

LESSON 1

MY LIFE CAN TELL OF GOD'S WONDER

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Invites Us into His Family

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 4; Romans 7

GOD'S BIG STORY: God created a good world. Most special of all, He made humans in His image, but sin kept people from living as God made them. But Jesus changes everything. Through Him, we are invited into God's family!

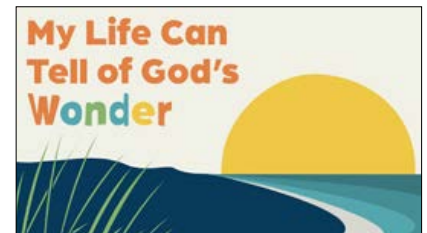
WORD OF WONDER: But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are God's special treasure. -1 Peter 2:9a

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What is one of your family's traditions?
- Interactive Game: Group and Gather
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Here With Me, House of the Lord
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Responding in Worship: Reckless Love
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

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

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WORD OF WONDER: 1 Peter 2:9a

This summer our family spent a fair amount of time at animal parks. My middle child loves animals, and her souvenir of choice at every visit was a stuffed animal. Not surprising for a 6-year-old. What did surprise us was the amount of time she spent choosing each new member of her stuffed family.

She examined every style of creature, evaluating its pose, its stitching, whether the face looked friendly or fierce, whether the eyes were even, what the huggability was for each one. She was dedicated to finding The One. And sure enough, eventually she would look at a stuffed animal and know “This is it!”

Did you know God chooses you with the same dedication and attention? He doesn’t spend time evaluating your worth based on your faults. Rather, He focuses on your identity. Who you are. The fact that you ARE!

1 Peter 2:9 says we are God’s special treasure, chosen by Him to be part of His family. Then we can tell the world of God’s goodness and wonder!

But first, God invites us into that family. He doesn’t force us or demand ... He simply invites. It’s up to us whether or not we’ll accept the invitation.

Remember, God sees something special and beloved when He looks at you.

—**Laura Koesterer**

Kidmin Director

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Paul encountered Jesus through a revelation that changed the direction of his life (Galatians 1:13–17). His zeal for preserving Jewish traditions was transformed; he went from persecutor of the church to Jesus' apostle to the Gentiles. His letters show the development of early Christianity.

WHAT?

Paul says the Jewish law is good (Romans 7:12), but it does not redeem from sin. Paul introduces a metaphor—legal adoption—to show God's unprecedented offer through Jesus. Because of Jesus' redemptive actions, no one has to remain enslaved to sin any longer.

WHERE?

Galatians is sent to multiple congregations in the region of Galatia (modern-day Turkey). Paul had first brought the message of Jesus to these Gentiles. Romans touches on some similar themes and is addressed to various house churches in the city of Rome.

WHEN?

Galatians could be Paul's earliest letter, normally dated a few years before the book of Romans and perhaps around AD 50. Paul wrote his letter to the Romans before being brought to Rome as a prisoner in the early 50s.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Israel is called God's child many times in the Old Testament, and Paul gives new meaning to this image. Anyone with faith in Jesus becomes a child of God, part of His family. Paul uses the Aramaic word *Abba*, as Jesus does in prayer (Mark 14:36).

Large Group

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

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As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop.
Play 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

At your start time ...

/s kids arrive, draw their attention to the Welcome Question board.

Welcome Question: **What is one of your family's traditions?**

Suggest a few ideas to get thoughts flowing, such as opening a gift on Christmas Eve, getting ice cream on the last day of school, Friday pizza nights, etc. If you have younger kids, be sure to read the question for them.

"There are so many family traditions! And how wonderful to learn a bit about your families. The Bible says that people who follow Jesus are like a big family.

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD INVITES US INTO HIS FAMILY."**



Small Group

Introduce small group time. 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!"

Interactive Game: Group and Gather

SLIDE: GROUP AND GATHER

Gather kids into a circle. **"Today we're going to play a game called Group and Gather. Families are often groups of people who gather together and share some things in common. Let's see what you all have in common! I'll call out a direction, and you'll have 10 seconds to group yourselves according to the direction. Let's practice. Make a group with people who are the same age as you.**



Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. The time limit is meant to add a sense of fun and urgency to the game. Lose the countdown if it makes the group anxious about completing each directive.

Allow kids time to move, figuring out their groups and standing together. Once they're grouped, ask which group is what. Continue with other directives:

- Birth order (oldest child, middle child, youngest child)
- Same hair color
- Same eye color
- Born in the same month
- Same number of siblings (Zero is a number!)
- Same kind of pet

Invite kids to have a seat in the circle again. **"How fun to see some of the things we have in common as well as things that make us unique. Our families don't define us, but they do help make us who we are. While we typically think of family as the group of people we live with, family is also a place to belong. Today's Wonder Truth is GOD INVITES US INTO HIS FAMILY."**



Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

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.)

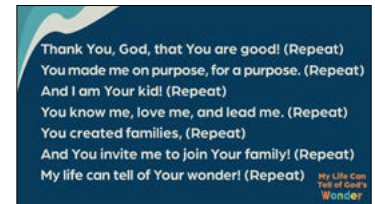
And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

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

You created families, (Kids repeat.)

And You invite me to join Your family! (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 your own words, with this blessing as a guide if needed: **God, thank You for the opportunity to learn more together about You. Holy Spirit, help us understand what it means to be invited into God's family and walk in the truth that we are His kids! 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!

"We're going to stand and sing together! One way that we show love to God is to worship through song! So stand up, sing loud, and join in the motions with us. God loves to hear us sing praises to Him! Let's stand together and sing!"

WORSHIP VIDEOS: HERE WITH ME, HOUSE OF THE LORD

God's Big Story

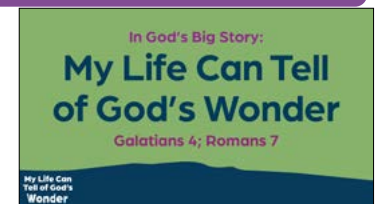
SLIDE: TITLE

Today's Bible passages are found in the New Testament in two different letters written by Paul.

"Let's start by watching part of God's big story directly from the Bible.

Afterward, we will experience more of the story!"

Invite a few volunteers (leaders or older students) to read aloud Galatians 4:4–7 and Romans 7:14–25



LESSON 1 MY LIFE CAN TELL OF GOD'S WONDER

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: floor -length mirror, black dry-erase marker, eraser

Ahead of time, set the mirror, black dry-erase marker, and eraser near your stage area where they are not obvious, but are easily accessed. During the storytelling, set the mirror upright on the stage area and draw on it with the dry-erase marker. Plan the best spot to set the mirror so kids can see it. Consider holding a clicker to advance the slides yourself, since it moves quickly.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens (display the **Images Slide 1** and pause for a moment) **and the earth** (advance to **Images Slide 2** and pause). **God created everything that exists, whether distant galaxies** (advance to **Images Slide 3** and pause) **all the way across the universe or the tiniest spec** (advance to **Images Slide 4** and pause) **that we cannot see with our eyes. God created every living creature** (advance to **Images Slide 5** and pause). Pause to allow kids to consider the complexity of God's creation.



Most special of all, God created humans in His own image (advance to **Images Slide 6** and pause). **Every person, whether the person knows it or not, was created by God for a purpose.** Bring out the floor -length mirror and hold it horizontally, angling it so kids can see themselves in the mirror. Be careful not to reflect the stage lights into the eyes of the audience. **God created humans to be like a reflection, always pointing back to God** (advance to **Images Slide 7**, which is solid black).

But sin—the wrong things that we do—gets in the way. Set the mirror down vertically. Use the black dry-erase marker to color thick black lines up and down and across the mirror to look like prison bars. **Instead of being God's helpers, humans became slaves or prisoners to sin. That means, without God, humans are trapped. Even if we want to do the right things, there is something inside of us that holds us back.** Finish drawing the bars and hold the mirror so kids can see themselves in it, drawing attention to the "prison" we're in as a result of our sin. **We as humans don't stand a chance of doing the right things if we don't have God's help. God's creation remains good, but it needs God to repair it.**

Prop the mirror where it won't slip, and so the kids can still see the prison bars of sin.

God put His plan in action. God waited for the perfect time to send His Son to be born as a human baby. Jesus' birth fulfilled a promise to bless the whole world through Abraham's family. Generation after generation, the people of God waited for Him to do something amazing through them, but they never guessed God Himself would come to earth as a baby!

Jesus became human. He was tempted by sin like everyone else, yet He didn't give in to sin. Jesus never did anything wrong! And when He was arrested and killed on the cross, Jesus paid the price for our sin and broke sin's power over us. After Jesus died, the Spirit of God raised Him from the dead; this is called the resurrection.

Retrieve the mirror and begin erasing the lines, leaving bits of lines to mar the reflection.

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection provide something completely new for us. Instead of staying trapped in a pattern of doing wrong again and again, instead of remaining prisoners to sin, God invites us into a new life and wants us to be His kids. God invites us into His family!

Erase the remaining bits of black lines, and write "God's Kids" in the middle of the mirror. Prop the mirror up while you continue to tell the story.

Maybe you or someone you know has joined a family through a process called adoption. When a child is adopted, the child becomes 100 percent part of the family. It doesn't matter if the child wasn't born into the family or looks different from the family. The law says an adopted child is a part of the family.

God wants everyone to join His family! Just like joining a human family comes with good things, joining God's family does too! When you become a child of God, the Holy Spirit—the presence of God—goes into your heart. Write "Holy Spirit" on the mirror. Instead of being trapped doing wrong things, God has set you free to do what is right. Write "Free!" on the mirror. As one of God's kids, you get to call God Abba—which means "Father" or "Daddy." Write "Abba" on the mirror. God is close to each of His kids, and He promises to be there for you and me.

As children of God, we get to be messengers to the world, pointing people to our loving Father. Write "Messengers" on the mirror. Through our words and actions, others can say, "Jesus is really king. God's amazing creation is transformed. Evil has lost!" Each of our lives can tell of God's wonder!

God's children can also look forward to eternal life with God. Write "Live Forever" on the mirror. That means, even though our bodies will someday die, God will raise us from the dead just like Jesus rose from the dead.

Joining the family of God is the most wonderful thing a person can do. When we accept God's invitation to become His child, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and freed from sin, we live the way God created us to be. God invites us into His family.

Leader Tip: For smaller groups, consider inviting kids to write their names on the mirror around the words and phrases describing God's kids.

Leader Tip: Consider moving the mirror to the exit of your teaching space to allow kids the chance to look at themselves in the mirror, surrounded by all the good things that come with being God's kid.

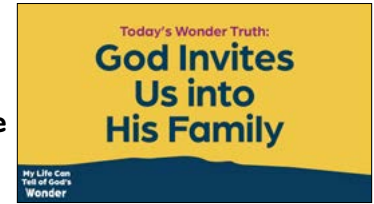
Connecting the Wonder Truth

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 INVITES US INTO HIS FAMILY**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel—or the Hebrew people—are sometimes referred to as God's children. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul explains that now anyone with faith in Jesus becomes a child of God, part of His family. Jesus Himself calls God **Abba**, and as God's kids, we get to call Him **Abba** too! **God invites us into His family!**" (See Mark 14:36.)



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. 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 motions to this video for AWWBS, kids may do the motions if they know them, or just worship and reflect.

WORSHIP VIDEO: RECKLESS LOVE



Blessing Your Kids

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

Blessing: This week, may you remember you are a chosen child of God, created by God, freed by Jesus, and invited through the Spirit to be a part of God's family, to reflect His love and goodness.