



OUTSTANDING

*object lessons*

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# INTRODUCTION

One of the most treasured lessons in Christianity is that God is involved in all facets of our lives and cares about what appear to be the smallest of things. This concept resonates by using simple household items to reveal the nature of God. God shows us things about himself via a bottle cap, a piece of string, an extension cord, an egg.

Important truths about God can be found simply by examining items like these. And lessons using simple household items as a centerpiece tend to be easy for kids to understand and simple for teachers to execute.

Hence we're presenting "28 Object Lessons." You'll find the comparisons enlightening and useful in teaching kids Christian lessons. For example, mittens, hats, and snow wear represent "the whole armor of God." An extension cord is the power of the Holy Spirit that keeps us "plugged in" to our Father.

Each lesson takes between 10 and 15 minutes. Most contain interactive elements including questions for the children to answer or things for them to do. Each is broken down for easy understanding into parts:

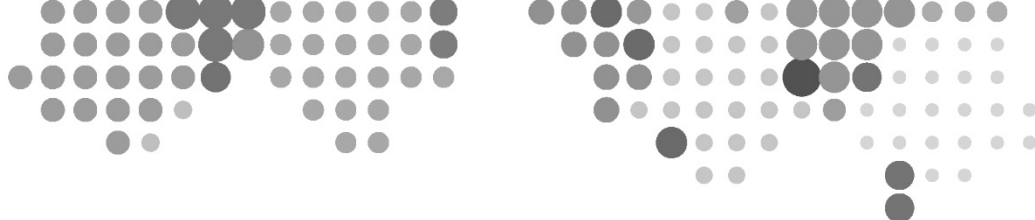
Message, Related Scriptures, Materials Needed, Preparation Needed, and the Lesson itself. Lessons are easy to teach because they contain exact wording for teachers who are uncomfortable speaking extemporaneously. The words can serve as a guideline for those who like to add their own flair and flavor. All words for teachers in the lessons are in bold type.

Add your own signature to these or teach them effectively as presented...your students will be sure to learn to see God in everyday life, in every day things, and yet with wonder and inspiration that they can carry all week!



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# OBJECT LESSON #1

## FLASHLIGHT

### GOD WANTS YOU TO BE FILLED WITH LIGHT

#### MESSAGE:

A flashlight filled with rags illustrates our lack of power before confession of sins. Getting rid of the rags and filling the flashlight with batteries is synonymous to us having the strength of the Spirit.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 5:14, 1 John 1:9

#### OBJECTS NEEDED:

- Flashlight, batteries not inserted
- Small, dirty rags or paper towels
- Two dirty cotton balls
- A piece of old sponge

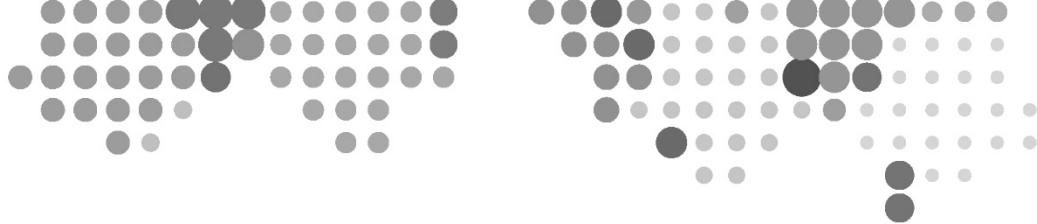
#### PREPARATION:

- Insert rags, cotton, and sponge piece into the flashlight and tighten it before the lesson starts, and don't let students see you do it.
- Keep the batteries to the side.

#### LESSON:

**Jesus says in Matthew 5:14 that we Christians are “the light of the world.” What does he mean by that?** *That we should be well-behaved and a good example for others. They should give examples of good behavior.*

**But we're not always able to be on our best behavior. We mess things up often and easily, don't we? Here's what we are like.** *Hold up the flashlight. God wants us to be the light of the world. He wants us to light up with good behavior, just like this flashlight.*



*Try to turn the flashlight on. Because the rags are inserted, it won't.*

**Uh-oh. What's wrong here? The flashlight won't light. I wonder why not. Anybody else want to try?**

*Pass it around and let the children try to light it. One ought to be assertive enough to unscrew the light and see if the batteries are in correctly. If not, do so yourself. If students pull everything out, put everything back in to continue the lesson.*

**There's a good reason the flashlight won't light! The batteries aren't in it. What's in it instead?**

*Dirty rags or paper towels. Take one and hold it up.*

**This dirty rag is sort of like our sins. When *they* fill us, we aren't able to shed any light.**

**When we confess our sins, that's the first part of being a light of the world.** *Shut your eyes and confess to God something you did wrong recently. Ask him to forgive you. Crumple up the rag, and drop it to the ground.*

**There. I've confessed what I did wrong before God and asked him to make things right for me. That's sort of like crumpling up the dirty part of myself and tossing it aside.**

*Go back in the flashlight and pull out another rag. **Sometimes, I've been doing a really lot of things wrong.** Confess yet another thing you've been doing wrong. Ask for forgiveness. Crumple up the next thing that comes out of the flashlight.*

**But God is big enough to forgive all the things we do wrong. He wants us to confess, why?**

*Take everything out of the flashlight, crumpling and discarding. The kids should say that God wants all sin out of your life.*

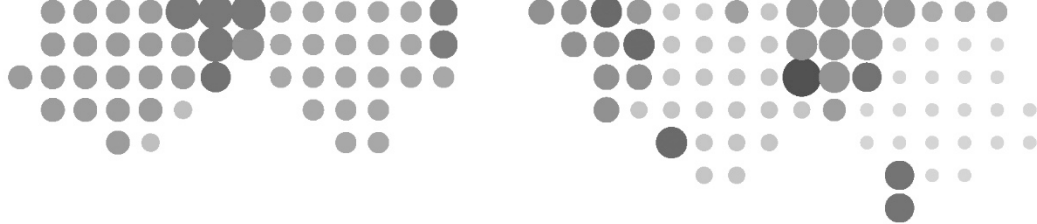
**When we confess things we do wrong, God is faithful and just to forgive us, according to 1 John 1:9. He wants us to be clean. Like this.**

*Turn the flashlight and let them see the inside of the barrel that is empty.*

**When we're clean of our sins, we ought to be able to shine and be the lights of the world, right?**

*Screw the flashlight back together and try to turn it on. It still won't.*

**Wait. It still doesn't work. Something is missing. What is it?**



*Kids will say it's the batteries. Talk as you screw the batteries inside. Make sure you have them going in the proper direction!*

**Once God has “emptied” us our sins by forgiving us, we are like empty vessels. Then we can be filled with his spirit, which is like these batteries. Asking for forgiveness after we mess up is great. But to be God’s light, we have to be asked be filled with his light once our sins are gone away.**

*Turn on the flashlight. It will shine brightly.*

**It’s easy – with school and neighborhood friends, and sisters and brothers - to get caught up in wrong things and do them. Before long, we can’t shine at all because we’re all filled up with wrong things. We only need to confess and feel sorry. When God takes our sins, then he can fill us with his spirit, which is like the batteries.**

Filled with God’s spirit, we can shine brightly before all!

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, please hear us on this day as we silently confess anything we’ve done that’s bothering us. *Silent pause as children reflect.* Please take these “rags” of our behavior away from us. Make us clean. Now, fill us with your light. Help us remember all week that we are light to others. Others are counting on us to be a light so they can know you also.

Amen.





# OBJECT LESSON #2

## *ELECTRICAL CORD*

### **GOD NEEDS YOU TO BE PLUGGED IN TO HIS WORD**

#### **MESSAGE:**

An extension cord illustrates the extra power we need from the Spirit, as we always come up short.

#### **RELATED SCRIPTURES:**

John 14:16, Romans 8:26

#### **MATERIALS:**

- Small mirror
- Hairbrush
- Hair dryer
- Hair spray

#### **PREPARATION:**

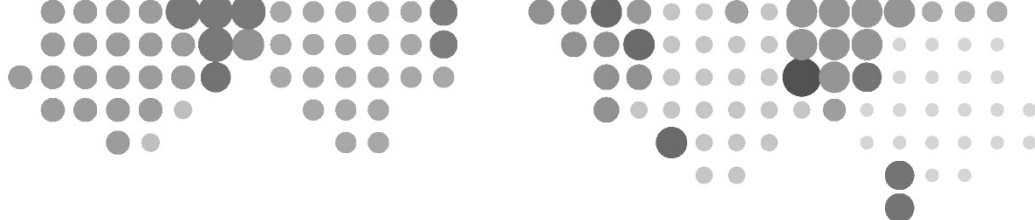
- Set up a little vanity for yourself on a Sunday school table that isn't close to any outlet.
- Wet your hair a bit, though you don't need to soak your head.

#### **LESSON:**

**Today, I want to look really good. I have somewhere very important to go. God doesn't want us to be vain, but he likes when we look nice. How do we know? Think of a zebra. How can a zebra let us know about God's desire for things to look nice?**

*Zebbras are one of the most beautiful land animals God has made. Their stripes are just perfect. A zebra can be a manifestation of God's artistry and appreciation of beauty.*

**Well, the place I have to go is church-related, so that makes it even more important. I want to look my nicest for God. But look at this! I accidentally got water in my hair, and if it's going to shine and bounce, I need to dry it.**



*Hold out the end of the dryer cord to the nearest student. Would you plug this in for me, please?*

*The students will know that the cord does not reach to the nearest outlet.*

**I really want to look nice for my church meeting. Sometimes the things I want to do, I can't do very easily. I need help from God.**

*Hold up the hair dryer. This hair dryer is a little like us. God gave us a great set of insides (knock on the dryer). We're complete to do great things. We're strong and powerful and meant to help out (turn the switch on). But sometimes...nothing happens. We can't do the things we're supposed to do.*

**What's the answer in this case?**

*Hold up your extension cord. A student should recommend that you use it.*

**I want to do the things that God designed me to do. But I can't do them on my own. I need his long reach.**

*Plug the dryer into the extension cord. This cord is very much like something God sent to us to help us when we're in trouble. In John 14:16, Jesus says, "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another helper, that he may abide with you forever." Does anyone know who that helper is?*

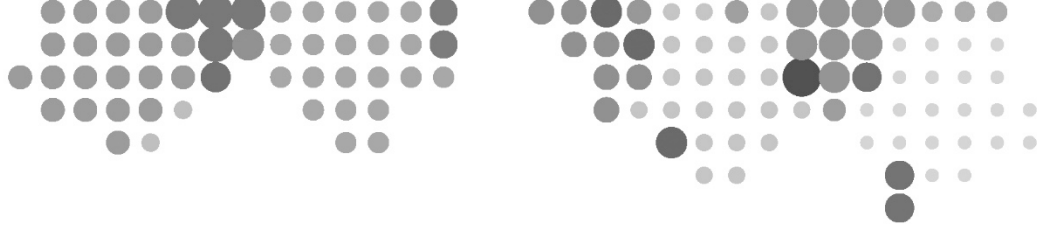
*Someone should come up with the Holy Spirit.*

**This plug is like the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to us and "plugs us in" to God.**

*Plug the extension cord into the wall outlet that you couldn't reach otherwise.*

**When we're filled with the Holy Spirit, voila! Turn on the dryer. Begin drying your hair. Suddenly, we can do everything God designed us to do.**

**This dryer will dry my hair, so that I can look nice for my church meeting. That's because it's plugged in. The dryer could not have reached the outlet without the extension cord. (Keep drying.) As a Christian, I want to speak to people about Jesus and behave in ways that would make him happy. But sometimes, I get afraid to speak about Jesus. I'm afraid people will make fun of me or that I'll say something stupid. And even though I want to behave like the perfect Christian, I'm always messing up. Maybe I'll hear myself repeat gossip, or maybe I'll get jealous of someone who has something that I've always wanted but don't have. I do that instead of being happy for that person. I can't make it by myself.**



**My “spiritual cord” isn’t long enough to reach God’s power.**

*Stop drying and go sit at your vanity, and brush your hair.*

**When I asked the Holy Spirit to help me, he provides the extra piece that I need to be “plugged in to God.” Romans 8:26 says, “The Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us.”**

**I don’t really understand electricity. But I know it works. I don’t really understand how the Holy Spirit works, but I know that he does. When I ask daily to be filled and to let the Holy Spirit guide me, I find that I can function the way God wants me to.**

**Who wants to spray my hair for me? *Don’t let them get it in your eyes!***

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, you know that when I try to be a good Christian on my own, I always come up short. Thank you for providing the Holy Spirit, that extension of you, that extension *to* you, so that we can be “plugged in” to your power. Help me to remember every morning to ask to be plugged in so that I can make you proud.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #3

## CATERPILLAR

### CATERPILLARS MIGHT THINK THE WORLD IS ALL CATERPILLARS

#### MESSAGE:

Caterpillars and butterflies illustrate what we're like before death and after death, making the concept of death a little more understandable.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Exodus 34:29 & 30, 1 Corinthians 13:12

#### MATERIALS:

- Caterpillars, if it's early autumn, or pictures of caterpillars that the children can hold and pass around.
- A picture of a cocoon and a butterfly. *Helpful note: A great variety are pictured in the Wikipedia entry for Caterpillar.*

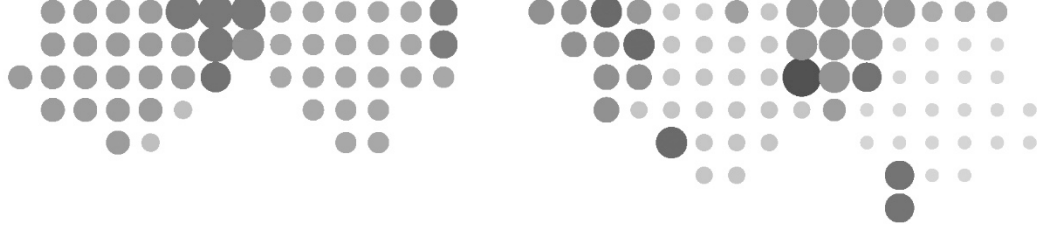
#### PREPARATION:

- Set the caterpillar on the table to children can watch it move around. Or if you only have photos, have enough so that the children can pass them back and forth during the early parts of the lesson.

#### LESSON:

**Sometimes God uses animals to give us clues about things we don't understand. For example, we don't really understand death. Some of us have had loved ones die. We're told that they're in a higher place now and they're better off, but it's kind of hard for us to believe. All we know is what we have here on earth.**

**We're a little like caterpillars.**



**Someday this caterpillar will go into a cocoon.** *Show a picture of a cocoon.* **Some people believe that Christians sleep for a while before they enter heaven. We're not really sure, but if that's true, we'll be like this caterpillar, in a cocoon and very much asleep so we won't even be aware of time passing.**

**And when this caterpillar finally wakes up again...voila!** *Show picture of the butterfly.* **He's still *him*, but he's not a caterpillar anymore. What is he? A butterfly.**

**Do we think it's better to be a caterpillar or a butterfly?** *They ought to say a butterfly, but dig for various reasons:*

*Butterflies are able to do a lot more things—like fly! A caterpillar can only crawl.*

*Butterflies are prettier.*

*Butterflies are freer and more versatile. Caterpillars mainly only eat and crawl.*

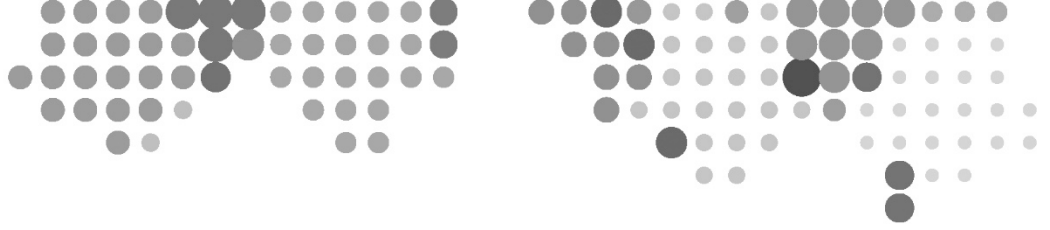
**Caterpillars are like us down here, and butterflies are more like people up in heaven. People in heaven are able to do a lot more things—maybe even fly! Their bodies will be perfect, while ours are kind of sluggish and not nearly as pretty. We get sick down here, we have flaws in our skin, and let's face it: we're kind of clunky. A caterpillar can only crawl, and compared to all the things we'll be able to do in heaven, we are sort of like him.**

**We said butterflies are prettier than caterpillars. When we get up to heaven, what might we look like?** *Take their ideas, and some you can note to them include references to great light surrounding them.*

**Exodus 34:29-30** says, “Moses came down from Mount Sinai, carrying the Ten Commandments. His face was shining brightly because the LORD had been speaking to him. But Moses did not know at first that his face was shining. When Aaron and the others looked at Moses, they saw that his face was shining, and they were afraid to go near him.” Other faces shone brightly in the Bible, when the persons had either come down from heaven or were exposed to someone else who came down.

**We said that butterflies can do more things than caterpillars. “Butterflies are free to fly,”** sang rock-and-roll star Elton John. **Will be we freer and able to do more in heaven? If so, like what?** *Allow them to guess and speculate.*

**But still, right now, we're caterpillars. And caterpillars can't think very well, can they?**



**They're not very insightful, and in fact, they're kind of stupid, aren't they? It would be very hard for a caterpillar to understand what a butterfly is. In its instinct or nature, it knows it's moving toward something, perhaps that it will be something bigger someday.**

**That's sort of like us trying to understand that *we're* moving toward eternity and that we'll be something bigger someday.**

**Caterpillars might not even know that much. Caterpillars don't have great eyes. They don't see very well. They can see the food in front of them, but they can't process a whole human being. Do you ever think that spiritually, maybe we don't have great eyes either? Maybe we can see things we're supposed to eat, drink, play with, read, and study for school...but maybe we are surrounded by angels and spiritual beings, but we can't "process" them with the eyes we have now.**

**There are many verses in the Bible that claim our "eyes will be opened" someday to the glory of God. One is in 1 Corinthians 13:12. "Now, we see through a mirror dimly, but then, face to face." Jesus healed many blind people to give us clues about someday us having our "full sight" of what God and heavenly creatures are really like.**

**Might caterpillars think the entire world is made up of caterpillars, since they can't see well enough to process a human, or even a dog or cat? Did you ever hear people say that there is no god, no angels, no nothing except what you can see, hear, touch, smell, and taste? Do you think they're being a little like stupid caterpillars?**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for giving us the animal kingdom. Thank you for giving us clues about your nature and your plan for us. Help us to always look for insights about you in your creation.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #4

## BUTTON

### GOD WANTS YOU TO FASTEN YOURSELF TO HIM

#### MESSAGE:

God is like a button. He can be our best friend but we need to “sew” ourselves to him with prayer.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 10:16-20, Psalms 91:2-6 & 11

#### MATERIALS:

- One large button
- Threaded needle
- A piece of fabric
- Scissors

#### PREPARATION:

- Thread the needle
- Tie a knot in the end

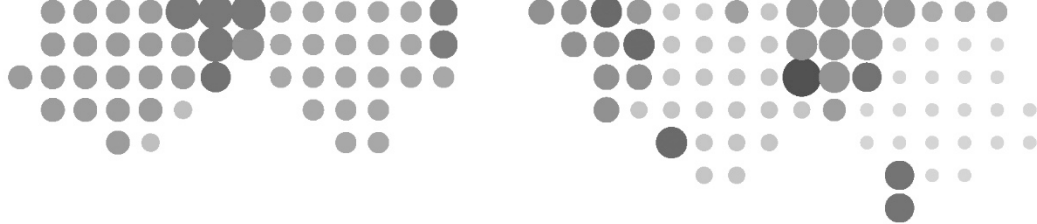
#### LESSON:

**How many of you have a best friend?** *Get them to raise hands.* **What’s your best friend’s name?**

**Actually, you have a better best friend than that person. How many of you have ever thought of God as your best friend?**

**Of course God wants you to have friends down here on earth, but he wants to be your best friend. God can do great things for you that your best friends can’t.**

**God can give you the right things to say. Matthew 10:16-20 says that when you’re asked tough questions about right and wrong, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. “At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”**



**God can protect you like earthly friends can't. Psalm 91:2-6 says, God is a refuge and a fortress. "You won't need to worry about dangers at night or arrows during the day. And you won't fear diseases that strike in the dark or sudden disaster at noon." Verse 11 says, "God will command his angels to protect you wherever you go."**

**But to have God as a best friend, we have to stay really close to him. Sometimes that's hard. It's like....*pick up the button and the piece of fabric...a button that keeps falling off. Sometimes God can seem to fall away from us in the middle of the week.***

**What happens when a button comes off your clothing? What does your mom do? *Many these days will have non-sewing moms, but some should say that Mom will sew it back on.***

**We have to "sew" Jesus close to our hearts. He's like this pretty button. What we mean by that is we have to get in good habits, like praying every day for God's wisdom and protection. A prayer is like this needle.**

***Hold up threaded needle. Prayers are sharp. And strong. They poke through our tough situations.***

***Poke the needle into the fabric. Pull the thread through a bit, then stop. The thread is like the Holy Spirit. It reaches out between God and us and helps draw us close to him.***

***Pull the needle farther until it meets the knot. If we pray every day, it's like adding another stitch to hold the button to the fabric of our lives. Praying every day is strengthens our relationship with God.***

***Make three or four stitches. If your kids are old enough and responsible enough, you can have them sew a button to fabric of their own. Just warn against poking fingers or eyes!***

***If we've been praying daily for quite a while, God will be held to us with strength. Tie the button off and cut the thread. Pull on the needle a few times.***

**Jesus is like the button. Our prayers are like the needle. The Holy Spirit is like the thread. Our lives are the fabric. If we want Jesus to be close to us, we should sew in another stitch of his love and strength every day. How do we get closer to Jesus? *Pray daily.***

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, Let us begin to pray daily right this very minute, and help us to remember to do it every day. We ask for your strength and your wisdom on this day, and we know we'll get stronger and closer to you if we put a in stitch of prayer every morning when we wake up. Amen.





# OBJECT LESSON #5

## BOTTLE CAP

### PRESERVING THE FIZZ IN OUR FAITH

#### MESSAGE:

A comparison between plain water and sparkling water can illustrate our lives before meeting Christ and now.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

2 Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 3:1

#### MATERIALS:

- One plastic bottle of water
- One or more plastic bottles of Sprite or 7-Up—enough to give the whole class a full glass.
- Two clear drinking glasses, either plastic or glass.
- Small cups—enough for each child to have one.

#### PREPARATION:

- None

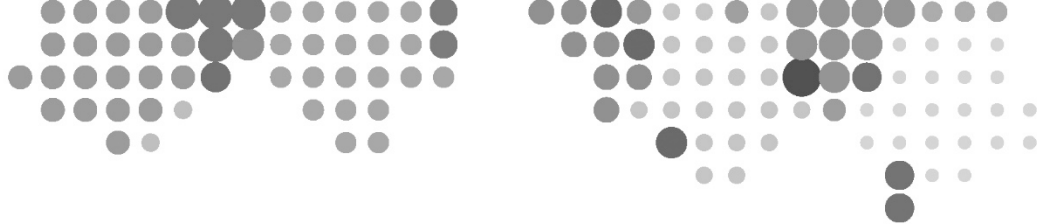
#### LESSON:

**The apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. It’s sort of like these two bottles here.**

*Hold up water in left hand, soda in right hand.*

**In my left hand, I have a bottle of water.** *Have a student open the bottle.*

**Let’s pour some in a glass.** *Have the student take the bottle and pour some in a cup. Tell the student to sit back down.*



**In my right hand, I have a bottle of Sprite. Let's pour some of that in a glass.** *Have another student take the bottle and break the seal on the cap. This time stop her.*

**Did you hear that? What kind of a noise did that bottle just make?** *They should answer that the fizz created a squirting noise.*

**This bottle sounds more "alive" than the plain water, doesn't it?** *Have the student pour some soda into the other cup.*

**What is this liquid doing that the other didn't do?** *It's sizzling and sparkling. Have the student sit down.*

**Before we give our lives to Jesus, we're a little like this plain water. We look okay, but we're kind of bland. We're kind of boring.**

**After we give our lives to Jesus, we're more like this soda pop. We sparkle. We come alive.**

**Now let's notice something about the two glasses. If we don't touch either for a minute or so...do they look sort of the same?** *Yes, they look very much the same. They're both clear. But one makes a sparkle every once in a while.*

**Often times in life, Christians look very much the same as other people. But when it comes time to show the love of Jesus in our lives, we tend to sparkle. How do we do that? How do we get the power to look more sparkly than others?** *God fills us with his love and power, which makes us different.*

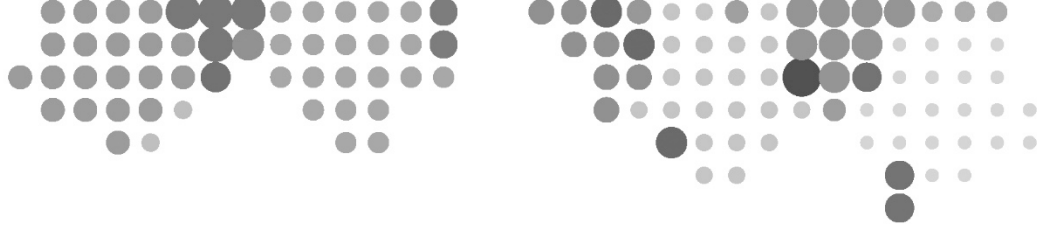
**Colossians 3:1 says it very well: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sets at the right hand of God... set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth." If we practice that all the time, we will sparkle.**

**So, once God fills us, one of two things can happen.** *Put the lid on the bottle.*

**We can keep our sparkle or...** *Take the lid off again and toss it to a student.*

**What happens when we leave the cap off a bottle of soda pop overnight?** *It loses its sparkle.*

**It becomes like the water again, doesn't it? No sparkle? Who wants to drink flat soda pop? As Christians, we want to keep our sparkle.** *Ask for the cap back from the student and hold it up.*



**If we're going to act like new creations, we have to take care to preserve our sparkle. We have to ask for God's protection.**

**The bottle cap is like God's protection. We have to put it on... we have to ask God for it.**

*Put the cap on the bottle but leave it loose.*

*Pray, "Father, we ask that you protect our Christian sparkle. Help us to resist temptation when we're with kids who are doing things you wouldn't like..." Screw the lid on with one twist.*

**"Father, help us remember to speak with you every day so that you can make us stronger."** *Give the lid another twist.*

**"Use us, Father, so that others may know you because we sparkle from your love and power."** *Give the lid a final twist.*

**"Amen."**

*Pass out cups. And of course it's really important when you're God's new creation, that you share your sparkle with others!*

*Put some Sprite into the cups and have a drink together.*

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

*[Said before passing out of soda cups.]*



# OBJECT LESSON #6

## *LIGHT BULB*

### WHEN JESUS COMES BACK

#### MESSAGE:

When Jesus came to earth 2,000 years ago, he was like a flame of a candle. When he comes again he will be like a light bulb.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

John 11:25, Revelation 22:20

#### MATERIALS:

- Candle (If your church has a strict fire code an electric candle with a dull flame can be substituted for a real one.)
- Matches
- Lamp without shade
- Light bulb
- Extension cord (if you're not near an outlet)
- Darkness

#### PREPARATION:

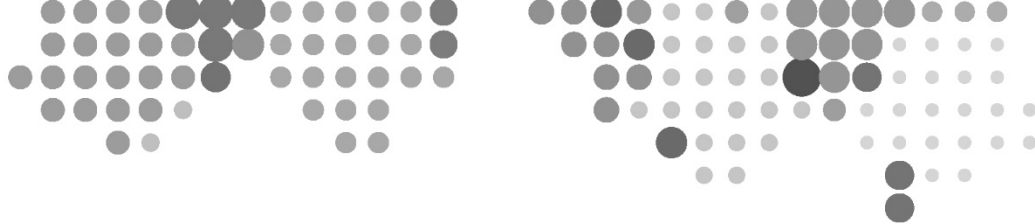
- Plug in the lamp with the light bulb in it but keep it turned off and out of sight
- Close the drapes or blinds so the area is as dark as possible

#### LESSON:

**Most people say that throughout Jesus' three-year ministry, he never traveled more than 30 miles from his hometown. It's amazing that Jesus is the most well-known figure in human history, and he was also so humble.**

*Light the match and light the candle. (Keep matches and flame away from children).*

**The Son of God was born in a manger on a cold and windy night. He was wrapped in rags**



as his parents had no clothes for him. He drew shepherds and wise men to him as signs and wonders appeared in the skies around Bethlehem. Somehow his light managed to penetrate the dark of a harsh and cold world, much like this candle.

Once his ministry started, he spent most of his time healing the sick in small towns. Word would get out that “the healer” was in town, and so many sick people would gather, that Jesus would be backed against a wall, barely able to move. Yet, he spoke of love and hope and promises for the future of mankind. The only thing he took for himself was rest...away from the crowds...to speak to the Heavenly Father in private prayer.

Even his disciples thought that once Jesus reached Jerusalem for Passover, that he would somehow be crowned King, and he would lead a great army to set Israel free. But Jerusalem turned out to be a different story. There, he was arrested because leaders were jealous of him. He was whipped and beaten, made to carry a cross while everyone watched, and he was nailed to it and hung in the sun until... he died.

*Blow out the candle.*

God’s ways are mysterious to us. Sometimes it looks like we’re in horrible circumstances, and even that our lives are over. Yet Jesus said very plainly in John 11:25, “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.’”

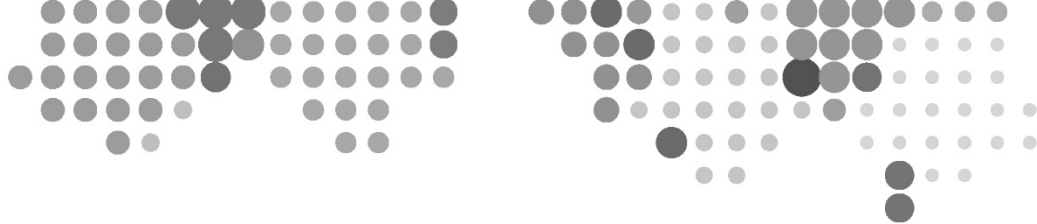
God’s never breaks his promises. The greatest thing about Christianity is that every story can, and will, end happily therein. If you’re in a rough patch, or someone you know is in a rough patch, it only means that it’s not the last chapter. It’s a suspenseful story that will end well - when we all meet in heaven.

As for Jesus? Some people said he died, and that’s the end of the story. But other people, special people, saw him alive. A month or so after his murder, 500 people saw him alive near Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ is alive. He’s in heaven. And someday... he’s coming back. Only this time, in a bigger form...

*Pick up the light, hit the switch, and hold it up.*

He said in Revelation If we’re going to believe in the light of God, we have to believe it in good times and bad. When things get bad, we have to believe he has a bigger plan for us



**that what we're thinking of. We have to believe he's coming back, and in the meantime, everything is in his control.**

**We need to let his light fill us so we can be his lamps in a dark world. "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 22:20. Pray with me...**

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, your Son Jesus is the light of the world. Bring him into our hearts today. We want to live in the light. We want to see a dark world clearly. And we want to be a light for others. In Jesus' name,

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #7

## SPOON

### WHY GOD DOESN'T GIVE US TONS OF STUFF

#### MESSAGE:

We all get materialistic urges at times. God usually spoon-feeds us the things we get in life, or we'd make a huge mess.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURE:

Proverbs 30:8-9

#### BEST TAUGHT IN:

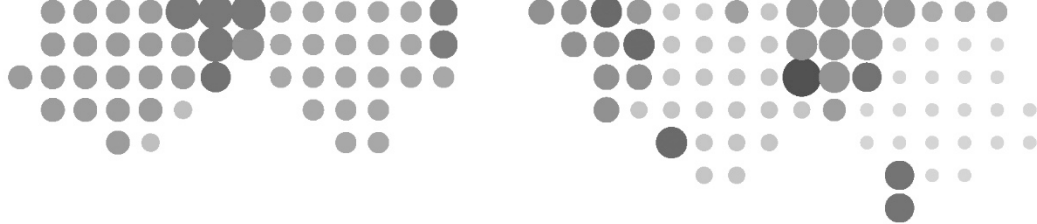
This is good for Holiday season, as the discussion covers Holiday shopping and wish lists.

#### MATERIALS:

- Plastic or Styrofoam bowls
- Any popular kids' cereal (enough for everyone to have some)
- Milk
- Plastic spoons

#### PREPARATION:

- Put a bowl in front of everyone
- Pass around the cereal box so students can pour some for themselves
- Pass around the milk or put milk on top of cereal for all students
- Hide the spoons!



## LESSON:

**Okay, we've got this great cereal! Let's eat!**

*Someone should announce very quickly that there are no spoons.*

**Oh, dear! What are we going to do? If we try to eat with our fingers, we'll end up with a huge mess! There will be milk all over the table...soggy cereal all over the floor... soggy cereal on our outfits.**

**Without spoons, we'd have to eat this cereal with our fingers. Ew! Sticky! Or we'd have to get the bowl up to our mouths—don't try it! Most of us would have soggy milk running down our necks!**

**I have spoons!** *Pass out the spoons. Now everyone can enjoy their cereal while I talk.*

**How many of you have gone through a catalog or a website that has lots of outfits or electronics displayed?** *Take answers. And how many of you have thought you wanted almost everything on a page?* *Take answers.*

**When we wish for something like 100 outfits or dozens of electronic games, we don't often get that much. We usually get one or two. In America we're lucky. Sometimes girls can get up to five outfits for Christmas. But it rarely feels like "everything we wanted."**

**God is a little like this spoon.** *Hold up some cereal on the spoon.*

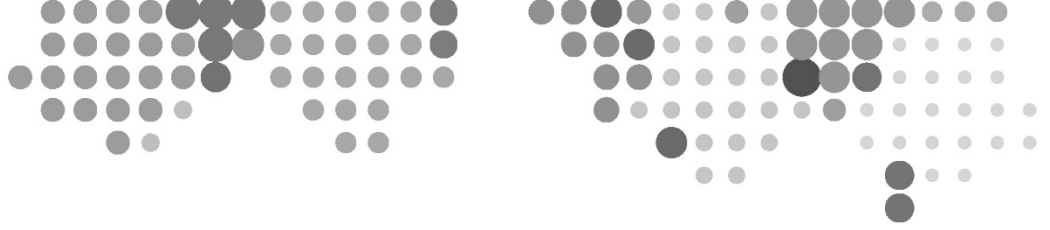
**He spoons good things out to us in small "mouthfuls." Do you know what I mean?** *Eat what's on your spoon.*

**He doesn't allow us to have too much stuff or to be given too many clothes very often. Why not?** *Because we'll get spoiled. Because we'll make a huge mess.*

**If we're given too much, and we don't rely on God to give us the things we need when we need them, we can end up with a huge mess. We can become spoiled and think we're entitled to a lot of stuff. That's sort of like putting this bowl to our mouths and gulping. What can happen?** *We'll make a mess and maybe even choke.*

**There's a thing called "spiritual indigestion." It's when you have so many material things that you can't "taste" the spirit of God anymore. One prophet in the Old Testament said in Proverbs 30:8-9,**





Give me neither poverty nor riches,  
but give me only my daily bread.  
Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you  
and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’  
Or I may become poor and steal,  
and so dishonor the name of my God.

**We need God to spoon our blessings out to us. When we get one outfit for Christmas instead of the 40 we could have picked out online—let’s learn to be thankful. God is spooning out what we need, so that we don’t make a huge mess, so that we don’t get so much that we forget either about him or the important things in life.**

**Let’s thank God for his abundance, which comes to us in spoonfuls.**

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for supplying all our needs. Thank you as well for not giving us so much that we get “spiritual indigestion” and forget about you. Thanks for spooning out to us what we can deal with, without making a huge mess.



# OBJECT LESSON #8

## SOAP BAR

### JESUS CLEANSSES US FROM OUR STICKY SINS

#### MESSAGE:

Sins are sticky. Jesus is like soap. He washes away that sticky sin if we ask for forgiveness.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Hebrews 4:16, 1 John 1:9

#### MATERIALS:

- One cup of syrup
- Giant pixie stick or cup of granulated sugar
- One cup of gravel
- Warm water
- Soap
- Towels

Place the items where you have access to warm water. (Note: sticky things will not come off of hands with only cold water!)

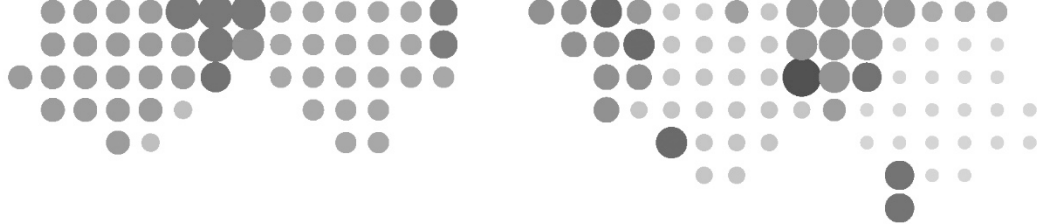
#### PREPARATION:

- Open pixie stick and have other ingredients in their own cups.

#### LESSON:

*Pour a quarter-sized dab of pixie stick candy in each child's palm.*

**Go ahead! Lick it! Try not to make a mess! Pixie sticks are mostly sugar. We've been told by all the experts that sugar is not good for us. Sugar is a little like sin. It might taste really good to eat sugar, and it might actually feel good committing a sin. For example, if someone makes you mad, and you call them a bad name... it might feel gratifying for a moment, but that doesn't make it right. When we eat sugar it tastes really good. But it also corrodes our teeth, makes us restless, and later, when our blood sugar drops, it can**



**make us tired and grouchy.**

**Let's pretend somebody accidentally stepped on our lunch at school and ruined our sandwich. We have less to eat, and we were looking forward to that sandwich. So we yell at the person: "You are a stupid klutz! I cannot believe you just did that, idiot!"**

**That's the "sin" that's like this sugar in your palm. It tasted good, didn't it? And it might have felt great to say something hurtful. But now, try to open and close your palm. What has happened?**

*It's sticky.*

**If you don't say you're sorry for a sin and ask God to wash it away, that stick makes things worse—it makes it easier to sin the next time. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." We should. What happens if we don't?**

*Add a quarter-size dollop of syrup to their palms.*

Now, we've got a slightly bigger mess, don't we? It still tastes good...go ahead! Tell me what it is! *Syrup.*

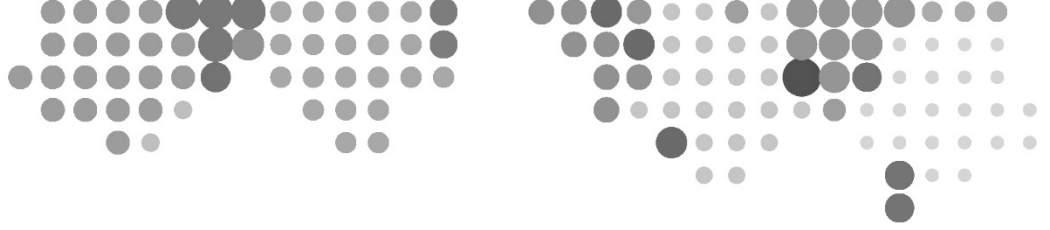
**So, let's say you didn't ask God's forgiveness for that last thing you did. This time, somebody knocks your bike over and the chain comes off. You remember the look of fear you put on the kid's face who stepped on your sandwich. It felt kind of powerful having people fear you, didn't it? You remember that. This time, it's easier. "How could you be such an idiot? Don't you even know how to walk? Are you blind? Didn't you see my bike?"**

**Now, make a fist and open it. That stickiness is getting to be a mess, isn't it? But! It still tastes sweet. Taste it again.**

**But eventually, if you don't ask God to help you stop, you'll find it stops tasting good. Sometimes after we're mean, we go home at night and when we're all alone in our beds, we remember the hurt on the other person's face. We know how we would feel if somebody spoke that way to us. What is that icky feeling called when you know you hurt someone else? *Guilt.***

*Go around and put a quarter sized dollop of gravel in each person's hand.*

**Now, we've got the stickiness of our sin, a greater stickiness because we didn't ask**



**forgiveness, and it was easy to attract another sin. And now we've got guilt, and guilt means our sin isn't enjoyable. It doesn't taste good!**

**So, what do we do? First thing to know: It's never too late to ask for Jesus' help. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Let's get rid of this sticky mess, shall we?**

*Show everyone to the sink. Or if you have warm water in your classroom, put the bowl in the middle of the table with a couple bars of soap. Have children take turns using the soap to get the stick off. You may need a washcloth or paper towels also.*

**Jesus is like this bar of soap. He's always available to take away our sins—to keep us from getting sticky and messy and hurting others. Let's all thank Jesus for his love and forgiveness, no matter how big a mess we've made.**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for your love and for the love and forgiveness provided through Jesus, your son. Help us to understand that no mess is too big for you to clean up. Help us to come to you immediately when we do something wrong so that we can be clean and make you happy. Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #9

## *FLOWERS*

### WE DON'T HAVE A BOUQUET 'TIL WE GIVE THEM AWAY

#### MESSAGE:

A bouquet is more beautiful than a single flower, and a bouquet can illustrate the concept of giving.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURE:

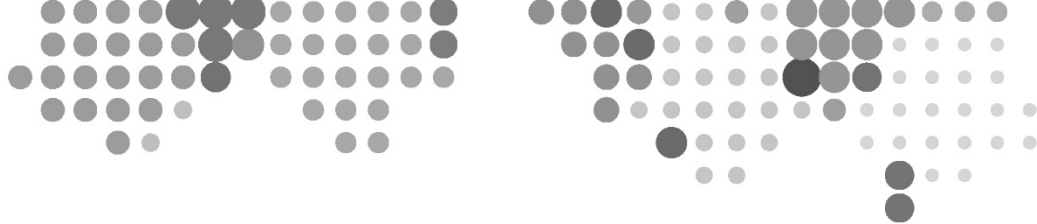
Matthew 5:40

#### MATERIALS:

- One colorful bouquet of flowers from the supermarket with enough pieces (flowers, green stalks, etc.) for every child to hold a piece.
- One vase filled with water
- One pitcher filled with water
- Small paper cups, one for each child
- Small candies such as candy kisses or candy hearts, five or six for each child

#### PREPARATION:

- Put water in the vase
- Pass out paper cups
- Give one stalk out to each child; tell them not to worry if they didn't get a pretty bloom. It will all work out in the end.



## LESSON:

**Isn't God creative? Look at all the things he made that we are holding. Everyone take turns and tell me about the thing you have in your hand. Is it soft or bushy or fuzzy? Is it colorful? Did God make it strong, or did God make it beautiful? Or did God make part of it beautiful and part of it strong?** *Take answers, allowing kids to examine their own piece and add comments about it or about God's creative side.*

**Each of you has a piece of God's creativity. It is yours. I gave it to you. There's one thing about God's creativity in flowers: The life of a flower isn't meant to be long. And once we cut a flower, we need to get the pieces in water fast, or it can die. Who would like some water for their piece?**

*One of the children may suggest at this point that you put all the flowers together to make a bouquet. If no one does, you offer it as a suggestion.*

**I was going to put water in everyone's cups so you could put your stalks in them. But guess what? These stalks are long. They'd probably fall over in the cups. They belong somewhere else, really. Where do they belong?** *In a bouquet.*

**Well, if we're going to put them all together, that means you have to give yours back. You have to give away something that belongs to you. Who wants to be first to give their flower away?** *Take volunteers, putting the stalks into the big vase filled with water.*

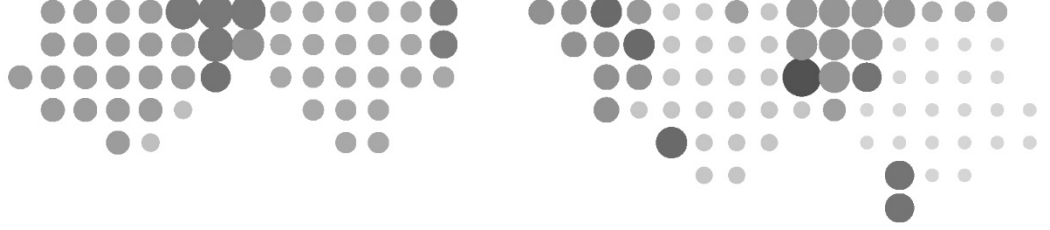
*Let the children come up and help arrange the flowers. If you have a large group, pick some volunteers.*

**Often, to really enjoy something, we have to give it away. Giving is a very important concept in Christianity. In Matthew 5:40, Jesus said that if anyone wants your shirt, to give him your coat also. If we were all more concerned with giving that with getting, how much nicer a world would it be?**

**And now we can see that if we all give, we will have something great.**

*Show the bouquet.* **If everyone kept their own piece, the pieces might have gotten damaged or would have wilted and died. But together? The pieces are stronger, they're prettier, and they can make us all feel good.**

**Now who owns the bouquet?** *We all do.*



**Would it be better for one person to take this home than for us all to take our own pieces back. Yes. Why? Because no one can enjoy it that way. Can we pull a name out of a hat to see who gets to take it home? Can we all promise to be happy for that person as God would want us to be?**

**And we can all enjoy together a nice snack as a reward for our giving.**

*Pass out candy in the paper cups instead of filling each with water. As children eat, figure out who should take home the bouquet.*

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, we realize that giving does not come easily to us. We know that giving not only makes you happy, but it makes the world a stronger and prettier place. Create in us giving hearts, Father, so that we can give to a world in need. Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #10

## *SHEET OF PAPER*

### THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES US FROM FLAT TO SHARP AND GIVES US A POINT

#### MESSAGE:

Turning a flat piece of paper into a paper airplane will help students understand that the messages of Jesus are like the folds needed to turn the paper into an airplane that flies.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

John 14:2, Mark 13:11

#### MATERIALS:

- One sheet of paper for each child
- Pencils

#### PREPARATION:

- Give out sheets of paper and pencils.

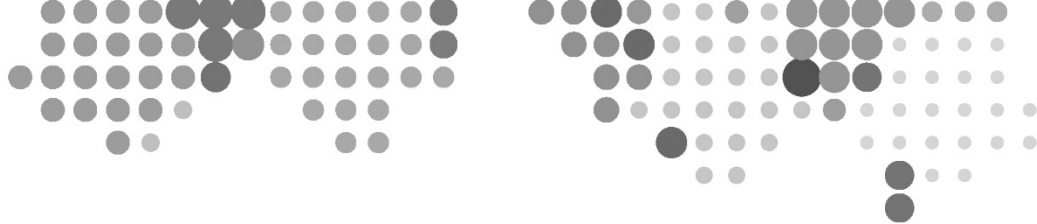
#### LESSON:

**A lot of people don't believe in Jesus. One of the saddest things about that, is when a loved one passes away, they don't have any assurance that Jesus will keep them in heaven with him until we get there too.**

**But we have Jesus' powerful words to rely on from John 14:2. There, he was speaking to his disciples, who were often confused about exactly who Jesus was or how much power he had. Jesus said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions: *If it were not so, I would not have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*"**

**That is some of the greatest news we could share with others. Let's write that Scripture down. *Give them a chance to write it down.***





**Sharing the gospel is not easy. Even though we have great news like Jesus himself saying he's preparing places in heaven for those who love him, we're afraid to share that. We don't know people's individual lives. We don't know what they need to know. We don't know what they *want* to know.**

**We have a very powerful message here, but we really don't know who needs it or whether we're saying the right thing.** *Pick a volunteer. Tell him to get that message to you by trying to throw the piece of paper. It will land back in his lap or on the floor. Have another volunteer try the same thing for reinforcement.*

**If we're going to share the gospel, we need the "direction" of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows everyone's heart. Jesus said in Mark 13:11, "Do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit."**

**Just like we need "direction" from the Holy Spirit, our message needs some direction.**

*Hold the paper lengthwise in the middle of the table to demonstrate for the kids. Take the two upper corners and fold them in so they meet, and you have formed a triangle with them.*

**Now, our message has a "point."** *Point to the tip of the triangle.*

**But we're not done yet. Our message needs more strength. All these folds are like the Holy Spirit, who will give our messages strength to move far and wide.**

*Continue to fold the paper into an airplane. Have the students do likewise with their papers. Line the students up in such a way that they will not be tempted to throw their airplanes at each other and possibly cause an injury.*

**Now try to move your piece of paper.** *Let everyone try to fly his airplane. They may keep retrieving and flying again, but not at each other!*

**Now, we have a very important message, but because we have the Holy Spirit with us, the message can travel farther, and it has more strength.**

**Let's all pray for the Holy Spirit to help us send messages to the world.**

## **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Lord, we thank you for the Holy Spirit. We don't always understand him. But we know that you sent him to give us strength and direction. Help us to use him to speak to the world. Help us to always remember that when we are speaking of you to others, the Holy Spirit can provide the right words so we are open and unafraid. Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #11

## BEDDING

### GOD PROTECTS US FROM A COLD WORLD

#### MESSAGE:

The cold floor is supplemented with a rug, blankets, and pillows to illustrate how God provides us comfort in a hard, cold world.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

John 14:16-17, John 10:27-29

#### MATERIALS:

- Blankets—enough so that every child can snuggle with friends.
- Pillows (bed or throw), enough so that each child can have one or share with another child.
- A large section of rug.

#### PREPARATION:

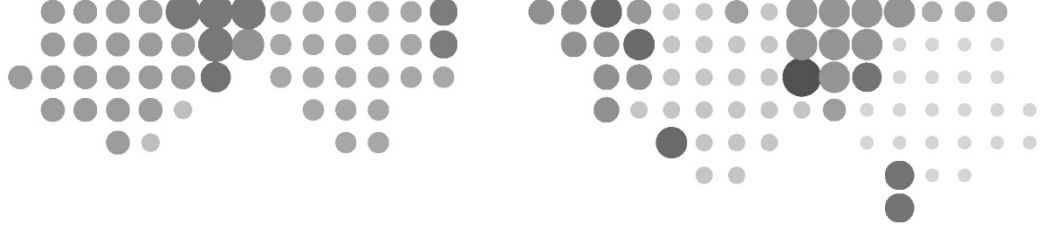
- Keep the blankets and pillows in trash bags or out of sight. Keep the rug rolled up.

#### LESSON:

**If I told you to fall asleep right now on this hard, cold floor, how many of you would be able to?**

**Why not?** *Some will say they're not tired. Let's pretend we just did nine hours of homework and then ran two miles and then ate a big meal. Yawn loudly.* **Okay, now it's time to go to sleep. Go on, all of you—lie down on the floor and try to go to sleep. Bet at least one of you can do it.**

*Let them lie down and complain about the hard, cold floor.*



**The floor is a lot like this world. It can be uncomfortable at times. Not only can the temperature be cold, but people can be cold. Sometimes they're not friendly when we're lonely, and they can't understand where we're coming from.**

**And this world can be hard—like this floor. Just when we're looking for life to get “soft,” it gets really hard. A loved one gets sick or dies. A parent loses a job. Friends who were always our friends move away or simply get new friends, and they're not around anymore. We lose a pet.**

**We know that to live in this world, things can go wrong at any time. But as Christians, we have good news. We know that everything will turn out right for us in the end. And in the meantime, while we're here on earth, God provides ways for us to be warm and comfy and happy.**

**First, there is our salvation. Asking Jesus into our hearts is a foundation for all the good things that God has prepared for his children. A foundation is sort of like this rug. It's big and covers all of us.**

*Get the rug, roll it out, and let students sit on it.*

**After we have the foundation of salvation, God promises us... a comforter! *Get out the blankets—if one is an actual comforter, that's great!* In John 14:16-17, Jesus says, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another comforter to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”**

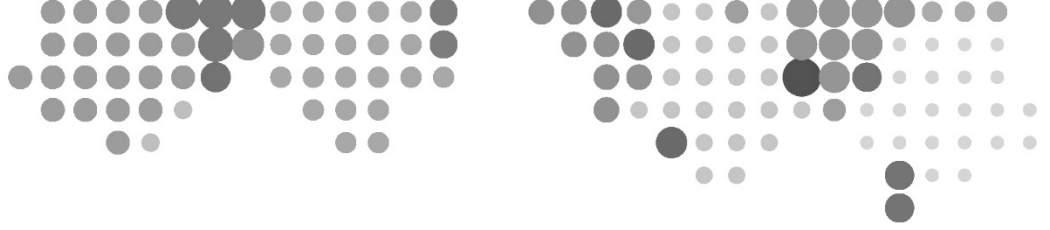
**Jesus is talking about the Holy Spirit, who wraps himself around us and guides us and gives us comfort.**

*Pass out the blankets and have students wrap up in them.*

**Finally, God provides protection in a hard, cold world. In John 10:27-29, Jesus says, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.”**

**That is soft and kind good news, very much like these soft pillows.**

*Pass out pillows. Let students put their heads on them while wrapped up in the blankets on the rug.*



**Now, the world is still a hard, cold place sometimes. But as Christians, we have the foundation of salvation through Jesus. We have the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and we have the protection of our Father. We *could actually* fall asleep on this rug if we had to, couldn't we?**

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for being a warm foundation, a kind comforter, and a soft protector for us during our lives on earth. Once we get to heaven, we'll be able to abide in the real bed of complete happiness. For now, thank you for your love.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #12

## CELL PHONE

### GOD LIKES US TO PHONE HOME EVERY DAY

#### MESSAGE:

Phoning home is a good idea when God is on the other end of the line.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Romans 8:26, Psalm 121:4, Matthew 10:29-31, Isaiah 40:31

#### MATERIALS:

- Cell phone.

#### PREPARATION:

- None

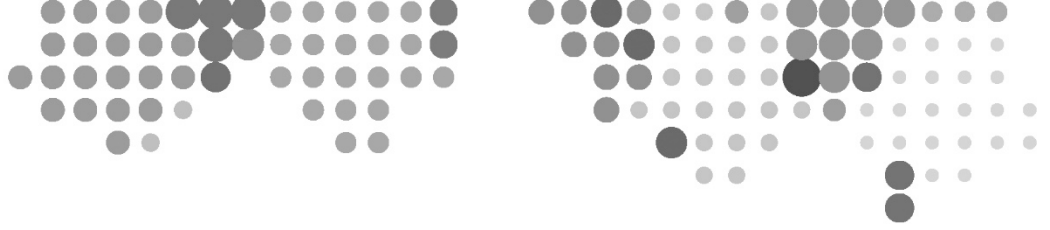
#### LESSON:

*Hold up a cell phone. **How many of you have one of these already?** There should be a few or many, depending on the grade level.*

***What are some of the good things about a cell phone?** You can text your friends. You can always know what your friends are doing. You can phone home and ask to sleep over at a friend's. You can call for a ride if you are stuck.*

***Your parents don't care so much about you texting your friends. They give you cell phones for other reasons, and texting is just a benefit you get. What are some of those reasons?** So that they can always know where you are. So that they can get in touch with you right away for an emergency. So that you never get lost or can't find your way. You can call them to come get you.*

***Sometimes it's hard to believe that God loves you even more than your parents do, but that is the total truth. Just as you text or phone home when you need your parents, you***



**should check in with God lots of times each day. How do we “phone home” to God?**  
*Through prayer.*

**Some people say that when we speak to God, it’s a little more like ‘texting’ than speaking on the telephone. Texting is a little harder, isn’t it? What are some of the pains about texting?**

*It’s hard to spell out what you want.*

*You’re afraid the other person might not understand you.*

*In texting you can’t remember the language—the abbreviations.*

*You have to wait for the answer.*

*Sometimes you can’t understand the answer.*

*Sometimes you get cut off.*

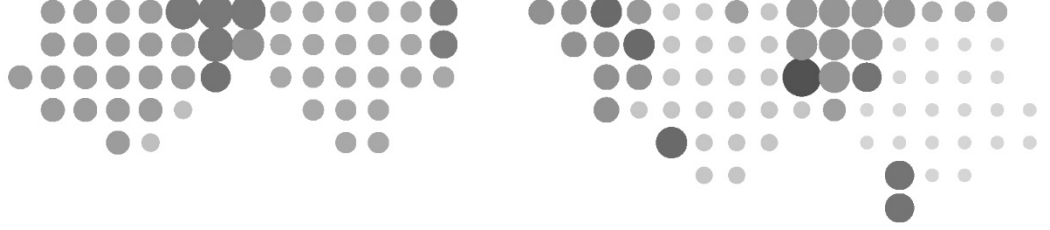
**So, texting has a lot in common with prayer when we look closely.**

**It’s hard to spell out what you want in a text. When we pray, we don’t always know what we want. After a scary movie when we can’t sleep, we might say, “God, I’m scared. Help me.” But how is he supposed to help? Is he going to rewind time and erase the scary movie from our heads? Not likely. Will he demand an apology for seeing something too scary if we call on him for help? Not likely, but that’s a type of thought we all have sometimes.**

**The good news is that the Holy Spirit knows what we want and need, even if we are unsure of it. Romans 8:26 says, “The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for utterance.” In other words, unlike when you text, there’s the Holy Spirit, who translates exactly what you mean. He knows that what you really need is an invisible angel to come into your presence and calm you down, and you’ll be thinking clearly again in the morning.**

**When texting, we use abbreviations the other person might not know. We also get cut off sometimes. Have you ever been in the middle of a text or the middle of a phone conversation, and your phone simply shut down?**

**Sometimes it feels like our prayers might have gotten “shut down.” We can’t feel any response from God, and we can’t see any changes in the situation we’ve asked him**



**about. Unlike our cell phones, God never shuts down. Psalm 121:4 says, “The God who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” Jesus said in Mathew 10:29-31, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”**

**Sometimes when we pray we have to wait for our answers. Waiting is important. It builds patience. Isaiah 40:31 says they that wait on the Lord will mount up with wings like eagles.**

**Cell phones are modern and cool and expensive, and everybody wants one. Prayer is timeless and free and does not fail, unlike our cells. We have a Holy Spirit who can make sense of whatever we say; the important thing is that we say *something*—we dial into God several times a day at least. We have a Father who is *always* at the other end and who *never* drops a call.**

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thanks for always being on the other end of the line. Thanks for taking *all* of our calls. Thanks for “phoning us” with your word and with your Holy Spirit if we forget to call you. Thanks for never dropping a call and always knowing what we’re trying to say, even when we don’t.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #13

## SCISSORS

### GOD CUTS OUR LIVES BACK SO THAT A MORE BEAUTIFUL LIFE CAN BLOOM

#### MESSAGE:

When scissors cut living things like hair or plants or bushes, the results can look thinned out, but it's just a prelude to the growth that will result in more beauty and fullness.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURE:

John 15:1-2,

#### MATERIALS:

- Scissors,
- Two bushy house plants. The class will prune one, so be sure you're working with one that will not be hurt in the cutting.

#### PREPARATION:

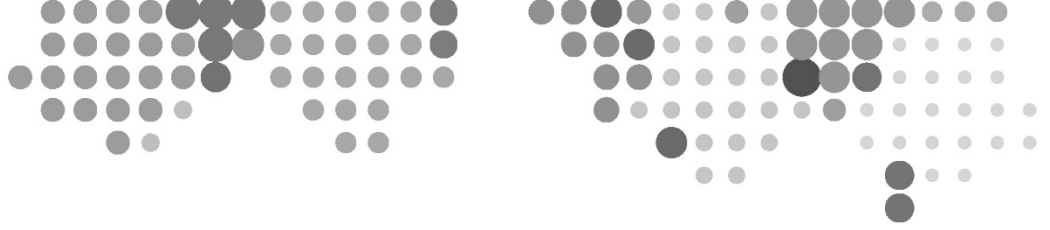
- Hide one of the bushy houseplants out of sight so that the class can't see it.
- On the other plant, cut half the blooms away so that it is only half as fruitful as its hidden partner.

#### LESSON:

***Hold up scissors. I'm going to start today with a story about a girl named Rachel. She had long pretty hair, maybe halfway down her back. She used to sleep with braids in, because even though her hair was really shiny and pretty, it was just a little thin. And the waves put in by the braids made it look thicker and prettier than it actually was.***

**One day, something awful happened. She woke up, and there was a huge wad of gum in**





her hair, up close by her neck, all tangled. Did your parents ever tell you not to go to sleep with gum in your mouth? Rachel’s mom was only glad that Rachel hadn’t choked to death. Rachel was hysterical. She had to get her hair cut off to the base of her neck.

*Hold up the scissors.* These were the last thing that Rachel wanted taken to her hair. Once her hair was short, she felt like she’d lost the one thing that made her pretty.

God talk about “pruning” in the Bible. Jesus said in John 15:1-2, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.”

Have you ever had a time in your life when something was taken from you? A home that you loved? Maybe you had your own room and then suddenly had to share with a sibling? Were you ever really good at a sport, but you got injured and couldn’t play for a season? These are all examples of “pruning” in life—things that look like a loss, but God makes them great gains.

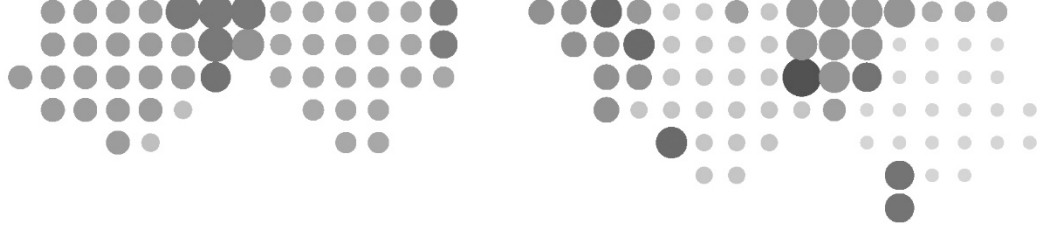
*Bring out the plant that is half pruned.* We prune plants all the time. Cut off a bloom. It looks like we’re making the plant uglier, but the plant will grow bushier and even more beautiful if we use the scissors on it. Let’s prune it together.

*Let the children take turns passing the scissors, cutting off a bloom or cutting back a stalk.*

Rachel went around with her head down and her face scowling for a few weeks. She would look at herself in the mirror and say, “I’ll be ugly for at least three years!” What happened to her was amazing. Once she wasn’t focused on her own beauty, she began to notice beauty in others. She began to develop inner beauty, and rather than just focusing on her hair, she found herself focusing on things like being nice to a person everyone else was mean to. She didn’t know why or where it came from.

When kids got bullied in school, it got to her. She started a website where kids who got bullied could come and post. She couldn’t believe that kids were posting from as far away as New Zealand, which is near Australia. She won an award from her school and a scholarship to college.

And all the while, Rachel’s hair was growing back. But somehow, it didn’t matter as much. She noticed one day that her hair was as long as it used to be and that now, it was actually a lot fuller. But she wouldn’t have time to braid her hair every night even if she



still needed to. She was counting posts on her website and answering the ones she could give advice to.

“I used to be a bully,” she admitted to one scared freshman. “Bullies are actually scared themselves. If you stand up to them without getting mean, they can’t feed off your fear and they’ll leave you alone,” she said.

**One day, Rachel realized her hair had grown to her waist. She’d been told in school that she had the most beautiful head of hair and she might be named in the yearbook for “Best Hair.”**

**But she had other plans in mind. With hair that long and beautiful, surely it could profit some kid who had cancer. She went to the beauty parlor and had them take off a two-foot-long piece for a wig, so some girl with cancer could go to school and look pretty too. Her hair was to her shoulders again. But her heart was long...and deep and wide.**

**Rachel had been successfully pruned. When something bad happens in our lives, we should ask God how we can use this to be even bigger people. That is a prayer we can never be sorry for praying. God will always answer. If everyone prayed like this, we would have a world full of extraordinary people.**

**We’d be like a plant. *Hold up the now-pruned bush. It doesn’t look very good. But we all want a chance to be great, right? Go and get the other plant with all its blooms.*** If we believe, if we give God a chance, and we accept what’s happened to us and look for good in it, we’ll be even more beautiful afterwards.

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thanks for the bad things in life. We always thank you for the good things, but here’s a prayer of thanks for the bad things. Because we know that underneath, they are opportunities for us to grow. You can use your spiritual scissors on our lives and we’ll end up richer and fuller than ever. Help us to always remember that.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #14

## GOLDFISH

### DEEP-SEA FISH ON EARTH BECOME GULLS IN HEAVEN

#### MESSAGE:

Deep-sea fish have a lot in common with us now, and seagulls have a lot in common with what our heavenly bodies will be like. We can discuss this by using a goldfish.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

1 Corinthians 13:12, John 10:27

#### MATERIALS:

- Goldfish in a small goldfish bowl or aquarium
- Pictures of deep-sea fish, taken from the Internet
- Picture of a seagull flying.

#### PREPARATION:

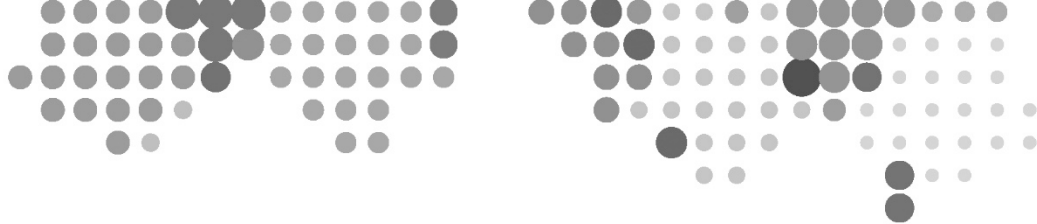
- Put the goldfish bowl on display for the students and have the pictures ready.

#### LESSON:

**The photic zone is the top layer of the ocean that contains sunlight. Generally the photic zone goes down only a few hundred meters. Therefore, about 90 percent of the ocean's volume is utterly black.**

**Our friendly goldfish is from the photic zone. He lives close to the surface of the water. Hence, he can exist in the light. Many fish cannot. Have you ever seen pictures of deep-sea fish? Most of them are really scary.**

*Show Internet photos of deep-sea fish—ones with big teeth and eyes and electric lights.*



**These fish are kind of like what we were like before we were saved. We didn't know there was a "light of God" before giving our lives to Jesus. These fish don't know there is a "huge ball of light" at the surface of the water that never stops shining. These fish are entirely in the dark.**

**Some people who don't know Jesus understand the concept of salvation. They understand that they need to "come to the light of God." They just haven't done it. These deep-sea fish know the concept of light because some fishes way down deep have lights on their bodies that flash and sparkle. Still, they can't conceive of a big light up above them that never stops shining. People who don't know Jesus can't conceive of his love and promises that never stop shining.**

**Once a person gives his life to Christ, he becomes like our friendly goldfish. He lives in reflections of the light. He no longer lives in darkness. However, he's still a fish and has a lot in common with deep-sea fish. As Christians, we live among non-Christians, and we have a lot in common too. They're all fish, and we're all people. Some might notice, however, that we who live near the light are not so fierce. We don't need those big scary expressions in our eyes. We're also more peaceful, because of the light.**

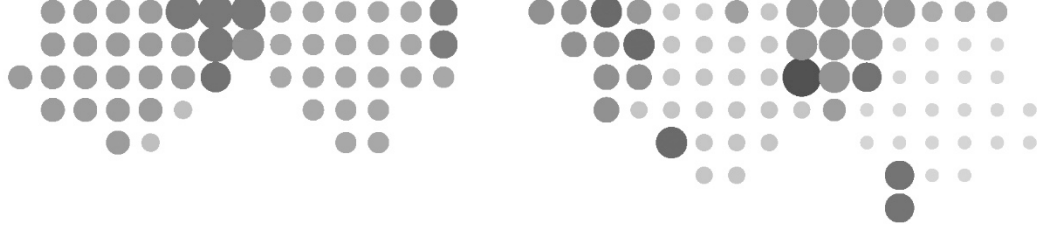
**What happens to a person when he dies? *He goes to heaven.***

**But we don't really understand a lot about heaven. But we can help ourselves by making comparisons. Our fish in the photic zone—those that live in the light—are very, very close to something they don't quite understand, but it's definitely there. It's called "land and sky." In the deep sea, we have deep-sea fish. In the photic zone, we have fish who live in the light. In the land and sky we have beautiful birds, one of which these fish might know. Between photic fish that jump and birds that dive, fish that live in the light may know the seagulls!**

*Show your picture of the seagull.*

**If we're like deep-sea fish before accepting Christ and like photic-zone fish who live in the light after accepting Christ, then when we die, we'll be like seagulls.**

**Look at all the things seagulls can do that are like being in heaven—if you're a fish. Seagulls live *in* the light. Fish only live in *a reflection or a small portion of the light, where there are still lots of shadows.* Fish only have a couple ways of getting around. They're like us in the sense that we can only walk and they can only swim. Seagulls can walk *and***



**fly! They can call out, whereas if goldfish make any noise at all it's pretty small and weak.**

**Seagulls can go faster, farther, and with a lot more strength and grace than fish. In heaven, we'll be able to go faster, farther, higher, stronger, and more gracefully. As seagulls live in direct contact with the sun, s-u-n, we will live closer to the Son, S-o-n.**

**In 1 Corinthians 13:12, the apostle Paul says, "Now we see through a mirror dimly, but then, face to face." How many of you have tried to open your eyes underwater? *Take a show of hands.***

**Things aren't very clear, are they? Above the water, things are perfectly clear. As Christians on earth, things are not very clear to us. But in heaven, everything will make perfect sense.**

**How many of you have tried to hear underwater? *Take a show of hands.***

**As Christians on earth, it's hard to hear God's voice sometimes. We get confused by all the distortion. Jesus acknowledged that, encouraging man to believe in God's voice. He said John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and they know me and follow me." But in heaven, God's voice will be crystal clear. We'll be able to hear and see him plainly and talk with him. We'll be able to fly like seagulls....like angels!**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for your creation, which sometimes gives us hints of what you are like and what wonderful plans you have for our futures. Help us always to believe in heaven, and when things seem dark and dim, to remember the fish and the seagulls and look forward to flying with you someday.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #15

## PAPER CLIPS

### LIKE GOD, PAPER CLIPS HOLD THINGS TOGETHER

#### MESSAGE:

Paper clips are like God's word; they keep our lives from blowing around.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Deuteronomy 31:6, Matthew 8:24, Psalm 9:9,

#### MATERIALS:

- Large paper clips, enough for every child to have one.
- Sheets of printing paper, enough for every child to have five.
- Pencils

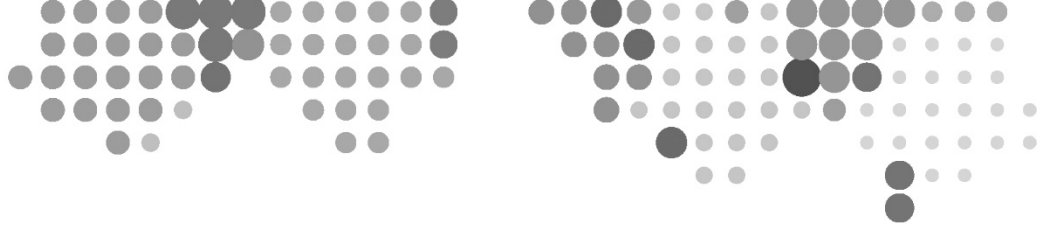
#### PREPARATION:

- Write one phrase on each of five sheets of paper as follows: Give Money to the Poor; Don't Gossip; Be a Great Mom; Be a Great Wife; Pray Every Morning.
- Count out five sheets of paper for each child.

#### LESSON:

**Some very successful people say that if you write down the things you want to do or the things you want to be, it helps you achieve those dreams. So this morning, I wrote down things I want to be better at as a Christian. Here's what I wrote that I want to improve at for Jesus:**

- **Give Money to the Poor**
- **Don't Gossip**



- **Be a Great Mom**
- **Be a Great Wife**
- **Pray Every Morning.**

**Now each of you has five sheets of paper. I'd like you to write down five things that you want to be better at as Christians. Let's talk about this first.**

*Ask students how they'd like to improve their behavior and get them to write things down on their own sheets of paper. You may have to persist as kids may think of future improvements as current weaknesses, and often kids are not good at seeing their own weaknesses or setting goals. Persist until they each have five and have given each other ideas.*

**I always want to behave like a good Christian. But hard days come along, and they can discourage me. Big bills come, and I'm afraid to give to charity and am tempted not to. One of my children irritates me, and I yell. I wake up to a problem—my husband's car broke down and I have to go pick him up—and all of a sudden I've forgotten to pray that morning.**

**Hard days are like “spiritual storms” and a lot of “windy circumstances” are blowing through our lives. Balance all your Christian desires on the palm of your hand like I'm doing.** *Have them follow your lead by balancing their five sheets of paper on their palms.*

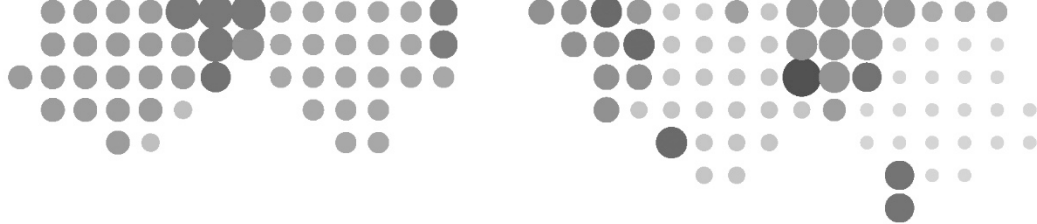
**Let's see what happens when life's storms come along.** *Blow on your papers, and encourage the students to blow on theirs. Pages will go everywhere.*

**Before I know it, my pages—my life—are all mixed up, out of order, and I'm confused! My desires get mixed up with the desires of others, or they get trampled on. Let's try to get our own desires back and help others get theirs.** *Help them sort out their own papers from others that blew around.*

**God knows that we're not strong enough in our own right to stand up to storms. He knows all our best-laid plans can get turned into a shambles if we have a hard day.**

**In Deuteronomy 31:6, God says, “Be strong and courageous... I will never desert you nor forsake you.”**

**Matthew 8:24 tells of Jesus in a boat with his disciples. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping, why? He wasn't worried. He knew God can have victory over our storms.**



Finally, Psalm 9:9 says, “The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a ‘stronghold’ in times of trouble.” *Hold up a large paper clip.*

**What is a stronghold?** *Let them try to answer.* **A stronghold is something big enough and strong enough to hold things together. God wants to hold our lives together and give it strength. But we have to invite him in.**

*Put the paper clip on the papers.*

**Most people want to be good. They just can’t be as good as they think they should be or they would like to be. They need help from above. Does having Christ in your life make things perfect?**

*Blow hard on the papers again. With the paper clip, the pages should flutter but not fly.* **Our lives can still blow around a bit, but things don’t fall apart. Not while you’re trusting in Jesus.**

## CONCLUDING PRAYER:

Father, thank you for being a stronghold. You keep our lives together and running more smoothly while we’re here on earth. Thanks for your strength, and oh yes: Help us to become the things we wrote down today, with you holding us daily.

Amen.





# OBJECT LESSON #16

## *CHICKEN BONES*

### **GOD MAKES GOOD THINGS OUT OF GARBAGE**

#### **MESSAGE:**

God can make greatness out of a mess; don't give up on him, because he's not giving up on you.

#### **RELATED SCRIPTURE:**

Hebrews 5:13-14

#### **SPECIAL NOTES:**

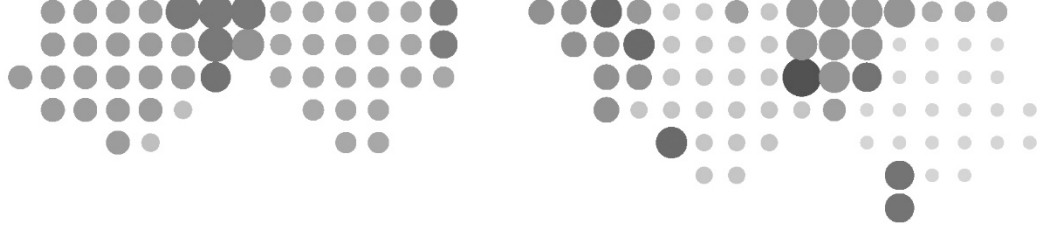
This lesson works best in a kitchen, but a Crock-Pot and microwave will suffice. Heat the already-prepared soup as you're giving the lesson.

#### **MATERIALS:**

- Leftover chicken carcass from a previous night's dinner
- Your favorite soup recipe, which ought to include something like two carrots, two onions, one cup of pre-boiled soup noodles, two stalks of celery, one container of soup starter, salt, and pepper
- Crock-Pot or stew pot, access to a microwave.
- One batch of chicken soup prepared earlier—enough for each child to have a cup.
- Cups, napkins, and spoons, one for each child.

#### **PREPARATION:**

You're going to make chicken soup with your class. Anything relative to your own recipe should be added to the ingredients listed above. As with most cooking shows, you'll start the preparations, and rather than wait for them to simmer, you'll serve a pre-made batch.



## LESSON:

**Last night, my family had the most wonderful baked chicken for dinner! Yummy! Look what I've brought in today for you guys.**

*Open the bag where you've stored the carcass. Have everyone look at it. **Now it just looks like a big old mess! It looks like something we'd want to throw out, doesn't it? And if we don't do something with it soon, it will spoil. Then, it will *have* to be thrown out!***

**Sometimes we make a mess of our day. We end up feeling a lot like this carcass: mushy and eaten alive and almost ready for the garbage. I've woken up some mornings with the best of intentions. I wanted to be a good Christian and be kind to others and make the best use of my day. But I'd find that a couple of my kids were sick and the washer was broken and foul moods prevailed around the house. Nothing got done, I felt worn out and exhausted - like it would be good just to throw out the whole day and start over. Ever have a day like that? Where everything went wrong and you ended up feeling like a carcass? *Take examples from the students.***

**That's where God comes in. God can take all the bad and make something good out of it.**

*Put the carcass in the Crock-Pot.*

**Did you know that in the Bible, the cleansing of the Holy Spirit is often symbolized by water? What church ritual do we still practice today that has to do with water? *Baptism.***

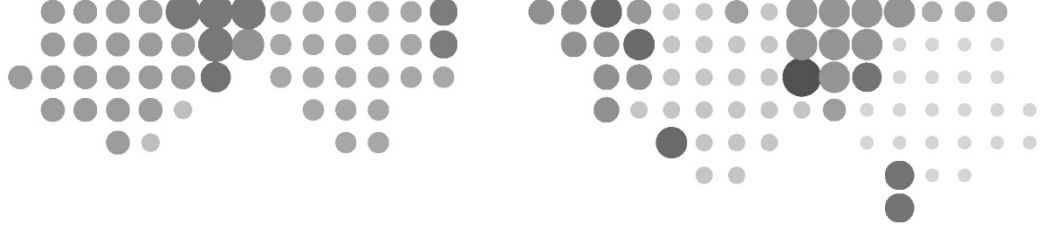
**We're going to 'baptize' this carcass like God baptizes us. And that's the start of making a new creation out of an almost rotten life!**

*Measure your water and soup starter, according to the recipe. Follow soup starter instructions for correct heat.*

**Why do we put vegetables in soup? *They're good for you.* Which tastes better in soup? **The chicken chunks or the vegetables?** *Most should say the chunks of chicken.***

**Not everything God asks us to do "feels good." Sometimes he asks us to be kind to others when it would be easier to snub them or to be mean. But it's good for us to do what he says. We're adding vegetables now, because they're good for us—like obedience is good for us.**

*Have some students cut up vegetables or simply add them if you have cut them earlier.*



**God wants us to be strong. He also wants us to be smart...or wise. Hebrews 5:13-14 says, “Anyone who lives on milk, being an infant still, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid meat is for the mature, who have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” He’s making a metaphor. He’s saying that babies’ milk is like the easy things in life, and meat is like spiritual maturity. We all want to grow up feeling spiritually strong, and our soup needs to give us physical strength. That’s why we add these chicken chunks.**

*Have some students cut up chicken you pulled from the carcass or add pre-cut chunks.*

**Even if we’re having fun in life, that joy doesn’t last unless we’re filled up with the Holy Spirit. God provides the Holy Spirit, and the word most used in the Bible to describe what happens to us is “filled.” To be “filled” with the Holy Spirit means to be filled with his love and guidance and wisdom. Without the Holy Spirit, we’d be really bland. Our soup needs filler too. That’s why we put in noodles. They’re the part that will fill us up.**

*Add pre-cooked noodles.*

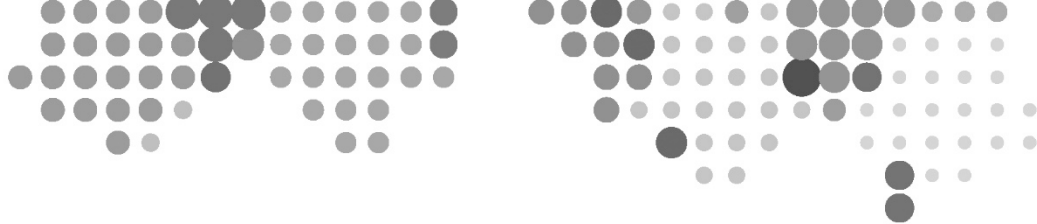
**Finally, we need surprises to make our Christian lives complete.**

**Sometimes we think we have to get up and go to school and we find...it snowed outside! That’s one of God’s many ways of saying that we need good surprises—we need reasons to celebrate. They’re known as “the spices of life.” The *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* states that the saying, 'the salt of the earth' is used today for 'a person or persons of great kindness, reliability, or honesty'. We want to be those people, so we’re adding spices, and most especially, salt.**

*Add spices, salt, pepper.*

**Have you heard the expression, “You’re like a teabag...not worth much until you’ve been through some hot water”? That’s a famous saying, and it means that you need to go through some hard things in life to develop strength and depth of character. Lots of times, those character-building experiences are referred to as “heat.” Let’s “put the heat” on our football team so they’ll win Saturday. The teacher was hard anyway, but he “turned up the heat,” giving us a quiz every Monday. We’re going to put heat on our soup to make it strong and hearty, just like we should be in life.**

*Add heat and let simmer.*



**This soup would take all day to cook properly. And that’s another ingredient of becoming like Jesus—patience. We change slowly. We grow slowly. Just because we’re not like Jesus today doesn’t mean we won’t be like him after years pass...if we have patience.**

**And we have plenty of patience. However, we’re out of time. Therefore I’m serving you a delicious batch of this soup that I made earlier.**

*Serve soup in cups with spoons and napkins.*

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for this soup. We started with something that looked like it needed to be thrown out. But you make all things good. Just like you can make good things out of a pile of bones, you can make us strong and hearty today, no matter what we did yesterday. Help us to take whatever “heat” comes our way and to have patience. We know you will bring us to completion, just like this pot of soup.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #17

## PICTURE BOOK

### BOOKS AREN'T USEFUL...UNLESS YOU READ THEM!

#### MESSAGE:

Our walk with God is like a book. Possession is not enough, just like knowing about God is not enough. You have to know how to “read” the book to get to the magic, and our lives are a walk toward knowing God.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURE:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

#### MATERIALS:

- Any children’s picture book (but one of Bible stories is particularly useful).

#### PREPARATION:

- None.

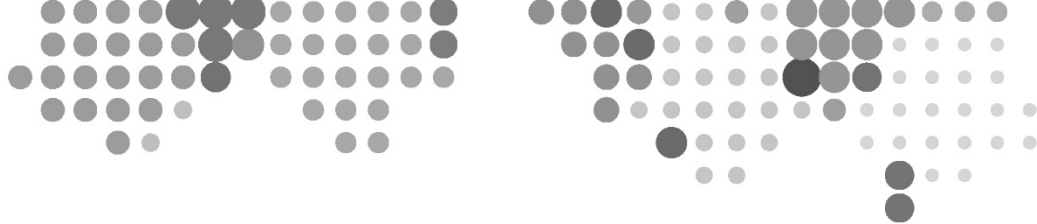
#### LESSON:

**When I was five years old, my aunt got me a book.** *Hold up the book.* **She told me it was a magic book. I’d never known my aunt to lie to me. She was a great woman. She said it could take me to The Magical Land of Isletompf. And on that note, she went off to speak to the grown-ups.**

**I thought, “magic book?” How does it take me? What do I need to do? How do I activate the magic?**

*Stand on the book.* **Was it like a magic carpet?** *Bounce a couple times impatiently.* **Nope, not a magic carpet.**

**Was it like a wand?** *Wave the book all around.* **I didn’t see any sprinkles falling, and I didn’t feel anything.**



**I had just seen *Mary Poppins*, where the kids pop through a painting on the sidewalk and go on holiday. Lay the book open on the floor. Would I merely have to look at a picture and jump into this magical land? Jump on top of the open book.**

**Well, I was only five. What was I misunderstanding about the magic my aunt was telling me about? You have to read the book.**

**Reading the story is what would take me to the magical land. I just didn't get it. And it would take me a while to learn to read well enough that I could look at words and my imagination would simply take off. I wasn't able to "get to" the magical land of Isletompf by myself for a couple of years.**

**A lot of people today have been given a magical gift from above. It is the gift of salvation in Jesus. They're thinking because God offered him to us that that is enough. He's simply ours. But that's a lot like having a book you never read.**

**God gives us advice on how to keep our salvation magical and how to grow in Christ every day. 1 Thesalonians 5:16-18 says these things:**

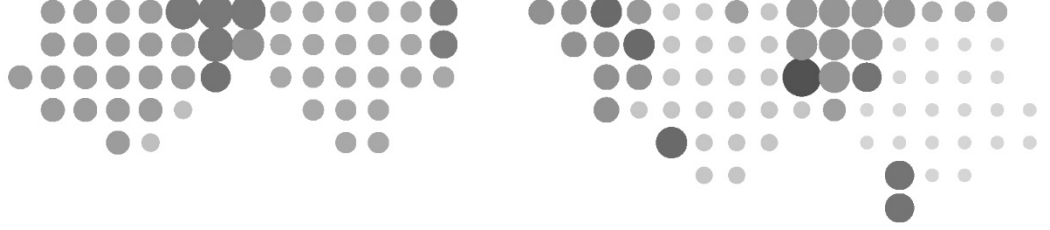
**Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

**Just like I had to read the magical book about the Land of Isletompf, we ought to practice things to gain power from the Holy Spirit.**

**What does "rejoice always" mean? Does it mean to wake up with a smile and to smile all day long until our face hurts? Help them along; children don't readily understand "degrees". It means to find the good in every situation.**

**Even if you just failed a test in school, you can rejoice. Why? Because God isn't like school. He always gives second chances, and no matter what your earthly grades are, your heavenly grades are honor roll, thanks to Jesus' death and resurrection.**

**What does "Pray without ceasing" mean? Do we have to go around all day praying, even when we're trying to talk to people and get work done? It means that you will think about God often during the day—not just when it's time to pray in the morning or at night. The Holy Spirit will be with you all day to remind you of how to behave in different situations. **Some Christians claim to think of God and ask him how they should act 60 or 70 times a day. That's what we need to shoot for.****



What does it mean “in everything, give thanks?” How can we always be thankful? That’s very much like that first thing: “Rejoice in the Lord always.” **How can we give thanks in all circumstances, even bad ones, such as finding out we’re going to move and we have to switch schools?** *If you give thanks, you can find that you have even better friends in your new school. You can find you have more courage after starting with new kids. It gave you more character.*

**If we go about our days trying to rejoice always, we’ll be happier, and we’ll be able to make others happy. If we “pray without ceasing,” it means God will keep us on a straight path all day long, and we’ll feel his presence whenever we need it. If we “give thanks in all things” we’ll come to see that life is always an opportunity, and in Christ, all things can work to our advantage and his.**

**Your daily walk is the magic that will bring you to fullness in Christ. We ought to practice these things every day. Practicing in our daily lives is like reading the story that contains the magic.**

*Hold the book up.*

**Good daily living is what takes us to special places.**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for wanting to be present and active in our daily lives. Help us to rejoice, pray to you whenever we feel like it, and give thanks in all circumstances. Drawing you to us every day is the magic we need to get into the story you’re writing about our world today.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #18

## EGG

### GOD MAKES US STRONG

#### MESSAGE:

God changes us from clear and weak and slimy to white and strong and good.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Exodus 29:7, James 5:14, John 12:24

#### NOTES:

This works best in a kitchen, but can be done in a classroom with a hot plate.

#### MATERIALS:

- Raw eggs (You're going to scramble eggs for your students to eat, so the number you need will depend on the number of students. Keep two eggs aside for the demonstration).
- Bowl
- Fork or whisk
- Spatula
- Large fry pan
- Slices of toast or slices of bread and toaster, one slice for each student
- Hot plate or burner
- Oil
- Butter for toast

#### PREPARATION:

- Wisk enough eggs before class to make enough for all students to get a helping of scrambled eggs
- Refrigerate
- Toast bread so that each child can have a slice





- Keep warm
- Place the bowl on the floor between your feet while students look on

## LESSON:

*Hold up an egg. What's this?*

**What do we normally do with eggs?** *Cook them and eat them.*

**This is just a plain old raw egg. It reminds me of me before I met Jesus. I was ... *pretty smooth.* I looked good. I looked solid. But sometimes the storms of life would come along. I might have looked good on the outside, but it was all an act. On the inside I was mushy. My strong looks were not what they appeared.**

*Shake the egg just a little—not enough to break it.*

**If I got bullied, or if kids ignored me, or if someone disappointed me, or I got some really bad news from my family...**

*Drop the egg into the bowl. Let the children see it all cracked.*

**I could “break” pretty easily. Once we become Christians, God gives us special strength. But the Christian walk isn't always easy. To make us stronger and more usable to him, God sometimes “puts a little heat” in our lives.**

*Put the egg and cracked shell into a garbage bag. Light the burner, put the pan on it.*

**Lots of times in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is symbolized by oil.** *Pour oil into the pan quickly.*

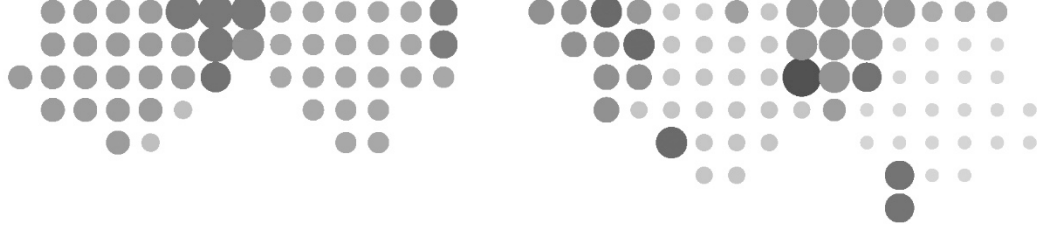
**God commands in Exodus 29:7 that to bring men into the priesthood, "Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him."**

**James 5:14 says, “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” Oil is used to anoint sick people.**

**Oil is important to Christian rituals, and it's important to cooking, too. It will keep our egg from sticking once it gets hot.**

**Jesus described salvation using a seed. In John 12:24 Jesus said, "Unless a seed falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."**

**Seeds are like eggs. They're not good for much unless they're cracked open.**



*Crack a new egg on the side of the pan. Let it fall into the oil.*

**We have to give our lives to Christ in order to become strong Christians. There's no other way. Some call this "a death to self" or a time when we leave the throne of our own lives and we seat Jesus on the throne. He rules us thereafter. Hence our death is not really a death, but the start of a new and far better life.**

**Before we accept Jesus as our Savior, we're kind of clear and gooeey. We don't have much color. We're kind of *raw* in getting around in life.**

**Look what's happening now to our egg.** *They should see the egg white starting to turn from clear to white.*

**Now we're getting some color, aren't we? We don't want to touch that pan. It's really hot. It's like our lives. I've seen some people scratching their heads and saying, "Once I became really serious about Jesus, things around me started to go wrong." That's a common sensation. But it's not that anything is really *wrong*. It's that God "puts the heat under us" to give us sustenance and color, and we can be used by him.**

**Right now, this egg is sunny-side up. Have you ever heard the expression, "Keep your sunny side up?" What does it mean?** *Always be happy; always try to see the good.*

**In Christianity, we call this, "having joy." We can always have joy if we can see God's hand in every experience, even those that feel like "we're in the heat."**

**What if we turned this egg over?** *We wouldn't have our sunny side up anymore.*

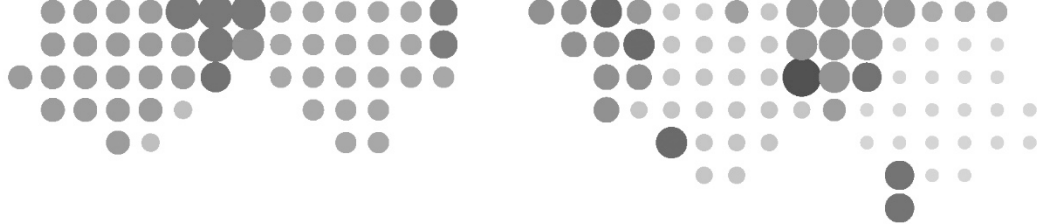
**The "sunny side of an egg" is caused by the yolk, the yellow part. In our Christian lives, we can compare this to having Jesus at the center of things. If we turned this egg over, would we still have a yolk at the center?** *Yes.*

*Turn the egg over with the spatula.*

**So long as Jesus is at the center of our lives, we will have strength.**

**Break the yolk intentionally with the spatula. Now the egg is cooked. What can we do with it now?** *We can eat it.*

**Once God has put "heat" under us, we can serve others. Lots of Bible expressions refer to God's word as a sort of "meal." We're filling up spiritually when we "feast" on God's word. Jesus even referred to his own body as bread.**



*Turn off burner.*

**Heat has made us strong. We can now say and do things to serve God. Others can now “feast” on Jesus through what we say and do.**

**Let’s eat eggs together and thank God for the heat, for the oil, for the spices.**

*Add the scrambled eggs to the fry pan and cook them. Heat toast in microwave or toaster.*

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for sending Jesus. He’s like the yellow center of the egg—always bright, able to fill us completely. Thank you for “the heat” in life, which will make us strong and good. Let us look for good in all circumstances, even painful ones, so that when we’re strong, others can “feast” on our example and become strong too.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #19

## SALT & FLOUR

### UNDERSTANDING THE TRINITY: THREE BEINGS, YET ONE BEING

#### MESSAGE:

We have trouble understanding the Trinity, but this lesson, using salt, flour, and water as the ingredients should make it clear.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 5:13, John 3:5

#### MATERIALS:

- Half
- a cup of salt
- Half a cup of water
- One cup of flour
- Bowl
- Mixer

(You can double or triple this recipe. It will make play dough, and you'll want enough that your students can each make something with it.)

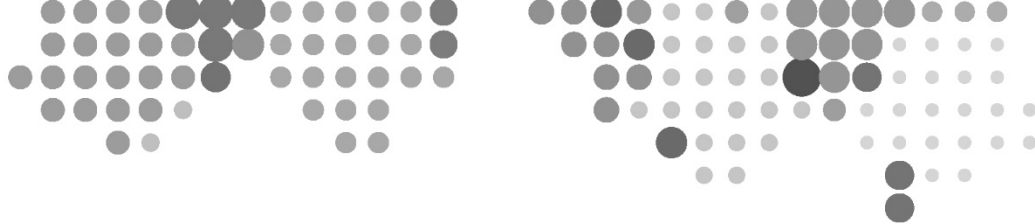
#### PREPARATION:

Practice this recipe once at home if you're not familiar with it. Figure out how you'll need to multiply the recipe to give a glob of play dough to each of your students

#### LESSON:

**How many of you know what The Trinity is?** *Get a show of hands and some answers.*

**The Trinity is a very important concept in our Christian faith. Trinity starts with "tri," which means "three." There are three members of the Trinity. Who are they?** *Father, Son*



*and Holy Spirit (if it hasn't been said already).*

**However, a lot of people are confused by this. Christians believe in only one God. And yet, there are three beings: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. How does this work?** *Take some answers if any student wants to take a try at it.*

**Three-yet-one sounds contradictory. We don't really know how the Trinity works, and that's okay. There are obviously things in the universe so complex that man can't understand them. People who think they can understand everything are in danger of missing something big!**

**Today we're using this cup of common flour, this cup of plain water, and this common table salt to understand the Trinity.**

*Hold up the cup of flour. Let's pretend this is God the Father. White is a symbol of purity, and we know that God is purest of the pure. Turn the flour over into your bowl.*

*Hold up the half-cup of salt. Let's pretend this salt is Jesus. Jesus told us, "You are the salt of the earth" in Matthew 5:13, meaning we Christians "flavor" the earth by sharing God's word. And Jesus would certainly know about that; he was the original salt. Turn the salt over into your bowl.*

*Hold up your half-cup of water. Let's pretend this is the Holy Spirit. Water is often associated with "spirit" in the Bible. In John 3:5, Jesus says "no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the spirit."*

*Mix all ingredients with your mixer.*

**We're mixing all three ingredients together. Is the salt still in here? Yes. Is the flour still in here? Yes. Is the water still in here? Yes.**

**All three are still here. Stop mixing. Yet now we have one substance. Can anyone guess what it is?** *Hold up some dough and squish it around in your hand.*

**It's one thing now—it's homemade play dough. And yet, all three ingredients are still there.**

**That's one of the ways we can understand the Trinity—three in one. Definitely three; definitely one. Let's make something!**

*Make enough play dough for all kids, They can make a cross or a triple cross to symbolize the Trinity.*

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for giving us your Son, your Spirit, and yourself. We hope we understand the Trinity better. Help us to believe even when we can't quite understand. Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #20

## PAPER SHREDDER

### WHEN JESUS COMES BACK

#### MESSAGE:

When God forgives sins, he shreds them so that no one should ever be able to read them again.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Psalm 103:12, 1 John 2:1

#### MATERIALS:

- Paper shredder,
- Sheets of paper (one for each child)
- Marker pens, one for each child
- Old bills or bank statements that you will shred in front of the class

#### PREPARATION:

Plug in the paper shredder.

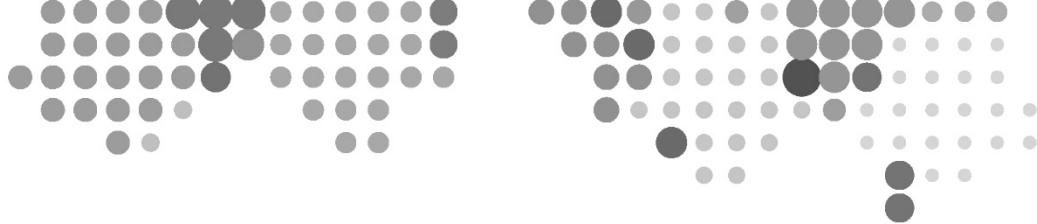
#### LESSON:

**We have this paper shredder in our house so that we can feel safe. If we throw old bills in the trash, someone could come along and steal our account numbers and use them. We could have problems with identity theft. Someone could pretend to be us and use our credit cards by stealing the numbers off our bills.**

**This paper shredder means that we're throwing out pieces of our bills that are so tiny, nobody could ever put them back together and read them.**

*Shred some old bills into the shredder. Open it and show the students the confetti-like residue.*

**Could anybody possibly read any information about us on this stuff?** *Pass some around.*



**The answer is no.**

**A paper shredder sort of reminds me of what God does with our sins. Last week, I got mad at a friend and said something I probably shouldn't have to another friend about it. I committed the sin of**

*Write the word "complaining" on a piece of paper and hold it up in front of them.*

**And before that, my sister needed help and I was just too tired and feeling sorry for myself because I had a lot of work to do too.**

*Write the word "selfish" on a piece of paper and hold it up in front of them.*

**Did you do anything this week that you're a little bit ashamed of? Write it briefly on your own piece of paper. You don't have to let anyone see it if you don't want. But if you want, you can share what you did.**

*Call for volunteers to share. If you get some, shred their piece of paper. If you don't, use your own.*

**When we ask God's forgiveness, Psalm 103:12 says, "He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west." 1 John 2:1 reads, "...if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."**

**God takes our sin away and more or less shreds it. *Send a paper through. Can anybody read what our sin was after it's passed through the shredder?* No.**

**God won't either. It's gone. There's no need to feel guilty or sad anymore. We can just move on, knowing that what we did will never be read again.**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for forgiving us every time we ask. We thank you that there is no limit to your mercy or forgiveness. Help us to know we should come to you each time we do something wrong, so that you can shred it and it won't have to bother our consciences anymore.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #21

## CHARGER

### GOD WANTS TO RECHARGE US WHEN WE'RE OUT OF JUICE

#### MESSAGE:

We need to plug into God when life depletes us. He is our recharge.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 40:30-31

#### MATERIALS:

- Cell phone
- Charger

#### PREPARATION:

Plug the charger into the wall and have cell phone near it.

#### LESSON:

*Hold up your cell phone. **Uh oh! My cell phone is dead. What does that mean?** You can't make any calls. You can't receive any calls.*

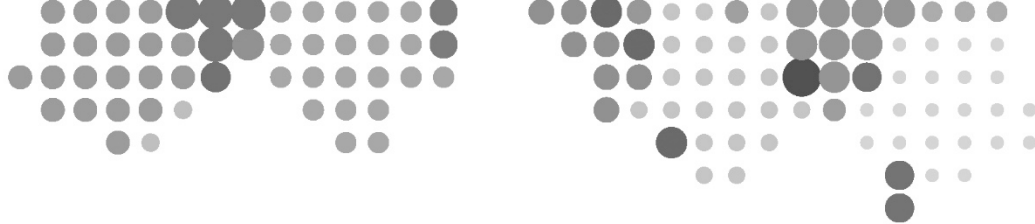
**How does a cell phone get to be dead?** *You used all your battery charge.*

**Sometimes a cell phone can go dead faster than usual. What causes that?** *Overuse.*

**Yesterday, my cell phone went dead even before dinnertime because I was helping a friend solve a problem, and she had me on my cell for a couple of hours. I overused my cell and now, it needs to be recharged.**

**Our souls are a little like this cell. Sometimes life brings trials and tribulations. They can get us "run down." We can get to feeling so tired or so dejected or so depressed that we feel like we just want to curl up in a ball and fall asleep for a year.**





**What we need is a recharge.** *Take the phone and plug it in to the charger. Show the “recharging” icon to the kids.*

**Did you know that some churches call the Wednesday night service a “Mid-Week Recharge?” Why do you think it’s called that?** *It gives you a surge of faith in the middle of the week in case you’re running down.*

**When we’re starting to feel worn down by life’s struggles, that’s when we really need to plug into God the most. By plugging in to God, we mean praying lots more, reading our Bibles more often, and going to church services in the middle of the week. God will be able to recharge you.**

**Recharging our cell phone takes a while. We have to be patient. And it’s the same for waiting on the Lord to recharge us.**

**Isaiah 40:30-31 says:**

**“Even youths shall faint and be weary,  
and young men shall fall exhausted;  
but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary;  
they shall walk and not faint.”**

**If I’m patient just a little while, I’ll have my charge back on my cell. If I’m faithful to the Lord—I pray hard, go to his word in prayer, and have fellowship with other Christians, I will find that my life has been recharged as well.**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, help us to stay “plugged in” to you. Help us to know that when we pray and study your word, we are getting a recharge. And if we are patient, we will see your strength shining anew in us.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #22

## STRAINER

### LET'S NOT BELIEVE IN A WATERED-DOWN GOSPEL

#### MESSAGE:

A watered-down gospel is like watered-down noodles: yucky and not as nutritious.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

John 8:58, Revelation 22:13

#### MATERIALS:

- Cooked noodles in a pot of water
- Strainer
- Pan to catch the water once the noodles are strained
- Butter
- Salt
- Pepper

#### PREPARATION:

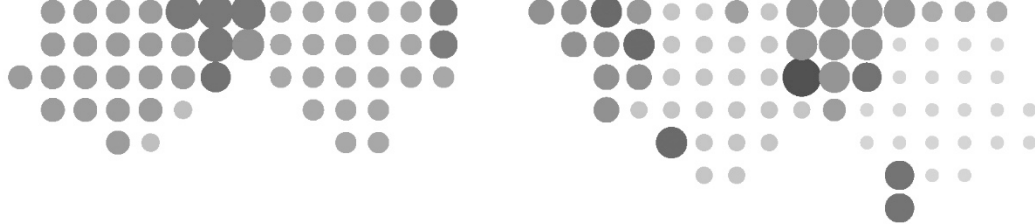
If you're in a kitchen you can boil the noodles right in front of the class. If not, you can bring steaming water from the church kitchen and cover noodles you already cooked.

#### LESSON:

**Some people say that Jesus was just a nice man. What's wrong with that? *He's the Son of God.* Other people say he was a very wise prophet. What's wrong with that? *He's the Son of God.* Some people who say that Jesus was a prophet are really trying to be nice. They think they're paying Jesus a compliment.**

**In this overcrowded world of so many religions, it is very important that we all get along. Or there could be a huge war or a lot of disagreements. We want to get along, but what is more important? To not make waves or to stand by what's actually true? *To be truthful.***

**It's even kind of trendy today to say certain things like "Everyone has a right to their**



own beliefs.” And “Nobody can know the truth.” And “Jesus was good, but so were a lot of people.” These statements “water down” the truth, just like these noodles are watered down right now.

**If we leave these noodles in the water too long, what will happen?** *They’ll become soggy. They’ll lose their flavor. They won’t hold together. Their nutrition will run down into the water.*

**If we allow ourselves to be swayed by people who are teaching a watered-down version of Christianity—for example, saying that Jesus was just a prophet—what can happen to us?** *Our strength can become watered down. We can lose our power as Christians. We won’t hold together and we’ll forget about each other. We’ll become spiritually undernourished.*

**It’s important to keep the water out of today’s gospel.** *Take the strainer, hold it over a second pot. Pour the noodles and water through it. Hold up the strained noodles.*

**These are still warm and strong and good. They’re like us when we refuse to let a watered-down version of Jesus get into our hearts. In John 8:58, Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I AM.” He meant that he was God. In Revelation 22:13 Jesus said: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End...the first and last.”**

**Jesus is Lord.**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, help us not to get waterlogged. Help us to stay aware of who Jesus really is, so that we can remain strong and firm and tasty, like these noodles we’re about to eat.

Amen.

*Add butter and salt and pepper to your noodles, and you’ll have a nice snack for all.*



# OBJECT LESSON #23

## POPCORN

### GOD TURNS US INSIDE OUT

#### MESSAGE:

A popcorn seed is hard and tasteless – like us, until God turns the heat on it.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

John 12:24, Romans 8:28

#### MATERIALS:

- Microwave
- Microwave popcorn
- Jar of kernels
- Bowl for serving

#### PREPARATION:

None

#### LESSON:

**Let's eat some popcorn, shall we?** *Pass around the jar of un-popped kernels after taking a handful for yourself. Kids will object.*

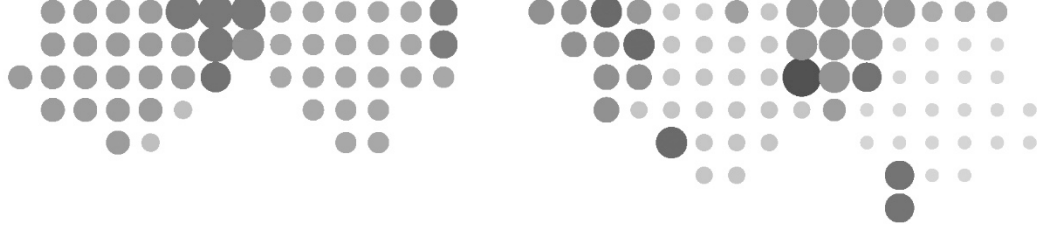
**We can't eat these hard, little seeds, can we? Why not?** *They're tasteless. They can make you choke. They're hard to chew.*

**Let me tell you a story about a boy named Ted. He was an athletic kid, who looked forward to playing football in high school.**

**Ted had a pain in his leg that wouldn't go away, so his mom took him to the doctor. It turned out, Ted had bone cancer. He had to have his leg amputated to save his life.**

*Hold up a popcorn kernel.*

**At that point in his life, Ted felt hard and utterly useless—like our kernel. But the surgery,**



his recovery, and the attitude of faith he had to develop to keep going did something to him.

*Put the bag of popcorn in the microwave and start the popping process.*

When God wants us to become bigger people, sometimes he will allow hardship, or “heat,” so that we have to become someone bigger. Ted gave up football, but he started to walk on his artificial leg, and he started to ski on just one leg. Then he started to water ski. Eventually he tried snowboarding.

Ted’s dad was a famous senator, Edward Kennedy. They went skiing in Colorado just months after Ted’s amputation, so the newspaper people all followed him and took pictures. One reporter asked, “Don’t you help him with his skis, Senator?” Senator Kennedy replied, “No, he usually helps me get mine on.”

Ted would never have chosen to lose his leg. Obviously his pain and suffering is not the type of thing anyone looks forward to. But because of it, he sort of “turned inside out” like the popcorn will in the microwave. And in just a few years, he was a much bigger person.

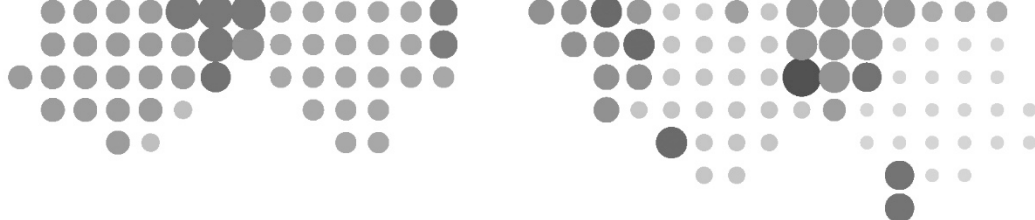
Ted may have gone on to play football in college. Instead, he went on to try Xtreme Sports with a prosthetic leg and didn’t let anything stop him from trying the things he wanted to do. He gained national attention when he grew up, because he became a lawyer and one of the nation’s foremost advocates for people with disabilities. He gave great encouragement to other teenagers who had been diagnosed with cancer.

*Popcorn should start popping.*

Ted was turned inside out. In John 12:24 Jesus said, “Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed.” And it’s like these popcorn kernels. If they get heated enough, they will “pop,” just like we will if we rely on Jesus to help us grow as people.

Next time we feel some heat... next time we’re sick or we get bad news or something goes terribly wrong in our lives, we can look at it as “God will use this situation to make us pop,” and then we’ll be big and strong and worth a lot more.

Romans 8:28 says, “All things work together for the good of those who believe.” Sickness, bad news, terrible circumstances: all of it will pop us into shape to make a



**bigger difference to others.**

**And now...let's eat!** *Serve the popcorn*

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, help us to remember that all things work together for our good, because we are your children and you know what will make us strong and wise. You know what will make our lives “pop,” so that we can be used by you to serve others.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #24

## TUPPERWARE CONTAINER

### GOD KEEPS US FRESH AND ALIVE

#### MESSAGE:

Tupperware containers are like God's spirit. It will protect us from people and situations that might make us hardened and spoiled.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 6:25-26, Matthew 6:33

#### MATERIALS:

- Slice of bread that has been left out overnight
- Slice of bread that has been preserved in a Tupperware container
- Tupperware container

#### PREPARATION:

Leave a slice of bread out the night before so it gets hard.

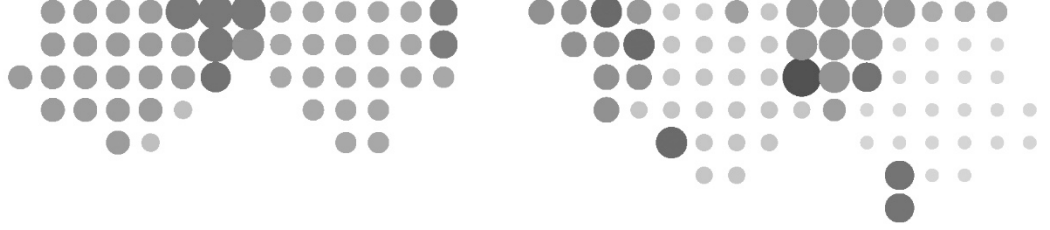
#### LESSON:

**Last night, I accidentally left this slice of bread out when I was making a sandwich. How do you think it feels?** *Hard.*

*Pass the slice around so kids can feel.* **What can I do with it? Do I want to use this to make my sandwich?** *No.*

**There's not much I can do except throw it outside and let the birds peck at it.** *Throw it in a wastebasket or put it aside.*

**This bread went bad because the air got at it. Things got at it that weren't supposed to. As Christians, we are a little like this. We have to be careful of what we get exposed to,**



**or we can also become hardened and spoiled.**

**Who knows what Black Friday is?** *It's the first Christmas shopping day after Thanksgiving.*  
**How many of you have been to the mall on Black Friday? What's it like?** *It's a madhouse of people buying stuff.*

**Black Friday is a great example of how we can become hardened. You get in with all those shoppers, all those people busting a gut over a good sale, and before you know it, we can become “hardened” to the meaning of Christmas. We can get so focused on what gifts we get and give that we can forget that when Jesus was born, he was wrapped in rags and his bed was a food trough for animals. Christmas is supposed to be a time to celebrate humility and great things that come without a price tag on them—like the Messiah, love of family, and the joy of salvation. And eternal life. Many of us don't even remember to say “Happy Birthday, Jesus.”**

**Jesus wants us to have nice presents under the tree. But not so many that we become spoiled, and not so outlandish that we're in debt over it. We can't get worried over what we will and will not get.**

*Open the Tupperware and take out the fresh bread slice. We need to stay close to the gospel message over the Holidays. Jesus said in Matthew 6:25-26, “I tell you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. They don't even store grain in barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth more than birds?”*

**Verse 33 says, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things *will* be added unto you.”**

*Close the lid on the piece of bread in the Tupperware container. We can be preserved—we can stay soft—by remembering the words of Christ during the Holidays. He's the reason for the season.*

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, help us to remember that your Son was born in a manger. Help us to remember that during his ministry he never traveled more than 30 miles from his hometown. He is the most well-known figure in all of history, and we want to be like him. Preserve our hearts from the love of money. Amen.





# OBJECT LESSON #25

## STRING

### YOUR FRIENDS ARE ONLY AS STRONG AS THE WEAKEST LINK

#### MESSAGE:

A string chain can illustrate how the wrong friends can be like weak links in the chain of your life.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Proverbs 19:22, Luke 12:34

#### MATERIALS:

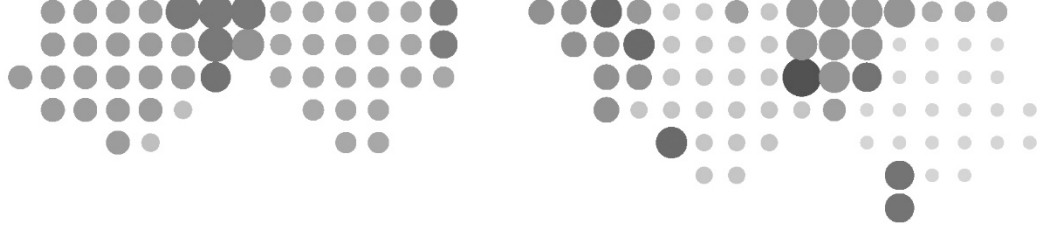
- Three-inch-long pieces of string—enough for each student to have a dozen. Multi-colored yarn also works well, especially if you can get one ball that keeps changing colors.

#### PREPARATION:

- Cut the string in three-inch sections by wrapping it around three fingers a dozen or so times.
- Then make the cuts at both ends.
- Make your own chain first (see lesson below for description of how).
- As you will be discussing the concept of “the weakest link,” tie one loose enough to come apart when you demonstrate for the class.

#### LESSON:

**When I was a girl we used to make necklaces out of string pieces. There’s something about tying knots in string that has always meant a lot to people. We tie strings around**



**our fingers for luck or to remind ourselves to do something. We make string bracelets and necklaces to link ourselves together symbolically with friends. Let's make one now. We'll use ties as symbols for people who are close to us.**

*Show them how to loop a piece of string around one finger and have the person next to them tie it in a double knot—loose enough so that it can be pulled off easily.*

*Next, you loop the second piece of string through the first, wrap the second one around your finger while the first one dangles.*

**The first loop is you. Each additional loop stands for one of your friends.**

**Your second loop: Who is your best friend? Say that person's name, then let the person next to you tie the string for that person.** *Let students add links as saying name.*

**Third: Who is your best friend from your own neighborhood? If your best friend lives in your neighborhood, think of your second-best friend from your neighborhood.** *Let them say the name and add a link.*

**Fourth: Who is your best friend from playing a sport? Say that person's name and add a link. If it's one of the people you already named, then say your second-best friend from playing a sport.** *Let them add a link.*

**Fifth: Who is your best friend because you belong to the same club or church group?** *Let them say names and add links.*

**Sixth: Who is your favorite cousin?** *Let them say names and add links.*

**Finally: Who is your best friend who only comes here to visit another relative? Like a grandma or an aunt? One of your friends' cousins?**

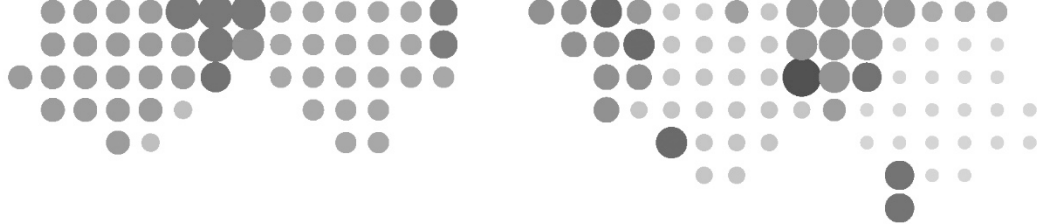
*Let them say names and add a link.*

**Now we have a chain of friends. Think of the things your friends do. Some friends are known for being very good. Others can get into trouble. Have you ever had a friend who stole things or lied and appeared to have no conscience?** *Some should be able to give examples.*

**That person would be considered a "weak link" in your chain.**

*Pull from your chain at both ends and let students watch as the weak link snaps and breaks.*

**You've heard the expression "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link." All the people**



**you associate with can be fairly good. If there's one that has a weakness for doing wrong things, it can infect other areas of your life and bring you down.**

**What do you need to do if you have a weak link among your friends?**

*Take the link that came apart and separate it from the chain. You have to put it aside for the time being. Proverbs 19:22 says it's better to be poor than a liar. Luke 12:34 says, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If you've made a treasure out of troublemakers, your heart will become troubled.*

**You can replace a weak link with a stronger link.** *Hold up a new piece of string. In life, if you have a friend who is getting in trouble, you might have to eliminate that person from your plans for a while, and you can use the time to make a new friend.*

*Take a new piece of string and have one of the kids tie the knots so you can add her.*

**Your other option is to try to strengthen the other person.**

*Pick up the discarded loop, put it around your finger and let the student tie the knots.*

**You can try to talk to her, try to be a good influence. You can tell her that if she stops lying about friends, shoplifting at the mall, that's the only way she can get back to being friends with you. Sometimes kids *will listen* to you...if you have leadership qualities...**

*Show that the link is strong now and back in place.*

**Our friendship bracelet is like our circle of friends. If there's a weak link, the bracelet becomes useless, and in life, we can put ourselves in positions where God can't use us. We want our whole circle strong, so we have to watch out who we let in our inner circle.**

**Put your bracelet around your wrist and have the person beside you tie the ends with one final link so it will stay on. Let that link represent the person who ties it on for you!**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, help us to pick our friends wisely. Give us the courage and the determination to let any weak links go. If they listen to us, help us to take them back without holding any grudges or any bad memories. Help us to always give others a fresh chance. And if they won't listen, we thank you for a chance to make a new friend instead. Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #26

## SNEAKERS

### GOD IS LIKE A SHOE: OUR “SOLE” PROTECTOR

#### MESSAGE:

While going barefoot is probably the most comfortable, our feet are vulnerable to accidents. We, like our feet, need protection.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

John 17:15, Psalms 91:9-12, 119:105

#### MATERIALS:

- Pair of Sneakers
- Bag of stones

#### PREPARATION:

None

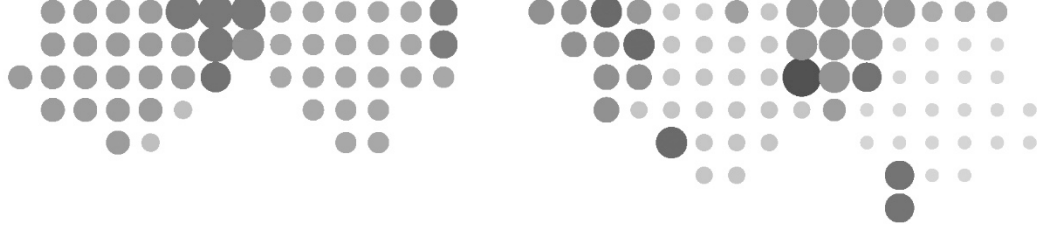
#### LESSON:

**I love summer. One of the reasons I love summer best is that I like to go around in my bare feet.** *Take off your shoes and wiggle your toes in your socks.*

**Everyone take off your shoes.** *Let kids take off shoes and be in their socks. Doesn't that feel the best? What's the first thing we usually do when we walk in the house after school? Take off your shoes.*

**We like being comfortable. We'd like to spend our entire lives being comfortable, wouldn't we? Who would want to be uncomfortable? Therefore, we ought to never wear shoes. Or if it's cold we ought to wear only socks.**

**The problem is...** *Open the bag of stones and toss them onto the floor. Life brings things our way that are painful, or even dangerous.*



*Try to walk on the rocks. **Ouch! That really hurts!***

**Our soles** ... *Point to the bottom of your foot and spell ... S-O-L-E-S are a lot like our souls. Put a hand to your heart and spell ... S-O-U-L-S. In our spiritual walk, we need to guard our “souls.” Point to your chest.*

**Jesus said to God in John 17:15, “My prayer is not that you take your servants out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.”**

***Put on your sneakers and now walk around on the rocks.***

**Psalm 91 shows us all the great things about God’s protection of our souls. It says in verses 9 through 12:**

**“If you make the Most High your dwelling,  
no harm will overtake you,  
no disaster will come near you.  
For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways;  
they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**

*As you step on stones in your sneakers...*

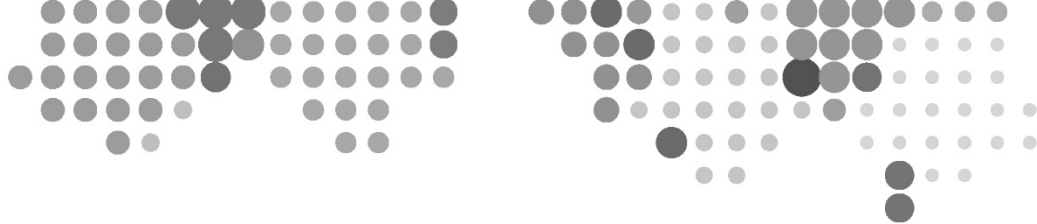
**This stone stands for a mean kid in school. With God’s protection, he can’t hurt my feelings too badly.**

**This stone stands for temptation. A kid I’m with decides to bully somebody else, but I’m not tempted because God protects my soul.**

**This stone stands for pride. I want to feel bigger and better about myself, and I could put down others to make myself look bigger, but God is protecting my heart, and I remember “Pride cometh before the fall.”**

**This stone is disappointment. I tried out for a team and didn’t make it on. God helps me have the determination to try again.**

**Psalm 119:105 says, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” God protects our souls like a good pair of shoes. And his word will always show us how.**



## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for always being like a sturdy pair of shoes and protecting our souls. Sometimes we think it's uncomfortable to be Christian, and we'd almost rather not be part some of the good behavior you want us to uphold. But you show us the way to go, and you protect our feet as we strive to walk in Jesus' footprints.

Amen.



# OBJECT LESSON #27

## SNOWSUIT

### PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

#### MESSAGE:

Going out to play in cold weather or snow can illustrate putting on the whole armor of God.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 6:11-18

#### MATERIALS:

- Hats
- Gloves
- Boots
- Jacket
- Sled

#### PREPARATION:

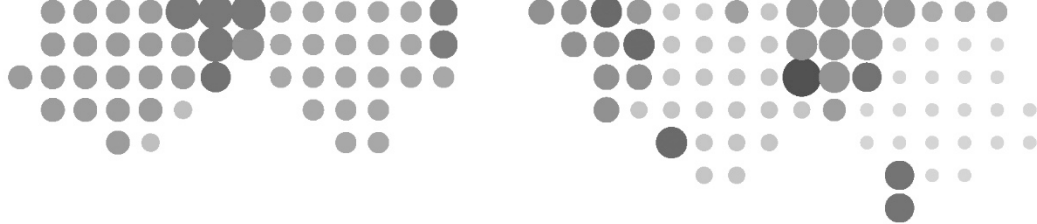
As this has to do with winter wear, it would best be taught when kids are dressing warmly.

#### LESSON:

**When we go out to sled in the snow, we have to wear more stuff than usual. What do we have to wear?** *Hats, gloves, boots, jacket, and snow pants.*

**What would happen to us if we went out in the snow in nothing but shorts and a t-shirt?** *We'd catch cold. We could get frostbite. We would be in pain and not have any fun.*

**Life can get pretty cold and frosty sometimes. Sometimes people have cold hearts, and they'll lie or try to get us to lie. Or they'll get jealous of a friend and try to stir up trouble between you and them. Sometimes people can say nasty things and call names and bully. God wants us to be prepared for the cold world that is out there and still be able to have fun and enjoy it.**



**That's why Ephesians 6:11-18 says:**

**“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.**

**"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...."**

**Let's put on the armor of God before going out on a snowy day.**

*Take up your scarf and wrap it around your neck. Have kids follow. **If someone gossips or tells a big fib, we'll have girded our waists with the truth.***

*Take up your jacket, put it on and zip it. Have kids follow. **This is our breastplate of righteousness, which can resist temptation to do what others are doing when it's wrong.***

*Take up your boots and put them on. Have kids follow. **If we cover our feet with the gospel of peace, we'll know how to reply with a soft-spoken answer to someone who is mean.***

*Take up your mittens and put them on. Have kids follow. **These can be the shield of faith, so that we'll be able to quench all those fiery comments. We'll be able to think things clearly, such as “sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me.” And as Jesus said, “Father forgive them; they don't know what they're doing.”***

*Take up your hat and put it on. Have kids follow. **This is our helmet of salvation. Knowing Jesus will protect our thoughts and minds.***

*Take up your sled. **And finally, let this sled be our sword of the spirit. With it, we can “slide through” life without falling into temptation or traps.***

**Now, we've got on the whole armor of God. We're also ready to go sledding! Let's go!**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for giving us everything we need to do battle in this world. Thank you for “the whole armor of God,” and help us remember when and how to use it! Amen.





# OBJECT LESSON #28

## CLOTHESLINE

### HOW TO STAY ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW

#### MESSAGE:

Staying on the straight and narrow may seem like walking a tightrope until we realize God is carrying us.

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 5:20-40, Matthew 7:13-14, Romans 3:23

#### MATERIALS:

- Piece of clothesline, 12 feet long
- Two chairs

#### PREPARATION:

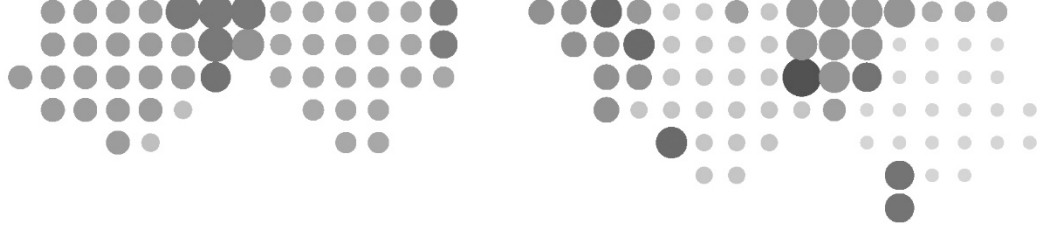
- Tie the clothesline around the feet of two chairs.
- Pull the line tight so that it stands about three or four inches above the ground.
- Have two children sit one on each chair facing each other.

#### LESSON:

**Jesus said things in his famous Sermon on the Mount that are hard to understand. Some people heard the things he said and thought, “Gee. How can I get into the Kingdom of Heaven if I have to do all the stuff he said?”**

**In Matthew 5:20, Jesus said, For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. In his day, these people were considered the most religious.**

**In verses 21 and 22 he says, “It was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is**



**angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.**

**In verses 39 and 40, Jesus says, “If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.”**

**He ends chapter 5 saying, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”**

**Can we understand why people get frustrated and say, “There’s no way to be that perfect. The whole concept of failure as a Christian is really scary”?**

**In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus sounds almost as rigid, but he provides clues here to how salvation is made doable. He says, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”**

**Enter through the narrow gate. How do we find it and what do we do to walk the way Jesus wants us to? It would feel almost like walking a tightrope. Who wants to try to walk on our clothesline - tightrope - without falling off?**

*Have the two students sitting in the chairs brace themselves and push back far so the rope is taut. Let students try to walk on it. Explain that the rope will bend enough that they can use some of the floor to steady themselves, but they ought to walk across trying not to get their heels or toes off on either foot.*

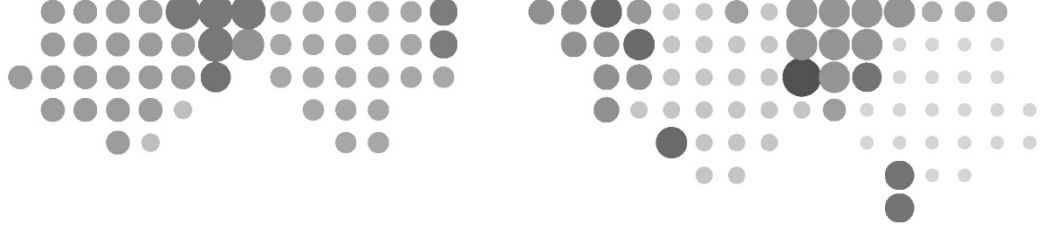
**The idea is to “stay on the straight and narrow.” Don’t let your foot hit the floor without both your heel and toe touching the rope.**

*You may have a gymnast or extremely balanced student who can actually get to the other end. If that appears to be the case, when she is three-fourths there, try taking hold of the rope behind her and wiggling it and saying this:*

**And of course there are those “stormy” times in our lives when things begin to go wrong. The wind kicks up—trials set in—and we have to stay on even during those times, according to Jesus.**

*When everyone has tried:*

**Jesus said, “Be ye perfect.” That was the way to stay on the straight and narrow. Was**



**Jesus lying? No. If students get side tracked on watering this down, keep returning to the black and white; he said it very plainly, and He's either telling the truth or he's lying.**

**There is only one way we know of to stay on “the straight and narrow.” It has to do with our relationship with Jesus—not with our actions.**

**Romans 3:23 says, “All have sinned; all fall short of the glory of God.” That’s why Jesus came. That’s why he lived and that’s why he died—so that he could keep us on the straight and narrow. Pretend for a moment I’m Jesus.**

*Pick the smallest child in the room so you don't hurt your back. Put his or her arm around your neck and lift him so his weight is on you and his feet barely touch the ground. Walk along beside the rope so his feet can swipe it, and it doesn't really matter if he misses or hits.*

**When we accept Jesus into our hearts, he begins to carry us. He takes control of our lives so we have hope, vision, understanding, a bit of clarity, safety, security, and love for others. And when we don't get it perfect— he did. And he is carrying us.**

*Put the student down.*

**That, brothers and sisters, is how to be perfect. It's the only way on planet earth.**

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

Father, keep us on the straight and narrow by keeping us in Jesus' arms. We might be imperfect. We might miss the line, but he never does.

Amen.