

THOUGHTFUL TRUTHS



CHILDREN'S CHURCH · CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

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Mesoamerica Region

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Children's Church

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Published and Distributed by Discipleship Ministries, Mesoamerica Region
Guatemala City, Guatemala

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All Biblical quotes were taken from the New International Version
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Design and Layout: **Cesia Aragón**

Cover Design: **Cesia Aragón**

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of "Reflective Capsules" is to equip the leaders that work together on our Districts and in our Local Nazarene Churches in the area of Children's Ministry, such as: teachers, assistant teachers, pastors and volunteers; to carry the message of the Good News of salvation and Discipleship beyond Sunday until all accept Christ and become mature Christlike Christians.

As Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries International, it's our desire that each of those who serve in Children's Ministry will continue in the development of Discipleship, remembering what Jesus commanded us to do in Matthew 28:19-20 when he said:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

INDEX

1. You Can't Deceive Us	9
January	
2. Jesus Loves You and Searches for You	13
February	
3. Jesus Rescues Me	17
March	
4. Jesus Guides Me	21
April	
5. Make Good Decisions	25
May	
6. Unique As A Snowflake	29
June	
7. Tell the Story of Jesus	32
July	
8. I Am A Soldier of Christ	35
August	
9. Keep the Word of God in Your Heart	39
September	
10. We Have Potential	42
October	
11. We Are the Body of Christ	45
November	
12. So Much To Be Thankful For	49
December	

WHAT IS

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

We want to start by saying:

Children's Church is:

- The act of Worshiping God, prepared appropriately for girls and boys of the Children's Church.

Children's Church is NOT:

- Duplicating Sunday School class.
- Just taking care of boys and girls.
- An extended session of Sunday School planned for younger children.
- Entertainment time for girls and boys.

For Children's Church to be effective, it must:

- Be prepared and presented at the level of understanding of the girls and boys.
- Involve girls and boys so they actively participate in the worship services in Children's Church, and not just be passive listeners.

A wide variety of activities and methods can be used to keep girls and boys interested and teach them to apply biblical truths to their lives; but they will only be valid when they come from a significant worship experience, that is, we must not only appeal to their feelings, but must lead them to a clear experience of worship and devotion to God.

Arguments For and Against

"The family should sit together in church."

"Girls and boys should sit still and listen to all of the sermon that the pastor preaches."

"The distraction or noise that girls and boys make must be accepted in the service."

"Parents must be with their kids at all times."

These arguments are out of the question. Girls and boys are just not able to pay attention, or participate in an entire worship service with adults. Wouldn't it be better for these girls and boys to be in a service in which they can understand and actively participate? Wouldn't it be better for these girls and boys to learn that the Church is where God is worshiped? What about the girls and boys whose parents do not attend church?

Because it's difficult for girls and boys to sit still and be quiet for such a long time, services are interrupted with distractions, adults must get up to attend to or take care of the girls and boys. Sometimes children are allowed to leave the family to sit with their friends; others stay with their parents, but are drawing, reading, playing or writing. It's not that the children are bad, but that they are not used to or taught to behave properly in a church service. Let's not blame the girls and boys for being bored in the church services, since they don't understand much of what is said or done because it's not presented at a level they can understand. Let's not blame the pastor either; he may

have the attention of the children for a short time, but within a few minutes, the children will be ready to shift positions, turn around, get under the bench, pinch their baby brother or sister or pull the hair of the girl in front of them. There are adults who enjoy seeing well behaved children in church, but they should understand that sometimes girls and boys may be calm-tempered while other times they're being threatened by their parents to be calm. That may be reason enough to have Children's Church. In a Children's Church setting, children can learn about God in a way they understand as well as learn to behave and worship the

Lord.

Information extracted from the Children's Church Manual 2012.

Adapted for the book "Thoughtful Truths."



THOUGHTFUL

TRUTHS

LESSONS

LESSON 1

You Can't Deceive Us



ELBA BERNABE - TEACHER (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That boys and girls will decide to praise God and be faithful only to Him.

conquerors, we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ. We're more than conquerors, we are more than conquerors, we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ.

To Remember

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

James 4:7



Thoughtful Truth

Today we're going to talk about a person who teaches us to stay faithful to God even when we face temptation, even when we face trials. He is Jesus!

Introductory Activity

Have a music player (tape recorder, computer, mp3 player, CD, etc.) and prepare the following song with actions: "Who Shall Separate Us"

Who shall separate us from the love of Jesus Christ? Who shall separate us from the love of Jesus Christ? Who shall separate us from the love of Jesus Christ? Who shall separate us from the love of Jesus Christ?!

Shall trouble, or hardship, persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword. No, in all these things, we are more than

What is "temptation"?

The dictionary says: it's the impulse that moves us to do something, especially something bad. For example, if you were to go to the store with your mom or dad, or even if you went alone, and you see something that you like and you think, "that would be easy to steal since no one is watching." But your conscience tells you not to, so you reject that thought and leave. In that moment, the battle against temptation was won.

What is a "trial"?

A trial is the act of testing someone or something to know its qualities; trying, putting to the proof; an affliction or trouble.

In Matthew 4:1-11; we find that Jesus was put to the test. Jesus? Yes! Jesus, the Son of God, faced trials.

The Bible tells us about the temptation of Jesus. In reality, for the devil they were temptations, but for Jesus they were tests/trials. Jesus was put to the test to see if he would be faithful to God.

In our Bible passage, we read about three instances in which Jesus was tried:

I. Jesus was hungry:

Open your Bible and read Matthew 4:1-4 with the children.

Several important events took place in Jesus' life, one of them was his baptism. Going back a bit from our reading, the Bible tells us that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, and that when Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and they saw the Spirit of God come down in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven said; *"This is my Son, whom I love"*. Do you remember this story? We can also see this in the movie "The Jesus Film".

After his baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted, and he fasted for 40 days and nights. (Fasting is a spiritual discipline in which a person gives up something, usually food, and devotes their time to prayer.) And here the enemy intervened. Taking advantage of the situation Jesus was in, Satan wanted to tempt Jesus because he wanted to make Jesus fall into a trap. Satan said to Jesus: *"Tell these stones to become bread"*. And what did Jesus say? *"It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"* Jesus responded with authority, and quoted Deuteronomy 8:3. This tells us that although Jesus was physically hungry, he knew that the best thing to feed on is the Word of God, the message that comes from God. Jesus overcame temptation. He passed the first test.

2. Jesus - protected by God:

In your Bible read Matthew 4:5-7.

"If you are the Son of God . . . throw yourself down." The enemy knew Jesus well and he knew the Word of God. Quoting Psalms 91:11-12, Satan wanted Jesus to prove he is the Son of God because the scripture says that God *"will command his angels concerning you. . . so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."* If Jesus gave into this temptation, Satan said that the people would believe with more certainty that Jesus was the Messiah.

But the Son of God responded with wisdom, authority, and knowledge of the Word of God. He quoted, *"It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* Jesus was not going to demand that God perform a miracle to prove that God loved him. Jesus was sure that God loved him and that he would protect him. God didn't have to prove anything. Test passed.

3. Jesus is Victorious:

Now read Matthew 4:8-11.

Then Satan thought to himself: "The third time's the charm..." And he took Jesus to the highest mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and said: *"All this I will give you if you will bow down and worship me."* The enemy sure is bold! He wanted to take God's place; he wanted the Son of God to worship him, and in return, he would give Jesus what already belonged to Jesus. But Jesus commanded the devil, *"Away from me, Satan!"*

"For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Jesus quoted the words that we find in Deuteronomy 6:13 to show Satan that he will be faithful to God. As the Son of God, Jesus would not follow human desires, but only the will of God. For true worship is serving God alone.

Jesus set a great example for us by overcoming temptation. His example teaches us that we must be faithful to God and decide to serve only Him. If we're ever tempted to do something wrong, we can remember Jesus' example.

The Bible says that we all will face temptations. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What really matters is how we react when we're tempted. Let's reject the temptation immediately because we know it's wrong; otherwise, there comes a point where doing it is just unavoidable. Since we're not slaves to bad desires; we can master them. Jesus said: *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33). We're not alone!

Conclusion

We can get rid of all bad desires or wrong thoughts with God's help. But how?

- a. Think about the things that are good in the eyes of God. (Philippians 4:8)
- b. Think about the consequences of our actions. (Deuteronomy 32:29)
- c. Pray and be attentive to the Word of God. (Matthew 26:41)

Let's close our eyes and pray

Lord Jesus,

- Thank you for teaching us to overcome temptations. Just like you, we can conquer temptations and win victory over temptations.
- We pray that each day you will help us by directing our daily walk.
- Give us self-control to face the temptations of this world.

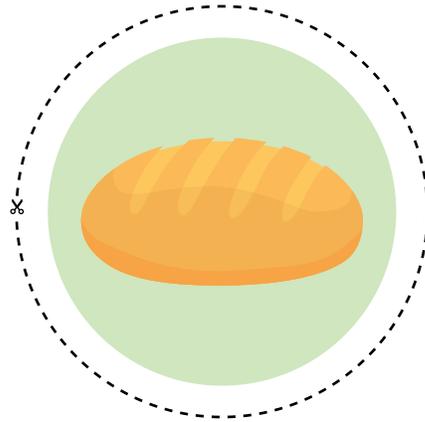
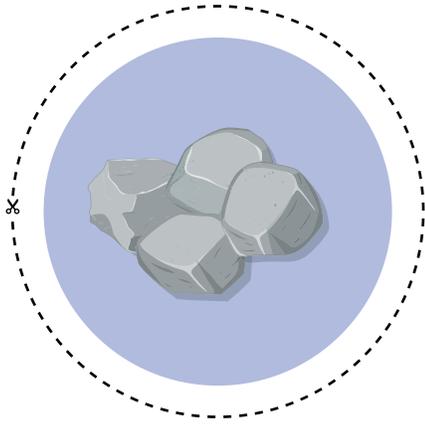
Let's Say Goodbye

Provide the necessary materials for the children to make a MEMORY board game. You will need 2 photocopies of the next page for each child, 12 cardboard squares for each child, crayons or markers, glue, and scissors.

Instructions: Have the children color the pictures on the worksheet and then cut them out. Then they are to glue the pictures to the cardboard squares that they will be given.

Then play the game of MEMORY: Turn the tiles upside down and mix them up. Then take turns, turning 2 tiles over at a time. When you get two that match, remove them from the table and take another turn. If your tiles don't match, it's the next person's turn. Play until all the tiles are matched.

Cut out the pictures and paste them onto your cardboard squares.



LESSON 2

Jesus Loves You & Searches for You



ELBA BERNABE - TEACHER (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That boys and girls understand that Jesus' love is true; it's a real love.

To Remember

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him."

1 John 4:9



Introductory Activity

Prepare a box with some figurines inside, like a mom, dad, pets, firefighters, police officers, teachers, pastor, and a card with the word "Jesus" (or if you don't have figurines, you could use pictures). Let the boys and girls take turns removing a figure from the box and have them explain how the figure shows us love. (If you are teaching virtually, you'll have to remove the figures one at a time and show the children, and then allow time for the girls and boys to respond).

Thoughtful Truth

Do you know how much Jesus loves you? Knowing that God loves us changes everything. Because God's love is wonderful, it helps us to understand that we're loved by Him. And He show us his love by searching for us, finding us, and saving us. Were we lost? Yes, at one time we're all lost in sin, but God's love reaches out to us through his son Jesus.

In the Gospel of Luke, we read a parable that shows us God's great love and God's search for us. Read Luke 15:1-7 with the children.

What is a Parable? A parable a short and symbolic story that teaches a truth or moral lesson. *"Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables"* and this is one of them.

"The Lost Sheep"

I. God Loved You First

In 1 John 4:10 we can confirm this truth. It says: *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."*

How interesting! God took the initiative by sending his Son to die on the cross. Not only that, but God was thinking of you and me when he sent Jesus. He knows you and loves you, now and forever. He knows each one of us because he created us and he knows all about his creations, so if any of them are missing, he goes and looks for them. And this brings us to the next point.

2. God's Love Searches for You

In Luke 15:4, the parable says that the Good Shepherd counted his sheep in the evening and realized that one was missing. He returned to all the places that he had been to or that a sheep might be hiding in order to find and rescue the one that was lost.

We can get lost along the path of life and stray from Jesus' teachings. But his Word teaches us that he loves us unconditionally, even though he knows all our faults. His love has no limits. He is willing to forgive us. We just have to accept his friendship.

If you have a friend or relative who doesn't know Jesus as their personal Savior, you must keep telling them about the love of Jesus. Our scripture reading says that he searches for the one who is lost until he finds them. Let's not worry, but trust in Him and see how God will work in them.

3. God's Love Protects You

When Jesus finds us, he joyfully picks us up and places us on his shoulders. And he shares that joy with us so that we can live a pleasing life before Him. He brings us home to God's house which is safe and enjoyable; it's a place like no other; it's a refuge for all

of us. It's like a hen that covers her chicks with her wings when it's raining. The chicks are well guarded by the mother hen. There they won't get wet; they won't be harmed. Let's read what God's Word teaches us in Psalms 36:7.

In his love, God protects us like a bird cares for her young and protects them from the dangers of the world. So, we can fully rely upon God's protection every day.

4. You Are A Child of God

Ask the girls and boys: "Who are God's creations? Who are children of God?" (Listen for a moment to the different responses of the children.) Now explain.

All human beings are God's creations, but we're not all God's children. By accepting Jesus' friendship, by asking Jesus into our hearts to be our Savior, that makes us children of God. And there's a party in heaven whenever that happens! There's a great celebration!

In our parable, Luke 15:6 says that when the Good Shepherd gets home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, telling them: "*Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.*"

Let's read verse 7. "*I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents ...*" Do you want there to be a party in heaven? There's a party in heaven whenever someone receives Jesus into their heart. And if you've already received Jesus into your heart, I am sure that there was a party in heaven that day, because that's what God's Word says.

Application

It's beautiful to know that Jesus loves us and searches for us. But the most beautiful thing is that we can have him in our hearts forever. What must we do to have Jesus in our hearts?

- a). Ask Jesus to come into your heart.
- b). Know that God loves you through his Son Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to pay for your sins.
- c). Share your salvation story. Tell your friends and neighbors about the good news that Jesus saves us.
- d). Jesus loves them too and has been searching for them for a long time.

Conclusion

Let's not play hide and seek with Jesus. He loves us and every moment he invites us to get closer to Him and to follow His ways. Jesus left everything, his father and his home in heaven because of His love for us. By accepting Jesus into our hearts, we're accepting God's love and we become part of God's family, with all the privileges of being a beloved child of God.

Let's close our eyes and pray

- Thank you Lord Jesus for loving us, we want to be children of God.
- We want to follow your ways. Since you have searched for us and have found us, help us to stay close to you.
- We want to belong to the great family, the family of God.

Let's Say Goodbye

Allow some time and provide the necessary materials for the children to make a hanging ornament which reminds us of God's love. (They can keep it or give it to a friend.)

Give each child a copy of the cross on the next page. If you're unable to provide colored copies, have the children color the cross using the following colors and tell them how each color represents the Good News of Jesus.

Blue = Heaven - where God lives

Yellow = pure holiness of God, creator of all

Dark = sin and separation from God.

Red = the blood of Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins.

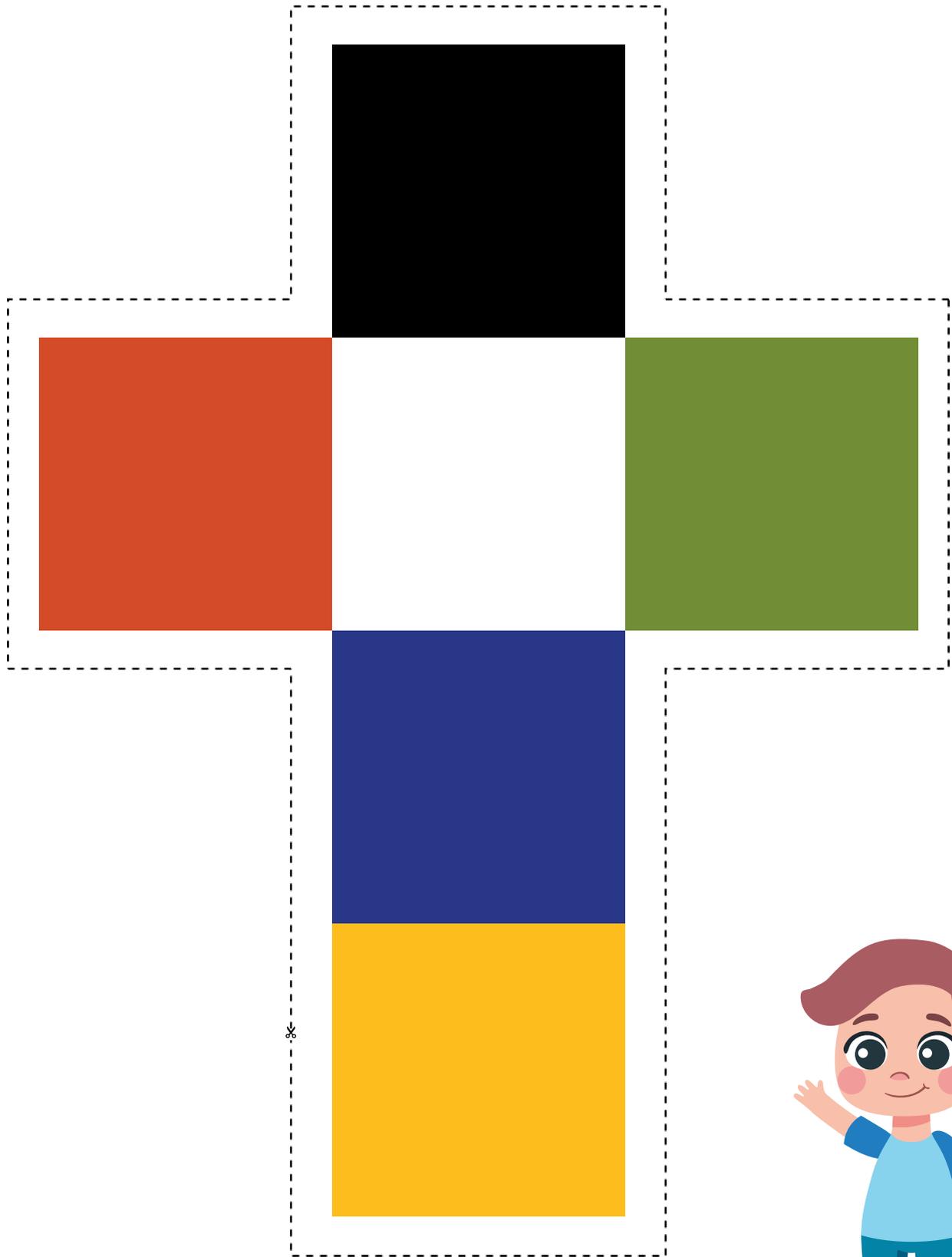
White = purity or being washed clean when we accept Jesus into our hearts.

Green = a growing relationship with Jesus.

Have the children cut out the cross and write the "To Remember" verse on the back.

You can punch a hole in the top and tie a string or ribbon on it so it can hang.

Cut Out the Cross



LESSON 3

Jesus Rescues Me



MONICA DE ARAGON - PASTOR (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That girls and boys learn that even when they sin, God still loves them, and that's why he sent his Son Jesus to save them and cleanse them from all sin.

To Remember

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8



Introductory Activity

You will need plastic cups or empty juice or milk cans and a handkerchief to cover the child's eyes.

Divide the girls and boys into two groups, it can be a team of girls and another of boys. Each team is going to choose a leader and the teams will take turns, one group at a time.

Cover the eyes of one of the children in the first group with a handkerchief. Place the cups or cans on the floor creating an obstacle course in front of the blindfolded child.

The object is for the blindfolded child to cross the room without knocking over any of the obstacles. In order to accomplish this, the blindfolded child must listen to the voice of his leader (who is chosen by his group) who will be guiding him with vocal instructions to know where to walk. The leader cannot touch him in any way; he can only give instructions. The leader can walk alongside him as he goes through the obstacle course.

The children from the other group can stand around the room or along the obstacle course and yell at the blindfolded child, but they cannot touch him. Their goal is to try and confuse him by drowning out the voice of the leader.

You will want to set a time limit for this activity because all of the children will want to participate and go through the obstacle course as well as take a turn being the leader. To make it more challenging, move the obstacles after each child completes the course.

Bring several small prizes so you can reward the winning team. If you have time at the end of the lesson you can allow more children to have a turn in the obstacle course.

Thoughtful Truth

I want to ask you a question. Have you ever gone with your mom or dad to hunt or fish, to catch an animal to eat, or simply to trap an animal in a cage? (Let the children respond.)

A long time ago when I was a child, I went with my older brother into a field. He wanted to catch a squirrel, not to eat, but to keep in a cage as a pet.

My brother made a trap; he put a wooden box on the ground, used a stick to prop it open, and tied a fairly long string to the stick. Then he placed some food under the box to attract the squirrel, and hid, close enough to see the box, but far enough away that the squirrel wouldn't see him. His idea was to attract the squirrel with the food and then when it was eating, pull the stick away from the box with the string that was tied to it and the box would fall over the squirrel and catch it.

He had to wait with great patience for the squirrel and be very quiet in his hiding place so he wouldn't scare the squirrel and let it get away; then he wouldn't be able to catch it.

You know, we have an enemy, we call him the devil. He sets traps for us in order to get us to sin, which separates us from God.

The enemy tricks us into believing many lies which he disguises as being something good, so that we don't realize that we're doing something wrong that doesn't please God. This is called sin.

The enemy deceives us by saying things like:

- If nobody sees you, you can do it.
- Nobody will know what you watch on the computer when you're alone.
- Try it just once, you'll like it, nothing bad will happen.
- A little bit doesn't matter.

These are all lies. The Bible says that we have all sinned and that's why we're far from God's presence. (Romans 3:23)

When we stop listening to God's voice, we automatically move away from him. But God, who loves us very much, doesn't want that. The Bible says that God doesn't want anyone to be lost; he wants us all to be saved.

So, what do you think He did? He sent a medicine that rescues us when we take it. That medicine is God's Son, Jesus, who died for each one of us. Because Jesus died for us, sin no longer has the power to separate us from God. Instead, he gives us victory over the enemy.

Jesus came to rescue us, to pay the price for our sin so that we can receive salvation. That price was very high and now we don't have to pay it.

Application

Every day you'll find yourself in situations where you have to pay close attention because you'll have to make decisions about what you're going to do, which path you're going to take. There will always be a good path and a bad path. The Holy Spirit is with you and he can guide you to the good path if you listen to him. The good path will lead you to eternal life.

But, the enemy will be trying to make you listen to his voice, to turn you towards the bad path. He'll try to disguise that bad path with beautiful things so that you don't realize that you're moving away from God. In the end, the bad path will lead you to death. The Bible says: *"For the wages of sin is death. . ."*. You decide who you're going to listen to, and which path you're going to walk along. So you must be very attentive to which voice you listen to and which voice you're going to let guide you as you walk through your life.

Conclusion

- God loves us, and doesn't want us to get lost, so we must pay close attention when God speaks to us. In Christ, we're more than conquerors.
- Jesus died on the cross in our place, and in doing so, he paid the price for our sins.
- Jesus is the special medicine to destroy all sin.
- God's grace finds us and saves us.

Let's close our eyes and pray

Let's close our eyes and talk to God.

- Lord, today I ask you to forgive my sins and help me not to sin anymore.
- I thank you for sending your Son Jesus to pay the price that I could never pay.
- Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying for me on the cross. Please help me to always listen to your voice so that I don't fall into the traps that the enemy puts out for me.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Let's Say Goodbye

Give each student a piece of plain paper and a copy of the worksheet on the next page.

On the sheet of plain paper, help the children trace around their hand.

Then have them cut out the strips on the worksheet and glue them on their traced hand in the order you give.

1. Draw a silhouette of your hand.

2. Cut out the strips below and glue them to your silhouette in the following order:

1. Thumb

2. Index finger

3. Middle finger

4. Ring finger

5. Little finger

1. I've sinned

2. God Loves Me

3. Jesus died for me

4. I've accepted Jesus

5. I'm saved



LESSON 4

Jesus Guides Me



MONICA DE ARAGON - PASTOR (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That the girls and boys learn that the Word of God is like an instruction manual that guides them throughout their lives.

Ask the children to go through the maze in the dark. When everyone has completed it one time, ask them to go through it again, but this time give each of them a small flashlight.

After everyone has gone through the maze the second time, turn on the lights and ask them:

To Remember

*"Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path."*

Psalms 119:105



How did you feel when you went through the maze in the dark? What was different the second time you went through the maze?

Thoughtful Truth

Introductory Activity

Before the children arrive, transform the room into a maze. Use tables, chairs and other objects to create the maze and place obstacles in the way so that children find some difficulty going through it. Cover the windows of the room so that it's totally dark.

Have you ever had to go outside and walk somewhere at night in a place where there's no light? (Let the children answer.)

Or maybe you've had to get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom and your room was very dark so you couldn't see the way to the bathroom. Has that happened to you? What did you do?

If you had to go outside and walk away from your home in an area where there was no light, surely your parent(s) took their

cell phone, found the application that says flashlight and ta da! the light comes on and you have a way to light your way.

In our homes, some moms put a small lamp or light called a “night light” in our rooms that gives off just a little bit of light in case we have to get up during the night, or possibly, we have a lamp on a table next to our bed and if we have to get up we have a light close by to turn on.

In our daily lives, we often have doubts about how we should act or what we should do. We’re constantly having to make decisions and we’ll always have more than one option. How can we know what the correct decision is? What path should we follow? Well, thankfully, we have a lamp that will help us to know what the correct path is, which decision we should make. That lamp in God’s Word, the Bible.

Proverbs 6:23 says, *“For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life. . .”*

Our parents are our first teachers. They try to teach us everything we need to know as we grow up, and God gives them wisdom to teach us. Sometimes they have to scold and correct us when we don’t do the right thing, which is good because it helps us to learn. But as we grow up, our parents won’t always be with us to tell us what to do. Well, God loves us and he knew that we would have times in our life when we would not see our path clearly and we would need a light. So, He left us His Word. In the Bible we find EVERYTHING we need to light our path.

In the Bible, we find the instructions that are necessary to be able to do things well. There are 10 steps (commandments) that will help us walk in a way that is pleasing to God. In the Word of God we’ll also find examples of

people who will guide us. It’s important that we know the instructions that are in the Bible so that we’ll always have the light of God’s Word within us. God’s word will guide us to lead a life that is pleasing to Him.

Application

It’s important that we study and listen to the Bible because it’s our lamp, and it will guide us in our daily life. We must read a little every day and, most importantly, we must apply it to our life and put it into practice. It won’t do us any good if we know the instructions but don’t follow them. So, we must know the Word of God and we must also put what it says into practice.

The more you read it, the more you’ll know it, and the more you practice it, the easier it will be for you to do what is good.

Conclusion

All right, so where do we find the instructions and the guiding light for our path? (Let the children answer.) Correct! In the Word of God.

The Bible is the Word of God that is the light that is our guide throughout our life. That’s why we must know it and practice it.

When we know the Bible and follow what it teaches us, we’ll reflect Jesus in our life.

- God loves us, and that’s why he left us instructions; those instructions are in the Bible.

- God wants to make it easy for us to learn, so the first steps He gave us are the Ten Commandments to make it easy for us to remember them.
- Jesus is the best example we can follow, and by reading the Bible, we can know Him.

Whenever we don't know what to do, we can ask ourselves: What would Jesus do in this situation? What would Jesus do in my place?

Let's close our eyes and pray

Let's close our eyes and talk to God.

- Lord, thank you for loving me so much that you left a light to guide me.
- Please help me know your Word; help me put it into practice in my life. Please help me to follow the example of your son Jesus and always do the right thing. I want to do the things that are pleasing in your eyes and I want others to be able to see you through me.

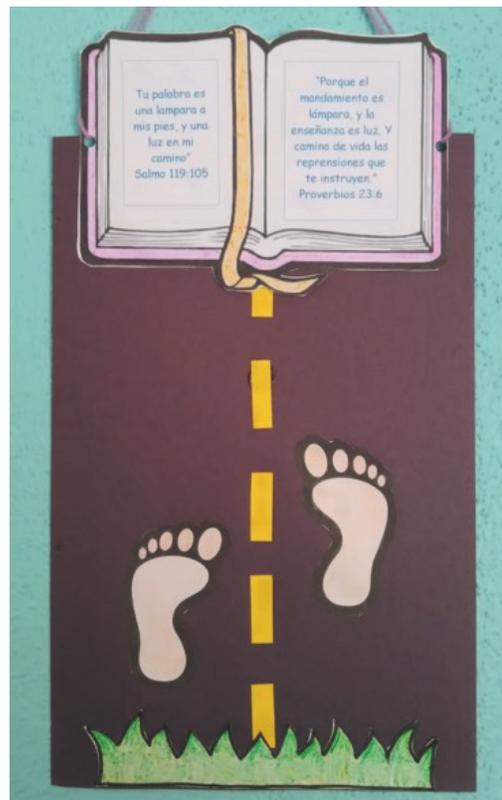
In the name of Jesus, Amen.

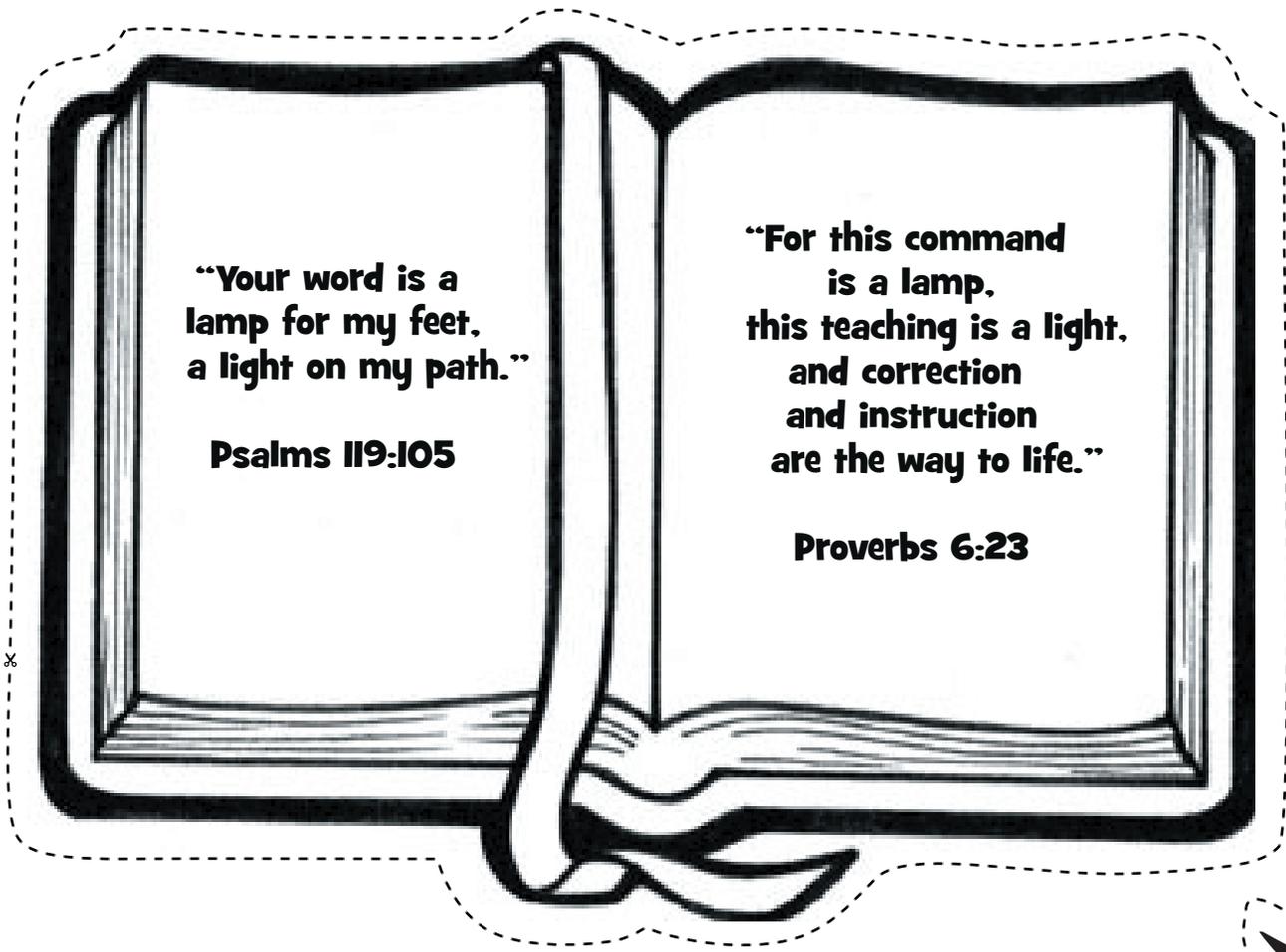
Let's Say Goodbye

Help your children complete today's craft. An example is shown.

Provide each child with a black piece of paper, a copy of the worksheet on the next page, a piece of string, yarn, or ribbon and yellow paper for dash lines.

Give the children time to color the pictures and then cut them out. They will also need to cut out dash lines from the yellow paper to make their black paper look like a path. Then show the children an example of the craft and have them glue their pictures and dash lines onto their black paper. Help them punch holes in the paper, as shown in the example, and tie the string to the project so the children can hang it up.



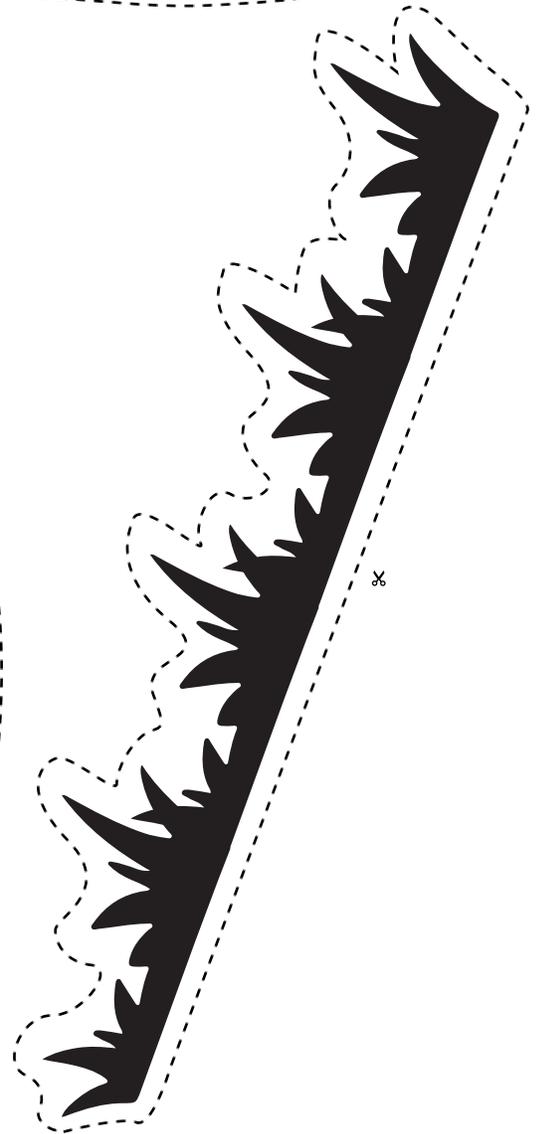
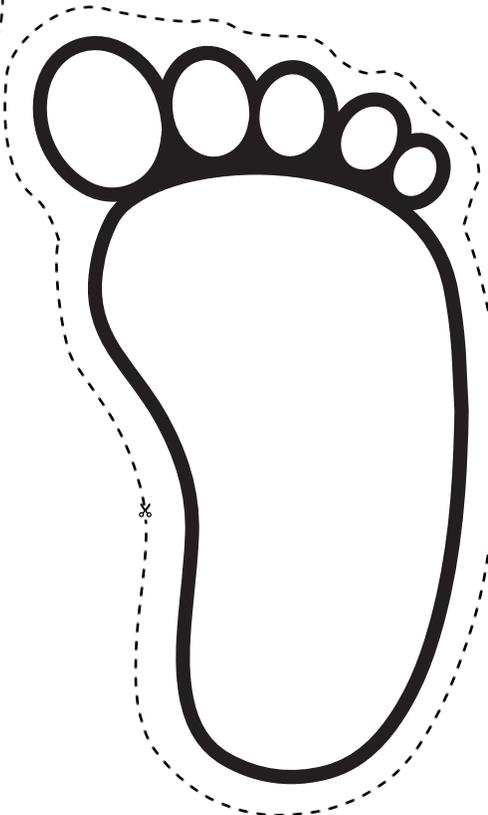


**“Your word is a
lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.”**

Psalms 119:105

**“For this command
is a lamp,
this teaching is a light,
and correction
and instruction
are the way to life.”**

Proverbs 6:23



LESSON 5

Make Good Decisions



ÉUNICE DE ARAGON - TEACHER (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That the children will understand that we can choose the right thing, even if others don't. God gives us the opportunity to choose to do what is right.

The father, faced with this demand from his son, gave him his inheritance. Upon receiving his inheritance, the son left his father's house. Soon he met some friends (who were not really friends), and he spent all of the money that his father had given him. He use the money wisely; instead he got drunk and did whatever he wanted to.

One day after he had nothing left, his friends abandoned him and he was left alone. He was hungry but didn't have any money to buy food; he was thirsty and he didn't have money to buy water. In short, he was living in terrible circumstances.

To Remember

*"I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
I have set my heart on your laws."*

Psalms 119:30



So, he had no other option but to look for a job, and he found one. But the work he found was not exciting or fun; he was hired to feed pigs. He was so hungry that even the food the pigs ate looked good to him. How terrible it is to make bad decisions!

Introductory Story

There's a story in a very special book about a father who had two sons. One day, the younger son approached his father and asked for his share of his father's estate.

The son was miserable but no one would help him. As he sat feeling sorry for himself, he thought about his father's house where he had been treated well. There he had had money, food, a bed to sleep in, and clean clothes.

So, he decided to go back to his father's house. The story tells us that when he was almost to the house, his father saw him from

a little ways away and ran to meet him.

They hugged, the father kissed him, and then he sent his son to bathe. He sent his servants to put new clothes on him and to kill a chubby cow and Zap!, they had a big party for him. What a nice story right?

Thoughtful Truth

Jesus taught us through his parables what happens when we make good or bad decisions. The story we just heard is found in Luke 15:11-32. This is the parable of the prodigal or lost son.

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

According to God’s words in Deuteronomy, what should we do?

1. Obey God’s commandments. One of the 10 Commandments is: *“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long.”*
2. Make sure that we *“do not turn aside to the right or to the left,”* but we must follow the path of Christ.
3. We should *“walk in obedience to all that the Lord your God has commanded you.”*

4. By walking in obedience to God’s commands, we *“may live . . . and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.”*

God’s Word tells us that if we make the decision to follow him and obey his Word, He’ll be with us in every situation we face. We must obey what the Bible says. And we must obey our parents because they want the best for us.

Application

God loves us and helps us to know which path we should take, that’s why we must always remember that:

- a). If for some reason, we stray from (leave) the right path, we can go to God and ask for his forgiveness, and he will forgive us. If we ask Him, he’ll help us not to make those mistakes again.
- b). Before we leave the right path, let’s ask ourselves if it’ll be worth it or not. Because at home with God we’ll always have the best. God, who is our father, has everything we need.
- c). God rewards our good decisions with blessings from heaven. Cheer up and make the best decision for your life!

Conclusion

As you may have realized, God gives us the opportunity to choose between good and evil. But he will always help us choose good if we ask him to help us. He knows what will help us, that’s why he tells us in his word, **“But seek first the kingdom of God”** because only when the hand of God leads us will everything turn out well for us.

Let's close our eyes and pray

- Thank you Lord for helping me to understand more about you through your Word today.
- Please help me make good decisions in my life so that what I do pleases you.
- I want to decide to do what is right and what pleases you.
- I want to obey your command to obey my parents who teach me wisely.
- Please show me what is right so I have the power to make good choices.

Let's Say Goodbye

Provide a worksheet (see next page) for each child and have them color the squares that show the children making good decisions.

Who Made A Good Decision?

Hug a friend.



Insult someone.



Push someone.



Help with the chores in your home.



Color the pictures that show that a good decision was made.



LESSON 6

Unique As A Snowflake



ESUNICE DE ARAGON - TEACHER (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

May the children understand that we're all unique in God's eyes. We all have qualities and virtues that make us different and very valuable to the Lord.

are no 2 snowflakes that are the same in the whole world. God takes great care in making each one different and unique. Just like he made us unique. He made some of us small, some tall, dark hair or light hair, smiling or serious, some like pizza, others like hamburgers. We each have many qualities that make us unique, different than other people. But what's most important is that even with all our differences, God loves us all just the way we are.

To Remember

"Samuel said to all the people, 'Do you see the man the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.' Then the people shouted, 'Long live the king!'"

1 Samuel 10:24



Thoughtful Truth

What does it mean to be unique? (Let the children respond.) There is no other person in all the world like you. Have you ever meet anyone who is a twin? Sometimes twins are called identical twins, but even though they're called "identical twins," they're not exactly the same. They will always have some differences. Sometimes they'll look the same and it's hard to tell them apart, but their personalities or their way of thinking is completely different.

In 1 Samuel 10:24, the Bible tells us why David became the king of the people of Israel. God chose David because there was no one like him among all the people.

Introductory Activity

Show the girls and boys two snowflakes, a small one with 5 points and a large one with 6 rounded points. Ask them what differences they see between the two and give them time to respond. Then explain that there

He was different from everyone. The Bible says that the Lord looked for a man after his own heart, which was David. David had 7 brothers, and even though he was the youngest, God chose him.

Many times we compare ourselves with our older brothers or sisters. We say, "I want to be as strong or as big as they are." But God has a purpose for you! Sometimes our brothers and sisters need help to reach into very small places and we can reach those places for them. And sometimes they can help us reach up to very high places. God made each of us with different qualities so that we can help each other, and we must remember that we all have a purpose.

In 1 Corinthians 12:14-27, the Bible tells us how each part of the body has a purpose and is unique. The right hand is not the same as the left hand; the two fulfill different functions. The feet help us to walk, the eyes to see, the mouth to speak and to eat. This is how God made us! Each one of us is different, unique, and has a particular purpose, but we're all part of the body of Christ. God loves us all equally; he created us with our differences.

Application

Isn't it good to know that each of us is created differently so that we can help each other by using our differences as strengths. We must always remember that:

- a). God loves us all equally.
- b). Our differences make us unique.
- c). We shouldn't feel bad if we're different from other people.

- d). We can make our differences into strengths.
- e). We all have a different purpose that we'll achieve when we walk hand in hand with the Lord.

Conclusion

God made us each unique and so is his love for us. The Lord loves each of us with our different abilities and he teaches us to use our differences to help others and to fulfill his purpose.

Let's close our eyes and pray

- We thank you God for the unique way You have made each of us. We thank You for making us different so that we can help each other.
- We ask You to help us to love each other in spite of our differences, and to understand that You created all of us for different purposes, but You love us all equally.

Let's Say Goodbye

Give each child a worksheet (on the next page) and have them write their own answers in each square.

My name is

My eyes are

My hair is

My favorite
food is

My favorite color is

I am

years old

and that makes me as
unique as a snowflake!



LESSON 7

Tell the Story of Jesus



ELBA BERNABE - TEACHER (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That the boys and girls will understand that Jesus was human, just like them, but there was no sin in Him, only obedience to His heavenly Father, God.

To Remember

"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

1 John 1:3



Introductory Activity

Guess, Guess!

This is a time for guessing. Present the following riddles to the girls and boys, and listen to their answers:

1. I was baptized in the Jordan River by my cousin John the Baptist. Who am I?
Answer: Jesus.
2. I was the first miracle that Jesus performed. What miracle am I?
Answer: When Jesus turned water into wine.
3. I am the number of people Jesus resurrected. What number am I?
Answer: 3.
4. I prayed over the 5 loaves and 2 fish from a boy and God blessed the food to feed more than five thousand people. Who I am?
Answer: Jesus.

Thoughtful Truths

Jesus is the main character of the day. We've heard about Him. (Ask; "What have you heard about Jesus?") Allow time for the children to respond.) So who is Jesus? Let's get to know more about him.

No. 1. Characteristics of Jesus:

Matthew 1:18-25

Jesus had hair, eyes, mouth, hands, arms, just like us. He had a mother, a father and brothers and sisters. He also had friends. He was a boy like you. He was a normal boy who ran, ate, slept and played like everyone else.

He was born and raised by his parents. He had birthdays; 5, 12, 15, 30 years old. Jesus grew up. But you know, there's an interesting thing: Jesus never sinned; he never did anything that displeased his Daddy.

Another question: Who is Jesus' father? Well, Jesus had two dads: Joseph (his adoptive father) and God, the one who created all things. God created the whole world, the rivers, the lakes, the plants, the animals, the people, etc. When we talk about Jesus' Father, we're talking about God.

When Jesus was older, his Father gave him tasks to do here on earth, and Jesus obeyed. Who here is obedient? It's very important to be obedient in our heart and in our actions. We must obey our parents. The Bible itself says, "Honor your father and your mother"; that's part of obedience.

We should obey our parents, teachers, those in authority (policemen, principal of your school, Sunday school teachers, the Pastor of the church, etc.) In short, we must obey all the people who want the best for us. We must also obey God because He wants the best for us. Jesus' greatest characteristic was obedience.

No. 2. The Obedience of Jesus:
Luke 2:49-52

Ask the girls and boys what stories they remember about Jesus. Listen to their responses.

Read Luke 2:49-52 in the New King James Version. In the passage we just read, we see that Jesus obeyed God. *"I must be about My Father's business."* (NKJV)

In the four gospels, we can read about the miracles that Jesus performed. We hear Jesus speak about God, his Father, and we read how Jesus taught by telling parables and performing signs and wonders.

As we learned from our riddles, Jesus raised the dead, healed the sick and forgave people. He fed the hungry, taught about God's love and practiced God's love. We can see that Jesus took care of the whole person; he met the needs of those who were seeking him. Love in action is Jesus' favorite verb.

No. 3. The Loving and Tender Jesus:
Mark 10:13-16

In the Bible we read many stories of love. One of them is the story about the children; do you remember it? Yes! Jesus loves children, he loves you. He uses children as an example to us adults because we have a lot to learn from children.

And as children, you can learn about Jesus. Jesus loves children, he protects you, he goes with you wherever you go and is with you every moment and in every situation that you go through. He is there in the morning, in the afternoon, at night. He never leaves you. He helps you with chores around the house, in your school studies, when you're in difficult situations. You can always ask Jesus what you should do.

Jesus is the Friend that we should all want to have. Jesus was human so he knows about everything that happens to us; he understands us. Jesus wants to talk to us and listen to us. So, how can we talk to Jesus? Through prayer. Prayer is how we speak with our Friend, Jesus.

Jesus listens to us because he loves us very much. And he demonstrated His love by dying on the cross for each one of us so that we would be forgiven of our sins. The good news is that now Jesus is alive! Jesus is Alive! And He's preparing a home for us in heaven so that we can live with Him forever.

Application

One of the most exciting stories is the story of the life of Jesus.

- a) From Jesus we learn humility.
- b) From Jesus we learn about his love for everyone.
- c) From Jesus we learn about his grace that searches for us and saves us.
- d) Let's always tell the story of Jesus. Glory to God.

Conclusion

Jesus is a faithful friend. He is our Savior who gives us a new life. He wants to live in our hearts. He ascended to heaven and is waiting for us to join Him there someday.

Do you want to know more about Jesus? We can read about Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Let's read the Bible, the Word of God, and share God's message of love, the message that gives us confidence, hope, and life. It's our greatest responsibility to tell the story of Jesus to others so that they can know Him too.

Let's close our eyes and pray

- Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for the greatest gift you've given us, Your Son, Jesus.
- Thank you for a friend we can trust.
- Jesus, please go with us through every moment of our lives.
- We ask that you teach us to share your story with our neighbors, friends and family. In the name of Jesus, Amen!

Let's Say Goodbye

Allow time and provide the necessary materials for the children to make a wordless book to share the message of Jesus.

You will need: colored paper; yellow, black, red, white, and green and a way to connect the pages together: a piece of string, a ring, etc. (See example below.)

Yellow = pure holiness of God, creator of all

Dark = sin and separation from God.

Red = the blood of Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins.

White = purity or being washed clean when we accept Jesus into our hearts.

Green = a growing relationship with Jesus.



LESSON

8

I Am A Soldier of Christ



CHARITO XUC - LICENSED MINISTER (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That girls and boys understand that being soldiers of Jesus Christ has profound implications in the life of the believer.

To Remember

"No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer."

2 Timothy 2:4



Introductory Activity

Dress up like a soldier from the time of Alexander the Great and perform the following monologue.

I was one of the greatest military leaders of my lifetime, and I conquered almost all of the known world. One night, I, Alexander the Great, couldn't sleep and went for a

walk around the camp. While I was walking, I found a sleeping soldier who was on guard duty. This was a serious mistake for him to make because at that moment, he could have died instantly as a punishment for falling asleep.

As I got closer to that soldier, the soldier began to wake up. Recognizing who was in front of him, the young man panicked because he feared for his life.

I asked him some questions: "Do you know what the punishment is for falling asleep while you're on duty?" "Yes, sir!" The soldier replied in a fearful voice. "What is your name?" I demanded. "My name is Alexander, sir!" I repeated the question: "What is your name?" "My name is Alexander, sir!" the soldier repeated.

A third time and in a louder voice I asked him, "What is your name?" A third time the soldier humbly said, "My name is Alexander, sir."

Then I looked the soldier straight in the eye and said, "Either you change your name or you behave like a real Alexander."



Thoughtful Truth

In 2 Timothy 2:1-13, the Apostle Paul refers to young Timothy as “my son.” Paul loved Timothy so he gave him some practical advice so that he could be a good soldier for Jesus Christ.

To be a good soldier for Jesus Christ, Timothy would need to do certain things:

1. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (v.1)

To advance to another level, or to another grade, you have to make an effort. If you want to get good grades on exams, you have to make an effort by studying.

Being strong in the grace of Christ is fighting bravely, competing seriously and working hard to learn divine truths, and then keeping them in your heart and mind. Then we must share them until the whole world hears the gospel of salvation.

2. Entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others (v.2)

Faithful or reliable men are people who do the task assigned to them well because they are committed. If you are reliable, you will overcome everything to complete what’s given you to do, and you’ll do it responsibly.

3. Join with me in suffering. like a good soldier of Christ Jesus (v.3)

Do you remember the story we told at the beginning? The story tells us that soldiers suffer pain, sometimes they don’t get to eat, and they get tired.

We don’t stop being good soldiers of Jesus because of our suffering. We realize if we’re good soldiers or not by the disciplines that we put into practice day after day.

4. Tries to please his commanding officer (v4)

The sleeping soldier in the story had to please the one who enlisted him to be a soldier, but he wasn’t fulfilling his responsibility because he was asleep at his battle post. He wasn’t just risking himself but the whole army as well.

5. An athlete does not receive the victor’s crown except by competing according to the rules (v5)

This is another important discipline that we need to take into account when we talk about being a good soldier for Jesus Christ. What do athletes do? Run! But to win a race, to be a champion, they must be in good physical shape, they must train everyday and they must follow the rules so they’re not disqualified.

6. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops (v.6)

The Apostle Paul tells his disciple Timothy about the discipline of a farmer. A farmer is someone who works hard, cultivates the land, cares for the land, and plants seeds so that he can harvest a crop later. The farmer who first works to grow the food is the first to get a share of the harvest.

Application

So how do we apply these points to our lives?

- a) Work hard each day and be strong in the grace of Christ.
- b) Let's commission other girls and boys who are faithful to teach others.
- c) Sometimes, instead of congratulating us, some people will make an ugly face at us or they'll push us, or hurt us, but we must go through these things as good soldiers of Jesus Christ and because he loves us.
- d) As good soldiers for Jesus Christ, we must always want to please Christ because he enlisted us as his soldiers.
- e) We must discipline ourselves and work hard so that in the end, we'll win the victory.
- f) Let's endure everything for the love of Christ and his chosen ones.

Conclusion

It's important that you remember every day that if you want to be a good soldier for Jesus Christ, you must arm yourself with the armor of God. How can we do this? By girding (wrapping around) our waist with the truth, putting on the breastplate of righteousness, putting on our feet the gospel of peace, taking up the shield of faith, putting on the helmet of salvation and taking up the sword of the Spirit that is the Word of God. Pray at all times and be perseverant. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Let's close our eyes and pray

Heavenly Father,

- Please help us every day to be your good soldiers.
- Help us when we face a battle to stand firm, dressed in your armor.
- We ask that you help us to be able to please you in all we do.

Amen.

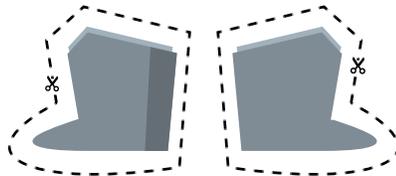
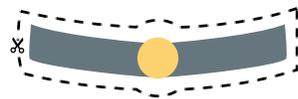
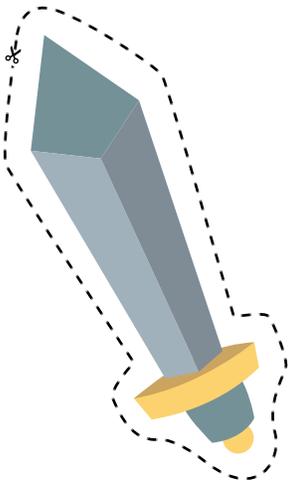
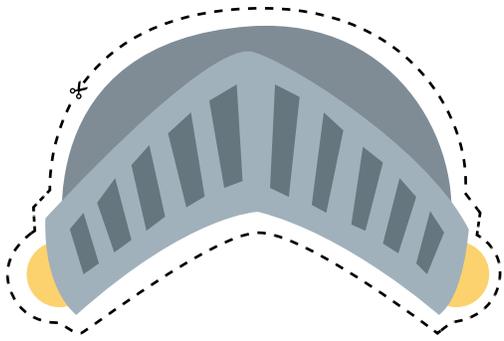
Let's Say Goodbye

Reproduce as many worksheets as you need and give one to each child (see the next page).

Have the children color the soldier's armor. Then cut out the boy and each piece of the armor. Give the children some glue and let them put the armor on the boy.

Cut out the pieces of the Armor of God and put them on Paul.

I am a soldier of Christ!



Example:



LESSON 9

Keep the Word of God in Your Heart



SOFIA BARRIENTOS (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That children understand the importance of keeping the Word of God in their hearts so they can be guided by it.

Ask the children the question, "Have you ever saved anything so that you wouldn't lose it?" Let the children answer and share about their experience.

Why do we keep some things under lock and key? Let them answer. Explain that one of the main reasons to save something is because it's important and useful to us.

To Remember

"and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

2 Timothy 3:15



Thoughtful Truth

God's purpose for giving us the Bible is so that it can be our guide throughout our lives.

Psalm 119:105 tells us that the Bible is a lamp for our feet, a light on our path.

We're going to talk about some people that you'll find in the Bible that teach us how to keep the Word of God in our hearts.

I. Joshua

Joshua had been with Moses for many years, learning from him and fulfilling God's law. When Moses died, God told Joshua that now he would be the leader of His people.

Introductory Activity

Bring a box with some sweets in it (try to have enough for the whole class) and close it with a padlock. Bring the key to the padlock and four other keys. Ask five children to come and choose a key. Then let them take turns trying their key in the padlock. The child who opens the box will be in charge of giving the sweets to the rest of the children.

Can you imagine what would have happened if Joshua had not learned from Moses? God was putting Joshua in charge of Israel. He could not have fulfilled the mission that God had for him if he had not learned from Moses.

In Joshua 1:8, we read that God told Joshua that he must do what Moses taught him, and that was to keep the Ten Commandments. But the most important thing is that God told him that he should never stray, or go away from, the Word of God. As long as he obeyed God, he would do well.

We learn from Joshua that to fulfill God's purpose, we must obey His Word and not stray from it.

2. Jesus

We always learn a lot from Jesus. He is our greatest example of obedience, love, friendship, respect, faith, but above all, that it's important to read the Bible.

Jesus is the Son of God, but still he went to the temple to listen to and ask the teachers of the law about the Word of God. Jesus was learning and keeping in his heart the words that he heard from those teachers.

In Luke 2:52, he says that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature; he was growing like you, but he was also learning about his Father (God) through the Bible.

When Jesus was older, he began to preach, using all the knowledge that he had learned, and many people believed his words and began to follow Jesus.

Once when Jesus was praying in the desert, the devil appeared and tried to get Jesus to disobey his Father, but Jesus knew the Word of God and used it to respond to the devil and he didn't fall into his trap.

From Jesus we learn that we must listen to God's Word, learn it, apply it, and share it with others.

3. Timothy

Timothy was a young man who was encouraged by Paul to hold fast to the Word of God. Despite all the bad things that he might be experiencing, the dangers, the people around him who told lies and who always wanted to fight or who wanted to go against God, Timothy was encouraged to hold fast to the Word of God.

Timothy grew up knowing about and learning the Holy Scriptures. He put into practice all that he kept in his heart.

Paul told Timothy to remember that the Word of God would make him wise, and the most important thing was to keep it in his heart and not disobey it. If he did this, he would find salvation.

What wonderful news! If you keep the Word of God in your heart, like Timothy, and don't turn away from it, but seek to obey it, you will have salvation and eternal life.

We learn from Timothy that as children, we must learn the Word of God, keep it in our hearts and not turn away from it. If we do those things, we'll be wise and have salvation.

Application

Today we learned the importance of keeping God's Word in our hearts from three people in the Bible.

But how can we keep God's Word in our hearts? Let's learn 3 steps that will help us:

Step #1: Read the Bible every day

In the Bible, we find many treasures, promises, and stories that will teach us more about God, and that will help us in our day to day life.

In order to find all those promises and treasures, we must read it every day so that we can learn it and begin to memorize it.

Step #2: Memorize God's Word

Memorizing the Word of God will help us when we face difficult times. During those hard times, we'll remember the things we memorized and they will bring us peace and hope.

One way to memorize God's Word is to read it several times and repeat it out loud until you can remember everything you are reading.

Step #3: Share God's Word with others

Once you have read and memorized scripture, share what you have learned with your family and friends. This will help you better understand what you've learned, help you remember it, and most importantly, other people can know about Jesus and can find salvation.

Conclusion

We must keep the Word of God in our heart and mind, but the most important thing is to apply it, obey it and not turn away from it. We can find salvation and help others to know about Jesus when we keep the Word of God in our heart.

Let's close our eyes and pray

Heavenly Father,

- Please help us read your Word every day and understand it.
- Help us memorize your Word and obey it.
- We ask that other children will come to know you and will learn from your Word.
- We ask that as we grow up, you will help us grow in wisdom, too.
- Thank you for giving us your Word so that we can hear your voice through it and you can help us through every stage of our lives.

Let's Say Goodbye

To end the lesson, write the memory verse on a board or on sheets of paper (write one word on each sheet of paper) and stick them on the wall. Say the verse together out loud three times. Then erase or remove the words one by one, repeating the verse until everyone can say the whole verse .

LESSON 10

We All Have Potential



SOFIA BARRIENTOS (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That boys and girls will understand that God has given us potential to fulfill his purpose in our lives.

Explain that we all have the ability to fulfill the desire to work in one of these professions that have been mentioned, but that the most important thing is to fulfill the purpose for which they are called by God.

To Remember

"So Christ himself chose some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers."

Ephesians 4:11



Thoughtful Truth

Let's start by talking about what it means to have potential.

Have you ever heard the word "potential"? This word means that you have strength or power to achieve something; you are capable of becoming; possibility.

We're all born to fulfill a purpose, but many times we believe that because of the things that surround us or because of our physical or intellectual characteristics, we cannot fulfill that purpose.

Today we'll learn that some people in the Bible fulfilled their purpose by using their gifts. Their characteristics and circumstances, although they seemed negative, were part of the perfect will of God.

Introductory Activity

Bring to class pictures of people in different professions, including pastors, missionaries, and teachers.

Ask the children: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" (Give them time to respond.) Tell the children that each of them will grow up and have the opportunity to be in the profession they want.

I. Moses

Have you ever met a person who stutters? Well, let me tell you about Moses. Many scholars believe that Moses had this characteristic; it was difficult for him to speak because he stuttered.

Moses didn't grow up with his mother and father because when he was born, the ruler of the land had ordered all male babies to be killed. So his mother decided to place him in a basket and put him in the river to save him.

Moses floated down the river to the palace in Egypt and was found by Pharaoh's (the ruler's) daughter. So Moses grew up in the palace. Imagine growing up in a palace! But the bad part was that he grew up with people who weren't his true family.

Everything would indicate that the purpose for which he was created was already ruined. However, God had a plan and he knew Moses had potential.

When Moses grew up, God told him that his mission, his purpose, was to free God's people from Egypt. However, in order to free the people, Moses would have to go and talk to Pharaoh, and Moses couldn't speak well because he stuttered. So he asked God to send someone else because he couldn't speak well. Do you know how God answered him? God said, *"I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."* (Exodus 4:12).

Moses fulfilled his purpose because God knew he had leadership potential. Moses was the one who God gave the Ten commandments to. What a privilege!

Perhaps you are going through a similar situation or have some characteristic that makes you feel afraid of being able to fulfill the purpose for which God called you. But just like with Moses, God knows you have potential.

2. Joseph

Our second person is Joseph. Many of us know him as the boy with the coat of many colors, but there is much more we can learn from Joseph's story.

Joseph was sold by his brothers as a slave, and was later charged for a crime he didn't do and imprisoned. Everything seemed to indicate that Joseph no longer had anything to offer and that he was going to die in jail.

But God knew that Joseph had a mission to fulfill, and God had given Joseph gifts and talents that would set him free.

Joseph was very intelligent but he was also favored by God and could interpret dreams. Because of this gift that God gave him, he was placed in a very important position in Egypt.

Sometime we may face financial difficulties (problems having to do with money) or we may lose a family member. These things can make us believe that we can't move forward and that all our dreams aren't going to be fulfilled.

But, I want you to remember that God has given you spiritual gifts, talents and abilities and that despite the situations you may be going through, you can fulfill the dreams that are within God's will and purpose for you.

3. Paul

We learn many things from the apostle Paul. When we read about him in the Bible, we see that he had the gift of leadership, was very outgoing, and people believed what he said.

In the beginning, Paul (then his name was Saul) persecuted Christians and killed them. Many people followed him and admired him for this.

He wasn't a good person, but even so, God knew that he had potential and that Paul's personality could be used to teach many people about God.

Perhaps like Paul, you are a leader who likes to talk a lot and sometimes you get in trouble for saying the wrong thing, and that makes you think that you can't fulfill God's purpose for you. Or you might think that you will have to give up a lot to achieve your dreams because you are easily distracted.

Today I want you to know that God gave you your personality and if you seek him and ask him to help you fulfill his purpose in your life, that outgoing personality and your leadership skills will help you achieve an important purpose.

Conclusion

God sees potential in you to fulfill his purpose in your life.

Perhaps there are difficult situations or characteristics that make you think that you can't achieve many things or achieve a dream or a goal. But just as we learned from Moses, Joseph, and Paul, who each had some aspect that seemed to be a negative that would keep them from fulfilling their purpose, God saw their potential and they achieved great things for Him. God also sees potential in you, and if you seek Him with all your heart, He will help you fulfill your purpose.

God made us all different and the purposes for each of us are different, but what we all have in common is that God sees our potential.

Let's close our eyes and pray

- Thank you, Heavenly Father, for the gifts, talents, and abilities you have given us.
- We ask that you will help us find our purpose for which you have created us.
- Please help us to seek you with all our hearts and to seek your will.

Let's Say Goodbye

To end the lesson, in an open space, have the class make a circle. Then celebrate the different professions that the children identified in the following way:

- 1. Those who want to be teachers, jump up and down.*
- 2. Those who want to be vets, walk around in circles.*
- 3. Those who want to be missionaries, hop on one foot.*
- 4. Those who want to be doctors, raise both hands.*

If there are other professions that the children mentioned, incorporate them with some other movement.

If the space isn't big enough to do the above exercise, you can have the children make sounds with their hands, feet or mouth to make a symphony.

LESSON 11

We Are the Body of Christ



CHARITO XUC - LICENSED MINISTER (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That girls and boys will always remember that they are part of the body of Christ, and as such, they and their skills are important.

As the girls and boys enter the room, pass out a sticky note to each one.

Then instruct the children to find a part of the body that is connected to the part they have. So a head has to find an ear or a neck, but cannot find a leg. Once found, the two must stay together until they find another part and so on until all the parts are connected.

To Remember

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12:27



Thoughtful Truth

In chapter 12 of the first letter to the Corinthians, a servant of God named Paul talks about the Body of Christ or the church of Christ. In these verses, he compares the body of Christ to a human body. He says a foot wouldn't say, "Hey! I am not a hand! That makes me unimportant!" Rather, the foot plays a very important role. Are our feet useful? What for? Do the eyes help us? Are ears and noses good for us to have? (Let the children respond.) Each part of our body is so important!

Let's talk about the functions of the different parts of the body of Christ.

Introductory Activity

Before starting the Thoughtful Truth, write down the main parts of the body on sticky notes, such as head, neck, body, arms, legs, etc. For a larger class, include parts like ears, mouth, nose, fingers, toes, hair, freckles, etc.

I. THEY ARE DIVERSE

In I Corinthians 12:4-6, Paul tells us that:

- a.** There are different spiritual gifts, but the Spirit who gives them is the same. The gifts are given by God to each Christian, and not everyone is given the same gift. Some people get the gift of wisdom, or the gift of knowledge, to another faith, to another the gift of healing, to another miraculous power, prophecy, discernment of spirits, different kinds of languages, and still others interpretation of languages.

All these things are done by one and the same Spirit. He distributes these spiritual gifts just as he determines.

- b.** There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. These services include: teaching the Word, preaching, singing (although it's a talent, it can be transformed into a gift), visiting the sick, evangelizing, praying for someone, etc.
- c.** There are a different kinds of workings, but God, who makes all things, is the same. What does this mean? The Message Bible says it this way, "God works through different people in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves his purposes through them all." (Give examples of this.)

2. THE BODY IS ONE (v. 12)

As you may realize, there are a lot of different gifts, a diversity of gifts. But all of them belong to a single body, the Body of Christ, which is the church. Each of them is very important.

We can't belittle someone because they do a little or a lot. The person who does the maintenance is just as important as the pastor, or the worship leader, or the usher who collects the offering, or the one who cleans the bathrooms, etc. (v. 22-23). God gave each of us what we would need to build His church.

You are important, your gifts are important, and you can use those gifts in the service of the Lord. Do you know what your gift is? What do you like to do? (Wait for the girls and boys to answer.)

3. CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY (Colossians 1:18)

Can you imagine a body without a head? (Let the girls and boys share.) Like our body has a head, the body of Christ, the church that we are a part of, has a head, and that head is Jesus. As the head, Jesus directs us, accompanies us, gives us the power to act, and leads us by his Spirit within us. Christ the head coordinates us very well; he is our Lord, and he is so good that he gave us gifts and talents to be a blessing to his entire body.

Application

Isn't it wonderful to learn about the Body of Christ and that each of us makes up that body! We've learned that we have many different gifts, and God calls us to put them to work to encourage each other. So, from now on, we must remember that:

- a) We must appreciate the many different gifts that each of us has.
- b) Our gifts are valuable.
- c) As the Body of Christ, we're going to give an account of how we used our gifts.
- d) We are one body led by Christ and we receive our gifts from the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

Never feel frustrated because you don't have the same gift as someone else. You have been given a special gift to use to glorify God and fulfill His purpose. If you haven't discovered your spiritual gift yet, pray, asking the Lord to show it to you, what you should use it for, and how to use it to serve within the Body of Christ. If after praying you're still unsure what gift God has given you, then come to us, and we can help you discover your gifts and talents.

(A great lesson on Spiritual Gifts can be found in the resource, Young Believer's Discipleship Pack, in the lesson, So What Are My Spiritual Gifts? More information about this resource can be found here:

<http://www.mesoamericaregion.org/en/package/young-believers-discipleship-series-pack-children-2/>

You are very important because you are part of the Body of Christ.

Always remember that!

Let's close our eyes and pray

- God, thank you for this beautiful lesson that has shown me that I'm important to you and that I'm part of the Body of Christ.
- Please help me value the gifts that my friends have.
- Give me the opportunity to serve you with the gifts that you have given me, and in doing so, build up the Body of Christ.

Let's Say Goodbye

Before the girls and boys go home, provide them with the word search on the next page and give them time to complete it. (If you have younger children, at your discretion, you can do a different activity that is more age appropriate.)

Complete the Word Search

C	H	R	I	S	T	I	M	I	W
D	E	M	U	A	B	G	E	R	S
B	A	E	R	M	O	L	M	U	P
E	D	O	R	B	D	M	B	D	I
L	U	L	P	M	Y	S	E	I	R
C	H	U	R	C	H	Z	R	B	I
P	O	N	E	V	C	V	S	A	T
M	I	R	A	C	L	E	S	B	U



1. Head
2. Body
3. Christ
4. Church
5. Members
6. Spirit
7. Miracles
8. One

LESSON 12

So Much To Be Thankful For



CHARITO XUC - LICENSED MINISTER (GUATEMALA)

The Great Desire

That the children will always express their gratitude for who God is and for all that God gives them.

To Remember

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before."

Daniel 6:10



Introductory Activity

Ahead of time, ask some of the boys and girls to prepare actions for the song "Thankful." (It can be found on YouTube by Group Publishing.) Have them lead the other children in the song. This is a great way to present the topic of the lesson in a fun way.

Thoughtful Truth

Let's talk about the topic: "So Much To Be Thankful For!" What are some rules for being polite? (Allow time for girls and boys to respond; if they don't, give them a hint, then proceed.)

One of the rules for being polite is to be thankful. We know that God deserves our gratitude for all the things He's done for us and for all the things He will do in our lives every day. We will always be in debt to Him because there will always be so much to thank him for.

In the Bible, we find several passages that talk about being thankful, and we see events or times when we should be thankful. Today we'll talk about some of those times that we should be thankful according to the Bible.

I. When we give offerings to God Leviticus 22:29

In the Old Testament, God gave very careful instructions to the people of Israel concerning their offerings and sacrifices that they brought before Him.

Apart from the fact that the sacrifice should be pure, along with other details, when it was presented to God, it was also important to be thankful to God. And what does it mean to be “thankful”? Being thankful is expressing gratitude to God for what He does for us!

God says to his people: *“When you sacrifice a thank offering to the Lord, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted . . .”*

2. For the wonderful things God does

The Psalmist Asaph, in Psalms 75:1 (GNT), raises a song to God, saying: *“We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks to you!”* And why does he give thanks to God? Because *“. . . of the wonderful things you have done.”* What the Lord had done was cause for admiration, for praise, and they wouldn’t go before God with sadness or pain, but with gratitude in their hearts.

3. For strength and wisdom

How many people in the Bible needed strength? How many needed wisdom and God gave it to them? I want to tell you that Daniel, the young man who was thrown into the lion’s den, gave thanks to God for giving him strength and wisdom. He says to God in Daniel 2:23: *“I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king”*.

Another reason that we find in Scripture is:

4. For God’s provision

Jesus taught us this principle. How many of us have food, clothes, shoes, a bed to sleep in, a house to live in, friends, family, etc? (Let the children answer.) In Matthew 15:36, Matthew 26:27, Luke 17:15-16 and John 11:41, we see various acts of gratitude.

Matthew 15:36 says that Jesus took seven loaves and the fish, and as he broke them he gave thanks to God. Matthew 26:27 says that when Jesus took the cup, he gave thanks to God.

Luke 17:15-16 tells us that after Jesus performed a miracle in the lives of the 10 leper men by healing them, one returned to thank Jesus.

In John 11 we read about the resurrection of Lazarus, and in verse 41 it says that when the stone was removed from the tomb, Jesus looked up and said: *“Father, I thank you that you have heard me.”*

5. For the most wonderful gift we’ve been given

Beginning back in the Old Testament, it was announced to us that one day we would receive a wonderful gift. Do you know who that gift is? Jesus, the Savior of the world! John 3:16 says: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* For this we give thanks to God.

6. For everything

The Bible encourages us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 that we should *“give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”* This means that we shouldn’t just give thanks when we have what we need, or when everything goes well, but always.

Application

The song we sang at the beginning mentioned that there is so much to be thankful for! Today we have learned about the times when we should be thankful, but there is so much to be thankful for and we must be thankful for all we have. Why do we give thanks today?

- a) For the birth of Jesus.
- b) Because through Christ we have salvation.
- c) Because Christ searches for us and when he finds us he offers to give us salvation, and when we accept Jesus, He gives us eternal life.
- d) For His daily provision.
- e) For the jobs our moms and dads have.
- f) For healing us when we're sick.

Conclusion

Let's remember that we must always give thanks to God. God give us so much mercy that He gives us many opportunities. If you are not saved yet, today you can be. And when you are saved, you will go home filled with thankfulness in your heart.

Let's close our eyes and pray

Heavenly Father,

- Thank you for all you do for us.
- We want to always be thankful for what you do and for who you are.
- We pray to you with thankfulness; we want to worship and praise you always.

Let's Say Goodbye

Make copies of the worksheets on the next 2 pages. Each child will need a copy of each page.

Have the children color the first page. Then have them cut out the flower petals on the first sheet and glue them onto the corresponding shapes on the second sheet.

Review the memory verse in the center.

Color and cut out the flower petals and glue them onto the corresponding areas on the next page.

1. When we give offerings to God

2. For the wonderful things God does

3. For strength and wisdom

4. For God's provision

5. For the most wonderful gift we've been given

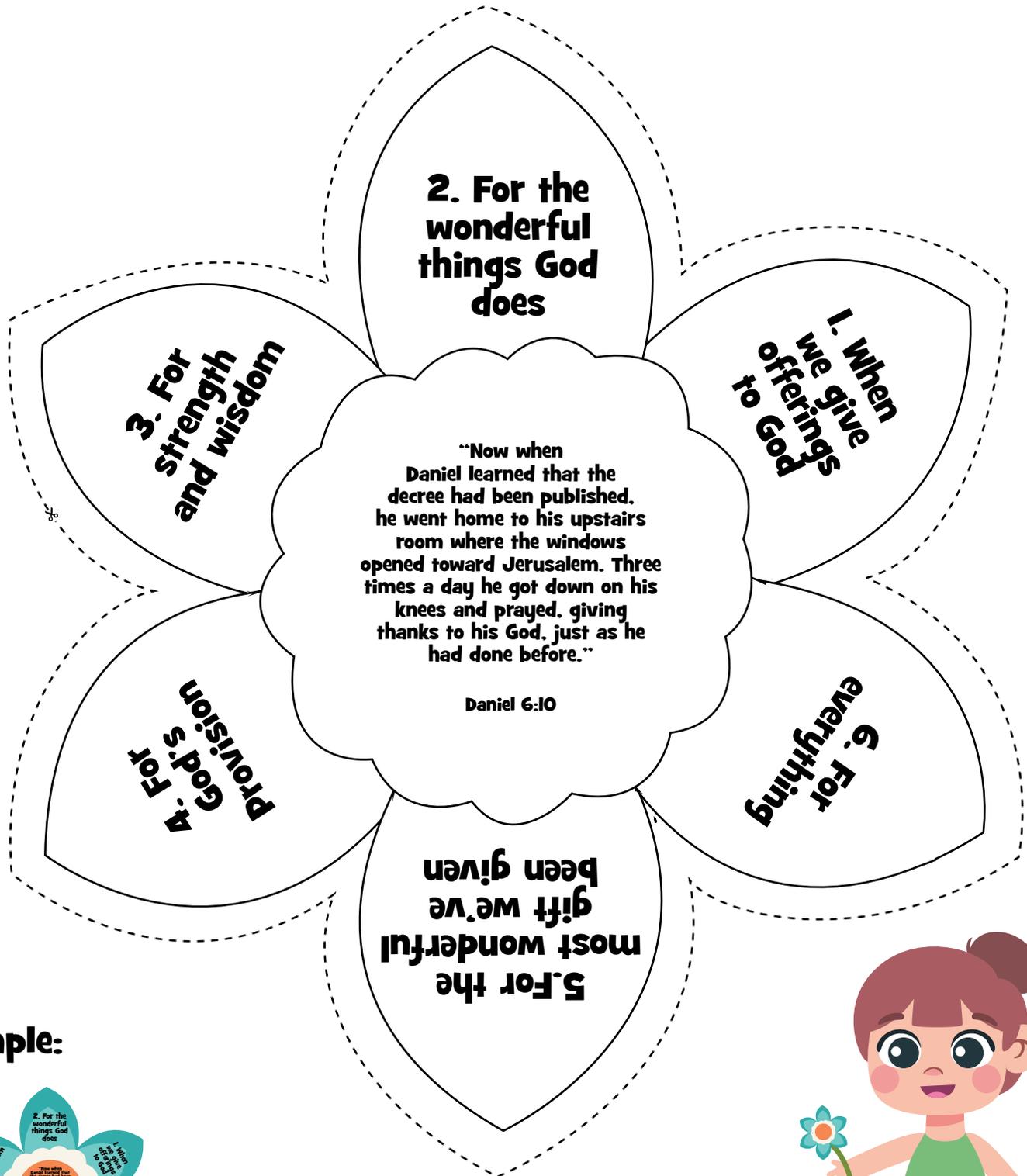
6. For everything

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before."

Daniel 6:10



Glue the flower petals onto the corresponding areas.



Example:

