

CHOSEN BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: EPHESIANS 1:1-14



The STORY

Read Paul's introduction to his letter to the Ephesians in Ephesians 1:1-14. This certainly will be a difficult passage for younger children to comprehend. Read it anyway and then take time to explain some of the more basic concepts that it teaches. Feel free to explain them in your own words as you go.

Please note: *The discussion questions in the following sections are written to serve as a guide in teaching our youngest children. Three to six year olds are not going to be able to answer these questions like their older brothers and sisters. Please refer to the God's Story Preschool Curriculum Outline for additional ideas.*

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion.

- What do you think it means when it says that God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world? (It means that first, God knew us even before we were born, that He loved us even before we did anything good or bad, and He chose to save some and grant them eternal life.)
- What does it mean when it says we have redemption through His blood? (We are all sinners who deserve the punishment of death. Jesus, who had no sin, became sin for us so that He might take the penalty for sin we deserved. To redeem means to buy back with a certain payment. Jesus redeemed us through offering His blood. His death was a sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sin.)
- It tells us that God paid the penalty for our sin according to the riches of His grace. What does grace mean? (Grace means that it was free and had nothing to do with what we have done.)

CRAFT QUESTIONS

Coloring sheets have been provided that exemplify today's lesson: a multitude of faces flying among the stars. Engage the children by asking:

- Who are the people drawn in among the stars? (They are all God's adopted children.)
- Why do you think they are drawn among the stars? (God created people and God created the stars. Genesis 22:17 tells us that Abraham's children would be just like the stars, too many to count.)
- What does it tell us about God that He knew each of us even before we were born? (God is all-knowing and all-powerful.)

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SNACK QUESTIONS

While the children are eating the snack, engage the children by asking:

- Read verse 13 again to the children and ask them what the Ephesians heard that helped them believe. (They heard the word of truth, the Gospel of their salvation.)
- What is the word of truth, the Gospel of their salvation? (The Gospel is the word of truth: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was crucified for our sins, died and was buried but rose again on the third day. Those who place their trust in Jesus can be saved and live in heaven with Him forever.)
- Who does God give us as a guarantee when we become Christians? (We are sealed with the Holy Spirit who comes to live with us when we become Christians. Feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit is one way we know we have Christ in our hearts.)

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).

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.