

WEEK 1

OUR FELLOWSHIP IS RESTORED

SALVATION IS A GIFT

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

THE FOUR KEYS . . .

KEY VERSE

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. Revelation 3:20

KEY IDEAS

1. Salvation requires humility.
2. Salvation cannot be earned.
3. Salvation is a gift that must be accepted.

KEY PASSAGE

Matthew 19:16-26

KEY PRINCIPLES



EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW . . .

salvation cannot be earned by good works but instead it is a gift that must be accepted by belief in Jesus and obedience to God.



EVERY CHILD SHOULD FEEL . . .

grateful that salvation is not earned but given freely to all who believe.



EVERY CHILD SHOULD BE ABLE TO . . .

understand that only God is good and accepting God's free gift of salvation means surrendering our desires for His.



EVERY CHILD SHOULD WANT . . .

to accept the free gift of salvation in Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus's encounter with the rich man shows us that our salvation cannot be earned. The man thought he had it all. He had worked hard and earned a lot of money, and he kept all of God's laws. To him, this seemed like enough to get into heaven, but Jesus showed him that his faith and trust was really in his wealth and accomplishments instead of God. When Jesus asked him why the man called him good, it wasn't because Jesus isn't good, but because Jesus wanted him to acknowledge that only God is perfect and since Jesus is God, following him is the only way to be saved. To receive salvation, the man had to surrender everything he had built for himself and accept the gift of Jesus's sacrifice. In many ways following Jesus is harder but the reward and blessing of eternity in heaven is so much greater than anything we could have on earth.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION

Begin the class by asking for a volunteer. Pull out a gift-wrapped box and tell the child the gift is for them but they have to wait until after the lesson to open it. Read the story in Matthew 19 of the rich man. Then tell the child they can have their gift but it comes with a choice. The choice is either the \$5 bill in your hand or whatever is inside the box. If they choose the \$5, they do not get to have what is inside the box. If they choose the box, they do not get to keep the \$5. Tell them that you know what is in the box is better but they don't know that for sure. They can either choose to trust what you tell them and take the box or they can trust in what they see and take the \$5. Let the child choose. If they chose the box, have them open it in front of the class and show what's inside. If they chose the money, have them sit back down and then open the box for the class to see. Explain that when someone offers us a gift, it doesn't actually become ours until we accept it. It's the same with God's gift of salvation. Unless we trust Him and accept His gift, we will miss out on salvation because we cannot serve both God and ourselves. There is no way to have both.

KEY IDEAS

Read Matthew 19:16-26. Then use the following points for guided discussion.

- Salvation requires humility.
 - What is humility? Humility means "lowliness of mind". It is the opposite of pride and arrogance. To be humble means to understand that God is perfect and we are not. We have nothing to offer a perfect and holy God that he does not already have. All we have to give him is a heart that desires Him above our sin and is grateful for His love and mercy. God loves us so much that He responds to our humility with mercy and salvation. He is a good Father. (Matt. 5:3) Jesus was the perfect example of humility when He left His throne in heaven to live among us in our sin. He did it so we could be saved. (2 Cor. 5:21)
 - How does salvation require humility? To be saved we have to first acknowledge that we need someone to save us. We have to understand the weight of our sin and how much it grieves the heart of God. When we acknowledge our need for Him, He responds out of love to save us.
- Salvation cannot be earned.
 - Why can't salvation be earned? Salvation is not a reward for good works because the Bible says that our good deeds are still as filthy rags before a holy and perfect God. God knew that we would not be able to earn salvation because of our sinful nature, so He made a way through Jesus. Jesus became our substitute and took the punishment for our sin, so that we could be free. (Is. 64:6, Eph. 2:8-9)
- Salvation is a gift that must be accepted.
 - How do we accept the gift of salvation if it cannot be earned? We accept it by believing in Jesus, confessing our sin, and trusting in Him for salvation by living for Him instead of for ourselves.
 - Once we are saved, are we free to do whatever we want? When we are saved, God forgives all our sin, past, present, and future, but this is not a free pass to go on sinning. Instead, we should live our lives in gratefulness to God, for His glory, and denying our sin daily because we no longer are slaves to it. (Rom. 6:1-4)

Activity

Bring in a needle and thread. Have kids take turns threading the needle. After a few tries, give them something larger like a cord or rope. Ask them to thread it. When they can't, explain that Jesus told his disciples that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to inherit eternal life. Why did He say that? He meant that it is impossible for any person to be saved on their own. The rich man tried to earn salvation through his wealth and accomplishments, but no one is good enough to earn salvation. It is only by Jesus's perfect work on the cross for us that we can be saved.

Prayer

Thank God for giving us the gift of salvation. Ask God to help us understand that we can't earn salvation and to help us trust in Him for forgiveness of our sin.

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

ACTIVITY

Memorize the key verse Revelation 3:20.

Spend time this week talking with your child about gifts. Use the discussion questions below to facilitate the conversation. Then make a plan to give a gift to someone you know as a way to encourage them and show how much you love and care for them.

DISCUSSION

- What is a gift?
Something given voluntarily, out of love, that was not earned.
- Why do we give gifts?
We give gifts because we love others and want them to know it.
- How do you feel when you receive a gift?
- How did God show His love for us by giving us the gift of Jesus?
God knew that we did not deserve salvation. We've done nothing to earn it, and yet He loves us so much that He gives it even still.
- How should we feel when we receive God's gift?
We should live our lives in a way that offers Him praise and thanksgiving and tell the world all about the gift they can receive, too.

PRAYER

Thank God that He has given us a gift we can never earn. Thank Him that He has loved us enough to send His only son Jesus to be our Savior and Redeemer. Ask God to help you accept His gift when you are ready to surrender your sin and live for Him.