

An artistic illustration of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Adam, a man with a beard and long hair, is in the foreground, looking down with a sorrowful expression, his hands held out. Eve, a woman with long dark hair, is partially visible on the left, looking away. The background shows a lush garden with a large tree and a bright sun setting or rising, casting a warm glow over the scene.

UNIT 1 | SESSION 3

THE FIRST FAMILY

GENESIS 4

CHRIST CONNECTION: God had promised that one of Eve's descendants would put an end to sin and death. Cain was not that descendant. He was sinful like his parents, Adam and Eve. As families grew and sin spread, people waited for God to keep His promise. At just the right time, God would send His Son, Jesus, to save sinners.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is God? God is our Creator and the King of everything.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 104:24

EXPECTED RESPONSE: Sorrow



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

PLAN the Session

1. Read the Leader Bible Study and review the session plan.
2. Check out the session-by-session training available on Ministry Grid.
3. Pray for yourself, your group, and the other leaders and kids in your ministry.

LEADER Bible Study

God created His image bearers to live in perfect unity with Him and one another. Yet it doesn't take more than a quick examination of our relationships to discern that we have fallen far short of God's ideal. With the entrance of sin into the human heart, we now suffer the consequences of a broken relationship with our Creator and with those around us. From jealousy and anger to the desire to wield power over those weaker than us, we know that sin wreaks havoc in our lives.

This week we will explore the narrative of Cain and Abel. Their parents' sin had set a course for the rest of human history, and these brothers were destined to be living representations of the powerful grip sin has over the human heart. Read and meditate on Genesis 4 and think through the following key points as you prepare to teach.

Sin infects all of humanity. Like an ever-present virus, sin is everywhere. No one is immune from the rebellious nature found within every human. From the moment Eve attempted to seize God-like power for herself, humanity has been saddled with the weight of sin against a holy God.

Sin is destructive. Our natural rejection of God brings brokenness to what should be a perfect union with our Creator and King. Sin also damages our relationships with those around us and even causes turmoil within our own souls. Sin leaves a path of destruction in its wake.

God shows mercy to sinners. Just when all seems hopeless, God shines a light of hope and redemption into the world. His mercy covers over all who join their hearts to Jesus in faith. We are no longer condemned (Romans 8:1) but are given the righteousness of Christ and find freedom from the power of sin.

The story of Cain and Abel is a heavy one, but it clearly illustrates the pervasive and horrendous effects of sin within the family and beyond. Sin brings with it a deep sense of sorrow over what we have lost. We have become disconnected from God and from one another. Thankfully, there is still hope for us. This week as you teach kids, guide them to see the destructive nature of sin, but also God's power to overcome it. Apart from Jesus we are all lost in our own rebellion, but God has provided a path for us that leads to peace with Him and with our fellow image bearers.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



LEARN

20-30 MINUTES

Teach kids how and why we worship



LOVE

25-30 MINUTES

Lead kids to love God by worshiping Him



LIVE

10 MINUTES

Lead kids to live worshipful lives for God



PREPARE

FOR THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



LEARN

Countdown

- ☐ countdown video

Worship through Music

- ☐ "What You're Made For," "God of Everything," or other high-energy worship songs of your choosing

Introduction and Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "The First Family" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Group Demonstration

- ☐ baking pan with rim
- ☐ milk
- ☐ food color
- ☐ dish soap



LOVE

Group Activity

- ☐ balls, 1 per 5 or 6 kids

Respond in Worship

- ☐ "How Marvelous You Are," "My Father's World," or other slower worship songs of your choosing
- ☐ offering basket or collection box (optional)



LIVE

Key Passage

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "Countless (Psalm 104:24)" song

Additional Activity

- ☐ "Books of the Bible" printable, 1 copy per 3 or 4 kids



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN through Worship

1 COUNTDOWN

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as worship time begins.

2 WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC (5–10 min.)

Choose a few high-energy worship songs—such as “What You’re Made For” or “God of Everything”—to sing with your group of kids. Lead motions enthusiastically and encourage kids to join you. Between songs, help the kids think through what it means to worship God and why we often use music to help us do so. Take time to talk the kids through any lyrics that might be challenging to understand.

3 INTRODUCTION AND BIG PICTURE QUESTION (3 min.)

SAY “Hello, friends! It’s great to see you all here today. I can’t wait to dive back into the Bible as we study another story from God’s Word. But first, let me ask you a question. What makes you feel sad? **[Allow responses.]** We all feel sad from time to time. Sometimes small things make us sad like accidentally breaking a toy or doing poorly on a test. Other times it’s something more significant like the death of someone we love or having to move away from our home. God created the world to be a perfect home for His children, but when sin entered the world, everything seemed to go wrong. Now there is sadness, pain, and death. Another word we might use to describe feelings of deep sadness is sorrow. We will hear a story today that may make us feel sorrowful. It’s a sad story about the effects of sin on the first family in the Bible. But it is also a story of hope as we remember the promise that God made to send a Rescuer into the world to do battle against the power of sin in each of us.

Before we hear the story, let’s remember our big picture question. **Who is God?** Do you remember? **God is our Creator and the King of everything.** Nothing exists outside of God’s creative power. He made man and woman in His image to reflect His character. He put Adam and Eve—the first man and woman—in the garden to work and keep it. They were connected to God and to each other. But last week we heard the story of how sin entered the world. Adam and Eve wanted to be like God, so they listened to the crafty serpent rather than trust their loving Father. Everything good that God made became warped by sin. Today we’ll hear how sin impacted Adam and Eve’s sons, Cain and Abel. Let’s turn in our Bibles to Genesis 4 and get ready to learn together.”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

4 TELL THE BIBLE STORY (10 min.)

Open your Bible to Genesis 4. Tell the Bible story using the script provided, or flesh out the “Kids Sermon Outline” in the margin to teach a more in depth message. You may choose to play the Bible story video “The First Family.” Use bold text to retell or review the story.

THE FIRST FAMILY

“After Adam and Eve left the garden of Eden, they had a son named Cain and another son named Abel. Abel became a shepherd, and Cain worked the ground by growing plants and crops. **Because sin entered the world through Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel were sinners too.**

One day, Cain gave God an offering of some of the produce he grew. Abel gave God some of the firstborn of his flock. God accepted Abel’s offering, but He did not accept Cain’s offering.

Cain was furious. God said to Cain, “Why are you so mad? If you do what is right, your offering will be accepted.” Then God warned Cain, “If you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. Sin wants you, but you must rule over it.”

Cain said to his brother, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

God said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” Cain lied. “Is it my job to keep track of him?” But God knew what Cain had done.

Because God is holy, God had to punish Cain for his sin. **“Now you are cursed,” God told Cain. “You will work the ground, but nothing will grow for you. Instead, you will wander the earth, never finding rest.”**

Cain would not be able to stay with his family. He could no longer live in God’s presence. **Even though God punished Cain, God was merciful. He put a mark on Cain to warn people not to kill him. Then Cain left the land and went to live in Nod, a land to the east of Eden.** He had a wife and a family, but they did not follow God.

God gave Adam and Eve another son, Seth. Adam and Eve’s family grew. Seth grew up and had a family too. Around this time, Adam’s descendants in Seth’s family began to call on the name of the Lord. ”

KIDS SERMON OUTLINE

Sin infects all of humanity (Gen. 4:1-5): Adam and Eve’s sin did not just touch their lives, but every person’s life who would come after them.

Sin is destructive (Gen. 4:6-8): When God confronted Cain about his sin, Cain became angry and ultimately killed his own brother.

God shows mercy to sinners (Gen. 4:13-16): Even in Cain’s punishment, God was kind and protected him from enemies.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ The story of Cain’s sin against his brother and against God is a sad one. Cain and Abel both brought their offerings to God. Cain brought a grain offering and Abel brought the firstfruits of his animals. God was happy with Abel’s offering because he had offered God the best of what he had, but God was not happy with Cain’s offering. In his jealousy and anger, Cain killed his brother Abel. Sin reared its ugly head and brought so much suffering into this family.

But there was still hope. God had promised that one of Eve’s descendants would put an end to sin and death. Cain was not that descendant. He was sinful like his parents, Adam and Eve. As families grew and sin spread, people waited for God to keep His promise. At just the right time, God would send His Son, Jesus, to save sinners. We may feel sorrow over the sin in the world, but as Christians we have reason to rejoice. Jesus came to pay the price for sin. He was willing to die to set us free. Now, when we put our faith in Christ, we are forgiven for our sin and welcomed into God’s family. ”

6 GROUP DEMONSTRATION (5 min.)

Display a large, rimmed baking pan at the front of the room. Pour milk into the pan. Ask a few volunteers to come to the front to drop the food color around the pan. Ask the kids what they think will happen when you add the dish soap. Allow another volunteer to add a drop of dish soap to the pan. The food color will swirl all over the pan.

SAY “ What happened when we added the dish soap to the milk and food color? [Allow responses.] That’s right, we saw the food color swirl throughout the baking sheet. The more dish soap we added, the more swirling and mixing of colors there was.

In Genesis 4 we read about another kind of spreading: sin. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and they suffered the consequences of no longer being allowed in the garden of Eden where they had perfect connection with God. Instead, they had to fight to survive in a world that was hostile to them. Their sin spread to their sons, Cain and Abel. Cain lost the battle against his own anger and jealousy and killed his brother. He also had to face the punishment for his sin and was separated from his family. Sadly, the cycle of sin wouldn’t end there. We can trace the horrible effects of sin throughout human history all the way to our lives today.

Has God given up on His children and abandoned us to a sense of hopelessness forever? Of course not. God loves us more than we can ever imagine. How do we know? The Bible tells us in Ephesians 2:4-5. [Ask a volunteer to read these verses.] God shows us mercy through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You and I are forgiven for our sin when we trust Jesus with our lives. We are shown mercy and are not given the punishment of death that our sin deserves. Instead, God welcomes us into His kingdom and gives us the promise of eternal life with Him. ”



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE with Worship

1 DISCUSSION (10 min.)

Consider forming smaller groups to discuss the following deep questions. Encourage kids to be honest about their feelings and help them learn to process them in healthy ways.

1. What did we discover about God in this passage? God is just, meaning He will allow us to feel the consequences of our sin. Cain was cursed because he was a liar and a murderer. Cain deserved the punishment he got, but God was also merciful. He placed a mark on Cain to protect him from others who wanted to kill him.
2. Thinking about the devastating effects of sin brings us a sense of sorrow. But that may not be the only response we feel when we hear the story of Cain and Abel. You may feel angry that sin has such a strong hold on people made in God's image. You may feel confused that God would allow sin to run rampant through the perfect world He created. No matter how we feel, we can be honest about it before God. He knows exactly what we are thinking and feeling, and He wants us to come to Him to find peace. Help kids think about and describe other feelings they may have. Provide a safe place for kids to discuss emotions and remind kids that their feelings are real and valid, even if they don't match what others feel.
3. What are some ways a person might show the emotion of sorrow? Sorrow can take many forms. Deep sorrow over sin can lead someone to feel lifeless or tired. Someone experiencing sorrow may feel numb to other emotions or may feel overwhelmed by seemingly small tasks. A person who is feeling sorrow over sin might try to avoid God, but we know that He wants us to draw close to Him, even in sadness.
4. Can you think of other times you have felt those feelings? Would anyone like to share their stories? Help kids talk through other situations where they have felt sorrow, anger, confusion, or another emotion mentioned in the first question. Be prepared with examples from your own life.
5. Why do you think God would allow His children to experience an emotion like sorrow? How might this feeling bring us closer to God? Sin and rebellion are not the way God designed us to respond to Him. It goes against our created nature as His image bearers. So, it makes sense that negative emotions come along with sin. God allows us to experience consequences for our disobedience. Sin causes us pain, which should lead us back to God in repentance.

After the kids have had time to discuss, direct their attention back to the main worship leader for the group activity. If you formed smaller groups, you may choose to re-gather as a larger group depending on your ministry context.

2 RESPOND THROUGH PRAYER (3 min.)

SAY “No matter what emotions come up for you as you think about the story of Cain and Abel, God wants you to go to Him with them all. Sin has impacted our lives in so many ways, but none of it surprises God. God is our Creator and the King of everything, and He can handle our big feelings including sorrow, anger, and confusion. Let’s spend a few minutes in quiet prayer, asking God to show us mercy for the ways we have sinned against Him. Remember, if a person has chosen to follow Jesus, then he is forgiven and has been shown grace.”

3 GROUP ACTIVITY: ON YOUR GUARD (5–10 min.)

SAY “Our story contained a warning from God to be on guard against sin. Let’s play a game to help us remember this important truth that we’ve heard from God’s Word.”



LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

Lead kids to stand in groups of five or six and give each group a ball. Explain that the kids will roll the ball around the circle trying to get the ball to go between the legs of the other players. If the ball goes through a player's legs, that player is out.

SAY “Great job! Was it difficult to keep the ball from going between your legs? [Allow responses.] You had to be on your toes and guard yourself to stay in the game. This game was easy in comparison to what God called Cain to do in our Bible story. Let's think back to what we heard today.

Cain and Abel brought their offerings to God, but God favored Abel's offering over Cain's. [Read **Genesis 4:3-5.**] How did Cain respond? [Allow responses.] He was furious and jealous that God seemed to favor his brother. But God wasn't playing favorites, Abel had offered the best of what he had, while Cain had not. God saw the sin in Cain's heart and gave him a warning. Listen to this. [Read **Genesis 4:6-7.**] What did God tell Cain to do? [Allow responses.] God told Cain that sin was crouching at his door like a lion ready to devour him. Cain needed to be on guard against sin and be ready to fight it. But as we heard, Cain did a lousy job of fighting off the sin in his own heart. He let his anger and jealousy get the better of him. Instead of humbly learning from his mistakes, Cain wanted to rid himself of the thing that reminded him of his failure: his own brother. He killed Abel and God held him accountable for his actions.

There were consequences for Cain's sin, but God also had made a promise to Cain's mother, Eve, and God would keep that promise. One of Eve's descendants would go to battle against the serpent that showed up in Eden. Sin would be defeated finally and forever, and those who are joined to Jesus would be set free from its power. Today, when we give our hearts to Jesus, we find forgiveness for our sin. Even though it's not murder, our sin is just as great as Cain's. Like him, we deserve punishment, but God has shown us mercy. We are saved from that punishment and instead we are given life with God. He has turned our sorrow into rejoicing.”

4 RESPOND IN WORSHIP (3 min.)

Choose slower worship songs—such as “How Marvelous You Are” or “My Father's World”—that will help your kids reflect on the concepts they have learned about during this session. Encourage kids to respond however they feel God leading them, whether in prayer, quiet thought, or song.

SAY “Sin brings sorrow, or deep sadness, into our hearts. This makes sense, because our sin robs us of experiencing the peace that God designed us for. God created us each in His image to show the world what He is like. Sin is a barrier to living out the purpose God has for us. Though we are sorrowful now, we can also have a sense of joy, knowing that sin does not have the final word over us. Jesus has proven Himself victorious over our rebellious nature, and when we are joined to Him, we are set free. We can praise God for who He is and all He has done. **Who is God? God is our Creator and the King of everything.** Let's spend time worshipping our Creator and King.”

As you continue playing music, allow the kids a few minutes to pass an offering basket, bring offerings to a collections box, or collect offerings in another way.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE in Worship

1 KEY PASSAGE (5 min.)

SAY “ When we think about the effects of sin all over the world, we may forget about the ways that creation still glorifies God each day. Our key passage reminds us that God made everything, and He is still in control. The Psalms are beautiful prayers that help us focus our attention on the goodness of God. ”

Read Psalm 104:24 and encourage the kids to read along. Display the key passage poster for kids to read. You may also sing the key passage song, “Countless (Psalm 104:24).”

2 APPLICATION (2 min.)

Spend some time following up with the kids to see if they were able to complete the application challenge from the previous session. (Be curious about the instances when you feel shame and ask God to reveal sin that you need to repent of or lies that you’re believing.) Encourage each kid for his or her efforts, and remind kids to keep seeking ways to worship God each day.

SAY “ Thanks for trying out our challenge last week. Last time we talked about how shame can lead us to repentance, and I hope you found that was true for you this week. Today we have covered another heavy emotion: sorrow. I think you’ll find that sorrow can also draw us closer to God. Check this out. ”

Spend some time this week thinking about the ways your sin and the sin of others impact your daily life. Maybe you fight with siblings because sharing is difficult. Or perhaps you see the way others around you are in need (hunger, homelessness, sickness, etc.) Write down what causes you to feel sorrow and spend a few minutes talking to God about those situations. Ask Him to remind you of His love for you and how He has made a way for you to experience peace with Him and others. ”

3 PRAYER AND ANNOUNCEMENTS (2 min.)

SAY “ God, we feel sorrowful as we consider the ways our sin impacts our relationship with You and with the people around us. Please forgive us for the ways we have not honored You with our actions, thoughts, and words. Thank You for sending Jesus to pay the price for our sin so we can be set free to live in peace with You. Help us live in a way that honors You each day. Amen. ”

Make any announcements from your kids’ ministry before dismissing. If there’s significant time between dismissal and pick-up, consider using the additional activity to keep the kids engaged. You may also substitute the additional activity for the group activity.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

BIBLE SKILLS - BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Prior to the session, print and cut apart the “Books of the Bible” printable. Form groups of three or four kids and distribute a set of the “Books of the Bible” cards to each group. Explain that the kids will group the Old Testament and New Testament books together. Encourage them to use the table of contents in their Bibles to help them. For an added challenge, invite the groups to put the books in order.

SAY “Great job, everyone! The Bible is God’s Word and it tells us what is true about Him and ourselves. When you first begin studying the Bible it may seem intimidating. It’s long and has many different writing styles. It was written thousands of years ago and some of the names and words are unfamiliar. But the more we explore the Bible, the more comfortable we will be reading it. Even though there are 66 books of the Bible, they all fit together to tell the big story of God creating the world for His glory and how, even though sin has damaged God’s good world, He is working to restore all things to Himself.”