



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Romans 3:10-28

Romans 5:1-11

Session Theme:

Justification

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Good, Better, Best?

Invite kids to name the best and holiest people they have ever heard of, either recently or in history (excluding Jesus). Write those names on the board, and then read the list aloud. It is wonderful and commendable that these individuals have lived such good lives, and we can learn a lot from them. Yet here is a question: Were any of them perfect enough to earn a place in heaven? Discuss this as a group.

In today's Bible lesson, Paul writes a letter to the Romans. In it, he explains that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," and thus, none of us can "earn" our place in heaven. So if that's the case, how can we be saved? Let's begin our lesson and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Lord God, we want to be good and to do the right thing. Yet sometimes we fail. Forgive us for our sins, and help us to see our deep need for Jesus and his saving work in our lives. In his holy name we pray. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "Jesus Loves Me" (children's song)
- "Standing in the Need of Prayer" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the New Testament
- Scripture Section: Churches

The first apostles sent letters to believers in various towns and regions. The majority of these letters were written by the Apostle Paul to congregations he helped start. Eventually, these writings were collected and became part of the New Testament.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level:

Children: Read aloud the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read aloud Scripture from the Bible

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Pre-Readers: Coloring Page and Activity

Elementary: Children's Pages (Worksheet and Drama)

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, and Questions)

Adults: Bible Study (Large or Small Group Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. Use the Bible Rhyme as a short review, or simply ask questions to help the students recall the events of the story.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Pre-Readers: Teacher leads a simple prayer

Children: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Romans 3:10-28

- Many of Paul's letters were written to places he had already visited. Given the fact that Paul had not yet been to Rome, how do you think this affected his tone and the subject matter he wrote about?

Since Paul had not yet had the chance to speak to people in Rome, what he wrote in this letter was a very basic explanation of what Jesus has done for us, and why Jesus needed to die on the cross to save us. Paul spends a lot of time explaining how sin holds us in bondage. But he was also very clear about the promise of forgiveness, salvation, and new life in Christ.

- Read Paul's opening words in this letter from Romans 1:1-7. Who is at the center of Paul's message? What are the main things Paul wanted to say about him?

From his very first words, Paul refers to himself as "a servant of Christ Jesus." His whole introduction is about Jesus and the promise we have because of Jesus. Paul particularly focuses on the heart of the Gospel message, that Jesus died and rose again for our sake. As believers, we belong to Christ!

- In Romans 3:10-18, Paul is quoting the Old Testament, including Psalm 14:1-3 and Psalm 53:1-4. From these verses, do you get the impression that people come into the world in a "neutral" state? What is true of all human beings?

What Paul says in these verses should leave no doubt that we human beings are all sinners. We need God's forgiveness and grace. None of us could merit or earn God's favor by what we do.

When Paul says that "we are all ... under sin," he is saying that all of us are born into sin from the start. We are not neutral agents; we are already on the road to hell from the beginning. If we are to be saved, God himself must intervene. That is what God has done in Jesus Christ.

- Paul is speaking to a common assumption that if we just try hard, do good, and follow the rules, we can make ourselves right in the eyes of God. What did God really want to teach us by giving us the law?

We are taught from our childhood and throughout our life to expect a reward for good behavior and the idea that "if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself." So when we are

given rules from God, we assume two things: a) we assume we actually have the ability to follow God's rules, and b) we assume that we will be right with God if we can make ourselves good enough. Both of these are false assumptions.

The truth is, God has given us his Law to show us that we *can't* save ourselves. God wanted to show us that left to ourselves, we have no hope. That is why we need to trust in him.

- Martin Luther said he had always thought "the righteousness of God" was a quality that God possessed — something God is. He later came to understand God's righteousness as something God does — something he gives to us. How are these two concepts different?

Like most of us, Martin Luther thought that he needed to "measure up" to please and satisfy God. He thought that if he could only meet God's standard of goodness, he would be saved. But Luther realized he could never live up to God's perfect standard. But by reading the Bible, Luther learned that God's righteousness is not a standard we need to meet; God's righteousness is his own goodness, and the fact that God loves us enough to do good *to us* and *for us*.

- To be justified means to be "made right" before God. So what does it mean to say that we are "justified by his grace as a gift"? How did God make this happen? What did Jesus do for us?

To be justified by God's grace means that we are not the ones who make ourselves right with God; God himself is the one who makes us right, and repairs the broken relationship we caused with him. In Jesus' death for our sake, we are forgiven of our sins, and in Jesus' resurrection, we have the promise of new and eternal life.

- As Christians, does our faith allow to brag about how much better we are than other people? Why or why not?

Being Christian does not mean we are better than other people; in fact, we recognize that we are sinners just like everyone else. The only difference is that we know Jesus and what Jesus has done for us. We cannot boast about how good we are, but only about how good Jesus is!

- Read Romans 5:1-11. According to these verses, what is the result or consequence of being made right with God by faith? How does this make a genuine and meaningful difference in our life?

God gives us his grace as a gift. That gift actually changes us and makes us thankful. This makes us *want* to do good and care for our neighbors just as God has done for us. Good works flow naturally from a heart that is filled with grace.

Classroom Craft and Activity Page

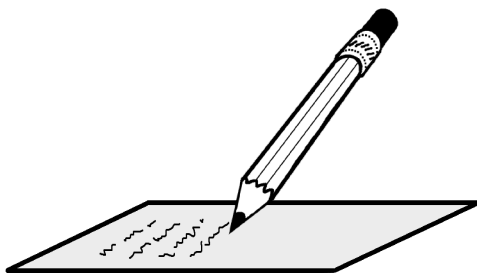
Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: God's Been There Letter

For all children

Materials Needed:

- Writing paper
- Pencils or pens
- Envelope



Instructions:

In today's Bible lesson, the Apostle Paul was writing a letter to the people of the ancient Roman church. In it, he explained that none of us have reason to boast, not even him. Why would he say this? Because none of us are perfect; all of us sin and fail. But God is good and is faithful to us despite our weakness. He sent Jesus into the world to save us from our sins. By trusting in Jesus and his saving work, we can be made right with God! God treats us so much better than we deserve.

For today's activity, invite kids to write a letter to someone who knows nothing of God or Jesus. (It can be an imaginary person.) Give each person two pieces of paper, an envelope, and a pen or pencil.

Kids should use one of their sheets of paper to make a list of good things that God has given them in their lives. Pre-readers can draw pictures instead. Start with "sending Jesus into the world to forgive my sins and save me." Talk about other good things, like family and other people who love them, their homes and food, school and teachers, safety, and so on.

Use the second sheet of paper to compose the letter (or pictures) telling this unknown person about all that God has done in their lives and why they have learned to trust him. God has been there for them in the past, is there in the present, and will be there in the future. God loves and cares for his people!

Ask kids to put the letter in the envelope and to take it home. But here's the twist: Rather than giving it away, invite kids to tuck their letter in a drawer and take it out and read it whenever *they* need a word of hope, themselves. This can help remind them of God's faithfulness to them.

Activity 2: Best Boaster Game

For all children

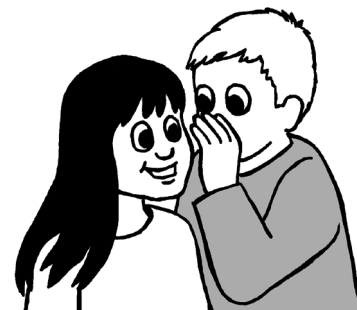
Materials Needed:

- Large open area

Instructions:

Invite kids to sit in a circle on the floor. Choose one person to be the Boaster.

This game is played like Telephone, but with a braggart twist.



Before beginning the game, have the kids make up some over-the-top boasts for examples. Here are some starters:

- "I ate 40 pancakes in a pancake eating contest, and didn't even stop to put syrup on top!"
- "I built a mansion out of cereal boxes, and if it hadn't collapsed, I would be famous right now!"
- "I watched an ant colony build an anthill for 10 hours straight, and they now recognize me as their leader!"

The object is for the boast to be so crazy as to be nearly impossible, and for all who hear it to pass it on in a serious manner without laughing.

To begin the game, the Boaster whispers a boastful statement into the ear of the person to his or her left. The sentence should begin with the words, "No one in the world is better than I am! I [insert ridiculous boast] ..."

The person left of the Boaster repeats it to the next person in line, and so on, until the last person in the circle (the one on the right side of the Boaster) repeats aloud what he or she heard. The Boaster will then give a thumbs up or a thumbs down, depending on whether or not what was said out loud is the original statement. Play additional rounds as time permits, with other volunteers being the Boaster.

If today's lesson taught us one thing, it is that boasting that we are better than others is just plain silly. We are all simple human beings, and not only that, but we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, too. God loves us not because of the amazing things we can do, but because he made us and we are his children. As the Apostle Paul said, we have every reason to thank God for his many gifts to us, but no real reason to boast endlessly about ourselves.

Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:



Paul wrote to churches in:

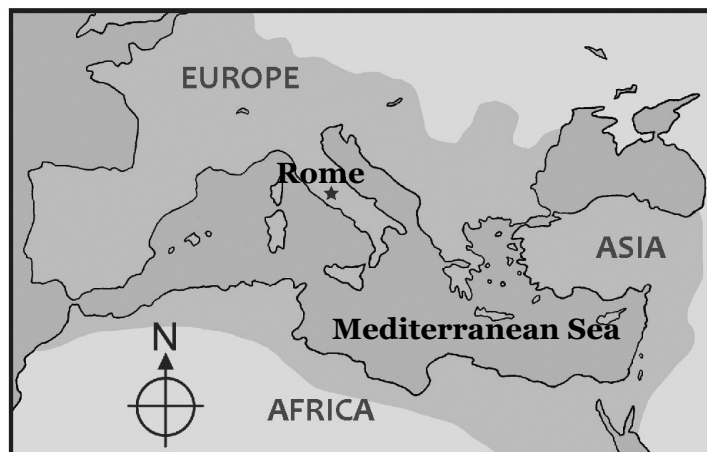
- a) Corinth Greece
- b) Ephesus Asia Minor
- c) Philippi Macedonia
- d) Rome Italy
- e) Thessalonica Macedonia

Region where these cities were located:

Map Questions:

- 1) Which sea on the map is the largest? Mediterranean Sea
- 2) Which sea did Paul travel completely around? Aegean Sea
- 3) Which sea is just east of Rome? Adriatic Sea
- 4) Which sea is just north of Asia Minor? Black Sea
- 5) Which sea is between Jerusalem and Rome? Mediterranean Sea

Map Answer Key:



The Mediterranean Sea is bordered by these three continents: **Europe, Africa, and Asia.**

Reflection for the Week Ahead

One of the reasons God gave us the Ten Commandments was to show us our need for him. Just think about that for a moment.

As hard as we may try to be perfect, there is always something that we could have done better. In other words, we are not God and cannot be. But thankfully, God does not leave us in our mixed-up, fallen state. He loves us and decided to make us right with him despite ourselves. That's why he sent Jesus into the world.

Jesus put himself in our place and accepted the punishment for sin that we, ourselves, deserved. We trust and believe that God makes us right not because *we* are worthy but because of what *Jesus* did for us. It's amazing grace!

Talk to one another about these questions:

Paul taught that rules themselves would not save us. Considering that, why is it still important to have and to follow rules (like the Ten Commandments) for life on this earth?

What's the difference between feeling good about ourselves and boasting?

The Practice of Prayer

On the lines below, pray to God asking him to guide your life through his holy Word. Ask him to reveal his promises to you and show you his love and mercy.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.

A: _____

D: _____

T: _____

R: _____

C: _____