

LESSON 1

What Does it Mean to Have a Relationship with Jesus? (The Gift of Salvation)

Lesson Objective:

To look within and determine if your students have accepted the incredible gift of salvation. If not, give them a chance to ask questions and possibly pray the prayer!

Prayer as You Prepare:

Lord, thank You for a wonderful start to Kids Small Groups in Children's 201. If there are students who have not made a decision to follow You, I pray that this week they would do so! Amen.

[Pray for each of your students by name as you prepare for the first lesson in Children's 201]

IN THE CLASSROOM

Begin the Journey:

Let your students share their favorite gifts that they have given to someone else.

ACTIVITY PAGE: IF I COULD HAVE ONE GIFT

Remembering Christ's free gift can both over-joy and overwhelm us—what gift could be better than eternity with Jesus? This handout is a tool to encourage your students to think about life's greatest gifts. In the gift box pictured on the handout, encourage your students to think creatively and draw what they think would be the most valuable gift they could receive. Is it a new skateboard? Maybe a pony? Or is it world peace? What one gift would they choose for themselves if money, space and time were not an issue?

Once your students have drawn their gift, have them answer the following questions:

1. Why is this gift of such great value to you?
2. If you were to give your gift to someone else, do you think they would value it in the same way that you do?
3. Why do you think people do not accept Jesus' free gift of salvation?
4. Why is Jesus' gift the greatest gift imaginable?

Did You Know?

Even though your students may be familiar with the Wise Men, take time to read Matthew 2 and/or Luke 2. We all can benefit from hearing the story of the Wise Men.

OBJECT LESSON: WRAPPED GIFT

People love to give and receive gifts. What better way to illustrate Jesus' gift of eternity than to actually give a gift? In your classroom will be a wrapped gift that you will give to one student. They must receive it and unwrap it. Convey the following:

I have a special gift that I would like to give to someone. Can I have _____ come up? Here is a gift just for you. All you have to do is accept it. Would you like to have it?

If the student does not say, "Yes," do not give them the gift. When they say, "Yes," then give them the gift. Have them open the gift in front of the small group. They can keep what is inside. Then, ask these questions:

1. How does it feel to receive a free gift? Do you always have to accept it?
2. How would you feel if someone did not receive or accept your gift?
3. How do you think God feels when we say "No" to His gift of salvation?

NOTE:

- Give a "free gift" to all of your students. After all, Jesus' free gift of salvation is extended to everyone.

Seek the Treasure:

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8–9)

Uncover the Truth:

Spend time carefully reviewing what a gift is. Break your students into groups that will look up one of the four verses so they can better understand what a gift is.

Your students may come up with different TRUE or FALSE answers. Discuss the different answers. Why are the four statements FALSE? Do any of your students feel ready to make a decision to follow Jesus if they have not done so already?

- Write TRUE or FALSE by each statement below:

FALSE I can earn my way into heaven.
Salvation is a free gift given through the grace of God.

FALSE I am going to heaven because my parents are Christians.
Everyone must account individually for their relationship with Jesus.

FALSE I am a Christian because I go to church.
Going to church does not make you a Christian. Church is a means by which we grow in our faith and have fellowship with other believers.

FALSE I think being a Christian means doing the best I can to get into heaven.
God's Word is clear that the only way to heaven is by accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Find the Purpose:

The first question should help you reiterate that you do not have to do anything to be saved. You only need to accept the free gift of salvation. Romans 10:9–10 is a great verse to review for your students who want to know more about how to become a Christian.

In this particular lesson, your students are to answer these questions silently on their own, and then bring them to the small group for discussion.

- According to Revelation 22:17, how do you “take the free gift of the water of life” (salvation)?
You come and take the water of life (salvation). There is nothing you can say or do that will help you earn it. It is a free gift you must simply accept or receive.
- Why is it so important to make the decision to follow Jesus?
Answers will vary. For example, it is so important because it has eternal impact. It goes beyond a decision to a deeper, life-long relationship. Honestly, it is the biggest decision they will ever have to make.
- What does it mean to follow Him? (HINT: Check out Deuteronomy 13:4 for some ideas.)
Answers will vary. According to Deuteronomy 13:4, following Him means to have respect for God, obey His commands, serve Him and hold fast (believe and be committed) to His promises. Allowing God to be your leader and following His direction for your life, wherever He goes.
- What are some ideas, right or wrong, you have about what it means to have a relationship with Jesus?
Answers will vary. Hopefully your students understand that God truly desires a relationship with each of them. He does not want to just be acquaintances; He wants a truly deep and meaningful relationship with everyone. That would look like long, personal conversations, mutual respect and care and basic friendship. Some may associate, positively or negatively, a relationship with Jesus to one with their earthly father or even a ruler or king.

GAME: FRIENDLY WRAP UP

Objective—To work as a team to “wrap up” their peers. Remember that it is what is on the inside that matters most. Also, that we all have a free gift—salvation—offered to us, and we need to accept and cherish it.

Materials—Wrapping paper, tape, bows and timer

Instructions—Divide your small group into teams of four. One student is the designated “present.” The other students will have two minutes to wrap up their “present” with wrapping paper and bows. Be sure that your students do not forget to make a gift tag written to whom the present is for and from. At the end of two minutes, one leader will be the judge of which present is the most beautiful, most creatively wrapped and most appealing to be opened. Once one has been chosen, let the presents unwrap themselves! Now, ask which present itself is the best. The answer is all of them! What matters is not the outside wrapping, but rather the present inside and what we do with it.

NOTE:

- Keep the game under control as your students may be tempted to take the silliness to the next level of out-of-control wrapping pandemonium.

Discussion

1. Do you think it was easy for God to give us the gift of His Son?
2. Do you think the joy of giving His gift outweighed His sorrow?
3. What is the greatest gift that you can share with others?

FOLLOW-UP:

Particularly follow-up with any students that you know have not accepted the free gift of salvation. Ask if they have any questions and assure them that you will get the answers if you do not already know them. Remind your students that salvation is a free gift. Ask your students if there is a gift that they can give someone this week just because. Encourage them to give freely to show God’s love for everyone.