



Date: _____
Series: Character Shapers
Spring Year 2, Lesson 51

Facing Failures

Take Home Point: *God can lift your past failures and use them for his purposes today.

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Romans 8:31-34; Acts 26; Revelation 12:10

Key Verse: Romans 8:28, "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God—those whom he has called according to his plan."

We will help kids know:

- They all experience "flops" or failures. Often we listen to Satan's accusing voice reminding us of these past failures.
- They can give past failures to God who lifts them off of us.
- There is no condemnation because we have faith in Christ.
- God can use past failures for his purposes today.




We will help kids feel:

- Release from the shame of past failures.
- Confidence with their small group to share openly about their past failures.

We will help kids do:

- Share with their group some of their past failures.
- Make paper maché feet for the sculpture they made last week.
- Pray release from the condemnation of the accuser, affirming their faith in Christ.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Kids decorate their character with facial features as they discuss flops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ sheet of poster board or cardboard • paper • scissors • glue • magazines for cut-outs of facial features • masking tape • paper maché head from last week
Large Group 	4 7	Overview Bible Teaching: Pablo Pistachio adds to his masterpiece sculpture as he defines a flop and helps kids understand that Satan is an accuser, but Jesus does not condemn them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • news print or two sheets of poster board taped to the wall • markers • newsprint or poster board with the word FLOP written vertically on it (See appendix) • Alfred sculpture from last week • bucket of paste • strips of newspaper soaked in paste • drop cloth to protect floor • <i>option:</i> video— <i>Visual Bible: Acts</i> produced by Visual Bible International, 1997—show Acts 26—order from www.amazon.com
Small Group Application 	4	Feet to support the sculpted figure from last week are made out of the flop wads as a reminder that God uses our past flops for his purposes today.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sculpted head from last week • the flop wads from the Warm-Up activity

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

Supplies: paper maché head from last week, ½ sheet of poster board or cardboard paper, scissors, glue, magazines for cut-outs of facial features, 3" strip of cardstock to make a "collar," masking tape

Shepherd, be sensitive about the kids' feelings today, and help the group to support and encourage one another. This can be a sensitive subject. You can break the ice for discussion by giving the first example of a personal failure.

Remember our character from last week? Last week we learned that God can use troubles to shape character and that feathers represented them as being "light and momentary." It's time to give him a face. Let's also give him a name.

Have kids use eyes, ears, and lips cut from magazine pictures to decorate the face. Use the cardstock and masking tape to make a collar or neck for the head.

As the kids decorate, discuss the following:

Look at our character as we give him facial features. Do you think our creation is a success or do you think it is a flop? What makes a success and what makes a flop? Any ideas?

Today we will talk about "flops." Flops are those things we tried that didn't come out as we had planned. Have you ever done something in the past and said to yourself, "I can't believe I did that. I am so stupid?" This might be a little thing you did or it may have been something that REALLY embarrassed you.

Today as we talk about our flops, let's trust each other that we will not make fun of anyone who shares a personal example. Also, let's trust that this conversation will remain in this group and we will not talk to others about these "flops."

If you can think of a flop, share it with the group. For example, I can think of a time when...

Share a personal experience.

There are two kinds of flops. Some flops are simple mistakes that embarrass us before other people, but are not wrongdoings. On the other hand, there are flops in which we are embarrassed before God, and this is sin.

God wants to lift both of these types of flops and even use them to glorify him. This is an important truth for us to discover and hold on to for the rest of our lives. **God can lift your past failures and use them for his purposes today.*

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Bible Teaching: Pablo Pistachio adds to his masterpiece sculpture as he defines a flop and helps kids understand that Satan is an accuser, but Jesus does not condemn them.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?/ Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Have kids refer to Acts 26 in their Bibles.

According to Acts 26:9-11, what are some things Paul did to oppose Jesus? *(He threw Christians in prison and voted to have them killed. He went to synagogues and punished believers and forced them to curse the name of Jesus. He also hunted Christians down outside of Jerusalem.)*

What changed Paul (then Saul)? *(Acts 26:13-18. Jesus appeared to him in a blinding light on the road to Damascus.)*

What did Jesus tell Paul he was chosen to do? (*Acts 26:16-18. He would witness to the Jewish and non-Jewish people. God, through Paul, would open these peoples' eyes and turn them from darkness to light and from Satan's control to God's. They would receive forgiveness of sins and become God's holy people by believing in Jesus.*)

Why do you think God chose this man, Paul, who had persecuted his believers? (*God wanted to show the people how he could change them. Paul was an example of a dramatic change; even his name was changed.*)

What did God promise Paul in Acts 26:17? (*He promised to rescue and save Paul from the people God sent him to.*)

How was this demonstrated in Acts 26:24-32? See also Acts 25:24-27. (*Paul witnessed to the people in authority who judged him. They could not find any evidence that Paul deserved to die or to be imprisoned.*)

How is Paul a prime example of how **God can lift our past failures and use them for his purposes?*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Pause and have kids think about some of the flops mentioned in the beginning Warm-Up. Then read Romans 8: 31-34. Kids can also follow along in their Bibles.

“What can we say about all of this? If God is for us, who can be against us? God didn’t spare his own Son but handed him over to death for all of us. So he will also give us everything along with him. Who will accuse those whom God has chosen? God has approved of them. Who will condemn them? Christ has died, and more importantly, he was brought back to life. Christ has the highest position in heaven. Christ also intercedes for us.”

According to these passages, Satan CANNOT accuse us of our past mistakes? Why? (*Because Jesus died and rose for our sins and failures. He also chose us to be his own. He sits on the throne of heaven interceding or praying for us.*)

Just like Paul was chosen for a purpose, God also chooses us for a purpose.

The key verse for today from Romans 8:28 says, “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God—those whom he has called according to his plan.”

Of course, God does not allow us to experience flops just so he can make good things happen later. He does, however, allow us to make mistakes. When we turn to him, he will make good things come out of those mistakes.

Application activity:

Supplies needed: character sculpted head from Warm-Up

Today we will make flop wads. They are goops of wet papier-mâché paper that may seem like a flop at first but they can be reshaped into something useful... like feet for our character.

What is the definition of a flop as given in large group? (*Failure lifted off our past.*)

Have you seen a way that God has used any of the flops we shared earlier for his purposes? For example, I can see how God used...

Share an example in your life of how he used a flop.

If you can give an example of how God used a flop from your life, take a flop wad and throw it on the paper.

Shape the wads into feet as examples are shared.

Remind kids of the take home point: ****God can lift your past failures and use them for his purposes today.***

Prayer Time:

Encourage each student to give thanks to God for how Christ has not condemned them, but has lifted the flops (let them mention specific examples) and will use them for his purposes. Pray release from any condemnation of the accuser and have kids affirm their faith in Christ.

Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

encountering opportunities to show service or faithfulness. All of these can be character shapers if we allow God to shape us through them.

Pablo Pistachio will present this series. This artistic character might be costumed with an artist's smock, palette and beret. A prop used from week to week is the figure of a sculpted head on a table. This will be a significant visual prop as different features are applied in conjunction with weekly discussions about how God shapes our character. The features added will create abstract art, but will give clear visual illustration to the concept of the day.

Create a head for this series that will act as the focal point for "shaping one's character." Form a paper maché head with a filled balloon, strips of paper and paste. Create eyes, nose, ears, eyebrows, and lips from magazine cutouts or with markers. This needs to be prepared ahead of time and dried. Other options that could be used are a Styrofoam head and straight stickpins, or a mannequin head.

Supplies: newsprint taped to the wall or two pieces of poster board; marker to draw the devil (an outline of the devil's face can be lightly penciled on beforehand so it can be drawn quickly with marker during the presentation); another newsprint or poster board marked with the letters FLOP vertically on the left hand side of the paper. Next to the corresponding letter are the words printed horizontally: F-failure, L-lifted off, O-our, P-past written on the bottom of the poster, "Because God has a purpose for it today" (see appendix); the Alfred sculpture from last week; a bucket of paste; strips of newspaper soaked thoroughly in the paste and ready to throw; drop cloth for messes; Visual Bible: Acts video, cued up to Acts 26. Order the video from www.christianbook.com.

Introduction

Hello, class. As you remember from last week, I am Pablo Pistachio, the great artist. My latest creation is Alfred. Last week Alfred reminded us of how God shapes our character through the challenges we face.

We talked about problems and difficulties, how facing them shapes our character. When problems and difficulties teach us to better trust God, that character becomes a masterpiece as this (refer to Alfred) demonstrates.

Define Flop

Set paper wads in the paste beforehand. These are called flop wads and can be referred to as you talk.

Today we will talk about "flops." A flop is a failure. It can be a mistake or an embarrassing moment like tripping in the cafeteria and spilling your food on the principal. These kinds of things happen to everyone and we have committed no crime. We just had a flop.

There are other flops that are more than mishaps. In these flops, we have disobeyed God. Maybe we cheated on a test and it was especially embarrassing when we got caught.

Each of the wads of paper maché I have placed on the table reminds us of our flops. Let's call them flop-wads. Now, what can we do with these flops? I have an idea and will share it with you in a minute. First, let me introduce you to someone.

Devil Accuses (Draw the Devil)

As you speak, have a second person draw with a bold marker over the pencil outline of the devil on the paper.

The reason flops hurt so badly is that, after they happen, sometimes for days, weeks, months or even years later, we think back on these flops and feel all stupid inside again. Why do you think this is?

We have an accusing little voice that says, "Loser, loser, loser!" Where does that voice come from?

This is the devil, Satan himself, a real spiritual being. He wants to do whatever he can to keep us from God and to make sure we are as miserable as possible. The Bible tells us in Revelations 12:10, *"(The devil is) the one accusing our brothers and sisters. The one accusing them day and night in the presence of our God."*

The devil also accuses you with messages that say, "Remember that failure? Boy, are you dumb!

Here, how about you watch it again on your brain's instant replay. Look! What a flop! What a failure!"



Christ Does Not Condemn Us (Throw Flop Wads)

Note: Make sure the "flop wads" are very wet with paste or they won't stick.

What should we do with those flops from our past? Romans 8 gives us a suggestion. Let's start reading in verse 31 through 34.

"What can we say about all of this? If God is for us, who can be against us? God didn't spare his own Son but handed him over to death for all of us. So he will also give us everything along with him. Who will accuse

those whom God has chosen? God has approved of them. Who will condemn them? Christ has died, and more importantly, he was brought back to life. Christ has the highest position in heaven. Christ also intercedes for us."

Let me read one phrase again, "Who will accuse those whom God has chosen? God has approved of them." In other words, since Christ gave himself for us, died and rose again, our sins and failures no longer accuse us. They have been lifted off. What should we do with them? This is what we should do with them.

Throw a flop wad at the devil picture.

Choose one boy and one girl to come forward for a contest to see how many flop wads each one can throw on the picture of Satan. Allow them three minutes to throw as many flop wads as they can. Have the girls and boys seated keep track of the number of hits for each.

This is a picture of what you can do in your mind when those past failures begin to replay again. You can take those failures and, just like a flop wad, you can throw them back into Satan's face—telling him, "Christ does not condemn me. He is the one standing up for me right now in heaven. He is the one taking my side and interceding for me in heaven."

God Can Use My Flops (Show Flop Sign)

The amazing thing about flops is that not only does God want us to throw those flops back into Satan's face when he tries to accuse us after being forgiven, but God can use these flops for his purposes today.

Refer to the FLOP sign.

This is what a flop really is. A failure lifted off our past. Why? God has a purpose for it today. As a matter of fact, it would be like this...

Take some of the flops that have fallen to the ground after thrown against the paper or peel them off the paper. Place them at the feet of Alfred.

These flops actually become like feet to our character. They don't hold us back anymore, but God can still use them for his purposes to glorify him today.

An Example of a Flop Turned into God's Purpose

The apostle Paul had a huge failure in God's eyes because he helped murder Christians. That was one huge flop!

God rescued Paul and showed him that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Paul then came to faith in Jesus. Rather than dwelling on that flop, he watched how God used his flop for a purpose.

Paul used his story to witness to other people wherever he went. He was a living testimony of how God changes people. An example of this is in Acts 26 when Paul witnessed before King Agrippa.

Option

Either show Acts 26 from the *Visual Bible: Acts* video or read the scripture. Order from www.christianbook.com.

Conclusion:

So, what should we do with our flops? Remember, when Satan accuses us, we don't have to listen and replay that flop in our mind. Instead, we can throw it back at Satan and tell him that Christ does not condemn us.

Why does Christ not condemn us for our sins and failures? Jesus died and rose again to lift off our flops.

What does flop stand for? Failure lifted off our past because God has a purpose for it today.

Let's pray.

**Heavenly Father, thank you for lifting off our past failures. Thank you that you can now use them for your purposes today, just like you did for Paul. Help us to ignore Satan, the accuser, and throw back into his face the flops that he would like to remind us of because Christ does not condemn us. In Jesus' name, we pray.
Amen**

F ailure

L ifted Off

O ur

P ast

***Because God has a
purpose for it today.***

