

WEEK 2

GOD SENT HIS SON

SALVATION IS BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

THE FOUR KEYS . . .

KEY VERSE

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8

KEY IDEAS

1. Salvation cannot be earned.
2. Grace is a gift.
3. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

KEY PASSAGE

John 3:1-21

KEY PRINCIPLES



EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW . . .

that salvation cannot be earned by our works and only comes through the grace of God offered by our faith in Christ.



EVERY CHILD SHOULD FEEL . . .

grateful that salvation does not have to be earned.



EVERY CHILD SHOULD BE ABLE TO . . .

share the truth of what God has done for them.



EVERY CHILD SHOULD WANT . . .

to accept the free gift of salvation in Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

Nicodemus was a chief Pharisee. He knew the Law of God like the back of his hand and was a member of the Sanhedrin who were the Jews that made sure other Jews followed the Law. When he heard the things that Jesus was doing, he was curious and wanted to know more about this man who could perform miracles only God could do. He came to meet Jesus at night, possibly because he was afraid of what others might say. Jesus didn't seem to follow the Law like they did and yet the Spirit of God seemed to be upon him. What could this mean? What could he really be the Messiah they were waiting for or was he a blasphemer as other Pharisees suggested? Nicodemus needed to find the answer to that question for himself.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION

Begin by asking for two volunteers to help tell today's Bible story. Explain that we are going to be talking about the night when Nicodemus visited Jesus. One volunteer is going to play the role of Nicodemus and one volunteer will play the role of Jesus. Have the children each use their Bibles and read their respective parts to the rest of the class.

KEY IDEAS

Read John 3:1-21. Then use the following points for guided discussion.

- Salvation cannot be earned.
 - Why was Nicodemus confused by Jesus? Nicodemus was a teacher of the Law. He was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. He understood the Old Testament system that God had given them well, but Jesus came to bring a new system, a system of faith. This was a foreign concept to Nicodemus.
 - What did Jesus mean by "born again"? Since we have been born into sin under the curse of Adam, there is no way to inherit salvation on our own. As we've discussed before, the OT system that Nicodemus knew was not good enough because it could never make men perfect in God's eyes. By saying we must be born again, Jesus was saying that we must take on a new nature in Him through faith in Him. This spiritual birth brings cleansing from sin and new life and it is what Jesus meant when He said "unless one is born of water and the Spirit". (Eph. 4:22-24, 2 Cor. 5:17)
- Grace is a gift.
 - What is grace? Grace simply means getting what you do not deserve. We do not deserve God's forgiveness but He has offered it to us through salvation in Jesus anyway.
 - How do we receive the gift of grace? ABC: admit that you are a sinner, believe that Jesus is God's son and died for your sins and rose again so you may have life, and confess that Jesus is Lord of your life. Very simply, ask God to forgive you for your sin, believe that Jesus's payment on the cross was enough to cover you, and give your life to God in worship for this gift by living for Him.
- Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.
 - What is faith? Faith is simply a response to hearing the Word of God. There is enough evidence in the way that God has preserved His Word alone that we can know it is trustworthy and true and when we hear the Words of God, our hearts know it is true. Faith is simply recognizing it is true and choosing to trust God for what you still need help understanding. (Heb. 11:1, Rom. 10:17)
 - How can we know that God's Word is true? There is physical evidence in the preservation of the Bible through time and archaeology that has confirmed the historical accounts told in it, but even more than that, every person knows in their heart that they are a created being. There is evidence all around us in creation that points to our Creator. The question is are we willing to accept it or do we want to go our own way? (Rom. 1:20)

Activity

Play a game called "Grace is a free gift". Use the instruction sheet attached to set up the game and provide the instructions to the class.

Prayer

Thank God for offering us the gift of grace in Jesus Christ. Ask God to help you have faith that His word is true and trustworthy.

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

ACTIVITY

Memorize the key verse Ephesians 2:8-9.

Spend time with your child this week discussing the meaning of grace. If grace is getting something we don't deserve, how can we show grace to others this week when they haven't earned it? Think of some examples together of how you can show grace to others because God has shown it to you.

DISCUSSION

- Think of a time when you received something you hadn't earned. What was it?
- How did you show your appreciation for that thing?
- How can we show our appreciation to God for what He has given us in Jesus?

PRAYER

Thank God that He gives good gifts and the greatest gift of all is Jesus. Thank Him that He loves us enough to die for us while we were still sinners. Ask God to help you accept His gift of Jesus and show your appreciation by living your life to honor and glorify Him.

Grace is a Free Gift Game

Introduce the game:

Who can tell me what grace is? In a nutshell, grace means getting something we don't deserve, like a gift. Jesus offers us the gift of salvation because He died for our sins on the cross. We didn't deserve that and we didn't do anything to earn it. We cannot earn God's forgiveness of our sin through our good works. Our works are never good enough to earn God's forgiveness, but He has offered it to us freely in Jesus. So we're going to play a fun game to help us memorize our verse today and help us understand the difference in a gift and works.

Set up the game:

Prepare 12 envelopes. On the outside of the envelopes, write the following portions of Ephesians 2:8-9:

1. For by grace
2. you have
3. been saved
4. through faith
5. and that
6. not of yourself;
7. it is the gift
8. of God
9. not of works
10. lest anyone
11. should boast.
12. Ephesians 2:8-9

Each envelope will randomly contain one of the following cards inside (write out on index cards):

Gift Card worth 50 points

Gift Card worth 75 points

Gift Card worth 100 points

Gift Card worth 100 points

Works Card: do 10 jumping jacks for 10 points

Works Card: do 10 pushups for 15 points

Works Card: do 10 lunges for 20 points

Works Card: do 10 squats for 25 points

Works Card: turn in place for 20 seconds for 30 points

Works Card: stand on one foot for 20 seconds for 35 points

Works Card: do 10 arm lifts to the side for 40 points

Works Card: hop in place for 20 seconds for 45 points

Place all envelopes on the table in the correct verse order and avoid putting gift cards in envelopes directly next to each other. You are now ready to play the game.

How to play:

Divide the class into 2 teams and flip a coin or ask a trivia question to see who goes first. Have a child from Team One come forward and say the Bible verse (it's okay to look at the envelopes because it will get harder as the game goes on). Next, have the child point to an envelope they want to open. You, the teacher, open the envelope and read what's inside. If the card is a gift, then Team One earns the points listed freely. If the card is a works card, they must complete the task assigned to earn the points. Once the points are recorded on the board, you, teacher, return the envelope to its place face down so the words are not visible. The next child from Team Two takes their turn and must say the verse with the missing portion. If said correctly, the child gets to point to an envelope and follow the same rules above. As the envelopes are turned over, the game gets harder. The team with the most points at the end wins!