

LESSON 4

Cain & Abel

GENESIS 4:1-16



BIBLE TRUTH

OUR ACTIONS REVEAL THE TRUE MOTIVATION OF OUR HEARTS

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 1. OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
 Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
- 2. BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
 Read Genesis 4:1–16 from the Scriptures or read story 4, “Cain and Abel,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
 The King’s Seal
SUPPLIES:
 ✓ bowl of freshly popped popcorn
 ✓ a gold star or seal
- 4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
- 5. OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
 Mirror of Grace
SUPPLIES:
 ✓ pen and paper for each child
- 6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
- 7. ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
 Cain’s Mark
SUPPLIES:
 ✓ paper
 ✓ pencils
 ✓ crayons
- 8. CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
- 9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
 Guilty of Murder
SUPPLIES:
 ✓ small star stickers (enough for one per child)

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

True worship puts God first—Abel made an offering to God from sheep he personally owned, the firstborn sheep, the very best he had. That was definitely a sacrifice. But what Cain gave does not seem to have been very special, just “the fruit of the ground.” Maybe he even found it growing wild! Cain’s offering was not a celebration of God’s goodness because Cain was not sacrificing the first or the best of what he owned.

When God approved of Abel’s offering, but not Cain’s, Cain got angry. If Cain really cared about God being glorified, then instead of being angry he would have been sad that God was not pleased. This shows Cain was more concerned with his own glory than with God’s.

Unrepentant sin will bring destruction—In Genesis 4:6–7, God gave Cain a warning that was kind and loving but also very serious. God told Cain that if he did not turn from his sinful anger it would bring destruction. But Cain’s anger burned so hot that not even God’s warning could stop him from killing his brother.

Galatians 6:7–8 tells us that we reap what we sow. Here we see how true this is. Because of Cain’s anger, Abel is dead and Cain is cursed by God. Unrepentant sin brings destruction.

God’s grace extends even to the disobedient—God could have judged Cain as soon as his offering was found to be unacceptable. Instead, God allowed Cain to live. Then, when Cain became angry, God could have judged Cain’s anger right away. Instead, God warned him for his good. And when Cain rebelled against God’s warning and killed his brother and was driven away, God could have abandoned him immediately. Instead God placed a mark on Cain for protection.

So we see that God’s grace extends even to those who are disobedient. Psalm 103:10 describes God as not treating us as our sins deserve or repaying us according to our sinfulness.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Firstfruits

Abel offered the fattest of the firstborn in his offering to the Lord. When we offer our firstfruits to God, we are communicating to God that we recognize that he is more important than any of our other needs. It is about giving God what is best in our lives—not what is left over. Giving

God the firstfruits shows that God is important enough to us that we give him, not ourselves, what is best.

God repeatedly asked Israel for the firstfruits of their labor. Firstfruits touch the heart of God. One of the reasons is that in offering the first and best to God, we are following his example.

Colossians 1:15 tells us that Christ is the firstborn over all creation. Colossians 1:18 tells us he is the firstborn from the dead. Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection. So, when we give to God the first and the best, we are celebrating the truth that he offered up his first and his best.

Abel's sacrifice was pleasing to God not because of Abel's work but because it reminded God of the firstborn Son he would one day offer to us.

WHERE IS JESUS? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Hebrews 12:22–24.

Abel was the first man ever to be killed. Jesus was the most important man ever to be killed. They were killed for the same basic reason—because they were favored by God, and others not favored by God hated them for it. So in some ways the deaths of Abel and Jesus are very similar.

But Abel's blood could not bring forgiveness of sin. Only the shed blood of Jesus, both God and man, could do that. This is why "the sprinkled blood [of Jesus] speaks a better word than the blood of Abel." The sacrifice of Jesus was perfect.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW

5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY

10 MIN

Read Genesis 4:1–16 from the Scriptures or read story 4, “Cain and Abel,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

The King’s Seal

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ bowl of freshly popped popcorn
- ✓ a gold star or seal

Place the popcorn out on a table in front of the class and let its fragrance fill the room. If anyone in the class asks if they can have popcorn tell them, “No, it is not for you.” While this is happening, explain to the class that you have a very special gold seal. Tell them that the person who wears the seal will have special authority. Then, walk around the room and pick someone to wear the seal. (Try to pick a person who will not take advantage of the situation as an opportunity to draw attention to herself.)

Explain to the class that the person selected is the only person who is allowed to take a handful of popcorn. This person can get up whenever they want as long as they are wearing the special seal. Offer the popcorn to the selected person, and welcome them to come and take as much as they want. They may choose to give it away, but they may only take one handful at a time.

The class at this point should get the picture that the person with the seal can go up and get them some popcorn. The class will probably start overwhelming the selected person with requests for popcorn. Let the activity play out and encourage the person to pass out the popcorn. When everyone has had popcorn and the bowl is empty (this should take all of five minutes), ask the children the following questions:

- **Why was the person with the seal so special?**
(She was the only one allowed to go to the popcorn bowl for popcorn.)
- **What did they do to deserve the seal?**
(nothing)
- **What is it called when a person gets something as a free gift that they did not work for?**
(We say it was given out of grace.)

- How is the seal like the story of Cain after he killed his brother?
(God placed a mark upon Cain's forehead so that no one would kill him when they saw him.)
- How was the mark on Cain's forehead a sign of God's grace?
(Cain did not deserve to be protected; in fact, he deserved to be punished for what he had done. God demonstrated his grace to Cain. In fact, Romans 5:8 tells us that while we were still sinners and enemies of God, God showed us his grace by sending his Son to die for us.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

Mirror of Grace

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pen and paper for each child

Have the children write two questions on their paper with space enough under them to write a list. The headers should read, "How am I like Abel?" and "How am I like Cain?" Encourage them to think of ways that they are like each of Adam's sons.

You might spark their thinking by asking, "What was Abel like?" "Do you worship the Lord?" "Who was jealous?" "Are you ever jealous?" etc.

When the kids have had an opportunity to do the exercise, ask them questions about what they have written. Explain to them that we can all identify with the sin of Cain, the grace of God to Cain, and that we should all want to be like Abel, giving God a pleasing sacrifice.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Cain's Mark

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ pencils
- ✓ crayons

Have the children draw a picture of Cain and Abel and their two sacrifices. Give the kids some help, suggesting that they draw a large fire for Abel and draw a smaller fire for Cain. Abel's hands can be raised signifying his worship while Cain could have a frown on his face signifying his displeasure.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Guilty of Murder

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ small star stickers (enough for one per child)

Ask the class to raise their hands if there is anyone present who is guilty of the sin of murder (killing someone). Read Matthew 5:21–22 and then explain that Jesus said we are guilty of the sin of murder when we get angry at a person. Now ask the class again for a show of hands from everyone who thinks they are guilty of murder (anger).

Tell them that God told Cain he would become a wanderer and whenever he tried to plant crops they would no longer grow for him. That made Cain afraid that he would be killed.

Now pass a sticker around to each member of the class and say, "Even though Cain was sinful and deserved to die for what he did, God put a mark on Cain's forehead to show that he was under God's protection and that anyone who killed Cain would be punished seven times more for what they did. Tell the class to put the sticker on their forehead to remind them that God gave grace to Cain even when he did not deserve it.

Then ask the class if we, who are sinners, are better than Cain. Explain that, although it is worse to actually kill someone than to get angry, it only takes one sin (and the sin of anger is

enough) for us to be guilty before God and deserve to be punished. But, instead of punishing us, God sent his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins so that if we believe in him, we can be forgiven.

Now tell the children to remove the sticker from their forehead and place it on their heart. Tell the children that for the rest of the day that sticker should remind them that Jesus died on the cross to save them. When God saves us, he changes our sinful heart of stone into a soft heart of flesh. God also gives us a “mark”—his Holy Spirit to live inside us. That is a better mark than Cain received.