

GOD'S WORD IS LIVING!

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: HEBREWS 4:12-16



The Word of God is active.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

The living Word of God judges our hearts. It is true that the words of Scripture never change and that no one can add or take away from them. But that does not mean they do not speak today. The Word of God is active. When we hear it, something wonderful happens. The Word of God probes us. Its truth judges our hearts. Even our attitudes, hidden in the depths within, are uncovered.

Nothing is hidden from God's sight. His Word reveals what is hidden to us or to those around us, but nothing is hidden from God. We might fool ourselves into thinking a sin we committed is hidden, but God knows everything we have done. His word will expose it. If a person has stolen something and hidden it away, he might think he has gotten away with his crime. But every time he reads the words "Thou shall not steal," he becomes freshly aware that God knows he is a thief. One day we will all need to give an account before God for all we have done.

Jesus sympathizes with our struggles. We can run to the throne of grace in our time of need because we have a faithful high priest. Jesus was tempted like us in every way, so He can sympathize with our struggles. Unlike us, He did not sin. His sinlessness made him the perfect sacrifice for our sin. Now, in heaven, the sacrificial lamb of God stands as our high priest before God. His sacrifice pleads for us before the throne of God night and day forever. Later, in Hebrews 7:23-25, we read:

"Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself."

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Immediately following the description of the probing work of God's Word, the writer of Hebrews turns our attention to Jesus our great high priest. This is not an accidental transition. Verse 14 begins with "therefore," connecting it to the verses before. In other words, God's Word exposes our sin, making us aware of our need for forgiveness. Therefore we should run to the throne of grace.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Psalm 45:6,7

Connecting the passage to Christ:

The writer of Hebrews quotes this passage in Hebrews 1:8,9 and attributes it to the Son of God. Jesus is God, whose throne will last for ever and ever. Jesus died on the cross so that we sinners might receive the righteousness of God. Because of Christ's humility, taking on human flesh and offering Himself up as a sacrifice, God exalted Him above all.

Questions for reflection:

- What do we learn about Jesus from the writer of this passage from Hebrews? (We learn that Jesus is God. He tells us that when the writer of Psalm 45 says, "Your throne, O God," he is referring to Jesus.)
- In what way did Jesus extend righteousness to His entire kingdom? (By dying on the cross, Jesus extended righteousness to the many sinners whom He died for.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

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.

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ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

THE WONDER OF GRACE**Supplies:**

large bowl of individually wrapped chocolate candy

Tell the children that you are opening up your candy store for them to come up and get some candy. Before you give them a piece of candy, they must tell you something they did this week that impresses you. If they tell you something that they did this week which impresses you then you will grant a piece of candy. Have five volunteers who want to give it a try line up. No matter what they say, do not let yourself be impressed. Refuse them all the candy.

After refusing them all, ask the rest of the class if they feel eager or confident to approach you for a piece of candy. (They will say no because nothing can impress you.)

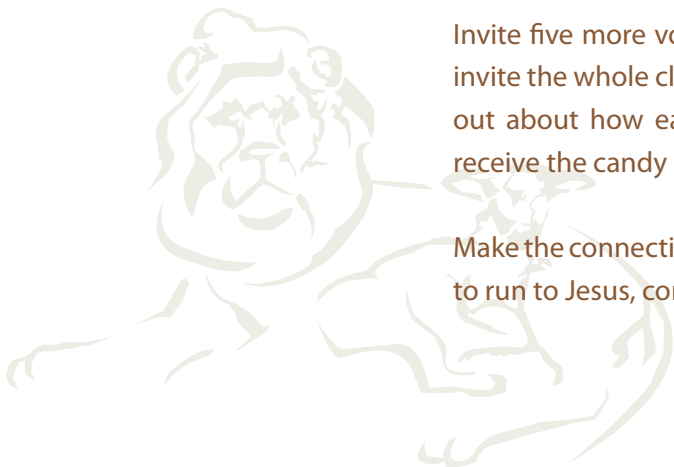
Then read through Hebrews 4:14- 16 and ask them what is different about the way we can approach Jesus in contrast to the way kids were reluctant to approach you.

The answer is that Jesus is willing to give all sinners forgiveness through His blood shed on the cross.

Then have the children line up again only this time say that if they come telling you they have nothing impressive to share, but are looking only for grace they might be more successful.

Invite five more volunteers to come forward. Give each one generously and then invite the whole class up to get in line. Then have them all sit down and draw them out about how eager they were to come forward when they knew they could receive the candy by grace.

Make the connections to the passage of scripture again and encourage the students to run to Jesus, confess their sin, and place their hope and trust in Him.



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ROTTEN TO THE CORE

Supplies:

- three apples two with mild bruises and one in good shape that should be prepared as described below
- large knife
- whole figs

Use this exercise to illustrate the sin in our hearts that the word of God is able to expose.

Prior to class, core an apple from the bottom but do not pierce the top. Then hollow out the cavity as large as you can without making the opening in the bottom larger. Then stuff the cavity with dates. The apple should look normal from the outside when it stands upright.

Read Hebrews 4:12-13 to your class. Ask them to describe what they think it means. Correct and lead them and then move to your illustration.

Tell them that you can't always tell if an apple is good to eat until you cut into it. The knife can reveal what is hidden inside. Ask them if they ever cut into a rotten apple.

Cut open one of the apples and let them see inside. If there are any imperfections around the circumference they will show up.

Cut open the second good apple and let them see inside again.

Finally cut open the cored apple and watch their expressions go wild!

Ask them the following questions:

How many of you expected to see such a bad apple? (Draw them out)

How did the apple look on the outside? (It looked pretty good.)

How is this like a person? (A person can look good on the outside but be filled with sin on the inside.)

How does the Word of God reveal our hearts? (The Word convicts us and makes us feel guilty for our sin so that we realize we must repent.)



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A LITTLE UN-MAGIC

Supplies:

- white board
- deck of cards
- clear plastic wrap for a blindfold

Use this exercise as a humorous way to introduce the concept that nothing is hidden from God's sight.

Prior to class, make sure that the plastic wrap you use for a blindfold can be seen through. You are not going to be able to bunch it up in multiple layers. If you practice you can get good at taking a length of plastic wrap and placing it across your eye so that you can still see through it.

Ask the class how many of them like a good magic trick?

Read Hebrews 4:13 to them and tell them that you have a trick that is going to demonstrate this.

Ask for 4 volunteers. Give them the deck of cards and ask them to inspect the cards and then shuffle them.

Then have each of the students select a card and look at it. Draw a large cross on the white board dividing it into quarters. Tell the first two volunteers to go up to the top two quarters of the board and write the number and symbol of their card in very large letters for the whole class to see while you are not looking.

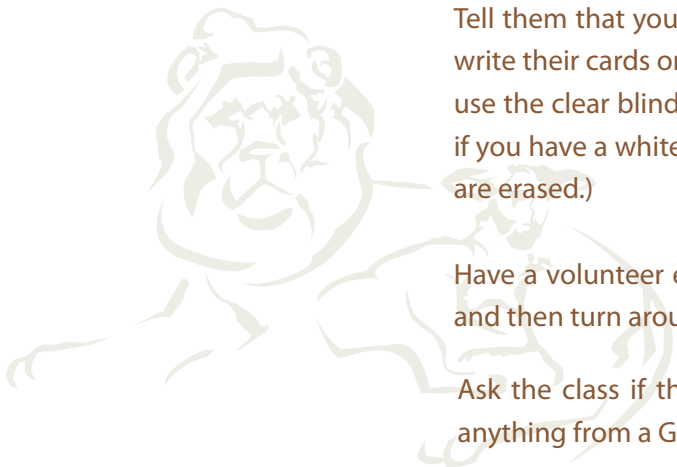
When they have finished, have them take a seat and without looking, explain to the class that you are going to blindfold yourself and then tell them the cards. Take out the clear plastic wrap, make your blindfold and then turn and read the names of the cards to them.

They will object to your method.

Tell them that you will do it differently this time. Have the second two volunteers write their cards on the lower two squares. Then sit down. Tell the class rather than use the clear blind fold you are going to have them erase the board. (Only do this if you have a white board. The markers always leave an impression even after they are erased.)

Have a volunteer erase the board on your command. Count backwards from five and then turn around and read the residue revealing the names of the cards.

Ask the class if they can tell you the point of your trick? That is, you can't hide anything from a God who sees everything.



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PRAYER

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

IN CLASS PROJECT

Draw a picture of a sword through a heart and write the words, "The Word of God judges the heart."

FOR THE OLDER GRADES

REVIEWING THE LIFE OF JUDAS

Supplies:

Paper and pencil

Read Hebrews 4:12-13 and talk about it as a class. Ask the students if they have ever experienced a time when something they read in the Bible cut them to their heart with conviction. Have willing students share their stories.

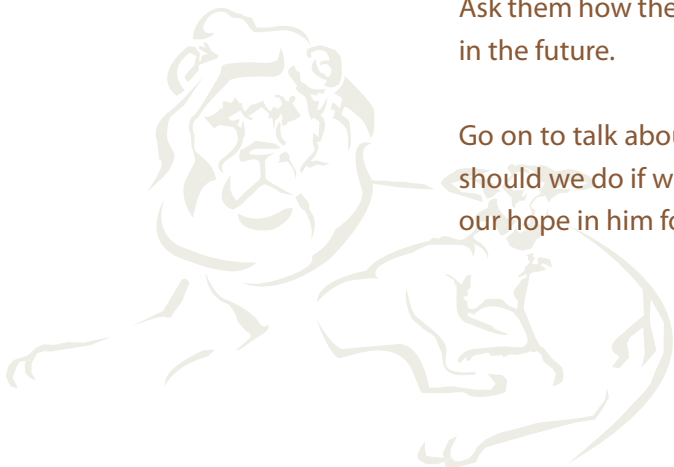
Then pass out the paper and pencils and ask them to look up Matthew 26:21-25 and then write an answer to this question.

How did Jesus demonstrate Hebrews 4:12-13 in the life of Judas?

Give the children some time to look at the scripture and record their answers and then discuss it as a class.

Ask them how the story affected them and if they would be more likely to avoid sin in the future.

Go on to talk about Hebrews 4:14-16. Share the gospel and then ask them, "What should we do if we do sin?" The answer of course is to confess it to Jesus and place our hope in him for our forgiveness and salvation.



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

High Priest – The High priest was selected from among men to represent men to God (see Hebrews 5:1). The high priest kept his office for life and was the leader of the priests. He was set apart from the other priests as he had the privilege of entering into the most holy place on the Day of Atonement to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. Jesus of course offered himself as the final sacrifice for sin. He remains on duty forever pleading our case before God our Father.

