

### 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?
- Curiosity Questions
- Interactive Game: Hidden Treasure
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Word of Wonder: Psalm 66:19–20
- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Responding in Worship: Sand Prayers



Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist

### INVITATION

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

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**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).

### Small Group

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

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

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**WORD OF WONDER:** Psalm 66:19–20

### Pre-Service (15–20 min)

**RESOURCES:** [Coloring Page](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

*Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.*

#### **While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..**

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

#### **I’m curious ...**

- **Have you ever said “I’m sorry” for something you did even though no one saw you do it?**
- **Why do you think it’s important to say “I’m sorry” when you’ve done something wrong?**

### Small Group Begins: Welcome Question 2–3 min

**SUPPLIES:** whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils

As kids arrive, invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question:

**“When you play hide and seek, where is your favorite place to hide?”**

Right at your service time, move into Small Group time by sharing your own answers and allowing kids to talk about their answers.

## Interactive Game: Hidden Treasure

**SUPPLIES:** coin (1 per 8–10 kids)

Invite kids to sit close together in a circle on the floor. Ask for one person to be a pirate who is searching for the hidden treasure. The pirate will stand in the middle of the circle searching for treasure. The treasure he is seeking is a coin. All the kids in the circle should make their hands into fists in their laps. Have the pirate close his eyes while you give one kid in the group the coin. Once the pirate opens his eyes, the kids will begin passing the coin until the pirate thinks he knows where it is. All kids should act as if they are passing the coin, even if they don't have it yet. When the pirate thinks he has found the coin, he can say, "Stop! That's it!" (in his best pirate voice for good measure) and point to the kid who has the coin. All kids must stop passing the coin at this point. The person who is discovered must reveal what's hidden (or not) in her hands. If the pirate is correct, he will take the coin from the kid, and they will switch places. The first pirate will then give the coin to a different kid while the new pirate closes her eyes. If your group is large, consider having kids form smaller groups of 8–10 for this activity.

**Leader Tip:** For Older Kids. To make the game more challenging, give kids the freedom to change the direction they pass the coin at any point in the game or try passing the coin behind their backs.

**Hiding can be fun when we're playing a game like the one we just played. However, when it comes to our relationship with God, we don't need to hide anything, even our sins. Sin is a wrong choice and can be anything we do that isn't part of God's perfect plan. Sin separates us from God. Unlike the pirates in our game, though, God isn't out to catch us and the sins we hide. Instead, He wants us to confess them on our own. He knows that when we confess them and admit to our wrongdoings, we recognize that we need God's help to be more like Him. God loves us! And we should never fear being honest with Him because we have confidence that today's Wonder Truth is true. Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD FORGIVES.**"**

## Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

Explain to kids that today's story from the Bible is found in the New Testament in 1 John. 1 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. Ask volunteers to help kids find 1 John 1.

**Read 1 John 1:8–10, 1 John 2:1–2, and 1 John 2:12 aloud.**

**\*\*Remember to use dynamic voices, inflection, and pauses to keep the reading engaging!**

- **What are some words used to describe God in 1 John 1–2?** (Help kids find the passage and reread 1 John 1:8–10; 2:12 together.)
- **What will God do if we confess to Him, or admit, the wrong things we do?**
- **Who paid for our sins?**
- **Is it hard or easy for you to admit when you have done something wrong? Why do you think that is?**
- **God's forgiveness means our sins (the wrong things we do) have been completely removed from us.**
- **When you think about God's forgiveness, what words or images come to mind? How does it make you feel?**

**"It's encouraging to know that even though we sin, God always forgives. And He doesn't stop there; when we confess our sins, God helps us become more like Him. Let's ask God for the courage to share our sins with Him so that we can come to Him for forgiveness."**

## Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite kids into a time of prayer. Encourage them to share praises and requests from the week and to pray for one another. If they aren't sure what to pray for, invite them to ask God to help them become more like Jesus. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God for His love and forgiveness.

## Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

Explain to kids that today's story from the Bible is found in the New Testament in 1 John. 1 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. Encourage adult volunteers to help kids find 1 John 1.

**Give a brief overview of the history and context using the info on page 3 of this guide.**

**Ask for three volunteers to read 1 John 1:8–10, 1 John 2:1–2, and 1 John 2:12.**

**\*\*Remember to use dynamic voices, inflection, and pauses to keep the reading engaging!**

- **Reread 1 John 1:8–10; 2:12. What does this passage say we are doing if we claim we are without sin?**
- **What does it mean that God forgives?**
- **This passage says that God will make us pure if we confess our sins. What do you think it means that God will make us pure? How does God make us pure?**
- **People (including you and I!) sometimes try to hide our sins from others and from God. Why do you think that is? Think of a time you hid something that you did wrong. How did you feel?**
- **What happens when we confess, or admit, our sins to God? If you have ever confessed your sins to God, how did you feel afterward?**
- **God's forgiveness means our sins (the wrong things we do) have been completely removed from us. When you think about God's forgiveness, what words or images come to mind?**
- **Why can it be difficult to confess our sins sometimes?**

**"Even though we know God forgives sins, sometimes it seems easier to hide our wrongdoings than to confess them. However, God wants us to confess our sins because He wants to help us change and be more like Him. Let's pray and ask God's Spirit to make us pure.**

## Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite kids into a time of prayer. Encourage them to share praises and requests from the week and to pray for one another. If they aren't sure what to pray for, invite them to ask God to help them become more like Jesus. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God for His love and forgiveness.

## Older Kids – Notes Page

**\*\*Complete the Notes Page with kids. Helping them to fill out all of the spaces. This is an important way for parents to see what their kids are learning each way and have meaningful conversations at home!**

## 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 (NIRV)

### Word of Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

"The Word of Wonder for the Power of Prayer series is Psalm 66:19–20. Today, we've learned how God doesn't want us to hide our sins but instead confess them because He forgives. This verse tells us more about how God will always listen to us and love us. Let's read the Word of Wonder together!"

Have kids open their Bibles to Psalm 66:19–20 and display the Word of Wonder Slide on the screen. Read the verse together and consider assigning kids to two groups. Instruct the groups to take turns reading sentences or phrases of the verse, with group 1 reading the first sentence, group 2 reading the second, group 1 reading the third, and so on.

Talk about these questions:

- **Have you ever thought about how God can hear every person's prayers in the whole world? How does that make you feel?**
- **What are different ways that God shows His love to us?**

### Word of Wonder Activity

**SUPPLIES:** scissors (prep only)

**RESOURCES:** Verse Sheet NIRV (1 per small group)

Ahead of time, print one copy of the Verse Sheet NIRV for each small group and cut out the verse strips. Just before the activity begins, secretly pass out each of the strips to a different kid. Tell each kid to hide the verse strip either by putting it in a pocket or sitting on it discreetly. Invite kids to gather with their small groups and sit on the floor.



"We are going to practice the Word of Wonder, but first we have to find the Word of Wonder! This verse mentions that God always listens to us, so we are going to practice listening as well. Different parts of the Word of Wonder are hidden with some of our friends. I will give clues for you to listen to carefully. When you think you know who has part of the Word of Wonder, raise your hand."

The clues should not be difficult and can mention things like the color of a kid's shirt or hair. After everyone finds each strip, kids will say that part of the verse together. When all the strips are found, kids will say the whole verse in order together.



**Leader Tip:** For Older Kids. Make the clues more difficult or older kids. Give their initials, their grade in school, or the first letter of a sibling's name.

## Large Group!

### Responding in Worship: Sand Prayers

**SUPPLIES:** several plastic containers, sand

**RESOURCES:** [Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist](#); RBKids Gospel Bookmark (1 per SG)

Ahead of time, fill plastic containers with sand. Before starting this activity, place them throughout your space.

Quietly play music from the [Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist](#). Gather kids together.

**"Today we have talked a lot about the importance of confessing our sins to God. We don't need to hide our sins as though we are ashamed or afraid of getting in trouble. Instead, we can bring them to the One who can actually help us with our sins! As our Word of Wonder has taught us, God loves us! He doesn't withhold His love because of the wrong choices we have made. Instead, God will purify us. Jesus paid for our sins by dying on the cross, so when God purifies us, He removes our guilt; it's like He makes the inside of us—our thoughts and feelings—clean.**

**Now we'll give you time and space to think about your sins, those wrong choices that miss the mark of God's perfect plan for you. We are going to pray in different ways. Praying is communicating with God, whether we are talking, listening, or connecting with Him through art. While the music is playing, you can close your eyes and invite God to show you how you have sinned. Remember, He loves you always and is gentle and kind. When a sin comes to mind, you can approach one of the containers filled with sand. Using your finger, you can write out that sin or draw a picture in the sand as a confession. No one will see it but you. Even if what you write looks messy, that's OK. When you are finished, wipe away what you drew or wrote. When we confess our sin, that's exactly what God does. He wipes it away!"**

Direct kids to the different containers around the room. Consider dimming the lights if doing so is an option.

Help maintain a time of prayer and worship by ensuring kids have space to participate in this activity without others crowding them. When kids have all had a turn to participate, gather them together to and walk through the Gospel Bookmark