representing the Garden of Eden. God's plan begins in a garden

This picture represents the Garden of Eden. God’s plan for every person began in the Garden of Eden. God created Adam and Eve and placed them in this beautiful garden called 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 evil and all of its horrible effects entered the world. However, after Adam and Eve sinned, God made a promise that one day he would free all of mankind from the rule and control of Satan.

Page Four: Picture of stars representing Abraham

God’s plan for all of us didn’t end when Adam and Eve sinned. God still was at work among humanity and was making promises to them. God chose a man named Abraham and promised that he would bless every nation on earth through his descendants. God told Abraham that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky. God fulfilled this promise because Jesus, his Son, was born to a descendant of Abraham. Jesus was used by God to bless all nations. Throughout all of time, God has had a plan to bless all nations and all people and he has kept all of his promises!

Page Five: Picture of David

Throughout the Bible God has used many people to accomplish his purposes. He uses older people like Abraham, and he also uses young people and children to accomplish his purposes and bless others.

This is a picture of David. When David was still very young God enabled him to kill the giant Goliath with just a slingshot and some stones. Goliath was an enemy of God’s people and mocked God. Through David we learn that even though someone is young, God still has a purpose for their life each day that they can live out with joy and courage.

Page Six: Picture of a crown representing Esther

Throughout history God has always had a plan to bless others through people. God’s plan does not just include men and boys but it also includes every woman and young girl. This picture of a crown represents a young woman in the Bible who went from refugee status to become queen. Her name was Esther. Though an orphan and an immigrant refugee in another country, she became a queen when she was still a young girl. As queen she risked her life and was able to save God’s people, Israel, from all being killed.

Page Seven: Picture of the cross representing Jesus

This picture of the cross represents Jesus. Jesus, the only Son of God, came to the earth as a baby. He became an adult and revealed God to people. He healed many people and forgave them of their sin. He, himself, lived a sinless life. He was cruelly put to death on a cross in order to be a perfect sacrifice and pay the full penalty for all our sin. He was

buried and then three days later rose again and is alive. He returned to heaven to be with the Father but he sent his Spirit to give us his life, to live in us, and give us power, encouragement, and wisdom. He now sits at the right hand of God the Father and will return some day to judge the world and set up a new heaven and a new earth.

Page Eight: Picture of eyeglasses representing history of God providing good things to us through inventions

This picture represents God's plan throughout history to provide good things to people through his creation. When he created mankind, he gave them the ability to have dominion over all creation – to create, invent, solve problems, and make the world a better place. There are millions of examples of how God has blessed us in this way but one we all know is the invention of eyeglasses over 700 years ago. God loves us so much that he gives us ability and talent to manage his creation and solve problems and make good things for others.

Page Nine: Picture of a Bible representing history of the Gospel coming to all the nations - including your nation

This picture represents God's plan throughout history to spread his truth and Gospel to all the nations – including your own nation. God used all kinds of people and situations. For example, in 1782 God called a freed slave, George Lisle, to take the Gospel to the little island country of Jamaica. In our own nation, God made it possible for the truth to come here, for the Bible to be translated into our language so that we could know the truth and the good news that we are talking about today.

Page Ten: Picture of a map of the nation representing founding of your nation and significant events that have shaped it

This picture represents God's plan in the founding and shaping of your nation. Did you know that God has also worked in history to establish our own country and even our community? Job 12:23 says, "He (God) makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them." God is sovereign over all the nations and people.

Page Eleven: Picture of a finger pointing to you, representing each child's place in God's plan

This picture of a finger pointing is pointing to each one of you! God has had a wonderful plan throughout history and each page in this book has explained just one small part of his plan. But God also has a wonderful and a special plan for your life. You were born in (name of country) to your family to fulfill his good plans for your life. God has a special purpose for you at this time in this place on this earth. You are very, very special to him.

Page Twelve: A picture of a beautiful gate representing Eternity Future

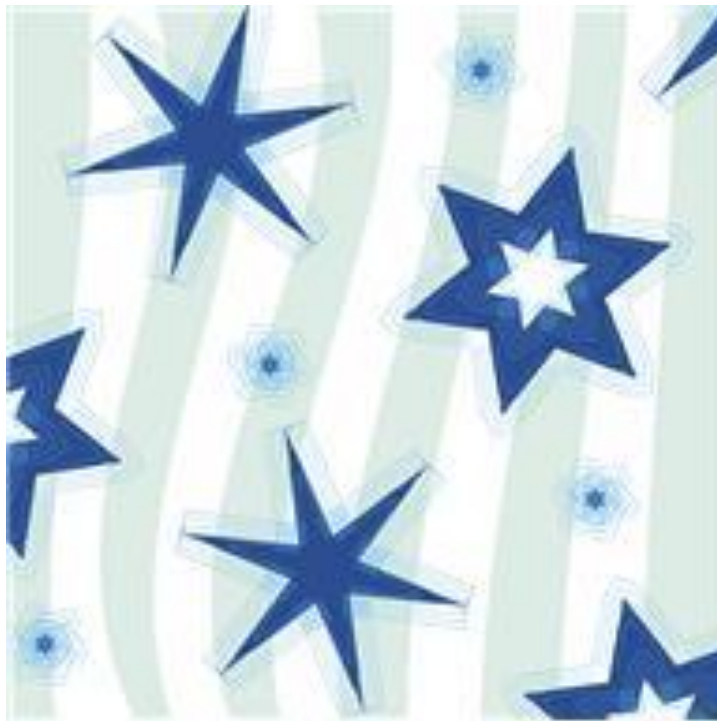
This picture of a beautiful gate represents Eternity Future, meaning the time in the future when God will return to judge his people. God will create a new heaven and a new earth where there is no more pain and no more tears. The gates of this city will never be shut because it is the city of God. God's plan will end in this wonderful city. If you believe in God's Son, Jesus, and that he paid the penalty for all of your sins, you are a citizen of this future city. If you haven't done that yet, you can make that decision today.

As you can see, God has had a wonderful plan throughout all of history. His wonderful plan also includes you and me. Let's pray and thank God now for his wonderful plans.

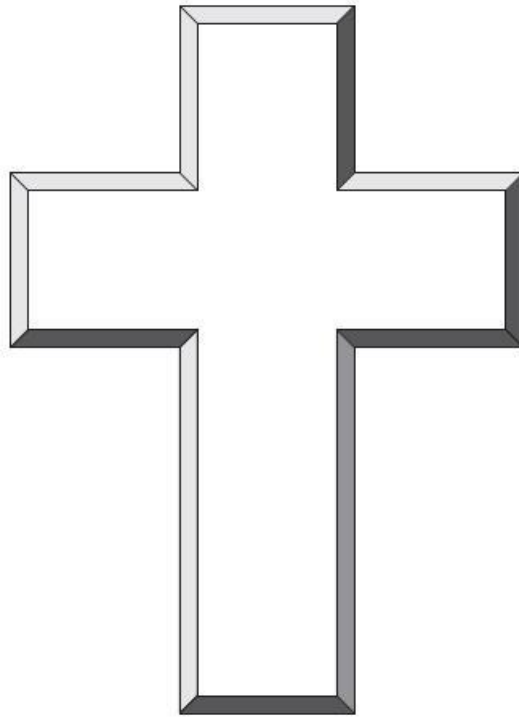
Prayer

Dear God, Thank you that you are sovereign over all history. That does not mean that you are the author of all the wars and violence that so often shape history, but that amidst the sin and suffering of the world you are carrying out your plan to bless people and achieve your final plan. Thank you that you have always kept your promise and will keep your promise to each one of these children. Thank you for giving each one of us a special place and purpose in your plan. Help us to develop the gifts you have given us and be all that you intend us to be to bless others. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.











Picture of map of
your nation



Unit Three – Lesson 2 (Two Parts)

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

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*.⁴

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) is, he responded that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And the second is to love your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:29-31) 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." (Matthew 7:12) 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.

Please review the Teacher’s Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

⁴ *God's Intentions-Their Irreducible Minimum, Leadership Development Training Program: Level I*, Harvest Foundation, 1997, 47-49.

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.

Part One

Supplies/Materials

One banana for every five children in your class

Scripture Reference

Mark 12:29-31

Lesson

Have the children sit in groups of five and give each group one banana.

Do you ever feel like there are too many rules in life? What if you had to only worry about and keep one rule? Wouldn't this make life a lot easier? Instead of having lots of rules in school and at home, and lots of laws to keep, what if there was only one? How would you feel about this? Allow for a response. **Jesus actually simplified all of life into one rule. Today we're going to talk about that, but first let's think about some of the rules we are supposed to live by.**

We are going to do this by peeling a banana. Each group has five people and one banana. Each banana has five sides to peel. Starting with the first group I would like someone to peel back one side of the banana and as you do so, share one rule in your school or family or community. Then pass the banana to the next person and they will do the same. After your group is done peeling your banana, we'll start with someone in the next group. Okay, let's begin.

Encourage the children to come up with as many different rules as possible, including rules about eating, greeting others, etc.

When the last banana is peeled... **We certainly have a lot of rules in our lives. There were many rules in Jesus' time as well, more than 600 of them. One day a man asked Jesus, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"**

Do you know how Jesus responded? "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 12:29-31)

Just like we peeled back all the sides of the banana to uncover the most important part, Jesus peeled back all the rules and said there is one that is most important. It is this: Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. Today, let's look at what it means to love God with all our being. But, first let's share and eat the most important part of the banana.

This is a very important Bible verse for us to remember, so I'd like us to practice saying it with some hand motions that will help us memorize it. We'll learn the first part today. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." Mark 12:30

Let's say, "Love the Lord your God," as you point up to heaven where God is. Let's say, "with all your heart," as we point to our hearts. Let's say, "and with all your soul," as you make a circle on your chest that shows that our souls live forever. Let's say "and with all your mind" as you point to your head, where your mind is and let's say, "and with all your strength" as you make muscles with your arms." Ok, let's say the whole verse together and make the hand motions. Lead the children in saying the Bible verse together with the motions. Say the verse twice so the children become familiar with both the words and the motions.

Concept: How we can love God

How do we love God with all our hearts? When you love a person with all your heart, like your friend or mother, you probably show it by giving them a big hug, saying thank you, or telling them how wonderful they are or how important they are to you. To love God with all your heart is the same. We are thankful for the many good and great things he does and we show our gratitude and devotion to him. Who can tell me something that they're thankful to God for? (Allow as many children who would like to share one thing that they are thankful to God for.)

How do we love God with all our souls? Our soul is who we are on the inside...the part of us that will live for all eternity. Our soul is the part of us that knows right from wrong. Loving God with our soul means that we make the decisions and choices that are best for us, that God wants us to make. This means when we're tempted to cheat on an exam in school what choice will we make? What will we do? (Allow the children to answer this

question.) **If we make the choices that God wants us to make, when our friends are teasing someone else, what will we do?** (Allow the children to answer this question.) **If we love God with our souls then we will choose to make the right choices for ourselves and others even when it is difficult.**

How can you love God with your mind? Allow for good discussion. The children should have some ideas on this question. **When we develop our minds, we are loving God. When we go to school and learn about math, science, and geography, we are loving God with all our mind. When we think good thoughts and seek truth, we are loving God with all our mind. When we use our mind to solve problems and help others, we are loving God with all our mind. There are many ways we can love God with all our mind.**

What do you think it means to love God with all your strength? Allow the children to answer this question. **When we love God with all our strength, we use the strength and energy God gives us each day to do what is right and best for others. Maybe this means we fetch water for a neighbor who is too old to go to the well themselves. What other things can you do that would be loving God with your strength?** Allow as many children that would like to, to share.

God wants us to love him with all our being. When we pull back all the sides of the banana, we get to the most important part. When you pull back all the rules in life, the most important commandment is this. Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Let's say our Bible verse to remind us of this. . Lead the children in saying the memory verse along with doing the motions. Then lead the children in prayer.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for loving us and making it clear how we can best live and fulfill your purpose in our lives. Continue to teach us how to love you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength every day! Help us. In Jesus' name, Amen

Unit Three – Lesson 2 – Part Two

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

Supplies/Materials

None

Scripture Reference

Matthew 7:12; Mark 12:30, 31; Galatians 5:14

Lesson

How many of you remember the Bible verse we learned the last time we were together? (Give a pause and allow any children who would like the chance to recall the Bible verse.) **Let's say it together now and do the hand motions. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." Mark 12:30**

Jesus said this was the most important commandment, but that there was a second part. Do you know what the second part is? Allow for response.

Concept: Loving others

Jesus said, "The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:31)

At another time Jesus said that all of the laws and everything written by the prophets could be summed up in this one thing: "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7:12) In Galatians, it says that the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:14)

If we peel back all of the rules and instructions in life we find the command to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. If we peel back how to do this, the answer is: love your neighbor as yourself. Love one another.

So, the next time you peel and eat a banana, let it remind you that amidst all the complexity of life, your calling and purpose is very clear and not complicated. It is to love God with all your being and to do so by loving your neighbor as yourself.

Before we end our time, I have one more question. Who do you think your neighbor is?
Allow the children time to answer this question.

Your neighbor isn't just the person who lives close by you. Your neighbors are all of the people that God puts into your life. This includes your parents, brothers and sisters, teachers, and friends. When Jesus is telling us to love our neighbors, he is telling us to love everyone around us.

What do you think it means to love your neighbor as you love yourself? What are some ways or examples of how we can love our neighbor as our self? Allow the children time to answer this question and discuss.

Examples:

-Sarah has a good friend who has a hard time understanding math. Every day after school, Sarah helps her to understand and get her homework done.

-Francoise's mom is very busy with a lot of work. When Francoise notices how much work her mom has, she stops playing with her friends and immediately goes to help her, even when her mom didn't ask her to.

-Jean Paul is teasing another classmate and calling him bad names. Roger and Jean Paul are good friends, but Roger does not join his friend in making fun of the classmate but encourages him to stop it.

God loves us so much and has a good purpose for our lives! His purposes are good for us and good for those around us. God's purpose for your life starts with loving him by loving your neighbor as yourself.

Prayer

Let's pray and thank God for his love and good purpose for us.

Dear God, Thank you very much that you want what is best for us. You have a wonderful purpose for our lives. Thank you for making it so clear and simple. Help us to love you by loving our neighbor as our self. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Unit Three – Lesson 3

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

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:

- 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.
- We have no resources and are trapped in our situation.
- 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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Lesson pictures, handful of sand, a red, yellow, and blue crayon

Scripture References

Genesis 1:26; 2:15

Lesson

I need you to become detectives today! A detective finds something that is hidden by listening to and following clues. Listen to these verses from Genesis. I want you to listen for the three very important jobs we are to do in regard to everything God created. Help the students by emphasizing the words that are in caps.

Genesis 1:26 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 all the creatures that move along the ground." Genesis 2:15 says, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to WORK IT and TAKE CARE OF IT."

Who heard the three important jobs that God has given us in regard to creation? Allow time for the children to answer this question.

God's three jobs for us in regard to all that he created is to RULE OVER it, to WORK it, and to TAKE CARE of it. Let's look at these more closely.

Concept One: We are to rule over creation

I want to show you several pictures or objects. I would like you to guess what they all have in common.

Take out your pictures of the farmer, a doctor, and a house builder.

What do you think that these three people have in common? Allow for the children's responses.

Each of these people is ruling over creation. To rule over all creation means that we are exerting control over it to improve it or stop some negative effect. Hold up the farmer picture. **What are some ways the farmer rules over creation?** Discuss and allow for response. **The farmer rules over creation by tilling the ground and planting good seed, by cutting back weeds that crowd out good plants, by using techniques that limit pests and enable the plants to grow.**

Hold up the doctor picture. **The doctor rules over disease, sickness, and injury by giving us medicine and treatments that enable our body to prevent illness or heal.**

Hold up the house builder picture. **A house builder rules over rain, wind, heat, and cold by making a house that gives us shelter and protects us from the weather.**

God's plan, even before Adam and Eve sinned, was that human beings would rule over all creation, to improve it, and to control it in a good way.

Concept Two: God calls us to work the creation

Take out a handful of sand, 3 crayons – red, yellow, blue, and a picture of a child reading.

Who can tell me what these objects have in common? Allow children to respond. They probably will not know.

When God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he gave them the instruction to "work" it. He meant for Adam and Eve to take the resources present in the garden, the water, the earth, the plants, the rocks, and to use them to make the garden even more beautiful, productive, and bountiful. They were to use the resources God had provided and make something even more special.

This handful of sand, the three colors in these crayons, and a child reading are examples of resources that God has provided to us to use to make something even more special.

Can anyone tell me what we can make from sand? Discuss with the children how people discovered how to make glass from sand over 5,000 years ago. Talk about some of the things we have and enjoy that are made of glass: windows, eye glasses, water glasses, microscopes, storage jars, etc. Silicon is also a form of glass from which silicon chips are made which are responsible for all of the logic and memory functions in a computer, or calculator, or microwave oven, radios, etc.

All this from sand. All this because of people following God's plan and purpose given to Adam and Eve - and to us - to 'work creation'.

Can anyone tell me what you can do with these three colors: red, blue, and yellow?

Discuss with the children how people discovered that they can mix these colors together to make secondary colors and all the other colors out there. Then they used these colors to create beauty in paintings, handicrafts, and cloth. Look at examples of beauty through color.

All this from three colors. All this because people followed God's plan and purpose given to Adam and Eve – and to each of us – to 'work creation'.

Show the picture of the boy reading. **What is this boy doing? Yes, he is reading a book. Maybe he is learning about science or history, or engineering. Whatever he is reading, he is learning and developing his mind. He is taking one of the most valuable resources God has given him, his mind, and is developing it so that he can use it solve problems, create new things, and improve things in his life, family, and community. He is following God's plan and purpose given to each of us to 'work creation'.**

We are to take the resources God has provided to us and make something special. What are some of the resources God has given to you to work with and make something special out of? Allow for response. Examples of resources the children have would be: their minds, their physical energy and strength, their creativity, the ability to spell and write, etc.

Concept Three: God calls us to care for all creation

Show the children your pictures of hand washing and a trash can.

What do you think these two pictures have in common? Allow for the children's responses.

These pictures demonstrate ways that we can take care of creation. Remember, in Genesis 2:15 it says, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and TAKE CARE OF IT."

When we take care of something we protect it and nurture it. God wants us to not only rule over creation and to improve it or make something special out of it, but also to care for it. To care for something is to protect and nurture it.

Hold up the picture of hand washing. **How is this caring for creation? Our bodies are part of God's creation. When we practice good hygiene like hand washing, we protect and care for God's good creation. When we exercise and eat well, when we do things to help ourselves and others stay healthy we are caring for God's creation.**

Hold up the picture of the trash can. **How is this caring for creation? Our community and homes are part of the creation God has given us to care for. By putting our trash away in**

trash containers instead of throwing it on the ground, we are caring for creation by keeping it clean and not polluting the environment.

From the very beginning, God has given us three very important jobs to do. Let's repeat them together three times and then we'll close in prayer. Let's say, "God's purpose is for us to rule over all creation, work it, and care for it."

In the last lesson we learned that our most important purpose is to love God by loving your neighbor as yourself. One of the best ways to love God and serve your neighbor is to rule over, work, and care for creation for the benefit of others.

Prayer

Thank you, God, for the wonderful earth that you have given us to live on and its amazing beauty and resources. They are evidence of your goodness and love for us. Thank you for making us in your image and giving us the ability to create as well. Thank you for giving us an important purpose. Thank you that you call us to rule over, work, and care for all creation. Please help us to fulfill these very important jobs well! In Jesus' name we pray.







Unit Three– Lesson 4

God’s Purpose for Your Life – Blessed to Be a Blessing

The Concept: Why Teach This

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.

Please review the Teacher’s Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

A bag of heavy stones, signs: servant 1, 2, & 3

Scripture References

Matthew 25:14-29; Ephesians 2:10

Lesson

Before the lesson identify three persons who can act out the servant story. Share the story with them in advance so they can prepare and act it out in a dramatic and expressive manner.

To start the class, try to pick up the bag of heavy stones and try to carry it. Struggle unsuccessfully and be as dramatic so that one of the children will *hopefully* volunteer to help you carry it. If no one volunteers without you asking, encourage a child to help you.

UHHH, I have this really heavy bag with me today and I just don't know how I'm going to get it to the other side of the room. UHHH, it's just too big for me to carry. At this point a child should volunteer to help you or you should choose one child to help you carry it.

You really blessed me by helping me carry that bag! We have been learning about God's important purposes for each of our lives at this time and place in history. We learned that the most important commandment or purpose is to love God with all our being and to do this by loving your neighbor as yourself. We learned that one of the very first purposes God gave to us was to rule over, work, and care for all that God has given us in creation – to improve all of life and make it better for others. Today we're going to see how all this ties together in God's purpose that we be a blessing to others. God blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others.

Concept One: We are blessed so that we can bless others

God says in Ephesians 2:10 that, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God planned in advance for us to do." In advance, before we were even born, God had a purpose and a plan for our lives that we would do good works for others. God did not create us just for ourselves. He created us to bless others.

When God decided to choose a people through whom he would show his ways, plans, and purposes, he started with a man named Abraham. Listen to the job that God gave to Abraham. "Leave your country, your people, 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."

God told Abraham that he was going to bless him. God also told Abraham why he was going to bless him or the result? Did you hear the reason God was going to bless Abraham? Allow the children to answer this question. God was going to bless Abraham so that Abraham could then be a blessing to others.

God's pattern with Abraham is the same for every one of us. He blesses all of us, whether we are rich or poor, with abilities, gifts, and resources, so that we can bless others.

Concept Two: God entrusts different types of blessings (resources) to us

This applies today to you right here as well. You may not have a lot of money, but you certainly have strength, a mind, a voice, and abilities that you that you can use to bless others. Remember when I couldn't carry that heavy bag earlier? (Child's Name) used the physical strength God gave him to be a blessing to me. Maybe you are not physically strong, but you have a sharp mind, or you are very good at singing. God gives each of us resources and abilities that we can use to bless others.

Please think about some way in which God has blessed you. Then think of how you can use that ability or that skill to bless someone else. OK, think hard about it! (Allow the children about 30 seconds to think.) Please turn to the person sitting next to you and tell him what God has blessed you with and how you will use it to bless someone else. (Allow the children about one minute to share.)

Concept Three: We are to steward the resources God entrusts to us

Let's listen to a Bible story. I'll need three people to be the servants and to act out the story as I tell it. At certain points I'll say, "STOP" and you'll need to freeze acting out what you hear and not move. I'll give a short explanation to what's going on in the story. When I resume telling the story you can begin moving and acting again. Our story is found in Matthew 25. Let's read it now.

There was a man who was going on a journey. Before he left, he called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents (bags of money), to another he gave two bags of money, and to another servant one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. STOP!

The picture here is of a businessman calling in three of his employees and giving each full responsibility to manage a portion of his money. He is not turning the money over to them as a gift to do whatever they please. Rather he is entrusting his money to them to protect and put to good use while he is absent. Just like in the last lesson God gave resources to Adam and Eve, and now to us, to rule over, work, and care for. Just like the businessman, God gives abilities and resources to each of us to manage, develop, and do something special with them. (Back to our story.)

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 bag, went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. STOP.

We all have a choice in how we will use the life that God has given us. We can work hard at developing our mind and abilities and then use them to bless others or we can be lazy or use them selfishly. (Back to our story.)

After a time, the master of the three servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five bags brought another 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 in your master's happiness!"

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 in your master's happiness!" STOP.

One man was given 5 bags the other 2. God does not give us all the same ability, amount of talent, or level of resource. What is important is not the amount he gives us, but what we do with what we have. Do we develop what God entrusts to us and turn it into something special? (Back to our story.)

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."

Maybe we are sometimes like this last servant and we do not fully develop or put to good use all that God has entrusted to us. Maybe we are afraid of failure, or no one encourages us, or we feel it is too difficult. (Back to our story.)

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." STOP.

God has a wonderful purpose for our lives and he wants what is best for us. God loves us and does not want us to live below our potential and what he designed for us. (End of story.)

Like he did with Abraham, God blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others. Like this story of the master and the servants, God entrusts life and ability to us that we are to develop and put to good use.

Apart from your life itself, what is something special God has given to each one of you that he wants you to develop and use to bless others? Allow children to respond. Then highlight the gift of the mind.

One of the most important things God has blessed each of us with is our mind. He wants us to develop it and then use it to bless others. This is the reason you go to school each day and study hard. This is the reason why even as adults we should never stop learning.

God is glorified when we develop and make good use of what he gives us to bless others.

Prayer

Let's pray and thank God for what he has given us and ask for his help to use this to bless others.

Dear God, Thank you first of all that you love us and you always want what is the very best for us. Thank you for the gift of life. Thank you for our bodies that work. Thank you for our minds. Thank you for all the abilities you have given each one of us. Like the good and faithful servants, help us to develop and put these to good use. Like Abraham, help us to be a blessing to others. We pray this in Jesus' name.

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.

Unit Four – Lesson 1 (Two Parts)

Our Lives and World Are Broken

The Concept: Why Teach

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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.

Part One

Supplies/Materials

Piece of fruit

Scripture References

Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 3:23

Lesson

What are some problems people face in your family, school, our community, and nation? Can you tell me what some of them are? Allow as many children as possible to answer the question.

Those are serious problems that you mentioned. Have you ever wondered why we have so many problems? Today I'd like to tell you a story that explains why all of these bad things happen and why there is so much suffering. Listen carefully to this story.

The first man and woman God created were Adam and Eve. They lived together in a beautiful garden that God called the Garden of Eden. God wanted Adam and Eve to take care of the garden and look after everything in it. Adam and Eve were so happy to live in this beautiful place. They looked after the animals and enjoyed the beautiful flowers! They picked all kinds of delicious fruit and ate them. God had given them permission to eat all the fruit in the garden except the fruit of a certain tree, which grew in the middle of the garden. God called this tree, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." God told Adam that he could eat from any other tree in the garden, but he couldn't eat from this one tree. He warned him that if he ate the fruit from this tree he would die!

But there was someone who didn't like how happy Adam and Eve were. This was Satan. Satan was the enemy of God. Because he knew God loved Adam and Eve and they were friends with one another, Satan looked for an opportunity to ruin God's work by tempting and deceiving Adam and Eve.

Satan knew that Adam and Eve would always be happy and living at peace if they obeyed God's instructions. So in order to trick them Satan used a snake. At that time, the snake was one of the most beautiful of the animals that God created.

One day, Eve was walking by herself in the Garden of Eden. As she passed by she heard a very soft voice calling out to her. "Eve, did God really say don't eat the fruit of the trees in the garden?"

"No," replied Eve, "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 doesn't want us to eat from that tree. We can't even touch it! If we eat from that tree we will 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 good and evil is."

Children, 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 nice. Take your 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. Then she reached out and 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."

After eating the fruit, Adam and Eve began to be afraid. Before that, they had felt safe around God, but now it was very different. They were afraid of God because they had done the thing he warned them not to do.

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. What would God say? He would surely find them. No one can hide from God, because he knows and sees everything.

In the evening God came to look for Adam and Eve. They were hiding, ashamed and afraid.

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 told you not 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.

Through Adam and Eve sin entered the world. We all sin. The Bible tells us in Romans 3:23, "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."(NLT)

This is a very sad story that begins to tell us why there are so many problems in the world. All of the problems, the sadness and pain in our world are the result of sin. Our world is broken! The next time we meet together we're going to learn about what parts of our world sin has broken.

But I hope you don't get too sad by this very sad story! God has given us a solution to this problem of sin that we're also going to learn about very soon. So don't give up! God has a great plan.

Lesson

Let's pray together now to end our lesson.

Dear God, It's very difficult to think about how broken our world and lives are. It is difficult to think about all the suffering in this world. It is difficult to think how we all sin and fall short of the glorious way God intended for us to live. We are glad that you provided a solution to our problem. In Jesus' name we pray.

Unit Four – Lesson 1 (Part Two)

Our Lives and World Are Broken

Supplies/Materials

Dish or pot to be broken, pictures to represent God's creation

Scripture References

Romans 8:22; Colossians 1:21

Lesson

Think back to our lessons about creation. Who can tell me some of the things in the universe that God made? (Allow as many children as possible to answer the question.)

The last time we were together we learned about how sin entered the world through Adam and Eve. What did we say happened to the world when sin entered? Allow children to respond.

Yes, we said it was broken. At this point, if you can afford to break something like a dish or a pot, throw it onto the ground for the dynamic effect of it breaking into hundreds of pieces. The children will not quickly forget this illustration and the idea that the world is broken by sin.

Today we're going to find out what broke - what parts of God's creation were affected by sin.

Concept: Four main areas of life broken

Our relationship with God is broken

Hold up picture of the cloud with God's name inside it. **The first area of life that is broken by sin is our relationship with God.** Rip this 'relationship with God' picture in half. **Our relationship with God is broken in many ways. We are separated from God.** (Colossians 1:21) **We don't trust that God knows what is best for us or that he wants what is best for us. So, we hesitate to follow his instructions in the Bible for how to live. We don't recognize all of the good things God puts in our life or we don't see these as coming from him. We don't recognize and depend on God as the giver of life and all gifts, but put our trust in other things.**

Relationship with God's creation is broken

Our relationship with God's creation is also broken. Hold up the picture⁵ of the child hugging the world (creation) and rip it in half. **After Adam and Eve sinned, famine, drought, plague, weeds, disease, sickness, earthquakes, floods, and death entered the world. Adam and Eve were called to have dominion or rule over creation before it was broken. Now it is an even bigger challenge. The Bible says all creation is now groaning** (Romans 8:22).

Relationship with others is broken

Our relationship with other people, with one another is also broken. Take out your picture of two friends and rip it in half. **When sin entered the world people began to be suspicious of each other. We started to think that certain groups of people were better than others. Jealousy, greed, envy, racism, feelings of superiority and inferiority, betrayal, anger, hatred, and murder, gossip, and slander came into being. It's not good at all!**

Relationship with self is broken

Unfortunately, there is even one more area that was broken because of sin. That's our relationship with our self. Take out the picture of the person smiling and rip it in half. **. After they went against God's instruction and sin entered the world, Adam and Eve experienced fear, worry, shame, insecurity, selfishness, and false pride. It's like that with us too. We are broken.**

When sin entered the world so many things became broken. Hold up all of your ripped pictures. **We really do have a big problem! We try so hard to fix these things but the only one can do so it God.**

The next time we meet together we're going to learn about the solution God provided to make our lives whole again.

Prayer

Let's pray.

Dear God, It is really easy to see how our lives are broken. We are separated from you. There are terrible things that happen in creation. We fight with our friends and even family. We are broken in the way we see ourselves. Thank you for providing a solution. Please prepare us to learn about how you can make the broken parts of our life whole again. In Jesus' name we pray.

⁵ [Sketches in this lesson come from Rohr-Roundaal, Petra. Where There is No Artist. Halesworth, Suffolk, UK: Practical Action Publishing, 2007.](#)



Relationship with Creation



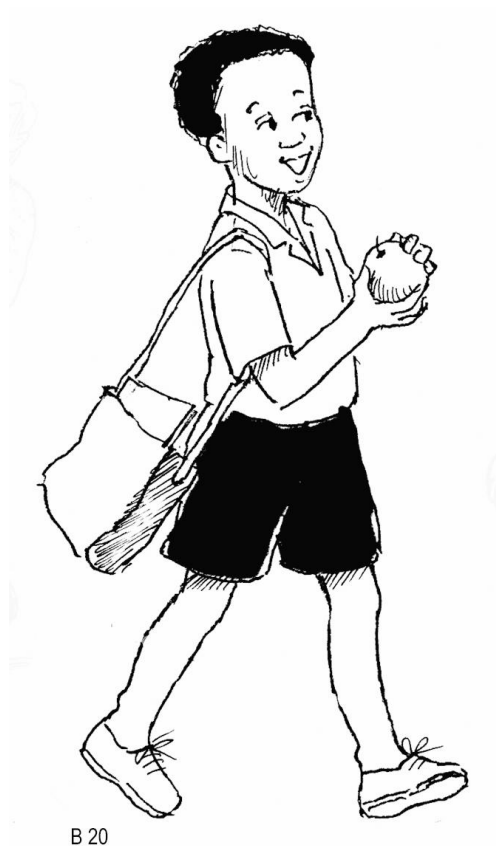
B 2

Relationship with Others



B 7

Relationship with Self



B 20

Unit Four – Lesson 2

Sin: Missing the Mark

The Concept: Why Teach

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 perfection⁶. 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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

The Main Point

Sin is anything less than God's standard of perfection.

⁶ 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.

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

Targets, small coins or bean bags for each of 3 volunteers to use in throwing at the target

Scripture References

Matthew 5:48; Romans 3:23 (NLT); 1 Peter 1:14

Lesson

Divide the children up into groups and place a target on the floor several meters from each group.

I have a fun game I’d like for us to play today. This circle that I have here is called a target. I’m going to allow each one of you to take a turn. You’ll get this small coin (or bean bag) and you’ll have to throw it at the center of the target. The goal is to get your coin as close to the center as possible. If you get in right in the center, we call that a bulls-eye. Ok, let’s start playing! Allow each child in each group to take a turn at getting the small coin in the center of the target. When all of the children have had a turn, bring them back together and continue the discussion.

It was fun playing that game wasn’t it? But it was really hard to get the coin in the center of the target wasn’t it?

Can anyone tell me what sin is? Allow for the children’s responses. **You’re right when you say that sin is doing bad things like lying, cheating and stealing. But did you know that God says sin is even more than that? In the New Testament of the Bible, when sin is talked about, the word used in the original language means “to miss the mark.” It is the same word used for playing this game and missing the center or bull’s-eye. If you missed, you have sinned or missed the center. Sin is “missing the mark.” Romans 3:23 says, “For everyone has sinned (missed the mark). We all fall short of God’s glorious standard.” (NLT) We all fall short of God’s bull’s-eye.**

Concept One: God’s standard is perfection

God's glorious standard, his bull's-eye, is his wonderful perfect best for us. It is being able to love your neighbor as yourself 24 hours a day. It is never struggling with envy, jealousy, fear, or insecurity. It is always being truthful and honest. It is always giving your very best in your studies and school. Just as we like things to be perfect, that is God's good desire for us. Jesus said in the Bible, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:48.

In light of all this, how many of you are able to be perfect, to hit God's bulls-eye, his standard of perfection all of the time? None of the children should be able to answer yes.

No one is able to live or be perfect. You might try very hard. You might get close to the bulls-eye, but that's not good enough. However, we know that God is perfect in every way and that is good thing for us. But, because he is perfect and we and this broken world are not, we are separated from him.

Sometimes we may think that the reason people miss the mark or sin is because they are very evil and rebellious. But the Bible shows us there are other reasons as well. Let's look at them today.

We are going to do three demonstrations with the targets to show some of reasons the Bible says we can sin and miss the mark. Several volunteers are going to help me.

Before the lesson, identify your three volunteers and tell them what you want them to do.

Concept Two: We miss the mark because we rebel

Set up one target at the front of the room.

I would like the first volunteer I have selected to walk up to the line and try to hit the bull's-eye on the target with the coin or bean bag. Okay, volunteer, hit the bull's-eye!

First volunteer says: **Hit the bulls-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!**

Why wasn't our volunteer able to hit the bulls-eye in this demonstration? Allow for children's responses.

You're right. He wasn't able to do it because he rebelled and refused to. Sometimes a person can willingly choose to go against God's wisdom and good instruction for their life. For example, the ten commandments say to not lie but they decide that this is a dumb idea if it means they will not get something they want. They rebel.

Let's see another reason now why we sin and miss God's mark.

Concept Three: We miss God's mark because of ignorance

Have your volunteer leave the room and while he or she is gone, place a second target to the left of the first one. Let the children know this is the wrong target but to not say anything.

To Volunteer #2. **It is now your turn. Come back in and hit the bull's-eye!**

Volunteer #2 is a bit confused by the two targets but chooses the one to the left. He throws his coin or bean bag at the target and hits the center.

Volunteer #2 cheers and jumps up and down. **Yay! I hit the bull's-eye, didn't I? I did a really great job, right?** Allow for the children's responses.

What do you mean? I didn't hit the right bull's-eye? It's not my fault, I did not know.

End the demonstration

We all do this sometimes. We do something wrong because we don't know any better. In our demonstration the volunteer did not know which target was the correct one. He was ignorant, so he chose the wrong one. But that doesn't matter. The unfortunate fact and reality is that he did not hit the correct target and bull's-eye. The Bible says, "As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires that you had when you lived in ignorance." (1 Peter 1:14) You see, children, the Bible even tells us that we can sin because of ignorance, because we don't know better. Sometimes we miss the mark because we are ignorant.

Concept Four: We miss the mark because of inability

Remove the incorrect target. Have volunteer #3 come forward. Spin him or her around five times until he or she is very dizzy and can hardly stand upright. Ask the children to cheer him on.

Okay, now hit the bull's-eye.

The volunteer tries to hit the target but, of course cannot because of dizziness. If he wants to be even more theatrical, he can fall down when shooting due to dizziness. Stop the demonstration.

Why wasn't our volunteer able to hit the bull's-eye? Allow for the children's responses.

He didn't hit the bulls-eye because he wasn't able. He was too dizzy. This is just like us. No matter how hard we try, we are not able to perfectly meet God's glorious standard for our lives. Because God's standard is perfection, we don't get a prize or credit for effort or coming close. The Apostle Paul said, "I try to do what is right but cannot. My spirit is willing but my flesh is weak."

This reminds us of our Bible verse found in Romans 3:23. Let's say it together, "For everyone has sinned (missed the mark). We all fall short of God's glorious standard." (NLT)

Rebellion, ignorance, inability - these are some of the reasons why we fall short of God's glorious standard for our lives. This is bad news! We have a huge problem! But there is good news. Next week we'll learn what God's perfect solution is to this problem. If any of you don't want to wait until next week to learn about what God's perfect solution is, come and talk to me after class is over.

Prayer

Let's close in prayer.

Dear God, Thank you for being perfect and having a perfect plan and standard for all of creation and for us. We would want it no other way. We realize we fall short of your glorious standard for many reasons and because of this our lives are broken. This is a big problem! Please help prepare us to listen well to your wonderful solution to this problem the next time we are together. In Jesus' name we pray.



Unit Four– Lesson 3

Jesus – Our Solution

The Concept: Why

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.

Please review the Teacher’s Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Bag or backpack, large stones, 4 “Jesus” pictures

Scripture References

John 1:12; 14:6; Acts 16:31; Romans 3:23; Hebrews 9:22; 1 John 1:8

Lesson

Have a volunteer come up to the front of the room. Hand her or him an empty backpack or bag. Then give large stones to other children in the class. Start this discussion.

Children, our volunteer is like all of us. We come into this world carrying a 'sin' backpack. We are born separated from God with a nature to automatically sin or "miss God's glorious standard". We sin ourselves and, from day one, we are impacted by the sin of others and the effects of the sin in the world. Let's illustrate how this works. I will give an example and for each one I would like one of you to put a stone into the backpack.

Give a variety of examples that include not only personal sin, but the way we are impacted by the sin of others, and the effect of sin in creation resulting in sickness and suffering.

Maybe a parent sins by not taking good care of you as a young child and you hurt yourself. Motion for one child to put a heavy stone in the bag. **One of the first words you learn and use is the word "no" when your parent asks you to eat your vegetable or take a nap.** Motion for another child to put a heavy stone in the bag. **A brother or sister gets jealous of you and makes fun of you in some way.** Motion for another child to put a heavy stone in the bag. **You are disrespectful to your parent.** Motion for another child to put a heavy stone in the bag. **A school teacher punishes you unfairly when it was someone else's fault.** Motion for another child to put a heavy stone in the bag. **A friend dies due to some sickness.** Motion for another child to put a heavy stone in the bag. **You don't do your best work in school.** Motion for another child to put a heavy stone in the bag. **When you are older someone steals from you or calls you names.** Put another stone in the bag.

How does all of that "sin" in the bag feel? If the child says that it's not that heavy, name a few more sins and have other children put heavy stones in the bag.

Sin becomes like a heavy weight in our lives. We can't carry 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. Because of Jesus' death, he paid the penalty for our sin and the sin of the whole world. If we acknowledge our sin and believe in Jesus' payment for it, God says he forgives our sin and breaks the power of sin in our lives. (Take the heavy bag away from the volunteer.) **He gives us a new life – his life. He helps us to begin to walk free of sin, and to restore what is broken.**

This is great news! Let's learn more about the life of Jesus and how he is the solution to our big problem. I have four pictures to remind us about the life of Jesus.

The Birth of Jesus

Tell the class briefly about the miracle of the birth of Jesus. Be sure to include the following facts:

- God sent Jesus to earth to be born of Mary.
- 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 100% just like you and me! He got hurt, played with his friends, laughed and cried, got tired, probably got laughed at by others at times, had to do chores, helped his parents, etc.
- What was different? Jesus did not sin. He always thought, said, and did the right thing. He never fell short of God's glorious standard like you and I do.

The Work of Jesus

Tell the class about Jesus' work while he was here on earth. Be sure to include the following facts:

- Jesus was a teacher who went around his country and taught people about God and God's plan for all of life, including the future life. (For example, he told them the most important commandment or purpose in life was to love God by loving your neighbor as yourself.)
- He taught using many stories or parables. (For example, the story of the three servants who were given talents to invest.)
- He ruled over the effects of sin in creation by calming a storm that threatened the lives of his apostle, raising people from the dead, healing sicknesses, providing food to hungry people, etc. In doing all this, he showed how much he loved and cared for people, grieved over the effects of sin, and also showed his power over sin and creation.
- Because so many people liked, listened to, and followed Jesus, the religious leaders were threatened by him and started to get jealous and made plans to get rid of Jesus.

The Death of Jesus

Tell the class the story of the Jesus' death. Be sure to include the following facts:

- The religious leaders sent people to arrest Jesus.
- They took him to the government ruler Pilate.
- The authorities beat him badly, put a crown of thorns on his head, and made fun of him. He suffered greatly.
- They crucified Jesus (killed him by nailing his hands and feet to a cross and hanging him up in the air to die).
- Jesus had never done anything wrong. He always wanted what was true and best. While dying on the cross he asked his Father God to forgive the people because they did not know what they were doing.
- Jesus could have stopped his crucifixion, but he knew it was part of God's perfect plan to conquer sin and its power.
- Jesus became the once-and-for-all perfect sacrifice for all sin for the whole world for all time. Jesus paid the penalty or took on the full consequence for our sin and that of the whole world when he died on the cross. He did this so that we would not have to.
- Because Jesus took our sin and that of the whole world upon himself, we can be forgiven by God. Hebrews 9:22 says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." The wall that separates us from God was removed.

The Resurrection of Jesus

Tell the class the story of Jesus' resurrection. Be sure to include the following facts:

- Jesus' followers put his body in a tomb and rolled a giant stone in front of the doorway.

- Soldiers were put in place to guard it to prevent anyone stealing the body.
- 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 several 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 to judge the earth and all people and we will live with him forever.

How to receive the free gift of forgiveness and new life that God gives us through Jesus:

Through his death and sacrifice Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, for our "missing the mark." Through his coming back to life, Jesus' defeated death and set us free. He now gives us his amazing life so that we can live with him now and forever as he designed for us to live.

All of this is a free gift. We don't have to work for it or earn it.

How do you and I receive this free gift?

1. Admit or agree

The first step is to admit or agree with God that you sin and that you cannot save yourself from your sin. You cannot save yourself by trying harder to be good, inflicting some pain on yourself, going to church, taking the sacraments, being baptized, helping the poor, giving money, or trying to please God with your words or actions.

Romans 3:23 says, "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." (NLT)

1 John 1:8 tells us that, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

2. Believe

The second step is to believe.

The Bible says, "Believe in Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

To believe in Jesus means to believe that Jesus is God, that he died and paid the price for all of your sins, and that he is alive today.

Believing in Jesus is the most important thing that you can do. It's the most important decision that you can ever make.

Prayer

Would you like to admit your need and believe in Jesus for salvation right now? I am going to say a prayer that you can repeat after me, either out loud or in your hearts, if you want to believe in Jesus today. Let's talk to God together. (Teacher: Say one line at a time, leaving a few seconds between lines for the children to respond):

Dear God,

I believe Jesus is your Son. Thank you that Jesus died on the cross for all the wrong things that I have thought and said and done.

Thank you that he rose from the grave to defeat all sin and to give me life.

Thank you for forgiving me.

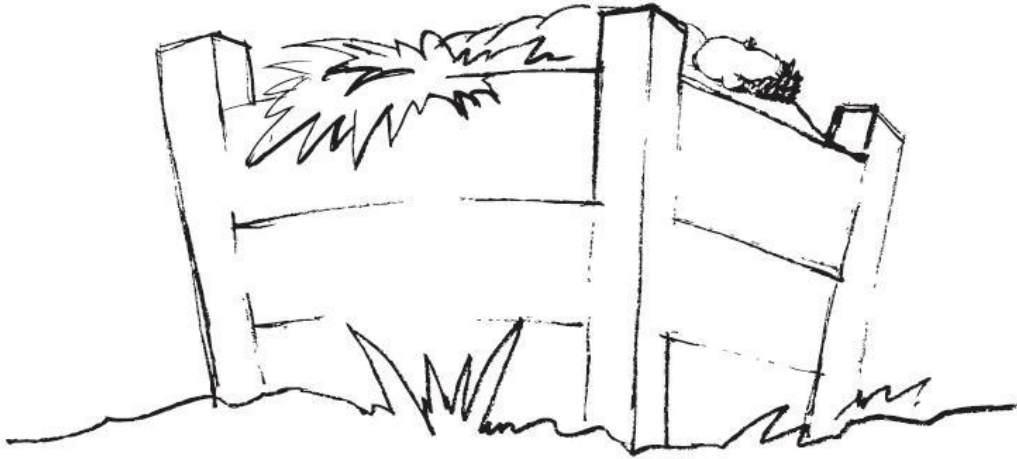
Thank you for giving me your spirit and new life.

Help me to live the good life you designed for me. Amen

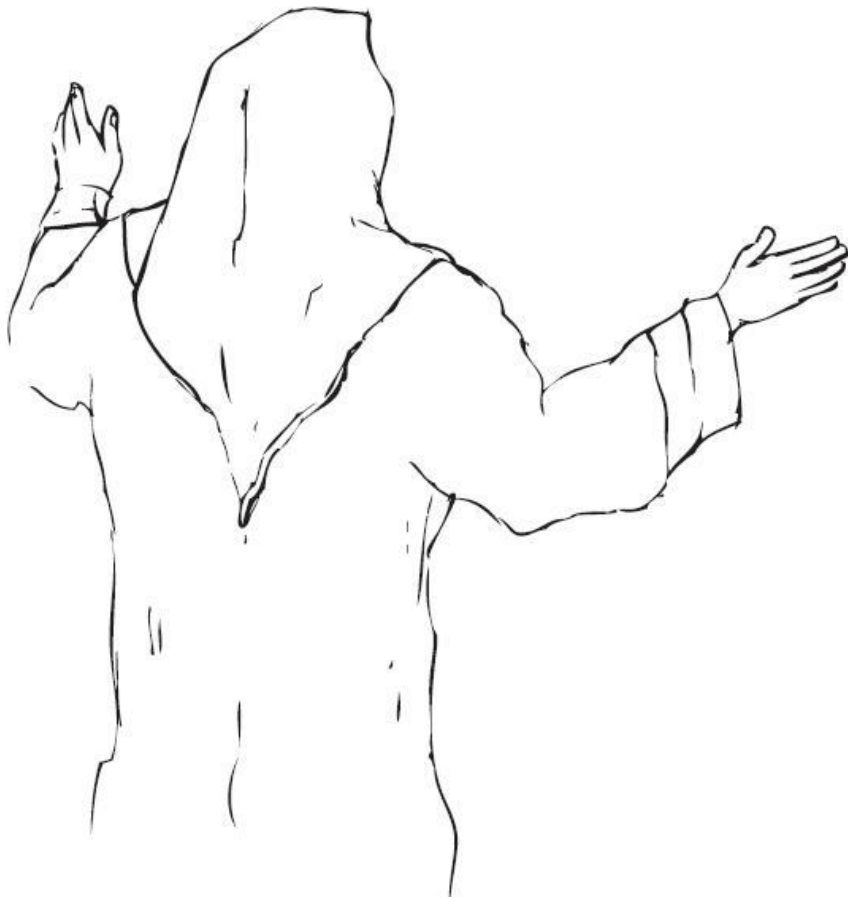
The Bible promises in John 1:12, "to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." If you believe in God you can trust God's promise that he has made you his child now and forever! If you prayed this prayer of belief, it would be good to tell someone like your friend, your dad or mom, or your grandparents. I'd also love it if you would tell me. You can come tell me after class. If you have any questions or would like for me to pray for you about this, please come to me at the end of class. I want you all to know Jesus and have this wonderful gift of forgiveness and new life!

Pictures to show to the children while telling the story

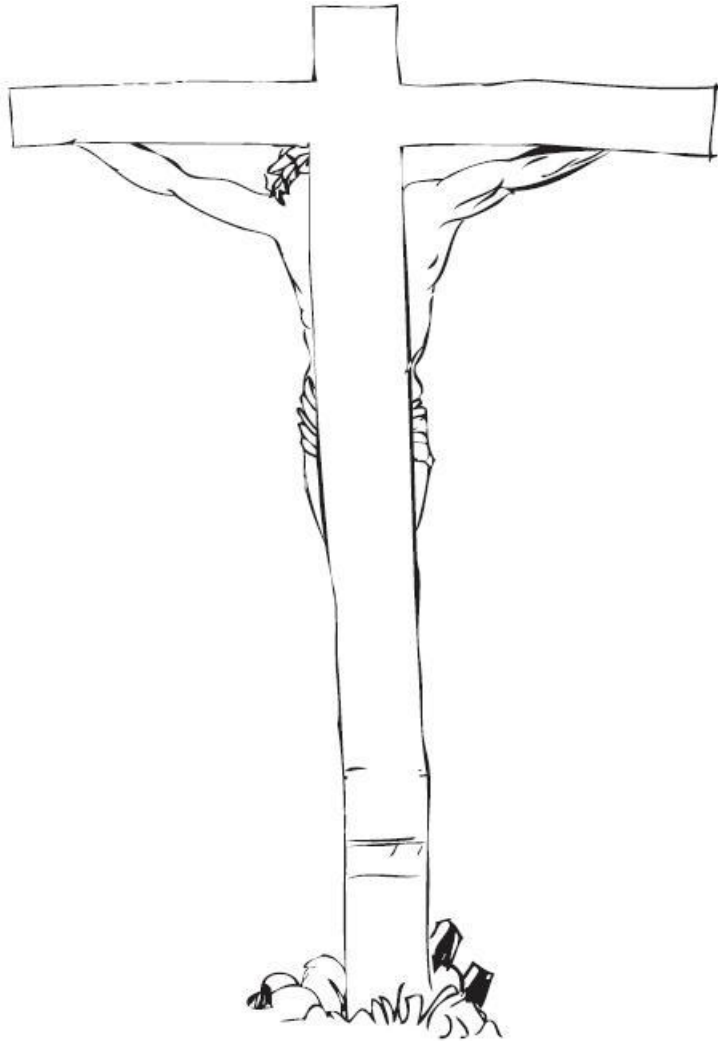
The Birth of Jesus



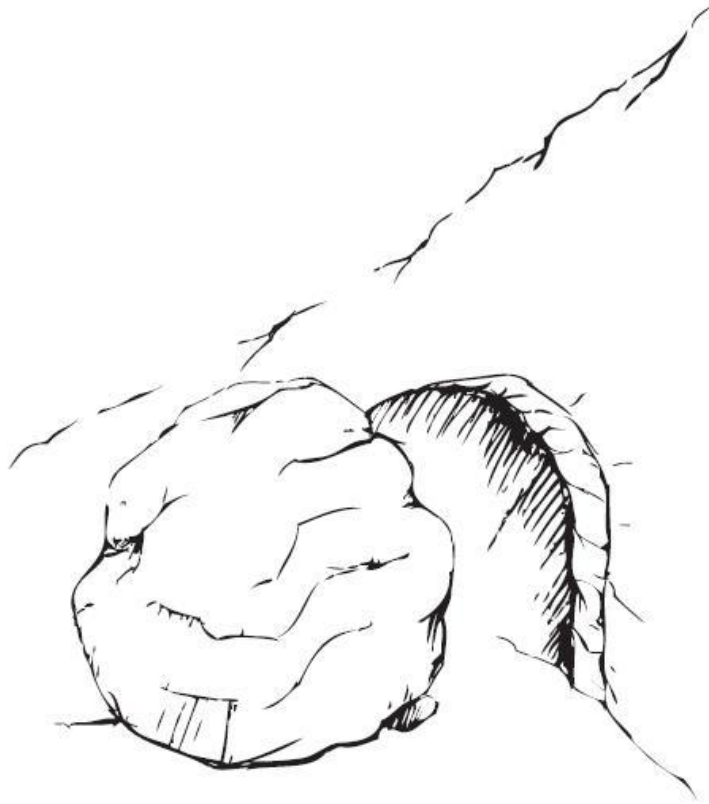
The Work of Jesus



The Death of Jesus



The Resurrection of Jesus



Unit Four – Lesson 4

Life Eternal – What Is It?

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, kingdom 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). It is the life Jesus prayed for us when he taught us to pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," Matthew 6:10.

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 life and the eternal life and the kingdom life that Jesus promised us are the same thing. They will realize that this 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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Bible, ripped pictures from "broken world" lesson, tape

Scripture References

John 3:36, 5:24, 14:6, 20:31; Colossians 1:19-20; 1 John 5:11-12

Lesson

Today we're going to talk about the special life that God gives us when we believe in Jesus. We may not be able to see it on the outside, but something very special is going on inside of us! I'm going to read several verses about the life that Jesus gives us. I need you to listen very carefully to these verses from the Bible. When you hear the word "life" in each one of these verses, please raise your right hand.

In John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

John 20:31 says, "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 says, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

What do these verses say we get or have when we believe in Jesus? Allow for the children's responses.

That's right! We get LIFE! GOD'S LIFE.

Here are some more times that Jesus said we get a new and special kind of life when we believe in him. Here he describes it as an eternal life because it comes from the eternal God.

Again, when you hear the word "life", please raise your left hand.

In John 3:36, Jesus said, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life..."

In John 5:24 he said, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life..."

John wrote in 1 John 5:11-12, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Jesus says that he gives us life when we believe and this life comes from God. So, what is this life about? Let's find out.

Concept One: God's life – his free gift to us – is eternal

God's life – his free gift to us – is eternal. Remember our timeline? (If you still have it up on the wall in your room, point to it.) **God's life started in Eternity Past and goes all the way on into Eternity Future. God had no beginning. He is not created. His life will also never end. God's life is eternal just like him. It will go on forever and ever. Jesus once 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." When God give us his life, it is this life that we receive. It is eternal - never ending.**

To help us remember that God's life is eternal, let's say exactly that while we spread our arms wide and point in both directions. Ok, let's say, "God's life is eternal," and do this arm motion.

Concept Two: God's life – his free gift to us – affects every area of life

God's life – his free gift to us - affects all areas of our lives. Let's say that together to help us remember lets make a big circle with our arm to show how God's life affects and transforms every area of living. Lead children in saying the big idea and doing the hand motion. **In Colossians 1:19-20 the Bible says, "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him (Jesus), 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."**

God reconciles "all things" to himself. To "reconcile" means to completely restore something into God's original plan or design. God wants to reconcile every area of our lives. God's life, the life he gives us, affects every aspect of our lives.

Do you remember our lesson several weeks ago when we learned that our world and our lives are very broken? I ripped pictures of all of the areas of our life that are broken. Well guess what? Through the life that comes from Jesus, those areas of our lives are restored.

Take out the ripped "Relationship with God" picture. Tape it back together. As you are taping it continue. **Through Jesus and the life that God gives us, our relationship with God is restored. We can know God and become friends with him. We can more truly love him with all our hearts, souls, minds, and all our strength.**

Take out the ripped "Relationship with Others" picture. Tape it back together. As you are taping it continue. **In this new life from God, our relationship with others can be restored. Having God's life will enable us to see all people as created in the image of God, uniquely made and gifted, equal in value before him. It will help us love our neighbors as ourselves.**

Take out the ripped "Relationship with Creation" picture. Tape it back together. As you are taping it continue. **God's life in us will help us fulfill his purpose for us to rule over all creation as he intended. To develop our minds, to solve problems, to overcome disease and suffering, to make things better, to wisely manage and care for all the resources that God has provided.**

Take out the ripped "Relationship with Self" picture. Tape it back together. As you are taping it continue. **God's life in us can also heal or restore us from the inside, freeing us from believing lies and helping us see ourselves as God sees us, freeing us from fear, shame, and guilt and giving us peace, hope, and a purpose.**

God's life affects all areas of our lives. Every area of our lives is affected by God's life. Doing our chores, cooking, going to school, and playing with our friends is all touched by God's life. Isn't that amazing?

Concept Three: God's life – his free gift to us – can begin today

God's life can begin today. To help us remember that God's life is for right now and can start today, let's say this while pointing to the ground, meaning "here and now". Lead children in saying, "God's life can begin today" and do the hand motion.

The life that God gives us through Jesus begins the moment that you admit that you are a sinner and believe in Jesus. If you have done that, you already have God's life. You have it right now – this very second! It does not begin when you die physically. If we believe in Jesus today, he gives us his life and we can start to live it immediately.

Concept Four: God's life – his free gift to us – is the very best

God's life is the very best! Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it to the full!" God loves us and wants and knows what is very best for each of us. To help us remember that, let's say this truth while we give an "okay" sign. Lead children in saying the big idea and doing the hand motion.

Do you remember our target? Do you remember what the bull's-eye represented? Allow for children's responses. **That's right. The bull's-eye represents God's perfect and best plan for our lives. This does not mean we will no longer experience great challenge and difficulty on this earth but that we will have God's life in us as we go through them and will experience his goodness.**

God loves us and gives us new life through Jesus his Son. Let's thank God for the life that he gives.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you so much for the life that you give us through Jesus' death and resurrection. Help us to know and experience this free gift of life every day. In Jesus' name we pray.

Four – Lesson 5

Experiencing Life Eternal – Follow Jesus (Believe, Obey, Depend)

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Brightly colored treasure box with a small treat inside (candy or stickers - enough for one for every child), envelope with directions to the treasure box inside, blindfold, bottle of water

Scripture Reference

John 5:30

Lesson

Play **"Treasure Box Hunt"** – Before class hide the treasure box you made in a pre-determined location. Have the envelope with the simple set of directions for locating the treasure box.

Children, there is a box of treasure hidden somewhere close to where we are meeting. It is a free gift to you. It is already yours. However, to find the box so we can experience what is inside, I have some simple instructions which I received in this envelope. So that we do not have a big confusion finding the treasure, I will choose one volunteer to look for it while I read the instructions. Choose the volunteer and begin reading aloud the simple instructions, with the volunteer following them. Celebrate when he or she finds the treasure!

I'm sure this is a great box of treasure, but let's wait until the end of our time together to see what's inside. But for now, I'd like to ask you a question. Why was (name of volunteer) able to find the treasure box? That's right. (Name of volunteer) followed the instructions.

In our previous lesson we learned how God has given us a free gift through Jesus death and resurrection. What is this free gift? Allow for response. Yes, it is forgiveness of sin and a new life. When we admit our sin and believe in Jesus God gives us LIFE. Pick up the actual treasure box and hold it. It's like being given a gift of a treasure box with something wonderful inside. You have the treasure because it's given to you when you believe in Jesus. But now you have to open up the treasure box and experience what's inside.

Our question today is how do we experience the new life that God has freely given to us? How do we experience Jesus' life in us? To his disciples, Jesus' answer to this question was very simple. He said, "Follow me." (For verses and references, see Teacher's Guide)

This made sense to Jesus' disciples because he was physically present. But, how do we follow Jesus today? How do we follow Jesus and experience the treasure, the full life God has for us.

We follow Jesus by doing what he did. Jesus did many things, but there are three important things he did that enabled him to live all his life as God intended. He believed and trusted in his Father's word. He obeyed. And, he depended on his Father. We also can experience God's free gift of life in us as we believe, obey, and depend on him.

Concept One: How do we follow Jesus and do what he did? Believe and trust God's word.

I need a very brave volunteer who will help us understand what it means to believe and trust in God and his word. Ask the child who wants to be a volunteer to raise his or her hand.

I have a bottle full of water. Pick up your bottle. **In ten seconds, I am going to pour this whole bottle of water on (name of student)'s head.** Walk over to a student and count to ten. **Ready?** Pretend that you are about to pour. If the student does not move, pour the water on him or her. If the student moves before you pour the water, respond as follows. If he or she does not move until you pour the water, give your comment an opposite spin – as an example of unbelief or lack of trust in your word.

What just happened? (Name of student) moved out of the way because he/she believed and trusted my word – that I would do what I said and he/she didn't want to get wet!

To believe is to know and to trust. When we know and trust something, we act accordingly. (Name of student in object lesson) knows me and trusted that I do what I say I will do. She/he got out of the way when I said and acted like I was going to pour water on his/her head.

Jesus believed and trusted his Father and his word. When you truly believe and trust someone or something, you naturally act accordingly. For example, Jesus believed and knew that all persons were made in the image of God and so were equal in value, worth and dignity. As a result he welcomed little children; he showed respect to women; he got close to the sick and the suffering; he spoke to both Jews and Gentiles; he did not favor the powerful over the weak; he welcomed everyone. Jesus believed and knew that God had an important purpose for his life so he steadfastly set his face like flint to accomplish it.

In summary, Jesus knew and trusted his Father and acted accordingly. We follow Jesus by doing what he did – believing in and trusting God and his word.

Concept Two: How do we follow Jesus and do what he did? Obey God.

Now let's blindfold a volunteer to help us demonstrate what it means to obey God. Tie a blindfold around the volunteer. **(Child's name) is blindfolded.** Place the child on one side of the room and place some obstacles in his or her path. **I will choose another volunteer to instruct (name of blindfolded child) how to cross the room safely. Lead him/her from one side of our meeting area to the other only by using your voice. (Child's name) is not allowed to take his/her blindfold off!** The child should now begin giving directions to the blindfolded child to help him or her get safely to the other side of the room.

How was (child's name) able to get across the room? Allow for children's responses. **Yes, the key for safe crossing was to obey the instructions. Jesus knew the same and that is why he obeyed God. We follow Jesus by doing what he did. Jesus obeyed God.**

How do we obey God? We obey God when we follow the truth and instructions God gives us in the Bible.

If we think about previous lessons, we can see some really important ways to obey God. Remember the most important purpose or commandment? We obey God when we love him with all our being by loving our neighbor as our self. We obey God when we rule over all creation, develop, and improve what he has given us, and protect and take care of it. We obey God when we use the blessings that he had given us to bless others.

Jesus obeyed God. We follow Jesus and experience his life by doing the same.

Concept Thee: How do we follow Jesus and do what he did? Depend on God.

Now, let's have another two volunteers to help us learn what it means to depend on God. One of the volunteers will again be blindfolded and will need to cross from one side of the room to the other without bumping into anyone or anything. But, there will be obstacles. I would like ten of you to go stand in the way. I'd like the second volunteer to not say a word but lead by taking their arm. Okay, let's go.

Everyone should watch as the blindfolded child is led by the other.

How was our blindfolded volunteer able to cross the room safely? What did he/she have to do? He/she was only able to complete this activity successfully because he/she depended upon the help of our second volunteer. If (child's name) didn't have his or her help he/she wouldn't have been able to do it!

In the same way, Jesus, because he was 100% human (the Son of Man) while also being the Son of God, had to depend on God's spirit for help.

There's a big lie in this world that you need to be a strong person and a strong person never has to ask for help from anyone and doesn't need to depend on anyone. People, especially men, sometimes think that if they ask for help they're showing that they're weak. But Jesus, the strongest person who ever lived showed he needed his Father God and constantly asked for his help. In John 5:30 Jesus said, "By myself I can do nothing."

Jesus depended on his Father for help. We need God's help too and we should ask for it! God gives us this help through the Spirit that he sends to live in our hearts when we believe in Jesus.

To follow Jesus, we will do what he did. Jesus lived in full dependence on God.

Show the children the treasure box. **This treasure box represents the life – eternal life - that God gives us. It's a wonderful, beautiful gift that we get when we believe in Jesus. However, just having the box isn't enough. We want to experience all the wonderful treasure that is inside. We want to take the lid off and experience God's life now, not just after we die.**

Jesus simply said to believe and follow him. We receive this life by believing in him. We experience it by following him.

We learned three ways that we can follow Jesus. They are to BELIEVE God and his Word, OBEY what God says, AND DEPEND on God through his Spirit.

Let's say, believe, obey, and depend together and then open our treasure box.

Lead the children in saying the three ways to follow Jesus and then take the lid off the box and give each child one of the candies or stickers inside.

Prayer

Let's end in prayer asking God to help us to follow Jesus and experience the wonderful life God has given us through Christ.

Dear God, Thank you that we can experience your life and live it out each and every day. Please help all of us to believe, obey, and depend on you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Unit Four – Lesson 6

Experiencing Life Eternal – Follow Jesus (Revere, Worship, Thank)

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.

Please review the Teacher’s Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Lesson pictures

Scripture References

I Kings 18:16-39; I Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 99:5; 105:5

Lesson

Before class hide your small lesson pictures around your meeting area. Instruct the children to each find a picture and then come back and sit down. Repeat the pictures so that every child has one.

These pictures that you found are going to help us with our lesson today. Today we are going to talk more about living and experiencing the eternal life God gives us – by 'following Jesus'. We follow Jesus by doing what he did.

Jesus did a lot of things but throughout his life and work, it was clear that Jesus always saw or recognized that God, his Father, was good and he was great.

We often get into trouble and discouragement because we do not see or recognize how truly great and truly good God is. Our God is too small.

Concept One: Recognize that God is great and God is good

There is a great story in the Bible about the prophet Elijah. The King and the people did not believe in God but worshiped Baal. Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to build an altar and then call on Baal to send fire to light the sacrifice on it. Elijah would then call on God to send fire. Whoever sent fire would be the true God. Baal's prophets cried and yelled loudly and even cut themselves calling for Baal to send fire, but nothing happened. Elijah then poured barrels of water all over the altar and called on God. God sent fire that not only burned the sacrifice, but all the water and the rocks of the altar. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!" (I Kings 18:16-39).

The point is that when the people saw how truly great and powerful God really is, they fell immediately on the faces in fear and reverence toward God.

Our God is not only truly great but he is truly good. Jesus knew and experienced God in this way. What are some ways we can do the same? Allow for response.

God is Good. The Bible says to, "Think of the wonderful works that God has done." (Psalm 105:5)

Let's use the pictures that you have to help us think about all of the wonderful things God has done. Each is a picture of something God has created and given to us. I would like each of you with a picture to come to the front and show it to us and then tell us what is great about the item in the picture and what is good about it. If you get stuck the rest of us will help you.

Things God Created		
	What is great about this?	What is good about this?
Earth:		
Stars:		
Sky:		
Clouds:		
Animals:		
People:		
Plants:		
Heart:		
Cross:		
Spinning Earth:		
Food:		
Water:		
Child waking up:		
House:		
Family:		

We can see and know that God is great and good just by looking daily at everything he has made and how he takes care of us.

When we recognize how great and how good God is, what will our response be? The people in Elijah's time fell on their faces. What was Jesus' response?

Concept Two: Our response – fear God

Jesus taught his followers to pray, "Our father in heaven, hallowed be thy name..." To "hallow" means to "greatly revere or respect". Jesus' response to God's greatness and goodness was to highly revere and respect his name. In many other places the Bible says to 'fear God'.

What exactly does it mean to fear God? Does anyone have any ideas? Allow for children's responses.

When the Bible tells us to fear God it means to look at God with awe - to realize that he's not like us...He's very amazing, and then to respect him because of that.

How many of you have a favorite teacher? Allow children to raise their hands. Fearing God is similar to the way you respond to your favorite teacher. Because you respect, love, admire, and even fear that teacher so much, you'll do whatever they ask of you because

you want to please them and not disappoint them, and because you respect their authority over you.

Concept Three: Our response - worship God

When we recognize how great and good God is, another response is to worship him. Psalm 99:5 says, “Exalt the Lord our God and worship him...he is holy.” The literal meaning of worship in the Old Testament is to “bow down” or to “fall down before”. As you explain and describe worship to the children kneel down.

When we recognize how great and good God is and then bow in our hearts before him we worship him. When we respect and give God the honor he deserves in our words and thoughts, we worship him.

You also don’t have to be in a church to worship God! You can see God’s goodness as you work or play and worship him in your words and thoughts anywhere and at anytime!

You can recognize God’s goodness and worship him anytime, anywhere!

On the other hand, you can go to church on Sunday and kneel and pray, but not be worshipping God in your heart and mind.

Concept Four: Our response - thank God

The most natural way we can respond to God when we recognize his greatness and his goodness is to thank him. I Chronicles 16:34 says, “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.” Jesus did this when he took the five loaves and two fishes and aware of God’s goodness in providing this food, he gave thanks to God for it. We have so many reasons to thank God. Let’s look back at our pictures that you found and go through each one, thanking God for what he made, did, or gives us. Hold up your pictures as we give thanks for these things.

Earth: Thank you God for making the Earth. You are great!

Stars: Thank you God for making the Stars. You’re great!

Sky: Thank you God for making the sky. You’re great!

Clouds: Thank you God for making the clouds. You’re great!

Animals: Thank you God for making the animals. You’re great!

People: Thank you God for making man in your image. You’re great!

Plants: Thank you God for making plants! You’re great!

Heart: Thank you God for loving us. You’re good!

Cross: Thank you God for sending your Son for us. You’re good!

Spinning Earth: Thank you God for holding the earth together. You’re good!

Food: Thank you God for giving us food. You’re good!

Water: Thank you God for giving us water. You’re good!

Child waking up: Thank you God for giving us life. You’re good!

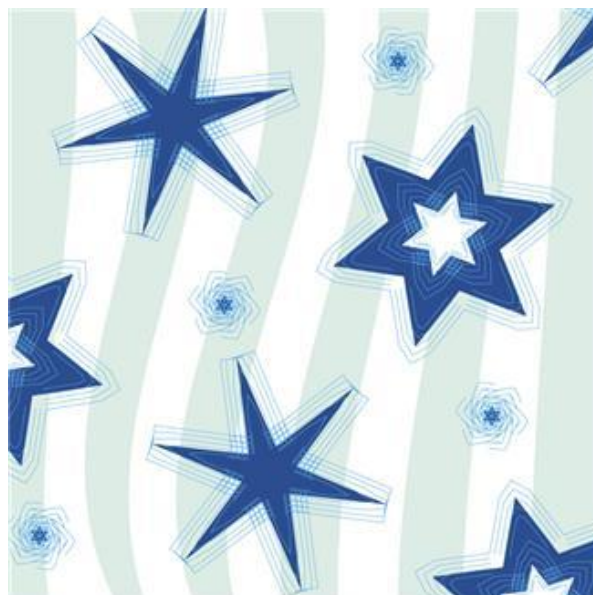
House: Thank you God for giving us shelter. You’re good!

Family: Thank you God for giving us family and friends. You’re good!

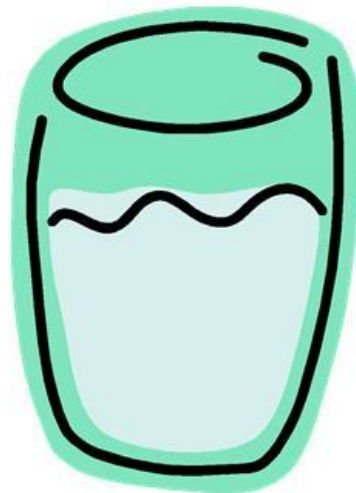
God is so good! He's given us so much and has done amazing things. Let's pray now and ask him to help us to always recognize who he is and what he's done and then respond to him.

Prayer

Dear God, We want to follow Jesus each day and experience the life he gives. Like Jesus, please help us to recognize your greatness and goodness each day. Help us to fear you, worship you, and thank you each and every day. In Jesus' name we pray.









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.

Unit Five – Lesson 1 (Two Parts)

God's Design for the Family: Marriage Is Sacred

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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.

Part One

Supplies/Materials

Three strings, story of marriage pictures

Scripture References

Genesis 2:18-24

Lesson

Hold up three separate strings.

Can you tell me what I'm holding in my hand? How can we make these three strings as strong as possible? Allow as many children as possible to answer the question.

Each one of these strings, by itself, is not very strong. But when we join them together by braiding them (begin braiding the strings together) **they become very strong and difficult to break.** Try to break the strings, showing the children that it is impossible. **There's a Bible verse that talks about this. 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 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)**

The Bible verse that I just read is talking about relationship. God wants us to be in relationship with each other. Today we're going to talk about the relationship of marriage which may someday be a very important relationship to you. Hold up your triple braided string. **In our braid here, let's suppose that this is a picture of marriage and two of the strings are people. Who do you think the third string or cord is?** Allow for the children's responses. **The third cord is God. In a healthy marriage, there are three people: a husband,**

a wife, and God. For our next few lessons, we're going to learn all about marriage and how God designed marriage to be and work for the best of both the husband and the wife, and the children.

Concept: God created marriage

Who created marriage? Allow for the children's responses. **Where was the first wedding?** Allow for the children's responses.

You're right! God created marriage and the first marriage ever was in the Garden of Eden between Adam and Eve. I'm going to tell you the story of this first marriage using five pictures. Let's listen carefully as if we were guests at this first wedding!

Before God made Adam he made all the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and the animals that walk on the land. Hold up your animal picture. Then God created people – Adam and Eve. In Genesis 1:27 it says, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female, he created them." Both the man and woman were fully created in the image of God. This verse means that both, women and men, girls and boys are equally important to God, equal in value, dignity, and worth.

In Genesis 2:7 the Bible tells us how God created the man. It says, "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life and the man became a living being." Hold up your picture of the dust. This means that God created Adam from dust on the ground and then he personally breathed life into him. What an amazing God we have!

Our God is a "working" God. He worked in creation and he continues to work by sustaining and holding all things together (Genesis 1; Colossian 1:17; Hebrews 1:3). God made people in his image and never intended for us to not work (Genesis 2:15). So, God immediately gave Adam a very important job to do. God brought all of the animals to Adam and asked him to name them. Hold up your picture of an animal with a name. Though Adam had many animals to keep him company, God knew that none of these animals would be a great companion for Adam. Adam was alone. Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for (or corresponding to) him." (Genesis 2:18)

(Note: An important question is because God said he would make Eve as a helper fit for (Adam) does this make Adam superior to Eve. In the Bible, this same word "helper" is used when it says "God is our helper" and Jesus said he would send the Holy Spirit to be "our helper". A "helper" is one who has abilities and gifts that you do not possess and completely lack. Therefore, they can help you. It does not automatically mean someone is inferior or less in value. In this case, Adam did not lack the ability to do domestic work or farm. His problem was that he was alone. What he lacked was a suitable companion. See the Teacher's Guide for more on this important question.)

To solve this problem, God did something amazing. He made a woman! Here is how he did this: "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 man, and he brought her to the man." (Hold up your picture of the rib.) (See the Teacher's Guide for footnote on the significance of using a rib.)

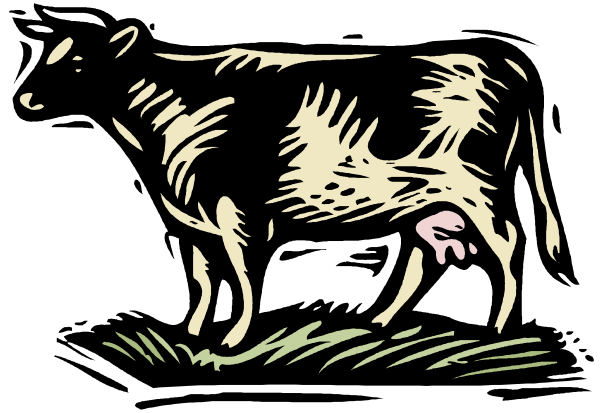
Adam was really happy when he woke up and saw Eve! (Hold up your picture of the happy face.) **Adam had something to say about it. He said, "At last! She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman' because she was taken out of a man."**

And this is the story of the first marriage. What did you learn from this story? (Allow as many children to answer that would like to.)

You have learned many important things from this story, but the most important thing we can learn from the story is that God created marriage. If God created marriage, then it must be something very special and important to him. Let's pray now and thank God for creating marriage.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for creating marriage and making it such a special and important relationship. Help us Thank you for the reminder that two cords are better than one and three cords are even better. In marriage we know that you are the third cord that makes it especially strong and good. Help us to learn as much as we can about this wonderful relationship that you have created. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Unit Five – Lesson 1 - Part Two

God's Design for the Family: Marriage Is Sacred

Supplies/Materials

Lesson pictures, small ball

Scripture References

Malachi 2:14; Revelation 19:7

Lesson

Hold up your picture of a heart and begin discussing it with the children.

What is this a picture of? It's a heart. We know that we all have physical hearts, but what does this picture normally stand for? Allow several children to respond. **You're right children, when we see a picture of a heart, it usually represents love.**

God also uses pictures or illustrations to represent important ideas that he wants us to understand. For example, Jesus often referred to himself as a good shepherd and to us as sheep to let us know how he wanted to care for, guide, and protect us. Take a look at this picture. Hold up your picture of a bride and groom getting married. **What is this a picture of?** (Allow one child to answer.) **You're right. It's a picture of a wedding. It's two people getting married. But did you know that marriage between a man and woman is also a picture of God's love and commitment to us? It's pretty amazing!**

Concept One: Marriage is important to God

In the Old Testament, in the Bible, when God wanted to talk about his love for commitment to the people of Israel, he talked about marriage. He says to the people of Israel, "Return, faithless people, for I am your husband." When God says that he is the people of Israel's husband, he is saying that he is committed to them, he loves them, and will not leave them. God is saying that he has made a promise to his people and he will always keep that promise.

In the New Testament, God also uses the example of marriage to show us how much he loves us. God says that the church and Christ will be in a marriage commitment. God describes the church as the Bride and Christ as the bridegroom. In Revelation 19:7 He

says, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! The wedding of the Lamb (meaning Christ) has come, and his bride has made herself ready." If we have a relationship with God, we are part of his church and this means that we too are the bride of Christ. As the groom, God loves us, his church, and is committed to us.

If God uses the example of marriage to tell us about his commitment to and love for us, then marriage must be very important to him! Let's say this very important idea together, "Marriage is important to God!"

Concept Two: Marriage is a covenant

The word "covenant" is also used in relation to marriage (Malachi 2:14). A covenant is a very special and serious promise that a person is required to keep. It's not just like an ordinary agreement like when we tell our mom, "I promise I'll do my housework after school." It is a more serious and special promise. Because God created marriage he considers it to be a very serious agreement. It's as serious and important as God's relationship and love for us.

What does it mean to be loyal? (Allow many children to share their ideas.) When you are loyal to someone, you always keep your promises to that person and always remain with that person. In the Bible, God tells married people to be loyal to one another. He says to men, "Guard yourself and remain loyal to your wife." When a husband and a wife are loyal to each other, they support one and protect or back one another, and keep their covenant. God hates divorce because the marriage relationship and the families they create are so important to him, and because he knows and wants what is best for the people he loves. That's why our second important idea of the lesson is this, "Marriage is a covenant." Please repeat that with me now.

We've learned two very important ideas about marriage today, "Marriage is important to God" and "Marriage is a covenant." Let's sit in a circle now and throw our ball to one another. When you catch the ball I'd like you to say one of our important ideas about marriage. You should either say, "Marriage is important to God," or "Marriage is a covenant." Play this game until all children have had the chance to say one of the important ideas. Then pray with the children to end the lesson.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you that marriage is a picture of how much you love us and are committed to us. Help us to consider marriage as important and sacred as you do. Please help each one of these children, if someday you bless them with a husband or wife, to keep their covenant and be loyal to their spouse. Please help their parents to do the same. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Unit Five – Lesson 2 (Two Parts)

God's Design for the Family: The Building Blocks of the Family

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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.

Part One

Supplies/Materials

None

Scripture References

Genesis 1:27-28

Lesson

Let's take a minute and think of different groups we are familiar with. For example, maybe you play on a football team group. Or maybe your father belongs to some group or organization. What are some different groups you can think of? Name some of them.

Allow as many children as possible to share their ideas. Hopefully one will name the family group. If not, you will need to name it.

Of all of those different groups, which one do you think is the most important? Allow for the children's answers.

Concept: God made the family

One of the most important groups we mentioned is a group created by God himself. This group is the family.

Note to Teacher: For our wellbeing, God established three groups. The first is the family (Genesis 1:27-28). Another is the church (Matthew 16:18). The third is government (Romans 13:1). Each has a unique role to play.

God has a very important role and special design for the family. The family is even more important than a business, or a school or even the government. Let's find out why.

In the beginning God created the family. He made the first family in the Garden of Eden. Can you tell me who those first family members were? Allow for response. **You're right. God created the first family when he created the first husband and wife, Adam and Eve, and told them to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28). Their first two children were Cain and Abel.**

So why do you think that the family is the most important group of people to God? Allow the children to give their ideas.

The family is a very important group to God because he designed it to be a safe and loving place for each person to grow, develop, and be everything that God wants them to be.

We have seen how God's design for every aspect of life is good and best. This especially includes his design for the family. We are going to look at God's design for the family—his important building blocks for it.

But, first let's think more about why our families are important to each of us. Why is your family important to you? What does your family give you? Think of the things you can see and touch with your hands, but also the things that you can't see or touch. Turn to the person next to you and talk together about some of the things that your family gives you and why they are important. After one minute we will share our ideas together. Allow the children to talk together then ask some of the children to share one thing they talked about.
Our families are very important to us.

Our God is so good and loving that he has established families. He has provided us with families (could be extended family or even adopted families) who care for us and provide for us.

Families are very important to God!

Let's end in prayer now and thank God for the families that he has given us.

The next time we meet together we're going to learn about how God perfectly designed families.

Prayer

Dear God, We thank you so much for our families. We thank you for the moms and dads or other family members are people that you have given us who help provide for our needs and care for us. Thank you for caring about us. Thank you for having a good design for the family that we can learn about and apply for our benefit. Please bless our families. Help us to do our part to bless our own families. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Unit Five – Lesson 2 – Part Two

God's Design for the Family: The Building Blocks of the Family

Supplies/Materials

Lesson pictures (Another option is to tape the picture to an actual brick and use the brick for your illustration. This will mean creating some type of roof to put over your bricks and labeling this appropriately as well.)

Scripture References

Matthew 19:4; Mark 12:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 5:21

Lesson

What do you need to build a good house? Allow for the children's responses. **Yes, there are many important things you need to build a good house.**

Today we are not going to talk about how to build a good house. Instead, we are going to look at God's perfect design for building what lives in the house – the family. The last time we met we talked about how God created the family and has a perfect design for it. God's plan is that families be a wonderful safe and loving place for us to grow, develop, and become all that he made us to be.

We're going to learn about four important building blocks and the roof God uses to build a really great family.

Listen carefully and we'll see how our house, a family, is built.

Take out your roof visual and show it to the children.

Concept One: God is the head of the family

Every house needs to have a good roof over every part of it. If a house doesn't have a roof, it isn't a house! Rain will get inside and people will be cold and unprotected. The Bible says that God, Christ, is over everything and everyone (1 Corinthians 15:27). "Everything and everyone" includes families. This means that God is over the family. He is the roof. God is ultimately the head over the father of the family, and the mother, and the children. God has given the husband and father a unique role, and also a unique role to the wife and children. But, over all of them is God!

This is good news! We're going to learn later on how God wants us to respect our parents and love our brothers and sisters. This is difficult to do when our parents act in an ungodly way or when our family members are unkind to us. But, if we know that God is ultimately the head of our family we can trust that he will take care of us. Because God is the head of the family and he is all powerful and all wise and all good, we can trust in him even when our family members do not treat one another the way God intends. There's no one better to have over our entire family than God, since God is always good and always loves us. He will not disappoint us, even when our families do.

Concept Two: All family members equal in value, worth, and dignity

Now let's look at each of the four important building blocks that make up our strong house called the family. Hold up your block or brick with the "equals" sign. **This brick has an equals sign on it because it tells us that each member of the family is equal in value and dignity. A young child, a father, a mother, and an old grandmother all have the same value and dignity in a family. Why and how is this true?** Allow for the children's responses.

Each person in a family is first and foremost created and made in the image of God. Because we are all made in the image of God it means that we are equal in value and dignity to God. To God, husbands are not more important than wives, nor are wives more important than husbands. They are equal in value to God and both are equally important and loved the same by him. This also means that parents aren't more valuable than children, nor are children more valuable than parents. They are all created in God's image and are equally important and valued by him. Children are very special and important to God and are loved by him. This is why Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them!" (Matthew 19:4 NLT)

Even though as a child you may not be treated as valuable or as important as another family member, you can be strengthened and comforted by the fact that God sees you equal in importance and values you the same as every other member in your family.

Concept Three: Each family member called to submit to the other. Submission is for everyone in the family.

Our next building block has hands grasping each other. Hold up this picture or building block. **It represents that "submission is for everyone". God tells every person to "Submit to everyone out of respect for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21).**

Submission is a difficult word to correctly understand. It means to have an attitude of cooperation with others and putting their needs before your own. When you submit to another person, you cooperate with them and put your needs and wants below theirs. The picture of the hands is one of cooperating with and submitting to others and not just demanding and pushing your own way. In a family, this means you put your needs below the needs of your family members. It means that if your friends want you to play with them but your mom wants you to stay and help her, you put what your mom wants first before what you want.

It's important to see that this Bible verse says to submit to everyone. That means that submission is for everyone in the family. It's not just that children should put their needs

and wants below those of their parents, or the wife's below those of her husband. This is also calling the father and husband to put his needs and wants below those of his wife and children, to serve them, and to cooperate with them for their wellbeing and benefit. God calls every member of the family to submit to one another out of respect for Christ who is the head over all of us.

Concept Four: Each family member called to love God and one another

Our third essential building block for the family is just as important as the others. It has a heart on it because it represents love. Hold up your picture or brick with a heart on it. **Do you remember what God's most important or greatest commandment is? Let's say it together, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and will all your strength" and "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31).**

God's design for the family is that we love God and one another. Your family members are your closest neighbor. God in his wisdom, goodness, and love for us, calls you to love your family member as yourself. This command to love is unconditional and sacrificial. It is not a feeling or sentiment. It does not hinge on whether the person is deserving of love. It is doing what is best for the other person even when it is difficult and costs you something. God's good design for the family is that each member of the family love in this way – the father, the mother, the child.

Concept Five: Each family member is unique with an important role

This is our fourth block and is as important as the others. It is a picture of a knife, fork and spoon because it is meant to show that while all family members are equal in value and importance, each has a unique role. Hold up your picture or brick with the knife, fork, and spoon on it.

This idea of being equal in value and importance yet with different roles is difficult to understand, especially if one role is over or below another in authority. How can someone be equal in importance to you if they are below you in rank? The best picture of this is God himself. We know that God is three persons in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each has a different role and position, but we would never say one is inferior to or less than the others.

It's the same way in our families. Each member of a family has a different role and position, a different responsibility and level of authority. But, none is inferior to the other. They are equal in value and importance. In our next lessons we're going to learn more about those roles.

So, we have four important building blocks of the family and a roof over everyone who is God.

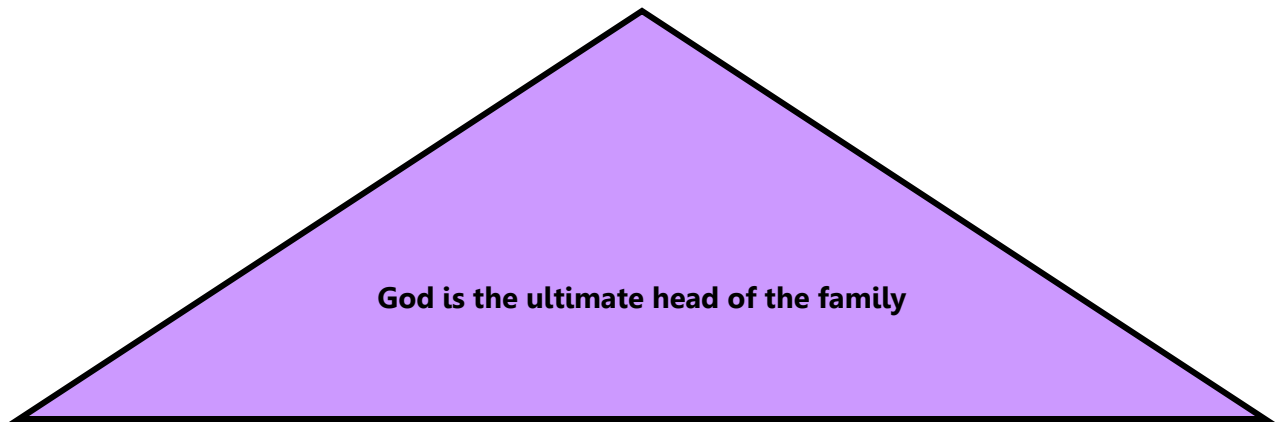
In closing, let's remember: God is great and good. He loves us and always wants what is best for us. His design for how every aspect of life should work is perfect. We can trust it. God has a wonderful design and plan for the family. He created it to be a safe and loving place where we could each develop and become all that God intends us to be.

God's design for the family includes these five important truths. When we do these our families will be amazing. Let's pray and ask God to help us and our families to be how he designed for them to be.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for your good and perfect plan for families. Thank you for being the head over all of us. Help us to love and always do what is best for one another even when it cost us. Help us to put our needs and wants below those of other family members. Help us to see the equal value and importance of each member of our family including our younger brothers and sisters. Help us to respect and support each other's different roles and gifts. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

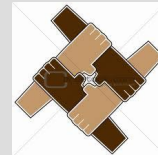
Building Blocks for the Family



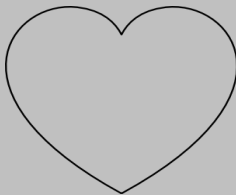
All family members equal in value and worth



All family members called to submit to one another (to cooperate and put the other person's needs before their own)

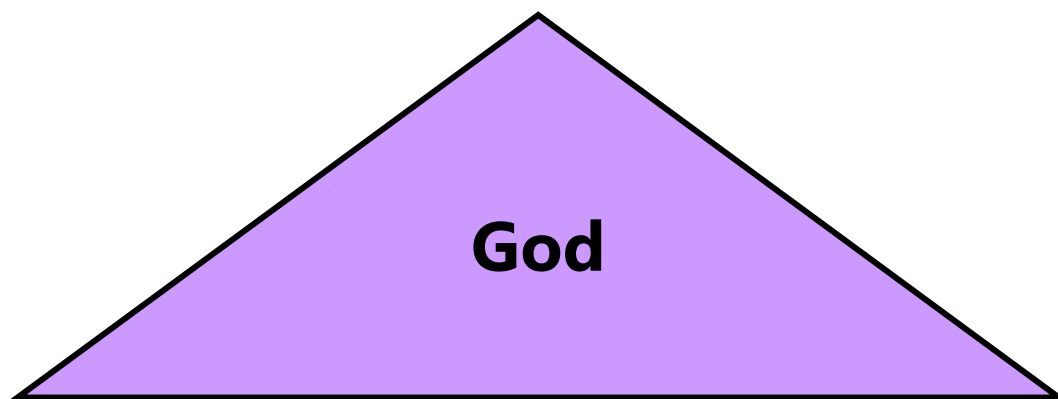


All family members called to love one another



All family members have unique roles and gifts to share

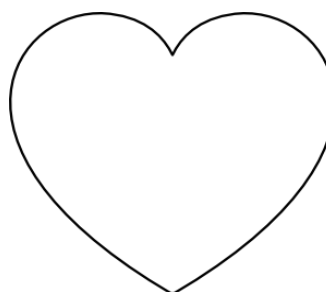




Each member equal in value and dignity



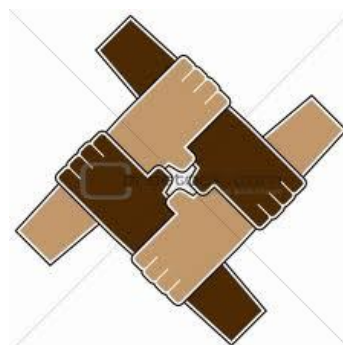
Each member called to love God and one another



Each member unique in role and potential



Each member called to submit and cooperate



Unit Five – Lesson 3

God's Design for the Family: Headship

Note: 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 Concept: Why Teach This

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Lesson pictures

Scripture References

Mark 10:42-45; John 13:1-12; 1 Corinthians 11:13; 1 Timothy 5:8

Lesson

Remember our house picture from last time that shows what the bricks of a healthy family are? Today we're going to begin looking at the brick that explains that family members are all equal in value and importance but have different roles in a family. Hold up the picture or brick with the knife, fork, and spoon and show it to the children.

In the case of the family, the roles are obviously not a knife, fork, and spoon. What are they? Allow for response. Highlight roles of father, mother, children.

We are going to look at the husband and father's job in the family.

What is the job of a father and husband in a family? Allow many children to answer this question.

You've given lots of great ideas about a husband and father's job in a family. Let's look at what the Bible says his jobs are.

We're going to play a little game as we learn about this. I'm going to read a sentence. If you think the sentence is correct, give an "okay" sign. If you think it's incorrect, give a "not okay" sign. Let's begin.

Concept One: God owns everything – women and children are not the property of the husband or father

Here's our first idea. "Because a husband and father is the head of the family, this means that the wife and children are his possessions. He owns them." Allow children to respond.

If you signaled not okay, you're right. This idea is wrong. The Bible says that God is the owner of everything because he created everything and everyone. We all belong to him. If we all belong to God, this means that a wife and children are not the property or possession of a husband and father. Rather, God has entrusted the wife and children to the husband and he must take care of them the way that God wants him to. A wife and children are not the property of a man to treat any way that he wants to.

Concept Two: God is the head of everyone and a man is accountable to God for how he treats his wife and children

Here is our next idea. "God is the head of everyone and a man must be responsible to God for how he treats his wife and children." Allow the children to respond.

If you signaled "okay", you are correct. Remember our last lesson and the roof over the house? God is over and in charge of everyone including the husband. A husband and father is responsible to God for how he treats his wife and children. Listen to this Bible verse and see if you can hear who a husband and father's boss is, "Now I want you to realize that the head of everyone is Christ and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:13).

Did you hear who the head of the husband and father is? God is the head over Christ. Christ is over everyone including the husband. A man doesn't appoint himself as head of a family, nor does the society or government. It is God who makes the appointment. God is the boss. The man is accountable to God for how well he does his job.

God assigns the role of "head" to the husband and father but this does not make him better than or superior to the rest of the family. It just means he has a very important job and responsibility to carry out!

It also does not mean that the husband and father can do whatever he wants and treat his family however he wants. God is his boss so it means he must obey God and care for his family the way God wants him to.

Concept Three: The man is called by God to serve his family

Listen carefully because I'm going to say another idea that I want you to decide is correct or incorrect. "To be the head of a family means that a man can demand that his wife and children serve him, doing whatever he wants because he is the king!"

If you signaled incorrect, then you know that this is a bad idea! Listen to what Jesus says about the role of being a leader or the “head” in the Bible, “Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the slave to all” (Mark 10:42-45).

Jesus said that to be a leader, to be the head of a family, means you are the person who sacrifices and serves the most. Being the head or leader of a family doesn’t mean that you get whatever you want and get more of it. To be a leader is not to be served by others. Rather, it means that you have a bigger responsibility to serve the most!

Furthermore, when Jesus wanted to explain what it meant to be a leader who served, he washed his disciples’ feet (John 13:1-12)! Washing feet was the lowest most humbling job of that day. In doing this, Jesus showed his disciples, who would go on to lead others and be the heads of their own families, not to put themselves or their dignity first. Instead, they should sacrifice and do whatever is needed and best to help their wife and children thrive and flourish in the way God designed for them.

In his role as “head”, how does a husband and father serve his family?

Let’s start again with the most important commandment, as this will certainly apply to the husband and father as well. Show the picture of the heart. We’ll use this picture of a heart to remind us of this part of a father and husband’s job.

Let’s say this commandment together: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.” And, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

The father and husband is to love God and show this by loving his family. To love is not just a sentiment or feeling but it is to sacrifice and do what is best for the other person at all times.

Concept Four: **The head of a family is to love his family by leading and providing for them**

Here are two important ways a father and husband can best love his family:

Show the picture of the foot and shoe. The first way a man can show love to his family is to lead his family. When a head leads his family he takes them in a good direction. It is easy to boss people around but it is difficult to lead well. A good leader first leads himself well. He obeys Jesus, does good, seeks truth, and stands up for what is right. He sets an excellent example for his family to follow. The temptation for a husband and father is to act like a boss but set a poor example and passively not lead well.

Show the picture of the hand. Another critically important way the head of a family can love his family is by providing for them. He works with his mind and hands to provide for them.

The Bible says, “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith” (1 Timothy 5:8). God expects husbands and fathers to provide for the needs of their family. These needs include things like food,

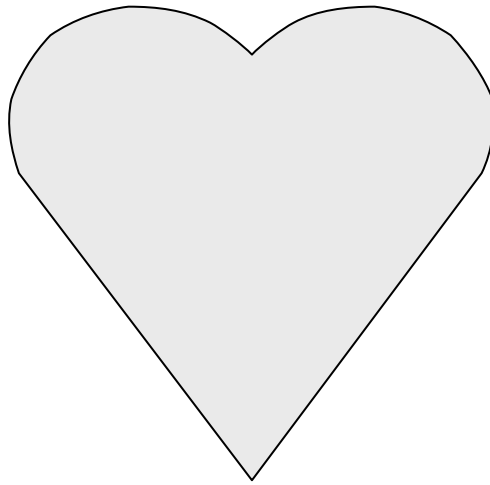
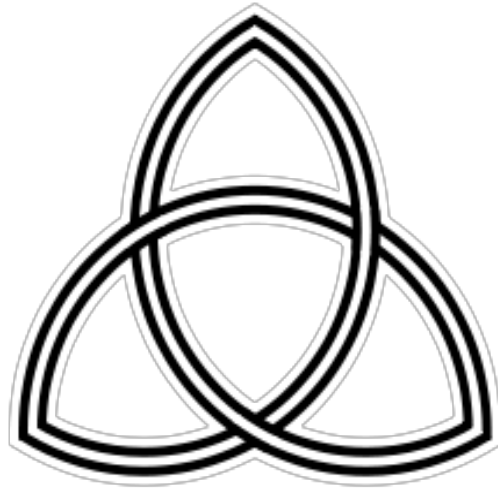
clothes, and shelter, but it also includes needs that can't be seen such as encouragement, a listening ear, compassion, and wisdom.

Wow! In God's design for the family we can see that husbands and fathers have a very important job to do. They must sacrifice and serve their families, provide for them and lead them in good ways. This means that your fathers have a very important job. Let's end in prayer now and pray for each one of your fathers that they would become the leaders that God wants them to be.

Prayer

Dear God, I thank you for each one of these children here today. I thank you have good plans for their lives. We pray for each one of their fathers, whether they are known or unknown by the children. I pray that you would help their fathers to know you and be the leaders and servants that you designed them to be. Help their fathers to love and provide for their families well. I also pray for each of the boys here today. When they get older help them to love you and their families well and to always serve and provide for them. In Jesus' name, Amen.

God is over the head of the family



Unit Five – Lesson 4

God's Design for the Family: Husbands, Love Your Wives

The Concept: Why Teach This

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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.

Scripture Reference

Ephesians 5:25-33

Supplies/Materials

None

Lesson

The Concept: A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church

The last time we talked about the very important job that a father and husband has. Who remembers what those jobs are? Allow time for the children to answer the question. Answers should include: to obey God, to lead his family, to serve them and to provide for and meet their needs. If they need help, show them the pictures from the last lesson.

I know it might seem strange that we're spending a lot of time talking about jobs that adults have when you're all still children. But soon you will be an adult. And when you're an adult God might bless you with a husband or a wife. We all want to have the families that God wants us to, so even now, when you're still children, you can begin learning about how to have the family that God wants you to have.

Today, we're going to talk about the very important job that husbands have. Can you guess what this job is? Allow as many children that would like to, to answer the question.

You're correct if you think that a husband's most important job is contained in the most important commandment. Remember that the most important commandment is to love God and the second part is to love your neighbor as yourself.

We're going to learn a Bible verse that tells us what a husband's most important job is and how it has to do with love. It's found in Ephesians 5:25 and says, "And you husbands must love your wives with the same love that Christ loved the church." Let's say that verse twice together. Lead the children in repeating the verse after you.

God calls each of us to love one another. This command is for everyone: husbands, wives, boys, and girls. It is interesting that in telling the husband his job, God singles out and emphasizes this particular command in relation to his wife. Maybe God knew that it would be tempting for the husband to want to only be served by his wife and rule over

her, so he gives this very specific command. God is making sure that husbands understand that their number one priority as husbands is to love their wives.

God is not only asking husbands to love their wives, but he is asking them to love their wives the way that Christ loves the church. How do you think that Christ loves the church?
Allow children to answer the question.

Christ loves the church unconditionally and sacrificially. These are two very big words!

To love someone unconditionally means that you will love them no matter what they do or say. If they say something disrespectful to you, you will still love them. You will love them no matter how you feel. If you are tired and hungry and just want to rest, you will still love them by helping them. This is the way that Christ loves us and the way that husbands are meant to love their wives.

Christ also loves the church sacrificially. When you love someone sacrificially, you are willing to give up your own wishes and things for that person. Christ loved us so much that he gave up his life for us. God expects husbands to sacrifice for the benefit of their wives. God wants the husband to say and do what is best for his wife even when it is difficult or inconvenient. God tells us in the Bible, “And you husbands must love your wives with the same love as Christ showed the church....In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man is actually loving himself when he loves his wife. No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for his body, which is the church” (Ephesians 5:25-29). God is saying that a husband must meet the needs of his wife in the same way that he cares for himself.

Let’s play a game that will help us recognize when a husband loves his wife well and when he doesn’t. I’m going to read you several scenarios. If a husband loves his wife well, just like Christ loves the church, I’d like for you to clap your hands. If a husband doesn’t love his wife well, I’d like for you to stay silent. OK, let’s begin!

- 1. A husband really wants to buy a bicycle but his wife needs the money to put towards the family’s food and the children’s school uniforms. He doesn’t buy the bicycle. (CLAP HANDS)**
- 2. A wife shouts at her husband and is very rude to him. He chooses to be patient and loving and find out what is wrong. (CLAP HANDS)**
- 3. A husband comes home from working in the fields and he’s very tired. When his wife says that she needs to talk to him about something very important, he says he’s too tired and won’t talk to her. (STAY SILENT)**
- 4. A wife spent all day cleaning and cooking a delicious dinner for her husband. He eats quickly and then goes out, not thanking her for the meal. (STAY SILENT)**
- 5. A wife is worried about many things. The husband takes time to listen to her worries and pray with her. (CLAP HANDS)**

A wife is a gift from God. God is entrusting one of his very special daughters to a husband. Proverbs 18:22 says, "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord." Boys, if God chooses to someday give or entrust you with a wife, realize that she is a great gift from God. Girls, know that you are a special daughter to God and you are loved by him!

Today we learned all about the special and important job that God has given husbands. Let's say our Bible verse one more time to remind us of this important job. Lead the children in saying the Bible verse together.

As we end in prayer let's have all the boys stand up. Boys, someday God may call you to the very special and important job of being a husband. I'd like to pray for you to do a very good job at loving your wives like Christ loved the church.

Prayer

Dear God, I thank you for being so wise and for giving us such good instructions for how to live our lives well. I pray for each one of these boys who you may someday ask to be a husband. Help each one of them to love their wives unconditionally and sacrificially, just like you love the church. Help all of us to recognize how great and good you are. Help us to trust your word and do it. Encourage and strengthen us through your Spirit to follow the good instructions that you've given us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Unit Five – Lesson 5

God's Design for the Family: Wives, Respect Your Husbands

The Concept: Why Teach This

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Picture of heart, foot, and hand from previous lesson

Scripture References

Ephesians 5:21, 33; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 2:17; 3:7

Lesson

Today we're going to learn about a wife's job in a marriage. God designed the family perfectly so that each member could grow and live the life that God intends. He gave different members of the family different roles or jobs to do. Last week we looked at the husband's job which was to love his wife sacrificially and unconditionally as Christ loved the church. Today we're going to look at God's instruction for the wife.

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." In Colossians 3:18 God says, "Wives submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

The Concept: A wife is to respect and submit to her husband

The two ideas here are respect and submit.

To respect means to talk and act in a way that shows honor and that you value and appreciate a person. To submit means put another person's needs and interests before your own. It means to not try to control another person but to cooperate and relinquish control.

God calls each of us to show respect and to submit to one another (1 Peter 2:17; 3:7; Ephesians 5:21). This command is for everyone: husbands, wives, boys, and girls. It is interesting that in telling the wife her role, God singles out and emphasizes this particular command in relation to her husband. Like in the case of the husband, maybe God knew that it would be particularly tempting for the wife to want to dominate and control her husband or talk more about his faults than his strengths to others.

Remember two lessons ago we played Good Idea/Bad Idea? We're going to play it again today. This time I want you to raise your right hand when you hear a good idea and to raise your left when you hear a bad idea. Ok, let's go!

Here's the first idea. Decide if it's good or bad!

"To submit is to recognize that God has given a husband the responsibility to be the head of the home." Allow children time to respond.

If you're raising your right hand, you're right! This is a good idea straight from the Bible. God has given husbands the responsibility to be the head of a family, to serve the most and love them by leading and providing for them. Remind the children of the visual of the trinity, heart, shoe, and hand from the last lesson.

Here's our next idea, "To submit means that the wife becomes the husband's property or his slave." Allow children time to respond.

If your left hand is raised, you're right! Because God created and made us, we belong to him! A wife is never a husband's property but rather is a gift from God entrusted to the husband for him to protect, love, and encourage.

The next idea: "Submission means that a husband can treat a wife however he chooses, even abusing her." Allow time for the children to respond.

If you raised your left hand, you are absolutely correct! This is a very bad idea! Remember that God calls husbands to love their wives as they love themselves. A husband would never mistreat himself and he should never hurt his wife. To submit does not mean that the wife is to put up with any type of abusive behavior. Submission does not mean allowing the husband to physically or emotionally abuse the children. Submission does not mean the wife gives up all rights in her home.

Nowhere in scripture does God give a husband the right to abuse his wife or children. Nor does God ever call wives to endure violence, physical battering, or habitual infidelity. In such cases the wife should seek guidance and counsel from another godly person in her church or community.

Here's another idea, "Submission is encouraging a husband to lead well." Allow children time to respond.

If your right hand is in the air, you are absolutely correct. Remember the Bible calls for heads of households to lead their families in the right way. They are to begin by leading themselves in saying and doing what is right. A wife is doing a good job of submitting if she is encouraging her husband to do right and lead in this manner.

Here's our last idea. "To respect is to talk and act in a way that shows honor and that you value and appreciate a husband."

If your right hand is raised, you are correct! A wife is doing well if she is valuing and encouraging her husband. Just like wives are very important and a wonderful gift from God, husbands are also important and a wonderful gift.

Our God is so wise. He created women in his image and knew that they would really need to know that they are loved by their husbands. That's why he gave men the important job

of loving their wives. He also knew that men would need to know that their wives support them in their role as head, and value and respect them. That's why he gave wives the job to respect and submit to their husbands.

Sometimes it's difficult to understand what submit and respect looks like in real life. Listen to these sentences. If you think it's a good way for a wife to respect and submit to her husband, I'd like for you to clap your hands. But if it's a bad way, I'd like for you to be silent. Ok, listen carefully and let's play!

A wife says kind things about her husband to her friends. (CLAP HANDS)

A wife complains to others about how her husband is not a good enough leader and provider. (STAY SILENT)

A wife thanks her husband for specific things he does to provide for the family. (CLAP HANDS)

A wife regularly prays for her husband that God will give him the strength to be a good leader of himself and to his family. (CLAP HANDS)

A wife would really like to buy some new items for their home. However, her husband tells her he would rather the money be saved for emergencies. She agrees but complains about it to her friends. (STAY SILENT)

The wife would really like to buy some new items for their home. However, the husband tells her he would rather save the money for emergencies. She agrees and thanks him for thinking of their future. (CLAP HANDS)

When a wife respects and submits to her husband, she helps him to do his particular role well.

The whole family is happier when a husband loves his wife like Christ loves the church and when a wife respects her husband and supports him in leading. These are not always easy to do for the husband or the wife, but God promises encouragement and strength as we depend on him.

Two lessons ago we prayed for your fathers and during the last lesson we prayed for the boys. Today, I'd like to pray for all of your moms and for all the girls in our group. Girls, someday God may give you a husband. It's important that you learn even now, what it means to do your part well. Let's pray.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you the amazing way you designed our families and each of our roles in it. Thank you for each one of these children, and thank you for their moms. Help their moms and give them strength as they care for their families and do their part as wives. Help them know just how best to support their husband in his leadership role and how to encourage him by respecting him. Give our moms encouragement and strength in this. I pray also for each of these girls who some day you may call to be a wife. Help them to know how best to fill this role for the blessing of their husbands, the blessing of their children and for their own blessing. Thank you for loving us and knowing what is very best for us. Help us to trust you more. We want to follow you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Unit Five – Lesson 6 (Two Parts)

God's Design for the Family: Children, Honor Your Parents

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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.

Part One

Supplies/Materials

Wrapped gift box with three slips of paper in it that tell of God's promises when children obey their parents

Scripture References

Ephesians 6:1-3

The Lesson

We have been looking at a very important group God created – the family. The family is very special to God. He designed it to be a safe and loving place for each person to grow, develop and be everything that God wants them to be. We know God's design for every aspect of life is good and best. This especially includes his design for the family.

In the past lessons we have been looking at the jobs of fathers, husbands, and wives in God's good design for the family. Maybe you thought that because you're not an adult yet, you don't have a specific role or job in God's family design. But that's not true! Children, you have a very important job in making the family be the great place God intends it to be. Allow for the children's ideas.

Concept One: Children are to honor and obey their parents

You're all very close to the answer. God's very important role or task for children is found in Ephesians 6:1-3, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother..."

Let's say that verse twice together, since it tells us exactly what your job as children is.
Repeat the verse twice with the children.

This Bible verse tells you the exact job you have as children in the family: to obey and honor your parents.

We all know what it means to obey and we have a good idea how to do it. But, who has an idea of what it means to honor your parents? Allow time for children's ideas and responses.

When we honor someone we respect them and treat them as if they are very important. When the word honor is used in the Bible it means to give something weight.

How would you feel if the president of our country walked into our room right now? Allow for the children's responses. **Can you show me how you would feel by the way you sit or look?** Allow for response. **You're right. You would probably sit up straight and tall and pay full attention to what was being said. You would feel and act this way because the President is an important person and you would give him honor or weight.**

This is what honor feels like and how we act when we honor someone. When you honor someone, you recognize his or her importance and you treat them with respect. God's good design for us in our lives and family is that we honor our father and mother – to recognize the important role God has given them as our parents and to show them respect for this.

Sometimes our father or mother may be struggling in the role God has given them as a parent. They may not be doing it well. But, this does not change the fact that God has given them this role and we are to respect and honor them in it, even though they make mistakes. This may be hard to do at times, but God will help us.

Concept Two: Honor and obedience to our parents carries a promise

God promises us a reward or benefit if we honor and obey our parents. The Bible says that this command is the first one with a promise!

Here is a wrapped gift box with three pieces of paper in it that tell us the reward God promises when we honor and obey our parents (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Give the gift to a child and ask him or her to carefully take out and read first piece of paper.

The first promise is, "That it may go well with you." God promises that when you obey your parents, things will go well. There will still be many challenges and things won't always be perfect but your life will go better. Your life will work better and you and your family will get along better.

Give the gift to a different child and ask him or her to read the next slip of paper.

God also promises that if you honor and obey your parents “you may enjoy life on the earth.” This means that you will be more able to enjoy your life. When you honor and obey your parents there will be fewer arguments between you and they may even give you more freedom because they trust you. Life will just be more enjoyable!

Give the gift to a different child and ask him or her to read the next slip of paper.

God’s final promise if you honor and obey your parents is, “That you may enjoy long life on the earth.” God promises that when you honor and obey your parents you will enjoy “long life”. Many children die or are hurt because they don’t obey their parents. They do things that harm them and put them in danger. You see, God has given your parents to you to protect you and help you make good decisions.

When we honor and obey our parents we get to enjoy the benefits that come with it. God wants what is best for us and will help us succeed in honoring our parents!

The next time we meet together we’re going to learn about some ways that we can honor and obey our parents. Right now, let’s end in prayer and ask God to help us and give us the strength to do the jobs that He wants us to do.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for wise and good instructions on how to live well. Help us to honor and obey our parents. Thank you for your promise of blessing that goes with this command. We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Unit Five – Lesson 6 – Part Two

God's Design for the Family: Children, Honor Your Parents

Supplies/Materials

None

Scripture References

Ephesians 6:1-3

The Lesson

The last time we were together, you learned about the very important job you have as children. Who can tell me what that job is?

You're right! God asks you to honor and obey your parents. I'd like for you to turn to the person next to you and talk with them about ways that you can honor and obey your parents today. I'd like for you to talk with each other for one minute and then I'll ask you to share some of your ideas together. Try and be specific and think of real things that you can do. Allow the children time to talk and share.

Concept: Six ways to honor and obey parents

You've all named some very good ways that you can honor and obey your parents. Let's look at a few more. We'll do this by learning six words and actions that go along with those words. The six words are: Respond, Thank, Help, Listen and Talk, and Forgive.

Let's go through each one of those words and learn the action that goes with it.

Respond: **Please say the word "respond" as you jump up quickly.**

Thank: **Now let's say the word "thank" as we put our hands together like a prayer.**

Help: **Say the word "help" as you put your hand out as if you are giving your mom or dad something?**

Listen and Talk: **Say the words "listen and talk" as you put one hand to your ear and another to your mouth.**

Forgive: **Finally, let's say the word "forgive" as you put your arm in the air like you are blessing someone.**

Let's repeat them again together so we can learn them well. Lead the children in saying the words and doing the motions again.

You did a great job saying those words and learning their actions. Now let's talk about each one.

The first way you can obey and honor your parents is to *respond* (do motion). When your parents ask you to do something or not do something you can *respond* to them immediately and fully. Don't wait until they ask you several times or only do part of what they asked you to do. Honor them by obeying them quickly and fully. Can someone give me a specific example of responding immediately to your parents? Allow for response.

The second way we can honor our parents is by *thanking* (do motion) them regularly for what they do. They give you food, clothes, shelter, and train you and protect you. They aren't perfect but they do a lot each day to help you. Can someone give us a specific example of honoring their parent by thanking them for something they do or provide? Allow for response.

Another way we can honor our parents is by *helping* them. (Do motion) Don't wait to be asked to *help* them, honor them by doing things often to *help* them. This can be simple like picking up trash when you see it or taking care of a younger brother or sister. Would someone give us another example of honoring your parent by helping them? Allow for response.

You can also honor your parents by *talking* (motion) and *listening* (motion) to them. Tell your parents about things that happened during your day and the problems that you're having. But *listen* to them also! Ask them questions about their day. *Talk* to your parents when you're upset or when you think you've been misunderstood. Give your parents a chance to hear you and to help solve your problems. Maybe they'll understand better than you think. Can someone give me an example of how they talked or listened to their parents recently? Allow for response.

The last way you can honor your parents is by *forgiving* them. (Do motion). Your parents aren't perfect and they'll make mistakes sometimes. They forget things, lose their temper, and even sometimes blame you for things you didn't do. Remember, none of us is perfect. We all make mistakes. Honor your parents by *forgiving* them and remembering that they are trying their best to take care of you. If you ask God he will help you to *forgive* them when you are angry at your parents. As the teacher, give an example from your own life where you needed to forgive your parents.

Some of you however, may have a very difficult time at home with your parents. Some parents don't follow God's plan for their lives and do wrong things. Sometimes they may do things that are bad for themselves and for you. God never wants children to be hurt or be forced to do things that aren't what He wants. If this is happening to you, you need to talk to another adult in your family, community, or church who may be able to help you.

You can always talk to me and I will help you. God is watching and always loving you. He will show you what to do. Don't suffer alone.

You've learned some very good ways today that you can honor and obey your parents. I'd like for you to talk again with the person sitting next to you. This time, tell them another new way you will honor and obey your parents. Think of something new that you learned today. Allow the children to talk together for a few moments and then end the lesson in prayer.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for creating our families and wanting us to have a safe and good place where we can grow and be all that you want us to be. Thank you that you have a good job for each family member to do. Help us each to do our part well so that all benefit and are blessed. Thank you for each child here. Help each one of them to honor and obey their parents. Please help them more and more to respond, thank, help, listen and talk, and forgive their parents. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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.

Unit Six – Lesson 1

God’s Design for Life: Money!

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.

Please review the Teacher’s Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Lesson pictures

Scripture References

Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Psalm 24:1; Proverbs 22:2; Matthew 6:19, 24; 1 Timothy 6:10

Lesson

Today's lesson is going to be all about money. I'm going to read some statements about money. I'd like for you to tell me if they're true or false. If you think the statement is true please raise your hand. If you think the statement is false, please keep your hands down. Ok, listen carefully and make a good decision!

Money solves all problems. (FALSE)

Money is evil. (FALSE)

God loves poor people more than the rich. (FALSE)

God loves the rich more than the poor. (FALSE) If we have a lot of money we have no worries. (FALSE)

Too much money is the start of all kinds of trouble. (FALSE)

If we have a lot of money we are more important and valuable as people. (FALSE)

If you had your hands down on every one of those statements you were correct. They all were false. People think a lot of things about money that are very wrong. Here's what is true:

Money cannot solve all of our problems, but it's not evil either.

Even people who have lots of money still have worries; thought they may be different worries than the person who has very little money.

God loves both the rich and the poor the same.

Having money does not make you a more important or successful person.

We're going to look at what God has to say about money. We will look at the truth about money. I have several pictures to help us remember what is true.

Concept One: Money is from God

Our first picture is a bill from your local currency under our symbol for God. Show first money visual. **The Bible says, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." (Psalm 24:1)** Everything in this life, including money, belongs to God! Everything? Yes, everything! Even money. Money is from God. The Bible is very clear about this.

Some people might try to say, “But I earned this money. It belongs to me!” In the Old Testament people were saying this same thing. But listen to God’s response:

“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)

God gives us everything.....our talent and abilities and even the breath we need to live! God gives us the ability to make money! Our money is from God and ultimately belongs to him.

Concept Two: Money reveals our hearts. It shows what master we serve.

Money shows what is in your heart. It shows what is important to you. Jesus said, “...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.” (Matthew 6:19, 24)

Show picture of shackles.

When we forget that all our money comes from God and ultimately is his money, it can quickly become our master and rule us. Like the picture of the shackles, we become the slave of money. Making, saving, and spending money can become all that we think about. Instead of being a tool for us to use, money becomes our master. Money reveals our hearts. It shows what master we serve.

Concept Three: The LOVE of money is a problem

Our next picture is a currency bill inside a heart with a line through it. This means we are to not (heart) love money. The LOVE of money is a problem.

Sometimes people say that money is the root of all evil. But, that is not what God says. The Bible says, “For the love of money is the root of all evil.” (1 Timothy 6:10)

Money is not the problem because money, like everything else, is from God.

The problem is when we love money and just want to use it to benefit ourselves. When we love money, we become stingy and not generous. We begin to hate those who have more money than us. We may even go to extremes like stealing or being dishonest to get more money because we love it so much.

The love of money is a problem.

Concept Four: Money does not measure our value or success

Show the final picture.

Often we look at people and think that the man who has nice clothes and lots of money is more valuable. In the world's eyes he is, but not in God's eyes. Money does not increase our true value. It doesn't make us a more important person from God's perspective. We are valuable and important because we are made in God's image. The true measure of our value is from God and not from money. The Bible says "Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the maker of them all." (Proverbs 22:2)

Money is not a measure of our true success either. For example, your mom does a great job of taking care of you and your home. She may not make a lot of money but she is very successful as a mother. Your school teacher may not make as much money as a businessman, but when he helps you to learn he is very successful and has one of the most important jobs in the country even if he does not make much money.

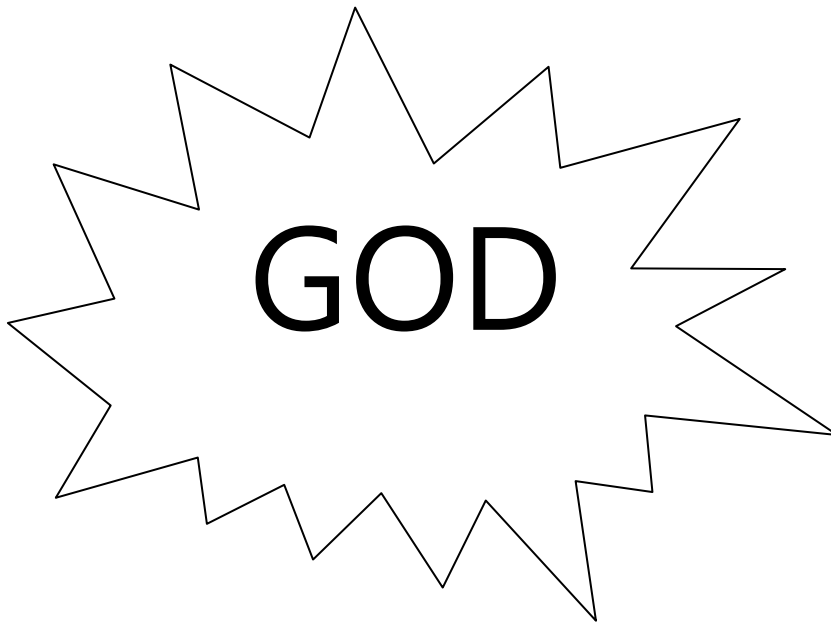
We've learned four very important ideas today: Money is from God; Money reveals our hearts; The love of money is a problem; and Money does not measure our value or success. Let's say each important idea as I hold up each picture. Lead the children.

These are all important truths about money that we find in God's word. Let's ask God to help us to see money the way that he sees it and to use it in the way he says is best.

Prayer

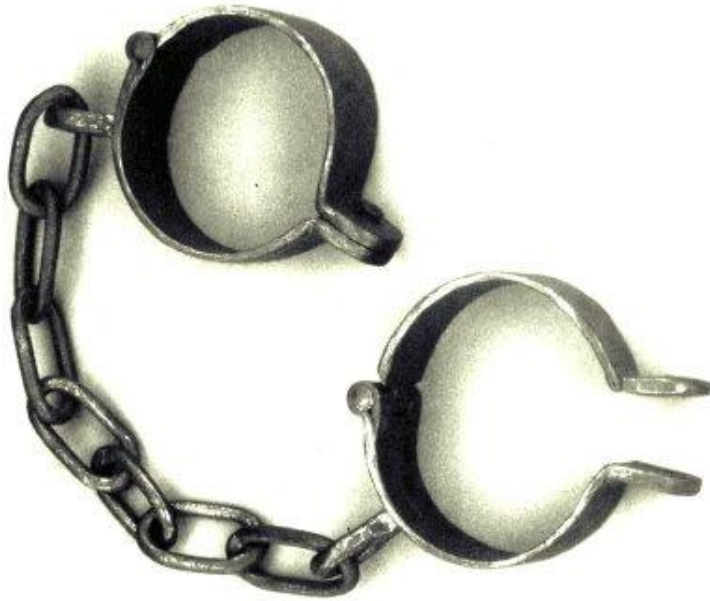
Dear God, Thank you so much for all you give us each day. Thank you that we are valuable because you created us in your image and choose to love us. Thank you that our true success and value is not measured by money. . Help us to see money accurately the way that you do and to realize that everything comes from you and belongs to you. Help us to not love money but to see it as a blessing so that we can be a blessing. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Your money is from God

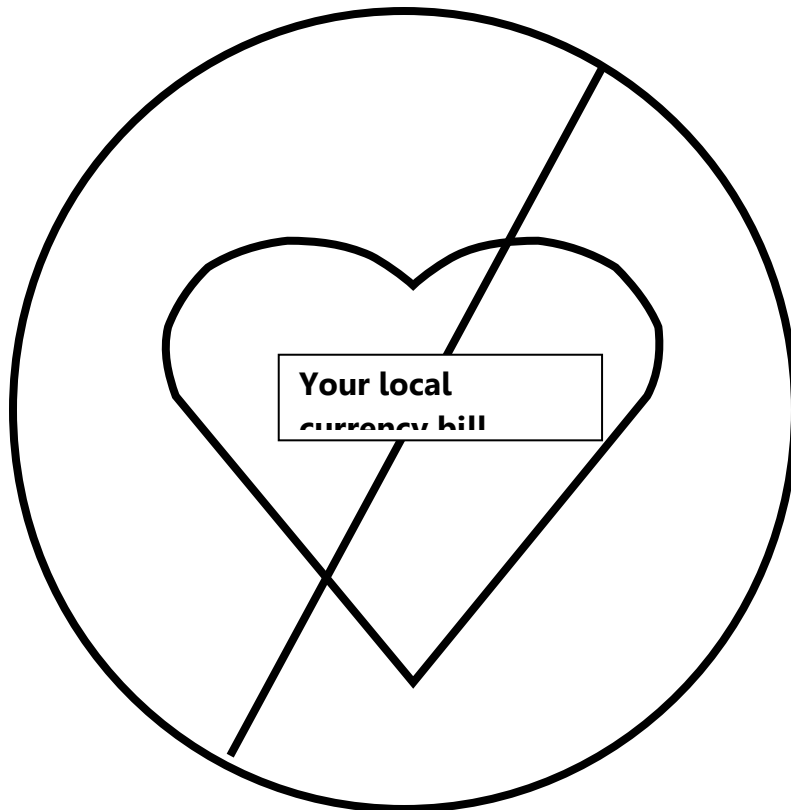


Your local currency

Money can be the master you serve



The LOVE of money is a problem



**\$ ≠ Your Value
or Success**

Unit Six – Lesson 2

God's Design for Life: God's Purpose for Our Money

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.

Please review the Teacher's Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

Money pictures from the last lesson, new lesson pictures

Scripture References

Matthew 6:25-26; Ephesians 4:28

Lesson

The last time we were together we learned about how God sees money. God looks at money differently than most people do, doesn't he? We looked at four big ideas found in the Bible that tell us the correct way to see money. Let's review those ideas. Show the children each of the pictures from the previous lesson and say the important truths they represent: **Money is from God; Money reveals our hearts; The love of money is a problem; and Money does not measure our value or success.**

These are important truths, but there is another big question. What does God want us to do with our money? That's what today's lesson is all about.

The answer is quite simple. Money is a tool so that we can live out the purpose God has for us.

God's plan is that we use the money he gives us to fulfill the great purposes he has for our lives.

Previously, we looked at God's purposes for our lives. Today we will review them and see how we can use money as a tool to do what God designed for us to do on this earth.

Concept One: God wants us to use our money to fulfill the great commandment – to love God and one another.

Remember what Jesus said was our most important purpose on this earth, the most important commandment? Allow for response. Yes, Jesus said it is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength – all your being - and to love your neighbor as yourself.

Concept Two: God wants us to use our money to rule over all creation, to improve it, to make the world a better place.

We also looked at the very first purposes God gave to Adam and Eve in the first chapters of the Bible. Do you remember what they were? Allow for response. Yes, God told them to rule over all creation. He told them to work creation, to uncover and develop all its

potential and make it more fruitful and bountiful, to make it even more special. Finally, he told Adam and Eve to care for all creation, to protect the resources God gives us including our own bodies.

Concept Three: God wants us to use our money to bless others.

Finally, we looked at the purpose God gave to Abraham. Do you recall what God's purpose was for Abraham? Allow for response. Yes, God said he would bless Abraham so that Abraham would be a blessing to all nations, a blessing to others.

God's plan is for each of us to live out these three great purposes as well. Because each of us is totally unique and one-of-a-kind, we'll each have our own unique expression of these purposes.

As for money, it is one of the tools God gives to us to help us accomplish the important purposes he gives us.

Let's look at some examples of how we can use money to do each of these.

Picture of a farmer. **God gives this farmer money. What are some ways this farmer uses this money to do God's purposes for his life?** Allow for response and discuss the ideas the children come up with.

The farmer buys tools, seeds, and oxen or a horse or maybe a tractor. He uses them to grow food for people and animals. He is loving his neighbor by growing food for people to eat.

He is loving God with all his strength by working hard.

He is ruling over creation by cutting back weeds, tilling the ground, and using the strength of the horse.

He is working creation by making the ground produce bounty.

He is using the resources God has blessed him with to bless to others.

Picture of a doctor. **God gave this person money. What are some ways this doctor used money to do God's purposes in his life?** Allow for response and discuss the ideas the children come up with.

The doctor uses money to go to medical school and then to buy equipment and set up a clinic. A person can love God with all their mind by going to medical school and developing their ability and learning all about health and medicine in order to serve others.

By spending money on breakfast each day, this doctor can then give his full effort and attention to caring for his patients. In so doing, he is loving God with all his strength.

By spending money on learning how to cure illness, this doctor is following God's command to rule over or have dominion over sickness and disease.

By spending money on equipment and a clinic, this doctor can love his neighbor and bless them by helping them get well.

Picture of a painter. **What are some ways this person can use money to do God's purposes in their life?** Allow for response and discuss the ideas the children come up with.

She used her money to buy art supplies and equipment in order to make paintings.

She is loving her neighbor by making beautiful and interesting paintings for people to have and enjoy.

She is loving God with all her heart by developing and applying her passion for art and creating beauty.

She is working with creation by developing and using the resources God has given her – her mind, her creativity, her paints, her energy – to make something good and special.

God has blessed her with talent, equipment and supplies. She is using this blessing to bless others.

Picture of people buying books. **These people are buying books. What are some ways they might be using their money to do God's purposes in their life?** Allow for response and discuss the ideas the children come up with.

They might be buying books to learn and develop their minds in a good way. If so, they would be loving God with their mind by developing (working) the resource God has given them like the stewards with the talents from their masters.

They might be buying a book in order to solve a problem or make some improvement that will benefit others. If so, they would be using their money to rule over creation and to love their neighbor as themselves.

Or maybe it is a dad buying school books and school supplies for his son. He is helping his son love God by developing his mind in the way God intends. He is helping his son prepare to better rule over and work all creation. He is blessing his son, so that his son can be a blessing to others.

Picture of a mom buying food. **This mother is buying food for her children. How is she using money to fulfill God's purposes?** Allow for response and discuss the ideas the children come up with.

A mom goes to the market and buys food for her family. She is loving God by loving her very closest neighbor – her own family.

She is enabling her family to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength by providing them with the food they need to live strong and healthy.

She and her husband are using the blessing God has given them (their money) to bless their children and whoever else they give food to.

This lesson is about money but you may not be able to bless someone with money. Remember, God has given you many other good things and resources that he wants us to use to bless others. Maybe you're very strong. You can use your strength to go find water for an older person who is unable to get water themselves. Perhaps God has given your family a wonderful avocado tree. Maybe your parents will allow you to give some of those avocados to someone who is in need.

Please turn to your neighbor now and talk together. Think of a resource or even a small amount of money that you may have. Talk with your neighbor about what you have that you will use to bless someone in need or to love your neighbor as yourself. Allow the children a little bit of time to talk together

Here is a good verse to close with. It is found in Ephesians 4:28 and says, "Use your hands for good, hard work and then give generously to those in need."

God provides for our needs and gives us resources so that we can bless others. Remember that God always promises to provide for our needs, whether it's through hard work that we do or through someone else being a blessing to us.

When you're going through hard times and aren't sure how God is going to meet your needs you can always remember this verse in 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?"

We've learned so much today about how God wants us to use our money as a tool to fulfill his great purposes in our lives. Let's end in prayer now and thank God for revealing himself to us and giving us his abundant life.

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for revealing yourself to us and giving us an abundant life. Thank you for money and that we can use it to love you and to be and do all that you designed for us. Help us to not love money but to love you and others and to see money the way you see it. Help us all to be a blessing to the people we have chosen this week. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Farmer



Doctor



Painter



Buying books



Mom buying food



Unit Six – Lesson 3

God’s Design for Life: Managing Your Money

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson

There are more than 1,000 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.

Please review the Teacher’s Guide for more information that will help you teach this lesson well.

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

1000 franc note (or similar amount in your local currency), 250 francs (or equivalent small amount in your local currency), a pot, some spoons, a knife, and ten small stones for every two children

Scripture References

Psalms 24:1; Matthew 6:21

Lesson

Hold up local money (for example: 1000 francs) for the children. Be sure to show much money you have.

I'm holding 1000 francs in my hand. Pretend that you have just been given 1000 francs. How will you use it? Turn to your neighbor and tell them how you plan to use this money. Be sure you both get the chance to share your ideas.

I hope you made a good plan for how you will use this money.

The last time we met, we talked about how God gives us money so that we can live out the important purposes he has for our life.

Today we are going to talk about ways we can best manage our money so that we use it well to accomplish God's purposes for us.

Have you ever noticed how your mother organizes her cooking utensils so that she can cook you good meals? She probably has a big pot placed on a shelf, some spoons placed nearby, and a knife kept sharp and put in a particular place. Demonstrate this by laying out a pot, some spoons, and a knife. **Your mother organizes all of these so that she can cook well. Today we're going to look at four ways that God wants us to organize or manage our money so that we can use it wisely. I'll name the four ways and we'll learn a motion for each.**

Let's start learning about each way and the motion that goes with each.

Concept One: Manage your money well - First, give to God (Tithing)

The first way God gives us to manage our money is to begin by giving a portion back to God. We call this tithing. Let's say "First, give to God," while we cup our hands and lift them in the air. The motion is mimicking lifting up money to God.

It seems strange that the first step to managing money would be to give some of it back to God. That means we'll have less money to manage! But, this is exactly what God says to do. God knows more about managing money than the richest and smartest person in the world. He also wants what is the very best for us in every area of our life.

Why does God ask us to do this? Does he need the money? Allow for response and discussion. No, God doesn't need our money. Yet God called his people in the Old Testament to give back 10% of their crop or earnings to his work or temple. In Proverbs, God tell us to "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops." (Proverbs 3:9) And in 2 Corinthians 9:7, God tells us to, "Give according to what God puts in your hearts, not giving with a grudge, because God loves a cheerful giver."

God asks us to give back part of our money to him because he loves us and has good plans for our lives? God knows that as we give back to him it will help us to remember that he is the source of all our money. Giving first to God, also helps us to love him and people more than money. And, we know that loving money is the root of all evil. As we give to God we will become more generous and will bless more and more people. Finally, God says he will take care of us when we trust him and obey his command to give first to him.

Let's say this money management principle again and do the motion. "First, give to God."

Concept Two: Manage your money well - Be generous to others

God tells us, "...the righteous give without sparing." A second important money management principle from God is to "Be generous to others. Let's say, "Be generous to others," while we put our hands out as if we're giving to someone else. The motion is mimicking giving money to someone else.

Just as "giving back to God" or tithing does not make immediate sense, "being generous to others" does not seem like an obvious way to best manage our money. But God calls us to do both. Psalm 112:5 says, "Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice."

You see, God's good plan for our lives is to meet our needs and bless us so that we can bless others. When we give to others, God is using us to meet the needs of others.

Even when we have very little money, we can still be generous and share what we have with others. The Bible says, " And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8)

Let's say this important money principle again as we do the hand motion, "Be generous to others."

Concept Three: Manage your money well - Budget and avoid debt

Quietly hand a child in the front row 250 francs and ask him or her to hold on to it. Act out the following situation:

Kids, I really have a problem. I really want to buy a Fanta but I just don't have enough money to buy it. I'm never sure how my money gets spent, but it always seems to disappear. The Fanta costs 250 francs but I just don't have it and really don't know when I'll ever have that extra 250 francs. Hmm....how am I going to get the money? I'm so thirsty and only a Fanta will do.

Go over to the child who you gave the 250 francs to. Say to him: **What, you are offering to loan me 250 francs. Oh, thank you so much. This will really taste so good. I promise, promise, promise I'll pay you back soon.** Say this somewhat hesitantly as if you are unsure. Walk away from the children.

Stay away for a few seconds and then come tiptoeing and sneaking back. **I certainly hope that (child's name that you gave the money to) doesn't see me. It's been a month and I still don't have any money to pay him/her back. I don't know when I'm ever going to get the money to pay him/her back and I worry about it all the time. I hope he/she just forgets.**

One of the biggest problems we have sometimes with money is that we spend more than we have. Then we borrow from someone, go into debt, and owe them money. When we have a debt we are nervous all the time and can't relax.

You can prevent this problem by planning ahead as to how you'll use your money. This is what is called planning and budgeting. This is a third way God gives us to manage our money well. Let's say, "Budget and avoid debt" while we pretend to write with a pencil on a paper as if we were writing a plan of how we'll spend our money.

When you make a plan of how you will spend your money you write down what you need to spend and subtract it from how much money you earn. When you do this, you will know how much money you will have left over to spend on things that aren't necessary but you would really like to have, like the Fanta I wanted earlier. It's important that we not buy the things we want before we pay for what we need like food, water, and our house. Otherwise we'll run out of money and won't be able to pay for the things we really need. This can cause trouble and we'll have to borrow more money.

The Bible teaches us to be wise and think carefully about how we will spend our money. The Bible teaches us to be careful about borrowing when it says, "...the borrower is servant to the lender." (Proverbs 22:7)

When you are older and even now, do everything possible to try to stay out of debt. If you need to borrow money, only borrow money for things you absolutely need and pay it back as soon as possible. When we are in debt to someone, we are responsible to that person until we pay the debt. We can live a free life when we are not in debt to anyone. Let's say our third big idea again as we do the hand motion, "Budget and avoid debt."

Concept Four: Manage your money well - Save your money

The fourth way that God wants us to manage our money is by saving. Let's say "Save your money" while we put our hands in our pocket as if we're putting our money away to not spend it.

In Proverbs 6, God uses the little ant to teach us that he wants us to save our money! “Go to the ant, you who are lazy, consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its food in summer and gathers its food at harvest.”
(Proverbs 6:6-8)

What does the ant do that is so wise? Allow for the children’s responses. **The ant gathers and saves its food even when it doesn’t need it during the summer. The ant is saving the food for the winter when it will otherwise not be able to get something to eat. In the same way, God is telling us to be wise and save some of our money for when we will need it later on. Especially when you are an adult, you never know when an emergency will come up. If you have money saved you will be able to pay for what you didn’t plan for. Let’s say this fourth important principle again and do the hand motion, “Save your money.”**

We’ve learned four ways that God gives us to best manage our money so that we can accomplish the most with it. Let’s say those four again and do the motions with them: First, Give to God; Be Generous to others, Budget and avoid debt; Save your money.

Let’s show how that would practically work in real life. I’d like for you to work in pairs. I’m going to give each pair ten very small stones. Allow children time to form in pairs and then give each pair ten small stones. **Pretend that they are real money and that each is 100 francs. You’ll each get a chance to “budget” this money.**

Here are the instructions. I would like one of you in each pair to do the instruction as I give it. Then we’ll have the other person do the instruction.

1. Take your ten pebbles and put them in front of you. Pretend that this is the money you get each week when you get paid from your job. Tell your partner what your job is where you earned this money.

2. We learned that God wants us to give back some of our money to him as a tithe. Take one of your pebbles and put it off to the side. This represents ten percent of your income that you give back to God when you tithe at church. Tell your partner where and when you will give this 10%.

3. Take two more of your pebbles. This represents the part of your earnings that you will save. Remember, that God wants us to save part of our income for unplanned expenses. This is just a suggestion as the Bible does not say how much to save, but only to save.

3.1 One of the pebbles will be for emergency or short-term savings. Set this aside and tell your partner an example of when and how you might need to use this.

3.2 One of the pebbles will be for long-term savings or an investment. Set this aside and tell your partner what you hope to buy or invest in at some future date when you have saved enough (e.g. buy land, a house, a motorbike).

4. The other seven pebbles represent the money that you will use this month or until you get paid again. Set this aside and tell your partner what things you will have to buy with this money and if there is money left over at the end what you will buy that you want, such as a special food or something extra.

Go through the above exercise a second time to allow the other partner to divide up his “money” in the way that would be wise and God intends.

I'm so glad that God gives us such good instructions about how we can manage our money well. Let's pray now and ask him for help as it takes wisdom and strength to manage money in the best possible way.

Prayer

Dear God, You are so good and to give instruction and wisdom for how to manage money. Help us to first give to you, then be generous, plan and budget well, and save like the ant. Thank you for promising to provide for our needs. Help us to do the right thing, even when it seems we do not have enough money to be generous or obedient. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Income: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Tithe: First, give to God: ☐

Be generous to others: ?

Save:

Long-term savings: ☐

Short-term savings: ☐

Spend: Budget and avoid debt

Must have: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Nice to have: ?



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.

Disciple Nations Alliance

1110 E. Missouri Ave., Suite 393

Phoenix, AZ 85014

www.disciplenations.org