



11

Sodom and Gomorrah

Key Themes

- God judges sin.
- God is merciful toward sinners.

Key Passages

- Genesis 18:24, 18:26, 18:28–30, 19:16–17, 19:26

Lesson Focus

- God must punish sin because He is just.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will color the Sodom and Gomorrah coloring sheet.



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—The Lord and two angels appeared to Abraham and told him the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah would be destroyed because the people were evil and had turned away from God. Abraham pleaded with God to spare the cities. God had to punish the sin but He did have mercy on Abraham's nephew, Lot, and his family.

Song—Children will sing "Be Careful Little Eyes." Then they will review the "Acts 17:26 Memory Verse" song.



Activity 1: Get Out of Sodom!

Students will play a variation of tug of war as they work to "pull" Lot out of Sodom while reciting the Fire and Brimstone jingle.



Activity 2: Pillar of Salt

Students will make a pillar of salt using clothes pins, cotton balls, and white pipe cleaners.



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 Sodom and Gomorrah coloring sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Sodom and Gomorrah coloring sheet for each student
- Crayons



CIRCLE TIME

- Print one Will You Spare 50? sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use.
- Before class, complete one "pillar of salt" to show the children.

- Lesson Flip Chart
- Will You Spare 50? sheet
- Completed pillar of salt to show the children (see Activity 2: Pillar of Salt)



GET OUT OF SODOM!

- Practice the Fire and Brimstone jingle on the Song Sheet at the back of this Teacher Guide
- Make three simple signs on a sheet of paper with one of the following words on each sign: Lot, Sodom, and Escape.

- Long rope adequate for tug of war
- Optional: heavy piece of furniture to pull
- Signs appropriate for the Get Out of Sodom Activity



PILLAR OF SALT

- Gather needed items.

- Clothespin for each student
- Cotton balls
- White pipe cleaner for each student
- Glue



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 18:1–2, 18:16–33, 19:1–29; Luke 17:28–30.

The journey of Abram to Canaan is one wrought with detours and adventure. The Lord told Abram to leave the land of his family and settle in a land the Lord would show him. Abram was to be the head of a great nation, a blessing to many, and his name would be great (Genesis 12:1–3). Abram listened and obeyed and left the land of Ur. God tells us that Lot, Abram's nephew, was part of the company of travelers from the beginning of the journey. After settling first in Haran (Genesis 11:31) they proceeded at the Lord's call to Canaan. Then there was another detour to Egypt because of a famine (Genesis 12:10). Through all of their wanderings, the Lord continued to increase their livestock and the land they traversed was no longer efficient to support Abram, Lot, and all of their possessions (Genesis 13:5–7). This is when uncle and nephew parted ways. Abram to the land of Canaan and Lot to the cities of the plain—where sin and wickedness prevailed against the Lord (Genesis 13:12–13).

God's justice demands punishment for sin and wickedness, and He was soon to providentially bring an end to the sin that permeated Sodom and Gomorrah. In a meeting between Abraham, the Angel of the Lord (Jesus), and two angels, the Lord confirmed that Abraham and Sarah would bear a son (Genesis 18:14). He also revealed the plan to destroy the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20–21).

Abraham pleaded with the Lord to spare the city. However, God must punish sin; His justice demands that He punish those who turn from Him in wickedness. And there were fewer than ten righteous in the city (Genesis 18:32). This account illustrates just how wicked men can be. Lot, too, had succumbed to the evil influence of the city as demonstrated when he offered his own daughters to the men of the city to satisfy their lusts and protect the angels (Genesis 19:6–8).

But God is also merciful. And His mercy was shown to Lot and his daughters. In spite of their own sinfulness, they were spared from the destruction of the city (Genesis 19:16).

This account is tragic. The sin of man is great and God's judgment is to be feared—and not taken lightly. Lot's wife did not learn that lesson. And it was only moments after she was mercifully spared death in the

city that she again blatantly disobeyed God during the escape—when she looked back at the destruction behind her (Genesis 19:17). For this she was judged and turned into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26).

The terrible destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is an event referred to throughout Scripture to demonstrate the severity of God's judgment: Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 1:9, 13:19; Jeremiah 50:40; Lamentations 4:6; Amos 4:11; Zephaniah 2:9; Matthew 10:15; Mark 6:11; Luke 17:28–29; Romans 9:29; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 1:7.

And yet God also revealed His mercy—by sparing Lot and his daughters. This is the mercy He provides to all sinners who in faith and repentance accept His forgiveness and turn to Jesus Christ.

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

There are many who cannot believe that this account could possibly be true. What can we say to those blinded to the truth? First of all, the fact that this event is referenced so many times throughout Scripture (see above for list) verifies that there was never any doubt by these writers that this event occurred just as it was recorded.

We know that those who do not rely on the authority of God's Word resort to relying on man's "evidence." And there was no historical or archaeological evidence to corroborate the biblical account—until recently.

It is clear from various biblical passages that Sodom and Gomorrah should be located in the Dead Sea region. When Abraham and his nephew Lot parted ways (Genesis 13:8–13), Lot chose to settle in the Jordan valley "in the direction of Zoar" and moved his tents to "the cities of the plain" as far as Sodom. According to Genesis 14, the cities of the plain, which include Sodom, Gomorrah, Zoar, Zeboiim, and Admah, joined forces to battle a coalition of Mesopotamian kings in the "Valley of Siddim" (Genesis 14:8)—that is, the Salt Sea. This is referring to the Dead Sea region.

Between 1973 and 1979 two archaeologists surveyed an area southeast of the Dead Sea and located the remains of five cities. From North to South the cities are Bab Edh-Dhra (first discovered in 1924), Numeira, Safi, Feifa, and Khanazir. Could these be the five "cities of the plain" identified in Genesis?

The most remarkable feature of Bab Edh-Dhra is the number of graves. An estimated 20,000 tombs are located on the site. These family tombs held approxi-

mately half a million people with over 3 million pottery vessels. This was clearly a well-populated area in the past, and may well be the ancient city of Sodom.

The excavation of the city of Numeira exposed that this entire area was covered by the ashy debris of its final destruction, up to 16 inches in depth. This, coupled with the fact that the Arabic name for this city has similar consonants as the Hebrew name for Gomorrah, led biblical archaeologists to conclude that this could be the city of Gomorrah.

“Proof” is not necessary to verify God’s Word. In fact, what more do we need than the very word of the one who ordained and accomplished this historical account. However, God allows for these confirmations so that we will be better equipped to defend our faith and the Bible against the skeptics who attempt to dishonor and discredit it.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The biblical narratives of this time period in terms of customs, laws, legal agreements, and family arrangements fit well with what we know from historical records left by other societies of the Middle East, such as the Amorites, Sumerians, and Akkadians.

During this particular period in history in the Middle East, the role of the patriarch in family life was very important. Family structure included three levels: tribe, family, and household (Joshua 7:14). The fundamental societal unit of the household included a patriarch, his wife, his sons and their wives, his grandchildren, and other dependents. These households often lived in a compound, with houses around a central courtyard, encircled by a low wall.

Abraham, as patriarch of his household, was

responsible for the economic support, religious well-being, and safety of his entire household (Genesis 14:13–16). In Genesis 18 we see Abraham, as the patriarch, fulfilling his hospitality obligations to protect and care for sojourners or aliens, too (Leviticus 19:33–34). Hospitality was one of the most highly regarded virtues of the ancient world, and still is in many societies of the Middle East. Abraham showed his guests great honor by preparing them a meal.

Again, as we compare the history book of the universe with secular historical accounts, we gain confirmation and confidence that God’s Word is true.

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



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Lord, you are truly a God to be feared. You must punish all sin and your punishment is serious as demonstrated in this account of Sodom and Gomorrah. I marvel at your patience with the world today. You are mocked, ignored, cursed, and blasphemed by so many—yet you wait patiently. And you continue to offer a way for sinners to be reconciled to you. Help my students to see the gravity of their own sinfulness against you. And give me wisdom, Lord, to clearly explain the mercy and forgiveness you offer through Jesus Christ. Open their eyes to see that you alone can offer forgiveness—and you have done that through Jesus Christ.



COME ON IN

As children arrive . . .

- They will color the Sodom and Gomorrah 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 stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, rope, completed "pillar of salt," 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 Adoration is suggested. You might proceed this way.

Today let's say prayers of adoration—and tell God just how wonderful we think He is!

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 are wonderful and worthy of our adoration. Today

I just want to praise you for . . . (enter personal prayer here).

Pass the stuffed animal around the circle giving all the children an opportunity to say a prayer telling God they love Him and why.

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!

Yes! God's Word is all true! And the whole Bible tells us about God and Jesus. Hold up the Bible as you refer to it. Today we are going to see that God hates sin! Sin is when we disobey God.

Open your Bible to Genesis 18 as you recap the following account. Today we will see how God punished the sin of two cities, Sodom and Gomorrah. We hear all about this in the Bible. The Bible is absolutely true! This is about Abraham and Lot. Lot was Abraham's nephew. Lot lived in the cities. Abraham lived out in the countryside. One day God sent Abraham a message from some very special visitors. The visitors were the Lord and two angels! They told Abraham that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, where Lot lived, were going to be completely destroyed and everyone in them killed.

The people in those cities were sinners. They had turned away from God. They didn't care about God. They didn't care about doing what was good and right. In fact, they loved doing what was wrong. They weren't afraid of God. And because God is just—that means He hates sin and He must be fair—He must punish all sin. He was going to punish the sin of the people in Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Lord sent His angels into the cities to destroy them. Abraham asked the Lord to have mercy and spare the cities and his nephew Lot. Abraham asked God, "What if there are good people in the cities, will you still destroy them?" Listen as I read what happened. Read Genesis 18:22–33 as follows.

? Read Genesis 18:24. How many people did Abraham ask God to spare? 50. Show the Will You Spare 50? sheet. There are 50 people on this sheet.

? Read Genesis 18:26. What did the Lord say? I will spare the cities if 50 are found.

? Read Genesis 18:28. How many people did Abraham ask God to spare? 45.

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

Genesis 18:24, 18:26,
18:28, 18:29, 18:30

? Read Genesis 18:28. **What did the Lord say?** For 45 people I will not destroy it. Cross off 5 people from the Will You Spare 50? sheet.

? Read Genesis 18:29. **How many people did Abraham ask God to spare?** 40.

? Read Genesis 18:29. **What did the Lord say?** For 40 people I will not destroy. Cross off 5 people from the Will You Spare 50? sheet.

? Read Genesis 18:30. **How many people did Abraham ask God to spare?** 30.

? Read Genesis 18:30. **What did the Lord say?** For 30 people I will not destroy. Cross off 10 from the Will You Spare 50? sheet.

This kept going on. Abraham asked again. The Lord said He would spare 20. Cross off 10 more people from the Will You Spare 50? sheet.

And Abraham asked again! The Lord said He would spare both cities if there were just 10 people who loved the Lord in those cities. Cross off 10 more people from the Will You Spare 50? sheet.

But there weren't even 10 people in both of the cities who loved the Lord. The Lord was going to destroy the cities and all the people.

But the Lord told Abraham He would save Lot and his family. The Lord did have mercy on Lot. The angels were in the city. They were with Lot. Listen as I read the Bible. Read Genesis 19:16 emphasizing "took hold of their hands and brought them out of the city."

Genesis 19:16

? What did the angels do to Lot and his family? They took hold of their hands and brought them out of the city.

The angels had to drag them out! They were taking too long! God must punish sin because He is just, but He also showed mercy by saving Lot and his family.

? The angels gave Lot an order! The angels told Lot to run and not do something. Listen carefully! What did the angels tell them? Read Genesis 19:17 emphasizing do not look back! Run and don't look back!

Genesis 19:17

It must have been horrible! They were running and God was sending fire and brimstone down on the cities. Brimstone is a kind of rock that burns. The cities were burning up. The cities were being destroyed because God must punish sin. God is just. But God showed mercy to Lot and his family. God told them not to look back. Listen to this and tell me if they all obeyed God's command. Read Genesis 19:26 emphasizing his wife looked back!

Genesis 19:26

? What did Lot's wife do? She looked back to see what was happening.

? And what happened to her? Reread that part of Genesis 19:26 if necessary. God turned her to salt!

God told them not to look back. Lot's wife did look back. She sinned against God and because God is just He had to punish her. He turned her to a pillar of salt!

But God did show mercy to Lot, Abraham's nephew, and his two daughters. The cities were destroyed by fire and brimstone from the sky. But Lot did escape with the help of the angels.

SONG

► Musical instruments, marching, and motions can be added to this section to add interest and help learning.

Wow! Lot's wife was turned to salt just because she looked back! That reminds me of a song. We should be careful what our eyes look at. We need to obey God, listen to Him, and do our best to please Him in everything we do, say, and even look at. Let's sing this song. Sing "Be Careful Little Eyes."

The lyrics to the songs are on the Flip Chart Song page and can also be found on the Song sheet at the back of this Teacher Guide.

Great! Now, who remembers what our memory verse is? If no one knows, give some hints. Turn to the Flip Chart Memory Verse page. Acts 17:26.

Let's sing the song. Sing the "Acts 17:26 Memory Verse" song.

Transition to the Get Out Of Sodom Tug of War while children are still in circle time.



Get Out of Sodom

MATERIALS

- A length of strong rope to use for tug of war
- Signs: Lot, Sodom, Escape (depending on how you play your tug of war)

INSTRUCTIONS

Tie the rope to something heavy in the room (e.g., a desk or heavy chair) or bring something heavy from home. Label it "Lot." The children will act as the "angels" who have come to save Lot from being destroyed. Have two children pull the first time. If they can't move the object, add more children until they can.

Option: You may want to divide the children into two teams and have a tug of war. Place a sign saying "Sodom" on one side of the room and one saying "Escape" on the other side. You can join the "Escape" team to help them win.

As the children tug on the rope have them repeat the following jingle. At the end of the jingle, say Freeze! Children will all stop until you start up again.

Fire and brimstone, cities destroyed;
God is judging sin.
Run with your family, don't look back!
Or salt you will become. Freeze!

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God destroyed the two cities and all the people in them because of their sin. They did not like God and enjoyed doing bad things. God had to punish the sin. God must punish all sin. He showed mercy to Lot and his family by sending the angels to pull them out of the city to safety before the fire came. But when Lot's wife disobeyed and looked back, God punished her by turning her into a pillar of salt!

Now we are going to go back to our tables quietly and we will make a pillar of salt! Show the completed craft and explain a bit about it before moving to the tables.



Pillar of Salt

MATERIALS

- Clothespin for each student
- Cotton balls to cover the clothes pins
- White pipe cleaners to use as arms
- Glue

INSTRUCTIONS

Glue the cotton balls to the clothespins. Twist the white pipe cleaner around the middle for arms. You have a pillar of salt!

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God punished Lot's wife because she disobeyed him. She turned around and looked when she was told NOT to turn around. God is just and must punish sin. Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt.



Memory Verse Review/Snack

Acts 17:26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.

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.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Because God is just He must punish sin. He can't just let it go. Today we read that he had to punish the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because they did not want anything to do with God—they had turned their backs on God. God destroyed the cities and everyone in them.

But, remember, God also showed His mercy. He sent His angels to the city to warn Abraham's nephew Lot. And not only did the angels warn them, but they took them by the hands and brought them safely out of the city.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

God offers us His mercy, too. We deserve God's punishment because we are sinners like the people in Sodom and Gomorrah. The Bible says we are ALL sinners. God does not look lightly on sin—He is patient and He will allow us a long time to seek His forgiveness—but eventually, He must judge our sin.

And that is where His mercy to us comes in. Jesus came to earth—Jesus is God—and He never sinned; He lived a perfect life. He was killed on the Cross even though He had done nothing wrong. And He did that so we would have a way to be forgiven. Jesus said that whoever would believe and trust in Him would be saved from God's punishment, the punishment we deserve because of our sin.

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



Group Prayer Time

- Thank God for His true Word that tells us about Him.
- Thank God that He is just and punishes sin, but He also provides mercy to us through Jesus Christ, the Savior.
- Pray that the children will one day know Him as their Savior and be forgiven of their sins.

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

ACTS 17:26 MEMORY VERSE

(To the tune of "Are You Sleeping?")

And He has made

(Are you sleeping?)

From one bloo-ood

(Are you sleeping?)

Every nation, every nation.

(Brother John. Brother John.)

To dwell on all the ear-earth.

(Morning Bells are ringing)

To dwell on all the ear-earth.

(Morning Bells are ringing)

Acts Seventeen: Twenty six.

(Ding, ding, dong. Ding, ding, dong.)

BE CAREFUL LITTLE EYES

Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see!

Point to eyes . . . clap, clap and/or stomp, stomp.

Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see!

Point to eyes . . . clap, clap and/or stomp, stomp.

There's a Father up above,

Point up.

And He's looking down in love.

Point down, wave arms.

Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see!

Point to eyes . . . clap, clap and/or stomp, stomp.

FIRE AND BRIMSTONE JINGLE

Fire and brimstone, cities destroyed;

God is judging sin.

Run with your family, don't look back!

Or salt you will become. Freeze!

