

Stained Glass Windows

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Our lives can be compared to stained glass windows

Scripture: Psalms 34:18

Memory Verse: The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. - Psalms 34:18

The Children's Sermon

Imagine you have a favorite toy, but one day, it breaks. You might feel sad, right? But what if I told you that sometimes, when things break, they can still be beautiful, or even become more special? This is a little like our lives. Sometimes, we feel broken inside because of things that happen to us or mistakes we make. But there is beauty in that brokenness, just like there is beauty in a toy that's been fixed with care.

Each one of us has parts of our lives that feel broken. Maybe you had a fight with a friend, or you didn't do well on a test even though you studied really hard. When we look at these broken pieces, we might feel sad or upset. But guess what? We can learn from them and become stronger, kinder people. It's like putting the pieces back together in a new way that makes us even more special.

We can take the brokenness of our lives and try to see the beauty in it that God sees. Sometimes, we might wish for everything to be perfect and for all the bad things to just go away. But even in tough times, there's something good that can come out of it. It's like finding a rainbow after a storm. God helps us see the rainbow in our brokenness.

In our troubles, we can fail to see how this problem can be meant for us. We might even ask God, "Why is this happening to me?" But every challenge we face is a chance to grow and learn. It's like when you're learning to ride a bike. Falling off is part of learning how to stay on. Our problems can teach us how to be stronger and more loving.

There are times we feel like we are scattered, broken, and anything but a beautiful piece of art for God. But remember, even the most beautiful mosaics are made of broken pieces. Each one of us is like a piece of a big, beautiful picture that God is making. Even when we feel lost or broken, we're still a part of something wonderful.

All of us are both beautiful and broken. It's okay to have both happy and sad feelings. It's okay to make mistakes because that's how we learn. Just like a puzzle, every piece is important, even if it's a little bent or chipped. We're called to live lives where the Creator can work through us, yet where we try to make sense of our brokenness.

Now, let's talk about how we can see the beauty in our brokenness. First, we can talk to God about our feelings. Just like you talk to your mom or dad when you're upset, you can talk to God too. He listens to us all the time.

Second, we can help others who might feel broken inside. Maybe you have a friend who's sad or someone at school who sits alone at lunch. By being kind to them, you're showing them the beauty in their brokenness, just like someone might do for you.

Third, remember to be thankful for the good things in your life. Even when things seem tough, there's always something to be thankful for, like your family, friends, or even your favorite ice cream. Being thankful helps us see the beauty in our lives.

Heavenly Father, help us to trust you and know that you love us and want only the best for our lives. Help us to live our lives in a way that helps others want to know you better. When we feel broken, remind us that there's beauty in our brokenness, and you're always there to help us put the pieces back together.

Bible Memory Verse

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. - Psalms 34:18

You Will Need:

- Heart-shaped balloons (one per child)
- Permanent markers
- String

Get Ready:

- Gather all materials and ensure there are enough balloons and markers for each child.
- Create a sample balloon to show the children what they will be doing.

Do This:

1. Give each child a heart-shaped balloon and ask them to think of a time they felt sad or heartbroken. Have them write or draw that moment on their balloon with the markers.
2. Once everyone has finished, gather the children in a circle and share Psalms 34:18, explaining how God is close to us, especially in our toughest times.
3. Have each child attach a string to their balloon. Then, as a symbolic gesture of giving their worries and sadness to God, let them release their balloons into the air (either by

letting go of the strings if indoors with helium balloons or by tossing them up gently if outdoors or with regular air-filled balloons).

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Transparent contact paper (2 sheets per child)
- Tissue paper in various colors, cut into small pieces
- Black construction paper
- Scissors
- Psalm 34:18 printed on paper
- Pens or markers

Get Ready:

- Cut the black construction paper into frames (size should match the contact paper sheets).
- Cut out shapes or patterns from the center of the frames to mimic stained glass leading.
- Prepare a sample stained glass window to show as an example.

Do this:

1. Begin by discussing Psalm 34:18, focusing on how God is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Compare our lives to stained glass windows - they can be beautiful and let light shine through even when broken.
2. Give each child two sheets of contact paper, one to work on and one to seal their artwork. Peel the backing off one sheet for each child and lay it sticky side up.

3. Invite the children to create their stained glass design by placing pieces of colored tissue paper on the sticky side of the contact paper. They can create any design they feel represents the verse or their personal reflection on it.
4. Once they are satisfied with their design, help them place the second sheet of contact paper on top, sticky side down, to seal in the tissue paper pieces.
5. Frame their "stained glass" with the pre-cut black construction paper, securing it with a bit of glue if necessary.
6. Conclude by allowing each child to share their creation and what they learned or felt about Psalm 34:18 through this activity. Encourage them to hang their stained glass in a window at home as a reminder of God's presence in times of trouble.

Snack Activity: Stained Glass Heart Cookies

You'll Need:

- 1 package of sugar cookie dough
- Assorted colors of hard candy (like Jolly Ranchers)
- Rolling pin
- Parchment paper
- Heart-shaped cookie cutters
- A smaller heart-shaped cutter or knife
- Baking sheets
- Hammer or meat mallet
- Ziplock bags

Get Ready: Preheat your oven according to the cookie dough package instructions. Place candies in separate Ziplock bags and crush them into small pieces using a hammer or meat mallet. Line your baking sheets with parchment paper.

Do this:

1. Roll out the sugar cookie dough on a surface lightly dusted with flour to about 1/4 inch thickness. Use the larger heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut out cookie shapes. Then, use the smaller heart cutter or knife to cut out a heart shape in the center of each cookie.
2. Place the cut-out cookies on the prepared baking sheets. Fill the center hole of each cookie with the crushed candy pieces, making sure to mix colors to resemble stained glass.
3. Bake according to the cookie dough package instructions, or until the cookies are lightly golden and the candy has melted and filled the cut-out area. Let them cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes before transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely.

As you enjoy your Stained Glass Heart Cookies, remember Psalms 34:18, 'The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.' Just like these cookies, our lives can be beautiful and colorful, reflecting God's love, especially during tough times when we feel broken.

Game Activity: Stained Glass Hearts

You'll Need:

- Large sheets of clear contact paper
- Tissue paper in various colors, cut into small squares
- Black construction paper
- Scissors
- Psalms 34:18 printed on paper

Get Ready: Cut the black construction paper into frames that resemble stained glass window outlines. Each frame should have a heart shape in the center. Cut two pieces of contact paper for each student, ensuring they are large enough to cover the entire frame with extra space around the edges.

Do this:

1. Begin by discussing Psalms 34:18, explaining how our lives are like stained glass windows - made beautiful by God, especially when we are broken or going through tough times. Each piece of tissue paper represents our experiences, and when light shines through, our lives reflect God's love and healing.
2. Peel the backing off one piece of contact paper for each student and place it sticky side up. Students then place their black frame on the contact paper.
3. Inside the heart shape, students will place the tissue paper squares onto the sticky contact paper, creating their own stained glass design. Encourage them to think about the different 'pieces' of their lives as they work.
4. Once they are satisfied with their design, help them place the second piece of contact paper on top, sticky side down, sealing the tissue paper in place.
5. Discuss how, just like the stained glass, we may not understand how our broken pieces fit together until we see how God uses them to create something beautiful. Conclude by hanging the stained glass hearts in a window so light can shine through, illustrating the message of Psalms 34:18.

Craft Activity: Stained Glass Hearts: Reflecting God's Love

You'll Need:

- Tissue paper in various colors

- Black construction paper
- Clear contact paper
- Scissors
- Printable heart template
- Psalms 34:18 printed on paper

Get Ready: Print out the heart template and cut out a heart shape from the black construction paper to use as a frame. Cut the tissue paper into small squares.

Do this:

1. Cut two pieces of clear contact paper large enough to cover the heart template. Peel the backing off one piece and place it sticky side up on the table. Place the black construction paper heart frame on the contact paper.
2. Invite the children to fill the inside of the heart frame with the tissue paper squares, explaining that each piece represents how God can take our broken pieces and make something beautiful from them, just like He is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit (Psalms 34:18).
3. Once the heart is filled, peel the backing off the second piece of contact paper and place it sticky side down on top of the heart, sealing the tissue paper in place. Trim any excess contact paper around the edges.
4. Discuss how our lives can be compared to stained glass windows, where God's love shines through our brokenness to create something beautiful. Have the children write or glue the verse Psalms 34:18 on the back of their stained glass heart.

Prayer Activity: Stained Glass Hearts: Reflecting God's Light in Brokenness

You'll Need:

- Tissue paper in various colors
- Black construction paper
- Clear contact paper
- Scissors
- Psalms 34:18 printed on a paper

Get Ready: Cut the black construction paper into frames in the shape of a heart. Cut the inside of the heart out, leaving about an inch border, creating a heart-shaped outline. Cut the contact paper into squares that are slightly larger than the heart frames. Prepare small squares or shapes of colored tissue paper.

Do this:

1. Read Psalms 34:18 together: 'The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.' Discuss how our lives can be like stained glass windows, beautiful because of how the broken pieces fit together with God's light shining through.
2. Peel the backing off one side of the contact paper and place it sticky side up on the table. Stick the black heart frame onto the contact paper. Then, have the children fill in the heart with the colored tissue paper pieces, representing how God brings beauty from our brokenness and pain.
3. Place another piece of contact paper on top, sticky side down, to seal the tissue paper pieces. Trim any excess contact paper around the heart. Reflect on how, like the stained glass, our lives can reflect God's light and love, especially when we feel broken or hurt.