

LESSON 65

The Gift of Men

EPHESIANS 4:10-16



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD GAVE LEADERS AS GIFTS TO HELP THE CHURCH MATURE AND GROW

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 143)

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 65—one for each child; markers or crayons

What Do They Do?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ building blocks
- ✓ a pair of eyeglasses
- ✓ a staff
- ✓ a Bible
- ✓ a net
- ✓ puppet (optional)

Tossed by the Waves

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a bag to hold the following: a bag of candy, an empty ice cream box, an empty frozen broccoli bag, a can of green beans, a can of soda, a fresh carrot, and a pack of gum
- ✓ make a boat anchor by taping a rope onto the handle of a claw hammer (or bring in a real boat anchor and rope)

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 how God gives the church gifts of leaders to help his people know the gospel and grow closer to Jesus.

Guide the opening discussion with the following questions:

- **What do we call the people who lead our church?**
(pastors)
- **Do you know who gave pastors to our church?**
(God did.)
- **Do you know why he gave us pastors?**
(God gave us pastors as a gift to help us to grow.)
- **What do the pastors do?**
(Draw out the children to see if they can name some of the things a pastor does, such as pray, study the Bible, preach from the Bible, care for the people, etc.)

Tell the children that the Bible also calls pastors shepherds. Say "Let's see how pastors care for the people." Instruct the children to pretend they are sheep looking for grass to eat. Tell them you are going to pretend a certain place in the room is the grass. When you say "go" and start to count, they are to crawl around and try to guess where the grass is. When you get to ten have the children stop moving and see if anyone has found the grass. Repeat this a couple of times.

Then appoint a helper to be a shepherd (who will decide where the grass will be). Tell the children that this time, the shepherd is going to lead them to the grass. Say "go" and have the shepherd tell the children, "Come I will show you where the grass is." All of the children should flock to the shepherd, who can lead them to the grass.

Ask the class if it was easier for them to find the grass with the shepherd helping them. Then make the connection that God gives us leaders to help us keep close to Jesus. Tell your class that today they will learn more about the job pastors have in caring for the people of God's church.

Take time to pray and thank God for the pastor(s) of your church. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 143, “The Gift of Men,” 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:

- **Paul tells us that God gave us special people to help us. What are they called?**
(apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.)

- **Why did God give them to us?**
(to equip us—to help us—be a part of the church)

- **Paul tells us that our leaders are to help us do the work of ministry. What does God want people in the church to do?**
(God wants people to learn about the gospel and share it with others. God wants us to help each other. God wants us to worship him and do the work of ministry to honor him.)

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

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

Where Is the Gospel? _____

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

In Ephesians 4, Paul turns to the practical issue of obedience, but the cross remains at the center. Although we need to obey and help one another obey, we do it for Christ. Our fellowship is designed to help us grow up into Christ, “until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13 NIV). We do not obey to become Christians; we obey to become more like Christ!

- **What did the apostles in the New Testament do?**
(They planted and cared for churches. They also helped the churches with their problems.)
- **Do we still start new churches today?**
(Yes, God still wants us to start new churches. We won't stop this activity until Jesus returns again.)
- **Do you know how any churches have been started?**
(You can start with telling them the story of how your own church was started, and how the pastor working with your local church helped make it fruitful. If your church has planted other churches, you can share those stories as well.)

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 65—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

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

- **What do we call people who preach to us on Sunday at church and lead the church?**
(We call people who lead the church pastors.)
- **What is the man in the picture doing?**
(He is preaching from the Bible.)
- **Why is it important that we listen to the people that God gives to teach and lead us?**
(They can help us to follow God's Word.)

What Do They Do?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ building blocks
- ✓ a pair of eyeglasses
- ✓ a staff
- ✓ a Bible
- ✓ a net
- ✓ puppet (optional)

Spread out the objects on a table. These objects represent the different roles that leaders had in the church in Ephesus. Ask the children to guess which object represents apostle, pastor, etc. Use the following list to guide your description of each office. You can also tell the children there are often shared responsibilities; for example a teacher can also pastor or build local churches. Use the puppet to help the children connect the objects with the roles from Ephesians 4. The puppet can help the children by whispering answers or giving clues.

APOSTLE (BUILDING BLOCKS): A builder of local churches (1 Corinthians 3:10). Responsible to make sure that churches do not drift away from the truth of God's Word (sound doctrine). Helps churches with their problems and helps start new churches.

PROPHET (EYEGASSES): Encourages, strengthens, and comforts the church (1 Corinthians 14:3–4), and encourages others to use their prophetic gifting to do the same.

PASTOR (STAFF): A shepherd of God's people (1 Peter 5:2) who leads them to a better understanding of the gospel and helps them grow up in Christ. Corrects them when they stray from God's good path for their life. Pastors preach and teach from God's Word, the Bible.

TEACHER (BIBLE): Teaches the church from God's Word (Titus 2:1). This is a gift that is often paired with a pastor since pastors must be able to teach.

EVANGELIST (NET): The evangelist is the fisher of men and equips the people in the church to share the gospel.

Tossed by the Waves

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a bag of candy, an empty ice cream box, an empty frozen broccoli bag, a can of green beans, a can of soda, a fresh carrot, and a pack of gum
- ✓ a bag to hold all the above
- ✓ make a boat anchor by taping a rope onto the handle of a claw hammer (or bring in a real boat anchor and rope)

Read Ephesians 4:14–15 again, explaining that God gives us leaders so that we are not tossed to and fro in the waves by all the other voices of the world.

Hold up the candy and ask the children what they think of when they see candy. They will likely expose their affection for sweets but not think about the dangers of sweets. Then hold up the frozen broccoli bag. You should get a different reaction. Explain to the children that the sweet things of life call out to us. It is not that they are all bad, but if we only ate candy, for instance, we would get sickly.

Go through the items in the bag and then bring the following comparison to them. We need parents to help regulate, or lead us, in our diet. They help us to make wise choices and not be tossed by the waves and blown by every idea of something we would like to eat.

Similarly, God gave the church leaders to make sure that the people of the church don't just do what feels good but what pleases the Lord. Pastors, apostles, teachers, evangelists, and prophets all help us to keep our eyes focused on a balanced diet of the gospel. We need to remind ourselves of the gospel every day. The Bible calls the Word of God real food, and even Jesus is called the bread of life.

Ask the children if they know what a boat anchor is and what it is used for. Explain to the class that an anchor holds a boat in place on the water by holding fast to the ground below the ship. If a boat or ship does not have an anchor, it will get tossed to and fro by the waves.

Take the anchor and hook it around a few chairs and a table so that it snags these items. Have the children pull on the anchor to see how it works to hold them in place.

Read verse 14 again and point out that God and his covenant is called an anchor in the Bible (Hebrews 6:19), and that Jesus is our rock (Luke 6:48) or firm foundation. If we have an anchor and a rock to hold onto, we will not be tossed to and fro by the waves of life.

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 65 - THE GIFT OF MEN

