

Genesis

Cain and Abel
(Genesis 4:1-16)

INTRODUCTION

What's something that makes you sad or unhappy? [Let the children respond.]

What makes God sad or unhappy? [Lead the children into a discussion of specific sins. Summarize by saying that doing things our own way and not God's way makes Him very sad.]

Today we're going to learn about a guy who learned a very hard lesson about how much unhappiness his sin caused himself and others...

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, this morning we're going to learn about how bad our sins really are to You. But, before we begin, we just want to thank You for sending Jesus to take the punishment for our sins. Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen now as we study Your word. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE

The LORD is more pleased when we do what is right...than when we offer Him sacrifices. (Proverbs 21:3 NLT)

A *sacrifice* is a gift that costs you a lot. Say you were rude to your mother and it caused her to be unhappy with you. So, you spent every penny you had in your piggy bank and bought her bouquet of flowers. You were hoping she wouldn't be unhappy with you anymore. Well, she liked the flowers, but she really wished that you hadn't sinned against her in the first place.

When we sin against God, we sometimes think we can make it up to Him by giving Him something of value. For example, you might think that if you did a good deed for someone, such as cleaning your room or taking time to read to a lonely old person down the street, that God would overlook your sin. But you can't buy forgiveness. God might appreciate your sacrifice of time spent with that lonely old person, but He would rather that you didn't sin in the first place.

Ask: How do you get forgiveness for your sin?

1 John 1:9 tells us that when we come to God and confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us.

LESSON

Last week we learned that when Adam and Eve sinned against God, He punished them by sending them out of the Garden of Eden. Life was not the same for them outside the lovely garden.

Genesis 4:1

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.."

Adam and Eve had a baby boy. Oh, how happy they were! They valued him more than anything else in the world.

Genesis 4:2

And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.

Cain grew up to be a farmer and Abel became a shepherd; he raised sheep.

Genesis 4:3-4a

In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.

Each brother brought an offering to the Lord. Cain brought some fruit and vegetables from his garden, but Abel brought his best lamb from his flock. Cain's gift was not brought out of a heart of love and thankfulness but Abel wanted to please God.

Genesis 4b-5a

And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

We learned in our last lesson that after Adam and Eve had sinned, they suddenly became ashamed of their nakedness before God.

Ask: Do you remember what God clothed them with? (*Animal skins*)

God had to kill an animal to cover their shame. In this way, God showed mankind the seriousness of sin. A life had to be given; blood had to be shed. God was giving them a picture of what Jesus would someday do by coming to earth to die and give His life for all of mankind.

The Bible tells us that our sins cannot be forgiven *without shedding of blood*.

Hebrews 9:22

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

This is why God valued Abel's offering of his best lamb from his flock and did not appreciate Cain's offering of fruit and vegetables. Cain knew that God required the sacrifice of an animal. But he evidently didn't believe God. He wanted to have his own way.

The Bible says, we are all born with a sinful, selfish nature.

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

No one had to teach you how to sin because we are all born with a "want to" to do things our own way. Being selfish is sin. God loves you very much, but your sin must be punished.

Genesis 4:5b

So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

Cain was furious. He was jealous of his brother because God accepted Abel's offering. He was also angry with God for rejecting his offering. Cain's jealousy led to anger and his anger to hatred.

Ask: Have you ever been jealous or angry? How did that make you feel? Did it rob you of your joy?

Sin brings much unhappiness to you, God, and every person around.

Genesis 4:6-7

The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

God gave Cain another chance to do the right thing; God was telling Cain that if he would change his attitude, believe God, and do what He said, everything would be fine. All he had to do was bring the offering that God required; a perfect lamb.

God provided a way of forgiveness to solve Cain's sin problem. All Cain had to do is come to God, God's way.

Genesis 4:8

Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

One day Cain suggested to his brother, "Let's go out into the fields." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

Cain's jealousy of Abel and anger against God led him to murder his brother Abel.

Jealousy and anger always lead you to sin.

Genesis 4:9-10

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.

God tried to get Cain to confess his sin and admit that he had killed his brother, but Cain refused. Cain lied to God; he knew what happened to his brother.

Genesis 4:11-12 (God speaking...)

And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹²When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."

Here God tells Cain, "No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth."

Because Cain refused to do things God's way, he had to suffer sin's unhappy consequences. No doubt, this caused much unhappiness to his parents, Adam and Eve.

Ask: Are their consequences at your house if you are disobedient?

It gives your parents much heartache to have to discipline you. But God has given them the responsibility to train you up in the ways of the Lord.

Genesis 4:13-14

Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

Cain thought his punishment was too severe. Cain thought the Lord wasn't being fair.

Ask: Have you ever felt that way when you get disciplined?

Genesis 4:15

Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.

In His mercy, God put a mark of protection on Cain.

Genesis 4:16

Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Sin always separates loved ones from each other and from God. That's why sin has to be punished, but thankfully God loved you and me so much that He sent Jesus to die on the cross to pay for our sins. This is God's way and the *only* way of forgiveness.

Closing Prayer

Lord, our sins are not funny or cute to You. They bring You so much unhappiness. Help us to realize how serious our sins are. And, Lord, thank You for providing a way for us to receive forgiveness from You. Help us to want to do things Your way. Let bringing You happiness be our greatest joy in life. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING CENTERS

Imagination Station

(Craft Center)

Choose one of the following craft project ideas:

1. Acceptable Sacrifice to God

Discuss what an acceptable sacrifice to God is. Have them draw pictures to illustrate.

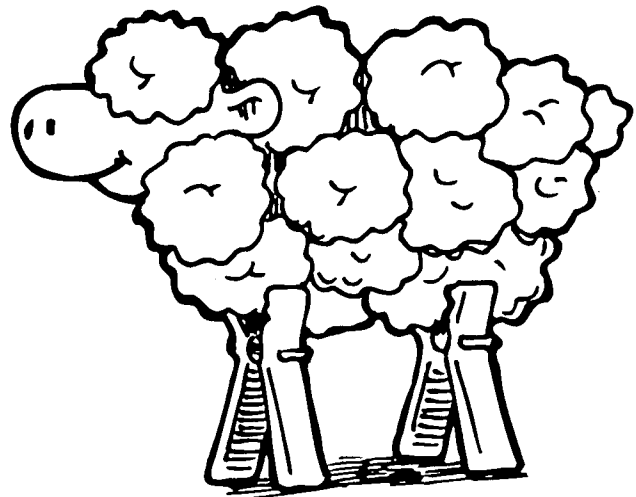
2. Cotton Ball Lamb

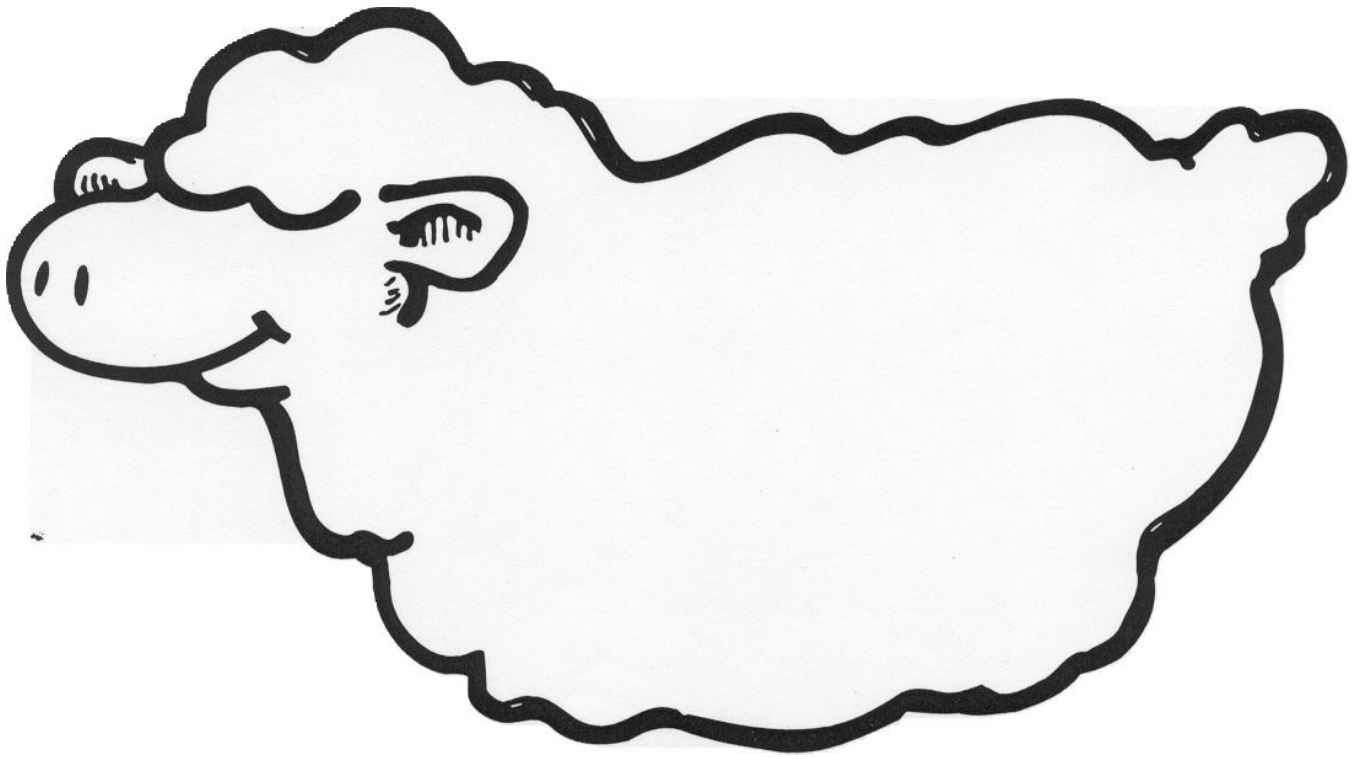
Materials

- White card stock
- Cotton Balls
- 2 spring-style clothespins
- Black and red markers
- Paste or glue

Directions

1. Copy the lamb pattern shown on the next page onto card stock.
2. Cut out a lamb for each child.
3. Use a red marker to color the lamb's mouth.
4. Use a black marker to color both clothespins and to outline the lamb's facial features.
5. Cover the lamb's body (but not the face) with paste or glue. Attach the cotton balls to the body.
6. Clip the black clothespins to the bottom of the lamb so it can stand alone.





Fun House

(Game Center)

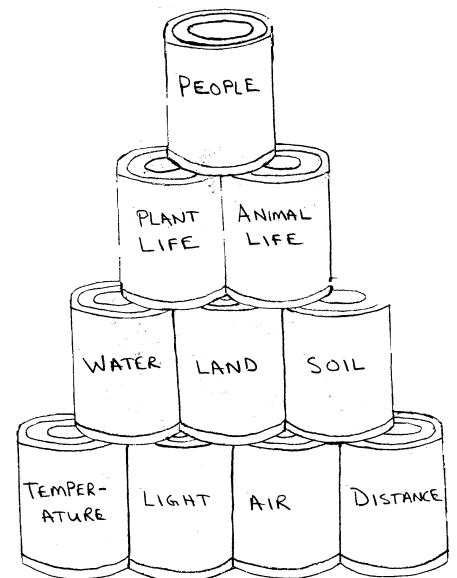
Cain's choice to sin had consequences. Play a rendition of "Truth or Consequences."

God's Weird and Wonderful World

(Science Center)

God's Wonderful Plan of Creation

The perfect conditions for human life on Earth are very much like the pyramid of cans shown below. Each part of creation is a building block that is set just right in order to sustain life on this planet. The pieces fit together perfectly, and not one can be removed without the whole structure tumbling down. The pieces build upon each other and interact with each other to provide an ideal physical environment for us to live in. For example, God placed this planet at just the right distance from the sun to provide the correct amount of light and just the right temperature we need. Water, soil and plant life work together to give us food to eat and fresh air to breathe. God, in His infinite wisdom, engineered this marvelous world in which each piece is perfectly designed and fits together perfectly with all the other parts, in just the right way, so we can survive. This could not have happened by accident! God put this all together out of His love for us!



How Much Do You Know About God's Weird and Wonderful World?

1. 93 million miles is the approximate _____ from the Earth to the sun.
2. Although many different gases make up the _____ we breathe, oxygen is most important to us.
3. Photosynthesis is the process where plants use _____ from the sun to convert water, carbon dioxide and minerals into oxygen and other important stuff we need to stay alive.
4. As the planet orbits the sun the distance between them changes somewhat, resulting in the changes in the _____ we relate to the four seasons.
5. Dry _____ is our living space and makes up about one-third of the total area of the planet.
6. The other two-thirds of Earth is covered by _____ which is essential to life on the planet as well as home to many species of plants and animals.
7. The top layer of the land is called _____ and it provides the base for land plants to grow and living space for many insects.
8. Both _____ life and _____ life depend on all the other parts of creation to survive.
9. God put _____ at the top of this pyramid because He made this weird and wonderful world for our pleasure and so that we'll be in awe of Him and give Him all the glory due His name!

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