



Date: _____

Series: The Early Church
Spring Year 1, Lesson 54

God Looks at Our Heart

Primary Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 16:7, "...God does not see as humans see. Humans look at outward appearances, but the LORD looks into the heart."

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kids are in a process of growing and understanding who they are. Often they measure themselves by world standards, i.e., outward appearances. We want them to see a much more important aspect of measuring self-identity, the inward character of the heart. They need to know that God cherishes them as people and he looks at their hearts. He is willing to forgive sin and then mold character that is pleasing to him.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: It is because of the finished work of the cross that salvation has been won for us. When God looks at us through our faith in Jesus Christ, God sees Jesus and his righteousness.

Jesus in us: Because of our relationship with Jesus Christ, his character can dwell in our lives through the filling of the Holy Spirit. This is the heart that God seeks—a Christ-like character that seeks to do the Father's will.

Jesus through us: God can do great things through people whose hearts are fully devoted to him. It matters not what size we are or even how old we are. What matters is our faith in him and our reliance on him to do what he wants.

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Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Prop needed: oversized sunglasses or Goofy lens glasses

Talk about having special x-ray vision while wearing the special glasses or goggles.

What would you say if I told you that with these special glasses, I could look right into your minds and read your thoughts? What if I could even know your feelings?

Play a mind reading game where a volunteer is asked to leave the room while the rest of the group selects an object in the room that the volunteer must guess.

In advance, explain the trick of the game to another adult or mature child. When he returns to the room after the item is selected, you will ask if an object is the one the kids selected. The volunteer is to indicate no in any way other than actually saying the word "no." For example, he may shake his head, say "Nope", "No way", or "Huh-huh". When the volunteer wants to indicate he is ready to guess the correct object, he responds to the current object with a simple, "No." When he responds with only a "no", it is your signal to point next to the designated object. When you point to the correct object, the volunteer says, "Yep", or "That's it."

To give the illusion of x-ray capabilities, have the volunteer wear the Goofy glasses when he returns to the room before trying to identify the object. Play a couple of rounds and then have the volunteer exit and say:

Do you think these glasses really have x-ray vision capabilities? Actually, they don't. This was a trick. But there is someone who can read our minds and see into our hearts without x-ray vision glasses.

Did you know that God can look into our hearts and minds and know what we think and feel? That's why it is so important every week to spend time worshiping him, filling our minds and hearts with all the wonderful thoughts about who God is and how he wants us to know him better and better. Let's do that now as we worship.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Use the same oversized sunglasses or Goofy lenses glasses.

Read Psalm 139:1-4. (You could have it printed on power point or overhead projector and have kids read together with you.)

"O Lord, you have examined me, and you know me. You alone know when I sit down and when I get up. You read my thoughts from far away. You watch me when I travel and when I rest. You are familiar with all my ways. Even before there is a single word on my tongue, you know all about it, Lord."

God knows our thoughts, even before we think them. He knows our words, even before we speak them. That is a good thing.

But sometimes the thoughts and words he sees in our hearts and minds aren't so good. Right now, is he seeing in your heart that you want to worship him, or is he sensing that you would rather be outside playing ball or at home talking to your neighbor?

Does God see any thoughts like, "I really don't like that person over there and I don't care if I am mean to him"? Does he see any thoughts like, "I don't care, God is not so important. I just hope that God will leave me alone"?

Let's take a moment to look on the inside at our thoughts and at our feelings when we come to church. Sometimes when we do have those bad thoughts, sometimes when we have done things that are wrong, we try to keep them down inside of us. We pretend that they are not there and we even try to hide them. But God knows what they are.

The Bible says, "...God does not see as humans see. Humans look at outward appearances, but the Lord looks into the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

That is our theme for today's worship: what we see on the outside is not always what God sees on the inside. That is why we need to confess our sins to God and tell him that we are sorry.

Maybe there was something you did this week that was not God pleasing, or, maybe you are having a thought that is not God pleasing right now. Take this sin and lift it to God. He sees it anyway. Tell him in your heart that you are sorry. Tell him that you trust Jesus who gave his life for you, tell him that you need him to lift your sins away. Thank him that Jesus lives in your heart.

Pause for a moment of silent prayer. Then say:

Now, think of this. When God looks at you, he says, "I forgive you because of your faith in Jesus. When I look at your heart, I see Jesus. Through the power of My Spirit now living in you, I will help you do the things that Jesus would do. I will shape your heart to be like Jesus.' Go now with my power."

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Have an eighteen-inch heart cut from poster board. As kids bring their offerings forward, have them attach their offering envelopes directly to the heart with tape. (If the heart is mounted on cardboard, use pushpins to mount the offering envelopes.) Explain that this offering is one of the ways we can show God our true heart in giving to him first.

OR

Attach a large heart cut from poster board to the offering plate/basket. As kids bring their offerings forward, explain that this offering is one of the ways we can show God our true heart in giving to him first.

This is a way we can say to God, “We love you.” Think about that as you bring your offering to him. It is a way that you are telling God something from your heart. You are saying, “I love you God.”



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Elephant Game

Supplies: Materials for each group:

- *one roll of masking tape*
- *lots of newspaper*
- *one plastic garbage bag for clean up*

Learning Point: What we see on the outside is not always what God sees on the inside.

Divide kids into groups of four or five. Choose a kid from each group to be transformed into an elephant using newspaper and masking tape. Have the rest of the group decorate the “elephant”. The kids may need some prompting in what they can do to tape newspaper to a classmate and help transform them into elephants. This could include a long snout, big ears, fat tummy, and thick legs.

Give a five-minute time limit for each team to do whatever they can to help their person be transformed as close as possible into an elephant. Afterwards, model the elephants, taking note of their characteristics.

Vote for the best elephant. Give special bonus points for those contestants who best act the role. Then discuss.

The point of this learning game is how we judge appearance on the outside. We are judging for elephants here, but the truth is, they are not elephants at all. We know that on the inside they are boys and girls just like us. People often judge others based on outside appearances, but, when God looks on the inside, he might see something completely different.

In today's Bible event, we will see how everyone looked at David's outside appearance. They saw a scrawny little kid who was nothing but a shepherd. While *they* saw a shepherd, *God* saw a king.

When I look at you, I might see just another third grader, but God sees a prayer warrior. I might see a good soccer player, but God sees one who is powerful enough to be kind to the people that everyone picks on. I might see someone who is pretty, but God sees a heart that is tender and full of love for people. What does God see when he looks at your heart?

Bible Presentation:

The two Bible readings will be told in narrative style, calling children from the audience to participate. This can be done by a person telling the story and directing the student actor, or it can be done with two people doing the jobs of narrator and director.

First Bible Event – The event of David's anointing (1 Samuel 16:1-13)

Supplies:

- *Headpiece for Jesse and each of his seven sons*
- *A shepherd's hook or staff for David the shepherd boy*
- *If possible, a horn for anointing oil*
- *Costume*

Select an adult to act the part of Jesse. Place seven children on one side of the stage to be Jesse's sons. Place them in a line from the tallest to the shortest. Select the smallest child to play David. Place him on the other side of the stage, out of the picture. Let them prepare their headpieces and any props before the presentation. As you tell the story, bring the characters out.

This Bible event is from the book of 1 Samuel, chapter sixteen. It answers this question: When God looks at us, what does he see? Just what's on the outside? ... or does he see our hearts? In verse seven, it says, "*God does not see as humans see. Humans look at outward appearances, but the LORD looks into the heart.*" Here is what he saw when he looked at David. I will tell you the Bible event while we act it out.

Samuel was the Lord's prophet. It was Samuel's job to anoint the king of Israel. This would be the person who God chose to lead his people. The nation of Israel had a king, Saul, but he had closed his heart to God and he kept God at a distance. God was looking for a different leader, one whose heart would seek after him. So the Lord told Samuel, the priest, "Go to Jesse in Bethlehem. I've selected one of his sons to be king."

But Samuel asked, “How will I know which son to anoint as king?”

The LORD explained, “I will show you. Take a cow and sacrifice to me. I invite Jesse to the sacrifice. There, I will show you what to do and who to anoint with oil as the next king of Israel.”

Samuel did what the LORD told him. He went to Bethlehem and invited Jesse to the special ceremony and sacrifice. Here comes Jesse now.

Indicate to actor playing Jesse to come forward.

Samuel thought to himself, “Ah, Jesse has fine sons. I’m excited that one of these will be the next king of Israel.” Jesse brought his first son forward.

Jesse actor brings forward one son.

His name was Eliab. “Certainly, LORD,” Samuel thought to himself, “this is the one I should anoint as king. He looks like a fine, impressive man.”

But the LORD told Samuel, “Don’t look at his appearance or how tall he is, because he is not the one I’ve chosen. Remember, I do not see as humans see. Humans look at the outward appearance, but I look into the heart.”

Escort child playing Eliab across the stage.

Then Jesse called Abinadab and brought him to Samuel. (Go ahead, Jesse, bring Abinadab here.) But Samuel said, “The LORD has not chosen him either.”

Escort child playing Abinadab across the stage while Jesse shakes his head.

Then came Shammah. “The LORD has not chosen this one either,” said Samuel.

Jesse escorts him across the stage.

So Jesse brought his next oldest son,... and his next oldest, and the next one... to Samuel.

Have Jesse bring each acting son across the stage.

Do you think the LORD chose any of these sons either? Right. Samuel told Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these. Do you have any other sons?”

“Well, yes,” said Jesse. “There is still the youngest. But he is out tending the sheep.” Jesse sent for him, and he came in to the ceremony. Then the LORD showed Samuel that this was the one, and told him to anoint him. Who do you think this was? Right! David. So, Samuel took the oil and anointed David in the presence of his brothers. This showed that the LORD was choosing him to be the next king. The LORD’s Spirit came over David and stayed with him from that day on.

Can we have an applause for our actors? This may seem like a simple story, but it shows us something very important. God has a special purpose for the little shepherd boy. He would use him to be one of the greatest kings ever to rule God’s people. His greatness would not be based on his outward looks or attraction. It would be because of his heart. David was known as a man after God’s own heart. Do you ever think about what you will do when you grow up? You’re too young to know exactly what that will be, but one thing you can decide is this. You can be a man or woman after God’s own heart! That means, in your heart, you can love him and, in your heart, you can trust Jesus as your Savior. In your heart by God’s Spirit, Jesus will be right there with you.

The next story shows what happened to David a little bit later when the strength of his heart helped him defeat a mighty enemy.

Second Bible event: The story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17)

Props:

- *A stepladder with an adult perched at the top at an equivalent height of ten feet off the floor*
- *Any other costume props that might help the audience picture the intimidation of Goliath*
- *David, an actor in costume, with a stick or staff and a sling*

Divide the room in half. One half will shout as the armies of the Philistines. Have them practice their chant: “**Boom, boom, boom, Goli-i-i-ath. Boom, boom, boom, Goli-i-i-ath.**” The other, on cue, will scream loudly as the armies of Israel: “**A-a-a-h! E-e-e-e!**”

I will need your help to tell the Bible event of David and Goliath. This is not a story of who is the biggest on the outside. Most think it is. For David was just a boy, maybe fourteen years old. Goliath was a ten foot tall champion warrior... a giant.

This story is about what was in the heart of each man. David had a heart after God's way, while Goliath rejected and cursed God. In fact, Goliath served other gods... false gods, instead.

The army of Saul came to do battle with the army of the Philistines. The Philistines were on one hill and the Israelites were on a hill on the other side. There was a valley between the two armies. Sometimes when two armies gathered for war, they would send a champion down to the valley to represent their side and see which champion could beat the other army's champion.

I bet you know the name of the Philistine champion... the ten foot tall giant. His name was Goliath. Let's hear a chant for Goliath. All Goliath's armies chant, "**Boom, boom, boom, Goli-i-i-iath. Boom, boom, boom, Goli-i-i-iath**

Here he comes, now! Point to the person on the ladder. He was ten foot tall. He had his helmet on his head and a coat of armor, weighing a hundred and twenty-five pounds. On his legs, he had bronze shin guards. On his back, he had a huge spear. His spear was as thick as a big old pipe. The head of the spear weighed fifteen pounds and was made of iron. It took another man just to carry his shield and walk in front of him. He was the champion. On the outside, it looked like no one could beat him. I think I can hear the armies chanting for him again. Listen! All Goliath's armies chant, "**Boom, boom, boom, Goli-i-i-iath. Boom, boom, boom, Goli-i-i-iath.**" Every day he would come down to the valley and yell up to the armies of Israel. He'd make fun of them. He'd say things like, "King Saul's a pansy, and your armies are all sissies." The worst thing he did was to mock God. He'd say, "Your God is no god at all and our god can beat up your god."

Right after he said all this, he let out a great roar and all the armies of Israel, instead of roaring back, screamed. I think I can hear them screaming now! Israel's armies scream loudly, "**A-a-a-h, E-e-e-e!**" Day after day, Goliath would come to the valley and his armies would chant, "**Boom, boom, boom, Goli-i-i-iath. Boom, boom, boom, Goli-i-i-iath.**" Goliath would shout out, "Come down and fight like a man!" And all the Israelites would scream back in terror, "**A-a-a-h, E-e-e-e!**"

But one day, the shepherd boy David was sent from the fields by his father to deliver food for his older brothers who were fighting. When he saw what was happening and saw the giant in the valley making fun of all the armies of Israel, and saw how everyone around was scared and ran away, he said, "Who is this heathen that would make fun of the armies of the living God?"

His brothers and others around him said, “Who are you to talk like that? You’re just a little boy.” That was just because they were looking on the outside. They couldn’t see the size of his heart. So David volunteered before all of them. He said, “I will go down and fight this giant because the LORD will be the one who defeats him.” David was brought to King Saul and given all of Saul’s armor. “It doesn’t fit,” said David. David knew he wouldn’t fight with weapons or with the strength of men, but he would use a different kind of weapon. It would be God who worked in him.

As he walked to the valley, the giant began to make fun of him. “Who is this little pipsqueek that comes to fight me? All I see is this stick. Am I a dog that you think you can beat me away with a stick? Come on and I’ll feed your body to the birds.”

But David told the giant, “You come to me with a sword and spear but I come to you in the name of the LORD God, most high. He is the God of the army of Israel who you have insulted. Today the LORD will beat you. I will strike you down and cut your head off. Your whole army will be destroyed. The world will know that Israel has a God that can save without sword or spear, for the LORD determines every battle’s outcome.” When the giant moved closer to attack, David quickly ran toward him. He reached into his bag, took out a stone, put it into his sling, swung it around his head, and let it go at the giant at more than a hundred miles an hour. It hit him right between the eyes and sunk into Goliath’s forehead and he fell down on his face, dead.

So, using only a sling and a stone, David proved to be stronger than the Philistines and the giant. But the real power for victory came from God himself! When the Philistines saw this, they began to run. The entire army of Israel received courage and began to chase them. The Philistine army was completely defeated that day.

So, this is the lesson of not what is on the outside, but what is on the inside. What did God see when he looked on the inside of Goliath and looked at his heart? *He saw a heart that mocked God and followed other gods.*

What did he see in David’s heart? *It was a heart that trusted God and counted on him to win the battle.*

The question is today, boys and girls, when God looks at your heart, what does he see? Does he see a heart that trusts him—like David’s—or does he see a heart that turns away from him?

Today, let each one of us turn our heart to God and come to him in prayer.

Option: Substitute Object Lesson

Substitute the above two /Bible events with a drama performed by the kids. "The In-Spite Of Man" This story is available in the "*Parable of the Shape*," p. 1167, Ideas # 17-20. Youth Specialties, Inc., 1224 Greenfield Dr., El Cajon, California 92021.

Application:

Object Lesson - Number One

Supplies:

- *piece of Styrofoam or a box that is made to look like an exquisitely decorated cake*
- *a sheet cake with white frosting which looks somewhat pathetic*
- *knife to cut the cake*
- *small plates or napkins*
- *forks*

Have Your Cake and Eat It, Too!

Learning Point: What people see on the outside
is not always what God sees on the inside.

Have two cakes on a table. One cake is exquisitely tiered and decorated handsomely with icing. The other cake is simply a sheet cake that looks somewhat pathetic.

Select a volunteer and ask him to choose between the cakes. He will probably choose the tiered cake. Give the volunteer a knife to cut a slice from this cake. He will find, however, that the cake is nothing but a Styrofoam or cardboard box covered with icing. Then have him cut the other cake to find that it may not have a grand appearance but is truly good on the inside.

Discuss the learning point with the children as it applies to the cakes. Then share the cake with everyone as they listen to Witness and Tell.

Another variation in this activity is to let the kids spread icing on the sheet cake. The cake will probably be a little challenged in its presentation. Then, present the nice looking cake. Ask which one they want to eat.



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Tell about a time when you called on God to help you and he did.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- big funny glasses

Offering:

- 18-inch heart cut from poster board and attached to cardboard
 - push pins or masking tape
- Or...*
- 18-inch heart cut from poster board and attached to offering basket

Learning Game:

Materials for each group:

- one roll of masking tape
- lots of newspaper
- one plastic garbage bag for clean up

Bible Presentation:

First Bible Event:

- headpiece for Jesse and each of his seven sons
- a shepherd's hook or staff for David the shepherd boy
- if possible, a horn for anointing oil
- costume

Second Bible Event:

- a stepladder with an adult perched at the top at an equivalent height of ten feet off the floor
- any other costume props that might help the audience picture the intimidation of Goliath
- David, an actor in costume, with a stick or staff and a sling

Application:

- piece of Styrofoam or a box that is made to look like an exquisitely decorated cake
- a sheet cake with white frosting which looks somewhat pathetic
- knife to cut the cake
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- forks

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