
Forward

This book contains lessons on the greatness and worth of God. Who is God? What is He like? How should I act toward Him? The answers to these questions are of utmost importance in the life of faith for children and adults alike. These lessons on God's attributes were written to present children with a bountiful feast of all that God is in His greatness, His worth, and His Word. Applying these lessons will help to build His wonderful character into their lives. Knowing God will help them find the way of salvation, endure life's trials, and worship their Creator the way He desires.

I have designed these lessons to enable you to teach the Bible expositionally. The idea is to have the kids read the passages in their own Bibles and the teacher explain the scriptures and give good practical applications that are age-appropriate. My goal is to ensure that children learn that God's Word is exciting and meaningful and that teachers teach sound doctrine!

Even though I've scripted the lessons, I don't expect teachers to read my lesson materials verbatim to the children as they teach. My lessons are meant to provide the details you need to get background information and some suggestions for child-oriented personal application. Once you know and understand the Bible lessons for yourself, you'll be ready to teach your class.

The two-column layout of this book is designed so that you can copy and cut the pages in half to fit into your Bible. When the children observe that you are teaching right out of the Bible, rather than from a curriculum book, it validates God's Word and gives your teaching more authority.

You will discover that there is not always a Craft or Game idea suggested in each lesson. When I've had a good idea that really seems to support the lesson objectives, I've included it. But I have another handbook called *Tips and Tricks — Making Children's Bible Lessons Come to Life* that gives lots of suggestions for activities that will help reinforce your lesson and teach the memory verse. (This is

available from my website:

<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com/>)

Use the Teaching Schedule to help you organize your teaching rotation.

I pray that you will use these lessons for God's glory by teaching the Bible as an entire plan by a systematic and connected study of the Word.

Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:14)

Sheila Scroggins

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Helping Children to Know God

Knowing God will Help you find the way of salvation

- When you learn that God is **Holy**, you will see that you are a sinner. (Romans 3:23)
- When you learn that God is **Just**, you will realize that God must punish your sin. (Romans 6:23)
- When you learn that God is **Love**, you will accept His forgiveness through the Savior. (John 3:16)

Knowing God will help you endure life's trials

- When you learn that God is **Truth**, you will look to His Word for the answers to life. (Psalm 19:7-11)
- When you learn that God is **Sovereign**, you will accept God's right to plan your life. (Psalm 22:28)
- When you learn that God is **All-Present**, you will live each day seeking to please Him. (Psalm 139:23, 24)
- When you learn that God is **All-Powerful**, you will trust Him to help you. (Jeremiah 32:17; 33:3)

Knowing God will Help you Worship Your Creator

- When you learn that God is **Wise**, you will praise His excellent name. (Romans 11:33)
- When you learn that God is **Good**, you will develop a thankful heart. (Psalm 106:1)
- When you learn that God is **Faithful**, you will depend on Him. (Lamentations 3:22, 23; 1 Thessalonians 5:24)

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Teaching Schedule

Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
		God, the Great Creator (Genesis 1 – 2:25)	<i>The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)</i>
		God is Holy (Exodus 19:1 – 24:18)	<i>Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Exodus 15:11)</i>
		God is Just (Genesis 19:14-26; Numbers 20:3-12)	<i>He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He. (Deuteronomy 32:4)</i>
		God is Merciful (Luke 15:11-32)	<i>Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)</i>
		God is Love (Selections from the Gospels)	<i>Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)</i>
		God is All Knowing (Psalm 139)	<i>Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33)</i>
		God is All Powerful (Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)	<i>With God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26b)</i>
		God, Our Great Provider (Genesis 15, 17; 1 Kings 17:7-16)	<i>And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)</i>
		God, Our Great Protector (Psalm 91)	<i>God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. (Psalms 46:1)</i>
		God Hears and Answers Prayers (James 5:13-16; Jeremiah 29:11-13; 1 Chronicles 29:10-13)	<i>The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. (Psalms 34:17)</i>
		God is Good (Psalm 103)	<i>And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6)</i>
		God is Faithful (Genesis 8:22; 15:13-16; Isaiah 7:14)	<i>Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations. (Psalms 145:13)</i>
		Great is Our God (Psalm 145)	<i>Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable. (Psalm 145:3)</i>

God, the Great Creator

(Genesis 1: — 2:3)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Today we're going to start a new series of lessons all about God's attributes. An *attribute* is a character trait or quality about someone. For example, one of my attributes is that I love children and I'm passionate about teaching them about God.

God has lots of different character traits. 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.

In today's Bible study we're going to learn that God is **creative**. The Bible tells us that God created the whole universe out of nothing. We have a great and awesome and creative God!

Opening Prayer

Father, tune our ears so that we might learn more about You today. You are such an awesome God! Draw us a little closer to You as we learn about the wonderful way You made the world we live in. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

Lesson

[Teacher, shake up a bag full of Lego's, spill them out, and ask, "*What can you make out of these?*" (Allow responses.) Then shake up an empty bag, spill it out and ask, "*What can you make out of this?*"] You can't make anything out of nothing! Only God can do that!

Before God created the heavens and the earth, there was nothing. There was no land, no trees or flowers or animals or even people; there was only God.

Close your eyes and imagine nothing but darkness—no sounds, no colors, no light. Only God existed.

God has always lived; He is **eternal**. That means God had no beginning and He will have no end. He told Moses His name is "I AM" because He *is* and always *was* and always *shall be*.

At first there was nothing. Then God created the heavens and earth.

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

There was no shape to the world and there was nothing in it, on it, or around it. The world was dark, just like night, except there were no stars or a moon. There was only deep, deep water all around, and it was totally dark.

Genesis 1:2

The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

The verse says, *The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters*. God was **present everywhere** at the time of creation, just like He is today. God **never changes**, He is always the same. The idea here of God hovering over the waters is similar to a mother bird caring for and protecting her young. God is always close to us caring for and protecting us, like a mother bird.

At first there was only darkness. So, after God created the heavens and the earth the next thing God needed to create was light. And because God is **all-powerful**, all He needed to do was speak it into existence.

Genesis 1:3

Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

God spoke. He said, “*Let there be light!*” And there WAS light! Isn’t God’s word powerful!

We know from verse 14 that God didn’t create the sun, moon, or stars until the 4th day of creation. What do you think made it light until then? (*God Himself!*) That is why Jesus said that He is the light of the world.

Genesis 1:4-5

And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. (5) God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

He was well pleased with the work He did on that first day of creation, But the world wasn’t finished yet. There was more God wanted to do!

Day #2

The second day God created the sky.

Genesis 1:6-8

Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” (7) And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. (8) God called the space “sky.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

God created the sky. It was more than the blue sky above us; God stretched layers of gases and water around the earth to make an atmosphere that we could live in. So now there was light and sky and an atmosphere surrounding the earth. But every bit of the planet itself was water. There was much more God wanted to do!

Day #3

On the third day, God created two things. First, He created dry ground:

Genesis 1:9-10

Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. (10) God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

When the water gathered into seas, mountains and hills and islands appeared! There was still a lot of water – and it made rivers and lakes and creeks. Next, God created plants:

Genesis 1:11-12

Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened. (12) The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

There were plants, trees, and fruit and flowers of every kind.

Day #4

On the fourth day, God created the sun, and the moon, and the stars:

Genesis 1:14-18

Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. (15) Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. (16) God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. (17) God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, (18) to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

God made a special bright light and put it in the sky to shine during the day. We call that light, *sun!* And he made the moon and stars to shine at night.

And God looked at the beautiful planet and saw how good it was. It was a beautiful, perfect planet, except that it was empty! All those lakes and seas, forests and fields and prairies were very quiet.

What do you think was missing? Can you imagine a world without birds or fish or animals?

Day #5

On the fifth day, God created fish and sea life in the rivers and oceans. And, He created birds, butterflies and every other creature with wings to fly in the sky.

Genesis 1:20-22

Then God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind." (21) So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. (22) Then God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."

Day #6

On the sixth day, God created two things. First, He created animals:

Genesis 1:24-25

Then God said, "Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals." And that is what happened. (25) God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

Animals roamed all over the earth—walruses and wallabies, iguanas, and ibexes!

What are some unusual creatures you can think of that God made?

Now this was all very wonderful—but there was something else God wanted to create.

Genesis 1: 26-27

Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." (27) So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

The first people, Adam and Eve, were different from everything else God had created. God lovingly created people to care for all that He had created. More than that, God created people to love Him and to be loved by Him. The Bible tells us that people were created in the image of God—that means we are like God in some important ways.

Best of all, the people God made would be able to talk with God and know Him. Day and night, people could pray and know that God would hear them. That's what made people the most amazing part of all of God's wonderful creation.

Day #7

And what about the seventh day? Well, on the seventh day God rested from the work of creating the world.

Genesis 2:1-3

So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. (2) On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. (3) And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

God was happy with His creation. The world was off to a perfect start.

God's creation is all around us. We can see it, taste it, touch it and hear it from the minute we wake up with birds chirping outside our windows until the minute we go to sleep with the glow of the moon

and stars at night. Sometimes we don't even notice the amazing way God has made the world! But when we pay attention to what God has made, it reminds us of how wonderful God really is.

Read Psalm 9:1 aloud. God is amazing! God made our wonderful world and everything in it—all the bugs, the fish, the animals, the birds—everything! What are some things God created that you praise Him for? (People, Beaches, the sun.)

God is the creator of our world and of you and me! We can thank God for all the wonderful things He made for us to enjoy.

Closing Prayer

[Teacher, let the children thank God for specific things that God created that amaze them. Then close with the following prayer:

Father, we praise You for Your love and Your wonderful creation. Thank You for being our awesome creator. We're glad for all the animals and other wonderful things You have made in this world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Balloon Animals

Allow the children to create animals with an inflated balloon.

- Using the fish tail and fin patterns, have children cut and color the shapes and tape them to a balloon.
- Provide fun materials like wiggle eyes, stickers, tissue paper, chenille wire, permanent markers, glitter glue, puff paint, etc.

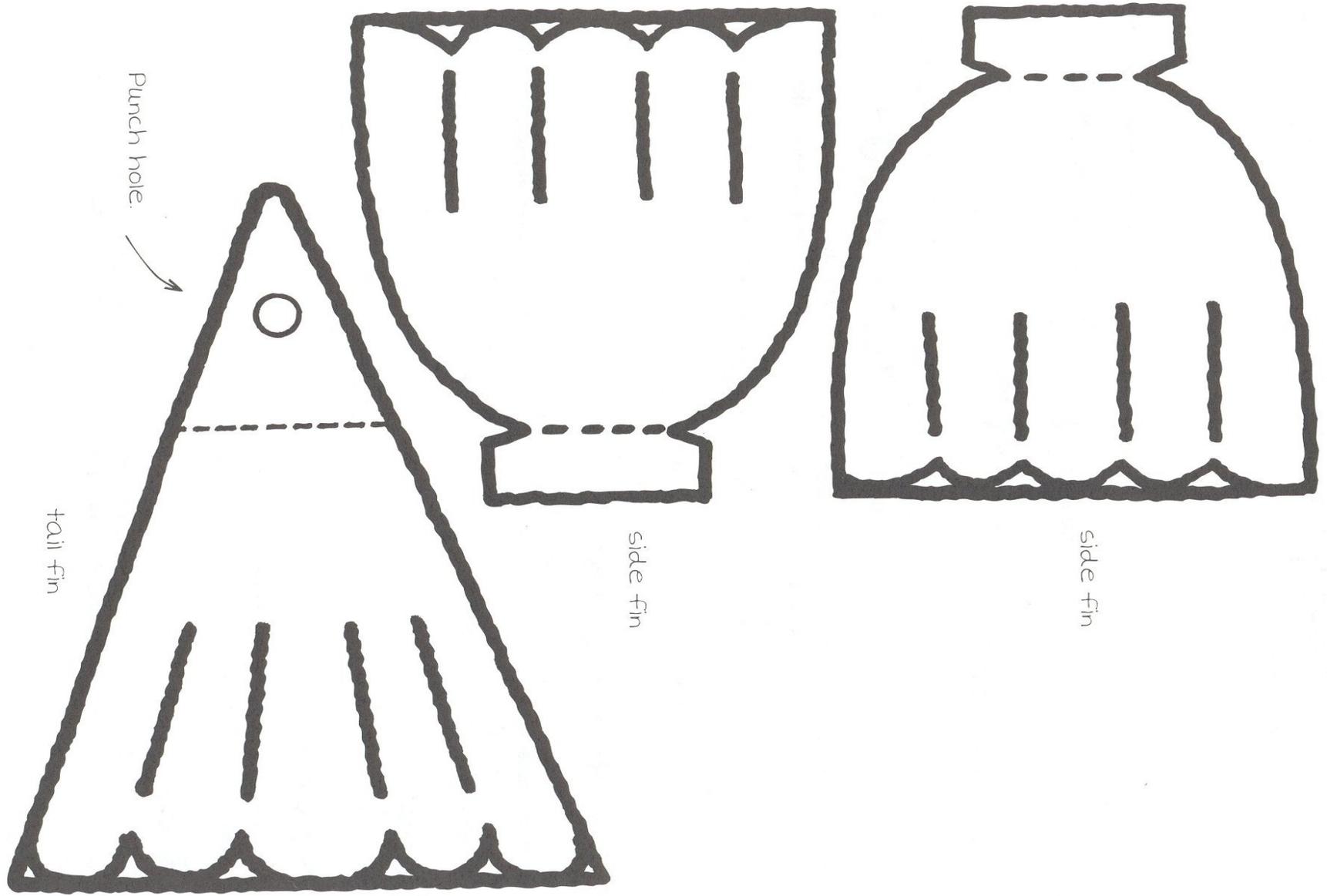
- Assist children in taping one end of a string to the top of the balloon to hang from the ceiling.

Game Center

Use the following questions in a discussion or game of your choice:

1. Why do you think God made light? Plants? Birds?
2. What is one thing God create that amazes you? (A beautiful sunset. Fifteen-foot waves in Hawaii. A unique fish at the aquarium.)
3. What is one powerful thing God created?
4. What's one thing that you think that really shows God's wisdom?
5. God's creation is all around us—in the sky, the sea, even in the mirror! How can thinking about God's creation help us to praise Him? (Helps us see God's care and power. It helps us to see God's power and greatness and gives us reasons to thank Him.)
6. What words would you use to describe what God created? (Wonderful. Amazing. Awesome. Good.)

Fish Fin Patterns



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?

God is Just

(Genesis 19:14-26; Numbers 20:3-12)

Pre-Session Warm Up

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

What are some of things that we've learned about God already?

- God is **the great creator**—He created the whole universe! We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

- God is **holy**—He is without sin; He is perfect in every way.
Who is like you among the gods, O LORD—glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders? (Exodus 15:11)

There are many wonderful things about God: God is **good**, He is **loving, forgiving, and faithful**. Today we're going to focus our attention on the fact that God is **just**.

Have any of you ever received consequences (good or bad) for something you have done? [Discuss what happened and if they felt the consequences were fair. Try to get examples of both *good* consequences (for example, getting thanks for doing a kind deed or getting paid for doing a job) and *bad* consequences.]

What do you think it means that God is **just**?

[Write the following on the board:]

God is Just –

- God sets the standard for right and wrong
- God judges all behavior fairly
- God punishes sin

- God rewards obedience
- God punishes or rewards as quickly or slowly as He wants to

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You that You are a God of love. But, to really appreciate the fact that You are a gracious and merciful God, help us to grasp what it means that You are also a just God who must punish sin. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He. (Deuteronomy 32:4)

Lesson

In the book of Genesis, we learn that God had called Abraham to leave his country (present day Iraq) and move to the Promised Land, present day Israel.) Abraham brought his nephew, Lot, with him.

Abram was a very rich man. He and Lot had so much livestock that the land could not support them all. So, they parted company, and Lot moved to a place in the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley.

Genesis 13:12-13

So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. (13) But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the Lord.

The people in Sodom and its neighboring city of Gomorrah were so evil that God had to destroy them.

Genesis 18:20

So the Lord told Abraham, "I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant.

God sent two angels (appearing as men) to warn Lot and his family to get out of the city. When the angels arrived, they found Lot sitting at the gate of Sodom.

Genesis 19:1

That evening the two angels came to the entrance of the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting there, and when he saw them, he stood up to meet them. Then he welcomed them and bowed with his face to the ground.

The angels told Lot what God was about to do and told them to run for their lives.

Genesis 19:12-13

Meanwhile, the angels questioned Lot. "Do you have any other relatives here in the city?" they asked. "Get them out of this place—your sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else. (13) For we are about to destroy this city completely. The outcry against this place is so great it has reached the Lord, and he has sent us to destroy it."

The angels told Lot to get his family out of the city. And God expected them to obey His warnings.

Genesis 19:14

So Lot rushed out to tell his daughter's fiancés, "Quick, get out of the city! The Lord is about to destroy it." But the young men thought he was only joking.

Lot's sons-in-law mocked (made fun of) the angels' warnings. They didn't take them seriously.

Do you believe God when He says that *the wages for sin is death?* (Romans 6:23) He's not kidding! He says that there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22). We deserve to be punished for our sins.

Genesis 19:15-17

At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. "Hurry," they said to Lot. "Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out

right now, or you will be swept away in the destruction of the city!" (16) When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the LORD was merciful. (17) When they were safely out of the city, one of the angels ordered, "Run for your lives! And don't look back or stop anywhere in the valley! Escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away!"

God, fortunately for us, is not only just, but He is merciful! Isn't it wonderful to know that God provides a way of escape?

When you are tempted to do ungodly things by the kids at school or by the characters on TV, remember what God's Word says,

1 Timothy 6:11

But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.

God's word here is telling us to run for our lives from wrong, just like the angels told Lot to run from Sodom.

This means that you need to say "*No, thank you*" when tempted to sin; switch the channel or turn off the TV instead of allowing yourself to be amused and entertained by immoral ideas. Pursue (or choose) what is right: Read God's Word so you know right from wrong; listen carefully to wise parents and teachers who want to protect you from being hurt. If you have friends that tempt you to do wrong things, make new friends who love God. Otherwise, you may face terrible consequences that you will live to regret.

Although Lot was spared when God sent fire from heaven to destroy the cities of the plain, he lost everything.

Genesis 19:23-25

Lot reached the village just as the sun was rising over the horizon. (24) Then the LORD rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah. (25) He utterly destroyed them, along with the

other cities and villages of the plain, wiping out all the people and every bit of vegetation.

Lot lost all of his possessions and even some of his family.

Genesis 19:26

But Lot's wife looked back as she was following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt.

Back in verse 17, the angels warned Lot not to look back or stop, but to run for his life. Why do you think Lot's wife looked back? (She didn't believe God, she was curious to see what was happening; Lot was very rich so she probably had a beautiful home with servants and lovely possessions that she might have longed to hold on to.)

This is an example of when God chose to issue immediate consequences for disobedience. Lot's wife was punished immediately when she disobeyed God's warning.

An example of God delaying his punishment for sin is when Moses sinned against God.

When Moses was leading the Israelites through the desert from Egypt to the Promised Land, the people often grumbled and complained. One time they were hot and tired and thirsty. They needed water.

God wanted to use this as an opportunity to teach the people about His mighty power, provision, and protection.

Numbers 20:8

"You and Aaron must take the staff and assemble the entire community. As the people watch, speak to the rock over there, and it will pour out its water. You will provide enough water from the rock to satisfy the whole community and their livestock."

What did God tell Moses to do? (*Speak* to the rock and it would pour out water.) Let's see if Moses did what God told him to do.

Numbers 20:9-10

So Moses did as he was told. He took the staff from the place where it was kept before the LORD. (10) Then he and Aaron summoned the people to come and gather at the rock. "Listen, you rebels!" he shouted. "Must we bring you water from this rock?"

Moses got the rod and went back to the people and called them to come together at the rock. But he was very, very angry...

Numbers 20:11

Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with the staff, and water gushed out. So the entire community and their livestock drank their fill.

Why do you think Moses struck the rock?

When you're angry you don't always think straight, do you? Moses was so angry he didn't *speak* to the rock as God had told him to do; he struck the rock with the rod, not once, but twice!

God loved the people so much he made the water gush out of the rock so that they and their animals could drink. But Moses had disobeyed God.

Do you think that God would have 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 you and me 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.

But, 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.]

Did Moses throw a fit and quit serving God because he couldn't go into the land? No, he knew he had done wrong. He kept right on loving and serving God. Moses knew God to be fair. He would trust God with his punishment.

In accepting his punishment without complaint, he became a good example to the people following him. He showed people that he still believed in God and trusted Him.

This is an example of when God chose to issue delayed consequence for disobedience. Moses wandered the desert faithfully with the Israelites and after forty years was not allowed to take them into the Promised Land.

God is still the same just God that He was in the time of Lot and Moses. He still punishes sin and rewards obedience.

Hebrews 4:13

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

God is a just God and nothing can escape Him.

Romans 14:10b

Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

We will all stand before God some day and have to give Him an account.

Ecclesiastes 11:9

Young people, it's wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it. Do everything you want to do; take it all in. But remember that you must give an account to God for everything you do.

He rewards obedience and punishes sin.

What are you doing to be sure that you are following God's way? Are you living a life that is pleasing before the Lord?

What are your three favorite TV shows? [Teacher, ask: How do the characters feel about God? How can you tell? What kinds of things do the characters do that are wrong? How does this TV show remind you of something you learned about God?]

Sin is serious to God.

God is always fair. He always makes the right decision. When you learn that God is just, you will realize that God must punish your sin. But, because of God's love, His justice works perfectly with His mercy.

That's why He sent Jesus to pay for all sin on the cross. Now because the price is paid, God is "just" NOT to give us the punishment that we deserve if we will turn to Him.

Romans 3:23-26

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. (24) Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. (25) For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, (26) for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

However, if someone doesn't turn their life over to Him, He must and will punish those who insist on going their own way instead of His. God's punishment for sin is eternal separation from Him.

But God has made a way of escape for you. The Lord Jesus Christ took the punishment for your sin when He shed His blood on the cross.

Jesus died but is alive in heaven today. He will give you His free gift of forgiveness and everlasting life if you believe and trust in Him and what He did on the cross.

John 3:16

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

If you do not turn your life over to God, Satan will destroy your life. But you can choose God's way.

Closing Prayer

Father, help us to really grasp the fact that You hate our sin. You said that all sin must be punished and if we don't trust and believe that You took our punishment for us, then we will be doomed to eternal life without You. Help us to fall down on our knees and thank You for providing the way of escape for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Work Sheet

Making God's Word Personal

(See the attached worksheet.)

Game Center

Knock Knock

Preparation:

Write the following words (or others you can think of) on index cards, one word on each card, and place the cards in a shoebox or basket. Repeat the words as needed to have enough cards for each child.

- KINDNESS
- FRIENDLY
- COMPASSION
- PEACE
- GENTLENESS
- PATIENCE
- FORGIVENESS
- LOVE

Play:

Select one child to be king (or queen). Have the King sit on a chair (throne) at one end of the room, and have the remaining kids draw

one card from the basket. Then have them line up in front of the king. The object is for children to come up with a situation that describes the word on their card. For example, if they picked the card KINDNESS, the child may say something like "*My little brother wanted to play with my toys, so I let him. This is Kindness.*" The king will judge if the situation truly described the word kindness, and if so, will let the child enter the kingdom.

What you will do:

(After selecting the king and lining up the children with their cards...) The king is a very wise king. He wants to be sure you know what is pleasing to God before he lets you enter his kingdom. That is why the king gave each of you a word. You must show the king you know the meaning of the word by giving an example of something you can do that matches the word. For example, if your word is CARING, you could give me an example like "*My grandma was sick, so I help her by cleaning her house.*" If the king agrees that your example describes being CARING, he will let you enter the kingdom. If he does not agree, you pick another word from the basket, go to the end of the line and try again.

The play starts with each of you saying, "*Knock-Knock.*" The king will ask, "*What word do you have?*" then each of you, in turn, will say your word and then your example. If the king accepts your example, he will say, "*Please enter my kingdom.*" If the king does not accept it, he will say, "*Sorry, be away with you.*"

The make-believe kingdom in this game may resemble heaven, but it is not heaven. There is no way to get to heaven on our own, not by what we know or what we do. That's because heaven is a free gift. Only by receiving Jesus in our heart do we receive this wonderful gift.

However, as children it is important to know what behaviors are Godly and what behaviors are a result of a sinful nature. By knowing the difference, we can begin to recognize there is a lot of sin in our life. When we admit we are sinners, we begin to understand the need for God's grace and forgiveness.

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

1. Have you ever received a good consequence for something you have done?
2. Have you ever received a bad consequence for something you have done?
3. What does it mean that God is just? (He is righteous and fair.)
4. Does God always issue consequences for our behavior immediately? (No)
5. Why did God have to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? (The people were evil.)
6. God says that all sin must be punished. What did God say was required for Him to forgive sin? (The shedding of blood)
7. When you are tempted to do ungodly things, what does God's word tell you to do in 1 Timothy 6:11? (Run from wrong; choose to do the right thing.)
8. Why did Lot's wife look back? (She hated to leave that city of sin.)
9. What did God tell Moses to do to get water for the people? (Speak to the rock and it would pour out water.)
10. What did Moses do? Was he obedient to God? (No, he struck the rock.)
11. Why did Moses strike the rock? (He was angry.)
12. Why did God punish Moses for striking the rock? (God expected him to set a good example for the people he was leading.)

13. Was that fair of God to punish Moses? (All sin must be punished.)
14. Do you think God loved Moses less for being disobedient? (God still loved Moses even though he had sinned against Him.)
15. Why is God just to NOT give us the punishment that we deserve for our sins? (He sent His own Son to pay for all sin on the cross. Jesus paid the price for our sin.)
16. Does Jesus' death on the cross pay for all people's sin? (John 3:16 says that "*God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.*" You must believe.)
17. What happens to people that don't trust in what Jesus did for them on the cross? (They spend all of eternity separated from God.)

God is Merciful

(Luke 15:11-32)

Pre-Session Warm Up

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

What are some of things that we've learned about God already?

- God is **great creator**—He created the whole universe! We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

- God is **holy**—He is without sin; He is perfect in every way.
Who is like you among the gods, O LORD—glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders? (Exodus 15:11)
- God is **just**—He always does what is right and fair.

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He! (Deuteronomy 32:4)

We've been learning about God's attributes, and today, we'll talk about one of my most favorite things about God: He is **merciful**!

Have you ever done wrong and not gotten the punishment you deserved? How did you feel?

One time I was driving along and I looked in my rear-view mirror and saw flashing red lights and then I heard the siren. I quickly slowed down. In my mind I was thinking of all the excuses I *could* make. But I knew there was no point in trying to defend myself. I knew I'd been speeding and that I deserved a ticket.

Then, unexpectedly, the officer said he wasn't going to give me a ticket! He said I was free to go! So, I very slowly pulled away and as I carefully drove home, I praised God for His mercy! I deserved that ticket, but God put it in that policeman's heart not to punish me! I love to receive mercy, don't you?

Mercy is not getting what you deserve.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You that You are a God of mercy—You don't give us what we deserve. We deserve to be punished for our sins, but instead, You extend forgiveness to us and then You forget all about our sin! Give us grateful hearts as we consider what it means to us that You are merciful. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Lesson

During the time of Jesus, the Pharisees were the religious leaders of the Jews. They thought it was terrible that Jesus showed kindness toward sinners. They thought they were better than most people because they strictly kept the *Ten Commandments* and all the rest of the rules. They thought that God shouldn't forgive people that they considered horrible sinners. It made them angry and resentful to hear Jesus teach that God wanted sinners to come to Heaven. So, one night after dinner, Jesus told them a story to show them God's kind of love for us.

Luke 15:11-12

To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons. (12) The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

In Bible times, the oldest son always inherited two portions of the father's estate while the other brothers got only a single portion. Usually the sons would have to wait until *after* the father died to get their inheritance. But in this story, the younger son didn't want to wait for his share of the money. He wanted it NOW! He was eager to leave home and do what he wanted, even if it was wrong!

So, the father gave the younger son his part of the money. How good this father was to his younger son! He was willing to give his hard-earned savings to his son even though the son didn't deserve to have it until after his father's death.

The love of the father in our story is a picture of God's love for us: He willingly lets us enjoy all that belongs to Him. Can you think of some of the things God has given you? (He's given us good health, a loving mother and father, a warm bed, enough food to eat, etc.)

Why is He so good to you? Is it because you deserve it or because you have earned it in some special way? No, God loves you because that is just the way He is. "*God is love*" (1 John 4:8), and you are His treasured creation.

When the younger son asked for his portion early, it showed that he was self-centered and had no respect for his father.

Luke 15:13

"A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.

The son had disregarded his father's love and care and decided to go his own way. How foolish! God's Word says that you and I are much like that son. God has been very good to us: He has provided for our needs and given us many things to enjoy. Yet we, too, go our own way (Isaiah 53:6) and waste what the Father has given us.

We often do things that displease God. Can you think of ways we displease God? (We speak rudely to our brothers & sisters, talk back to our mothers, get cocky at school with our teachers, and so forth.)

Often you and I are much like this son — foolishly going our own way, disregarding God's goodness and love. The younger son said *good-bye* and headed to a faraway city. There, he started spending his money very foolishly—on wild parties and anything he thought would make him happy. He had lots of friends who enjoyed the parties he paid for, too! But, soon the son would have to suffer the consequences of following his own sinful heart.

One day his money bag was completely empty! All of a sudden, people he thought were his friends didn't come to see him anymore. He was all alone. And he was in big trouble. He had no money to buy food or to pay for a place to live. This was awful!

Luke 15:14-15

"About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. (15) He persuaded local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his field to feed the pigs.

At last he found a job taking care of pigs! But, according to the law God gave to Moses, pigs were unclean animals and the people were forbidden to eat pork (Leviticus 11:7, 8). They were not to eat bacon, or hot dogs, or ham sandwiches. Jews would not even touch pigs. For a Jew to stoop to feeding pigs was a great humiliation.

Luke 15:16

"The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him, but no one gave him anything.

He was so hungry all of the time, he started thinking about eating the pig's food if it had been offered to him. For this young man to eat food that the pigs had touched was the lowest possible thing the listeners of this story could imagine. This son had truly sunk to the depths of society.

Luke 15:17

"When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!"

One morning the son thought, 'I'm starving to death while the people who work for my dad have plenty of food to eat!' So, he decided to leave his job feeding pigs and return home.

The younger son is like many us who want to be free to live as we please. He had to hit bottom before he came to his senses. It often takes great sorrow and heartbreak to cause people to look to the only One who can help them.

Luke 15:18-19

'I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, (19) and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."'

The son realized his sin was against God and his father. Recognizing that you have sinned is the first step towards making peace with God. By telling this story to the Pharisees, Jesus was trying to get them to see that there was hope for them if they would only grieve and agonize over their sins like the son in this story.

Luke 15:20

"So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him."

In this story, the father watched and waited for his son to come back home. He missed his younger son very much. Every day he looked down the road. He was waiting with open arms, ready to greet his son if he returned.

In the same way, God's love is patiently looking for us. He will not force us to turn from our sins, come to Him, and ask Him for forgiveness. But, He is constantly waiting for us to come to Him.

Luke 15:21-24

His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' (22) "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. (23) And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, (24) for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began."

The father was so excited, he ran to meet his son! He hugged him and kissed him even though his boy was probably smelly and dirty and ragged and didn't deserve to be kissed at all!

The father told his servants to bring his son new clothes and sandals and a ring of his own. Then the father threw a big party to celebrate. Even though the younger son had been foolish and selfish and wrong, his father still loved him and forgave him!

Luke 15:25-26

"Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, (26) and he asked one of the servants what was going on."

Meanwhile, back at home, the older brother was bitter and angry at his younger brother for wasting his portion of their father's estate.

Luke 15:27-28

'Your brother is back,' he was told, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.' (28) "The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him,

The older brother refused to go to the festivity. He didn't think the father should give his foolish brother a ring and a party. He didn't think his father should welcome his brother at all!

Luke 15:29-30

"but he replied, 'All these years I've slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. (30) Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!"

In this story, the father forgave because he was filled with love for his son. But, the older brother refused to forgive because he thought it wasn't fair. The older brother's anger and resentment towards his younger brother made him just as lost to the father's love as the younger brother had been.

Luke 15:31

"His father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours."

The father encouraged him to rejoice on behalf of his younger brother. He said, "*All that I have is yours.*" The father wasn't going to take the older son's inheritance away from him. He still had the double portion that was his by birth right, even though the younger son had already spent his single portion. The father was just glad the son had come home where he belonged.

Luke 15:32

"We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!"

In Jesus' story, the older brother represented the Pharisees, who were angry and resentful that Jesus wanted sinners to come to Heaven. After all, the Pharisees must have thought, "*We have done so much for God*".

The father in this story was merciful, just like our Father in Heaven is with us. The older brother was not merciful; he was judgmental and unforgiving. Jesus told this story to show us God's kind of love.

Jesus told his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount,

Matthew 5:7

God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

What does that mean to you? God will be merciful to you if you forgive others and show them kindness even if they are wrong.

The merciful unselfishly reach out to help others in need. They don't look down on others or condemn them. God is merciful towards us; He doesn't keep track of the wrong things we do. And since God is merciful and forgiving towards us, even when we do wrong, God wants us to show mercy and forgiveness towards others.

It's important to learn that forgiveness isn't complete unless you also forget all about the sinful thing that was done. When God forgives us, He forgets all about the wrong things we do.

Hebrews 8:12

I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.

To truly forgive someone, you must also forget all about the wrong done to you. Let it go, like water under a bridge.

Jesus tells us to do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. Sometimes people do wrong things to us. But we can be kind and forgive them, even if they don't deserve to be forgiven. And, once we forgive them, we need to forget all about it. That is being merciful, just like Jesus!

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your great mercy and forgiveness! We love You, O Lord! Help us to show Your kind of love towards others. Help us to show mercy and forgiveness to others, even when they don't deserve it. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Make a pigpen from craft sticks. Have students cut out pink pigs from construction paper. Use strips of brown paper to be straw. Label each pig with a sin that led the young man to the pig pen.

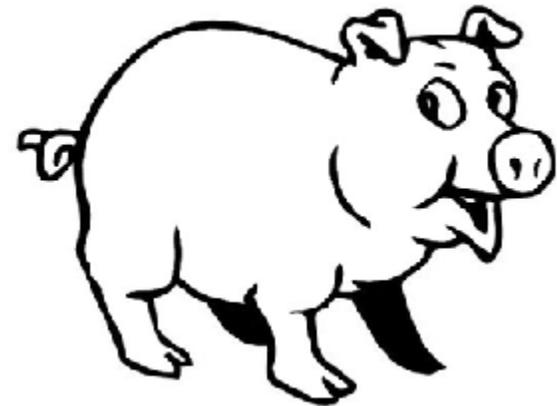
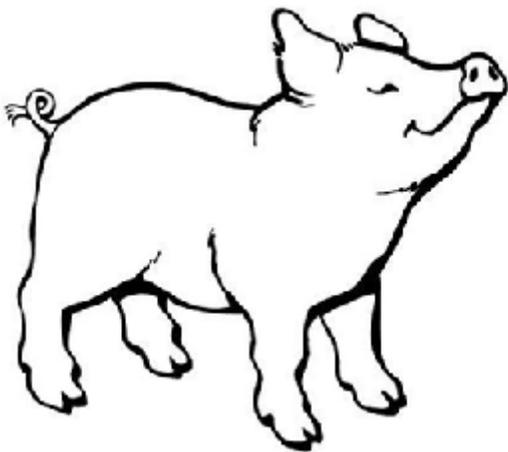
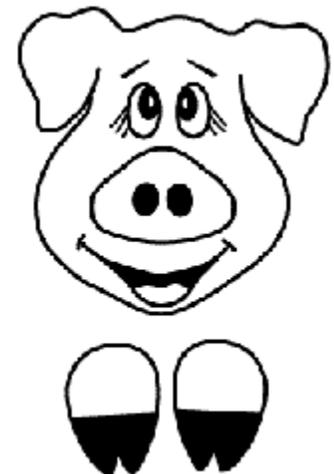
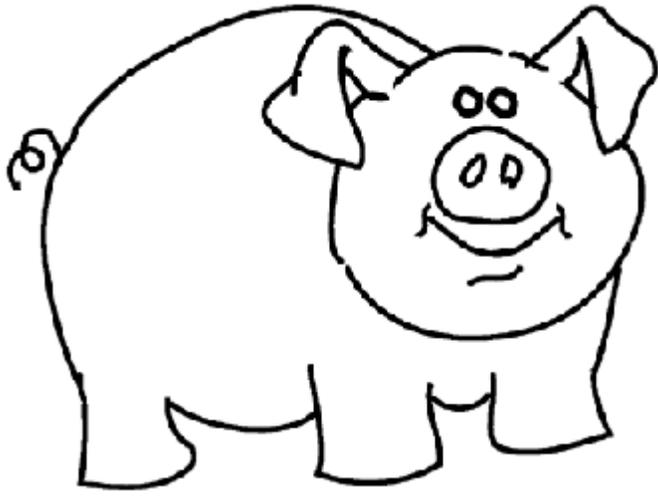
Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. What did the father do to show mercy and forgiveness?
(Welcomed his son when he came back home. Celebrated his son's return with a party. Forgave his son for the wrong things he had done.)
2. How do you think the son felt before he saw his father? (Sorry for the wrong things he did. Worried that his father would not accept him.)
3. When is a time you have felt like the son before he saw his father? What happened?
4. How do you think the son felt after he saw his father?
5. Showing mercy means showing more love or kindness to a person than he or she expects or even deserves. What are some ways kids your age can show mercy and forgiveness to others?

(Forgetting about the time when your brother or sister took your bike without asking. Accepting someone's apology.)

6. How has God shown us His mercy and forgiveness?
7. Who are people to whom you can show mercy and forgiveness?
8. When is a time when someone has forgiven you? Why? How did it feel?
9. When is a time you needed to forgive someone? Was it easy or difficult to forgive him or her? Why?
10. When are times when it might be difficult to show mercy and forgiveness?
11. Why is it good that God is merciful?
12. How would your life be different if God were not merciful?
13. Is there someone who has been mean to you? How would you like that person to treat you? If someone is mean to you, you have a choice. You can either be mean back, or you can ask God to help you be merciful to that person.



God Is Love

(Selections from the Gospels)

Pre-Session Warm Up

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

What are some of things that we've learned about God already?

- God is **great creator**—He created the whole universe! We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

- God is **holy**—He is without sin; He is perfect in every way.

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

- God is **just**—He always does what is right and fair.

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He! (Deuteronomy 32:4)

- God is **merciful**—He extends forgiveness to us even though we don't deserve it.

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

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

Love is probably the most talked-about subject on the planet. It is one thing that none of us can live without. But not many people really know what *true* love is. We say we love chocolate, we love our

mothers, we love our pets, or we love ice cream. But clearly, loving ice cream isn't the same as loving your Mom, is it?

Today we're going to learn about the kind of love that God shows.

Opening Prayer

Father, the messages we get from the world through our TVs and movies are so mixed up. Please teach us what it means to love others with Your kind of love. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

Lesson

What are some famous love stories you know? (Romeo and Juliet. Cinderella.) Today we will hear about the greatest love story ever told. But first, I want you to write down as many things as you can remember about the life of Jesus on these five sheets of paper.

[Teacher, place five large sheets of paper around the room. Label papers, "Who?", "What?", "When?", "Where?", and "Why?" Give the kids five minutes to record information; discuss their observations.]

How would you show your love to someone? What would you do? [Let the children discuss.]

Jesus and His disciples traveled for three years, talking with people about God's love, healing sick people, and doing all kinds of miracles. Many people followed Jesus. But most of them didn't really understand who Jesus was or why He was there.

Because of Jesus' popularity, the religious leaders were jealous of Jesus. They were afraid that the people who followed Jesus wouldn't listen to them anymore. So they decided to get rid of Jesus.

Matthew 26:3-4

At that same time the leading priests and elders were meeting at the residence of Caiaphas, the high priest, (4) plotting how to capture Jesus secretly and kill him.

The leaders paid one of Jesus' disciples to betray Him.

Matthew 26:14-16

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests (15) and asked, "How much will you pay me to betray Jesus to you?" And they gave him thirty pieces of silver. (16) From that time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

Judas, one of Jesus' closest friends, led soldiers through the dark to where Jesus was praying. They arrested Jesus and pressured the Roman governor to order Jesus to die on a cross!

As Jesus hung on the cross, He looked at the people around Him. There were people making fun of Him and yelling angrily at Him. But, Jesus didn't say anything to them. Instead He prayed to the Father.

Luke 23:34a [Teacher, read]

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."

Jesus is much more powerful than the ropes and nails that the soldiers used to put Him on the cross. He is all-powerful; He is almighty! He could have broken free at any moment! He could have called down legions of angels.

Matthew 26:53

Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly?

Why do you think that Jesus chose to stay on the cross? (Because of His love for us.) He knew He was there to pay the penalty for sin so all

people everywhere would have the chance to be forgiven and live forever with Him.

Jesus chose to lay down His life for ours even though we were not worthy of His love.

Romans 5:8

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

That is what God's kind of love looks like. He took the punishment that we deserved. God's love is real. It is pure and complete. Because of what He did for us we will someday live in His very presence, forever.

No matter what we do, He will always love us with an everlasting love. That's because God is unchangeable; He is *always* loving. 1 John 4:8 says that *God is love*. He cannot be any other way, because He is God.

Often we feel like a balloon that has not been inflated. [Teacher, hold up an un-inflated balloon.] We feel let down and disappointed as if all the air has been let out of us. But when we turn to God, His love starts to fill us up. [Start to blow up the balloon.] Before long, we do not feel our disappointment and sadness because we are so full of the knowledge of His love for us. [Finish blowing it up.] He lavishes us with His love!

Nobody can love us as much as God. There is nothing we can do to make Him stop loving us. And, there is nothing we can do to make Him love us any more than He already does. When we think about how great His love is for us, God's love should overflow all over everyone else. [Let the balloon fly through the class room.]

God wants us to love one another in the same way that He loves us.

What does God's kind of love look like?

God's Love is not just a feeling, it's an action word. And, if you are truly a child of God, then you will choose to love people with God's kind of love, even when they don't deserve it.

1. One way to love people with God's kind of love is to do all you can to live in peace with everyone; you are to be a peacemaker.
2. Secondly, you will be willing to forgive others when they do things that bug you just because you know that God has forgiven you so much.
3. Third, you will be completely unselfish; it is a love that gives and keeps on giving; it's having compassion on others and being willing to do something for them with no thought of getting anything in return

God's love considers what is best for the other person. God's love always puts the other person's needs first. Jesus laid down His life for the sakes of His friends. He was willing to endure a painful death on the cross for our sakes.

4. Fourth, you will be actively looking for opportunities to do what God says is the right thing to do, even when it's inconvenient for you.
5. Fifth, you will be faithful; true to your word. Always doing what you say you're going to do.

God wants us to show others what His love looks like through our own gentle actions so that they will come to know Him as their own personal Lord and Savior.

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for your amazing love that You demonstrated to us by coming and dying on the cross for our sakes. Thank You that You were not selfish, but that You laid down your very life for us. Thank

You for forgiving us of our sins. Help us to show other people that same kind of Godly love – Your kind of love. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities**Activity Corner**

As I read to you a situation, tell me how you could show God's kind of love:

- A new girl is in your class. She is very quiet and always eats lunch by herself. You've seen her looking at you and your friends at recess. How could you show love to her?
- Your Sunday school class is having a workday at your church. You've been asked to help pull weeds from the large flower beds in front of the church. You very much dislike pulling weeds. How can you show God's kind of love as you help out?
- Your grandma is very ill and you don't know what will happen to her. What can you do to show her God's kind of love?
- Your three-year-old cousin is visiting. You're trying to put together a new puzzle that you've just received as a birthday present. Your cousin really wants to help. How can you show God's kind of love as he tries to help?
- Suppose you are at a friends' birthday party and one guest is being excluded from most of the activities. How can you show God's kind of love to this person?
- You've just earned ten dollars by helping your neighbors clean out their garage. You're trying to decide what to do with your money. How can you show God's kind of love with your money?

- An elderly next-door neighbor has asked you to help her by walking her dog every day for the next four weeks while her sprained ankle heals. It was fun in the beginning, but now it's been raining and you don't feel like you have much time. How can you show God's kind of love in this situation?
- Your friend's little brother has been bugging you and your friend all day. He sticks his tongue out at you and is just plain obnoxious. Your friend wants to hit him. If you want to show God's kind of love, what should be your reaction?
- You are at the mall with your mom. A new video game you've been wanting for is on sale. You ask your mom whether she will get it for you, and she says, "No". If you wanted to show God's kind of love, what would you NOT do?

If the person asked does not have any cards of the named Attribute, they say '*Go Attribute!*' The asker must then draw the top card of the draw pile. If the drawn card is the Attribute asked for, the asker shows it and gets another turn. If the drawn card is not the Attribute asked for, the asker keeps it, but the turn now passes to the player who said '*Go Attribute!*'

As soon as a player collects a book of 4 cards of the same Attribute, this must be shown and discarded face down. The game continues until either someone has no cards left in their hand or the draw pile runs out. The winner is the player who then has the most books.

Game Center

Go Attribute (like Go Fish)

Make a set of Attribute cards for each child in your class. (Make at least 4 of each Attribute.) Shuffle them all together and let them draw five cards for their hand.

Rules:

Go Attribute is best for 3-6 players, but it is possible for 2 to play. The dealer deals 5 cards to each player (7 each for 2 players). The remaining cards are placed face down to form a draw pile.

The player to dealer's left starts. A turn consists of asking a specific player for a specific Attribute. For example, I might say: '*Mary, please give me your Faithfulness cards.*' The player who asks must already hold at least one of the requested cards. If the player who was asked (Mary) has any of named Attribute, she must give all her cards of this Attribute to the player who asked for them. That player then gets another turn and may again ask any player for any Attribute.

God is All-Knowing

(Psalm 139)

Pre-Session Warm Up

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

What are some of things that we've learned about God already?

- God is **great creator**—He created the whole universe! We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

- God is **holy**—He is without sin; He is perfect in every way.

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

- God is **just**—He always does what is right and fair.

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- God is **merciful**—He extends forgiveness to us even though we don't deserve it.

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

- God is **love**—He always does what is best for me even when I'm not at my best.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

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

What is something about yourself that others may not know or see right away? Perhaps you have a hobby or a special talent. [Teacher, let the children share.] Each of us has unique things about ourselves that might not be so apparent to others.

Who is someone that knows you very well? How does it make you feel that he or she knows you so well? Some of our friends or family members may know us well enough to finish our sentences! But there is Someone who knows you better than you know yourself! He even knows what we're thinking before we speak—God!

Have you ever wondered how a great and powerful God could know and care about you the way your Mom and Dad do?

A long time ago, a man named David wrote a song telling about God's greatness and His personal concern for us.

Opening Prayer

Father, it is truly amazing that You know each of us so well that You can keep track of how many hairs we have on our heads! You have every tear we've ever shed in a bottle. You are a great and awesome God. I pray that today You will capture the hearts of the children in this class so that they will stand in awe of You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

With God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26b)

Lesson

The Psalms are a collection of prayer and praise songs written mostly by David, the shepherd boy that killed the giant, Goliath. He wrote most of them while he was out tending the sheep. He would spend hours out in the field alone with the sheep, surrounded by God's creation. As David spent time thinking about God's creation, it

prompted him to praise God. It helped him see God's power and greatness and gave him reason to thank Him. He was in awe of God!

The Psalms have been used for hundreds of years during worship services to sing praises to God. Even today, many of our praise songs use the Psalms in their lyrics.

In Psalm 139, David was praising God for being **all-knowing**.

Psalm 139:1-3

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. (2) You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. (3) You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do.

God knows everything—past, present, and future. He knows all about you—even what you are thinking. He knows your deepest needs and desires, and He knows how to meet them.

Psalm 139:4-6

You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. (5) You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. (6) Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!

It's comforting to know that God knows where you are at all times. He knows about every detail of your life. He knows the things you plan to do each day. He knows if you're going to have a test at school, or if you're going to see the doctor. He knows if you have an important sports activity coming up. And He sees you do your chores at home and He knows if you are doing your homework or not!

The things that happen to you in life are never a surprise to Him. He knows before you have an accident and He knows if you are about to receive a special gift!

Day and night God is aware of everything that happens to you. He knows what is in your heart, so He understands why you do certain

things. God knows what words you are going to say before you even say them. How wonderful to know that your all-knowing God is personally concerned about you!

When David thought about the fact that God is all-knowing, he was amazed (perhaps even a little fearful) that's why he said in verse 6, "*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!*"

Psalm 139:7-10

I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! (8) If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. (9) If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, (10) even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.

Not only does God know everything; He is **everywhere at all times!**

Psalm 139:11-12

I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night— (12) but even in the darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

There is no place you can go to hide from God!

Perhaps there were times when David wanted to hide from God because he didn't want God to know about his sin. But David knew that he could never hide from God. Maybe you, too, have wished that there was somewhere you could go so God wouldn't know where you are. That way you could do what you wanted without God finding out. But God always sees the sinful things you and I do.

We were born with a *want to* do things our own way instead of God's way. We call that sin (Isaiah 53:6). God says that we deserve to be punished for our sin. But God came to earth to die on the cross for your sin and mine. He gave His life's blood so you could be forgiven (Revelation 1:5b). Jesus died for you because He loves you and you are very special to Him.

David realized that no matter where he went, he couldn't hide from God. Even the darkness cannot hide you from God—you are never beyond His care. He is with us wherever we go. Even in the darkest times of your life, when nothing seems to be going right, God is right there with you.

What are some difficult times when you can remember that God is with you? [Teacher, discuss hard times at home and school, being alone, natural disasters, lightening & thunder storms, nightmares and so on.] Thank God that He is everywhere at all times!

Not only does God know everything and He is everywhere at all times, He also **has all power in heaven and earth.**

Psalm 139:13-14

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. (14) Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

By His power God created you in a special way and by His power God controls all the events of your life.

Psalm 139:15-16

You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. (16) You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

It is a comfort to know that God is all-powerful. Since there is nothing in the universe that is beyond God's control, He can use His power in your life. His power can control you on the inside. That is, He can help you keep your temper under control, be patient, be content with what you have, or even speak up for God.

God's power also controls the circumstances around you. He can accomplish His plans for you. If you are willing to follow God's direction in your life, He will use His power to work out the details (in school, your future occupation, your marriage, and so on). Because

God is personally concerned about you, He will use His power to do what is best for you.

David praised God for being all-powerful and for His loving thoughts toward him.

Psalm 136:17-18

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! (18) I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

With all this in his mind—knowing that God knows everything and He is everywhere at all times, and He has all power in heaven and earth—David asked God to show him where his thoughts, words or actions have been offensive to God.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. (24) Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

God is personally concerned about you! That gives us reason to praise Him for His greatness—He knows every aspect of your life, He is everywhere with you, and He has all power to control your life.

Closing Prayer

[Teacher, have the children say sentence prayers of praise to God specifically for the three attributes taught in this lesson.]

Father, thank You for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous. There is no place I can hide from you so, please, Lord, clean my heart so that everything that I think or say or do is pleasing in Your sight. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Self Portraits

Make life size self-portraits - Before class tape big pieces of butcher paper (or paper used to cover bulletin boards) about 2 feet wide, one next to the other, on the wall. Write the memory verse on each sheet of paper. Have each child stand in front of the paper and outline his or her body onto the paper and then let them color it. When they are finished, roll them up, and tape them closed so they can take them home. If you have children in your class who are beginning to read, you can also have these children label the different body parts on their pictures. Write the different body parts on labels and then have the children place the appropriate label on each body part. Use words such as: head, hand, mouth, nose, ear, foot, etc.

Game Center

These two games help test how well we really know each other!

Happy Birthday

Divide group into teams of five or six students. At your signal, team members quickly arrange themselves in a line according to birth month order. Quickest team to arrange themselves in the correct order wins! Then have everyone sing *Happy Birthday* to the children who have birthdays in the current month.

Who's Shoes?

1. Children take off their shoes and put them in a big tub or box in the middle of the playing area. Mix them up. Divide the class into two teams. Teams line up shoulder-to-shoulder on opposite sides of the playing area. Assign numbers to students.

2. Call out two numbers. Students with those numbers from each team run to the shoe pile and collect as many shoes from their team as possible within three seconds. Call "Stop" when time is up. Students return to the teams with the shoes they've collected from the pile and distribute the shoes to the correct owners. Students return the unmatched shoes to the pile.
3. Team that got the most correct matches is the winner.

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

1. What is something God knows about you that others may not know? (Teacher, share with children your own answer, and let children know they do not have to answer the question aloud.)
2. Read Psalm 139:14. King David wrote Psalm 139, praising God for making and knowing him. God knows everything about you and still loves you! What do you think it means that God knows everything about you?
3. What are some things that are easy to know about a person? (What color eyes they have. How tall they are.)
4. What are some things that are more difficult to know about a person? (Their thoughts. What they like or dislike. Their age.)

God is Powerful

(Various)

Pre-Session Warm Up

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

What are some of things that we've learned about God already?

- God is **great creator** —He created the whole universe! We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

- God is **holy**—He is without sin; He is perfect in every way.
Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Exodus 15:11)
- God is **just**—He always does what is right and fair.

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He! (Deuteronomy 32:4)

- God is **merciful**—He extends forgiveness to us even though we don't deserve it.

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

- God is **love**—He always does what is best for me even when I'm not at my best.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

- God is **all-knowing**— God knows everything—past, present, and future. He knows all about you—even what you are thinking. He knows your deepest needs and desires, and He knows how to meet them.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33)

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

How powerful are you? Can you do 100 pushups? Can you lift a 100-pound barbell?

For some people, power is *very* important. Some people make becoming rich and powerful their whole goal in life! They dress for power; they eat protein and go to the gym and lift weights so their muscles become powerful. They buy powerful cars to drive. They seek political power. Some people take power walks to get in shape. [Teacher, give each child a Power Bars for a treat.] Personally, I like to take power naps just to get a quick refreshment!

Today we're going to learn what *real* power is – God's kind of power. God is much more powerful than any super power!

Opening Prayer

Lord, You are such an amazing God! You have created the whole universe by just speaking it into existence! You set the moon and the sun and the stars in place with just a flick of Your fingers. Today, as we meditate on just how powerful you really are, give us a real sense of awe in You, O Lord! In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

With God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26b)

Lesson

Who knows the name of our closest star? It's the Sun! Do you know how far away it is from the Earth? It almost 93 million miles away! [actually, it's 92,955,820.5 miles]

To get an idea of just how far that is, let's measure something big.

[Teacher, give the children some rulers and have them figure out how many inches long a conference table is. (A 6-foot table is 72 inches long.) Now stick a 48" circle cut from butcher paper up on the wall and butt the end of the table up to the "sun".]

If that was the Sun and this was the distance to it from Earth, each inch of this table would be over a million miles long [1,291,105 miles]! I want you to get a feel for just how far that is!

First let's talk about how far it is to California. [Teacher, using a map of the United States, draw a big black line from Provo, UT to Los Angeles.] It's 644 miles from here to Los Angeles and it takes over 10 hours to drive there. You think that's a long way to drive, how far do you think it is from Los Angeles to New York City? It's almost 3,000 miles [2,848 miles]. That's about 5 times farther than going from here to Los Angeles. And, it would take you several days to drive there!

Let's take it a step further. How many miles do you think it is clear around the Earth? It's almost 25,000 miles [24,774.60] around the Earth. That's almost 9 times farther than going from Los Angeles to New York City [8.7 times]. How long do you think it would take to drive around the Earth, if you could? [Let the kids guess!] If you got in a car and drove 65 miles per hour, 24 hours a day, without stopping or slowing down for anything, it would take you about 16 days to go around the earth one time.

Going to the Sun from here would be like going around the earth almost 4,000 times! [3,752 times]!

I'm trying to give you an understanding of just how far away the Sun is! And that's our *closest* star. It's millions of miles away.

Think about it! Our awesome God put the sun and the moon and the stars in place with just a flick of His fingers! Don't we have an awesome God? He is so great, we can't even imagine how big and powerful He is!

We've talked about how far away the Sun is, now let's talk a minute about how *big* the Sun is. As we watch it go overhead each day, it looks about the size of a quarter, right? If this 48" circle is the size of the Sun, then how big do you think the Earth is in comparison to it? [Teacher, let the children draw circles on the "Sun" to indicate how big they think the earth would be.] If that was the Sun, Earth would be about this big. [Teacher, using a hot glue gun, glue a ½" marble or a button to a Popsicle stick and tape it to the far end of the table.]

Look at how the size of our Earth, this little ½-inch circle, compares to our Sun, this 48" circle. The Sun is huge in comparison to the Earth.

The Sun is only a medium-sized star. There is a star called Pistol that is so big that it would take about 150 Suns to fill it up! We're talking huge!

And, our God put Pistol into place with the flick of His fingers!!!

Our universe is very large. There are about 100 billion stars in our galaxy alone. And, there are about 100 billion galaxies that we can see in our universe. Traveling as fast as you could go, it would take billions of years to get to some of the stars in the sky.

How much power do you think it took to create the universe?

Psalm 33:6-9

The LORD merely spoke, and the heavens were created. He breathed the word, and all the stars were born. (7) He assigned the sea its boundaries and locked the oceans in vast reservoirs. (8) Let the whole world fear the LORD, and let everyone stand in awe of him. (9) For when he spoke, the world began! It appeared at his command.

God made this whole world by just speaking. He said, “*Let light be!*” And there was light!

Jesus proved that He is God while He lived on Earth by showing us His power in many ways. Can you think of some ways that Jesus showed us that He is God?

- He fed 5,000 people with a two fishes and five small loaves of bread.
- He healed many people that were hopelessly sick.
- He raised people from the dead.
- He stopped a raging storm by speaking to it!

He left no doubt in any body’s mind that He had power over every other power.

What was the most amazing way that Jesus displayed His power? He raised Himself from the dead and then ascended into heaven in the clouds! God has so much power that we could never measure it. And yet He cares so much about us that He came to Earth to die for us.

Jesus knew that the Jews were jealous of His popularity with the people. He knew they hated Him and were planning to kill him. Jesus is God and knows all things. And, He could have stopped them.

Matthew 26:53

Don’t you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly?

He could have called down thousands of angels to protect Him. But He didn’t. He wanted to show us what real power is.

On the night before He was to be crucified, He wanted to give His disciples one last lesson on what true greatness is. He got them all together in the upper room to have the last supper with them.

Then, after dinner Jesus did a very odd thing...

John 13:2-5

It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. (3) Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. (4) So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, (5) and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

Jesus, God the Son, laid aside His rights. He had all power. He created the whole universe. He could have called down legions of angels. But, He put His own desires aside. Instead of picking up a sword, He wrapped a towel around His waist and began to wash His disciples’ feet.

Why would Jesus wash the disciple’s feet? The people in Jesus’ day wore sandals, and streets were dusty. Just like we take our shoes off when going into someone’s home so that we don’t track dirt into the house, it was customary in Jesus’ day to wash guests’ feet when they arrived at your home. Foot washing was usually a job for a household servant to carry out.

Can you imagine? Jesus, God the Son, washing dirty feet? Do you think it was hard for Jesus to wash Judas’ feet, knowing that Judas was going to betray Him? How would you feel if you were Jesus? Jesus loved Judas and wanted to give him one last chance to choose NOT to do the evil thing he was planning.

What was Jesus trying to teach His followers? Even though He was their leader and God Himself, He was not too proud to be a servant. He was serving them with a humble heart.

Jesus taught them that the greatest person in God's kingdom is the servant of all. God gives us power, not for our own selfish ambition, but for useful service to others.

Mark 10:42-45

So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. (43) But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, (44) and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. (45) For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Most people measure greatness by high personal achievement: how high their grades are, or how expensive their clothes are, or how well they do in sports, and so forth.

How often we judge others by worldly standards – power, wealth, beauty – and miss the truly great people through whom God works! Greatness is not measured by what you have, but by your faith in God. Give yourself entirely to God so God's power can work through you.

Jesus taught us through His example that true greatness in this life comes through our willingness to serve others. That is what truly glorifies God.

We have a big, big God who is all-powerful and almighty. He has absolute power. There is nothing that He can not do. We can trust His power in any situation to help us. The Holy Spirit can fill each of us with God's power to help us resist evil, serve others, pray, and much more.

Closing Prayer

Father, we stand in awe of You! You are so big and so awesome and so wonderful; we can barely comprehend Your greatness! Yet, You are such a personal, loving God. Thank You for showing us what true greatest is by Your standards. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Solar System Poster

Materials:

- Two pieces of blue or black construction paper
- One piece of yellow construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Planet cut-outs
- Colored pencils or markers

Procedure:

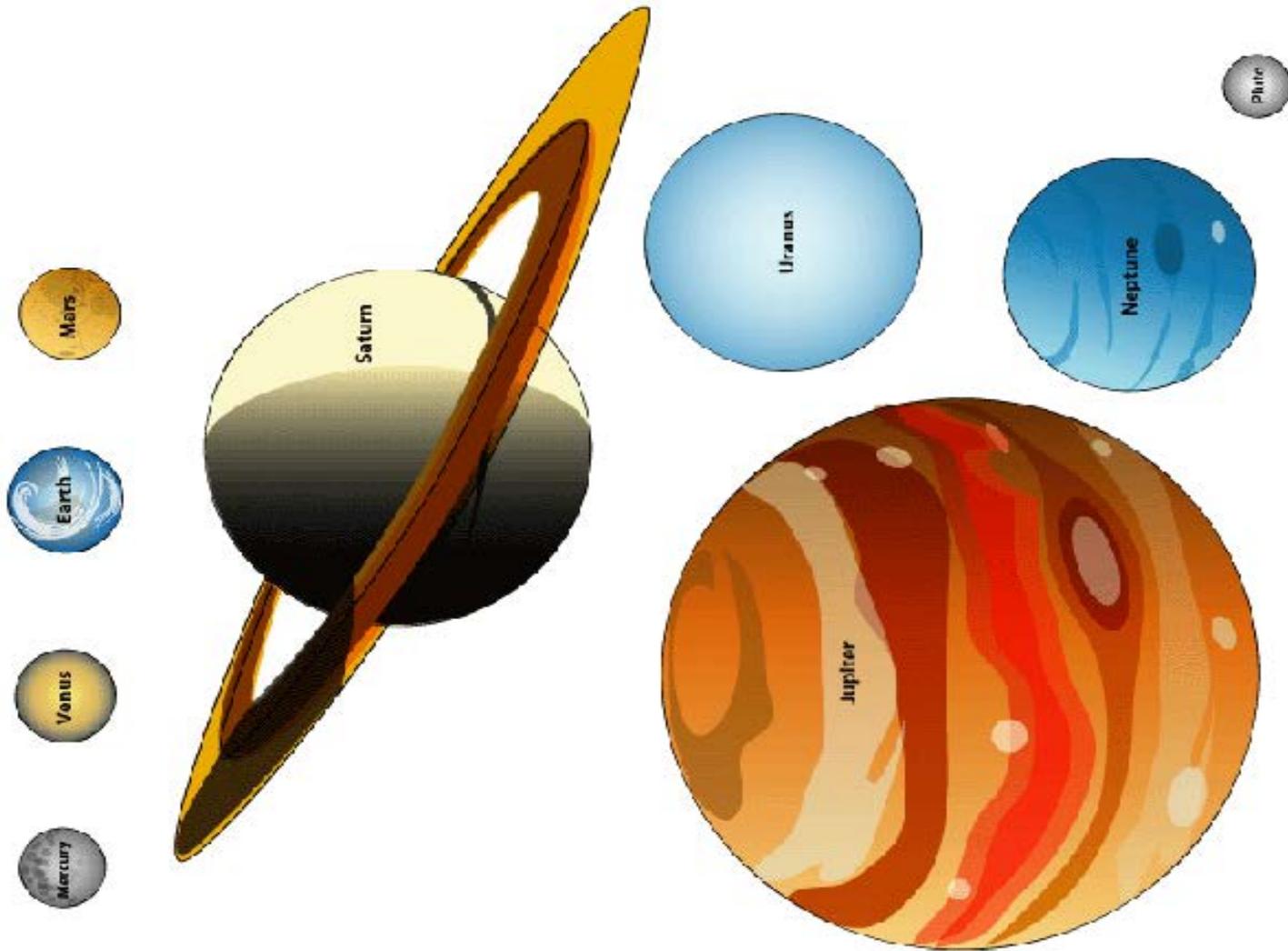
1. Fold both pieces blue or black construction paper in half like a hot dog bun and cut along the fold line; Make a long single poster strip by taping the short ends together.
2. Print and cut out the planets.
3. Draw a circle on the yellow construction paper and cut it out. This is the Sun.
4. Glue the Sun on one end of the poster strip.
5. Glue the planets in order from the Sun on the poster strip.
Hint: **My Very Educated Mama Just Served Us Nine Pizzas.**
(Remember that “**M**y” is Mercury and “**M**ama” is Mars.)



Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. What is the name of the closest Star from the Earth? (The Sun)
2. How many miles is it from the Earth to the Sun? (93,000,000)
3. What's the name of the largest star? (Pistol)
4. How many Suns would it take to fill up Pistol? (150!)
5. How did God create everything? (He spoke it into existence.)
6. How powerful *is* God? (He has so much power that we could never measure it. He is all-powerful!)
7. What are some things we know from Jesus' life that prove He is our almighty and all-powerful God? (He gave sight to the blind. He healed the lame. He died and rose again.)
8. What are some ways that Jesus shows His power in our lives? (Helps us choose to be honest. Gives us patience when someone wants to fight.)
9. When is a time God has shown His power to you?
10. Why can we depend on God's power and help? (He loves us. His power is greater than anything.)
11. What are some words you can use to praise God?



God, Our Great Provider

(Genesis 15, 17; 1 Kings 17:7-16)

Pre-Session Warm Up

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

What are some of things that we've learned about God already?

- God is **great creator** —He created the whole universe! We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

- God is **holy**—He is without sin; He is perfect in every way.
- God is **just**—He always does what is right and fair.

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

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He! (Deuteronomy 32:4)

- God is **merciful**—He extends forgiveness to us even though we don't deserve it.

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

- God is **love**—He always does what is best for me even when I'm not at my best.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

- God is **all-knowing**— God knows everything—past, present, and future. He knows all about you—even what you are thinking. He knows your deepest needs and desires, and He knows how to meet them.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33)

- God is **all-powerful**—He is almighty; He has all power in heaven and earth and can do anything. There is no limit to His power.

With God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26b)

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

Our world tells us that we ought to be self-sufficient. There are a lot of self-help books out there:

- [How to Win Friends and Influence People](#) by Dale Carnegie
- [Seven Spiritual Laws of Success](#) by Deepak Chopra
- [Feeling Good, the New Mood Therapy](#) by David Burns
- [Seven Habits of Highly Successful People](#) by Stephen Covey
- [The Art of Happiness, a Handbook for Living](#) by The Dalai Lama
- [Self-Reliance](#) by Ralph Waldo Emerson

These books tell you how to be successful and happy by depending completely on yourself. There's even a magazine called, *Self!* But no matter how rich or prosperous or well educated you get, you will never find meaning and fulfillment in life apart from God.

Without God, you are without hope. There is no true blessing in this life apart from Him.

James 1:17

Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.

Can you remember a time when God provided for you or your family in a remarkable way? How has God helped people you know? How has He helped you? (Helped me get better when I was sick. Helped me at school during a test.)

God wants you to come to a place in your life where you realize that God is your great provider.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You that nothing is too hard for You. There is no limit to the ways that You can provide for our needs. Teach us this morning to always trust that You will love and care for us, even when the situation looks hopeless to us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

Lesson

In Bible times God showed Himself to be a generous, gracious, abundant provider! One example is in the lives of Abraham and Sarah.

Abram and Sarai

God promised to make a nation out of Abraham and Sarah's offspring.

Genesis 15:5

Then the Lord took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!"

God told Abram that he would have descendants and through his family lineage the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would be born and the whole world would be blessed. God's promise seemed impossible. Abram was 75 years old when God made this promise to him. And his wife, Sarai, was barren. She could not have children.

Abram and Sarai wanted to help God keep His promise, but they were insufficient in themselves to make that happen.

Why did God wait so long to fulfill His promise? God didn't want them to have any doubt that He is fully capable of fulfilling His promises and accomplishing His purposes without their help.

Finally, when he was 99 years old, God spoke to him again.

Genesis 17:1-2

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am El-Shaddai—'God Almighty.' Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. (2) I will make a covenant with you by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants."

Notice that God called Himself, "*El-Shaddai*." This name means *The All-Sufficient One*. This is a wonderful name of God that shows the tender care and compassion of God towards us. "*El*" is a Hebrew word that speaks of His power and strength. He is almighty God. And "*Shad*" is the Hebrew word for *breast*. It speaks of a nursing mother who supplies her baby all he needs. It's a picture of God as a tenderhearted, compassionate, nursing mother. Now you put that together with "*El*", the all-powerful, all-able God who is also the tender, caretaker and provider for His people. He's the one who supplies and nourishes, who satisfies all of our needs.

Finally, 25 years after He gave Abram and Sarai this promise, God (the *El-Shaddai*) gave them a son. God waited until Abram and Sarai were so old that everyone knew they couldn't possibly have a baby. He waited for the situation to become impossible. Then God said, "Now I'm going to do exceedingly, abundantly beyond anything that you could have ever imagined." (Ephesians 3:20)

God is never in a hurry, and He's never late. He's always right on time.

God will meet you in the midst of impossible situations, too. He wants us to know that He is the All-Sufficient One, *El-Shaddai*, who is the almighty and tender caretaker. He wants us to go to Him to find satisfaction for all our needs, just like a nursing baby goes to his mother!

Philippians 4:19

And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. (NLT)

He wants us to know how desperately we need Him. Only He can supply all our needs.

Elijah and the Widow

Another example of God being a great provider is in the life of Elijah.

God had asked the children of Israel to worship Him—the only true God. But in the time of King Ahab, the Israelites forgot all about following God's commandments and they were worshiping false gods. They even built altars to these idols!

God sent a message to the people through the prophet Elijah that there would be no rain in the land until He caused it to fall.

1 Kings 17:1

Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, "As surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—there will be no dew or rain during the next few years until I give the word!"

When there is no rain, they call it a *drought*. It was a very serious thing in those days. A drought causes a famine, a time when there isn't enough food to eat. The crops would not grow without rain; people wouldn't have enough water to drink or food to eat and many would die.

The shortage of food and water would affect Elijah, too. So, God told Elijah to get out of town.

1 Kings 17:2-3

Then the Lord said to Elijah, "go to the east and hide by Kerith Brook, near where it enters the Jordan River."

God provided both protection and food for Elijah in a miraculous way. He told Elijah to hide from Ahab and Jezebel by the brook called Cherith. The brook provided Elijah with water, and then God sent bread and meat by special delivery birds.

1 Kings 17:4

Drink from the brook and eat what the ravens bring you, for I have commanded them to bring you food.

God is a great provider who can meet your needs in miraculous ways. What are some needs that you or I might have? (Food, clothing, a place to live.) When you have a need, what do you do? Do you worry? Do you look to others, such as your parents or friends to meet your needs? Maybe you try to meet your own needs.

Remember that God wants you to look to Him first to provide for your needs. He is your Heavenly Father who knows and cares for you more than anyone else could. He longs for you to call upon Him in your times of need.

Elijah had some very important needs, but he knew that God would provide. And God miraculously fed Elijah by sending ravens with meat and bread! And I'm sure Elijah was very thankful for God's provision.

Then God allowed the brook Cherith to dry up.

1 Kings 17:7

But after a while the brook dried up, for there was no rainfall anywhere in the land.

Did God forget about Elijah? Would Elijah start to doubt God's love and care for him? God knew just what Elijah needed and He had a plan to take care of him.

God told Elijah to go to a place called Zarephath where a widow lady would provide for him. (A widow is a woman whose husband has died and she is now a single mother.) Even though Elijah knew that most widows were very poor and would not have any extra food to give strangers, Elijah obeyed the Lord.

1 Kings 17:10-11

So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her. "Would you please bring me a little water in a cup?" (11) As she was going to get it, he called to her, "Bring me a bite of bread, too."

This woman must have thought Elijah was crazy. Didn't he know there was a drought going on? How could this poor woman help Elijah when she didn't even have enough for her and her son to eat?

1 Kings 17:12

But she said, "I swear by the Lord your God that I don't have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die."

And then Elijah tells her not to worry.

1 Kings 17:13-14

But Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid! Go ahead and do just what you've said, but make a little bread for me first. Then use what's left to prepare a meal for yourself and your son. (14) For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive oil left in your containers until the time when the Lord sends rain and the crops grow again!"

If you had been this woman, what would you have done?

It may sound selfish of Elijah to ask the woman for food and water in a time of drought. Here she was at the point of starvation. But He knew that if she was willing to give the bread to him first, God would bless her in many other ways. This was a test of faith for this woman. But Elijah assured her that God would provide.

God can provide for all your needs, too. There is no need too great or too hard for God to supply. God has all power, all wisdom, and He loves you! He is well able to supply all your needs. God does not promise to supply *everything* we want. But our *needs* will never go unmet if we trust in God.

Sometimes God doesn't give us what we ask for because he wants our faith to grow. Perhaps he wants us to learn how to have patience. He loves you and will always do what is best for you. When you have a need, talk to God about it; and then trust that He will give you what is best.

Elijah didn't know how God would feed him and the widow and her son, but he trusted God's promise to provide.

And as the widow obeyed Elijah, God miraculously provided for all their needs.

1 Kings 17:15

So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her son continued to eat for many days.

Every day until God sent rain again there was enough oil and flour to make bread for all of them! God showed His great power and love by supplying food for them, even when there was no rain!

God's provision of flour and oil never failed during the drought. And He will never fail to provide for you, too.

God cared for Elijah and protected him from King Ahab. God had promised to provide what Elijah needed, and God always keeps His promise!

George Muller's Story

Another example of God's miraculous provision during modern times is the story of a man named George Muller.

Mr. Muller and his wife had an Orphanage. By 1870, he had over 2,000 children living in five homes. It was very expensive for him to support all these children. But he never asked anyone for financial support. He trusted completely in God's great provision.

One time he and the children and his wife were sitting at the dining table and they didn't have a single scrap of food to eat. So, they prayed and asked God to supply all their needs. And, as they were praying, there was suddenly a huge crash and commotion outside in the street. A bread truck had broken down and the driver gave all the bread to the kids at the Orphanage.

We can trust God to meet all of our needs. God promises to hear and answer our prayers. He can give us wisdom to help us know what to do and He gives us people to care for us. El-Shaddai is the One who supplies, who nourishes, who satisfies all our needs.

[Teacher, ask for prayer requests....]

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that You have promised to meet our every need. Help us to trust You and never doubt that You will always love and care for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Activity Corner

Cooking Option

We're going to make some bread like the widow might have made for Elijah and her family. Students wash hands and then prepare the recipe.

Materials:

- Ingredients for the recipe below
- Cooking utensils, hot plate or electric frying pan
- Napkins

Procedure:

Recipe:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| • 1 ½ cups flour | • 3 Tablespoons honey |
| • 3 Tablespoons oil | • 3 Tablespoons water |
| • Dash of salt | • Oil for frying pan |
1. Stir ingredients together.
 2. Roll dough into small balls and flatten like tortillas, approximately 3 inches in diameter.

3. Pour a small amount of oil in the pan to prevent sticking.
4. Cook bread over medium heat, turning to brown both sides.

Each student tastes the bread when it has cooled.

As students wait for their bread to cook, engage them in conversation using some of the Review Questions below.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. Name two of God's Attributes. (Creative, eternal, everywhere, all-powerful, almighty, love, faithful, unchangeable, provider)
2. What does *El-Shaddai* mean? (The all-Sufficient One.)
3. What promise did God make to Abraham and Sarah? (They would have descendants)
4. How long did they have to wait for God to fulfill His promise? (25 years.)
5. Why did God wait so long to fulfill His promise? (He waited for the situation to become impossible so that they would know without a doubt that it was a miracle of God.)
6. How did God show His great provision to Elijah when the drought came? (God led Elijah to a brook from which he could drink and he sent ravens with bread and meat.)
7. How did God show His great provision to Elijah and the widow? (He gave them a never-ending supply of flour and oil.)
8. Even though Elijah and the widow didn't know how God would supply their needs, what did they have? (Faith that God would supply their needs.)
9. How did God show His great provision to George Muller? (A bread truck crashed in front of the Orphanage.)
10. How has God supplied your greatest need? (He died on the cross and has forgiven us of our sins.)

God, Our Great Protector

(Psalm 91)

Pre-Session Warm Up

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

What are some of things that we've learned about God already?

- God is **great creator** —He created the whole universe! We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

- God is **holy**—He is without sin; He is perfect in every way.

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

- God is **just**—He always does what is right and fair.

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He! (Deuteronomy 32:4)

- God is **merciful**—He extends forgiveness to us even though we don't deserve it.

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

- God is **love**—He always does what is best for me even when I'm not at my best.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

- God is **all-knowing**— God knows everything—past, present, and future. He knows all about you—even what you are thinking. He knows your deepest needs and desires, and He knows how to meet them.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33)

- God is **all-powerful**—He is almighty; He has all power in heaven and earth and can do anything. There is no limit to His power.

With God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26b)

- God is our great **provider**—He is a generous, gracious, abundant provider.

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

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

Can anyone share about a time that God protected them in a fearful situation? [Teacher, share with the children a personal story in which God protected you in a fearful situation.] God doesn't protect just adults; He protects boy and girls, too.

What are some things kids your age worry about? (Getting a good grade on a math exam. Making the team at soccer tryouts.) What kind of troubles might kids your age face? When might someone need to depend on God's help and protection? (When they are in danger. When they are uncertain about the future. When others might tease them for doing something they believe in.)

God has promised to protect us. This does not mean that you will never get hurt, but it does mean that God is always able to care for you. Sometimes God allows things to happen to us that we think are bad, but God uses them for our good.

Today we will learn about God's wonderful protection.

Opening Prayer

Father, You are our Great Protector. Help us to really know that we don't have to worry or fret about things that happen to us in life. Help us to always remember that You are always there for us, even in most scary times. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.
(Psalms 46:1)*

Lesson

Open your Bibles to Psalm 91. We are not exactly sure who wrote this praise song to God. Some think it might have been Moses. Whoever it was, he uses lots of word pictures to help us understand what he's trying to explain.

Psalm 91:1

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

Here Moses speaks of people living in the "shadow" of God. The Bible tells us that God is spirit. He obviously does not cast a shadow, like a shade tree. Have you ever had to work out in the blazing hot sun? Isn't it a relief to come into the shade? Here Moses is using a word picture to describe how we can find spiritual rest by being "in Christ."

You are "in Christ" if you 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, when you accept that Jesus

took your punishment on the cross – when you believe that what Jesus did on the cross satisfied God's need to punish all sin – then God no longer sees you as guilty before Him. He only sees Jesus' righteousness because you are "in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17; Hebrews 13:5-6). He is our place of shelter and safety from the wrath of God against sin.

Psalm 91:2

This I declare about the LORD: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him.

Do you have a favorite hiding place? In Bible times, people hid from danger in caves. God is our hiding place, our place of shelter. If you are "in Christ" then God will protect you from eternal death.

Being "in Christ" is our place of safety.

Psalm 91:3

For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease.

Moses knew that Satan often tries to destroy God's people. Have you ever caught a mouse in a mouse trap? Satan will try to catch you in his trap, in just the same way. He will set the trap and then put something tempting in it – not a piece of cheese, but a temptation to sin. Maybe he will tempt you to covet something that belongs to someone else, something you've seen other kids have or something you've seen advertised on TV that wouldn't be good for you. God said that you are not to covet. It's one of the Ten Commandments. But Satan wants you to covet things you don't have.

What other kinds of traps does Satan try to catch us in? (Sin of all sorts: lying, slandering, jealousy, coveting, and, disease.)

1 Peter 5:8

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

Satan is the great destroyer. But God is able to protect you in every situation no matter what Satan may try to do. You may face some scary situation, perhaps when you are home alone or when you have to be some place in the dark. At those times you should remind yourself that God is always able to protect you.

However, when bad things happen, remember that God still has everything under control. Even though we can't always understand why hard times come into our lives, nothing happens to you and me except what God knows is best. Moses had learned this lesson well by seeing what God did to protect the Israelites in Egypt.

David knew this, too.

Psalm 18:2

The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.

Now Moses uses another word picture to explain that God is our great protector.

Psalm 91:4

He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection.

Now obviously God does not have feathers! Moses is saying that if you are "in Christ" you are as safe as a little chick that hides under the wings of its mother.

This verse also assures you that you will be just as safe as a soldier wearing armor and standing behind a big strong metal shield because God always keeps His promises.

Psalm 91:5-6

Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day. (6) Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster that strikes at midday.

God is protecting you night and day. Have you ever had "night terrors" or nightmares? You can have peace in these dreadful situations; remember that God is with you and powerful enough to do anything.

Let's skip down to verse 11 and 12 to see how God protects us.

Psalm 91:11-12

For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go. (12) They will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.

God sends His angels to protect you wherever you go. Did you know that children have guardian angels?

Matthew 18:10

Beware that you don't look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly Father.

God assured the children of Israel that He would protect them as they made their journey to the Promised Land.

Exodus 23:20

"See, I am sending an angel before you to protect you on your journey and lead you safely to the place I have prepared for you.

Angels are servants of God sent to take care of us.

Hebrews 1:14

Angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation.

Daniel experienced that. The king had passed a law that no one was to pray to any god except to him. But, Daniel refused to obey that law. So, the king threw him into a den of lions. And God honored Daniel for his faithfulness to Him. While Daniel was in the den of lions, God sent His angel to shut the lion's mouths so they would not hurt him.

Daniel 6:22

My God sent his angel to shut the lion's mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."

God can keep you safe from dangerous things like mean dogs and spiders and snakes, too.

Psalm 91:13

You will trample upon lions and cobras; you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet!

This verse promises that God can protect you from a lion or a snake. These animals are word pictures to help you understand that God will protect you from the strongest, meanest, and most frightening of situations. Of course, you need to be wise and not foolishly put yourself into dangerous situations to see if God will protect you.

God adds His promise that He is able to deliver those who love Him.

Psalm 91:14

The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name.

God knows that the greatest need we all have is to be saved from the judgment of our sins (Romans 6:23). If you call on God and ask Him to forgive you, He will save you.

Psalm 91:15-16

When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. (16) I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation.

God promises to help you when you call on Him in times of trouble.

Sometimes God, in His wisdom, may allow things that seem bad to happen. But He promises to use even these situations for your good (Romans 8:28). Whatever happens, God is able to protect you.

This week when you are afraid, remember that you belong to God and that He is the strongest of all (Romans 8:38-39). No matter what comes into your life, even dangerous or frightening things, you can trust God to do what's best for you.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for being our Great Protector! Thank You that You are always watching out for us, even when we are unaware of Your presence. Thank You that we do not need to fear because You are always with us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

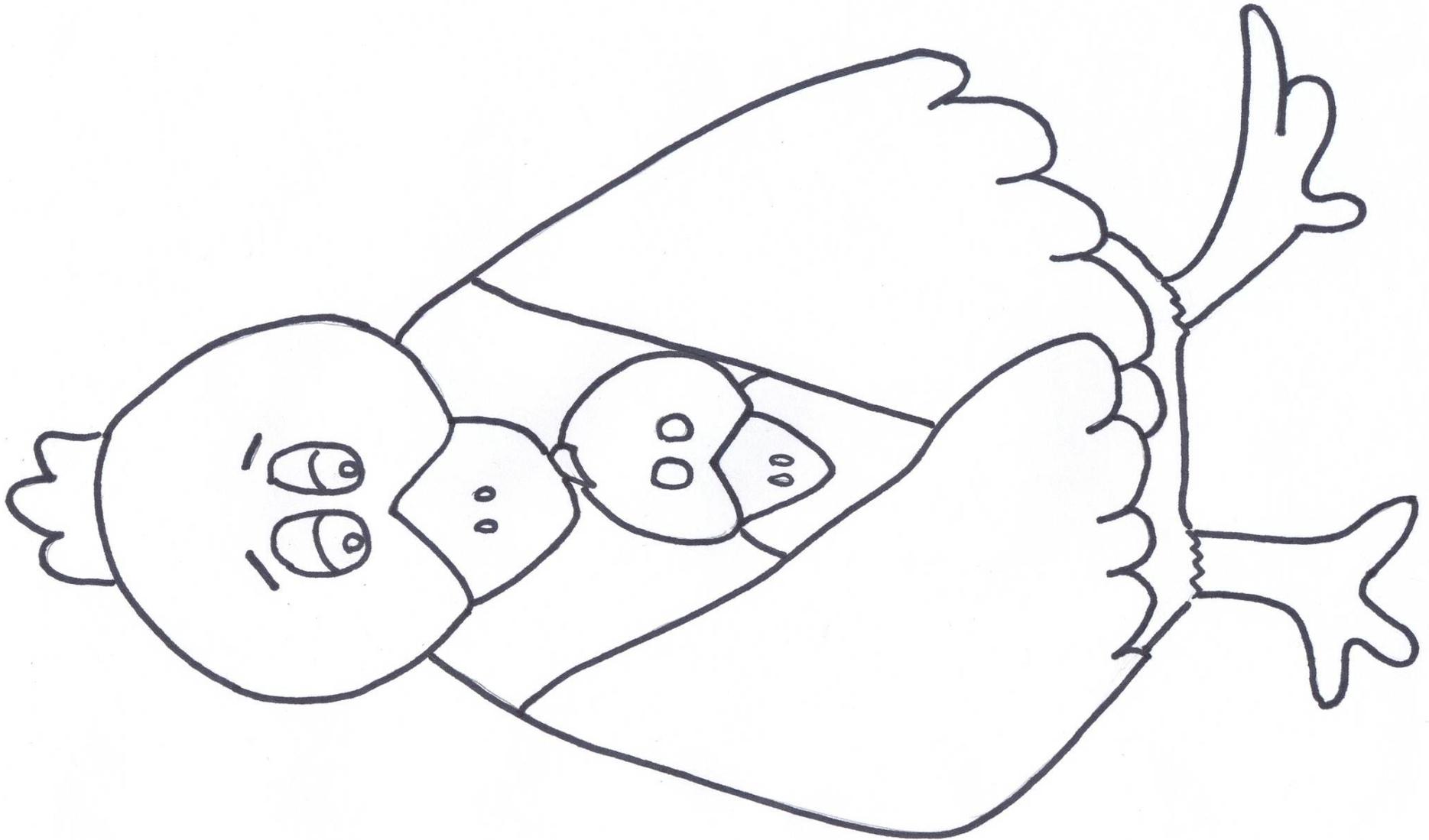
See coloring pages at end of lesson

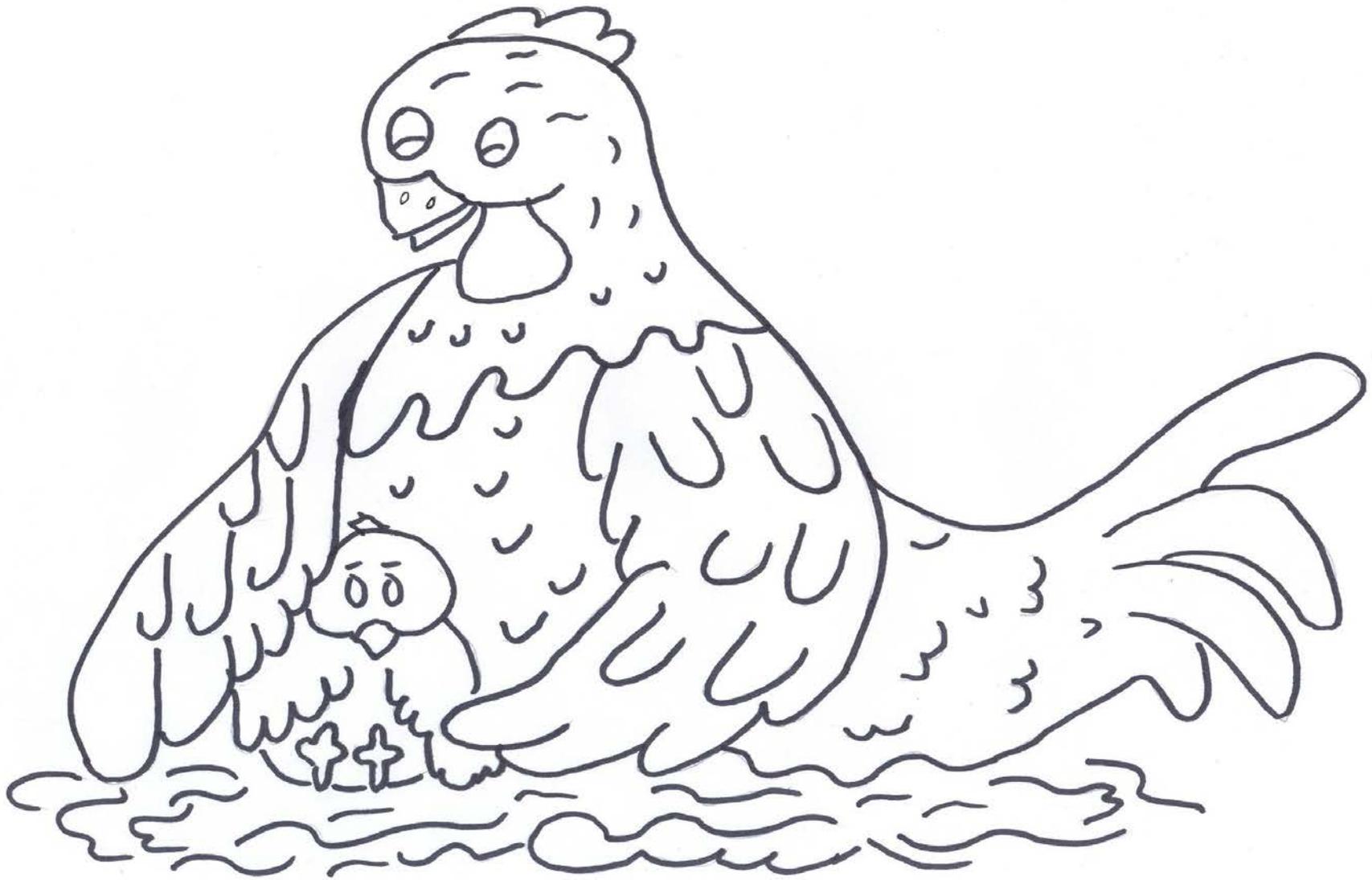
Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. When are times kids your age might need to depend on God's help and protection? (When they are in danger. When they are uncertain about the future. When others might tease them for doing something they believe in.)
2. What is a word picture? (A way of describing something in an understandable way.)

3. When Moses says that we can find shelter or rest in the shadow of the Almighty, what is he trying to say? (We can find spiritual rest by being “in Christ.”)
4. What does it mean to be “in Christ”? (When you believe that Jesus died on the cross, God no longer sees us as guilty before Him. He only see Jesus’ righteousness.)
5. What does verse 2 say our hiding place is? Why? (God is our hiding place; He will protect us from eternal death.)
6. What kind of trap does Satan try to catch you in? (Sin of all sorts: lying, slandering, jealousy, coveting, etc.)
7. Why did Moses have peace in the midst of dreadful situations? (He knew that God was with him and powerful enough to do anything.)
8. What did Moses mean when he said that God would cover you with his wings? Is God like a chicken? (God will keep you just as safe as a baby chick is under its mother’s wings.)
9. What did God send to protect Daniel when he was in the den of lions? (An angel.)
10. What are angels? (Servants of God; spirits sent to care for people.)
11. What is your greatest need? (To be saved from the judgment of our sins.)
12. How can you be saved? (Trust in what Jesus did for you on the cross.)
13. Does God always keep you from experiencing bad things? (No, in His wisdom, he may allow things that seem bad to happen. But, He promises to use even these situations for your good.)





God Answers Prayer

(James 5:13-16; Jeremiah 29:11-13; 1 Chronicles 29:10-13)

Pre-Session Warm Up

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

What are some of things that we've learned about God already?

- God is **great creator** —He created the whole universe! We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

- God is **holy**—He is without sin; He is perfect in every way.
Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Exodus 15:11)

- God is **just**—He always does what is right and fair.

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He! (Deuteronomy 32:4)

- God is **merciful**—He extends forgiveness to us even though we don't deserve it.

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

- God is **love**—He always does what is best for me even when I'm not at my best.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

- God is **all-knowing**— God knows everything—past, present, and future. He knows all about you—even what you are thinking. He knows your deepest needs and desires, and He knows how to meet them.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33)

- God is **all-powerful**—He is almighty; He has all power in heaven and earth and can do anything. There is no limit to His power.

With God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26b)

- God is our great **provider**—He is a generous, gracious, abundant provider.

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

- God is our great **protector**—He is always with us and is powerful enough to protect us from the strongest, meanest, and most frightening of situations when you call on Him in times of trouble.

God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. (Psalms 46:1)

Today we're going to focus our attention on the fact that God **hears and answers our prayers**.

[Teacher, have the following items on display in your classroom as the children arrive: telephone, newspaper, letters & envelopes, an eMail, a road map, and a radio.] What do you think these things all have in common? These are all communication tools—things that help us get and to give information.

Today we're going to talk about communicating with God. We may not be able to call God on the telephone or to send Him a letter, but when we pray to Him it's just as real as a TEXT.

Opening Prayer

Our Father, help us to learn today that there is no prayer too small or too great that it isn't important to you. We're so thankful that You love us and hear us when we pray to You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. (Psalms 34:17)

Lesson

To have a real friendship with someone you have to communicate. Communication involves both people. That means you not only have to talk to your friend and tell him everything that's on your heart, a good friend also listens!

Can you imagine trying to have a best friend without talking to him? Jesus is the best Friend you will ever have. And, He wants to communicate with you.

Prayer is our way of telling God all that's on our hearts *and* as we quietly wait upon the Holy Spirit, He will speak to us. If we listen for God's still small voice, we will hear what His plans are for our lives.

We have been learning about God's attributes. We've learned that He is the almighty, all-knowing, all-powerful creator of heaven and earth. That He put the sun and the moon and the stars in place with just the flick of His finger. But, not only is God grand and powerful, He is tender and personally involved in every detail of your life.

God is so good, He will help us when we are happy, sad, sick, or even when we're in trouble. God will give us wisdom, strength and

understanding if we only ask Him. In fact, God is willing to give us many good things as long as the things we ask for are His will for our lives. He wants us to talk to Him to give us direction for our lives.

James 5:13-16

Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. (14) Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. (15) Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. (16) Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

What is James telling us are some reasons to pray? (When you are in trouble, when you are happy, when you are sick, to show faith, for confession of sin, and to pray for others.)

God is a God who loves to hear and answer our prayers. What are some ways God answers our prayers? He can arrange the circumstances in our lives (like having the bread truck crash just outside of George Muller's orphanage). He can send certain people into our lives at just the right moment to help us. And, He also speaks to us through His word, the Bible. As you are reading a passage, it can jump off the page at you and you will know that God is speaking right into your heart.

Praying before meals and at bedtime is good, but He wants to hear from us more often than that. He wants to be involved in our lives, to comfort us when we are sad, strengthen us when we are scared, and laugh with us when we are happy. God will give true meaning and direction to our lives. We need to make Him part of our lives throughout the day by reading His Word, the Bible, and seeking Him through prayer.

Jeremiah 29:11-13

For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (12) In those

days when you pray, I will listen. (13) If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

God wants us to pray heart-felt prayers. He wants us to tell Him our desires, our fears, our hopes, and He wants us to sing songs of joy to Him when we are happy.

Psalm 34:15

The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help.

God's eyes and ears are open; He is watching and waiting for us to come to Him in prayer.

Psalm 34:17

The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. (NLT)

God hears us when we pray and He is able to save us from all our troubles. No prayer is too small or too large for God to care about, hear, and answer. He answers all our prayers and wants to hear about all our problems.

Psalm 65:1-2

What mighty praise, O God, belongs to you in Zion. We will fulfill our vows to you, (2) for you answer our prayers. All of us must come to you.

Knowing that God hears and answers our prayers should make us want to jump for joy and sing praises to Him.

Let's read King David's prayer of praise:

1 Chronicles 29:10-13

Then David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly: "O LORD, the God of our ancestor Israel, may you be praised forever and ever! (11) Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is

yours, O LORD, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. (12) Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength. (13) "O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name!

Let's give God our praise and thanks for being a God who hears and answers prayer. [Teacher, let each child pray a prayer of thanksgiving.]

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for being a God who delights in hearing and answering our prayers. Please help us never to forget to give you all our praise. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

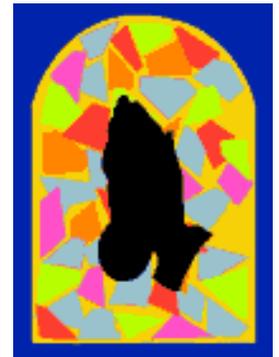
Praying Hands Picture

What you need: Construction paper (yellow, dark blue, and scraps), black gel pen paper, scissors, glue, gel pens.

What to do: Before class print out the pattern of the praying hands and the stained-glass window.

Using the patterns, cut the window shape from the yellow construction paper and the praying hands shape from black gel-pen paper. Note: Black construction paper may not work with gel pens. They need a very smooth paper to work well. You can purchase gel-pen paper wherever you buy gel pens.

Cut up scrap pieces of construction paper or computer paper (neon color work best) into small one-inch shapes.



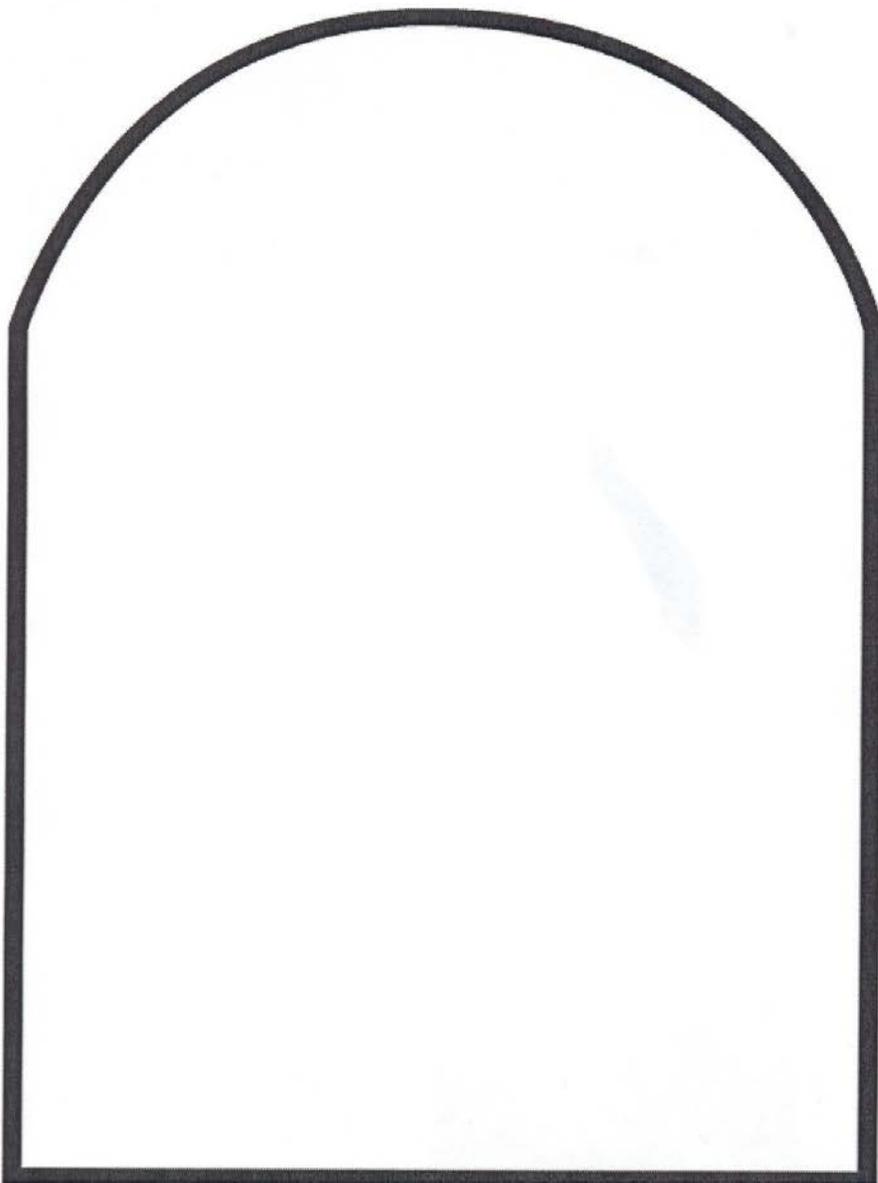
In class have the children glue the window shape to a piece of dark blue construction paper and then glue the small pieces of paper to the window shape.

Have them write a prayer (The Lord's Prayer or the Prayer of Jabez) on the praying hands shape using gel pens and then glue it in the center of the stained glass window.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. What are some of the examples of why to pray mentioned in James 5:13-16? (When you are in trouble, when you are happy, when you are sick, to show faith, for confession of sin, and to pray for others.)
2. What does James 5:16 say about the prayer of a righteous person? (It has great power and produces wonderful results.)
3. What kind of plans does God have for us? (Plans for good to give us a future and a hope.)
4. What are some ways you can pray for others? (Praying for a sick friend or family member, praying for money to buy food, etc.)



God Is Good

(Psalm 103)

Pre-Session Warm Up

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

What are some of things that we've learned about God already? [Teacher, lead the children in a review of God's attributes they have learned so far.]

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

Have you ever been ungrateful to someone who has been kind and loving to you? Do you ever complain about anything? What kinds of things do you complain about in your life?

Sometimes we just have really bad days when nothing seems to go right. But, I think that it is far too easy for us to find fault in people and situations in life.

God wants us remember His goodness. He knows what is best for us and will turn even the worst situations around in our life for our good if we will just trust Him.

Opening Prayer

Father, as we remember Your goodness today, may we just want to praise You with our whole being. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6)

Lesson

Today we are going to study one of David's songs, Psalm 103, which tells of God's goodness. David loved God and he spent a lot of time worshiping God by singing songs to Him.

Psalm 103:1

*Let **all that I am** praise the Lord; **with my whole heart**, I will praise his holy name.*

What do you think it means to worship God with "*all that I am*" and "*with my whole heart*?"

Satan will try to get you to use your mind, your mouth, your eyes, and your ears, your heart, your hands, and your feet for anything except to honor God. But God gave you your body and mind so you could use them to worship Him.

How do you think you can use these different parts of your body to praise God?

- **Mind**—You can use your mind to think about God and His word. (Philippians 4:8)
- **Mouth**—You can use your mouth to praise Him by telling Him and others how wonderful He is. (Psalm 146:1-2) What are some wonderful things that God has done in your life that you praise Him for? [Teacher, allow some discussion.]
- **Eyes**—You can use your eyes to notice what He has made.
- **Ears**—You can use your ears to hear the beautiful sounds of His creation and to listen to others as they praise Him.
- **Heart**—You can use your heart to love Him for who He is and all that He has done.
- **Hands**—You can use your hands to play songs of praise on a musical instrument, write poems about His greatness, or draw pictures of what He's done for you.
- **Feet**—You can use your feet to take you places where you can praise Him publicly.

Where are some places you could praise God to others? (Sunday school, family dinner table, school, etc.)

David urges us to give praise to the Lord with our whole being—with all that we are! 1 Chronicles 16:29 says, “*Give to the Lord the glory he deserves!*”

David lists off many blessing of the Lord that we can praise Him for: [Teacher, as you read the following verses, write the attributes on the board.]

Psalm 103:2-6

*Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. (3) He **forgives** all my sins and **heals** all my diseases. (4) He **redeems me** from death and crowns me with **love and tender mercies**. (5) He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle’s! (6) The Lord gives **righteousness and justice** to all who are treated unfairly.*

- Forgiveness (vr 3)
- Physical healing (vr 3)
- Protection from danger (vr 4)
- Love and tender mercies (vr 4)
- Daily provision (vr 5)
- Help when treated unfairly (vr 6)

Psalm 103:7-10

*He revealed his character to Moses and his deeds to the people of Israel. (8) The Lord is **compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry** and filled with unfailing love. (9) He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. (10) He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.*

- Compassionate and Merciful (vr 8)
- Patient (slow to anger) (vr 8)
- Forgiveness (vr 10)

Psalm 103:11-12

*For his **unfailing love** toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. (12) He has **removed our sins** as far from us as the east is from the west.*

- Unfailing love (vr 11)
- Salvation (vr 12)

David was especially thankful for God’s promise to forgive his sins. He understood what a wonderful blessing it is to be cleansed and forgiven.

It is because God wants to cleanse and forgive your sin that He sent Jesus to die on the cross. You can come to the Lord Jesus for salvation by simply admitting to Him that you are a sinner, asking Him to forgive you and then asking Him to save you and make you His child. God has promised that He will receive all who come to Him in this way (John 6:37b).

David believed in God’s promise and was very glad for what God had done for him.

Psalm 103:13-14

*The Lord **is like a father** to his children, **tender and compassionate** to those who fear him. (14) For He **knows how weak we are**; he remembers we are only dust.*

- Like a father (vr 13)
- Tender and compassionate (vr 13)
- Understands human weaknesses (vr 14)

Psalm 103:15-19

*Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die. (16) The wind blows, and we are gone—as though we had never been there. (17) But the **love of the Lord remains forever** with those who fear him. His **salvation** extends to the children’s children (18) of those who are faithful to his covenant, and of those who obey his commandments! The (19) Lord has made the heavens his throne; from there he **rules over everything.***

- Everlasting love (vr 17)
- Salvation (vr 17)
- Supreme Ruler (vr 19)

When David thought about God’s goodness, he couldn’t help worshipping Him. To worship means to tell God how much you love and admire Him for who He is.

Psalm 103:20-22

Praise the Lord, you angels, you mighty ones who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands. (21) Yes, praise the Lord, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will! (22) Praise the Lord, everything he has created, everything in all his kingdom. Let all that I am praise the Lord.

As David was thinking about God’s goodness, he was so filled with praise he felt unable to express himself. He called upon the angels and all the other created beings on earth to help him tell God how wonderful He is.

How can remembering that God is good help you in life? Sometimes God allows certain things to happen to you in life and you won’t understand why.

Can you think of troublesome things that can happen to kids your age? (Parents get a divorce, parents lose their job, a friend dies, and so on.)

When you are in a situation like this, why might it be hard for you to trust in God’s goodness? You may think God is punishing you for doing something bad. That is NOT God’s character! He loves you with an everlasting love. Why do you think He allows hard things to come into our lives? He wants to strengthen our faith in His goodness! He wants us to remember that His plans are always good, that He loves and cares for us and that He promises to help us and protect us.

If you remember that God is good all the time, it will help you trust that God has a good plan and purpose for everything that He allows into your life, even the bad stuff.

When David remembered God’s goodness, he couldn’t help but burst into praise and thanksgiving. And that’s how it should be for us, too! 1 Chronicles 16:29 says, “*Give to the Lord the glory he deserves!*”

One way you worship God is to **praise Him**. Tell Him how much you appreciate His greatness and beauty and all that He does for you.

Another way to worship God is to **give Him thanks** for the things He has given you.

When you study God’s Word, the Bible, you begin to learn how wonderful God really is. Only as you get to know God, will you be able to worship Him the way He deserves to be worshiped. Only then will you find the special joy God gives to those who know Him well.

We all need to take time regularly to worship God as David did. Look at all reasons we can praise Him. [Teacher, point to your list on the board.]

How awful it is to ignore Someone who has been so very kind and loving to you. Have you been ignoring His goodness to you? This week, set aside a time to get alone with God. Perhaps you can take a walk. Use your time alone to remember as much as you can of all you have learned about God. Think about what God has done for you and what He is like. Then think about how you can best worship Him. Talk to Him and tell Him how wonderful He is and how much you appreciate all He has done.

Let's pray one- or two-sentence praises to God in appreciation for who He is.

Closing Prayer

[Teacher, have the children say prayers of praise to God specifically for these attributes taught in this lesson.]

Father, You are so good to us! You are a loving, forgiving, compassionate God who has good plans for our lives. May we want to give You our whole life: our hearts, our minds, our lips. We want our lives to bring Your name all the glory that You deserve. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

God Appreciation

Make a list of the things you appreciate about God. [Teacher, suggest a few uncommon things that the children can be thankful for such as the fillings in their teeth, backyards to play in.]

Now as an act of worship to Him, choose some way to express your love for God's goodness.

- Write a praise song or a poem about His greatness.
- Draw a picture of what He's done for you or that shows His marvelous creation.
- Make a *Thank You* card and write a love note to Him in it telling God how much you appreciate His greatness and beauty or thanking Him for the things He has given you and all that He does for you.

Then, you can share your song, poem or picture with the rest of the class.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. What do you think it means to worship God with "*all that I am*" and "*with my whole heart*?"
2. How do you think you can use these different parts of your body to praise God?
 - **Mind** (You can use your mind to think about God and His word.)
 - **Mouth** (You can use your mouth to praise Him by telling Him and others how wonderful He is.)
 - **Eyes** (You can use your eyes to notice what He has made.)
 - **Ears** (You can use your ears to hear the beautiful sounds of His creation and to listen to others as they praise Him.)
 - **Heart** (You can use your heart to love Him for who He is and all that He has done.)
 - **Hands** (You can use your hands to play songs of praise on a musical instrument, write poems about His greatness, or draw pictures of what He's done for you.)
 - **Feet** (You can use your feet to take you places where you can praise Him publicly.)
3. What are some wonderful things that God has done in your life that you praise Him for?

4. Where are some places you could praise God to others? (Sunday school, family dinner table, school, etc.)
5. Have you been ignoring His goodness to you?
6. What are some good reasons to praise God?
7. What are some ways God shows His goodness? (He helps us know what to do and gives us wisdom when we ask for it.)
8. What is a way you can show you are thankful for the good things God does? (Say, "*Thank You*" to Him.)
9. When someone is having a hard time or is in a difficult situation, how might they feel about God? (They may feel that God doesn't love them anymore and that nothing good will ever happen to them again.)
10. When are times we need to trust in God's goodness?

God is Faithful

(Genesis 8:22; Genesis 15:13-16; Isaiah 7:14)

Pre-Session Warm Up

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

What are some of things that we've learned about God already?

- God is **great creator** —He created the whole universe! We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

- God is **holy**—He is without sin; He is perfect in every way.
- God is **just**—He always does what is right and fair.

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

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He! (Deuteronomy 32:4)

- God is **merciful**—He extends forgiveness to us even though we don't deserve it.

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

- God is **love**—He always does what is best for me even when I'm not at my best.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

- God is **all-knowing**— God knows everything—past, present, and future. He knows all about you—even what you are thinking. He knows your deepest needs and desires, and He knows how to meet them.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33)

- God is **all-powerful**—He is almighty; He has all power in heaven and earth and can do anything. There is no limit to His power.

With God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26b)

- God is our great **provider**—He is a generous, gracious, abundant provider.

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

- God is our great **protector**—He is always with us and is powerful enough to protect us from the strongest, meanest, and most frightening of situations when you call on Him in times of trouble.

God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. (Psalms 46:1)

- God **hears and answers prayer**—He hears us when we pray and He is able to save us from all our troubles.

The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. (Psalms 34:17)

- God is **good**—He is a loving, forgiving, compassionate God who has good plans for our lives.

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6)

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

Many of you may have a faithful dog; my husband is faithful to me. How would you describe a person that is faithful? What does it mean to be faithful? (Someone who is loyal and steadfast, who isn't going to leave you; someone you can count on to always do what he says he will do; someone you can trust completely; someone who always keeps his promises.) Do you know anyone like that?

Some people might forget to keep a promise. No matter how much people *want* to be faithful, eventually you will be disappointed—your dad won't be able to keep a promise or a friend will let you down. How wonderful it is to know that God is faithful in all things and at all time. He will never disappoint you or let you down.

Opening Prayer

Father, what a wonder it is that You are faithful even when we are not faithful! Please open our hearts tonight so that we might behold Your glory even a little bit more! Broaden and deepen our faith in You as we meditate on this attribute of attributes. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations. (Psalms 145:13)

Lesson

God is worthy of our love. You can have confidence that He will always do what He says He will do. You can trust His Word completely. You can depend on Him.

Because God is perfect, He never changes in any way. He never changes His mind. He never changes His mood and He never stops loving you. God is faithful and He's not ever going to change! It is impossible for God to be unfaithful.

2 Timothy 2:13

If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.

God's faithfulness makes all of His other attributes perfect. He is *always* just; His love *never* fails; He *never* lies; He has perfect plans and *always* carries them out in the best possible way. He *never* forgets, *never* makes a mistake, and *never* changes His mind.

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?

Examples of His Faithfulness

Scripture has loads of examples of God's faithfulness.

1. Seasons

More than four thousand years ago God made this promise,

Genesis 8:22

As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.

Has God been faithful to this promise? Every year the seasons come and go. Every spring the snow melts away and the farmers can plant their crops. Every fall the farmers can harvest their crops so that we all have enough to eat all year long.

And, every day the earth turns around so that there is daytime when we are facing the sun and nighttime when we turn away from the sun.

2. God's promise to Abraham

Another example of God's faithfulness is the promise He made to Abraham.

Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. (2) I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. (3) I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

God loved Abram and called him to leave his birthplace and his father's family to come out of Babylon. God promised to give Abram the land of Israel for his descendants.

Genesis 15:5

Then the Lord took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!"

God promised to make a nation out of Abram and Sarai's off spring. Why did God's promise seem impossible? (He was 75 when he got the promise and when he was 100 he still hadn't had any children!) Did God keep this promise? Yes! He gave them the land of Israel and today it is filled with their descendants!

Genesis 15:13-16

Then the LORD said to Abram, "You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. (14) But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. (15) (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) (16) After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction."

After a number of years, Abraham's family had grown to about 75 people. Then there was a great famine in the land and they went down to Egypt where there was plenty of food. For 400 years Abraham's descendants groaned under the rule of the Egyptians. Had God forgotten His promise? No!

Exodus 12:40-41

The people of Israel had lived in Egypt for 430 years. (41) In fact, it was on the last day of the 430th year that all the Lord's forces left the land.

God was faithful to His people. He sent Moses to rescue them out of Egypt and to lead them back to the land He had promised Abraham.

3. God's promise to Isaiah

Another example of God's faithfulness is the promise He made to the prophet, Isaiah.

God had promised to send the Messiah, the Savior who would rescue the believers from this world and lead them to heaven. God said that many will come claiming that they are the "Messiah" but they will be fakes; there is only one true Messiah.

Isaiah was asking God how the people would know the true Messiah when he came. And, God gave the prophet Isaiah a way to tell people how to recognize the true the Messiah when He came.

Isaiah 7:14

All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means "God is with us").

Many centuries passed, but no Messiah came. Had God forgotten His promise?

Matthew 1:18-25 [Teacher, read...]

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit....But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

It all came true—Jesus was born of a virgin. There has never been, nor will there ever be, anyone born of a virgin. That's one reason we know Jesus is God.

Promises of God

We know that God is faithful. He means what He says and He says what He means; His promises always come true.

What are some of the promises of God? He will:

- Never leave you
- Always comfort you
- Strengthen you
- Supply all your needs
- Be your helper
- Direct your paths

God has given us many precious promises, but are we really counting on them? Are we actually expecting Him to do for us all that He has promised?

When in Doubt?

There are times in our lives when it is not easy to believe that God is faithful. Sometimes things happen that might make us feel that God has forgotten all about us.

Can you think of things that can happen to kids your age that can make you doubt God's faithfulness? (Parents get a divorce, parents lose their job, a friend dies, etc.)

When we are tempted to doubt the faithfulness of God, cry out to Him and wait for His answer. In His time He will make His will known to you.

Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.

That's a promise!

Summary

There are three indications that you really understand that God is faithful:

1. **You do not worry.** If we really have faith in God's goodness, we will not worry or be afraid. If we worry and fret about things this means that we don't really believe that His plans for us are for good and not for evil. It's like saying, "*I don't believe You; I don't trust you.*"
2. **You do not murmur.** If we really have faith in God we will not grumble or complain about anything; we will trust that the Lord knows what is best. God is greatly honored when, instead of finding things to complain about, we find the good in even the worst of situations!
3. **You do not doubt God's love and faithfulness.** If we are really certain of God's love and faithfulness, we will trust Him with our whole life. We may not understand why He's allowing certain things to happen to us, but we will have confidence that His plans and purposes are for our good.

God has promised to love us and help us do what is right. God is faithful. He never breaks His Word. He keeps His promises, no matter how quickly we break our promises to Him. We can trust Him with our lives. Let's thank God for keeping His promises.

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You that You never give up on us. I find myself worrying and fretting and murmuring all the time. I ask Your forgiveness. Please increase my ability to trust You and have faith in Your faithfulness. I also pray, Lord, that you will make me a faithful person in all my relationships, especially with You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Make a dictionary of God's Promises. On a sheet of paper, have the children list the letters of the alphabet. Then next to each letter have them think of one of God's Promises that starts with that letter. For example, A. **A**lways Faithful to me, B. **B**less me, C. **C**ounsel me, and so forth. Have them personalize each promise.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

- How would you describe a person that is faithful? (Someone who is loyal and steadfast, who isn't going to leave you; someone you can count on to always do what he says he will do; someone you can trust completely; someone who always keeps his promises.)
- What has God done to show that we can trust Him to always keep His promises? (God kept His promises to people in the Bible. God promised to send us a Savior and He did.)
- What was God's promise about seasons? (That there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter.)
- How did Abraham and Sarah learn that God is faithful? (He kept His promise, even when it seems impossible.)
- What are some reasons it may have been difficult for Abraham and Sarah to believe in God's promise that they would have a child? (Abraham and Sarah were very old. They waited for a very long time and nothing happened.)
- How do you think Abraham felt when God pointed to the stars in the night sky and promised Abraham many sons and grandsons? (Hopeful. Excited. Thankful.)
- What was the sign that God gave Isaiah about the coming Messiah? (That He would be born of a virgin.)
- What are some promises God has made to us? (To hear and answer our prayers. To give us courage to do right. To help us know what to do when we need help.)
- When are times that remembering God's promises can help us? (When a loved one is sick. When you feel lonely. When you want to make a good decision.)
- How can we find out more about God's promises? (Read the Bible. Listen to what other Christians say about God.)
- How would I know that you really understand that God is faithful? What are three things that you would NOT do? (NOT worry about things; NOT complain; NOT doubt God's love and faithfulness.)

Great is Our God

(Psalm 145)

Pre-Session Warm Up

This is our last lesson in this series about the attributes of God. We've learned a lot about God, haven't we?

Tell me which of God's attributes are your favorites? [Teacher, lead the children in a review of God's attributes they have learned.]

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

Have you ever been bummed out? Have you ever felt lonely or scared? Have you ever had your feelings hurt and you just felt crushed in your spirit? What did you do? Where did you turn?

David turned to God. And that's what we should do. We're going to take a peek into David's heart as we read and study through Psalm 145 and see how David handled discouragement.

Opening Prayer

Lord, You are amazing. You created the whole earth and everything in it and You keep the universe running in perfect order. And yet You still have time to think about me. Thank You that You are such an awesome God. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable. (Psalm 145:3 NKJ)

Lesson

David wrote most of the Psalms that we have in our Bible. Most of the songs David wrote are prayers of praise to God. When he would think

about all that God had done, David just couldn't help himself. He would just burst out with heartfelt praise to God.

As read the Psalms, notice the praise given to God, not only for what He does—His creation, His blessings, His forgiveness—but also for who He is—loving, just, faithful, forgiving, patient. I am so thankful that God made sure these songs of praise were written down in our Bibles so that we can enjoy them, too. When I read the Psalms, I am caught up in David's passion and enthusiasm for the Lord and that encourages me to praise God, too.

Psalm 145 is one of my favorite praise songs written by David. And in it he praises God for many of the attributes of God that we have been learning about. Let's see if we can list all the attributes of God David mentions.

One interesting thing about this song is if you could read it in the original language, you would see that each verse starts with the next letter in the alphabet. That would have been an easy way for people to memorize it.

David begins this song with a vow to praise God every day.

Psalm 145:1-2

I will exalt you, my God and King, and praise your name forever and ever. (2) I will praise you every day; yes, I will praise you forever.

Next David praises God for His greatness.

Psalm 145:3-7

Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise! No one can measure his greatness. (4) Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power. (5) I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles. (6) Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue; I will proclaim your greatness. (7) Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about your righteousness.

David says that you can't measure God's greatness. He does wonderful and awesome works. Each generation should tell of God's

greatness to the next. He is righteous and full of glorious splendor and majesty.

David then continues with praise for the Lord's attributes.

Psalm 145:8-10

The LORD is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. (9) The LORD is good to everyone. He shows compassion on all his creation. (10) All of your works will thank you, LORD, and your faithful followers will praise you.

He is gracious, compassionate, patient, and loving!

Next, David praises God for His everlasting kingdom.

Psalm 145:11-13

They will speak of the glory of your kingdom; they will give examples of your power. (12) They will tell about your mighty deeds and about the majesty and glory of your reign. (13) For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. You rule throughout all generations. The LORD always keeps his promises; he is gracious in all he does.

David praises God for His power and His mercy and grace. He rules over an everlasting kingdom and He always keeps His promises.

Next David praises God for His provision.

Psalm 145:14-16

The LORD helps the fallen and lifts those bent beneath their loads. (15) The eyes of all look to you in hope; you give them their food as they need it. (16) When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.

Sometimes our burdens seem more than we can bear, and we wonder how we can go on. If you are bending under a burden and feel that you are about to fall, turn to God for help. He is ready to lift you up and bear your burden. He is the great burden bearer.

God opens His hand and satisfies every living thing! He is our source of all our daily needs.

Next, David praises God for His righteous ways.

Psalm 145:17-20

The LORD is righteous in everything he does; he is filled with kindness. (18) The LORD is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth. (19) He grants the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them. (20) The LORD protects all those who love him, but he destroys the wicked.

David praises God for answering the cries of those who sincerely call upon Him. God is righteous and loving in all His ways; He remains near to those who call on Him; He hears our cries and saves us.

Then, David ends this song encouraging us all to praise the Lord.

Psalm 145:21

I will praise the Lord, and may everyone on earth bless his holy name forever and ever.

Just by reading one of David's psalms we are reminded of how great and awesome God is.

And when we think about all that God has done and does for us, what could be more natural than having outbursts of heartfelt praise, just like David? When you praise God it's a way to tell Him how much you admire Him and appreciate Him, and thank Him for all that He does for you.

In what ways have you recently praised God or told others all that he has done for you?

Closing Prayer

Father, help us to be like David and praise You in all of our circumstances, even when we're bummed out. You are an awesome

and wonderful God, full of compassion and mercy. Help me to remember that You have a good plan for my life and that You only want what's best for me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

- Psalm 145:7 and Luke 19:37
- Psalm 145:14 and Luke 13:10-13
- Psalm 145:15-16 and Matthew 14:15-20

Learning Activities

Activity Center

Write a Psalm or, using each letter of the alphabet, make a list of reasons to praise the Lord, including His attributes and His blessings.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. In verse 1, how does David address God? (My God and King.)
2. In verse 2, how often does David say he will praise the Lord? (Every day forever.)
3. Verse 3 is the main theme of this whole psalm. What is it? (Great is the Lord!)
4. Why do you think it is important to speak the praise of the Lord to Him? To other people?
5. Verse 4, why is it so important to speak God's praise to the next generation?
6. The Old Testament contains many references that foreshadow the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus, who was yet to come. What connections do you see between each of the verses and the corresponding New Testament passage?
 - Psalm 145:5 and Matthew 17:1-2
 - Psalm 145:6a, 11 and Matthew 8:26-27

