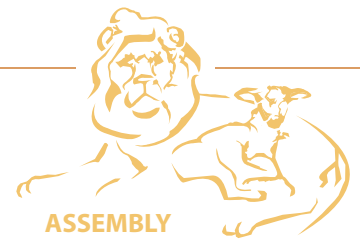


THE HEART'S DESIRES

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JAMES 4:1-3



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

LESSON IDEAS

JUST LIKE A SPONGE

Supplies

- a sponge cut into the shape of a heart
- grape sugar-free drink mix (sugar-free drink mix does not get sticky and is easier to clean up)
- a scoop of Oxy-Clean or other powdered stain remover
- two clear bowls

Mix one half full with the drink mix. Mix some of the stain remover in the other with warm water.

Explain to the children that a heart is like a sponge. When people don't do what we want they squeeze our hearts and whatever we have filled our hearts with will come out.

Tell them that the purple water represents anger. Take the sponge and put it in the solution and then ask the children to tell you what will happen when you squeeze it. They should say that purple water or anger will come out. Tell them if anger fills our hearts when people squeeze our hearts anger will come out. (Sometimes we say someone made us mad but really the "mad" or sin of anger is already in our hearts.) Tell them that Jesus changes our hearts (as you say this, place the squeezed out sponge into the stain remover which should neutralize the dye in the drink mix.) Tell them Jesus cleans our sinful hearts by His spirit so that if someone sins against us anger no longer comes out. (Squeeze the sponge and clear water should come out.)

Tell them if we fill our hearts with desires for God, kindness will come out when people sin against us. If we fill our hearts with desires for things, anger will come out when people sin against us.

After the demonstration is complete ask them what makes them get angry. Help the children see that ultimately they had a desire for something and they did not get what they wanted.

THE HEART'S DESIRES

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JAMES 4:1-3

YOU MAKE ME UPSET

Supplies

one puppet

The purpose of this puppet performance is to help the children see that anger comes out of our hearts and can't be blamed on someone else.

- Puppet: (Talking to himself) I can't believe it.
- Teacher: Hi Puppet. Is everything okay?
- Puppet: I'm just a little upset that's all.
- Teacher: What happened?
- Puppet: Well, I was playing with the blocks in class today and I wanted the blue blocks and John didn't want to give them to me. He makes me so mad when he does that.
- Teacher: What do you mean "he makes you mad"? How did he make you mad?
- Puppet: I already told you. He wouldn't share the blue blocks!
- Teacher: Why did that have to make you angry? You can't blame him for your anger you know.
- Puppet: Well, if he would have given me the blue blocks I wouldn't have become angry. So he did make me angry.
- Teacher: Well Puppet, John didn't put anger inside of your heart, it was already there. You see, when you didn't get what you wanted, the blue blocks, you got angry yourself. That is what the Bible tells us starts our quarrels and fights. We want something but we do not get it."
- Puppet: You mean anger was already inside of me?
- Teacher: Well, there is sin in your heart that loved the blue blocks more than honoring God by giving up the blue blocks to John. And, when you didn't get what you wanted, you decided to be angry against John who was keeping you from what you wanted.
- Puppet: You mean, when we become angry or upset it is because we are not getting something that we want too much?
- Teacher: Yes, that is true.
- Puppet: Well, I guess I better ask John to forgive me for loving the blue blocks more than I love him.



THE HEART'S DESIRES

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JAMES 4:1-3

When the puppet show is completed ask the children the following questions:

- Why did the puppet become angry? (He did not get what he wanted.)
- Do you ever get angry if you don't get something that you want? (Children will answer yes. Try and help them remember what they get angry about. Help them understand that just like the puppet no one makes them angry. People just reveal their anger.)
- What should the puppet do better next time? (The puppet should not love blocks more than God or others.)

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.

In James 4:4, James charges the people with this rebuke, "You adulterous people." This is not because the people were struggling in the area of physical adultery but because they had not loved God but turned to other loves. This is such a serious sin because God has demonstrated his love in the most profound way by sending his own Son to take the punishment for our sins. When we covet something in the world, we are rejecting God's love and the relationship he extends to us in Christ. God wants our pleasures, our desires, and our love to be focused upon Christ.

