



A NEW CREATION

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11- 6:2

Every Christian is a new creation.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Christians who have died in Christ live for Christ – False teachers moved into the Corinthian church in Paul's absence and undermined Paul's ministry and the gospel. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is designed to refute false teaching and affirm gospel truth. Here Paul is absolutely caught up in love for Christ and shows us where right motivation for all we do as Christians must come from.

Christ's love compels us and affects the way we live. Paul was telling the Corinthians what motivated him as well as declaring a standard for all Christians. The cross is the greatest declaration of love there could ever be. When our hearts open to the wonder of the cross, we are given the power to live for Christ. Jesus died on the cross so that we could die to sin and live for Him. Our whole lives are changed by the gospel. When we live by the love of God in Jesus, we are compelled to live for Christ.

Anyone in Christ is a new creation – Not only can we live for Christ because sin has been defeated, we have also been changed! This change is so significant that Paul describes it as being created again! Our old self, which was a slave to sin, has been changed. Now we are free to live for Christ. The old has gone and the new has come; we have been created again! The word used for "come" does not mean "to arrive" or "to get somewhere." Rather, it signifies change and could be translated "generated". In other words, if anyone is in Christ, he is a brand-new creation. What was old has passed away, and something new has been generated. When a person becomes a Christian, this passage teaches us that he has been regenerated or re-created.

Christians speak for Christ – When God regenerates us or re-creates us, we become His ambassadors. We take His message to others. We don't just take the message of the cross without emotion, as though we were delivering a package. Instead we are to implore others to be reconciled to God. We are to tell others the gospel-- that God made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in Christ we could be righteous! We are to convince others. We are to appeal, to urge, to passionately implore them to turn to God. We are to explain to them that there is no time to wait; today is the day of salvation.

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

This passage, and indeed all of 2 Corinthians 5, is filled with the gospel. Through Christ's work on the cross we have been reconciled to God. That, in short, is the Gospel!

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "For our sake he made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." If we take out the pronouns this passage reads: "For [add your name]'s sake God the Father made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Jesus [add your name] might become the righteousness of God."

This is the message of reconciliation that has been entrusted to us. We call this message the gospel. The message applied in our lives so transforms us that we become new creations (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Psalm 31:9-16

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus quoted from Psalm 31:5 just before He died. In looking at the rest of the psalm, although it is written by David to describe his own suffering, we see the suffering of Christ as well. Jesus was consumed by anguish on the road to the cross, and his strength failed Him as He fell carrying the cross. He was deserted by the disciples, his friends. People slandered Him on every side.

Although these verses are not directly attributed to Christ, David's life itself is a shadow of the life of Jesus and points us forward to Christ. When we read this psalm, though we know it speaks of David, we should know that it also speaks of the sacrifice of our Savior and His suffering.

Questions for reflection:

- Read through Psalm 31. Where do you see Jesus and His sacrifice in the sufferings and trials of David? (Help your children look for connections.)
- How did David's faith in God reflect our Lord's trust in the Father? (David demonstrated great faith and trusted God in the midst of his suffering just as Jesus trusted His Father while on the cross.)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

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 worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

RE-CREATION

Supplies:

- 3 small tubs of play dough
- a new hairbrush

The object of this lesson is to help the children understand the concept of re-creation, or new creation.

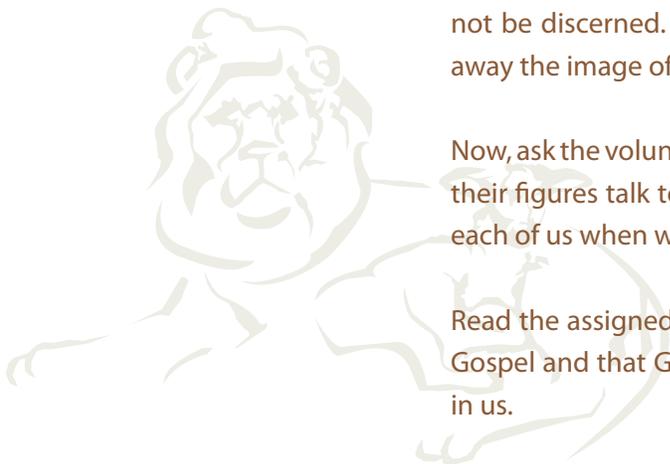
Ask for three volunteers. (Make sure these volunteers are not very sensitive types.) Give each of them a portion of the dough and ask them to create a self-portrait figure. Give them a few minutes and take time to tease them a bit about their creations.

While you are waiting for them to finish, draw the children out about who created us, and what it means to create something. When they have finished, tell the class that God created Adam and Eve perfectly but when they sinned everything was affected by their sin. The whole creation was marred.

Take each of the figures and pound it with the bristles of the brush till they are significantly disfigured and misshapen but not so bad that their original image can not be discerned. Then explain to the class that sin affected us but did not take away the image of God completely.

Now, ask the volunteers to re-create their self-portraits. While they work to re-create their figures talk to the class about God's re-creation or making a new creation of each of us when we become Christians.

Read the assigned passage and discuss what God did to re-create us. Explain the Gospel and that God causes us to come alive in Christ and places His Spirit to live in us.



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AMBASSADOR RELAY

Supplies:

• Write the following verses on two sets of index cards (one verse per card) and also write them all down on a piece of paper as an answer key.
2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, 16, 17, and 18

The object of this lesson is to demonstrate the work of an ambassador to take the message of the Gospel to those who do not know him.

You will need two judges and 12 volunteers, six boys and six girls. Have the boys compete against the girls, or mix up the teams. Explain to the teams that they have been commissioned as God's ambassadors. Tell them that your judges are the unbelievers to whom they are to take their message. Each team will be given five verses written on index cards placed face down on a table. When the signal to begin is given, the first member of each team picks up a verse card to memorize. When he or she thinks they have the message memorized, they run to the unbelievers and the judges and say their verse. If they get it correct the judge will say "correct." If they get it incorrect, they need to go to the end of the line and the next person on their team gives that verse a try.

Only the player trying to memorize the current verse can hold the card but the next person can read it with them in preparation if they get it wrong. But, as soon as they run to tell their verse, the card must go back on the table face down.

The team to successfully "ambassador" all their messages to the unbelievers is the winner.

After going through the game, talk about the importance of getting our message accurate as ambassadors for Christ.



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COMPELLED BY OUR LOVE FOR CHOCOLATE

Supplies:

one very large 8 ounce
chocolate bar

The object is for the children to understand the word and feeling of being compelled by something, in this case chocolate. Then make the connection to being compelled by the love of Christ to live for Christ.

Ask the class for volunteers to come forward to memorize 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. Choose three volunteers and then interview some of the children who didn't want to volunteer. Draw them out as to why they didn't want to volunteer. Take note of who didn't want to volunteer.

Now, pull out the chocolate bar and tell the class that anyone who can memorize 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 gets to share a piece of this chocolate bar. Now see if any of those who didn't volunteer feel suddenly compelled to memorize. Interview your previous volunteers and ask them if they are freshly motivated. Choose three more volunteers out of those who changed their minds.

Give your six volunteers a few minutes to memorize the passage. Then go over the whole passage as a class helping them all to memorize it. Then test your volunteers. Break the bar of chocolate into six pieces and offer the first pieces to those who had the fewest mistakes.

Talk about what it felt like to be compelled by your desire for the chocolate. Then explain to the class that we as Christians are compelled to live for Christ because of His sacrifice on the cross. The cross should be for us a greater motivator than a chocolate bar.



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PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

Draw a picture of a seed sprouting with leaves just opening up. Write the words to 2 Corinthians 5:17 across the top of your picture.

FOR THE OLDER GRADES

WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Supplies:

- photocopies of today's passage (enough copies for each student)
- pencils for your students

Read through the passage as a class. Pass out the paper and pencils and then ask the students to underline all the portions of verses that contain the Gospel. Then they should write their answer to the following question on their papers:

How should this section of scripture affect the way we live? (Because we have been changed by the Gospel, we should live for Christ like people who have been changed. Because we have been commissioned as ambassadors for the Gospel we should share the message with others.)

Talk about the fears which can stand in our way of sharing the Gospel.

Solicit testimonies from the students of those who have witnessed the transforming power of the Gospel in someone's life.

Invite a person from your church who had never heard the Gospel before and was saved when someone shared the Gospel message. (You are looking for someone that perhaps did not grow up in a Christian home and did not go to church as a child.)



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

Ambassador – An ambassador is a spokesperson for another, often an official or ruler, and is usually appointed to the office by the ruler. Most countries have several ambassadors. Often one for each of the other countries they relate to. The ambassador's job is to speak for the king or president or ruler. The ambassador does not make up his own message; he takes the message of the king to others. We have been appointed to be ambassadors for Christ. We have been commissioned to take God's message, the Gospel, to the people God places in our lives. The message we take is one of reconciliation. That is, God has made a way for man to have peace with God, through the sacrifice of Jesus.

