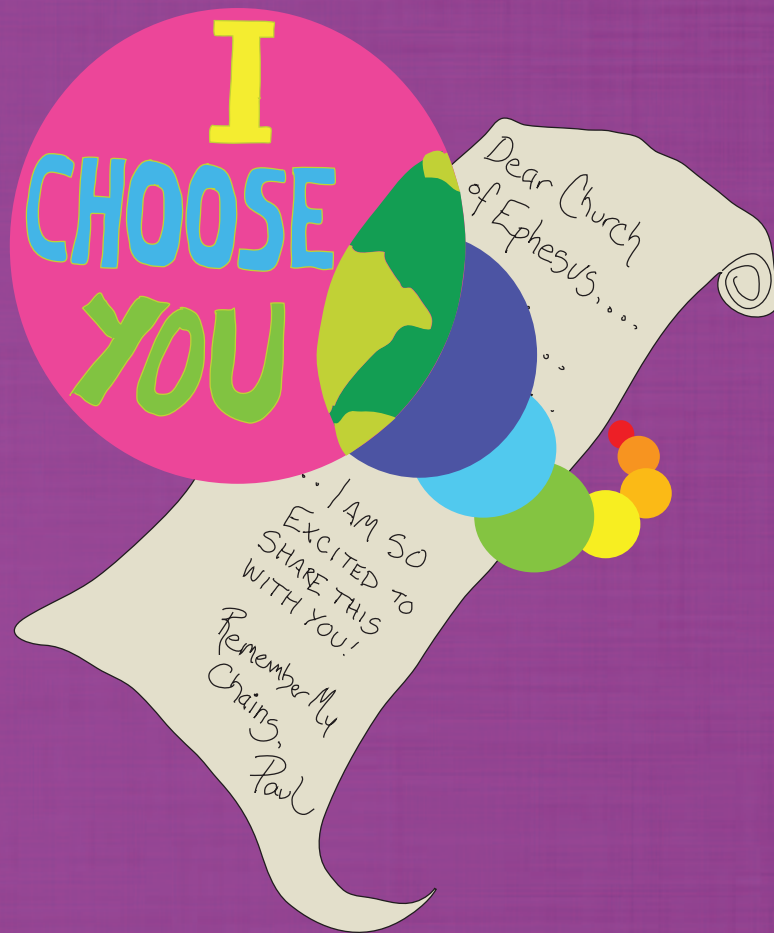


LESSON 63

Chosen before the World Began

EPHESIANS 1:1-14



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD'S SALVATION WAS PLANNED BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

SUPPLIES: blocks or crayons—one per student

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 141)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES: coloring page for NT Lesson 63—one for each child; markers or crayons

Chosen by God

SUPPLIES: • a bag of color-coated chocolate candies, separated by color and placed in baggies; a puppet

Adopted into a Family

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will learn that God's plan of salvation started even before the world was made.

This is a complicated passage for preschool children to understand and will need to be broken down into a few very simple truths: making a choice, adoption, and salvation.

Gather objects such as building blocks or crayons (one for every child) and place them in a pile on the floor. Have the children sit around the pile and direct them to reach out and pick one. After all the children have picked one, ask each child why they chose the one they did.

Ask the class if anyone knows what adoption is. After getting a few answers, explain to the class that in adoption a child born to other parents joins a different family. Explain that that is what God does for us when he saves us. He brings us into his family—he adopts us—and we get to be Jesus' brothers and sisters!

Finally tell the class that we can only be chosen by God to be adopted if we are perfect. But, because we are sinners who disobey, we need someone to take away our sin and make us right before God again.

Then tell the class that today we are going to learn that Jesus lived a perfectly obedient life for us and took the punishment for our sins to open up a way for us to be forgiven for our sins and be right again before God. That way, if we trust in Jesus and turn away from our sin, we can be adopted into God's family!

Take time to pray and thank God for the life of Jesus. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 141, "Chosen before the World Began," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **What do you think it means that God chose us in him before the foundation of the world?**

(It means that God knew us even before we were born, that he loved us before we did anything, and he chose to save us and grant us eternal life.)

- **What does it mean that we have redemption through his blood?**

(We are all sinners who deserve the punishment of death. Jesus, who had no sin, became sin for us so that he might take the penalty for sin we deserved. To redeem means to buy back. Jesus redeemed us through offering his blood. His death was a sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sin.)

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

We, who were chosen in Christ before the world began (Ephesians 1:4), were included in Christ when we heard the gospel and believed (Ephesians 1:13). Though we are chosen, we are yet sinners until the appointed time where we hear and believe. The gospel is the message of salvation; but more, it is the power of our salvation. We hear it and believe. At the moment of salvation, God places his Spirit in us as a deposit and a guarantee of our full redemption, which will be experienced when sin will be removed and our sinful bodies will be changed into glorified bodies.

In Ephesians 1:7 we read, "In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." This is the heart of the gospel. Christ's shed blood on the cross is the foundation of the forgiveness of sins for all those who "heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him" (Ephesians 1:13).

Paul's introduction to Ephesians is a repetition of the basic facts of the good news. To this he adds that God's plan for us individually was known in the mind of God even before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4).

- God paid the penalty for our sin according to the riches of his grace. What does grace mean?

(Grace means that it was free and had nothing to do with anything we have done.)

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

- Read Ephesians 1:13 to the children and ask them what the Ephesians heard that helped them believe.

(They heard the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation.)

- What is the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation?

(The gospel is the word of truth: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was crucified for our sins, died and was buried, but rose again on the third day. Those who place their trust in Jesus can be saved and live in heaven with him forever.)

- Who does God give us as a guarantee when we become Christians?

(We are sealed with the Holy Spirit who comes to live with us when we become Christians. Feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit is one way we know we have Christ in our hearts.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20-30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 63—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- Who are the people drawn in among the stars?

(They are all God's adopted children.)

■ **Why do you think they are drawn among the stars?**

(God created people and God created the stars. Genesis 22:17 tells us that Abraham's children would be just like the stars, too many to count.)

■ **What does it tell us about God that he knew each of us even before we were born?**

(God is all-knowing and all-powerful.)

Chosen by God

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a bag of color-coated chocolate candies
- ✓ plastic snack bags
- ✓ puppet

To prepare, sort the candy by color and place in individual plastic snack bags.

In class, lay out all the candies of one color on a table. Have the class form a line and choose one of the candies. If you start to run out of one color, switch to a second color. The object is that none of the children choose a particular piece of candy based on any quality of that particular candy. When everyone has taken a candy, have the class go through the exercise once more. Then ask the class the following questions:

(Use a puppet here to act as one of the children, doing what they do. If the children don't get the right answer, the puppet can give the correct answer and cheer the kids on to agree with him.)

■ **Why did you pick the piece of candy that you did?**

(They will likely answer, "I don't know, I just picked one.")

■ **Did you pick the candy because it did something or just because you like candy?**

(They will likely answer, "Just because I like candy.")

■ **Did the candy call out and asked to be chosen?**

(No, the candy can't call out because it's not alive.)

- Did the piece of candy you picked do anything special to make you want to pick that one?

(No, I just picked one because I wanted it.)

Help them see that God does not choose us based on anything we did either, but because he loves us. We cannot earn God's favor. Ephesians 1:4 says, "He chose us in him." That is, it is because Jesus took the penalty for our sins so that we can be pleasing to God. It was God's love for us that gave us Jesus. God's love for us is not based on anything we did.

Adopted into a Family

Ask a family who has adopted a child to come to your class with their adopted child and tell the story about the adoption to the class. They should include in the story a brief explanation of what it means to be adopted. (It may be better to find an older person who was adopted some time ago. Since adoption can be a sensitive topic, a family who has already shared their adoption story publicly is a good choice. Also, be careful to not single out other adopted children in your classroom to tell their stories. Make sure you preview the story to make sure the content of the testimony would be appropriate for the children in your class.)

Read Ephesians 1:1–5 and point out to the children that Christians are adopted by God into his family. Explain that sin separates us from God, but God in his love forgives our sins through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, and then God grants us adoption as his sons and daughters. Then explain that God even gives us a share in his inheritance—heaven and all of its glory.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

LESSON 63 - CHOSEN BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN

