

THE BIGGEST STORY CURRICULUM



June
Gospels

1st - 3rd Grade : Red Check Marks
4th - 5th Grade: Green Check Marks



STORY 71

The Kids Can Come Too

MARK 10

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 10.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

What makes Jesus different than anyone else in history? He cured the blind? That's true. He calmed a storm? That's true too. What is also true, and what really sets him apart, is that though he is a glorious king (the very Son of God!), he came to earth and lived like a poor man. He was made a human, born of a poor woman, raised in a small town, worked as a carpenter for most of his life, and ministered to the sick, dying, and demon possessed. The people that he called to follow him were fishermen, tax collectors, and other outcasts. Of course, the greatest thing he did (and the humblest!) was dying for us. The apostle Paul describes it like this: "Though he is fully God, he set aside his heavenly glory and became a man. More than that, he lived the life of total obedience to his Father and day-by-day service to others, even serving God's people by dying a

criminal's death on the cross for them" (see Phil. 2:6–8). Such an unusual king! With a king like this, what is his kingdom like? Who belongs in such a king's kingdom? Let's listen in for Jesus's answer.

TELL THE STORY

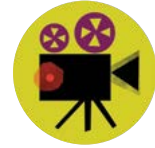
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Jesus wants
us to come to
him like little
children—needy
and helpless.

Throughout the four Gospels we read about people coming to Jesus. A leper came to him to be cured of his awful, yucky skin disease. Four men came to him to heal their paralyzed friend. Large crowds came to him to be cured of every type of sickness. One day, some parents brought their children to him. Why? Were the children sick? No. Were they hungry? No. Were they dying? No. They brought their children to Jesus so he might lay his loving hands on them and give them a special blessing. How beautiful! It is beautiful that these parents wanted that. It is beautiful that Jesus wanted that too. Not many powerful people want little children around. Little children can be noisy, messy, and, well, sometimes stinky. None of that bothered our Lord, who “took them in his arms and blessed them” (Mark 10:16).

But it bothered his disciples. When they saw this, they told the parents to stop. They thought Jesus was too busy, too important, and too powerful to waste his precious time with children. But, boy, were they wrong. When Jesus saw what his disciples did, “he was indignant” (10:14). *Indignant* is a big word that means angry, upset, or furious. Why was Jesus so upset? There were two reasons: (1) Jesus welcomed children to be part of his kingdom, and (2) everyone (even an adult) needs to be like a child to be part of the kingdom. He put it this way:



Story

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Mark

10

“Let the children come to me . . . for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it” (10:14–15). Jesus didn’t mean everyone should act like selfish, spoiled children crying for candy at the supermarket. Rather, he meant that we should come to Jesus knowing that we are small, helpless, weak (like a newborn baby), and in need of his blessing.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Right after those children came to Jesus, Mark tells a story about a rich man who also came to Jesus. This man wanted the answer to the question, “How do I live with God forever?” Jesus tested his heart, saying, “Have you obeyed the Ten Commandments?” This man replied, “Yes, my whole life!” He may have thought he obeyed all ten all the time, but no one (except Jesus!) has ever done that. So Jesus tested him by seeing if he could keep—right then and there—the first commandment (love God above all) and the last (do not covet). “Sell all that you have and give to the poor . . . and come, follow me” (10:21). The rich man, we are told, “went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” (10:22). He couldn’t let go of his stuff! Jesus doesn’t test everyone like he did this man, but he does ask everyone to be totally dependent on him whether we are rich rulers or tiny children. The gospel is for everyone in the world. Because everyone in the world is small, helpless, and weak compared to God. What this rich ruler didn’t understand is that no one can live with God forever until they realize they are as weak and helpless as toddlers. That’s how God wants us to come to him. And when we do, he will take us in his arms and bless us.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. **QUESTION:** What are some amazing things that Jesus has done? Even though Jesus is a glorious king, what is surprising about how he lived on earth and whom he spent time around?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus is a glorious king and a humble servant.

3

Engage

Memory Verse
Truly, I say to
you, whoever
does not receive
the kingdom of
God like a child
shall not enter it.

MARK 10:15

2. **QUESTION:** Why did parents want to bring their children to Jesus? Why didn't the disciples want them to? What was Jesus's response to the disciples? Are little children welcome in God's kingdom?

TAKEAWAY: Children are welcome in God's kingdom.

3. **QUESTION:** What does it mean that the kingdom of God belongs to little children? What did the rich man need to do to enter the kingdom of God, which he was unwilling to do? What sort of people does Jesus want in his kingdom?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus's kingdom is for the weak, not the strong.

4. **QUESTION:** Can a rich man come to Jesus? How should he come? How should we all come to Jesus?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus wants us to come to him like little children—needy and helpless.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Keep Away

Supply List: beach ball

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Have children form a large circle. Choose one child to stand in the center of the circle. Give a beach ball to a child on the circle and have her toss the ball to someone on the opposite side while the person on the inside tries to intercept it. When the “insider” gets the ball, he switches places with the person who threw the ball. Continue play as long as time allows. Remind everyone that the disciples tried to keep children away from Jesus, but Jesus welcomed children and blessed them.



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Option 2: Children Come!

Supply List: none

Put children into pairs. Have one person from each pair stand in an inner circle and the other person stand in an outer circle. Children on the inner circle walk clockwise and the children on the outer circle walk counterclockwise. After about 10 seconds, call out, “Children come!” Children must find their partners as quickly as possible and link arms with them. The pair that links arms last is out. Play continues until one pair remains. Remind children that we can run to Jesus any time—he is never too busy or bothered.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Obstacle Course Relay

Supply List: various items to make obstacles (cones, chairs, ropes, etc.)

Before Class: Set up identical obstacle courses (one per team).

Divide children into teams and have them line up. Have the first person on each team maneuver through the obstacle course in both directions before tagging the next player in line. The first team to get all its players through the obstacle course wins. Remind children that they should never let anything stop them from getting to Jesus.

Option 2: Connect Four Relay

Supply List: masking tape, sticky notes, marker

Before Class: Use masking tape to create a grid on the wall that has seven columns and five rows. Draw hearts on two different colors of sticky notes.

Divide children into two teams (Team 1 and 2), and give each team one of the colors of sticky note hearts. Have the first person on Team 1 attach a heart of her team’s color to the grid. As in the game Connect Four, the grid must be filled from the bottom up. After Team 1’s turn, the first player on Team 2 attaches a heart. Play continues with each team’s taking a turn until one team wins by getting four of its hearts in a row vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Tell children the hearts remind us that Jesus values children and his love for them is great—in all directions, at all times.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: “Jesus Loves Children” Headband

Supply List: construction paper, paper, scissors, tape, glue, crayons

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut construction paper in half lengthwise. Make copies of the words “Jesus loves children.” Make copies of pictures of children of different ethnicities. Make a sample craft.

Place scissors, tape, glue, crayons, and printed copies on tables. Give children two strips of construction paper each, and have them tape them together to make one long strip. Children then color and cut out the words “Jesus loves children” and the pictures of the children, and they glue them to the strip of paper. Help children tape the two ends of the strip together to fit their heads.

Option 2: Heart in Hands

Supply List: paper, pencils, scissors, pink and red construction paper, glue, markers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Set supplies on tables. Have children fold a piece of paper in half so the short ends meet. Trace around one of their hands with fingers spread out, Next, they cut out their traced hand. Children can then open the paper and glue their two hands close together (upside down) to form a heart between the hands. Have the children glue this paper to a piece of red or pink construction paper and write “Jesus loves me” above the hands.



Option 1: “Jesus Has Time for Me” Clock

Supply List: paper plate, cardstock, scissors, markers, brass fasteners

Before Class: Gather supplies. Print two arrow shapes on cardstock, one arrow longer than the other (one copy per child). Make sample craft.

Give each child a paper plate, scissors, arrow paper, and brass fastener. Place markers and glue on tables. Have children write “Jesus Has Time for Me” on the plate and decorate with markers. Instruct them to cut out and attach the base of the two arrows to the center of the plate using the fastener, allowing the hands to move around the plate. Have them write the numbers 1 to 12 around the outside of the plate like a clock. Remind children that Jesus took time to bless the children and that he has time for each of them.

Option 2: Soooooo Much Love!

Supply List: construction paper, paper, pencil, scissors, markers, glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut 1-inch-wide strips of construction paper. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a piece of paper and pencil. Set paper strips and remaining supplies on tables. Have children fold their paper in half so the short ends meet. On one side of the paper, children should trace their hand with fingers spread out. Then they cut out their traced hand to form two handprints. Next, they tape together two strips of construction paper to make one long strip. On the strip, have them write, “Jesus loves me soooooo much!” Instruct them to accordion fold the strip from end to end and glue one end of the strip to each handprint. Children can open and close the handprints to display the message of Jesus’s great love for them.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 72

Who Is My Neighbor?

LUKE 10

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Luke 10.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.



THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



Remember how Jesus's disciples were upset that children were coming to Jesus? They thought Jesus was too busy, too important, and too powerful to waste his precious time with children. They misunderstood the King and his kingdom, so Jesus corrected them. The disciples weren't the only ones who misunderstood the King and his kingdom. They weren't the only ones Jesus needed to correct. There was also another group. But this second group was trickier and meaner than the disciples. They didn't like Jesus; they wanted him dead. Sometimes they'd ask him questions to get him into trouble. In today's lesson, they ask him one of those trick questions. But Jesus isn't tricked. Instead, he uses their question to correct their wrong views about his kingdom.

TELL THE STORY

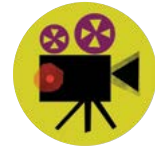
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
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video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Loving God
means loving
our neighbors,
which involves
showing mercy
to those in need.

One day “a lawyer” tried to test Jesus. He asked a trick question, trying to trip Jesus up. This lawyer was not a lawyer in the way we talk about lawyers. He was an expert in the *law* of Moses. The lawyer asked, “What do I have to do to live forever?” (see Luke 10:25). This is a good question—a question everyone should ask, because everyone will one day die. Some people might have asked that important question because they wanted an answer. However, the Bible tells us that this man asked it to test Jesus, hoping it would show that Jesus didn’t know the law as well as the lawyer did.

But Jesus (who was far wiser than this lawyer) answered his question with another question, “How does the Bible answer your question?” (see 10:26). The man replied, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (10:27). “That’s right,” said Jesus. “If you perfectly love God and love your neighbor you will live forever.” Ah, Jesus was now testing him! Do you think this lawyer could perfectly love God and his neighbor? Of course not. Only God loves like that. At this point the lawyer decided to ask Jesus a follow-up question, “And who is my neighbor?” (10:29). He wanted Jesus to answer the question how he himself would answer it. “My neighbors,” the man thought, “are people like me and people I like.” Then Jesus shared this shocking story to correct him and show him that our neighbors include anyone in need. He told this *Jewish* religious leader the parable of the good *Samaritan*.

A man was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way, some robbers beat him up, stole all he had, and left him on the road to die. Soon after, a



priest saw him. But instead of helping, he walked right by him. Then, a Levite passed by, and did the same thing. Finally, a Samaritan saw him. And do you know what he did? Even though Samaritans and Jews didn't like each other, this Samaritan had compassion on this helpless man. He poured oil and wine on his wounds (to clean them), wrapped him in his own clothing, and brought him to an inn. The next day, the Samaritan gave the innkeeper money and said, "Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back" (10:35).

After the parable, Jesus asked, "Which man loved his neighbor?" The answer was obvious. "The one who showed him mercy" (10:37), the lawyer admitted. "Right," Jesus said, "Now go and do the same."

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Think again about what the Samaritan did in the parable, and then think about what Jesus has done for us. Like the Samaritan, Jesus came to the rescue. The Samaritan just crossed the road to do so; Jesus came all the way from heaven! The man who was beaten was rescued from dying; we were already dead in our sins when Jesus came for us. It cost the Samaritan some money to restore the dying man back to life; it cost Jesus his very life to restore our relationship with God. Jesus suffered for us. Jesus bled for us. Jesus died for us.

We are to follow the example of the good Samaritan, but more importantly we are to follow Jesus, our always good Savior. The right answer to the lawyer's first question ("What do I have to do to live forever?") is to follow Jesus—the only person to ever love God and neighbor perfectly.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What question did the lawyer ask Jesus to test him? How did Jesus respond? Even though the lawyer wanted to test Jesus, how did Jesus test that man's heart? How does his story test your heart?

TAKEAWAY: People sought to test Jesus, but it is Jesus who tests our hearts.

3

Engage

Memory Verse

You shall love the
Lord your God
with all your heart
and with all your
soul and with all
your strength
and with all your
mind, and your
neighbor as
yourself.

LUKE 10:27

2. **QUESTION:** How did the man answer Jesus's question about how to summarize the law? What happens if you perfectly love God and your neighbor? What keeps us from doing that? Who is the only person who can do that?

TAKEAWAY: The whole law is summed up by loving God with all your heart and loving your neighbor as yourself, and only Jesus can do that perfectly.

3. **QUESTION:** Who were the three men who saw the wounded man on the road to Jericho? Which one helped the man? Why is that surprising? In what ways is Jesus the Great Samaritan?

TAKEAWAY: The parable of the good Samaritan reminds us that Jesus came to save his enemies; he is the Great Samaritan.

4. **QUESTION:** What's the final question that Jesus asked the lawyer? What was his answer? The whole story was to answer the question "Who is my neighbor?" So what is the answer? If we love God and want to follow Jesus, what must we go and do?

TAKEAWAY: Loving God means loving our neighbors, including our enemies.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: TP Bandage Relay

Supply List: toilet paper (one roll per team)

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Divide children into teams of three to four, and give each team a roll of toilet paper. Have each team choose one child to be "hurt." On "Go" each team must wrap the hurt person with toilet paper. The first team to use the entire roll of toilet paper wins. Remind children that Jesus told a story about a hurt man who was helped by an unlikely good neighbor.



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Luke

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Option 2: Bandage Tag

Supply List: bag of bandages

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Choose one child to be “It” and one to be the “good Samaritan.” Give the good Samaritan a bag of bandages. Begin a game of tag. If a child is tagged, she must freeze until the good Samaritan comes and puts a bandage on her hand. Once she has a bandage, she can rejoin the game. If a child is tagged a second time, she must remain frozen because each person can only be saved once per game. After a few minutes, restart the game with a new “It” and “good Samaritan.”

3rd–5th

Option 1: Bandage Relay

Supply List: bandages, table

Before Class: Gather supplies. Set a table on the opposite side of the starting line, and spread out bandages on the table.

Divide children into teams of five to six. Have each team choose one child to be “hurt,” who will then stand in front of the bandage table directly opposite from his team. On “Go” have the first person on each team skip down to the bandage table, take a bandage, stick the bandage somewhere on his team’s “hurt” person, and skip back to tag the next person in line, who will repeat the process. After five minutes, the team that has placed the most bandages on its “hurt” person wins. Remind children that one way to love our neighbors is by helping people when they are hurt.

Option 2: I Love My Neighbor!

Supply List: chairs

Before Class: Set chairs in a circle (one less than the number of children playing).

Choose one child to stand in the middle of the circle, and have the rest sit in chairs. The person in the middle says, “I love my neighbor, especially the ones who . . .” (the child then calls out a characteristic like “are wearing blue,” “have a sister,” or “like pizza”). If the statement is true of a child, he or she must stand



and find a new place to sit. While those children are moving to a new seat, the person in the middle also tries to get a chair. The child who does not get a chair is the new person in the middle. Continue play for a predetermined time, ensuring that all children get to participate. Remind children that Jesus wants us to love our neighbors.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Sign Language “I Love You”

Supply List: construction paper, pencils, scissors, colored pencils, glue sticks

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Set supplies on tables. Demonstrate how to say “I love you” with your hand in sign language. Have children take a piece of construction paper and trace around one of their hands with their fingers spread out. Children should then cut out their traced hand and glue the middle and ring fingers down to say “I love you” in sign language. Have children write Luke 10:27 on the front of the handprint. Remind children that when we love God, we want to love others like Jesus did!

Option 2: “Love One Another” Beaded Craft

Supply List: cardstock, pipe cleaners, string, scissors, tape, pony beads

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut 6-inch pieces of string. On cardstock, print the words “Love One Another” (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Set copies and supplies on tables. Have children thread pony beads onto a pipe cleaner, leaving 1 inch unbeaded at each end. Then they can shape the pipe cleaner into a heart, twisting the unbeaded ends to secure. Have them cut out the words “Love One Another” and attach them to the back of the heart with tape. Last, they should tie a piece of string to the top for hanging.



Option 1: Heart Chain

Supply List: string, paper, scissors, hole punch

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut string (eleven per child). Make copies of a paper that has five hearts, with each heart containing one word from the phrase “I Can Love My Neighbor” (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Set string, heart papers, and remaining supplies on tables. Have children use the string and hole punch to make a paper chain with eleven links. Have them cut out the hearts and attach them on every string so the chain reads “I Can Love My Neighbor.” Remind children that when we show love and mercy to others, we are like Jesus.

Option 2: Love Dangler

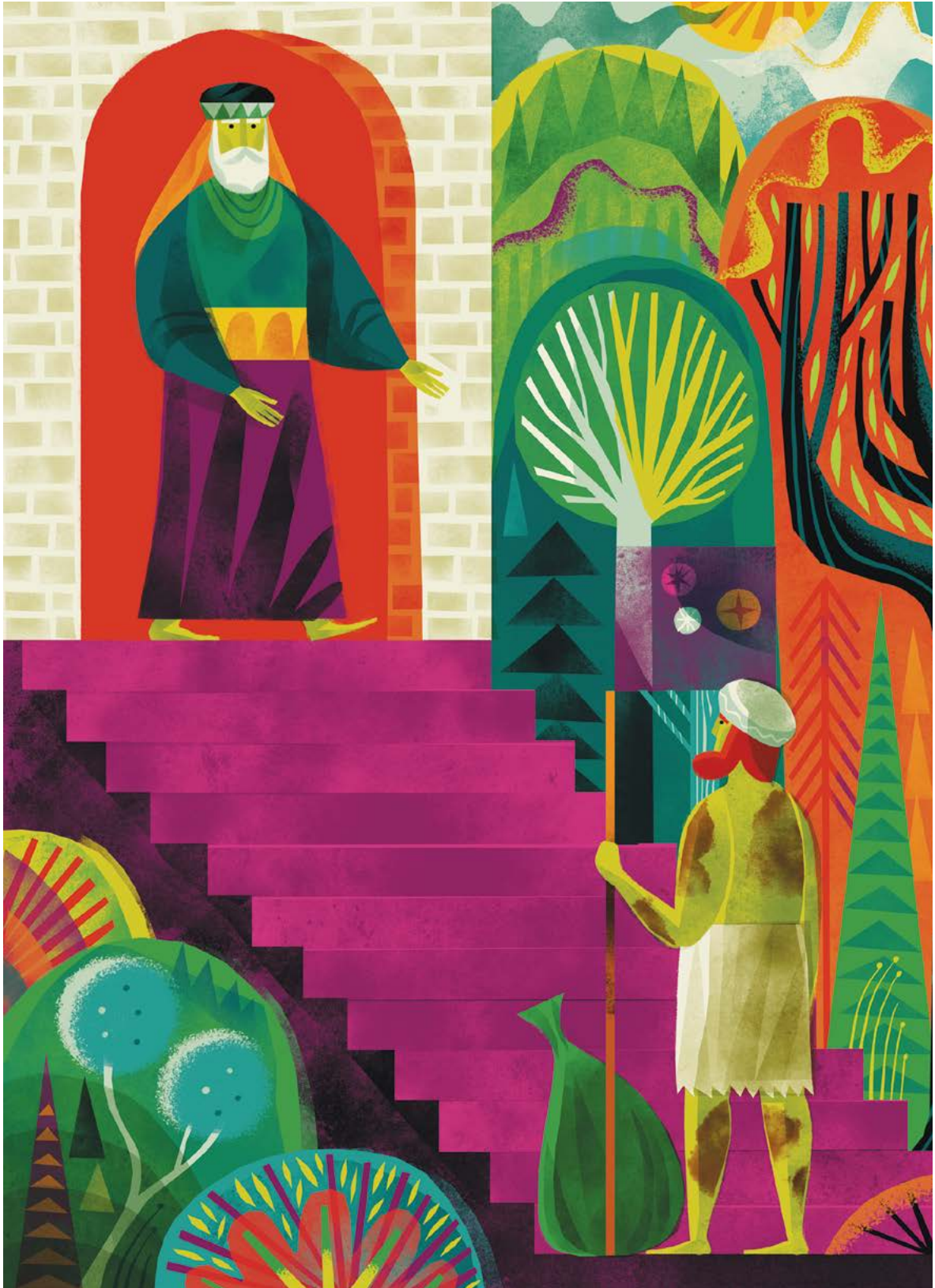
Supply List: cardstock, string, red paper, scissors, glue sticks, colored pencils, tape

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, print simple pictures of a cross, a heart, and a hand. On red paper, print three small hearts that say “Love God,” “Love others,” and “Serve others.” Cut 15-inch pieces of string. Make a sample craft.

Set copies and supplies on tables. Instruct children to color and cut out the cross, heart, and hand. Children should then cut out the three hearts and glue the “Love God” heart to the cross, the “Love others” heart to the heart, and the “Serve others” heart to the hand. Have children line up the shapes facedown with space in between them, and then they can tape a piece of string to the backs of the shapes so they will hang vertically. Leave extra string at the top to form a loop for hanging. Remind children that when we love God, we will love and serve others.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 73

Lost and Found

LUKE 15

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Luke 15.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan to answer the lawyer's questions. And while the lawyer may have gotten an answer to his big question about living forever, there were still many more people with many more questions. There were also more people trying to catch Jesus doing something wrong. People who didn't like what Jesus was saying and doing. Jesus didn't like that they grumbled about God's grace or about his spending time with people who were lost. And so Jesus told more stories to show them why he came to be with sinners. He told them a story about a man who went to rescue his lost sheep. He told them about a woman who scoured her house looking for a precious coin. After telling stories of a lost sheep and a lost coin, he told one about a lost son. He told them these parables because the Pharisees and scribes were complaining about how

really bad people (“tax collectors and sinners,” Luke 15:1) were coming to Jesus, eating with him, listening to him, and following him. His stories helped show why there is much joy when lost things are found—and why spending time looking for the lost is good. How will the Pharisees respond to the stories? Will their grumbling against Jesus turn to joy? Will they begin to seek the lost with hope that they will be found? Let’s find out!

TELL THE STORY

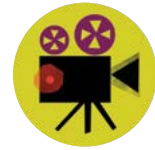
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Jesus came
to rescue and
redeem lost
sinners.

This is the famous story of the prodigal son. Of course, most people don’t know what “prodigal” even means. It means wasteful or reckless. A prodigal is someone who recklessly wastes money. But there is more to the famous parable of the prodigal son than the story of a son who wastes money. He certainly does that! He spends all his father’s money. But he also has an amazing transformation.

The story goes like this. Once there was a rich man who had two sons. The younger son said, “Father, give me right now all the money I will receive when you die. My inheritance!” His father agreed. The boy then took the money and traveled far from home. Before long he spent every single dollar on selfish things with sinful people. Now he was poor and hungry and needed a job. The only job he could find was feeding pigs. Oink. Oink. Ugh. Ugh. He was so hungry he dreamed about eating the pig slop. Yuck. Yuck. Especially for Jews who want nothing to do with “unclean” pigs. Suddenly an idea came to him: “Why starve to death? Why not go home? Even your father’s hired servants have more than enough to eat.” As he walked home, he rehearsed what he would say to his father: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to



be called your son” (15:18–19). What an amazing transformation—from prodigal to humble and repentant. But how would his father respond? Before he reached the front door, his father noticed his son walking in the distance. Did he lock the door? No. Send out the guard dogs to sic ‘em? No. The father loved him and forgave him. He ran to his son, hugged and kissed him, and ordered his servants to give his son new shoes, clothe him with the best robe, and put a ring on his hand. Then he gave this order: “Let us eat the biggest and best cow and celebrate. Steaks for everyone! For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found” (see 15:23–24). The father had been longing for just such a transformation. He rejoiced to have his son back home.

How do you think the Pharisees reacted to this story? We’re told they responded by ridiculing Jesus (Luke 16:14). Instead of learning from Jesus, they remained upset with Jesus for seeking the lost. Their hearts toward the “sinners” remain unchanged. How sad.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Do you know that not everyone was excited when the prodigal son returned home? When the older brother heard the music and saw the dancing (and likely smelled the tasty steaks on the grill), he was angry and refused to join in the celebration. He complained just like the Pharisees and scribes did. He told his father, “What are you doing? Look, all these years I have faithfully served you and never disobeyed you, and you have never thrown even a little party for me. But you have thrown a big party for this sinful son of yours, who did terrible things and spent all the money you gave him. Why?” (see 15:29–30). He thought we earn the Father’s favor, so he begrudged when it was an undeserved gift. The father replied to the older son, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found” (15:31–32).

The older brother’s thinking is common even today. It’s easy to think we deserve God’s salvation because we’ve done enough good things. We’re not as bad as others (so we think). Jesus told the three “lost” parables to correct such thinking. All heaven rejoices when someone repents of their sins and returns to God. When the lost are found. That is why Jesus came and spent time with sinners—to seek and save the lost, like us. When we understand the true gospel, we rejoice that God came to rescue sinners of all kinds.

3

Engage

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. **QUESTION:** Why were the Pharisees upset with Jesus? Whom did Jesus come to save?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus came to find lost sinners.

2. **QUESTION:** In the last parable, what was lost? What had he done to ruin his life? How did the son think his father would respond when he returned? How did his father respond when he returned to him? What does the story teach us about our Father in heaven?

TAKEAWAY: We are never too lost to return to our Father in heaven.

3. **QUESTION:** What are some of the things the father did when his son returned home? Why did he do them? What does this teach us about how God feels when a sinner repents and returns to him?

TAKEAWAY: God rejoices when someone repents of sins and returns to him.

4. **QUESTION:** How did the older brother feel when his brother returned home and his father rejoiced? Would you have felt the same way? What did his father encourage him to do? How should we feel if Jesus has found us?

TAKEAWAY: We should rejoice that we have been found by Jesus and rejoice when others are saved.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Gather My Sheep

Supply List: poster board, marker, tape, cups, cotton balls, glue sticks

Before Class: Gather supplies. Draw a large rectangular “sheep pen” on poster (one per team), and tape it to the wall opposite the starting line. Fill each cup with one hundred

Memory Verse

There is joy
before the
angels of God
over one sinner
who repents.

LUKE 15:10

cotton balls (one cup per team), and place the cups along the starting line across from the sheep pens.

Divide children into teams of five or six, and have each team line up behind a cup. Give each team a glue stick. On “Go” the first person on each team must take the glue stick and one cotton ball out of his team’s cup, run to glue the cotton ball inside the sheep pen, and run back to hand the glue stick to the next player in line. Play continues with each player’s gluing one cotton ball at a time. The first team to glue all their cotton balls inside their “pen” wins. Remind children that Jesus will find all his sheep.

Option 2: Pass the Snort and Baa

Supply List: none

Have children sit in a circle. One child starts the game by looking at the child on her left and making a pig snort noise without laughing. That child must then pass the snort to the person on his left, and so on around the circle. If the person snorting or receiving the snort laughs, he is out. When the snort has been passed around the circle, continue play by passing a sheep’s baa around the circle without laughing. Continue play (alternating between snorts and baas) until one child remains or until time is up. Remind children that Jesus told a parable about a lost sheep and a parable about a lost son who was so hungry he dreamed about eating pig slop!

3rd–5th

Option 1: Coin Hunt

Supply List: paper plates, crayons, fifty to one hundred coins

Before Class: Gather supplies. Hide coins around the room.

Have each child write his or her name on a paper plate and place it in the center of the room. Tell children that there are coins hidden all around the room and that their goal is to find as many as possible. On “Go” have children begin looking for coins. When a child finds a coin, he must place it on his plate before finding another one. Play continues for a couple minutes or until all the coins have been found. The child with the most coins wins. Remind children that Jesus came to search for the lost.



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Luke

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Option 2: Lost and Found

Supply List: random objects, dry rice, large bucket

Before Class: Gather objects like buttons, bouncy balls, clothespins, and the like. Mix the objects with rice in a large bucket. Make note of the objects in the box.

Divide children into two teams, and have them line up facing each other with the bucket of objects in the middle. When you call out one of the objects, the first person on each team runs to the bucket to find the object named. The first person to find the object gets a point for her team. Continue calling objects until all children have had the opportunity to participate and all objects have been found. The team with the most points wins. Remind children that Jesus came to seek what was lost.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Party Hats

Supply List: paper, scissors, streamers, staplers, markers, glue sticks, sequins

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a large semicircle pattern with the words “Rejoice! The lost are found!” printed inside it (one per child). Cut streamers into 5-inch lengths. Make a sample craft.

Set copies, streamers, and remaining supplies on tables. Children first cut out a semicircle and decorate one side. Then they shape the semicircle into a cone, stapling along the seam to close. Have children glue streamers to the point of the hat.

Option 2: Paper Bag Pig

Supply List: paper, paper lunch bags, scissors, glue sticks, tape, crayons, pencils, pink pipe cleaners, googly eyes

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a pig nose and two pig ears (one set per child). Make a sample craft.



Place copies and remaining supplies on tables. Children first color and cut out a pig nose and two ears. Then they glue the nose, ears, and two googly eyes to the bottom flap of the bag, creating a pig puppet. Have them add a tail by wrapping a pink pipe cleaner around a pencil and taping the tail to the back of the puppet. Remind children that the lost son was so hungry he dreamed of eating pig slop!

3rd–5th

Option 1: Coin Collage

Supply List: paper, variety of coins, crayons

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of the words “I was lost, but now I am found,” with FOUND in block letters (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Set copies, coins, and crayons on tables. Have children place a coin under the found paper so the coin is inside one of the block letters. Gently color on top of the coin with a crayon. Have children continue this process with different coins and colors until the block letters are filled in.

Option 2: Lost Things Story Wheel

Supply List: paper, scissors, colored pencils, brass fasteners

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of an 8-inch-diameter circle divided into three equal sections (one per child). Make copies of another 8-inch-diameter circle with a one-third section marked (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Give each child one of each circle. Set remaining supplies on tables. Children first cut out the circles, then take the circle divided into three sections and label the sections “A Lost Sheep,” “A Lost Coin,” and “A Lost Son.” Have children draw pictures to go with each parable. Instruct children to cut out the one-third section on the other circle and fasten this circle on top of the first using a brass fastener. Have them write, “God rejoices when the lost are found” on the top circle. Children can rotate the top circle to remind them of each parable.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 74

Debts and Debtors

MATTHEW 18

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Matthew 18.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

A couple weeks ago we looked at Jesus's parable of the good Samaritan and learned that we should love our neighbor, especially when he is in great need. Then we looked at Jesus's parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. And we learned that, like God, we should rejoice when someone repents and receives God's forgiveness. Today we will look at the parable of the unforgiving servant. In the next lesson we will look at the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. That's a lot of parables, isn't it? Why did Jesus teach so often with these short stories? Thankfully, Jesus answers that question. He says that he taught in parables to reveal and conceal. To *reveal* means to make something known that was hidden; to *conceal* means to hide or cover something up. To those who want to be Jesus's disciples and to whom God gives ears to hear

and understand, Jesus's parables show us great truths about God's kingdom. To those who don't want to be disciples, parables fall on deaf ears. They cannot hear. They do not listen. God's truth is hidden. For today's parable let's ask God to open our ears and our eyes!

TELL THE STORY

Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
*The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook*



Play *The
Biggest Story*
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
We should
forgive others
just as God
forgave us.

What should you do if someone steals something from you or tells a lie that gets you in trouble? One day Jesus taught his disciples what to do if someone sins against them. If a person admits his fault and asks for forgiveness, Christians should forgive. When Peter heard this teaching, he had a follow up question: “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” (Matt. 18:21). Jesus replied, “Not seven times, but seventy-seven times” (see 18:22). In other words, “Stop counting how many times someone sins against you. You are to forgive them every single time!” Jesus told a story to explain why.

One day a rich king decided to require his servants to pay back money they owed him. One servant owed him ten billion dollars. Wow, that's a big debt. Astronomical! Because he obviously couldn't pay back that astronomical amount, he fell on his knees and begged the king to be patient. The king decided to be more than patient; he would be merciful. He forgave the whole debt!

That's shocking. But what happens next is even more shocking. Shockingly sad. The servant who was forgiven remembered that another servant owed him money—about fifteen thousand dollars. That's still a lot. (More than you get from your grandma on your birthday, right?) But that's not anywhere close



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Matthew

18

to ten billion dollars! Now here's what the forgiven servant did. He grabbed his fellow servant and started to choke him. "Give me the money you owe me," he screamed. The man begged him to be patient: "Give me some time to repay you." "No way!" the first servant said. "Off you go to debtors' prison." When the king found out what happened, he called the forgiven servant and said, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" (18:32–33). The king tossed the man into debtors' prison until he could pay every last penny (which might just take an eternity!).

The point of the parable is that because God (like the king) has forgiven our many sins (like the first servant's debts), we should forgive others (like the second servant's much-smaller debt) when they sin against us.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Do you know the Lord's Prayer? It starts, "Our Father in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). After we pray "Give us this day our daily bread," the very next thing we ask God to do for us is to "forgive us our debts" (or trespasses or sins). Just like we need daily bread to live, we need daily forgiveness too. Our trespasses or sins are like debts we owe God. Our debt is as massive as the first servant's debt in the parable. We owe God ten billion dollars. So what are we to do? *We can't do anything* to earn our salvation. But thankfully *God has done something* about our debt problem. He sent Jesus to pay it all. Jesus gave his "life as a ransom" (20:28), a full payment. We, through faith, can accept that good news. And forgiven people forgive others. That's how it works. In fact, after Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer, he taught that Christians are to "forgive others their trespasses" (6:14). Jesus even implied that if we haven't forgiven, we probably haven't truly been forgiven (see 6:12, 14). The forgiven must be forgiving! We are to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one other, as God in Christ forgave" us (Eph. 4:32).

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What did Peter want to know about forgiveness? How many times did Jesus say Peter should forgive someone who sinned against him?

3

Engage

What did he mean by that? How many times will God forgive you for sinning against him?

TAKEAWAY: There is no limit to God's forgiveness of sins.

Memory Verse

Be kind to
one another,
tenderhearted,
forgiving one
another, as
God in Christ
forgave you.

EPHESIANS 4:32

2. **QUESTION:** How much money did the first servant owe the king? Could he ever pay that debt? Why did the king forgive the debt? How much money did the second servant owe the first? What should he have done when the second servant asked for time to pay his debt?

TAKEAWAY: Because God has forgiven us, we must forgive others.

3. **QUESTION:** What did the first servant do to the servant who couldn't pay him back? What was wrong with that? What did the king say and do to punish him? What lesson is God trying to teach us?

TAKEAWAY: If we do not forgive others, God will not forgive us.

4. **QUESTION:** What do we ask God to forgive in the Lord's prayer? And what do we tell him we will do to others? What should we do when we struggle to forgive others?

TAKEAWAY: When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to forgive us as we forgive others.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: String Search

Supply List: string, scissors

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut one extremely long length of string, and sixty different lengths of string, from a couple inches to a foot. Hide the sixty lengths of string around the room.

Show the long length of string, and explain that it represents Jesus's forgiveness of sins. Tell the class that you have hidden strings all around the room.



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18

On “Go” have children collect as many as they can. Once all the strings have been found, have each child line up the strings he or she found to form one long string. The child with the longest string wins. Show children the string that represents Jesus’s forgiveness. (This string should be much longer than any of theirs.) Remind children that we need to forgive like Jesus—way more than we think we should.

Option 2: Swat away Unforgiveness Game

Supply List: masking tape, paper

Before Class: Gather supplies. Place a piece of masking tape down the center of the play area to divide it into two sections.

Divide children into two teams and assign one team to each side of the tape. Distribute an equal number of pieces of paper to each team, and instruct children to crumple the paper into balls. Explain that the paper represents sins committed against us and that we don’t want to hold onto unforgiveness. We need to let go of hurts and trust God. On “Go” have teams try to keep crumpled paper balls off their side by continually tossing them to the other side. Continue play for 3 to 5 minutes. When the time is up, the team with the least number of paper balls on their side wins. Remind children that when we are unforgiving, we lose. Instead, we should keep on forgiving others, like Jesus forgives us.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Balloon Stomp

Supply List: balloons, string, scissors

Before Class: Gather supplies. Blow up balloons and tie a string to the knot of each balloon (one per child).

Tie a balloon around each child’s ankle. Have children spread out around the playing area. On “Go” have children try to stomp on and pop other children’s balloons while protecting their own from being popped. The last child with an unpopped balloon wins. Remind children that in the parable, the servant only looked out for himself.

Option 2: Ball Battle

Supply List: ball

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Have children stand in a circle with their feet slightly more than shoulder width apart and with the edges of their feet touching their neighbors'. The object of the game is for players to use their hands to hit the ball between other players' legs while blocking balls from coming through their own legs. If a ball passes through a child's leg, he gets a "one." If it passes through a second time, he gets a "two." This continues up to "seven." Once a child gets to seven, the game restarts. Jesus taught that we should forgive someone not seven times but seventy-seven times.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Heart Puzzle

Supply List: cardstock, scissors, crayons

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a large heart pattern (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Set crayons on tables. Give children a heart pattern and scissors. Have them cut out the heart and then cut it into two pieces to make a broken heart. Children then write "Jesus forgives my sins" on one half, and "I can forgive others" on the other half. Remind children that sin breaks God's heart, but he still forgives us. Sometimes our hearts are hurt by the sins of others, but we should forgive like God has forgiven us.

Option 2: King's Crown

Supply List: construction paper, scissors, tape, markers, jewels, sequins, glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. Draw a zigzag line lengthwise down the center of a piece of construction paper (one per child). Make a sample craft.



Give each child one piece of construction paper. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut along the zigzag line and then tape the pieces together to form one long piece. Have them write “Jesus is a forgiving and merciful King!” and then decorate it with markers, jewels, and sequins. Have children tape the two ends of the long piece to form a crown.

3rd–5th**Option 1: Keep on Forgiving Spiral**

Supply List: cardstock, scissors, markers, hole punch, string

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a spiral template (one per child). Cut 6-inch lengths of string (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Give each child a spiral template. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children write “Keep on forgiving” on their spiral and then color it with markers. Have children cut along the lines to make a long snakelike spiral. Have them punch a hole in the middle of the spiral, then thread and tie a piece of string through the hole for hanging. Remind children that forgiveness is not something we need just once but something we need again and again.

Option 2: Stained Glass

Supply List: cardstock, thin washi or masking tape, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, cups, water

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a small square (centered on the cardstock) with the Memory Verse printed inside it (one per child). Fill cups one-fourth full with water. Make a sample craft.

Set copies, cups of water, and remaining supplies on tables. Have children use the washi or masking tape to divide the space surrounding the square into at least eight different sections. Using the watercolor paints, have children paint the sections different colors. Once all sections have been painted, have children remove the tape to display a stained-glass picture that highlights the Memory Verse.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 75

Grumbles and Grace

MATTHEW 20

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Matthew 20.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

The ballerina danced with *grace*. The sports star *graced* us with his presence. The teacher gave the class a *grace* period to finish the assignment. We use the word *grace* a lot and for a lot of things. The Bible uses the word a lot too, but it expresses a different idea than the examples above. Grace is God's kindness toward those who don't deserve his kindness. God's grace, then, is a generous gift. It is like getting an unexpected present for Christmas after you have been naughty from January to December!

So, let's think of some examples of grace throughout the Biggest Story. When God called a nobody named Abraham to come to the promised land and receive God's blessing, that's grace. When God forgave King David's awful sins, that's grace. When Jesus called the tax collector Matthew to follow him, that's grace.

When the father in Jesus's parable of the prodigal son welcomed his son home, forgave all his sins, and threw a big party to celebrate his son's return, that's grace. That's amazing grace! In today's lesson we learn more about God's amazing grace. It's another parable, one usually called the parable of the laborers (or workers) in the vineyard. By God's grace, let's listen!

TELL THE STORY

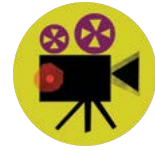
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
God is free to
bless anyone he
chooses in the
ways he knows
are best.

When it comes to seeing the world the way God wants us to, we need to put on grace glasses. This means we stop paying attention to everything in life that doesn't seem fair and start seeing all the good things God gives us every day.

Jesus told the parable of the laborers in the vineyard to teach this point. One morning a man who owned a vineyard needed help harvesting grapes. So he hired some workers. They agreed to work the whole day in order to provide a day's worth of food and shelter for their family (about a hundred dollars). Then a few hours later, the boss walked into town and saw some people who had nothing to do. Without work, their families would suffer. "Do you want some work? I'll pay you whatever is right." Off they went to the vineyard and started to work. The boss hired more workers later in the day—at noon, three, and five. It is strange that he would hire people so late in the day. Maybe his heart was more focused on helping them than on the help they could give him. When all the work was done, those who were hired last were paid first. They got a hundred dollars—enough to provide for their families! Those hired first thought to themselves, "If they got a hundred dollars for working just one hour, we should get a thousand." But no, they received a hundred too. "Wait a minute," they



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Matthew

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grumbled. “We worked all day, and they only worked an hour. It’s not fair that they should get the same as us.” Maybe not, but the boss seemed more focused on making sure everyone got the money they needed to care for their families. So the boss replied, “It is fair. You agreed to work for a hundred dollars. If I decide to give the same to the other workers, why does my generosity upset you?”

Jesus ended the parable saying, “So the last will be first, and the first last” (Matt. 20:16). The point is this: if we put on the grace glasses, we will be glad when people who really don’t deserve grace get it (which includes all of us). The people who think they’ve earned God’s blessing will begrudge when others receive it, but those who know they don’t deserve God’s blessing will rejoice the most.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Do you know what Jesus said right after he told this parable? He said, “Let us now journey to Jerusalem, for when we get there I will be delivered over to the Jewish religious leaders and they will condemn me to death. Then they will deliver me over to the Romans and they will mock me and whip me and crucify me. But, on the third day, I will rise from the dead” (see Matt. 20:18–19). By going to the cross for us, God gave us more than a hundred dollars. He gave us the most precious gift of eternal life through Jesus’s death and resurrection. God gave us grace upon grace. How could we possibly grumble? Instead, we put on grace glasses and rejoice anytime God chooses to bless anyone. Instead of comparing and trying to make sure it’s all even, we are free to trust God. He’s given us the greatest gift of all, so we can trust that he will be good however he blesses—even in itty-bitty things like who gets the best Christmas presents or which sibling got the biggest helping of dessert.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** Do people normally want to be first in line or last? In the story that Jesus told about the workers, who got paid first—those who started last and did the least or those who started first and did the most? What point was Jesus making?

TAKEAWAY: In God’s kingdom the last will be first and the first last.

3

Engage

Memory Verse
So the last will
be first, and
the first last.
MATTHEW 20:16

2. **QUESTION:** Do you think you would have been upset like the first workers that you didn't get paid more for doing more work? Why? How does Jesus say those workers should have responded? Why?

TAKEAWAY: When you're tempted to compare your life to others, remember that God has given you everything he promised.

3. **QUESTION:** Who created you? Whom do you belong to? When you create something, does it get to tell you what you're allowed to do with it? Why not? Since we belong to God, who gets to decide what he can do with us?

TAKEAWAY: God has the right to bless anyone he chooses as he sees fit.

4. **QUESTION:** Did Jesus die on the cross for you because you were so obedient? Does God listen to your prayers because you're so good? Why doesn't it make sense to respond to God's grace by complaining when other people get more than you? How should we respond to God's amazing gift of salvation?

TAKEAWAY: When we remember we don't deserve God's blessing and salvation, we stop complaining and start rejoicing.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Grumble and Grace Tag

Supply List: none

Have children spread out in the room. Choose one child to be "Grumble Blob" and one to be "Grace Blob." Start a game of tag. The Blobs are "It." When a Blob tags someone, the tagged child links arms with the Blob. Continue play until everyone is part of one of the Blobs. Remind children that both grumbling and showing grace can be contagious. Let's be people of grace!

Option 2: Move on Back!

Supply List: masking tape, dice (one per team)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Use the masking tape to mark a finish line.

Divide children into teams of six, and give each team a die. Have teams line up single file at a starting line. On “Go” the first person on each team rolls the die. The whole team must move forward the number of steps shown on the die. The die is then passed to the next person in line, and the team again moves forward the number of steps rolled. If the number one is rolled, the team must return to the starting line and begin again. The first team to cross the finish line wins. Remind children that it can be easy to complain when something in life seems unfair (like when they rolled a one!), but God wants us to be thankful for all he has given us.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Payday Relay

Supply List: dice (one per team), play money, envelopes (one per team)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Place dice across the room from the starting line.

Divide children into teams, give each team an envelope, and line each team up across from a die. Have the first person on each team bear walk to his team’s die and roll it. The number he rolls is his day’s wages. He then gathers wages from the leader (e.g., a 4 earns \$4), runs to add the money to his team’s envelope, and tags the next person to go. After 5 minutes, teams count their money. Surprise them by saying that the team with the least amount of money wins, because in God’s economy the first shall be last.

Option 2: You’re So Grape!

Supply List: packing tape (one roll per team), green or purple balloons, large bag

Before Class: Gather supplies. Inflate balloons and place in a large bag.

Divide children into groups of four. Give each team packing tape. Have teams choose one team member to be the “grape.” Before starting the relay, give teams time to wrap their grape in packing tape, sticky side facing out. On “Go” the



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Matthew

20

first person from each team runs to get a balloon from the bag, brings it back to stick on her team's grape, and tags the next person. After three minutes, the team with the most balloons stuck to their grape wins. Tell children the grapes remind us of the parable Jesus told about workers in a vineyard.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Cluster of Grace

Supply List: paper, purple and green construction paper, glue sticks, crayons

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of an outline of a cluster of grapes with Matthew 20:15 printed underneath (one per child). Cut 1" x 4" purple and green strips of paper. Make a sample craft.

Place copies, strips, and remaining supplies on tables. Have children take a grape paper and color any leaves or stems. Next, children roll the strips of paper into cylinders and glue at the seam. Have them glue these “grapes” to their paper until the cluster is filled. Remind children that in the parable of the vineyard workers, we learn about God’s great generosity.

Option 2: Be Grapeful

Supply List: purple and green paint, paper plates, empty toilet paper rolls (one per child), paintbrushes

Before Class: Gather supplies. Put purple and green paint on paper plates (one color per plate). Make copies of Matthew 20:15 printed at the bottom of a paper (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Give each child an empty toilet paper roll and a verse paper. Place paint and paintbrushes on tables. Have children dip the end of the toilet paper roll in the paint and press onto their verse paper to make a circle. Have children form a cluster of grapes by continuing to make circles that touch one another, then

paint a stem and leaves using the paintbrush and green paint. Remind children that in the parable of the vineyard workers, we learn about God's great generosity.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Spread Grace

Supply List: construction paper, paper plates, washable paint (green, black, and white), paper towels

Before Class: Gather supplies. Place green, black, and white washable paint on paper plates (one plate per child). Make a sample craft.

Give each child a piece of construction paper, a plate with paint, and a paper towel. Have children dip a finger in the black paint and make a large dot that will be the center of a dandelion. Children should then dip a finger in the green paint to make a stem coming down from the black dot. Next, they dip a finger in the white paint and make lines coming out from the black dot like a firework, then make dots to the right of the dandelion to look like seeds blowing. Have them use paint on their fingers to write "Spread Grace" under the flower. Encourage children to wipe their fingers on the paper towel between new colors.

Option 2: "First Shall Be Last" Trophy

Supply List: paper, tape, glue, scissors, trophy template

Before Class: Gather supplies. Print papers that say "First shall be last" (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Place trophy copies and remaining supplies on tables. Have children use the provided supplies to design a trophy that displays the "First shall be last" paper. Remind children that Jesus used a parable to teach us that the first shall be last.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



Story

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Matthew

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