

Lesson 7

Love Your Brother

Lesson Overview

BIBLE LESSON: Genesis 4:1-16

MEMORY VERSE: Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32

CHALLENGE MEMORY VERSE: Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer.

I John 3:15a

CATECHISM: The Fifth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do our neighbor no bodily harm nor cause him any suffering, but help and befriend him in every need.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: The student will:

- understand that killing is a sin against God.
- understand that hating breaks the fifth commandment
- learn that God wants us to be sorry for our sin and ask Him for forgiveness

MATERIALS: Lessons, activity sheets,

LESSON OVERVIEW: This is the story of the first murder. Cain killed his brother Abel. The hate in Cain's heart toward Abel came to be because Cain did not trust God and his offering to God was not accepted but Abel's offering was accepted because he had faith in God. God knew what Cain had done and Cain told lies to God in an attempt to cover his sin. Cain never was sorry for his sin. God gave Cain consequences for his sin and he went away from God.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS: What does our lesson tell us about Cain and Abel? Both men brought sacrifices to God, why did God not accept Cain's offering? What did Cain do because he was so angry with his brother? How did Cain respond to God? What should he have done instead? This commandment talks about killing but what other things are included in breaking this commandment? How can we be forgiven if we have been hateful to our family or our friends? How can we be forgiven?

ACTIVITY 1: Finish the News: (student's name), (student's hometown), Cain, Abel, brother, offering, lied, kill, God, forgive, (student's name).

ACTIVITY 2: What is in your heart?: Be KIND to one another, TENDER-hearted, FORGIVING each other, just as GOD in CHRIST also has forgiven YOU. Ephesians 4:32

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach

Look through the lesson early in the week and set aside time to revisit it during the week.

Be alert to and gather materials that may add interest to the lesson.

This is a hard lesson, as there are other underlying lessons that are not explicitly laid out in the Biblical text. There might be extra discussion.

Keep the discussions focused on: the wrong committed (we do not always have to know the ‘why,’ Cain’s response (was he sorry?), how Cain should have responded.

If children seem too focused on the death scene, acknowledge that some people do terrible things, redirect them to feeling bad or sorry for doing wrong things and point them to God’s love and forgiveness.

Prayer Preparation

- Pray for awareness of each child's spiritual needs.
- Pray for the children’s hearts to be tender and to help them recognize the signs from their hearts, minds, or tummies when they have done something wrong.
- Pray that you will be made able to apply each lesson to your own life.
- Spend time in conversation with the Lord.

Prepare Materials

- Activity Sheets
- Lessons

Bible Background

Genesis 4:1-16

This lesson on the Fifth Commandment is about the difficult topic of hatred and murder. The children in your class likely have seen the news. The world is violent. It isn’t too soon to teach about hatred in a way that they can understand. Too many children see it through bullying and peer pressure that can lead them to despair of life itself.

The natural man sees the commandments in terms of outward behavior and believe they can keep them quite well (Mark 10:20). Jesus made it clear that the law is more than “doing”. What we do and say comes from the heart, and the heart is filled with evil (Matthew 5:21-48; 15:18-19).

Most of us have not murdered anyone, yet we break this commandment as much as any other. We may actually say, “Oh, I just hate her!” or “I’m so mad, I could just kill him!” We may say that we don’t really mean it, but what does the Bible say? Read Matthew 5:21 and 22, as well as I John 4:20.

The story of Cain and Abel shows that it didn’t take long after the fall of man for the utter depravity of mankind's sinful nature to express itself.

James describes the growth cycle of sin, and the description fits the series of events in Genesis 1-4. “But each man is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”(James 1:14-15). In Genesis 4:7b, God warned Cain about the enticing and deadly power of sin.

The details emphasize the depth of mankind's fall into sin. The context is worship. The victim is a brother (Genesis 4:3-5, Matthew 5:23-24). Eve had been talked into sin by Satan (Genesis 3:1-6), Cain won't let God talk him out of it (Genesis 4:7b, nor will he confess it (4:9b), nor accept its punishment (4:13-14).

Worship had begun at some point and Cain and Abel each brought an offering to God (4:3-4). God had regard for (accepted) Abel and his offering but not Cain and his offering. The Bible says the acceptance or rejection of an offering depends not on the offering itself, but on the heart of the person bringing it (4:4b-5a). Jesus called Abel righteous (Matthew 23:35).

Abel offered in faith, Cain did not; Abel was penitent, Cain was not; Abel's confidence was in God, Cain's confidence was in himself. God sees the before He sees sacrifices and offerings (Matthew 5:21-25) and only accepts a humble and contrite heart (Psalm 51:16-17), (Isaiah 66:2).

Cain couldn't understand why God didn't accept his offering and became very angry and his face was gloomy (fell)" (4:5b). He wasn't angry at himself for his unfaithfulness and hypocrisy that separated him from God. He didn't examine himself or ask God what he had done wrong. He simply saw God as an enemy. God is gracious and didn't want to lose Cain, or any person (I Timothy 2:4).

God tried to reason with Cain and asked him, "Why are you angry?" God wanted to lead Cain to repent of his anger. Cain's anger (hatred) led him to actually murder his brother (4:8) Cain hated Abel because God loved Abel.

Again, God came to Cain seeking restoration and asked him, "Where is your brother?" (4:9a). The question was intended to lead to conviction of sin and possible repentance. This is an example of the love and patience of God to seek out a lost and straying sinner. Cain's heart was hard. He answered with a lie (another major sin) and a lack of repentance, "I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

Cain's sin was found out and he was convicted by his brother's blood crying out from the ground (Genesis 4:10). Again, Cain could have repented. For Cain, sin was waiting at the door. If sin is harbored in the heart, the curse waits at the door. Jesus also waits at the door (Revelation 3:20). The Bible tells of the victory over sin that is ours by faith in Christ, "for sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14). Cain rejected grace.

Cain gave in to sin. In killing his brother, Cain was also striking out against God (Psalm 51:4). He hated Abel because God loved Abel.

God came again to Cain, seeking restoration. He asked Cain, "Where is your brother?" There was still the possibility of repentance. This is an example of the love and patience of God to seek out the lost and straying sinner.

Cain's heart was hard. He answered with a lie and a lack of repentance, "I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

Cain's sin was found out and he was convicted by his brother's blood (Genesis 4:10). God punished him with a curse. The ground that received Abel's blood would become a curse to Cain, no longer yielding its strength to Cain, and he would become a wanderer (drifter) on the earth (4:12). The ground from which Cain had supported himself would no longer grow anything for him, and he would never again have a place of his own to farm.

Cain would be a wanderer on the earth (Genesis 4:12).

Cain complained that the punishment was too hard, as most people do when they are punished. He still doesn't admit fault or express sorrow: "My punishment is too great to endure! Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and I will be hidden from Your face" (4:13-14). Cain was separated from God and so had lost his source of life and contentment. Cain now saw himself as the victim and believed that people would try to kill him (4:15). God is still merciful and offered him protection (4:15), but what protection is there when God is not your refuge?

Cain went on to marry, and later his great-great-grandson, Lamech, boasted to his wives, "I have killed a man for wounding me; And a boy for striking me!" (4:23).

The devil first appears in Genesis 3 and tempts Eve to sin. From then on, humans have struggled against the devil, the world, and our own flesh. Victory came only when Jesus died on the cross and overcame the devil, the world, and sin in the flesh.

Learn the New Words

It is okay to explain the new words in the beginning or as you encounter them.

offering: “Offer” means to give. People gave gifts or offerings to God.

hate: If we hate, we dislike someone or something very much.

Cain: Adam and Eve’s first son

Abel: Adam and Eve’s second son.

kill/murder: Killing is taking someone’s or something’s life. Murder is killing with evil intent.

angry: Anger is an emotion and, by itself, is not always a sin. God is sometimes angry. But God does not sin. We are told to refrain from anger (Psalm 37:8).

be sorry: Be sad about your sin, regretting it, and repenting of it. Asking God to forgive is important.

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Greet the children as they arrive.

Open the class with prayer, praying for each child by name, if you like.

Read the Memory Verse

Remember the appendix of ways to teach memorization of the verse. Read the verse clearly,

“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32

Be sure to read it together aloud. Remind the children you’ll repeat the verse again at the end.

Review the Recent Lessons

Remember we have been learning about the Fourth Commandment. See if the students can remember something from the stories in the last 2 lessons.

TEACHING TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON

Introduce the Lesson

ASK: Does anyone have a brother or sister? Raise your hand if you do. Sometimes people get angry or fight with their siblings or other

people. That doesn't please God. We may have to work at getting along with each other. Sometimes we need to say, “I’m sorry, I was wrong.” Our lesson today is about two brothers who had problems.

SAY: God created people to be friends with Him. He made people so they could think, talk, and love God. In the beginning, He made people so they could live forever. That is why human life is special; and we must never kill someone or even think about killing someone.

ASK: Has anyone here ever killed anyone?

ASK: Does this mean we've never broken the Fifth Commandment? **SAY:** I think we're all about to learn something very important today.

Read the Lesson

Read (or have volunteers read) the first three paragraphs.

ASK: What were the brothers' names? What work did Cain do? What work did Abel do? What did they decide to do for God? (give Him an offering). The Bible doesn't explain the reasons for the offerings at this time, but later in the Bible offerings were given to thank God, others because of sin, and some as an act of obedience.

ASK: How did God feel toward Abel? (pleased). Why? (Abel gave his offering because he wanted out of his love for God). What do we learn here about God? (He knows our heart attitudes and what we are thinking).

God knew that Cain didn't really want to give God an offering. He was not pleased with Cain but he still loved him. God wanted Cain to know he was wrong to be angry that his offering was unaccepted. Cain wouldn't listen to God. He would not ask God to forgive him. Cain became very angry that God was happy with Abel, but not happy with him.

Read the next two paragraphs.

Cain hated Abel. One day when Cain and Abel were out in the field, Cain did something terrible. Cain killed Abel.

God asked Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" Cain thought he could lie to God. Cain answered, "How should I know? Am I my brother's keeper?"

Cain should not have lied to God. He should have asked God to forgive him for being jealous and hating Abel in the very beginning. Cain could still have asked God to forgive him after hating and killing Abel. It was not too late to ask for forgiveness. But Cain did not.

God had to punish Cain. God said you must go away from me and your family. You will be a wanderer, alone in the world.

Jesus says that we break the Fifth Commandment even when we are angry with someone and say, "I hate you!" Sometimes we don't say the words out loud, but we think mean things about other people. All of us have broken the Fifth Commandment this way. God even knows when we are thinking mean thoughts.

But God loves us very much. He wants us to know when we are wrong and apologize. He wants us to ask Him to forgive us. He can forgive us because Jesus died for our sins. He will help us to be kind and loving.

Repeat the Memory Verse

The goal in the following weeks will be for students to memorize the Bible verse and catechism before the next class session. This will be their weekly assignment and will help students to gain more from their lessons in class each week. Some students may not be used to memorizing, but it is important to encourage them to hide God's Word in their hearts. The creative ideas for teaching the memory verses will then serve as a review for most students but will also help others to learn the verses. The teacher should also memorize the Bible verses and catechism to serve as a model for the students. You may want to give a reward at the end of the quarter to those who have memorized all the memory verses, enrichment verses, and catechism.

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Do the Activities Together

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Activity 1

Fill in the blank to finish the news report.

Activity 1
HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

You are a reporter. Finish the news report. Then share it with others.

This is _____ (student's name) reporting live from _____ (student's location).

Many of you know _____ Cain _____ and _____ Abel _____, sons of Adam and Eve. Cain grows crops in the area, and Abel raises sheep. Cain has killed his _____ brother _____. Abel! We are trying to understand why. Cain and Abel both brought offerings to the one true God. God received Abel's _____ offering _____. God did not accept Cain's offering. Abel gave his offering in faith, but Cain did not trust God. Cain got mad at his brother and even hated him. Then Cain killed Abel and _____ lied _____ to God about it. Cain was not sorry for what he had done. Cain broke the Fifth Commandment, "Thou shalt not _____ kill _____." This is very bad and very sad news.

But wait! There is good news too! The best news of the day is God will forgive us! If Cain asked God to forgive him, God would. The fact is that _____ God _____ loves everyone and wants us to admit we are sinful. He wants us to ask Him to _____ forgive _____ us when we think, say, or do mean things against others. Remember to do this every day, folks.

Signing off now, this is your trusted reporter, _____.

What is in Your Heart?

Activity 2

Fill in the hearts with the missing words from the verse.

Activity 2
WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART?

Write the missing words. Carry this message in your heart.

Be **K I N D** to one **h**at
another. **F I N D E R**-hearted.
F O R G I V I N G
each other, just as **G O D** in
C H R I S T also has
forgiven **Y O U**.
Ephesians 4:32

Words in hearts: Christ, love, kind, helping, mean, forgiving, others, God, unkind, me, you, thank.

CLOSING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Closing Prayer

Ask about prayer requests. Allow students to pray if they choose. Allow time for silent prayer. Encourage students to bow their heads and close their eyes.

Additional Teaching Options

Hymns and Songs:

Additional activities for a multi-age class: