

THE SAD STORY OF CAIN AND ABEL

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

IGNORE CAIN BAD THOUGHTS DEEDS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Genesis 4:1-16

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students understand that Cain ignored what God said and let bad thoughts lead him to do bad deeds

MEMORY VERSE

“The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving” (Daniel 9:9a, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

This seems to be a strange story to tell children in elementary school, even in these violent times when even youngsters commit murders. However, this lesson is really about the decision to obey or disobey God. And, our children face these issues.

The context of this story is related to their lives. In most cases it is not that the schoolyard or neighborhood streets are terrible places, but there is rivalry between siblings and friends. Children easily become jealous if they believe that another is favored more than they are, either because they get more attention, or enjoy greater approval. These feelings produce strong reactions, such as derogatory names, physical aggression, or other malicious acts.

The emphasis you should give to this session is the following: “It is very easy for bad thoughts to lead us to commit bad deeds.” When we allow bad thoughts to settle in our mind, we may end up doing something terrible. In the same way, it is also true that God can help us and protect us from sin. Encourage the children to talk to God honestly. And tell them that if they obey him, he will help them.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The phrase “Sin is crouching at your door” (Genesis 4:7) raises two questions:

- Do you have to open the door to sin?• What happens if we open the door?

The story of Cain and Abel is the story of a murder, which was and is a very serious offense. But observing it from a higher level, this narrative has to do with grace.

The choice is to decide to do good or bad. If we do the right thing, God will accept our efforts, even if they are not perfect (see v. 7). But, if we persist in doing our own will, we run the risk of being “dominated” by sin, that is, falling deeper and deeper into rebellion and bad deeds.

That was the curse that Cain chose. He ignored God’s counsel and fell into sin because of his jealousy and anger, which led him to kill his brother Abel. Even so, God did not abandon Cain, but placed a protective mark on him, to show that his grace is always available while we live here. This should give us some peace of mind in thinking of those who have strayed from the way of the Lord. They did not go astray to places where his grace cannot reach them.

In a way, this story is about the relationship between two brothers. In it, we see more of the character of the “bad” than of the “good”. Here we see aspects of our own lives that we know very well. Relationships between brothers (or sisters) can be broken if there is competition between them, or if one is filled with jealousy and anger. How do we act in our family relationships, like Cain or Abel? It is something that we decide.

The story of Cain also has to do with worship. Perhaps Abel’s sacrifice was acceptable because he brought the fat portions of the first newborn animals (v. 4). Cain brought some of the fruits of the earth (v. 3). Or maybe there was an attitude problem. Hebrews 11:4 mentions the offering of Abel in relation to “his faith”. Perhaps Abel’s sacrifice was a reflection of a loving relationship with God, while Cain’s offering was only to fulfill a certain formality.

We cannot say with certainty. But it leads us to reflect on the choices we make regarding our worship. In light of this narrative, we can answer the question of the principle: we are never forced to open the door to sin. If we do, the consequences are dire, but God does not abandon us. As long as we live on this earth, forgiveness will always be available.

The end of the story

I repeat, this narrative is about grace. Here is something we can meditate on. From the day of that first murder, “you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, ... to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:22, 24). This should help us choose correctly, so that sin remains “outside the door”.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

“Danger or GO”

Before the session begins, prepare two large posters (like the traffic signs of your country). They can be 50 cm. x 50 cm., of poster board or cardboard. One sign should read: “STOP - DANGER” (can be made in red and white), and the other: “GO” (can be green). Be sure to alert teachers in nearby rooms about the noise this activity will have.

In your group, ask that two volunteers hold the signs. Say: “I will read several sentences. In some of them, children have good thoughts, but in others, they have bad thoughts. If the sentence is about good thoughts, they will raise the sign that says ‘Go’. But if it is about bad thoughts, they will raise the signal of ‘Stop - Danger’.

Practice for a few minutes. All children should shout loudly when the “Go” or “Stop - Danger” signs are raised.

- Ana has an old bicycle. Emilia has a new one. Ana thinks, “Why does Emilia have a new bicycle? I hate her!” (Stop - Danger).
 - Peter has many toys and John has almost no toys. Peter shares his toys with John (Go).
 - Carla wants to do something special and beautiful for her parents (Go).
 - Julius bought a huge red balloon. Andrew looks at him from afar and thinks about how he can get close and pop it (Stop - Danger).
 - Mary went for a walk with her friends Judy and Cecilia, but she forgot to invite Debora. Debora found out and promised that she would no longer be Mary’s friend (Stop - Danger).
 - Mrs. Rosa gave her husband a beautiful car. The neighbor Andy is very upset and says unkind things about them (Stop - Danger).
 - Julian has a new soccer ball. His brother Paul became jealous and promised to break it (Stop - Danger).
- Say: “Why is it dangerous to think like some of these people?” Emphasize that bad thoughts can lead to bad actions, as in the case of Cain and Abel.

TEACH THE LESSON

Life for Adam and Eve was very different after they disobeyed God. They no longer lived in the beautiful garden of Eden. Their

work was hard. Now they suffered from pain and became ill. But God still loved them very much. Soon, Adam and Eve had children. Eve named the first child Cain, which means "God helped me to have this child." Their second child they named Abel. Adam and Eve taught the boys about God.

The two sons grew up healthy and strong. Upon reaching the appropriate age, Cain decided to become a farmer, and Abel decided to raise sheep. One day, Abel offered a sheep as an offering to God. He carefully chose the best one he had for the sacrifice. Cain also offered an offering. He gave some vegetables and fruits that he had grown.

God was pleased with Abel's offering, but not with Cain's. Why was God not pleased with Cain's offering? The Bible does not explain it. But we know that the Lord is good and everything he does is good. Something was not right about Cain's offering, or in the way he gave it to God. Cain became very angry with God. But, God still loved him. "Why are you so angry?" God asked him. "If you'll do the right thing, I'll be happy with you. But, if you do not do the right thing, you will be sinning. Be careful. It is your choice to do good or to do evil." Cain heard what God had told him. And he kept thinking about how angry he was. He was angry with God and with Abel. After a while, Cain no longer loved his brother."

One day, Cain told Abel, "Let's go to the field together." "Okay," Abel agreed. The two men headed towards the field. While they were there, Cain killed his brother Abel and buried him. Later, God spoke to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I do not know!" said Cain. "Is it my job to take care of Abel?" "I know what you did," said God. "You were very bad. From now on, nothing will be easy for you. You will wander from one place to another."

"Oh Lord, my guilt too great!" cried Cain. "Now people will try to kill me because of what I've done. Although Cain had done something very bad, God continued to love him and made a promise to him. "I'll make sure no one kills you." Sadly, Cain left his home and his family. God kept the promise he had made. But surely, many times Cain would have wondered why he did not obey God and his warning not to do wrong.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Small puppets

Before the session, prepare: scissors, glue or tape, wooden sticks or ice cream sticks, crayons. Give the children Student Activity Sheet #245. Ask them to color the little puppets. Help them cut out the figures of the puppets and glue them on flat wooden rods about 20 cm. long by 1 cm. wide, or ice cream sticks. When they have finished, they can act and have the puppets talk about the story of Cain and Abel.

As a review when the story is over, ask the children: "Did Cain have to do wrong and kill his brother? (No) Who tried to keep Cain from doing bad? (God). What was Cain's biggest mistake, before killing Abel? (He had bad thoughts about God and his brother Abel).

Encourage the children to take home their puppets and share the lesson with their families and friends.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Flags with the memory verse

You will need: poster paper or brightly colored paper, markers, tape, scissors and sticks. Write the memory verse on the triangle-shaped flags beforehand. In your group, hand out a flag to each child to decorate. Say that they should not color over the memory verse. Once the flags are colored, they should be glued onto sticks about 12 cm. long by 1 cm. wide. Ask the children to write their name on their flag.

Ask them: "What does it mean that 'our God is merciful and forgiving'?" (God does not punish us as he should for the sins we commit, He is always ready to forgive us if we ask Him.) Say: "When he forgives us, he never remembers our sins anymore. He treats us as if we had never sinned."

Repeat the memory verse several times. Then they can go out into the yard and march with their flags, repeating it aloud. Finally, collect the flags. These will remain in the room until the last lesson of the unit.

For options on how to help the children memorize this lesson's verse, see the "KidzFirst Memory Verse Activities" sheet.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Pray giving thanks for: every child in your group; their parents and siblings; their spiritual lives and their relationship with God; their studies; because they are good children; because they come to church. Also pray that: the children will be obedient to the Lord; they will be good siblings and friends; they will always be good children and students; they will have good thoughts towards God and others.

Encourage

Remember to encourage the group to find ways to demonstrate obedience this week.

Invite

Invite the children attend the next session and say some interesting things about it.