



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: Where's My Treasure?

SUPPLIES: small plastic gem

Have kids sit in a circle while you stand in the middle of the circle with a small, plastic gem. **For this activity, I'm going to choose someone to be the guesser. The guesser will leave the circle and stand away from the group with his eyes closed. Then I will quietly give this treasure (hold up the small gem) to one person in the circle. That person will hide it in her closed hand, and the rest of you should act like you have something in your closed hands. The guesser will come back and get three chances to guess who has the treasure. If the guesser is correct, he will join the circle and the person who had the gem becomes the new guesser. If the guesser doesn't guess who has it, he can choose someone else to be the new guesser.**

Choose a kid to start as the guesser and lead him to a spot that's far enough away from the rest of the group that he can't see what's happening, but so you can still see the kid. Pick a kid to hide the gem in her hands, then instruct all the kids to pretend to have the gem in their hands and call the guesser over. Play several rounds until most kids have had a chance to be the gem hider or the guesser.

That was a fun game, and you all did a great job guessing who was hiding the treasure! You were also really good at hiding the treasure and pretending you had it when you didn't. We don't have to hide anything from God, and we can come to Him with anything. We're going to learn more today about how He forgives us when we sin—when we do wrong things that separate us from God.



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:

10:45 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!*)



Faith

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

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Craft: Colorful Crosses

SUPPLIES: prepared sheet with taped cross on it (1 per kid), crayons

Set out crayons and give each kid a sheet of paper.

We are going to color all over this paper with our crayons. You can use any colors you'd like, but make sure to color the whole page. When you have finished, ask an adult to help you peel the tape off and reveal a shape.

Great job! Those are beautiful! The cross reminds me of how God forgives our sins and gives us a relationship with Him through Jesus' death and resurrection. You can take your colorful cross home with you, and when you look at it, thank God for forgiving our sins through Jesus.



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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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.

10:45 Service

Closing Activity: Clap if You're Close

SUPPLIES: any small object

Choose a small object to be hidden and show it to the kids. Divide the group into two teams.

The first team is going to find a perfect hiding place for the object. The second team of kids will close their eyes. Once the object is hidden, the second team will stay together and look for the object. The hiding team will give them hints by clapping fast when the team is close, and clapping slower if they get farther away. When the second team finds it, they will work together to hide the object while the first team closes their eyes.

Allow kids to play a few rounds with each team taking turns hiding and finding the object. Encourage them to stay together and work as a team.

It was fun to find the hidden object with clapping clues! When we sin, we don't have to hide from God or continue to feel bad. When we confess our sin to God, He will always forgive us.

10:45 Service