

SABBATH SCHOOL

Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level 5 • Unit 9 • Week 3

LOVE

OBJECTIVE:

Our purpose in this lesson is to show God's complete, perfect, unconditional love. Christ's story of the prodigal son serves that purpose well.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Read the parable of the prodigal or lost son (at least read Luke 15:11-24, the famous part of the story).

BIBLE LESSON:

Ask : How much does God love us?

Do: Allow each child in your group to respond with one good, complete answer. Then ask them all to turn in their own Bibles to John 3:16.

Ask: Who is the Son here? [Allow them to respond. We want them to see that the Son in this scripture is Jesus.]

If the Son is Jesus, what does that make God? [Guide them to see that God is Jesus' Father.]

When the Bible says "He gave," what does it mean? [Possible answers: God was Jesus' Father. He sent Jesus to earth. They gave up, for awhile, their relationship in heaven. They made a plan that allowed/required the Word (Jesus Christ) to come to earth, be born, live and die for mankind. God loved us enough to share His favorite thing.]

Say: Jesus Christ agreed with and wanted to do His part in the plan. God the Father and God the Son were willing to give up, for awhile, a wonderful personal relationship so that more of us may enjoy a similar relationship later.

Now turn to John 19. I said that God the Son, Jesus Christ, was willing to do His part in the plan. Let's see just how willing He was!

It might be fun, if you were an extraterrestrial superbeing, to come to earth to see how people live. That is exactly what Jesus Christ did. But He did not do it for an adventure or a vacation but rather for a most important purpose. God the Son came to earth and became man because the rules that He and His Father had thought up and created in heaven required God to become man.

Not only did they require God to become man, but they also required that man (that God-man) to die as a human sacrifice for sin. That idea might seem a little strong, but it is the truth and may be discussed with your parents or minister, as you wish. Right now let us examine the final moments of the drama that the Father and Son designed in heaven, before Christ ever came to earth as a man (John 19:1-4). Christ did not just die!

Before He died He suffered—for you and me. We know we are going to die some day, but we don't want to suffer. Neither did Jesus. But as was said before, He willingly suffered and died so that you and I may have eternal life and so that you and I may call on Him and the Father for healing from sickness and injury. Christ took on our frail, weak humanity so that we might call on Him and be healed and so that in time we may enjoy eternal life with Him and our Father. That reward is in heaven now, but will come to this earth at the appointed time.

Let's read about Jesus Christ's last moments as a human being: John 19:5-30.

Remember the father of the lost son (Luke 15)? That father really pictured God the Father. But who was the son? Actually the son was all humanity, each of us; each one of us human beings is the lost son. And like the parable, the Father is happy when we repent and return to Him. But unlike the parable, our older "brother," Jesus Christ, was willing to lay down His life for us so that we can return to our Father.

If we examine Matthew 26:52-54, 64; John 18:36; and Luke 22:15-16, 18, 28-30, we will see that Jesus really looked forward to the world tomorrow more than this physical life. But as Luke 24:44 says, "...all things must be fulfilled...." Christ had to die and when He said "finished" in John 19:30, He had fulfilled all those things.

LESSON APPLICATION:

Say: We all consider certain things to be important—some more important than others. Take five minutes to list some of the essentials of your life right now. Please consider food and water but also clothing, housing and—of course—essential people: Mom, Dad, brothers and sisters. Write down what you need for an adequate life, for the "good" life and for "no" life. And then after five minutes, compare your list with others' lists for five minutes.

Finally, together, decide what you would be willing to give up for eternal life. Then ask yourself, "Would I be willing to give this up for my friend?"

Music:

Sing one of the following from the United Church of God hymnal: "From the Realms of Unseen Glory" (page 12); "Bless the Lord Eternal, O My Soul" (page 32); "Be Not Afraid My People" (page 33); "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (page 34); "God's Message," (page 38); or "God Our Father, Christ Our Brother" (page 39).

MEMORY VERSE:

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

family activity

THE POINT:

Our purpose in this lesson is to show God's complete, perfect, unconditional love. Christ's story of the prodigal son serves that purpose well.

ASK ME...

To tell the story of the lost son from Luke 15. Discuss the parable of the lost son and how great God's love is for us. Talk about how Christ, our elder brother, is different from the older brother in the parable.

Talk about the love God wants us to have as a fruit of His Holy Spirit. What "stuff" is essential for your life? What would you be willing to give up for a friend or family?

MEMORY VERSE:

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."