

## 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 become more like Him.**WORD OF WONDER:** God listens to me and hears my prayers. I can praise Him. —from Psalm 66:19-20

## CURIOSITY

## BELIEF

## FAITH

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing





## LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

### 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:** From 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**

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**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).



LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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:** From Psalm 66:19–20

Welcome

**Slide: Series Welcome Loop**

**As kids arrive...**

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

**Video: Countdown**

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

Introduce the kids to Tac, the curious cat.

**Leader:** Well, hello there, Tac! Kids, you remember our friend, Tac the Cat, don't you?

**Tac the Cat:** Oh, hi kids! You're all looking good today! You look like a fun group!

**Leader:** They are! What are you up to today? You look a little sad.

**Tac the Cat:** I'm a fun cat too ... maybe too fun. I was playing with a ball of yarn in the cat house after my mom told me not to ... and something bad happened. I knew it was the wrong thing to do. I don't know why I did it. I tossed the yarn too hard, and it broke the water dish. I'm afraid to tell my mom. Have any of you ever done anything you knew you weren't supposed to do?

**Leader:** Tac, I think we all do sometimes. That's called sin. Sin is the wrong things we do that separate us from God. When we sin, it can upset our parents too!

**Tac the Cat:** I'm curious! Should I tell my mom the truth?

**Leader:** Kids, what do you think? Should Tac tell his mom the truth about who broke the water dish? (Pause for kids to answer.)

...Tac, your mom loves you and she may be upset that you disobeyed, but I think she will be happy if you tell the truth.

**Tac the Cat:** What about God? When I sin, what should I tell Him?

**Leader:** God already knows! He sees everything. He is always ready to forgive us. When we sin, we should admit it to God and ask for His forgiveness. We're going to learn more about that today!

**Tac the Cat:** I think you're right! I'm going to tell her now. Bye, kids!

**"Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: Have you ever wondered how God sees everyone all the time? Allow the kids to respond. Have you ever wondered how God knows everything? Allow the kids to respond. We all see and hear things that make us curious. Did you ever stop to think about how God hears all our prayers? Allow the kids to respond.**

### SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD FORGIVES**. Today, we'll discover how God forgives!"

## Declaring God's Wonder

### SLIDE: DECLARATION

Encourage the kids to say it with you and do the motions.

**Thank You, God, that You made me!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

**And I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

**Jesus loves me so much;** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

**His love for me is big.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

**The Holy Spirit leads me,** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

**And I can follow You.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

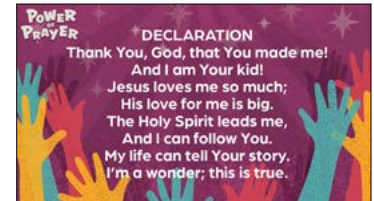
March like you're following the leader.

**My life can tell Your story.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

**I'm a wonder; this is true.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").



## Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words with these as a guide if needed **God, thank You for each kid here today, and the ones who could not be here with us. We ask that Your Holy Spirit will open our hearts to hear what You have to say to us. Help us understand that You want us to turn from our sins and receive Your forgiveness! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## Worship

"Today, we'll learn about how God forgives. Let's sing about how we can praise God no matter what!"

**VIDEOS: PRAISE, THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE**

## God's Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the book of 1 John in the New Testament. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found.

### Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

**I open my Bible and what do I see?** (*Hands together then opening palms up, like opening a book.*)

**God's big story, waiting for me!** (*Point to yourself.*)

**"Let's watch part of God's big story, which comes from the book of 1 John 1-2 in the Bible."**

**VIDEO: GOD'S BIG STORY**

## GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

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

Before kids arrive, blow up balloon and use a permanent marker to write *Jesus* on it. Set up a table near the front of the room where all the kids can see it. Fold the sheet of paper or cardstock in half and set it on the table like a tent. Set out the plate, salt, and pepper on the table.

**Leader Tip:** If you have a lab coat and goggles or a silly professor style hat or glasses, wear them and pretend to be a “mad scientist” while doing the experiment and telling the story.



**"Welcome to the science lab! I have a science experiment to show you today! First, I have a question for you. Have you ever done something that hurt someone else?"** Pause for kids to answer.

**We make hundreds of decisions every day. Many of these decisions are good. Many of the things you do are good, kind, and helpful. Can I have a volunteer come up and help me?** Choose a kid to come up to the table. **Thanks for volunteering! Can you fill this teaspoon with salt, then dump it on the plate?** While the kid is pouring the salt onto the plate, keep talking.

**The salt represents the good things we do.** Thank the kid for volunteering and direct him to return to his seat. Shake the plate so the salt covers the bottom of the plate. **I need another volunteer to help with another task.** Choose another kid to come up.

**Can you use this teaspoon to put some pepper on the plate?** Help the kid scoop or pour pepper into the teaspoon and sprinkle it on the plate. **The pepper represents the wrong, and sometimes hurtful, things we say and do. This is called sin. The Bible says we all sin. Sin hurts not only other people, but our relationship with God.** Thank the volunteer and instruct her to return to her seat.

**Make It Virtual!** This activity would work in a digital or virtual setting by doing the experiment on screen for the kids to watch, as you tell the story.

**Our lives are made up of good choices and wrong choices. When we do wrong things, sometimes we try to hide from God.** Shake the plate so the salt and pepper mix together. **Put the tented sheet of paper or cardstock over the plate.** We hide from God and hope He will forget about it.

Remove the safety goggles (if wearing them) and stand in front of the table. Hold up a Bible for the kids to see.

**The book of 1 John is a letter that reminds us how important it is to pray to God when we do wrong things, admit what we've done, and ask for forgiveness. John said that if we pretend like we don't ever do wrong things, or sin against God, we are kidding ourselves because we all sin. Look at this plate.** Take the sheet of paper or cardstock off the plate and hold it up. **We can try to hide the sin, but it's still there. It isn't going away.**

**But here's the good news! In John's letter, he says that Jesus can save us. Jesus gave His life for us so God can forgive us. To receive God's forgiveness, we must come to Him and admit that we have sinned, ask for His help to turn from our sin, and He will forgive us every time! No questions asked!**

Walk back to the table and put goggles on if you're using them.

**I need another volunteer to help me.** Choose a kid to come to the table. **All I need you to do is rub this balloon on your shirt until you feel the static!** Show him how to rub the balloon on his shirt. **Great job! This balloon is like Jesus. Let's see what happens when we come to Him with our sin and ask forgiveness. What do you think will happen to the salt and pepper when I hold the static balloon over it?** Pause to give kids time to answer. **Let's find out !**

Hold the balloon right over the plate so it's touching the salt and pepper. If nothing happens, rub it on your shirt to create more static. **The pepper, which represents sin, sticks to the balloon but the salt, which represents the good things we do, stays behind. When Jesus died on the cross, he took all our sins upon Himself so we could be forgiven by God.**

**Sin is when we disobey God, and the Bible says we've all sinned and need God's forgiveness. Confession is admitting when we sin and asking God to forgive us. God sees everything. He knows when we sin. When we come to Him and admit our sins, He will always forgive us. We don't have to hide from Him; He is always on our side! God wants us to come to Him and confess our sin, admitting when we make wrong choices, and He will always forgive."**

## Connecting the Wonder Truth

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

### SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

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

**In the books of John and 1 John, we read that we should love Jesus above everything else in our lives. Both books show 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.**

## Prayer and Blessing

Pray over kids, thanking God for hearing their prayers. Use your own words, with these below as a guide if needed.

**God, You are so good. Your grace really is amazing. We know we do wrong things, and we are sorry. We admit our sin to You. Thank You for always forgiving us. Help us live in ways that honor You and show others Your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

**Blessing:** **May you understand how much God loves you and wants to be in a close relationship with you. You can go to Him boldly, knowing He will always forgive you.**