

God is Holy

(1 Peter 1:15, Leviticus 19:1-2, Hebrews 12:14)

Pre-Session Warm Up

We've been learning about God's attributes. An *attribute* is a character trait or quality about someone.

God has many attributes. What are some things you already know about God? (He is **wise**; He's **loving**; He's **good**; He's **forgiving**, and He's **faithful**—He always does what He says He will do.)

Last week, we learned that we have a creative God who has such power that all He had to do was speak our universe into existence. His word is so powerful that all he had to do was say, "*Let there be light!*" and there was light!

Today we're going to focus our attention on the fact that God is **holy**.

Opening Prayer

Father, as we come to the knowledge of Your holiness, open the eyes of our hearts and help us to begin to see the purpose and plan you have for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Exodus 15:11)

Lesson

The Bible tells us that God is *holy*. That means He is without sin. He is perfect in every way. He has never had a bad thought. He has never made a mistake. He is *righteous* in all His ways. That means that He *always* does what is right and good.

Because God is perfect and holy we can believe everything He tells us in the Bible. We can trust His word.

Since God is pure and holy, He cannot be in the presence of anything that is sinful in any way.

[Teacher, use opposing magnets as an object lesson to show how God cannot be in the presence of sin.]

God made a point of showing people in Bible times that He is holy and that He cannot tolerate sin. There are many examples in the Bible of God punishing people when they disobeyed Him. These stories were written down for our sakes so that we would know that God is holy and that He must punish sin.

Moses

God chose Moses to lead the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt to the land He had promised Abraham. While Moses and the people wandered in the wilderness, God promised to provide water for them. God told Moses to *speak* to the rock, and water would flow out of it. Do you know what Moses did? Moses was so angry at the people for always complaining, in a rage he *hit* the rock with his staff, not once, but twice. He disobeyed God.

Do you think that God had to punish Moses for disobeying Him? Yes! All sin must be punished. Let's see how God punished Moses for being disobedient.

Numbers 20:12

But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust me enough to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land I am giving them!"

Not go into the Promised Land! After all those years of traveling over dusty sand! Moses must have wept many bitter tears. How he must have regretted not obeying God!

Even though Moses obeyed God many times before, God expected him to set an example for the people he was leading.

God expects us to set a good example to others, too. When you do naughty things that brings disgrace to God's name. You are not being a good example to others. God wants you to lead others to Him.

Do you think that God loved Moses less for being disobedient? God still loved Moses even though he had sinned against Him. God loved him with a Father's love; just like He loves you.

There is always forgiveness with God. If you do anything that displeases God, all you need to do is go to Him in prayer and ask Him to forgive you. Then you must stop doing those things that are not God pleasing.

You have to understand, that even though God forgives you for your sin, sin must be punished. There are consequences to your sin. Some sins have bigger and longer lasting consequences. For Moses, he was never allowed to go into the Promised Land.

Do you think that was fair of God? [Teacher, let the children discuss.] God is holy and does not tolerate sin.

[Teacher, depending on the age of your students and the amount of time you have to teach, you may want to skip the examples of David and Solomon and proceed to the example of Jonah. Because David's sin involved adultery and murder, use wisdom in presenting it.]

David

The Bible says, that David was the apple of God's eye. As a shepherd boy, he wrote many of our wonderful psalms – songs of praise and worship to God. When he grew up, he was a great king, thousands of people admired him. Yet David sinned, too.

One time he desired to sleep with another man's wife. So, he sent the woman's husband to the front line of a battle where he would be killed, then he married the woman. This was both murder and adultery. Two of God's Ten Commandments prohibit both of these sins! And,

because David sinned, God told him there would always be trouble in his family. And, indeed, there was!

But, David was a good king and he lived a long life. The Bible refers to David as “*a man after God's own heart*” because he was deeply sorry for his sins and asked God to forgive him. Then, before he passed away he appointed his son, Solomon, to become the next king.

Solomon

When Solomon came into power, he asked God for wisdom to rule the people well. God was so pleased with Solomon's request for wisdom that He gave him riches, power, and a long life, too.

God honored King Solomon; he had everything a person could want. He was famous for his great wealth and he was the wisest man who ever lived. He had it all! But, sadly, King Solomon had one major weakness which led him away from God.

King Solomon had a weakness for women. He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Many of these women were from nations where people worshiped idols—wooden or stone statues of false gods. The Lord had clearly instructed the children of Israel not to marry anyone from those nations because He knew that if a man married a foreign woman—one that worshiped false gods—he would be tempted to start worshiping her gods. Yet Solomon did it anyway.

Solomon's first wife was an Egyptian princess and Solomon allowed her to keep her idols. And then he married again and again and again!

1 Kings 11:1-2

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites. (2) The LORD had clearly instructed the people of Israel, "You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods." Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway.

All these foreign wives brought their own idols of false gods with them from their countries! Soon there were lots and lots of false gods being worshiped in Solomon's kingdom! He even built some temples for his foreign wives to use for worshiping their false gods.

And, sure enough, these women encouraged Solomon to worship along with them and he turned his heart away from the true and living God. Solomon started to listen to his wives! He began to think that maybe, just maybe, these idols really had some power of their own! Pretty soon, Solomon himself was praying to the false gods that his wives worshiped.

Solomon did what was clearly wrong and refused to follow the Lord as his father David did. God was very angry with Solomon about this. Even though God appeared to him twice to warn him specifically against worshiping others gods, Solomon didn't listen and now he was no longer interested in the Lord God of Israel.

1 Kings 11:11

So now the LORD said to him, "Since you have not kept my covenant and have disobeyed my decrees, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants."

How sad! How could a king so blessed by God fail to obey the One who had lavished such love on him?

Jonah

Who knows about the prophet Jonah? How did he end up in the belly of a big fish?

God commanded him to warn the people of Nineveh that their city would be destroyed because of their great wickedness.

Jonah 1:1-2

The LORD gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: (2) "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are."

The sin of the people of Nineveh was very great. God loved them and wanted to warn these people that they would be destroyed unless they chose to believe Him.

God wanted His prophet to warn the people of Nineveh that unless they chose to believe God, they would be destroyed because of their wickedness.

Jonah 1:3

But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the LORD. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the LORD by sailing to Tarshish.

Jonah did not like the people of Nineveh because they were so evil so he ran away from God. Here he was, one of God's prophets. He loved God; that is, he *thought* he loved God. But when he heard what God wanted him to do, he refused to obey.

Jonah, a great prophet of God, disobeyed and did not do what God told him to do. God punished Jonah by letting him be swallowed by the big fish. For three days and nights, Jonah was in the fish's belly.

In God's eyes, sin is always sin—no matter who sins. Great leaders sin. Kings and prophets sin. You and I sin. God hates all sin because He is holy.

The prophet Isaiah understood this and when he saw God in a vision, he was afraid.

Isaiah 6:1-5

It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. (2) Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. (3) They were calling out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven's Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!" (4) Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke. (5) Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies."

When Isaiah saw how holy God is, he knew that he was sinful. He fell on his face and cried out to the Lord. That's exactly what God wants us to do – to realize that we are sinners in need of His grace.

God wants us to be holy.

Leviticus 19:1-2

The LORD also said to Moses, (2) "Give the following instructions to the entire community of Israel. You must be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy."

The word *holy* actually means *to be separate from evil*. God wants us to separate ourselves from evil.

Hebrews 12:14

Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.

Are your words holy?

Do you think it matters what you say? Do you tell coarse jokes? Do you use bad words? Do you use the name of our Lord in vain? It is important to be careful about the words that come out of your mouth.

Our words are like windows into our souls; they show what's really in our hearts. They show others what kind of person we really are.

Is your reading holy?

Many comic books and magazines make crime and immoral living look glamorous.

Is what you listen to holy?

The words of many of today's popular songs refer to sexual immorality. It's easy to get carried away by the music and the heavy beat. But Satan can use music to pull your heart away from God.

Is what you watch holy?

Your understanding of right and wrong can easily be lowered by watching TV or by playing some of the most popular video games. Many shows have very crude comedy. And many shows make immoral living look acceptable. You also have to guard yourself against materialism. You can begin to be greedy for the things you see advertised on TV.

You must keep your heart and mind pure before the Lord. Did you know that sin takes birth in your mind? First you have a bad thought, then you act on it somehow. Either you think, or say, or do something that is ungodly.

One way to keep those bad thoughts from coming into your mind in the first place is by guarding what your eyes look at and what your ears hear. That's the only way to keep your heart pure and clean.

God created us to have fellowship with Him. But human beings are prone toward sin. [Show the opposing magnets again.]

God loves us so much that He made a way for us to come into His presence. He came and took the punishment that you and I deserve (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Sin must be punished (Romans 6:23). But thank God, He had a plan.

To receive forgiveness from God, you must believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead so that your sin can be forgiven. When you do that, God says you are clean and pure in His sight because He sees you as “in Christ.”

It's like taking a piece of paper all covered with marks and placing it inside your Bible. Now all you can see is your Bible. You can't see the dirty piece of paper. In the same way, God can only see Jesus because you are “in Christ” – you believe that what Jesus did on the cross satisfied God's need to punish all sin.

Now, just because you are forgiven, that is, saved from eternal punishment from sin, does not mean that you can just live your life any way you want.

God is holy. He is set apart from sin. God wants you and I to be set apart from sin, too, so that we can show others what God is like.

When you become a child of God, others should see that you are Godly.

When people meet you, do they know you are a child of God?

Closing Prayer

Father, we want to be holy as you are holy. We want to be set apart from the evil things in this world. Help us to guard our eyes from seeing immoral and evil things; help us to guard our ears from hearing ungodly things. When people see us we want them to see that we resemble our Heavenly Father's family. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Make a plaque with the Memory Verse.

Game Center

Name that Attribute

Have the children form a circle. Each child must say one of God's attributes in a strong voice. The next child in line has to tell everyone a new attribute plus the attributes that have been said so far. So, the last child has to remember all the attributes.

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. What is an *attribute*? (A character trait or quality about someone.)
2. Name three of God's attributes. (Creative, eternal, everywhere, all-powerful, love, faithful, unchangeable, holy.)
3. What does it mean to say that God is *holy*? (He is without sin.)
4. What does the word *holy* mean? (Set apart from sin.)
5. What must God do about sin? And why? (He must punish sin because He is holy and perfect; He cannot tolerate sin.)
6. What sinful thing did Moses do? (He hit the rock with his staff instead of speaking to it, like God had told him to do.)
7. How did God punish Moses' sin? (God didn't allow Moses to enter the Promised Land.)

8. What sinful thing did David do? (He had a man killed so that he could take his wife in marriage.)
9. What did Solomon do that deserved punishment? (He started worshiping idols.)
10. Why did God allow Jonah to be swallowed by the big fish? (He disobeyed God. God told him to go to Nineveh to tell those people about Him, but Jonah ran away.)
11. When Isaiah saw God in his vision, what did he do? (He fell on his face and cried out to the Lord.)
12. Why is it important to be careful about the words that come out of your mouth? (Our words are like windows into our souls and show other's what's really in our hearts.)
13. What can you do to help keep your heart pure before God? (Be careful about what you see and what you hear.)
14. What can be dangerous about listening to many of today's most popular songs? (The words refer to immoral things.)
15. What can be dangerous about watching many of today's most popular TV programs? (They make immoral living look acceptable and can also make us greedy for material things.)
16. God is holy and cannot tolerate sin; He cannot have sin in His presence. What has He done so that we can come to Him? (He came and died on the cross and took the punishment that I deserve.)
17. Once you've asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins, can you just live your life any way you want? How does God want you to live? (He wants us to live holy lives, set ourselves apart from sin.)
18. When people meet you, do they know you are a child of God?