

THE FIRST FAMILY

Genesis 4



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.

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.



1 WELCOME TIME

Greet each preteen as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

- **What happens if you disobey a rule at your school or in your home? Do you have a consequence?**
- **Why do you have a consequence?**

2 SESSION STARTER

☐ OPTION 1: CAST OUT



Before the session, gather two balls of different colors. Designate one ball as “sin.” Lead kids to form a large circle. Give one ball to a kid and the “sin” ball to another kid. Direct kids to pass the balls around the circle in opposite directions. Play music for about 15–20 seconds, allowing kids time to pass the balls around. When you stop the music, whoever is holding the “sin” ball is out. Continue playing as time allows.

SAY “Being caught with the ‘sin’ ball cast you out of the game. Last week, we learned how sin entered the world through Adam and Eve’s disobedience. Because of their sin, all people sin. Today, we will learn how **sin separates us from God**. We’ll hear a story of how Adam’s son Cain was cast out from God’s presence because of his sin.”

☐ OPTION 2: IS IT MERCIFUL?

Lead kids to stand in the middle of the room. Define mercy by telling kids it means showing forgiveness and kindness or choosing not to punish someone who deserves it. Tell kids to listen to the statements you say aloud. Direct kids to run to the right side of the room if the statement shows mercy or run to the left side if the statement does not show mercy. Call out the following statements or create your own:

- Choosing to be kind to someone who called you a name (shows mercy)
- Forgiving someone who is mean (shows mercy)
- Laughing at someone when they make a mistake (does not show mercy)
- Loving a person even when she is unkind (shows mercy)
- Yelling at someone who was hurtful (does not show mercy)

SAY “God is merciful! Even when we sin, He shows us mercy. We don’t deserve God’s mercy, but He is forgiving. Today, we will learn how God showed mercy to Cain even when he sinned. We’ll also learn how God’s promise to send a Savior at just the right time shows us mercy too.”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Today we are going to hear about the first family. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Read from Genesis 4:1-16,25-26.

•What does this story teach us about God?

God must punish sin. God punished Cain because of his sin. God cursed Cain and the ground he worked. The God sent Cain away to the land of Nod. Sin separates us from God.

•How did God show Cain mercy?

He protected Cain with a mark so that whoever found him would not kill him. God is just, but He also shows mercy to sinners. God's mercy and kindness is intended to lead us to repentance. (Romans 2:4)

Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

2 MISSIONS MOMENT

Form groups of three to five kids. Give each group an inflated balloon. (Tip: If an outdoor space or gymnasium is available, consider playing there with a soccer ball.) Choose one player in each group to be It. The other players will use their feet to tap the balloon back and forth to one another, keeping it away from It. If It intercepts the balloon with his feet, he may choose the next player to be It.

Discuss how this game required kids to keep the ball away from the player in the middle. Tell kids that sin keeps us away from God. Explain that missionaries like Eric and Ramona Reese have dedicated their lives to telling others about Jesus. Tell kids that they live in Brazil, where soccer is the most popular sport, and tell people that **SIN SEPARATES US FROM GOD**, but God sent His Son, Jesus, to save sinners.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

We are all sinful and sin separates us from God. But God is merciful and sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from sin. We have a choice to trust in Jesus and let Him rule our hearts or we have a choice to continue to let sin rule our hearts. When we trust in Jesus, our sin is forgiven and we are brought back to God. Have you trusted in Jesus and asked Him to forgive your sin?

4 PRAY

Dear God, You are an amazing Creator and King! We praise You for Your mercy, and we ask that You help us trust You. In Jesus' name, amen.

THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

				
GOD RULES	WE SINNED	GOD PROVIDED	JESUS GIVES	WE RESPOND
Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.	Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.	Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.	Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.	Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

1 THINK ABOUT THE STORY

- Why do we fight with our siblings or other people?
- Why is trusting in Jesus good news for sinners?

2 GROUP DISCUSSION

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to Genesis 4. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 4:26. Remind preteens that after Cain was sent away, Adam and Eve had another son named Seth. Tell kids that Seth had a son named Enosh. Discuss how the Bible also records these names in the New Testament book of Luke as well. (Luke 3:38) Explain that we see these names in Luke because they are a reminder of God's promise to send a Rescuer through Eve's offspring. Tell kids that at just the right time, God sent His Son—Jesus—to live a perfect life and die on the cross for our sins. Remind kids that **SIN SEPARATES US FROM GOD**, but when we trust in Jesus, we are saved from our sin and are brought back to God.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Genesis 4:26 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. Why must God punish sin?

Remind kids that God is holy and hates sin. Tell kids that sin also makes us enemies with God. Share how our sin has wronged God and reveals that we have rejected Him. Explain that sin must be punished because God is just. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 2:6-8.)

2. God showed Cain mercy even though he sinned. How does God show us mercy?

Discuss how God kept His promise to Adam and Eve by sending Jesus into the world to save sinners. Explain how Jesus took the punishment our sin deserves when He died on the cross. Tell kids that we receive mercy by not getting the punishment our sin deserves when we trust in Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:6-11.)

3. Cain let sin rule in his heart. How can we not let sin rule our hearts?

Remind kids that God is our Creator and King. Tell kids that we can choose to acknowledge and submit to God as King and follow Him, or we can choose to go our own way and let sin rule in our lives. Share how (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Jer. 24:7.)

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

Who is God?

God is our Creator and the King of everything.



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

1 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Psalm 104:24. Lead them in reading the key passage aloud together. Tell kids that God made a beautiful and good world! Remind kids that even though sin has broken the world, we can still see how great God is through what He's made.

Provide kids with a Bible and a strip of cardstock. Teach kids what a chapter number is and what a verse number is. Invite kids to create a bookmark by copying the verse on the cardstock. Provide markers and stickers as needed.

2 PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for His mercy through His Son, Jesus Christ.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

SEEK MERCY

Form kids into five groups and provide each group with a Bible. Assign one of the following Bible verses to each group: Proverbs 28:13; Lamentations 3:22-23; Ephesians 2:4-5; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3. Direct groups to look up their Bible verse and discuss how it shows the mercy of God. Allow a minute or two for discussion. Then invite groups to share with everyone what they learned about God's mercy. For example, maybe they learned God's mercy never fails or that God shows mercy to those who repent of their sins.

Tell kids that mercy is an attribute or a characteristic of God. Share that God is merciful, and He shows mercy. Remind kids that in today's story, we saw how God showed mercy to Cain even when Cain killed his brother. Discuss how God shows mercy to us through His Son, Jesus. Encourage kids to remember that when we trust in Jesus, we don't receive the punishment our sin deserves. That's mercy!