



Date: _____

Series: Lookin' for a Leader
Fall Year 3, Lesson 17

Our Hearts: Open for Repair

Primary Scripture: Luke 19:1-9. Zacchaeus repents and heals a broken heart.

Key Verse: Psalm 51:17b, "O God, you do you not despise a broken and sorrowful heart."

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

Kids, like adults, often have a challenge in admitting their faults or confessing their sins. They need to learn to confess their sins to God by having their hearts broken over their sins. They need to regret their sin and feel remorse. If they do this, their hearts will be open for repair when they bring their lives to Jesus. Jesus gives us the assurance of forgiveness and with it the power for changed lives. Not only do children need to learn to confess and receive forgiveness with God, but they need to learn how to confess and apologize to others as well.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: While we were still sinners, Jesus died for us. He paid the price for our forgiveness even before we were ready to trust him.

Jesus in us: Jesus gives us power to heal our hearts that are broken by sin. As we open our hearts to him, Jesus literally comes into our lives to restore us to wholeness.

Jesus through us: Having received the power of Jesus' forgiveness, we can share that forgiveness by forgiving others.

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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.

Supplies needed: large poster cutout of a heart, large cutout cross, glue or sticky tack

Show kids the large heart cutout.

Does God want us to feel sad or sorry about the wrong things that we do? Of course, he does.

Tear the heart in two as the Scripture is shared.

The Bible says, "The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit." (Psalm 51:17) God will not despise a broken and sorrowful heart. A broken and torn heart is when we feel so sorry about what we have done wrong that we beg God to forgive us.

People who don't care what God wants and who are not heartbroken over their sin become hardhearted. The Bible tells us that the pharaoh in Egypt was hardhearted over the things he did wrong. Moses showed the pharaoh God's mighty power and told the pharaoh that God wanted him to let the people of Israel leave Egypt. But the pharaoh did not obey God and he did not let God's people go. His heart was hardened and he refused to obey. He wasn't sorry for his sin, either. The pharaoh ended up as God's enemy. We don't want that to happen to us.

But we don't want to have a broken heart either.

Hold up the torn heart.

That hurts. What are we going to do? We don't want to be hardhearted like Pharaoh, and we don't want to have a broken heart and be sad all the time because we have sinned. God has the answer to our problem.

When we say we are sorry for our sin, we open our hearts for repair, and Jesus takes all that sin upon himself through the onetime act of dying on the cross for us. Jesus' cross mends our broken hearts.

Take a large cutout cross and, using glue or sticky tack, patch the heart with the cross.

Let's sing praises to him for what he has done for us!

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.

Let's confess our sins to God now. Let God heal your torn hearts with his love. Who wants to tell God about something you did this last week that has made your heart—and God's heart—hurt?

The kids now have time for personal confession. Afterward, assure them that they have been forgiven because of Jesus' death on the cross.

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.

Place the broken heart mended by Jesus' cross on the altar. Use that as the place where children put their offerings as an example of giving our offerings to the Lord.



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.

“Rhythm Sticks”

Supplies needed: two poles about three to five feet long for each team of four

Divide the children into groups of four. Give each team two poles. Have two children in each group face each other holding the ends of the poles and approximately two feet apart. In rhythm, the children tap the poles twice on the floor and twice together. The four-count rhythm is repeated time and time again. Every time the poles are tapped on the floor, the space is opened for a child to jump in between the poles. The child must jump out before the poles come together. Let kids each take turns jumping and holding the poles. *(Different rhythms can be tried, as well, to allow the children more time to jump in and out.)*

After all kids have had a chance to jump, say:

The object of the game was to jump in when the poles were open. Was it frustrating when the poles were closed and you couldn't get in?

Sometimes it must be frustrating to God when our hard hearts are not open for him. When that happens, he cannot come in to give us healing.

Our hearts are closed when we refuse to admit to God our wrong and confess our need for his forgiveness. When we admit our wrong and confess our need, our hearts are open for God's forgiving presence and the power of his love.

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Use Nest Entertainment's video, *The Animated Stories from the New Testament: Treasure In Heaven*. Show the section of Zacchaeus meeting Jesus and coming to repentance and salvation. This video section begins with Zacchaeus on his roof looking at the fountain and saying, "Who am I?"

Application:

Application 1: "Torn and Restored Heart"

Needed:

- *the cross cutout from the Attention Grabber*
- *the Bible tear illusion, "Torn and Restored Heart," a paper tear trick in which a red heart is torn into small pieces and restored to one piece at the end. (Directions for performing the trick are included with the illusion.)*
- *red heart cut out in the same dimensions as heart used above*
- *a red paper heart for every child with the following written on it:*
 1. *Jesus loves you and gave his life to forgive you.*
 2. *Jesus invites you to forgive others, just as he forgave you.*
 3. *Jesus challenges you to confess your sins against others and apologize to them."*

The "patter" (*monologue*) while tearing the heart needs to describe how sin tears into our lives:

In the Bible reading today, we saw how Zacchaeus had a broken heart. What were some of the things he had done wrong? (*Zacchaeus had stolen money from others.*)

Tear off a sliver of the heart.

Can you think of other things we have talked about that can tear our hearts?

Each time a child names a sin, tear another sliver off the heart. Continue to collect the fragments until you fold them together as you continue the next section.

Do you see how I have taken all of the torn pieces and folded them together? This is like when God takes our torn hearts and wraps them up in his love. God said he could heal our torn hearts by giving us his Son, Jesus. Jesus gave his life for us so our torn hearts can be put together like this.

Use the cross to tap the torn, folded heart, then unfold it. As you "restore" the torn heart, say something like this:

Repentance begins with feeling sorry for our sin. But it is more than just feeling sorry. Repentance means to turn from our sin (physically turn around as you say these words) – turning to God and the power of his forgiveness. God’s forgiveness is given solely through the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanses us from all of our sins.

The Bible says in 1 John 1:9, “God is faithful and reliable. If we confess our sins, he forgives them and cleanses us from everything we’ve done wrong.”

That means our hearts are put back together whole. We can be at peace with God, having the wholeness of his heart.

The next part of this illustration involves another red heart cut out in the same dimensions.

I have a question for you. If you do something wrong to someone else, what do you need to do?

Let the kids answer.

When we sin against someone, two things are necessary:

- 1. We need to ask God for forgiveness.**
- 2. We need to go to the person we have wronged and admit our sin and apologize to him.**

It can be very hard to admit that we are wrong, but it’s important for us to do so. When we apologize to the person we sinned against, it’s like giving our heart to that person.

Hand the second red heart to a child and pretend to apologize for something you did or said.

God gives us power to forgive another with the power of his forgiveness. Since he has loved us enough to pay for the punishment of our sin, we can admit to others that we have done wrong. We can ask for their forgiveness, as well.

Give a paper heart to every child, saying:

I want you to keep this heart as a reminder of three things.

Have one or more children read the three statements on the hearts as you give them out.

If time permits, interact with the kids about various sins committed. Talk about how we would go about admitting our faults and asking for forgiveness from other people.

Application 2: “Forgiven Hearts Forgive Others”

Supplies needed: a paper heart printed with “Forgiven Hearts Forgive Others”

Pass out paper hearts to the kids that have been printed with “Forgiven Hearts Forgive Others,” or give them blank paper hearts and let them write the phrase themselves. Have a child come forward and read Ephesians 4:32.

“Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ.”

Since God has healed our hearts and made them whole, he has given us great power to forgive others when they do wrong against us. Today when we pray, we want to remember to not only thank God for forgiving us and making our hearts whole, but we also want to remember those people who have hurt us. God’s power will help us forgive them.

This heart in your hand will remind you how God has made your heart whole again because he forgave you. It also reminds you that since God forgave you, you can forgive others.



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 someone who might have hurt you. In our prayer line, ask God to help you forgive that person just as God has forgiven you.

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.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chairs:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

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 song 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:

- large poster cutout of a heart
- large cutout cross
- glue or sticky tack

Bible Reading:

- Nest Entertainment's video, *The Animated Stories from the New Testament: Treasure In Heaven*

Learning Game:

- two poles about three to five feet long for each team of four (Use wooden dowels, broom handles, PVC pipe, or whatever is available.)

Application 1:

- "Torn and Restored Heart," a Bible tear project ordered from Doc Haley Gospel Magic Company (615-885-4800). <http://gospelmagic.com>
- red heart cut out in the same dimensions as heart used above
- cross large enough for all kids to see
- a red paper heart for every child with the following written on it:
Keep this heart as a reminder of three things:
 1. Jesus loves you and gave his life to forgive you.
 2. Jesus invites you to forgive others, just as he forgave you.
 3. Jesus challenges you to confess your sins against others and apologize to them.

Application 2:

- a paper heart printed with "Forgiven Hearts Forgive Others"

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