

Power of Prayer

Week 3

BIG IDEA

God Forgives

BIBLE

God Forgives (1 John 1-2)

FOR LEADERS

DID YOU KNOW... *Use this section to get yourself ready to teach!*

- **WHO?**

- First John is a letter most likely written by the same person who wrote the Gospel of John. The main point of the letter is to encourage the members of the unnamed church in their faith in Jesus.

- **WHAT?**

- First John addresses a difficult situation in which some members of the church had walked away from the faith. In [1 John 1-2](#), the author teaches the remaining believers how to know they are walking in the truth of God's love.

- **WHERE?**

- The letter does not tell us to whom it was written or where the church was located, but the concerns of the community to know that they were really following the true God are as relevant today as ever.

- **WHEN?**

- While [1 John](#) reflects a concern for the first generation of churches, its exact date is not known. The letter begins with a description of Jesus as Word, similar to the Gospel of John, and is followed by the discussion about confession and forgiveness.

- **CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

- Both the Gospel of [John](#) and [1 John](#) place Jesus at the center of our lives. Both emphasize that Jesus is the Word who existed from the beginning ([John 1:1](#); [1 John 1:1](#)), and it is Jesus who brings forgiveness of sin ([1 John 1:7](#)).

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pause to read [1 John 1:8-2:2](#).*

- Confession is more than a nod toward our need to grow spiritually. It's taking sin as seriously as God takes it and coming to Him with humility and honesty.
- There's forgiveness waiting for you, you know. Jesus has paid for every sin you mention.
- What do you have to confess? And what might happen if you read [John 1:9](#) aloud and choose to believe it?

WELCOME

MUSIC | Worship Playlist

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *During free time, use one of our Spotify playlists to play background music while kids play OR stream the main worship service on your classroom TV to participate in the worship happening in the Auditorium.*

PLAY | Free Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tables will be set with games and activities for kids to play until the lesson begins.*
 - *This is a great opportunity to get to know some kids and work on building relationships.*
 - *Have kids go to the bathroom prior to class beginning*
 - *At the end of Free Time, play the Countdown Video and have kids work together to clean up toys/activities and then join you for the lesson - either on risers or on the floor.*

MEMORY VERSE | Prizes

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *During free time, kids may say their memory verse from the past week to any leader in the room. Place a dot sticker on their name tag to signify that they've said the verse. Give a memory verse prize **AT PICK UP** to any kids with dot stickers.*

WELCOME QUESTION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As kids arrive, warmly welcome them by name. Show them the welcome question written on the white board. Invite kids to be thinking about their answer during free play time. This question will be written on the board as a conversation starter during free time.*
 - **When you play hide and seek, where is your favorite place to hide?**

INTRO

TALK

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play the Countdown Video to signify time to clean up. Gather kids on the*

floor or on the risers. It's always fun to have everyone count down the last 10 seconds together!

- **Welcome to church today, friends! I am so glad to be here with all of you.**
 - *This is a great opportunity to let kids know what the time together will look like! Walk them through the schedule and go over the class rules.*
- **I have a question for you: When you play hide and seek, where is your favorite place to hide?** *Call on several kids to share their answers to the Welcome Question.*
- **While it's fun to hide when we're playing a game with friends, there are some things that we don't need to hide, especially from God, like the wrong things we do. Today, we'll see that it is good to freely confess, or admit, our sins to God because He forgives, or completely removes them from us. First, it's time to be curious.**
 - **Why do you think it's important to say "I'm sorry" when you've done something wrong?** *Offer a few seconds to think about it, then instruct them to do a "turn and talk" with someone sitting next to them where they say, "Good morning!", give each other a high five and then, discuss their answer. Choose a few groups to share their answer with the large group.*
- **Today we're going to learn more about what it means to confess our sins.**

DECLARATION

- **Before we open the Bible together, I have an important reminder for everyone here. Let's declare this together. You can by repeat after me!**
 - **Thank You, God, that You are good!** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **You made me on purpose, for a purpose.** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **I am Your kid!** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **You know me, love me, and lead me.** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **You forgive me of my sins,** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **And You help me to become more like Jesus!** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **My life can tell of Your wonder!** *(Kids repeat.)*

WHAT? What are we talking about today

PRAYER

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words:*
 - **Father, thank You for Jesus, who died for our sins. We invite Your Holy Spirit to show us our wrongdoings so that we can confess them. Thank You for loving and forgiving us always. You are so good! Please help us to become more like You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

(OPTIONAL) BIBLE STORY VIDEO

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Watch the [Prayer of Confession God's Big Story!](#)
 - *NOTE: This short video will introduce the Bible Story and give you a jumping off point for the rest of the teaching. If you split into smaller group for the re-telling of the Bible Story, watch the video together as a large group before doing so.*

BIBLE STORY | 1 John 1-2 (God Forgives)

- **Open a Bible to 1 John. Today we're going to learn from a small book toward the back of our Bibles called 1 John.**
 - *FOR OLDER KIDS: Have kids open their Bible to 1 John, which is located near the end of the Bible. Ask for three volunteers to read [1 John 1:8-10](#), [1 John 2:1-2](#), and [1 John 2:12](#).*
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ahead of time, inflate the red balloon and use a permanent marker to write "Jesus" across it in large letters. Fold the paper or cardstock in half to create a table tent. Set a table at the center of your teaching space. If you have a lab coat, put it on just before starting. Then with the kids watching, enter the teaching area silently and take your time placing the items for the experiment in front of you: red balloon with "Jesus" written on it, plate, salt, pepper, teaspoon, paper or cardstock table tent, a Bible, and safety goggles (if you have them). Once you are prepared, begin addressing the kids from behind the plate.
- **Welcome to our lab! I have a question for you: Have you ever done something that hurt someone else?** Pause for kids to think.
- **You see, we go through life making thousands of decisions every day.** Put on safety goggles if you have them. Then scoop a teaspoon of salt and slowly pour it onto the plate.
- **And most of those decisions are good, helpful, kind, responsible choices.** Shake salt on the plate so it covers the bottom.
- Next, scoop a teaspoon of pepper and slowly pour it onto the plate. **But the truth is we all do wrong, hurtful things sometimes, (shake plate so salt and pepper mix) and those things hurt not only other people but also God.**
- **Sadly, rather than admitting when we do wrong, we sometimes try to cover it up.** Place a tented sheet of paper or cardstock over the plate. **We hide what we did and hope it will go away.**
- If wearing safety goggles, remove them. Move in front of the table and open the Bible to [1 John](#). **The book of 1 John is a letter that tells the church how important it is to admit the wrong things we do and ask for forgiveness. Look at this plate. Lift paper and tilt plate toward the group.**
- **These wrong, hurtful things aren't going away. Nor can we get rid of them ourselves. They're clearly there. Some members of the church denied that they were doing things that hurt God. They said that they never did bad things. Cover plate again with paper.**
- **The author of 1 John says that if we claim we don't do wrong, we are "fooling ourselves" and "the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). The truth he is talking about is Jesus Christ. Jesus gave His life so that we can be forgiven. When we deny that we have sinned—or done wrong things—we are denying what Jesus did for us. In fact, "we are calling God a liar" (1 John 1:10). And that's just silly! God cannot do anything wrong!**
- Walk back behind table, and if you have safety goggles, put them back on. **Sometimes we lie about what we have done because we are afraid of what might happen if others know the truth. (peek under the paper at the salt-and-pepper mess) But 1 John tells us that if we admit—or confess—that we have done wrong, God will eagerly forgive us and treat us as though we had never done wrong at all.**
- Take out the red balloon and rub it on the sleeve of your shirt. **Remember what Jesus did? He gave His life so that we can be forgiven. This balloon is like Jesus. Now watch what happens when we confess our sin and let Jesus come close to us.**

- *Hover the charged balloon just above the plate. The pieces of pepper will stick to the balloon, leaving the plate full of only salt. Put the balloon behind the table.*
- **The sinful things we do still have consequences. Like the small holes left where the pepper used to be on this plate, we still have to deal with the consequences of our choices. That might look like fixing relationships with the people we hurt. But we can know that God always forgives us.**
- **Jesus (hold up balloon) is our advocate, our supporter—the person who speaks to God the Father for us. Jesus gave His life so that we could live forever with Him.**
- **Because of what Jesus did, we can approach God with courage, knowing that God will forgive us. And God doesn't just forgive us, He also strengthens us to love others (draw a heart in the salt on the plate with your finger and tilt it toward the kids so they can see it) instead of hurting them. When we love our brothers and sisters in God's family, it shows that God has truly changed our hearts, and we have been forgiven!**
- *Remove goggles if wearing them, and move in front of the table.*
- **Admitting when we do wrong things can be scary. But we don't need to be afraid to admit our sins and mistakes to God because God loves us. He hears our prayers! And because Jesus is always on our side, we can know for certain that God forgives.**

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

BIG IDEA | God Forgives

- **What does it mean that God forgives?** *Give kids time to contemplate this question and come up with a definition.*
- *After kids give their ideas, affirm their willingness to volunteer before giving them this definition:* **God's forgiveness means our sins (the wrong things we do) have been completely removed from us.**
- **That reminds me of our Big Idea today!**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the Big Idea slide on the screen or the poster on the white board while you have kids repeat after you.*
- **Let's say the Big Idea together: God Forgives.**
- **We don't need to hide our sins as though we are ashamed or afraid of getting in trouble. Instead, we can bring them to the One who can actually help us with our sins!**
- **God loves us and He doesn't withhold His love because of the wrong choices we have made. Instead, God will forgive us. Jesus paid for our sins by dying on the cross, so when God forgives us, He removes our guilt; it's like He makes the inside of us—our thoughts and feelings—clean.**
- **We can confess our sins to God and trust that He will always forgive us.**

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 66:19-20 (NIV)

- **Our memory verse reminds us that God loves us. And he loves us even though we make wrong choices. We can confess our sins to him and ask for his forgiveness any time, any place. We do that through prayer.**
- **Listen to what our Memory Verse says:**

- **"But God has surely listened and has heard my prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!" Psalm 66:19-10**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the verse to the kids, then encourage them to stand and repeat after you with the following motions:*
 - **But God has surely listened** (*Point up*)
 - **and has heard my prayer.** (*Point to ears*)
 - **Praise be to God** (*Lift hands in praise*)
 - **who has not rejected my prayer** (*shake finger as if saying "no"*)
 - **or withheld his love from me!** (*cross hands over heart*)
 - **Psalm 66:19-20** (*clap hands together, then open like a book*)
- **Nice work, friends! This verse reminds us that God listens to us when we pray. He does not withhold his love from us. You can talk to God about your sin and he will forgive you!**
- **Now, we're going to have a chance to talk with our friends in small groups about everything we learned today and spend some time praying.**

SMALL GROUPS

DISCUSSION | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you haven't already, split kids into smaller groups, ideally by grade. Use the following questions to help reinforce the lesson.*
 - *NOTE: Invite kids to share any questions they might have. Some kids have an easier time listening if their hands are busy. You may choose to pass out coloring sheets and allow kids to color as you discuss. You might also consider having kids lead the discussion by asking the following questions.*
- **What are some words used to describe God in [1 John 1-2](#)?** (Help kids find the passage and reread [1 John 1:8-10](#); [2:12](#) together.)
- **What will God do if we confess to Him, or admit, the wrong things we do?**
- **Who paid for our sins?**
- **Is it hard or easy for you to admit when you have done something wrong? Why do you think that is?**
- **How does it make you feel to know that God will always forgive you?**
- **It's encouraging to know that even though we sin, God always forgives. And He doesn't stop there; when we confess our sins, God helps us become more like Him. Let's ask God for the courage to share our sins with Him so that we can come to Him for forgiveness.**

PRAYER

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite kids into a time of prayer. Encourage them to share praises and requests from the week and to pray for one another. If they aren't sure what to pray for, invite them to ask God to help them become more like Jesus. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God for His love and forgiveness.*

EXTRA TIME ACTIVITY | Hidden Treasure

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids sit in a circle. Ask for one person to be a pirate who is searching for the hidden treasure. The pirate will stand in the middle of the circle searching for treasure. The treasure he is seeking is a coin. All the kids in the circle should make their hands into fists in their laps. Have the pirate close his eyes while you give one kid in the group the coin. Once the pirate opens his eyes, the kids will begin passing the coin until the pirate thinks he knows where it is. All kids should act as if they are passing the coin, even if they don't have it yet. When the pirate thinks he has found the coin, he can say, "Stop! Thar she is!" (in his best pirate voice for good measure) and point to the kid who has the coin. All kids must stop passing the coin at this point. The person who is discovered must reveal what's hidden (or not) in her hands. If the pirate is correct, he will take the coin from the kid, and they will switch places. The first pirate will then give the coin to a different kid while the new pirate closes her eyes. If your group is large, consider having kids form smaller groups of 8–10 for this activity.*
- **Hiding can be fun when we're playing a game like the one we just played. However, when it comes to our relationship with God, we don't need to hide anything, even our sins.**
- **Sin is a wrong choice and can be anything we do that isn't part of God's perfect plan. Sin separates us from God.**
- **Unlike the pirates in our game, though, God isn't out to catch us and the sins we hide. Instead, He wants us to confess them on our own. He knows that when we confess them and admit to our wrongdoings, we recognize that we need God's help to be more like Him. God loves us! And we should never fear being honest with Him because we have confidence that today's Big Idea is true.**