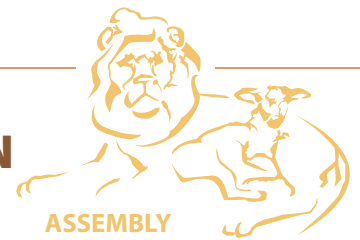


CHOSEN BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: EPHESIANS 1:1-14



The following are some ideas for creative ways that you can present this material.

LESSON IDEAS**CHOSEN BY GOD****Supplies**

- a bag of M&M candies, separated by color and placed in baggies

In class, lay out all the candies of one color on a table (have the logo facing down). Have the class form a line and choose one of the candies. If you start to run out of one color switch to a new color. The object is that none of the children choose a particular M&M based on any quality of that particular candy. When everyone is has taken a candy, have them go through the exercise once more. Then ask them the following questions:

- Why did you pick the M&M that you did? (They will likely answer, "I don't know, I just picked one.")
- Did you pick the candy because it did something or just because you like candy? (They will likely answer, "Just because I like candy.")

Help them see that God does not choose us based on anything we did but because He loves us. We cannot earn God's favor. The passage in Ephesians says, "We were chosen in Him." That is, it is because Jesus took the penalty for our sins so that we can be pleasing to God. It was God's love for us that gave us Jesus. God's love for us is not based on anything we did.

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ADOPTION INTO A FAMILY

Ask a family who has recently adopted a foreign child to come to your class with their adopted child and tell the story to your class about the adoption. They should include in the story a brief explanation of what it means to be adopted. (Make sure you preview the story to make sure the content of the testimony would be appropriate for the children in your class.)

Read Ephesians 1:1-5 again and point out to the children that it tells us that Christians are adopted by God into His family. You can explain to them that sin separates us but God, in His love, forgives our sins through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and then God grants us adoption as His sons and daughters. Then go on to explain that God even gives us a share in His inheritance; heaven and all of its glory.

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.

Ephesians 5:7 tells us that, "In him (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace."

This is the heart of the Gospel. It is Christ's shed blood on the cross which is the foundation for the forgiveness of the sins for all those who "hear the word of truth of the Gospel and believe in him" (Ephesians 5:13).

Paul's introduction to the book of Ephesians is a repetition of the basic facts of the Gospel. To this he adds that God's plan for us individually was known in the mind of God even before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 5:4).

