



## LESSON FOR LEADERS

### INVITATION

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

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Invites Us into His Family

**SCRIPTURE:** Galatians 4; Romans 7

**WORD OF WONDER:** 1 Peter 2:9a

This summer our family spent a fair amount of time at animal parks. My middle child loves animals, and her souvenir of choice at every visit was a stuffed animal. Not surprising for a 6-year-old. What did surprise us was the amount of time she spent choosing each new member of her stuffed family.

She examined every style of creature, evaluating its pose, its stitching, whether the face looked friendly or fierce, whether the eyes were even, what the huggability was for each one. She was dedicated to finding The One. And sure enough, eventually she would look at a stuffed animal and know “This is it!”

Did you know God chooses you with the same dedication and attention? He doesn’t spend time evaluating your worth based on your faults. Rather, He focuses on your identity. Who you are. The fact that you ARE!

1 Peter 2:9 says we are God’s special treasure, chosen by Him to be part of His family. Then we can tell the world of God’s goodness and wonder!

But first, God invites us into that family. He doesn’t force us or demand ... He simply invites. It’s up to us whether or not we’ll accept the invitation.

Remember, God sees something special and beloved when He looks at you.

—Laura Koesterer

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LESSON FOR LEADERS

MY LIFE CAN TELL OF GOD'S WONDER

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

**WHO?**

Paul encountered Jesus through a revelation that changed the direction of his life ([Galatians 1:13–17](#)). His zeal for preserving Jewish traditions was transformed; he went from persecutor of the church to Jesus' apostle to the Gentiles. His letters show the development of early Christianity.

**WHAT?**

Paul says the Jewish law is good ([Romans 7:12](#)), but it does not redeem from sin. Paul introduces a metaphor—legal adoption—to show God's unprecedented offer through Jesus. Because of Jesus' redemptive actions, no one has to remain enslaved to sin any longer.

**WHERE?**

Galatians is sent to multiple congregations in the region of Galatia (modern-day Turkey). Paul had first brought the message of Jesus to these Gentiles. Romans touches on some similar themes and is addressed to various house churches in the city of Rome.

**WHEN?**

Galatians could be Paul's earliest letter, normally dated a few years before the book of Romans and perhaps around AD 50. Paul wrote his letter to the Romans before being brought to Rome as a prisoner in the early 50s.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

Israel is called God's child many times in the Old Testament, and Paul gives new meaning to this image. Anyone with faith in Jesus becomes a child of God, part of His family. Paul uses the Aramaic word Abba, as Jesus does in prayer ([Mark 14:36](#)).



## Curiosity

### LESSON EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.*

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#### Curiosity Activity: Group and Gather

Gather kids into a circle. Today we're going to play a game called **Group and Gather**. Families are often groups of people who gather together and share some things in common. Let's see what you all have in common too! I'll call out a statement, and you'll group yourselves according to what I called out. Let's practice. Make a group with people who are the same age as you.

Allow kids time to move around the space, figure out their groups, and stand together. Some kids may need help determining some of the categories. Offer help as needed. Once they're grouped, invite kids to share more about how they are grouped (example: red shirts, blue shirts, patterned shirts). Continue with other statements:

- Same shirt color
- Same hair color
- Same eye color
- Born in the same month
- Same number of siblings (remember, zero is a number!)
- Same kind of pet

Invite kids to have a seat in the circle again. **It was fun to see some of the things we have in common as well as things that make us unique. Our families don't define us, but they do help make us who we are. While we typically think of family as the group of people we live with, family is also a place to belong. Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD INVITES US INTO HIS FAMILY.****



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## Belief

### LESSON **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

*Guide kids into knowing God, 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 the opportunity to learn more about You. Holy Spirit, help us understand what it means to be invited into God's family and to walk in the truth that we are His kids! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

### God's Big Story

What is this? *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

[Galatians 4:4-7](#)

But then the chosen time came. God sent his Son. A woman gave birth to him. He was born under the authority of the law. <sup>5</sup> He came to set free those who were under the authority of the law. He wanted us to be adopted as children with all the rights children have. <sup>6</sup> Because you are his children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. He is the Holy Spirit. By his power we call God Abba. Abba means Father. <sup>7</sup> So you aren't a slave any longer. You are God's child. Because you are his child, God gives you the rights of those who are his children.

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, stuffed animals

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** [God's Big Story Video](#)

God's big story today is about how our lives can tell of God's wonder as children of God and a part of God's

## 10:45 Service

**family. Let's find out more!**

Show the kids the [God's Big Story Video](#), or read the story from the Bible, or use the script provided.

**You can help tell the story by hugging the stuffed animals anytime I say, "family."**

**In the beginning, God created everything that exists. The most special was people! He created people to be in relationship with Him! But people sin—that is, do things that are wrong—and sin separates us from God.**

**But God sent Jesus to save us from our sins and forgive us so we can be a part of God's *family*!** Encourage the kids to hug their stuffed animals.

**When we trust in Jesus, we can be a part of God's *family*** (encourage the kids to hug their stuffed animals) **and be adopted as a child of God.**

**We get to be forgiven from our sins and have the Holy Spirit live in us when we are a part of God's *family*.** Encourage the kids to hug their stuffed animals.

**When we ask God to let us become His children and part of His *family*, to be filled by the Holy Spirit and freed from sin, we live the way God created us to be.** Encourage the kids to hug their stuffed animals.

**As children of God, we get to be messengers to the world, pointing people to our loving Father. Through our words and actions, others can see what God is like. All of our lives can tell of God's wonder! We can know that God invites us to be a part of His *family*!** Encourage the kids to hug their stuffed animals.

### Word of Wonder

#### WORD OF WONDER

**You are God's special treasure.**

—1 Peter 2:9a

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What do you think it means to be treasured and loved by God?**
- **How do you know God loves you? How does it make you feel?**



## Faith

LESSON **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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

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**Game: Invited into God's Family**

Ahead of time, designate one side of the room as the “God’s Family” side and the other side of the room as the “Earthly Family” side. Point out each side to the kids.

**We’re going to play a game where I will say a phrase, and if it describes something that’s part of being in God’s family, you’ll run to the “God’s Family” side of the room. If it describes something that’s a part of an earthly family, you’ll run to the other side of the room. Remember that the earthly family things aren’t bad things!**

Read the following phrases and pause after each phrase to encourage the kids to run to either side of the room. You can instruct them to go back to the middle of the room after each phrase, or they can simply stay where they are.

- Trust Jesus as my Savior (God’s family)
- Have a little sister (earthly family)
- Become a child of God (God’s family)
- Go on a family picnic (earthly family)
- Become adopted into God’s family (God’s family)
- Holy Spirit comes into my heart (God’s family)
- Celebrate a birthday with a grandparent (earthly family)
- Live with God forever (God’s family)
- Have a family movie night (earthly family)
- Freed by God to do what is right instead of trapped doing wrong things (God’s family)
- Get to be a messenger of God to the world as a child of God (God’s family)
- Parents adopt a brother or sister (earthly family)
- Become filled by the Holy Spirit (God’s family)
- Be freed from sin and live the way God created me to be (God’s family)

**There are so many great things that happen when we are a part of God’s family! We can celebrate that God invites us to be a part of His family!**

LESSON **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: Child of God Invitations

**SUPPLIES:** envelopes (8), scissors (prep only), markers (optional), stickers (optional)

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** [God's Family Notes](#)

Ahead of time, print the [God's Family Notes](#), put one note in each envelope, and seal the envelopes. Gather kids together. **Because God knows, loves, and leads us, our lives can tell of God's wonder. You are invited to join God's family by trusting Jesus as your Savior! What are some good things about being a part of your family on earth?** Allow the kids to respond. Remember and be sensitive to kids who are in different family situations.



We'll talk about what it means to be a part of God's family. There are eight envelopes with invitations inside. We'll take turns opening them, and I'll read each invitation. Imagine the invitation is from God to you. After I read each invitation, you can pray and tell God thank you! Then you can clap and cheer to thank Him for loving us so much and giving us the chance to be a part of His family.

Choose eight kids (or you can reuse the envelopes and give every child a chance to open one) to each pick and open an envelope. Allow the kids to open each envelope and bring it to you to read aloud. After you read it, encourage the kids to pray, thanking God for what you said. The envelopes do not have to be opened in a particular order. You can play a worship song from the flash drive during the activity.

The kids can also decorate the envelopes with markers and stickers as you do the activity.

The letters say:

- Dear child, you're invited to ... trust Jesus as your Savior.
- Dear child, you're invited to ... become a child of God.

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- Dear child, you're invited to ... become adopted into God's family.
- Dear child, you're invited to ... have the Holy Spirit live inside of you and lead you.
- Dear child, you're invited to ... live with God forever.
- Dear child, you're invited to ... be forgiven and set free from sin.
- Dear child, you're invited to ... be a messenger of God to the world and reflect God's wonder.
- Dear child, you're invited to ... be known by God, loved by Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit, and able to share God's wonder as a child of God.

### Prayer and Blessing

**Let's pray and talk to God and thank Him for how He loves us and invites us into His family!**

**God, thank You for Your great love for us. Thank You for inviting us to be adopted into Your family and allowing us to be forgiven and live as children of God. We love You! 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:** God knows you through and through. He loves you with a love that's deep, wide, and strong—stronger than life itself. May God help you always follow Him joyfully, today and all your days. Go with God and let your life share His wonder with the world.