

## Children's Church Grades 1- 3

### Year 1 Curriculum - December

#### Theme: Advent

**Lesson 1 Zacharias exalts in the Salvation of God**

**Lesson 2 Mary Exalts in the Salvation of the Lord**

**Lesson 3 Simeon and Anna exalt in the coming of the Lord**

#### Suggested songs related to the theme:

##### **Lesson 1: Zacharias exalts in the Salvation of God**

*Angels From the Realms of Glory* (verse 1)

*Angels We Have Heard on High* (verse 1)

*Go Tell it on the Mountain* (verse 1)

*God Rest You Merry Gentlemen* (verse 1)

##### **Lesson 2: Mary Exalts in the Salvation of the Lord**

*Joy to the World* (verse 1, 4)

*O Come All Ye Faithful* (verse 1, 2)

*O Little Town of Bethlehem* (verse 1, 2)

*Silent Night* (verse 1, 3)

##### **Lesson 3: Simeon and Anna exalt in the coming of the Lord**

*Away in a Manger* (verse 1, 2, 3)

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (verse 1)

*Joy to the World* (verse 1, 3)

*O Come All Ye Faithful* (verse 1, 4)

These traditional carols do not directly re-tell the word of Zacharias', Mary's or Simeon's praise and exaltation. However, you may emphasize that we sing carols to express our own praise to God for sending Jesus.

**Children's Church Grades 1-3**  
**Year 1 Curriculum - December**

**Lesson 1**

**Title:** Advent – Zacharias exalts in the salvation of God

**Text:** Luke 1:5-25, 57-80 (esp. 67-79)

**Theme:** Zacharias blesses the Lord for His covenant faithfulness in sending salvation to which his newborn son shall give witness.

**Teaching Objectives:** By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to share why times were so dark during the life of Zacharias.
2. Be able to tell why John's birth brought so much joy to Zacharias and others.
3. Be able to share why the birth of Jesus should be a joyful occasion for all who believe.
4. Give God thanks and praise for sending His "Light" into the world.

**Memory Verse: *Luke 1:78-79 ... the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.***

**Teacher Direction:**

1. The lessons for this unit focus on the exaltations of Zacharias, Mary, Simeon and Anna recorded in the book of Luke. They all lived in a time of darkness and they recognized their need for supernatural deliverance. Each clung to a hope, though, that enabled them to carry on in life. When, however, the good news was revealed to them, each was moved to full-throated praise of God for being true to His promises and sending the Light to their dark world.

As you share these lessons with the children help them catch the sense of great joy each of these persons had. Truly something great was happening in their day and they could not contain themselves. Children should leave the session realizing that God has done something most wonderful in sending His Son to deliver us from darkness.

**2. Introduction**

To introduce this lesson ask the children if they know what a concentration camp is. Tell the children that during WWII many people were captured by the Nazis, taken from their homes, and placed in these camps. Help the children understand how terrible these camps were: they were fed and clothed very poorly, they were forced to do much hard work, they were separated from other family members, they were severely mistreated.

After describing these camps, ask the children what they think the people in those camps hoped for. Try to help the children see that the people would have desperately hoped for a deliverer. They hoped that the Allied troops would defeat the Nazis and free them from their bondage. After some discussion of this, ask the children how they think the people felt when the Allied troops actually did come and free them from their camps.

Finally, tell the children that in this lesson, the people are living in darkness or in bondage. They do not like the situation in which they find themselves. They do have a hope, however. Encourage the children to listen and see what the people wanted to be delivered from, and how they felt once they knew deliverance was on the way.

### 3. Bible Story

As you share the story from Luke 1, be sure to emphasize the following points:

A. Background – God’s interest was to enter into covenant with a people through whom He would show His glory to the nations. In light of this intent, God made a covenant with Abraham promising him a great name, a great nation, a land, protection from enemies, and that through him, God would bless every family. Later, God confirmed that covenant with King David, adding a promise that one of David’s descendants would sit on his throne forever. Israel, the chosen nation, would be the recipient of these blessings and countless others from the hand of God. They only needed to follow His commandments.

Sadly, Israel failed to obey. Even after God sent many prophets to call them to return, they still persisted in their evil ways. Finally, God brought other nations to dispossess them of their land, and scatter their people to other lands.

In less than a century, some of the people were able to return to the land and rebuild the temple and the wall around Jerusalem, but the situation was not the same. God’s voice was now silent and would be for 400 years, and during that time, though many would live in their own land, they had to live under the domination of Gentile kings.

B. The context of Zacharias’ praise – Zacharias lived in the land of Israel. He was a priest who had the privilege of serving in the temple. Yet, he and the people of Israel, were not happy. The Romans ruled over them in their own land, and all who understood God’s covenant with Abraham and David knew that this is not what God intended. Zacharias and the people longed for the day when God would send His Messiah to deliver them from such oppression. Those spiritually inclined also longed for the forgiveness of sins. They knew that their present dark plight was due to their wickedness.

When God visited Zacharias in the temple, a new day was dawning. God was now breaking into history, after years of silence, with His greatest revelation. He was bringing word to Zacharias and the people of Israel that His salvation was drawing near. The newborn babe, John, would be a very important part of that deliverance. He would be the forerunner predicted by the prophets (Malachi 4, Isaiah 40) to prepare the way for the Lord.

C. The content of Zacharias’ praise – After John is born and Zacharias regains his voice, Zacharias spills over in full-throated praise to God. He realizes that God is in the process of fulfilling His promises to Israel through Abraham (vs. 73) and David (vs. 69). In verses 68-75, Zacharias praises God for raising up a horn (a power or authority, ultimately pointing to Jesus) in David’s house who would bring freedom from oppression. Probably foremost in Zacharias’ mind is freedom in a political sense, that is, from Rome. But Zacharias appears to have more than political freedom in mind. In his address to his son (vs. 76-79) he also mentions “the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins”. For Zacharias what is beginning to take place is like a light shining in the darkness, providing great joy and guidance for the feet of his people who have so long been in distress.

#### **4. Application**

The coming of Christ to our world is the most glorious event of history. It represents God entering into our world, in fulfillment of His promises, to bring deliverance to His people. We who sat in darkness, enslaved to our sins, were given a Deliverer in Jesus Christ who would bring us back to God, providing the forgiveness of sins and a power to “serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness all our days.” This Christmas time we all must rejoice in the coming of Christ. We must praise God for being a promise keeper and for sending His glorious light into our dark world. We must not let anything else get in the way of such worship of God this season.

#### **5. Review Questions**

What was God’s plan for the people of Israel? (He wanted them to be His people, and He, their God. He wanted to show His glories through this people.)

Why was it such a dark time for Zacharias and the people of Israel? (God had been silent for nearly 400 years, and though the people lived in the land, they were still under the rule of the Romans. They were close to being slaves in their own land.)

Why was the birth of John such an occasion of joy? (Zacharias knew that God was now breaking into history to bring deliverance to his people. For this he was very grateful.)

What special job would John do when he grew up? (He would be the forerunner of Jesus, encouraging others to prepare for His coming.)

Why is the birth of Jesus a reason for joy and celebration? (With Jesus’ birth, God was entering into our world to save us from our sin and our alienation from God. It showed God’s special concern for us, His faithfulness to His promises, and gives us great hope. These are all reasons for great celebration.)

Will you take time this Christmas season to truly praise God for His indescribable gift in Jesus Christ?

# Baby Jesus

## Tips for Teachers

- Make copies of the master
- Pre-fold half of the paper plates
- Write the memory verse on the folded paper plate

## Materials

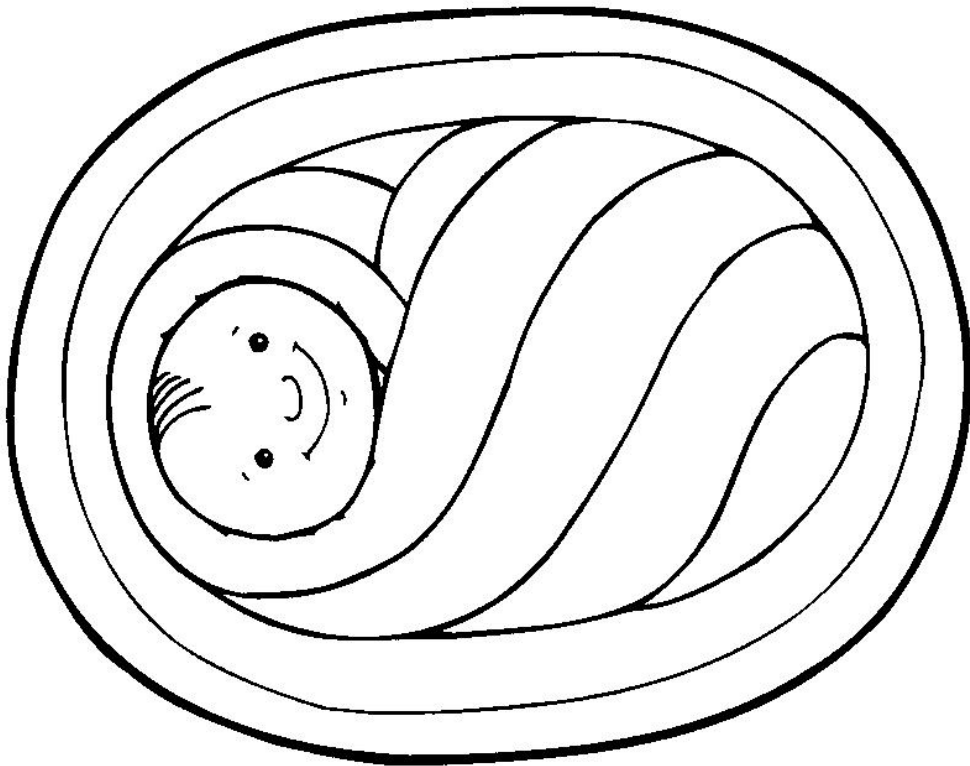
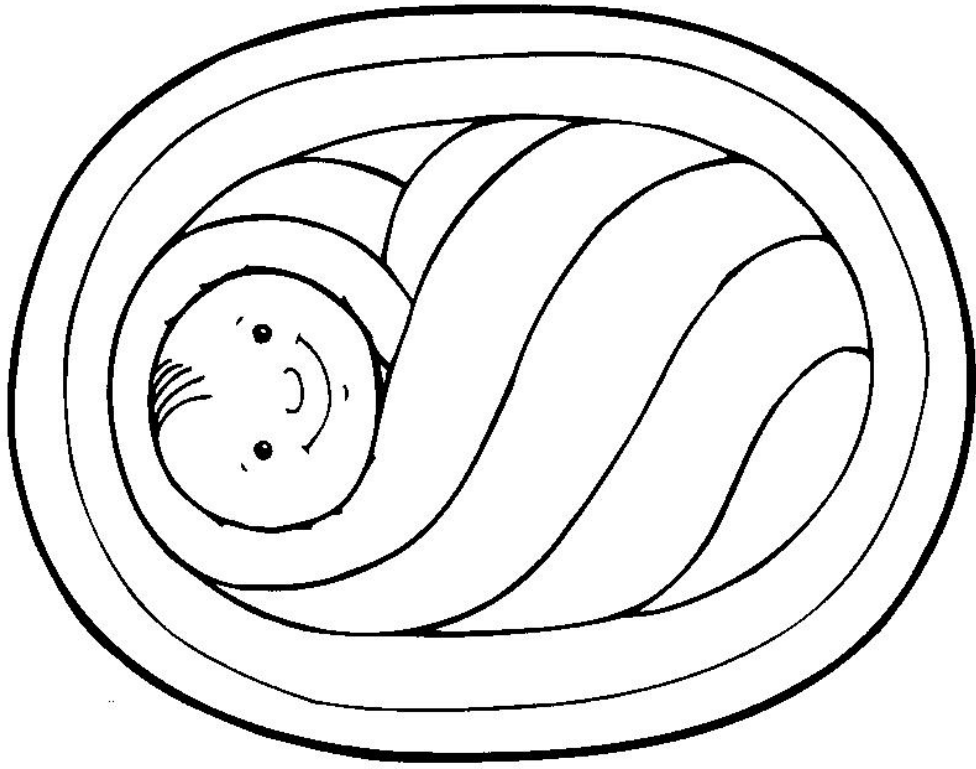
- Copies of the master
- 2 paper plates (6" in diameter) per child
- stapler
- crayons
- scissors
- hole punch
- ribbon or yarn

## Instructions

1. Help students staple the pre-folded paper plate with the verse on top of another paper plate. This will create a pocket.
2. Have the students color the stapled plates to look like the sun.
3. Have the students color and cut out their baby Jesus.
4. Have the students place their baby Jesus into the pocket of their sun plate.
5. Punch a hole at the top and attach string.

## Faith Connections

***Luke 1:78-79...the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.*** As the children are making their craft have them share why John's birth was bringing so much joy. Have them tell you how John would be used by God to prepare people for Jesus. Also, discuss with the children the importance of Jesus' birth. Focus on the salvation He brings and the gift that God gave us by sending His Son. If time permits have the children recite their memory verse with one another and share why Jesus' birth is important to them.



## Lesson 2

**Title:** Advent – Mary exalts in the salvation of the Lord

**Text:** Luke 1:26-56 (especially 46-56)

**Theme:** Mary magnifies the Lord for His mercies in exalting her and helping Israel in accordance with His covenant.

**Teaching Objectives:** By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to tell in what special way God favored Mary.
2. Be able to tell what the angel said about the child she would soon bare.
3. Be able to tell for what two things Mary especially praised God.
4. Offer full-throated praise to God for sending His Son to be our Savior.

**Memory Verse:** *Luke 1:49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name.*

### Teacher Direction:

1. In this unit we are looking at the exaltations of Zacharias, Mary, Simeon and Anna. All of these lived in a very dark time for the people of Israel. Though they lived in their land they were oppressed by the Romans, and had not heard from God for nearly 400 years. Yet, they clung to the hope that one day God's light would break through.

In last week's lesson we looked at the exaltation of Zacharias. With the birth of his son, miraculous in itself, Zacharias knew that God was entering into history to fulfill His glorious promises. Zacharias' son would be the forerunner to the Messiah. These were indeed joyful days.

In today's lesson we shall look at the exaltation of Mary. Though a humble woman of no extraordinary rank, God chose her to bear the Son who would fulfill God's promises of deliverance which He had given to Abraham and the fathers. So overwhelmed by God's favor was Mary by this privilege, that she burst out in song. It is hoped that the children will come to understand some of the joy that comes in knowing God sent His Son to deliver us.

### 2. Introduction

To introduce this lesson encourage the children to imagine the following situation: You are a young child, in about second grade, living in an average American city. Your family is not very well to do. Your dad works hard, but doesn't earn a large sum of money. There is nothing exceptionally special about you. You do fine in school and are average in a couple of sports, but your life is generally pretty average.

Then one day, someone comes to the door. He is from the office of the President. This person tells you that you have been chosen to do a very important job for the President. Though there are millions of people in the United States you have been chosen to do the job.

After sharing this situation ask the children how they would feel about their being chosen by the President for a very important job. Help the children see that they would be honored, but perhaps feel unworthy of such a privilege. Certainly joy would be one of the emotions they would feel.

Finally, tell the children that in today's story, a certain woman is chosen to do a very important job though she would have never considered herself worthy of such a job. Encourage the children to listen well in order to find out what this job was and how this woman reacted to being chosen for it.

### **3. Bible Story**

As you present the story found in Luke 1:26-56, be sure to emphasize the following points:

A. Mary's Surprise – Mary was a young lady (some suggest even a teen) who was betrothed to Joseph. She looked forward to the day her union to Joseph would be made complete with a marriage ceremony, and consummated through the sexual act. All of this was still future for Mary, who was said to be a virgin. She lived in the town of Nazareth, a town held in scorn by strict Jews. All in all she was quite an average girl, growing up in a time when her own people were oppressed by the Romans.

When she was visited by Gabriel she was stunned. Why was this angel calling her “favored one”? She was very average. Why had she been chosen to bear this special child? How could she have a child anyway, since she was a virgin? (You may wish to avoid explaining what a virgin is by telling the children she was not yet fully married.) Throughout this encounter with Gabriel, Mary is amazed that this is being said to her and about her. Note: Help children understand the sense of surprise and wonder Mary felt.

B. Mary's Son – It was one thing to be a virgin and to be told you were going to have a son. That would be amazing enough. But when Mary was told who that Son was going to be, she was even more amazed. He would be great, being called the Son of the Most High. He would have the throne of His father, David. He would reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom would never end. Mary was well aware that the things Gabriel said about her Son were direct fulfillment of God's promise to David (2 Samuel 7). She knew that God had chosen her to bear the Son of the Most High. Again she wondered why she would be chosen for such an honored role.

C. Mary's Exaltation – When Mary entered Elizabeth's home, her voice caused the unborn John to leap in Elizabeth's womb, and caused Elizabeth to be filled with the Spirit. Filled by God's Spirit, Elizabeth spoke words of blessing to Mary and her child. Upon experiencing such a greeting, Mary could contain herself no longer. She burst out in song.

Mary exalts or glorifies the Lord for His mercies to herself (vs. 46-49). She, though in humble state, was being honored by the Lord and would be considered blessed throughout all generations. She also exalted God for His mercies to all who fear Him, lifting them up while bringing down those who oppress them. She especially gives thanks to God for His mercies to Israel. This coming Messiah, her child, in fulfillment of promises made to Abraham, would bring about the deliverance that Israel most desperately needed. She indeed had much for which to rejoice in the Lord.

### **4. Application**

We all have reason for full-throated praise to God. Though living in darkness because we had rebelled against our Father, we were rescued through the birth of this special child. Jesus' miraculous entrance into the world was “light” come into the world. He would die for our sins, providing for us the forgiveness of sins, and would live in us through the Holy Spirit, providing for us power over sin and its tragic consequences. When we begin to see the birth of Christ in terms of such deliverance, we will not be able to restrain our voices, and will peel out with praise just as Mary did.

### **5. Review Questions**

Whose visit was a big surprise for Mary one day? (The angel, Gabriel)

What did Gabriel tell Mary that greatly surprised her? (He said that God had highly favored her. She would bare a very special child.)

What did the angel say about this child? (He would be the Son of the Most High God. He would sit on David's throne. He would reign forever over Jacob. His kingdom would never end.)

How did Mary react to all the angel told her? (She was humbled, but very ready to receive what the Lord had planned for her.)

What happened when Mary visited Elizabeth? (At the sound of Mary's voice Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and her baby, John, leaped in the womb for joy.)

For what things did Mary show her thankfulness in her song? (She praised God for highly favoring her, and for being merciful and faithful to her people – Israel.)

What reason does the birth of Christ give us to exalt in or praise God? (Though in the darkness of our sin, God loved us so much to send His light and life in the person of His Son. This is reason for great gladness.)

# Angel Doll

## Tips for Teachers

- Make copies of the master –angel's arms
- Pre-cut lace for the angel's neck
- Pre-cut some yarn for the angel's hair
- To save time you may want to...
  - Cut out the angel wings
  - Cut off the bottom of the paper bags
  - Draw the faces on the Styrofoam balls.

## Materials

- lunch bags
- scissors
- copies of angel's arms
- Styrofoam balls
- yarn
- glue
- fine-line markers
- lace
- crayons

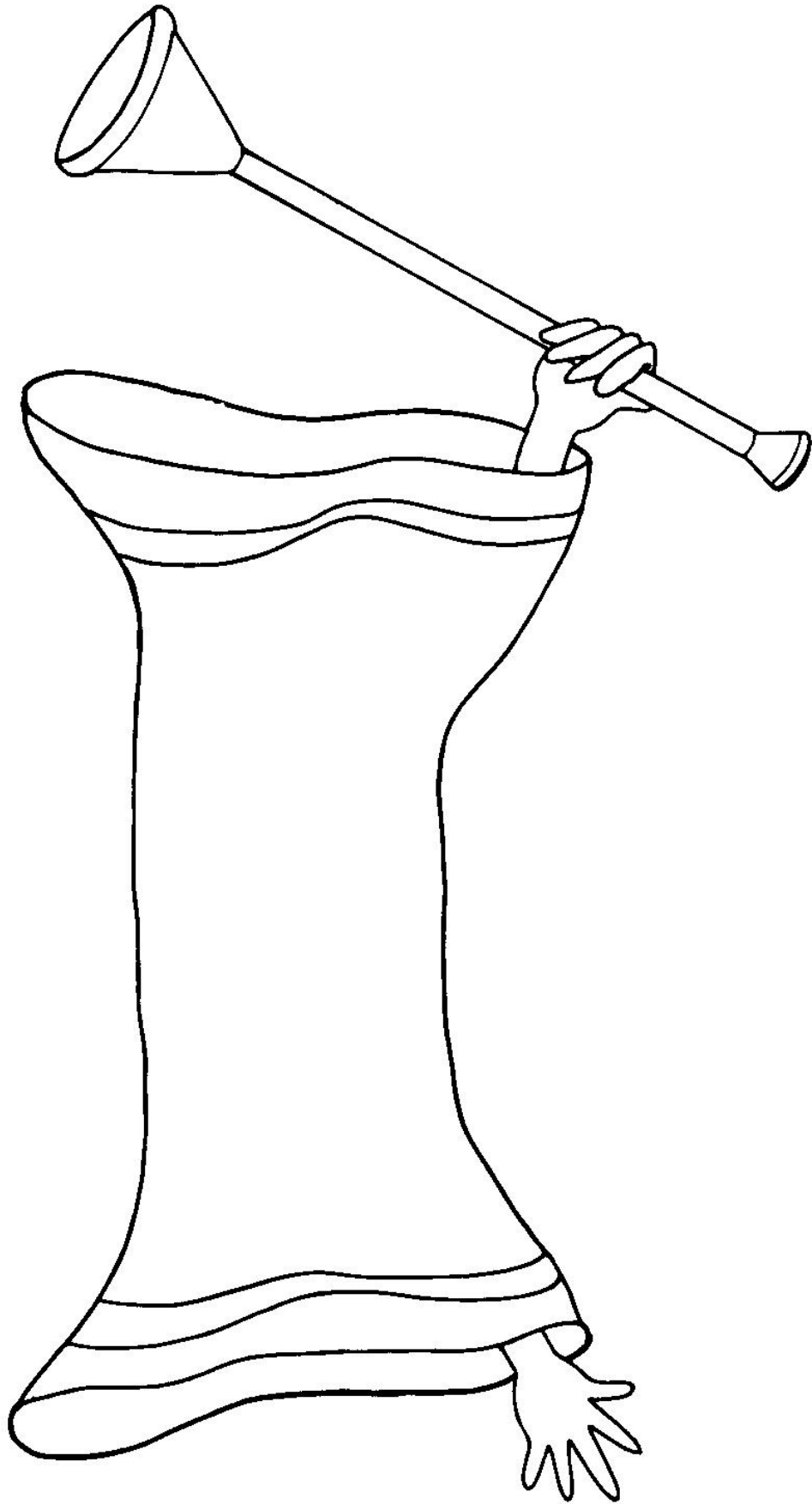


## Instructions

1. Remove the bottom rectangular piece from the flattened bag by cutting through all layers at the fold line.
2. Open the bag and twist the cut end to form the body of the angel. Tie with yarn
3. Color and cut out the arms pattern and glue it to the back of the bag.
4. Draw a face on the Styrofoam ball.
5. Glue yarn on the ball to make hair.
6. Glue the Styrofoam head to the paper bag body.
7. Glue lace around the neck of the angel.

## Faith Connections

**Luke 1:49... for the Mighty One has done great things for me – holy is his name.** Discuss with the children the importance of the angel coming to Mary. Have them retell the story of the angel visiting Mary by using their angel as a puppet. Then focus the children on Mary's response of praising God. Have the children tell you things in their lives that they can praise God for. Then remind them that the greatest thing we can praise Him for is the gift of His Son.



### Lesson 3

**Title:** Advent –Simeon and Anna exalt in the coming of the Lord.

**Text:** Luke 2:1-7, 21-38

**Theme:** Simeon and Anna give thanks for the child who would be salvation and redemption not only to the Jews, but also the Gentiles.

**Teaching Objectives:** By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to share what was unexpected about Jesus, the Messiah's birth.
2. Tell in simple words what Simeon and Anna said about the baby, Jesus.
3. Rejoice in the coming of Jesus, God's Light to a dark world.
4. Share with others (like Anna) the coming of God's Son to bring deliverance.

**Memory Verse: *Isaiah 60:1*** "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you."

#### Teacher Direction:

1. In this unit we have been looking at various people in the book of Luke who rejoiced greatly at the coming of Jesus. In our first lesson we looked at Zacharias, to whom John, the Baptist, was born. Zacharias learned that his son was to be the forerunner of the Messiah. When Zacharias' tongue was loosed he offered great praise to God for His faithfulness to His promises. God was again breaking into history on behalf of His people. In our second lesson we saw Mary's response to the announcement that she would give birth to the Messiah; to the One who would sit forever on the throne of David. Mary found herself unable to contain herself as she shouted out praise to God for His mercies to her and to her people, Israel.

In this lesson we shall look at two others who gave great praise to God for the coming of Messiah. Upon seeing Jesus in the temple, Simeon and Anna, both praised God, proclaiming some amazing things about this newly born child. This One, though born in a stable suited for animals and placed in a manger, was a light to the Gentiles and glory to Israel. He was God's promised redemption. As children hear this account, it is hoped that they, too, will praise God for sending His Light, and for being true to all His promises.

#### 2. Introduction

To introduce this lesson ask the children if they have ever had to wait a long time for some encouraging news. Perhaps they had a sick grandfather and had to wait many days or even years before hearing news that he was recovering. Perhaps someone in their family was in an accident and they had to wait for what seemed to be long hours before hearing that all was well. Perhaps they heard about a disaster in another part of the country (i.e.: hurricane or tornado) where other family members live, and they had to wait many days before finding out that everyone was safe and secure. Allow the children to share their stories.

Next, ask the children, how one might feel both while waiting for good news, and then after the good news is heard. Help the children see that those waiting for the good news may be anxious, or may even grow weary, while those who receive good news instantly are full of great joy.

Finally, tell the children that in today's story, we will learn of two people who waited for many years for a certain bit of good news. Encourage them to listen well to find out what this good news was, and how these two people responded when they finally received it.

### **3. Bible Story**

As you present the text for today's lesson, be sure to emphasize the following ideas:

A. The Hoped-for Messiah is born – In the first lesson of this unit John is born whose role it was to prepare the way for Messiah. His birth signaled that God was about to do something great. In the second lesson, Mary is told about the role she would play. She would give birth to the One who would sit on David's throne and reign forever. With these two events the author builds anticipation for this birth. Yet, when Christ is born we see numerous contrasts. He is indeed born in the city of David, Bethlehem, thanks to a timely census. This points to His royal lineage. Yet, there are a number of things that seem too humble for a king. Jesus is born in some sort of dwelling suitable for animals and placed in a manger because there was no room for Him in the Inn. When his parents offer sacrifice, they offer turtledoves or pigeons, the usual offering of those of meager means. These seem out of sync with what we would expect for a king, especially, the King of Kings.

B. The Hopeful remnant described – This passage describes one man and one woman, both probably very old, (we know only of the woman's age) and both faithfully awaiting God's redemption. Simeon is described as righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, that is, he was awaiting the coming of Messiah who would end Israel's time of alienation and suffering. He had been informed by the Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the One who would bring comfort to Israel. Thus, he knew the time was near. Anna is described as a prophetess, a widow, 84 years old, who worshipped day and night in the temple, fasting and praying. She was one among perhaps a small group who looked forward to "the redemption of Jerusalem". Note: Help children see how remarkable their faithfulness was. God had been silent for 400 years. The people were living in bondage to the Romans. Yet, these two and perhaps a small remnant were eagerly and faithfully waiting for God to fulfill what He had promised.

C. The Hopeful message is proclaimed – Simeon is first to exalt in this newborn child. He begins by praising God for keeping His promise in allowing him to see the salvation of Lord. He calls this child "a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel". These are remarkable things to be saying about a child born in such humble circumstances. He next blesses Joseph and Mary. In his blessing he states that Jesus would cause the rise and fall of many (perhaps referring to their being brought to repentance and then to new life, or possibly to judgment on the proud and exaltation of the humble). He says that this child will be a sign (perhaps a convicting sign) that will cause some to speak against Him, and will cause His own mother to be pierced to the heart. Again these are amazing things to be saying about a newborn babe. Finally, Anna speaks giving thanks to God and speaking about this child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. Note: Help the children see how remarkable it is for such things to be said about a child born in a manger. Remind the children, though, that such statements were worthy of this remarkable child, who truly was God's Son.

### **4. Application**

A. The birth of this child, though in humble circumstances, stands as one of the greatest events in all of history. God was breaking into history to fulfill his promises to bring deliverance to a people that was in great bondage. This Child would live a perfect life, then offer Himself on a Roman cross, so that those who were enslaved to sin might be forgiven, and given the power to truly live. For all of this, we must rejoice this season. Our Light has come into the world. Praise be to God.

B. As Anna went and shared this good news with others who looked for this day, so should we find others that we might encourage them with this truly good news.

C. Optional activity: Compose your own exaltation to the newborn child. Review the past three stories for ideas of what to put in your statement of praise.

## **5. Review Questions**

What is unusual about the birth of Jesus, the King and Messiah? (Though born in the royal city of Bethlehem, Jesus was born in a stable and placed in a manger. His family was poor as well. We would not expect this to be the circumstances of a king.)

What two people offered praise to God in this story? (Simeon and Anna)

What do we know about Simeon? (He was a righteous and devout man who was waiting for Messiah to come and to bring consolation to Israel.)

What had the Spirit told Simeon that must have encouraged him? (He would not die until he had seen Messiah.)

What do we know of Anna? (She was a widow, 84 years old, who devoted herself to fasting and prayer as she awaited the redemption of Israel.)

What did Simeon and Anna say about this newborn babe? (Simeon said he was God's salvation; a light to the Gentiles and glory to Israel. He would have major impact in many people's lives. Anna spoke of Him as the redemption of Jerusalem.)

Why is it remarkable that such things would be said of this baby? (We would not expect such things to be said of one born in such humble circumstances.)

Will you offer praise to God for sending us Jesus, and will you tell others of this great news?

# Stand Up Nativity

## *Tips for Teachers*

- Make copies of the master – nativity figures
- Collect and cut paper towel tubes into  $\frac{3}{4}$ " high rings. There will need to be 6 rings per child.

## *Materials*

- paper towel tubes
- copies of the nativity figures
- crayons
- scissors
- glue

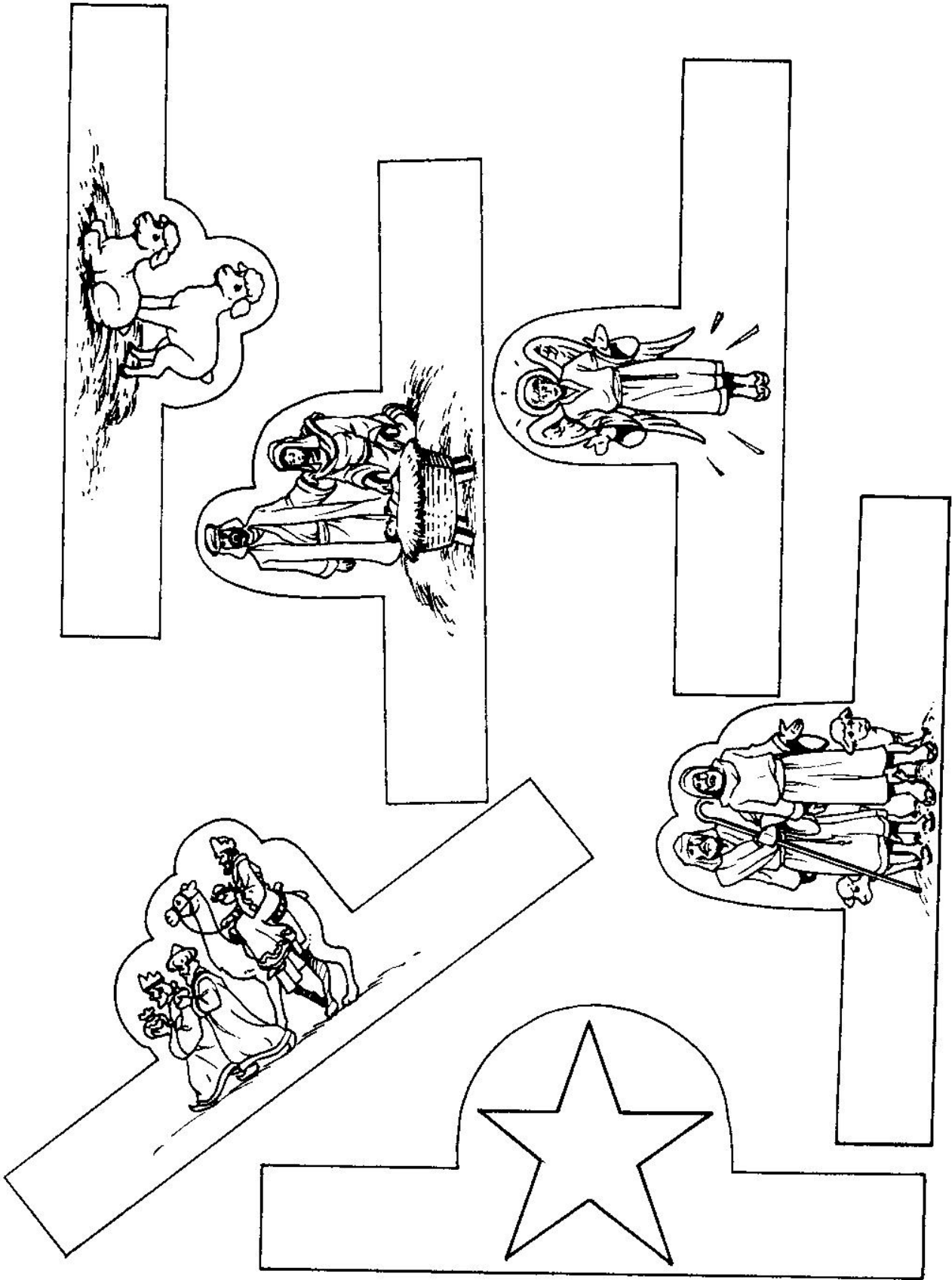
## *Instructions*

1. Have the children color and cut out each of the nativity figures.
2. Glue each figure to a paper towel ring.

## *Faith*

## *Connections*

***Isaiah 60:1 " Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.*** Since this activity does not take much time, it is a great opportunity to have the children use their nativities to tell the Christmas story. You might want to remind them about their previous advent lessons of John's birth, and the angel coming to Mary. Have the children include these as part of their story. Remind the children that they should be like Simeon and Anna; exalting this newborn child, giving praise to God for this gift of His Son, and share this good news with everyone. Have the children share how they can be like Simeon and Anna.



**Children's Church Grades 1- 3**

**Year 1 Curriculum - January**

**Theme: Christian Character**

**Lesson 1    Contentment**

**Lesson 2    Gratefulness**

**Lesson 3    Forgiveness**

**Suggested songs related to the theme:**

**Lesson 1: Contentment**

*Fruit of the Spirit, The  
He Has made Me Glad  
Jesus, I'm Trusting You  
Seek Ye First*

**Lesson 2: Gratefulness**

*God's Grace  
God is so Good  
Sing, Shout, Clap  
Sing to the Father  
This is the Day*

**Lesson 3: Forgiveness**

*I Can Do Everything  
Lord Be Glorified  
Walk Like Jesus*

**Also choose assorted general worship songs.**

## Children's Church Grades 1-3

### Year 1 Curriculum - January

#### Lesson 1

**Title:** Christian Character - Contentment

**Text:** Acts 16:16-34

**Theme:** Contentment is being happy with the way God has chosen to provide for you.

**Teaching Objectives:** By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to give a brief definition of contentment.
2. Be able to recite the memory verse.
3. Give examples of contentment from his life as well as the lives of others.
4. Thank God for his good care, confessing any lack of contentment.

**Memory Verse:** *1 Timothy 6:8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.*

#### Teacher Direction:

1. In teaching lessons on Christian character it is important to remember where such character comes from. True character flows from the life of God within us; it does not come from human effort. Thus a lesson on character can be used to call the unsaved child to Christ as the source of all character (which they are presently not living out), or to call the saved child to greater dependence on Christ to see these traits developed more fully. **Avoid teaching this as a moralistic lesson apart from Christ.**

#### 2. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by asking children if they know what the word "contentment" means. Help children understand that contentment is being happy with the things God chooses to give us. Encourage children to memorize this definition.

To illustrate contentment you might call two children to the front of the room. Give one child 1 piece of candy and give the other child 5-10 pieces of candy. Then discuss with the child who received one piece how he feels. Most likely he will not be experiencing contentment. Then let the children know that contentment is being happy with what God has chosen to give them. Just as neither of the children deserved any treat, but received a treat from the goodness of the teacher, so God gives as He desires what is in no way deserved. We ought to be content with what God in His goodness gives.

Finally ask children if they can share examples from their lives or the lives of others that show discontent or contentment.

#### 3. Bible Story

First share with the children the events recorded in 16:16-24. As you tell this part of the story emphasize that Paul and Silas are doing exactly what God wants them to do. In fact God had directed Paul to this land (16:9). Nonetheless God has allowed some very difficult things to occur. Relate the suffering that Paul and Silas went through.

Having related the suffering ask children the following questions: How would you have reacted to being treated as Paul and Silas were? Would you still be content? What are some of the reasons

Paul and Silas could have used to not be content in this situation? How do you think they will react?

Finally share the second half of the story recorded in 16:25-34. Emphasize how Paul and Silas showed their contentment in their singing and praising God amidst their suffering. Also point out how God greatly used their contentment to bring the jailer and his family to Christ.

Having related this part of the story, ask children why Paul and Silas were content even in such difficulty. Help the children see that they truly believed they were doing God's will and that He was in control. They knew God would give them exactly what they needed and that He would be glorified in the end. They also had Christ living in them and knew He was really the greatest possession anyone could ever have.

#### **4. Application**

Help children see that in whatever situation we find ourselves we should be happy with what God chooses to give us. Our contentment shows we believe in His goodness and can result in God's name be glorified. It also shows that we believe that in having Christ we have all we need.

Encourage children to confess their lack of contentment and to give thanks to God for all they have.

#### **5. Review Questions**

What is contentment? (Being happy with what God chooses to give us.)

What reasons could Paul and Silas have had not to be content? (They were badly mistreated while doing the will of God.)

How did Paul and Silas show their contentment? (While in prison they praised God.)

Why were Paul and Silas content? (They believed in God's goodness and knew God worked all things out for their good. They had Christ and needed little else.)

Are you content? Are there areas of your life where you are not satisfied with what God has given?

# Needs vs. Extras

## Tips for Teachers

- Cut out various pictures from old magazines of basic needs and extra things. (ex. food, vs. sports car)
- Prepare a piece of large construction paper with the following:
  - Separate into 2 sections by labeling at the top (Needs, Extras)
  - Write the memory verse at the bottom

## Materials

- Magazine cut outs
- Construction paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Old Magazines

## Instructions

1. Review with the students the difference between needs and extras.
2. Give each student a handful of cut outs and have them glue them in to the appropriate category.
3. If time permits allow students to cut out their own clippings from the magazines to add to their paper.

## Faith Connections

**1 Timothy 6:8: *But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.*** As the students are working, have them explain in their own words why God gives us extras. You might even want to get into a discussion about what would be extra to a child in another country. Then talk about how we would get along without each extra. Example: "No car – then we'd walk." It is important that you keep the focus on "extra" as God's blessings because He loves us, rather than the "extra" being our wants.

## Lesson 2

**Title:** Christian Character - Gratefulness

**Text:** Luke 17:11-19

**Theme:** A grateful person is one who is aware of God's provision of all things.

**Teaching Objectives:** By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to give a brief definition of gratefulness.
2. Be able to recite the memory verse.
3. Repent of pride which neglects the true source of all blessings or considers blessings a personal right.
4. Sincerely give thanks to God for each of His blessings.

**Memory Verse:** *1 Thessalonians 5:18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

### Teacher Direction:

1. In teaching lessons on Christian character it is important to remember where such character comes from. True character flows from the life of God within us; it does not come from human effort. Thus a lesson on character can be used to call the unsaved child to Christ as the source of all character (which they are presently not living out), or to call the saved child to greater dependence on Christ to see these traits developed more fully. **Avoid teaching this as a moralistic lesson apart from Christ.**

### 2. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by handing several children a piece of candy. (You may wish to give something to each child in attendance.) As you hand out this treat take note of how many children thank you. Discuss your findings with the children.

Next ask the children the following questions: How many of you thanked your parents this morning for the food they gave you? For the clothes you wore? For the warmth in your house? For the ride to school? How many of you thanked God for the air you breath? For the use of your arms, legs, and hands? For the health you enjoy today?

Next ask children why many of us do not thank God and others for the things they provide for us. Help children see that many are ungrateful because of pride. They either think they deserve what they are getting or that they are responsible for getting it themselves. Help children see that gratefulness is seeing things as they really are and then showing appreciation for what God and others provide for us. Use this as a working definition.

### 3. Bible Story

As you relate the story found in Luke 17:11-19 make sure you emphasize how helpless these lepers are. They had been struck with a deadly disease which had no cure. This disease caused them to live a sad and isolated existence. Help children see how desperate their situation was. All they really could do is cry out for mercy.

Next focus on Jesus Christ and how grand and glorious He is. Though veiled in human flesh, He was indeed God incarnate. In His hands were life and death and He was the one who sustains all who live. Help children see that it is this One who commanded the lepers to go to the priest. (Note: the priest needed to verify that they were healed so that they could reenter society again.)

Next relate the response of the 10 lepers. Though 10 were healed only one came back to give glory to God. The nine got caught up in the healing and forgot the one who was responsible for it. Only one immediately returned to Christ and acknowledged the giver of this gift. Help children see how pleased Jesus was with this response.

#### **4. Application**

Help children to see that we are like those lepers. We have no real capacity to provide anything for ourselves. Everything we have is a gift from God, though God funnels many gifts through our parents.

Encourage children to repent of ingratitude, of taking for granted God's generosity. Urge them to take time daily to thank God for His gifts and to give thanks to those God uses to provide us with those gifts.

#### **5. Review Questions**

What is gratefulness? It is showing appreciation especially to God for providing us with all we have.

Why aren't we grateful? We think we provide what we have or that we deserve what we have.

Why did only one leper return to Christ to give thanks? The others got caught up with the healing. This one leper wanted God to receive glory for what He had done. The one leper knew God had aided a helpless one.

How are contentment and gratefulness related? Contentment is being happy with what God has chosen to give us. Gratefulness is showing appreciation for those things. Both show we see God as the giver of all gifts.

# Journal of Gratefulness

## Tips for Teachers

Prepare the journals ahead of time:

- Copy the masters and cut them in half so that each child will have 8 sheets of paper in their journal
- Fold a piece of construction paper around the half sheets of paper to be the cover. Title it "A Journal of Gratefulness"
- Hole punch the side twice
- Pre cut some yarn that the students can use to tie their journal together.

## Materials

Copies of master

Construction paper

Yarn

Pencils

Crayons

## Instructions

1. Pass out the journals to the students.
2. Have them color the cover and string the yarn through the holes to bind the journal.
3. Have the students read through each page and try to list at least 5 people for each page.

## Faith Connections

**1 Thessalonians 5:18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.** This journal is to help the students see all the people God has blessed them with. It is also to help them remember to thank those very important people. Allow the children to share some examples about how people in their lives have helped them. Remember to make sure their gratefulness goes to God first. The ultimate goal of the lesson is to put the memory verse into practice.

**Who are the ones who have prayed for you in the past?**

**Who are the ones who have taught you what you know?**

Jan., lesson 2

**Who are the ones who have helped members of your family?**

**Who are the ones who have been an example to you?**

Jan., lesson 2

**Who are the ones who have corrected you in the past?**

**Who are the ones who have taught you special skills?**

**Who are the ones who have given you things?**

**Give thanks  
in all  
circumstances,**

for this is  
God's will  
for you  
in  
Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

## Lesson 3

**Title:** Christian Character - Forgiveness

**Text:** Luke 23:32-49 (compare with Matthew 27:26-54)

**Theme:** When we forgive we model the character of our crucified Lord.

**Teaching Objectives:** By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to relate what Christ suffered because of our sin.
2. Seek the forgiveness of those they have wronged (including restitution if necessary).
3. Be able to forgive all those who have wronged them.
4. Seek the Lord's forgiveness for their sins as well as the new life He came to give.

**Memory Verse:** ***Ephesians 4:32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

### Teacher Direction:

1. In teaching lessons on Christian character it is important to remember where such character comes from. True character flows from the life of God within us; it does not come from human effort. Thus a lesson on character can be used to call the unsaved child to Christ as the source of all character (which they are presently not living out), or to call the saved child to greater dependence on Christ to see these traits developed more fully. **Avoid teaching this as a moralistic lesson apart from Christ.**

### 2. Introduction

You may wish to introduce this lesson with a demonstration. Have one child kneel on one side of the room. Have another child stand on the other side. (A distance of 8-10 is adequate). Give strips of paper to the child who is standing. Have that child crush the strips into paper balls. Then have him toss the paper wads at the other child. Every time a wad hits the child who is kneeling, have him take the wad, uncrumble it, and tack it to the wall as a reminder how many times he was hit.

Explain to the children that this demonstration shows what an unforgiving person is like. Every time someone hurts them they put up a reminder in their minds and seek revenge. Note: There is actually a tribe in our world where the people attach strips of cloth to their houses to remind them every time another tribe harms them in any way. These strips remain until the people feel they have avenged themselves. These people live with much hatred in their hearts.

Next allow children to share ways others have hurt them and how they have tried to deal with the hurt. Did they hang up a reminder in their minds and try to get back at the person or did they do something else?

Finally, tell children that you are going to tell them a story (a very familiar story) that will show them a better way to live and deal with the hurts of others that will inevitably come.

### 3. Bible Story

As you prepare for the Bible story read through the accounts listed above to get a more detailed understanding.

Begin by laying out the "hurts" that our Lord suffered before and during His crucifixion. Note how he was scourged, stripped, made to wear a crown of thorns, beaten with reeds, mocked, made to bear a heavy cross, pierced through with nails in His hands and feet, and made to hang on a cross gasping for each breath. Beyond these tremendously difficult hurts was the stroke that Jesus bore for our sins. When He cried out to God asking why He was being

forsaken, at that moment He bore the wrath of God for all our sins. This was the most difficult of all the hurts He endured.

Ask children to compare Jesus' hurts to any of theirs. Help them to see how great were the strokes that Jesus bore. Remind the children that they, as all of us, were responsible for putting Jesus on that cross. Then show children the amazing response of Jesus to His hurts. Luke 23:34 encapsulizes this response. He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." Here was the spotless Son of God, bearing the wrath of God for the sin of the world, requesting that His Father forgive them.

#### **4. Application**

The application to this lesson is tri-fold:

First, each of us should seek the Lord for the forgiveness of our sins. We were responsible for putting Christ on a cross. It was our sins that warranted the wrath of God which the Son endured. Encourage children to come to Christ, confessing their sins, laying their lives at the Savior's feet.

Secondly, we must forgive others as Christ forgave us. A sign that we have been forgiven and that Christ lives in us is that we forgive. How can we say Christ lives within us if we do not forgive as He forgives.

Thirdly, if we have wronged someone we must go to them and ask for forgiveness. If restitution is required we should pay for it to show our genuine repentance.

#### **5. Review Questions**

What were the hurts that our Lord suffered? (See the list above in the Bible Story section.)  
Which was the worst hurt? (The wrath of God for our sins.)

Who was responsible for sending Christ to a cross and for causing Him to be forsaken of God? (All sinners which means each of us.)

What was Jesus' amazing response to those that sinned against Him? (He asked His Father to forgive them).

How should we respond when others hurt us? (We should forgive them as Christ forgave us. This shows Christ living in us.) How should we respond when we hurt others? (We should go to them and ask for forgiveness and in every way makes things right.)

Have you gone to God to seek forgiveness and new life?

# Stained Glass Cross Window

## Tips for Teachers

- Cut out the window pattern from the master
- Trace around the pattern on black construction paper and cut it out. (One for each student)
- Cut some different colors of tissue paper into small squares and strips.
- Cut the memory verse master into strips

## Materials

- Window pattern (already cut out of black paper)
- Multi-colored tissue paper
- Glue
- Hole punch
- Yarn
- Memory verse strips

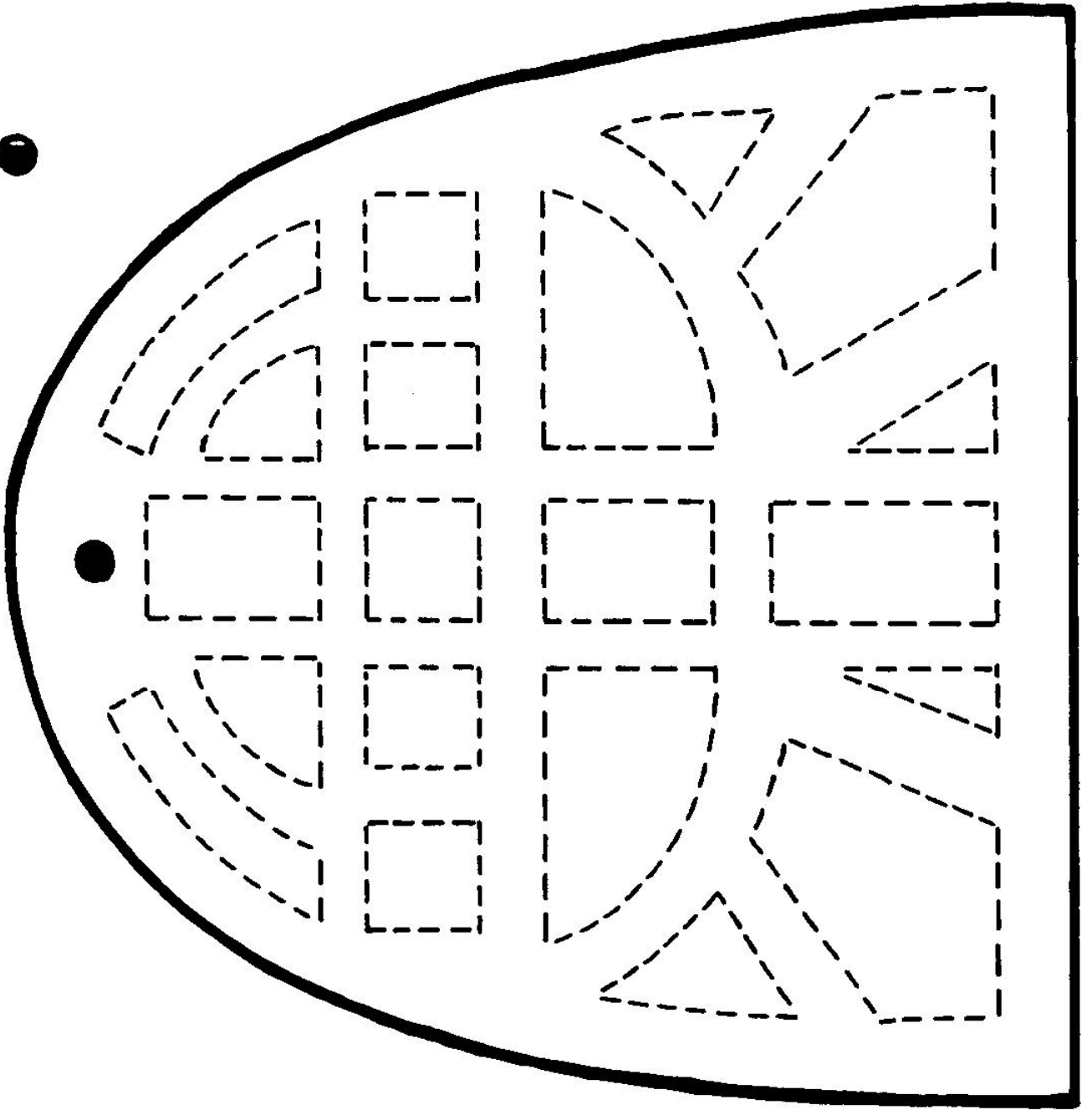
## Instructions

1. Have students glue pieces of tissue paper to cover the holes in the window.
2. Use the same or related colors for all holes that help make up the cross shape.
3. When finished have students turn the window over and glue the memory verse onto the front of the window.
4. Hole punch the top and string some yarn through it.

## Faith Connections

***Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.***

As the students make their windows review the lesson. Have them share the hurts that our Lord suffered on the cross. Remind them that each of us was responsible for Jesus dying on the cross. Then have them share how Jesus responded to those that sinned against Him. Show them how we are supposed to forgive others just as Christ forgave us. Then ask them if there is anything they need to confess to God and seek His forgiveness.



**Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

**- Ephesians 4:32**

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**Children's Church Grades 1- 3**  
**Year 1 Curriculum - February**

**Theme: Attributes of God**

- Lesson 1    Patience**  
**Lesson 2    Grace**  
**Lesson 3    Incomprehensibility**

**Suggested songs related to the theme:**

**Lesson 1: Patience**

*The Fruit of The Spirit*

*Love Is Patient*

*Patience*

**Lesson 2: Grace**

*Amazing Grace!*

*Don't You Know*

*For God So Loved The World*

*I Will Sing of the Mercies*

**Lesson 3: Incomprehensibility**

*Awesome God*

*Mighty Is Our God*

*We Bow Down*

*You Are The King of Glory*

*(a.k.a Hosanna To The Son of David)*

Also choose assorted general worship songs.

**Children's Church Grades 1-3**  
**Year 1 Curriculum - February**

**Lesson 1**

**Title:** Attributes of God - Patience

**Text:** Nehemiah 9:1-31, other OT references

**Theme:** God's patience bears with our sinfulness, holding back the punishment we deserve.

**Teaching Objectives:** By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to give a definition for the attribute of patience.
2. Be able to share several ways God demonstrated His patience to the people of Israel.
3. Thank God for His patience in not dealing with us as our sins deserve (Ps. 103:10).
4. Commit to displaying the patience of God with his neighbor.

**Memory Verse:** *Psalm 86:15 But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*

**Teacher Direction:**

1. During this month we shall look at three aspects of God's character: patience, grace and incomprehensibility. It should be noted that though God cannot be defined by one or even the sum of these attributes, it is still helpful to look at each characteristic and see how we should respond to it. It is indeed true that each aspect of God's character speaks volumes as to how we ought to live as His creatures.

In this first lesson we shall look at the patience of God. According to A.W. Pink, God's patience is "that power of control that God exercises over Himself, causing Him to bear with the wicked and forbear so long in punishing them". This patience is beautifully and abundantly manifested in God's dealing with Israel. In the passage taken from Nehemiah we see God over and over restraining Himself from giving Israel the punishment they truly deserve. It is hoped that the children will come to marvel in God's patience for them, and will seek to emulate that patience in their relationships with others.

**2. Introduction**

To introduce this lesson, ask the children to give you a definition for the word "patience". Be sure the children give you definitions first and not examples of someone being patient. After some discussion tell the children that one way to define patience is "that ability to bear great hurt from others without quickly trying to punish them for their poor treatment of you."

Next ask the children to evaluate each of the following situations in order to tell if the person in the story is being patient or not.

- You are standing in a long line at the grocery store tapping your foot and complaining to those around you that the service is slow. When you get to the front of the line you “chew out” the cashier.
- Your little brother wants to accompany you to the park, but he has to get dressed. You know this is going to take a long time, but you decide to wait for him.
- You disobey your parents, who are deeply hurt by your behavior, but they still treat you with great love. They decide not to punish you this time.
- A smaller boy at school tells some of your friends a lie about you. When you hear about it you get in his face and threaten to beat him up. You also begin spreading some lies about this boy.
- A healthy elderly lady is slow at catching on to her new job. Her boss fires her after only one week on the job.

Finally, tell the children that in today’s story we shall look at the patience of God. Encourage the children to listen well in order to be able to share how God showed His patience to the people of Israel.

### **3. Bible Story**

As you share the account from Nehemiah 9 be sure to emphasize the following points:

A. Background – For her disobedience, Israel was exiled first to Assyria (northern tribes), then to Babylon (southern tribes), but God who is rich in mercy, allowed a remnant to return to Israel. Led by Nehemiah the people returned and, in time, were able to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem even though persecuted greatly in the process. When the walls were finally completed Ezra gathered the people and read the Law. This was a time of great joy and celebration. In the midst of this celebration, the people recommitted themselves to their covenant with God. The prayer found in Nehemiah 9 was part of that time of recommitment.

B. God’s Goodness Given – Over and over in the prayer we see the goodness of God showered on this people. God gave them life (vs. 6). He chose Abraham and entered into covenant with him and his descendants (vs. 7-8). He miraculously delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt and then provided for them while in the wilderness (vs. 9-12). He met with them on Mt. Sinai and entered into covenant with them. Then He continued to provide for them (manna, quails, guidance, protection, growth in numbers,...) while they took possession of the land (vs. 13-25). When oppressed by foreign nations God brought deliverance, always seeking good for this often wayward nation (vs. 26-31).

C. God’s Goodness Spurned – Despite the greatness of God’s goodness, the people responded with rebellion. They became arrogant and stiff-necked, and did not obey God’s commands. They forgot God’s miracles and appointed a leader to take them back to Egypt (vs. 16-17). They formed a golden calf and claimed that this idol brought them out of Egypt (vs. 18). After entering in the land of promise

and blessing, they turned their backs on God's law again. When the prophets came they put them to death, though they were sent for their own good (vs. 26-27). When God delivered them from their oppressors, they soon forgot and went back to their evil ways (vs. 28). All in all, the people of Israel showed themselves very unworthy of all of God's many goodnesses.

D. God's Patience Displayed – Despite Israel's rebellion and stiff-necked behavior, God restrained His anger and withheld the punishment which they most certainly deserved. When the people sought to return to Egypt, and even when the people made a gold calf, God did not desert them. He continued to care for them in an unbelievable fashion (vs. 16-25). When the people had spurned all the blessings of the land, and had even killed the prophets, God still heard their cries for help and answered them (vs. 26-27). When they returned to their evil ways after being delivered from oppressors, and cried out again for deliverance, God still heard their prayers and brought deliverance (vs. 28). Even after the people neglected every warning from God so that God had to exile them, God was still ready to restore them and bring them back into the land (vs. 29-31). God had indeed been a patient God for Israel, withholding the punishment they greatly deserved and bearing with their wickedness.

#### **4. Application**

A. We must praise God for His patience to us as well. He has been so good to us. He has given us life. He has offered to enter into covenant with us. He has sent His Son to die for us. He now offers us forgiveness of sins and His Spirit to help us live for Him. Yet despite all of these blessings, we still can be rebellious and neglectful of God. We accept His many blessings, but do not allow them to make us more grateful. Even when we come to trust Christ for salvation, we still are prone to walk our own way. But praise be to God who is not quick to punish, and who waits patiently for us to repent and come into His blessed fellowship.

B. As Christians we are called to reflect God's character. Reflecting God's patience is a very important way to do this. We must not be quick to retaliate against those who hurt us. When we are working with those younger than us or less able than us, we must bear with them and help them along. We must, as Paul has directed in Colossians 3:12, put on a heart of ...patience.

#### **5. Review Questions**

What is patience? (It is that ability to bear great hurt from others without quickly trying to punish them for their poor treatment of you.)

How did God show His goodness to the people of Israel? (He gave them life, entered into covenant with them, provided for them, protected them, forgave them, gave them a land,...)

How did the people of Israel respond to all of God's goodness? (They were rebellious, stiff-necked and ungrateful. They turned their back on God, killed His prophets, and sought their own will.)

How did God show His patience with the people of Israel? (Although the people rebelled and deserved punishment, God did not desert them. He kept caring for them awaiting their return to Him.)

How has the Lord been patient with each of us? (He has given us life. He has given His Son and provided a way of salvation. Yet we go our own way and neglect Him. Still God does not treat us as our sins deserve. He waits for us, also, to return to Him.)

How can you show patience with others around you? (Answers vary)

# Jesus loves me silhouette

## Tips for Teachers

- Pre-cut some large hearts out of red construction paper
- Write the memory verse on one side of the heart.

## Materials

- Red construction paper hearts
- White paper doilies
- Scissors
- Glue
- White paper
- Yarn
- Markers
- Overhead projector
- Hole punch

## Instructions

1. Tape the white paper to the wall and direct the overhead projector toward the paper.
2. Have the student stand in between the projector and the paper so that their shadow falls on the paper.
3. Then trace the outline of their head with the marker.
4. Have the student cut out their silhouette.
5. Have students glue the doily to the heart on the side without the memory verse.
6. Then glue the silhouette on top of the doily.
7. On the bottom of that side, write "Jesus loves (then add the

## Faith Connections

**Psalm 86:15** *But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.* It is important for the children to see the connection between love and patience. God was so patient with His people that even though they rebelled against Him, He still heard their prayers and delivered them from their enemies. That kind of patience can only come from a great love that God and Jesus have for each one of us. In turn our response should be to show that love and patience toward others.



## Lesson 2

**Title:** Attributes of God - Grace

**Text:** 2 Chronicles 33:1-20, 2 Kings 21:1-18

**Theme:** God's grace is seen in His favor to those who have no positive merit, who are thoroughly ill-deserving and hell-deserving.

**Teaching Objectives:** By God's grace, each child will

1. Give a simple definition of God's grace and tell of what it is the opposite.
2. Tell why Manasseh was so undeserving of God's grace.
3. Share how God's grace was showered on Manasseh.
4. Respond to God's grace with repentance, faith and rejoicing.

**Memory Verse: *Ephesians 2:5*** (God) made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. Note: The word "God" at the beginning of this verse has been supplied from the preceding verse.

### Teacher Direction:

1. In this unit we are looking at several attributes of God. As we said in our last lesson, God cannot be defined by the sum of all these attributes, but we can learn something of our great God by studying them, and what we learn will thrill our hearts.

In the first lesson of this unit we looked at the patience of God. We saw how God continually bore with the wickedness of the people of Israel. Though they performed deeds worthy of instant punishment, God patiently endured and did not desert them. We also saw how this is true of us. We, too, have done deeds worthy of punishment, but God patiently bears with us, always seeking our good. In our application to this lesson we were encouraged to deal patiently with others around us.

In this lesson we shall look at God's grace. Pink defines this as "the favor of God shown to those who have not only no positive deserts of their own, but who are thoroughly ill-deserving and hell-deserving." To illustrate this attribute we shall look at God's dealings with King Manasseh. So wicked was Manasseh that the Bible says he was worse than the nations whom God dispossessed, yet God in his grace granted repentance and restoration to this very wicked man. It is hoped that the children will grow to understand this "much used" word and begin to marvel in their God of grace.

### 2. Introduction

To introduce this lesson perform the following object lesson for the child: Place before the children a vessel containing oil and another vessel containing water. Ask the children what they think will happen when you pour the water into the vessel with the oil. Will it mix with the oil? What will the water do? After listening to

their responses, pour the water into the oil. Give the water a chance to settle, then ask the children to tell you what they see. Help the children to understand that oil and water do not mix. (If you are able to give a brief, scientific explanation why they don't mix, feel free to do so.)

After this demonstration ask the children if they know what the word "grace" means. Allow for discussion. Tell the children that grace is God's unmerited favor; that it is God blessing those who in no way deserve His blessing. Emphasize that God's grace has nothing to do with man's efforts or works or, for that matter, anything that man has to offer. To make this point more clear, refer to the object lesson. Tell the children that just as the oil and water do not mix, so God's grace and man's effort or merit do not mix. What God gives to man by His grace is in no way earned or deserved by man.

Tell the children that in today's story we shall hear of a man who was very wicked, but because of God's grace was able to come to his senses and repent. Encourage the children to listen well and to see how God showed His grace to Manasseh.

### **3. Bible Story**

As you share the Biblical account of Manasseh's life be sure to emphasize the following ideas:

A. God's grace spurned – Manasseh had every reason to be a godly king. His father was Hezekiah who brought about many badly needed religious reforms in Judah. It was said of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:5) that "He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. For he clung to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses." Not only did Manasseh have such a heritage, but it is also believed that he co-reigned with his father for 11 years. Surely, some of Hezekiah's fervor for the Lord should have rubbed off on his son.

Sadly, when Manasseh began his sole reign, he defected greatly from the Lord. Many of the idols or false gods his father had done away with, he re-instituted. He placed altars for Baal all over the land, and placed an image of the Canaanite goddess, Asherah, in the temple. He even sacrificed children to the Ammonite deity, Molech. Those who protested were put to death; this perhaps included a prophet or two. It was said of Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:9) that "he misled ...Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the sons of Israel." Manasseh was indeed a very wicked man deserving nothing but the wrath of God.

B. God's grace discerned – Manasseh's behavior angered the Lord. This can be seen in 2 Kings 21:10-15. Yet the Lord was gracious to use circumstances to call this wicked king to repentance. After sending the prophets on an unsuccessful mission, God sent the Assyrians. They took Manasseh, placed chains on his hands and feet, pushed a hook through his lip (by which they led him), and brought him to Babylon. Manasseh was in great distress, but God had finally

gotten his attention. Confronted with his wickedness and with his inability to offer God anything for his deliverance, he humbled himself and cried out to the Lord. God, in His grace, heard Manasseh's cry for help and brought him back to Jerusalem. Note: Be sure to help the children see that Manasseh had nothing to offer God except his wickedness. His deliverance was all a gift of the God of grace.

C. God's grace restores – When Manasseh returned to the throne in Judah he was a new man. Among the reforms he enacted were the removal of the foreign gods and the idols from the house of God, throwing out the altars he had made on the mountain of the house of God, setting up the altar of the Lord for peace and thank offerings, and calling the people of Judah to serve the Lord God. He had been touched by the unmerited favor of God, and as a result was now moved to serve him. He knew this opportunity to serve was all a gift from God, for he knew his former days had been filled with wickedness.

#### **4. Application**

A. Those who have responded to God's grace should rejoice that He is a God of grace. All of us, like Manasseh, have gone our own way. We have torn down what God has built up and have raised up that which is contrary to God's will. Yet God sought us and found us and has given us forgiveness and new life. For this we ought to be grateful and should give praise to God. We should also seek to live by God's grace each day of our life, so that we use our days to build His kingdom.

B. Those who have never responded to God's grace are being called to repentance and faith. It is foolish to wait until God has to do something drastic to get our attention. God wants us all to come with empty hands, confessing our sin, and asking God to make us clean and new. (Invite children to respond to God in this way if they sense Him speaking to them.)

#### **5. Review Questions**

What is the meaning of the word "grace"? (In our Bible it refers to God blessing those who in no way merit favor.)

What advantages did Manasseh have they should have encouraged him to be a godly king? (His father, Hezekiah, was a very godly king. Manasseh reigned with Hezekiah for 11 years. He should have learned from this example.)

How did Manasseh show his wickedness? (Many of the idols his father tore down, Manasseh built back up. He led the people away from their God.)

How did God show his grace to Manasseh? (God brought difficulty into Manasseh's life. After he repented, God restored him as king.)

How did Manasseh respond to his being captured by the Assyrians? (He cried out to the Lord seeking His mercy and grace.)

How did Manasseh's life change after he received God's grace? (He became a new man. He again tore down the idol's altars, built up the true God's altar, and called the people to serve the Lord God alone.)

Have you received the grace of God? Have you come to Him confessing your sins, asking for forgiveness and new life? Have you given thanks for God's grace in your life?

## The crown of God's grace

### Tips for Teachers

- Copy the master onto cardstock
- Pre-cut the crowns
- Staple the extra strip to one side

### Materials

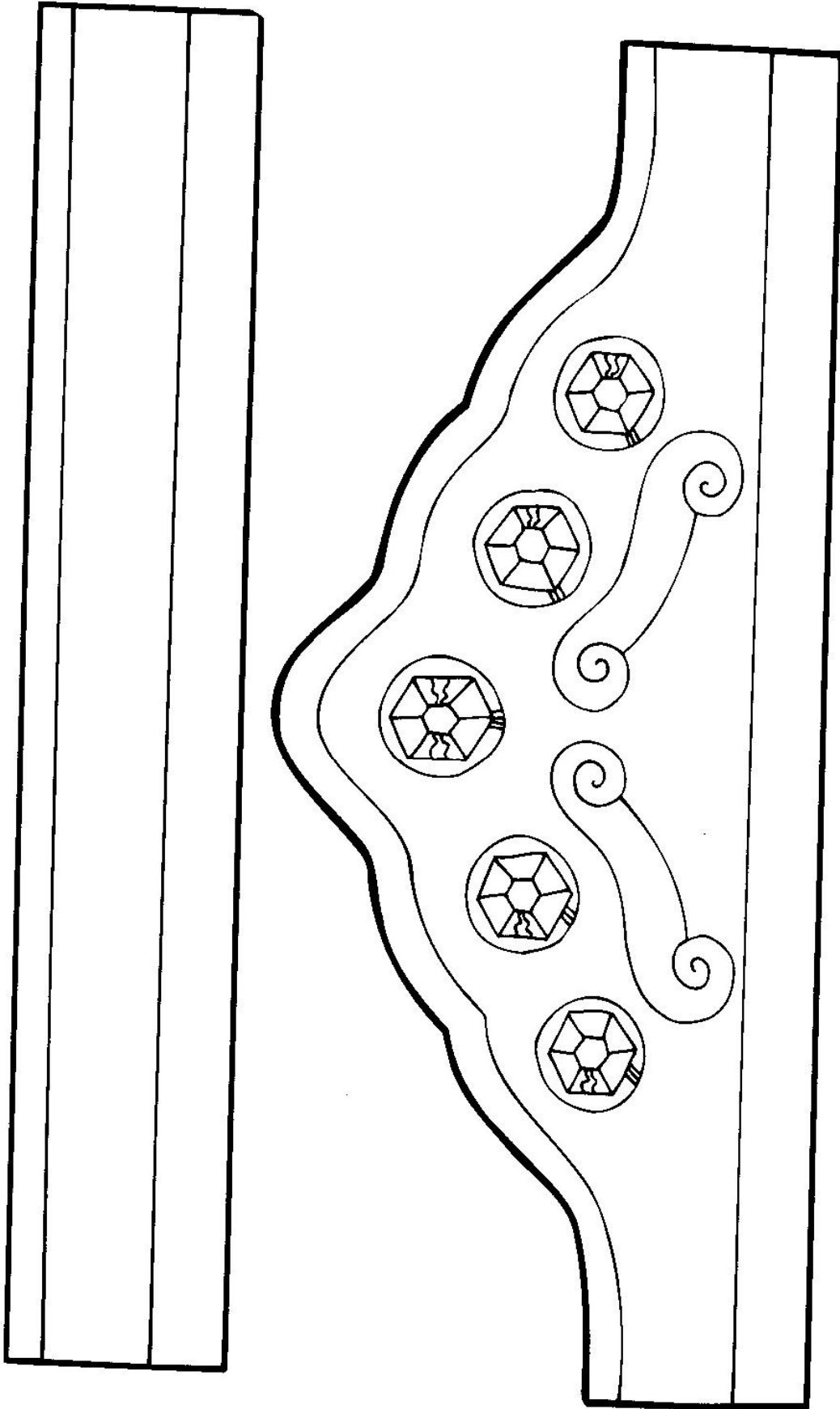
- Crowns
- Crayons
- Sequins, glitter, other embellishments
- Glue
- stapler

### Instructions

1. Have the children decorate the crown with the sequins, glitter, or other embellishments.
2. They may want to draw pictures on the crown of how a good king (one with God's grace) might act.
3. Staple the crown to fit each child's head.

### Faith Connections

***Ephesians 2:5 (God) made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.*** While the students are decorating their crown have them retell the story. Make sure to mention what it was that Manasseh was doing wrong at the beginning of his reign. Then make sure they tell you what it was that got Manasseh's attention. And finally have them tell you how God's grace changed Manasseh and restored him as a king. Remind the children that they are also given God's grace and they need to do what is right in God's eyes.



### **Lesson 3**

**Title:** Attributes of God - Incomprehensibility

**Text:** Job 38:1 – 40:5 (expanded lesson to 42:6)

**Theme:** God's character and ways are so far beyond man's understanding that man's fullest knowledge of God is at best ignorance.

**Teaching Objectives:** By God's grace, each child will

1. Be able to relate the sufferings of Job and the kind of advice his friends gave him.
2. Be able to share several ways God showed Job He was far beyond his understanding.
3. Kneel before God in silence being awed by the greatness and vastness of God who is beyond his understanding.
4. Commit to searching out the greatness of God all his days.

**Memory Verse: Job 11:7** *"Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?"*

#### **Teacher Direction:**

1. In the first lesson of this unit we looked at the patience of God. We marveled at God's patient dealings with the nation of Israel. Even when they deserved great punishment, God still dealt with them tenderly. In the second lesson we looked at God's grace. Again we saw God withholding punishment and giving blessing, this time to the wicked King Manasseh. Though Manasseh was perhaps in the running for being one of Israel's most ungodly kings, God, in His grace, brought him to repentance and restored him to his position as king.

In the final lesson of this unit we shall look at an attribute of God that shows another dimension of His greatness. We have said repeatedly in the first two lessons that God is more than the sum of His attributes. As we study each attribute we do gain a glimpse of who God is, but we only see dimly. Even when we combine each attribute with all the others, God is still more than the sum of these attributes. He is still beyond our knowing Him as He is. This is the focus of the final lesson in this unit. We refer to it as the "incomprehensibility" of God. Perhaps for the children's sake we should talk about God being One who is so great that we could never come to know Him fully. It is hoped that this study will bring the children to awe, and to a lifetime of learning about this God.

#### **2. Introduction**

To introduce the lesson bring an orange to class. Ask for a volunteer, someone who thinks they do very well in school, to come forward and answer a few questions. As you begin questioning the child ask very simple questions, but as

you go on, ask exceedingly more difficult questions. Some sample questions follow.

- What is it that I have in my hand?
- What color is it?
- From where does this fruit come?
- What is the chemical composition of this fruit?
- How is it that this fruit is able to grow an orange skin that is different from the orange inside?
- Why don't bananas grow from the tree this fruit was taken?
- From what tree was this fruit taken? Can you give the location of the tree?
- How is it that the sun helps this fruit to grow on the tree?
- How did oranges start growing from trees in the first place? Who commanded them to do this?

After this demonstration help the children to understand that there are many mysteries surrounding even simple things like a piece of fruit. In fact, even though scientists are learning many things about our world, there are still many, many unknowns.

Tell the children that in today's story we will learn about one thing that will never be fully known because it is far too great for man to fully know. Encourage the children to listen carefully to see if they can find out what that one thing is.

### **3. Bible Story**

As you share the account from the book of Job be sure to emphasize the following points:

A. Background – Job was a righteous man, yet God permitted Satan to put him under severe trial. In fact, in a very short time, Job went from a man who was very blessed (with children, possessions, and health) to a man who had lost everything except his life. When his friends heard about Job's tragedy, they came to counsel him, but their counsel was anything but comforting. Since they were convinced that this calamity came upon Job because of some transgression, their words only frustrated Job and perhaps even made him angry. Toward the end of their dialogue Job defended his integrity and then called on God to answer him, that is, explain why He allowed this trouble to come upon him. These words, certainly spoken out of frustration with his counselors, may have been said in too haughty or insolent a manner. After this statement Job is rebuked by the younger, Elihu, who prepares the way for God Himself to speak.

B. God's' Rebuke – As God enters the conversation he turns the tables on Job. He begins asking Job the questions. He does this in such a way so as to say, "If you are so smart and demand an answer from God, how about teaching God a thing or two." Then God rifles numerous questions at Job: Does he understand how the earth was formed? Can he explain what keeps the seas from

overflowing? Is he able to command the morning? Does he understand death? Light? Darkness? Snow? Hail? The Wind? Thunder? Lightning? Rain? Dew? Ice? Does he have knowledge or control of the stars and constellations? Can he make it rain? Can he provide for the lion as well as the raven? Does he understand the ways of the mountain goat? The deer? Wild donkey? Wild ox? The ostrich? The horse? Has he given them their wisdom or ordained their ways? Has he given understanding to the hawk or commanded the ways of an eagle? Confronted with these many questions for which he has no answer, Job realizes that he has met his match. If he cannot understand how the creation around him operates, how can he understand the God who put all these things in place and continues to keep them going?

C. Job's Response – When God finally finishes His questions, He asks Job to answer him. Job responds (40:4-5) by acknowledging his unworthiness. He places his hand over his mouth as if to say, "I have already said too much. I will say no more. It is best if I become a listener." Later (42:1-6), after a few more questions, Job again acknowledges his foolishness and declares that "he repents in dust and ashes". He takes a humble position before His God who showed Himself to be far more than Job ever imagined. Job was beginning to see just how great His God was and how foolish it is to question His ways.

#### **4. Application**

A. Though it is true we will only know God in part, that is not reason to stop seeking to know Him. In fact, it makes God the only worthy object of such a pursuit. It is wise to give our lives to searching out who God is, for when we do, and when we learn of God, we will find our hearts, minds and souls enlarged. Learning facts about our world may make us "smart", but knowing our God can satisfy our soul.

B. Since God cannot fully be found out, or searched out or known, we ought sit silently before His feet. We ought to learn to come humbly, cautiously, and reverently before God to be taught of Him. He is the One who created all things and keeps them in their places. Surely, He is the One we need to learn from.

#### **5. Review Questions**

What happened to Job that caused him to begin to question God? (God allowed Satan to test him by removing his family, possessions and health. Then some friends suggested that God was punishing him because of some sin.)

Job called God to give reasons why He allowed Job to suffer. How did God respond to this? (He came to Job and told Job to teach Him. He then fired numerous questions at Job.)

What were some of the questions God asked Job? (See 3B above.)

What were the questions supposed to teach Job? (God's person and ways are beyond our human knowledge.)

Did Job learn this lesson? How do you know? (We know he learned the lesson because he shut his mouth and humbled himself before God.)

Can God be fully known? Why or why not? (Though we can learn much about God, we can never fully know Him. He is far too great!)

Are you willing to give your life to getting to know your great God? Are you willing to sit quietly and learn from God through His Word?

## See what God Made Collage

### Tips for Teachers

- Cut cardboard squares about 6"x6" for each child.
- Write at the bottom of each square "See what God made"
- Collect some nature objects that might not be found on the church property.

### Materials

- Cardboard squares
- Glue
- Markers
- Baggies
- Crayons

### Instructions

1. Go on a nature walk and gather small items suitable for gluing to the cardboard.
2. Have the children glue the objects to the cardboard
3. The children may also want to draw things they didn't find on their walk.

### Faith Connections

**Job 11:7 "Can you fathom the mysteries of god? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?"** As the children go on their nature walk and begin to glue the items on to the cardboard, discuss with them where those things came from. Everything on earth comes from God. He created everything. His power and wisdom surpasses all understanding – He is incomprehensible! Try to make the connection with the students that we need to be in awe with the things the Lord has created, and try to learn as much as we can about our Awesome God!

