

Valentine's Day Lesson

Theme: God Loves Me!

Teacher Pep Talk: You are so blessed! You get to teach about the MOST important thing we can tell people: Jesus Loves You! I know that it sounds simple, and it is. But there is often confusion about God's love and so it is important for us to teach it well. Mountains of materials have been written on God's love, and yet it has never been fully described. God's love for us is unfathomable and yet simple. Be blessed today as you teach this important lesson.

In order to be ready to teach today, please review the truths about God's love found in John 3:16, Romans 5:8, and in 1 John 4:10-19.

You Will Need: Lesson – Draw a heart shape on the board or have a cutout paper heart shape to show. *(If you have access to a stethoscope you may bring it and let the children listen to their own heartbeat.)*
Crafts – Construction Paper (*ex: pink, red, white*), scissors, & glue.
Activity – Two large pieces of paper for Bible Verse

Major Points: God loves you!
God is love!
We don't earn God's love, He gives it to us!
Because God loves us, we can love Him back!

Memory Verse: 1 John 4:19 – We love because he first loved us.

Song: "Jesus Loves Me"

Lesson: Our lesson today is about something very special. And I have a hint to help you guess what it is about. *(Show paper heart, draw one for the children to see, or point to your own heart and let the children point to theirs.)* **What is this?** *(A heart, a valentine, etc)* *(Have a stethoscope? Invite the children to listen to their hearts.)*

Our hearts beat all the time... from before we are born to the moment we die and go to be with Jesus. Our hearts are very important. For many years the heart shape has been used to talk about "Love". **What is love?** *(Wait for answers; they will vary.)*

Those are good answers! The Bible says that love is from God. It also says that God is Love. Isn't that amazing? Can you imagine God actually being Love? It's hard for me to imagine too! But we know from God's Word that God is love, and love comes from God!

Lesson (cont.) Sometimes, we get mixed up about what love is and how we get it. We start thinking that if we are good then people will love us. We may think that if someone is angry with us, or disappointed with us that they may not love us anymore. But that's not the way love is.

Love (real love) doesn't have anything to do with whether someone is happy or sad with us. It doesn't have anything to do with whether we've been good or bad. Real love is given to us as a gift. That is how God loves us! That is how you can KNOW that God loves you!

We don't have to make any special promises, or do any special things for God to love us. He just does! GOD LOVES YOU!!

The Bible, God's Word, tells us that God showed His love for us by sending His Son, Jesus, (to be our Savior.) He did this wonderful thing for us before we ever loved Him!

When someone loves you, do you love them back? (Yes)

God loves us! And the Bible says that we can love God because He loved us first. 1 John 4:19 – **We love because he first loved us.** We can love God and we can love others too!

We love because he first loved us. *(Have children repeat verse.)*

Let's pray and thank God that He loves us and that we can love Him back!!

Prayer: *(Pray with the children out loud. Allow them to repeat after you.)*
Dear God,
Thank you for loving us.
Thank you for sending Jesus for us.
Thank you that we can love you back!
Amen.

Transition Time: Stand up tall and reach up high!
See if you can touch the sky!
Squat down low and touch the ground!
Jump up fast and turn around!
Careful, not to fall back **dow----n!** *(Plop back down on the floor!)*
(Do this twice if necessary)

Discuss Craft: Today we will be making a Valentine for someone we love! *(Show craft you have decided upon and discuss how you will make it today. Have enough materials on hand for each child to make at least one Valentine to take home.)*

Craft:

Paper Hearts *Traditional Valentines.*

Show the children how to fold paper in half and create a heart shape from construction paper. If necessary have a half-heart shape template to trace out Valentines. (*Have various sized templates available.*) Write on paper hearts “God Loves Me!” or “Jesus Loves Me!” or “I Love You” or “Be My Valentine!” Put names on Valentines. (*OPTION: Glue to paper dollies or onto larger pieces of construction paper.*) Send home with children to give to parents and loved ones.

With All of my Heart *For those already adept at Valentines.*

Provide construction paper of various colors for the children, some cut in half sheets, some in quarter sheets. Give one half sheet and two quarter sheets, of different colors, to each child. From quarter sheets the children cut out two heart shapes, one slightly larger than the other. From the center of the smaller heart shape, cut out a tiny heart and reserve. Glue the two larger Valentines on top of each other. Fold the half sheet to create a card. On the front of the card glue the two larger Valentines and write “Valentine, I Love You...” On the inside of the card, glue the tiny heart and write “...With ALL of My Heart!”

First Love *Simple and pretty.*

Start with two half sheets of different colored construction paper. Fold one piece in half and then fold ONE side of it in half again. Carefully cut out a heart from the center of the folded side of that sheet. Unfold the sheet. Glue the two half sheets on top of each other. The heart cutout will show the contrasting color beneath it. Fold the glued sheets in half at the midline to create your card. On the inside of the card, glue the heart you cut out. On the front of the card write “**We love because...**” and on the inside of the card write “**...He first loved us!**” (*OR On the Front write “God loves us!” and on the Inside write “And we love Him back!”*)

Activity:

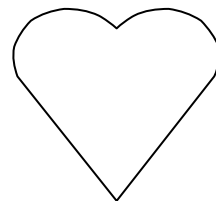
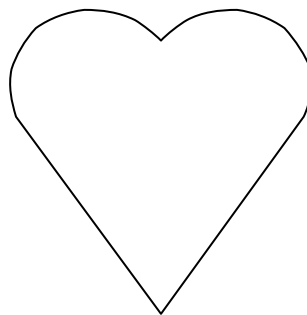
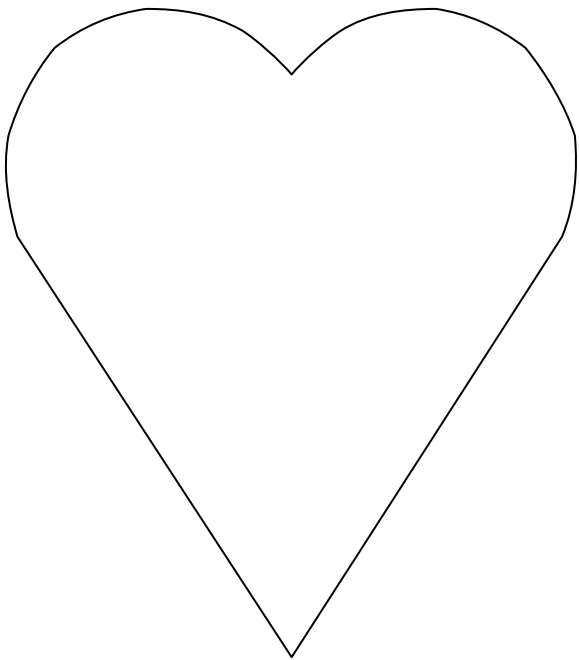
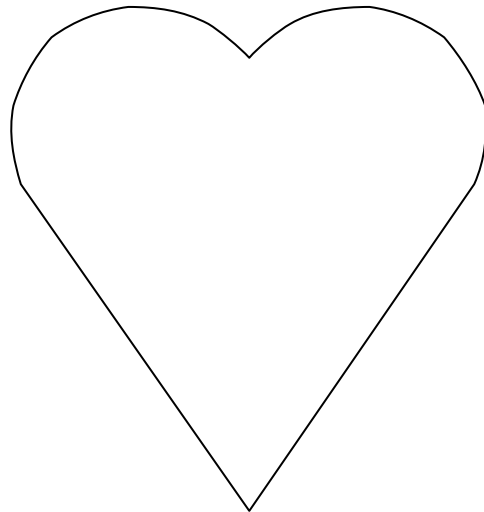
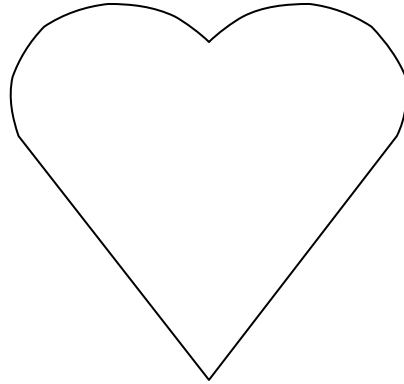
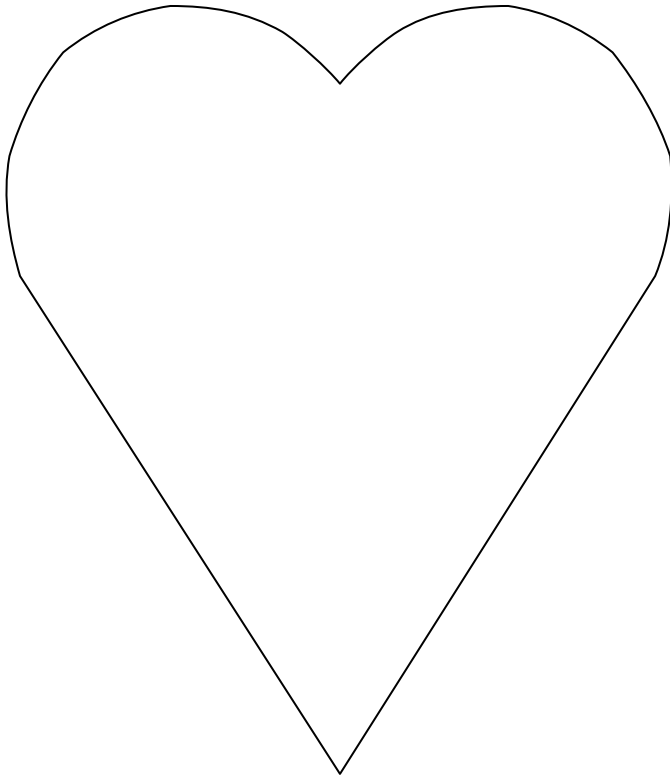
Bible Memory Game *Very Active – Be Careful!*

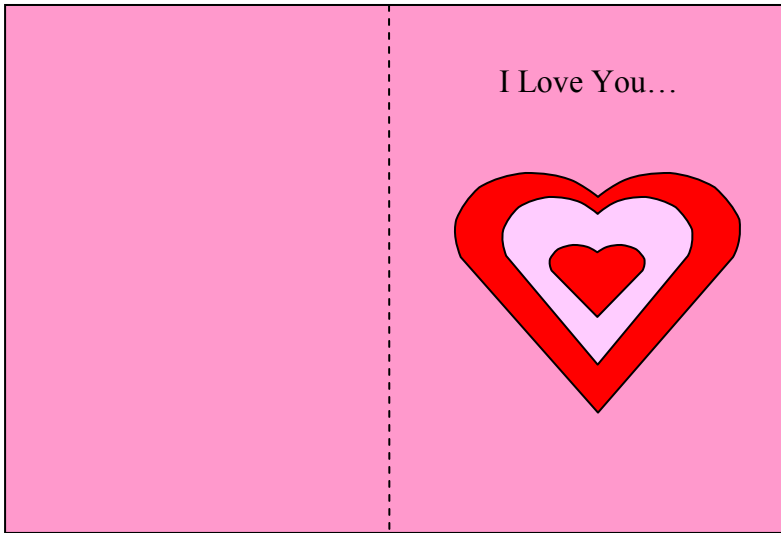
On a sheet of paper write “We love because...” and on another sheet of paper write “...He first loved us.” Put the papers up on two opposite walls. Make sure there is NOTHING in between the walls in that area. Put half the children on one side and half on the other side. Have all the children touch their wall. The children with the first part of the verse say their half loudly and then the other children respond with their half. Switch sides quickly!! Repeat!!

Tamer Game Version – have a small group start on one side; say half of the verse, and then move to the other side, by hopping or skipping, where they say other half of verse. REPEAT as needed.

Paper Hearts

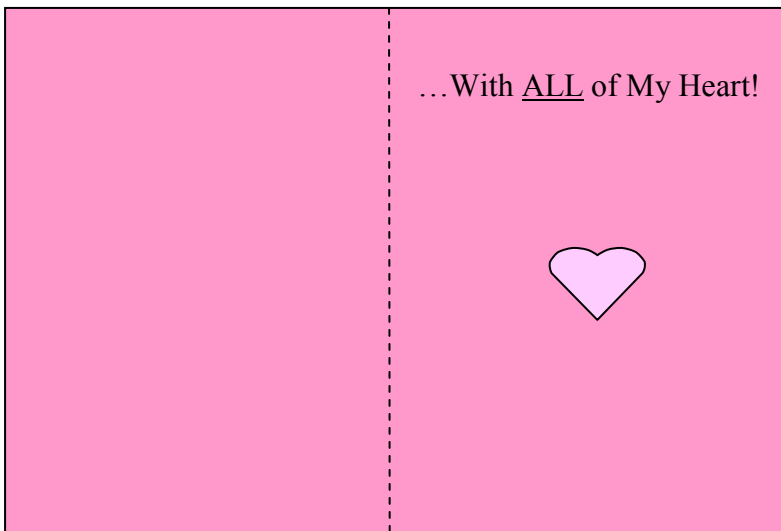
Fold shapes in half to cut templates.





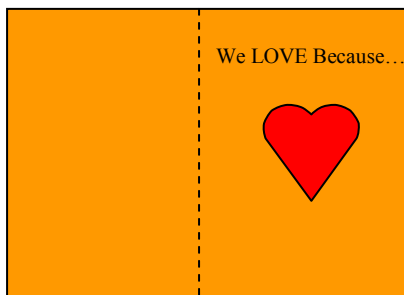
**With ALL of
My Heart**

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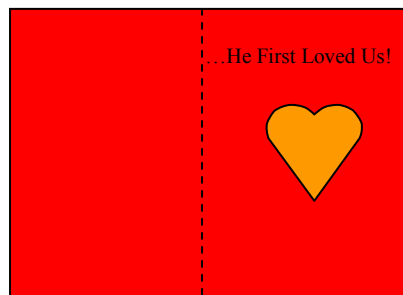


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First LOVE



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INSIDE

Mother's Day – Sunday School Lesson
For Preschool, Kindergarten, and First Graders

Theme: Mothers are to be Respected.

Teacher Pep Talk: We all know it: Mothers are a blessing! We may appreciate it more on some days than others, but it is still true. And we are to honor and respect our mothers. God promises us a blessing when we do this, which makes it an even better idea! Our mothers loved us and brought us into the world, for this (if nothing else) we owe them our respect. For most of us, our mothers loved us, stood by us, raised us, took care of us, and taught us good things. Let's honor them!

You Will Need: An assortment of construction paper, crayons, scissors and glue. Optionally – tempera paint, newspapers, coverings for clothes

Major Points: Mothers care for their children.
We are to respect our mothers.
We are to listen to what our mothers say.

Reference Verses: 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 *Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you.*
Leviticus 19:3 “*Each of you must respect your mother and father...*”
Proverbs 6:20 *My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching.*

Memory Verse: Leviticus 19:3 “...respect your mother...”

Lesson: **Mothers are to be Respected**

Mothers care for their children

- Each of us was born of a mother.
- Most of us live with our mothers now. Or other people who love us take care of us now. (*Ask the children to say who is in their family. Let them share with you about their parents and caregivers. You may mention grandmothers, aunts, etc.*)
- These are very important people in our lives!
- They care for us. How do they do that? What kinds of things do mothers do to take care of us? (*Wait for answers.*) (They feed us. They help us get dressed. They keep us warm. They play with us. They tuck us in at night.)
- Very good! Those are very good answers. We know by the things that they do for us that mothers care for their children.
- God has given us our mothers to help take care of us!

We are to respect our mothers.

- If our mothers take care of us, it's only fair that we do something nice for them in return.
- In His Word (the Bible) God tells us that we are to **respect** our mothers. What does that word mean? RESPECT? *(Wait for answers. They will probably not be able to define the word. But they may give you examples of what it means to them.)*
- Respect means that we are to hold that person in a special place in our hearts, and think highly of them.

We are to listen to what our mothers say.

- In the case of our mother, we are to care about what she says. When she talks we need to listen to her.
- We are to try and do the things she asks us to do.
- And we are to listen and to learn from her.
- God has given our mother to us to help take care of us AND to help us learn things we need to know!
- Let's pray and thank God for our mothers!

PRAYER: Dear God,
Thank you that you have given each of us people to care for us!
Thank you especially for our mothers!
Please bless our mothers today and always!
Amen

Suggested Activities:

Make a Mother's Day Card

Everyone likes making cards for Mother's Day! And there isn't a mother on earth who doesn't enjoy receiving a handmade Mother's Day Card! Use your own imagination to help create the card itself. Or, use some of the ideas listed here:

- 1.) Copy the attached sheet for each child, and allow the children to color the sheets, to cut out the various pieces, and to glue the pieces to the inside and front of folded paper to create a Mother's Day card.
- 2.) Simply copy and color the attached sheet and present it to Mom!
- 3.) Draw and cut out pieces of construction paper to form flowers. Allow the children to glue the pieces on to folded paper to make a card for their mothers. Older children may write "Happy Mother's Day!" on the card.
- 4.) Using construction paper, crayons or markers, allow the children to draw pictures of themselves and their mothers (caregivers) on construction paper. Then fold the picture in half and write Happy Mother's Day on the "front" of the newly formed card. OR fold the paper first and have them decorate both the front and the inside of the card with pictures or flowers.

Handmade Handprint Pages – a perennial favorite!

NOTE: In order that these may be ready to go home with the children at the end of your time together, do the handprints FIRST THING in class, and THEN do your lesson. Hopefully they will dry enough to send home at the end of class!

- 1.) Across the top of a sheet of construction paper write "I Love You!" or "Happy Mother's Day!" or "I was THIS BIG on Mother's Day!" for each child.
- 2.) If you like, print out the poem and attach it to the side of the construction paper.
- 3.) Cover tables with newspaper, and the children with old shirts, to protect against paint spills.
- 4.) Bring out very shallow pans (pie pans) with very small amounts of tempera paint in them.
- 5.) Allow the children to place their hands down in the paint and then press them carefully onto the sheet of construction paper.
- 6.) Wash their hands carefully.
- 7.) Put handprint pages to the side to dry.
- 8.) Lead the lesson while the pages are drying!

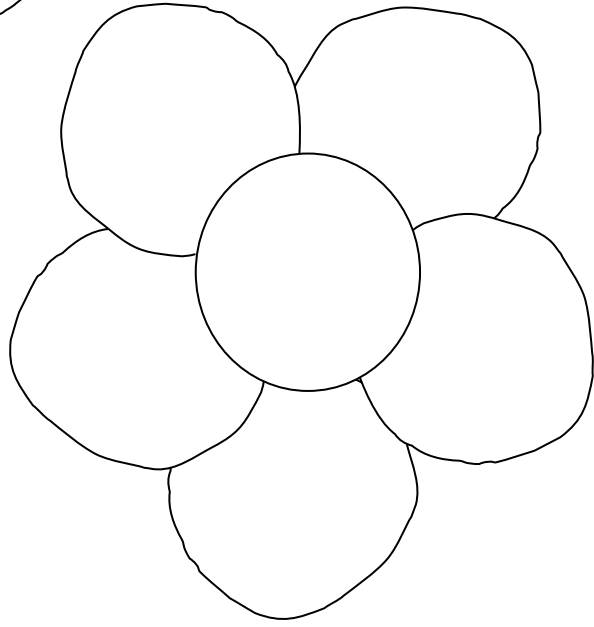
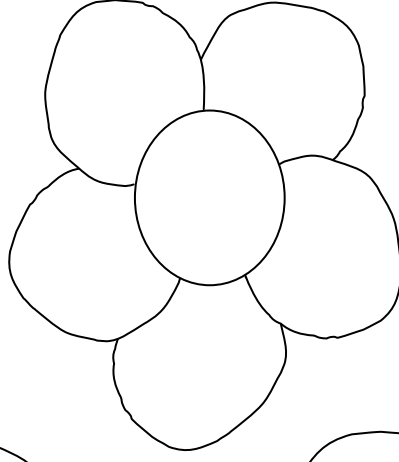
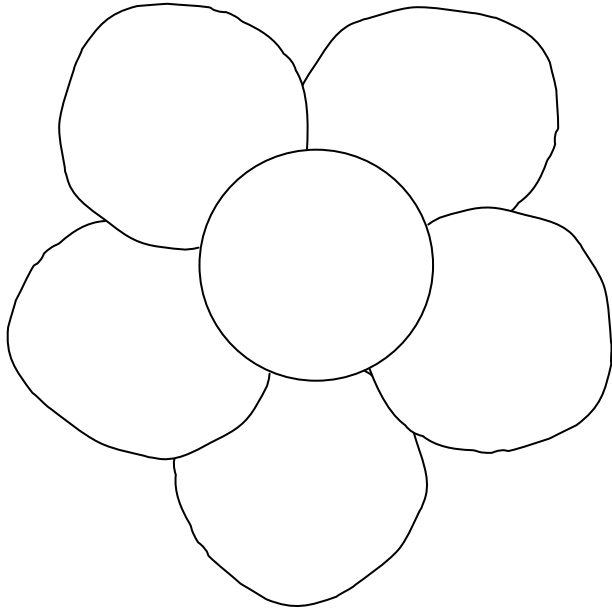
A Poem for Mother's Day

It seems like such a special thing
To be a Mom or Dad,
And I know you're the Best-est one
A feller ever had!

I cannot think to tell you how
To do the job God gave ya,
I only know when He made Moms
I'm really glad He made ya!

- SK Chatwell

Happy Mother's Day!



A Poem for Mother's Day

It seems like such a special thing
To be a Mom or Dad,
But I know you're the Best-est one
A feller ever had!

I cannot think to tell you how
To do the job God gave ya,
I only know when He made Moms
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- SK Chatwell

**Mother's Day – Sunday School Lesson
For Elementary Age Children**

Theme: Honor your Father and Mother.

Teacher Pep Talk: Parents are so important: They are a child's world! They care for the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of their children. By God's design they help teach their children about the caring relationship that God has with us as His children. They exhibit the selfless (*agape* style) love, the patience, and the gentle guidance and leadership that He shows to us. How we interact with our children helps them understand how God interacts with us... (*Or, at least, it is supposed to!*) God help us to do a good job, and to represent Him well to our children, and to the generations to come!

You Will Need: An assortment of construction paper, pencils, crayons, scissors and glue. Optionally: sequins, glitter glue, rickrack, yarn, and buttons.

Major Points: Mothers and fathers are to care for their children
We are to respect our mother and father.
We are to obey our parents in the Lord.
God promises us a blessing for honoring our mother and father.

Reference Verses: 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 *Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you.*
Leviticus 19:3 *"Each of you must respect your mother and father..."*
Proverbs 6:20 *My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching.*
Ephesians 6:1-3 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." (Referring to Exodus 20:12)*

Memory Verse: Ephesians 6:2 *"Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—*

Lesson: **Honor your Father and Mother**

Mothers and fathers are to care for their children

- God gave us parents. Why do you think He did that? (*Wait for answers.*)
- Absolutely! Somebody had to take care of us when we were first born! Little babies can't get their own food, or get around on their own, or keep themselves warm. These are all necessary to life!
- So, we needed our parents when we were first born.
- How about now? (*Wait for answers. Depending on the age of the children, they may have various answers.*)
- Right! So, our parents are still important. They provide us a place to live, and food to eat. They give us clothes and a place to sleep at night. And the LOVE us.
- Talk to me about Love. What kinds of things do parents do that show love to us? (*Wait for answers.*) EX: Take care of us when we are sick, Say our prayers with us, Take us to school, Hug us, Give us kisses, Sit by us when we are scared
- Excellent! These are all things that show love to us! Isn't it good that we have parents?! (*Depending on ages, you may get some answers that seem a little disrespectful.*)

We are to respect our Mothers and Fathers.

- Uh oh, some of those words didn't sound very respectful. And I understand. It's because you don't always like the authority your parents have over you.
- Because our parents have responsibility for us, they also have authority over us. (They go together!)
- As we grow up it is important for us to start moving apart from our parents and taking responsibility for ourselves. We call that "Growing Up." And you are all growing up!
- As you grow up more and more, you will need your parents to take care of you less and less, until eventually you will be an adult. Then you will be in charge of yourself completely.
- But no matter how grown up we become, we are ALWAYS to respect our mothers and fathers! What does that word "RESPECT" mean? (It means that we are to have a special place in our heart for that person and to think highly of them.)

We are to obey our parents in the Lord.

- God gave us our parents to care for us and to teach us.
- The people who love us will teach us to do good things.
- God wants us to obey our parents who are teaching us what is right. What does that word "OBEY" mean? (It means to do the things we are instructed to do and asked to do.)
- The Bible says it is right for us to obey our parents in the Lord.

God promises us a blessing for honoring our mother and father

- It is good and right for us to obey our parents and to respect them. So we should do it for those reasons alone.
- However, God has ALSO promised us a BLESSING for honoring our parents. What does that word "HONORING" mean? (It is sort of a combination of Respect and Obey. It means holding them in high regard, caring about what they say, listening to them, and obeying them in the Lord.)
- But what blessing does God promise us? Let's read it together. (*Find Ephesians 6:2-3 and read it aloud.*)
- Ephesians 6:2-3 "*Honor your father and mother*"—which is the first commandment with a promise— "*so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.*"
- What did you hear as God's promises? (So that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.)
- It makes sense that if you do what your parents tell you to do that you may live longer. (EX: They tell you not to play in the street, because it's dangerous. OR They tell you not to smoke because it's bad for your health. You will probably live longer if you do not do these two things.)
- But, God is also talking about special blessings that He will give you because you have obeyed Him, by honoring your mother and father. That's another good reason to do it!

Let's pray and thank God that He has given us our parents and others to love us and care for us.

PRAYER: Dear God,
Thank you that you have given each of us people to care for us!
Thank you especially for our mothers and fathers!
Please bless our parents, and help us to respect, obey, and honor them.
Amen

Suggested Activities:

Bible Verse Bingo

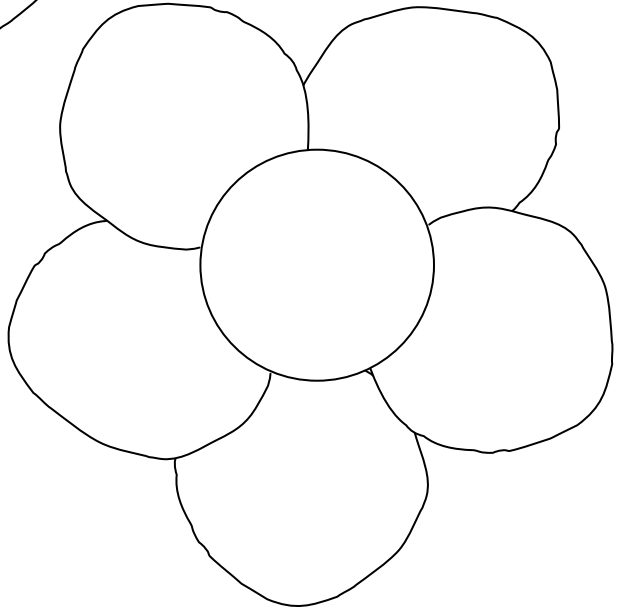
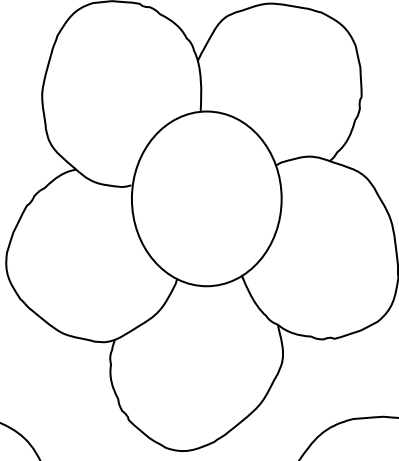
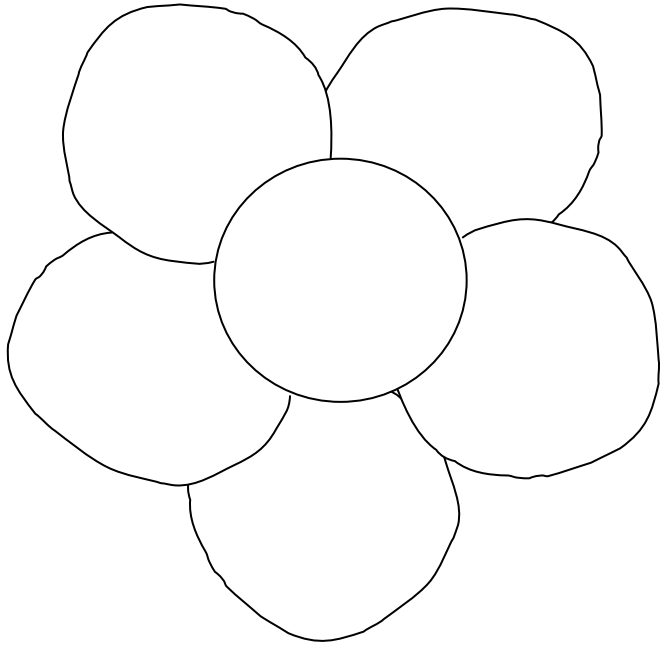
Tell the class that today you read aloud the verses from **Ephesians 6:2-3**. Have them use Bibles to look up that scripture reference. Have the children say "**Bingo**" when they locate it. When most everyone has found it, read the reference verses out loud again. Say that these verses are found in the New Testament, which means they were written after Jesus was on the earth. However, they refer to something that was said earlier in the Old Testament. (Things written in the Old Testament were written before Jesus' time on earth.) Look up the original scripture reference in the Old Testament: **Exodus 20:12**. Have the children look up the verse in Exodus. When they find it have them say "**Bingo**" and wait. When most of the class has found it, read the verse out loud. How are these two references similar? How are they different, if at all?

Create an original Mother's Day Card

Everyone likes making cards for Mother's Day! And there isn't a mother on earth who doesn't enjoy receiving a handmade Mother's Day Card! Use your own imagination to help create the card itself. Or, use some of the ideas listed here:

- 1.) Allow the children time and space to create their own card for their mothers (caregivers). Provide ample amounts of construction paper, crayons, markers, pencils, sequins, glitter, rickrack, yarn, buttons, and glue so that they can decorate their cards. Write "Happy Mother's Day!" on the board so that they may copy it down on the inside or front cover of their card. *(If you create flowers for your card, you can use green yarn for their stems!)*
- 2.) Using construction paper, crayons or markers, allow the children to draw pictures of themselves and their mothers (caregivers) on construction paper. Then fold the picture in half and write Happy Mother's Day on the "front" of the newly formed card. OR fold the paper first and have them decorate both the front and the inside of the card with pictures or flowers.
- 3.) Copy the activity sheet for each child. Allow the children time to color the items on the sheet and to cut them out. Glue the pieces on to different parts of a card made out of construction paper. (For fun, put the first part of the poem on the front of the card, and the second part of the poem on the inside of the card.) Alternatively, create your own poem or saying.

Happy Mother's Day!



On this special day, day, day
And in this special way, way, way
I'll take the time
To make it rhyme
So I can truly say, say, say...

...Have a very
Happy Mother's Day, Day, Day!

What Happens When We Die?

Teacher Pep Talk: Sometimes it becomes necessary for us to teach a child about "What Happens When We Die." This may bring to us all sorts of feelings of angst. But be reassured; generally the young child is not afraid of death, nor even overly concerned with it. At this tender age, death is usually still an abstract concept to them. At most they may have known a loved one (a grandparent, etc) who has passed away, or they may have experienced the death of a family pet.

As you are teaching, keep in mind that Jesus conquered death when He rose from the dead and that He is the Resurrection and the Life. Jesus said *"He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."*

You will need: A tent, if you have access to one that can be put up in the room (or outside somewhere, if the children may have access to it safely.) Or drape a sheet or blanket over a table in your room. Or mark the edges of a pretend tent on the floor with masking tape. Copies of the activity sheet, if desired, for Memorial Day.

Major Points: Sometimes people die
Our body may die, but our soul/spirit lives on
When we die, if we believe in Jesus, we go to be with Him
One day we will have a heavenly body

Scripture Ref. 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (Our Heavenly Dwelling)
John 11:25-26 (Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life)
Luke 23:32-43 (The Thief on the Cross)
1 Corinthians 15:40 (The Resurrection Body)

Memory Verse: *Away from the body... at home with the Lord...* 2 Corinthians 5:8

Lesson: **Introduction...**

- How many of you have ever been camping or slept in a tent? (*Wait for answers.*) Do you know what a tent is? (*Wait for answers.*)
 - Yes! It's a little house-like thing that you sleep in overnight, maybe while you are camping.
 - It may be made of different types of fabric or materials.
 - They may all look different.
 - Different people may sleep in them for different amounts of time... different numbers of days...
 - But one thing is the same about all tents: They are a temporary dwelling. That means we only use them for a little while. (They are not permanent.) They go up when we need them, and they come down when we are done with them.
 - Good! Now, you know all about tents!

Sometimes People Die

- God made us and He made our bodies too.
- The Bible says that our bodies are like little tents (that God gave us) for us to live in while we are here on earth.
- All of our tents are different. Some are bigger, some are smaller, some are stronger, and some are weaker.
- But all of them are the same in one way... They are all temporary... That means that they are not our permanent homes.
- After we have lived in them a long, long time... sometimes they begin to get old and can even begin to wear out. Sometimes we even begin to get tired of them, because they are beginning to be difficult to live in.
- Different people live in them for different amounts of time, but one thing is the same for everybody... Eventually we will leave our little tent.
- Sometimes people die. Have you ever known someone who died? *(Wait for answers. There may be lots of them. Let several children speak. Let all of them speak if possible. The children may tell you about relatives who died or even about family pets which died. Listen attentively. Be kind and considerate of each other during this time.)*
- Yes, sometimes people die. And it can make us feel very sad. Mostly because we are sad that we cannot see the person anymore for now.
- But... I have some very good news!

Our Body May Die, But our Soul/Spirit Lives On

- Even though our body may die, our soul and spirit live on. These are the parts of us that make us... us!
- We are the same! We will still know everyone and they will know us. We will know the things we know now, and we will know new stuff too!
- After all, even though we may go in and out of a tent, we are still us!
- And... there is more good news!

When We Die, if We Know Jesus, We Go to Be with Him

- When we die, if we know Jesus (have trusted Him as our Savior,) we go to be with Him in a place called Paradise!
- We know this because one day Jesus died on a cross for all of our sins
- While He was on the cross, there was a thief on one of the crosses next to Him.
- The thief knew that he had done lots of bad (wrong) things in his life.
- But the thief knew also knew that Jesus was good and had never, ever done anything bad (wrong)
- The thief trusted in Jesus as the One who could save him
- Even though he saw Jesus dying on the cross, he said to Him, *“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”*
- Amazing... Here is Jesus dying on the cross next to him, and the man still believed that Jesus would one day rule in His own kingdom!
- That’s when Jesus told the man something wonderful.

- Jesus said, “*I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.*”
 - Today... not tomorrow... not next week... not sometime in the future a long way off... Today you will be with me in paradise.
- Both Jesus and the thief died that day, and the thief went to be in Paradise with Jesus, because he trusted in Him as his Savior.
- Later a man named Paul, who also knew and trusted Jesus, said “... as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.” And then he said, “We... would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord” meaning that (as Christians) when we die we go to be with Jesus.

One Day We will Have a Heavenly Body

- Jesus is so good that He plans to give us new bodies to live in forever!
 - The Bible calls them incorruptible, which means that they will never grow old or wear out!
 - I think we will like them a lot!
 - I’m looking forward to having mine!

Let’s pray and thank God that when we die we can go to be with Jesus.

Prayer: Dear God,
Thank you that you made us.
Thank you that you gave us our bodies!
Thank you that when we die, we can go to be with Jesus in Paradise!
Thank you for loving us!
We love you back!
Amen

Suggested Activities: *(Choose two or three that work well for your group.)*

Visit a Tent In this activity, the children will visit a tent and go in and out of it.

Before Class: Locate a small tent which can be pitched in your classroom, or in an outside area which the children may visit safely after the lesson. Have the tent set up when the children arrive. No tent available? A sheet or blanket draped over a table makes a wonderful tent. *You may choose to have your snack in the tent today.*

During Class: Remind the children that the Bible tells us that our body is like a tent that God has given us to live in while we are here on the earth. When we are done with it, we leave it to go to be with Him and to have our new bodies, which will last forever.

Visit the tent that has been set up earlier. (Slip off your shoes, as you are not usually supposed to go in a tent with your shoes on. You may wear your socks!) Take turns going in and out of the tent a few times. “See, you are the same when you go in and when you come out. When we die, our spirit/soul leaves our body; just like we leave the tent. It goes on to be with Jesus in Paradise, if we have trusted Him as our Savior.”

Memorize the Bible Verse The children will learn 2 Corinthians 5:8: “Away from the body... Together with the Lord.” You may use the tent for this activity, if you like.

No tent? Use masking tape to mark off a square on the floor. Pretend it is the tent. OR drape a sheet or a blanket over a table for a tent-like effect.

Have everyone stand outside the tent. Tell the children that just for this exercise one of you will pretend to be Jesus. Have the children go in the tent one at a time. Have them come to the door of the tent and say “Away from the body...” as they exit the tent. Then have them run to you and the others as you all say “Together with the Lord...” The children may want to get creative about how they leave the tent: they may hop out, jump out, crawl out, etc, but each time they come to the group say: “Together with the Lord.”

Making Trail Mix The children will learn to make trail mix and then eat it during class.
Before Class: Obtain a recipe you like for trail mix. Easy things to use include: dry cereals, M&M candies (or semi-sweet chocolate morsels), dried cranberries or raisins, and tiny pretzels. You will also need a mixing bowl and tiny plastic bags that close. Provide water for the children. Display a canteen or a water bottle for them to see.

NOTE: Nuts are traditionally used – But NO NUTS in your trail mix because of choking hazards and nut allergies! (Mostly because of choking hazards!)

During Class: Explain to the children that we live a long time in our bodies and that we go a long way in them. It is important to help keep them healthy and strong. A good way to do this is by walking and hiking. Today we will learn about snacks that are fun to take on a long walk or hike. Discuss different types of snacks. Discuss trail mix. Show how to combine the various ingredients together to make a tasty snack. Good trail mix has a mixture of carbohydrates, sugar, and at least one thing with a little salt: These help replace the things in your body that you lose or use up as you walk along on a long hike. Mix up your trail mix. Let each child place some trail mix in their bag for a snack. Take a hike to the tent. Sit in or around the tent and have your snack.

Snacks in the Tent The children will enjoy their snack time in the tent.

Before Class: If you are using someone else’s tent, be sure to check if snacks may be eaten in their tent. Sometimes folks don’t want this because the crumbs may draw bugs such as ants. If you do have snacks in the tent, make sure it is thoroughly clean and dry before taking down the tent. Good tent snacks are crackers/ trail mix, and water.

During Class: Remind the children that while we are here on earth we live in our bodies all the time. We eat, sleep, and play every day in these little houses or tents that God has given us to live in. Today we will have a little snack in the tent. Bring out snacks and distribute them among the children. Sit in the tent (you may have to take turns) and eat part of your snack. You may pretend to take a nap in the tent. Sing a song in or around the tent, etc.

Draw Yourself The children will draw self-portraits.

Before Class: Obtain pieces of paper for each child, along with pencils, colors and markers. Consider providing various shades of yarn for hair, along with scissors and glue. You may want to provide mirrors for the children to look at themselves.

During Class: Remind the children that God made each of us unique and special. Ask them to draw themselves. Ask them to put in as much detail as they can. (Younger children will probably be able to draw eyes, ears, nose, and a mouth. Older children will most likely be able to include eyebrows, eyelashes, teeth, hair style, etc.) Ask the children to color the picture. Look in the mirror. What color eyes do you have? What color hair do you have? You may use yarn to make the hair.

Getting the BIG Picture The children will draw life-size outlines of themselves.

Before Class: Obtain large pieces of butcher paper for the children to outline themselves. Obtain pencils or markers. Clear space in one part of the room.

During Class: Cut off large sections of white paper. Allow the children to lie down on the paper. Have a helper (adult or child) outline the edges of the child. You don't have to get really close, just more or less the idea of around the legs and arms, etc. Display the pictures on the wall of the room. Talk about how God gives us our bodies to live in while we are here on earth. One day we will have new bodies that will last forever!

Memorial Day Activity The children will learn of Memorial Day in the US.

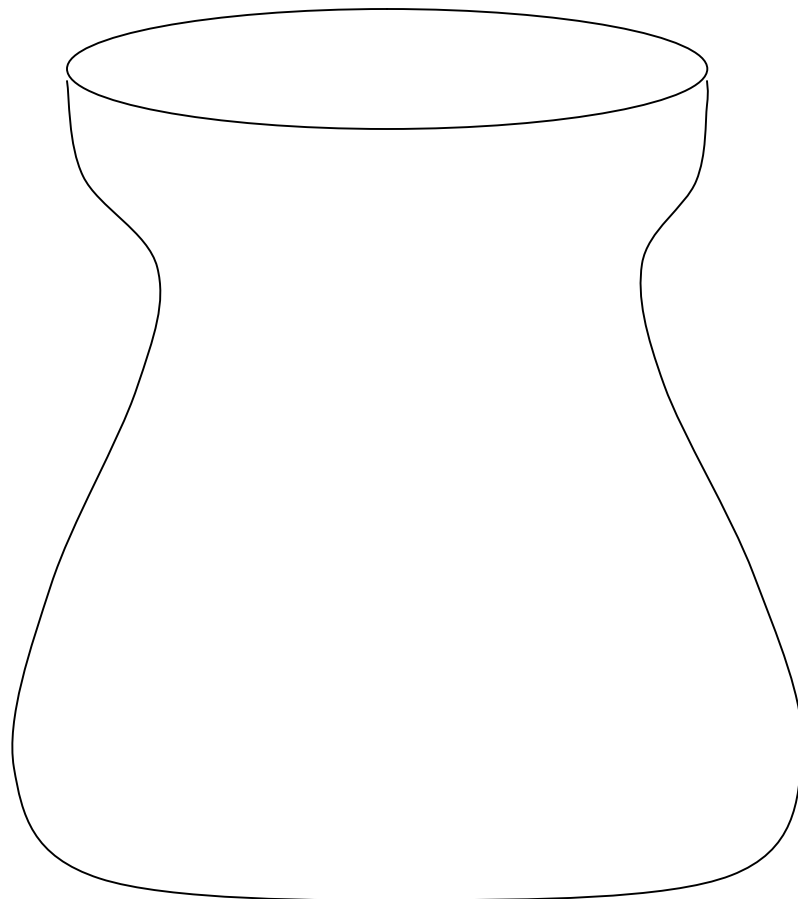
Before Class: Make copies of the activity sheet for the children. Obtain colors or markers. Consider bringing a bouquet of flowers with you to class.

During Class: Discuss with the children that when people die, their bodies are usually placed in graves at the cemetery. On Memorial Day, in the United States, we often go and visit the graves of those in our families who have died (or "gone on before us.") Sometimes we take flowers and leave them on the grave. (*Show the flowers you brought with you.*) Sometimes we say a prayer at the graveside. We must remember that even though the person's body is in the grave that their spirit/soul is not there. Those who believe in Jesus are with Him in Paradise. Remind the children that on Memorial Day in the US we give special remembrance to those who died fighting in our armed forces, in the cause of freedom.

Say a little prayer thanking God for those who have gone on before us to be with Him.

Draw some flowers in the little vase on the activity sheet, and display it at home.

Remembering Those Who have Gone on Before Us



Sunday School Lesson for Teens – Father's Day or Mother's Day
The Boy, Jesus, in the Temple

TEACHER PEP TALK

Congratulations! Soon, you're going to be teaching a Sunday School lesson for Mother's Day or Father's Day! This is a great opportunity for Youth to learn to appreciate their parents more fully! This lesson will help them see how Jesus interacted with His earthly parents when once, at the tender age of 12, they were really worried about Him ... *proving that even a perfect, sinless youth can make his/her parents crazy!*

SCRIPTURES

Read through Luke 2:41-52 – The Boy Jesus in the Temple

Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

LESSON PLAN

As you re-tell the Bible story stop and discuss how Mary and Joseph must have felt:

- When they first noticed He was missing from the caravan going home.
- While they were heading back to Jerusalem to look for Him.
- After they had been searching unsuccessfully in Jerusalem for 3 days.
- When they finally found Him safe! And just after they found Him safe!!

Also talk about how Jesus responded to Mary and Joseph when they finally found Him:

- Jesus knew who He was and who His Father was
- Jesus was able to “separate” successfully from His earthly parents
- Nevertheless, Jesus returned with them to Nazareth and was “obedient” to them
- He stayed with them until He was ready to start His ministry (at about age 30)

The Youth will learn that sometimes we make our parents crazy with our behavior!

- When we do, how do our parents react? Often with amazing love and patience!
- Talk about that! Who in your group has the best story?

Then the students will each make a nice homemade card for Mom or Dad.

BIBLE STORY

(Tell the story in your own words.)

Jesus was 12. That sounds really young to us! But remember that at that time, in Jewish households, 13 year old boys were considered to be men!

When Jesus was 12, He and Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem (from Nazareth) for the celebration of Passover. [*Scripture ref. for Passover is Exodus 12:14-28.*]

They went routinely every year, even though the journey from Nazareth (about 70 miles away) must have been long and difficult. To make it easier, they traveled with other family members and friends.

The Celebration of the Passover took a whole week (7 days). Finally it was time to go home, so Joseph and Mary and all their family and friends packed up and left.

Mary and Joseph's Situation

Ever been on a long trip with your family? **Ever left a kid at the gas station? Ever been the kid left behind at the gas station?** Sometimes you are miles up the road before you realize someone is missing. That's what happened to Mary and Joseph!

After the first day of traveling, Mary and Joseph started looking for Jesus. They had figured He was with some of their other relatives or friends. But they couldn't find Him!!

Can you imagine how Mary must have felt? What do you think? (Oh, no! I've LOST the Son of God!) **How about Joseph... How do you think he felt** about leaving Jesus back in Jerusalem? How about having to go ALL the way BACK to get Him?

When they got back to Jerusalem they started looking for Jesus. **Where would you have looked first?** Remember, no cell phones were available! They had to physically tromp around all over Jerusalem looking for Him. **What kinds of things do you think might have been running through their minds?**

After 3 DAYS they finally found Him! SAFE! **How do you think they felt?** (Relieved, excited?) **How about right after that?** (Maybe a little frustrated) Jesus was safe and that was great! But why had He treated them that way? Mary even asks Him that later.

In addition, where was He? Sitting with the elders and the teachers in the Temple discussing the Holy Scriptures with them! The Bible says that "Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers." Remember He was only 12!! **What do you think Mary and Joseph thought about that?** (Confused, perplexed)

So, finally Mary speaks to Jesus, saying "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

Now the ball is in Jesus' court... let's see what He will say in response...

Jesus' response to Mary and Joseph

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

At the tender age of 12, **Jesus knew who He was and who His Father was.** He was in the Temple of God... and He said it was His Father's house! He knew that He would eventually separate from Mary and Joseph and go on to have His own mission to fulfill.

The Bible says that Mary and Joseph "did not understand what he was saying to them." **They didn't quite get it.**

The Bible also says that Mary "treasured all these things in her heart." (*Scholars believe that Luke spoke to Mary to get some of the first hand information found in the Gospel of Luke.*)

Then Jesus did an amazing thing!!! He went home to Nazareth with them and **"was obedient to them."**

Jesus, the Son of God, who knew that He was the Savior of the world... who knew that the Temple was His Father's house... went home with his earthly parents and was obedient to them! Even though He knew all these things... even though Mary and Joseph didn't quite "get it"... He was still obedient to them.

The next thing we hear about Jesus in the Gospels is when He began His ministry at about the age of 30.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they first noticed that Jesus was missing?** (*Oh, NO! I've misplaced the Son of God!!*)
- **How do you think they felt when they finally found Him?** (*Relieved, thankful, happy, thrilled, and then... wait for it... Angry! Yep, that's when parents act crazy... when they're mad... usually just after they've been worried to death and then suddenly are relieved. And no, it doesn't make sense... even to parents.*)
- **Have you ever made your parents "crazy"? What did you do? What did they do?**
- **Who has the best story?** (*Of when you did something really outrageous, but your parents responded really well?*)
- **Should we follow Jesus' example and be obedient to our parents?** (*Even if they don't always get it?*)

ACTIVITY

Create a Card - Nothing goes over better than a handmade card on Mother's Day or Father's Day!

Provide lots of construction paper or note card paper and envelopes. Bring in markers, pens, pencil, glue, sequins, glitter-glue, etc. Let the children make their own handmade cards for Mom or Dad.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CARDS

On the front write "**Mom/Dad... Remember when I...?**" (Fill in the blank with something you did). On the inside write "**And you...?**" (Fill in the blank with how s/he responded) "**Thanks for loving me and being such a great Mom/Dad!**"

Scripture verse for Father's Day: 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Scripture verse for Mother's Day: 1 Thessalonians 2:7 ...we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.

	<p><i>Dad,</i></p> <p><i>Remember when I...</i></p>
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<p>OUTSIDE OF CARD</p> <p>On the front of this card to Mom or Dad write out something you did that made your parent crazy (<i>but they reacted well.</i>)</p> <p>Use different colored construction paper for Mom and Dad. Decorate as desired. (<i>Mom likes flowers!</i>)</p>
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<p><i>For you know that we dealt with you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.</i></p> <p><i>1 Thess. 2:11-12</i></p>	<p><i>And you...</i></p> <p><i>Thanks for being such a great Dad!</i></p> <p><i>With love,</i></p>
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<p>INSIDE OF CARD</p> <p>Write the way your parent responded in love and patience to the crazy thing you did. Thank your parent!</p> <p>Use different Bible verses for Mom and Dad.</p> <p><i>(1 Thess. 2:7 for Mom)</i> <i>(1 Thess. 2:11-12 for Dad)</i></p>

Independence Day Lesson for Children (Ages 7-12)

TEACHER PEP TALK

The idea of freedom is an important one for children to understand. As Americans, we celebrate our freedom on July 4th, Independence Day. As believers in Christ, we can celebrate our freedom every day, because Jesus has set us free from sin and death!

SCRIPTURES

John 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

LESSON PLAN

WELCOME

- Welcome each child by name.
- Introduce all workers.
- Give any necessary instructions or announcements

PRAYER

- Pray for and with the children.
- Thank Jesus and ask Him to help you learn about Him in class.
- Encourage the children to say “Amen” with you.

INTRODUCE LESSON (follow outline provided)

- USA declared its independence from British rule nearly 235 years ago.
- Americans enjoy many freedoms that people in other countries may not.
- It takes work and sacrifice to keep our country safe and free.
- Discuss people or groups who help keep our country safe and free. (Veterans, active and enlisted persons in the armed forces, first responders, statesmen, citizens, etc.)
- Discuss War of Independence (follow outline)
- Show Flag of 1776.
- Show Current US Flag and discuss meaning of following:
 - 13 stripes (7 red and 6 white), 50 stars (states)
 - Red – Courage, White – Purity, Blue – Faithfulness

BIBLE LESSON (follow outline provided)

- Jesus is the Son of God.
- He came to earth many years ago (long before America was founded!)
- Jesus came to set us free from sin and death.
- He was Courageous, Pure, and Faithful
- He came to set people FREE, not only in this country, but in every country all over the world.
- He came for all people everywhere!
- Jesus came to save us. He came to set us free!

READ BIBLE VERSE

PRAY IN CLOSING

CRAFT

SNACK

DISMISSAL HOME

LESSON INTRODUCTION

We live in the United States. The United States of America was started over 225 years ago. That seems very old. But the ideas it was started with are still important. Americans are free to live where they want, and say what they believe, and to worship God where they would like to do so. These are BIG Freedoms. Some other countries don't have those freedoms.

Today we are celebrating Independence Day: the day our country declared its independence (or freedom) from rule by others. It takes hard work and sacrifice to keep our country safe and free. Let's talk about some of the groups or people who help keep our country safe and free. (Take answers from the group. These may include: Veterans, persons in the armed forces, first responders, statesmen, citizens, etc.)

When our county started, the people then fought a great war for America. They were victorious in that fight (They won!) and they started a new country here, the United States of America. They had a new flag for their new country. It looked like this (**Show picture of 1776 flag.**) Now the flag looks a little different (**Show picture of current flag.**) Each thing in our flag means something special. The stars represent the number of states we have now (50). The stripes represent the number of states America started with (13, 7 red & 6 white). Even the colors of the flag mean special things.

RED – COURAGE

WHITE – PURITY

BLUE – FAITHFULNESS

Later we are going to make a flag just like this one. (**Show sample of craft.**)

BIBLE LESSON

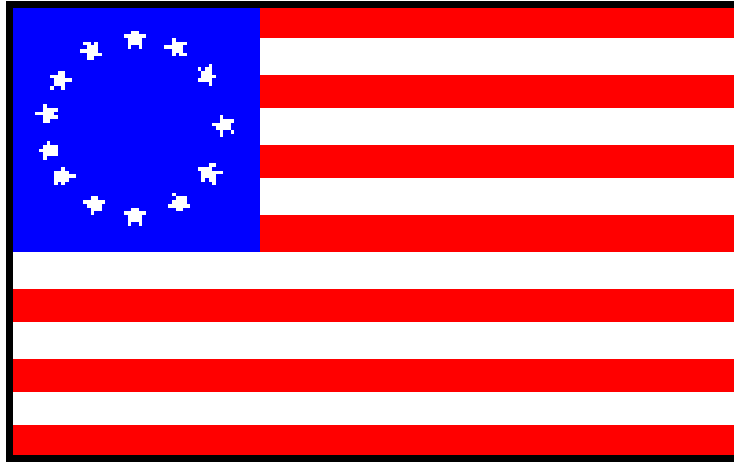
There was a man named Jesus, who was and is the Son of God, who came to earth many years ago, way back before America was started. Jesus came to set us all free. He came to set us free from sin and death. He was COURAGEOUS because He stood up to evil and did what was right. He was PURE because He was the Son of God and because He never did anything wrong. He was FAITHFUL to do what He came to do, even though it was very hard. And in the end He was victorious (He WON!) over sin and death.

HE came to set people FREE, not only in this country, but in every country all over the world. He came for all people who would believe in Him, no matter where they lived or when they lived. He came for all people everywhere!

Jesus came to save us! He came to set us free!

BIBLE VERSE

The Bible tells us: So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:36



The Betsy Ross Flag of 1776



The American Flag with 50 Stars

Craft for Independence Day

The Making of an American Flag (or “I doubt Betsy Ross did it this way!”)

PRIOR TO CLASS:

- Cut out construction paper pieces for each child as directed below. (Using a paper cutter will help in the process, especially in cutting the stripes!)
- Obtain white star stickers (50 per child)

DURING CLASS:

- Give each child one piece of red paper, six white stripes, and one blue sheet
- Have glue available
- Lay out the stripes on the red paper – LEAVE SPACE FOR RED STRIPES ON TOP AND BOTTOM (HINT: Putting the first white stripe just under where the blue section will go helps – then just put 2 below and 3 above that stripe.)
- Glue all 6 white stripes lengthwise across the red paper
- Put glue on the back of the blue sheet
- Glue the blue sheet to the upper left corner of the red paper with the stripes.
- Use white star stickers to make the star field.
- Put child’s name on artwork.

Here is what a real US Flag looks like:



NOTE: You will HAVE TO CUT all these pieces... even the red background!

Red Section – one piece
Length 11.5” Width 6.5”

Blue Section – one piece
Length 5” Width 3.5”

White Stripes – six pieces
Length 11.5” Width 0.5”

*Suggestion – Use a paper cutter... it works better than scissors!

Hints for Sanity during Arts and Crafts

- 1.) **Glue happens.** Remember that. Stay calm. Have wet wipes available for sticky fingers. Most glue will wash out of any kid clothes’ fabric. Wipe down tables at end of craft.
- 2.) **This is art, not science.** Kids will not have their stripes straight or spaced correctly... especially the little ones. Don’t say anything.
- 3.) **How many Stars?** Some kids will have 6 stars, others will have 65. Let them put the stars on until they are happy with their artwork. Encourage them just to put the stars on the blue part. Some may want you to help them count. Count slowly and out loud with the child.

*Thanksgiving Sunday School Lesson
Preschool to Elementary Age*

Scripture References:

Psalm 136:1

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.

Psalm 69:30

I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Definitions of words

Praise is saying things to God that are true about God

Endure means to last, or to bear with (as in God's love endures forever)

Major Points

- We are to give thanks to God
- God is good
- God's love endures forever
- Definition of praise
- Definition of the word endure

Lesson

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever." These are great words! In fact, they are the words of a song that we can hear on the radio! But the amazing thing is that these words have been used in songs to praise God for thousands of years.

About 3,000 years ago a man named David (King David of Israel) wrote these words down in order to praise God with them. David also wrote these words: *"I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving."* (Psalm 69:30)

Praising God means saying things to God that are true about Him. When we say things like: "God is good!" that is praising God, because God is good!

We might say things like "God is loving" or "God is always there" and that is praising God, because those things are true about God. God is loving and God is always there.

What are some other things we could say to praise God? What kinds of things can we that are true about God? (*Listen to answers from students; give feedback.*)

“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.” His love endures forever. That’s a new word, endure. Endure means that something lasts, or bears with other things. It means that it doesn’t go away, no matter what. So, God’s love lasts forever; it will bear with all other things forever; it will be there forever.

“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.” The Bible says that we are to give thanks to God. We are to give thanks to God because He is good. And God is good, isn’t He? Let’s talk about one of the ways that we know God is good.

We know God is good because He gives us good things.

(James 1:17 *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father...*)

Let’s name some of the good things God gives us or has given us.
(*Listen to answers; give feedback.*)

Examples of answers from younger children:

Parents, food, homes, grandparents, pets, sunshine, the stars, animals, my goldfish, etc.

Examples of answers from older children:

Love, integrity, justice, kindness, peace, joy, salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

What holiday is coming up soon? (*THANKSGIVING*)

When we celebrate the holiday of Thanksgiving, we are setting aside a day to thank God for all the good things He has given to us. We can thank Him for things as simple as our pets or as big and wonderful as our salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

We can thank Him for anything good that we have received, because the Bible tells us that He has given us every good and perfect gift.

King David wrote: *“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.”* One of the ways we can give thanks to God is to pray. Let’s pray and thank God for all the good things He has given us!

Prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for all of the good and perfect gifts you have given us! We praise you for how good and loving you are!! Help us to make every day a day of thanksgiving!! AMEN

King David also wrote: *“I will praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.”* Let’s do that! Let’s sing a song of praise to God and thank Him for all He has done for us!

Songs

Praise Him! Praise Him! All ye Little Children (Public Domain)

Praise Him, Praise Him!
All ye little children,
God is love, God is love.
Praise Him, Praise Him!
All ye little children,
God is love, God is love!

Love Him, love Him,
All ye little children,
God is love, God is love.
Love Him, love Him,
All ye little children,
God is love, God is love!

Serve Him, serve Him,
All ye little children,
God is love, God is love.
Serve Him, serve Him,
All ye little children,
God is love, God is love!

For Free Lyrics and Midi version go to: http://biblestudycharts.com/CH/Praise_Him_Praise_Him.html

This is the Day (Public Domain)

This is the day, this is the day
That the LORD hath made, that the LORD hath made
I will rejoice, I will rejoice
And be glad in it, and be glad in it

This is the day that the LORD hath made
I will be rejoice and be glad in it

This is the day, this is the day
That the LORD hath made!!

For Free Lyrics and Midi version go to: http://biblestudycharts.com/CH/This_Is_The_Day.html

Activities: (Choose from the following according to age group and interest)
Suggested Song for Musical Activities: "Forever" by Chris Tomlin (Use with permission only.)

Sing Along

You may wish to play the song and allow the children to sing along with the parts they know or with the parts which repeat such as "His love endures forever".

Background Music

You may decide to play this song softly as background music while the children do a craft project or play quietly.

Freeze Dancing

Play the song and allow the children to dance with the music. Turn the music off abruptly and have them freeze in place. Pick one child from the group to come up and turn the music on and off again. Repeat until others have had a turn.

Letter Scramble

Write the word THANKSGIVING on the board. Have the children write as many words as they can think of using just the letters in the word "Thanksgiving". For example: thank, thanks, thing, ant, sank, van, tan tins, I, in, sin, sink, etc. After a certain amount of time, have the children share their lists if they would like to do so. Who has the most words? Who has the longest word? Who has the shortest word? Does anyone have a word that no one else thought of?

Bible Verse Work

Have the children write out one or all of the Bible Verses for the day. Look up the verses in the Bible. Read them out loud. What verses precede and follow these verses in the Bible? Memorize Psalm 136:1 and say it while hopping up and down, or while standing on one foot.

Today's Bible Verse

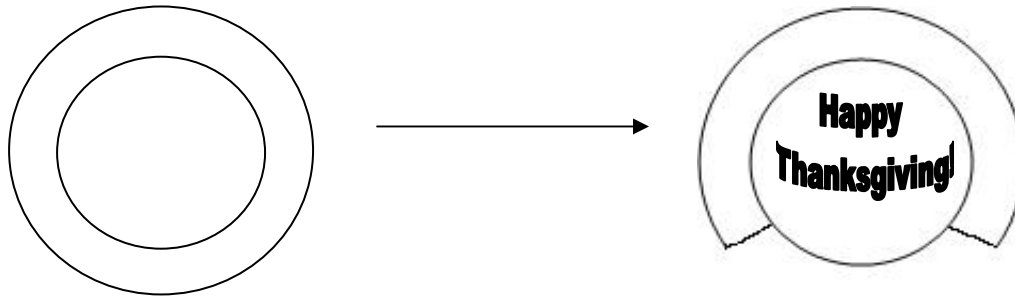
Psalm 136:1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.

Thanksgiving Crafts:

Turkey Handprints: A "classic" and still a must-do Thanksgiving activity with young ones. Give each child a piece of either plain paper or construction paper (8 ½ x 11 inches or larger). Use crayons or washable markers to trace around the child's outstretched hand on to the paper. Then lift the hand. Connect the lines at the wrist area and you have the "body" for your turkey. Draw legs and turkey feet under the wrist. Draw an eye and a beak on the thumb to denote the head. Color the four fingers brightly to make the turkey "feathers". Write "Happy Thanksgiving" or "Give thanks to the LORD..." at the top of the page. Be sure to write down the child's name and the date as these will become keepsakes as soon as Grandma sees them.

Turkey Wall Hanging:

Provide each child with one paper plate (the cheap paper kinds are best) and access to lots of autumn color crayons or markers. Write "Happy Thanksgiving" or "Thank you, God" in the center of each plate with indelible marker or dark crayons. Allow each child to decorate a plate. For those who want their plate to resemble a turkey: Cut off the frilled edge along the bottom third of the plate. Then decorate the plate as if it represents the turkey's feathers. To hang, put two small holes in rim at top, loop the ends of a length of yarn through the holes and tie.



Turkey Cup:

For each child, provide one paper cup of an autumn color. Place child's hand on construction paper (autumn color) and trace around it. Cut out paper handprint. Fasten or glue paper handprint to side of cup with fingers extending up above rim, so they look like feathers. Use pattern provided to cut out turkey neck and head from the same paper. Decorate with eyes and a beak. Fasten turkey head to opposite side of cup from feathers. Fill cup with dry cereal or snack mix. (*Watch for food allergies! NO NUTS!*)

