

A VICTIM OF EVIL

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

BELIEVE POWER DEMON EVIL SIN LIFE DECAPOLIS LEGION

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 8:26-39

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help your students understand that Jesus' power is greater than any kind of evil, and that they can count on him when they're confronted by sin and evil

MEMORY VERSE

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (John 3:16-18, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Your students live in a world that often denies the power of God, and many even doubt his existence. It is also common to see the power of evil accepted and glorified. We have every reason to worry about the influence of evil in the lives of our students.

Although preadolescents are maturing, most do not see the consequences of sin and evil yet. Their youthful curiosity, combined with the pressure of friends, can influence them to experience new sensations, thrills, and pleasures. Preadolescents need Christian parents, teachers, and models to help them recognize the dangers that surround them to be overcomers and be a positive influence.

They do not need to live in fear. Jesus' power is stronger than any kind of evil. Satan and his demons were defeated because Jesus died on the cross and was raised to life. Even though the enemy works hard to deceive and do wrong, God gives us his grace and his power to overcome Satan.

The key to defeating sin and evil is the Christian's relationship with the Lord. This makes all the difference between success and

spiritual failure. The closer you are to Christ, the stronger you'll be. Encourage your group to strengthen their personal relationships with the Lord so that they can overcome evil and be a positive influence to those around them.

Personal thoughts for you, the teacher:

What kind of evil do you see influencing students?

How can you pray for them this week?

What weapons do you use to overcome evil in your life?

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Horror stories are exciting in some cultures. Many people enjoy and have fun listening to stories that scare them.

In the Gentile region of the Gadarenes, there were probably many fables of terror that made people tremble or made them look over their shoulders for something evil to be after them. Living very close to there was a man possessed by demons.

The region of the Gadarenes was near the Sea of Galilee. In that area there were 10 independent Greek cities, known as Decapolis. One of the important cities was Gadara; the demoniac lived nearby. The condition of the man is one of the most clear examples of what Satan and evil promises and offers.

Although sin promises freedom, sin gives chains.

Sin says: "You're in control. You are the one who determines how you will live." But the person possessed by Satan had no power, not even to protect himself.

Sin promises: "You are one of the group." But the man in the story lived alone, in "the deserts" (Luke 8:29).

Sin says: "You are the center of attention and you'll have fun." But Legion lived in the graves, the place of the dead.

Sin says: "You are important." But the given name of the demonized man was no longer remembered. He was so dominated by demons that everyone knew him by the nickname "Legion."

When Jesus spoke to the possessed man, the demons replied: "Do not mess with us, leave us alone." Ironically the demons invoked the power of God and cried out for mercy. They knew that the power of God is greater than that of Satan.

But why did Jesus not destroy or imprison the demons? In other words, why did God allow evil to continue? The answer is that it was not yet the time indicated (Matthew 8:29) for the destruction of the evil one. The day will come. In the meantime, God works to overcome the evil of our lives, until finally he judges and destroys it completely.

The people were "scared" and asked Jesus to leave (v. 34). They had trembled in the fear when the demons that possessed the man. Now they were overcome with another fear after witnessing the miracle through the power of God.

In most cases, Jesus told the people that he healed not to say anything about his miracles. But this time, he instructed the man to go to his house and tell them what had happened to him. There are many reasons for this.

First, this would extend Jesus' ministry to the Gentiles.

Second, although the Gentiles also waited for the Messiah, they did not try to force Jesus to assume political power as the Jews did.

Finally, the dramatic change in the life of the man would be the positive proof that something miraculous had happened. Mark 5:20 says that the man spread the news throughout Decapolis.

We must fear evil, enough to stay away from it. But we must also remember that the power of Jesus is greater than the power of darkness. The Lord has the power and authority to change our lives, to sweep away everything old, and bring in everything new. What power is your whole life based on?

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What is evil?

What do we mean when something is bad? Give students the first activity sheet for this session, Student Activity Sheet #399-A (What is Bad?). Ask them to circle everything that is "bad." Say: "Our world is full of evil and evil influences. Many times we cannot decide if something is bad. Draw a circle around the things that you think are bad."

When they have finished, ask: "Why do you think those things are bad? Why did you choose them? Evil is powerful and scary. We cannot control it. But we do not need to live in fear. Today we'll see why."

TEACH THE LESSON

Read this story in Luke 8:26-39. Then discuss the following questions:

How did evil affect the man known as Legion? (Evil consumed him. He was totally out of control. He lived alone. He was a danger to himself and others. Possibly at one time he had everything, but now, nothing.)

Who was more powerful than Legion? (Jesus)

Describe how this man's life changed after his encounter with Jesus. Help the students think about all the positive things the man now had:

A relationship with God, peace, acting on his own will, freedom from evil

A house, clean clothes and food, a job, etc.

He was interacting with other people.

He had a family that loved him and was not afraid of him.

Friends, he was part of the community

Ask a student to read Mark 5:18-20. Explain that Decapolis was like a metropolitan area full of Gentiles who knew very little about the true God. What effect would the healthy man have caused by going to this area and telling everyone about the power of Jesus?

The great truth that the Word of God leaves us is this: "Jesus has power over any kind of evil." Incredible but real!

Crazy pigs

As you begin the story, show students where this story is in the Bible. Ask the students to read the story from Student Activity Sheet #399-B and #399-C.

Assign the parts of Scott and Legion. The rest of the students will be the audience that will watch the news. If you want, prepare a costume for Legion and a microphone for Scott.

After the drama discuss the following questions:

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CONNECT THE LESSON

Tell the students: "We live in a world that often denies the power of God, and many even doubt his existence. It is also common to see the power of evil accepted and glorified. We have reason to worry about the influence of evil in our lives."

Ask the group: "What are some reasons people your age do not see the consequences of sin and evil yet?" (allow several responses) Then say: "Sometimes youthful curiosity, combined with the pressure of friends, can influence us to experience new sensations, thrills, and pleasures. We need Christian parents, teachers, and models to help us recognize the dangers that surround us in order for us to be overcomers and a positive influence."

Ask: "Why were the people in this story fearful? (allow several responses) Then say: "Jesus' power is stronger than any kind of evil. Satan and his demons were defeated because Jesus died on the cross and was raised to life. Even though the enemy works hard to deceive and do wrong, God gives us his grace and his power to overcome Satan. The key to defeating sin and evil is the Christian's relationship with the Lord. This makes all the difference between success and spiritual failure. The closer we are to Christ, the stronger we'll be."

Encourage your group to strengthen their personal relationships with the Lord so that they can overcome evil and be a positive influence to those around them. Ask:

"What kind of evil is influencing our students today?" (allow responses)

"How can you pray for each other this week?" (allow responses)

"What weapons can we use to overcome evil in our life?" (allow responses)

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #399-D (Overcoming Evil), and ask the students to complete the crossword puzzle.

Across

2. Name of the possessed man. (Luke 8:30) (Legion)

5. Creatures that ran into the lake and drowned. (Luke 8:32) (Pigs)

7. ____ every kind of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:22) (Reject)

8. Who is more powerful than demons? (Luke 8:28) (Jesus)

9. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have ____ the world. (John 16:33) (Defeated)

Down

1. ____ from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. (Psalms 34:14) (Turn away)

3. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with _____. (Romans 12:21) (Good)

4. Dear friend, do not ____ what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. (3 John 1:11) (Imitate)

6. The man from whom the ____ had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away. (Luke 8:38) (Demons)

10. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who ____ that Jesus is the Son of God. (1 John 5:5) (Believes)

At the end of the crossword puzzle, talk about the questions and answers as a group. Lead them to think about what bad things they may face during the coming week. Encourage them to remember what they learned in this group, and that when faced with evil, they should pray and ask the Lord to help and care for them. He will give them the strength to overcome "evil with good."

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

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Practice several times playing different ways, such as:

Getting in a circle and passing a ball or bag full of seeds from child to child, while repeating the parts of the text.

March around the room or the building and sing to the rhythm of a rap or hip-hop song.

Have competitions between girls and boys.

Mix the parts to assemble the text as if it were a puzzle.

Write the words on the board and delete them while they learn the text.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Make a circle with the students. Form pairs of two boys or two girls and hold hands to pray for each other. Each one will pray for his/ her partner saying something like this: "Lord, I beg you to help (name) to be brave every day, to overcome evil, and be a positive influence." The other partner will pray the same way.

Encourage

End with an appropriate chorus to encourage the students.

Invite

Invite the students to return for the last session of this unit. Ask them: "If possible, bring a photo of when you were children or babies to the next session." If you wish, you can prepare a small party in honor of completion of these sessions, and to congratulate those who had perfect attendance and those who learned all the memory passage.