



Lesson 3

Depend on God

Large Group Lesson & Games

Bible Story

The Parable of the Pharisee & the Tax Collector

Luke 18:9-14

Bible Verse

“I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.”

Mark 10:15, New Living Translation

Key Teaching Point

Hearts that depend on God can receive from him.

Materials

- A Bible
- A variety of objects (e.g., balls, small toys, building blocks, lightweight objects)
- A roll of twine or string



Large Group Lesson

(15 Minutes)

Today I will tell you a story that Jesus told about two people who went to pray to God. It shows us an important truth about humility and receiving from God.

Once upon a time, there was a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee was very proud and thought he was better than others. He stood up and prayed loudly, saying how good he was and thanking God that he was not like others.

But the tax collector stood far away and didn't even lift his head. He humbly prayed, asking God for mercy, knowing he had made mistakes.

Jesus said that the tax collector went home forgiven because of his humble heart, but the Pharisee did not receive anything from God.

Why do you think the tax collector's prayer was better? What did the tax collector receive from God?

Take student responses.

What did the Pharisee gain from his prayer?

Take student responses. (Nothing, he acted like he had everything he needed.)

What can we learn from this story about how we should pray and approach God?

Take student responses.

Imagine you have done something wrong, like accidentally breaking a plate or telling a lie. You know that what you did was not right, and it makes you feel sad or guilty inside. That's how we can sometimes feel when we make mistakes or do things that hurt others.



But here's the amazing thing: God loves us so much that he wants to forgive us and make things right again. When we ask God for forgiveness and say sorry for the things we've done wrong (like the tax collector in today's story), he does something very special. He makes us right with him, just as if we had never done anything wrong in the first place. This is called 'justification,' and this is what Jesus meant when he said the tax collector walked away justified.

God does this because of his great love and mercy for us. He sent his son Jesus to show us how much he loves us and to take away the wrong things we've done. When we believe in Jesus and ask him to be our savior, God forgives us and makes us right with him. It's like he's giving us the gift of a fresh start: wiping away our mistakes and making us clean inside.

We'll talk about this more in our small groups today.

Dismiss children to their small groups.



Large Group Games

(20-25 Minutes)

THE HUMILITY RELAY

Materials needed: A variety of objects (e.g., balls, small toys, building blocks, lightweight objects)

Divide the group into teams of equal size and have them line up behind the start line. Place the small beanbags at the finish line. Explain to the children that the objective of the game is to complete the relay as quickly as possible, but there's a catch. Instruct the first person in each team to approach the finish line and grab one small object. However, before they can start running back to their team, they must say out loud something they need help with or something they don't have but need. Once they've shared their need, they can begin running back to their team, holding the small object. As soon as the first person reaches the start line, the second person can go and repeat the process, stating their need before running back. The game continues until all team members have completed the relay. The team that finishes the relay first, with each member sharing a need before running, is declared a winner.

Story connection: **We can't receive from God if we think that we have all that we need.**

HELPING HANDS

Materials needed: a variety of objects (e.g., balls, small toys, building blocks, lightweight objects), a ball of twine or string.

Invite the children to stand in a circle. To mark the circle where they are standing, lay a long piece of twine or string behind them on the floor. Place the pile of objects in the center of the circle. Explain to the children that the objective of the game is to work together as a team to move the objects from the center of the circle to a designated area outside the circle using only hands. However, there's a catch: No one can directly move the objects with their own hands, they need to rely on the help of another! Participants can use their own hands to move another's hands to grab and move the objects, passing them to the next set of helping hands. (This works best if you divide students up into pairs, with one student being the helper, and the other student being the "hands." Create a chain or series of "helping hands" by lining up the pairs of students, starting at the center of the circle and ending outside of the circle.)

Encourage participants to communicate and work together to pass the objects using the chain of helping hands. If an object falls or is dropped, the team must start again from the beginning with that object. The group has successfully accomplished their task when they move all the items outside the circle.

