



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](#)

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: craft sticks (1 package), play dough, blocks

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Prayer of Confession Coloring Sheet](#) (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?

Play Station: Making Crosses

Set-up: Set out craft sticks and play dough.

Play: Encourage kids to use play dough and craft sticks to make crosses. Make a few examples ahead of time.

Play Station: Building Bridges

Set-up: Set out blocks and craft sticks.

Play: Encourage kids to use the blocks and craft sticks to make bridges. Make a sample ahead of time so the kids can see how they can make bridges.

Play Station: Prayer of Confession Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the Coloring Sheet. Set out the [Coloring Sheets](#) and coloring utensils.



Belief

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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SCRIPTURE: 1 John 1–2

WORD OF WONDER: From Psalm 66:19–20

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!)*



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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Game: Forgiveness Tag

This game is like freeze tag, except when you get tagged and are frozen, you have to fold your hands like you're praying. You can get on your knees if you want. Any kid who's not frozen can come and "un-tag" you by saying, "God forgives you!" and then you can move again. Choose a kid to be the tagger, give the kids a countdown to start the game, then let them play the game.

Leader Tip: Choose a kid who is fast enough to catch the other kids, or two kids to be the taggers. You can also switch it up in the middle of the game if they start to look tired or ask for a break.

Wow, you are fast! Great job! It's great to know that God will always forgive us!



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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Responding in Worship: Sand Tray Prayers

SUPPLIES: sand, sand trays or 9" x 13" baking pans (1 for every 4–5 kids)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: music from the [Power of Prayer Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

Before kids arrive, put a layer of sand into sand trays or baking pans. You don't need a lot of sand in each dish—just enough to make a thin layer to cover the bottom.

We're going to come to God now and tell Him something we have done wrong and ask Him to forgive us. We can always come to Him, even with our secrets or sins. Nothing shocks God. He promises to forgive us whenever we confess our sins to Him.

You're going to take turns going to the sand tray. With your finger, you can draw a picture in the sand of a time when you have sinned—when you have disobeyed God or hurt someone else. While you're drawing, you can pray and ask God to forgive you. You can say it out loud or in your head. God hears our thoughts and knows what's in our hearts! Then erase the picture and remember that God forgives you and doesn't see the sin anymore!

If your group is large, divide the group so there are 4–5 kids at each sand tray. Play worship music from the [Power of Prayer Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) while kids are doing this activity. If you have enough leaders, station a leader at every sand tray, or between two.

Leader Tip: If you don't have sand trays, you can use a dry erase board or have kids draw on paper. Have the kids use a tissue or cloth to erase the board, or crumple the piece of paper after drawing their sin.

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.