

WEEK 2 LESSON GUIDE

CHANGING GEARS



BIG IDEA

Our past doesn't change God's love for us.

BIBLE

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: John
4:5-42; Romans 5:1-11

LARGE GROUP TIME

Hello! Welcome back to *Changing Gears*! Today, we're joining our robot friends to blast to the past! No, not time travel — we're going to talk a lot about things we've done or experienced in our lives anytime before today. We'll discover how the things we did back then change how God feels about us. (Psst . . . they don't change a thing!)

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "Not the Same" (North Point InsideOut)
 - "Won't Look Back" (SEU Worship)
 - "You Never Change" (Gateway Kids)
 - "2 Corinthians 5:17" (JumpStart3)

ACTIVITY | Human Machines

- We use machines every day without thinking about it. Now we're going to mix it up a bit and pretend to be machines.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** In teams, kids will work together to be different machines — this can be anything from a toaster to a bicycle. The catch is they can only use their bodies and voices to pretend to be the machine you call out. If you have a small group, this can be done as a large group instead of in teams. Music isn't needed for this activity, but it helps set the atmosphere. [Here's](#) a suggested song for this activity.
 - ✳ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Make sure to provide images of all the different "machines" you want kids to act out so they have a reference for what you're talking about and so it scaffolds the activity, too.

ACTIVITY | Change It Up

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In this quick game, kids will try to recognize change and how easy it is for people to change. Have all of the kids sit in a circle (or one circle per leader in the room). Choose one kid to leave the room (or one kid from each group) or have them simply close their eyes. While one kid is not looking, the group should change as many things as they can: people swap seats, change hair bows, or untie shoes. Then, call the player back and ask them to point out the changes in the group.*
- Today, we are going to play a fun game to see if some of you can notice the changes that have taken place while you weren't looking.
- People and all other parts of creation often change, like we saw in our game, but God never changes!

QUESTION | Have you ever changed your mind about something?

- Let's talk about ways that you have changed your mind about things.
 - Maybe you used to love pickles, but now you think they're gross.
 - Or maybe a song you used to love . . . you don't love anymore!
- **Share with someone next to you about one thing that you now have a different opinion about compared to how you used to think about it.**
- We change our minds all the time — it's a natural part of growing up and learning new things. We start liking different foods, wearing different clothes, and hanging out with different friends.
- But there's someone whose mind never changes about us, no matter what. Let's tune in to our Bible story today to find out more!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | John 4:5–42 (Jesus and the Samaritan Woman)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read and act out the script while sharing the Bible story from John 4:5–42 as [an inventor in the lab](#) showing off robot inventions. Recruit another leader to play the robot character, [dressed as a robot](#) and speaking in a robotic voice or operating a [robot puppet](#) instead.*
- **Inventor:** Hey everyone, it's me Rickie! Welcome back to the *Changing Gears* laboratory. We've been tinkering with more robot story simulators, and I think I've outdone myself! Meet . . . Sammy!
- **Robot:** *[In robotic voice]* Hi Rickie!
- **Inventor:** Isn't she life-like? Well, Sammy here is going to help me tell the story about the time Jesus met with a woman in a town in Samaria. Sammy is going to help us understand what happened by playing the part of the Samaritan woman. Okay, Sammy. Activate story mode!
- **Robot:** Initiating sequence. *[Makes random beeping noises]* Ready.
- **Inventor:** Perfect. So like I was saying, Jesus came to this small Samaritan town, and because it had been quite the journey, he stopped at a drinking well to rest.
- **Robot:** *[In regular speaking voice]* That's right. And that's about the same time that I went to the well, too. And then Jesus asked me for some water. He was all by himself because his friends had gone into town to buy food.
- **Inventor:** Was it out of the ordinary for someone like Jesus to ask you for a drink?
- **Robot:** It really was. First of all, he was a Jew and I was a Samaritan. Our people have a complicated history, and we generally don't get along really well.
- **Inventor:** But he wasn't just any Jew! This was Jesus, the son of God!

- **Robot:** Funny you should say that because that’s what Jesus said. He said that if only I knew who he was, I’d be asking *him* for water. He said that he was the source of eternal water and whoever drinks that water would never be thirsty again.
- **Inventor:** What, I don’t remember reading anywhere about Jesus having an endless water supply . . .
- **Robot:** I don’t think Jesus meant literal water. But I was a little confused, too. When I kept talking with him, I knew that Jesus wasn’t just your average human. He knew everything, including details about me there’s no way he could have known unless he really was the savior we had heard so much about.
- **Inventor:** That sounds like a really great chat you had with Jesus. What did you do?
- **Robot:** What else? I had to tell everyone about Jesus! He taught me so much more about God in that one conversation than I had known my whole life. And even though he knew everything I had ever done in the past, he continued to talk to me and tell me about God.
- **Inventor:** That’s Jesus, alright. And from what I’ve heard, you telling everybody led to more people believing in Jesus! Amazing! Well, Sammy, thanks so much for helping us bring this life-changing story to, well, life. Deactivate story mode!
- **Robot:** My pleasure. Goodbye. [*“Powers down” by lowering head.*]

BIG IDEA | Our past doesn’t change God’s love for us.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write the Big Idea on an 8.5x11” piece of paper and affix it to the torso of the GrowBot. Then, cover it with a flap until it’s time for the big reveal. (You may choose to display the Big Idea from the previous week on a bulletin board to make space for the new one.)
 - ✦ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** As you reveal this week’s Big Idea, show kids the [sign language for “past”](#) which is the same as for the word “before.” This will help kids contextualize what we’re talking about when we say “past” . . . which means we’re referring to anything from before!
- It’s GrowBot time! And the Big Idea is [*lift the flap*]: **Our past doesn’t change God’s love for us.**

VIDEO | Changing Gears, Episode 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week’s episode of [Grow TV](#).

VIDEO | “Keep Moving Forward”

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show this [video clip](#) from “Meet the Robinsons.”
- Lewis is an aspiring inventor, but when his science fair project fails, he loses his confidence and doesn’t think he could be an inventor after all. But his new time-traveling friend and their entire family remind him that failing isn’t bad.
- Our mistakes and experiences in the past help us make better decisions for the future. It’s a part of us that we can’t change, but God loves us in spite of that part of us. **Our past doesn’t change God’s love for us.**

OBJECT LESSON | Transformed

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use a toy that transforms or changes shape, like [this](#) Transformer. Hold up the Transformer in its smallest form. Offer help if they don’t know what it is at first. Then, transform the toy into its best and biggest self. Continue to alternate its poses as you discuss the points below. Then, pass around the Transformer toy and let kids each take a turn transforming it.
 - ✦ **PRETEEN HACK:** Preteens might appreciate more real-life examples of how God loves us and can change us no matter what our pasts are, so consider showing them videos or images of repurposed items [like this](#).

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Depending on the item you choose, it's possible for some kids to get frustrated with trying to transform the small parts. Consider using [pop tubes](#) or [pop fidget toys](#) to show how changes to the objects don't change what the object is.

- **How many of you know what this is?**
- A Transformer is a cool toy because it shows us how one thing can be changed into another thing – a bigger and better and more useful thing. Last time, we learned that we change, or transform, when we know who God is.
- Sometimes in the process of change, we can get stuck. We start to remember who we used to be – the things we used to say or do that weren't the best, the ways that we were unkind, or the poor choices we made – and we start to feel like our old selves again.
- But remember, who we were yesterday doesn't affect God's love for us today. God knows all about us – even the parts we'd rather forget – and loves us just the same.
- While you transform a part of this toy, take a moment to say our Big Idea out loud. **Our past doesn't change God's love for us.**

SCRIPTURE | Romans 5:1–11

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Romans 5:1–11, then talk to the kids using a wrench, a piece of wood or metal with holes, and various nuts and bolts to help them digest the passage.
- **Have you ever watched someone build something using nuts and bolts?** Nut and bolts hold things together. They work together, sort of like gears.
 - As you can see, the bolt is screwed into the nut. If you want to hold two pieces of wood together, you drill a hole through the wood, place the bolt through the hole, and screw it into the nut. When the two are tightened, the wood is quite secure. *[Demonstrate]*
 - **What happens if the bolt is too large? What if the bolt is too small?** The build won't work. *[Demonstrate]*
- Many nuts and bolts are used to make things like cars. You could even use them to make a robot! They have to be exactly the right fit or the product you are trying to build won't work the right way.
 - We just read in Romans that we have been made right with God! This passage shows us that it's not because of anything we've done but because of what Jesus has done to connect us to God. (We'll learn more in the coming weeks about what Jesus did on the cross for us.)
 - But God does not require that we be a certain shape or size. We don't have to be the "perfect fit," meaning we don't have to be perfect in any way. We are loved simply because God loves us.
- Even though we are all sinners who were once far from God, sort of like the wrong nut or bolt, God still offers everyone forgiveness and love. **Our past doesn't change God's love for us.**
- We can be secure in God's love, just like the right nut and bolt makes whatever we are building secure.

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

ACTIVITY | GrowBot Snacks

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Kids can create [edible robots](#) for a snack. Have a random assortment of pieces to build the robots, such as twisted gummies and gum drops. Have kids choose up to eight pieces to add to their marshmallow robot base using toothpicks.
- Today, we heard an amazing Bible story about a woman who had a pretty complicated past. Even though she made some big mistakes, God's love for her never changed! While we build our snack today, let's answer this question:
 - **How does knowing that God's love for me never changes make me feel?**

RESPONSE | Gears of Change

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Just as you did in Week 1, set up a makeshift [assembly line conveyor belt](#) using butcher paper and two long tables. Distribute a pre-cut printable to each kid, or hand out scissors for kids to cut these out themselves, and some markers. Kids will write or draw their responses on a different gear each week to add to the assembly line.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Instead of asking about something general that they wish they could change in the past, ask preteens: "What is one thing you regret doing? If you could go back in time, would you change it? How would you change it? Why do you think God does not allow us to change our past?"
- Today, let's write one thing we wish we could change about something that happened in the past on a gear. This can be something personal or something historical. **If you could choose anything, what would you change?**
- Maybe this change you make to the past would make your life or even this entire world better. But the fact of the matter is, we can't change what's already happened. No matter how painful or embarrassing it might have been, our past is a part of us.
- However, that doesn't make us any less lovable to God! God sees past our past and loves us so much anyway. **Our past doesn't change God's love for us.**

MEMORY VERSE | 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

- **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"**
- Uh oh! Someone forgot to keep the robots in their safety pods last night, and they were all over the lab! You all will have to work in teams to put the words in the correct order.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Help the kids memorize 2 Corinthians 5:17 by playing this word scramble game. Write each word of the verse on a separate index card, and spread the cards out on a table so all are visible. Kids will work in teams to place the words in the correct order and tape them to the wall (or use magnets to attach cards to a magnetic board). For added fun, have kids arrange the cards in order, but in the shape of a robot.
- **(Don't forget to also check out the memory verse signs – a combination of SEE and ASL – available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/2Corinthians5-17.)**

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for your never-changing love for us! In a world where *everything* changes, we feel safe and secure knowing your love for us remains the same, no matter what we might have done in the past. Help us to continue to transform to be more like you. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- What did Jesus ask the Samaritan woman?
- What convinced the woman that Jesus was really the savior?
- What did the Samaritan woman do after her encounter with Jesus at the well?
- Read Romans 5:8. How does this verse show us that today's Big Idea is true?
- Why might we find it hard to talk to God about our mistakes?
- What can we do to remind ourselves that God's love doesn't change?
- What helps you to keep moving forward (to forget about your past and keep trying)?

ACTIVITY | Draw a Bot

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use [this](#) simple tutorial to guide kids in drawing their own robots. To reinforce today's Big Idea, don't allow kids to use pencils and erasers so that their drawings aren't erasable.
- **How did it feel to draw your robot without being able to erase anything?** It probably made you nervous, and you might have made some mistakes. But every mark you made, whether you like them or not, is a part of this amazing robot you drew. I love that your robots are all different and have character!
- God doesn't expect us to erase our past but to learn from it and change in good ways. And no matter what it was, **our past doesn't change God's love for us.** God loves us despite everything we are!