

### 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

- Play Stations:
  - Making Crosses
  - Building Bridges
  - Prayer of Confession Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: Where's My Treasure?
- Word of Wonder: From Psalm 66:19-20
- Circle Time: True or False
- Craft: Colorful Crosses
- Game: Forgiveness Tag
- Responding in Worship: Sand Tray Prayers
- Closing Game: Clapping Hot and Cold



[Power of Prayer Preschool Spotify playlist](#)



## 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

## Play Stations

**SUPPLIES:** craft sticks (1 package), play dough, blocks

**RESOURCES:** [Prayer of Confession Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

**"Welcome to RBKids! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?"**

**Leader Tip:** Lay down a disposable tablecloth or craft paper where the kids will be using play dough to make cleanup easy.

**Play Station: Making Crosses**

**Set-up:** Set out craft sticks and play dough.

**Play:** Encourage kids to use play dough and craft sticks to make crosses. Make a few examples ahead of time.

**Play Station: Building Bridges**

**Set-up:** Set out blocks and craft sticks.

**Play:** Encourage kids to use the blocks and craft sticks to make bridges. Make a sample ahead of time so the kids can see how they can make bridges.

**Play Station: Prayer of Confession Coloring Sheet**

**Set-up:** Print one copy per kid of the Coloring Sheet. Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

**Play:** Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of a place they want to hide during Hide and Seek.

## Word of Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, scissors (prep only)

**RESOURCES:** [Word of Wonder Puzzle Sheet](#)

**Make It Inclusive!** For kids who can't walk with the group or identify pictures or numbers, print a separate puzzle, cut out the pieces, and have a leader help them put it together while saying the verse.

### WORD OF WONDER

God listens to me and hears my prayers.

I can praise Him.

—from Psalm 66:19–20



Before kids arrive, print and cut out the puzzle pieces from the Word of Wonder Puzzle Sheet or prepare to display the slides on a screen. If the group is large, cut out enough so you have one complete puzzle for every 4–5 kids. Hide the puzzle pieces around the room when the kids aren't watching. If using multiple puzzles for a larger group, keep the puzzle piece numbers together when hiding.

Divide the group into four groups. **"The pieces of our Word of Wonder are hidden in this room, and you can help find them. Once you find your assigned number and picture, bring the piece to me and we will work together to put the verse in order."**

**Leader Tip:** Write numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 on a sheet of paper and hang the paper on the wall or a dry erase board for kids to see and refer to. Not all kids at this age know what each number looks like. Older kids or leaders can help the younger kids identify the numbers.

Assign each group a number: 1, 2, 3, or 4. **Remember your number! When I say, "Go," you'll look for the puzzle piece with that number on it. If you see another number at the top, leave it and keep looking and be careful not to say it out loud or tell another group! Group 1 is looking for the number 1 and a picture like this.** Show the first slide with the number 1 or corresponding picture.

**Group 2 is looking for the number 2 and a picture like this.** Show the number 2 slide or picture.

**Group 3 is looking for this number and picture.** Show the third slide or picture. **And finally, group 4 is looking for this number and picture.** Show the last slide or picture.

**Ready, set, go!** Give kids time to look for the puzzle pieces. They can bring the pieces to you as they find them and join the other kids to help them search.

When all the pieces are found, have kids sit in front of you. **Great job finding all the puzzle pieces! The puzzle pieces were hidden, but we don't have to hide from God or hide our sins from Him—we can always come to Him!**

**Would you like to help put the pieces in order? Let's start with 1. Does anyone see a number 1?**

Hold the pieces up or lay them where kids can see them. You could also tape them to a wall in front of the kids. Allow kids to point to the piece with number 1 on it. **Right! Good job! Does anyone see the number 2?** Allow kids to find number 2. **Great job!** Continue until you've put the pieces in order. **We're going to read the words on each piece as I point to it. I'll read it several times and when you think you can say it with me, jump right in!** Read the verse with the kids several times, pointing to each puzzle piece as you read it.

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

- **GOD LISTENS TO ME**—Point to your ears.
- **AND HEARS MY PRAYERS.**—Fold your hands together.
- **I CAN PRAISE HIM.**—Hold your hands above shoulders and turn wrists back and forth.
- **FROM PSALM 66:19–20**—Hold your hands out together with palms open, as if opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **How do you think God feels when we talk to Him through prayer?**
- **When is the best time to pray, or talk to God?** (anytime!)

## God's Big Story/Snack

**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 read part of God's big story, which comes from the book of 1 John 1–2 in the Bible."** Read

**Read 1 John 1:8–2:2 and 2:12 from the Bible.**

## Circle Time: True or False

Have kids sit in a circle and tell them to think of one fact about themselves that's true and one that's false. Give an example for yourself and let kids guess which one is true and which is false. **"You all are good at guessing which fact is true and which is false! I'm also good at making things up and making something seem real that isn't. I threw some of you off, didn't I? We don't have to hide the truth from God. When we sin, He's waiting for us to come to Him and ask forgiveness.**

**For this next part of the activity, you will each share one fact about yourself that is true and one that's false, and we'll all try to guess which is false. If the others correctly guess which is false, you will answer a question from the list. If the kids guess incorrectly, you get to pick another kid to answer a question. We will go around the circle, so everyone gets a turn.**

If kids have a hard time thinking of things to share, give them prompts, such as their favorite color, game, food, or sport.

**Leader Tip:** If the group is large, you can choose only a few kids to go, or split into multiple circles if you have more leaders. You can also reuse questions.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **True or false: The book of 1 John was a letter written to a church.** (true)
- **What is sin?** (the wrong things we do that hurt God or others and separate us from God)
- **Is there anyone besides Jesus who has never sinned and never will?** (no)
- **Have you ever done something wrong and then tried to hide it? How did it make you feel?**
- **How does God respond when we come to Him and admit we have sinned?** (God forgives)
- **Have you ever confessed, or admitted, a wrong thing you have done? How did it make you feel?**
- **Should we forgive others when they do wrong to us? Why or why not?**
- **How does it make you feel to know God will always forgive you?**

**We don't have to hide our sins from God. He loves each one of you very much. He will always forgive you when you ask Him. We don't ever have to be afraid to come to Him. We can be honest with Him and tell Him we have sinned, and He will always forgive us. Let's talk to God now and thank Him for always being ready to forgive us."**

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for His grace to continually forgive us.

**Head to Large Group!**

## Responding in Worship: Sand Tray Prayers

**SUPPLIES:** sand, sand trays or 9" x 13" baking pans (1 for every 4–5 kids), craft sticks (2 per kid), coloring utensils, glue dots, butcher paper or plastic tablecloths to line the tables (optional)

**RESOURCES:** music from the [Power of Prayer Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

Before kids arrive, put a layer of sand into sand trays or baking pans. You don't need a lot of sand in each dish—just enough to make a thin layer to cover the bottom.

**"We're going to come to God now and tell Him something we have done wrong and ask Him to forgive us. We can always come to Him, even with our secrets or sins. Nothing shocks God. He promises to forgive us whenever we confess our sins to Him.**

**You're going to take turns going to the sand tray. With your finger, you can draw a picture in the sand of a time when you have sinned—when you have disobeyed God or hurt someone else. While you're drawing, you can pray and ask God to forgive you. You can say it out loud or in your head. God hears our thoughts and knows what's in our hearts! Then erase the picture and remember that God forgives you and doesn't see the sin anymore!**

If your group is large, divide the group so there are 4–5 kids at each sand tray. Play worship music from the [Power of Prayer Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) while kids are doing this activity. If you have enough leaders, station a leader at every sand tray, or between two.

**Leader Tip:** If you don't have sand trays, you can use a dry erase board or have kids draw on paper. Have the kids use a tissue or cloth to erase the board, or crumple the piece of paper after drawing their sin.

Pass out 2 craft sticks to each kid. **"When you put the craft sticks together like this, they make a cross. Demonstrate for kids how to make a cross with the craft sticks.**

Have volunteers help kids glue/tape their craft sticks together to form a cross. Then instruct kids to color their cross.

**Great job! Those are beautiful! The cross reminds us of how God forgives our sins and gives us a relationship with Him through Jesus' death and resurrection. You can take your colorful cross home with you, and when you look at it, thank God for forgiving our sins through Jesus."**



## Game: Forgiveness Tag

This game is like freeze tag, except when you get tagged and are frozen, you have to fold your hands like you're praying. You can get on your knees if you want. Any kid who's not frozen can come and "un-tag" you by saying, "God forgives you!" and then you can move again. Choose a kid to be the tagger, give the kids a countdown to start the game, then let them play the game.

**Leader Tip:** Choose a kid who is fast enough to catch the other kids, or two kids to be the taggers. You can also switch it up in the middle of the game if they start to look tired or ask for a break.

**Wow, you are fast! Great job! It's great to know that God will always forgive us!**