

# Cain Kills Abel



Genesis 4:1-16



**Worship Theme:**

 God deserves our best.

**Weaving Faith Into Life:**

 Children will give their best to God in worship.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<p><b>1</b> Let's Praise God! (up to 25 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Sing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Worship Christ" (1 Peter 3:15)</li> <li>• "God Is for Me"</li> <li>• "Doin' It for the Lord" (Colossians 3:23)</li> <li>• "The Love of God"</li> <li>• "God Has Given to Me"</li> </ul>	<p><b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> KidsOwn Worship DVD</p> <p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Bible, video equipment</p>

**Preschool**

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<p><b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! (up to 25 minutes)</p>	<p><b>* Cain and Abel</b> Explore the Bible story, and talk about the gifts Cain and Abel gave to God.</p>	<p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Bible</p>
	<p><b>Gifts for God</b> Make a flower bouquet for God.</p>	<p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> At least 1 sheet construction paper per 2 kids, 1 chenille wire and 1 marker per child, stamp pad, transparent tape, vase, colored tissue paper, scissors</p>
	<p><b>Practice Brotherly Love</b> Act out ways to show love to each other.</p>	

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! (up to 25 minutes)	<b>*"Gunnar's Story"</b> Watch a video about a boy who does his best for God.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>KidsOwn Worship</i> DVD <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Video equipment
	<b>Our Best Gifts</b> Write a moral to the story of Cain and Abel.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> 2 boxes, wrapping paper, bow, tape, scissors, newsprint, piece of paper and pencil for every 2 children
	<b>* That's Not Fair</b> Get snacks and experience jealousy.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> 1 small snack per child, 1 note card per child, marker

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>3</b> Let's Pray! (up to 10 minutes)	<b>The Offering</b> Offer their gifts to God.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Offering bowl, chenille wires
	<b>A Living Gift</b> Hear Romans 12:1, and offer God the gift of themselves.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Bible
	<b>"Worship Christ" (1 Peter 3:15)</b> Sing a song to God.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>KidsOwn Worship</i> DVD <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Video equipment

\* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together.

Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Let's Learn the Point!

Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

# Cain Kills Abel

Genesis 4:1-16

Cain and Abel, the first two humans born on earth, chose different occupations. Adam had likely done both occupations; each of his sons chose to specialize. This early in human history, we see that God created people to be different—to have different interests and skills. It's interesting, though, that Abel's choice of lifestyle was likely a contemplative one. Herding animals gave him a lot of time to think and reflect on what God had done. Later in Scripture, we see several other prominent thinkers who were animal caretakers—Abraham, Moses, and David, to name a few.

Some have suggested that God accepted Abel's sacrifice because it involved the shedding of blood and rejected Cain's because it didn't. However, nothing God had told humans to that point required blood sacrifice. It's more likely that God accepted or rejected the sacrifices based on the attitude of the heart. Abel's sacrifice came from true gratitude for what God had done for him; Cain's apparently came from a feeling of obligation to maintain God's favor. Abel offered the best he had; Cain offered simply a sampling of his fruits. God wants our best, and he wants our hearts to be right.

God knew Cain was at a dangerous junction. In Genesis 4:7, God's response to Cain was a loving warning—be careful what you do; sin can get the best of you. Unfortunately, Cain's jealousy got the best of him, and he kept going in the direction God already knew he had been heading. The evil started by Adam and Eve would continue. Cain proceeded with his planned deception and murdered his younger brother, Abel.

God did not question Cain after the murder in order to gain information. By engaging Cain with such a question, God was offering him a chance to admit his sin and repent. As with Adam and Eve, Cain's sin in killing Abel was followed by a second sin: lying to God. God's second question was

one of accusation, encouraging Cain to consider what he had done. When God said, "Your brother's blood cries out to me," the word for blood is plural—indicating the inclusion of Abel's would-have-been offspring in the cry. Abel's premature death snuffed out an entire line of descendants, and God was holding Cain responsible.

When God pronounced judgment upon Cain for his sin, Cain finally came to his senses and realized that separation from God would mean his own death. As with Adam and Eve, God was merciful, providing protection for Cain even though he didn't deserve it.

Jealousy and sin ripped apart the family of Adam and Eve. Yet this was the family through whom God would work to populate the earth. God must have known from the beginning what a sinful bunch these humans would be, yet he loved them just the same. And that's a very comforting message for human beings today.

### **Devotion for Leaders**

God has taught us about love through Jesus' life and through our own families. And he will help us love them the way Jesus loves us: mercifully and unconditionally.

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** How has God taught you about love through your family? Take some time to write a note to each member of your immediate family, expressing how God has loved you through each person and expressing your love for each of them. Also pray for your students' families, and ask God to help your students learn more about him through their families.

## Teaching This Bible Story to Children

FaithWeaver weaves together Sunday school, children's church, midweek, and home life as *everyone* in your church studies the same Bible story in interactive, age-appropriate ways.

Having all ages study the same Scripture passage each week occasionally presents what could be a challenge at first glance—having younger children study what many would consider stories that are not age-appropriate. However, because we believe so strongly in the power of having the whole family living out the learning from the same passage, we are careful to identify an age-appropriate truth and develop the session accordingly for all ages.

You might be surprised to see that this week's session teaches children about Cain killing Abel. Rest assured that for this age level we have chosen to focus on the truth that God deserves our best. Check out the session—we think you'll find God has a lot to teach children through this important Scripture!

## Why We Worship for Leaders

It's easy to look at Cain's murderous actions and feel superior. But the emotions Cain experienced are common to us all. Who hasn't been eaten up with anger and jealousy because a friend, a co-worker, or a sibling has done a better job than we have? But Cain missed the whole point. It wasn't that Abel's gift was better than his. Rather, Abel gave to God an acceptable gift—his best gift—and Cain didn't.

God is good beyond measure, wise beyond understanding, loving beyond comprehension. To give God less than our best is to insult God. God is worthy of our best gifts, our best efforts, and our best love. There's no better time to offer our best than when we worship. Help children worship God by offering him their very best.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

**Let's Praise God!**—Make sure your video equipment is ready.

**"Gunnar's Story"**—Watch "Gunnar's Story" at least once before the children arrive.

**Our Best Gifts**—You'll need two gift-wrapped boxes. Neatly wrap one box with pretty wrapping paper and a nice bow. Messily wrap the other gift in torn newsprint.

**That's Not Fair**—You'll need one note card per child. On half the note cards, draw a star. On the other half, draw a circle. Hide the cards around your room.

**Preschool Activities**—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

## 1 Let's Praise God!

Play KidsOwn Worship music videos as children arrive. Have volunteers stand at the entrance of the area to greet others as they arrive.

When everyone has arrived, begin worship.

**Say** Hello, everyone! We serve and worship a wonderful God. Part of worship is recognizing and talking about how good God is. Listen to what the Bible says about worshipping God. Every time you hear something that talks about how good and wonderful and powerful God is, lift your hands and shake them in the air; this will represent the glory we're giving to God.

Choose an older student who reads well to read aloud Psalm 145:1-10. Lead the children in lifting and shaking their hands.

**Say** God is a mighty God. God is the creator and is good and powerful. God has never sinned and is the one true God. God is holy. The Bible passage tells us to tell about God's goodness and awesome works. Let's do that right now. What are some of God's good deeds? What are some of God's awesome works?

Encourage kids to raise their hands when they think of something good about God they'd like to share. Call several children to share their ideas.

**Say** God is good and loves us. God gives good gifts to us. One of the gifts God gives us—the best gift of all—is his Son, Jesus. Jesus is our best friend and gives us forgiveness of our sins. When we know Jesus, we can be with our holy God forever. Because God is holy and because God gives his best to us, he deserves our very best. Because God deserves our very best, we want to worship God the very best we can. Our worship is a gift we give to God. Let's worship God in song.

▶ Sing "Worship Christ" (1 Peter 3:15).

**Say** We worship because God is great and mighty—and he's on our side! Let's sing about that!

▶ Sing "God Is for Me."

**Say** Worship is very special. We worship God because he's God; he's better than people are. We save our worship for God. That's because God deserves the best.

Designate four groups, and assign each group one letter of the word *best*.

**Say** We worship God because he deserves our... Then point to each group in succession so that they call out, "b" "e" "s" "t."

- Ask**
- If you do your very best at sports, how do you play? (I focus hard; I work hard all the time.)
  - If you do your very best in school, how do you study? (I study hard; I make sure I study everything.)
  - If you do your best at being a brother or a sister, what kind of brother or sister are you? (I'm a good brother; I'm a loving sister.)
  - If you try to worship God the best way you can, how do you worship him? (I spend a lot of time with God; I worship God in lots of different ways.)

**Say** ▶ Let's sing this song and worship God because God deserves our *b-e-s-t*. God deserves the best because he is the best. That's why we do our best for the Lord.

▶ Sing "Doin' It for the Lord" (Colossians 3:23).

**Say** ▶ We can rejoice in the Lord always because we're God's children. God takes care of us and gives us what we need just as a good parent does, and we give God our best because we love him more and more every day. Let's sing about God's love for us.

▶ Sing "The Love of God."

**Say** ▶ God deserves our best: He deserves the work of our hands, and he deserves all of our hearts, all that we are. God also deserves our thanks for all he has given us.

▶ Sing "God Has Given to Me."

**Pray** ▶ God, we thank you for showering us with your love. You give us so many good gifts. Help us to give good gifts back to you. Teach us how to give you our best. In Jesus' name, amen.

## 2 Let's Learn the Point!

### *Preschool Activities, pages 51-52*

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Give the Preschool Activities page to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (\*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

### *Elementary Activities*

#### *\* "Gunnar's Story"*

**Say** ▶ Let's watch a video that talks about how to do your best for God. This video is about a boy who does his best at a lot of activities. Let's see what he has to say.

▶ Watch the video "Gunnar's Story." In this interview with Gunnar, he talks about why he does his best in sports, acting, and more.

After the segment, have kids form discussion groups of three or four. After you ask each question, let the discussion groups talk for a minute or so. Then have volunteers report to the entire group what they discussed.

- Ask**
- **What does it take to give God your best?** (Relationship with God; we should give God our time and effort; faith in God.)
  - **What did Gunnar learn about doing his best for God?** (We can serve God in whatever we do; we can do our best even if we don't win.)
  - **What's tough about giving your best to God?** (We might want to give our best to someone or something else; we might think it's better to serve ourselves instead of serving God.)
  - **What are the rewards of giving your best to God?** (We'll have a closer friendship with God; God will be pleased with us.)
  - **How do we honor God when we give him our best?** (We put God first in our lives; we show God that we love him.)

**Say** **Not all of us will win important competitions. We can't all be big stars. But God does want us all to give him our best no matter what. Sometimes that means working really hard and giving God our best effort.**

## *Our Best Gifts*

**Say** **Listen to this story, and be ready at the end of the story to write a moral to go with it. The moral is the lesson the story teaches. Here's an example: The moral of the story about the tortoise and the hare is "Slow and steady wins the race." Here's today's story. There once were two brothers named Cain and Abel. Cain worked at growing fruits and vegetables. Abel worked at raising animals. One day, the brothers decided to give a gift to God.**

**Abel brought a gift of the animals he was raising. It was his best gift.** Put on a table the box you wrapped nicely before the session.

**Cain brought a gift of the fruits he was growing. It wasn't his best gift.** Set out the box you wrapped with newsprint before the session.

**When Cain** (indicate the newsprint box) **saw the present his brother gave God** (indicate the other gift), **he was furious. Cain saw that God was pleased with Abel's gift, and Cain knew that God wasn't pleased with his gift.**

**Instead of giving God another gift—this time, his best gift—Cain decided he was going to get back at Abel for making him look bad. So Cain murdered his brother.**

*(continued on page 53)*

# Cain Kills Abel

Genesis 4:1-16

## Worship Theme:



God deserves our best.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

### Gifts for God—

- Cut 4-inch-wide hearts from assorted colors of construction paper.
- Gather chenille wires, markers, a stamp pad, transparent tape or a stapler, a vase or basket, and a few sheets of colored tissue paper.
- Get permission to place a bouquet of paper heart flowers in the worship area or deliver them to the pastor.
- Make a card for the bouquet that says something like, “God deserves our best. We give him our hearts. These hearts are presented to the Lord by the preschoolers of [church name].”

## Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo treat others with kindness during the “Practice Brotherly Love” activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.



## \* Cain and Abel

Open your Bible to Genesis.

**Say** Our Bible story today comes from the book of Genesis. We have been learning that after God made the world, he created Adam and Eve to live in it. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and had to leave the Garden of Eden. Then Eve had a baby boy and named him Cain. Later she had another baby, a brother for Cain. His name was Abel. When the boys grew up, Cain grew vegetables and Abel raised sheep.

- Ask**
- Have you ever grown anything in a garden?
  - What do you do to help the vegetables or flowers grow? Show me with your actions.

Have the children act out what they would do to take care of a garden.

- Ask**
- Have you ever taken care of an animal?
  - What do you need to do to care for an animal? Show me with your actions.

Have the children act out what they would do to care for animals.

**Say** Cain worked hard in his garden. He watered the plants, and he pulled out the weeds. Abel worked hard taking care of his sheep. He made sure they had green grass to eat and cool water to drink.

One day Cain and Abel each brought a gift to God. Abel gave God the best gift he could find in his herd of sheep. But Cain didn’t give God a good gift. God was not happy with Cain, and Cain was jealous of Abel for doing what was right. Instead of telling God he was sorry, Cain got mad.

**Ask** • What should Cain have done instead?

**Say** Cain could have said he was sorry, and God would have forgiven him. Cain could have done his best for God instead of getting mad at his brother. God deserves our best. Let’s do our best and make a gift for God.

## Gifts for God

**Say** We learned from our story about Cain and Abel that we should give our best to God.

- Ask**
- What are some ways you can give your best to God?

**Say** Sometimes when we love people, we give them gifts. Abel gave God his best lambs as a gift.

**Ask** • What are some gifts you could give to God?

Encourage children to mention such things as their love, sharing with others, and obedience.

## Gifts for God (continued)

**Say** God deserves our best because he loves us so much. The best gift we can give God is our hearts. That means we love God best. I have some special heart flowers for us to make. When we're all finished with them, we'll put them in the church's worship area as a sign to God that we give him our hearts.

Give each child a heart shape. Have children sign their names with the markers or use the stamp pad to put their fingerprints on the heart shapes. Tape or staple the heart shapes to the chenille wires. Line a vase or basket with colored tissue paper.

Have each child add his or her flower to the vase while they pray, "Lord, I give you my best. I give you my heart." Use extra tissue paper between flowers to make them stand up individually, if needed.

When all the children have had a chance to add their flowers to the vase, walk together to the worship area, and deliver the bouquet to its special spot.

### Preschool Leader Tip

If it's possible to do so, have children make their presentation of flowers to God during the adult worship service.

## Practice Brotherly Love

Gather the children around you.

**Say** One way to give our best to God is by obeying what God tells us to do in the Bible. There's a verse in the Bible that would've helped Cain to love Abel instead of hating him. It says, "Love each other." Try saying that with me.

Repeat the verse a few times with the children.

Have children choose partners, and have the pairs spread out around the room.

**Say** Let's obey God by treating each other with love. Let's do our best. I'm going to call out ways to care for each other, and you act them out with your partner. Remember to give God your best!

Name such things as "Take off one shoe, and help each other put your shoes back on"; "Pretend to help your partner find a lost pet"; "Pretend to serve your partner a snack"; "Pretend to tuck your partner into bed"; "Pretend to share a toy"; and "Pretend to comfort your partner when he or she gets hurt."

**Say** You're such good helpers! You gave God your best. Hug your partner now and say, "Love each other!"

(continued from page 50)

**Then Cain was in more trouble. Not only had he given God a gift that was less than his best, but he had also hurt someone else who had given a sincere, good gift to God.**

**Say** ▶ **That's the story. Now it's your job to write a moral for the story.**

Have kids form discussion groups of two or three, making sure younger children are in groups with older children. Distribute paper and pencils. Have the groups work for two or three minutes on writing a moral for the story of Cain and Abel. Then have individual groups share their ideas with the larger group.

- Ask** ▶
- **What does the story of Cain and Abel tell you about giving to God?** (We should give God our best right away; what we give God honors him; as long as we give our best, God is pleased.)
  - **Why was Abel's gift more acceptable than Cain's?** (It was his best; Cain was selfish by not giving his best gift.)

**Say** ▶ **You've all had great insights into this story. We serve a perfect, holy God who deserves our best. But God doesn't look at all our gifts and accept only the best one. God doesn't care if your friend is better at something than you are or if you're better than your friend. God cares that we each give him our best gift.**

## \* *That's Not Fair*

Have kids sit in a circle.

**Say** ▶ **You might have noticed some of the note cards around the room. When I say go, you'll find a note card, bring it back to the circle, and sit down. Ready? Go!**

Allow time for each child to find a note card and bring it back to the circle. Help any kids who can't find a card. Then bring out the snacks, and show them to kids.

**Say** ▶ **Now look at your card. If you have a star on your card, come up and grab a snack.**

Let kids with stars on their cards get snacks and start eating them. Put the rest of the snacks away for now. Some of the kids may protest. Ask if they have stars on their cards, and remind everyone that only the kids with stars on their cards get snacks. Then sit with the kids.

- Ask** ▶
- **When you found out not everyone was going to get a snack, what did you think?** (It's not fair; I wish I had a star on my card.)
  - **Have you ever been jealous of someone? What happened?** (I got jealous when my brother got to stay up late.)
  - **What do you think Cain was thinking when God accepted Abel's gift but not Cain's?** (Cain was jealous; he wished he gave God a better gift.)

**Say** ▶ **When Cain and Abel gave their gifts to God, Abel looked better**

than Cain did. Cain was jealous of his brother, so Cain got angry and hurt Abel.

**Ask** • **What could Cain have done instead of getting angry and hurting his brother?** (Cain could have tried harder to give his best to God; Cain could have asked Abel to help him do better.)

Read aloud Romans 12:10: “Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.”

**Say** **If Cain had done a better job of loving his brother, he wouldn’t have gotten jealous and hurt him. You might have felt jealous of everyone who got a snack today. Now we’re going to practice this Bible verse and “be devoted to one another in love.”**

Bring out the snacks again. Instruct the kids with stars on their cards to come up and get another snack, but this time they’ll give their snacks to the kids who don’t have stars on their cards.

### 3 **Let’s Pray!**

#### *The Offering*

**Say** **Whatever we give to God, no matter how big or small it is, should be our very best. Think of a gift you’d like to give to God—make it your very best. You won’t have to tell anyone what it is. I’ll give you a chenille wire, and you can bend your wire into a shape that represents the gift you’re giving to God.**

Distribute chenille wires, and give the children some time to shape them.

**Say** **Let’s offer our gifts to God as we take the offering. While you’re waiting for the offering bowl to come to you, silently tell God about the gift you’re giving to him. Tell God why you chose to give him that particular gift. Then tell God why he’s worthy of your very best.**

Pass the offering bowl, and have the children offer their chenille “sculptures” as well as their money. While children are passing the offering bowl, periodically call out reminders to the children about what they’re talking to God about.

**Pray** **God, you are perfect and holy. You are strong. You are wise. You are good. You are faithful. You are loving. We want to give you gifts to show you that we love and honor you. Please accept our gifts. May they bring joy to you. In Jesus’ name, amen.**

#### *A Living Gift*

**Say** **The Bible tells us about the ultimate gift we can give to God. It’s the very best gift, and it’s what God truly wants from us. God wants us to give him our lives. Listen to this verse from the book of Romans. Have a volunteer read aloud Romans 12:1. **The Bible****

says our spiritual act of worship is to give God ourselves as a living sacrifice.

**Ask** • What do you think that means? (To spend time with God; to give up other things that don't honor God.)

**Say** Let's give God our best gift. Follow my actions while we pray together.

**Pray** God, we want to give ourselves to you as living sacrifices. Touch your head.

God, we give you our minds—what we think about.

**Say** Take a moment to give God your mind and your thoughts as a gift.

Pause before continuing. Then touch your heart.

**Pray** God, we give you our hearts—who we are and what we feel.

**Say** Take a moment to give God your heart as a gift.

Pause before continuing. Hold out your hands.

**Pray** God, we give you our hands—what we do.

**Say** Take a moment to give God your actions as a gift.

Pause before continuing.

**Pray** God, we are your creation, and you deserve every part of us. Help us to give ourselves to you as living sacrifices every day. In Jesus' name, amen.

## *"Worship Christ" (1 Peter 3:15)*

**Say** Let's sing "Worship Christ" (1 Peter 3:15) to close our time together. There's a line in this song that says, "He is Lord of all and the Lord of our life."

When God is the Lord of our life, it means we give him the very best of us. We do that when we give ourselves to God with our actions, our thoughts, and our singing. Let's sing to God.

 Sing "Worship Christ" (1 Peter 3:15).