



11

Cain and Abel

Key Themes

- God demands obedience and trust.
- God is merciful toward sinners.

Key Passages

- Genesis 4:2–5, 4:8

Lesson Focus

- God accepted Abel's offering but not Cain's.
God knows our hearts.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will color and add stickers to the hearts drawn on the newsprint covering the tables.



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—Students will hear how God accepted Abel's offering, but not Cain's because He knew what was in each of their hearts. He also knows what is in each of our hearts and we cannot fool Him.

Song—Students will praise God by marching, clapping, and singing the songs "God Created!," "Sin Entered In," and "Clean My Heart."



Activity 1: Different Offerings Tunnel Relay

Students will pick up a black or white heart, run through the tunnel, and place the black hearts with Cain and the white hearts with Abel to remind them that even though both offerings looked good, God knew their hearts. God knew Abel loved Him and Cain did not.



Activity 2: God Knows Our Hearts

Students will circle the hidden hearts then color the God Knows Our Hearts activity sheet. God knew that Cain's heart was bad and he didn't love God. God knew that Abel's heart was good and he did love God. God knows our hearts, too!



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

- Draw some heart outlines in various sizes onto newsprint and cover each table in the room before class.

- Newsprint to cover each table
- Optional: Heart stickers to add to the newsprint
- Crayons



CIRCLE TIME

- Plan to bring in fruit, vegetables, a stuffed sheep or pictures of sheep with a shepherd for your use during the lesson.
- Practice the songs on the Song Sheet at the back of this Teacher Guide.

- Lesson Flip Chart
- Bible
- Stuffed animal for prayer time
- Fruits and vegetables
- Stuffed sheep or pictures of sheep with a shepherd



DIFFERENT OFFERINGS TUNNEL RELAY

- Print one Different Offerings Tunnel Relay sheets from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Cut apart the Cain and Abel Offering illustrations.
- Copy and cut out several copies (so you have 3–4 per student) of the white and black hearts.

- Cain and Abel Offering illustrations (one each)
- Black and white hearts (3–4 copies of each per student)
- Large sheet, blanket, or piece of fabric to make a tunnel
- Container for the black and white hearts
- Tape



GOD KNOWS OUR HEARTS

- Print one God Knows Our Hearts activity sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- God Knows Our Hearts activity sheet for each student
- Crayons



MEMORY VERSE REVIEW/SNACK

- Prepare and bring snacks.

- Lesson Flip Chart for memory verse review
- Snacks



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

To prepare your heart and mind for this week's lesson, read Genesis 4:1–17; Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:11–12.

The sin committed at the Fall of man through the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the garden (Genesis 3:6–7) brought corruption on the human race. Adam and Eve were cursed by God (Genesis 3:16–17) and sent out of the garden (Genesis 3:24). Eve had two sons—Cain and Abel. As they grew, Abel was a keeper of the sheep, but Cain tilled the ground (Genesis 4:1–2). After some time, they each brought an offering to the Lord—Cain some of the “fruit of the ground,” and Abel “the firstborn of his flock” (Genesis 4:3–4). In Genesis we are simply told that “the Lord respected Abel and his offering, He did not respect Cain and his offering” (4:4–5). But why?

Various Scriptures from the New Testament help to solve this puzzle. The book of Hebrews records that Abel made his offering “by faith” and that “he was righteous” (Hebrews 11:4). Cain, however, was of the wicked one and murdered his brother because his works were evil (1 John 3:11–12).

Cain's actions spoke loudly of the desires of his heart. Because of his jealousy, he killed his brother—who walked by faith in righteousness toward God.

And God used this unlikely scenario to display His gracious mercy. God is a holy God and, because of His holiness, had to judge Cain's sin. But instead of requiring a life for a life as the law demanded (Exodus 21:23–24), God spared Cain, making him a fugitive and vagabond on the earth—a fugitive specially marked by God and protected from those seeking revenge for his offense (Genesis 4:14–15).

The effects of the Fall came fast and furious. It doesn't take long for sin to corrupt and this first murder illustrates that. In the first generation after Adam and Eve, we see jealousy, selfishness, and hatred. And yet, God was already revealing the depths of the mercy in His character—a mercy that has repeatedly been demonstrated as man continues to disobey God in his sinfulness.

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

“Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife” (Genesis 4:16–17).

One of the most-asked questions about the book of Genesis is, “Where did Cain get his wife?” This question is often used by skeptics to discredit the historical truth of the book of Genesis because most Christians don't know how to answer it. If Adam and Eve were the first humans, and if their first two sons were Cain and Abel, then where did Mrs. Cain come from? Some have answered this by saying that God must have created other people or races on earth who did not descend from Adam and Eve. However, Scripture is very clear that ALL people are descendants of Eve (Genesis 3:20). And since only descendants of Adam and Eve can be saved, believers need to be able to show that Cain's wife—like all other humans—was a descendant of Adam and Eve.

The answer to this question is, in fact, quite simple: Cain married his sister or perhaps another close relative such as a niece. Genesis 5:3–4 states:

And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters.

Notice that the Bible tells us that Adam had “sons and daughters.” Exactly how many, we aren't told, but given that Adam lived more than 900 years, it could have been a lot! One Jewish tradition states that Adam had 33 sons and 23 daughters.

Many people reject this very clear answer, citing the law against brother-sister marriages. But keep in mind that way back then (about 6,000 years ago) close relatives could marry—they had to in order to start their own families. Even Abraham married his half-sister (Genesis 20:12). It was not until much later—2,500 years after Cain married his wife—that God commanded Moses that people were not to marry close relatives (Leviticus 18:6). We know now that this command, directed by the providence of God, protects us from many genetic deformities that could result from the marrying of close relatives. These deformities are one of the results of sin and its consequences, which brought disease and death to God's perfect creation. Cain and Mrs. Cain, living near the beginning of creation, wouldn't have had as many genetic mutations as we do today, so marrying a close relative was no problem.

God's Word gives us answers. We need to approach all questions with biblical glasses, standing on the authority of the Scripture—knowing that the Bible is our starting point.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the account of Cain and Abel, we see that God respected the offering of Abel (Genesis 4:4). Abel's offering was the firstborn of his flock—an animal offering presented with a pure heart. As we look at animal offerings throughout biblical history, we can see the amazing foreshadowing and significance of them.

The very first animal sacrifice was made by God Himself to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve after they had disobeyed and introduced sin to the human race (Genesis 3:20–21). Adam and Eve deserved instant death because of their sin, yet we see God displaying His glorious mercy as He killed the animal(s) to make garments as coverings for the sinners. In hindsight we can see how this is a foreshadowing of the substitutionary death of an animal to pay for sin. The foundational elements of God's plan of redemption are shown here on the occasion of the first sin in the Garden of Eden.

Scripture tells us of more customary animal sacrifices ordained by God. Noah sacrificed animals after the Flood (Genesis 8:20), Job sacrificed animals for the sins of his family (Job 1:5), and Abraham sacrificed the ram that God provided as a substitute for Isaac (Genesis 22:13). Clearly, God had revealed the concept of substitutionary sacrifice long before the time of Moses and the Law.

However, it was at the time of Moses, when the Israelites left Egypt, that God specifically appointed a sacrificial system to cover the sins of His people. Leviticus 17:11 states "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." In this system, the life of the animal atoned for—or covered—the offenses of the sinner; the animal died as a substitute for the sinner.

We know, of course, that animal sacrifices can never cleanse us from our sin. Scripture states, ". . . in

those [Old Testament] sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Hebrews 10:3–4). The ultimate purpose of the sacrificial system was to demonstrate that the penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). It was God's way of preparing us to receive and believe in the perfect Lamb of God whose blood would finally take away the sins of all who would turn to Him in repentance and faith (John 1:29).

This we know, that before the universe was created, before time existed, before man was formed, God knew that we (in Adam) would sin. He also had a predetermined plan by which salvation for our sins could be received through the free gift of grace by the death of the perfect sacrifice—Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God and only Savior.

What an amazing God we serve! "For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Holy, sovereign God, thank you for your Word. Please seal it to my heart and give me total faith and trust that every word is true. Instill in me, dear Lord, a heart that is obedient, faithful, and righteous like the heart of Abel. Please accept my life as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to you. And please work in the hearts of the children this week. Give them the desire to please you with all their hearts—not just in appearances—but with all their soul. Thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness, justice, and mercy.



COME ON IN

As children arrive . . .

- They will color the hearts on the newsprint covering the tables. Optional: Supply stickers of hearts to be used to further decorate the newsprint.

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. Remember, children learn by repetition and review.

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 stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, fruit and vegetables, stuffed sheep or pictures of sheep with a shepherd, 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.

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 Confession is suggested. You might proceed this way:

Today let's say prayers of confession—and tell God we're sorry for the sinful things we've done.

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.

➤ 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.

I'll start. Dear God, you will forgive all our sins. Please forgive me for . . .
(insert personal prayer).

Pass the stuffed animal around the circle giving all the children an opportunity to say a prayer of confession.

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!*

Refer to Lesson 10 Flip Chart. When Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit God told them not to eat, sin entered the world and everything changed. Now everyone would sin. And we will see that it didn't take long for people to get really mean in their sin. Adam and Eve left the garden and started their family. They had two sons, Cain and Abel. Today we are going to see what the Bible has to tell us about these two boys, Cain and Abel.

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

Genesis 4:2

First let's see what the two brothers did when they grew up. Listen carefully as I read—the Bible tells us. *Read Genesis 4:2 emphasizing "Abel was a keeper of sheep, Cain a tiller of the ground." Refer to the Lesson 11 Flip Chart. Abel took care of sheep. He was a shepherd. Cain was a farmer.*

Genesis 4:3

One day Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord. Let me read what they brought! First I'll read about Cain. *Read Genesis 4:3 emphasizing "an offering of the fruit of the ground."*

- ? What does this say Cain offered? *Fruit.*

Show the children the fruit and vegetables you brought. Cain was a farmer. So, he brought some of the things that he grew in his garden.

Genesis 4:4a

- ? Now what do you think Abel brought as an offering to the Lord? *Allow discussion. The Flip Chart illustration could give them an idea. Let's find out. Read Genesis 4:4a emphasizing "the firstborn of his flock." What did Abel bring? A sheep from his flock. Bring out your stuffed lamb or pictures of sheep or goats with a shepherd.*

Genesis 4:4b–5

They both brought God offerings from their work—Cain, fruit and vegetables and Abel, sheep from his flock. What did God think of these offerings? Let's find out! *Read Genesis 4:4b–5.*

Did you hear that? It seems that God accepted Abel's offering of the sheep. He did not accept Cain's offering of the fruit and vegetables. And

the Bible tells us that Cain got angry. Cain got angry at God and at his brother Abel. He was not happy.

You see, both Cain's and Abel's offerings seemed really good. *Refer to your props.* So why would God accept Abel's offering of the sheep and not Cain's offering of the fruit and vegetables? Well, it is because God knew what they were thinking. God knew what was really in their hearts. God accepted Abel's offering. Abel loved God, and God knew he was righteous. God knew Abel wanted to do his very best for God. *Refer to the Flip Chart.* God did not accept Cain's offering. God knew Cain's heart—that it was sinful and his works were really evil. *Refer to the Flip Chart.* Cain did not want to do his very best for God.

God knows your hearts, too. He knows exactly why you do what you do. You can't fool God at any time. He wants you to do your best for Him all the time. And He knows when you aren't doing your best. He sees everything. He knows everything about your heart, just like He knew Abel's heart was good and Cain's heart was not. *Hold up the white and black hearts.*

So, then what happened? Remember we said that Cain was really angry at God and at his brother? It bothered Cain when God did not accept his offering. And he got really mad at his brother.

Listen to what happened next. *Read Genesis 4:8 emphasizing "he killed him!"*

Genesis 4:8

? What did he do to his brother? *He killed him!*

Yes. That is terrible. But that is what he did. It didn't take long for people to get really mean. And it is because sin entered the world when Adam and Eve committed the very first sin in the Garden of Eden. And now Cain was so evil, he killed his brother because he was angry that God didn't accept his offering! *Refer to the Flip Chart.*

Cain and Abel both made offerings to God. God accepted Abel's offering but did not accept Cain's. That is because God knew their hearts. Abel loved the Lord and wanted to do his best for God. Cain did not love God and he did not want to do his best for God. In fact, Cain was so angry at Abel and at God, that he killed his brother.

God knows our hearts, too. We can't forget that. He knows what we are thinking and what we are doing all the time. He is all-knowing. He is omniscient! Remember that big word we learned? Let's say that a few times together. *Repeat the word a few times followed by the definition, "all-knowing."*

SONG

Turn to the Flip Chart Song page. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, sin entered the world. It didn't take long for sin to make things really bad.

► Turn to the Flip Chart Song page during this part of the lesson.

It is because of sin in the world that there is so much suffering, pain, and death in the world. God didn't mean it to be this way. He created everything perfect. Let's remind ourselves again of how wonderful God intended His creation to be by singing the "God Created!" song. Sing "God Created!" while clapping and marching in place.

That was great! It wasn't long after God created everything very good that sin entered the world. It is because of sin, and disobedience to God, that we now have pain, death, suffering, and trials. Let's sing our song about sin entering into the world, and then remember the wonderful news about Jesus! Sing "Sin Entered In."

We know that we all have sinned because of Adam and Eve's sin. Let's sing this song about the sin in our hearts. Sing "Clean My Heart."

Lyrics to the songs can be found on the Song Sheet at the back of this Teacher Guide.

OK. Now help me make a tunnel with this blanket and chairs. I'll tell you what we're going to do once we get the tunnel made. *Begin to make your tunnel with chairs and/or tables and the cloth. See below.*



Different Offerings Tunnel Relay

We are going to have a Different Offerings relay race through a tunnel!

MATERIALS

- Black and white hearts (3-4 copies of each for each student)
- Cain and Abel Offering illustrations (one each)
- Large sheet or piece of fabric to make a tunnel between tables or rows of chairs
- Tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Set up two rows of chairs or tables to make a "relay tunnel" using the large sheet, blanket, or cloth. At one end of the tunnel, tape the Cain and Abel Offering illustrations to the seat backs of two chairs facing the tunnel. Explain that Cain brought an offering of fruits and vegetables. Abel brought a sheep.

At the other end of the tunnel put the black and white hearts in a box or container the kids can't see into. Explain

that the black heart is like Cain's heart. He didn't love God. The white heart is like Abel's heart. He did love God. God knew both of their hearts and what they were thinking.

When you say go, children will take turns grabbing a heart from the box or container, running or crawling through the tunnel, and placing the black heart on the seat of the chair with Cain illustration and the white heart on the seat of the chair with Abel illustration. You can time them to make it more fun. Repeat it as time allows.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God is omniscient. He knows everything—even what we are thinking! We can't trick Him by acting good on the outside and thinking bad things on the inside. He knows it all! God knew what Cain and Abel were thinking about Him. He knows what is in our hearts too. We can't hide from God. He knows everything.



God Knows Our Hearts

MATERIALS

- God Knows Our Hearts activity sheet for each student
- Crayons

INSTRUCTIONS

Students will circle the hidden hearts and then color the God Knows Our Hearts activity sheets.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

This activity sheet shows some hidden hearts. Remember, we can't hide our heart from God. He knows what we are thinking and what we are doing all the time, just like God knew Cain's heart. Cain couldn't fool God and neither can we!



Memory Verse/Snack

Genesis 2:16–17 Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.

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 and say it on their own.

► For your snack today, you may want to use the fruits and vegetables you brought in to illustrate Cain's offering.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

God knew what was in Cain's heart. It wasn't right. It was sinful and wicked. But in Abel's heart, God could see that he wanted to do what was right and pleasing to Him. When Cain brought his offering gift to God, it looked nice and seemed like a nice thing to do. But on the inside deep down in his heart, Cain didn't really like God. And God could see that. God accepted Abel's offering because He knew that Abel really did love Him and wanted to please Him.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

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

Remember, God knows all things. He is omniscient. He knows what you are doing. He knows why you are doing it. You can't hide from God! Even though you might fool your mom and dad—you can't fool God.



Group Prayer Time

- Thank God for His Word and the truth.
- Pray that God will give us hearts that truly love Him.

Do you still have more time? Review the past quarters using the Flip Charts, 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

GOD CREATED!

(To the tune of "This Old Man")

God made day, God made night,
God made everything in sight.
So let's stand up, turn around,
Thank God for His grace.
With a big, happy smile on our face!

Hold up 2 fingers for Creation Day 2.

He made the air, the blue sky too.
He knew exactly what to do.
So let's stand up, turn around,
Thank God for His grace,
With a big, happy smile on our face!

Hold up 3 fingers for Creation Day 3.

He made the plants and the land,
From the hardest rock to the softest sand.
So let's stand up, turn around,
Thank God for His grace.
With a big, happy smile on our face.

Hold up 4 fingers for Creation Day 4.

He made the stars, the moon, the sun.
Exploring the sky is so much fun.
So let's stand up, turn around,
Thank God for His grace.
With a big, happy smile on our face.

Hold up 5 fingers for Creation Day 5.

He made the fish, the birds that fly;
We see them daily in the sky.
So let's stand up, turn around,
Thank God for His grace.
With a big, happy smile on our face.

Hold up 6 fingers for Creation Day 6.

All the animals that roam the land,
He even created woman and man.

So let's stand up, turn around,
Thank God for His grace.
With a big, happy smile on our face.

SIN ENTERED IN

(To the Tune of "This Old Man")

God created Adam and Eve.
They walked with God in the Garden light.
He said, "Don't eat this fruit;
Don't take a single bite."
"Obey me," He said, "and do what's right."

The serpent came and told a lie,
"Taste this fruit; give it a try!"
So they ate the fruit and sin entered in.
We disobey God and we all sin.

God must punish our sin; it's true,
But He offers a plan for me and you!
He'll forgive the sins of everyone,
Who believes on Jesus, His own Son.

CLEAN MY HEART

(To the tune of "Jesus Loves Me")

In my heart, what does God see?
(Jesus loves me, this I know,)

Is He the One I want to please?
(For the Bible tells me so.)

Or does my heart need help, Oh Lord?
(Little ones to Him belong,)

Clean out the sin and make it yours!
(They are weak, but He is strong.)

Yes, I need Jesus!
(Yes, Jesus loves me!)

Yes, I need Jesus!
(Yes, Jesus loves me!)

Yes, I need Jesus!
(Yes, Jesus loves me!)

Please, clean my heart today!
(The Bible tells me so.)

