

THE GOSPEL

God's Plan For Me

GOD RULES · WE SINNED · GOD PROVIDED · JESUS GIVES · WE RESPOND

Leader Guide

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We believe the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

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ADMINISTRATION GUIDE

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me is a six-week Bible study designed to help leaders and parents encourage and teach kids, 1st-6th grade, how to encounter and receive the truth of the gospel.

This hands-on, interactive resource can be used in a church setting of any size as well as at home. This book provides detailed plans for each of the six sessions. Along with teaching plans, teaching supplies for each session are listed as well.

During the six sessions, kids will see the truth of God's Word when they grasp the gospel. They will discover that God rules, and they do not. They will learn that they are sinners, and their sin separates them from a holy God. Kids will learn that God provided His only Son, Jesus, to pay the price for their sin. They will explore the gift of mercy as they seek to understand that Jesus gave His life freely, and we can be saved by His finished work on the cross. Kids will learn that simply knowing the gospel is not enough, but they must respond to what they have heard. All these truths will be explored as they: **Discover Truth** through an opening activity; **See Truth** in God's Word; **Experience Truth** through hands-on, multi-sensory activities; **Discuss Truth** with their leader, parents, and peers; and **Apply Truth** to their everyday lives.

Incorporate *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me PowerPoint*® as needed throughout the study.

ACTIVITY BOOKS

Because of the nature of the study, children will need their own activity books. *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me Younger Kids Activity Book* (9781535962230) and *The Gospel: God's Plan for*

Me Older Kids Activity Book (9781535962247) include 80 pages of activities and devotions designed to guide kids to learn about and know God more. Games, activities, puzzles, and family guide pages support each of the six sessions. These books are designed for kids to use during the session and at home. They can work through the books and have fun as they learn how to go deeper in their relationship with God. A copy of all family guide pages are found in the printable downloads (Item 13) for those who would like to send home copies of the family guide pages each week.

PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

The unique nature of this study provides ministry leaders with the great opportunity to partner with parents during this discovery time in a child's spiritual walk. Most parents want to be a part of their child's decision to trust in Jesus, but some may need a safe place to walk through the gospel with their kids. **Why not invite parents to attend this study with their child?** When it comes to discussing truth, guide kids and parents (or another caring adult) to turn and talk to one another about what they are discovering. No one knows these kids better than the people raising them, so let's invite them into this special time as a way to partner with parents and discover if and when kids are ready to make a personal commitment to Jesus.

PRINTABLES

Included in this Leader Guide is a download code to access 20 printables to aid in teaching.

To access your free downloadable items, go to my.lifeway.com/redeem and register or log in.

Enter the following code to download your printable items: **FA2G8SV7JJ**

Incorporate *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me PowerPoint*® as needed throughout the study.

1. Administration Guide
2. Allergy Alert
3. Family Scavenger Hunt
4. Key Verse Planes
5. Target
6. Romans 6:23 Cards
7. Ephesians 2:8-9 Poster
8. John 3:16 Cards
9. Backpack Mercy
10. Right or Wrong Review
11. The Missing Piece
12. Gospel Point Signs
13. Family Guide
14. Certificate of Completion
15. The Gospel: God's Plan For Me

ITEM 1. Administration Guide

Instructions: Print and distribute an Administration Guide to each leader. Review the guide as you prepare to lead.

ITEM 2. Allergy Alert

Instructions: Print and display as needed.

ITEM 3. Family Scavenger Hunt

Instructions: Print and give this additional activity to each child during session 1 to take home and complete with their family.

ITEM 4. Key Verse Planes

Instructions: Print and help kids fold into paper airplanes during "Experience Truth" in session 2.

ITEM 5. Target

Instructions: Print and use with "Key Verse Planes" during "Experience Truth" in session 2.

ITEM 6. Romans 6:23 Cards

Instructions: Print and give to each child along with crayons to color during "Apply Truth" in session 2.

ITEM 7. Ephesians 2:8-9 Poster

Instructions: Print and display during "Discuss Truth" in session 3.

ITEM 8. John 3:16 Cards

Instructions: Print and cut. Give several cards to each child during "Apply Truth" in session 3 to take home and use with their family.

ITEM 9. Backpack Mercy

Instructions: Print each sign and use during "Experience Truth" in session 4.

ITEM 10. Right or Wrong Review

Instructions: Print and hang on opposite sides of the room during "See Truth" in session 5.

ITEM 11. The Missing Piece

Instructions: Print and cut puzzles for each child. Take the special "missing piece" and hide it in the room. This activity will be during "Apply Truth" in session 5.

ITEM 12. Gospel Point Signs

Instructions: Print each sign. Hang the first four in various corners of the room, and place "We Respond" in the center of the room. This will be part of "Discover Truth" in session 6.

ITEM 13. Family Guide

Instructions: Family Guide pages are located at the back of each child's activity books. Additional pages can be printed and distributed at the end of each session.

ITEM 14. Certificate of Completion

Instructions: Print, sign, and give a certificate to each child at the completion of the study.

ITEM 15. The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Instructions: Print and display the sign. Use as needed throughout the study.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

1. Pray. Ask God to guide your planning, preparation, teaching, and follow-up for the study. Thank God for the opportunity to share the life-changing truths of the gospel with kids and families. Pray that God will grant you great love and discernment for the children who will come to the study.

2. With your church staff, choose a meeting time and place. Consider meeting during a time when families are already at church together. Try to find a meeting area that is large enough for the number of kids you expect so they can play active games and have fun.

3. Gather resources. A list of materials can be found in each session in the margin notes. Gather resources as needed and use throughout this study.

4. Recruit workers. Find at least one person to help you. Many churches require at least two adults in a room with kids. This is for both the kids' protection and yours. One worker for every 6 kids is a good goal. If you expect more than 15–18 kids, enlist enough workers to form two classes, possibly one for younger kids and one for older kids. Ask God to direct you to people who are experienced children's workers and faithful Christians. Explain to potential teachers what you expect from them, what their responsibilities would be for both planning and teaching, and the dates and times of the classes.

5. Invite parents. Partner with parents by inviting them to attend this class with their child. If children do not have a parent or another caring adult to come with them, enlist a mature believer to pair with each child needing an adult for discussion.

6. Determine your schedule. If possible, try to arrange six weeks in a row to maintain consistency in learning. If that is not possible, try to line up sessions as close together as you can.

6. Plan ahead. Meet with other leaders to decide who will lead each part of the session. (See "What Happens at Each Meeting" in the

next section.) Print out teaching aids from the downloadable content. Cut apart items as needed. Clip the pieces of each item together or place them in resealable bags. Gather supplies. A list of supplies needed for each activity is printed in the margin for each meeting.

7. Advertise. Consider the following suggestions:

- Display promotional materials near the children's departments and near the departments of kids' parents. Since children cannot bring themselves to the sessions, place materials where parents will notice them. Be sure information about the time, date, place, and intent of the study are on the posters or other materials.
- Vary the approaches. Use bulletin boards, handouts, announcements, newsletter articles, mail-outs, emails, phone calls, displays, posters, and anything else you think of!
- Promote the Bible study on social media and in parent emails. Share what kids are learning so parents will be aware what the study is about the next time it becomes available.
- Make it colorful. Color attracts attention to the message.
- Start in plenty of time to build interest in the study for kids.

WHAT HAPPENS AT EACH MEETING?

Each meeting is divided into the following parts:

"Discover Truth" (Introduction)—As soon as they arrive, kids will play games or do quick activities to pique their interest in what they will learn during the session.

"See Truth" (Opening God's Word)—Kids will open God's Word to see and hear from the Bible the truth of each session.

“Experience Truth” (Hands-On Learning)—

Kids will participate in activities that experience the key point through a variety of interactive, multi-sensory activities.

“Discuss Truth” (Adult/Child Interaction)—

During this time, kids discuss (with their parents or other caring adults) what they are learning. This is a great time to get a glimpse of where each child is on his or her spiritual journey. Discussion time is a safe place to ask questions and a great place for kids to interact with parents or caring adults. Additional activities may be provided in this section.

“Apply Truth” (Conclusion/Application)—

Class is concluded through an activity, a discussion, or a special experience.

SHARING THE GOSPEL TOOLS

The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me booklet (CSB: 9781430066965) is sold in packs of 10. It provides a witnessing tool that emphasizes God’s plan of salvation from creation to Jesus and how we respond to the good news. Also available in ESV (9781430066958). This resource interacts with this Bible study content often and is a great tool to give parents so they can review with their kids at home.

The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me PowerPoint® is included in the digital download files to assist in your teaching time. Refer to the slides as needed as you share the gospel.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS!

What is a Christian? (9781615079469) is an eight-week activity book for kids that helps them answer questions about becoming a Christian. Content covered includes questions about God, Jesus, sin, the gospel, becoming a Christian, heaven, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. An included parent section equips parents to have conversations with children who are asking questions about the gospel.

I’m a Christian Now! Leader Kit (9781535935791) is an eight-week class that will cover how to become a Christian; a deeper understanding of salvation, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper; what it means to be a church member; the importance of Bible reading, prayer, worship, service and giving; how to tell your testimony; going on mission; and continuing to grow as a Christian in difficult times. The Leader Kit provides everything you need to teach a class on children and salvation.

Leading a Child to Christ Digital Bundle (9781535950213) provides you with the tools to guide parents, leaders, and older children in how to share their faith. Each digital training pack includes downloadable videos and PDFs of the companion resources: *Leading a Friend to Christ* booklet, *Leading a Child to Christ* booklet, and *ABCs of Becoming a Christian* (CSB and KJV).

SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH KIDS

This study is designed for children who are asking questions and seeking the truths in the gospel. These may be children who have been in church all their lives and know much about Jesus, or kids who know very little but long to know more. During these six sessions, we want to be ready to share more with kids who may already feel the conviction and want to make a personal decision for Jesus Christ.

- The ultimate goal of teaching the Bible is for a person to trust in Jesus as his Savior and Lord when the Holy Spirit leads him to realize that he has sinned against God and is spiritually lost. The Holy Spirit is the leader in the experience, but believers have the responsibility of following the Spirit's leading.
- Becoming a Christian is an individual matter. Discussions about conversion are more effective when conducted individually because the child will often feel freer to share true feelings, thoughts, and questions.
- Remember that each person comes to this decision as the Holy Spirit leads. People respond at different ages. Strive to know the kids you teach as individuals.
- The questions a child asks can signal leaders and parents that the child is considering the decision to follow Jesus. When she asks questions, answer simply and without pushing her to do more than she is ready to do. More than anything, these questions indicate the child's awareness of her need for God.
- If a kid indicates a desire to become a Christian, ask him to tell you what he feels. Use questions that require thoughtful answers rather than just "yes" or "no." Use language the child understands.
- You might want to use these questions: *Why do you want to become a Christian? What do you think a person has to do to become a Christian? Why do you need Jesus? Can you do anything to save yourself?* Explain the good news of Jesus in your own words.
- Use your Bible as you share the gospel. After reading a Bible verse, be ready to explain the verse in your own words. Invite children to also turn in their Bibles to see this truth for themselves. Help the child understand unfamiliar terms, such as *repent*. Refer to *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* to help you know Bible verses to share and kid-friendly ways to explain how to become a Christian.

- Help the child know how he can respond. Use directions such as *“Tell God you know you have sinned and are sorry. Ask God to forgive you for your sin, for wanting your way instead of God’s way. Ask Jesus to become your Savior (the One who keeps you from being separated from God) and Lord (the One in charge).”* Again, refer to *The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me* booklet for good ways to help kids know how they can respond.
- One common misconception for kids is that being baptized makes them a Christian. Be sure they know the difference between becoming a Christian, being baptized, and joining the church. Explain that baptism is a symbol for a commitment that has already been made when they trusted Jesus to save them.
- Include parents or caregivers when possible. Tell them what led you to discuss salvation with their child. Explain where you think the child is in his spiritual journey (e.g. becoming aware of a need for God, is thoughtfully considering how to respond, made a decision to receive Christ, or wants to be baptized).
- Don’t forget that children are very literal. Avoid or explain symbolism.
- Prepare yourself ahead of time so you are ready to answer kids’ questions as they arise. Be ready with Bible verses to use.
- Pray. Ask for God’s leadership as you help boys and girls grow in their understanding of salvation.
- Some of the kids you teach may have Christian parents while others may not. Consider how you can reach out to each child’s parent or guardian.
- Cultivate friendships. During the study, connect to families you don’t already know. Share stories or pictures from the class with parents. *Crop out or blur images of children if written parental consent is not acquired.
- Pray for parents.
- Invite parents to special events.
- Share parents’ names with leaders in adult Sunday School groups.
- Minister to parents as you discover needs. This could be anything from a hot meal after a hospital stay or helping locate child care for parents.
- Present the gospel as you see opportunity. Use the plan listed for kids.
- Share your own testimony. A one- or two-minute conversation about your story is appropriate. Keep it simple.



A NOTE TO LEADERS:

Guiding children to take those first steps toward faith can be the most rewarding opportunity for both leaders and parents. *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* encourages leaders to incorporate parents and caregivers in the faith journey of their children. By laying these foundations for spiritual conversion, parents become partners with the Holy Spirit as He prepares and leads the children in your study to understand the gospel and trust Jesus as Savior.



It is exciting when a child grasps the truth of the gospel, trusts Jesus, and follows Him. Following Jesus is a decision that affects every other decision. Given the importance of that decision, consider inviting parents and caregivers to partner with you and be a part of a discipleship process that will complement what you are doing to lead the children in your group to grow in Christ.

Parents and caregivers can attend the study with their child. They can also continue the session at home with parent pages to engage in conversations about what their child is learning, daily devotional pages, and session activities.

Thank you for your commitment to lead *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* with the kids in your group and partner with families in the spiritual growth of their children.



THE GOSPEL

God's Plan For Me



GOD RULES.

The Bible tells us God created everything, including you and me, and He is in charge of everything. Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16-17



WE SINNED.

We all choose to disobey God. The Bible calls this sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. Romans 3:23; 6:23



GOD PROVIDED.

God sent Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9



JESUS GIVES.

He lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 2:8-9



WE RESPOND.

Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus. John 14:6; Romans 10:9-10,13



GOD RULES.

When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. God is Creator, God rules, and He loves us.

KEY POINTS. When we grasp the gospel, we discover that...

- God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus.
- God is Creator.
- God rules.
- God loves us.

KEY VERSE

“Everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and by him all things hold together.”
Colossians 1:16-17 (CSB)

PREPARE TO TEACH

The gospel is all about God and His plan to send Jesus. Sometimes we can try to make ourselves the center of the story, but that is God's place. That is why we start with God and not us. God rules. He is Creator and holds everything together. He is at the very core of the good news about God's redemption plan to save us from our sins.

God is the central figure. God is the goal. So let's start with Him.

PONDER

Pause for a moment and reflect on your life. Who stands in the center today? Is it God, or have you taken over the spot that is rightly His? Even as church leaders, we can become so busy doing things for God's glory, we try to take over the spotlight for ourselves.

PRAY

Praise: Praise God for being the Creator. Praise Him for being the Alpha and the Omega.

Confession: Ask God to search your heart and show you ways you have allowed yourself to become the center of a story that is all about Him. Spend time confessing your sins to Him.

Thanksgiving: Maybe as you sit by a window or outside, spend time thanking God for His creation.

Supplication: Pray for the kids who will be joining your class, by name if possible. Ask God to prepare their hearts to see they have a loving God who not only creates, but holds everything together.

DISCOVER TRUTH

Supplies:

- › 5 pieces of large craft paper
- › A set of crayons or markers at each station

Teaching Tip:

- › Consider providing enough animal or plant names for kids to create their own drawings on individual papers rather than rotating to different stations.

Prepare: Before kids arrive, write the name of a made-up animal or plant at the top of each large sheet of craft paper. You can combine names of familiar plants and animals to help kids create new animals, but be sure to make at least one or two stations with brand new animals. (For example: a *kangagator*, a *whalephant*, a *danditiger tree*, or a *yada yada bird*.) Place papers around the room to give kids room to work.

Instructions: As children arrive, instruct them to go to one of the five stations. Challenge them to draw their version of the type of animal or plant on the large craft paper. (Be sure to remind them to leave room for other friends to draw, too.) Explain there is no wrong way to draw their creation. As they finish one drawing, they can rotate to another station.

After each child has completed at least two drawings, gather the papers and invite kids to find their seats. Hold up each sheet and point out unique and clever drawings of the assigned animal or plant.

Ask:

- What was easy about drawing your creation? What made it difficult?
- Now that you have drawn one of these creations, what would it take for you to make this creation come alive? (*Allow kids to answer as they struggle to consider all it would take to make their picture come to life.*)
- What if I simply asked you to speak this creation into existence? Could you make that happen? Why or why not?

Say: Today we are going to discover that **God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. God is Creator, God rules, and He loves us.**

SEE TRUTH

Supplies

- › Bibles (1 per child)
- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- › Pencils

Invite kids to open their Bibles to Genesis 1.

Say: Each week we will talk about truths from God's Word. It is important for you to see the truth for yourself in the Bible.

Open your Bible to Genesis 1 and tell the following story.

GOD CREATED THE WORLD GENESIS 1:1-25

In the beginning, nothing existed except God. God spoke and created the heavens and the earth. When He first created the earth, it had no shape, and total darkness covered the earth. The Spirit of God was there, hovering over the waters. God spoke. He said, "Let there be light!" and what God said happened. Light was created. God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and He called the darkness night. Evening came, and then morning. That was the first day of creation.

God spoke again: "Let there be an expanse between the waters, to separate them." What God said happened. He made a space between the water that was on the earth and the water above the earth. God called the expanse sky. Evening came, and then morning came. That was the second day of creation.

God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear." What God said happened. God called the dry land earth, and He called the gathered water seas. God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth make plants and trees with fruits and seeds." What God said happened. Plants and trees grew, and God saw that it was good. Evening came, and then morning. That was the third day of creation.

Next, God placed lights in the sky. God created the sun to shine during the day and the moon and stars to shine at night. God gave us lights to provide light on the earth, to separate day from night, and to help us track time in days and years. God saw that it was good. Evening came, and then morning. That was the fourth day of creation.

Next, God made creatures that move and swim in the water. He made birds to flap their wings and soar across the sky. God saw that it was good. God told the animals to multiply, and they filled the seas and the sky. Evening came, and then morning. That was the fifth day of creation. Then God made more animals—livestock, creatures that crawl, and wildlife to live on the earth. When God said it, it happened. And God saw that it was good.

Say: Wow, after reading this passage, we see God indeed is Creator! He is amazingly creative and powerful, isn't He? **God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. God is Creator, God rules, and He loves us.** I am going to say that again and you repeat it to me: **God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. God is Creator, God rules, and He loves us.**

CREATOR GOD

Transition kids into small groups, leading them to form an older group and a younger group. If you have a large group of either older or younger kids, form groups of about five or six kids. Distribute the Activity Books and pencils. Direct the boys and girls to write their names inside.

Explain to the group that each week, they will have pages in the Activity Books to complete. Call attention to the puzzles and fun activities that can help them learn more about God and their relationship with Him. Also point out the daily pages where kids can write about what they are learning. Point out the pages for them to complete at home and the parent pages to give to their parents or caregivers. Explain that working on these pages can help them learn more about being created in God's image. Encourage kids to continue their study during the coming week.

Note: *If parents (or caring adults) are present, invite them to work on the activity page with their child. Discussing these questions can help parents gain a clearer understanding of what their child grasps regarding the truths of the gospel. Point out the parent pages at the end of the Activity Books for parents to complete at home with their children.*

After reading the Bible story, group kids into small teams to complete the "Creator God" activity in the Activity Book (p. 8). Kids will scan Genesis 1 in their Bibles and total together how many times they see or hear the word *God*. List or draw some creations they remember God made. Lead them to fill in the last statement: "And God saw that it was _____." (*good*)

Near the bottom of the page, ask kids to unscramble words in today's key point to help them remember it: ***God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. God is Creator, God rules, and He loves us. We can know He holds all His creation together.***

EXPERIENCE TRUTH

CREATION VS. CREATOR

Instructions: Give each child some play dough. Invite them to decide what they would like to create with their play dough. Once they have all decided, tell them to begin. Give them a minute or two to start modeling their creation, then pick up some play dough and hold it to your ear like the play dough is speaking to you.

Note: *Invite parents and guardians to be a part of creating something fun with their children.*

Say: Yes, play dough, what do you want? (*The kids will look at you like you are crazy.*) Well, play dough, they have already decided what they wanted to make. I can't make them change. OK. OK, I will tell them. (*Take the play dough from your ear and share the message with the kids.*) Kids, I am sorry to say you will have to stop making what you decided to make because the play dough has another idea on what it would like to be. The play dough would like to be a house, so you need to start making that now.

Supplies:
› Play dough for each child

Allow the kids another minute or two to start making the house, then interrupt them again with the play dough wanting to talk to you.

Say: Kids, I am so sorry to interrupt, but the play dough has something to say again. *(Put the play dough up to your ear.)* Yes, play dough, I am listening. How can I help you? *(Pause.)* I already told them you wanted to be a house, and now you are changing your mind? OK, what do you want me to tell them this time? *(Act like you are listening to the play dough.)* OK, play dough, I will tell them, but they may not be happy to change creations again. *(Turn to the group.)* Kids, I am sorry to say the play dough doesn't want to be a house now. It has changed its mind. It would like to be a bicycle.

The kids might be slow to accept this change, but gently encourage them to begin making a bicycle out of their play dough. Give them a minute or two and then act like the play dough is interrupting you one last time.

Say: Oh no, I believe the play dough is trying to get my attention again. *(Pick up the play dough and put it to your ear.)* Listen, play dough, my group is not happy with all these changes. *(Pause and pretend to listen.)* Seriously, you want me to tell them you have changed your mind again? *(Pause and pretend to listen to the play dough.)* OK, play dough, I will tell them, but not only are they looking at me like I'm crazy for listening to play dough, but they don't like all these changes! OK, I will tell them. *(Turn to the group.)* OK kids, the play dough decided it really didn't like being made into a bicycle, so it wants to be a cross. Go ahead and make your play dough into a cross.

Encourage kids to make a simple cross.

Ask:

- Was it easy or hard to make a creation with the play dough giving so many instructions? Why or why not?
- Who should be deciding what the play dough will be? You (the creator) or the play dough? Why?
- How is the play dough's trying to tell you what to do like our trying to tell God, the Creator, what to do?

Say: God was in the beginning before all things. He created all things, and since He is Creator, He alone rules. We often like to try to be in charge, but we are creations of a powerful Creator. ***When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. God is Creator, God rules, and He loves us.***

Note: *If adults are present, instruct kids and parents to turn to one another and discuss these questions.*

HOLDS ALL THINGS TOGETHER

Instructions: Give each child a paper clip and tell them to imagine their paper clip represents something in God’s creation. They get to pick what they want their paper clip to represent. After everyone has decided, let each child share what her paper clip represents (e.g. a cat, the moon, the ocean, people). Then invite each child to bring his paper clip and set it in a pile in front of you. Invite kids to open their Bibles to Colossians 1:16-17. Call on a volunteer to read the verses aloud.

Supplies:

- › Bibles (1 per child)
- › Paper clips (1 per child)
- › Large strong magnet
- › A cup, a sandwich bag, and a string

Ask: What does the last part of that passage say? He holds what? (*Pause for answers.*)

Say: That’s right, Jesus holds all things together. He created them, and He holds them all together. You have brought me your paper clips representing items in creation. I am going to use some objects to try to pick these items up and hold them all together.

One at a time, hold the cup, sandwich bag, and string over the paper clips to try to pick them up. Obviously, none of those items will work.

Say: *When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. God is Creator, God rules, and He loves us.* Because He created everything and is Ruler over it, He holds all things together. If we are honest, though, sometimes we think we might be as smart and powerful as God and we try to be in charge. But just like the items I just used, we can’t hold all things together.

Next, bring out the large magnet and hold it close to the paper clips so it picks them all up and holds them together.

Say: This magnet is like the one true God. He alone is Creator and holds all things together. He loves us so much and did not create us to keep all things together. **God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. God is Creator, God rules, and He loves us.** We can know He holds all His creation together.

I’VE SPIED

Instructions: Direct kids to “I’ve Spied” in their Activity Books (p. 8). Review with them what each block shares about the days of creation. Challenge kids to look at each block and list all the things they have ever “spied” that fits into each day. (For example: They can list animals they have seen in day 6. They can list flowers and plants they have seen on day 3.) Give kids time to list all these things, and challenge them to think about things they have “spied” in the day one and two blocks. After time is up, invite kids to share their top three things they have ever “spied” in God’s creation.

Supplies:

- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- › Bibles (1 per child)
- › Pencils (1 per child)

Say: It is so exciting to see all the things in God’s creation that we have seen with our eyes. Can you imagine all the other things we have never seen? I want to tell you one of my favorite things I have spied in God’s

creation. (*Look intently at the kids.*) It's you! Did you know God created you? You would be in box six for me because there is something very special about you.

Invite kids to open their Bibles to Genesis 1:27. Ask a child who volunteers to read that verse aloud. Then ask another volunteer to read the same verse again.

Ask: Did you hear what was so special about when God made people? (*God created them in the image of God, male and female.*) Yes, God created all things, but He made people special. He made them in His own image. That's a pretty great God, isn't it? It's so special that He would love us enough to make us in His image!

Point out that being made in God's image means to have some characteristics that are like God, or to be patterned after Him, such as the ability to think and reason, make choices, and be creative.

Say: Turn to your neighbor and say, "You are made in God's image." Now turn to your other neighbor and say the same thing. Now let's see if you can say our key point with me: **God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. God is Creator, God rules, and He loves us.** We can know He holds all His creation together.

DISCUSS TRUTH

Invite children to open their Bibles to Colossians 1:16-17. Remind them that this is their key verse for the week. Tell them that they can write the words *God Rules* in the margin of their Bible as a reminder that these verses prove that God alone rules. (*You may also encourage them to outline or highlight the passage in yellow.*)

Encourage one or two children to read this passage aloud. Then ask the children the following questions, but remind them to use these verses as their source of truth.

Ask:

- What do we learn in verse 16 that proves God rules? (*He made everything, He made things we see and things we don't see.*)
- What do we learn in verse 17 that proves God rules? (*He was first before anything. He holds all things together.*)
- How do we know that He alone is Creator? (*Verse 16: "everything was created by him."*)

Teaching Tip:

Consider teaching kids hand motions to remember the key point.

- › God created everything: make a large circle to represent the world
- › through Jesus and for Jesus: raise arms in an upward motion to point towards the heavens
- › God is Creator: place a pretend crown on your head
- › God rules: make a fist and move your arm in an upward motion towards the sky
- › and He loves us: make a heart shape with your hands

Supplies:

- › Item 2: Allergy Alert
- › 9 blue balloons
- › 9 green balloons

› Younger Kids Version:

Instruct younger kids to go as a team and collect all their balloons, then bring them back to their side to put them in order. Use painter's tape to order the balloons on the floor or wall.

› Older Kids Version:

Instruct older kids to send in one teammate at a time to get the next balloon in the order of the passage. If they bring back the wrong balloon, the player must take it back to the middle and come back with the right balloon before the team can move to the next balloon. Each child must be given a chance to gather a balloon. An adult will coach each team

Supplies:

- › Cotton balls (several for each child)
- › Construction paper leaf cutouts (1 per child)
- › A simple tree drawn on a large piece of craft paper
- › Pencils (1 per child)
- › Disco ball light or glow in the dark stars
- › Fish crackers (several per child)
- › Dot stickers (several per child)

KEY VERSE GAME

Prepare: Post the Allergy Alert listing latex usage. Before class, inflate the balloons and write the key verse phrases on each balloon.

- Everything was created by him,
- in heaven and on earth,
- the visible and the invisible,
- whether thrones or dominions
- or rulers or authorities—
- all things have been created through him and for him.
- He is before all things,
- and by him all things hold together.
- Colossians 1:16:17

Create two teams—the blue team and the green team. Invite one team to stand on one side of the room and the other team to stand on the other side of the room. Explain that you are going to release the balloons into the middle of the room. The goal of each team is to get their balloons to their side of the room in order before the other team.

APPLY TRUTH

PRAYER EXPERIENCE OPTION 1: CREATION PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Prepare: Post the Allergy Alert listing the snack.

Instructions: This is a guided prayer activity that will lead kids to praise God through each of the days of creation. Point out that this is prayer time, and although at times they will be moving or have their eyes open, they are still approaching a holy God and need to do so with respect.

Say: Today we are going to pray through the days of creation and praise the Creator and thank Him for all He has done.

Day 1—Turn off the lights or instruct children to close their eyes and sit in darkness.

Say: As we sit in the darkness, I want you to silently thank God for creating light.

Day 2—Turn the lights back on. Give kids a handful of cotton balls.

Say: On day two, God created the clouds and the ocean. I love to look at the clouds and try to see shapes of different animals or objects. Pretend your cotton balls are clouds, and use them to form the shape of something found in the ocean. I will give you three minutes. (*Allow kids time to create their shape.*) Now when I call your name, I want you to say, "God, I thank You for _____" and say the thing you created in your clouds.

Day 3—Lay the drawing of the tree on craft paper in the middle of the room. Give each child a leaf cutout and a pencil.

Say: For day three (land and plants), I want you to think of a plant you think is an incredible creation. Maybe it is a type of flower or tree. Write or draw that plant on your leaf. (*Allow a couple of minutes.*) Now we are going to praise God for being the Creator of these things only He could create. When I call your name, I want you to say “God, I praise you for being the Creator of _____,” and name the thing on your leaf. Then lay your leaf somewhere along this tree drawing.

Day 4—Turn off the lights in the room, turn on the disco ball, and tell the kids we are going to pretend these are stars. (You may use glow-in-the-dark stars.) You can place them on the ceiling or let kids hold them.

Say: On day four, God created the sun, moon, and stars. Only a powerful God could create all that. Don’t you agree? I want you to lie on your back and look at our pretend stars. We are going to take some time to thank God for who He is. When you think of something that God is, I just want you to say it out loud like, “God, I praise You for being powerful.” Now remember, in this prayer we are focusing on who God is—King, Savior, Creator—not what He has done. (*Allow time for kids to pray.*)

Day 5—Give each child several fish crackers.

Say: On day five, God made fish and flying creatures. As you eat each cracker, thank God for a type of fish or flying creature that He created.

Day 6—Give each child several dot stickers. Make sure you have some too, because you will want to make sure every child gets one.

Say: On day six, God made land animals and people. What was unique about the people God created? (*Allow answers.*) That’s right, people are created in His image. Each of you have a few dot stickers. When I say “go,” you will take a sticker and put it on someone’s hand and say to her, “God created you in His image, and He loves you very much.” Keep going until you run out of stickers. Make sure you pause for people to give you a sticker, and keep your eyes open for people who still need stickers.

Day 7—Instruct children to get in a comfortable resting position, either on the floor or at a table.

Say: God rested on the seventh day. I want you to close your eyes and pray and ask God to help you be thankful for all He has created. (*Lead the group in prayer.*)

PRAYER EXPERIENCE OPTION 2: MAD-LIB® PRAYER

Direct kids to the “Mad Lib®” in the Activity Book (p. 9). Remind them that talking to God is enjoyable activity, even better than a Mad Lib®. Instruct them to fill in all the blanks (or circle answers for younger kids) on their activity page. Allow each child to read her prayer aloud or in groups. As kids dismiss, give each child his Activity Book, “Family Scavenger Hunt” and “Family Guide” page to complete at home, and personal belongings.

Teaching Tips:

- › Consider creating a slide show with pictures to represent what God created each day.
- › Consider making a ziplock bag with the items to each child to use during the activity rather than passing out items to the group.

Supplies:

- › Item 13: “Family Guide” page for this session (1 per child)
- › Item 3: “Family Scavenger Hunt”
- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- › Pencils (1 for each child)



WE SINNED.

When we grasp the gospel, we discover that we are sinners, and our sin separates us from God.

KEY POINTS. When we grasp the gospel, we discover that...

- Sin is anything we think, say, or do that displeases God.
- We are sinners.
- Our sin separates us from God.
- God cannot ignore and must punish our sin.

KEY VERSE

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23 (CSB)

PREPARE TO TEACH

Which would you rather be told first: good news or bad news? We all may have our own opinion about which is best to hear first, but as we grasp the gospel, it is imperative for us to hear the bad news about our sin condition first so that we can fully embrace and appreciate the gift of salvation in Jesus.

As we share this bad news with kids and families, remember that we all need to understand that we are lost before we truly grasp our deep need to be found.

PONDER

Pause and think back over your last week. What things did you think, say, or do that didn't please God?

Use the following prayer prompt to pray and prepare your heart to teach.

PRAY

Praise: Praise God for being holy and set apart.

Confession: Spend time naming the sins from the past week that came to mind. Agree with God they are sin.

Thanksgiving: Thank God for His love that is greater than all our sin.

Supplication: Pray for parents and kids to hear this difficult truth with hope of a God who doesn't leave them in their sin, but rescues them.

DISCOVER TRUTH

Supplies:

- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- › Pens (1 per child)

THINK, SAY, OR DO

Instructions: Invite kids to open their Activity Books to the “Think, Say, or Do” activity (p 18). Explain that there are three sections for sin on the page: things we think, things we say, and things we do that displease God. Encourage kids to think of examples for each category, then write them in the box that matches that sin. Younger children will be given a list and instructed to draw a line from the sin to the box they believe best describes what kind of sin it is. For example, gossiping would connect to the “Say” box, and a bad attitude would connect to either the “Think” or “Do” box.

Allow each child to put at least one sin example of each in the three categories.

Ask:

- Who can recite (without looking) our definition for sin? (*Allow kids a chance to give the definition for sin.*)
- Was it easy or hard for you to think about different types of sin? Why or why not?

Sin: anything we think, say, or do that displeases God

Say: Today we are going to learn that we are all sinners. We all think, say, and do things that displease God. ***When we grasp the gospel, we discover that we are sinners, and our sin separates us from God.*** Let’s take a look now at how and when sin entered the world

SEE TRUTH

Supplies:

- › Bibles (1 per child)

Invite children to open their Bibles to Genesis 3.

Say: Each week we will talk about truths from God’s Word. It is important for you to see the truth for yourself in the Bible. Last time we learned in Genesis 1 that God is Creator and in charge of all things. Today, we will be just a couple chapters over in Genesis 3.

Open your Bible to Genesis 3 and tell the following story.

SIN ENTERED THE WORLD GENESIS 3:1-24

God gave the first two people—Adam and Eve—a beautiful garden to live in. The garden was full of food they could eat. God also gave them one command. He told Adam that he could eat from any tree in the garden except for one. It was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said that if Adam did eat from the tree, he would die.

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals. One day, the serpent went to Eve. He asked, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden?’”

Eve answered, “We can eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. But God told us not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. He said that if we eat the fruit or touch it, we will die.”

“No! You will not die,” the serpent said. The serpent told Eve that rather than dying, she and Adam would be like God! They would know good and evil. Eve looked at the fruit God had said not to eat. It did look delicious, and the serpent said it would give them wisdom. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Eve also gave some of the fruit to Adam, who was with her, and he ate it.

Then their eyes were opened, and they knew they were naked. Adam and Eve sewed together fig leaves and made clothes for themselves.

That evening, Adam and Eve heard God walking in the garden. They hid among the trees. God called out to Adam, “Where are you?”

Adam said, “I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.” God asked Adam, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

Adam blamed Eve. “She gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it,” he said.

Eve blamed the serpent. “He tricked me,” she said.

God explained because of the serpent’s trick and Adam and Eve’s disobedience, Eve would have pain when she had children, and Adam would struggle to work the ground for food. God said that the snake would crawl on its belly and be an enemy to the woman. God promised that one of Eve’s descendants would destroy the serpent.

Everything changed after Adam and Eve sinned. Sin separated Adam and Eve from God. God made them clothes out of animal skins and then sent them out of the garden. God put an angel at the entrance of the garden. The angel had a sword of fire to guard the way to the tree of life.

Supplies:

- › Activity Books
- › Pencils (1 per child)

CIRCLE/SQUARE REVIEW

Transition kids into small groups, forming an older and younger group. If you have a large group of either older or younger kids, form groups of about five or six kids for each age group. Distribute Activity Books and pencils.

Remind the group that each week they will have pages in the Activity Books to complete. Call attention to the puzzles and fun activities in this week's pages that can help them learn more about God and their relationship with Him. Review pages from session 1 if time allows.

Instructions: Direct kids to "Square/Circle Review" in the Activity Book (p. 18). Explain that each statement on the page has a square or circle shape. If they believe the statement is true, they will fill the circle shape. If they believe the statement is false, they will fill in the square shape. Older children will be challenged to give additional information. Kids can work independently or as a group.

Say: This may be the first time you have heard this story, or you may have heard it many times. God's true Word shows us that Adam and Eve sinned and their sin affects us today. Let's turn to our week's key verse and see what God's Word says about us.

Supplies:

- › Item 4: "Key Verse Planes"
- › Item 5: "Target"
- › Paper (1 piece per child)
- › Pens (1 per child)
- › Bibles (1 per child)

Teaching Tip:

- › If you have a small group, each plane may have a phrase from the key verse. If you have a large group, you can put one word from the key verse on each plane. You can also form teams if you have more kids than words in the key verse and use different color paper for each team.

EXPERIENCE TRUTH

KEY VERSE PLANES

Instructions: Invite kids to open their Bibles to this week's key verse, Romans 3:23. Ask a volunteer to read the verse aloud. If parents are attending, ask them to take turns reading the verse aloud for repetition. Give each participant a sheet of paper and assign each kid a word or phrase from Romans 3:23. Lead kids to write their word or phrase on the piece of paper. Then instruct kids to make a paper airplane. (See Item 4 for instructions on how to make a paper airplane.)

After each plane has part of the key verse on it, hang the target somewhere in the classroom where it will be impossible for the kids to hit the center of the target. You can even have participants stand way back from the target.

Say: Using the key verse, we are going to experience the truth of this Scripture verse. Everyone look at the target we have on the wall. Let's think of the center of the target as God's perfect standard. One by one, you are going to get a chance to throw your paper airplane and see if you can hit God's perfect standard.

Allow everyone a turn. Be sure to leave the airplanes where they land. After everyone has had a turn, discuss the following questions.

Ask:

- Did anyone hit the mark perfectly? No, everyone fell short. No one reached God's perfect standard. ***When we grasp the gospel, we discover that we are sinners, and our sin separates us from God.***
- What made this activity difficult? God is perfect and holy, but we are not. We cannot reach His perfect standard.
- Can anyone recite the verse from memory? *(If kids are having trouble, help them say the Scripture verse one more time aloud. Read the verse with a word left out for them to fill in. The read again with a different word left out, and so on until they learn all the words.)*

Teaching Tip:

› If adults are attending class with their children, invite them to do the same as the kids, or form an adult team.

Say: This activity is not over. Now you must work as a team to take your airplanes that fell short, and put them in order of the words in the key verse. *(Time each team several times, challenging them to beat their time with each subsequent try.)*

After each team completes their verse several times, guide the class to say the key verse together.

Say: In this activity, not one of you hit the mark. Each of your planes did not measure up to the perfect standard every time. In a similar way, we are all sinful. We miss the mark and do not measure up to God's glorious standard. Our key verse explains to us that we are all sinners, and our sin separates us from God's perfect standard. ***When we grasp the gospel, we discover that we are sinners, and our sin separates us from God.***

DISCUSS TRUTH

PUNISH OR NOT?

Instructions: Direct kids to "Punish or Not?" in their Activity Books (p. 19). Explain that they are provided space on the page where they are to draw their favorite possession. It can be their favorite game, toy, electronic, and so forth. Allow kids time to draw their favorite possession. If time permits, give them each a brief moment to show their picture and explain why that possession is their favorite.

After each child has a chance to share, ask children to share how they might feel if another person destroyed their picture by scribbling through it with her pen or marker. Guide children to answer the questions below their picture by circling the face that best represents their answer.

Supplies:

- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- › Pens (1 per child)
- › Bibles (1 per child)

Note: *You can instruct children to work independently on their answers, or you can work through the activity as a group.*

Say: It seems that most of you were all in favor for some kind of punishment for someone if this happened in real life. Why do you want the person punished? *(Allow kids to answer.)* That's right, because doing something wrong deserves to be punished. Let's open God's Word to Romans 6:23. After you find the verse, fill in the blanks of at the bottom of your activity page to complete the key verse. *(Allow kids time to complete this task.)*

Ask:

- Who did we learn is a sinner today? *(For ALL have sinned.)*
- What did this verse say is the punishment for sin? *(death)*
- Does God ignore us and leave us in our sin? *(No, God gave us the gift of eternal life through Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, God rescues us from the punishment of sin and makes a way for us to have a right relationship with Him forever.)*

APPLY TRUTH

Supplies:

- › Item 2: Allergy Alert
- › A bag of burnt popcorn sealed in a plastic bag
- › A bag of regular popcorn for kids to enjoy after the activity.
- › Paper plates (one per child)
- › Napkins (one per child)

To Do:

- › Post the Allergy Alert listing the snack.

Note: *While you are talking as if you want them to try the popcorn, it should be so burnt no child would want to eat it. Try to stop the curious child before he puts it in his mouth.*

SIN IS STINKY

Instructions: Before the activity instruct a leader take a bag of microwave popcorn and burn it in the microwave. Try to seal it as soon as it is taken out to keep the smell as intense as possible.

Note: *When burning popcorn in the microwave, make sure to keep an eye on the microwave for fire safety. It usually takes several minutes over the suggested time to get the popcorn thoroughly burnt.*

Say: I brought a snack today. Is anyone really hungry for a snack? *(Pick two children you know will be able to handle this activity well.)* OK, these two friends come sit in front of the class with your paper plate and napkin while I go get your snack.

Go pull out the popcorn and act like everything is normal. Slowly walk by all the children as you open up the bag so the smell of burnt popcorn fills the class. Walk up to your two volunteers and pour the most burnt pieces onto their plate. When they pause, ask them what is wrong with the popcorn. If they say it is burnt, suggest that they just pretend it isn't burnt and they eat a big bite anyway. When they still refuse, suggest they ignore the burnt popcorn and eat it to taste the delicious buttered popcorn.

Ask:

- What was wrong with the popcorn I brought today? (*It was burnt.*)
- Did pretending it wasn't burnt make you want to eat it? Why or why not? (*You can't just pretend that popcorn isn't burnt.*)
- Could we ignore the smell of the burnt popcorn? (*No, burnt popcorn smell is strong and very hard to ignore.*)

Say: Suggesting you pretend the popcorn isn't burnt is pretty crazy. You can't ignore burnt popcorn. Just like we could not ignore the burnt popcorn, God cannot ignore sin. He is holy, perfect, and just. ***When we grasp the gospel, we discover that we are sinners, and our sin separates us from God.*** God is just and He must deal with our sin, but remember Romans 6:23. God tells us He doesn't leave us in our sin. God gave us the gift of Jesus.

Distribute regular popcorn for kids to enjoy as they transition to the next activity.

ROMANS 6:23 PRAYER CARDS

Instructions: Distribute a Romans 6:23 prayer card to each child. Guide kids to color their cards and as they are coloring, challenge them to silently pray to God. Give them some examples of things they could pray:

- Agree with God they are a sinner.
- Confess a specific sin to God.
- Thank God for the gift of Jesus.
- Thank God for the gift of eternal life.

CLOSE IN PRAYER.

Lead the group in prayer. Pray the following prayer or use your own words to close the session.

Dear God,

You are holy and perfect and we are sinners. Our sin separates us from You and we know You must punish sin. Thank You, God, for not leaving us in our sin, but giving us the gift of Jesus to save us from sin. Help us understand our need for a Savior.

In Jesus name, amen.

As kids are dismissed, give each child her Activity Book, "Family Guide" page for this session to complete at home, and personal belongings.

Teaching Tip:

› If food allergies are an issue, consider adjusting this activity to ask kids if they have ever had a really itchy bug bite and they were told to ignore it and not scratch? Then make the connection that we can't ignore an annoying, irritating bug bite—even more so, God cannot ignore sin.

Supplies:

- › Item 13: "Family Guide" pages for this session (1 per child)
- › Item 6: "Romans 6:23 Cards" (1 per child)
- › Crayons (several per child)



GOD PROVIDED.

When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God provided the solution to our sin problem through faith in Christ alone.

KEY POINTS. When we grasp the gospel, we discover that...

- Sin created a problem we cannot solve on our own.
- God provided the solution to our sin problem.
- Through faith in Jesus Christ alone, we can be rescued from our sin.

KEY VERSE

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”
John 3:16 (CSB)

PREPARE TO TEACH

The Savior met with a desperate sinner beside a well. That is a glimpse of the true story we will study today, but do you ever see yourself at the well? Maybe your sins are different, but do you ever hear the voice of the woman at the well and think, *That is me?*

As you prepare to teach, draw deep from the truth of God's Word and quench your thirst as you worship God for who He is—Your Rescuer and Savior.

PONDER

Does your life show that you are living in victory because your Lord and Savior is alive? Where do you need a fresh encounter with the living Savior?

Use the following prayer prompt to pray and prepare your heart to teach.

PRAY

Praise: Praise God for being a living Savior.

Confession: Express to God the areas you are walking in defeat.

Thanksgiving: Thank God for His mercy as you recount the times He has changed your life.

Supplication: Pray as you prepare to help your class understand that a living Savior changes everything. Ask God to open kids' eyes to Him as the one true God.

DISCOVER TRUTH

JOHN 3:16 ILLUSTRATED

Supplies:

- › Activity Books
(1 per child)
- › Pencils
(several per child)

Transition kids into small groups, forming an older and younger group. If you have a large group of either older or younger kids, form groups of about five or six kids for each age group. Distribute Activity Books and pencils.

Remind the group that each week they will have pages in the Activity Books to complete. Call attention to the puzzles and fun activities in this week's pages that can help them learn more about God and their relationship with Him. Review pages from session 2 if time allows.

Instructions: Direct kids to "John 3:16 Illustrated" in the Activity Book (p. 28). Explain that although many of them are familiar with this verse, you want them to think through this Bible verse in the form of images. Younger children will illustrate the entire verse, while older children will illustrate comic boxes. After kids finish, allow them to share their illustrations of this verse.

Say: Today we are going to learn that *when we grasp the gospel, we discover that God provided the solution to our sin problem through faith in Christ alone.* Using John 3:16 as your guide, share whom God provided.

SEE TRUTH

Supplies:

- › Bibles (1 per child)

Invite children to open their Bibles to John 4:1-26.

Say: *When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God provided the solution to our sin problem through faith in Christ alone.* God provided Jesus as the solution. Through today's true story, we are going to see what is so different about Jesus and why He is the only way to fix our sin problem.

Open your Bible to John 4 and tell the following story.

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL JOHN 4:1-42

Jesus had been making disciples in Judea, and His disciples baptized people. Now Jesus had more followers than John the Baptist. Jesus began traveling back to Galilee. He traveled through Samaria and stopped in a town beside the well. Jesus' disciples went into town to buy food.

While Jesus was at the well, a Samaritan woman came to get water from the well.

"Give Me a drink," Jesus said to the woman.

The woman was surprised. "You're a Jew," she said. "Why are You talking to me? I'm a Samaritan."

Jesus said, "I asked you for a drink. You don't know who I am. If you did, you would have asked Me for a drink, and I would give you living water."

The woman was confused. "Sir," she said, "This well is deep, and You don't have a bucket. Where do You get this 'living water'?"

Jesus said, "Anyone who drinks this well water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give will never, ever get thirsty again! In fact, the water I give will become a well inside you, and you will have eternal life." Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit, but the woman did not understand.

"Sir," she said, "give me this water. If I'm not thirsty, I won't have to keep coming to this well to get water."

"Go get your husband," Jesus said. "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus knew she was telling the truth. He said, "You don't have a husband now, but you've had five husbands."

Jesus was right. "I see You are a prophet," the woman said. Maybe this prophet could explain something to her. She said, "The Samaritans worship here on a mountain, but the Jews say we need to worship at the temple in Jerusalem."

Jesus said, "Soon you will not need to be in either of those places to worship God in spirit and in truth."

The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming. When He comes, He will explain everything to us." Then Jesus said, "He is talking to you now. I am the Messiah." The woman left and told the people in her town, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could this be the Messiah?"

Many Samaritans believed in Jesus because of what the woman said. They asked Jesus to stay with them, and He stayed for two days. Many more believed because of what Jesus said. They told the woman, "We no longer believe because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this really is the Savior of the world."

Say: God provided the solution—Jesus. Jesus was unlike any other. He offered living water so we would never thirst again, but what does that mean?

LIVING WATER

Instructions: Direct kids to “Living Water” in the Activity Book (p. 28). Explain there are two drawings of water bottles provided on this page. One is labeled *World’s Water*, the other is labeled, *Living Water*.

Say: Let’s look at John 4:13-14 again. (Read it aloud as kids follow along in their Bibles.)

Ask:

- What was true about the water the woman at the well was offering? (*She would be thirsty again after drinking it.*)
- What was different about the living water Jesus was offering her? (*She would never thirst again and receive the Holy Spirit.*)

Say: Oftentimes when people learn they are sinners, there are things they try to do to fix their sin problem, but these things cannot ultimately solve our problem. One example is that we try to choose right actions, but they don’t last. We can’t be perfect all the time. Write *right actions* on your “World’s Water bottle” in the Activity Book. What are some other things we do to try and fix our sin problem, that just don’t last? (If kids don’t come up with any ideas on their own, discuss things such as coming to church. While coming to church is good, just coming to church doesn’t fix our sin problem. With each thing they list that won’t last, instruct them to write it on their “earthly water bottle” picture.)

Say: Jesus is God, and He knows everything. Last time we met, we learned that we are sinners. That was bad news, but here is a real-life story about how God treats sinners. This woman had done some bad things, but Jesus took time to meet with her. He offered her living water (the Holy Spirit) so she could have forgiveness and eternal life. Look back at verse 14 and write words that describe living water on the water bottle picture in the Activity Book.

When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God provided the solution to our sin problem through faith in Christ alone. God provided Jesus and from this true story we can trust that Jesus loves us no matter what we have done. God provided the only real solution that would last and solve our sin problem.

Supplies:

- › Activity Books
(1 per child)
- › Pens (1 per child)

EXPERIENCE TRUTH

Invite kids to turn to the key verse, John 3:16. Ask for a child to read this verse aloud for the group.

Say: This verse tells us that God provided Jesus to rescue us from our sin problem because He loves us. In this way, God showed us grace. *Grace* is a word we hear often when we talk about the Bible, so let's discover together what grace really means!

WHAT IS GRACE?

Instructions: Display the prize you brought for kids today. Explain that they can earn the prize by completing a task you give them. Invite kids to try to complete a difficult task. Make sure it is an impossible task, such as jumping 20 feet or running as fast as a cheetah.

When the volunteers are unable to complete the tasks, give prizes despite the outcome.

Ask:

- Did the volunteers deserve their rewards? Why or why not? (*They didn't successfully complete the task.*)
- How is this like what God does for us when we fail? (*Even though we are sinners, God provided Jesus for us. We fail at obeying God perfectly, but Jesus lived the perfect life we failed to live and died the death we deserve.*)

Say: In that activity, our volunteers did not successfully complete their tasks but they still received the prizes. They received a gift they didn't deserve. That is grace. ***When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God provided the solution to our sin problem through faith in Christ alone.***

Direct kids to "What Is Grace?" in the Activity Book (p. 29). Ask them to fill in the definition. Younger kids have a word bank, but older kids must try to decode the definition.

After kids have worked on their definition of *grace*, explain that grace is a gift we do not deserve.

Instruct kids to answer the following questions on their own, with their parent in the group, or as a large group. Younger kids can circle their answers, while older kids write the answer.

Supplies:

- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- › Pens (1 per child)
- › Small prizes for each volunteer who attempts the tasks.
- › A difficult task not able to be completed by a child. (For example: jump 20 feet in the air without any assistance, run as fast as a cheetah, sneeze with your eyes open, bend your pinky without moving your ring finger, lick your own elbow.)

- Why do we need grace from God?
- How do you feel about the grace God showed you?
- Do you show grace to others?

DISCUSS TRUTH

Invite children to open their Bibles open to Ephesians 2:8-9.

Say: In the last activity we learned that God provided Jesus to rescue us from our sin problem because He loves us. God showed us grace, providing something we do not deserve. That is the first part of this verse. Let's read all of verse 8 together now.

Hold up the Ephesians 2:8-9 poster so kids can all read from the same translation.

"For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift."

Supplies:

- › Item 7: "Ephesians 2:8-9 Poster"

Say: We learned what grace is. Grace is receiving what we don't deserve. God provided Jesus—the solution to our sin problem so that we can be rescued from our sin. This verse also tells us that we are saved by grace through faith. What do you think *faith* means?

Instructions: Challenge kids to hold their place in Ephesians and turn to Hebrews 11:1. Invite a volunteer to read Hebrews 11:1 aloud.

Say: Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen. Basically faith is believing in the proof of something you cannot see. We are going to participate in an activity that will help us discover what it is like to have confidence in proof we do not see.

FOLLOW THE LEADER ACTIVITY

Instructions: Explain to children that faith isn't merely believing in something, it is trusting as well. It is not enough to believe all about God, you need to trust Him with your life. Call on a child who volunteers. Invite him to stand in front of you as you blindfold him. Invite another child (or parent) to lead the blindfolded child around the room giving only voice commands. Be sure the leader warns him if he is about to collide with an object. Guide the leader to lead him safely around then back to the front where you have positioned a chair. Do not touch the volunteer and do not tell him you have put a chair in place but instruct him to trust you and to sit down. (*You might gently guide the chair underneath him so he sits safely.*) Point out that faith is not being able to see and yet trusting in God who can.

Supplies:

- > Blindfold
- > Chair

Note: *Some children will not want to take part in this activity. Never force children to do anything in which they feel uncomfortable. They can participate while watching their friends.*

Ask:

- What was easy or challenging about that activity?
- Can it be difficult to believe and trust in something you can't see?

Say: Our key verse in John 3:16 tells us that God provided Jesus for us, even though we are sinful, through faith which is believing and trusting. The grace we receive only comes through faith in Jesus.

APPLY TRUTH

Building off what you have learned from the first part of Ephesians 2:-8-9, call on a volunteer to now read the entire passage.

Ask:

- What do these verses say you cannot do?
- Why can you not save yourself?
- What does it mean to boast?
- Without using any names, what is an example about boasting you have heard?

Supplies:

- › Item 8: “John 3:16 Cards”
- › Item 13: “Family Guide” pages for this session (1 per child)

Say: Apart from Jesus, we are weak and helpless. We are dead in our sin. God gave us a great gift by sending His Son. When we trust in Jesus by faith, He forgives our sins and gives us eternal life. Boys and girls, here is a big truth for today. You cannot save yourselves—this verse says it. The truth is you are just not that powerful.

Instructions: Print Item 8: “John 3:16 Cards” and give each child a set of cards to take home.

Say: Today we learned that *when we grasp the gospel, we discover that God provided the solution to our sin problem through faith in Christ alone*. These cards can help you remember the love God has for you in providing Jesus as you memorize the key verse this week.

Encourage kids to pair with a friend, mix up the cards, and put them in order. Let each child take at least one turn ordering the cards.

CLOSE IN PRAYER.

Lead the group in prayer. Pray the following prayer or use your own words to close the session.

Great big God, You are so good to us. We are sinners, yet You love us and provided Jesus for us—the solution to our sin problem. Lord, help us to see there is nothing we can do to save ourselves. You alone provided Jesus to rescue us from our sin problem. Help us to understand that not just in our heads, but in our hearts!

In Jesus' name, amen.

As kids are dismissed, give each child his Activity Book, "John 3:16 Cards," "Family Guide" page for this session to complete at home, and personal belongings.



JESUS GIVES.

When we grasp the gospel, we discover that Jesus gave up His perfect life and died on the cross to pay the price for our sin.

KEY POINTS. When we grasp the gospel, we discover that...

- Jesus lived a perfect life.
- Jesus willingly gave His life for us by dying on the cross for our sin.
- Mercy is when we don't get what we deserve.
- Jesus didn't stay dead. He defeated death and rose again.

KEY VERSE

"God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

PREPARE TO TEACH

Have the truths of the gospel become a tad too familiar? Do you still marvel at the grace freely given by Jesus? Do you often consider the mercy God shows you? Are you still filled with awe and wonder when you think that not only did a perfect Jesus take our punishment of death on the cross, He defeated death? Jesus is alive!

PONDER

Last week we were reminded that grace is a gift we do not deserve. Where do you see the incomparable grace of God in your life right now? As you dwell in that grace for a moment, what thoughts come to your mind? Consider the just punishment you do deserve for a moment and praise God for His mercy in not giving you what you do deserve.

Use the following prayer prompt to pray and prepare your heart to teach.

PRAYER

Praise: Praise God for being a God of grace and mercy.

Confession: Come to Jesus and confess your sin to a Savior who already knows everything you have done.

Thanksgiving: Spend time thanking Jesus for giving us salvation and for providing eternal life for everyone who trusts in Him.

Supplication: Pray for your group, that they would understand that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Ask God to give the kids you lead understanding of the gospel and a desire to trust in Jesus and know Him more.

DISCOVER TRUTH

Supplies:

- › Several newspapers (Large weekend papers work best, and the black and white pages are better than the slick full color sheets. Each child will need 1 or 2 sheets.)
- › Clean, white towel
- › Wet wipes

THE DIRTY TRUTH

Instructions: Give each child a sheet or two of newspaper. Encourage them to push up their sleeves if they have on long sleeves. On the count of three, instruct them to rub the paper between their hands as fast as possible to get their hands as dirty as they can. (Allow time.) Once their hands are dirty, direct them to throw away the newspaper and sit with their palms up on their laps.

Ask:

- What do you think our filthy hands represents? (*Allow kids to guess but tell them that in this activity their dirty hands will represent sin.*)
- Whose hands got the dirtiest from the newspaper? (*Allow kids to compare.*)

Say: We often like to compare our sin to others, but we know the Bible teaches that we are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God. We should compare ourselves to God's standards, not to anyone else.

Walk around with the white towel and allow kids to compare their hands to the clean, white towel. Talk about the difference in their hands and the towel.

Ask:

- If our dirty hands represent our sin, what or who do we think the towel represents? (*Share with the kids that the clean towel represents the holiness and perfection of Jesus.*)

Invite kids up one by one to wash their hands or clean their hands using wet wipes.

When all the children have washed their hands, hold up the towel or wet wipe.

Say: We have learned that the payment for sin is death. Jesus came to earth, took our sin upon Himself, and gave His life for us. ***When we grasp the gospel, we discover that Jesus gave up His perfect life and died on the cross to pay the price for our sins.***

SEE TRUTH

Open your Bible to Matthew 26 or John 18 and tell the following story.

JESUS' CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION MATTHEW 26:36–28:10; JOHN 18:1–20:18

Jesus came with His disciples to the garden of Gethsemane (geth-SEM-uh-nih). He prayed, "Father! If it is possible, take this suffering away from Me. But only if it is part of Your plan." While Jesus prayed, the disciples fell asleep. Jesus said, "Get up. It is almost time."

Suddenly Judas arrived with a large crowd. Judas kissed Jesus so the crowd would know who Jesus was. The crowd grabbed Jesus and arrested Him. Peter tried to stop the men, but Jesus told Peter to stop.

Jesus' followers ran away, but Peter stayed nearby. Three times, Peter was asked if he was a follower of Jesus. "No! I'm not!" Peter said.

Jesus was led to the high priest. The religious leaders tried to find a reason to kill Jesus, but they could not. The high priest asked, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?"

Jesus replied, "Yes, that's right."

The high priest said, "Aha! He has spoken against God. He deserves to die!" The religious leaders did not want to believe Jesus was God's Son.

They led Jesus to Pilate, the governor. "Are you the King of the Jews?" Pilate asked.

"Yes, that's right," Jesus replied.

"What should I do with Jesus?" Pilate asked the crowd.

"Crucify Him!" they answered. Pilate did not think Jesus had done anything wrong, but he handed Jesus over.

The soldiers put a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns on Jesus. Then they mocked Him, "Here is the King of the Jews!" They beat Jesus and led Him away to be killed.

*The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. They put a sign above His head that said **THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS**. Two criminals were crucified next to Him.*

Darkness covered the land. Then Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" Jesus shouted again and then He died. Suddenly, the curtain in the temple sanctuary split in two, from top to bottom, and there was an earthquake. One of the men guarding Jesus' body said, "This man really was God's Son!"

Jesus was buried in a tomb. A stone was sealed in front of the tomb so that no one could steal Jesus' body.

On the third day, Mary Magdalene (MAG-duh-leen) and the other Mary went to the tomb. Suddenly there was an earthquake. An angel of the Lord rolled back the stone.

The angel spoke to the women, "Don't be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus, but He is not here. He has been resurrected, just like He said He would. In fact, He is going ahead of you into Galilee."

The women hurried to tell the disciples the good news. Just then Jesus met them. "Good morning!" He said. The women worshiped Him. "Don't be afraid," Jesus told them. "Go tell My disciples to meet Me in Galilee. They will see Me there."

Ask:

- What happened to Jesus in this true story?
- Did Jesus deserve what happened to Him? Why or why not?

Say: Jesus willingly took our place on the cross. He took our punishment for sin—death. Because of what Jesus did for us, we don't have to get what we deserve. The last time we met, we discovered that grace is a gift we don't deserve. Today we will learn that mercy is when we *don't* get what we *do* deserve. Because of Jesus, God showed us mercy by not giving us the punishment for sin we deserve. Let's take a closer look at that in this next activity.

EXPERIENCE TRUTH

BACKPACK MERCY

Prepare: Print the signs before the session.

Instructions: Call on an adult volunteer. Place the backpack on the volunteer's back and ask her to hold the *sin* sign. Explain that because we don't see all sin, sometimes we can believe that sin is not a big deal. Allow kids to name sins we may not see. With each sin named, place a book in the backpack that the volunteer is wearing. After every three or four books, ask the volunteer to walk around the room and express how she is feeling. Put just enough books to really weigh down the volunteer, being careful not to hurt the volunteer.

Explain that sin weighs us down. Sin is a burden we can choose to carry ourselves, but if we do (*instruct the volunteer to turn the sign around*), the payment for sin is *death*.

Hold the *Jesus* sign. Ask the volunteer if he would like to trade his sin (heavy backpack) with Jesus. Take the backpack off the volunteer and put

Supplies:

- › Item 9: "Backpack Mercy" signs
- › Backpack
- › Several heavy books (the Bibles used in class will work)
- › Activity Books (1 per child)

it on “Jesus” (yourself). Instruct the volunteer to give “Jesus” the *sin/death* sign. When you, “Jesus,” put on the backpack, turn your sign around and give the volunteer the *life* sign.

Say: Jesus gave His perfect life for you and me. He took our sin and the punishment we deserve so we wouldn’t have to. *When we grasp the gospel, we discover that Jesus gave up His perfect life and died on the cross to pay the price for our sin.*

Direct kids to turn to “Grace or Mercy?” in the Activity Book (p. 38). You can work through these statements as a class or instruct kids to work on them individually. Younger children will circle *grace* or *mercy*. Older kids will write *grace* or *mercy*.

DISCUSS TRUTH

TO THE RESCUE

Transition kids into small groups, forming an older and younger group. If you have a large group of either older or younger kids, form groups of about five or six kids per age group. Distribute Activity Books and pencils.

Remind the group that each week they will have pages in the Activity Books to complete. Call attention to the puzzles and fun activities in this week’s pages that can help them learn more about God and their relationship with Him. Review pages from session 3 if time allows.

Instructions: Direct kids to “To the Rescue” in the Activity Book (p. 38). Guide them to read each statement and select who they would want to come to the rescue in each situation. Younger children can draw a line from the rescuer to the statement. Older children can write who they would want to come to the rescue.

Supplies:

- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- › Pens or pencils

Supplies:

- › Fresh fruit
- › Plastic fruit
- › Dead or bare branch
- › Painter's tape

INSIDE OUT

Say: Today, we are learning that Jesus gives. Jesus willingly gave His life for us by dying on the cross for our sin. When people trust in Jesus and become Christians, Jesus changes them from the inside out.

Show the dead branch.

Say: This is what we are like before we are changed by Jesus. The Bible tells us that we are dead in our sin, similar to this dead branch. We can't do anything on our own to be made alive again.

Read Romans 5:8.

Say: But Jesus came so that we can have life. He took the punishment for sin so that when we trust in Him we can be changed and have new life in Him.

Say: When we trust in Jesus and follow Him, He gives us the Holy Spirit to change us to be more like Him. The Bible tells us that people will know we are disciples or followers of Jesus by our love for one another. Love is part of the fruit or evidence of the Holy Spirit working inside you. The fruit of the Spirit is the result of knowing Jesus as Savior. This fruit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control.

Say: When we regularly study our Bibles, pray, worship God, and meet together with other Christians, we cultivate "fruit that is fresh."

Display fresh fruit.

Ask: What about people who try to be religious and earn their way to God by doing the right things, like the Pharisees thought they were doing in today's passage?

Show the fake fruit.

Say: People who try to earn their way to God might look like fruit on the outside, but on the inside, nothing is really alive and changed.

Tape fake fruit to the dead branch.

Say: Some people even try to display their good works. Like this fake fruit, it is not enough. Jesus is the only One who can truly change people from the inside out.

Ask:

- How does Jesus change people?
- What is the fruit of the Spirit?

Say: God changes us from the inside out when we receive Jesus as Savior, but He also grows us gradually over time to be more and more like Jesus. It is important to read our Bibles, pray, and gather with other Christians to learn about God. If we do not, it is like trying to grow fruit without being attached to the tree! We need to remain with Jesus to bear fruit. This glorifies God.

APPLY TRUTH

ALIVE OR NOT

Instructions: Invite kids to “Dead or Alive?” in the Activity Book (p. 39). As they look at the photos of some heroes, instruct them to write *dead or alive* underneath each photo. After kids complete the activity, lead in a discussion of what they discovered.

Ask:

- Which one was different than all the others in this activity? (*Jesus, He is the only one alive.*)
- Do we have heroes that are still living today? (*Of course we do.*) Who is someone alive today whom you would consider a hero? (*Allow kids to share.*)

Say: Our world has seen many amazing heroes, but all of them will die one day, except for Jesus. He will never die again. ***Jesus gave up His perfect life and died on the cross to pay the price for our sin.*** And not only did Jesus live an amazing life and die for our sin, He is alive today! That’s what separates Christianity from all other religions; our Savior is alive. Let’s go to Him in prayer now.

CLOSE IN PRAYER.

Lead the group in prayer. Pray the following prayer or use your own words to close the session.

Dear Jesus, You are truly amazing. We thank You for freely giving up Your perfect life so that we can be free from sin. Your dying on the cross is the most sacrificial gift of love, and we pause and thank You for Your sacrifice. Help us to not forget how much You love us and how You long to have a relationship with us.

In Your name we pray, amen.

As kids are dismissed, give each child her Activity Book, “Family Guide” page for this session to complete at home, and personal belongings.

Supplies:

- › Item 13: “Family Guide” pages for this session (1 per child)
- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- › Pens or pencils



WE RESPOND.

When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God's gift of Jesus is the only way to be saved. To receive this gift, we must believe in our hearts that Jesus saves us by the work He has already done on the cross.

KEY POINTS. When we grasp the gospel, we discover that...

- There is only one way to be saved—Jesus.
- Jesus is the greatest gift we have ever been given, but we must respond to receive this gift.
- When we trust in Jesus' finished work on the cross for our salvation, God welcomes us into His family.

KEY VERSE

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
Romans 10:9 (CSB)

PREPARE TO TEACH

“If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead we will be saved” (Romans 10:9). That is good news. Through this great gift, we are welcomed into God’s family—an eternal family. A family that looks forward to the day where God will wipe away every tear from our eyes and sin will be no more.

PONDER

When was the last time you just paused and pictured the day you responded to God’s gift of salvation through Jesus? What was going on that day? Who was there? How did you feel? When was the last time you shared your story with someone?

Use the following prayer prompt to pray and prepare your heart to teach.

PRAY

Praise: Praise God for being eternal.

Confession: Agree with God about your sin.

Thanksgiving: Thank God for the best gift ever—Jesus.

Supplication: Ask God to meet each kid you teach this week. As they open their Bibles, may His Word that is alive and active reach into their hearts and show them their need for a Savior.

DISCOVER TRUTH

Supplies:

- › Activity Books
(1 per child)
- › Pens or pencils

ONE WAY MAZE

Instructions: Direct kids to “One Way Maze” in the Activity Book (p. 48). Instruct them to start at the middle of the maze where the person is and try to get out of the maze to God. Allow kids time to try to complete the maze and then discuss the following questions.

Ask:

- How easy or difficult was it to find your way out of that maze?
- How many ways out were provided in that maze?
- How many ways are there to get to Jesus?

Invite children to open their Bibles to John 14:6. Lead the class to read this Scripture aloud together: “Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

Ask:

- Who is speaking in the verse?
- What three things did Jesus say He was?
- Are there any other ways to get to God the Father except through believing in Jesus?

Say: Jesus was making it clear in this passage that there is one way to God the Father and it is through Him—Jesus. *When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God’s gift of Jesus is the only way to be saved. To receive this gift, we must believe in our hearts that Jesus saves us by the work He has already done on the cross.*

If that is a little confusing to you, that’s OK. A very smart, religious man had a hard time understanding this too. Let’s learn about that truth together now.

SEE TRUTH

SILENT THEATER

Instructions: As you present this truth, invite kids to silently act it out. Half the group will play Jesus, and the other half will play Nicodemus. They will not utter any words or sounds, but act out in motions and facial expressions the story you share from John 3.

Open your Bible to John 3 and tell the following story.

JESUS MET NICODEMUS

JOHN 3:1-21

Jesus had traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. One night, a religious man came to see Jesus. The man's name was Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. He studied and taught God's law, and he tried very hard to obey the law. Nicodemus wanted to know more about Jesus.

"Rabbi," he said, "we know that You have come from God. You are a teacher, and no one could do the miracles You do unless God is with him."

Nicodemus had that right. Jesus said, "I tell you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Now Nicodemus was confused. He thought that keeping all of God's laws was how a person got into heaven. Besides, what Jesus said didn't make any sense! "How can anyone be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked.

Jesus said, "A man cannot enter God's kingdom unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit." When a baby is born, he gets physical life from his parents. Physical life doesn't last forever. But the Spirit gives people spiritual life so they can live with God forever.

Jesus said, "Don't be surprised I told you that you must be born again."

Nicodemus still didn't understand. "How is this possible?" he asked.

Jesus replied, "We talk about what we know, and we tell others about what we have seen. But you don't believe what I'm telling you! When you don't believe what I say about things I've seen on earth, how will you believe what I say about the things I've seen in heaven?"

"No one has ever gone up into heaven, except the Son of Man. He came down from heaven. Do you remember how Moses raised up the bronze snake in the wilderness? Everyone who looked at it was healed. Like that, the Son of Man will be raised up, so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life."

Then Jesus told Nicodemus about God's great plan. Jesus said, "God showed His love in this way: He sent His One and Only Son to save the world. Everyone who believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life.

"God didn't send His Son to declare the world guilty, but to save the world. Anyone who believes in Him is found not guilty, but anyone who does not believe in Him is guilty already."

Say: What an amazing story! Let's give a big thanks to our actors. (*Pause for applause.*) Now let's play a review game.

RIGHT OR WRONG REVIEW

Instructions: Tape a line down the middle of the room. Using the "Right or Wrong Review" signs, hang one sign on one side of the room and the other sign on the opposite side of the room. Instruct kids to stand on the tape line in the middle of the room. Explain that after you read each of the statements below, kids should quietly travel to the side of the room that they believe is correct. (Is the statement right or wrong?) If time allows, in between each question, ask kids why they selected that side of the room; and if the statement was wrong, ask what the correct answer is.

Supplies:

- › Item 10: "Right or Wrong Review"
- › Painter's tape

- Nicodemus knew nothing about religion. (*wrong*)
- Nicodemus tried very hard to obey God's law. (*right*)
- Nicodemus wanted to know more about Jesus. (*right*)
- Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a person was born again, he couldn't see the kingdom of God. (*right*)
- Nicodemus understood immediately. (*wrong*)
- Keeping all of God's laws gets you into heaven. (*wrong*)
- Being born again isn't another physical birth, but being born of the Spirit requires responding to Jesus in faith. (*right*)
- Everyone who believes in Jesus will have eternal life. (*right*)
- Nicodemus was born again because he was a good man. (*wrong*)

Say: *When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God's gift of Jesus is the only way to be saved. To receive this gift, we must believe in our hearts that Jesus saves us by the work He has already done on the cross.*

EXPERIENCE TRUTH

THE GREATEST GIFT

Instructions: Hold out the gift in front of the kids. Explain that they are going to have to use their imaginations and pretend that inside this gift is the greatest gift they could ever imagine. Ask them to think about what would be the most amazing gift they could receive.

Direct kids to “The Greatest Gift” in the Activity Book (p. 48). Include parents or caregivers in the group. Instruct kids to write about or draw the most amazing gift they could ever receive in the provided gift box on the page. When kids finish, invite them to share some of the greatest gifts.

Challenge kids to imagine that the gift they wanted so badly was in the package you are holding. Walk around slowly in front of the children.

Say: I have that gift you wanted so much right here. What do you need to do to make it yours?

Allow the kids to think and then respond by simply getting up and taking the gift from you.

Say: I was holding that gift out to you, and all you had to do was take it. You may have thought up some pretty amazing gifts, but God gave the best gift when He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sin. The gift of eternal life is way better than anything we could dream up today because Jesus gave up His perfect life for our sin.

As amazing as God’s gift is, some people still choose not to receive this gift. In the Activity Book, circle some of the reasons you think people choose not to receive God’s gift of forgiveness through Jesus.

Allow kids to complete this activity, and if time allows discuss some of the reasons people may choose not to respond to God’s gift.

Say: *When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God’s gift of Jesus is the only way to be saved. To receive this gift, we must believe in our hearts that Jesus saves us by the work He has already done on the cross.*

Supplies:

- › A wrapped present or gift bag. You can put something in it or simply wrap an empty box. It will not be opened.
- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- › Pens or pencils (1 per child)

DISCUSS TRUTH

Supplies:

› Bibles (1 per child)

Invite kids to turn to Romans 10:9-10,13 in their Bibles. Read these three Scripture verses aloud.

Say: This is important information, so let's break it down into three parts.

CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH

Explain that the word *confess* means to agree with God. Typically this is done out loud. Help kids understand that this first part explains that if we want to be saved, we must agree with God that Jesus is Lord.

Ask kids what they think the word *Lord* means. After they define it, explain that *Lord* means ruler. Emphasize to children that we must agree that Jesus will be king in our lives. We obey Him and submit to Him as the boss of our lives because we know His plans are best and He loves us.

BELIEVE IN OUR HEARTS

Explain that the next part of this verse challenges us to believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead. This means it changes how we live. If we really believe something, we act on it. Believing in our hearts leads to God changing us when we respond to Him.

EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

Say: Next, we see that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. No one is excluded. It doesn't matter if you dress a certain way or are from a certain type of family or live in a certain place in the world. Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!

Say: *When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God's gift of Jesus is the only way to be saved. To receive this gift, we must believe in our hearts that Jesus saves us by the work He has already done on the cross.*

APPLY TRUTH

THE MISSING PIECE

Instructions: Print and cut apart a "Missing Piece" puzzle for each child. Put all of the pieces except the special "missing piece" in a ziplock bag for

them. Don't disclose that any puzzle pieces are missing. (Hide the special "missing pieces" somewhere in the room.)

Explain that you are going to have a race to see who can complete their puzzle first. They are to begin when you say start.

Allow time for kids to work on their puzzles and begin to discover that they can't complete the puzzle without all of the pieces. As they ask you about the missing piece, explain that they must be hidden somewhere in the room.

Once kids find the missing puzzle pieces and finish their puzzles, they will see that they needed the "Jesus" piece to complete this puzzle.

Ask:

- What made this activity difficult?
- What made your puzzle complete?
- How is this activity without the special piece like people trying to save themselves?

Say: *When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God's gift of Jesus is the only way to be saved. To receive this gift, we must believe in our hearts that Jesus saves us by the work He has already done on the cross. Jesus alone can save us from our sins.*

Before you close out this time in prayer, invite kids to use the "Prayer Journal" in the Activity Book (p. 49). to write a prayer to God. Invite kids to go to God in prayer.

CLOSE IN PRAYER.

Lead the group in prayer. Pray the following prayer or use your own words to close the session.

God, You gave the greatest gift—your Son, Jesus. We thank You that even though Jesus was perfect, He gave up His life for our sin. Not only did Jesus die on the cross, He rose from the dead and is alive today. Help us to see that Jesus alone saves us. Open our eyes to see that we need to agree that Jesus is Lord and believe with all of our hearts He is alive and what He did on the cross was enough to save us forever. We thank You for Jesus.

In His name, amen.

As kids dismiss, give each child his Activity Book, "Family Guide" page for this session to complete at home, and personal belongings.

Supplies:

- › Item 11: "The Missing Piece" puzzles (1 per child)
- › Ziplock bags
- › Activity Books (1 per child)

Supplies:

- › Item 13: "Family Guide" pages for this session (1 per child)

SESSION 6



GOD RULES.



WE SINNED.



GOD PROVIDED.



JESUS GIVES.



WE RESPOND.

THE GOSPEL AND ME.

When we grasp the gospel, we discover that God Rules, We Sinned, God Provided, Jesus Gives, and We Respond. These gospel truths are personal, life-changing, and can make us into a new creation.

KEY POINTS. When we grasp the gospel, we discover that...

- The good news is this: God Rules, We Sinned, God Provided, Jesus Gives, and We Respond.
- In Christ, we are new creations; the old has gone the new has come.
- We can't keep this news to ourselves; we have to share the good news of Jesus with others.

KEY VERSE

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 (CSB)

PREPARE TO TEACH

Made new. Fresh start. Clean. Forgiven. Jesus makes all things new. That is great news in a world that continues to make promises it cannot keep.

Maybe you need the reminder that in Christ, the old is gone; the new has come.

PONDER

As you prepare this week, walk through each of the five points of the gospel:

- God Rules
- We Sinned
- God Provided
- Jesus Gives
- We Respond

Which one resonates with you the most today?

Use the following prayer prompt to pray and prepare your heart to teach.

PRAY

Praise: Praise God for being Lord.

Confession: Ask God to search your heart, and confess your sin to Him.

Thanksgiving: Thank God for making all things new.

Supplication: Pray that the truths taught during this Bible study don't end with this session but change hearts for eternity.

DISCOVER TRUTH

Supplies:

- › Item 12: “Gospel Point Signs”

GOOD NEWS REVIEW

Instructions: Print the five “Gospel Point Signs” and attach the first four (God Rules, We Sinned, God Provided, and Jesus Gives) to one of the corners of the room. Put “We Respond” in the middle of the room.

Invite kids to review the good news of the gospel. Remind kids **when we grasp the gospel, we discover that God Rules, We Sinned, God Provided, Jesus Gives, and We Respond. These gospel truths are personal, life-changing, and can make us into a new creation.**

Explain that you are going to read a statement or Scripture passage, and they are going to travel to the sign that they think best represents that statement. If time permits, you can ask kids why they chose that area.

- Jesus gave up His perfect life and died on the cross to pay the price for our sins. (*Jesus Gives*)
- God cannot ignore and must punish our sin. (*We Sinned*)
- God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. God is Creator, and He loves us. (*God Rules*)
- “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9 (*We Respond*)
- Mercy is when we don’t get what we deserve. (*Jesus Gives*)
- God is Creator. (*God Rules*)
- We are sinners, and our sin separates us from God. (*We Sinned*)
- Our sin separates us from God. (*We Sinned*)
- God created everything through Jesus and for Jesus. (*God Rules*)
- God provides the solution to our sin problem. (*God Provided*)
- We can be welcomed into God’s family by believing that Jesus saves us by what He has already done on the cross. (*We Respond*)
- “But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8 (*Jesus Gives*)
- God provided a way for us to be saved by grace through faith in Christ alone. (*God Provided*)
- God’s gift of Jesus is the only way to be saved. To receive this gift, we must believe in our hearts that Jesus saves us by the work He has already done on the cross. (*We Respond*)

SEE TRUTH

Open your Bible to Acts 9 and tell the following story.

PAUL'S CONVERSION AND BAPTISM ACTS 9:1-25

Supplies:
› Bibles (1 per child)

After Jesus died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, people in Jerusalem who believed in Jesus were persecuted, or treated cruelly, because of their faith. One of Jesus' followers, Stephen, was even killed. A man named Saul had been there when Stephen was killed. Saul wanted to put an end to the church. He went into the believers' homes, dragged them out, and put them into jail. Many believers fled the city.

Saul headed to Damascus (duh-MASS-kuhs) to arrest believers there, but on the way, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. Saul fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

"Who are You, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus," He replied. "Get up and go into the city. Then you will be told what you must do."

Saul got up and opened his eyes, but he couldn't see! So the men who were traveling with Saul led him by the hand into Damascus.

Ananias (an-uh-NIGH-uhs), a disciple of Jesus, lived in Damascus. The Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision. He told him to go to the house where Saul was staying. Ananias knew that Saul had hurt many believers in Jerusalem and that he arrested anyone who believed in Jesus. But the Lord said, "Go! I have chosen this man to take My name to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites."

Ananias obeyed the Lord. He found Saul and told Saul that Jesus had sent him to help. Ananias put his hands on Saul, and suddenly Saul could see again. Saul got up and was baptized.

For the next few days, Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus. He began to go to the synagogues to preach about Jesus. Saul told the people, "Jesus is the Son of God!"

The people were amazed. They recognized Saul and knew he had wanted to put an end to the church and all the believers. Now he was one of them! The Jews did not like Saul's message, so they planned to kill him. Saul heard what the Jews wanted to do, so one night he left the city. The disciples helped Saul escape by lowering him down the city wall in a basket.

Ask:

- What did Paul want to put an end to?
- What was Saul on his way to do in Damascus?
- Who spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus?
- Who did God send to take care of Paul?
- How would you have felt if God asked you to take care of someone who had been killing Christians?
- How was Saul/Paul's life made new?

EXPERIENCE TRUTH

'SMORE' GOOD NEWS

Say: Today we are taking a deeper look at the gospel and us. We've learned a lot about what the gospel is and why it is important. But, the gospel is only good news for us if it changes us. If we don't trust in Jesus for our Savior, the gospel isn't very good news at all.

Say: Our Bible story today taught us that Paul was a religious leader. He knew Scripture and taught it to people. However, Paul was missing the most important part—Jesus. And that led him to treat Christians cruelly and try to have them imprisoned.

Continue: These stories give me an idea. Who likes to eat s'mores? Enlist a volunteer. Provide the child with graham crackers only, and instruct her to make a s'more treat.

Ask: Is something wrong? Do you want to make a s'more? Is there something missing? (Allow responses.)

Say: You cannot make s'mores with just graham crackers. You need chocolate, marshmallows, and a fire to roast the marshmallows. If you are missing the other parts, it just is not a s'more.

Explain: Paul was missing something important, and he did not even realize it. He did not understand he was a sinner, just like everyone else until Jesus came to him. Paul knew many religious things about the Bible, but only when he trusted in Jesus was his life made new.

Say: When we see our sin for what it is, we are able to show compassion to other lost people. When we understand how Jesus saved us, our hearts fill with joy, and we will want others to experience Jesus' love too!

Supplies:

› Graham crackers

STAIRWELL GOSPEL

Instructions: Invite children to turn to “Stairwell Gospel” in the Activity Book. Children will label the stairwell drawing in their Activity Books (p. 58).

Say: Let’s look at the stairwell drawing provided in the “Stairwell Gospel” activity in the Activity Book. There is a line at the top of the page and a line at the bottom of the page. Where does Jesus go and where do you go? Label them accordingly.

Ask: What actually separates us from Jesus?

Say: That’s right—sin. So write *sin* on the stairwell. God is holy and we are not, so our sin separates us from our perfect God.

Ask: What are some ways people think they can save themselves from their sin? List them on your activity page. (Allow time for kids to complete the activity page.)

Say: Jesus alone can rescue us from sin, and He came to earth while we were still sinners to save us. Jesus came all the way. We didn’t do anything to meet Him halfway.

Supplies

- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- Pens or pencils (1 per child)

Note: *Younger children have a word bank to complete this activity.*

DISCUSS TRUTH

NEW CREATIONS

Instructions: Invite children to open their Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5:17. Read this Bible verse aloud.

Say: This Bible verse tells us that when we respond and receive the gift of salvation found only in Jesus, we become new creations. The old self is gone, and we are made new.

Direct kids to “New Creations” in the Activity Book (p. 58). Explain that they are to color only the spaces with the dots in them. One dot is red, two dots is green, three dots is yellow. Once they finish, ask what they see in each picture. (Answers: caterpillar, butterfly)

Describe how the caterpillar goes through a complete transformation and becomes a beautiful butterfly. Explain that when we place our faith in Jesus, we become a new creation. Remind kids of Saul’s true story and how Jesus changed him. We can’t try to be new on our own; only Jesus changes our hearts and makes us new.

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Supplies

- › Activity Books (1 per child)
- › Pens or pencils (1 per child)
- › Red, green, and yellow crayons

APPLY TRUTH

GOSPEL MOMENTUM

Read John 20:19-23.

Say: We can't keep this good news to ourselves; we have to share the good news of Jesus with others. I love how Jesus says, "As the Father sent Me, so I am sending you." It reminds us how we are not sent out alone, but with the same power God sent Jesus.

Open a book so that it lies flat on the table. Use the center valley where the pages tuck into the binding as a "track." Place two of the three marbles in the "track." Flick the third marble into the two sitting on the "track." The middle marble will remain still and the momentum will transfer through it to the marble on the other side, which will shoot away from the row. Consider repeating the demonstration.

Say: Our demonstration with the marbles can help us think about how the power of God works in us. The momentum flowed through one marble into the other. God sent Jesus to earth to demonstrate God's power to us and then die on the cross for our sins. After He rose again, Jesus' power was transferred through the Holy Spirit to His disciples. This is a great way to imagine what it looks like to be sent by Jesus as Jesus was sent by God. Just as the moving marble gave momentum to the other marbles, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to give us power.

Say: We worship One True God revealed in three persons—God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit.

Ask:

- Who sent Jesus?
- Why was He sent?
- Who sends us out, and in whose power are we sent?

Say: Like God the Father sent the Son, we are sent out to tell the good news. We can thank Jesus for sending us the Holy Spirit to empower us to follow Jesus and obey by telling others the good news about Him.

GOSPEL IN YOUR WORDS

Direct kids to "Gospel in Your Words" in the Activity Book (p. 59). Explain that you want them to sit quietly and think about all they have learned through this study. Encourage them to write what they believe the gospel is in their own words. As time permits, allow them to share.

Supplies:

- › Activity Books
(1 per child)

Say: The gospel is good news. We learned that God rules and holds all things together. He created us and longs to have a relationship with us. We also learned that we are all sinners, and our sin separates us from a holy God. The payment for our sin is death, but God doesn't leave us there. God loves us so much that He provided Jesus to pay the price for our sins. Jesus willingly gave up His perfect life to take our place on the cross. Jesus is the only way to God the Father. It is not enough to know all these facts, but we must respond to them. To be saved, we must agree that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead.

CLOSE IN PRAYER.

Say: Now that is good news! Let's close in prayer.

Lead the group in prayer. Pray the following prayer or use your own words to close the session.

God,

Thank You for the good news of the gospel—the news that You do not leave us as sinners, but rescue us from our sin through Your one and only Son, Jesus. Help us to see this truth for ourselves and accept it personally. You alone are our Savior.

In Jesus' name, amen.

As kids are dismissed, give each child his Activity Book, "Family Guide" page for this session to complete at home, a "Certificate of Completion," and personal belongings.

Supplies:

- › Item 13: "Family Guide" pages for this session (1 per child)
- › Item 14: "Certificate of Completion" (1 per child)

