

GOD IS FAITHFUL

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE GOOD FAITHFUL PROMISE FORGIVE CALL

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Hosea 1:1-2; 3:1-2; 4:1-19; 6:1-3; 11:1-4; 14:1-2

MEMORY VERSE

“You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you” (Psalm 86:5, NIV*).

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To teach children that God is faithful in all his promises because he loves us even when we are not faithful to Him.

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

To better understand the book of Hosea, we need to recognize the circumstances of the times.

Politically and economically, the nations of Israel and Judah were living in a time of prosperity. Both had very stable kingdoms and predicted an optimistic future.

Nevertheless, Israel found itself in a time of moral and spiritual failure. They had combined their worship of Baal with their worship of the true God. Their worship for the pagan idol (a Canaanite god) diluted their worship for Jehovah/ Yahweh.

God used this moment to reveal himself. This is the story of Hosea. Through him and his experience, we can see signs of God’s love for humankind. This theology of love paves the way for the theology of love found in the New Testament.

Hosea is the first book of the minor prophets. The message to Israel, the pronounced vengeance of God on a weak and adulterous people, is tempered by the promise of God’s mercy. This prophet denounces Israel’s idolatry, predicts God’s justice through captivity and deportation, and proclaims the end of captivity. He also talks about the total corruption of the nation.

God instructs Hosea to give Israel a modern example of love and faithfulness. He obeys the command and marries an adulterous woman.

As a future demonstration of love and faithfulness, God instructs Hosea to buy back his wife again (3:1-2). Obeying God would require not only a loving heart, but also a loving act. Hosea paid the price of a slave to get his wife back - this was redeeming love.

Hosea sets aside his personal tragedy to deal with the implications that this had for Israel as a nation (4:1-19). This prophet could see the fatal nature of the people's corruption, which is why he tried to persuade them to repent and be saved. He also announced that they would not escape their terrible fate.

The theme of the love of a father for his child is presented through the love of a husband for his wife. Hosea highlights God's love as a father calling his son (Israel), who had distanced themselves in favor of a false god, inviting them to come back to Him (11:1-4).

Hosea 6:1-3 and 14:1-2 - These two passages are a call to repentance. If the son who left returned repentant, God would forgive his sins and restore his position. This book has profound implications for our personal relationship with God. It challenges us to confront our own false gods and think of the judgment God will have for us for not fulfilling the pacts made on Mount Sinai and at Calvary through the blood of Christ.

Despite having received the incomparable love of God through his son Jesus Christ, we are often unfaithful disciples. We find it difficult to love those who hurt us. God is faithful and treats us better than we deserve.

ADAPTATION

What do your children know about "faithfulness?" Probably not very much. Defining this word is a key aspect of this lesson. Why is God faithful to humans? Because he loves them unconditionally and without merit. His love is so deep and strong that no one can understand it.

Help your children understand that God's love is constant, faithful, and unending. He treats us better than we deserve.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Ask the group: "What do you know about faithfulness?" (listen to their responses) Then tell them: "Faithfulness is one of the qualities of God that we need to learn about, even if we may already have some idea of it. Some of us may have experienced it in some ways in our friendships."

TEACH THE LESSON

Carefully study Hosea 1:1-2; 3:1-2; 4:1-19; 6:1-3; 11:1-4; 14:1-2 before the session. Be prepared to tell the story in your own words.

Be sure that the children have fully understood the concept of faithfulness. It is probable that they have heard this word in different contexts; for example, it is sometimes used to talk about sound (high fidelity). Other times it is used to talk about spouses if both are faithful. Sometimes it is used to define interpersonal relationships, i.e. whether or not friends are faithful.

Be prepared to explain this quality, because just as holiness is born in God, he is the perfect and grand example of faithfulness in all of its expressions.

Tell the group that A Dictionary of the Bible and Christian Doctrine in Everyday English (Eby, Lyons, Truesdale: 2004) explains:

"Faithfulness is the quality of a person who is faithful. God is always faithful. The faithfulness of God is the reason people can trust him...A faithful person is loyal. Such people keep their promises. They can always be depended upon to do what they say they will do. The Bible teaches that God is faithful to his people. It also teaches that his people should be faithful to him and to others."

CONNECT THE LESSON

What do these people deserve?

Print Student Activity Sheet #138-A and #138-B back to back. Your group will also need construction paper and markers. Before class, write "faithful" on a piece of construction paper. On the back, write "God always fulfills his promises, even when people do not fulfill their promises to him."

For the first activity, allow children to describe what they see in each picture. Then allow them to say what the children in each picture deserve.

Ask, "Do they deserve to be punished?" The children may have different options about this. Help them come up with different possibilities for each situation. For example, the toy plane could have been broken on purpose. Talk about the last picture (Jesus forgiving Peter after Peter denied Him three times).

Ask, "Did Peter deserve God's forgiveness?" (No, Jesus forgave him because he loved him and Peter had repented for what he had done.)

Ask, "If God is holy and does not accept sin, why does not he destroy people who sin?" (Allow them to respond.) Then show them the piece of paper with the word "faithful" written on it. Give the answer, "Because God is holy, he is also faithful." Say, "God always fulfills his promises, even if we are unfaithful." Guide the children in completing the SAS #138-B.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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For this lesson make train cars like you did for the previous lesson, only smaller. Write the memory verse on each one and give one to each child. Then, using the larger train that you placed on the wall for the last lesson, repeat the verse together.

WRAP-UP

Pray

For the final prayer, form a circle and join hands. Pray first and have your children repeat your prayer.

Encourage

Encourage the children to tell other people today's story.

Invite

Before you end the session, remind children do not forget to attend the next session. Challenge them to bring friends.