

GOD CARES WHEN CHILDREN ARE SAD

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PLEASE NOTE!

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Introduction

These Bible lessons have been written to teach children about God's love and care for them, especially as they face difficult situations.

Applications

Applications have been made for

- ◆ children who face divisions in the family.
- ◆ children who are rejected because of some perceived difference to other children.
- ◆ children who face great peer pressure to do wrong - for example, steal, take alcoholic drinks, look at "dirty" pictures or videos.
- ◆ children who have been hurt by others and need to learn to forgive.

The Bible lessons have applications for both saved and unsaved children.

Objective

An objective is given for each lesson to try to help you think out what you want to see happen, by God's grace, in the life of the children. The objective expresses the desire and goal of the teacher. It does not guarantee that this will happen automatically. For example, if the objective for a lesson is expressed as "The children will trust in Christ for salvation", that is the teacher's prayer, desire and objective - but only the Holy Spirit can make that a reality in the life of the child.

Teaching Bible truths

We fall short of our responsibility as teachers if we only tell children Bible stories. It is essential that children learn the truths those stories were written down to teach us, and that we then take them a step further to show what that truth means to them in their daily lives. Of course, we cannot in one lesson cover all the teaching any particular story would provide, so in each of these lessons one central truth has been chosen. The teaching of the central truth has been woven throughout the narrative, but to help you in your preparation the teaching sections have been marked "CT". These are also marked out in the lesson plan.

You will notice that the central truths are marked with a "U" or an "S" to show the kind of children the truth is applied to - unsaved or saved. This is also made clear in the text by using phrases such as, "If you have not trusted the Lord Jesus to forgive your sin ..." or, "Christian, you ...".

The application of the truth has been highlighted with a line beside the text. You may feel it necessary to adapt the applications to better suit the children you teach. For example, the application may use a boy's name, yet you have only girls present. It could be that the application given is more applicable to older children, while yours are very young. Make the changes you feel are necessary. The important thing is that the Word of God is applied to their lives.

Make yourself available for counselling

When you present the Gospel message, there will be children who will respond to it independently. They may or may not at a later date tell you that they have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. There will, however, be others who would like some help. They may have questions to ask; they may need help or encouragement in knowing what to say.

As you teach the saved children, there may be times when they would like advice in a difficult situation; they may need clarification on how a particular lesson applies to their daily lives; they may find themselves in a situation where they do not know what the Bible says they should do; they may want to share a difficulty so that you can pray for them, especially if you are the only Christian support they have.

For these reasons it is important that the children know you are available to talk. It is also important that they know when and where to go when they want to talk to you. Finally, it is essential that unsaved children do not confuse coming to the Lord Jesus with coming to you.

In all cases you should not make yourself available at the same time as giving the Gospel invitation, so that the children never get the impression that they cannot come to Christ without coming through you, or that they are saved simply by waiting to speak to you.

An example for use with the unsaved child

“Do you really want to live for the Lord Jesus, but don’t know how to come to Him? I will be glad to explain it from the Bible; come and see me. I’ll be standing by that tree when the meeting is over. Remember, I can’t take away your sin - only the Lord Jesus can do that - but I will be glad to help you understand better how you can come to Him. Just come and sit with me under that tree.”

An example for use with the saved child

“If you have trusted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and you have never told me about it, please let me know. I’ll be standing beside the piano after the meeting is finished. I would like to know if you too have trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, so that I can pray for you and perhaps help you.”

Teaching methods

Often children who are living in these difficult circumstances are rebellious and difficult to control in class. For this reason, a variety of methods of teaching have been used to involve the children, hold their attention and reinforce the learning process. Methods include narrative, questions, interviews, group study, object lessons, role play, etc. Teachers need to prepare the lessons well in advance, as sometimes they will need the cooperation of other helpers, for example in the acting out of a Biblical scene or role play.

Memory verses

A Scripture verse to teach the children is suggested for each lesson. If you are teaching the lessons as a series over five weeks it would be advisable to choose two or three verses to teach well, which the children will then remember. If you try to teach all five, the children may not really know any of them well.

Practise using the visuals

It is wise to practise using the visuals before teaching the lesson to children. Become thoroughly familiar with the flashcards or PowerPoint slides and know when you need to use them in the lesson.

PowerPoint® visuals

If you are using the PowerPoint version of this lesson, you can choose from two options on the CD.

- 1 The first version contains the flashcard images and lesson cover slides only.
- 2 The second contains the extra features of the central truth, applications and memory verse.

At the bottom right side of each slide you will see a small image (such as a Bible, a cross or a crown) which contains a hyperlink. If you click on this image, it will take you to the central truth for that lesson, thus allowing you to use the central truth at any stage in your teaching. Clicking on the arrow on the central truth slide will take you back to the slide you were previously showing.

Extra visual aids

On a piece of card print out the words of the central truth for each lesson. If you are using a flannelboard, back the card with flannel or pieces of flocked paper. (Use lower case letters, so that even the younger ones can read the words easily.) Put this card on the board at the beginning of the class or when you first teach the central truth in the lesson.

Additional helps

Along the left and right margins additional helps are provided, giving background information and optional ideas on how to add interest to your lesson.

These ideas are designed to incorporate different learning styles. For effective learning, some children need to see or write, others need to hear or speak, others need to touch or handle, and still others need active participation.

You can use these ideas in your club as time allows.

Review questions

For each lesson some review questions are given. These can be used after the lesson or the following week, before teaching the new lesson.

Review time, if conducted in an orderly way, can be an ideal opportunity to reinforce what you have taught, while still being fun for the children. You can use this time ...

- 1 to find out how much the children are understanding and remembering.
- 2 to help you as a teacher to know what you need to emphasise more so that the children will remember better.
- 3 to provide a time of fun in the class. The children like competition and look forward to this part of the programme. But it is more than just a game: it is a time of learning.

In this textbook only questions on the lesson are included. It would be profitable to include questions also on the songs, verse and whatever else you teach. In this way the children realise that every part of the programme is important.

Carry-over activities

Ideas for carry-over activities have been supplied for some lessons. You do not necessarily need a carry-over activity each week.

Overview

Lesson	Central truth	Application	Memory verse
The outcast who was accepted by God (Jephthah) Judges 11:1-12:7 Hebrews 11:32	God receives and uses those who trust in Him	Unsaved: Trust in the Lord to save you from the punishment for your sins Saved: Trust in God in all your troubles and let Him use you to help others in trouble	“... Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful ...” Joel 2:13
The stranger welcomed (Ruth) Ruth (the whole book)	God loves and values all kinds of people	Unsaved: Trust God for forgiveness and cleansing Saved: Trust in God when others reject you	Review Joel 2:13
Clean in a dirty world (Samuel) 1 Samuel 2:12-26 1 Samuel 3:1-21	God can make clean and keep clean those who trust in Him	Unsaved: Trust in God to make you clean from sin Saved: Trust in God to keep you clean	“... Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” Psalm 51:7
Learning to forgive others (Peter) Matthew 18:21-35	God offers forgiveness to all	Unsaved: Accept God’s forgiveness as a first step to forgiving others Saved: Forgive those who have hurt you	“Be kind ... forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” Ephesians 4:32
Despised by others, forgiven by God (Matthew) Luke 5:27-32	God is willing and able to forgive sin and change lives	Unsaved: Call on God to forgive you Saved: Thank God for having forgiven you - go on to serve Him	Review Ephesians 4:32

Lesson 1

The outcast who was accepted by God (Jephthah)

Scripture for teachers

Judges 11:1-12:7

Hebrews 11:32

Central truth

God receives and uses those who trust in Him

Application

Unsaved: Trust in the Lord to save you from the punishment for your sins

Saved: Trust in God in all your troubles and let Him use you to help others in trouble

Objective

The lesson is written thinking particularly of children who feel rejected by their families. The aim is to lead them to trust in the Lord Who loves them. He wants to receive them as His children and help them in all their troubles.

Where to use

It is especially suitable in outreach to children from non-Christian homes and particularly dysfunctional homes; possibly orphanages or juvenile detention centres

Memory verse

“... Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful ...” Joel 2:13

Visual aids

◆ Flashcards: 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5 and 1-6

Or

◆ PowerPoint slides: 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5 and 1-6

And

◆ Visualise the central truth on an outline of welcoming hands (see page 40)

◆ Map of Palestine at the time of Joshua/Judges

Teaching methods

◆ At one point in the lesson, the children can participate in group discussion. You need to have copies made of the four questions provided. Give

a copy to each of your helpers who will lead a very brief (3-4 minute) discussion.

- ◆ Be sure to read short sentences of key verses from the passage as you teach. For example: Judges 11:11a, 11:29a; 11:32b. Better still, have a helper or an older child (prepared beforehand) read out these short sentences.

Lesson outline

Introduction

“Home was not a happy place” CT

Progression of events

- 1 Jephthah is expelled from his family and country CTU
- 2 He gathers a band of outlaws around him
- 3 The Ammonites declare war on Israel
- 4 The Israelite leaders invite Jephthah to be general of their army CTS
- 5 Jephthah unsuccessfully tries to negotiate peace with the Ammonites
- 6 The Holy Spirit gives power to Jephthah to defeat the Ammonites CTS
- 7 He is judge in Israel for six years
- 8 He is mentioned in the list of men of faith in Hebrews 11 CTU

Lesson

Flashcard 1-1

PowerPoint 1-1

Home was not a happy place for Jephthah. His younger brothers did not want him to live in the house at all. Actually, they were not his brothers - they were half-brothers. Jephthah and the other boys had the same Dad, called Gilead, but Jephthah's mother was another woman. That's where the trouble had really started. Jephthah's father and the other woman, whom he had not married, had been together and had had a baby. That was how Jephthah was born. Then Gilead married and had several other sons. These sons hated Jephthah their half-brother.

"Why is this fellow living in our home?" they said to themselves. "He is not really part of the family. Our mother is not his mother. The problem is, he is the oldest and maybe when Gilead our father grows old and dies, Jephthah will get most of the family money. We can't let that happen! Let's throw him out!"

Every time his half-brothers looked at him, Jephthah could see their eyes flashing with hate. He must have wondered, "Why are they so angry with me? Why do they treat me so badly? It's not my fault that my father went off with that other woman, that she got pregnant and that I was born that way. It was my father's bad conduct - not mine! What are those fellows planning? What will they do to me? Will they try to hurt me or get rid of me? I am afraid that something terrible is going to happen one of these days."

CT

Maybe you feel a bit like Jephthah. Maybe some of you have brothers or sisters (or half-brothers or -sisters) who can't accept you. You feel that you don't fit into the family and maybe you even feel that you are not wanted at all. Or maybe your friends at school or in your street make you feel unwanted and unappreciated. That is very hard for you and it must make you sad sometimes, but there is Someone Who does love you completely - He is God. He tells us in His Word, the Bible, that He loves you and me much, much more than any human person can love (John 3:16). And God loved Jephthah too in his unhappy home.

Flashcard 1-2

PowerPoint 1-2

Read (or have an older child read) the verse from your Bible.

One day there was a terrible row. What do you think Jephthah's half-brothers roared at him? Let's read from the Bible.

"You are not going to get any inheritance in our family because you are the son of another woman" (from Judges 11:2b).

They were telling him that he did not belong in that family and that they did not want him there. Poor Jephthah! He must have wondered, "Will they really throw me out of the house?" When he looked at their scowling faces, he knew that there was going to be trouble. Do

you believe that his brothers would really throw him out? Let's look at the story in the Bible for the answer.

"Then Jephthah fled from his brothers" (Judges 11:3a).

There was nothing he could do when all his half-brothers were against him, so he had to run away before they put him out. He ran from his family and from his home and even left his country to get away as far as possible from that terrible situation. Poor Jephthah!

Do you, like Jephthah, sometimes feel that you are not wanted or loved? Well, God loves you so much. He loves you, but it is not because you are good - all of us have done wrong and have displeased Him.

You too have done wrong things that God has told us clearly not to do. In your heart, have you had bitter, angry, hateful thoughts, just as Jephthah's brothers had? What about your words? Have you used bad language or dirty words? Have you told lies? If so, you have disobeyed God. He commands in the Bible, "speak truthfully" (Ephesians 4:25 NIV). Have you shouted angrily at others? What about your actions? Have you hurt others or cheated or taken things that are not yours? If so, you have disobeyed God Who commands, "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15). You do all these wrong things because inside you have a sinful nature, but God loves you very much in spite of the wrong way that you are living. You deserve to be punished, but God punished His own Son the Lord Jesus instead of you, so that He could forgive you.

Jesus suffered a cruel death on the cross. He never did anything wrong. He was perfect. But He died for the wrong things that we have done, disobeying God's laws. Jesus died, but He did not stay dead and now He is alive for evermore. He wants you to come to Him. If you do, He will certainly accept you as His child. He will become your loving Heavenly Father. Come to Him today. Ask Him to forgive all your sins. Ask Him to accept you as His child. He promises to do so.

Let's repeat the words of our memory verse again. "Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful" (Joel 2:13). The Lord is gracious and merciful. In other words, He is loving and kind. He wants to forgive you and accept you, even though you don't deserve it. God will receive you if you turn to Him.

If you are not quite sure how to turn to God, come to me after the class. I'll be glad to talk to you personally and explain more about how you can take this most important step. God wants to forgive you and help you. Do you think God would also help Jephthah? ... Yes, He did.

After Jephthah escaped from his home and his country, he went to live in another land. We don't have all the details of what he did there, but the Bible does tell us a little.

Read verse from your Bible.

CTU

Make yourself available for counselling.

Tob (Judges 11:3) was the name of an Aramean principality situated to the East of Jordan, north of Gilead. You might like to have an older child, whom you have prepared, point this out on a map showing Palestine at the time of Joshua/Judges.

Show Ammon on the map.

PowerPoint 1-3

Teaching method:
Discussion groups.

Read Judges 11:3b from your Bible.

“Worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out raiding with him.”

They probably lived by attacking enemy cities and carrying off the food and valuables. One of the enemies of God’s special people, the Jews, was the nation of the Ammonites. The people back in Israel began to hear the news of this courageous band of outlaws who were winning battles against their enemies.

Then one day the Ammonites decided to declare war on the people of Israel. They were a powerful enemy. The leaders of Israel thought, “We need someone to be our general if this war starts. Who would make an able general?” Whom do you think they chose? Yes, Jephthah.

Flashcard 1-3

The people sent messengers to Jephthah saying, “Come back to Israel. We want you to be our general in this war. After you win the war, you can be our judge or national leader” (like a president today). Would Jephthah come back to help the people who had driven him out of his home and away from his country? Before we find the answer, here are some questions I want you to think about.

If you have good helpers, you could divide the children into two or three groups. Your helpers would lead a brief discussion, not more than 3-4 minutes. Make sure that each group has some older children.

- 1 After the way they had treated him, how might Jephthah have felt about the people who were now asking for his help?
- 2 If God had not helped him - how might he have reacted?
- 3 With God’s help, how should he have reacted?
- 4 If you have been hurt by other people’s reactions to you, how could God help you to react, if you trust in Him?

CTS

After the groups come back together again, briefly answer the questions with the children’s help.

Well, let’s see what happened.

Read (or have a helper/ older child read) the verse from your Bible.

God’s Word says, “Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead [the leaders], and the people made him head and commander over them” (Judges 11:11a).

Flashcard 1-4

PowerPoint 1-4

What a change for Jephthah! From being an outcast and an outlaw, far from his country, he suddenly becomes the general of the army. God did this miracle.

Jephthah tried to talk to the Ammonites so that there would be no war, but they were determined to fight and so a great battle took place. We read something very important in God’s Word.

Read Judges 11:29.

“The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah.” That means that God the Holy Spirit gave Jephthah special help and strength for the job ahead of him. God helped Jephthah as he went out to battle against the Ammonites. Let’s read what happened. “The Lord delivered them into his hands” (Judges 11:32). Yes, Jephthah defeated the enemy army. There was peace in the land again. Jephthah became the judge (like a president) and he ruled in the land for six years.

Flashcard 1-5

Isn’t it wonderful how God accepts and loves every person even though some other people think they are no good?

If you have already asked the Lord Jesus to be your Saviour, remember that He loves you so much. You are precious to Him. He knows about the hurt feelings in your heart. He understands and cares for you. When you feel rejected like Jephthah was, or lonely or unwanted, trust in God in all your troubles. Talk to the Lord in prayer. Quietly thank Him that He loves you.

He loved you so much that He died on the cross so that you could be forgiven and become a member of His family. Thank Him that He is with you and you can trust Him in every trouble. He does not despise you even if others do. If you are His child He wants to use you too, just as He used Jephthah.

Flashcard 1-6

Just as God used Jephthah, He can use you too if you are in His family. Once God has received you as His child, you are no longer an outcast. You don’t need to feel rejected and useless, and you certainly do not need to run away from home as Jephthah did. God has something for you to do, right where you are.

He could use you right there in your family to be a peace-maker. He can help you to be kind and gentle to others. He could use you to bring other boys and girls to Good News Club® to hear the wonderful news of God’s love.

If you have received the comfort of God’s love for you, God could use you to explain the Bible verse that we learned today to some other boy or girl who needs to hear and understand these lovely words. You can be a help to others just as Jephthah was.

In the New Testament in the book of Hebrews there is a list of famous men and women who trusted in God and by God’s strength won great battles. Do you know whose name is there too? Jephthah’s!

Just as God helped Jephthah in his battle, He can help you too. If you have not yet done so, you need to come to the Lord Jesus and ask for His forgiveness for your sins. Turn from your sins today and

Read (or have a helper/ older child read) the verse from your Bible.

PowerPoint 1-5

CTS

Show card with central truth.

PowerPoint hyperlink (bottom right of screen)

PowerPoint 1-6

CTU

turn to the Lord for “He is gracious and merciful” (Joel 2:13). He loves you and wants to forgive you and receive you into His family.

Review questions

- 1 Why was Jephthah thrown out of his home? (Jephthah’s mother was not the same person as the mother of the other children in the family - his half-brothers would not accept him.)
- 2 Where did he go and what did he do? (He went to another land and gathered a group of adventurers around him.)
- 3 Why did the people of Israel call Jephthah back? (Because an enemy, the Ammonites, declared war on them.)
- 4 With God’s help, how did Jephthah react? (He was prepared to help his people.)
- 5 How did Jephthah try to avoid war? (He tried to talk to the Ammonites and make peace.)
- 6 From whom did Jephthah receive special power for the battle? (From the Holy Spirit.)
- 7 God loved Jephthah and He loves you also. In what wonderful way did God show His love for you and me? (God sent His only Son to earth to die for us on the cross.)
- 8 Why is it so surprising that God loves us? (Because we have done so many wrong things against Him.)
- 9 God used Jephthah. If you have trusted in the Lord Jesus and been accepted into God’s family, in what ways could God use you? Give me two ways. (God could use you to be a peace-maker in your family; to explain a Bible verse to another child.)
- 10 Can you repeat the Bible verse for today? (“Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful” Joel 2:13.)

Carry-over activity

God loves you

Make photocopies (if possible on fine card) of the template on page 41 and have them available for children who want to pick one up after class.

Explain what is to be done. Bend backwards across the dotted line and set up the face in your room. It will help you to remember that God loves you.

Lesson 2

The stranger welcomed (Ruth)

Scripture for teachers

Ruth (the whole book)

Central truth

God loves and values all kinds of people

Application

Unsaved: Trust God for forgiveness and cleansing

Saved: Trust in God when others reject you

Objective

Children who may feel excluded by their peers because of race, religion or for other reasons, will understand the Gospel clearly

Where to use

In any evangelistic meeting for children, especially where there are minority ethnic or cultural groups

Memory verse

Review Joel 2:13

Visual aids

◆ Flashcards: 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5 and 2-6

Or

◆ PowerPoint slides: 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5 and 2-6

And

◆ Visualise central truth on a card

◆ As well as the flashcards provided, you might want to print out some names that you could put on the board at appropriate moments - Ruth, Naomi, Bethlehem, Orpah, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David

◆ The older children in the class would appreciate seeing a map of Palestine and the surrounding area in Old Testament times

Teaching methods

◆ The narrative method is used principally

◆ An interview with Ruth is included as an alternative method at one point

◆ Learning is reinforced with a review quiz and a carry-over activity for Christian children - this

activity could be done at home or be part of the class hour

Lesson outline

Introduction

Ruth and Naomi travel to Israel CT

Progression of events

- 1 Departure from Israel ten years previously
- 2 Elimelech and the two sons die
- 3 Ruth decides to trust in God and follow Naomi CTU
- 4 Possible fears of Ruth CTU
- 5 Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem
- 6 Ruth works in the fields of Boaz

Climax

Boaz and Ruth fall in love and are married

Conclusion

Ruth - part of the genealogy that led to Jesus
CTS, CTU

Lesson

The sun was hot as the two women trudged along the stony road. The younger of the two women was called Ruth. The older one, her mother-in-law, was called Naomi. They had been walking for many days and they were tired and dusty. They were travelling on foot from a mountain village in the land of Moab to the town of Bethlehem in the land of Israel where Naomi had lived many years before. Ruth had been born and had always lived in Moab until now. Maybe she looked a little bit different from the people of Israel. She had spoken a different language when she was a child. Maybe the colour of her skin was a bit different from Naomi's, but of course God loves and values all kinds of people.

CT

Show card with central truth.

PowerPoint hyperlink (bottom right of screen)

It was a very big adventure for her to leave the land of Moab and travel to Israel with her mother-in-law. Why were they making this long, dangerous journey by themselves? Well, let me explain.

Some years ago, when Naomi was quite young she and her husband Elimelech had lived in Bethlehem. God had been loving and kind to them and He gave them two sons. But one year there was a real problem. Let's read about it here in the Bible.

Read the verse from your Bible.

Read Ruth 1:1.

Yes, there was a terrible famine. "Famine" means that the crops don't grow and there is no food. Probably that year there was not enough rain and so the wheat, barley and the other crops did not grow. There was no grain to make bread. There was no other food to eat and so the people in Bethlehem were starving.

Flashcard 2-1

PowerPoint 2-1

If you have refugee children in your class you could include them here.

Elimelech and Naomi decided to go with their two sons to another country. Where did they go? The Bible tells us that they went to a country called Moab. They made the long journey and settled down to live in that mountainous country. Even today people have to leave their countries because of a famine or war, or because they are poor and they don't have a job and they go to another country to work and earn some money. This isn't an easy thing to experience. Maybe some of you kids had to leave your home to come to this country and you are experiencing many difficulties. Naomi faced difficulties too.

When everything seemed to be going well, something very sad happened. Naomi's husband, Elimelech, died.

After some time each of the two sons married a girl from Moab. One was called Orpah, the other Ruth. But then the two sons also died.

How sad and lonely Naomi must have felt in that foreign land without her husband and her sons. Her two daughters-in-law were also very,

very sad. They had many other friends in their town but each had lost her husband.

One day, about ten years after she had first arrived in Moab, Naomi said to Ruth and Orpah, "I'm going to go back to Israel, my own land."

Why did she decide that? Well, let's find the answer here in God's Word.

Read Ruth 1:6.

Yes! The Lord had provided food for the people back in Israel.

Ruth and Orpah said, "We'll go with you."

So they packed up a few things, probably slung them in a bundle on their backs and off they went.

Flashcard 2-2

After travelling for a while Naomi said to the two girls, "You have been very kind to me but now go back to your own lives in the land of Moab."

They talked very earnestly for a while and then Orpah kissed Naomi and turned back to her home and her friends. Naomi spoke again to Ruth

Read Ruth 1:15.

What did Ruth reply?

Read Ruth 1:16.

Ruth had made up her mind. She wanted to be with Naomi, and go to her country. But even more important, she trusted in Naomi's God. She no longer trusted in the false gods of the people of Moab. This was the most important choice that Ruth would make in her whole life - to trust in the one, true, living God Whom we know through the Bible. Maybe Ruth did not fully understand it yet, but God loves and values all kinds of people.

Place the words of the central truth on the board.

God loved this lady from Moab and so she could trust Him.

God loves and values you too. He wants you to make the same choice that Ruth made - to trust in Him. Have you sometimes thought, "There is no-one who really loves me! There is no-one in whom I can trust completely"? There certainly is! That person is God! He created you. He cares for you. He tells us so in His Word (John 3:16). Even though you have not loved and honoured Him, He loves you. He loves you, even though you have broken the commandments or laws He has given us in the Bible. For example, He commands you to honour and obey your parents (Exodus 20:12). Have you always done that? He commands you not to lie (Exodus 20:16). Have you always

Read (or have a helper/ older child read) the verse from your Bible.

PowerPoint 2-2

Read verses from your Bible.

CTU

Make yourself available for personal counselling.

PowerPoint 2-3

told the truth to your parents and teachers? He commands you not to steal (Exodus 20:15). Have you sometimes taken things that don't belong to you? Maybe you found something that you should have handed in to the teacher or some other person - but you kept it. That is stealing. You certainly have broken God's laws many times. That is sin and sin is very serious in God's sight because He is so perfect and pure. But at the same time He loves you and wants to forgive you. You can trust completely in Him just as Ruth was learning to do.

If you are not quite sure how you can have your sins forgiven, stay behind after the class, I'll be up beside the board. I would love to talk to you and explain it to you in more detail.

Flashcard 2-3

Naomi and Ruth walked on and on along the road that led back to Israel. It was summer time and the days must have been really long and hot. The two ladies must have been tired every night when they lay down to sleep. We don't know all the details of the journey. Probably some nights they slept at inns or hostels. Probably other nights they slept outdoors under a tree or in the corner of a field.

I wonder what Ruth was thinking. Maybe she was concerned because she would soon arrive in a strange land, where she would know no-one except Naomi. The people would be Israelites. She was from Moab, a country that had been at war with Israel. The way she spoke was different too. Maybe she wondered if she would be very lonely; if the Israelites would not like her nor want her to be in their land.

Flashcard 2-4

PowerPoint 2-4

CTU

Apply here according to the differences the "strangers" in your class may be aware of - things that make them feel different or out of place.

Do you sometimes feel a bit like Ruth may have felt? Maybe you are a little different from the other children in your class at school or even in our class today. Do others make fun of you or treat you unkindly because they all grew up in the country (or the city) and you didn't? They belong to a different religion from you. They speak a different language from the one you use at home. Most of the other children have a different colour of skin from yours. They seem to have more money to spend than you have. Or maybe other children make fun of you because you are not good at sports, or you don't have trendy clothes. Things like that make you feel strange, unwanted, maybe lonely.

This is an important part of your ministry.

Remember I am your friend and you can talk to me personally after the class and tell me about any problem like that. I'll do all I can to help you. But first of all let me tell you more about the Person Who can really help you.

There is Someone Who cares about you and loves you very deeply. He is God. He knows all about you. He wants to take care of your greatest need and help you with other problems too. Do you know what your greatest need is? It's not really to be accepted by other

people. Your greatest need is to have your sins against God forgiven. He wants to forgive you and make you clean.

He loved you so much that He gave His Son, the Lord Jesus, to be punished for your sin. You deserve to be punished for breaking God's laws, but Jesus took your punishment instead. He was put to death on a cross so that God could forgive you and accept you into His family as His child. Jesus did not stay dead. He rose from the dead and is alive today to be able to forgive you and to care for you.

Your greatest need is to have your sins forgiven, though you may have other important needs like feeling unwanted or strange, as Ruth may have felt as she arrived in a strange country, the strange town of Bethlehem, and listening to people she did not know, speaking with a different accent.

What happened to Ruth and Naomi after they returned to Bethlehem? God cared for them in a very wonderful way.

Poor people in those days were allowed to go into the fields when it was harvest time (when the farmers were cutting the grain and taking it into the barns). Behind the men who were tying the stalks of grain in bundles, poor people would come and gather up any of the crop that had been missed - in awkward spots in the corners of the field or at the end of a row that was hard to reach.

Flashcard 2-5

So Ruth went to the fields to see if she could pick up some of the barley that was being harvested.

"Ruth" enters at this point.

Teacher Hello! Who are you?

Ruth I'm Ruth. I think you have been telling the children about me!

Teacher Oh, Ruth from the Bible! Great! Welcome to our class! We would really love to hear more of your story. We had just got to the place where you had arrived in Bethlehem. What happened after that?

Ruth God was so good to me. I was poor and a foreigner. I wondered what would happen to me. But God really blessed me so wonderfully.

Teacher Well, tell us what happened. Did you get a job?

Ruth I went to the fields to see if I could pick up a little of the barley that was being harvested. I worked in the field of a man called Boaz. God worked in his heart so that he was kind to me and he let me eat with his servants at meal times. He even told his servants to leave some grain on purpose for me. I was able to collect lots and lots of barley.

PowerPoint 2-5

This part of the lesson could be given in two different ways - either as a straightforward story or as an interview with Ruth which would be more interesting. Another teacher or a capable helper or some other person could come prepared to take the part of Ruth. Have her dress up a little, with a shawl over her head and let her act out this interview. Make a photocopy of the interview to practise beforehand.

Teacher Terrific! God was really caring for you. What happened next?

Ruth I kept on going each day to the fields of Boaz and he continued to be nice to me. The next part is a little embarrassing to tell, but it was wonderful. Later Boaz fell in love with me and married me. And God gave us a baby son.

Teacher Marvellous! Isn't God great! How He cared for you when you must have been so full of fears in that strange land. Thank you so much for being with us today and telling us your story. Good-bye! God bless you!

Ruth Goodbye everyone. It was lovely to meet you all!

"Ruth" exits.

Flashcard 2-6

Boaz and Ruth did not know this but many hundreds of years later, one of their descendants would be the Lord Jesus.

Of course, the real father of the Lord Jesus was God, but Ruth was the great-great-great-...grandmother of Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus. What a privilege for Ruth, the lady who seemed to be so different from all the other people in Bethlehem! God chose her for this special honour rather than any of the other people living there at that time!

If you have trusted in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, He has a wonderful plan for you too. Not the same plan that He had for Ruth, but something very special just for you. If other people seem to reject you or make fun of you because you are different from them in some way, remember that God loves you. He accepts you, He understands you perfectly because He made you, He has a wonderful plan for you now and the rest of your life. If someone hurts you, turn to God and whisper to Him, "Thank You that You love me and understand me. Thank You that to You I am very special." The Lord Jesus can also help you to forgive those who are unkind to you. He can help you be kind to them.

CTS

Ruth - Boaz
Obed
Jesse
David
Joseph - Mary
Jesus

CTU

If you have never asked the Lord to wash away your sins, do you want Him to do that now? Do you want God to help you not to go on doing wrong? Trust in God today. Ask Him to wash away your sins and to make you His child. There is a lovely prayer in the Bible that a man prayed to God. Here it is, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7). If you pray that sincerely from your heart, God can make you clean and pure. Do that today, right now or when you go home. If you do, come and tell me so that I can help you more.

PowerPoint 2-6

Put these names on the board leaving a large gap between "David" and "Joseph and Mary".

Explain, however, that the Bible gives all the names of the people who lived in the thousand years between David and the birth of Jesus.

I have told you the story of Ruth quite quickly, but if some of you older ones want to read all the details of this story you can read it here in the Bible.

Show children how to find the book of Ruth in their Bible.

Review questions

- 1 Why did Elimelech and Naomi go to Moab? (There was no food [a famine] in Israel, their land.)
- 2 Tell us about three very sad things that happened in Moab. (Naomi's husband, Elimelech died and then her two sons died also.)
- 3 Why did Naomi decide to go back? (There was food again in Israel.)
- 4 What was the most important decision that Ruth made in all her life? (She decided to trust in God and not in the gods of the Moabites).
- 5 In what way was Ruth different to the other people in Bethlehem? (She was from Moab, a different country; probably she looked and spoke differently from the people of Israel.)
- 6 What might she have been afraid of? (She was probably afraid that she would not be accepted and that she would be lonely.)
- 7 Tell three wonderful blessings that God gave to her. (She was allowed to work in Boaz's fields; some barley was deliberately left for her; she married Boaz).
- 8 Imagine that you are talking to Orpah and finish the sentence. "Orpah, you made a terrible mistake trusting in the gods of Moab. You should have ..." ("You should have gone to Israel and learned to trust in the one true God.")
- 9 What is the greatest need every person has? (To have his/her sins forgiven.)
- 10 What should a Christian child do if he feels hurt when someone makes fun of him because he is different in some way? (Remember that God loves him and accepts him - thank Him for that.)

Carry-over activity

Trust in God

Make photocopies (if possible on fine card) of the template on page 42 and have them available for children who wish to pick one up after class. It is an activity for Christian children but do not prevent unsaved children taking one if they wish.

Explain what is to be done. Colour this little picture. Set it up in your room like this. When you feel sad or rejected, trust in God. He can help you when you are attacked.

Lesson 3

Clean in a dirty world (Samuel)

Scripture for teachers

1 Samuel 2:12-26

1 Samuel 3:1-21

Central truth

God can make clean and keep clean those who trust in Him

Application

Unsaved: Trust in God to make you clean from sin

Saved: Trust in God to keep you clean

Objective

Children faced with temptations (especially of a sexual nature) will resist, inspired by the story of how God enabled Samuel to stay clean.

Where to use

Specially for use with children exposed to reading material or scenes on TV/video etc, where illicit sex is presented.

Memory verse

“... Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”
Psalm 51:7

Visual aids

◆ Flashcards: 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 3-5 and 3-6

Or

◆ PowerPoint slides: 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 3-5 and 3-6

Teaching methods

Mainly narrative and questions leading to discussion.
A review quiz is also included.

Vocabulary

The examples and vocabulary in this lesson are quite explicit. You might have to omit some of the words or expressions. But be careful - if you listen to children (even quite little ones) it is amazing to hear their explicit talk about sexual matters, even abnormal sex. The vocabulary in this lesson is mild compared to some of their talk! The children need your help to give them a Biblical perspective.

Lesson outline

Introduction

A flower in a rubbish dump CT

Progression of events

1 Samuel and the sons of Eli in the temple CT

2 The secret of Samuel's life with God
- He listens to God CTS
- He comes to know God personally - he is made clean CTU

- He serves God faithfully - he is kept clean CTS

3 The wasted lives of Eli's two sons

Conclusion

Follow Samuel's example CTS, CTU

Lesson

One day a lady was walking along a road outside a large city. The road went past a big rubbish dump. Piled high, one thing on top of another were old tyres, rotting food, old clothes and all kinds of dirty, smelly rubbish. In the middle of it all there was something white that caught the lady's attention. When she came closer, she saw that it was a lovely white flower.

Flashcard 3-1

"What a beautiful surprise," she said to herself, "to find that pure, clean flower among all that dirt and rottenness. I would love to be like that flower. I want to be clean and pure in this world that is so full of dirty, rotten things, of cruelty and selfishness and hatred."

CT

Do you sometimes feel like that too? You see all kinds of "dirty" things around, but you want to be clean. Boys and girls, and men and women do many things that are wrong and "dirty", things that must seem very ugly to God, who is so pure and holy. He hates all these things that are against His will and His commands.

Here are the kind of things that displease God:

- ◆ Two boys watching a "dirty" video about sex, on the TV screen in their bedroom.
- ◆ A group of children in the playground at school laughing at "dirty" jokes.
- ◆ A young teen looking at sexy pictures in a magazine that his older brother brought home.
- ◆ A man leaving his wife and children to go and live with another woman.
- ◆ A girl getting pregnant when she is not married. Maybe she has been in bed with various men and does not even know who is the father of the baby.

These sinful acts are taking place all around you. People laugh about them and tell jokes about them. As you watch some films on the television, sometimes it looks like fun to do these things. Maybe you know that others are doing these wrong things but you want to be different. How can you live in a way that is clean and different and also have a really happy life? Let's look at a story in the Bible to find the answer.

Flashcard 3-2

Many hundreds of years before the Lord Jesus came to earth, there was a young man called Samuel. He worked in the tabernacle of God, helping the priest called Eli. The tabernacle was a beautiful big tent where God's special people, the Jews, worshipped God and where the priests worked. Probably Samuel helped with the cleaning of the

PowerPoint 3-1

The objective of this lesson is to help children faced with temptations, especially of a sexual nature. But if you have younger children in your class you might want to leave out some of these examples, or substitute other sins like lying, losing your temper, etc.

PowerPoint 3-2

tabernacle, filling the lamps with oil, taking the ashes away after the sacrifices had been made on the altar, making sure that the special robes that the priest wore were clean and in the right place. Possibly he had other important jobs as well.

It sounds as if it was a wonderful place to live and to work, doesn't it? But the two sons of Eli were very wicked young men. When people came to offer a sacrifice to God of a lamb or another animal, these two sons would demand first of all the best parts of the animals for themselves to eat. If the person was not willing to do what they demanded, they would order their servants to take it by force. They were not only selfish, greedy and violent, but also they were taking girls to bed with them. God was very displeased about the way they were acting. We read in 1 Samuel 2:17, "The sin of the young men was very great before the Lord."

Maybe you don't do exactly what these men did, but you are also doing things that God hates. Maybe you have unclean thoughts, or you say bad words, or you act in a bad manner. All these things are sins and keep you away from God Who is clean, without even one single sin. God wants you to be clean, but you have a sinful heart and maybe you follow the bad example of an older brother, sister or friend. Eli's sons were also a bad example for young Samuel.

Probably Samuel was tempted to live just like the other two men. Maybe it seemed that these two older friends were having a wonderful time - living in this immoral way. But the important thing is that God was displeased by their conduct. Samuel did not follow their example. His life was like that white flower in the middle of the rubbish dump. How did he stay clean?

Flashcard 3-3

One night, when he was still quite young, Samuel was sleeping in the tabernacle. In the middle of the night an exciting and wonderful thing happened. Let's read about it.

Read 1 Samuel 3:3-4.

Yes, God called Samuel. He did not realise who was speaking to him. He thought it was Eli and so he ran to the priest and asked him, "What do you need?"

"I did not call you," answered Eli.

So Samuel went back to bed a bit puzzled.

Again the Lord called, "Samuel, Samuel," and the boy ran again to Eli's bedside, thinking again that it was the old man who was calling for him.

"No, I did not call you," said the priest for a second time.

Back to bed went Samuel. And for a third time he heard the voice, "Samuel, Samuel!"

You may need to explain "sacrifices".

Read the verse from your Bible.

CT

PowerPoint 3-3

Read (or have a helper/ older child read) the verse from your Bible.

Read the verse from your Bible.

CTS

Once more he ran to Eli, lying in bed. This time Eli realised that it must be God Himself Who was calling Samuel. So he told his young helper how to reply when he heard God calling again. Let's read 1 Samuel 3:10. Those last words are so important, "Your servant hears [is listening]." And Samuel did exactly that - He listened to God's voice. That is the first secret of how to be like a white flower in a rubbish dump - listen to God's Word.

Flashcard 3-4

PowerPoint 3-4

If you want to live in a way that pleases God, if you want to be clean - you too must listen to God's Word. Here in our Good News Club we open the Bible each week and teach you from it. Are you listening attentively? This is God's voice or God's Word speaking to us. You need to get into the habit of reading a little of God's Word on your own too - just a few verses each day.

Be prepared to provide reading notes or some help for children to read their Bible regularly.

On page 43 is a template of a bookmark with readings for a month, from the Gospel of John. Make photocopies on card if you wish to use this idea.

CTU

I have this little bookmark that you could pick up there on the table at the back after the class has ended. It will show you how you can read a few verses each day and in this way listen to God. This is how we know about God. This is how we discover what He wants us to do. Samuel started off right, listening to God's Word.

Samuel had been working quite a long time in the tabernacle before he heard God's voice calling him, but he had not really known the Lord personally (1 Samuel 3:7). It is not enough to know the stories in the Bible and all the things that God did and said. It is important for each of us to know the Lord as our own personal Saviour and Friend.

Do you know that the Lord Jesus died on the cross for all the wrong things that you have done? Do you feel sorry for the things that you have done disobeying Him? Do you want Him to forgive you and to change you? He wants to be your Saviour and Helper. Have you ever asked Him? You could use the words of the verse we learned today, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7). You could do that today and Jesus will hear your prayer. He will forgive your sin, and accept you as a child in His family. He will always be at your side to help you live a clean life as Samuel did.

Of course Samuel did not become perfect. He still did some wrong things and made some mistakes, but God was by his side helping him to be very, very different from those bad, older companions. You will not become perfect either overnight. But God will give you the strength to change your behaviour more and more.

Samuel was like a clean flower in a rubbish dump because ...

- ◆ he listened to God's Word.
- ◆ he came to know and trust in the Lord personally.

Flashcard 3-5

But that was not the end of the story. He served the Lord faithfully in Israel for many years (1 Samuel 7:15). He taught the people from God's Word and helped them to make right decisions. As he obeyed the Lord, God gave him a good life.

This is what God wants for you too - if you have already trusted in Him as your Saviour, He is able to keep you clean and help you to serve Him faithfully. You can be an example to others in your family and in your school.

Flashcard 3-6

Let the children suggest answers to the five questions below, before you suggest a solution. Be sure to emphasise the following:

- (a) *if at all possible, the need to avoid being in places, or with people where they know they will be tempted to look at or listen to "dirty" things.*
- (b) *the importance of doing what God says in His Word - eg "Flee the evil desires of youth" (2 Timothy 2:22 NIV), "Keep yourself pure" (1 Timothy 5:22) and "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Ephesians 6:10).*
- (c) *the need to ask the Lord for help.*
- (d) *the importance of taking some action - walk away, turn off the TV, etc.*

- 1 If some friends are looking at "dirty" magazines, what could you do? (If you knew what they were doing, stay away from them. Quietly ask the Lord to help you, and walk away!)
- 2 If someone is telling a "dirty" joke, what will you do? (Stay away! Pray quietly for strength and say, "No, thank you, I don't want to listen to that kind of joke.")
- 3 If a bad programme comes on the television, what will you do if you are on your own? (Turn it off.)
- 4 If you are with others looking at television, what could you do? (Ask them could you change to another channel.)
- 5 If they don't want to turn to another channel, what? (Just say politely, "I think I'll go and do something else." Maybe it would be a good chance to read some verses from the Bible and listen to God's voice!)

Samuel's life was so much better and more worthwhile than that of the two sons of Eli, who were taking girls to bed and getting them pregnant. God was not pleased with them. Their lives were a disgrace to themselves and to their father. They also had a sad ending dying in a battle when the enemy Philistines defeated Israel.

God wants you to be like Samuel and take these three important steps.

- ◆ Listen to God's Word. You need to do that here in class and as you read the Bible yourself.

PowerPoint 3-5

CTS

PowerPoint 3-6

Teaching method:
Questions and
discussion.

CTS, CTU

- ◆ Get to know the Lord as your Saviour and Friend. Pray, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psalm 51:7). Do it today! If you already have, come and talk to me after the class so that I can help you more.
- ◆ Trust Him each day to keep you clean and be an example to others.

Review questions

- 1 Who was Eli? (The priest who worked in the tabernacle [tent].)
- 2 Where did Samuel live and what was his job? (He lived in the tabernacle and helped Eli.)
- 3 Why did Samuel run to Eli’s bedside three times? (He thought that Eli was calling him by name.)
- 4 There were three important things that Samuel learned that helped him to live a clean life. What was the first? (Listen to God’s Word.)
- 5 What was the second important thing that Samuel learned? (Get to know the Lord as your Saviour and Friend.)
- 6 Repeat the memory verse for today. (“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” Psalm 51:7.)
- 7 What did Samuel do after he came to know the Lord? (He served the Lord for many years.)
- 8 Why is it important to stay away from places where you know you will be tempted to look at or to listen to “dirty” things? (The first step in overcoming temptation is to stay away from places where you may be tempted.)

Carry-over activity

Staying clean in a dirty world

Make photocopies of the flower on page 44.

Children who wish to may take a copy as they leave. Tell them to explain the story about the flower to a parent (or both parents) and tell them what they learned in Good News Club this week.

Lesson 4

Learning to forgive others (Peter)

Scripture for teachers

Matthew 18:21-35

Central truth

God offers forgiveness to all

Application

Unsaved: Accept God's forgiveness as a first step to forgiving others

Saved: Forgive those who have hurt you

Objective

Unsaved children will learn that God is willing to forgive them and they will receive His forgiveness. Children who know that God has forgiven them will be enabled to forgive others (adults or children) who have hurt them.

Where to use

In a wide variety of situations, but especially where children have been hurt physically or emotionally by other children or by adults; even extreme cases where children have been neglected or abandoned by parents.

Memory verse

"Be kind ... forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" Ephesians 4:32

Younger children could learn just half of the verse

Visual aids

◆ Flashcards: 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-5 and 4-6

Or

◆ PowerPoint slides: 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-5 and 4-6

Teaching methods

As well as narrative, there are three sets of questions incorporated into the text. This topic of forgiveness is one that really speaks to the heart of the children and they may have questions of their own also. Take time to discuss with them. (You do not have to memorize the questions - it is all right to read them out.) This is an important teaching method. As there are many questions in the lesson itself, a review quiz has not been added.

Lesson outline

Introduction

Monica

Progression of events

- 1 Peter, the disciple, asks a question about forgiveness
- 2 Jesus tells the story of the king who forgave the debtor CTU
- 3 The man who was forgiven, will not forgive a debtor CTS

Conclusion

- Forgive others CTU
- Accept God's forgiveness as a first step to forgiving others CTS

Lesson

Flashcard 4-1

PowerPoint 4-1

Monica was a girl who attended a Good News Club. (This is a true story). She came from a very unhappy home.

She had a bigger brother called Michael but he was not really a brother, because his father was not Monica's Dad. Monica's Mum did not treat the two children in the same way. She always hugged and kissed Michael. She never hugged or kissed Monica. She gave lovely birthday presents to Michael, but never gave any to Monica.

Teaching method:
Discussion of questions.
The teacher comments on the children's answers.
The children may have more questions themselves. Take time to answer.

- 1 How do you think Monica felt inside? (She felt very sad, angry and rejected.)
- 2 How do you think she acted in the Good News Club? (She enjoyed it, but she behaved very badly because she had all these angry, unhappy feelings inside.)
- 3 Would it be possible for Monica to forgive her Mum for treating her so unfairly? (Yes, but it would not be at all easy. God could help her.)
- 4 Was God pleased with Monica's Mum? (Not at all, though God loves her as he loves everyone.)
- 5 Would God be pleased with Monica if she did not learn to forgive her Mum? (No. He understands how difficult it is to forgive, but if Monica trusted in Him for His help, He could help her learn to forgive.)

Maybe you feel sad and angry inside because somebody has been unkind to you - maybe other children, or some adult. Would you like to learn this very important lesson about how to forgive?

It is not easy, but we can learn how to do it from God's Word.

Flashcard 4-2

PowerPoint 4-2

Peter had a question for Jesus about forgiving people. Let's read what he asked Jesus.

Read the verse from your Bible.

Read Matthew 18:21.

He wanted to know if he should be prepared to forgive a person up to seven times. Maybe there was somebody who kept doing unkind things to Peter. He had tried to forgive him several times, but his patience was coming to an end. I think Peter expected Jesus to say, "Oh yes, seven times is plenty." But the Lord Jesus replied (Matthew 18:22), "490 times." He just meant many times! You must learn to forgive **many times!** Then the Lord told a story to Peter and the other disciples to help them understand.

Flashcard 4-3

One time there was a king who was looking at his book where he noted down all his money matters. He found there that a man owed him a great sum of money. Look at verse 24 and find how much this man owed. Yes, 10,000 talents. That was an absolutely huge amount. In today's money it would be millions of euros or dollars.

He called the man in and told him it was time to pay back the money. How did the man react? Look at verse 26. He did three things. What were they? Yes, he fell to his knees, he asked the king to be patient with him and he promised to pay the money back. It was such a huge sum, that it would really have been totally impossible for the poor man to earn all that money and pay his debt. There must have been such a terrible look of despair on the face of the man that the king did a very, very kind thing. What did he do? Let's look at verse 27. He "was moved with compassion [took pity on him], released him, and forgave him the debt." The man must have been so happy and grateful to the king who had showed him so much kindness. I am sure he ran out of the palace jumping for joy and started for home to tell his wife and children the wonderful good news.

Do you think Peter understood why Jesus was telling him and the others this story? Do **you** understand? Jesus was reminding Peter and all of us that there is a great King before whom we have a huge debt. That King is God.

He has ordered us in His Word, the Bible, to do what is good. He commands you to tell the truth always, to obey your parents always, to be kind to others, and above all to love Him with all your heart. Have you always given your obedience to God by doing those things? No, nor have I, nor has anyone. We have all done many wrong things and disobeyed the great King. You, too, have a great debt to Him because so many times you have not given Him your obedience and good actions that He expected from you. You have a huge debt, so big that you could never pay it back.

God is not only perfect and holy, He is also loving and kind. What does He want to do for you? He wants to forgive you. You deserve to be punished for all your disobedience to Him. But the Lord Jesus, God's only Son offered to take the punishment that you deserve (Romans 5:8). He came down from Heaven and though He never did one single thing wrong, He went to the cross and there God, His loving Father, allowed Him to be put to death because of all the sins that you and I have committed. He did not stay dead; He came alive again and went back to His home in Heaven.

Today, if you have never done so before, come to God in prayer. Tell Him that you have done wrong. Tell Him that you are really sorry for the way that you have behaved. Thank Him for taking the punishment for your sins on the cross and ask Him to come into your life to

PowerPoint 4-3

Have an older child read the verse from your Bible.

Have an older child read the verse from your Bible.

Read the verse from your Bible.

CTU

forgive you and to change you. He promises that if you turn from your sin and turn to Him, your sins will be “blotted out” (Acts 3:19). You will be like the man in the story that Jesus told, whose debt had been wiped out. But the story does not end there.

Flashcard 4-4

PowerPoint 4-4

The man ran out of the king’s palace so happy. On the way home he met another man. Suddenly he remembered, “This man owes me some money.” It was not a very big sum, certainly not if you compare it to the great sum that he himself had owed the king. Now, what will he do? Let’s give the two men names. What will we call the first one? Frank? And the second one? Don? OK?

Teaching method:
Questions and answers.

- 1 How should the man who was forgiven by the king (Frank) treat the person who owes him some money (Don)? (He should forgive him immediately.)
- 2 Why should Frank forgive Don? (Because the king had already forgiven him his debt.)
- 3 Who is the great King who wants to forgive us our big debt? (God.)
- 4 Could we ever have paid that debt ourselves? (No.)
- 5 It would still be a little hard for Frank to forgive Don. Why? (Because he would lose the money that he had hoped to get back.)
- 6 It may still be a little hard for you and me to forgive another person who has hurt us. If so, what should we remember? (That God has forgiven us much, much more.)
- 7 Can you say today’s memory verse and explain it to me? (Verse: “Be kind ... forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” Ephesians 4:32.)
- 8 What do you think Frank did? Did he tell Don that he would not have to pay that little amount that he owed? (Let’s go back to our Bible story and find out.)

Flashcard 4-5

PowerPoint 4-5

In Matthew 18:28 we find out what the man whom the king had forgiven - we call him Frank - did when he met his friend. Let’s read.

Read aloud from your Bible.

“He laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’” (Matthew 18:28).

What a terrible way to react! Can you picture that? Frank grabbing Don by the throat and roaring at him, “You have got to pay me back!”

Don fell to his knees and begged, "Please be patient with me and I will pay you back." But Frank would not be patient or kind. He had Don taken off to prison for not paying his debt.

Some people had been watching this whole scene and listening to Frank shouting and acting so cruelly. They were very upset and they went and told the king what Frank had done. The king was so disappointed and angry that he decided to punish Frank. The story ends with Frank in jail and miserable.

What an unhappy ending to the story! A lot of people were angry, upset and sad.

Flashcard 4-6

- 1 How do you think the king felt when he heard about Frank's behaviour? (He was angry and disappointed - verse 34.)
- 2 How does God, the great King feel when you are not willing to forgive somebody else, especially if you are His child and have already been forgiven all your sin by Him? (Sad, angry and disappointed.)
- 3 How did the people who watched Frank's behaviour feel? (They were upset too - verse 31.)
- 4 How may other people feel if they see that you are not willing to forgive? (They may be disappointed too.)
- 5 What about poor old Don, how would he feel? (Probably sad and angry.)
- 6 How do you think Frank himself felt when he finished up in jail? (Ashamed and sad.)
- 7 How will you feel if you do not learn to forgive? (You will be unhappy with all those bitter thoughts inside you. Maybe you will behave badly too because you have that unforgiving attitude in your heart.)

Have you asked the Lord Jesus to forgive your sins and save you? Yes? Then, if He has forgiven you so much, ask Him to help you to forgive others when they do something that hurts you.

Let's say our memory verse together again. "Be kind ... forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

It is not always easy to forgive. But God can help you to do so.

When you learn to forgive, four wonderful things happen:

Point up.

- 1 God will be pleased.

Point out.

- 2 The person you forgive will be thankful.

PowerPoint 4-6

Teaching method:
Questions and answers.

CTS

CTS

Point around in a circle.

3 Other people who see your kind behaviour will be blessed.

Point to yourself.

4 You yourself will be happier because you have done what is right, though it was hard.

Have the children repeat the words and do the actions.

CTU

If you have never come to God to ask for His forgiveness, do it today. Just as the king in the story forgave the man who owed him a lot of money, so the great King in Heaven wants to forgive you.

God says, “Repent therefore [turn from your sin] and be converted [turn to God], that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19). Let us bow our heads quietly now and close our eyes. Right now you could ask the Lord to forgive you for all your sin. If you do not understand how to pray to God, or you would like more help, come to me after the class and I will sit down and talk to you about this important matter.

When you receive His forgiveness, He will help you to learn how to forgive others who may have done things to hurt you.

Carry-over activity

Forgiveness

Make photocopies of the template on page 45 for the children to complete during the week.

Lesson 5

Despised by others, forgiven by God (Matthew)

Scripture for teachers

Luke 5:27-32

Central truth

God is willing and able to forgive sin and change lives

Application

Unsaved: Call on God to forgive you

Saved: Thank God for having forgiven you - go on to serve Him

Objective

Children, possibly from unstable family situations, will learn how they can have forgiveness for past wrong doings. The lesson is mainly evangelistic.

A secondary objective is to help children who have guilt feelings about things for which they are really not responsible; for example divorce of parents, or some action they were obliged to do by adults.

Where to use

The lesson would be suitable principally for unchurched children (in Good News Clubs, camp, Holiday Bible Clubs) but would also be suitable for Sunday Schools.

Memory verse

Review Ephesians 4:32

Visual aids

◆ Flashcards: 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, 5-4, 5-5 and 5-6

Or

◆ PowerPoint slides: 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, 5-4, 5-5 and 5-6

And

◆ At the end of the lesson you will also need a whiteboard, flip-chart or any large sheet of white paper

Teaching methods

A variety of teaching methods has been used - case study, interview, Bible search, as well as narrative. A review quiz is also supplied to reinforce learning in an attractive manner. Some of the teaching methods

would be most suitable for use with older children (8-10 years old).

As a part of your preparation, read the questions for review and application at the end of the lesson. They will help you to pick out the important points to teach in the lesson.

Lesson outline

Introduction

Jeffrey is forgiven by his father CT

Progression of events

- 1 God can forgive your sins CTU
- 2 Matthew the tax-collector tells his story
- 3 His life as a tax-collector
- 4 Jesus calls Him to follow
- 5 His life is changed - he becomes a disciple CTU

Climax

- 6 God forgives and blots out our sins when we trust Him CT
- 7 Do not feel guilty for things that are not your fault

Conclusion

Come to the Lord today CTU, CTS

Lesson

Flashcard 5-1

PowerPoint 5-1

Jeffrey was nine years old. One day at school there was a big fight with several of his class involved. Jeffrey was in the middle of it. Afterwards he was so angry at some of the boys who had insulted and hurt him. He decided to take revenge. Next day when he was supposed to be at the toilet and no-one was looking, he opened several of the lockers that had not been shut with a key. Then he took his pen-knife and made cuts in the football shirts of the boys that had annoyed him.

That afternoon the damage was found, and there was a tremendous row. Somehow the headmaster found out that Jeffrey was the culprit.

The headmaster called Jeffrey's father and asked him to come into the school.

Flashcard 5-2

PowerPoint 5-2

Jeffrey felt so ashamed as he stood in the headmaster's study and his father was told the whole story. He felt guilty too, because he knew that he had done something terrible. His father was very sad that Jeffrey had got into such serious trouble. Because he loved his son, Jeffrey's father had warned him many times about his bad temper and his bad behaviour. He had even punished him to help him learn to stop doing these wrong things.

Now Jeffrey said, "Dad, I am so sorry. Please forgive me. This will be the last time I do this kind of thing."

He really meant it. He knew that he deserved to be punished for the awful thing he had done.

His father stood thinking for a moment before he said, "You deserve to have to pay for the shirts because you are the one who cut them. But because I love you, I'm going to pay for new football shirts. And I forgive you." He showed that he did by giving his son a hug.

That day really changed Jeffrey's behaviour. Because his father was so kind to him, from then on he behaved much better at school and at home. He wanted to please his father.

Let's think about this little story.

- 1 How had Jeffrey's father tried to keep him from doing wrong? (His father had warned him about his bad temper and had even punished him sometimes.)
- 2 Whose fault was it that Jeffrey had got into trouble - his or his father's? (His own.)
- 3 How did the father show that he had really forgiven Jeffrey? (He gave his son a hug and he paid for new shirts.)

- 4 What did it cost the father to forgive Jeffrey? (The price of the shirts.)
- 5 Why do you think his dad decided to forgive Jeffrey? (Because he loved him.)

In a way, that is a picture of how God forgives, but God's forgiveness is even more wonderful. God is willing and able to forgive sins and change lives.

You and I are like Jeffrey. The Bible tells us that we have all done wrong things. You probably have not done what Jeffrey did, but yes, you have done other things that displease God and make Him sad.

When you tell lies, or lose your temper or don't obey your parents, you do wrong to other people, but especially you are sinning against God. In the Bible, His Word, He commands us to tell the truth and He says, "Children, obey your parents" (Ephesians 6:1). When you tell lies and disobey your parents, you are also disobeying God; the great God of Heaven who is perfectly good.

Jeffrey's father forgave his son because he loved him. He was willing to pay for the damage that Jeffrey had done. Some of you have wonderful parents like Jeffrey's who love and care for you. But maybe there are some of you whose parents have separated. One has gone away and you feel that your mum or your dad does not really want to have you. That is really, really sad, but I want you to know that there is Someone who dearly loves you - more than any parent can; more than any teacher can, though I do love you. That person is God.

His Son, the Lord Jesus, died on the cross for the wrong things you have done. We read in the Bible that God sent Jesus into this world to be born as a little baby, then to live a perfect life and at last to go to the cross and die for all your sins and mine.

Flashcard 5-3

On the cross, God heaped on Jesus all the ugly things that you and I have done, the lies, the cheating, the disobedience, the nasty thoughts. Then the Lord Jesus suffered that terrible death for the wrong things that you and all of us have done. We deserve to die but Jesus died instead of us. He did not stay dead. He rose again and is alive forever. He is living and He can forgive and change you. Jeffrey's dad forgave his son, but there was one thing he could not do for Jeffrey, something that God can do for you. What was it? (Change him.) Yes, Jeffrey's dad forgave him, but he could not change him inside. God can do that. If you want God to change you, you can pray and ask Him to do that. If you are not quite sure what you need to do, come and talk to me after the class. I will be *(indicate a place)*. Don't be afraid. I want to help you and I will be very glad to speak with you personally.

CT

CTU

CT

Read Isaiah 53:6 to the children.

CTU

PowerPoint 5-3

Make yourself available for personal counselling.

Jeffrey's dad paid for the damaged shirts. Because He loved us, God paid a much greater price for us to be forgiven. What was it? (Gave His Son to die in our place.)

There are many stories in the Bible of people who did wrong things and must have felt guilty too.

Let me introduce you to a man who lived when the Lord Jesus was alive on earth.

At this point tell the story of the call of Matthew using flashcards 5-4 and 5-5. Alternatively you might have an interview with Matthew. Could someone from your church or a capable helper take the part of Matthew? For more dramatic effect, have someone dress up in a robe and head covering. You could have written questions to guide the interview. The person taking the part of Matthew would need to read the text carefully beforehand, but would not need to memorise the part.

Teacher What is your name?

Matthew Matthew.

Teacher Are you the Matthew who was one of the disciples whom the Lord Jesus taught and who followed Him?

Matthew Yes, indeed.

Teacher It must have been wonderful to be a friend of the Lord Jesus. Was it?

Matthew Yes, it certainly was! Even now I can hardly believe that God allowed a person like me to learn from Jesus and to be with Him for three years. I had done such terrible things before.

Teacher Would you be good enough to tell us a little of your story? I have been wanting to meet you. I even have some questions written down that I want to ask you. Is that alright?

Matthew Yes. You see I did things that make me feel ashamed now. The Romans had conquered our land of Israel and they ruled over us for many years. They made all of us Jewish people pay lots of money or taxes to them. The Jewish people felt sad and angry that they could not rule themselves but had to obey the Romans; but I worked for the Romans. It makes me so embarrassed and ashamed now.

Teacher Why do you feel ashamed?

Flashcard 5-4

Matthew I worked for the enemies of my people. I was like a traitor to them. I felt bad and guilty inside me at that time but I certainly did not show it on the outside. I did not try to collect the taxes in a way that would not draw attention.

Instead I set up a little office right in the street where everybody passed by and there I collected the money. We tax collectors often took more money than we should and kept it for ourselves rather than handing it on to the Romans.

Teacher But that all changed, didn't it?

Flashcard 5-5

Matthew Yes, it certainly did! One day the Lord Jesus was passing by in the street and He called me to follow Him.

PowerPoint 5-5

Teacher Did you know who the person was who called you to follow?

Matthew I had heard about the wonderful things He did and said. I really did not know then all that I know now - that He is God the Son, Who came down from Heaven to die on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven and that our lives could be changed. I only understood later that He died for all the wrong that I and each one of us has done.

Teacher So what did you do when He called you to follow Him?

Matthew That day I got up from my desk and followed Him. I was so glad that I made a great feast in my house. Jesus, other friends of His and some of my tax-collector friends all came and we had a wonderful time together. Some people criticised Jesus for eating with us tax-collectors.

Teacher How did you feel when Jesus came to your house?

Matthew We were so glad that He was prepared to be with us. I felt so bad and so guilty inside. I learned to trust Jesus. I know that He has forgiven me the wrong things that I did. I know that He was punished on the cross so that I would not be punished. He has changed me and those guilty feelings are gone!

Maybe like Jeffrey, or Matthew in the time of Jesus, you know that you have done wrong. You have disobeyed God and now you also feel bad and guilty inside. God loves you and wants to forgive you and change you.

CTU

Today come to Him. You can't walk up to Him like Matthew did so long ago, but you can come to Him in prayer. He promises, "The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37b). Tell Him that you know that you have done wrong things. Tell Him that you want Him to change you. Thank Him, the Son of God for loving you so much and for dying to take the punishment that you deserve. Ask Him to forgive you and to change you. Come to Him today!

What does God do with all the wrong things after we have asked Him to forgive us? Let's find out.

CT

PowerPoint 5-6a,b,c,d,e

On separate slips of paper print out the five verses given. Put them in your Bible with the ends sticking out. Invite a child to come up, pull a verse from your Bible and

CTU

read it. Then the teacher writes on a white-board (or shows on a card) the words which tell what God does with our sins. Do this with each of the five verses.

Make yourself available for personal counselling.

CTS

Flashcard 5-6

Bible verse	What God does
Acts 3:19	He wipes out our sins.
Micah 7:19	He casts them into the deep sea.
Psalms 51:2	He washes them away.
Isaiah 44:22	He blots them out.
Hebrews 8:12	He remembers them no more.

Come to the Lord today! He wants to receive you - to forgive you and change you!

At this point, or at some other moment in the programme, you might like to add the following.

Sometimes boys and girls feel guilty about something that was not really their fault. For example, when Mum and Dad separate and one leaves, the children can think, "It is all my fault. I am the reason that Mum or Dad has left" - but it is not your fault. That is a decision that adults have made. It probably has made you sad, but it is not your fault.

Sometimes an adult makes you do something that is wrong. You don't want to do it but they tell you not to worry and make you do it. Maybe they even tell you not to tell anyone. Inside you feel guilty and bad. Again, don't blame yourself. It is not your fault.

If you have a problem like that and want to talk to me, of course you can. I am your friend and I will be happy to listen to you and help you if I can.

If you have already trusted in Jesus as your Saviour, thank Him each day that He has accepted you as His child and He has forgiven all your sins. You don't need to feel guilty for the things in the past. Jesus took the punishment for them on the cross. In His sight you are clean. Ask the Lord Jesus each day also to help you to live the way He wants you to. He can help you to be like Matthew the tax collector who became His disciple and one who helped many other people to follow Jesus.

Review questions

- 1 What was Matthew's job? (Tax collector.)
- 2 What wrong things had he done that displeased God? (As he worked for the Romans [the enemy] he probably took more money than he should have.)
- 3 How did he become one of the disciples of the Lord Jesus? (Jesus called him to follow.)
- 4 What did he do to show how grateful and happy he was after the Lord Jesus called him? (He invited Jesus to a great feast that he had prepared.)
- 5 Why did Jesus mix with people like Matthew and the other tax collectors? (He came to earth to save all kinds of sinners.)

- 6 What great price did God pay so that Matthew's sins (and ours) could be forgiven? (He gave His Son to die on the cross.)
- 7 How can you have your sins forgiven? (Come to Jesus and ask Him to forgive you.)
- 8 What does God do with our sins when we confess them to Him and trust in Him? Tell me two things He does. (He forgives; He washes them away.)
- 9 Two other things that he does? (He does not remember; He blots them out.)
- 10 Can you say the memory verse? ("Be kind ... forgiving one other, even as God in Christ forgave you" Ephesians 4:32.)

Carry-over activity

What does God do with our sins?

Make photocopies on card of the template on page 46. There are two circles. One has the questions "What does God do with our sins?" and a segment cut out. The other circle is joined behind the first with a paper fastener (which you will need to provide). The second circle has the five answers printed so that they appear in the "window" of the first circle. Tell the children to use this visual aid to review and learn the five answers.

God receives and uses those who trust in Him

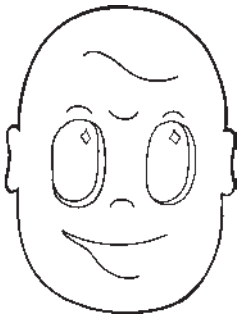
Central truth - lesson 1



God loves you

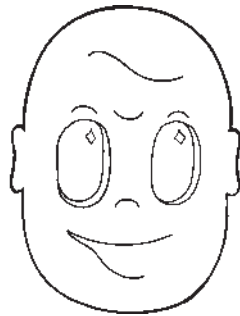
Carry-over activity - lesson 1

Don't be sad!



Remember God loves you.

Don't be sad!



Remember God loves you.

Trust in God

Carry-over activity - lesson 2

If you belong to God, remember ...

He can help you when you are attacked.

God is our refuge

Trust in Him!

"You're strange."

"You don't belong here."

"We don't want you."

If you belong to God, remember ...

He can help you when you are attacked.

God is our refuge

Trust in Him!

"You're strange."

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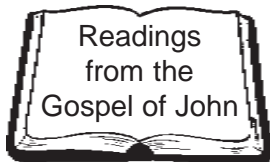
"You're strange."

"You don't belong here."

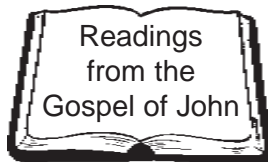
"We don't want you."

Bookmark

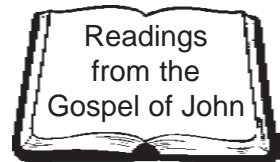
Lesson 3



Day 1 John 1:1-12
 Day 2 John 1:19-29
 Day 3 John 1:30-34
 Day 4 John 1:35-42
 Day 5 John 1:43-51
 Day 6 John 2:1-12
 Day 7 John 2:13-22
 Day 8 John 3:1-7
 Day 9 John 3:14-21
 Day 10 John 4:1-10
 Day 11 John 4:11-26
 Day 12 John 4:43-54
 Day 13 John 5:1-9
 Day 14 John 6:1-13
 Day 15 John 6:16-24
 Day 16 John 9:1-12
 Day 17 John 10:1-13
 Day 18 John 10:14-18;27-30
 Day 19 John 11:1-6;14-19
 Day 20 John 11:20-31
 Day 21 John 11:32-44
 Day 22 John 12:1-8
 Day 23 John 12:12-19
 Day 24 John 13:1-17
 Day 25 John 13:21-30
 Day 26 John 13:31-38
 Day 27 John 14:1-9
 Day 28 John 14:21-27
 Day 29 John 15:1-12
 Day 30 John 15:13-17
 Day 31 John 16:5-15



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 Day 30 John 15:13-17
 Day 31 John 16:5-15

Staying clean in a dirty world

Carry-over activity - lesson 3

If you want to stay clean in a dirty world,
as Samuel did ...

... listen to God's Word.



.. know the Lord Jesus as
your Saviour and Friend.

... trust in God for
strength when you
are tempted.

If you want to stay clean in a dirty world,
as Samuel did ...

... listen to God's Word.



.. know the Lord Jesus as
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.. know the Lord Jesus as
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strength when you
are tempted.

Forgiveness

Carry-over activity - lesson 4

If you have trusted in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour,



God has given you a great bucket full of forgiveness. Ask Him to help you give a little of forgiveness to others.



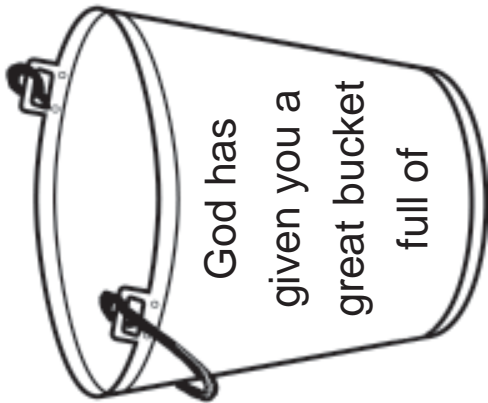
Draw a little cup every time this week that God helps you to forgive someone.

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Show the page with the cups to the teacher in your Club next week.

If you have trusted in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour,



God has given you a great bucket full of forgiveness. Ask Him to help you give a little of forgiveness to others.



Draw a little cup every time this week that God helps you to forgive someone.

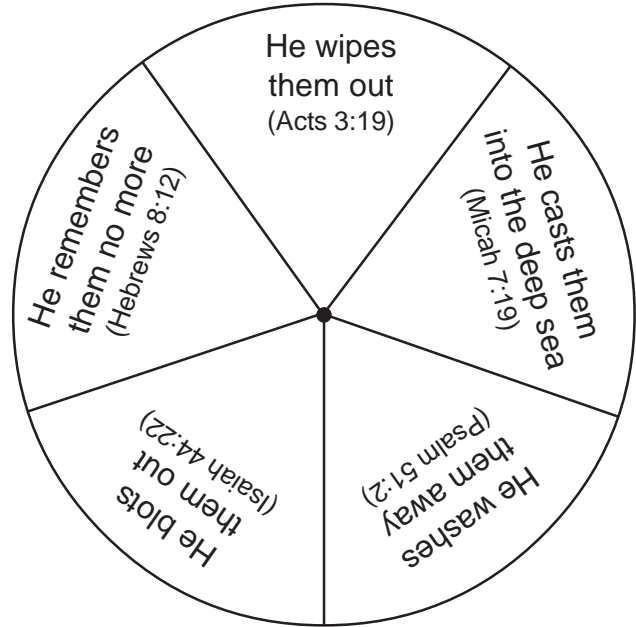
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Show the page with the cups to the teacher in your Club next week.

What does God do with our sins?

Carry-over activity - lesson 5



Copy, cut out and keep in your Bible



Summary of steps for counselling the child who wants to come to Christ

Make sure the child understands about

God

Who is God?
God made us. He speaks to us through the Bible.
God is holy and pure. He loves us.

Sin

What is sin?
Sin is disobeying God's commands. It is against God.
Speak about specific sins.
The child is a sinner by nature and act. (We sin because we are sinners.)
Sin deserves punishment.

The Saviour

Who alone can take away your sin?
God the Son died on the cross for sinners.
The Lord Jesus rose again from the dead.
He is Lord of all.

Explain how to be saved

Explain what the Lord wants us to do, and what He will do.
Use a Bible verse (*John 1:12; 3:16; 6:37; Acts 16:31; Romans 6:23 or 10:13*).
What does the Lord want you to do?
What will the Lord do?
Warn about difficulties.
Ask: "Do you want to trust Christ, or would you rather wait?"
Encourage the child to pray audibly (if ready).

Speak about assurance of salvation

Go back to the Bible verse you used.
Speak about a changed life.
Tell him what the person who is truly trusting in Christ can know.

Give (later) some advice about the Christian life

Read and obey your Bible.
Talk to God, our heavenly Father.
Tell others what the Lord has done for you.
Ask God to forgive you when you sin.
Meet with other Christians.
Remember the Lord promises: "*I will never leave you*" (*Heb 13:5*).