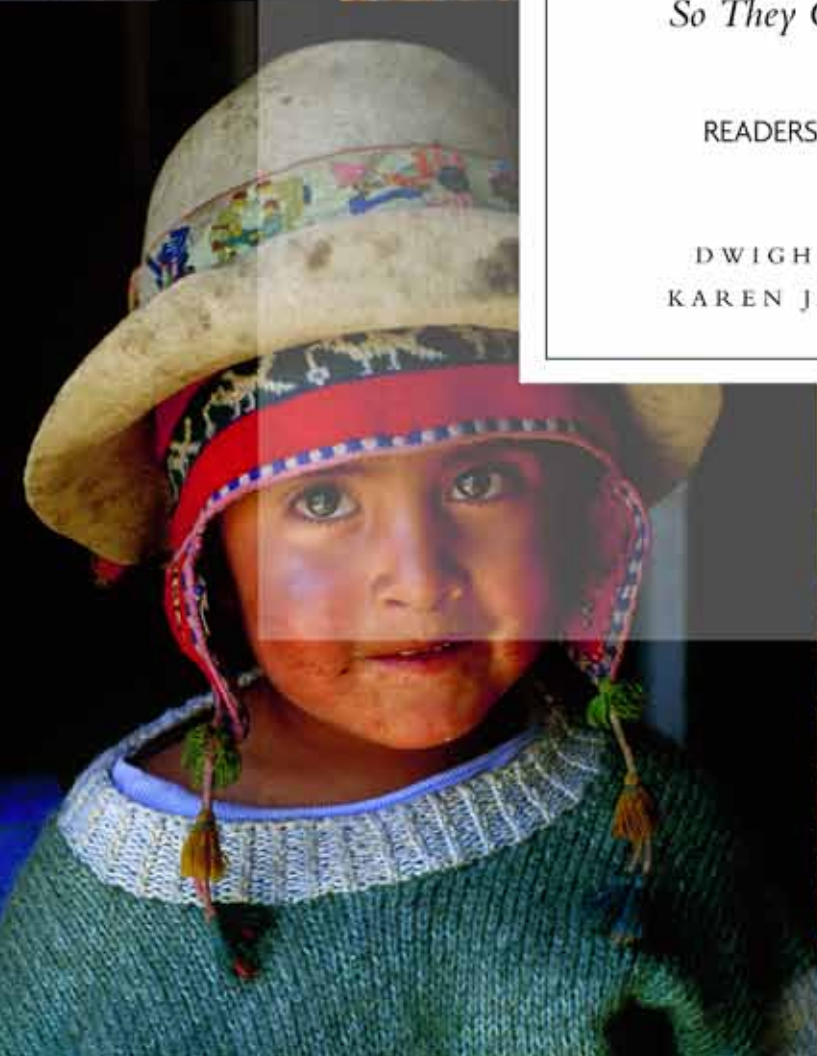


FOOTINGS
for
CHILDREN

*Imparting a Biblical Worldview
So They Can Thrive*

READERS VERSION

DWIGHT VOGT
KAREN JACOBSEN



Footings *for* Children

Imparting
a Biblical Worldview
So They Can Thrive

Readers Version

DWIGHT VOGT
KAREN JACOBSEN

Footings for Children: Imparting a Biblical Worldview so They Can Thrive (Readers Version)
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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.

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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. Readers Version (this version)
3. Non-Readers Version
4. Devotional 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

Readers Version

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Why Footings for Children?

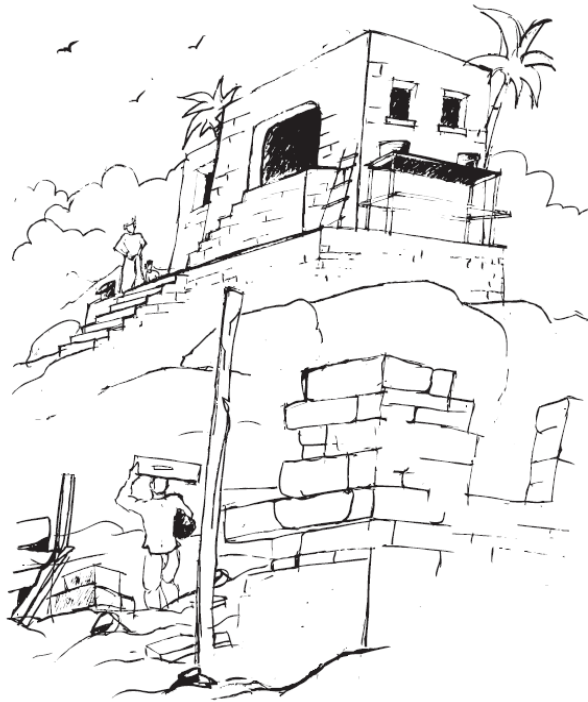
As parents and teachers, we want our children to thrive in life, to grow strong, and to flourish in every circumstance. We desire for them to prosper in the best sense, developing and using their abilities to bless others and the world around them all their days.

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.



¹ John 8:44

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

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 guide before diving into the lesson plan.

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

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

Realize also that many of these truths strike at the core of a cultural lie that Satan and his demons are promoting 24 hours a day to deceive our children and us. 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 Therefore, if you are teaching *Footings* to children and you can also help the parents learn to teach and live it out for their children, by all means do so. The parents' influence, coupled with yours, will be huge.

² Deuteronomy 6:7,8

Unit 1 – About God

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

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 about God, his acts, and his purposes as revealed in the Bible. Without Genesis 1 being true and real, there is no ground for believing that everything else the Bible reveals about God and life, from Genesis 2 to Revelation 22, is any 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

Bread making ingredients: eggs, flour, oil, spoon, bowl, etc., pencils, "God Created Everything" lesson worksheet, small slips of paper, blank paper (2 sheets for every child), origami paper box directions, assembled origami box

Scripture References

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

Welcome Time

Greet each young person by name and let them know you are glad to see them.

Attention Grabber

Note to Teacher: Feel free to choose any common food that the children eat for this demonstration. Here we are demonstrating making bread and you will need to bring flour, oil, eggs, a bowl and a spoon to do this demonstration.

Take out your supplies to make bread.

I just love bread. Raise your hands if you like bread too! That's great that we all like bread! How fortunate that I've brought all the supplies with me to make bread.

Take out flour, oil, eggs, a bowl and a spoon and put them out on a table in front of you. Continue on with the illustration.

Ok, now that we have everything to make bread, let's make it!

At this point you should go and sit in a chair for about 30 seconds and just watch the ingredients. Do not answer any questions from the children or acknowledge their comments. Go back to the table.

Wow, is that bread done yet? I'm really getting hungry for some bread!

At this point you should acknowledge the children's responses.

Hmm, you're right. It seems like nothing is happening. Is there something that we're missing? Allow the children time to respond.

You're right! Bread doesn't just make itself. We need a person to make it.

Let's say that you came home from school and your mom had just baked some delicious bread. You're hungry and she gives you a piece to eat. Would you say, 'Thank you flour, eggs and oil, you're really great?' Wait for the children's and praise their responses.

You're absolutely right children! You would thank your mother not the ingredients because behind great bread is a great bread maker! In the same way, behind everything that is in this world is a great creator. Everything in creation didn't make itself. Today we're going to go to the Bible and find out more about the God who created our world.

The Lesson

Concept One: God is the Creator.

When I put all the ingredients to make bread out on this table before, what was missing?

Praise correct answers.

You're right, there was someone missing to make the bread. Let's listen to this Bible verse and find out who was there in the beginning of time to make everything. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God," Explain to the children: Before this world existed, before there were any people, plants, animals, water, land or sky, there was God. This is the most important thing to know about God. He has existed from the beginning and no one has created him. Throughout our time together we're going to learn "big ideas" about God. This is one of them. No one created God. God is the Creator.

Memory Verse Moment I

Let's practice saying part of our Bible Verse in Genesis 1:1. It says, "In the beginning, God." We're going to play a memory verse game called *Stand up Tall*. You will be divided into three groups and given a part of the memory verse that you are responsible for "standing up tall" and saying when it is your turn. The first group will be responsible to stand up tall and say "Genesis 1:1". Another group will stand up tall and say, "In the beginning" and the other group will be responsible for standing up tall and saying, "God."

Divide the class into three groups and have the first group say, "Genesis 1:1" as they hold up that sign. The second group should say, "In the beginning" as they hold up the *In the beginning* sign. The third group is responsible for saying, "God" and holding up the *God* sign. Continue having groups stand up and say their part of the verse until they are able to say them without the signs.

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

To introduce the concept that God created the heavens and the earth from nothing, go through this activity without answering any questions.

I'm going to give you some supplies. You must follow the instructions that I give you without asking any questions. Pay attention to how you feel during the activity.

Theatrically give out "supplies" made from air, placing pretend drawing materials on the table and handing them pretend pencils that do not exist.

When I say "go," you are to draw a picture with the supplies that I have given you. After you say "go" and the children are unable to follow their directions, continue.

Why aren't you following my directions? Praise and highlight answers that reveal that you can't make something out of nothing.

Now give out the task sheets that have a space for them to draw their pictures in, and give pencils to each child.

I'd now like for you to use these supplies that you have been given to draw a picture of your favorite animal. Give the children about three minutes to draw. After they have drawn their pictures, continue on.

Why were you able to draw pictures of your favorite animals now? Praise answers that reveal that in order to create something you have to have some materials. **What is amazing is that God has the ability to create something from nothing.**³

Memory Verse Moment II

We're now going to learn the rest of Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Show the children the pictures of the heavens and earth. **We're still going to play *Stand Up Tall*, but this time we'll have four groups. One group will say, "Genesis 1:1" and hold up their sign. The second group will say, "In the beginning" while they hold up their sign. The third group will say, "God" while they hold up their sign. The fourth group will say, "created the heavens and the earth" while holding up their sign.**

Have groups stand up and say their part faster and faster. When you are confident they know the verse, have them switch signs and parts of the verse to say.

³ The Bible does not explicitly state the term "out of nothing" regarding creation. However, biblical scholars believe that the totality of Scripture teaches this. Looking at such passages as Genesis 1:1, Psalms 33:6, Psalms 148:5, John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, and Hebrews 11:3 gives a more complete picture of how God created the world. Viewing the entire biblical account has led theologians to conclude that God created "out of nothing."

If any of you were able to draw a picture without pencils or paper we'd all be super impressed. Since God was able to make the heavens and the earth out of nothing, what does that tell us about him? Allow the children to share their answers. **Because God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing this means he is super powerful!**

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

Teacher: If you can think of another activity for this next point would work better for your children, please feel free to substitute it. The main point is that the children will not be able to perform the requested action without instructions.

Hand out a blank sheet of paper to each child. Be sure that you have made an example paper box before class.

I'd like for all of you to make this folded paper box that I've made. Hold up your pre-made paper box. **When I say go, go ahead and make it. Go!** Give the children one minute or so to struggle with making the box.

Why aren't you able to make the box? Allow the children time to answer.

That's right children. In order to make something we need instructions. At this point, give them step by step instructions on how to make the origami paper box. **It's also helpful to have a model to look at. Go ahead now and make the folded paper box as I read the instructions to you and show you how to make it.** Read the instructions word for word on the Origami Paper Box Instructions found in the resource section of this lesson. Model each step for the children as they follow along.

It's much easier to make something when you have instructions, isn't it? Where do you think God went to get instructions when he made the earth out of nothing? Who did God talk to or learn from? Allow for children's responses. Praise and highlight answers that reveal that God had no examples or plans to work from when he created everything in the world.

You're right children. When God created the heavens and the earth he had no instructions. He thought it up all himself. His ideas to create our world came straight from himself. This box you made (hold up example) is like everything that people make. It is based on some idea that they got from other ideas or people. We learn to make and do things by watching others and then adding or subtracting to make something different or unique.

But God is not like that! All of creation came straight from his mind. This means that God is super intelligent. He's a million times smarter than any person you'll ever meet. No one could have possibly done what God did, to create millions of complex things perfectly with no instructions. He's amazing!

Closing Action Point

Today we learned that God is the creator of the heavens and earth. Even more amazing, God made everything from nothing. Equally amazing, from his mind alone he thought up all the plans and intricacies of all that is created.

God is powerful and a million times smarter than we can ever imagine. Every thing that all the scientist in the world know, God already knew and actually thought into existence when he created the world. We're going to make "God Made It" pictures that will show all of the amazing things that God made. I'm going to read several verses from the Bible that tell of the amazing things that God made. These verses are on your worksheet. As I read the verses, use your pencils to circle the words of what God made. Then draw a picture of that item in the space provided.

Read each of the following verses and ask the children to circle the word of what they hear is being created. When you have read all the verses, give them time to draw a picture in the space provided of the words circled.

Genesis 1:11 – "Let the land burst forth with every sort of grass and seed-bearing plant. And let there be trees that grow seed bearing fruit."

Genesis 2:9 – "And the Lord God planted all sorts of trees in the garden – beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit."

Genesis 1:16 – "God made two great lights – the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars." Children may need a little help understanding that this is talking about the sun and the moon.

Genesis 1:20 – "And God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life."

Genesis 2:19 – "Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and the birds of the air."

God has made some amazing things. I see beautiful pictures of God's creation. God made all of these things perfect and did a great job. You have empty space on your "God Made It" sheet . Please draw something else you saw this past week that God made.

Closing Prayer Circle

Have the children sit in a circle and sit with them.

We learned that God is the creator of what? (Everything.) **What did God create everything from?** (Nothing.) **What does this tell us about God?** (God is the most powerful.) **Who did God get his instructions to create everything from?** (No one, only from himself.) **What does this tell us about God?** (God is the smartest.)

Let's say our memory verse together to help us remember what God did. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

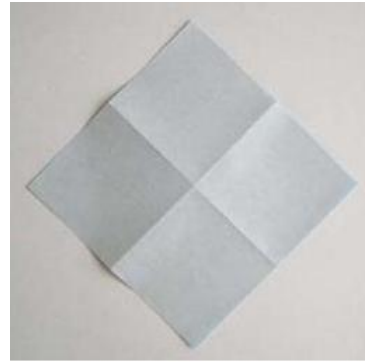
God made everything in our world. I'm going to hand out a small slip of paper to you. Please write down one thing that you are thankful to God for making. We'll then pass the slips of paper around the circle until I say stop. Then we'll close in prayer each one of you saying, "Thank you God for (the thing that's written on your slip of paper)."

Let's pray now. We'll end when everyone has gotten a chance to share what they're thankful for. End the Prayer Circle with a short prayer thanking God for his power and intelligence in creating our world and us.

Origami Paper Box Instructions

Step 1

Begin with a square piece of paper. Crease the sheet of paper in half lengthwise and then again in the other direction. Unfold the paper which will be divided into four sections.



Step 2

Take a corner and fold it up to the center of the paper. Repeat for all four corners. Ensure that the tips all meet in the center for a smaller square.



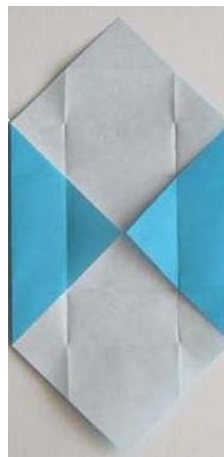
Step 3

Fold one side of the square up to the center of the box. Unfold and repeat for all four sides of the square. These creases serve as guides later.



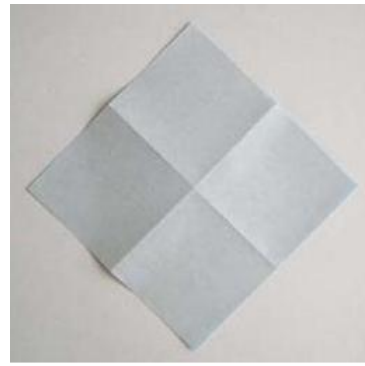
Step 4

Completely unfold two opposite sides of the square. Refold the two longer sides (that are still folded once) so they stand up to form two sides of the box.



Step 1

Begin with a square piece of paper. Crease the sheet of paper in half lengthwise and then again in the other direction. Unfold the paper which will be divided into four sections.



Step 2

Take a corner and fold it up to the center of the paper. Repeat for all four corners. Ensure that the tips all meet in the center for a smaller square.



Step 3

Fold one side of the square up to the center of the box. Unfold and repeat for all four sides of the square. These creases serve as guides later.



Step 4

Completely unfold two opposite sides of the square. Refold the two longer sides (that are still folded once) so they stand up to form two sides of the box.



Step 5

Fold the shorter (triangle) side along the crease line closest to the center of the box. The sides should tuck inward as the flap comes up.



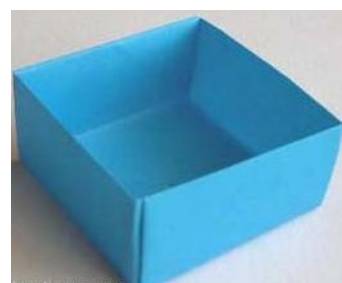
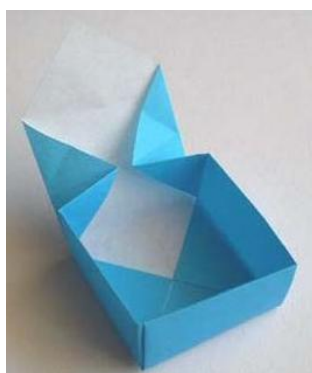
Step 6

Fold the flap down so the side is the same height as the other two sides of the box for a third side of the box.



Step 7

Repeat the previous step to create the fourth side of the box.



Memory Verse Signs

Genesis 1:1

*In the
beginning*

God

*created the
heavens and
the earth.*

God Created Everything

Circle and draw the item God made

Genesis 1:11 – Let the land burst forth with every sort of grass and seed-bearing plant. And let there be trees that grow seed bearing fruit.

Genesis 2:9 – And the Lord God planted all sorts of trees in the garden – beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit.

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

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

Genesis 2:19 – Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and the birds of the air.

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

Lesson pictures, 2 soccer balls, pea, small bead $\frac{1}{4}$ the size of the pea, cutouts of sun, moon, and earth from resource section, 6 foot (or 1.9 meter) string, 30 foot (or 9 meter string)

Scripture References

Colossians 1:16; Job 38:32-34; Acts 17:28

Welcome Time

Greet each child by name and let them know you are glad to see them.

Divide the children into four groups. Give each group one set of the verse phrase pieces from the last lesson, face down.

We're going to review our verse from the last lesson. I've given each one of your groups a set of the verse parts from the last lesson. When I say "Go" your group should work together to put your verse in order. When you have put your verse together correctly you should stand up. I will then call on the groups that are standing to say the verse together.

After each group has said their verse correctly, ask each group to name several things that God made.

Attention Grabber

Make sure that you have your lesson pictures on hand for this activity. **I'm going to show you four pictures. I'd like for you to think about each one and decide what all of the pictures have in common.**

Show children the following pictures one at a time, explaining what each is: human heart, human lungs, person running, and pictures of the sun, moon and earth. The students may think that they know what the pictures have in common until you show them all the pictures.

Let the students tell you what they think all the pictures have in common.

If you thought these are all things that God made, you are correct and you listened carefully to our last lesson. Today, we're also going to talk about how these are all things that God either holds together or keeps working perfectly. We're going to learn that God holds all things together in our world and also keeps our world running as it should. We'll learn that God keeps our hearts beating, our lungs breathing air, our bodies working, and also holds the sun, moon and stars in place. God is so amazing! We're going to find out exactly how amazing he is today!

The Lesson

Memory Verse Moment

Let's learn a very important verse found in Colossians 1:16. It says, "For by him all things were created. All things were created by him and for him and in him all things hold together."

We're going to play a little game called *Disappearing Verse* to help us remember this verse. I have all the words of the verse taped up on the front wall. (Teacher: If there is a black board in the classroom, write all of the words of the verse on the board and have a volunteer erase one of the words of the verse one at a time. If there is no board you will need to write out the words of the verse on single sheets of paper and then remove them one by one. **I will call on a volunteer to take away one word of the verse. We will then say the verse with a word missing. We'll take away words and say the verse until all the words of the verse are gone and we know it perfectly.** Lead children as described until they are able to say the verse from memory.

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

Does anyone know how the sun, moon, earth and stars are held in their place? Allow for children's responses. **We're going to look at how the sun, moon and earth stay in their place and work.**

Select volunteer children and hand out the soccer balls, peas and tiny beads. If these objects are not available, use the provided earth, sun and moon cutouts.

First, to help us understand the sizes of the earth compared to the sun and moon, let's pretend the earth is the size of this pea. If the earth is this pea, then the moon would be the size of this little bead (or about $\frac{1}{4}$ the size of the earth). **In comparison, the sun would be a little bigger than two soccer balls side by side.** (The sun is about a 100 times the diameter of the earth.)

At this size, let's see how far distant they would all be from one another. The moon would be about 6 inches⁴ from the earth. That does not seem very far but look how small the earth and moon are in comparison. The sun would be 190⁵ feet away from the earth. That is a long way!

⁴ 15 centimeters

⁵ 57 meters

At this point, give the children the cutouts of the earth, moon, and sun. **However, because this pea is so small, let's pretend that these cutouts represent the earth, moon, and sun.**

Give one end of a 6 foot⁶ string to one child who is holding the cutout of the moon. Give the other end to the child holding the cutout of the earth. Ask the moon to move away from earth until the string is tight. Ask the other children to form a large circle around the earth and the moon.

This string represents the distance the moon is away from the earth. The moon rotates, or moves in a circle around the earth. The moon's place and how it moves is called its orbit. The moon moves completely around the earth every 27 days. To show that, moon, I'd like for the person with the moon cutout to slowly walk in a circle around the earth.

Do you know what holds the moon in its exact orbit? Allow children time to respond. Highlight the answers that reveal that God is the one who holds the moon in its exact orbit.

God, who created the moon, holds it in orbit. God made physical laws or rules that cause it to stay right where it's supposed to be while it circles the earth. God's pretty amazing and wise isn't he?

Does anyone know what would happen if God's laws did not hold the moon where it is and one day it was just a little bit closer to the earth?

Shorten the length of the string between the earth and the moon. **If the moon suddenly moved closer to the earth, it would cause huge tidal waves that would drown millions of people who live near oceans on the earth.** Ask the child with the moon cutout to again rotate around the earth but at this reduced distance. Instruct the other children to pretend they are drowning. **God is amazingly wise and powerful. Even though there is no cable or wire between the earth and the moon, the moon stays right where it needs to be so that we are all able to live safely on the earth. God put the earth and the moon in their places and keeps them there through the laws or rules he put in place. He's incredibly amazing and wise!**

Ask the persons holding the earth cutout and the sun cutout to come to the center. Hand one end of a 30-foot⁷ string to the person with the earth and hand the other end to the person holding the sun. Ask the earth to move away from the sun until the string is tight. Ask the earth to move in a VERY slow circle around the sun.

This demonstrates that the earth rotates around the sun every 365 days.

What do you think holds the earth in its exact place or orbit around the sun?

⁶ 2 meters

⁷ 10 meters

There's no cable necessary is there? God holds the earth in its exact place by putting physical laws or rules in place that keeps the sun and the earth exactly where they should be. This too shows us that God is incredibly wise!

Ask the earth to move slightly closer to the sun. **Does anyone know what would happen if God's laws stopped working and the earth moved closer to the sun? We would all burn up!** Invite the children to act as if they were sweltering and then burning up!

Now ask the person with the earth to move farther away from the sun. The child will need to let go of the string to do this.

Does anyone know what would happen if God's physical laws stopped working and the earth moved farther away from the sun? We would all freeze to death! Invite the children to act as if they are freezing to death!

God is amazingly powerful and wise to keep the earth and the sun in their exact places so we can all live safely on the earth. Hold up your Bible. **In the book of Job (38:32-33) God says, "Can you bring out all of the stars in their seasons? Can you lead out the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper? Do you know the laws that govern the heavens?" (NIRV)**

We see from this passage in that God is very powerful, wise and in control. He holds everything together perfectly!

Concept Two: God sustains all of life.

We just learned how God holds the universe and everything together. God is also the one who keeps us living and breathing and moving. I'd like for you to choose between running in place and jumping up and down.

It is God who gives you the ability to move and do all of these things.

Ask the children to stand up and spread themselves apart. Now please run in place or jump up and down as fast as you can until I say "STOP!" After the children stop running demonstrate where they can put their fingers on their neck to find their pulse. Have them count their heart beats for 15 seconds and then tell you what number they get. Lead the children in a discussion.

What you just felt was your heart beating and working hard. While your heart was beating your lungs were breathing as well.

Who is the one who causes our hearts to beat and our lungs to breathe every day? That's right, it's God. Let's try and imagine if we didn't have God keeping our hearts beating and our lungs breathing. Instruct the children to hold their breath until you say "Breathe!" Repeat this several times.

Our lives would be pretty terrible if we had to constantly remind our hearts to beat and our lungs to breathe. But we don't have to do this. God keeps our heart beating and our lungs breathing every second of every minute of every hour of every day of our life whether we are sleeping, eating, playing, or sitting still! What does our memory verse say? Lead children in saying Colossians 1:16. "For by him all things were created. All things were created by him and for him and in him all things hold together." There is a similar verse in Acts⁸ that says, "In him we live and move and exist."

We can't do anything without God keeping us alive and breathing. We can't play, run, jump or breathe. God holds all of the world together and he keeps us living, moving and breathing. Everything we have, even our life and breath comes from God! Some people do not realize or believe that God exists. Some do not realize that it is God who gives them life and breath, and sustains them. But, just because they do not know or believe this does not change the fact that he does. Ironically, God is the one who gave such a person the ability to think – even though they use this ability to think that God does not exist or sustain them.

God is so amazing that he holds the world together and keeps everything in the world living and moving. He sustains everything.

Closing Action Point

What does this tell us about God?

You're right if you think this means that God is really powerful and incredible. He also loves us very much to keep our earth in place and keep us breathing and moving every day!

Hand out "What God Gives Me the Ability to Do" worksheets.

I'd like for you to draw a picture of one thing that God gives you the ability to do. Remember, it is God who keeps you living and breathing and moving so you can do this thing you draw. At the bottom of the space for a picture there is a note to God that you can fill in. It says, "Thank you God that you give me the ability to ____." In the blank space write the action you drew. Maybe you are thankful that you can run and you'll draw a picture of yourself running. Think of something unique!

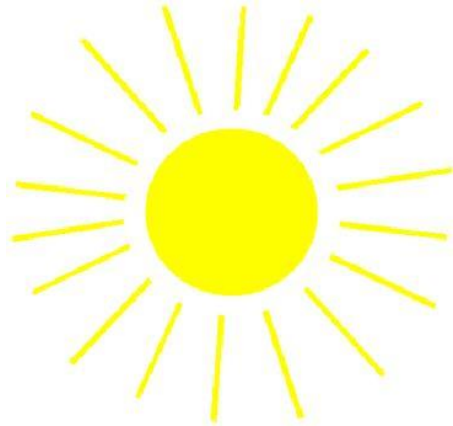
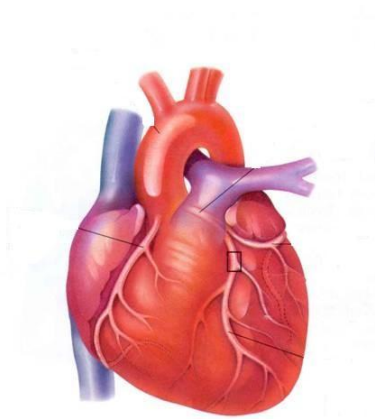
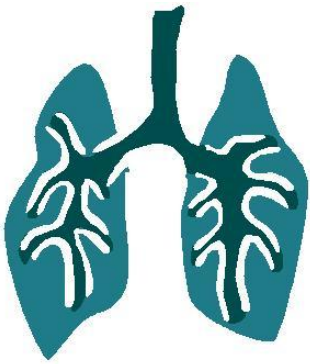
Prayer Circle

⁸ Acts 17:28 (NIRV)

Please bring your pictures and come sit in our prayer circle. Hold up your pictures. As I pray I'm going to thank God for some of the things that you drew. Remember our Bible verses, "For by him all things were created. All things were created by him and for him and in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:16) and "In him we live and move and exist." (Acts 17:28) God is so kind and loves us so much to give us life everyday and the ability to do all of these things. Let's thank him now.

Pray, thanking God that he is so powerful and holds the whole world together and keeps it working and moving. Thank him that he gives each of us life each day and allows us to do many things. Pray specifically, thanking God for many of the things the children drew.

Lesson Pictures





About 6 inches in diameter



About 6/8 inch in diameter



About 2.5 inches in diameter

What God gives me the ability to do:

Thank you God that you give me the
ability to_____.

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 things like, 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 think 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 that "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 in this world comes from God. If we do this well, then the many good things God puts into the children's 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 his 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 on a hot day, wonderful music, beneficial engineering and science, etc.? These too are all from God and are good 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 their lives can be continuous reminders of his perfect goodness and love for them.

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 that this good "just is." We do not connect it to its ultimate source – God. We fail to recognize that everything good comes from or originates with God. We fail to see that all that we experience as good 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.

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 each of us.

Scripture References

James 1:17; 1 John 4:7-8; Psalm 27:4; Exodus 31:2-5; Isaiah 54:16; John 14:6, 8:44; Proverbs 2:6

Supplies/Materials

Lesson worksheets, pencils, memory verse slips, 2 cups labeled "God goodness", water, pitcher, pictures of God's good gifts, small ball, beautiful flower or something else beautiful from nature

Welcome Time

Greet each child by name and let them know you are glad to see them. Play the game ***Hot Potato Review***. Ask the children to sit in circle. Take a small ball. Begin by quoting the memory verse from the last lesson, Colossians 1:16. Have the students say the verse with you. Play music or clap your hands with your back turned to the circle while the students pass the ball around the circle pretending that it is a potato so hot they don't want to touch it. When the music stops playing or you stop clapping, the children stop passing the ball. The student holding the ball must either say one thing they learned from the last lesson or quote the memory verse.

Continue tossing the ball until all students have had the chance to either quote the memory verse or say one thing that they learned.

Attention Grabber

Label two cups with the words "God's goodness." Place a pitcher of water, the small cutout pictures and two cups on a table in front of the children.

These cups represent God's goodness. Pick up the pitcher of water and pour it into one of the cups until it is overflowing.

God's goodness is overflowing. The good things that he gives us are too many to count! As a matter of fact, everything that is good and helpful that we experience every day comes from God!

Take out the second cup that is labeled "God's goodness". Also take out your lesson pictures that correspond to this activity.

Today we're going to talk about all of the good things we experience that come from God. For example, the good things we experience include friendship (put the picture of the group of friends in the cup), **beauty** (put the picture of the flower in the cup), **skill, ability and creativity** (put the picture of the football (soccer) player in the cup), **truth** (put the picture of the Bible in the cup) **and science or all knowledge** (put the picture of the microscope in the cup). **All of these things are good and were created by God. Today we're going to learn that everything that is good in this life is from God and is evidence of his love and goodness to us!**

The Lesson

Memory Verse Moment

The Bible tells us that everything good comes from God. Let's learn a memory verse that tells us this. It's found in James 1:17a: "Every good and perfect gift is from God. It comes down from the Father." (NIRV)

Let's play a little game. I have little slips of paper with each word of the memory verse written out on it. I will hand out one slip of paper to each of you. The English version of this verse has 15 words including the book and chapter number. If you have a smaller class than this, you'll need to give some children two words. If you have more than 15 children you'll want to do the verse twice giving each child multiple words, so that each child has a word. **When I say "go" you should put your slips of paper in the right order.** (On a table or on the floor).

When you have the verse in the correct order let me know. Then we'll all say the verse together! Have the students repeat the verse several times, boys then girls and in groups until you are certain the students know the verse well.

Concept One: Our friendships come from God.

Show the picture of the group of friends. **Friendship is a good thing. Every loving relationship in our life is a gift from God. The friends and loving family members in our lives are good gifts from God. They are continuous signs to us that God is good and cares for us.**

Listen to this Bible verse from 1 John 4:7-8: "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." Here we see that God is love and is the source of all love and friendship. Every loving relationship in our life is a gift from him.

God formed the first human friendship and loving relationship. God created Eve to be with Adam and to be his friend and companion.

God knew that we all need human friends, relationship, closeness and a sense of belonging. God provides this to us through people – just as he did for Adam and Eve. The friendship and love we experience from friends and family is from God and evidence of his love and care toward us. Hand out one lesson worksheet to each child.

Think of a friend or loving family member that God has put into your life. This person is a gift from God to you. On your lesson worksheet there is a place for you to write the name of that person (or persons). It says, "Thank you God for ____." Fill in the blank with the names of one or more of your friends or family that God has given you. They are evidence that God is good and cares about you.

Concept Two: Beauty comes from God.

Show the picture of the beautiful flower or bring in a cut flower that is beautiful. Ask them to look closely at it and tell you what is so amazing about it.

You're right, this is beautiful. It is good and every good thing comes from God. God created everything that is beautiful. We all need beauty. Beauty inspires us and makes our life rich. How do you feel when you look at something beautiful? Ask the children to give examples of things they find beautiful and how it makes them feel or think.

God is beautiful and is the source of everything beautiful. Listen to this verse from Psalm

27:4, "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. "

We hear the writer wanting to experience the beauty of the Lord. Beauty and the ability to experience it and be inspired by it is a gift from God. You have given some examples of beauty, but what are some other ways or areas that God gives us beauty? Don't just think about beautiful things we see but also beautiful things we hear, feel, smell, or taste. For example, the call of a bird, the feel of soft cloth, the smell of a flower or perfume, the taste of a favorite fruit or treat. Allow for the students' responses.

There are so many ways that God gives us beauty – in nature, in people, in music. He has given us so many things that are beautiful! Beauty is amazing evidence that God is good and enjoys giving us good things.

On your worksheets there is another thank you note and picture to God. Please draw a picture of something beautiful that you really enjoy. Fill in the thank you note to God that says, "Thank you God for _____. It's beautiful!"

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

We saw the picture of a football (soccer) player at the beginning of the lesson. Some of you are great at sports. Others are good at art, or reading, writing or building things.

In the Bible, God explains that he gives ability and skill to people. Listen to these verses about the ability, skills, and creativity God gave to a man called Bezalel and to the blacksmith.

Exodus 31:2-5: "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts -- to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship."

Isaiah 54:16: "See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work. "

God made each of you with all of your abilities, skills, and creativity! They are good things that we enjoy. All of our ability, skill, and creativity ultimately come from God. He is the source. These too are evidence to us of his goodness.

What is it that you like to do? Allow children to share. God-given ability is not limited to being able to kick a ball or make a craft. Your ability to think, create, solve problems, see, hear, and many other things all came from God. You are each a very special person to

God! Everything that is good comes from God. Your abilities are evidence that God is good.

Whether you are an athlete, artist, writer, or whatever you do, how many of you just want to be average in ability? I'm sure none of you! You all want to be the best you can. This desire to excel is a good thing. It too comes from God. So we see that even our desire to excel at something is a good gift from God and is evidence of his goodness and love.

I'd like for you to fill out the third thank you note and picture to God on your lesson worksheet. There is a space for you to draw a picture of something you're especially good at. Please fill in the thank you note to God that says, "Thank you God that I can _____."

Concept Four: Truth comes from God.

All that is true comes from God and is evidence to us that he is good. Listen to what Jesus says in John 14:6, "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life.'" God is the source of everything that is true because he is the truth!

In contrast, the Bible says that all lies come from the devil. It says the devil is the father of lies. John 8:44 says, "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

How does God deliver truth to us? Wait for responses. He delivers truth to us primarily through the Bible that he provided. He also gives us truth about his nature and character through all that he created. For example, today we are looking at the truth of God's goodness through all the good that we experience that he created.

Every good thing is from God. Truth is good. Whatever is true is a good gift from God. It is evidence that God is good and that he loves us.

I'd like you to fill out the fourth picture and thank you note on your worksheet. Draw a picture of the Bible. Fill in the word "true" in the blank that says, "All that is _____ comes from God. It is a good gift from God."

Concept Five: Science and all knowledge comes from God.

If you like to learn about tree, bees, people or anything found in the natural world, then you like to study about science! Science is the study of everything God made or created. Science and knowledge are good. They are good gifts from God and evidence of his goodness.

Proverbs 2:6 says, "For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."

God knows everything about creation even before the scientists discover it because he created it and is the source of science and all knowledge. God desires for us to discover the secrets and knowledge he put into the universe. He probably smiles when a scientist finally discovers or figures out a formula that God knew and designed in the beginning.

Can you think of anything about the universe that God might not know? (Wait for response). So, God knows everything about math, science, philosophy, etc. God is the great mathematician, the best scientist, the wisest philosopher, the most awesome everything! Science is from God so it is good. Being good, it is direct evidence of God's goodness and his love toward us.

I'd like for you to fill out the last thank you picture and note to God. Draw a picture of something in God's world that you know something about. Fill out the thank you note below it that says, "Thank you God for letting me learn about _____."

Closing Action Point

Let's review our memory verse one more time and then play the game of *Hot Potato* again. Say the verse with the children several times. **We'll pass around the ball while I clap** (or play music). **When the clapping** (or music) **stops the person who is holding the ball must say one good thing that God gives them to experience. Try to think of something unique that you thought about during this lesson. Let's begin.**

Play until all children have had the chance to name one good gift from God. Finish by adding your own ideas, mentioning things not covered by the children but mentioned in the lesson like the ability to run or jump, or to study and learn some area of science, or having a special friend, etc.

Prayer Circle

Close in prayer. Pray as you feel led. Here is a sample.

Thank you God for all your good gifts and how they show us just how good you are. Help us to always remember that every good thing we enjoy or benefit from, no matter how small or different, comes from you. Thank you for being the source of everything that is good in our lives. Thank you also for the ability to enjoy the goodness around us –ears to hear beautiful sounds, fingers to touch smooth cloth, eyes to see flowers and sunsets, tongues to taste (name a favorite food), **noses to smell** (a favorite smell). **In Jesus' name we**

pray to you.

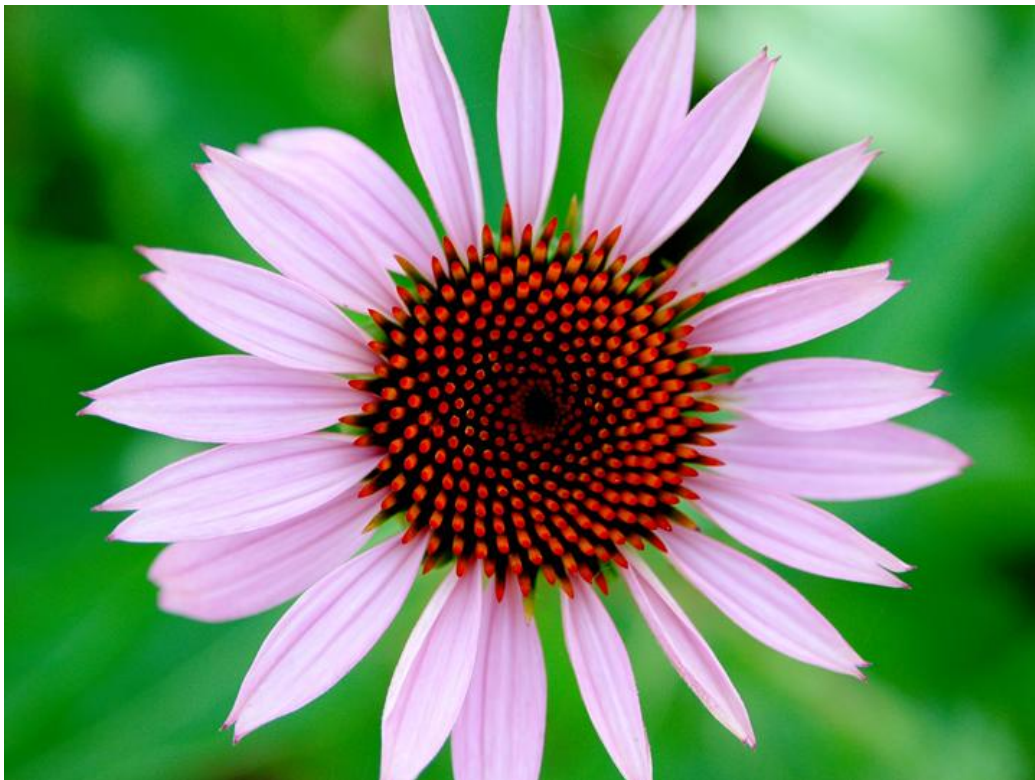
Thank you God for _____.

Thank you God for _____.
It's beautiful!

Thank you God that I can
_____.

All that is _____ comes from
God. It is a good gift from God.

Thank you God for letting me learn about _____.







Unit One – Lesson 4

God’s Character and Power Is Revealed in Creation

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

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

The Truth: Everything God made reveals something about his existence, character, and power. Things like: does God exist, what is God like? These are fundamental questions with answers 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 through what has been made.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Children will increasingly see and discover God’s character and power revealed in what has been 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 in creation reveals something about God.

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

Objects from creation, pencils, lesson worksheets, bottle with Romans 1:20 taped to it

Scripture References

Romans 1:20

Welcome Time

Greet each child by name and let them know you are glad to see them.

Introduce the ***Pebble Review*** game. Pass around a bag of small pebbles that you have collected. Ask the children to take as many as they think they will need. Give no more explanation than this. After all students have had the chance to take pebbles, tell them that they will have to share about as many good gifts that God gives as the number of stones they took. Allow each student the chance to share.

It's interesting that we used pebbles in our review game. Today we're going to learn that God reveals things about himself through what he created. Everything created reveals something about God. Even these simple pebbles reveal something about God.

Attention Grabber

If you do not have immediate access to the outdoors or this is not feasible, gather a large selection of items from nature like flowers grass, plants, sticks, seeds, stones, dirt, etc. before class. Put the items on a table and allow the children to choose one item that they will use during the lesson.

We are going to learn about God by looking at creation. In order to do this we need to collect some items that God made in creation. I'm going to give you five minutes. Please go outside and collect one thing that you find in nature. Remember it must be something natural, not something man-made. See if you can find something interesting. When you come back in we will look at those items more closely to see what they show us about God.

The Lesson

Ask the children to take several minutes to closely examine and study their item, looking at all of its detail.

What do you find most interesting about your item? Allow some of the students to share their thoughts.

Listen to this verse in Genesis 2:1, “So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed.”(NIRV) What does this tell you about the item that you have in your hand? Allow for the students’ responses. **You’re right, God made everything. He designed what you have in your hand!**

Memory Verse Moment

We’re going to learn a memory verse today that makes what you hold in your hand special. The verse is Romans 1:20 and says, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities -- his eternal power and divine nature -- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

Take out your bottle that you have labeled Romans 1:20. **Let’s play a game called *Spin the Verse*.⁹ Our Bible verse is taped to this bottle. I need a volunteer to read the verse and then spin the bottle. Whoever the bottle is pointing to when it stops spinning must read the verse or say the verse from memory. Then spin the bottle again. We’ll continue spinning and switching persons to say the verse until everyone has gotten a turn.**

What does this verse tell us? Allow for the students’ responses. **This verse tells us that creation reveals God and that there is no excuse for anyone saying, “I don’t know that God exists” or “I don’t know anything about God”.**

Where else does God reveal himself? Allow for the students’ responses. **God also reveals himself in the Bible. But, today we are going to look at how God reveals himself through what he has created. We’re going to look at the objects that you found.** Use the objects that the children found to explain the following characteristics about God. These are common characteristics that will be found in most of the items that the children have selected.

Concept One: Creation reveals God as the master designer.

Hold up an intricate flower or some other detailed plant that a child found.

Does this plant look like it just happened or does it look like it was designed? Why? Allow

⁹ This game can be found at kidzplace.org at http://www.kidzplace.org/atf/cf/%7B899BDF78-4CC9-48F8-8AD7-2A88AC21D94E%7D/missions_activity.pdf

for the children's responses. **You're right, something this intricate and complex couldn't have happened by random chance. This plant shows design. Where ever there is design, there is a designer. The maker of this plant is the master designer. God is the master designer.**

Some people believe that there is no master designer. Rather, everything in creation evolved over billions of years from nothing to its current state through random chance. However, this process of evolution would be a miracle even greater than creation. It would require things to happen that go against the laws of nature and reason.

The intricate design and function of this plant shows us that it was designed. This flower shows us that there is a master designer. This master designer is God – the one who created it.

Concept Two: Creation reveals God's love and care.

Did anyone bring in a piece of fruit that has good taste and nutrition? God must surely love us in order to provide us with such tasty things to eat. Do you remember our previous lesson and the memory verse? Let's review the verse. James 1:17 says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights..." In that lesson we learned that all the good things God created and gives to us reveal to us that he is good.

What is something that your mother cooks or bakes that you really like? Allow for responses. Why does she work so hard to give you good food? Wait for children's responses. It is because she loves you. The same is true of God! He loves us so much that he takes care of us and created good things for us to eat.

This simple piece of fruit shows us that God is good and that he loves us and cares for us. What other things in creation show us that God is good? Allow for responses. For example, a piece of wood can be used to build houses to live in, to cook our food and to make a fire to keep us warm. All of the useful things in nature that God gives us (like wood) reveal that he is good.

Concept Three: Creation reveals God's strength.

If a child has a rock or a piece of wood – something that is strong or hard to break or damage - ask them to hold it up.

What characteristics about God do we find in this item? Allow for responses.

This rock is strong. It is hard to break. It does not change or go away. It will be here long after you and I are gone. These are all characteristics of God that we can see revealed in

the rock he made. The Bible even refers to God as our rock. He is powerful and strong. He does not change or go away. He is everlasting - like a rock.

Creation reveals God is strong. What other things in creation show us that God is strong?
Allow for responses.

Concept Four: Creation reveals God's rational mind and nature.

Who has a plant that seems to be especially orderly and neatly put together? Ask the student with such a plant to hold it up and describe everything about it that indicates order and symmetry.

What do you think this plant tells us about God? Discuss.

This is evidence that God is rational. He is not chaotic or out of control, but thinks and makes things orderly, logically or rationally. Everything that God shows a rational design and works well.

Creation reveals that God is rational and not chaotic.

Closing Action Point

Today we learned that God's invisible qualities, his power and nature, can be clearly seen and understood from what he has made. So, everyone is without excuse. God has revealed his nature and power in creation! I'd like for you to look at and study the object you found at the beginning of the lesson. Draw a picture of it on the worksheet I will give you. Then fill out the statement below it. "This object is a _____ (name of item) _____. It shows me that God is _____ (characteristic it reveals about God) _____."

Allow students time to work on their pictures.

We need to always be on the lookout for what God shows us about himself in creation! There are three more boxes on your worksheets. This coming week I'd like you to draw three more things that you see in creation and record what they tell you about God.

Prayer Circle

What did you see or understand about God from your objects? Allow for students' responses.

Close in prayer.

Thank you God for revealing yourself to us through the Bible, and also through what you have created. As a result everyone can know something about your power and nature and be without excuse. Through your creation we can see that you are the master designer, you are good, strong, rational, orderly, and you love us. Help us to always be observant and learn about you through what you have created and help us others do the same.

This is a _____.

This is a _____.

This is a _____.

This is a _____.

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 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. 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 every aspect of life is also good and perfect, and they can trust his instructions.

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 compared to God's way.

The Benefit of Knowing This Truth: Every person, young and old, wants to live a good and fruitful 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 particularly includes their lives. The best and surest way to have a good and truly fruitful and productive life is to follow God's design and plan.

Following God's design does not mean we will have a life free of difficulty and pain. But, the Bible does say that God's way 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 this truth, children can live confident that God's way to live is the very best possible way. 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 how to live our lives will lead to the best possible 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 includes our lives as well

***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

Box of leaves, leaf information sheets, pencils, *crazy cards*, small ball

Scripture References

Genesis 1:11-12, 24-25, 31; Psalm 18:30

Welcome Time

Welcome all the children by name and let them know you are glad to see them. Ask the students to take out their pictures that they drew of things they observed and learned about God from creation this past week.

We will share our drawings by tossing a ball to each other. The person who has the ball is given the opportunity to speak. Those who don't have the ball are to politely listen. Please share one of the things you found in creation this week and what it tells you about God. When you're finished sharing you'll toss the ball to someone else who wants to share. Start by tossing the ball to a child who would like to share. They share and then toss to another. Continue in this manner until all children have had the opportunity to share who want to.

Attention Grabber

Allow each child to come up to the front of the classroom and choose a leaf out of the box of

leaves that you have brought to class. After each child has gotten a leaf, divide the students into four groups.

I'm going to give you a leaf information sheet. I'd like for you to fill out these sheets in your groups. You need to write down as many observations (things you notice) as you can about the leaf and also write down anything else your group knows about leaves. Please begin.

Allow children several minutes to work on their "Observations about our leaf" sheets. When groups are finished, call on one person in each group to share their group's list. If you have access to a chalkboard or whiteboard, make a large list of everything the children mention.

You have made so many great observations about your leaves! You're great scientists! Last week we learned that the things in nature that God has made can reveal something about God to us. Today, we're going to look more closely at this leaf and see what it can tell us about God and his plan for our lives.

The Lesson

Memory Verse Moment

Our memory verse today is Genesis 1:31 and says, "God saw all that he had made and it was very good." I have it written on this poster. Let's say it two times together. Then we'll play a little game called *Crazy Cards*.¹⁰ Each one of you will get the chance to draw a card then say the verse while doing the action that is listed on the card. A lot of these actions are very funny, so be ready! Let's begin.

Before class cut out the Crazy Cards and put them into a bag. Allow students to draw a card and say the verse, doing the action until all students have had the chance to say the verse.

Concept One: Plant life has a very good design.

Each of your leaves is like a tiny factory. Like a factory it takes in raw materials and uses these to produce something. The raw materials include light from the sun, carbon dioxide from the air, and water from the ground. The leaf converts or produces these raw materials into something new. It makes food for the plant and it produces oxygen that it puts back into the air.

¹⁰ This memory verse review game can be found at e-how at http://www.ehow.com/info_8066610_memory-verse-teaching-ideas.html

Here is how it works. The roots of the plant take in water from the ground. (Point to the plant you have brought to class to help illustrate this.) **This water travels up the root, through the stem and to the leaves. The leaf takes in light from the sun and carbon dioxide from the air. With these three elements the plant produces food for itself. Plus, it produces pure oxygen as a by-product which it emits from its leaves.**

This process is quite amazing all by itself but there is one more interesting part. Take a deep breath in. What you're breathing in right now is called oxygen. Without this oxygen you would quickly suffocate and die.

Now breathe out. Now cup your hands around your mouth and keep on breathing in and out. Or, if you have a paper bag, demonstrate breathing into a paper bag. **If you keep on doing this you will get light-headed because what you are exhaling and breathing in is called carbon dioxide.**

What's so amazing is that God designed plants to work exactly the opposite of humans. They need carbon dioxide to live, and that is what we exhale. We need oxygen to live and that is what plants produce or exhale. Exhale on your leaf. You are giving that leaf exactly what it needs to live. Take a breath from a living leaf. It is producing exactly what you and all animals need in order to live. That's amazing!

What do you think about this plan? Allow for the children's answers. **This is such a great plan! What do you think this plan reveals about God?** Allow for the children's response.

God's design for plants shows how his design for how things can best live is perfect! Let's listen to these verses from Genesis 1:11-12, "Then God said, 'Let the land produce vegetation; seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.' And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good."

God looked at all the plant life that he had made and all the systems built into them and how they function and he saw that it was good. It all worked perfectly.

Concept Two: Animal life has a good design.

Not only did God design plant life to work in an amazing way, he also designed animal life to work perfectly. Take fish for example. God designed fish so that they could live and breathe under water. He did this by giving the fish gills. The gills allow the fish to take in and extract oxygen from the water. This too is amazing. The only requirement is that the fish function as God designed it by staying in water. When it moves out of God's design by being out of the water, it dies.

Listen to these verses from Genesis 1:24-25 that talk about God’s creation of animals: “And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kind, the livestock according to their kinds and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kind. And God saw that it was good.”

God looked at all the animal life that he had made and all the functions and systems he built into the animals and he saw that it was good. It all worked perfectly.

Is there anything in creation that God did not design to work well? Be ready to share how the earth and creation was affected by the fall causing aspects of creation to be destructive such as destructive floods and storms, plagues of crickets that eat all vegetation, etc. But, this does not mean that God’s design for creation is flawed.

Concept Three: Our bodies are well designed.

Raise your hands and then bend your finger. What made your finger bend?

Allow for the children’s responses.

This is a very simple example, but even something as easy as bending your finger is designed perfectly by God. Think about what all is involved in bending your finger. God made your finger flexible. He in joints and surrounded it with skin that allows it to bend. He added muscles that move it. He made nerves that go from your from your brain to your finger to tell your finger to bend when your brain thinks it! God designed your finger amazingly well and it works perfectly! This is just one small part of your body. Think of how well your eyes and ears are designed, your brain, heart, feet, knees, lungs, blood stream, and your nervous system. The list goes on an on. God’s design for the human body is very good. God proclaimed it so at the end of creation.

Concept Four: God’s design for our lives is also perfect.

It is obvious to see and believe that God’s design for plants, animals, and our bodies is very good.

But, when it comes to God’s design for how to live our daily lives and relationships we struggle. We struggle to believe and trust that God knows what is really best for us when it comes to family, friendships, relationships, marriage, work, the use of money, eating, playing, and business. Like Adam and Eve in the garden we question whether God’s ways are really best for us. Instead, we go our own way and follow after other ideas. Even though God created our lives and understands what is best and good, we think we know best how to live our lives.

Yet, it is clear from nature that God knows what he is doing in his design for life and how to live life best. He knows what is good and perfect. King David ultimately recognized this and wrote, “As for God, his way is perfect.” (Psalm 18:30)

Whether it is business, friendship, family, marriage, work, how we use money, or pleasure, God has a good (even perfect) design for how to live our lives. But, we have to trust and follow it.

God’s design and his instructions for how to live our lives is found in the Bible.

Let’s think of some of the instructions God has given us in the Bible for how to live well.

Divide the children up into groups of 3-4 and have them list 4-5 instructions God gives us in the Bible. Have them discuss and decide why the instruction is helpful and leads to a good life and community. For example, God says to love one another, do unto others as you would have them do to you, tell the truth, respect others property, keep your word, work diligently, etc.

After 10 minutes or so, have each group share a couple of their instructions with the whole group.

Ask the children which of the instructions God gives is most difficult for them to follow or trust in.

Closing Action Point

Have you ever seen a fish that does not trust God’s design for living in the water but is afraid that it will drown, and so decides to live on land? Have you ever seen a bird that does not trust God’s plan for flying and so chooses to spend its whole life walking on the ground? Have you every met someone, besides yourself, who did not trust God’s design for their life and so decided to not follow God’s instruction? Strange that animals stick with and trust God’s design for how to live but humans, who are so much more intelligent, often do not.

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

This is true in our lives as well. When we follow God’s instructions for living, our lives work better. This doesn’t mean that we’ll never have problems but rather God will use whatever comes our way for good.

Prayer Circle

Close in prayer thanking God for his good designs for our lives. Ask him to give the children

help in trusting and believing his good design and then following it.

Crazy Card

Say the verse while
turning around

Crazy Card

Say the verse while
hopping up and
down on one foot

Crazy Card

Say the verse while
jumping up and
down

Crazy Card

Whisper the verse

Crazy Card

Say the verse while
running in place

Crazy Card

Say the verse while
walking backwards

Observations about our leaf

Observations about our leaf

Observations about our leaf

Observations about our leaf

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 presents answers.

Unit Two – Lesson 1

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 all his forces work extra hard to distort this truth and/or replace it with many lies. His most basic lie is that we evolved 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, another version of his lie is that we are created by some spiritual being but not in God’s 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 others 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.

Supplies/Materials

2 sheets of blank paper, group worksheet, pencils, 4 sets of verse cards.

Scripture References

Genesis 1:27, 6:6; John 4:24; I John 1:5; Exodus 34:6-7; Isaiah 65:19; Exodus 4:14; Psalm 92:5; 1 Samuel 24:5; Hebrews 2:7; Matthew 22:15-22

Welcome Time

Introduce the Icebreaker game ***Come to Order***. Ask students to get in line according to their height. The children who are the shortest should be at the front of the line and the children who are the tallest should be at the back of the line. When they have put themselves in order, review the memory verse from the last lesson with them. Have them all repeat Genesis 1:31 after you. Ask them to turn to one neighbor and say the memory verse. Then have them turn to their other neighbor and say one thing they learned from the last lesson. Assist them with hints if needed.

Attention Grabber

Hand out paper and pencil to each student.

Today we're going to learn about how God made us all in his image and how he created us all so uniquely.

I've given each of you a sheet of paper and a pencil. I'd like for you to trace one of your hands on the sheet of paper. After you've traced your hand, please put your name next to your hand so we all know that it belongs to you.

Ask one child to hold up their handprint.

Whose handprint is this? Allow for response. **Is this the actual hand of** (name of person)? **No, it is only a drawing of their hand. It is the same shape as their hand. It looks like their hand. Maybe it even smells like their hand if the person was just cooking!** (Smell the handprint and joke about it smelling like food). **However, it is not actually** (name of person's) **hand, but rather a drawing that resembles their hand. The drawing of their handprint is a pattern or image of their hand.**

Today we want to look at how each of us is the “handprint of God.” We are each made in his image. We are patterned after God’s image. Isn’t that amazing?!

The Lesson

Concept One: We are created in the image of God.

Listen to what the Bible says in Genesis 1:27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. The Living Bible translation in English reads, “God patterned us after himself.”

Note: There have been situations where the word ‘image’ in the Bible has been wrongly translated to mean “idol image.” This gives an incorrect meaning and leads to misunderstanding. If this is an issue, discuss the following.

To be made in the image of God or patterned after him does not mean we are created to be like an idol image. An idol is an image or something that people make to represent a god and they worship it. This is not what is meant in Genesis 1:27.

To be made in the image of God means that we *resemble* God. We are patterned after God himself. God did this so that we can relate to God and he to us -- and ultimately to bring glory to him.

We resemble God but it’s not in the way that you may think! We do not resemble God in the way we look. He does not have a body with a nose and ears and eyebrows. The Bible says that God is not a human but is spirit and light (John 4:24, I John 1:5).

If we do not look like God physically, then how do we resemble God? What does it mean to be made in his likeness or patterned after him? Allow for response and discussion. Make a list of the children’s ideas on the board. Use their responses to lead into the following points.

Concept Two: We resemble God - God feels emotion.

Let’s divide up into four groups. We’ll use these groups for the remainder of the lesson.

Hand out one worksheet to each group.

There is a scenario written at the top of the first box on the page. I’d like you to read that scenario in your group and draw a picture of a face showing the emotion that you would feel. Also write down the word for the emotion you would feel on the space provided.

After groups have had the chance to draw and write, call on each group to read their scenario and share the emotion they would feel.

Have you ever thought about the fact that God feels many of the same feelings you do? What are some of the emotions God feels that he gave to us? Allow for response. I'll read some verses that show emotions that God feels. Raise your hand and tell me what emotion it is.

Exodus 34:6-7: "And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness...'"
(Compassion and love)

Isaiah 65:19: "I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people..." (Joy)

Genesis 6:6: "The Lord was grieved...and his heart was filled with pain." (Sadness)

Exodus 4:14: "Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses." (Anger)

Concept Three: We resemble God - God reasons and thinks.

In the second box on your group worksheet I have a simple math problem. Please solve the problem in your group and raise your hand when you are finished. I'll check to see if you got it right.

Allow groups time to work. When all are finished continue the discussion.

We resemble God in the fact that he also gave us the ability to reason and think. Our ability to reason is what makes us many times superior to animals. Your ability to reason is extremely valuable - it helps you solve problems like the one you solved in your group. This ability comes from God in whose image we are made. God reasons and thinks. The difference is that his thoughts and reasoning is always perfect!

Listen to this verse from Psalm 92:5: "How great are your works, O Lord, how profound your thoughts!" God's thoughts are amazing! How wonderful that he has created us in his image and allows us to think and reason too!

Concept Four: We resemble God - God has a will.

In the third box on your group worksheet is a common problem you may have. I'd like for you to read the scenario and decide what you will do. Write what you will do in the space below the box. When you are all finished I'll ask one person in your group to read the scenario and another person to read what you decided to do.

Allow groups time to work. When they are finished ask all groups to share.

In this exercise you showed that you have a will. Your will is the choices and decisions

that you make. God gave us a will because he has a will. It was God's will that he send Jesus his son to die for us. Jesus decided or willed to obey and go to the cross. Because we are made in God's image, we also have a will. We can will or decide to love our neighbor as our self, or we can will to live and think only about our selves.

What if you knew something was good for you but you had no will to decide to do it?
Allow for the children's ideas.

Your will is extremely valuable. It is an important way that you bear the image of God because with your will you can decide and act.

Concept Five: We resemble God - God knows right from wrong.

In the fourth box on your group worksheet is a short story of someone who made a decision. I'd like for you to read that story and then decide if the person made the right choice or the wrong choice. You'll fill that in on the space at the bottom of the story. I'll give your groups time to work and when you finish, you can tell me what you decided and why.

Allow groups time to work and then call on each group to share.

You just showed in that activity that God gave us the ability to know right from wrong.
This is another way that we resemble God. God knows right from wrong because he is the one who determines what is right and wrong.

Knowing right from wrong is so important. **One famous person** (James Madison, U.S. president) **said that the ability to know right from wrong - our conscience - is our most valuable possession. We need to be thankful for our conscience.**

What if you had no conscience and could never tell good from bad, right from wrong? What if no one in this whole city/town/village could tell right from wrong? What would happen? Allow for response. **People who have lost their conscience hurt others and do not feel bad about it.**

1 Samuel 24:5 says, "Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his (Saul's) robe."

David and his men had trapped Saul, the king, in a cave. David was able to sneak up behind Saul and cut off a part of Saul's robe. But then David felt bad because he had dishonored King Saul. Because of his conscience, David decided not to harm the king like he and his men had planned to do. God helped David, through his conscience, to do the right thing. How do you think David would have felt if he had done the wrong thing anyway? Allow for response. **If we pay attention to our conscience, God will use it to help**

us do the right thing, too.

The fact that we have a conscience and can know right from wrong shows that we are made in the image of God.

There are so many more ways that we are made in the image of God. But who can tell me the four ways that we learned today? Allow for the children's responses. Review the four ways with them if they do not remember.

God considers us very special because he made us like himself. Of everything that God ever created or made, we are the beings that are made in his image. Hebrews 2:7 says, "You made them for a little while lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor."

How does this make you feel? Call on several students for their response.

Memory Verse Moment

Let's learn a verse that says we are made in God's image. It's Genesis 1:27 and says, "So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them." We'll play a little game in your groups. I have a set of cards for each of your groups with this memory verse written on it. I am not going to give you the cards in order. Please put the cards in order of how you would say the memory verse. When you have the cards in order, please raise your hands and I'll check it. You'll then say the verse to me. Play several rounds of the game so that children practice saying the verse several times.

Closing Action Point

You did a great job learning that verse! Let's listen to a really interesting story found in Matthew 22:15-22. Listen carefully so you can answer some questions at the end.

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

Jesus told the Pharisee to give to Caesar what was Caesar's. What was that?

How did Jesus know that the coin was Caesar's? (It was made in Caesar's image).

Jesus then said to give to God what is God's. If the coin made with Caesar's image on it belonged to Caesar and we are made in God's image, then who do we belong to? Allow the children to respond.

Who does that include in this room? Allow the children to respond. **It includes everyone.**

We are all made in God's image, so we all belong to God! I don't know about you, but that makes me feel special. How does that make you feel? Allow for the children's responses.

Hand out a blank sheet of paper and crayons or markers to the students. Ask the children to draw something unique about themselves or something they especially like. Ask them each to write at the bottom of their picture, "I am made in God's image. I belong to God!" Have the children take their pictures and come join you in the prayer circle.

Prayer Circle

Close in prayer asking the children to hold up their picture. Pray for each child by name saying, **Thank you God that you created (child's name) in your image. Thank you that he/she belongs to you.**

Four ways we resemble God

You just found out that one of your best friends has been saying bad things about you.

$$\begin{array}{r} 24 \\ + 16 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

You know that you should do something about the friend who has been talking about you. You think about what the best solution would be.

What do you decide to do?

This friend who has been talking about you denies that she has been saying bad things about you when you ask her about it. She denies it even though three people have heard her say these things. She gets so angry that she doesn't speak to you for weeks.

Did this girl saying the bad things make the right or wrong decision?

Genesis 1:27

So God

created

people

in his

own image;

God

patterned them

after

himself;

male and

female

he

created

them.

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 individuality and 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

Inkpad, blank paper, handprints from last lesson, partner interview, Certificates of Uniqueness and Worth

Scripture References

Psalms 139:13; Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 49:5

Welcome Time

Before class, cover up the students' names on the handprint picture that they made during the last class. Hand out one handprint to each student. Ask them to try and find the person they think it belongs to. When they think they have found a match, have them uncover the name. If they are correct they should tell that person one thing they learned in the last lesson or say the memory verse: Genesis 1:27. If they didn't find a match they should go find the person the handprint belongs to and give it to them. They then should tell that person one thing they learned last lesson or say the memory verse.

Attention Grabber

For those of you who found the person belonging to your handprint without checking the name, why were you successful?

Allow for the student's responses. **It was possible because God made each of our hands unique. No one's hand is exactly the same as someone else's. Let's find out some other ways that we are unique.**

Have all the children close their eyes. Pick several children to quietly go up front and stand in a line. Then tell them to one at a time say the word, "wonderful" when you point to them. Have them each say the word, out loud and one at a time, in their natural voice.

Ask the seated children (who still have their eyes closed and have not peeked) to guess the name of the child simply by the sound of their voice. Have them raise their hands, and then call on them, letting different children guess. As the children up front are "guessed," they are to sit down.

Do this exercise a couple of times with different groups until all of the children have had an opportunity to be up front.

How did we do at guessing the correct name of the child by their voice? Are any of the voices exactly the same? No, none are the same! Each voice is unique! Isn't that amazing? Our voices are unique and our handprints are unique. There is much about us that is unique!

Today, we are going to look at how God made us each unique and special, and learn why this is so important.

The Lesson

Memory Verse Moment

Today's memory verse is Psalm 139:13, "I praise you Lord because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Before class print enough of the verse phrases in the resource section of this lesson so that each child has a phrase. Have the children practice saying this memory verse with you until you are confident they all have it. Then, lead them in playing ***Verse Match Up***. Give each child one phrase and ask them to find people who have the other two phrases of the verse. When all have formed their phrase groups, lead the students in saying the verse several times.

Concept One: You and I are uniquely made by God.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made! There was a man in the Bible called Jeremiah. God said of Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5) There was another man in the Bible whose name was Isaiah. This man wrote of God saying, "... he who formed me in the womb to be his servant ..." (Isaiah 49:5)

These verses show us that each of us is so unique and loved by God that he bothered to know us before we were even born. He is the one who formed us in our mother's wombs to be special. We've looked at our handprint and voices as ways that God uniquely made us. Let's look at some other ways we are uniquely made.

Making Thumbprints

If possible and you have the supplies, have each child make their own thumbprint. If this is not feasible, review the different pictures of the thumbprints in the resource section. Have each child place their right thumb on an inkpad. Help them make a print on the paper. Have the students write their names under their thumbprints. (Give the children tissue to clean off the ink when finished).

Invite all of the students to compare and look at each other's thumbprints.

Are any of the thumbprints the same? What are some differences you see? Why do you think God decided to make each of our thumbprints so different? There is no "correct" answer.

As a matter of fact, our fingerprints are so unique that police officers use them to solve crimes. If a person leaves their fingerprints on objects at the scene of a crime, a police officer can use them to catch this person because none of us have the same fingerprint.

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

So far we have looked at how God made our hands unique, our voice unique, and our thumbprint unique. Starting with these, let's make a list as long as we can of the ways God made us unique? What are some other ways God made us each unique?

Make a list on a chalkboard or piece of poster paper. You may need to help the children come up with ideas for this list. They will probably give external or physical differences. Start with the items already mentioned. Other examples of ways people are physically different include the color and shape of our eye, profile, facial features, height, foot size, body shape, etc. Label this list "Outside (or External) Uniqueness". List as many ways as you can. Have fun with the children on this!

These are some of the external or outside ways that you and I are totally unique. No two of us in the entire world are exactly the same. There are seven billion people in the world, and no two of us look exactly the same. Even identical twins look different in some ways! God made each of us unique and special!

There are also some wonderful inside or internal¹¹ ways that each of us is unique and different from one another. Can you think of some of these? Make a second list labeled "Inside (or Internal) Uniqueness". You will probably need to give the children hints on some of these points. Examples include:

- Each person has his or her own tastes or likes/dislikes. For example, no other person likes all of the exact same foods that I like, with the exact same spice, etc.
- No two people think exactly the same. If we put five people in a room and asked them to be quiet and think about something, no one would be thinking about the same thing.

¹¹The inspiration for looking at the internal ways we are unique came from a workshop of Dr. Elizabeth Youmans in Lima, Peru in 2002.

- Each person has a unique temperament or personality. No two persons have the exact same personality.
- Each person has unique gifts and talents. One person is more observant than another. Another is a better dancer. One person reads better, another does math better. One person whistles better than another, etc.

You and I are each uniquely made by God. We are each special! Every single person is made by God, bears his image, and is precious to him. The Bible says that God knew you even before you were made. Let's say our memory verse again to remind us of this. Lead the children in saying the verse. **Psalm 139:13, "I praise you Lord because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." You are very special to God!**

Let's find out more about how unique you all really are! I have a short interview sheet for you with a list of questions. Get with another person and ask each other these questions. Your answers will show just how unique each one of you really is! Please find someone and do the interview.

Allow students time to complete their interviews. When they have finished bring them back together for a brief discussion.

Why do you think that God made each of us so unique? Allow for the students' ideas. **I think God created all of us so unique so that we could each uniquely bring him glory. To bring glory to God means to cause people to recognize God's existence, his greatness, his power and goodness. How do you each uniquely help others recognize God's greatness and goodness? You do this by fully being the special person God made you to be. You cannot be me. I cannot be you. Each of us is special to God. Each one of us can show others something special about God and bring glory to him through all that makes us unique.**

Closing Action Point

Certificate

Present to each child a personalized copy of the "CERTIFICATE OF UNIQUENESS AND WORTH" (see resource section). Read each certificate out loud and, if possible, give one special characteristic about each child as you present the certificate to them. A special characteristic could be that they arrive on time, write well, have a beautiful smile, have a great laugh, show concern for animals, work hard, etc. This could take some effort, especially if you have a large group, but it would be remembered by the children.

After you have given out the certificates have the children join you in a circle.

Prayer Circle

Close in prayer, thanking God for each student and for the ways that he uniquely created them. Ask God to help them live their lives uniquely in a way that causes others to recognize and praise God's greatness, goodness, and power – bringing glory to God.

God made every person's fingerprints unique.
How are these four thumbprints different from
one another?



Interview Questions

compare your answers with each other

1. What color do you like? _____

2. What do you most like to talk about?

3. What makes you happy? _____

4. What makes you sad? _____

5. What foods do you like to eat? _____

6. What do you like to learn about? _____

1. What color do you like? _____

2. What do you most like to talk about?

3. What makes you happy? _____

4. What makes you sad? _____

5. What foods do you like to eat? _____

6. What do you like to learn about? _____

Certificate of Uniqueness and Worth

This is to recognize that

_____ (Child's name) _____

Is uniquely made by God in every way

Is uniquely precious and valuable to God

Is uniquely loved by God

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

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

Psalm 139:13

Date: _____ Signed: _____
Teacher's Name

Psalm 139:13

*I praise you
Lord*

*because I am
fearfully and
wonderfully
made.*

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. If girls and boys know that women and men are both made in the image of God and all that this implies, they can live out this truth with courage and treat one another accordingly. They can fully support one another as girls and boys to develop all their potential and be 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

2 sheets of blank paper, group worksheet, pencils, attention grabber pictures, crazy cards from Unit 2 Lesson 1

Scripture References

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

Welcome Time

Have the students play ***Come to Order*** again. This time ask the students to line up by measuring their arm from their elbow to the tip of their longest finger. Line up from shortest to longest. Once they have put themselves in order give directions.

I've asked you to get in arm length order to show that God makes all of us unique. No two of us have the exact same arm length. Please turn to both people next to you and share the memory verse and one thought from the last lesson.

Attention Grabber

Divide the children into four groups. Give each group a pair of pictures: small fruit vs. large fruit, one cow vs. herd of cows, 4 cokes vs. 1 coke, mango vs. banana, one coin vs. bag of money, 4x1 or 4, and woman compared to man.

Ask each group to decide which picture or item is more valuable than the other or if they are equal. Then give their reason why. Allow groups time to discuss and then call on each group to show their pictures and share their conclusions.

Obviously, there are some things that are more valuable than others. We'd all love four cokes instead of one. A herd of cows is better than one cow. Some of you may value bananas more than mangoes. Today we're going to talk about the value of women compared to men, girls and boys. Is one more valuable than the other? What does God think?

The Lesson

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

How does God see men and women, boys and girls? This is a very important question we should ask ourselves. Does God value girls more than boys or does he value boys more than girls? If we want to see people correctly, we must see them exactly as God sees them. God is the only one who really understands the value of people because he is the one who created us. God alone has the correct view of people. Every other perspective is faulty.

Jesus is God the son - God become man. Let's see how Jesus viewed and valued women.

I will tell you the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in something I like to call *Freeze Frame*. I'll need the following student actors to act out the story: Jesus, a Samaritan woman and 12 Disciples. Disciples, you will not come into the story until the very end. Please silently act out what I say in the story but freeze when I say "Freeze Frame". Actors, you can begin again moving around and acting out the story when I say, "Let's continue with the story."

Here we go:

Then Jesus left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. *Freeze Frame.*

The Jews hated Samaritans. They viewed them as dogs. They would have avoided going through Samaria at all costs, even if it meant taking a longer route. The fact that Jesus went through Samaria and even stopped there was pretty amazing! *Let's continue with the story.*

It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) *Freeze Frame.*

Jewish men thought they were better than women and did not talk to them as equals. That Jesus is speaking to a woman, especially a Samaritan woman, is pretty amazing! *Let's continue with the story.*

The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) 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 did also 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 now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." *Freeze Frame.*

It's amazing that Jesus spoke to a Samaritan woman, but even more amazing is that he continued talking to this woman when she had such a troubled history! No religious Jew would have spoken to this kind of a woman in Jesus' day. Yet, Jesus talks to this woman and even asks her for a drink of water! He was setting an example of treating women with dignity and respect! *Let's continue with the story* and find out what happens in the end!

"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; 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 truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship 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 who speak to you 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?"

What did Jesus do in this story? What do you think it shows about him? Allow for the children's response.

The fact that Jesus spoke to a Samaritan woman shows that he highly values women. The Bible says in Genesis 1:27, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female created he them."

Genesis 5:1-2 says, "This is the history of the descendants of Adam. When God created people, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and he blessed them and called them human." (New Living Translation)

Memory Verse Moment

Today's memory verse is Genesis 1:27: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female created he them."

Let's say the memory verse several times together to get us started, and then we'll play *Crazy Cards*¹² memory verse game. You'll each get the chance to draw a card that has an action on it. You'll say the memory verse as you do that crazy action.

From our earlier lesson, what did we learn that it meant to be created in the image of God? We are patterned after God in that we have a soul, mind, spirit, personality, will, emotions, etc.

Between men and women, which one does the Bible say is made in God's image? Both are made in God's likeness or image.

If girls and boys, women and men, are both equally made in the image of God, then which one is more valuable and has greater worth to God? Which one has more dignity? Discuss and conclude that in God's sight *both* are of equal high value.

It's so important that we understand that both women and men are fully created in God's image. The fact that we are all equally created in God's image determines are value. This, not our gender, our height, our skin color, etc., determines are worth. When we realize this fully we will treat all people, every person, as the equally valuable person they are.

Do you and I know more than God does? Allow for response. **Of course not!** Laugh with the

¹² This game is found at e-how: http://www.ehow.com/info_8066610_memory-verse-teaching-ideas.html

children at what a silly question this is! **So, if God made girls and boys equally in his image and sees them as equal in worth and value, what if we or others think boys are superior and more valuable?**

We're deceived if we think differently than God on this point. He is not wrong. We are. We need to view and treat people the way that God does. This means that we see men and women as equally valuable and treat them both with honor, respect, and dignity.

The Bible says in Galatians 3:26-28, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Emphasize with your voice the underlined words.

What do you think this means? Allow for the students' responses. **It doesn't mean that there are no differences between men and women. God created us all with many differences. There are some things that your mother does better than your father, or your father does better you're your mother. What are some examples of things your moms do better than your dads and vice versa?** Allow for response.

Though God made us wonderfully different and unique, in God's eyes we are all equal in value and worth. We should treat girls and boys, women and men, with the same dignity and respect.

Closing Action Point

I'd like you to get into groups of four. In your groups draw pictures and write down a way that boys and girls could show equal value and dignity to each other as Jesus did to the Samaritan woman. Allow children time to work in their groups and share when they have finished.

Prayer Circle

It starts with you! Even if everybody else chooses not to respect and honor women as equal to men, you can choose to think and act differently.

We will still fail at times to see people as God does and treat them as God desires. The good news is that God wants to help us! When we confess our need and put our trust in God's son Jesus for forgiveness, God promises to give us his Spirit to live in us and help us think and act in the best way. You can each ask for his help today. Lead the children in prayer, asking for God's forgiveness and help to see each other the way that he does.

small fruit vs. large fruit



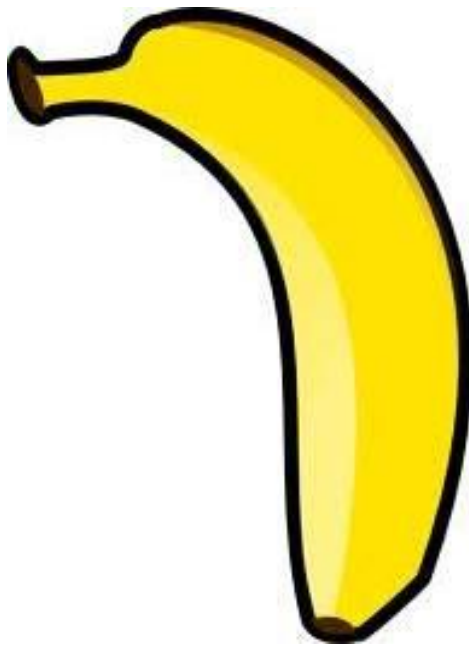
one cow vs. herd of cows



4 cokes vs. 1 coke



mango vs. banana



one coin vs. bag of money

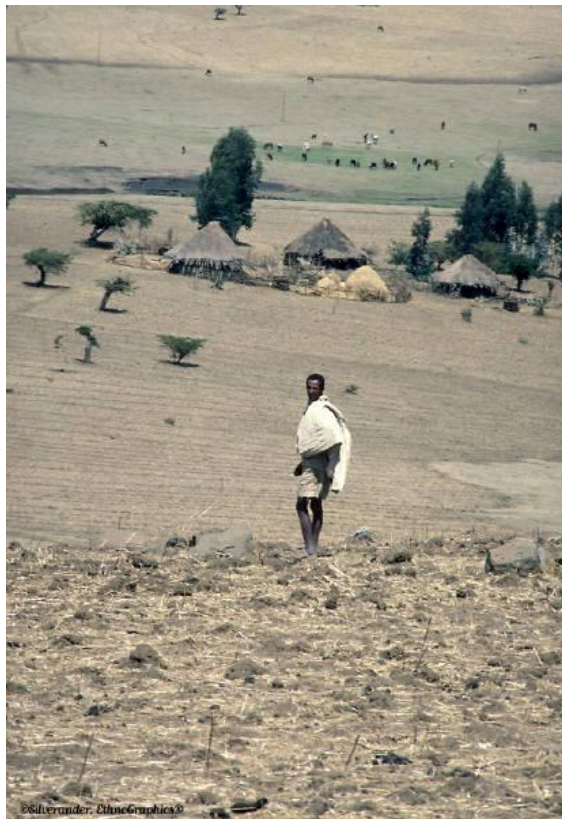


1 + 1 + 1 + 1

or

4

woman compared to man



**Draw a picture and write down a way that boys and girls
can show equal value and dignity to each other as Jesus did.**

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 and because of this God is no respecter of skin color, nationality, wealth, physical make-up, etc. Seeing others as God does, children 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.
- Being rich or poor does not change a person's inherent value.

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

Supplies/Materials

Group worksheets, pencils, sunglasses and clear glasses, question/answer slips, three boxes of an identical treat – one bent, ripped and worn box, one covered over with blank paper, one nice, unblemished box.

Scripture Reference

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

Welcome Time

Play a game called ***Question and Answer Match***. Write out questions and answers from the last lesson on separate slips of paper. Make sure that you have enough questions and corresponding answers so that each child in your class can have one or the other. Give one slip of paper to each student. Ask the students to match their questions with the correct answer. When all questions and answers have been matched (check to make sure the children have matched them correctly), ask the pairs to read their questions and answers aloud to the class. Here are some options:

What was the memory verse? -- Genesis 1:27, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female created he them."

Are women and men more like a large apple and a small apple or like a mango and a banana? – More like a mango and banana

We played Freeze Frame and told a story. Who were the two main characters in the story? -- Jesus and a woman from Samaria

What did Jesus do in this story that others thought was odd or even wrong? -- Jesus, a Jewish man, talked to a Samaritan woman and even asked her for water.

Which person is most made in the image of God, a man or a woman? -- Both are made in the image of God.

Since both men and women are created in the image of God, which is most valuable or has the most dignity? -- Both women and men have equal value and dignity in the sight of God.

When it comes to understanding the value and worth of women and men, who knows best God or people? -- God always sees things 100% correctly. If we see or think differently, God is not wrong, we are!

What is one way to treat girls as equal to boys? -- Support all girls to attend school.

Attention Grabber

Place the three boxes filled with cookies (or another snack) - one bent, ripped and worn box, one covered over with blank paper, one nice, unblemished box, at the front of the room. Tell the children that there are snacks for them inside these boxes, and that they can go and stand in line near the box they would like to have their snack from. When they have all chosen their box and gotten in line, reveal the snacks in each box. They are all the same! Make the point that we tend to choose based on the outward appearance, but that people are all the same on the inside...valuable and having dignity. Assure the children who chose the prettiest box that this is human nature, and that you would have done the same thing!

Today we're going to learn that God looks at people based on the inside not what is on the outside, just like what you found out with these snacks!

The Lesson

I'm going to divide you into four groups. We're going to work in groups to explore our lesson ideas for today.

Think of a time when you may have been ignored, shamed, or mistreated by another person for no good reason (meaning they just did not like you or you were seen as too young or too poor, etc). Can you remember a time like this? Maybe they just did not like the way you looked or acted. You do not need to say what happened (as some situations may have been very painful), **but do share how the situation made you feel. In your groups write down a list of all the words that describe how you felt** (angry, shamed, sad, humiliated, etc.). Allow groups time to discuss. When they are finished discussing, ask the groups to share their feelings.

It hurts and feels very unfair to be ignored or mistreated for no reason just because someone does not like the way you look or does not know you. If possible, the teacher should also share some personal experience that he or she has had like this.

Concept One: In this world, people wrongly judge others.

In this world, people often see and judge others by the way they look, or by the tribe or ethnic group they belong to, and/or by their abilities. There are four common ways people incorrectly judge each other. This is true everywhere in this world, in every country, in every place. We judge each other based on: 1) skin color; 2) the nationality or ethnic group we belong to; 3) wealth or socio-economic status; and 4) physical appearance or ability.

I'm going to ask you to explore one of the ways that people judge others. In your groups, based on the topic I give you, please discuss one example of how people judge others. Write your example on your group worksheet. Also, please consider how you think the person who is being judged feels and write that on your worksheet also.

Assign skin color, nationality/ethnic group, wealth, and appearance/ability to each group. Allow groups time to discuss and record their ideas on their group worksheets. When they have finished ask one person from each group to share.

Satan does not want us to see life and others clearly and love them as God does. He works to badly distort the way we see people and life. (Have a volunteer come up and put on your sunglasses). **Even though our classroom is still bright and clear, our volunteer sees it dark and dim. In the same way Satan wants to distort and dim our understanding about what is true and good and best. Our aim needs to always be to see people as God sees them. Only in this way can we see them clearly.** (Have your volunteer put on clear glasses. **To see people the way God sees them, we need to look at them through the lens of the Bible.** (Hold the Bible in front of your volunteer's forehead and eyes as you say this to represent seeing through God's eyes.)

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

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

What does "heart" mean? Allow for the student's ideas. It means the internal character, will, spirit, and attitude of a person -- those things that come from within.

What does this tell us about the way God looks at each person? Allow for the student's responses.

If God looks at what's inside instead of outside appearance how should we view people?

Memory Verse Moment

This is our memory verse for today: 1 Samuel 16:7 – “The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

We're going to play a little game to help us remember this verse. We can call it *Alphabet Stand-ups*. I have it written out the verse on a poster. Each time you say a word beginning with the letter “b”, I'd like for you to stand up. Then I'll pick someone else to choose a different letter. We'll say the verse several times, choosing different letters every time until we know the verse.

Play several rounds of the game until you are confident that children know the verse.

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

Let's look some more at what the Bible says about how God views people and how we should see others and ourselves. I will give each of your groups a verse from the Bible to read together. Read this verse aloud in your groups and then talk about what your verse says about how God views people. Write a sentence or two on your group worksheets about what you think.

Allow groups time to read and discuss. Call on each group to read their verse and share what it says about how God views people. Highlight the following points below if the children do not come to that conclusion.

Psalm 117:1-2: God loves all peoples -- all nations or all ethnic groups. No nationality or ethnic group is excluded from God's love!

John 3:16: God loves people from every ethnic group and sent his only Son to die for each person. No person is excluded from God's love and salvation!

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

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

Closing Action Point

How will you act and treat people differently in light of what you have learned in this lesson? Allow for discussion.

Hand out one Coloring Page to each child. Ask the children to color or design the two connected images on the paper however they wish, but each "person" is to be very different from the other "person." Ask the children to color the heart shape in the same color, as this is to connect the two people images.

In God's eyes we are all equally valued and loved by him – very much!

Prayer Circle

Ask the children to come and join you in a circle. Close with a prayer asking God to help everyone see others the way that he sees them – equal in his eyes and very loved!

**The Lord does not
look at the things
man looks at. Man
looks at the
outward
appearance, but the
Lord looks at the
heart.**

- 1 Samuel 16:7

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

How are people judged and how do they feel, based upon:

Skin Color

Nationality

Wealth

Physical Appearance

How does God view people based on these verses?

Psalm 117:1-2

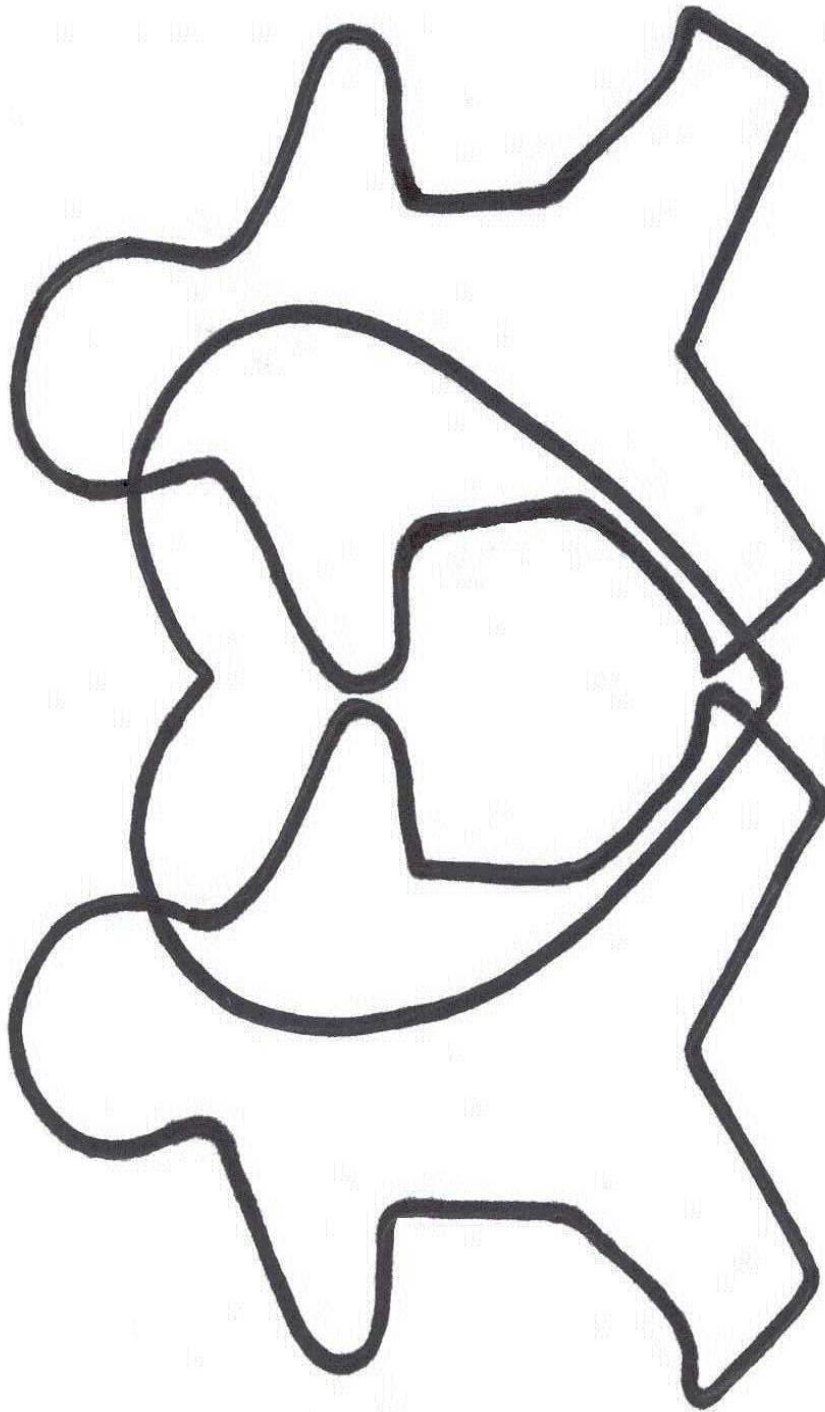
John 3:16

Luke 14:12-14

Galatians 3:26-28

Coloring Page

Color each image uniquely and yet
make the heart portion the same



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 to this question of purpose provide an indispensable footing for building a meaningful and fruitful 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 in it that only he or she can fulfill.

Our purpose as individuals 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. 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. Or, life is an illusion and is not actually real. In all of these ideas, each one of us is left to search for and try to find our own purpose. Satan and the world tell us a lie, and as a result we often assume a purpose and meaning, or lack thereof, 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. God has a critical part for each of us to play in his eternal plan and purpose. God put each of us on this earth at this time in history for an important 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.¹³

¹³ 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.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

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

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

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

Supplies/Materials

Long paper with prepared timeline (see resource section), blank paper, pencils, crayons, $\frac{1}{4}$ sheets of blank paper with a *timeline item* on it to assign to specific children to draw. 4 copies of the verse poster (from the last lesson) cut into 25 puzzle pieces

The main idea of this lesson is to create and talk through a "timeline" on paper that will stretch across one wall of the room and be displayed for several weeks while we talk about God's purposes.

The purpose of the timeline is to visibly show and remind the children that God has a plan for the world, and because he is sovereign, he is working out his plan. Plus, embedded within this plan, God has a plan for their individual lives, and will work this out as well. When children understand God's sovereignty and providential plan for all of time and all of humanity and for them as individuals, they can look at the subject of *History* as actually "His" (God's) Story.

To create the timeline.

1. Obtain or make a 1/2 meter-wide piece of white paper that can stretch from one wall of the room to the next wall. Make the timeline long and big so that you and the children have plenty of space to write dates, color, etc.
2. Create a title banner above the timeline that reads:
GOD'S PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR THIS WORLD
3. Create two other smaller title banners that will be placed above the timeline at the beginning and at the end. They should read **GOD'S PLAN BEGINS IN A GARDEN** (at the beginning), and **GOD'S PLAN ENDS IN A CITY** (at the end).

Space the dates out along the full length of the timeline. You do not need to be accurate in your measurement of the correct distance between the dates and events. It is more important that the events be spread out and be readable.

Scripture Reference

Genesis 1:1, 3:15; Job 12:23; Jeremiah 29:11

Welcome Time

Cut the verse poster from the last lesson into a puzzle. Divide the children into four groups. Give each group a set of puzzle pieces and ask the groups to put the puzzles together. Once they have assembled their puzzles, ask each person in the group to say one thing that they learned during the last lesson.

Attention Grabber

We're going to learn about God's plan for our lives throughout history. I'm going to need your help to do this. I'm going to hand out one word to each of you. I'd like for you to draw a picture of that object. Later on in the lesson we will use your drawing.

Hand out a blank sheet of paper and pencils and crayons to all students. Give each student a "timeline picture slip" which tells them what picture they should draw. Allow students time to work.

I see some great drawings. I'd like for you to hold on to your pictures and I'll call on you to bring them up when they are needed in the lesson.

The Lesson

God's Timeline

Unroll the long piece of paper that you have prepared to use as your timeline and tack it up at the front of your meeting area. Alternatively, if you are meeting outside, lay it down on the ground and have the children stand in a circle around it.

This very long timeline represents all of history. God has planned very important events for all of history. We're going to find out what some of these events are. When I ask for your drawing that goes along with a special event in history, I'd like for you to come up here and tape it to our time-line.

-Eternity past

Will the person who drew the Bible please fix it to the timeline here? God's plan started even before the creation of the world. Before the world was created, God, the Father, Son and the Spirit existed.

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God..." Before the world was created, there was God. God, the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit existed before time began. We call this Eternity Past.

Let's learn a hand motion to help us remember this event. Hold out your hands like a book to help us remember that God, who is revealed to us through the Bible, existed before creation.

-God's plan begins in a garden

Would the person who drew the plants and flowers please bring their picture up to the timeline? This picture stands for the Garden of Eden. God's plan for people started in a garden when he created Adam and Eve and placed them to live and work.

-In the beginning

Would the person who drew the earth please bring it up to the timeline? This picture stands for the beginning of the world when God created the world and everything in it.

Who remembers how God created the earth? He spoke it into existence....he created it from nothing with no blueprint or prior plan.

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

To help us remember the event on the timeline of the creation of the world, let's do a hand motion. Let's make hand bursts with our hands, similar to something being released to be created.

-Abraham

Would the person who drew the picture of the stars please bring it up to the timeline? Part of God's promise was that he would bless all nations. He chose a man named Abraham and said that all the nations would be blessed through his descendants. God told him that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky. Eventually God sent Jesus through the family or descendants of Abraham to save and bless the entire world.

-David

Would the person who drew the picture of five stones please bring it up to the timeline? You see, throughout the Bible God used children and young people as well as older people to accomplish his purpose and bless others. There are many examples we could choose from. David was one of them. When he was a young man God enabled him to kill the giant Goliath with just a slingshot and some stones. Eventually he was anointed king over Israel. Even though you're young, God has a purpose for your life.

Let's do a hand motion to help us remember that God used David when he was young and he can use you when you're young. Pretend that you're swinging a slingshot to stand for the young boy David who God used.

-Esther

Would the person who drew a picture of a crown please bring it up to the timeline? God has always had a plan to bless others through his people. Again, there are many examples in the Bible that we could choose from. One of them was a young woman, Esther, who became queen when she was a young girl. Because she was queen she was able to save God's people, Israel from destruction.

To help you remember the young girl Esther that God made queen and used to save his people, please put your hands on your head as if you're putting on a crown.

-Jesus

Would the person who drew the cross please bring it up to the timeline? This stands for Jesus, the only Son of God who came to the earth as a baby. He grew in stature and wisdom and revealed God to people. He healed and forgave sin and then was cruelly put to death by crucifixion, paying the full penalty for sin of every kind. He was buried and then three days later arose again to life to conquer death and give us God's life. Now he sits at the right hand of God the Father as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

To help us remember Jesus and his central role in all of history please cross your arms in front of you to look like the cross that Jesus died on.

There are empty places on the timeline which we will fill in between Jesus' life and death on the cross and eternity future. We're going to find out in the rest of the lesson more of God's plan in history and our place in it.

-Eternity future

Would the person who drew the picture of the beautiful gate please bring it up to the timeline? This stands for Eternity Future. Eternity Future is what God will do when Christ returns to judge all people and then create a new heaven and a new earth where there is no more pain and no more tears. The gates of this city will never be shut because it is the

City of God. God's plan ends in a city - the city of God. If you believe in God's son Jesus and that he paid the penalty for all of your sins, you can join him someday in the City of God.

To help us remember Eternity Future and the City of God, point up to the sky to stand for heaven.

Go through all the motions and events with the children, going faster and faster each time.

Now let's fill in the spaces in between Jesus and Eternity Future on our timeline. I am going to need all of your help. I'm going to hand you a quarter sheet of paper. I need for you to draw a picture of yourself on this paper. We'll then use your pictures and a few other pictures that I have to help us fill in the rest of the empty spaces.

Hand out the quarter sheets of paper and allow the students time to complete their self-portraits. Ask the students to hold on to them until you need them later on in the lesson.

-History of God providing good things to us through inventions

An important part of God's plan in history was to give people the ability to rule over all creation – to create, invent, solve problems and make the world a better place. We will learn more about this in a future lesson, but let's look at two ways (among thousands of examples) that God provided good things to us in this way.

Two examples are given below but feel free to pick two or more other examples from the list in the Teacher's Guide that will most interest your children. Draw or include a picture and a hand motion for those two invention events.

In about 1289 eyeglasses were invented. This was a wonderful invention that allowed people with bad eyesight to be able to see. What a wonderful idea God gave to the inventor to be able to help others. God loves us so much that he gives others ability and talent to benefit others. To us remember how God provides good things for us through inventions, let's put a picture of eyeglasses here, and let's pretend that we're putting on eyeglasses.

In 1866 a man named John invented Coca Cola. Soft drinks are not like medicine in that it saves lives but they sure do taste good. Isn't it wonderful that God gave people in history the ability to make fun foods that we can enjoy (even if they are not especially healthy). To help us remember how God provides good things to us through others inventions, let's put a picture of a soda here and let's pretend we are drinking a soda.

-History of the Gospel coming to all the nations - including your nation
Throughout history God has worked through people and events to spread his truth and Gospel to all the nations – including your own nation.

Two examples are given below but again, feel free to pick two or more other examples from the list in the Teacher's Guide that will most interest your children. Also, include at least one event of how God has worked in history to bring or spread the Gospel in the child's country. Draw or include a picture and a hand motion for how God spreads truth and the Gospel to all nations.

In 635 AD God raised up and used monks from Asia Minor and Persia to go to China to preach the gospel. To help us remember this event, let's learn a motion. Let's use our fingers and pretend they're walking on our arm to symbolize the monks traveling to China to spread the gospel.

In 1782 God raised up a freed slave, George Lisle, to take the Gospel to Jamaica.

Include an event in the children's country.

-Founding of your nation and significant events that have shaped it
Did you know that God has also worked in history to establish our country and even our community? God is sovereign over all the nations and people. Job 12:23 says, "He (God) makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them."

Identify and include one or more key dates related to the founding of your nation as well as significant events that have shaped it.

-Today – My special place in God's history

We see God has a plan throughout history. But, most importantly, God has a very special plan and reason for each of our lives within this history. God has placed you right where he wants you, in this time, and in this place. He has a reason and plan for your life within his great plan. You are special. The motion for this part of the timeline is to point to one self.

Ask the children to all come forward and tape their self-portraits to the timeline under the section marked *Today*.

Memory Verse Moment

We're going to learn a verse that talks about God's plans for our lives. God has a special plan for all of us. Before class write out the verse on a sheet of paper so that children can read the verse with you.

Let's learn our memory verse: Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

We'll play a little game called *Take a Word*. For this game, post or write the verse on a blackboard and then erase one or two words each time the children say it, until all words are

erased. For a bit of competition divide the children into two groups and alternate between them. **I need for you to get into two groups. I will have the first group say the verse and then I will erase or remove one or two words and the second group will say it. We will go back and forth until all the words are removed and you know the verse by heart. Let's go!**

Closing Action Point

God has a plan and purpose throughout all of history. He also has plans and purposes for each one of us as part of his big plan. We are important to God's plan. Our God is a sovereign and good God and we can always trust his plans.

To help us remember God's wonderful plans, let's repeat all of the events and do the timeline motions together. Play this as a game with the children, going through the timeline faster and faster.

Prayer Circle

Gather the children around you in a circle. Close in prayer, thanking God for his eternal plan from a garden to a city. Thank God for each one of the students and for his wisdom in placing them here at this time and this place to fulfill his purposes for their lives. Ask God to help them always remember they are loved by him and that he has a calling and plan for their lives.

Verse puzzle from previous week

(cut into 5 equal size columns and 5 equal size rows to create 25 puzzle pieces)

**1 Samuel 16:7 –
The Lord does not
look at the things
man looks at. Man
looks at the
outward
appearance, but the
Lord looks at the
heart.**

Pictures to assign to different children to draw

Eternity past

Draw a picture of a Bible

In the beginning

Draw a picture of the earth

David

Draw a picture of five stones

Jesus

Draw a picture of a cross

History of God providing good things to us through inventions

Draw a picture of eyeglasses (or whatever you highlight as an invention)

Draw a picture of a soft drink (or whatever you highlight as an

Founding of your Nation and significant events that have shaped it

Draw a picture of an event related to the founding of your nation or significant events that shaped it.

God's plan begins in a garden

Draw a picture of plants and flowers

Abraham

Draw a picture of stars (Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars)

Esther

Draw a picture of a crown

Eternity Future

Draw a picture of a gate

History of the Gospel coming to all the nations - including your nation

Draw a picture of China (or whatever event you highlight)

Draw a picture of Jamaica (or whatever event you highlight)

Today – My Special Place in God's History

Every child draws a picture of themselves

GOD'S PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR THIS WORLD

Make one continuous line that spreads around your room.

GOD'S PLAN BEGINS

IN A GARDEN!

Eternity
Past

In the
beginning

Abraham
c. 2166 B.C.

David
c. 1000 B.C.

Esther
c. 509 B.C.

Before the world was created. God, the Son, and the Spirit existed.

John 1:1, 14; 17:24

God creates the world
Genesis 1

God creates mankind
Genesis 1:26-28

Fall of mankind
Genesis 3

Promise of a Savior
Genesis 1:26-28

God makes a promise to bless all nations through Abraham

Genesis 12:3

Young man kills a giant. King of Israel
1 Samuel 17

Young queen Esther saves the people of Israel from destruction.
Book of Esther

JESUS

c. 3 B.C. – A.D. 30

Focal point of history the promised Son of God anointed King, Savior, resurrected one

Significant events/inventions that impacted the world

Founding of your nation and significant events that shaped it

History of the Gospel coming to the nations - including your nation¹¹³

TODAY

YOU!
Your name, birth date, and your place in God's eternal plan!

Eternity
Future

GOD'S PLAN ENDS
IN A CITY!

Christ's return, judgment, new heaven and a new earth. Glory of the nations brought to the City of God.
Revelation 19-22

Unit 3, Lesson 1

Unit Three – Lesson 2

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*.¹⁴

The Truth: God's main purpose for each of our lives is to love him and to love our neighbor. When Jesus was asked, what is the most important or the greatest commandment (or thing we should do), he responded that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second is to love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus said that all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. He also said, "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."¹⁵ In summary, our main purpose here on earth is to love God. The best way to show our love for God is by loving our neighbor.

Children, in order to thrive in their life, family, and nation, 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 about 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.

¹⁴ *God's Intentions-Their Irreducible Minimum, Leadership Development Training Program: Level I*, Harvest Foundation, 1997, 47-49.

¹⁵ Matthew 7:12

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

The Main Point

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

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

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

Supplies/Materials

Unpeeled fruit, blank paper, crayons, pencils sufficient for each child, Love God/Others diagram put on a large sheet of paper, and cutout circles for each child

Scripture References

Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:25-28

Welcome Time

Choose three students to lead the children in reviewing the timeline pictures, event titles, and motions. Allow these students to come up front. Point to the picture, say the events and do the motions once. Choose another three students to lead. Go through the timeline a few more times until children can confidently do the motions and say the events. Have the children look away from the timeline during the last recitation to make this activity more challenging for them.

Attention Grabber

Have the children sit in a circle and sit with them. Take the fruit or vegetable that you have hanging out of your pocket and pass it around the circle, allowing each child to look at it and touch it.

There are many things we should do and many things we should not do. We have all these *do's and don'ts*. Let's peel this fruit and think of and say one *do* or *don't* for every piece of peeling.

Begin the process of peeling. Then pass it to the child next to you. Instruct the children to take a little of the peel off and then pass the fruit to the next person. Continue this until the item is completely peeled.

We have removed the peeling and now we are down to the most important part of the fruit. In the same way God gave us many instructions in the Bible (dos and don'ts) but at the center of all these instructions is one that Jesus said was the most important. Today we are going to talk about this one most important command or instruction.

But before we do so, what if you only had to worry about and keep one rule? Wouldn't this make life a lot easier? Instead of having hundreds of rules in school and at home, and lots of laws to keep, what if there was only one? How would you feel about this? Allow for a response.

Jesus was asked this very question. "What is the greatest or most important command or thing to do?"

Does anyone have an idea of what he said? Allow for response.

Today we're going to find out what Jesus said was the most important thing to do. It's going to be the focus of our entire lesson. It will also show us what God wants each of us to do, our special part, in fulfilling his great purpose and eternal timeline.

The Lesson

What did Jesus say was the most important thing to do? Let's listen:

In Mark 12:28-30 it says: (If possible, have one of the children read): "One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'"

In Luke 10:25-27 it says: "On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'..."

What is the *most important thing* Jesus said we should do? To love God.

What does it mean to love God? Allow for response.

Concept One: How we are to love God

Jesus gave us four ways we should love God. What were they? Allow for response. **Let's read one of the verses again: "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 learn about each of these four ways and become artists while we do it!** Hand out a piece of paper and pencils to each child.

-With all your heart

Please draw a picture of a heart on your papers. Make it big enough that you could draw something inside of it.

What do you think Jesus meant by "heart?" Allow for response. **What does it mean to love a person with all our heart?** Say to a child, **I am SO GLAD you are in my class today! THANK YOU for coming!**

Loving God with our heart means we feel passionate about God's goodness and greatness. We have strong gratitude. We express our love and devotion to him.

What can we do to help us be passionate about God and be devoted in our hearts to him?

Allow for the student's responses. Some examples might be: prayer, worship, reading our Bibles...anything that helps us be more devoted to God in our hearts and actions.

On the inside of your heart, draw one thing that you can do to draw closer to God.

-With all you soul

Draw a picture of a star on your papers. Make sure that it is big enough that you could draw something inside of it. Draw an example of it for the students if necessary. Explain that this represents your will and inner self.

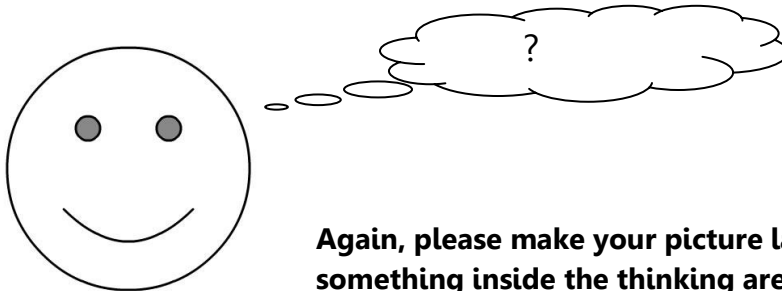
The star represents our soul. Our soul is our will and the part of us that will last forever. When Jesus asked us to love God with all our soul he is asking us to love him with the part of us that knows right from wrong. Loving with our soul means that we make the decisions and choices that God wants us to make. When we live our lives the way that God calls us to, we are loving him with all of our soul.

I'd like for you to draw a picture in the center of your star something that symbolizes to you the making of a good choice that honors God and pleases him. This will be an example of you loving God with all your soul.

-With all you mind

The next picture I'd like for you to draw is a person thinking with their mind.

Give them an example:



Again, please make your picture large so that you can draw something inside the thinking area. The thinking area represents ideas that you come up with in your mind.

How can you love God with your mind? Allow for good discussion. The children should have some ideas on this question.

There are many ways we can love God with our minds. Here are a few examples:

When we develop our minds we are loving God. When we learn about God in the Bible, learn about his creation in science and geography, learn to read and write and do math, learn from our parents ... we are loving God with our mind.

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

When we use our mind to help others, we are loving God with our mind. Your friend might have a problem that you help them solve. That's using your mind to help others and is loving God with your mind.

Now remember, we love God with our minds by developing and using our minds and by thinking like God thinks. Draw a picture inside your "thinking area" that shows how you can think and love God with your mind.

-With all you strength

Please draw one more picture on your paper. You can actually trace your hand. The drawing of your hand represents the physical energy and strength that God gives you every day. God allows you to have energy and physical life everyday but we need to choose how to use the strength he gives us.

Does anyone have an idea about how we can love God with “strength?” Allow for the student’s responses.

We love God with our strength when we use the energy he gives us to do good. Maybe we help out a neighbor who is older with moving something. Maybe we help out our parents at home. Maybe we use the legs that God gave us to walk to the market for our mother. These are all examples of loving God with our strength – our body.

Inside of the hands that you drew on your paper I’d like for you to draw a picture of a way you can love God with all your strength.

Concept Two: Loving others

Jesus gave a second part to the *most important thing* we should do. Does anyone know what that might be? Allow for response.

**Let’s find out by finishing the verses we were reading a few minutes ago:
Mark 12:31: “The second (most important commandment) is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”**

Jesus tells us that the best and most practical way we can show our love for God is by loving our neighbor.

When Jesus said we are to love our neighbor, who is our neighbor? Allow for discussion.

Our “neighbor” is someone who lives near us. But, it is also all the people that God puts into your life every day. Your “neighbor” is your teacher, father, mother, sisters and brothers, your friends. When Jesus tells us to love our neighbor, he is telling us to love everyone around us. Who are some of the people in your lives who God wants you to love? Allow the children to share.

Jesus said, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Why did he add “as yourself?” Why did he not just say “Love your neighbor?” Allow for discussion. I think it was because Jesus wanted to remind us that the easiest way to love someone is to “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” Jesus said the most practical way we can show God that we love him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength is by treating the next person the way we want to be treated.

What if we don’t *feel* love for certain people? How can we love them? Allow for the student’s responses.

Raise your hand if you did something good for someone today that you did not feel like doing. Now, raise your hand if you felt like saying something mean to someone recently

but decided not to say it. To those with raised hands, Thanks for being honest! We *all* do things we don't feel like doing. Or, we don't do things that we do feel like doing!

It is the same with loving others. We can obey God and love others in our *actions* even when we do not *feel* warm and loving inside. The wonderful thing is that often when we *act* loving God blesses us with loving *feelings* toward that person.

Just like we peeled off all the layers of the fruit to get to the most important part, Jesus took all of the commandments and said the most important one was to love God and to show it by loving your neighbor as yourself.

When we look at all of God's timeline of history and our purpose in this today, we can say our purpose on this earth in history at this time boils down to this one thing – to love God and our neighbor.

What is our main purpose here on this earth? It is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. The best way to show our love for God is by loving others (treating them as you want to be treated).

Memory Verse Moment

Let's memorize this verse that tells us about God's greatest commandment. Mark 12:28-31: "The most important commandment," answered Jesus, "is this: '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: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

We'll play a simple game called *Crazy Folds*. I have the verse printed out on this verse poster. I'm going to fold it in some crazy directions, in half, part of a corner folded, in thirds and diagonally. This will hide some of the words. Each time different words will be hidden but we'll still say the memory verse. Let's play.

As described in the above activity, fold the picture in many directions exposing and hiding different words each time you fold the poster.

Closing Action Point

Show the children the large paper with the "Love God, Love Others" diagram on it. Give them each a circle of paper and ask them to draw and color something in that circle that represents something they can do or say or make this week that would show their love for God and for others.

When the children are finished, have them attach their circle to the diagram somewhere on one of the lines. Space the pictures out to make the lines as full and connected as possible. If you have a small class, the children could create two circles.

Prayer Circle

Close with prayer.

Thank you God for making your main purpose for our lives so clear and simple - to love you and to love others. We know that your purpose and commands are always perfect and lead us to the best possible life - as we follow you.

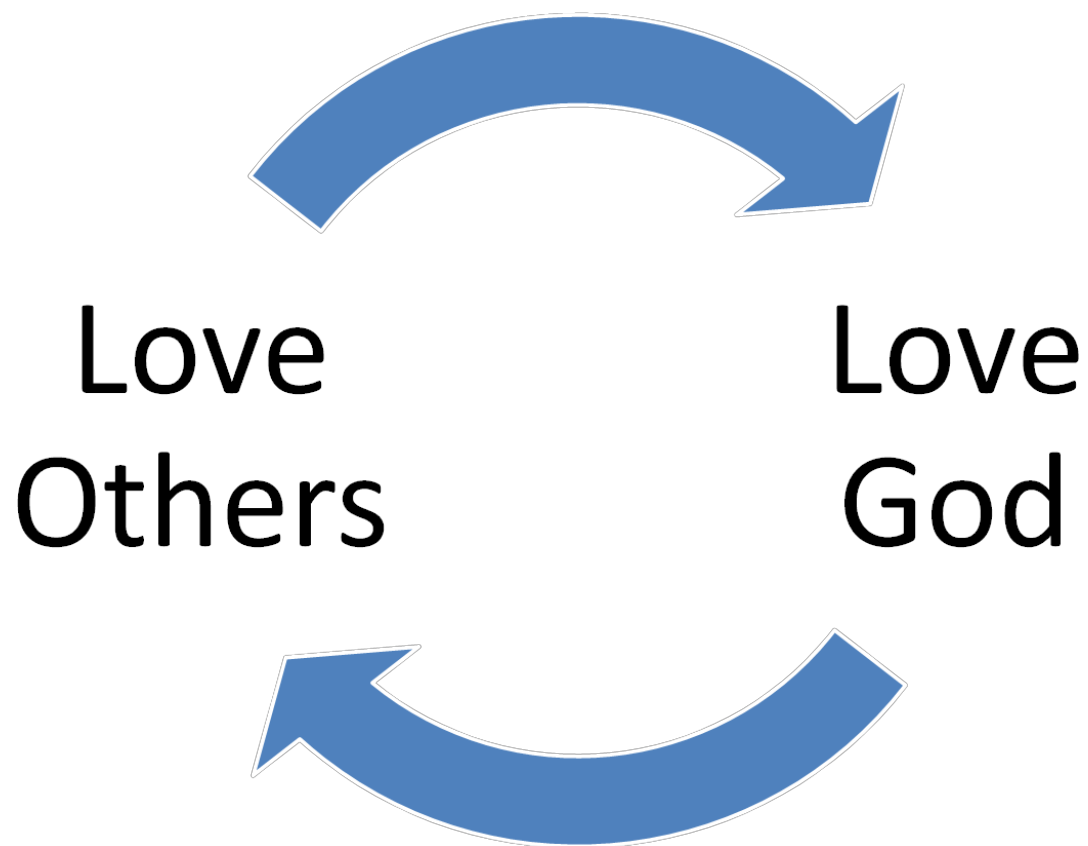
We also confess that while your command is simple and clear, it is very difficult to love you and to love others. Forgive us for falling far short of your purpose for us. Please put this simple command and truth deep into our hearts and mind. Give us the inner strength to live it out each day.

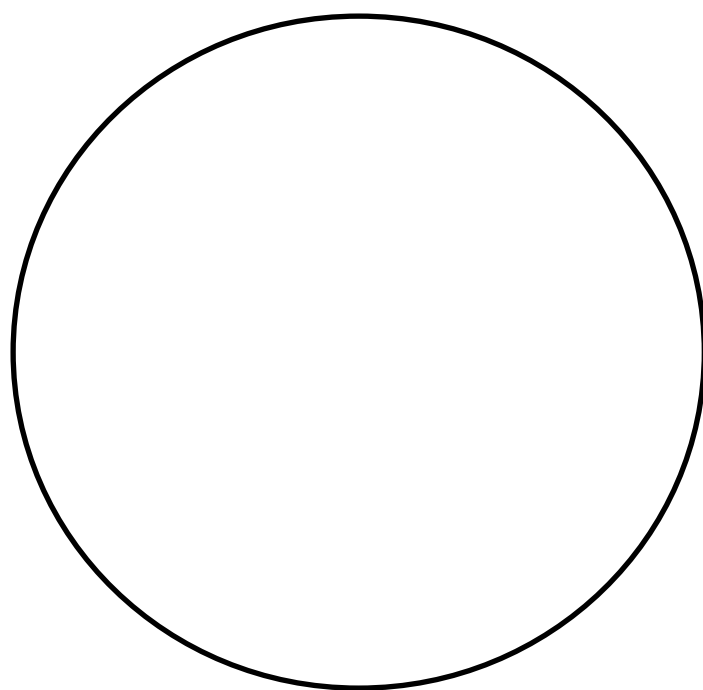
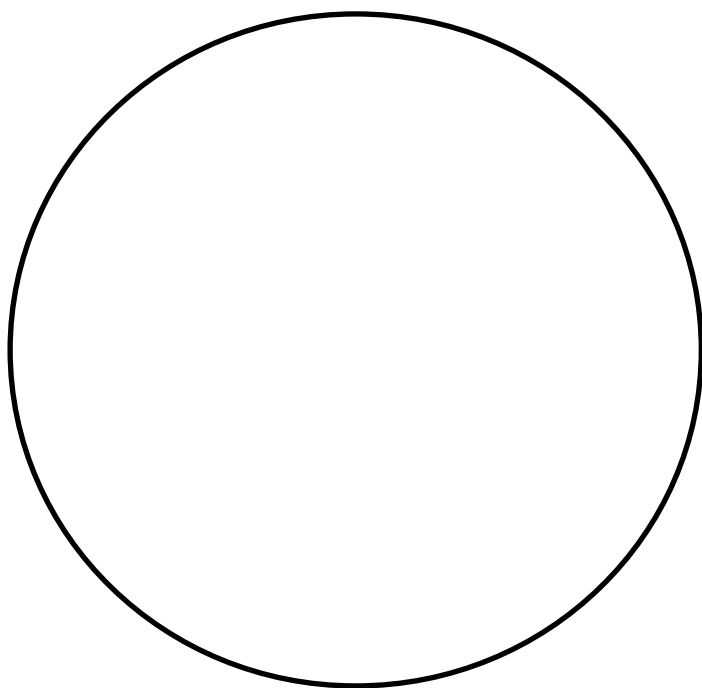
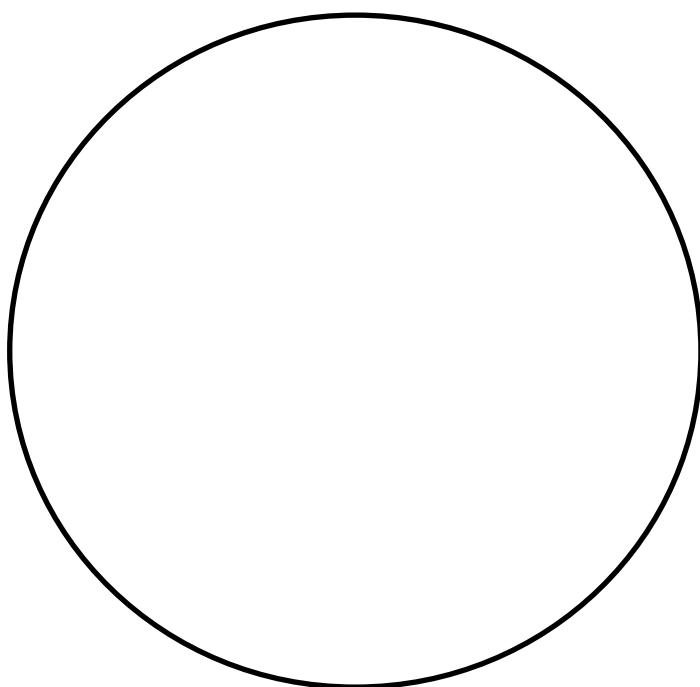
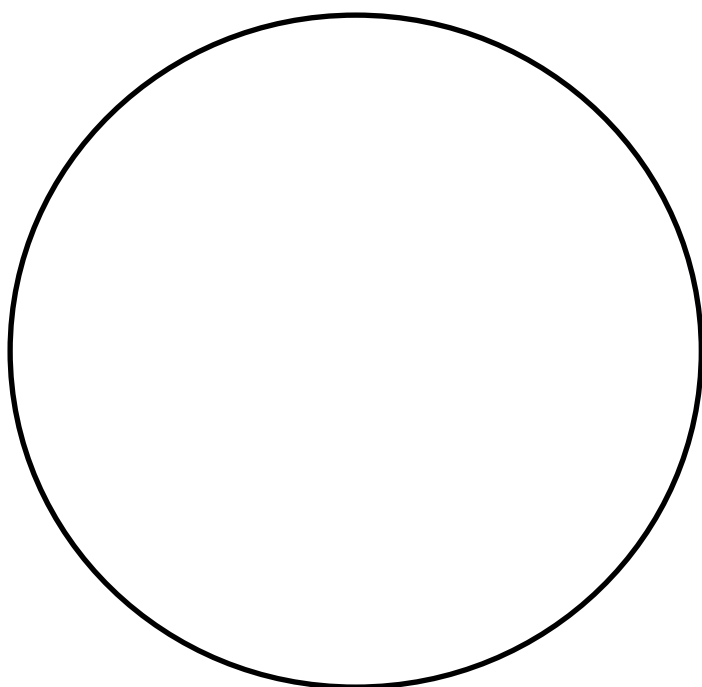
With all your heart (picture)

With all your soul (picture)

With all your mind (picture)

With all your strength (picture)





Memory Verse – for Crazy Fold game

Mark 12:28-21

**The most important
commandment,"
answered Jesus, "is this:
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: 'Love your
neighbor as yourself.'
There is no**

**commandment greater
than these."**

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:

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

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

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

Timeline from previous lessons in this unit should still be posted on the wall, group worksheets in resource section, large plastic jug filled with water and something to puncture it with, a small box or can with pieces of paper in it (one for each child) with a crown drawn on one of the pieces of paper, red, yellow and blue crayon, lesson pictures, piece of traditional artwork or a handicraft, blank paper squares for each child with three squares having a picture of a crown, a hoe or a shield on it

Scripture References

Genesis 1:26, 2:15; Psalm 8:6

Welcome Time

Play a modified game of charades. Say the memory verse from the last lesson: **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself”**

Ask volunteers to come up and act out an action that shows loving God with one of the following:

- your heart (passion)
- soul (will or conscience)
- mind (thought life)
- or strength (physical strength).

The other students are to guess what the action is and which of the four areas it represents.

Play as many rounds as time allows. Review the memory verse after every four acts. .

Attention Grabber

Bring a large disposable jug or plastic bag filled with water into the classroom. Set it in a place where all the children can see and where there can be no water damage. After the children are seated and ready for the lesson, casually pierce the jug or bag with something that will cause the water to begin flowing out fairly slowly (you can pierce it ahead of time and cover the hole with tape, removing the tape at this point if you prefer).

Begin talking with the children, asking about their day, etc., without attempting to stop the flow of water. One or more of the children should comment on your lack of action to stop the flow. Respond by telling them there is nothing you can do. At least one of the children should protest this and give you ideas. At this point, do whatever you need to do to stop the water and clean up the spill. Let the children help you if possible.

Ask the following questions, allowing for response after each one:

- **What just happened?**
- **What did you think when I said there was “nothing I could do” to stop the water from leaking out?**

God tells us in the very first chapter of the Bible to have dominion over, or to rule over all of his creation. Today we will learn what that means. I’ll give you a hint. It involves doing more than just standing by a leaking jug and saying, “There’s nothing I can do.” Let’s learn more about having dominion over creation.

The Lesson

Review the timeline and all of its motions. Remind the children how this shows that God has a purpose for the world and for their lives.

History is God's story. It began for mankind in a garden and ends in a city. God’s story includes eternity past, the creation of the world, the fall, Christ’s death and resurrection to save all mankind and much more. The timeline shows that Jesus will come back some day to judge the earth and set up a new earth and a new heaven. We are a special part of God’s eternal plan. This eternal plan includes a plan for today - this year, this month, this week, this day, and even this hour. God created *each one of us* to be here today and gave us a *special part* to play in his plan.

Last week, we learned that one of God's main purposes for our lives is to love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. How can we best do this? Allow the children to answer, “By loving your neighbor as yourself.”

Furthermore, each of us is unique and therefore we each have our own *unique* and *special* way we can love others. I cannot be who God made you to be and love. You cannot be who God made me to be and love.

Today we're going to discover another one of God's purposes for our lives. You will see it also connects to loving God and our neighbor.

On your group worksheets are two verses from Genesis that tell us about an important job or purpose God gave us when he first created the earth. Let's divide up into four groups. Each group will look at the verses and answer the question, "What is the job God gives us to do here? Hint: Look for the action words.

1. Genesis 1:26: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."
2. Genesis 2:15: The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Allow children time to search these verses for the job God gave to us. Discuss when they have finished.

What did you find out? What are God's "jobs" for us in these verses?

Genesis 1:26 - We are to rule over ALL the earth (or over all creation).

Genesis 2:15 - We are to work the earth (or creation). We are to take care of the earth (or creation).

Concept One: We are to rule over creation.

What does it mean to "rule" over? Allow for discussion.

To "rule" over means to have control, to make something do what you want it to do. We are to rule over all creation in order to improve it and make it even better.

Role Play:

- Have the children pull pieces of paper out of a small box or can. Prepare one small piece of paper for each child in your class. On one of the pieces you will have drawn a crown. Whoever gets the crown will be the king or queen of the classroom.
- Place the "king or queen" on one side of the class, and all the other students on the other side (including you).
- Have the king or queen tell the others to do three (appropriate!) things. You and the students must obey and do whatever silly request he or she makes. Allow the children to have some fun!
- Make the point that the king or queen of the class "ruled over" all of you. He or she had control and could make the rest of you do whatever he or she wished.
- If you have time, do this role-play again with another child playing the king or queen.

Ruling over the earth is very different than ruling over the classroom. What are some of the ways people can rule over the earth or over all creation? Show pictures of ways people

rule over the earth, asking the children to explain what and how each person is “ruling” as you show them each picture:

1. **Farmer.** Rules the land by cutting back weeds that crowd out good plants, using safe things to get rid of bugs that would eat the good plants, etc...
2. **Doctor or nurse.** Rules over disease and injury and helps people get well.
3. **Carpenter.** Rules over rain, wind, heat by making a house to protect us from the weather and elements.
4. **Bridge Builder.** Rules over a river or deep valley by making a way for people and vehicles to cross safely over.

God created people, and the first thing he told us to do was to rule over all the earth – over all creation. Isn’t that amazing! “All creation” includes our bodies, our minds, our resources – everything that was created. In your groups I’d like for you to come up with other ways you can rule over all creation. Discuss a practical way and then write down your answer inside the crown that’s on your group worksheet.

You may want to remind the children that we can rule over creation for good and we can also rule over it for bad. God is calling us to rule over all creation in a good way, to make it better, to improve it, to make it even more fruitful and healthy.

Concept Two: God calls us to work the earth.

When God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he told them to work the garden. This means they were to develop it and work with it to make it something really good and special. An example would be to put a seed in the ground and then work with it, water and weed around it until it grows into something good to eat or a beautiful flower. Adam and Eve were given the responsibility to develop all of creation and make it produce abundance and beauty.

Show the students some eyeglasses and sand.

Eyeglasses are an example of how we can work creation to make it better.

Does anyone know what glass is made from? Allow for student’s responses.

Glass is made from sand. This means that the inventor of eyeglasses took sand and made it into glass, and then shaped or curved the glass so that it would correct vision.

The eyeglass maker is ruling over or having dominion over poor eyesight and is working creation to create eyeglasses from sand. He unlocked the secrets that God has put into creation - into sand - to create something helpful and good

God wants each of us to use all the abilities, tools, and resources he’s given us to “work” all creation – to improve it and make something special.

The resources he gives us can be very simple. Here are two examples:

Three color crayons - red, yellow, blue

What can you do with only three crayons? Allow for response. **Did you know that *every* color in the world is based on these three colors?**

If you mix red and yellow colors you get orange. If you mix blue and yellow you get green, etc. All artists use the same basic colors that God has given us to make wonderful pictures and paintings. Hold up your example of a traditional craft or piece of art. **Isn't this item amazing! God gave the creator of this item the knowledge of colors and a very creative mind. The person who made this used what God had given them to create something special for others to enjoy. This is an example of "working" all creation. God would like for you to do the same every day and in your own way – to improve the world around you and make it better!**

Letters of the alphabet in your country

Every country has a written language that is captured with a set of symbols or letters in their "alphabet." Out of these simple letters or symbols come all the words, and from these words comes *all* of the poems, inspiring stories, encouraging letters, and motivating speeches you have in your country and language.

God has given each of you an ability to write and communicate using this same alphabet. What are the stories, speeches, letters, and communications that God would have you create in your life to bless and help others? Creating in this way is just one more example of "working all creation."

When God gave us (through the first man) the command to work all the earth or develop all creation, he gave us a really big purpose and task. He also gave us a mind and creativity with which to do this. But, this means the first thing we have to develop is our minds. We cannot fulfill God's instruction to rule over and develop all the earth if we don't first rule over and develop the minds he gave us! What is the best way to develop your mind so you can fulfill God's command to work or develop all creation? (To stay in school, study, read, learn. Allow and discuss the children's response.)

What a wonderful purpose and privilege God has given to each of us!

Divide the children into groups. Hand out a group worksheet to each child.

In your groups I'd like for you to discuss one good way you can work or develop creation. Please record your ideas on the worksheet with the hoe. I'll call on each group to share your answers when you are finished.

Concept Three: God calls us to care for all creation.

Another thing God told Adam and Eve to do was to "care for" the earth. Hold up your hand if you have something at home that you take care of. Allow the children to share what these things are. Ask each of them to share what they do to care for this thing.

What do we do when we care for something? Allow for the children's responses. **When we take care of something, we protect it and nurture it. God asks us not only to rule over and**

develop all of creation, but also to care for it so that it is not harmed, wasted, or destroyed.

Let's think of a resource God has given us in creation and some ways we could destroy or abuse it?

Allow for discussion. Examples would be God has given us land and leave garbage on the ground. He has given us a clean water supply but we let animals contaminate it. He has given us a forest for shade, wood, animals, etc, but we cut down all the trees.

Our bodies and minds are a part of God's creation. How might we destroy and abuse our bodies and minds? Drinking, smoking, drugs, eating too much, not practicing good hygiene and getting sick, etc. For our minds we may read and look at things that are not good or healthy.

In your groups I'd like for you to come up with one way you can care for some resource God has given you. Please write your idea inside the shield on your group worksheet. When you finish I'll ask someone from each of your groups to share your idea.

As always, God gives us these instructions to rule over, to work/develop, and to care for all creation, for our own good, so that we can live a good life and bless one another.

On the other hand, when we don't follow these instructions or God's purposes for us in this area, we and all creation suffer the consequences.

When we follow God's instructions, we are able to enjoy all that he created as he intended us to. God loves us very much!

Closing Action Point

Memory Verse Moment

You've all come up with some great ideas of how to rule over, work and care for God's creation. Let's learn the Bible verse now that tells us to do exactly this. It's found in Psalm 8:6 and says, "You made them (us) ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under their (our) feet." Let's all say this verse together.

We're going to play a little game. We'll pass around some blank squares as well as squares that have a picture of a crown, hoe and shield on it. I'll clap my hands as we pass the squares around. When I stop clapping we'll all say the verse. Plus, if you are holding a crown, hoe or a shield, you'll say one thing you can do to either rule over, develop, or protect and care for some aspect of creation depending on the picture you're holding. We'll play several times until everyone has gotten a chance to share.

One thing we can do to care for the creation in our community is to pick up the trash that is around our meeting area. I'm going to close in prayer now and then let's go outside and care for creation!

Prayer Circle

Close in prayer thanking God for every good thing he has given us in creation. Ask him to give the children wisdom on how best to rule over, to develop and to care for every aspect of creation. Thank God for giving all of us the talent and resources to carry out this good purpose of God.

Genesis 1:26: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them **rule over** the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, **over all the earth**, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

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



farmer



doctor

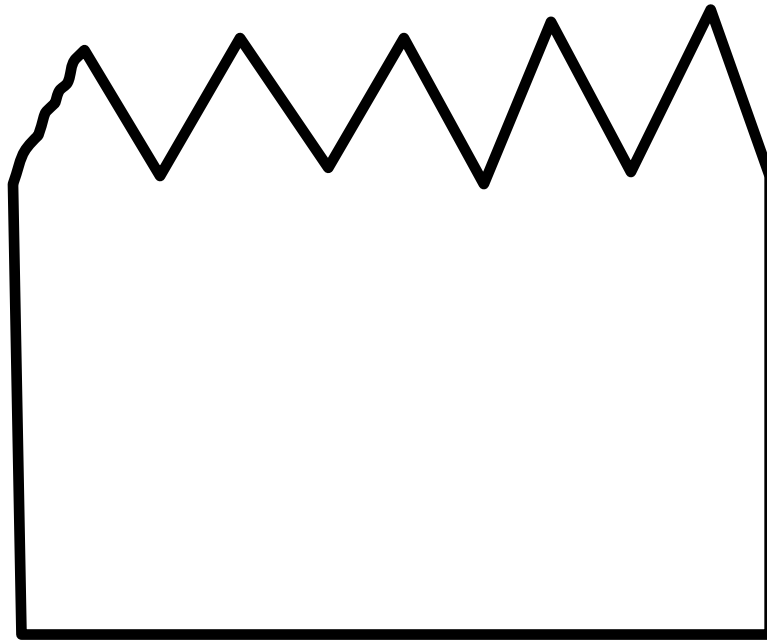


carpenter




bridge builder

One way we can "rule over" creation
Genesis 1:26

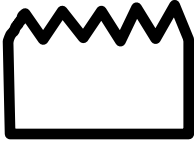
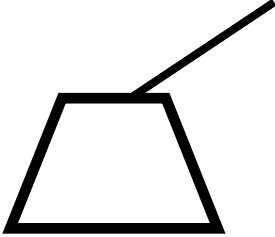
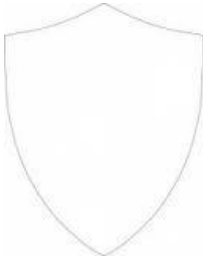


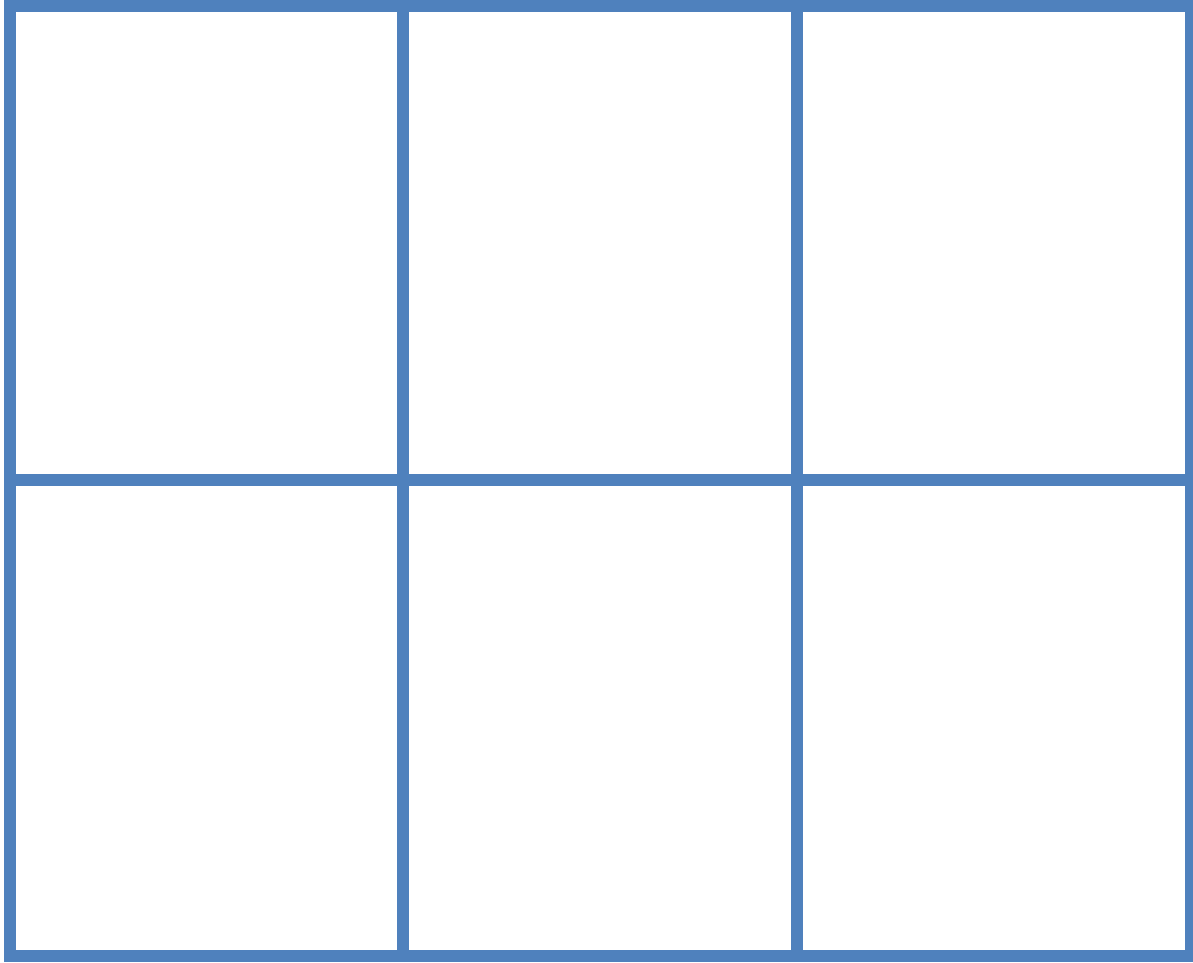
One way we can "work" or develop creation
Genesis 2:15





One way we can care for creation
Genesis 2:15



Unit Three– Lesson 4

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

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: God entrusts us with resources for the purpose that we are to steward them and use them to bless others.

While we may not always recognize it, God has given each of us many resources. He intends for us to diligently steward or to develop and wisely use every one of 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, the resources I have 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

Small squares of paper, one for each child, with each square having either a crown, a hoe, or a shield on it, treats for the Attention Grabber activity, pretend bags of money for the three servant actors, group worksheets, pencils, "My Commitment" worksheet, blackboard or large sheet of paper, Stand up Tall verse parts

Scripture References

Genesis 12:1-2; Matthew 25:14-29; Ephesians 2:10

Welcome Time

Hide the squares of paper, with the crown, hoe, or shield on them, around the room. Release the children to each find one slip of paper. After each child has found a hidden slip, ask them to share as follows. If they have found a crown, they must share one way they can rule over or have dominion over all creation. If they have found a hoe, they must share one way they can work or develop all creation. If they have found a shield, they must share one way they can care for some aspect of creation. Don't forget that our bodies and minds are part of all creation. Plus, the things we have made from creation such as books, homes, schools, roads, etc., these are all part of "all creation."

Attention Grabber

Divide the class into thirds. Have each group stand in a separate place from the others.

Give small treats to the groups as follows – asking them not to open or eat anything yet.

Group 1: Give each child 3 treats.

Group 2: Give each child one treat.

Group 3: Give no treat to this group.

Ask each group to "share" something they have with the other two groups. Group 1 should have no trouble sharing one of their treats. Group 2 will have to divide their treat up so that there is enough to go around. Group 3 will need to think of what they can give to the other two groups even though they have nothing tangible to share (i.e. expressing joy and appreciation when they are given a treat by the other children, hugs, helping the others pass out their treats, etc.).

Teacher, you may need to give group 3 some guidance!

Ask each group to share how they felt during the exercise. Make the point that even though each group had different amounts of treats (or even no treats!) to share, they all still had *something* to give to the others.

End this discussion by giving each person an equal share of treats.

In the previous three lessons we talked about God's purpose for each of our lives. Remember the timeline? Point to the timeline on the wall. It shows us that God has a purpose that stretches from eternity past into eternity future, and that each of us has a special place or role today in this eternal purpose. We have also learned about the "most important thing" God has called us to do...does anyone remember the two parts to the most important thing we can do? To love God and to love others. The last time we met we learned about our purpose in creation - to rule over the earth, to work or develop it, to care for it. Remember that leaky water jug/bag? God's purpose for us is to fix or overcome hardships in nature, to make all creation work for us, to improve it and make it productive and fruitful, and to carefully take care of it.

Today we are going to tie all of these points together by talking about another side of God's wonderful purpose for our lives! Are you ready? OK, here we go!

The Lesson

Genesis 12:1-2 says, "The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

God told Abram (later called Abraham) that he was going to bless him. Then God told Abraham why he was going to bless him...did any of you hear that reason? If none of the children can answer this question, read the verses again until they are able to answer the question. Right! God wanted to bless Abraham so that Abraham could then be a blessing to others.

God wants to do the same for us. He has blessed every single one of us ...rich or poor...with ways that we can be a blessing to other people.

In the opening activity you were each given a different amount of the treats. Some of you weren't even given any! Yet you realized that even if you didn't have any treats there still were ways that you could bless your classmates. Today we're going to learn that God has created us to be a blessing to others in every situation no matter how much we have.

There's a story that Jesus told in the Bible that will help us understand why we should bless others. We're going to listen and watch the story in "Freeze Frame". I need three characters who will be the three servants in the story. I will be the master in the story. Ask for three volunteers and assign them as Servant #1, #2, and #3. Actors, please listen and silently act out what you are hearing in the story. At certain points I am going to say "FREEZE" and you must totally freeze, allowing me to explain what is happening in the story. You may start moving again when I say, "Let's continue the story." OK, let's begin. Our story is from Matthew 25. (Teacher: Please read verses and explanation)

- **(verses 14-15) Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents (bags of money), to**

another two bags of money, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. *Freeze Frame.*

God entrusts resources to us, just like he entrusted the servants in this story with bags of money. God entrusts resources to us because he intends for us to develop and do something special with them. As we listen to the rest of this story, think about the resources and abilities that God has given you and how you can best use them. Let's continue the story.

- (verses 16-18) The man who had received the five bags of money went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two bags gained two more. But the man who had received the one went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. *Freeze Frame.*

We all have a choice in how we use the lives, abilities, and resources that God has given us. We can work hard at developing them and then use them to bless others or we can be lazy. Let's continue the story.

- (verses 19-21) After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five bags brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of money. See, I have gained five more.' His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' *Freeze Frame.*

God is pleased and will bless us with even more if we develop and use the talents and the resources he has given us to be a blessing. Let's continue the story.

- (verses 22-23) The man with the two bags also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of money; see, I have gained two more.' His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' *Freeze Frame.*

Not all of us will be given the same talents and abilities or amount of resources. The amount that we are given isn't important! What's most important is that we work hard and develop the resources that God has given each of us and turn them into something special. Let's continue the story.

- (verses 24-25) Then the man who had received the one bag came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your money in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' *Freeze Frame.*

This servant did not follow the master's instructions with what was entrusted to him. He didn't wisely develop or maximize what was given to him. He didn't make something special from the resources entrusted to him. Let's continue the story.

- (verses 26-29) **His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the bag of money from him and give it to the one who has the ten. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.’**
Freeze Frame.

God is disappointed and will not entrust us with more resources when we do not fully develop and do something special with what he has given us. Let’s continue the story.

Concept One: God entrusts what is his to us.

In the story, the master entrusted his property, or money (talents), to his servants. Does anyone know what it means to “entrust” something to someone else? Allow for the children’s responses.

To “entrust” means to take something that is yours - something you made, your property, your belongings, etc. - and give it to another person for them to manage and wisely use according to your stated intention or wishes. You don’t just give it to them as a gift to use as they wish. You give it to them for a very specific purpose, which you want them to follow. The master entrusted some of his property to his servants. He clearly expected them to further develop what he gave them and to do something important with it.

Give an example. Give a student your pencil and say. (Name of student) **I am giving my pencil to you. I don’t want you to lose it. I want you to keep the point sharpened, to use it on your homework, and to loan it to at least one other person every week. Don’t forget, it is my pencil. You just get to use it.**

God has entrusted life and things to us just like this master entrusted things to his servants.

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

What did the master in this story entrust to his servants? (Let the children answer - money) Right! He entrusted money to his servants.

What does God bless or entrust to us? Let’s get into four different groups. Together think about all the things that God has entrusted to you or blessed you with. I will give you a “Blessed...to be a blessing” worksheet with three categories: yourself, your relationships, and your things. Please list as many things as you can think for each of these categories.

Please only fill out the left (Blessed) side of your worksheet. We will work on the right side later. I will allow you time to work in your groups and then we will share our

answers together.

Teacher: You may need to help the students with one example of each. Divide the children into groups and give each group a worksheet. Allow students time to work in their groups. Circulate, helping them where necessary. After groups have had enough time to work, ask each group to share their lists. If possible make a large master list on a blackboard or poster.

What an amazing list of things that God has blessed us with and entrusted to us.

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

God wants us to steward all the things he has blessed us with and entrusted to us. Does anyone know what it means to “steward” something? Allow the children to share ideas.

To “steward” means to develop or use something to its full potential. The two men in Jesus’ story who had five and two bags of money developed, or used it to get more bags. They were good stewards. They used what their master gave them in them in the best possible way.

God is the master, owner, and over of all that you and I have – of everything you put on that list! He entrusts these things to us to develop and use to the fullest and best potential.

What do you think the greatest resource is that God has given you? How do you steward it?

Allow for discussion. Highlight the amazing gift of a mind God gives us and how we go to school to develop this.

Concept Four: We are blessed so that we can bless others.

Listen to Genesis 12:1-2 “The Lord said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.”

God told Abraham that he was going to bless him. Why was that?

God wanted Abraham to be a blessing to others. Through Abraham, God wanted people to experience and know God's goodness.

God has done the same for us. He has blessed each one of us with life, a mind, strength, and abilities. He has entrusted these to us so that we can be a blessing to other people - so that others can know God's love and goodness. Blessing others is what Jesus meant when he said the most important thing we can do is to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Take a look at the list of blessings that you wrote on your group worksheets. In your groups, discuss a specific way you can use that blessing to bless someone else. For example you can use the life and health that God gives you each day to help someone who is sick. Maybe you can do something in their home that they are unable to do. Please fill out the right side of your columns now. After you have finished I'll ask you to share your ideas with the whole class.

Allow children time to work together. When they have finished call on a volunteer to share their group's ideas. If possible, make a large list on a blackboard or poster.

We all have some blessing we can steward/develop and then use to bless others! No matter who you are, or how much or how little you think you have, God has entrusted resources to you that he wants you to steward and use to bless others. God blesses us so that we can bless others. This is an awesome privilege and a great purpose of God for our lives.

Memory Verse Moment

Let's learn a memory verse that talks about this. Ephesians 2:10, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

I've divided the verse into four parts. In your four groups, I'll give each of you one part of the verse. We'll play a game called *Stand Up Tall*. You'll stand up tall and hold up your part of the verse when it's your turn to say it. We'll stand and say our parts faster and faster until we all know the verse. Say the verse several times in this manner until you are certain that children know the verse. Switch parts if you like.

Closing Action Point

Hand out a "My Commitment" paper and a writing utensil to each child (see resource section).

Ask the children to fill in their papers (or dictate to the teacher or another student to write for them if they are unable to write) as follows:

- 1. Choose someone you would like to bless this week and write their name on the line after "This week I will bless..."**
- 2. Decide what you want to do to bless that person. Write this on the lines after "I will bless ... by..."**

3. **When you do this during the week, pay attention to how the other person responded to what you did for them, and how you felt when you blessed them. Next time we meet we will tell each other what happened!**

Prayer Circle

Ask the children to join you in a circle. Close in prayer thanking God for all of the wonderful blessings he has entrusted to each of us. Ask for his help to steward these blessings to the best of our abilities. Ask him for wisdom to see where we can best bless others. Finally, ask God to help each student as they seek to specifically bless someone this week.

BLESSED... What are resources God has entrusted to you to steward, develop, or use wisely?	...TO BE A BLESSING How can you use these resources to bless others - so that they will know God and his goodness?
1. My Self	
2. My Relationships	
3. My Things	

My Commitment

This week I will bless _____.

I will bless _____ by
_____.

Next week I will tell the class what happened and how I felt when I did this!

My Commitment

This week I will bless _____.

I will bless _____ by
_____.

Next week I will tell the class what happened and how I felt when I did this!

Memory verse in 4 parts

Ephesians 2:10

**“For we are God’s
workmanship,**

**created in Christ
Jesus to do good
works,**

**which God prepared
in advance for us to
do.”**

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

Our Lives and World Are Broken

This lesson is very important but fairly lengthy. Manage the time by rehearsing the lesson in advance and making modifications. Or, if needed, divide the content into two separate lessons.

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

Children need to know why, if God is good and created everything good, there is so much suffering and evil in their world. They need to know that the entire world was affected by Adam's sin. 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.

Supplies/Materials

Small ball, two clay pots to drop and break, attention grabber review pictures, broken relationship pictures, blank paper and pencils for groups, verse parts

Scripture References

Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 5:12

Welcome Time

Welcome all of the children and ask them to join you in a circle. Take out a small ball. Share your experience of blessing someone this week. Share what you did, how the other person responded to you blessing them, and how you felt. Toss the ball to another person and have them share how they blessed someone else with a blessing God gave them. Continue tossing the ball and sharing until all children who would like to share about their experience in blessing someone has had the opportunity.

Attention Grabber

Until now, all of our lessons have been about good news. We've learned how great and good God is, how he made us in his image, and the great plan he has for our world and lives. We're going to open up some "special messages" that will help us review some of the important things that we have learned. I need eight volunteers and will give each of you a picture. I will ask you to show your picture one at a time and then we'll remember what we have learned previously that relates.

Note to Teacher: These pictures can be shown and explained in any order.

- ***God created the world. Creation reveals the Creator.*** God made all of creation out of nothing with no blue print. God sustains it and holds it all together – including our own breath and lives. He said creation was "very good." The Bible says that every good gift is from God, everything that is good and that we enjoy comes from God. It is evidence that he loves us. Creation shows that God is good and his design for all of life is good. We can trust all of his instructions on how to live best.
- ***God is good.*** Our friendships are one example of a good gift from God to us and a sign that he loves and cares for us.
- ***Made in God's image – unique and loved.*** God made each one of us in his image or likeness. He created us to be in friendship with him. God loves each of us and made

each one of us unique and special. We all have a unique and special life. No one is ordinary in the sight of God. You cannot be me. I cannot be you.

- ***Made in God's image – equal in value.*** Men and women, boys and girls and people from every country, tribe and ethnic group, rich and poor, healthy and disabled – all have equal value, worth, and dignity before God because they are equally made in his image.
- ***God has an eternal plan.*** God has a plan and purpose throughout all of time that began in eternity past and extends into eternity future. You and I each have a special place in his plan.
- ***God's great purpose for us – to love him and others.*** God's great purpose for our lives is to love him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.
- ***God's purpose for us – to rule over all creation, to develop it.*** Another one of God's great purposes for our lives is that we rule over all creation, and develop or work it, and care for it. This includes our mind, body, and lives as well.
- ***God's purpose for us – to develop and use our abilities to bless others.*** Like the three stewards who received property from their master, God gives each of us abilities (like the athlete) and resources that we are to develop and use to bless others. One of the most important is our mind. Like he did Abraham, God blesses us so that we can bless others.

God has created and given us so many good things. So what happened? Everything he created was good but we obviously have some really big problems in our world!

All that God created is BROKEN!

Take one of the clay pots or objects you brought for this part of the lesson and drop it on the concrete floor so that it smashes into pieces. Be careful that the flying pieces do not hit anyone. This is dramatic, but the point you need to make is very dramatic! If you do not have a clay object, drop a pie, a cake, or something that was carefully made and is totally ruined when it hits the ground.

It has many problems. When God created the world, he said that everything was "very good." Yet the world does not work the way we wish it did. Bad weather destroys homes. People suffer and die of sickness or in accidents. Crops fail or are eaten by bugs. People hurt each other. As appropriate, include examples from your own community or life that the children will be able to directly identify with.

You and I are also BROKEN!

Take the second clay item (or whatever you are using) and drop it on the concrete floor so that it also breaks into pieces.

We do not live as God intended. We forget that God is great and the giver of every good gift. We take all of this for granted. We do not trust his instructions for living. We do not see people as equal in value but as superior or inferior. We do not love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We do not love others as ourselves. Instead, we are sometimes jealous, envious, angry, and selfish. We do not always work hard to steward and develop the resources and creation God has entrusted to us to make the world a better place. But, instead we are lazy or even waste, abuse or destroy the resources God gives us. We do not use all that God has given us to bless others, but instead we focus on blessing only ourselves!

So what happened? How did our individual LIVES and WORLD get so broken?

Today we will hear a story from the Bible that tells us how life became broken and how all these sad things began to happen. But first, let's clean up this mess! Ask for volunteers to help.

The Lesson

In the Garden of Eden ¹⁶

Teacher: If you have pictures or items that can illustrate aspects of this story, please feel free to use them to help make the story come alive to the children.

The first man and woman God created were Adam and Eve. They lived together in what was a beautiful place, probably located somewhere in what is now the Middle East. If you have a map, point to this area. This will make the reality of this story clearer to the children.

God called this place the Garden of Eden. God wanted Adam and Eve to take care of the garden and look after everything in it. Pretend you are pruning. Adam and Eve walked in the beautiful grounds with joy and gladness. Walk with a smile. They looked after the animals and enjoyed the flowers. Pretend to pick a flower. They picked the different kinds of fruit and ate them. Pretend to pick a piece of fruit and take a bite out of it.

God had given them permission to eat *all* the fruit except the fruit of a certain tree, which grew in the middle of the garden. God called it the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil". God had said to Adam, "You may freely eat fruit from all the trees in this garden, but don't eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Because on the day you eat the fruit of that tree you will surely die." Say this with authority! Adam and Eve did not understand what it mean to die, as they had never seen anything die. They

¹⁶ ¹⁶ The wording for this story is taken nearly verbatim from Creative Bible Lessons, Primary Year 1, Lessons 4, pages 20-22, Anni Dyck and Ruth Laufer, Surya Foundation, The Netherlands

only knew that it was a fearful thing.

Satan Tricks Eve

There was someone who did not like Adam and Eve's happiness in the Garden of Eden. This was Satan. Satan was a powerful angel who rebelled against God and God cast him out of heaven. For this Satan hated God. Now he looked for an opportunity to spoil the perfect work of God and tempt and trick the two people God had made in his image.

Satan knew that Adam and Eve would always be happy and at peace if they trusted him and followed the instructions and guidance that God gave them. In order to destroy their happiness, Satan used a snake as a tool. At that time, the snake was the most clever and cunning of God's creatures.

One day, Eve was walking by herself in the garden. She came close to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. From its branches came a soft voice... (Bend your head as if hearing an unseen voice)...the voice of the snake, which asked, "Did God really say `Don't eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden'?" "No," replied Eve... (shaking your head)..."that is not what God said. We may eat from all the trees in the Garden of Eden, except from the tree in the middle. God only forbids us to eat from that tree. We must not even touch its fruit. If we eat from that tree we will surely die."

But the snake answered, "It's not true. You will not die if you eat that fruit. In fact you will become like God and you will know what is good and evil."

Have your piece of fruit within reach.

Children, was Satan telling them the truth? Were they allowed or not allowed to eat the fruit? Wait for the children to answer.

Eve listened to the words of the snake. She looked at the forbidden fruit and it looked so beautiful, as if it would taste so delicious. Take the piece of fruit and turn it over in your hand, admiring it. Set the fruit back down, away from you. The snake had said it would make them clever so she went closer. Go close to the fruit again and lean in. Suddenly, she reached out, took the fruit and ate it. Grab the fruit and take a big bite. She also gave some to Adam, and he ate it, too. Give the fruit to one of the children and say, "Here Adam, eat this. It is delicious."

Adam and Eve are afraid of God

After eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve began to tremble. Pretend to be shaking. Before that they had felt safe in God's love, but now it was very different. They were afraid of God because they had disobeyed him. All at once they became self-conscious. Adam and Eve didn't feel a need to wear clothes before. Now they were aware that they

were naked, and they were no longer comfortable with this. So they hid in the bushes. But they were still afraid and self-conscious. Crouch and pretend to be hiding. What would God say? He would surely find them. No one can hide from God, because he knows and sees everything.

God punishes Adam, Eve, and the Snake

In the evening, God came to look for Adam and Eve. Usually they were glad when the Lord came and walked and spoke to them. But now they were ashamed and afraid.

How do you feel when you do something wrong or are disobedient to your parents? Allow the children to share. When we do something wrong, we often try to run and hide, so that no one will find us.

At that moment God called to Adam, "Adam, Adam, where are you?"

Adam could not be silent any longer and answered, "When I heard that you were in the garden, I was afraid because I was naked."

"Who told you that you were naked?" asked the Lord. Have you eaten the forbidden fruit?"

Immediately Adam defended himself, "Eve gave it to me and I ate." Eve answered, "The snake tricked me."

God was very sad that Satan, in the disguise of a snake, had succeeded in causing Adam and Eve to sin. For this reason, the first punishment was given to the snake.

God said to the snake, "Of all the animals of the earth you will be cursed. For the rest of your life you will crawl on your belly and eat dust. You and the woman will always hate one another. From Eve's descendants will come your enemy. He will crush your head, and you will bite his heel."

Then God said to Eve, "You will have pain in bearing children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

Then God said to Adam, "You listened to the words of your wife and ate the fruit which I forbade you to eat. For this reason the soil will be cursed. You will have to struggle all your life to make a living from it. Then you will return to the dust you came from." Then the Lord himself made clothes for Adam and Eve from animal skins. But they were not allowed to continue living in the Garden of Eden. God sent Adam and Eve out of that beautiful garden. Angels and a flaming sword guarded it, so that Adam and Eve could not return to the Garden of Eden.

This was how all of life and the world became broken. Since that day, everyone has followed Adam and Eve and contributed to the brokenness.

Please take out the four pictures of God, creation, others, and ourselves. You will need to rip each in half. Please save these ripped pieces, as you will need to refer to them again in Lesson 4 of this unit.

Concept One: Four main areas of life broken

-Our relationship with God was broken

(Rip the "Relationship with God" picture in half)

The biggest way our relationship with God was broken is that we struggle to trust and obey God. We struggle to do what God says is good, best, and right for us.

Divide the children in groups of three or four.

As time allows, have each group come up with a way that they struggle to trust and obey God. Then have them draw a picture of it and write a sentence about it. They will all share when they are finished.

Here are some examples of ways we do not believe, trust, and obey God because our relationship with him is broken.

- **We do not obey our parents because we don't trust God that this will be best for us in the end.**
- **We envy or our jealous of something our neighbor has because we don't believe God will meet our needs and desires.**
- **We lie to protect our name or interest because we don't believe God's promise and command that telling the truth is better.**
- **We are not grateful for the good things God gives us each day but just take them for granted, thinking we deserve them.**
- **We became rebellious against the one who knows and loves us. We decided that we know best.**

Have the children share their picture and idea. Or, share one or more of the above ideas.

-Our relationship with creation or nature was broken

(Rip the nature scene in half)

After Adam and Eve disobeyed, famine, drought, disease, floods, sickness, death, etc. entered the world. Can you think of other ways our relationship with creation was broken? In your groups, come up with one more way. Draw a picture of it and write a sentence about it. Be ready to share your example with the whole class.

-Our relationship with each other was broken

(Rip the Relationship with Others picture in half)

When sin entered the world, people began to be suspicious of each other. Adam and Eve immediately started arguing and blaming one another. In our world, one person does not trust another and vice versa. Can you think of examples of how our relationships with one another were broken?

As time allows, have them discuss this in their groups come up with one example, draw a picture of it and write one sentence about it.

Allow groups time to discuss and ask each group to share with the class.

-Our relationship with ourselves was broken
(Rip the smiling face picture in half)

Adam and Eve became fearful and self-conscious. We struggle with fear and self-consciousness. Can you think of other ways we struggle within ourselves?

As time allows, have the children discuss this in their groups and come up with an example of being fearful or self-conscious. Have them draw a picture of it and write one sentence about it.

Ask each group to share with the whole class.

All this happened and sin entered the world when Adam and Eve decided to go against God's command or instruction.

Memory Verse Moment

In this lesson you can see that we have a huge problem! Our world and our lives are very, very broken! God tells us just this in Romans 5:12. It says, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned."

"...in this way death came to all men, because all have sinned." The word *death* here means not just physical death but also separation from God and from his life-giving spirit and will in all the areas of life just as we have talked about.

Let's learn the last part of this verse together. I'm going to give each of your groups this verse cut apart into many sections. Please put your verse together in order and then practice saying it until you can say it with the pieces turned upside down. Allow groups time to work and check that each group knows the verse.

Closing Action Point

We're going to play a game called *Following the Right Voice*. I'm going to choose three girls to come up to the front of the class. Only one of the girls will be the right leader and you should listen to and follow her directions. However, all three girls are going to be

giving you instructions. They will turn around so you can't see who is speaking and giving you instructions. You should only follow the voice that is the right voice. Choose your three girls and identify one to the class as the right voice and leader. Ask the girls to turn around and each should separately give the class random instructions like jump up and down or touch your head. Watch how the children follow the voices and comment on how well they are doing. If the game goes as planned, it will be difficult for the children to act quickly and also follow the right voice.

We saw in that game how easy it is to follow the wrong voice. We often think that Adam and Eve were very silly to listen to the snake, which Satan used to deceive or trick Eve. We think that we wouldn't have been so easily tricked and done the same thing. But Satan speaks lies to all of us and tries to deceive us into thinking and doing the wrong thing. Sometimes we all choose to listen to the wrong voice. We listen to the lies spoken by Satan instead of the truth spoken by God. Sometimes Satan whispers something into our heart and mind, to think or say something mean or do something wrong. We've all experienced that type of temptation. Other times, Satan speaks deception into one of our friends (like he did with Eve for Adam) who then influence us to do wrong. But the bottom line is that we all listen to the wrong voice and disobey God. We all sin. As a result our life and world is broken in every way. The Bible tells us this in Romans 5:12. Let's say the last part of this verse together again, "...in this way death came to all men, because all have sinned."

Prayer Circle

Gather the children around you in a circle.

We have a big problem. Our lives and world are very broken in every way. However, God has a solution to this problem that we'll learn about next time. If any of you want to know the solution today instead of waiting for our next lesson, come to me at the end of class and we'll talk more about this. To get further guidance on this, see Lesson 3.

Let's close in prayer. I'll pray for all of us today. Pray for and with the children, asking God to bless them and help them understand their need for God's solution to sin.

Review Pictures

God created the world. Creation reveals the Creator



God is good



Made in God's image – unique and loved



Made in God's image – equal in value



God has an eternal plan

Eternity Future

You - Today

Eternity Past



God's great purpose for us – to love him and others.

Love

God's purpose for us – to rule over all creation, to develop it



God's purpose for us – to develop and use our abilities to bless others



Relationship with God



Relationship with creation



Relationship with others



Relationship with oneself



Our relationship with God is broken:

Our relationship with creation is broken:

Our relationship with others is broken:

Our relationship with ourselves is broken:

all

death

5:12b

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Unit Four – Lesson 2

Sin: Missing the Mark

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: Sin is anything less than God’s standard of perfection.

Children need to know that sin is not just outright rebelling against God. The concept of sin in the Bible is comprehensive and includes anything that misses the mark of God’s good design for all of life – for any reason. Some times we miss God’s standard because of ignorance, deception, blindness, or being hurt by or misled by another. Even if we are trying our very best, if what we do falls short of God’s good and perfect design for ourselves and the world, then it fits into the sin category. Because God is perfect and just, he cannot change or overlook his standard. 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 know that there are many reasons why people miss God’s standard and sin, but this does not mean that God can overlook his standard or requirement. They will recognize that it is impossible for any person to be perfect, no matter how hard a person tries. They 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 good and perfect standard.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

***Know** that sin is “missing the mark” of God’s good and 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

Bag of ripped pieces of paper, targets, rubber bands or straws with peas, to shoot at a target, or bean bags to throw onto a target, note cards with messages on them to place near targets

Scripture References

Romans 3:23, 5:12b, 7:18b; Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:14; John 8:44; II Corinthians 4:4

Welcome Time

Bring a bag of ripped pieces of paper to class with you. Don’t tell the children what they are for or what they represent. Ask the children to join you in a circle. Pass around the bag of ripped paper pieces. Ask each child to take as many pieces as they think they’ll need. Give no more explanation than that.

As you do this, lead the children in saying the memory verse from the last lesson, Romans 5:12b.

We are going to review how the world and all its’ people are broken like we learned in the last lesson. The ripped paper pieces you have are like the four relationship pictures we ripped last week. I would like each of you to share with the group one thing that is bad or broken in this world. Then we can decide whether that bad thing relates to God, others, creation, or ourselves.

For example – stealing is bad. This is evidence that our relationship with God is broken and we don’t trust him to provide for all our needs. Telling a lie is bad. This is evidence that our relationship with one another is broken. Or, a headache is bad. This is because nature is broken. Just think of something bad and we’ll put it in a category.

Go around the circle asking children to share and in this way review the last lesson.

Attention Grabber

Divide the children into four groups. Print out four different targets (see resource section). Give each group a small object like a rubber band or a straw and a pea, something they can shoot at the center or bull's-eye of the target. Ask them to take turns and shoot at the target three times each.

Another way to do this, if you cannot put the targets on a wall, is to print the target circles larger and place them on the floor. Have children stand back and try to throw a small bag of rice or sand into the center of the circle. The goal is the same – to hit the center. Make it difficult enough that no one can successfully hit the center every time.

Ask them to keep track of how many times their object lands on the bull's-eye. When all have had three turns...

How many of you hit the center of the bull eye three out of three times? No one was able to do that, were they? You all fell short of hitting the center every time.

Our memory verse today says the same thing, we all fall short.

Memory Verse Moment

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

Let's say this together until we all know it.

Today we're going to learn about what it means to fall short of God's glorious standard for our lives and why we do so.

The Lesson

Concept One: God's standard is perfection.

Who can tell me what sin is? Allow for the student's responses. **You're right when you say that sin is doing bad things like lying, cheating and stealing. But did you know that sin is more than that? The word for sin in the Bible literally means to miss the mark. Just like you missed the bull's-eye in our game, sin is like this.**

God's standard, God's bull's-eye is to fully live out his perfect design for every aspect of life. To always hit the mark or God's bull's-eye would mean we fully love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength every moment of every day. The bull's-eye is always loving your neighbor as yourself. It is never saying a hurtful word, never having a bad thought and never being jealous. It is always doing our very best in school, always sharing, always

doing what is most healthy, always being kind, etc. The center is God's wonderful, perfect standard for us.

Jesus said, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:48 (NIV) God, our maker, is totally perfect and without any flaw. It makes sense that he cannot accept imperfection, nor can he declare our efforts as "good enough," even when we miss the mark.

How many of you are able to live every aspect of life perfectly? Allow for response.

We all know that we're not perfect and we fail to live as God wants us to. Let's look at the Bible and see some of the reasons we miss the mark and sin.

Concept Two: We miss the mark because we rebel.

We are going to do a few demonstrations with the targets to show you the many ways or reasons that we all sin and miss the mark. We have four volunteers who are going to do the target shooting.

Select and coach these volunteers in advance so they know how to act their part.

Set up one target at the front of the room. **I'd like to have the first volunteer come up and take aim and do his or her best to hit the center of the target.**

Okay, do your best target shooter.

Volunteer #1 decides not to take aim and shoot at all. Instead, he/she says, "**Hit the bull's-eye? Why would I want to do that? This game is dumb! I'm not going to play this game. I'm going to do things my own way!**"

Teacher to students: **What was the reason this person did not hit the center of the target?**
Allow for children's responses.

You're right. He was unable to hit the target because he just refused to do so – he willingly rebelled. Sometimes we willfully choose to miss God's standard and choose our own way. Let's say the memory verse that reminds us of this.

Let's look at another reason why we sin and miss God's mark.

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

Place a box or some other object close to the target. Ask the next volunteer to come in from outside the room and shoot at the target. This volunteer demonstrates ignorance and aims and shoots at the object that is close to the target – thinking it is the target. He/she says, "**Yay! I hit it right on! I did a really great job! I am good.**"

Allow for the children's incredulous responses. Have the volunteer argue that he/she did not know any better, but actually thought the object was the target.

Teacher: **We all do this sometimes. We do something wrong because we don't know any better. In this instance, the shooter didn't know what the bull's-eye was so he wasn't able to hit it. He was ignorant – but that is no excuse. He still did not hit the target. Sometimes we sin because of ignorance, because we don't know. Sometimes we miss the mark because we are ignorant. 1 Peter 1:14 talks about this. It says, "As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires that you had when you lived in ignorance."**

Concept Four: We miss the mark because we are deceived.

For this next part, prepare by having placed a similar target at the back of the room. Place a card next to it that says, "This is not the right target!" signed by the maker of the game.

Begin by picking up an envelope and showing it to the students.

Children, I received this letter. Though it is not from the maker of this game or the one who made the rules of the game, I am sure it will be helpful. I hope so as our volunteers are not doing very well at hitting the center of the target. Open the envelope and pretend that you're reading the letter. **Ok children, this letter says that the target we are shooting at in the front of the room is not the correct target. It says to shoot at the target in the back of the room. So, I'd like our next volunteer to shoot at the target in the back of the room. I'm sure this letter must be right...even though it's not instructions from the maker of the game. Ok, volunteer #3, aim and fire away!**

Volunteer, shoots at the target in the back of the room. After he has finished go to the target, see the card and read it aloud. As you read, hit your forehead and moan in disgust.

UGGHH! We've been tricked and lied to. This card is from the maker of the game and it says this is truly the wrong target! Our volunteer may have hit the bull's-eye but it was not the right target. We were deceived and tricked.

Sometimes we miss God's standard, miss the mark and sin because we are deceived. We choose to listen to advice and directions from someone other than God. In this case we chose to listen to directions from someone besides the maker of the game. Do you recall who was the first person to be deceived into sinning? Who was that? Allow for response. **Eve was deceived into sinning. She chose to listen to the lies of Satan instead of listening to God and she missed the mark. The Bible tells us that, "Satan was a murder from the beginning, not holding onto the truth, for there is no truth in him." (John 8:44) Satan can deliberately deceive you and cause you to miss God's mark, his best for you. Let's say our Bible verse, Romans 3:23 again.**

Concept Five: We miss the mark because we are blind.

For volunteer #4, put a blindfold on him or her. Then give them their shooting device and say, **Go ahead, hit the bulls-eye!**

Of course the volunteer will not be able to do so because they are blindfolded.

Why was our volunteer unable to hit the bull's-eye? Allow the children to react and respond.

You're right. It was because he was blinded. He could not see. This is just like us. Sometimes the truth or how to do something the best way is right in front of us but we cannot see it. The Bible says we are blind. Because we can't see clearly, we sin and are guilty of missing the mark. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says, "The god of this age (Satan) has blinded the mind of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Satan tries to blind people so that they cannot see what is true and good and live by it. Sometimes we sin because of blindness. Let's say our Bible verse again.

Concept Six: We miss the mark because of inability.

Ask your final volunteer to come forward to shoot. Place them in front of the correct target but before they begin, spin them around quickly 10 times. Then ask them to aim and shoot at the target. **Okay, ready. Hit the bulls-eye.**

They will not succeed because they are dizzy. If they want to be even more theatrical, they could fall down as they are shooting because of dizziness.

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

Our volunteer missed the mark because he/she was not able. This is just like us. No matter how hard we try, we are unable to live as God intends. We cannot hit God's good and perfect standard. In the Bible, the Apostle Paul had this exact problem. He wrote, "For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." (Romans 7:18b)

Conclusion

No matter the reason, if a shooter in a contest misses the bulls-eye he or she does not get the prize. (See illustration in Teacher's Guide of Olympic shooter who missed the gold medal because he aimed at the wrong target). **This is God's requirement as well. God's standard is perfection. The Bible says that no matter how hard we try, we cannot perfectly hit the mark all the time. Doing good things and getting close to the mark is not good enough. This reminds us of our memory verse. Let's say it together. It is clear that we all miss the mark or sin. We all fall short of God's glorious standard.**

Today we learned that it is not only rebellion that causes us to miss God's bull's-eye. Sometimes we (and others) fall short of living the life God designed because we just don't know better, wey are ignorant. Sometimes it's because Satan deceives us and points us to the wrong target. Sometimes we are blind and just cannot see what is true and best. Sometimes we have every intention of doing the right thing but we just are not able. For all these reasons, we may think that God should not judge us for sinning and missing the mark. We argue that it's not our fault! But, the bottom-line is that ultimately we are responsible. We all fall short of God's glorious standard.

It is clear that we and the world have a huge problem! But there is good news. Next week we'll learn that God also has a perfect solution to this problem. If any of you don't want to wait until next week to learn about what God's solution is, come and talk to me after class is over. Teacher: Please refer to lesson 3 if you would like some guidance with this.

Closing Action Point

Break the children up into their four groups again and give them each a target and a small item to throw or shoot at their target. Each member of the group is to say the memory verse and then shoot three times at the target. The team scores one point for every time someone hits the bull's-eye. The winning team gets recognized.

Prayer Circle Time

Have the children gather around you in a circle.

Were there any groups that were perfectly able to hit a bull's-eye every single time? Allow for the children's responses.

Again, that's just like our lives. We often sin or miss the mark. But I'm so glad that God has a solution to this huge problem and I'm so excited to be able to share with you next week what his solution is. Let's close in prayer.

Pray and thank God for his perfection and his perfect plan for living. Thank God for his perfect solution. Ask God to begin preparing the children's hearts for hearing God's perfect solution next week.

Target – make as large as possible and at least four copies



Unit Four – Lesson 3

Jesus – Our Solution

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The Truth: Jesus is God’s wonderful, all-encompassing solution to sin and brokenness.

The Deception: The counterfeit ideas or Satan’s lies are:

- If we work hard enough or we are good enough, we can meet God’s requirement.
- There are many ways to God and the life he gives (his life - eternal life).
- A child is too young to come to Christ. You need to be an adult to know and 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 to meet God’s requirement and is now alive. They will realize how much God loves them. They will respond to God’s love by believing in and following Jesus - 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 God loves them.
- ***Respond** to God’s love by believing in and following his son Jesus.

Supplies/Materials

4 targets from the last lesson and small objects to throw or shoot at the target, four bags of small and heavy rocks for object lesson, plastic bag or backpack, pictures that depict Jesus’ life (resource section), poster paper to post pictures on and to decorate, markers, crayons, pencils, tape

Scripture References

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

Welcome Time

Invite the children to first say the memory verse from the previous lesson and one of the reasons people miss the mark and sin. Then take a turn at throwing or shooting at one of the targets. When everyone has had a turn, they should sit down.

How many of you were able to hit the bull's eye perfectly every time? Allow for the groups to respond.

Remember, that's what sin is – missing the mark – the bull's eye. There are many reasons we do not follow God's truth or instructions, and live in the good way he designed for us. We rebel. We are ignorant, blind, deceived or just not able despite our efforts. The bottom line is the same. We all fall short of God's good and perfect design for living – we fall short of God's glorious standard.

Attention Grabber

Ask the students to get into four groups and go to one of the four corners of the room where they will see a pile of stones. Give each group a plastic bag. Begin the object lesson.

I'd like for one person in each group to volunteer to hold the bag. The volunteer in each group is just like each one of us. We are all born sinners with a huge capacity to sin or miss the mark of God's glorious standard.

From the beginning we start missing God's standard of what is best for us. For example, we disobey our parents. Stop and have a different child each time put a heavy stone in the bag after this and each of the following examples.

We envy what another child has that we don't have.

We are selfish with our things.

We don't play fair in a game.

We are disrespectful to our parents or those in authority over us.

We don't give our best effort.

Ask the volunteer, **"How does all of this sin feel?"** Allow the child to answer that it's very heavy. If it's not heavy enough name a few other sins and put more stones in the bag.

Instead of being free and able to do what we know is best, we are all weighed down. We can't get rid of this weight on our own. We can't change ourselves the way we would like to. That's why God sent Jesus to this earth. He sent Jesus to take the weight of our sin, to pay the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross as a perfect sacrifice on our behalf. In this way, God takes our sins away (Take the bag away from the volunteer) and give us new

life – free and empowered to live in the wonderful way he intends. We access this gift from God through believing in Jesus and his death on our behalf.

We've talked much about our problem over the last two lessons. Today we are going to talk about God's wonderful solution.

The Lesson

Today we're going to learn all about how Jesus is the solution for our sin and separation from God and for all the brokenness in our lives and world.

Memory Verse Moment

Let's learn a well-known memory verse that tells us this. John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

To remember this verse we're going to play a game called *Stand up Tall*. We'll divide into four groups and each one of your groups will get a part of the memory verse to say. When it's your turn to say your part you will stand up tall and say it. We'll keep repeating it faster and faster until you're able to say the verse well. We'll even switch parts of the verse so that you really get to know the verse well!

Lead children in repeating and reading the memory verse several times. Switch parts until each group has had the chance to say each part of the memory verse.

Today we're going to use some pictures to tell the story of Jesus' life and how he provided a solution for our heavy bag of sin, for our missing the mark, and for all the brokenness. I'm going to divide you up into groups. You are to work together to decorate a poster picture that we'll use for our teaching about Jesus' life. Be creative and make your poster as colorful as possible. Feel free to add characters or other symbols to it.

To each group hand out the large piece of poster paper with the picture from Jesus' life taped in the center. Hand out crayons, markers and pencils so each group can decorate their poster. When they have finished begin telling the story.

You've done a beautiful job of decorating your posters. I'm going to call each of your groups up to the front one at a time to show your poster as I relate the story of Jesus. Listen carefully as you hear the greatest story ever!

The Birth of Jesus

Ask the group who had "The Birth of Jesus" to come to the front of the classroom and show their poster.

Tell the class about the miracle of the birth of Jesus. Be sure to include the following points/concepts:

- God sent Jesus as a tiny baby.
- God chose Mary, who was a virgin, to birth Jesus by placing the baby in her womb – this was a miracle!
- God chose Joseph to be Mary's husband and help raise Jesus.
- Jesus was just like you and me! He got hurt, played with his friends, helped his parents, etc.
- Jesus lived a perfect life. He always thought, said, and did the right thing in every situation. He never sinned.

The Ministry of Jesus

Ask the group who had "The Ministry of Jesus" to come to the front of the classroom and share their poster.

Tell the class about Jesus' ministry while he was here on earth. Be sure to include the following points/concepts:

- Jesus told people about God and how great and good God is. He taught people how to live right and well and to love each other.
- He often taught using parables or stories. For example, remember the story of the three stewards?
- He helped and served people by doing miracles (e.g. calmed a storm, fed 5,000 people with two loaves of bread and five fish, raised people from the dead, healed the sick, etc.).
- Many people liked and followed Jesus, but the religious leaders were threatened by him. They became extremely jealous and made plans to get rid of Jesus.

The Death of Jesus

Have the group who designed "The Death of Jesus" come to the front of the class and hold their poster for the other children to see.

Tell the class the story of the Jesus' death. Be sure to include the following ideas/concepts:

- The religious leaders sent people to arrest Jesus.
- They took him to their Roman government leader Pilate.
- The officials beat him badly, put a thorn of crowns on his head, and made fun of him. Jesus suffered much.
- They crucified Jesus (killed him by torture - nailing him to a cross).
- Jesus had not done anything wrong. He was perfect.
- Jesus could have stopped all this but he knew it was part of God's eternal and perfect plan.
- God's plan all along was to save people and restore them to himself by sending his son Jesus to pay the penalty for sin and break its power over us by dying on the cross.
- Jesus was the only person who could meet this requirement because he was perfect. His life hit God's bull's-eye or standard when our lives could not. His death took the penalty for our sin so that we would not have to pay this penalty. Because Jesus took our sins upon himself, we can be forgiven and restored by God.

- Hebrews 9:22 says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no removal of sin."

The Resurrection of Jesus

Ask the group who has "The Resurrection of Jesus" poster to share it.

Tell the class the story of Jesus' resurrection. Be sure to include the following points/concepts:

- Jesus' followers put his body in a tomb and rolled a giant stone in front of the doorway. The government put soldiers at the tomb to prevent anyone from stealing Jesus' body. (They had heard rumors this could happen.)
- 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.
- Jesus said that he would return to the Father but promised to send his Spirit to live in his followers and give them his life, wisdom, and strength.
- Over 500 people saw Jesus after he rose from death.
- Soon after Jesus rose into the sky and returned to heaven where he still watches over us.
- Someday Jesus will return, to judge all people and create a new heaven and earth. We will live with him forever.
- In the meantime, Jesus wants to live in us through his Spirit and give us his life – abundant life, eternal life.

Jesus was God's gift to the world to provide a way for anyone who believes in him to be forgiven of their sin and have his new life. Do you remember the illustration in the beginning of class with the heavy bags of sin? Jesus is the only way that we can be set free of the heavy load of sin in our lives. Here is how.

Receive God's Free Gift of Forgiveness and Salvation

Ask the children who decorated the title "Jesus" to bring it to the front of the class.

Jesus was God's way for you and I to be forgiven of our sin and given new life that is eternal.

Ask the children to attach their "Jesus" title in the center of the other four pictures (as shown in the resource section) before returning to their places.

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 and live 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.

Here is what we do to receive this 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 even harder to be good, by 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. Rather, we begin by admitting our need to God and that we fall short. 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. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) The Bible says, "Believe in Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

To believe in Jesus means to believe that:

- Jesus is God,
- that he died and paid the price for all of your sins,
- and that he is alive today.

Closing Action Point

Believing in Jesus is the most important thing that you can do. It's the most important decision that you can make. Teacher, consider sharing your story of how you came to believe in Jesus. Share the impact that believing in Jesus and receiving his gift of forgiveness and new life has had on your life.

Prayer Circle

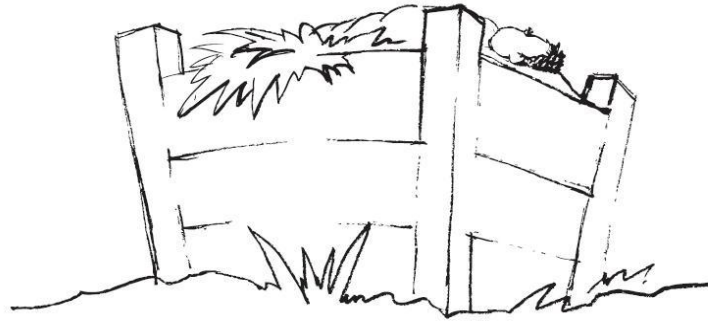
Do you believe that Jesus is God and that he died for your sins and rose again? Would you like to admit your need and believe in Jesus for salvation right now? I am going to say a prayer that you can repeat after me. If you want to believe in Jesus today, repeat the prayer with me. Let's talk to God 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 Jesus for dying in my place for my sin.
Thank you for rising from the dead and giving me new life.
Help me by your spirit to live the life you gave me.

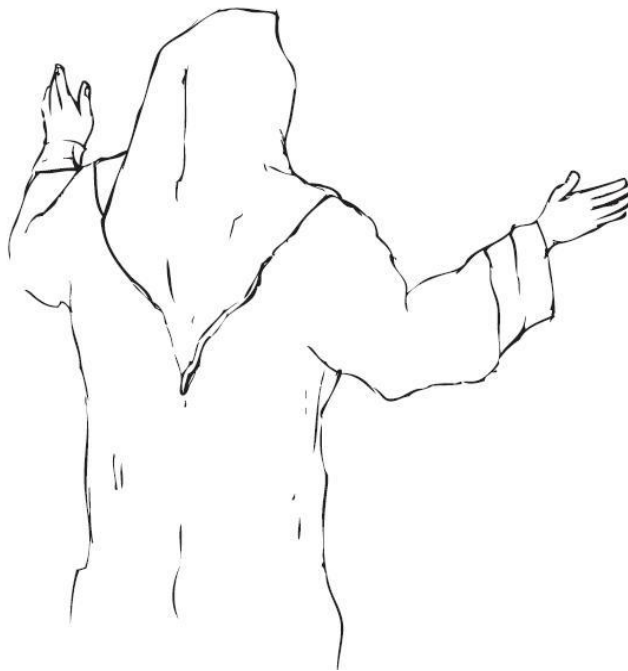
The Bible promises in John 1:12, to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." If you believe in God you can trust God's promise that he has made you his child now and forever! If you prayed this prayer of belief, it would be good to tell someone 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 were not ready pray this prayer you can pray that God will help you to believe in Jesus. 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!

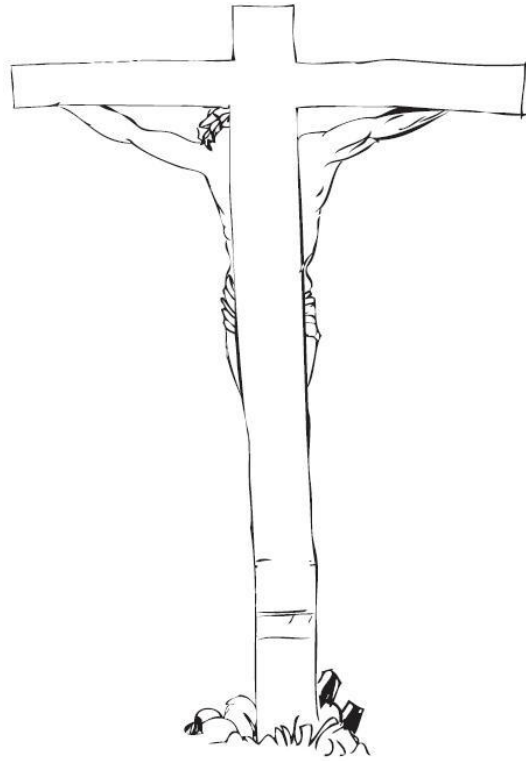
Pictures to tape into the middle of the poster the children will decorate
The Birth of Jesus



The Ministry of Jesus



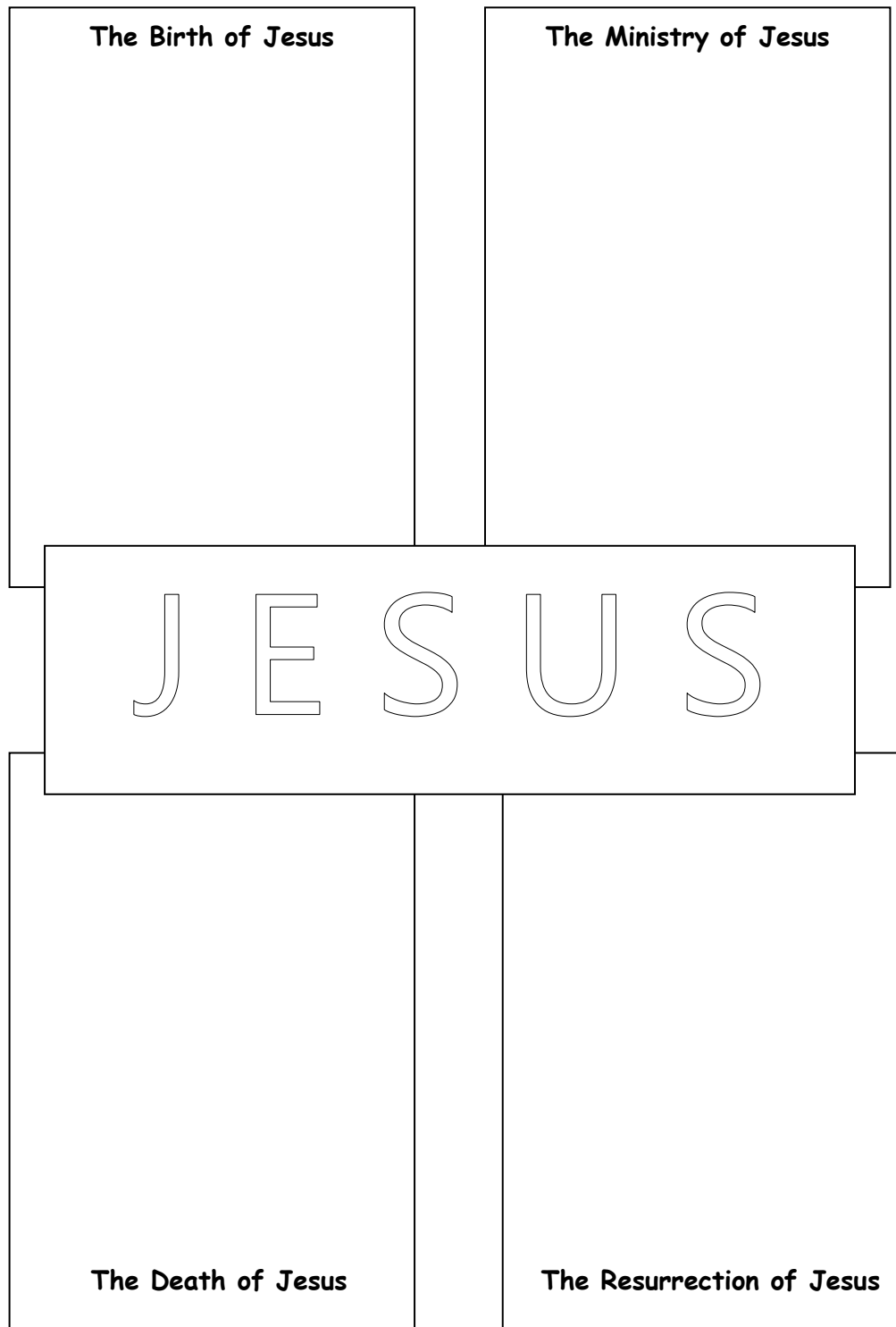
The Death of Jesus



The Resurrection of Jesus



JESUS



Memory Verse – four sections

For God so loved the

***that he gave his one and
only son,***

***that whoever believes in
him***

***shall not perish but have
eternal life.***

John 3:16

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 eternal life that God gives through his Son, Jesus. The aim of this lesson is to provide clarity on what is this 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 to have and experience 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 eternal that God promises when we believe in Jesus starts after we die. 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 impact all the aspects of our life here on this earth.
- Because the life that God gives us starts only 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 (i.e. coram deo). Grasping this, children can live 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” and “eternal life” are the same.
- ***Respond** with a desire to live and experience God’s life in every area of life every day.

Supplies/Materials

Life of Jesus paper slips (birth, ministry, death and resurrection) – one word/slip for each child, caterpillar life cycle picture for each child, crayons, poster with memory verse on it for Disappearing Verse game, black marker, a large paper cube designed as described in the resource section, ripped “relationships” pictures from earlier lesson, tape, photos of caterpillar life stages

Scripture References

John 3:36, 5:24, 10:10, 11:25, 14:6, 15:15, 20:31; 1 John 5:11-12; Colossians 1:19-20; Romans 6:1-10

Welcome Time

Print and cut out the “Life of Jesus” word strips that read, “Birth, ministry, death and resurrection.” Put them into a bag. Ask the children to draw out one word strip. When all children have drawn a word strip, ask them to share one thing they learned about that period in Jesus’ life. Another option is to pass out only one word strip for each word. Have the children pass these around while the teacher claps her hands. When she stops clapping the children holding the word strips must each say one thing they learned about the time in Jesus’ life on their word strip.

Attention Grabber

Give each child the caterpillar life cycle handout and crayons. Tell the story of the caterpillar:

Do any of you know what a caterpillar is? Allow for response. **Well, a caterpillar does not look like much, but it is actually a very amazing little creature. The caterpillar begins as an egg that has been laid on a leaf.** Ask the children to color the egg and leaf picture.

When the egg hatches, the caterpillar emerges and starts to eat the leaf it was laid on. Ask the children to color the caterpillar picture.

After the caterpillar is full grown, it finds a resting place and forms a cocoon around its body. Point to the picture of this cocoon stage and ask the children to color it as you explain. **It doesn't look like much is going on from the outside, but something very special is happening in the life of the caterpillar. We will talk more about that later.**

Today we are going to talk about the special life that God gives us when we believe in Jesus. It is a wonderful gift that only he can give. Something very special happens to begin transforming us when we believe in Jesus. Let's learn more about this.

The Lesson

In dying on the cross for our sin, Jesus accomplished two very wonderful things. One, he paid the full penalty for all our sin. Second, he gave us the gift of life – his life! I'm going to read several verses about this life that Jesus gives us. When you hear the word "life" as I read, please raise your right hand to show you caught the word.

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

"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." (John 20:31)

"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (1 John 5:12)

So, what does the Bible say we receive or have when we believe in Jesus? Allow for the children's responses. **That's right! We get real or true life, God's life.**

Often when Jesus talked about this real life that he gives us he described it as eternal life because it was the life of the eternal God. I'm going to read three more verses. Whenever you hear the words "eternal life" please raise your left hand.

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

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

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

The point is that when we believe in Jesus, the eternal God gives us new life – his life, true life, real life. It’s not just that we get a life that never ends. Rather, we get a new and special life – life from God – that never ends.

Jesus talks a lot about giving us life. So what is this life? What is it like? When do we get to experience it? Let’s explore and find out together.

Memory Verse Moment

Let’s memorize what Jesus said about the life he gives us. In John 14:6, Jesus said, “I am the way the truth and the life. No man comes to the father but by me.”

We’re going to learn this by playing the game *Disappearing Verse*. First we’ll say the verse several times. Then I’ll call a volunteer up, one at a time, to black out or erase a word of the verse. Then we’ll all say the verse filling in the missing word. We’ll continue blacking out words and repeating the verse until we’re able to say the whole verse without any words showing!

Show all the words of the memory verse and have the children say it with you several times. Then lead them in the exercise described above.

Take out the special cube you made in preparation for this lesson.

We’re going to find out all about this eternal life that God gives and have a little fun while doing it. I’m going to flip our special cube. On four sides of the cube are big ideas about today’s lesson. Two other sides of the cube have a Bible on it. If we land on one of the ideas, we’ll talk about it. If we land on the Bible, we’ll say today’s memory verse. If we land on an idea a second time, we’ll just say it and continue on. Let’s get started.

Note to teacher: The concepts below can be discussed in any order.

Cube Side One: God gives us his life. His life is eternal.

This side of the cube says, “God gives us his life. His life 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 is eternal, his life is eternal. Therefore, the life he gives us is also eternal.**

Jesus said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies (physically); and whoever lives and believes in me will never die...” (John 11:25) **Let’s say our big idea: God gives us his life. His life is eternal.**

Cube Side Two: God gives us his life. His life affects (reconciles) every area of our life.

God gives us his life. His life affects or reconciles every area of our life.

Colossians 1:19-20 says something totally amazing, “For God was pleased through Jesus to reconcile to himself *all things*, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.”

To “reconcile” means to completely restore or align things that are divided, broken and all messed up. In an earlier lesson we ripped up pictures to show how everything in this world – including our lives – is broken, messed up, and separated from God and his good and perfect design for life. Here the Bible says that through Jesus’ shed blood on the cross, God reconciled all of these things to himself. Notice, it is not just “some” things like our souls and hearts that God wants to reconcile and restore. Rather, the Bible makes it clear here that God wants to reconcile and restore all things - every area of our lives. “All things” includes eating, sleeping, working, playing, studying, our health, our friendships, etc.

The LIFE God gives us through Jesus’ sacrifice of his life on the cross, restores and impacts every area of our lives.

Take out the ripped “Relationship with God” picture. Tape it back together. As you are taping it explain:

Through Jesus death and the new life that God gives us, our relationship with God is fully restored. There is no more separation! Through Jesus, we can approach God with full confidence. (Hebrews 4:16) Jesus calls us his friend! (John 15:15) With this new life we can begin to love God with 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 explain:

The life that we receive through Jesus can reconcile and restore our friendships with other people. God’s life in us will enable us to see every person as created in the image of God, uniquely made and gifted, and equal in value before God. Jesus’ life in us can make it possible for us to truly love our neighbors as ourselves.

Take out the ripped “Relationship with Creation” picture. Tape it back together. As you are taping it explain:

The new life that we receive through Jesus will help us follow his original instruction in Genesis 1 and 2 to rule over and steward all creation in the best possible way as God

intended. God will help us fully develop and use all of the resources (external and internal) **that he has given us so that we can bless others.**

Take out the ripped "Self" picture. Tape it back together. As you are taping it explain:

The new life that we receive through Jesus will help us heal on the inside. God wants us to live lives of hope, peace, confidence in him, and purpose. He does not want us to live in fear, self-consciousness, shame and guilt. Through his life in us he wants to heal us from all of these.

Every area of our lives is affected by the life that God give us - doing our chores, cooking, going to school, playing with our friends, etc. God wants to restore and transform all of these things. Isn't this amazing?

Cube Side Three: God gives us his life. This life can begin TODAY.

God's life can begin TODAY. This is a very important Big Idea so, let's say it together. "God's life can begin today."

The new life that God gives us through Jesus begins the very moment you and I admit that we are a sinner and we believe in Jesus alone as the solution. If you have done that you have God's life in you! You have it right now! This new life that is eternal begins right now, not just when you or I die physically. (If you still have the timeline up in your room, point to the word "Today" on it.) **If we believe in Jesus today, he gives us his life starting today!**

Cube Side Four: God gives us his life. God's life is the very best!

Another very important big idea is that God's life is the very best! To help us remember that, let's say that again! Lead children in repeating that big idea.

There is no other life that is better than the life God gives. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it to the full!" (John 10:10) (Some translations say "abundantly")

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 represented God's perfect and best plan for our lives. God wants us to live a life that Jesus described as full or abundant - a life at the center or bull's-eye of God's good plan for us. This is not a life without challenges or difficulty, but it is one where we can thrive and be fruitful in the good way God designed for us. This life is available to us through Jesus' death on the cross.**

Closing Action Point

Do you remember our caterpillar? Last time we talked about him he was inside a cocoon where something was happening that no one could see. He was being transformed into a butterfly! Look at the last picture on your life cycle drawing. The caterpillar has become an amazingly beautiful butterfly that no longer crawls around on leaves but can fly!

Our lives are like this picture. The Bible says we are born on this earth as sinners and we sin from the beginning. We're like the caterpillar – existing but limited. In the eye's of the world we may be a gifted and successful caterpillar but in reality we are limited and our lives are not full or abundant as God designed for us.

We do not physically enter into a cocoon but in a sense Jesus did on our behalf. He came to this earth and took on our form, died on the cross on our behalf and was put into a grave. The Bible says that we died and were buried with Christ. (Romans 6:1-10)

The Bible also says that just as Christ was raised from the dead, we can live a new life with him. (Romans 6:1-10). Just like the caterpillar gets a new life as an amazing butterfly, we too can be transformed and live a new life that is amazing. This new life makes it possible for us to thrive and live fruitfully as God intends in every single area of life. We can become the person God designed us to be.

Let's color the picture of the transformed butterfly to remind us of the special life that God has blessed us with through Jesus and the way he wants to transform our lives.

Allow children time to color their butterflies.

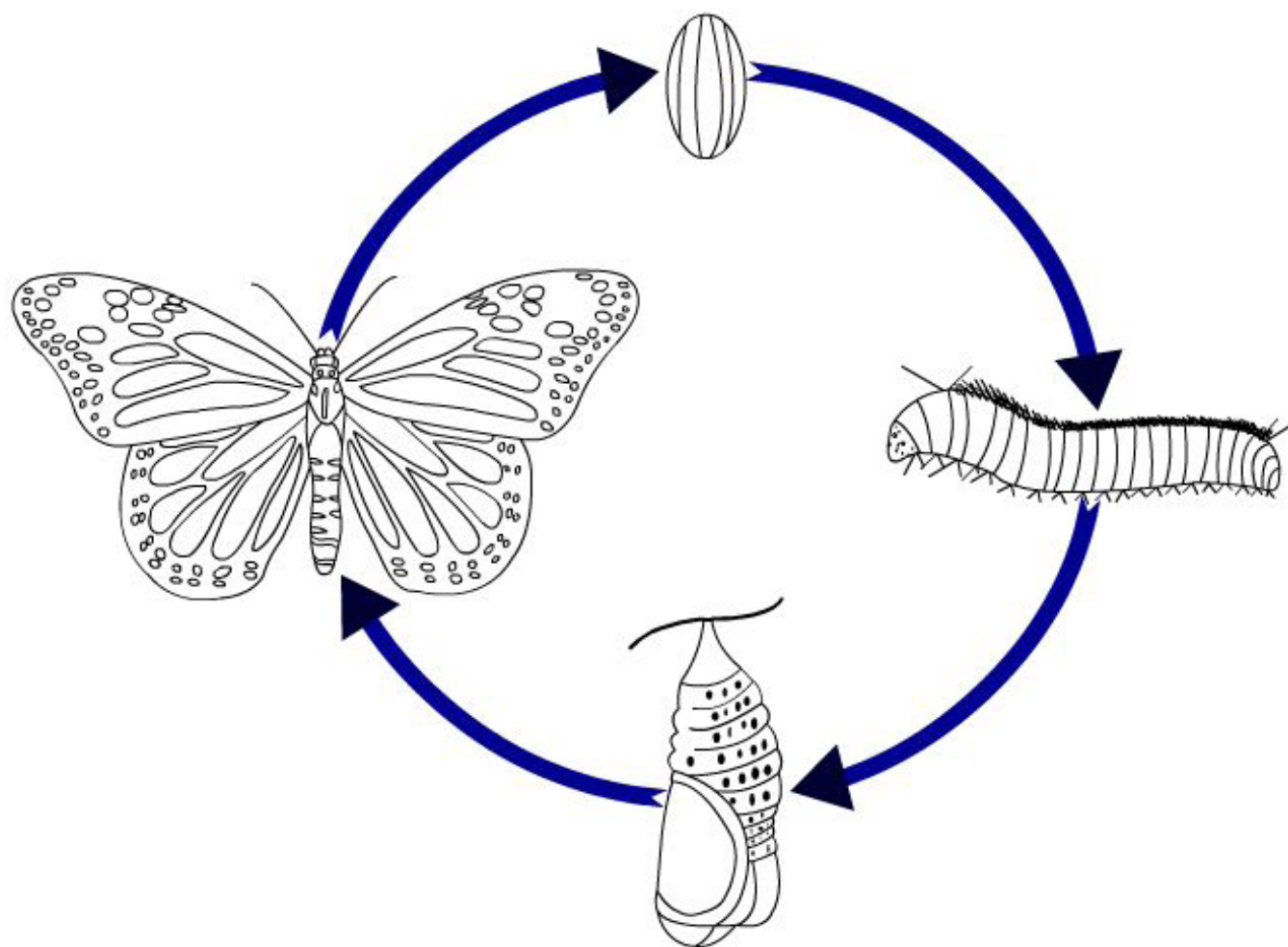
Prayer Circle

Let's close in prayer, thanking God for the amazing life that he gives us through Jesus. Pray and have the children repeat: "Thank you God that your life is eternal. Thank you that it touches all areas of our lives. Thank you that it can begin TODAY – the moment we believe in Jesus. Thank you that it is full and abundant – the very best. Thank you for your example of butterfly that shows us how you can transform our lives into something amazing and beautiful.

Review Slips of Previous Lesson

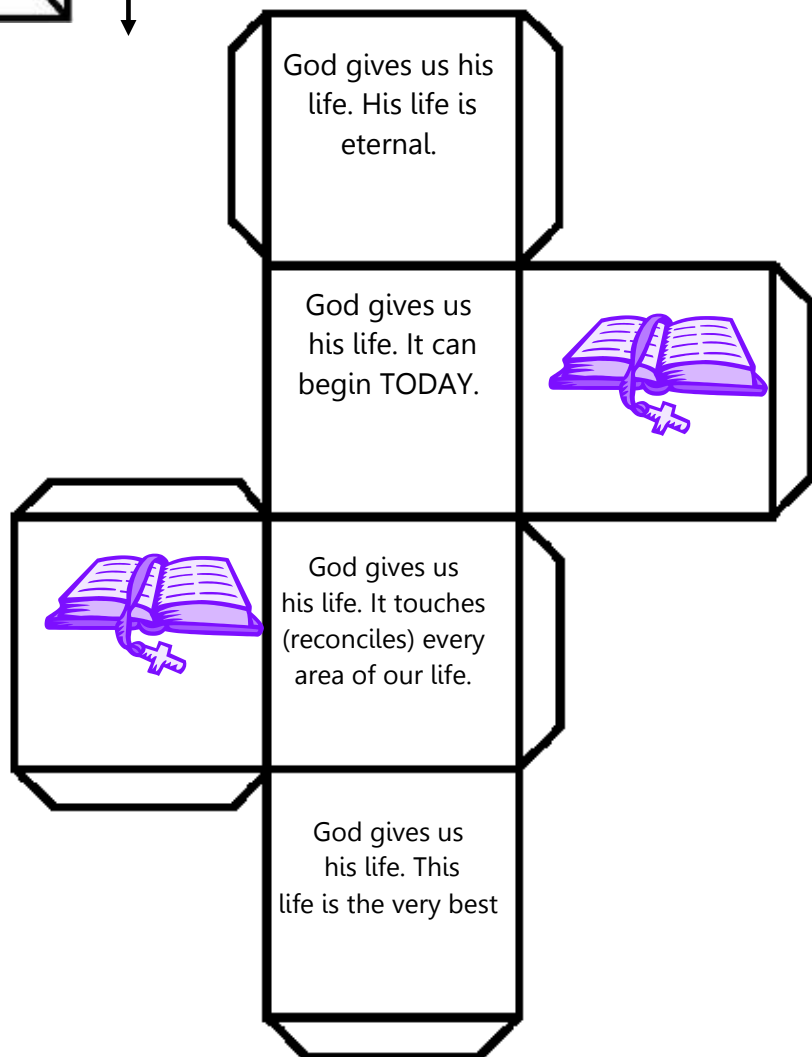
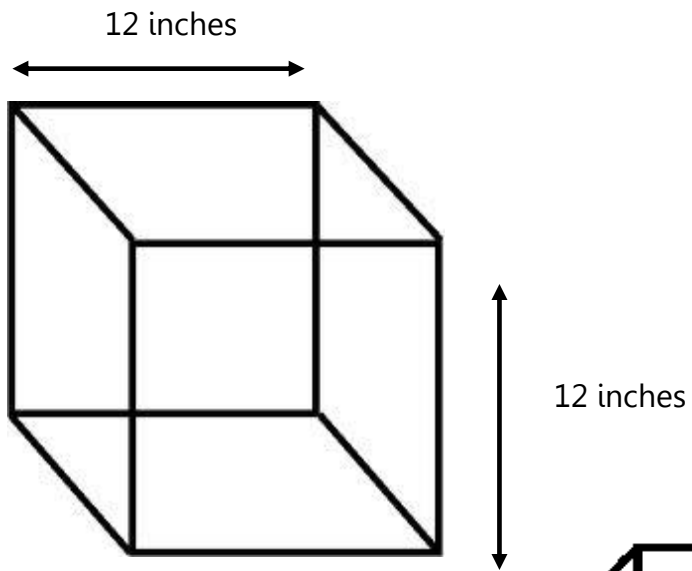
Birth of Jesus	Ministry of Jesus	Death of Jesus	Resurrection of Jesus
Birth of Jesus	Ministry of Jesus	Death of Jesus	Resurrection of Jesus
Birth of Jesus	Ministry of Jesus	Death of Jesus	Resurrection of Jesus
Birth of Jesus	Ministry of Jesus	Death of Jesus	Resurrection of Jesus
Birth of Jesus	Ministry of Jesus	Death of Jesus	Resurrection of Jesus
Birth of Jesus	Ministry of Jesus	Death of Jesus	Resurrection of Jesus
Birth of Jesus	Ministry of Jesus	Death of Jesus	Resurrection of Jesus
Birth of Jesus	Ministry of Jesus	Death of Jesus	Resurrection of Jesus

Life Cycle of the Caterpillar / Butterfly



http://www.softschools.com/science/butterfly/printbutterfly_life_cycle1.html

Big Idea Cube Design



Lesson Pictures

Caterpillar



Cocoon Stage



**Transformed into a
butterfly**



Unit 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 and thus never ends. It begins the moment we admit our need and believe in Jesus and his payment on the cross for the forgiveness of our sin. It touches all aspects of life. It is abundant and full - the best possible way to live.

Once we've received this life from Jesus, how do we actually live and experience it? This is the question of this lesson. The answer is one Jesus gave to his disciples. It was very simple. Jesus 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. In summary, we follow Jesus by doing what he did. This lesson presents three important things Jesus did that we also can do 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.
- To believe just means to agree 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 and increasingly believe, obey and depend as Jesus did, 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 gift that we experience when we follow Jesus. We follow Jesus by doing what he did. He believed, obeyed, and depended on God.

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

***Know** that we are given the gift of God's life when we believe in Jesus. We fully experience this abundant life by following Jesus.

***Understand** we can follow Jesus today by doing what he did.

***Respond** by doing what Jesus did: believe and trust in God and his word; obey or do what God says; depend and rely on God's Spirit for help.

Supplies/Materials

Treasure hunt directions (teacher prepares two copies), wrapped up treasure (box of small candies or treats), 4 cups of water, blindfolds for half the students, memory verse divided into 4 parts, 4 "Big Idea" cubes from last lesson, from previous lessons: re-taped relationship pictures, target, timeline if still posted on wall

Scripture References

John 8:28, 5:30, 10:27-28

Welcome Time

Before class make four of the *big idea* cubes used in the last lesson.

Divide the children into four groups. Review the memory verse from the last lesson: "John 14:6, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by me."

In each group, each child should take a turn rolling the dice. Depending on which side lands up, the child should say one thing about that big idea. If it lands on the picture of the Bible, they should quote the memory verse, John 14:6.

Attention Grabber

Treasure Hunt

Before class hide a treasure box somewhere in the meeting area and prepare a simple set of instructions that will lead someone from the front of the room to the hidden treasure box. Identify four children and prepare them in advance for the illustration.

When you meet as a class, have the four selected volunteers come forward and pair them up.

To pair one. **I have hidden a treasure box in this classroom. I have also prepared some instructions that will guide you to this treasure box. One of you should read the instructions out loud. The other one should go find the treasure. Begin.**

One student reads the instructions. The other student has been instructed to NOT follow all the directions, obeying some but not others, and giving reasons why he/she is doing something different. For example, taking two steps forward when the instructions say take two steps backward and explaining that it did not seem right to go forward right then. After a short time, the student who is reading the instructions should get frustrated and finally ask the other student to sit down without ever having found the treasure box.

To pair two. **Let's have you try the same thing. One of you read the instructions. The other go find the treasure. Begin.**

This time the second student will follow the directions perfectly, leading him or her to the treasure box. He or she should retrieve the treasure and give it to the teacher.

I assure you (shaking the box) **there is something good inside this box but we will not be opening it until the end of our lesson.**

What was the problem with the first pair of students? Why wasn't the treasure box found? Allow the children to share.

Our treasure is not a box in this room. Our real treasure is the life that God gives us through Jesus. In our last lesson we talked about how when we believe in Jesus we receive this treasure as a free gift. We learned that this treasure is a new life, God's life, an eternal life, that touches every area of our life today. It is an abundant or full life. It is best.

Today we are going to talk about how we can fully experience this life. I will give you a hint it has something to do with following instructions just like in our treasure hunt.

The Lesson

Last week we learned 4 different ideas about God's life. We reviewed them by using our bid idea cubes at the beginning of our time today.

- **God's LIFE is eternal.**
- **God's LIFE begins the moment we believe in Jesus.**
- **God's LIFE is not just "spiritual." It affects all areas of our lives.**
- **God's LIFE is abundant. It is the very best way to live!**

Hold up the butterfly life cycle page from the last lesson. **Remember the caterpillar that crawled on a leaf and how it was transformed into a beautiful butterfly that could fly? It gives us a picture of how God wants to transform and give us a new life.** Hold up a target from Lesson 2. **This target is a reminder of how God wants to help us live in the center of his good will and plan for our lives instead of constantly “missing the mark.”** Hold up or point to the taped together relationship pictures that you posted on the wall. **These pictures remind us of how God wants to reconcile and restore all areas of life that are broken by sin.**

This is what God wants to do by giving us his life through Jesus. When we admit our sin and believe in Jesus and what he did for us, God immediately gives us this treasure. This LIFE is a free gift to us paid for by Jesus.

Hold up the treasure box found earlier.

God’s gift of life is like this treasure box. It is not enough just to know we have it, we all want to open the box and experience the treasure. We need to experience the life of Christ that we have been given. How do we experience this life?

Jesus had a very simple answer for this. He said to Levi, Matthew, Peter, and Barnabas, and many others, “Come and FOLLOW me.” Today, Jesus asks us to do the same thing, “Follow me.”

Jesus calls us to FOLLOW him. In following him we can experience the LIFE he has given to us. Jesus calls those who follow him “disciples.”

However, Jesus no longer physically walks on this earth so how do we follow him today?

We follow Jesus by doing what he did.

Jesus did a lot of things but stepping back we see three important things that made Jesus’ life very special. Do you want to know what these three things are and follow Jesus by doing them also? (pause) We are going to work in groups to learn about these important ways we can follow Jesus. Divide the children into four groups.

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

I am going to give each of your groups a half full cup of water. When I say “go” I want the oldest person in the group to pick up the cup of water. I’d like the youngest person in the group to stand right by the person holding the water. Please do that now. Students respond.

Oldest person, please hold the cup of water up in the air. When I say “go”, please say, “I am going to pour water on your head,” then slowly pour the water on the youngest person’s head. Youngest person, please do whatever you wish. Ok, Go!

Allow each group to follow this activity to its conclusion. The expectation is that the younger students will believe the older student and get out of the way before they get water poured on them.

Younger student, why did you get out of the way? Allow for response.

It’s quite simple, you believed and trusted in what the older student said about pouring water on your head. If you had doubted their word, you wouldn’t have moved. (If per chance a younger student did not move you can rephrase this to say they did not believe and trust the word of the older student and so got water poured on their head).

It’s the same way with God and his word. Jesus completely believed and trusted in God and his word. Since Jesus was the son of God, you might say it was easy for him to believe and trust God’s word. But remember, the Bible says that Jesus was tempted just as we are, so there were times when he was tempted to not believe and trust what God said. Can you think of a time when Jesus believed and trusted God’s word? (Examples: When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the desert. When Jesus prayed “not my will but thine be done.”)

If we want to follow Jesus and do what he did, we will believe and trust in God and his word. For example, we will believe that God is both great and good because of what creation shows and the Bible tells us. We will believe that every person is made in God’s image and therefore equal in value, dignity and worth. We will believe that every person is special with gifts and abilities from God that they are to steward and develop. We will believe that God has made us to rule over all creation - to develop it, make it better, and care for it.

What are some other ways we can do as Jesus did and believe in God and his word? Allow for response.

Believe and trust in God’s word. This is the first way we can follow Jesus and experience the abundant life he gives us.

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

I would like you to pair up and line up on one side of the room. Next, I will give each pair a blindfold for one of you to put on. The other person’s job is to guide the blindfolded person from one side of the room to the other without bumping into anything or anyone. You cannot touch the person you are guiding but only speak to him or her. Please begin.

You may need to space the children out so they do not bump into one another as they complete this activity. After they have finished the activity have them sit down in their groups and lead them in a short discussion.

How did you do? What did it require to do this successfully?

The only way the blindfolded person was able to cross the room was by obeying the other person's instructions.

It was the same with Jesus. He not only believed and trusted God's word, but he obeyed it. He followed God's instruction. Jesus spent his whole life here on earth doing what God asked him to do. Jesus said in John 8:28, "...I do nothing on my own behalf but speak just what the Father has taught me."

The second way we can follow Jesus by doing what he did is we can obey God and his word.

How do we obey God? We obey God by doing unto others as we would have them do to us. We obey God by studying hard in school to develop our minds and use them to bless others. We obey God by obeying our parents, etc.

Obey God. This is the second way we can follow Jesus and experience the abundant life he gives us.

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

This time the other person in your pair will be blindfolded. Instead of speaking instructions to you, the person leading will push the blindfolded person from the back and guide him or her across the room without bumping into anyone. No one speaks. Please begin.

Allow students time to complete this activity. After all have finished ask them to sit back down.

How did you do? What did it require to be successful at this? Allow response.

Yes, in order for the blindfolded person to safely get to the other side of the room, they had to depend upon the person who was guiding them. Believe it or not, Jesus had to do the same thing. Jesus, even though he was the son of God, he depended on God. Jesus said, "By myself I can do nothing." (John 5:30) He often withdrew to lonely places and prayed to God depending on him for help.

If Jesus had to depend upon God in order to live the life God planned for him, how much more do we need to do the same!

The lie of this world is that to admit weakness or need is a bad thing. To ask for help is the first step to failure or defeat. Instead, we need to be strong and not need help. Men, especially should not need help. But, this is not true. Jesus was God's son and he depended on God for help. God gives his spirit to live in us and help us because God knows we need help.

Depend on God's Spirit. Jesus did! This is the third way we can follow Jesus and experience the abundant life he gives us.

I would like you to break up into groups of 3 or 4 and come up with a skit that shows a practical way you can follow Jesus by doing each of the important things he did. Jesus believed and trusted in God and his word. Jesus obeyed God. Jesus depended on God. If time does not allow for skits, as a group make a list of examples for each of the three ways on the blackboard or large sheet of paper.

Memory Verse Moment

Today we learned that we can experience the life Jesus gives us by following him. We follow him by doing what he did.

Let's learn a Bible verse where Jesus talks about following him. It's John 10:27-28, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life...."

To learn this verse we'll divide into four groups with each group saying one part of the verse. Then we'll rotate parts.

Closing Action Point

Bring out the treasure box that the one group was able to successfully find.

This treasure box is an example of the life eternal that God gives us. It's a wonderful, beautiful box 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 experience God's abundant life now, not just when we die. We can experience this by following Jesus. Today, we learned three ways that we can follow Jesus and experience the life God gives us. Let's say them all together three times and see if we can get the lid to come off our treasure box.

Lead the children in saying the three ways to follow Jesus. (Believe and trust God. Obey God. Depend on God.) They should get louder and louder each time. On the third time, take the lid off the box and give each child one of the treats inside.

Prayer Circle Time

Gather children in a circle around you. Close in a prayer for each child. If you have a smaller group you may want to pray for each child individually. If you have a larger group, insert five names into each prayer, praying the prayer several times.

God,

Thank you that we can experience your abundant life and live it out each and every day. Please help *(name/names)* to believe in you and your word, obey you, and depend on your Spirit to help them live as you designed. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Memory Verse

John 10:27-28:

My sheep listen to my voice;

I know them,

and they follow me.

I give them eternal life....

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. On this basis, is trust in God was unswerving. He responded to God’s greatness and goodness by revering, worshipping, and being thankful. To follow Jesus is to do what he did. We grow more and more aware of God’s greatness and goodness and our response is 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 life) 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 impact 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

Re-wrapped treasure box from previous lesson, book, cup (with water to drink out of it), light bulb and something to plug it into to light it, mystery item, cloth to cover it all, group worksheets per resource section, half-sheet to draw on for every child along with crayons or pencils, tape

Scripture References

Kings 18:16-39; Psalm 105:5 (NLT); Isaiah 40:26; Nehemiah 9:8 (NLT); Psalm 105:5 (NLT); Isaiah 11:3; Psalm 34:9; 1 Chronicles 16:34; John 11:41; Mark 8:7; Psalm 34:8-9; Psalm 96:4

Welcome Time

Rewrap the treasure box that you used during the last lesson. If you have a large number of students you may want to put another wrapped box inside of it to allow for total class participation. Have the children sit in a circle. Take out the treasure box and begin by ripping off a small piece of the wrapping paper. Review one thing covered in the last lesson as you take off the small piece of wrapping paper.

Remember the treasure box from the last lesson? It represents the treasure of God's life that he gives to us when we believe in Jesus and what he did for us on the cross. This life from God touches every part of our lives and all of our relationships. God wants to transform our entire life – every aspect – just like the caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly. In the last lesson we learned how we could experience this gift of life – by following Jesus, doing what Jesus did. We know that Jesus did many things, but three important things he did were to trust in God and his word, to obey, and to depend on God.

I'd like each one of you to take off a small piece of the wrapping paper and say one way you can do one of these three things. (Give specific examples if this will help spur their thinking). **I'll give each of you a minute to think about something. Then we'll pass around the treasure box. We'll finish when the treasure box is unwrapped and everyone has gotten the chance to share.**

Attention Grabber

Today we will look more at how we can experience the free gift of life that God gives us. We can experience this life by following Jesus - by doing what Jesus did.

We're going to play a simple game called *Guess that Word* to find out two important things about God. I'm going to write a sentence up on the board (or on a piece of paper) that says, "God is _____ and God is _____." I'll ask for volunteers to guess one letter at a time to fill in the empty spaces. After we have a few letters filled in, if you think you know the word, please raise your hand and you may take your guess. Let's see how quickly we can find out what these two words are.

Play until children are able to correctly read the sentence: God is Great and God is Good.

If time allows, review the following story. Otherwise, go directly to the lesson portion.

One of the dramatic stories of the Bible that illustrates God's greatness is Elijah's encounter with the prophets at Baal. Let's review it together. Read this story to the children or work with them to dramatize it. 1 Kings 18: 21 -39 (NIRV – New International Reader's Version)

Elijah went there and stood in front of the people. He said, "How long will it take you to make up your minds? If the Lord is the one and only God, follow him. But if Baal is the one and only God, follow him."

The people didn't say anything.

Then Elijah said to them, "I'm the only one of the Lord's prophets left. But Baal has 450 prophets. 23 Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for themselves. Let them cut it into pieces. Then let them put it on the wood. But don't let them set fire to it. I'll prepare the other bull. I'll put it on the wood. But I won't set fire to it. 24 Then you pray to your god. And I'll pray to the Lord. The god who answers by sending fire down is the one and only God."

Then all of the people said, "What you are saying is good."

Elijah spoke to the prophets of Baal. He said, "Choose one of the bulls. There are many of you. So prepare your bull first. Pray to your god. But don't light the fire."

So they prepared the bull they had been given.

They prayed to Baal from morning until noon. "Baal! Answer us!" they shouted. But there wasn't any reply. No one answered. Then they danced around the altar they had made.

At noon Elijah began to tease them. "Shout louder!" he said. "I'm sure Baal is a god! Perhaps he has too much to think about. Or maybe he has gone to the toilet. Or perhaps he's away on a trip. Maybe he's sleeping. You might have to wake him up."

So they shouted louder. They cut themselves with swords and spears until their blood flowed. That's what they usually did when things really looked hopeless. 29 It was now past noon. The prophets of Baal continued to prophesy with all their might. They did it until the time came to offer the evening sacrifice. But there wasn't any reply. No one answered. No one paid any attention.

Then Elijah said to all of the people, "Come here to me." So they went to him. He rebuilt the altar of the Lord. It had been destroyed. Elijah got 12 stones. There was one for each tribe in the family line of Jacob. The Lord's message had come to Jacob. It had said, "Your name will be Israel." Elijah used the stones to build an altar in honor of the Lord. He dug a ditch around it. The ditch was large enough to hold 13 quarts of seeds. 33 He arranged the wood for the fire. He cut the bull into pieces. He placed the pieces on the wood.

Then he said to some of the people, "Fill four large jars with water. Pour it on the offering and the wood." So they did.

"Do it again," he said. So they did it again.

"Do it a third time," he ordered. And they did it the third time. The water ran down around the altar. It even filled the ditch.

When it was time to offer the evening sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward. He prayed, "Lord, you are the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. Today let everyone know that you are God in Israel. Let them know I'm your servant. Let them know I've done all of these things because you commanded me to. Answer me. Lord, answer me. Then these people will know that you are the one and only God. They'll know that you are turning their hearts back to you again."

The fire of the Lord came down. It burned up the sacrifice. It burned up the wood and the stones and the soil. It even licked up the water in the ditch.

All of the people saw it. Then they fell down flat with their faces toward the ground. They cried out, "The Lord is the one and only God! The Lord is the one and only God!"

This is truly an amazing account of how God worked with Elijah. In the end, what caused or forced all the people to fall down flat with their faces toward the ground? Allow for response. You are right! The people fully recognized just how real and powerful God is. In response, they could not help but fall with their faces to the ground.

The Lesson

Jesus always recognized how great and good is God. His response was to revere, worship, and give thanks to God.

The Bible says to think of the great things God has done. (Psalm 105:5) Let's do this! Let's make a list of some ways that God is great and God is good by reading a verse and answering three questions.

- **What did God make?**
- **What does God do?**
- **What does God provide for us?**

Divide the children into three groups. Hand out the group worksheet for each question to each group.

Let's read the first verse, Isaiah 40:26, "Lift your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength not one of them is missing." Post this verse on the wall where all can see it.

In your groups answer your question according to this verse. Then share with the rest of us.

What did God make? God made the heavens and all the stars.

What does God do? God calls the stars each by name. He keeps them from getting lost.

What does God provide for us? God provides beauty and light at night.

Let's look at another verse, Nehemiah 9:8 (NLT): "You alone are the Lord. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and everything in them. You preserve and give life to everything, and all the angels of heaven worship you." Post this verse on the wall where all can see it.

What did God make? God made the earth and everything in it. Make a list of some items that would be included in "everything."

What does God do? God preserves and gives life to everything. Add to the "everything" list.

What does God provide for us? God provides everything. Have the children look around the room or out the window and add even more to their "everything" list.

Again, the Bible says to think of all the great things God has done. (Psalm 105:5)

Jesus constantly did this. He constantly recognized how great and good his Father. The people in Elijah's day fell down with their faces to the ground. (1 Kings 18: 39) What was Jesus' response?

Concept One: Our response – fear (revere) God.

The Bible says in Isaiah 11:3, “he (Jesus) will delight in the fear of the LORD.” More than 100 times, the Bible speaks of fearing God and why this is important. For example, Psalm 34:9 says, “Fear the Lord, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.” When we fully see how great and good God is, our response will be to fear God.

Yet, the Bible also says to not be afraid and that “God has not given us a spirit of fear.” So what exactly does it mean to fear God? Does anyone have any ideas? Allow for children’s responses.

When the Bible says to fear God, it means to be in awe of God and to revere him. It is to realize that God is not like us and then to respect and trust him because of how great and good he is.

How many of you have a favorite teacher or coach or some other authority figure in your life? Allow children to think about this and raise their hands. **How do you feel about this person?** Allow for response. **Do you love this person?** Allow for response. **Do you also fear them somewhat? If so, why or how?** Allow for response.

Fearing God is similar to the way you feel about your favorite teacher or coach. You love them but you also respect and even fear them. You’ll do what they ask because you don’t want to disappoint them. We respect and fear God because he is great and good, and better than even our favorite teacher or coach.

Concept Two: Our response - worship God.

When we truly recognize how great and good God is, we’ll worship him. Psalm 99:5 says, “Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy.” The literal meaning of worship in the Old Testament is to “bow down” or to “fall down before”.

We worship God when we recognize how great and good God is and then bow in our hearts before him. Worship starts in the heart. It’s possible for us to go to church on Sunday and kneel and bow our head in prayer, or lift our hands, but not really be worshipping God, if our heart isn’t bowed to him.

Did you also know that you don’t have to be in a church building or anywhere special to worship God? Throughout the day we can recognize how great and good God is and then respond in our hearts with respect and gratitude. This means that we can worship God at school, at home, or when we’re lying down to sleep at night. We can worship God, anytime, anywhere!

Concept Three: Our response - thank God.

When we recognize how great and good God is, the most natural way we can respond is to thank him. 1 Chronicles 16:34 says, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." This is what Jesus did. He gave thanks. (John 11:41, Mark 8:7)

We have so many things to thank God for. Let's look at our big list on the board that you made and go through all the things that God made, does and gives us. I'll read some of them and then we'll say, "Thank you God for ____" (fill in the blank with the item).

Memory Verse Moment

Today we have talked about seeing how great and good God is and then responding with reverence, worship and thankfulness. Let's learn a verse that encourages us to do this.

Psalms 34:8-9, "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing." Let's repeat this verse two times.

Now, let's play a game called *Subtract a Word*. We will divide up into three groups. Group one will say the first word of the verse and then I will cover the first word up. Group two will say the first and second word. Then I will cover up the second word. Group three will say the first, second and third word and I will keep covering up the next word. Then we'll go back to Group one and continue the process until all the words in the verse are covered and being said. Ok, let's play!

One last thing before we end. Did you know that God does not need us to fear, worship or thank him? Jesus said his heavenly Father was perfect and lacked nothing. So, God does not need our fear, worship or thanks. However, God certainly does deserve it! Psalm 96:4 says, "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise."

We also know that all of God's commands are perfect and good for us. To revere, worship and thank God for his greatness and goodness is like commanding someone to clap and yell when their favorite team wins in the last second of the game. It's the right and natural thing to do.

Closing Action Point

Let's do one more thing. I'm going to give each of you a half sheet of paper. It will be your thank you note to God. There is a place to draw a picture of what you're most thankful to God for. It can be something he made, something he does or something he provides for you. Draw a picture of it and then complete the sentence: "God you are great and good for making _____."

Prayer Circle

Allow students time to work. When they have finished ask them to take their thank you notes and join you in a circle. Ask them to hold up their notes as you pray. Thank God that he is so great and so good. Thank him for the things that they drew in their pictures. Ask for his help to always fear, worship and thank him.

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

Nehemiah 9:8 (NLT) - "You alone are the Lord. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and everything in them. You preserve and give life to everything, and all the angels of heaven worship you."

What God Made

What God Does

What God Provides

Memory verse (for *Subtract a Word* game)

Psalm 34:8-9 - "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing."

Unit 5 – God's Design for the Family

God created three primary social institutions to serve and support society – the family, the church, 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

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 because marriage 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 before 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.

Materials Needed

Match-Up cards, three cords or pieces of string that you are able to break one at a time but not as a bundle of three, set of three short strings for every child, pictures from resource section,

Scripture References

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Matthew 19:6; Genesis 1:27, 2:7, 2:18, 2:21-22, 2:23 (NLT); Jeremiah 3:14; Revelation 19:7; Malachi 2:15

Welcome Time

Greet children by name.

Play **Match-Up**. Divide students into four groups. Give each group a set of the matching cards as shown in the resource section of this lesson. Instruct students to mix up their cards very well and put them face down in front of them. Taking turns they are to then turn over any two cards. If they get a matching pair such as "Fear" and "God" they are to give an example of or reason why this is true. Then set these cards to the side face up. If they do not get a matching pair, they are to turn the cards over and put them back in the same place. The pairs are God/is Great, God/is Good, Fear/God, Worship/God, and Thank/God.

Attention Grabber

Bring out the three strings that you can break one at a time but not together. Ask one of the students to come to the front of the class. Hand this student one of the strings, and ask him or her to pull on it as hard as they can until it breaks. Hopefully, your student will be able to break it. If not, take it and break it yourself, thanking the student for "getting it started."

Now braid three pieces of the string together (knot them at each end) in front of the class. Then hand this to the same student. Ask him or her to pull as hard as they can to break the strings. They should not be able to break the strings. Ask two other students to come forward to help break the strings, pulling like a "tug of war." Ideally, they also should not be able to break the string or cords. Thank the students for such a good effort and ask them to return to their seats.

In Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 it says, “Two people can accomplish more than twice as much as one; they get a better return for their labor. If one person falls, the other 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 (or string) is not easily broken.” (NLT)

The triple braided string or cord stands for relationships. We’re all stronger when we are standing together with others. Can you give examples? Today we’re going to talk about a very special relationship where people stand together. It is marriage.

In marriage the first two cords are a husband and wife. What do you think the third cord is? Allow for response. The third cord is God!

Today we’re going to talk about marriage and how God designed it to be a three-cord relationship: a husband, a wife, and God.

Relationships can be hard because life can be hard. Every husband and wife need God’s help to keep their relationship strong and united.

Give each student a set of three short strings tied together at one end as a reminder of how God is a part of marriage.

The Lesson

Memory Verse Moment

Today our memory verse is Matthew 19:6, “What God has joined together, let no man separate.”

Let’s say this verse together several times and then play *Bottle Spin*¹⁷ to help us memorize this verse.

Tape the memory verse to a bottle. Have the students sit in a circle. Choose one student to come to the center and be the spinner. Before spinning, the student is to read the memory verse. The spinner then spins the bottle. Whoever the bottle points to is the new spinner and comes to the center and says the verse – ideally by memory. Repeat until all children have had the chance to be a spinner who would like to. If you have a large class, form a number of groups and have each group do the exercise at the same time.

Concept One: God created marriage.

¹⁷ This game comes from kidzplace.org at http://www.kidzplace.org/atf/cf/%7B899BDF78-4CC9-48F8-8AD7-2A88AC21D94E%7D/missions_activity.pdf

Does anyone know who created marriage? Allow for the children's responses. **Does anyone know where the first wedding was?** Allow for the children's responses.

God created marriage and the first wedding was in the Garden of Eden when God gave Eve to Adam.

For our lesson today we have five pictures:

a smile – Adam likes Eve

an animal – God created the animals

a rib bone - God created Eve from Adam's rib

a dust cloud - God created Adam from the dust of the earth

an animal with its name - Adam names the animals.

We are going to put them in the order they happened.

Before God made Adam he made all the fish of the sea, birds of the air, and animals of the land.

Then God made Adam. Genesis 2:7 says that "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." Wow! Close your eyes a moment and try to imagine God using the dust of the ground to make a man and then breathing life into him. What an amazing God we have!

After Adam was created, God brought the creatures to Adam and asked him to name them. What a job!

Yet Adam still did not have a companion to stand with him. In Genesis 2:18 God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (ESV) So God did something amazing again, he made a woman! Let's hear how he did this.

(Teacher: It is important to understand the meaning of the term "helper fit for or suitable for him." The question is whether Eve was less in value than Adam. This same word "helper" is used several times in the Bible to describe God as our helper. Also, Jesus said he would send the Holy Spirit to be our helper. Obviously, God is not less in value or inferior to us because he is our helper. Rather, a "helper" is one who has abilities and gifts that another person does not have. Therefore, they can help this other person. As opposed to being inferior or less in value, the "helper" has something the other person lacks. See the Teacher's Guide for this lesson, footnote #17, for more on this point.)

Read Genesis 2:21-22 or have one of the students read 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 the man, and he brought her to the man."

Can any of you guess what Adam said when he first met Eve? What would you have said?
Allow for response. **The Bible tells us exactly what Adam said! Let's hear it:**

Read Genesis 2:23 (NLT): **"At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of a man."**

How does it sound like Adam felt when he met Eve? Allow for response. **He sounds pretty happy to me!**

So this was the first marriage. It took place in the Garden of Eden and God was the person who brought this couple together.

An important thing to remember is that even though God's methods were a little different, we know that God created both man and woman in his image. Genesis 1:27 says, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Because both girls and boys are made in the image of God, they are both equal in value and worth before God.

Our first big idea is, "God created marriage!" Can you say that all together with me? It's very important.

Concept Two: Marriage is very special.

I'm holding up a picture of a heart. Hold up picture from worksheet. **What does this shape often stand for?** Allow for children's responses. **That's right, it's a symbol for love!**

Did you know that marriage between a man and a woman is a picture of God's love for us and his commitment to us?

In the Old Testament, God uses the picture of marriage to illustrate his love for us and commitment to the people of Israel. God says to Israel in Jeremiah 3:14, "Return, faithless people," declares the Lord, "for I am your husband." God is telling Israel that he loves them very much and is deeply committed to them – just like a husband. He won't break his promises to them.

In the New Testament, God uses the picture of marriage to show his love and commitment to the church. In Revelation 19:7 he says, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready." Jesus is describing the church as the bride of Christ. He is showing us how much he loves and is committed to us.

God uses marriage as a picture of his love and commitment. What does that tell us about God's view and purpose for marriage? Allow for discussion and response.

If God uses marriage to describe the way he loves us and is committed to us, then marriage is really special to him! This is our second big idea. Can you say it with me, "Marriage is very special?"

Concept Three: Marriage is a covenant.

Not only is marriage very special, it is also called a covenant. A covenant is a very serious promise that cannot be broken. It's not a simple promise like "I promise I'll do my chores." It's a very special and serious promise. Because God created marriage he takes it very seriously.

God tells us in Malachi 2:15, "Guard yourself; remain loyal to the wife of your youth." Remaining loyal means keeping the commitment you made to love and stay faithful to your wife when you married. God says he hates divorce because it involves breaking a covenant that is as serious as the one that God makes with his people. This is our third big idea, "Marriage is a covenant." Can you say that with me?

To represent that marriage is a covenant, let's take our triple-braided cords and make a tight knot in them that cannot be undone or broken.

Let's also say our memory verse together again: Matthew 19:6, "What God has joined together, let no man separate."

Closing Action Point

We've learned three very important things about marriage. Let's say them together. "God created marriage," "Marriage is special," and "Marriage is a covenant." Let's play *Bottle Spin* again. When the bottle stops spinning and points to you, say one of the three important things that we learned about marriage today.

Lead children in completing this activity enough times so that all children have a chance to spin the bottle and say one of the big ideas. Again, if the group is large, divide up and do this exercise simultaneously with each group.

Prayer Circle Time

Gather the children around you in a circle. Close in the following prayer.

Dear God, I thank you for each and every child in this circle. Thank you for creating marriage and family. Thank you that like our three strings, you want to be the third part

of every marriage to make it strong. I pray for each child, that if it is your best will for them, you would some day bring them a Godly husband or wife who they could commit to. Thank you that you use marriage as a picture to show us how much you are committed to us and love us. Thank you for loving us so much! In Jesus' name, Amen.

God	Is Great	God	Is Good	Fear
Worship	God	Thank	God	God
God	Is Great	God	Is Good	Fear
Worship	God	Thank	God	God
God	Is Great	God	Is Good	Fear
Worship	God	Thank	God	God
God	Is Great	God	Is Good	Fear

Worship	God	Thank	God	God
God	Is Great	God	Is Good	Fear
Worship	God	Thank	God	God

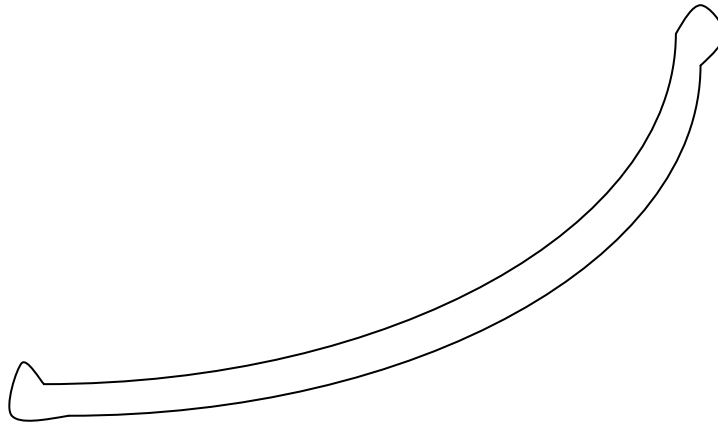
Adam meets Eve



Adam created from dust



Eve created from Adam's rib



God created the animals



Adam naming the animals



ill call this a "bird"

**God uses marriage as a picture of
how much he is committed to us
and loves us.**

Unit Five– Lesson 2¹⁸

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. In the future, many of the children will marry and start a family of their own. We often take the family for granted, yet 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 unless we have to.

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.

The Main Point

The family is God’s very special creation!

¹⁸ Note: In the Early Adolescent version this lesson is preceded by one entitled “Sacred Intimacy within Marriage” so the lesson numbering will be different here.

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.

Materials Needed

Question and answer slips of paper for Welcome Time, blank drawing paper for family portrait along with crayons or pencils for each child, poster paper and markers for each group, verse poster, one set of family building blocks and symbols

Scripture References

1 Corinthians 15:27; Matthew 19:4; Ephesians 5:21

Welcome Time

Welcome each child by name.

Write each of the following review questions and answers on different slips of paper. Give one question slip or answer slip to each one of the students. Have the children circulate around the room matching their answers to the correct questions. When all questions and answers have been matched correctly, have each pair read their question and correct answer.

1. Who were the people in the first marriage? (Adam and Eve)
2. What was created first, man or animals? (animals)
3. Who was created first, Adam or Eve? (Adam)
4. What is human marriage a picture of? (God's commitment to and love for us.)
5. Who should separate a marriage? (No one)
6. What is a covenant? (A special promise you must keep)
7. What do the three strings represent in a marriage? (A husband, a wife and God.)
8. Who created and performed the first marriage. (God created marriage)
9. Why is marriage special? (Because it is a picture of God's commitment and love to his people)
10. Why is marriage called a covenant? (Because marriage is a special commitment)

Attention Grabber

Give each child a sheet of drawing paper and a pencil. Ask the children to use the pencils to draw a "family portrait"—a picture of their family that includes every member with whom they live (father, mother, siblings, grandparents, etc.). Walk around the room, moving from child to

child, admiring each of their drawings. Underneath their drawings have them write one thing they appreciate about their family.

When the children are finished, ask each child to share their pictures with a child sitting close by them.

God created the family. In Genesis, it says that God created everything and then said it was very good. This includes his creation of the family. God has a very special design and good plan for our families. In this lesson we are going to learn how to have the very best family we can have.

The Lesson

Concept One: God made the family.

One of the very important and special things God created is the family. God made and designed the family. He gave the family a special purpose.

God made the first family in the Garden of Eden. Do you remember who they were? Allow for response. **God's first family included Adam and Eve. Do you know the names of their first sons?** Allow for response. **Cain and Abel were Adam and Eve's first sons.**

The family is a most important group of people in the world. The family is more important than the government, the school, or a business.

Why is our family so important to you and me and to our community and country? Let's answer this by getting into four groups and making a list on poster sheets of all the things your family gives you. Think of things you can see and things you can't see. In a few minutes we'll come back together and share our lists. Allow groups several minutes to work and then have them share their answers with the whole group.

God's special design and purpose for the family is that it be a good place for each family member to grow and be all that God wants them to be.

In our question and answer game at the beginning of the class, what would have happened if you had not followed the instructions? How would the game have worked? Allow for the children's responses. **That's right, there would have been confusion. It would not have worked well at all. The same applies to families. God created families to work well, but we have to follow his design and plan.**

Today, we're going to look at God's building plan for the family.

Take out your building blocks of a family house and have the parts ready to help you to explain each point.

Concept Two: God is the head of the family.

When building a house you don't start with the roof, but that is where we are going to start with God's building plan for the family. Tape the roof on your poster or wall.

The roof is the most important part of a house because it is what shelters and protects everyone and everything in the house. In God's design of the family, the roof is God. God is over the family. He is the head. He is the one ultimately in charge of every family. God is the head of the family.

1 Corinthians 15:27 says us that, "(God) has put everything under (Christ's) feet." That means that Christ is the ruler over everything - including dads and moms and the children in a family. God is in charge of everyone in the family. God is the ultimate head of every family.

This is great news because, knowing that God is the head of our family, we can have great confidence and trust in him. We can respect our parents and love our brothers and sisters even when this is difficult to do because we know that God is ultimately in charge and will take care of us.

I am so thankful that God is over everyone in the family. We can trust him in every situation.

Work together in your groups to finish this statement: "God is a good head of a family because he is_____." Write down as many things as you can think of to complete this statement (e.g. good, all-knowing, all-powerful, the creator of all things, perfect, kind, strong, just, loving, etc.)

Allow students a few minutes to complete this task then have them share some of the words they wrote down.

Concept Three: We are all equal in value.

Place the *all family members equal in value and worth* building block below the roof. Tape the *equal sign* symbol on the block.

For each of the following statements, I'd like for you to raise your hand and tell me if you think it is true or false:

- **Moms are more important and valuable than dads.**
- **Kids are more important and valuable than their parents.**
- **A husband is more important and valuable than his wife.**
- **A father is more important and valuable than a mother.**
- **Daughters are more valuable than sons.**
- **Sons are more valuable than daughters.**

Yes, all of these statements are false. As we learned in an earlier lesson, God created everyone in his image and he highly values each person. In God's eyes one person is never better than another.

In the same way, each family member is worth the exact same in the sight of God. A young child is not worth less than a father, mother or grandmother – they all have the same worth and value to God. Each has been uniquely created by God and is important.

Children are as valuable as their adult parent. This is why Jesus said, “Don’t prevent the children from coming to me.”(Matthew 19:4) Even if you are not viewed or treated as equal in value as another person in your family, you can know for certain that in God’s eyes you are equal in worth, and God is never wrong.

Work with your group members to come up with several answers to this statement: “Because we are all equal in value as family members, we should_____” (for example: help one another, respect one another, be kind to one another, etc.). Take some time to complete this statement and then we’ll share together as a class. Allow groups time to work and call on one student in each group to share one of their answers with the class.

Concept Four: Submission is for everyone.

Place the *All family members called to submit to one another* building block under the roof. Tape the *submission* symbol on the block.

Ephesians 5:21 says, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” The word “submit” is an important word to understand correctly. It means to have an attitude of cooperation toward another, to take responsibility over your own will and do what is best for the other person.

Memory Verse Moment

Ephesians 5:21 is our memory verse. “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Let’s say this verse together and then play *Disappearing Verse*. I have the verse written out on a sheet of paper. I’ll ask a volunteer to come up one at a time and use the marker to black out one or two words of the verse. Then we’ll say the verse with the missing words. We’ll continue erasing words and saying the verse until we are able to say the verse with no words. Let’s do it!

This verse tells us that submission is for everyone in a family. It is not just for children toward their parents or wives toward their husbands. It is also parents and husbands – taking responsibility for their children and wives, putting their needs and desires before their own. God calls us all to submit to one another because we respect Christ as the Lord of the universe and head over all.

In your groups I’d like you to talk about ways different family members can submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Concept Five: We are to love God and one another.

Place the *All family members called to love one another* building block with the others. Tape the *heart* symbol on this block.

Who remembers what God says is the greatest commandment and who can do the hand motions with me? Lead children in saying, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.”

How do we best show our love for God? What's the second command? Lead children in saying, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

In your families it's very important to love God. The best way to do this is by loving your other family members, because they are your closest neighbor!

I'd like for you to work in your groups to come up with ways that you can love your family. Talk about and finish this statement as many ways as you can, "I can show love to my family by _____" Allow groups time to work and then ask them to share their ideas with the group.

Concept Six: Equal in value but unique.

Place the *All family members have unique roles and gifts to share* building block next to the others. Place the *knife, fork, and spoon* picture on this block.

God exists in three equal persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We call this the Trinity. Each member of the God-head has a unique role to play. The Father created the Universe. The Son came to the earth to die for us so we can have eternal life. The Spirit lives in us and give us wisdom and power.

We have seen previously how family members are all equal in worth. Yet, each family member is also unique with different gifts and potential and a different role to play. In the next lessons we will talk about the different roles in a family. Each family member is equal in value and valuably unique.

Closing Action Point

None of us have perfect families but God calls us to love our families and help them function as he designed. In closing, let's think of some ways we can each help our family better function as God designed this next week.

The first thing we can do is PRAY for our family. Decide to take at least one time this next week to pray for each of your family members – asking God to bless and help them.

The second thing we can do is LISTEN to our family. I'd like for you to turn to a neighbor and share one way you will listen to and encourage another family member this next week. Allow children a minute or two to come up with their idea.

The third way we can help our family function as God designed is to SERVE them. Turn to your neighbor and come up with one way you will serve another family member this week. Allow children two minutes or so to share their ideas with their neighbor.

The last way we can show love to our family is to ENJOY them. Be grateful for them. I'd like for you to turn to your neighbor and say one thing that you enjoy about your family. Allow children about two minutes to share their great thing with a neighbor.

Prayer Circle Time

Have children gather around you in a circle. Ask them to share any prayer requests they may have for their family. Pray for the children's requests and then thank God for making each one of us so different and for placing each of us in our particular family for a special purpose. Ask God to give the children grace to enjoy, serve, and love one another in their families.

Poster for each of 4 groups

List of things our families give us (visible
and invisible things)

Ephesians 5:21

***"Submit to
one another
out of
reverence for
Christ."***

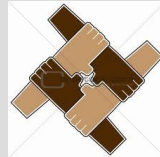
God's Building Blocks for the Family

God is the ultimate head of the family

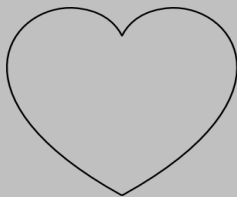
All family members equal in value and worth



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



All family members called to love one another



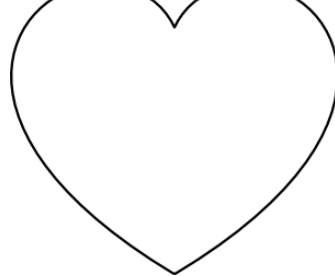
All family members have unique roles and gifts to share



**Each member equal
in value and dignity**



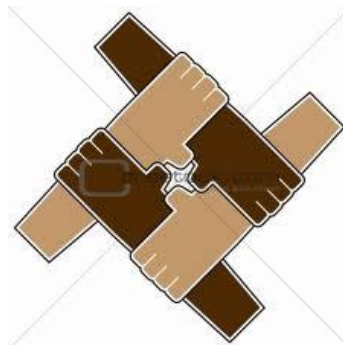
**Each member called to love
God
and one another**



**Each member unique
in role and potential**



**Each member called to submit
and cooperate with one another**



Unit Five – Lesson 3

God's Design for the Family: Headship

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

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 teaching children whose father is absent, please make this point clear and make appropriate adjustments in your presentation in consideration of these 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 father and a good husband to their children's mother.

The children you teach will soon be grown up and many 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 dad or mom. One area that is 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 to this question right 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 wholistically 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 “head” of 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.

Materials Needed

4 sets of family building block houses, wrong idea/right idea strips, tape, verse poster, visuals of heart, feet, hand, trinity sign, blank paper and crayons for each child

Scripture References

1 Corinthians 11:13; Mark 10:42-45; John 13:1-17; 1 Timothy 5:8

Welcome Time

Welcome each child by name.

Review Game. Divide the children into four groups. Give each group a set of the family building blocks from the last lesson and have them tape them together to form the house God designed. Ask each child to share in their group one thing they learned about how God designed the family.

Attention Grabber

Have the students remain in their four groups. Post two signs that say, “Right Idea/Wrong Idea.” Prepare these before class starts.

We're going to play a game called *Right Idea, Wrong Idea*. I have eight statements printed off for you. I'll give each of your groups two statements. Up here at the front I have two signs posted: Right Idea/Wrong idea. You'll need to decide if these statements are right or wrong. If the statement is correct put it in the right idea category. If it's incorrect you'll put it in the wrong idea category.

Pass out two statements to each group and allow them to decide and post their statements in the appropriate place. After all groups have gotten a chance to post their statements verify their accuracy and move any that are incorrect.

Today we're going to look at how God established and views the head of a family. We know that if we look at something through God's eyes, we will see it correctly. We are also going to look at the wrong ways people see and think about what it means to be the head of a family. By the end of this lesson you should be very familiar with how God sees headship - the right ideas about headship!

Statements for the children to place under the right idea or wrong idea column.

- *Headship means that the husband/father is the boss of his family and can control them however he wishes. (Wrong Idea)*
- *Since a man is the head of the household, his family should serve him by doing whatever he wants. (Wrong Idea)*
- *Headship means that the wife and children are property of the man. (Wrong Idea)*
- *The man is called by God to serve his family. (Right Idea)*
- *The head of the family is to lead and provide for his family. (Right Idea)*
- *God is the head of everyone and the husband is accountable to God to treat the wife and children as God commands. (Right Idea)*
- *Since the husband and father is the head of the family, this means that the wife and children are his possession. He owns them. (Wrong Idea)*
- *God owns everything – women and children are gifts, not property. (Right Idea)*

The Lesson

Let's look at all these ideas more closely. We'll find out why some of them are right and good ideas and why some of them are wrong and bad ideas.

As you talk about each idea, re-post the wrong one and the correct one side by side on your poster or wall.

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

- *Since the husband and father is the head of the family, this means that the wife and children are his possession. He owns them. (Wrong Idea)*
- *Headship means that the wife and children are property of the man. (Wrong Idea)*
- *God owns everything – women and children are not the property of men but entrusted by God for the man to care for and help thrive. (Right Idea)*

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 possession. He owns them. This is a bad idea.

The Bible says that God is the owner of everything and women and children are not the property of the husband or father, but a gift God entrusts to the man to care for and to help thrive and flourish. This is a good idea!

If you buy or get some wood and make a chair out of it, you are the owner of that chair. Who made you and every other person? Allow for children's responses. That's right, God made you and everyone else. So, God is our owner. A wife and children are not the property of a husband and father. They belong to God. God entrusts the gifts of a wife and children to a husband and father for him to take care of and help flourish and thrive as God instructs. They are not the man's property to treat as he wishes.

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

- *Headship means that the husband/father is the boss of his family and can control them however he wishes. (Wrong Idea)*
- *God is the head of everyone and the husband is accountable to God to treat the wife and children as God commands. (Right Idea)*

Here's another bad idea. To be the head of a family means that the husband and father is the "boss" of his wife and children and he can control them in whatever way he wants.

The truth is that God is the head or boss over everyone. 1 Corinthians 11:13 says, "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."

For a man to be the head of a family means that he has to answer to Christ and treat his wife and children the way that God commands. God is the head over everyone, then comes Christ and then the husband. A man does not appoint himself the head of a family. God does. So, the man is responsible to God for how he functions in this role. God gives the role of headship to a husband and father but this does not make him superior to the rest of the family. Rather, it gives him a very high responsibility before God.

To symbolize that God and Christ are over the head of the family and the head of the family is responsible and accountable to God, we are going to put the sign of the Trinity on our poster.

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

- *Since a man is the head of the household, his family should serve him by doing whatever he wants. (Wrong Idea)*
- *The man is called by God to serve his family. (Right Idea)*

Here's a really important idea. God tells men that they are to serve their families. The man is appointed by God to serve his family.

Often people think just the opposite. They think that to be the head of a family means that the family should serve the head, doing whatever he wants because he is the “king”. This is a very wrong or bad idea.

Listen to what Jesus says in Mark 10:42-45, “So Jesus called them together and said, “You know that in this world kings are tyrants, and officials lord it over the people beneath them. But among you it should be quite different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all. For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served, but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many.” (NLT)

Jesus said that to be a leader, to be the head of a family, means you are to be 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. Rather, it means that you have the greatest responsibility to serve the most! Headship is not about being the most powerful and being served. It is about being the most responsible and serving others.

When Jesus wanted to explain what it meant to be a leader, he served by washing his disciples’ feet (John 13:1-12). Then Jesus said, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things you will be blessed if you do them.” (John 13:13-17)

Washing feet was the lowest most humbling job of that day. In doing this, Jesus showed his disciples, who would go on to lead many others and be the heads of their own families, that to be a leader meant to sacrifice the most and serve others and not put themselves or their dignity first. Jesus is saying to fathers and husbands that just as he their Lord and Teacher has washed feet (which is a very low job), they are to humbly do whatever is needed and best to help their wife and children thrive and flourish in the way God designed for them.

It is also very important to understand that Jesus did not become inferior or less than others because he served his disciples by doing a lowly task like washing their feet. This did not cause him to lose his dignity. The fact was that he remained their Lord and teacher. Neither does a leader lose his or her dignity by doing lowly tasks and serving others.

Memory Verse Moment

Let’s learn a memory verse that reminds us that Jesus set the example for how fathers and husbands are to serve: Mark 10:45, “For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others.” We’ll learn the verse by playing *Crazy Folds*.

Write the verse on a large piece of paper and then fold it from the side, top or bottom to cover parts of it.

We’ll say the verse several times with a different part of the verse covered. The goal is for you to be able to say the verse when it is completely folded up and put it away. Let’s go!

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

- *The head of the family is to lead and provide for his family. (Right Idea)*

We've learned much about what the Bible says it means to be the head of a family. We've also learned what being the head of a family is not. Now, let's look at some specific things the head of a family does – his (her) job description.

Take out your three visuals that describe the head's job in a family. Tape the heart on the wall or poster.

Remember the great commandment and how we can best show or keep it? Let's say the verse and do the hand motions that help us remember it, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and will all your strength. ...You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

This first and most important commandment is especially true for the head of the family. He is to love his family, his wife and children, as himself. The picture of a heart reminds us of this command for the head to love their family.

How can a man best love his family? Let's look at two ways. Take out your foot and tape it next to the heart.

The first way a man can show love to his family is to lead them well. When a head leads his family well he takes them in a good direction. It is easy to boss people around but it is difficult to lead them well. This is because the first step to being a good leader is to lead yourself well. It means to accept responsibility, obey Jesus, do what is good and right, reject passivity, stand up for what is right and good, and provide an excellent example for others to follow. The temptation for a husband and father is to act like a boss but actually be passive and lazy as a leader. The picture of a foot stands for leading well. The head of a family leads well.

The second way a head can love his family is by providing for them. Take out your picture of a hand and tape it next to the heart. **This hand represents how the head is to provide for the family. 1 Timothy 5:8 says, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith." This makes it clear that God wants the head of a family to provide for the needs of his family. Some of these needs are material things like food, shelter, clothing and safety. But, the husband and father should also provide for the non-material needs of his wife and children, such as encouragement, a listening ear, compassion, and wisdom.**

Closing Action Point

Today we learned that being the head of a family is a very big and important responsibility before God. It means to serve each family member – even doing lowly tasks when necessary - so they can thrive as God intended. It means to love them by leading them well, accepting responsibility and doing what is good and right. It means providing for their needs.

Point to the pictures to remind children of the job of the head of a family. **Let's all make our own pictures to remind us of the job that the heads of our families do, our fathers and to pray for them.**

Give each of the students a piece of paper and writing or coloring utensil. Ask them to trace one of their hands on one half of the paper and one of their feet on the other half of the paper. Inside their hand they are to write: "Serve". Inside their foot they are to write: "Lead". After they are done ask them to draw a large heart around the tracing of their hand and foot. Somewhere inside the heart they are to write, "Love your family as yourself".

Prayer Circle Time

Gather the children around you in a circle. Ask them to share any prayer requests that they may have for their fathers. Close in prayer, praying for each request that the children shared and closing, **Lord, Thank you for our fathers. They work hard, sacrifice, and do many things for us, some of which we do not see. Give them strength and wisdom and grace in their job as husband and father. Help us all to be the people you designed and want us to be.**

Headship means that the husband/father is the boss of his family and can control them however he wishes.

Since a man is the head of the household his family should serve him by doing whatever he wants.

Headship means that the wife and children are property of the man.

The man is called by God to serve his family.

The head of the family is to lead and provide for his family.

God is the head of everyone and the husband is accountable to God to treat the wife and children as God commands.

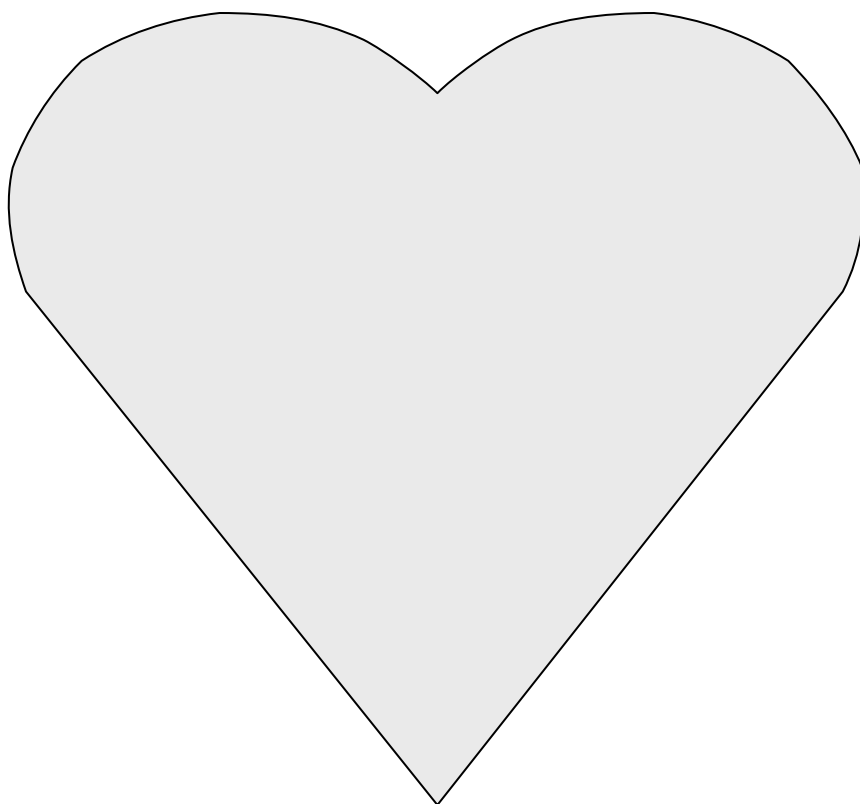
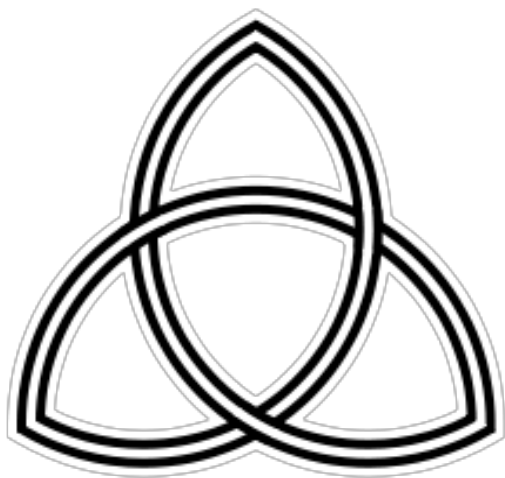
Since the husband and father is the head of the family, this means that the wife and children are his possession. He owns them.

God owns everything – women and children are gifts, not property.

Mark 10:45

***“For even I, the
Son of Man,
came here not
to be served
but to serve
others.”***

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 Lesson?

Every child is part of a family. The majority of children will someday marry and start a new family. Children need to understand God's plan or design for the husband. It is especially important that young men understand this so that, with God's help, they too can be successful husbands and fathers with a wife and children who flourish and thrive.

The Truth: God gave the husband a very unique and special instruction for how to treat his wife. This instruction to the husband is perfect and good. It will benefit his wife, his children and himself. 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, unselfish, 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 our cultural and community norm even if it does not agree with God's design.
- A husband should love his wife, but only if she is being 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 her. It is more important that she knows he is the boss than that she feel loved, respected and cared for.
- The husband's own needs and desires take priority over his wife's. This is appropriate and 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

Luke 6:42; Ephesians 5:25-29; Proverbs 18:22

Materials Needed

Sets of right idea/wrong idea strips from the previous lesson – enough strips for each child to get one statement each, group worksheets, boys note from God, verse matching cards

Welcome Time

Greet each child by name.

Play ***Right Idea/Wrong Idea Match-up***.

I am going to hand out one idea strip to each student from our previous lesson. You are to find one other person who has the opposite statement from yours. For example, if you have a Right Idea, you should find someone who has the corresponding Wrong Idea.

When I say "go" find someone who has the opposite idea. Share with that person one thing you can remember from the last lesson. Have the students exchange slips with others and play another round.

Attention Grabber

(Same as Non-reader Version) For this Attention Grabber you will need to have selected two students a boy and a girl in advance and coached them to do a bit of acting. You will pretend to be a dance instructor and will instruct the boy and the girl in a simple but unique dance step. You can choose whatever dance steps you wish as long as the boy's step is different from the girls. You will show each how to do their step and then ask them if they understand. They will say yes and then you will ask them to practice or do the step for about a minute. At this point the boy does not do his own step but only watches the girl and then seeing that she is not doing her step correctly uses all of his time trying to correct and coach her. He shows increasing frustration and disappointment that she is not doing her step perfectly and ignores the step assigned to him.

Today I am going to pretend I am a dance instructor. I will teach two of you different steps. I choose (name of boy) and (name of girl). Allow me as I teach each their step.

Teach them their step and ask them at the end if they understand. Both nod or say yes.

Now I would like these two students to demonstrate their dance step. Play music or drums if you wish and proceed with the demonstration as planned with the guy watching and then correcting and scolding the girl. After several minutes, lead the class in a discussion of what they observed.

What did you see here? How did it make you feel? Allow for children's responses.

This is what some husbands do in marriage. Wives do it also, but often it is the husband who does it most. God designed marriage perfectly. He gave husbands and wives similar but unique instructions on how to live a good life¹⁹ as God intends. However, sometimes, just like in our skit, the husband or wife is tempted to focus, not on their own assigned role, but on the other person's role and what they are doing wrong. Instead of focusing on the special and important role God has given them and making sure they do it well, they focus on the other person. When one or both of the partners do this, neither is happy and the marriage and family suffers greatly.

God's design is that each person in a marriage focus on their own role and responsibility. Jesus warned against people who focus on the small fault of another person but ignore their own big failure. (Luke 6:42)

Today we're going to look at the role of the husband. We will look at God's special instruction to the husband and how he is supposed to treat his wife. Boys pay attention, because God may call you to get married someday and be a husband. Girls, we will talk about your very special job next week.

The Lesson

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

Memory Verse Moment

Our memory verse this week talks about the husband's special and important job in marriage. Let's learn it together and then we'll play a game to help us memorize it. It's Ephesians 5:25, "And you husbands must love your wives with the same love that Christ loved the church."

Have children repeat the verse several times with you until you are confident that they know it. Lead children in playing ***Verse Phrase Match Up***.

Prior to class prepare enough of the five verse phrases so that you can give one phrase to each child. You may need to give more than one phrase to a few children so that a complete verse can be formed. **I have given each one of you a part of the verse. It is your job now to get into groups so that you have a complete verse. After you get into a group and have a complete verse, say the verse all together. Ok, let's go!**

¹⁹ Or "kingdom life". The life God designed and desires for us when Jesus prayed "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

If husbands are to love their wives, this reminds us yet again of the most important commandment that God gave us. Let's say it together and do the motions, "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.... and love your neighbor as yourself.*" Model the motions as the children say the verse with you.

This command applies to all people: men, women, boys and girls and wives and husbands. God calls all of us to love each other. However, as we see in our memory verse, this command "to love" is also the most important and specific instruction God gives to husbands concerning their wives. God is making sure that husbands understand how important it is that they love their wives. Lead children in saying the memory verse.

Does anyone know what God means when he tells husbands to love their wives? Allow for children's responses. God instructs husbands to love their wives the way that Christ loves the church. This means that husbands are to love their wives unconditionally and sacrificially.

These are two really big words! To love someone unconditionally means that you will love them no matter what! You will love them no matter what they say or do, and no matter how you yourself feel. This is the way that Christ loves us and the way that husbands are to love their wives. To love someone sacrificially is to be willing to give up what you have, desire, or think you deserve in order to do what is best for the other person. Christ loved us so much that he gave up his life for us. He commands husbands to give up themselves for the good of their wives. God's good design for husbands is that they say and do what is best for their wives especially when it is difficult or inconvenient.

Ephesians 5:25-29 says, "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."

Husbands are to love their wives the way that they care for and look after themselves. If a man is tired he rests his body. If a man is hot, he finds a shady place to sit. If he is hungry, he finds some food. If he's cold, he gets a coat or sits by a fire. God is saying to husbands that in the exact same way they naturally look after and care for themselves, they are to first look after and care for their wife. Let's say our memory verse one more time so we can remember God's design for how a husband is to love his wife. Lead children in saying Ephesians 5:25.

I'd like you to pair up with one other person and then each think of one good example of a husband showing sacrificial and unconditional love to his wife. I'll give you several minutes to discuss and then I'll ask you to share your example with the group. When all have finished sharing with one another, call on as many students as you wish to share their examples.

Closing Action Point

The Bible says that a wife is a gift from God. In marriage, God entrusts one of his daughters to a man and instructs him to love her sacrificially and unconditionally. 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 you a wife, realize that she is an amazing gift from God that he is *entrusting* to you so that you can help her be all that intends for her. Girls, know that you are a precious daughter to God and you are loved by him!

Let’s think about this idea even further. In your groups of two I’d like for you to make a list of three ways that a husband can help his wife develop and thrive as God designed for her.

Allow children time to complete their list. Then call on students to share some of their ideas.

Prayer Circle Time

Gather the children around you in a circle.

Today we learned all about the special and important job that God has given husbands. Let’s say our memory verse one more time to remind us of this. As we close in prayer let’s have all of 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 someday do a very good job at loving your wives like Christ loved the church. When we’re finished praying I’m going to give you a note from God to fill your name in that reminds you of your very important future job as a husband.

**Dear God,
I thank you for caring about us. Thank you for giving us such good instructions for how to live our lives. I pray for each one of these boys who you may someday ask to be a husband. I pray that you would help each one of them to unconditionally and sacrificially love the wife you give them, just like you loved the church. We know your instructions to us are good and for our very best because you love us. Give us your Spirit to help us believe and trust you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.**

After you’ve finished praying for the boys, hand out their “Note from God” that encourages them to fulfill the role that God may have for them someday as husbands.

(For the Boys)

Dear _____,

When you get married,

Remember,

Love your wife like Christ loved us.

Signed,

The God of the Universe

Verse Phrase Match Up

Ephesians 5:25	Ephesians 5:25	And you	And you
husbands	husbands	must love	must love
your wives	your wives	with the	with the
same love	same love	that Christ	that Christ
loved the	loved the	church.	church.

Group Work

Example of how a husband can love his wife sacrificially and unconditionally.

Ways that a husband can help his wife develop and thrive as God designed.

Unit Five – Lesson 5

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

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

Each child is part of a family. Most children will someday marry and start a new family. Children need to understand God's perfect plan or design for the wife. It is important to explore today's 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 husband when they marry (just as boys commit to honor God by sacrificially and unconditionally loving their wife when they marry).

Materials Needed

Words from memory verse of last week - each split in two pieces like a puzzle – enough for each child to have one piece or part, note from God to girls, verse on blackboard or poster, group worksheet for wrong and right idea

Scripture References

Ephesians 5:33; Colossians 3:18

Welcome Time

Greet each child by name.

Before class, print and cut out enough of the split memory verse words (from last week) so that each child has a piece. Hand out one puzzle piece to each student. Have the students roam around the room, looking for someone who has the part of a word that fits theirs. When they find the person who holds their match they should each say one thing they learned about the husband's role in marriage. When all have found their match and shared, repeat the verse as a group.

Attention Grabber

Remember last week when I tried to teach two of you some dance steps. Do you remember what happened? Allow for response. **Yes, the boy did not concentrate on his own role but only focused on the girl's role. Sometimes this happens in marriage. One or both persons focus on the other person's role when they should only be focused on doing their own role right.**

What would happen if you did this on an athletic team like a football team? What if the players did not focus on playing their own role well but instead just focused on making sure others played correctly? What would happen? Yes, you're right. The team would lose badly.

Ask a volunteer boy to come forward.

That is why it is so important that in a marriage each person focus only on getting their own role correct. However, this is often difficult to do. You almost need to be deaf and blind to the other person's role so you can focus on your own.

Today's lesson is about the girl's role in marriage and so is a lesson for the girls – not for the boys. The boys need to focus on their own role when they get married some day which is to love their wife unconditionally and sacrificially. To help (name of volunteer) do this I am going to put a blindfold on him and cotton in his ears so that he does not get distracted and can focus on his own future role in marriage.

Put the blindfold on and cotton in his ears and then play around with it a bit to see if he can hear, etc. Ask him to go sit down.

Class, do you think we can trust (name of student) to not get distracted by hearing about the girl's role but be able to concentrate on doing his own role in marriage perfectly some day? Remind, me what is the husband's role in marriage? (To love his wife as Christ loves us - unconditionally and sacrificially). Take the volunteer's blindfold and earplugs off.

The Lesson

Memory Verse Moment

Let's learn a memory verse that will introduce what a wife's role in a marriage is. The verse is found in *Ephesians 5:33b* says, "*and the wife must respect her husband.*"

Have the children say the verse with you several times. Write it on the board and then erase words until all can say it by memory.

Concept One: A wife is to respect and submit to her husband.

In our welcome time each of you had to fit your word puzzle piece with others so that you could form words.

God designed the marriage roles so that each would serve, fit, and complement the other so that both persons could grow and live the best life that God intends for them. Each person in a marriage has a unique role to play that best serves and complements the other person. This means that what God commands the wife to do complements perfectly with what he commands the husband to do. Together they make a terrific team!

In Ephesians 5:33 and Colossians 3:18 we see God's plan for 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. "Colossians 3:18 says, "**Wives submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**"

What two things does God call wives to do in marriage? Allow for response. God calls wives to respect and submit to their husbands.

Remember two lessons ago we played *Right Idea/Wrong Idea*? We're going to play it again today. I have some ideas written out on paper and I need for you to help me decide whether to post this under the heading *Right Idea* or under *Wrong Idea*.

Ok, let's go!

Here's the first idea. Help me decide if it's right or wrong, 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.

I you thought this is a good idea, 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 and to love them by leading and providing for them. Remind them 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 you thought this was a wrong idea, you are correct. In a previous lesson we talked about how since God 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 is "Submission means that a husband can treat a wife however he chooses, even abusing her." Allow time for the children to respond.

If you thought this was a bad idea, you are 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 like this 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 you thought this was a good idea, 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."

Again, if you thought this was a good idea, you are correct! A wife is doing well at her job if she is valuing and encouraging her husband. Just like wives are very important and a wonderful gift from God to husbands, so too husbands are also important and a wonderful gift to wives! Last lesson you worked together to come up with great ways to help a wife thrive and become all that God intends for her. This time, I'd like for you to work together in pairs to come up with three ways that a husband is a gift from God to a wife. Complete this statement: "*Husbands are a gift from God because*"...

Our God is so wise. He created women in his image. He knew that one of their greatest needs would be to know that they are loved by their husbands, so God specifically instructed husbands to love their wives.

Likewise, God created men in his image. He knew that one of their greatest needs would be to know that they are respected by their wives, so he specifically instructed wives to respect and submit to their husbands.

Love and respect. In these two commands, God enables the husband and wife to help the other thrive and flourish in the wonderful way God designed.

Closing Action Point

Even though none of you are married some day you might be. Even though you are not married, you can begin to practice how to treat your future husband or wives.

Guys, you can practice by sacrificing, serving and being kind to the women in your life such as your mom or sisters, or female classmates.

Girls, you can practice by complementing and encouraging the men in your life such as your dad or brothers, or male classmates.

What are some examples or ways you can do this in the coming week? Girls, why don't you give the guys some suggested ways and guys you can give the girls some suggested ways. Lead the students in a discussion.

In closing, remember again that a big challenge in many marriages is that the husband and wife do not concentrate on their own role but instead are critical of one another. This does not work in dancing. It does not lead to victory in sports. And, it does not make for a good marriage. Remember to focus on your role and pray for your husband or wife to do their own role well.

Prayer Circle Time

Gather the children around you in a circle.

Two lessons ago we prayed for your fathers and last week we talked about the husband's job and prayed for all the boys. Today I'd like to hear if you have any prayer requests for your mothers. We'll pray for your moms and then girls I'll ask you to stand up and we'll pray for all of you that if God calls you to be a wife someday you'll be blessed in that role. At the end you can take home a note that you can personalize that is written to you from God, reminding you of the very special role you may have someday as a wife.

Ask for all the children to share prayer requests for their mothers. Pray for all of their concerns and then ask all the girls to stand up. Close in prayer,

Dear God, I thank you for being so wise and for giving us such good instructions for how to live our lives. I pray for each one of these girls who you may someday ask to be a wife. I pray that you would bless each one with a great marriage. Help them to believe and trust in you and your instruction. Thank you that we can trust your design for living, knowing you love and care about us. In Jesus' name.

Welcome Time Word Puzzle Match
One piece to each student who finds their complement

<i>An</i>	<i>d</i>
<i>y</i>	<i>ou</i>
<i>hus</i>	<i>bands</i>
<i>mu</i>	<i>st</i>
<i>lo</i>	<i>ve</i>
<i>yo</i>	<i>ur</i>
<i>wi</i>	<i>ves</i>
<i>wi</i>	<i>th</i>
<i>th</i>	<i>e</i>
<i>Sa</i>	<i>me</i>
<i>lo</i>	<i>ve</i>
<i>th</i>	<i>at</i>
<i>Chr</i>	<i>ist</i>
<i>Lov</i>	<i>ed</i>
<i>th</i>	<i>e</i>
<i>chu</i>	<i>rch</i>

To submit is to recognize that God has given a husband the responsibility to be the head of the home.

To submit means that the wife becomes the husband's property or his slave.

Submission means that a husband can treat a wife however he chooses, even abusing her.

Submission is encouraging a husband to lead well.

To respect is to talk and act in a way that shows honor and that you value and appreciate a husband.

A husband is a gift from God because....

Ephesians 5:33b

***“and the wife
must respect
her husband.”***

For the Girls

Dear _____,

When you get married,

Remember,

Respect your husband!

Signed,

The God of the Universe

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

(Colossians 3:18)

Unit Five – Lesson 6

God’s Design for the Family: Children Honor Your Parents

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

The importance of children honoring their parents is evident by the fact that it is included as one of 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 that God places in their lives for their protection and well-being? Authority is a reality of life 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.

The *starting point* for a child recognizing and living under God’s authority is to recognize and live under the authority of their 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.
- God’s command to honor your parents 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.

Materials Needed

Three brightly wrapped boxes, blank paper and pencils or crayons for each student , word verse cards, group worksheets

Scripture References

Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20

Welcome Time

Greet each student by name.

Review the previous week's lesson with the children asking them if they remember the main theme and points. Remind the children that they talked at the end of class about ways guys could practice loving and being kind to and serving the women in their lives and girls could practice complementing and encouraging (i.e. respecting) the men (father, brother, classmates) in their lives.

Ask the students to give examples of how they were able to practice these things during the past week and the response they got.

Attention Grabber

Let's get into four groups. Allow children time to move into groups.

Today we are going to begin our lesson by pretending we are parents! As a parent, I have two questions for you to answer. Discuss these questions in your groups and then we'll come together and you can share your ideas with the rest of us.

- 1) (As a parent) **What are the 3-5 rules you want your children to especially follow in your home?**
- 2) (As a parent) **What are some things that your children can do that will make your life easier and happier?**

Allow the children time to discuss and then ask several to share their answers with the class.

I hope it was fun to pretend that you were parents. Some day you will be. We've talked in recent lessons about God's main instruction to the husband and wife in a family. Today we're going to look at God's main instruction to the child in a family.

The Lesson

Memory Verse Moment

Our memory verse is found in Colossians 3:20, "Children obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."

Let's say this verse together several times and then we'll play a game called *Order Up*. I'll give each of your groups a set of cards with a word from the memory verse on each card. Your job will be to put the verse in order. When you have assembled the verse correctly, raise your hand and I will come to your group to check it. Ok, let's get started!

You may need to give some children more than one card. Allow groups time to put their verse in order. When all groups have assembled their verse correctly, lead the children in saying the verse.

Concept One: Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Our memory verse tells us that God's perfect design for a child is that she/he obey their parents.

God also gave important instruction for children in the ten commandments. In Exodus 20:12 God says, "Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

What do you think it means to honor your parents? Allow time for children's ideas and responses.

When the word honor is used in the Bible it means to give something much weight or heaviness. How would you feel if the president of this country walked into the room right now? Allow for the children's responses. You're right. You would feel a little nervous. You would probably sit up straight, stay really silent, and listen carefully. You would feel and react this way because the President is an important or "weighty" person.

This is what honor feels like and how we act when we honor someone. When you honor someone, you recognize his or her importance (or weightiness) and you respond accordingly. You respect them and treat them with importance.

God tells us to honor our father and mother. God has given parents a weighty and very important role and responsibility. God wants children to recognize this and honor them for the important role he has given them.

Sometimes our parent may be struggling in the role God has given them and 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 for it, even though they make mistakes. This may be hard to do at times, but God will help us honor our parents for the role God has given them even when they are not doing it perfectly.

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

You are not honoring your parent if you are disobeying them. God instructs us in Ephesians 6:1-3, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother – which is the first commandment with a promise – that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Not only does God give a clear instruction, but he gives a clear reward as well. I have three gift boxes here that represent three parts of the reward God promises us when we honor and obey our parents.

Take out the three brightly wrapped boxes and have a child unwrap them one at a time and then read the reward written on a slip of paper in each box. Explain.

- 1. That it may go well with you. God promises that when you obey your parents, things will go well. Can someone share how life goes better when you obey your parents? Allow for children’s responses, and discuss. Things won’t be perfect but they will go better. Your life will work better and you and your family will get along better.**
- 2. That you may enjoy life on the earth. God also promises that when you obey your parents you will be able to enjoy your life. Can someone share how you will enjoy life more when you obey your parents? Allow for children’s responses, and discuss. You will find that the attitudes and actions that honor and obey your parents will make life more enjoyable overall. There will be less arguments between you and your parents and they may even give you more freedom because they trust you. Life will just be more enjoyable!**

3. **That you may enjoy *long* life on the earth.** God promises that when you honor and obey your parents you will enjoy “long life”. Can someone share how you will enjoy life more when you obey your parents? Allow for children’s responses, and discuss. **Many children die or are hurt because they don’t honor and obey their parents. They do things that harm them and put them in danger. You see, God has given your parents 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!

Concept Three: Six ways to honor and obey parents

Let’s say our memory verse again. Lead the children in saying the memory verse.

We know we need to honor and obey our parents, but how do we do this every day? Let’s look at some practical ways we can do this. There are six of them. Let’s learn them along with motions to remember them by.

Respond (jump up to attention)

Thank (bow)

Help (extend your hand as if helping someone up)

Listen and Talk (put your hand to your ear and to your mouth)

Forgive (put your arm around someone)

Have the children go through each of the words and motions several times to help them remember.

Let’s look at each of these.

The first way is to Respond (do motion). **When your parents ask you to do something or not do something you should 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. In your groups on your information sheet, next to the word “Respond” please come up with one practical way you can respond to your parents.** Allow students time to work and then call on each group to share.

The second way we can honor our parents is by Thanking (do motion). **Thank 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. Remember to thank them on a regular basis for what they do. We’ll do something specific at the end of the lesson to thank our parents. In your groups, on your information sheet, next to the word “Thank” please come up with one thing you can thank your parents for. I’m sure there are so many.** Allow students time to work and then call on each group to share.

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 on a regular basis to help them. This can be simple like picking up trash when you see it or taking care of a younger brother or sister. Please work in your groups to come up with one practical way you can help your parents.** Allow groups time to talk and then ask each group to share their idea.

You can also honor your parents by Listening (motion) **and Talking** (motion) **to them. Tell your parents about things that happened during your day and the problems that you're having. But listen to them too! Ask them questions about their day. Be willing to talk to your parents when you're upset or when you think you've been misunderstood. Give your parents a chance to hear from your heart and to work things out with you. Maybe they'll understand better than you think. Trust their love for you. With one other person, share two ways you can better listen and talk to your parents.**

The final 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 being forgiving toward them. If you ask God, he will help you to forgive them when you are upset.**

Some of you may have a very difficult time at home with your parents. Some parents don't follow God's plan for their lives and become lost and confused. In their confusion they may do things that are bad for you and for them. God never wants children to be hurt or be forced to do things that are wrong and against God's plan. If this is happening to you, you need to talk to another adult in your church, school or community whom you can confide in and trust. You can always talk to me and I will help you. If you are in a difficult situation, don't suffer alone.

Closing Action Point

We are called by God to obey and to honor our parents. For this, he promises us a good reward. Let's say our memory verse one more time to help us remember God's main instruction to children in the family. Lead the children in saying Colossians 3:20.

Let's review the six words and motions that help us to remember how we can honor our parents: Respond, Thank, Help, Listen and Talk, and Forgive. Let's do something right now to honor our parents by thanking them. I'm going to hand out paper and pencils (crayons). Let's make pictures or cards to thank our parents for all they do for us. Then when you go home you can give your card to your mom or dad to thank them for all they do for you.

Allow students time to make their cards. Assist them where necessary and praise their work.

Prayer Circle Time

Let's close in prayer now and thank God for our parents and grandparents that God has put in our lives to provide for us, love us and take care of us. Remember, God also wants to hear our concerns that we have for our families. Does anyone have any prayer requests that they'd like to share for their family?

Allow children to share prayer requests for their family. Pray for their requests and then close with a prayer,

Dear Lord,

Thank you so much for our parents. Thank you also for the wonderful promises that you give us when we obey. We know we don't always honor and obey our parents perfectly. You died to free us and forgive us and help us to live the way that you want us to. Please help us by your Spirit to be more obedient, thankful, helpful, talking, listening and forgiving of our parents. Thank you God for loving us and always wanting what is best for us. We pray in Jesus' name.

If you were a father or a mother, what are the rules you would want your children to especially follow in your home?

If you were parents what are some things your children could do that would make your life easier and happier?

Colossians

3:20

Children

obey

your

parents

in

everything

for

this

pleases

the

Lord.

Respond

Thank

Help

Talk & Listen

Forgive

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 when a child asks for something and the parent says “no” because they do not have money for it. Therefore, in order to thrive and flourish in life, a child needs to know early on 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.

Materials Needed

Review words from previous lesson, rope for tying hands, truth about money symbols and pictures, worksheet questions for groups

Scripture References

John 8:44, 14:6; Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Matthew 6:19, 24; 1 Timothy 6:10; Psalm 24:1; Proverbs 22:2

Welcome Time

Greet each child by name.

Hand out one of the following words to each student: Respond, Thank, Help, Talk & Listen, and Forgive.

Remember our last lesson? We looked at God's good plan and role for the children in a family which is: "Children obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord." (Colossians 3:20) and "'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." (Ephesians 6:2-3)

What a great plan God put in place for us so that we could live well! God really does care for us.

We talked about ways that children can honor their parents? They are respond, thank, help, talk & listen and forgive. Each one of you has a slip of paper with one of these words on it. I'd like you to find and get into groups of five where each person has one these words. When you get into your groups, have each person share one practical way that they can do the word on your slip to honor their parents.

Allow students time to do this exercise.

Attention Grabber

Hold up some local currency.

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 right or wrong. You'll show your decision by standing on one foot or the other. If you think the statement I read is right, please stand on your right foot. If you think the statement is wrong, please stand on your left foot. Ok, listen carefully and make a good decision!

Money solves all problems. (False – left foot)

Money is evil. (False – left foot)

God loves poor people more than the rich. (False – left foot)

God loves the rich more than the poor. (False – left foot)

If we have a lot of money we have no worries. (False – left foot)

Having too much money is the start of all kinds of trouble. (False – left foot)

If a person has a lot of money they are more important and valuable in the sight of God than someone who has very little money. (False – left foot)

If you stood on your left foot for every one of those statements you were correct. All of these statements were false. People think a lot of things about money that are actually not true. Today we are going to see what God has to say about money. We know that what God says is always true. God is the author and source of all that is true (John 14:6). Satan, on the other hand, is the author and source of all lies – all that is not true (John 8:44). This includes lies about money and its role in life.

The Lesson

Concept One: Money is from God.

I have several pictures that are going to help us remember the truth we're going to learn about money. Our first picture is our symbol for God. It is positioned above a bill of our local money. The idea here is that our money is from God and is under his rule. The Bible says, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." (Psalm 24:1) Everything belongs to God! The word "everything" certainly includes money.

Memory Verse Moment

This idea that "money is from God" is so important for us to remember that it is our memory verse for today. Let's say Psalm 24:1 several times together and then we'll play *Crazy Cards*²⁰ to help us memorize the verse. "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." (Psalm 24:1)

²⁰ The game Crazy Cards is found at e-how at http://www.ehow.com/info_8066610_memory-verse-teaching-ideas.html

Use the ***Crazy Cards*** that were used in Unit 1 Lesson 5. After you say the verse several times as a group, allow each student to one at a time draw a card and say the verse while doing the crazy action on the card. Have fun with this!

When confronted with the idea that “everything belongs to God, including money, some people respond by saying, “But I earned this money. It belongs all to me!” In the Old Testament there were people saying this exact same thing. Let's listen to what God had to say.

“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 energy, ability, skills, our mind, even our minute-by-minute breath. If everything belongs to God, this means that even our ability to earn money belongs to God. God gives us the ability to make money! So, all money truly is from God.

Let’s get into the groups of five that you met in for the review activity at the beginning of class. Please discuss and answer the following question and write your answers on your group worksheet. “What are some ways God has given us to make money and what are the abilities he gives us to do this?” Allow groups time to discuss and then call on each group to share their ideas.

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)

When we forget that all our money comes from God, it can quickly become our master and rule us. Like the picture of the shackles (in the resource section), 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, it becomes our master. You could illustrate this by handing a child a rope to use in pulling something but then take it back and tie his or her hands with it. The rope has gone from being a useful tool for the child to use to something that binds and enslaves them. The same thing can happen with money.

When can we tell that money has become our master and no longer a tool? What do you think are some signs of this? In your groups talk about this and write down one or more ideas.

Allow groups time to discuss and then ask them each to share one or more of their ideas.

Concept Three: 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 it is from God and part of his plan for us. Let’s say our memory verse to remind us that money belongs to and is from God. Lead children in saying Psalm 24:1.

The problem is not money but “loving” money. When we love money, we just want to use it to benefit ourselves and we want more and more of it. 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.

Our illustration for loving money is a currency bill inside a heart with a line through it. This means we are to not (heart) love money. The question I want you to think and talk about in your groups is, “Why is loving money a problem?” How does loving money hurt us and others? You can write your answers on your group information sheets. Allow groups time to discuss and then call on each group to share their ideas.

Concept Four: Money does not measure our value or success.

The next set of pictures shows a rich man and a poor man. Often we look at these two people and we think that the man who has nice clothes and lots of money is more valuable. In the world's eyes he is and this is one of Satan’s lies. But, in God’s eyes the rich man is not more valuable than the poor man. Both are equally valuable before God. Money does not increase our true value. It doesn’t make us a more important person in 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. There are many extremely successful people who do not make a lot of money. 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/she helps you to learn and develop your mind he is very successful. The school teacher has one of the most important jobs in the country even if he does not make much money.

Let’s think about this idea further. Who are some successful people you know who may not make much money, but are very successful? Talk about this in your groups and write down some answers. Ask the children to not give specific names, only what the person does

like being a mom, a policeman, your pastor. Allow groups time to discuss and then ask each group to share an answer.

Closing Action Point

We've learned a lot of really important things about how God views money today.

Let's review the important truths or big ideas about money using our pictures. Hold up each picture and have the children say the important truth with you. Go through the pictures several times, going faster and faster until the children are clear on the big ideas. Then allow the children to play ***Big Idea Freeze Tag***. To play ***Big Idea Freeze Tag***, choose one student to be "it." All of the other students run away from "It" trying not to get tagged by him or her. When "It" tags someone they must freeze (not moving at all) and say one of the "*Big Ideas*" of the lesson. Children may be "untagged" when another student who is not frozen tags them. Play several rounds, choosing a different person to be "It" every time.

Prayer Circle Time

Gather the children around you in a circle. Close in prayer, **Dear Lord, Thank you so much for all you have given us. Thank you for money. We know that it comes from you, including our ability to earn it. Thank you that we are all valuable and that our value is not based on how much money we have.**

Help us to not love money but to use it as an important tool to help us live in the good way you designed for us to live.

Help us by your Spirit to see money as you do. You are a good God.

Respond	Thank	Help	Talk & Listen	Forgive
Respond	Thank	Help	Talk & Listen	Forgive
Respond	Thank	Help	Talk & Listen	Forgive
Respond	Thank	Help	Talk & Listen	Forgive
Respond	Thank	Help	Talk & Listen	Forgive

Your money is from God



Picture of your local
currency

Ways God has given us to make money:

Example: making and selling shoes

Abilities God has given us to do different work:

Example: Hands and fingers to cut and sew. Eyes to see what you're doing. A good mind to know and guide the process.

Money can be the master you serve



When can we tell that money has become our master and no longer a tool? What do you think are some signs of this?

Example: A person cannot think at night because they are worried about money. Or, we don't want to share because we think about how much it cost.

**Money is not the problem.
The LOVE of money is the problem**



Why is loving money a problem?

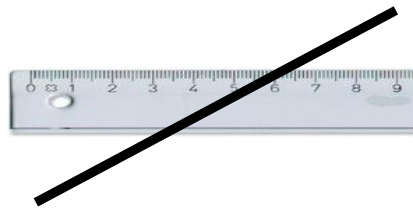


poor man



rich man

Money does not measure our value or success



**Your Value
or Success**

Who are some successful people who may not make much money, but are very successful?

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 to use it to full God’s greater 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 give us 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 great purposes. The tendency is to compartmentalize our lives and see some parts of our lives separate from God and his plan for us. We are especially tempted to do this with money! Children need to know early on that their money and God’s wonderful instruction 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.

Materials Needed

Bag of stones, review pictures/illustrations from last lesson, paper and pencils, lesson pictures, tape

Scripture References

Ephesians 4:28; Mark 12: 30-31; Matthew 6:25-26

Welcome Time

Greet each child by name.

Play ***Stone Review*** to review the last lesson. Have the children sit in a circle. Bring a small bag of stones with you to class. Give the students no more instruction than, "Take only what you think you will need." After all children have removed some stones, tell them that for each stone they took, they should say one thing they remember about money from last lesson - a picture, a question, a big idea.

Attention Grabber

Let's get into four groups. Please discuss what you would do if the following happened to you: You have just received a very large sum of money. What would you use that money for? Write down on your group sheet things you would buy or ways you would use a large sum of money.

Allow students time to discuss and record their group's answers. When they have finished call on the group spokesperson to share their group's ideas.

Now put a check mark on your list by all of those things that would benefit someone beside yourself.

Allow students time to do this activity.

The Lesson

Last week we learned about how God looks at money. He looks at it differently than most people do. Let's review the illustrations from the last lesson. Show the children each one of the illustrations and say the big idea that goes with each.

Money is from God. Money shows what master we serve. The LOVE of money is a problem. Money does not measure our value or success.

This is all true 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. Today's memory verse will give us a clue.

Memory Verse Moment

Today's memory verse is from Ephesians 4:28, "....use your hands for good, hard work, and then give generously to those in need."(NLT) Let's say it together several times and then we'll play *Stand up Tall* to help us memorize the verse. Lead the children in playing *Stand Up Tall* using the verse visuals at the end of this lesson.

Each group will get one phrase of the verse. We will say the verse as a class with each group standing up tall when it is time to say their phrase. Play four rounds of the game, allowing each group to have each part of the verse once.

God wants us to use our money so that we can fulfill the great purposes God has for our lives.

Money is just a tool God gives us so that we can better live out the purpose he has for us. We looked at God's purposes for our lives many lessons back. Today we are going to review them again and see how we can use our money to best do what God designed for us to do here on this earth.

Concept One: God wants us to use our money to rule over all creation, to improve it, to make the world a better place.

Do you remember one of the first instructions or commands God gave to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? Allow for response. He told them to rule over all creation, to have dominion over it. He wants us to rule over sickness, bugs, drought, flood, ignorance, and famine. God told them to work the garden and care for it. God wants us to discover all the potential he has put into this world and use this potential to improve all creation. God wants us to improve all creation, make it better, and enable it to produce bounty, goodness, and beauty. To improve all creation includes our minds, bodies, families, cities, cultures – everything!

Let's look at some pictures and share ideas on how we can use our money to have dominion over all creation and improve it.

Discuss.

Picture of farmer – uses his/her money to buy land, tools, and seeds to produce food for people and to make income that he can use to provide for his family and better the world around him.

Doctor – uses his/her money first to study how to be a doctor, then to buy tools and equipment he can use to set up a clinic and treat people who are sick.

Carpenter – uses his/her money to buy tools and lumber to build a house that provides protection, comfort, and beauty for a family.

Bridge-builder – uses his/her money study and learn engineering, then to buy cement and steel to build a bridge that allows people to visit one another and do business with each other.

Concept Two: God wants us to use our money to bless others.

Remember the story of Abraham. What did God tell Abraham? Allow for a response. **God told Abraham, “I will bless you....and you will be a blessing.” God gave Abraham descendants so that ultimately he could bless others. In the same way, God blesses us so that we can bless others. One of the resources God blesses us with is money.**

Remember the story of the three stewards that the master entrusted with different sums of money? Allow for response and ideally for someone to tell the story. **Two developed and used their money well and were rewarded. Another did not develop and invest the resource the master had given him and in the end the master took it back. God give us so many resources. These resources include seen things like money, our hands, and our abilities. They also include unseen things like our mind, our will, and our emotions. God’s purpose is that we develop and steward all that he has given us so that we can bless others. This includes our money. To “steward” means to develop and make the best possible use of all that God has entrusted to us.**

Concept Three: God wants us to use our money to fulfill the great commandment – to love God and one another.

Remember when the young man came to Jesus and asked which commandment was the most important? What did Jesus say? Allow for response.

Jesus said that the greatest commandment was, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all you mind and with all your strength. The second one is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Mark 12: 30-31)

Let’ say this again with the hand motions. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart (make a heart shape on your chest), with all your soul (hand in a circular motion), with

all your mind (hand to head), **and with all your strength** (make a muscle). **The second one is like it, love your neighbor as yourself** (put your arm around the person next to you.)

How do we use our money to fulfill the great commandment? Let's look at some pictures and answer the question, "How are these people using their money to fulfill the great commandment?"

Picture of person buying medicine. Discuss, allowing children to share their ideas.

This person is loving their neighbor by buying medicine for someone else who is sick (maybe a son, daughter, brother, sister, parent, neighbor).

Buying medicine for someone also makes it possible for that person to love God with all their strength because it enables them to recover and have strength.

Picture of person buying books. Discuss, allowing children to share their ideas.

Who do you think this person is buying a book for? What type of book is it? This is another good example of using your money to love your neighbor as yourself.

Buying a book for someone is a good way to enable them to love God with all of their mind because it allows them to develop their mind and use it as God designed and intended for them. Or maybe the book will encourage the person and give them hope so they can love God with all their heart.

What if this person is buying this book for themselves. Could this also be a way for them to fulfill the great commandment? (Yes, if they are developing themselves so they can better love God and others).

Picture of tithe. Discuss, allowing children to share their ideas.

What is tithe? An amount from our income that we give to God. Tithe in the Old Testament meant 10%. **How is this fulfilling the Great Commandment?** Allow for discussion.

When we give a percentage of our income to our church, it is a way to show love for God and all those who are blessed by the use of this money.

Picture of the couple giving bread to someone. Discuss, allowing children to share their ideas.

What is this a picture of? How is this couple using their money to fulfill the great commandment?

They are using their money to provide food to their neighbor. In this way they are loving their neighbor and giving him strength so that he too can love God also with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength.

You've come up with some great ways that you can fulfill God's purposes for your life using money.

Our memory verse for today calls for us to work hard so that we can meet our own needs and share with those who are in need. God provides for our needs by giving us work to do. We can be generous because we know God is our provider. Matthew 6:25-26 says, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

Closing Action Point

We have seen that God wants us to use our money to have dominion over all creation, to bless others and to fulfill the great Commandment by loving God and others. (In reality all these are interconnected).

I'd like for you to turn to your neighbor and come up with two or three ways this next week you can use your money (or some other material or physical resource God has given them) **to have dominion over and develop all creation, and to bless others.**

Allow children time to discuss their ideas and for volunteers to share their ideas with the group.

You've come up with some great ways that you can bless others this next week with the money or physical resources that God has blessed you with. Let's do this and when we come together next week we will share about what it was like to bless others.

Prayer Circle Time

Gather the children around you in a circle as you pray a closing prayer, **Dear Lord, Thank you so much for loving us and for providing for all of our needs. Thank you for allowing us to earn and make money. Help us use the money and resources that you have given us to bless others and show our love for you. Help us all by your Spirit to be a blessing to the people we have chosen to help this week. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

In groups, please discuss what you would do if the following happened to you:

You have just received a very large sum of money. What would you use that money for?

Dominion over all creation, to rule over and improve it, care for it



farmer



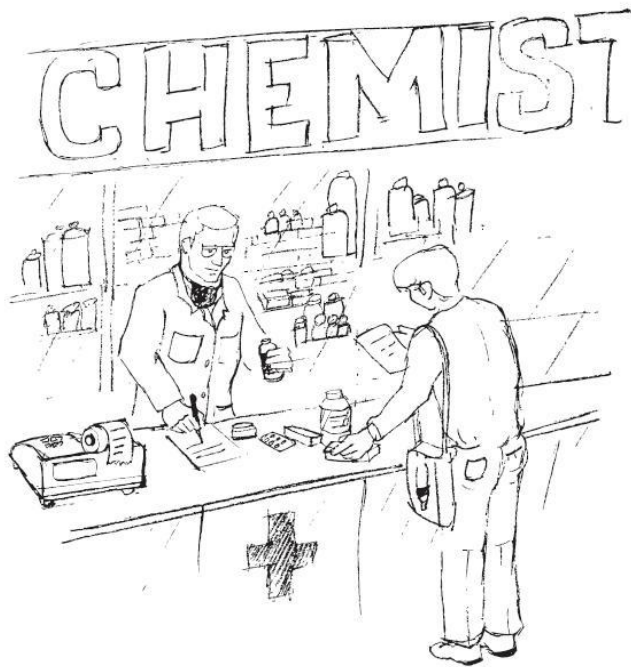
doctor

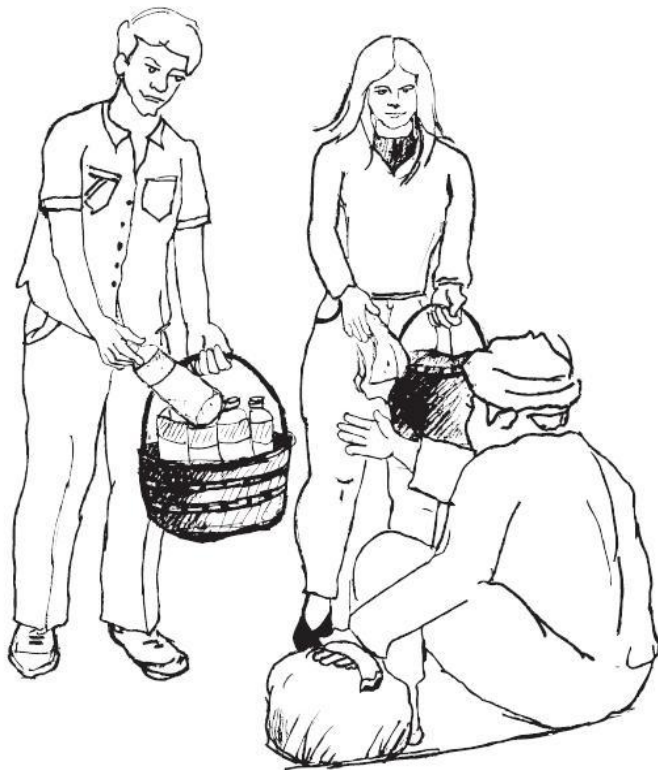
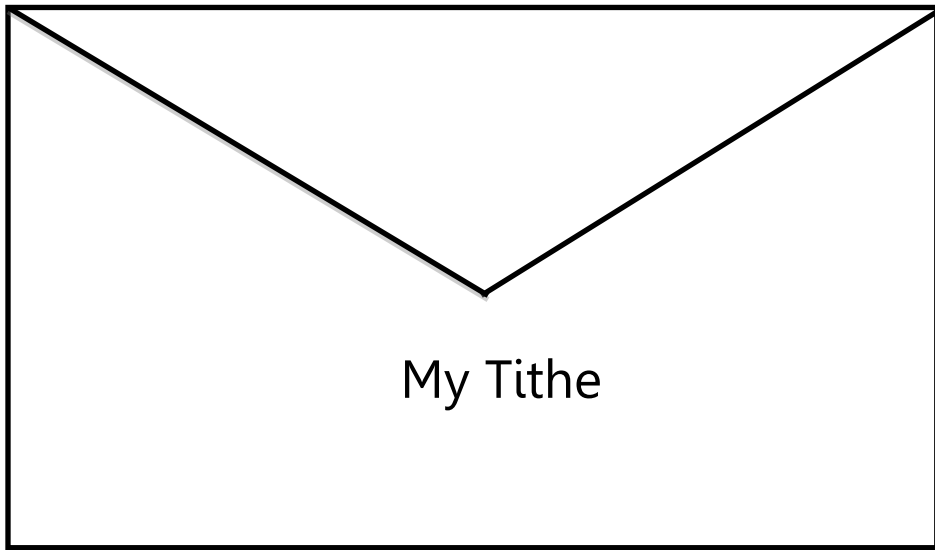


carpenter



bridge builder





Unit Six – Lesson 3

God’s Design for Life: Managing Your Money

The Concept: Why Teach This Lesson?

There are more than 1,100 verses in the Bible concerning money. 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 spending (to avoid debt),
- 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.

Materials Necessary

Small ball for Welcome Time review, cooking utensils, five coins, set of small rocks for every two children in the class - each set having 9 small rocks and 2 smaller or half rocks, group worksheets

Scripture References

Proverbs 3:9; Deuteronomy 8:17-18; 2 Corinthians 9:7,8; Psalm 112:5; Proverbs 22:7, 6:6-8

Welcome Time

Greet each child by name.

Have the children sit in a circle.

I hope you all had a very positive experience since our last lesson blessing someone with the money or other resources God has given you! Let's take time to share some of your experiences. I am going to toss the ball to one of you. Whoever catches the ball is to share about how they used their money or other resource to bless someone else and anything they learned from that. After you're done sharing, toss the ball to another student who wants to share. We'll keep tossing the ball and sharing until everyone who wants to has gotten the chance to share.

Attention Grabber

Divide the children into four groups.

I'd like you to think about and complete the following statement in your groups. Write as many answers as you can think of on your group worksheet.

"Adults spend the money they earn on _____."

Allow students time to complete this activity. Then allow them to share some of their answers. **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 here on this earth.**

Bring some cooking utensils and organize them on a table as you say the following to help the children visualize the concept of how it's important to manage and organize things.

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 near by, a knife kept sharp and put in a particular place, etc. She organizes all of these so that she can cook well. Just like your mother organizes her cooking items so that she can cook well, we need to organize or manage our money so that we can live out our purpose well.

Today we are going to talk about ways we can best manage our money so that we can use it to live out our purpose.

We will look at four ways God gives 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.

The first way God gives us to manage our money is by first giving a portion to God by tithing. Let's say "first, give to God" while we cup our hands and lift them in the air as if we are lifting up money to God.

The second way God gives us to manage our money is by being generous to others. Let's say "be generous to others" while we put our hands out as if we're giving money to another person.

The third way God gives us to manage our money is by planning and budgeting. Let's say "plan and avoid debt" while we pretend to write with a pencil on a paper as if we are making a plan for how to spend our money.

The fourth way God gives us to manage our money is by saving. Let's say "save money" while we put our hands in our pocket as if we're putting our money away to not spend it.

Let's repeat these four ideas and motions several times so we can remember them. Then we'll talk about what they mean. Repeat ideas and motions. Have one side of the room do it, then the other side to see who can remember them all first.

Concept One: Manage your money well - First, give to God (Tithing)

It seems strange to think that the first step to managing money would be to give a portion of it away, to give a tithe to God. But, this is exactly what God says to do. God knows much more about money than the world's smartest financial advisor. God also wants the very best for every part of our lives - including the money part. His first instruction is give a portion of the money that he gives us back to him. When we earn some money and it is handed to us, the first management instruction God gives us is to

give a portion back to him. This is what is called tithing. Let's say the first big idea; "First, give to God" as we do the motion.

Why does God ask us to do this? Does he need the money? Allow for response and discussion. **No, God doesn't need for us to give him money so that he can buy something! Yet God called his people in the Old Testament to tithe or give back 10% of their crop or earnings as a literal sacrifice to God. In our case we give a portion of our earnings to the function of our church and its ministries.**

Memory Verse Moment

Today's memory verse is Proverbs 3:9, "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops."

This means that when we earn money, the first thing we do is give a portion of it back to God who gave it to us in the first place by giving us the ability to earn it. (Deuteronomy 8:17-18)

Then we'll play *Disappearing Verse* to help us memorize the verse. Call up volunteers, one at a time, to black out a word of the verse on a verse poster with a marker. After a word is blacked out, students should say the verse without the word. Continue playing in this manner until all the words are blacked out and children can say the verse with no aids.

The Bible says we should give according to what God puts in our hearts, not giving with a grudge because we think we have to (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Why is giving back to God or tithing so important? Giving back to God reminds us that he is the source of all of our money. Giving back to God helps keep us from loving money - which we learned last week is the root of all evil. Giving back to God also helps us become more generous toward others. God promises to take care of us when we trust him by obeying his command to give back to him from our income.

If you do not earn actual money, what are some ways you could tithe or give back to God? Please talk about this question in your groups and be prepared to share your ideas with the class.

Allow groups time to discuss then ask each group to share their ideas with the class.

Let's say our memory verse one more time to help us remember that we are to give a portion of what God has given to us back to him. Lead the children in saying Proverbs 3:9.

Concept Two: Manage your money well - Be generous to others.

God tells us, "...the righteous give without sparing." God wants us to be generous. Let's say our second big idea, "Be generous" as we do the motion to help us remember it.

Just as "giving back to God" or tithing does not seem like an obvious way to manage money well, neither does "being generous to others" seem obvious or make sense in the world's eyes. 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."

Even when we have very little, 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)

In your groups, please finish the following statements and record them on your group information sheet: "It is hard to be generous because..."

Have groups share their answers with the class and discuss them briefly.

Concept Three: Manage your money well - Plan and avoid debt.

Before class, hand a child in the front row five coins and ask him or her to hold on to them. Act out the following situation: **I really want to buy this extra special cake. It cost five coins and that is just the amount I have in my pocket. This will make the dinner I'm having extra special.** Pretend you are buying the cake from one of the children and give them five coins for it.

Now it is the next day. My son is feeling sick today and I am pretty sure it is malaria. I need to get him some pills but I do not have enough money. Hmm....how will I get the money? Go over to the child who you gave the five coins to before class. **Can I borrow five coins from you? My child is sick and needs medicine.** Child agrees and gives it. **Oh thank you so much. I promise I'll pay you back.** Say this somewhat hesitantly and tentatively. Walk away from the children. Stay gone for a few seconds and come tiptoeing and sneaking back.

Talking in a low voice to the class. **I certainly hope that** (child's name that you borrowed the five coins from) **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. Honestly, I hope he/she just forgets I even borrowed it. I just hate being in debt to him/her.**

One of the biggest problems we have with money is that we don't have enough and then we go into debt and owe someone money. When we have a debt we have a big cloud hanging over our head.

Why did I not have enough money to pay for my child's medicine? Allow for response and discussion.

Yes, it is because I did not plan ahead. I did not plan and set money aside to pay for all the essential things I would need. Instead I bought the piece of cake. I failed to plan and to budget. Remember our third big idea? Let's say it together and do the motion, "Plan and avoid debt."

To plan or budget means to first put aside all the money you will need for buying essentials like food, water, medicine, and housing. Then identify what money you will have left over to buy things that are not essential but that you would like to have – like cake for a party. Otherwise, you will run out of money and won't have enough for essentials. This can cause real trouble and lead to borrowing money. The Bible says, "...the borrower is servant to the lender."(Proverbs 22:7)

Plan how to spend your money before you spend it. Do all that you can to stay out of debt. If you do get into debt, pay it back as soon as you can. We can live a free life when we are not in debt to anyone.

Concept Four: Manage your money well - Save money.

God uses the little ant to teach us that he wants us to save our money! That's our fourth big idea about how God wants us to wisely manage or organize our money. Let's say it together and do the hand motion, "Save money".

God says to us, "Go to the ant, you sluggard, consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest." (Proverbs 6:6-8)

What does the ant do that is so wise? Allow for the 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 he will need the food and 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 unexpected expense will come up. If you have money saved you will be able to pay for unexpected emergencies and necessities. You will also have money to invest so you can increase.**

Closing Action Point

We've learned four ways that God wants us to wisely use and manage the money that he's given us. Let's say those four ways again and do the motions with them, "first, give to God, be generous, plan and avoid debt, save money."

Let's show how that would practically work in real life. Have the children form pairs and then give each pair ten small stones. **Pretend that these stones are real money and that each is stone is valued at (100 of some coin in your currency). You'll each get a chance to "plan and budget" this money.**

I would like one of you in each pair to do the instructions as I give them. When you are done, the other person will repeat the instructions and do them as well.

- 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 work you did to earn 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, the Bible tells us in Proverbs how we are to be like the ant and save part of our income for unplanned expenses.**

3.1 One of the 'savings' 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 and, 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 aside the amount you will need to purchase all the essential things you will need and tell your partner what these essentials are. If there is any money left over, tell your partner what non-essential you might buy with this money.

Go through the above exercise a second time to allow the other partner to manage his money in the way that would be wise and God intends.

Prayer Circle Time

Gather the children around you in a circle. Close with the following prayer.

Dear Lord,

We know you are wise and you want what is best for us. We know you care about us and want us to live well. We know you have a good design for our lives including money. Thank you for telling us about money and how best to manage it. Help us to trust you and follow your instructions. Thank you for blessing and being generous with us. Help us to bless and be generous with others.

In Jesus name, Amen

Complete the following statement in your groups. Write as many answers as you can think of.

Adults spend the money they earn on _____.

Proverbs 3:9-10

**“Honor the Lord
with your wealth,
with the first
fruits of all your
crops.”**

What are some ways you could tithe or give back to God?

It is hard to be generous because_____ .

Income: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

First, give to God: ☐

Be generous to others ?

Save money:

Long-term savings: ☐

Short-term savings: ☐

Plan and avoid debt

Must have: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Nice to have: ?



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Disciple Nations Alliance

1110 E. Missouri Ave., Suite 393

Phoenix, AZ 85014

www.disciplenations.org