



LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: The Holy Spirit Helps Us Believe

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](#)).



Curiosity

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

Curiosity Activity: Peek A Boo

SUPPLIES: blanket

Let's play a game you may already know: Peek-a-Boo! I'll go first. Put the blanket in front of your face and hold it for a few seconds before popping out and shouting, "Peek-a-boo!" to the kids. **Who else wants to go?** Take turns putting the blanket in front of the kids' faces and letting them pull it down and shout, "Peek-a-boo!"

It's fun to hide and play Peek-a-Boo! It was so fun watching you giggle when we did it! It's fun to hide from each other. Sometimes when we sin, or disobey God, we want to hide from Him. But we're going to learn today that we never have to hide from God. We can come to Him because He will always forgive us, even when we do wrong things.

Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD FORGIVES.**

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

GOD—*Point up.*

FORGIVES.—*Put your hands together like you're praying and bow your head.*



Belief

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

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Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God’s big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for each kid here today, and the ones who could not be here with us. We ask that Your Holy Spirit will open our hearts to hear what You have to say to us. Help us understand that You want us to turn from our sins and receive Your forgiveness! In Jesus’ name, Amen.**

God’s Big Story

****Note to leaders:** This story is not in any of our picture Bibles. To aid in telling the story, you can use the summary provided, along with the scripture below.

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God’s word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Read 1 John 1:8-2:2 and 2:12 NiRV from the text below:

9:00 Service

⁸ Suppose we claim we are without sin. Then we are fooling ourselves. The truth is not in us. ⁹ But God is faithful and fair. If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar. His word is not in us.

² My dear children, I'm writing this to you so that you will not sin. But suppose someone does sin. Then we have a friend who speaks to the Father for us. He is Jesus Christ, the Blameless One. ² He gave his life to pay for our sins. But he not only paid for our sins. He also paid for the sins of the whole world.

¹² Dear children, I'm writing to you because
your sins have been forgiven.
They have been forgiven because of what Jesus has done.

Summary:

The book of [1 John](#) is a letter that reminds us how important it is to pray to God when we do wrong things, admit what we've done, and ask for forgiveness. John said that if we pretend like we don't ever do wrong things, or sin against God, we are kidding ourselves because we all sin.

We can try to hide the sin, but it's still there. It isn't going away.

But here's the good news! In John's letter, he says that Jesus can save us. Jesus gave His life for us so God can forgive us. To receive God's forgiveness, we must come to Him and admit that we have sinned, ask for His help to turn from our sin, and He will forgive us every time! No questions asked!

Sin is when we disobey God, and the Bible says we've all sinned and need God's forgiveness. Confession is admitting when we sin and asking God to forgive us. God sees everything. He knows when we sin. When we come to Him and admit our sins, He will always forgive us. We don't have to hide from Him; He is always on our side! God wants us to come to Him and confess our sin, admitting when we make wrong choices, and He will always forgive.

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

**But God has surely listened. He has heard my
prayer. Give praise to God.**

— Psalm 66:19–20a

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

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!)*



Identity

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

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Activity: Jesus is the Bridge

Gather the kids. **Have you ever seen a bridge or traveled on one?** Allow the kids to respond. **A bridge gets us from one place to another.**

Sometimes there's a river or a large ditch that we need a bridge to cross. Let's make a bridge!

Divide the group in half and have kids form lines standing shoulder-to-shoulder facing each other. Encourage them to put their hands up, touching the arms of the person across the line, making a bridge in the air.

Let's make a bridge with our arms! Hold your arms up like this and sing with me.

Sing to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down."

Jesus is the bridge to God,

Bridge to God,

Bridge to God.

Jesus came to save us all,

When we fall down.

At the end, everyone falls down. Sing the song several times, encouraging kids to join in singing if they're able.

That was fun! Bridges help connect us from one place to another. Today, we're going to learn how Jesus and prayer act like bridges for us, connecting us to God! We can pray, or talk to God, whenever we disobey Him because God forgives.

9:00 Service

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for hearing their prayers.

God, You are so good. Your grace really is amazing. We know we do wrong things, and we are sorry. We admit our sin to You. Thank You for always forgiving us. Help us live in ways that honor You and show others Your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May you understand how much God loves you and wants to be in a close relationship with you. You can go to Him boldly, knowing He will always forgive you.