

"That You May Believe"

Gospel of John

Week 11

Main Idea – Believe God's Word to live. Live by believing Jesus' words.

The goal of this week's lesson is to help the children understand that the way to have life is through believing God's Word. In the Old Testament, Moses gives Israel a choice — you can choose life or you can choose death. To choose life means to believe God's Word and obey it. To choose death means reject God's Word and disobey it. This reality is fulfilled in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the incarnate Word of God, and eternal life is only available if a person believes what Jesus says and obeys Him as the one true God. Jesus did not come with different instructions on how to have life, but the same instructions that God has always given. True life flows from believing God's Word, which we now have most clearly revealed to us in the words of Jesus Christ.

Sunday School — Deuteronomy 30:11-20

Preparation

Materials:

- Two levels of word searches to emphasize the main point
- Choose life coloring page

Set-up:

- Print out materials

Bible Verse (5-10 minutes)

1 John 5:11-12, John 14:6 (ESV) – "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life...Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Memorization — Have the students repeat the Bible verse with hand motions 2-3 times.

Song — Have the students sing "The Life" (Seeds Family Worship, ESV) at least once.

NOTE — Start the Bible Verse section at the beginning without waiting for students who may arrive late. This will preserve the allotted times for other sections.

Lesson (20-25 minutes)

Main Idea – **Believe** God's Word to **live**.

Pray

Introduction (5 minutes)

Opening activity — Freeze Dance! The rules of the game are simple. Everyone should dance to the Scripture music songs provided in the boom box. They are welcome to be silly or to do the hand motions. The teacher (or helper, if the helper wants to lead) will watch everyone. When the helper pauses the music, the teacher will reveal who was the last to move. That person is out and must sit down until the last person standing wins! *You can play a round or two depending on how many students you have and how fast it goes.*

Before we move into the lesson, let's reflect on the rules. By raising your hand, answer the following questions about the game:

- **What is the goal of the game?** The goal is to win! To be the last person standing.
- **How do you win the game?** You make sure that you're the last person standing.
- **How do you make sure that you are the last person standing?** You have to be following the instructions. When the music is playing, you must be dancing. When the music stops, you must stop.

Today, we are going to talk about a time in Israel's history when God gave them a responsibility to follow, and how he expected them to respond.

Body (15 minutes)

Main Point — Believe God's Word to live. Today we will be looking at the book of Deuteronomy. Can anyone give me a short history of God's people Israel to this point in the Bible?

- God called a man named Abram (who became Abraham) to be the father of His chosen nation, Israel.
- His grandson, Jacob, had twelve sons, who later became the 12 tribes of Israel.
- Israel were slaves in Egypt for 400 years, and then God delivered them.
- Israel disobeyed God in the wilderness and had to wander around for 40 years.
- Just before they entered the promised land, God had Moses reteach Israel the law. Here's how that teaching ended:

Point #1 — **The command** — Read Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Moses teaches Israel about the importance of obeying God's command — to love Him with all their heart and listen to everything that He says.

Was this command too difficult for Israel? — No! They could keep God's command and follow it.

Was this command beyond their reach? — No! God's command wasn't kept in heaven or across the sea where they couldn't reach it. Rather, God says it was very close to them. They had all of the words of God they needed to obey this command. This brings us to the second point.

Point #2 — **The choice** — Read Deuteronomy 30:15-16

What is the choice that God gives Israel? A choice between life and death! The good news is that for those who love the Lord their God and keep His commands, God promises to bless them with abundant life! And they would experience this abundant life in the promised land they were about to enter. That seems like the right choice to me! But what happens if a person didn't choose to obey God? That brings us to our third point.

Point #3 — **The consequences** — Read Deuteronomy 30:17-18

What was the consequence for not listening to God and obeying His commands? Death!

Unlike our opening game, where the person who is the last to follow the rules is out, the person who failed to listen to God's command and obey it would be faced with death!

According to Moses, what are some of the specific ways that Israel might be tempted to disobey God and receive death as a punishment? (If desired, you can draw pictures on the board to match each item in the following list).

- If a person's heart lost its love for God
- If a person refused to listen to God's command
- If a person decided to worship other gods

If those things happened, God promised to bring disaster on Israel, even though they were His chosen people! That is how seriously the Lord views sin and disobedience.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

That brings us to the conclusion. What did God want for His people? What does God still want for us today?

Choose life! — Read Deuteronomy 30:19-20

God desires His people to choose life! He says to all mankind, "Love me with all your heart! Follow my commands! And you will have life!" Now for Israel, the choice was primarily between a blessed life on earth for obedience to God's commands or cursed life for sin against God's commands. But sin doesn't just have an impact on our earthly lives — it has an impact on our eternal destiny. If we choose to obey God, we will receive eternal life! And if we choose to disobey God, we will suffer eternal death.

This truth is so important that God sent His only Son into the world to die so that we could have eternal life through faith in Him. This back to our opening verse — "And this is the testimony, that

God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life...Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Today — choose life by coming to the Lord Jesus Christ — by believing His words about the blessings of eternal life and the dangers of eternal destruction. We can die at any moment, and if we don't have forgiveness of sins from Jesus we will suffer that eternal destruction. Therefore, (say the names of all of the children before the closing exhortation if you want) believe Jesus' words about eternal life, love Him with all your heart, and listen to His commands so that you might live.

Pray

Lesson Activities (20-25 minutes)

Secret Word in the Word Search — Moses

Children's Church — John 5:19-47

Preparation

Materials:

- Two levels of word searches to emphasize the main point
- Scripture Coloring Page

Set-up:

- Print out materials

Bible Verse (5-10 minutes)

1 John 5:11-12, John 14:6 (ESV) – "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life...Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Memorization — Have the students repeat the Bible verse with hand motions 2-3 times.

Song — Have the students sing "The Life" (Seeds Family Worship, ESV) at least once.

NOTE — Starting with the Bible verse in Children's Church will help the children get some movement in before the lesson starts. (You can also pair this with the opening activity, "Freeze Dance", as seen below).

Lesson (20-25 minutes)

Main Idea – **Live** by believing Jesus' **words**.

Pray

Introduction (5 minutes)

Our opening activity is the same as Sunday school! Instead of reviewing the rules, we're going to begin and see if those who weren't here can pick up on the rules as they play.

TEACHER — If you feel like doing a practice round or two so that kids don't feel penalized for missing SS, you are welcome to do that. Also, I've included the rules below so that you know how to play the game. Afterwards, you can ask the students who weren't there for Sunday school the questions below about the rules and see if they can guess them correctly.

Opening activity — Freeze Dance (same as SS)! The rules of the game are simple. Everyone should dance to the Scripture music songs provided in the boom box. They are welcome to be silly or to do the hand motions. The teacher (or helper, if the helper wants to lead) will watch everyone. When the helper pauses the music, the teacher will reveal who was the last to move. That person is out and must sit down until the last person standing wins! *You can play a round or two depending on how many students you have and how fast it goes.*

Before we move into the lesson, I want to ask questions to those who were not here for SS.

- **What is the goal of the game?** The goal is to win! To be the last person standing.
- **How do you win the game?** You make sure that you're the last person standing.
- **How do you make sure that you are the last person standing?** You have to be following the instructions. When the music is playing, you must be dancing. When the music stops, you must stop.

In Sunday school this morning, we learned about the importance of following instruction. And unlike the game we just played, you don't have to guess what the rules are because God told us clearly what He expects of us — We must believe God's words to live. God gave Israel a choice — “You can choose to listen to My commands and obey Me, or you can choose to reject My commands and disobey Me.” Obeying God would lead to abundant life in the promised land, and disobeying God would lead to disaster and removal from the promised land.

We saw that Moses pleaded with God's people — choose life! Love the Lord your God with all your heart and listen to His commands so that you don't perish. We also saw that because of sin, the consequences are more serious than life on this earth. To obey God and choose life leads to eternal life, and to disobey God and choose death leads to eternal death.

This message about life and death was so important that God sent His beloved Son into the world to communicate this same message. In today's world, God has spoken about life and death most clearly through His Son Jesus, so we must listen to what He says and believe it in order to have eternal life.

Body (15 minutes) — Note! This is a large passage, and you won't have time to give every detail. Focus on a few of the main points so that those points will be most powerful, rather than trying to give every detail in this passage.

Main Point - Live by believing Jesus' words. Humans are able to live by believing Jesus' words because, as God, Jesus has the authority to give life! — Read John 5:21

The question for us is, how do we talk hold of that life? If we want to have true life, eternal life, we must believe what Jesus says so that we can live. Let's go to our first point:

Live by believing Jesus is one with God the Father — Read John 5:19-23

In this passage, Jesus tells us in many different ways that He is one with God the Father. **What are some of the ways that Jesus tells us He is one with the Father?**

- The Father loves Jesus and reveals everything He is doing to Jesus (20)
- The Father and Jesus both have the authority to give life (21)
- The Father gives Jesus authority to judge sinful men and women (22)
- The Father and Jesus both will receive the same honor (23)

If a person fails to believe that Jesus one with the Father (He is God), they cannot have eternal life. This was the problem with the religious leaders of the day — they refused to believe that Jesus was one with God. That brings us to our second point.

Live by believing Jesus' message — Read John 5:24 (You can read 25-30 if you believe you have time/the students are engaged).

What was Jesus' primary message while He was on earth? The good news of the gospel! That sinners need forgiveness to be right with God, and that forgiveness can only be provided through His perfect sacrifice for sinners on the cross. If a person does not receive forgiveness for their sins, they are dead and will be condemned. But if a person believe's Jesus message - recognizes their need for a Savior, and believes that Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient to save them from sin and reconcile them to God - they will have eternal life!

The promise of verses 25-30 is that those who believe Jesus' message will be raised from the dead, but those who do not believe Jesus' message will be judged. Let's go to our final point.

Live by believing Jesus' witnesses — Read John 5:31-32 (You can read 33-45 if you believe you have time/the students are engaged. Otherwise you can use the summary below)

So if Jesus was testifying about Himself, His testimony would be false. But He claims to have witnesses. Here are the people who witness that Jesus is who He says He is:

- John the Baptist — How did John the Baptist testify of Jesus? "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!"
- Jesus' teachings and miracles — How did Jesus' teachings and miracles testify of Him? He did things that the Scriptures said the Messiah would do — Heal the lame, give sight to the blind, and speak with authority like the people had never heard before.
- The Scriptures — How did the Scriptures testify of Jesus? They spoke of His coming into the world to save sinners and destroy His enemies.

- Moses — How did Moses testify of Jesus? Moses wrote that Jesus would come as God's chosen Prophet to speak the words of God to the people.

Jesus even goes so far to say that if a person cannot believe the words of Scripture that they won't be able to believe His words either. This made the Jews of the day so angry, angry enough to kill Jesus. They did not want to believe Jesus' words, and as a result they could not receive eternal life.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

In the Old Testament, Israel needed to believe God's words to live. In the New Testament, Jesus not only comes to speak God's words, but He is God in the flesh speaking the words of life. For anyone who does not believe Jesus' words, there is the certainty of judgment. But for all who believe what He says — that He is one with the Father, the gospel message that leads to eternal life, and the witnesses that testify Jesus' words are true — they will receive as a gracious gift the eternal life that Jesus is able to give. Believe Jesus' words, and receive the free gift of eternal life that He has to offer, and you will be saved, raised from the dead, and enjoy eternity with God forever.

Pray

Lesson Activities (20-25 minutes)

Secret Word in the Word Search — Witness