



12

What Is the Gospel?

Key Theme

- God provides salvation from sin through Jesus.

Key Passages

- Romans 3:23; John 3:16

Lesson Focus

- Jesus brings good news to sinners.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will color the Jesus Brings Good News to Sinners coloring sheet. The sheet will be used later during Activity 1.



Circle Time

Prayer—Using the Prayer page of the Flip Chart, discuss prayer and give each child the opportunity to pray after determining what type of prayer you will offer today.

God's Word—Salvation from sin is the main message of the Bible. It is because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that we are able to come to God as pure and holy. Our sins are forgiven in Christ if we repent and trust in Jesus as Savior.

Song—Students will clap and march around the room as they sing the new song Tell the Gospel News.



Activity 1: The Gospel Relay

Students will run a relay telling the “good news” that Jesus died for sinners.



Activity 2: Jesus Is Alive!

Students will color a picture of the empty tomb with a stone students can roll away.



Memory Verse Review/Snack

Children will review the memory verse while enjoying the snack for the day. You may want to use the snack as incentive to recite and/or repeat the memory verse.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



FOR THE TEACHER

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



COME ON IN

- Print one Jesus Brings Good News to Sinners coloring sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Jesus Brings Good News to Sinners coloring sheet for each student
- Crayons



CIRCLE TIME

- Practice the "Tell the Gospel News" song. Lyrics can be found at the back of this Teacher Guide.

- Lesson Flip Chart



THE GOSPEL RELAY

- Use the Jesus Brings Good News to Sinners coloring sheets from the Come On In activity.

- Jesus Brings Good News to Sinners coloring sheets from Come On In activity



JESUS IS ALIVE!

- Print one Jesus Is Alive! coloring sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Print and cut one stone from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Color and assemble a Jesus Is Alive sheet.

- Jesus Is Alive! coloring sheet for each student
- Stones to be attached to the coloring sheets
- Scissors
- Crayons
- Brads
- Completed Jesus Is Alive sheet



MEMORY VERSE REVIEW/SNACK

- Prepare and bring snacks.

- Lesson Flip Chart for memory verse review
- Snacks



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

In past lessons we have introduced our students to the Bible—where it came from, how to study it, why we can believe it. These are all critical areas of learning for all of us, but what is the central message of the Bible? Let's start at the beginning. What happened long ago in the Garden of Eden—Adam's fall into sin—has affected us all.

God's first proclamation of a coming Redeemer who would crush the serpent's head appeared in Genesis (Genesis 3:15). And the death and Resurrection of Jesus the Messiah fulfilled this prophecy—revealing God's plan of redemption.

To truly understand the good news of the Bible, we must grasp the bad news of the Bible first. Because God is a holy God—righteous and separate from sin—He cannot dwell with sinful man, and His perfect justice demands that He punish disobedience. The Bible tells us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). This is the bad news—that all people are separated from God, born spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1), under His just penalty, and destined for an eternity in hell.

There is absolutely no way that we can work our way to God or ever be good enough to merit eternal life. In fact, the Bible makes it clear that there are no good works that will commend us to God.

Isaiah 64:6 – But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Ephesians 2:8–9 – For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Titus 3:5 – Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us . . .

God sent His own Son, Jesus, to become a man, live a sinless life, and then die on the Cross, paying the penalty of death that we all deserve. "God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). In the death of Christ we see the justice of God satisfied and the love of God demonstrated (Romans 5:8).

So, what do we need to do to receive forgiveness for our sins against God and inherit eternal life? The apostle Paul makes the essential elements of the gospel clear.

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel

which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1–4).

Jesus's death for our sins, His burial, and His Resurrection are the heart of the good news. And what are we required to do to spend eternity with our Creator?

Mark 1:14–15 – Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Acts 16:30–31 – And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved."

Acts 20:20–21 – I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:9–10 – That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Repentance of one's sin, and trust in Christ as Savior are all that is required to be saved. And when that occurs in our hearts, we are adopted by God as sons, joint heirs with Christ (Ephesians 1:5; Romans 8:16–17); we are born again to a new and living hope (1 Peter 1:3); we become new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17); and we have the sure hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2). It is not until we grasp the bad news—we are sinners in desperate need of a Savior—that we will appreciate the good news—we can be reconciled to God by the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Praise be to God for His grace and mercy demonstrated in the good news of the gospel—the central theme of the Bible!

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

In today's pluralistic society with its many religions and insistence on tolerance for all views, it is important

that we understand that the good news of the Bible is not just one way among many. Rather, Jesus and the apostles make it abundantly clear that faith in this gospel message is the ONLY way to be reconciled to God. Jesus is the ONLY mediator between man and God (1 Timothy 2:5).

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name [Jesus] under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

Why is Jesus the only way? Because, as Dr. Bruce Ware puts it:

1. Christ alone was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin and as such, He alone qualifies to be Savior (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38).
2. Christ alone is God incarnate and as such, He alone qualifies to be Savior (John 1:1–18; Hebrews 1:1–3; 2:14–18; Philippians 2:5–11; 1 Timothy 2:5–6).
3. Christ alone lived a sinless life and as such, He alone qualifies to be Savior (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15, 7:23–28, 9:13–14; 1 Peter 2:21–24).
4. Christ alone died a penal, substitutionary death and as such, He alone qualifies to be Savior (Isaiah 53:4–6; Romans 3:21–26; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
5. Christ alone rose from the dead, triumphant over sin and as such, He alone qualifies to be Savior (Acts 2:22–24; Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3–8).¹

No other person, and no man-made religion, offers the true path of salvation and reconciliation with God. Merely acknowledging that God exists, or believing there is a God, does not save anyone. Scripture tells us that even the demons believe that (James 2:19). It is only through repentance and faith in Jesus and His work on the Cross that anyone can be saved.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The early church preached the true gospel amidst much opposition. For the first two centuries, Christians were persecuted, killed, ostracized, and considered second-class citizens. Yet, the gospel spread and the blood of the martyrs only seemed to validate the message, increasing its power.

It was in AD 312 that the Roman Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity and, as a result, he commanded official toleration of Christianity and other religions. And then, in 380, Emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the empire. From this point on, Christians could worship openly, and they enjoyed the protection and favor of the government.

Throughout the following centuries, segments of the

¹ Bruce Ware, “Only One Way? The Exclusivity of Jesus Christ and the Gospel,” <http://www.christianity.com/christian%20foundations/christianity%20main/11602124>

church began to include doctrines and practices that were not found in the Bible nor were part of the early church’s beliefs and traditions. These included the special authority of the Pope, the concept of purgatory as a place for after-life purification of sins, the immaculate conception and assumption of Mary, the doctrine of transubstantiation (that the bread in the Eucharist becomes the true body of Christ and the wine becomes His blood), and the general belief that one’s good works had to outweigh the bad in order to attain eternal life.

While the true gospel had been corrupted by officials in the church, God always preserved a remnant who believed the truth of His Word. And in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this remnant courageously began the movement known as the Reformation. God used these believers to restore the gospel of justification by faith in Christ alone, by grace alone—through the truth of the Bible alone.

Today, we again find the professing church corrupted and moving away from the truth and simplicity of the gospel message according to God’s Word. Many churches are distorting the Word of God in hopes of attracting more people to their services. These false messages can range from prosperity preaching (that God wants us all to be healthy and wealthy), to easy believism (just say a few words and you will be saved for eternity), to counseling sessions based on secular psychology (come see us and we can fix your life right up), to universalism (anyone can get to heaven as long as you are sincere in what you believe), and the list goes on—as far as man’s corrupt mind will take it.

The message of the gospel is clear. We are saved through repentance and faith in the God-Man, Jesus Christ, who came to earth, died for the sins of His people, and rose again from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). He is the only Mediator and He sits at the right hand of God the Father waiting to make His enemies His footstool (Hebrews 10:13).



BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord, what could be more important than this lesson on the gospel—presenting your good news to these children. I ask that you would have mercy on me as I try to adequately explain the truth of your Word and what it could mean to them. That you would provide a way for sinful man to spend eternity with you is breathtaking. And that I would be privileged to share this truth and plant its seeds in these young minds is humbling and overwhelming to me. I cannot do it justice on my own. I only pray that I will speak your words and by your mercy, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the truth of this lesson will find fertile soil and begin to grow into a tree that will bring forth its fruit in season and whose leaf shall not wither.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will color the Jesus Brings Good News to Sinners coloring sheet.

During this time you should be at the door welcoming the children as they come in and directing them to sit down at the tables and begin the activity. Have an aid/helper ready to engage the children with the activity.



REVIEW

Using the Flip Chart, quickly review the previous lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the lesson pages from the Flip Chart. Remind the children of each lesson's focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds, and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Circle Time

In an orderly manner, have the children assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs.

Bring your Bible, stuffed animal, Flip Chart, completed Jesus Is Alive! coloring sheet, and any other props you brought or prepared for this lesson.

PRAYER

This prayer time is designed to get children to begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to get them to understand that they can pray. Use a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—or appropriate object to pass around the circle as each child gets his/her turn to pray. Only the child with the stuffed animal is allowed to pray or speak during this time. Using the same stuffed animal or other object all year will add continuity and structure to this time.

After the children are situated in the circle, say:

We start our Bible Study with prayer. Let's pray. *Turn to the Prayer page in the Flip Chart. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there. Then determine which type you want the children to pray today.*

- I love you prayers—Adoration
- I'm sorry prayers—Confession
- Thank you prayers—Thanksgiving
- Please prayers—Supplication

Today Supplication is suggested. You might proceed this way.

Today let's say prayers of supplication—and ask God for something we need.

I'll start. Dear God, you say we can come to you for anything. You care for us and love us. Today, Lord, could you please . . . *(insert personal prayer here).*

► Prior to making your transition to circle time, we suggest you take time for restroom breaks and hand washing.

► Preschoolers need to move. This is a good opportunity to get them to move. Make an orderly transition to the circle time. You can have carpet squares if you want to sit on the floor, or help them to move their chairs into the circle.

The prayers you begin with should be specific to your needs. This will model to the children that you believe God does care about all the details of your life and you pray to Him about these things. Your example will increase their confidence in praying to God.

Pass the stuffed animal around the circle giving all the children an opportunity to say a prayer asking God for something.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away and we'll get into God's Word.

GOD'S WORD

These first four questions will be repeated each week. The repetition of these questions will help to solidify these simple but foundational truths in the children's minds at a young age.

? Before we begin, what is this? *Hold up your Bible. The Bible!*

? What is in this Bible? *God's Holy Word!*

? What does the Bible tell us? *Everything we need to know!*

? And all God's words in this Bible are what? *True!*

As you teach, refer often to the Flip Chart picture to keep the children engaged.

? We have been talking a lot about the Bible. It is God's Word and it is ALL true! This is all really good stuff and we need to know it and trust it.

But why is the Bible an important book to study? What is the Bible about?

Allow children to answer.

The Bible is about Jesus Christ and what He did when He came to earth. The main message of the Bible is the gospel. Gospel means good news. Jesus brings good news to sinners.

? Remember, God hates sin. God must punish sin. Remember we learned about the Flood of Noah's day? Why did God send the Flood? *Allow answers.*

The people were sinning. Refer to the Lesson 11 Flip Chart, Catastrophe.

Right. And then later God confused the language of all the people. They could all understand each other and then they couldn't. Why did God confuse the language? *Allow for answers. The people sinned. They disobeyed God. Refer to the Lesson 11 Flip Chart, Confusion.*

Right. Do you see? God has to punish sin. Well I am going to read something from God's true Word that doesn't sound like good news. Listen carefully as I read. *Read Romans 3:23 out loud to the students. Emphasize the word "all."*

Who has sinned according to God's Word? *All have sinned.*

That's right! All of us. You, and me, and everybody in the world. We have all sinned. We have all disobeyed God. We are all sinners. This is a big problem for us; a really big problem. God does not like sin.

? Because of our sins, we deserve to be separated from God forever. Because of our sin, God must punish us. This is very bad news for us! But

Romans 3:23

guess what? There is also good news! God has made a way for me, and you, and everybody to come to Him! We don't have to be separated from God! This good news is called the gospel. It is about Jesus and what He did for us! Jesus brings good news to sinners!

? Would you like to hear how God made a way for us to come to Him? *Yes!*

Let's read about it in God's Word. *Read John 3:16 out loud to the students. Read with expression and joy!*

John 3:16

? Who did God send? *His only Son!*

? Who is God's Son who came to earth? What is His name? *Jesus!*

? Why did God send His son? *He loved the world.*

This is the good news! This is the gospel! God sent His only Son so that whoever believes in Him would be saved from God's punishment. Even though we are sinners, God loves us and wants us to be with Him. God does not want us to die in our sins! Jesus brings good news to sinners.

► As you ask questions, reread the verse if necessary.

? Was Jesus a sinner like me, and you, and everybody else? *No!*

No! Jesus is God! Jesus is perfect! He never did anything wrong. Because Jesus is perfect, He is the only one who can take away sin and death.

? How did Jesus take away sin and death? *Let the students give answers. Point to the Cross on the Flip Chart as a hint. He died on the Cross.*

Jesus took away sin and death by dying on the Cross for our sins. Jesus brings good news to sinners like us.

? Do you know why it is good news that Jesus died on the Cross? *Allow for answers.*

It is good news because Jesus died on the Cross for our sins! We deserve punishment from God. We deserve to be separated from God forever and ever. But Jesus took our place. Jesus brings good news to sinners.

The Bible tells us that everyone who believes in Jesus will live forever with God in heaven one day! What good news! God has provided salvation through Jesus! Because of Jesus, anyone who believes, trusting in His death on the Cross, is forgiven and God will not punish our sin. Jesus brings good news to sinners!

? After Jesus died on the Cross, His body was placed in a tomb. What is a tomb? *Let the students give answers.*

Refer to the Flip Chart. In Bible times, a tomb was where bodies were placed after a person died. A tomb was a huge hole in a rock, like a cave. A big stone covered the entrance so no one could get in. The stone sealed the tomb shut.

? After three days of being dead in the tomb, guess what happened? *Let the students give answers.*

Jesus came back to life! Jesus is alive! Jesus conquered death! He won! Because Jesus died on the Cross and then rose from the dead, we can be forgiven! Jesus brings good news to sinners!

? Isn't that great news? *Yes!*

Jesus loves us and died on the Cross for sins. The Bible says that whoever believes in Him will not perish—they will not be punished forever. They will be able to go to heaven and spend forever with God! I love the good news of Jesus! He brings good news to sinners! We read about it in the Bible!

SONG

What good news we have heard today! Now I will teach you a new song that you can share with your friends and family about the good news of the gospel. Sing "Tell the Gospel News." The lyrics to this song can be found on the Song Sheet at the end of this Teacher Guide and on the Song Page of the Flip Chart.



The Gospel Relay

Jesus brings good news to sinners! We are going to share that good news with each other in a special race! First, I want you all to repeat that phrase with me, "Jesus brings good news to sinners—the gospel!" *Be sure children can repeat the phrase for the relay.*

MATERIALS

- Jesus Brings Good News to Sinners coloring sheets colored during the Come On In activity

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the class into two teams. Each child should have the Jesus Brings Good News to Sinners coloring sheet they colored earlier during the Come On In activity. Children will line up at one end of the room. First team member will take the coloring sheet, run across the room and put it in

his team's stack. The child will run back, tag the next team member, and repeat the phrase, "Jesus brings good news to sinners—the gospel!" The next team member will run and do the same thing. You may have to coach them as to what to say.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Jesus brings good news to sinners! That good news is the gospel. We are all sinners and deserve God's punishment. But Jesus lived a perfect life—He never sinned. And He died on the Cross so that those who are sorry for their sins, ask forgiveness, and believe and trust in Jesus like the Bible says, will go to heaven. God will not punish them for their sins. They will be forgiven.



Jesus Is Alive!

I have a simple and fun activity for you at the table! We are going to color a picture of the empty tomb and attach a stone to it that can open and close the tomb like this! Show example.

MATERIALS

- Jesus Is Alive coloring sheets
- Scissors
- Crayons
- Brads

INSTRUCTIONS

Give each student the two pieces of the Jesus Is Alive! coloring sheet and crayons. When the students are finished coloring, help them attach the stone to the tomb with the brass brad. The stone can be opened to show that the tomb was empty—Jesus is alive!

Go ahead and color the picture!

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

The gospel is the good news that Jesus defeated sin and death! Because Jesus conquered sin and death, whoever puts their trust in Him will be with God in heaven someday!



Memory Verse/Snack

Psalms 119:89 Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in heaven.

After thanking God for your snack, review the memory verse with the children while enjoying the snack for the day. You may want to use the snack as incentive to recite and/or repeat the memory verse.

Use the Memory Verse page in the Flip Chart. Explain the verse to the children as you go over the verse together. Say the verse and point at each picture several times. Ask the children if anyone wants to try to say it on their own.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

The Bible says we are ALL sinners. And God hates sin! Our sins have separated us from God. But God made a way that we could be forgiven of our sins. God sent Jesus to live a perfect life and then die on the Cross for our sins! After being in the tomb for three days, Jesus came back to life, conquering sin and death! God has provided salvation through Jesus! This is the gospel—the good news of Jesus to sinners! Whoever is sorry for their sins, believes in Jesus and His good news—that He is God's Son, that

He died on the Cross and rose from the dead—will be forgiven of their sins! Jesus brings good news to sinners! We learn about the good news of Jesus and the gospel in the Bible—God’s true Word.

GOD’S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

This is good news about Jesus. And I want you to remember that the only way we can get to heaven is through Jesus. Jesus is God. And He said that He is the only way and the only truth. Believing in Jesus is the only way anyone will be forgiven of their sins and get to heaven after they die.

The gospel is good news that we should praise God for! Let’s end our time in prayer and praise to God who is merciful to us!

► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



Group Prayer Time

- Praise God for His mercy in sending Jesus to die for our sins.
- Praise God that Jesus conquered sin and death.
- Thank God that whoever believes in Him, will be with God in heaven one day.

Do you still have more time? Review the past lessons using the Flip Chart, add another coloring page, recite and review the current and past memory verses, sing more songs, bring out play dough. Keep the children occupied with intentional, God-centered activities until their parents come to pick them up.

Song Sheet

TELL THE GOSPEL NEWS

(To the tune "The Farmer in the Dell")

Oh, tell the Gospel News.

(The farmer in the dell,)

Oh, tell the Gospel News.

(The farmer in the dell,)

Jesus . . . He is Alive.

(Hi-ho, the derry-o,)

Oh, Tell the Gospel News.

(The farmer in the dell.)

Christ gave His life for us.

He died upon the Cross.

So He could conquer sin and death,

So we can be with God.

We are free from sin.

We are free from death.

If we put our hope and trust,

Our hope and trust in Him!

