

LESSON 3

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Forgives**SCRIPTURE:** 1 John 1–2**GOD'S BIG STORY:** We might be tempted to hide our sins from God and others, but when we admit our sins to God, He eagerly forgives us and helps us to become more like Him.**WORD OF WONDER:** But God has surely listened. He has heard my prayer. Give praise to God. He has accepted my prayer. He has not held back his love from me. —Psalm 66:19–20

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: When you play hide and seek, where is your favorite place to hide?
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Responding in Worship
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Forgives

SCRIPTURE: 1 John 1–2

WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 66:19–20

Pause to read 1 John 1:8–2:2.

Before it burned in 2019, I had the opportunity to wander through Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral. I noticed the confessionals were mostly tucked away in quiet side chapels and for whatever reason—perhaps a nudge from God—I felt the need to finally admit to God something that was weighing on my conscience.

So in the glow of the Cathedral's rose windows, I slid into a pew for a heart-to-heart with God.

Until that experience, I hadn't actually confessed my sins. I'd generally admit I'd misbehaved, but naming my sins before God and acknowledging my need for His forgiveness—that wasn't part of my faith tradition.

Confession may not be part of your faith tradition, either. But if that's true, it's time to take seriously the Bible passage you'll explore with your kids this week.

Confession is more than a nod toward our need to grow spiritually. It's taking sin as seriously as God takes it and coming to Him with humility and honesty.

You'll know you're truly confessing when you feel the burn of conviction making its way up your spine. (That and when you find yourself glancing around to make sure nobody can hear you.)

There's forgiveness waiting for you, you know. Jesus has paid for every sin you mention.

What do you have to confess? And what might happen if you read 1 John 1:9 aloud and choose to believe it?

—**Mikal Keefer**

Children's Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

First John is a letter most likely written by the same person who wrote the Gospel of John. The main point of the letter is to encourage the members of the unnamed church in their faith in Jesus.

WHAT?

First John addresses a difficult situation in which some members of the church had walked away from the faith. In 1 John 1–2, the author teaches the remaining believers how to know they are walking in the truth of God’s love.

WHERE?

The letter does not tell us to whom it was written or where the church was located, but the concerns of the community to know that they were really following the true God are as relevant today as ever.

WHEN?

While 1 John reflects a concern for the first generation of churches, its exact date is not known. The letter begins with a description of Jesus as Word, similar to the Gospel of John, and is followed by the discussion about confession and forgiveness.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

Both the Gospel of John and 1 John place Jesus at the center of our lives. Both emphasize that Jesus is the Word who existed from the beginning (John 1:1; 1 John 1:1), and it is Jesus who brings forgiveness of sin (1 John 1:7).

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Forgives

SCRIPTURE: 1 John 1–2

WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 66:19–20

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loopPlay high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be sure to move to their level and introduce yourself to any new friends. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding to what they say.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

Welcome Question

Consider using a **30 or 2:00 Countdown** to let leaders and kids know it's almost time to begin!

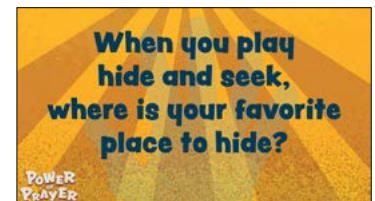
At Your Start Time...

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

Enthusiastically welcome kids as you begin. At your service start time, call attention to the Welcome Question on the screen and invite Small Group Leaders to begin: **When you play hide and seek, where is your favorite place to hide?"**

"While it's fun to hide when we're playing a game with friends, there are some things that we don't need to hide, especially from God, like the wrong things we do. Today, we'll see that it is good to freely confess, or admit, our sins to God because He forgives, or completely removes them from us. Today's we are learning GOD FORGIVES."

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH



Small Group

While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! I have a little game for us first today!

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

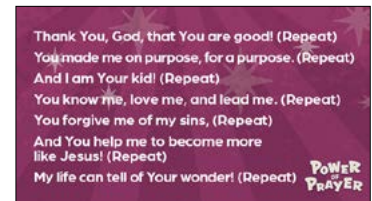
And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You forgive me of my sins, (Kids repeat.)

And You help me to become more like Jesus! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the your own words with these as a guide if needed **Father, thank You for Jesus, who died for our sins. We invite Your Holy Spirit to show us our wrongdoings so that we can confess them. Thank You for loving and forgiving us always. You are so good! Please help us to become more like You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you! Remember that some kids may have no idea why we worship or what we are doing!

WORSHIP VIDEOS: PRAISE, ALIVE WITH YOU

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE

Explain to kids that today's story from the Bible is found in the New Testament in 1 John. First John is one of three letters most likely written by the same person who wrote the Gospel of John to encourage other followers of Jesus.



"Let's start by watching part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we will watch and experience more of the story!"

VIDEO: GOD'S BIG STORY

LESSON 3 PRAYER OF CONFESSION

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: red balloon, permanent marker, paper or cardstock (1 sheet), table, plate, salt, pepper, teaspoon, Bible, safety goggles (optional), lab coat (optional)

Ahead of time, inflate the red balloon and use a permanent marker to write “Jesus” across it in large letters. Fold the paper or cardstock in half to create a table tent. Set a table at the center of your teaching space.

If you have a lab coat, put it on just before starting. Then with the kids watching, enter the teaching area silently and take your time placing the items for the experiment on the table in front: red balloon with “Jesus” written on it, plate, salt, pepper, teaspoon, paper or cardstock table tent, a Bible, and safety goggles (if you have them). Once you are prepared, begin addressing the kids from behind the table.

“Welcome to our lab! I have a question for you: Have you ever done something that hurt someone else? Pause for kids to think.

You see, we go through life making thousands of decisions every day. Put on safety goggles if you have them. Then scoop a teaspoon of salt and slowly pour it onto the plate. **And most of those decisions are good, helpful, kind, responsible choices.** Shake salt on the plate so it covers the bottom. Next, scoop a teaspoon of pepper and slowly pour it onto the plate. **But the truth is we all do wrong, hurtful things sometimes,** (shake plate so salt and pepper mix) **and those things hurt not only other people but also God. Sadly, rather than admitting when we do wrong, we sometimes try to cover it up.** Place a tented sheet of paper or cardstock over the plate. **We hide what we did and hope it will go away.**

If wearing safety goggles, remove them. Move in front of the table and open the Bible to 1 John.

The book of 1 John is a letter that tells the church how important it is to admit the wrong things we do and ask for forgiveness. Look at this plate. Lift paper and tilt plate toward the group. **These wrong, hurtful things aren’t going away. Nor can we get rid of them ourselves. They’re clearly there. Some members of the church denied that they were doing things that hurt God. They said that they never did bad things.** Cover plate again with paper.

The author of 1 John says that if we claim we don’t do wrong, we are “fooling ourselves” and “the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). The truth he is talking about is Jesus Christ. Jesus gave His life so that we can be forgiven. When we deny that we have sinned—or done wrong things—we are denying what Jesus did for us. In fact, “we are calling God a liar” (1 John 1:10). And that’s just silly! God cannot do anything wrong!

Walk back behind table, and if you have safety goggles, put them back on.

Sometimes we lie about what we have done because we are afraid of what might happen if others know the truth. (peek under the paper at the salt-and-pepper mess) **But 1 John tells us that if we admit—or confess—that we have done wrong, God will eagerly forgive us and treat us as though we had never done wrong at all.** Take out the red balloon and rub it on the sleeve of your shirt. **Remember what Jesus did? He gave His life so that we can be forgiven. This balloon is like Jesus. Now watch what happens when we confess our sin and let Jesus come close to us.**

Leader Tip: For larger groups, consider inviting a few kids on stage to watch closely and ask them to describe to the rest of the group what they see, or set up multiple stations and have a leader doing the experiment at each.

Leader Tip: For Older Kids. Consider inviting several older kids to the table to complete certain steps in the object lesson. For example, you might instruct one older kid to measure a teaspoon of salt and to pour it onto the plate and another to rub the balloon on the sleeve of her shirt.

Hover the charged balloon just above the plate. The pieces of pepper will stick to the balloon, leaving the plate full of only salt. Put the balloon behind the table.

The sinful things we do still have consequences. Like the small holes left where the pepper used to be on this plate, we still have to deal with the consequences of our choices. That might look like fixing relationships with the people we hurt. But we can know that God always forgives us. Jesus (hold up balloon) is our advocate, our supporter—the person who speaks to God the Father for us. Jesus gave His life so that we could live forever with Him.

Because of what Jesus did, we can approach God with courage, knowing that God will forgive us. And God doesn't just forgive us, He also strengthens us to love others (draw a heart in the salt on the plate with your finger and tilt it toward the kids so they can see it) instead of hurting them. When we love our brothers and sisters in God's family, it shows that God has truly changed our hearts, and we have been forgiven!

Remove goggles if wearing them, and move in front of the table.

Admitting when we do wrong things can be scary. But we don't need to be afraid to admit our sins and mistakes to God because God loves us. He hears our prayers! And because Jesus is always on our side, we can know for certain that God forgives."

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is GOD FORGIVES. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story?" Allow kids to answer freely.

Both the Gospel of John and 1 John place Jesus at the center of our lives. Both biblical books highlight that Jesus is the Word, who existed from the beginning (John 1:1; 1 John 1:1), and Jesus is the One who brings forgiveness of sin (1 John 1:7)."



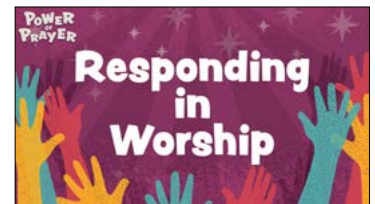
Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Give a special explanation for baptism and show the video. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

*****Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. There are no motions to this video. Kids should still stand and leaders should model worship like they would in adult service. Please refer to the Worship Posture Tutorial on the resource page before leading.**

WORSHIP VIDEO: FAMOUS FOR



Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids Use your own words, with these as a guide if needed:

Blessing: May God hear your prayers and guide you. He will not hold back His love from His children. Do not fear to share your heart. The Lord longs to forgive you and make you pure! Praise Him for His forgiveness!

