

The Gray Elephant From Delaware

LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: God's providence and our freewill

Scripture: Ephesians 1:11-23

Memory Verse: In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. -
Ephesians 1:11

The Children's Sermon

Hey kids, today we're going to talk about something really cool called Providence in God's Plan. It's a big idea, but I'll help you understand it with a fun little game. Are you ready? Let's go!

First, think of any number between 2 and 9. Got it? Now, multiply that number by 9. This might be a bit tricky, but you can do it! After you've multiplied your number, you'll get a new number. If that new number has two digits, add those digits together. Now, take the number you have and subtract 5 from it.

Next, we're going to switch gears a bit. Think of the letter in the alphabet that matches the number you have now. For example, if you have 1, that's A. If you have 2, that's B, and so on. Got your letter? Awesome! Now, think of a country that starts with that letter. Got one? Great!

Now, take the second letter of that country's name and think of the name of an animal that begins with this letter. Think of the main color of this animal. Is anyone else

thinking of a gray elephant from Denmark? (Take a show of hands and include everyone. Most will be right with you. Some, however, may be thinking of evergreen eels, apple-colored eagles, or whatever an active mind can come up with. Some will have lost track of the math altogether. Strongly emphasize the fact that most of the group just had its mind read).

God's plans for our lives are something like this. Just like we could choose any number we wanted to between 2 and 9, we can choose to go wherever, do whatever, and be whoever we choose to be. But we cannot escape God's plan. The will of God will ultimately be done in our lives. The lost will be found, and sinners will be made saints. And that, friends, is called Providence in God's Plan...even more wondrous than math.

Now, let's dive a bit deeper into Providence in God's Plan. Imagine you're playing a game where you can choose any path to walk on. Some paths might look really fun and exciting, and others might seem a bit scary or boring. But no matter which path you choose, there's a guide who knows the entire park by heart and will make sure you end up where you're supposed to be, safe and sound. That guide is like God, and the park is like our lives. God's Providence is His way of guiding us, even when we make our own choices.

Sometimes, it might feel like we're all alone, making decisions and hoping for the best. But just like in our number game, there's a bigger plan at work. Providence in God's Plan means that God is always with us, helping us through the tough times and celebrating with us in the good times. He knows where we're going, even when we don't.

You know, choosing our paths can be fun, but it can also be a bit scary. What if we make a wrong turn? What if we choose a path that seems right but ends up being really

hard? Well, that's where Providence in God's Plan comes in. God uses everything, even our mistakes, to bring us closer to Him and to the wonderful things He has planned for us.

Let's think about a butterfly for a moment. Before it becomes a butterfly, it starts as a tiny egg, then becomes a caterpillar, and after that, it turns into a pupa inside a cocoon. During each of these stages, the little creature might not understand what's happening. It might even feel scared or confused. But all these stages are part of a beautiful plan to turn it into a butterfly. Just like the butterfly, we go through different stages in our lives, and Providence in God's Plan is at work, making sure we turn into the beautiful creations God intended us to be.

Now, let's talk about how we can see Providence in God's Plan in our everyday lives. Have you ever had a day where everything seemed to go wrong, but then, out of nowhere, something really good happened? Or maybe you've been in a situation where you didn't know how to solve a problem, but then you got help in a way you didn't expect. Those moments, big or small, are examples of Providence in God's Plan. They're little reminders that God is with us, guiding us and taking care of us.

And here's something really important to remember: Providence in God's Plan doesn't mean we just sit back and do nothing, waiting for God to do everything for us. No, it means we do our best, make choices, and take steps, but we trust that God is with us, helping us along the way. It's like being on a team with God. We play our part, and He coaches us, making sure we're heading towards victory.

So, what can we do to be more aware of Providence in God's Plan? We can start by talking to God every day, just like we talk to our friends. We can tell Him about our

hopes, our dreams, and even our worries. We can ask Him to show us the way and to help us understand His plan for us. And we can keep our eyes open for those little signs that He's with us, guiding us every step of the way.

Let's end with a little prayer. Dear God, thank you for Your amazing plan for our lives. Help us to see Your hand in everything we do and to trust in Your Providence. Guide us, protect us, and help us to become the wonderful people You want us to be. Amen.

And remember, kids, Providence in God's Plan is always at work, even when we can't see it. So keep your hearts open, and let's walk this journey together, knowing that God is always by our side.

Bible Memory Verse

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. - Ephesians 1:11

You Will Need:

- Colored paper
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Glue
- Stickers (optional)

Get Ready:

- Cut the colored paper into large puzzle piece shapes, one for each child plus a few extra.

-Write one word of the memory verse on each puzzle piece.

Do This:

1. Mix all the puzzle pieces in a central pile. Have the children sit in a circle around the pile.
2. Ask each child to pick a puzzle piece from the pile. Once all the pieces have been picked, encourage the children to work together to assemble the puzzle in the correct order to form the memory verse.
3. Once the puzzle is complete, discuss how just like they worked together to complete the puzzle, God has a plan for each of us that fits together perfectly. Explain that God's providence and our free will work together in God's big plan. Encourage them to decorate their puzzle piece with markers, crayons, or stickers as a reminder of the verse and lesson.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A large puzzle (about 24 pieces) with an image that represents God's creation or something beautiful and positive.
- Blank puzzle pieces (1 per child) or cardstock to make your own.
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils.
- A Bible or a printed copy of Ephesians 1:11-23.

Get Ready:

- Before class, complete the large puzzle but remove 4-5 pieces, setting them aside.
- Prepare a short, simplified version of Ephesians 1:11-23 that focuses on God's plan for us and how we fit into it.

- Cut out enough blank puzzle pieces from cardstock if you're not using pre-made ones.

Do this:

1. Show the children the incomplete puzzle. Explain that just like this puzzle, God has a big, beautiful plan for the world. Sometimes, we might not see the whole picture, but each of us is an important piece of God's plan, just like Ephesians 1:11-23 tells us. Read them the simplified scripture.

2. Give each child a blank puzzle piece and ask them to draw something on it that they think represents how they can be a part of God's plan. It could be a talent they have, a way they can help others, or something they love about God's world.

3. While they work, discuss the concept of free will - that God has a plan for us, but He also gives us choices. We can choose to be a part of His plan and use our gifts in a way that fits into the big picture, just like choosing where to put a puzzle piece.

4. Once everyone is done, have the children come up one by one to add their piece to the puzzle, fitting it into the gaps or around the edges, creating a new, unique picture. Explain that this is how God's providence works with our free will. He has a plan, but we also get to make choices that shape the outcome.

5. Conclude by showing them the completed puzzle with their pieces added. Highlight how every piece was different but together, they made something beautiful. Relate this back to Ephesians 1:11-23, emphasizing that God has chosen us to be part of His plan, and each of us has a unique role to play.

Snack Activity: Pathway to Providence Cookies

You'll Need:

- Sugar cookies (pre-baked round cookies)
- White icing
- Assorted candy pieces (to represent choices)
- Small plastic knives or spreaders
- Plates

Get Ready: Before the activity, prepare a small story or explanation about how God has a plan for each of us, just like Paul talks about in Ephesians 1:11-23. Explain how our choices (free will) can align with God's plan (providence) to create a beautiful outcome.

Do this:

1. Give each child a pre-baked round cookie on a plate. This cookie represents the world God has created for us.
2. Spread white icing on the cookie. Explain that the icing represents God's love and plan for us—it covers and fills our lives.
3. Let the children pick from assorted candy pieces to decorate their cookies. Each piece of candy represents different choices we make in our lives. As they decorate, discuss how our choices can either align with God's plan or go a different way, but God's love and providence are always there to guide us back.
4. As they enjoy their cookies, remind them that even when we make mistakes or choose poorly, God's plan for us is still good, and He can turn everything for our benefit, just like the mixed candies can still make the cookie look and taste wonderful.

Game Activity: Pathway to Providence

You'll Need:

- Chalk
- Open space like a driveway or a sidewalk
- Small stones or beanbags

Get Ready: Draw a large path on the ground with the chalk. The path should have several branches leading off to the sides, each ending in a circle. Label the start of the path with 'Start' and write 'God's Plan' in a big circle at the end of the main path. Write different choices in each of the branching circles like 'Share', 'Help', 'Ignore', 'Complain', etc.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that God has a wonderful plan for each of us, just like Paul says in Ephesians 1:11-23. Our choices can lead us closer to or further from God's plan. The game represents our journey and the choices we make.
2. Each child takes a turn tossing a stone or beanbag onto the path. Wherever it lands, they hop towards it, making choices (hopping to different branches) based on the words they encounter. If they land on positive actions like 'Share' or 'Help', they hop back towards the main path. Negative choices like 'Ignore' or 'Complain' mean they hop on the spot, discussing how that choice might not lead towards God's plan.
3. The goal is to reach 'God's Plan' at the end of the path. After everyone has had a turn, gather the children and discuss how even when we make wrong choices, God's providence and our free will work together to guide us back to His plan for us.

Craft Activity: God's Plan Puzzle

You'll Need:

- A large piece of poster board or construction paper

- Markers or crayons
- Scissors

Get Ready: Draw a large puzzle piece shape on the poster board or construction paper. Inside the puzzle piece, write Ephesians 1:11-23 in large, clear letters. Then, draw smaller puzzle piece shapes around the large one, leaving some space between them.

Do this:

1. Carefully cut out the large puzzle piece with the Scripture written on it. Then, cut out the smaller puzzle pieces around it.
2. On each small puzzle piece, have the children write or draw something they believe is part of God's plan for them (e.g., being kind, learning, helping others) or a choice they can make because of their freewill (e.g., choosing to share, deciding to pray).
3. Once they have finished, discuss how each small piece (representing our choices and God's plans for us) fits around the big piece (representing God's overall plan and providence as described in Ephesians 1:11-23). Explain that even though we have the freedom to make choices, God's plan is perfect and encompasses all. Encourage the children to fit their pieces around the large puzzle piece, creating a visual representation of how our choices and God's plans work together.

Prayer Activity: God's Big Plan and Our Choices

You'll Need:

- A large piece of paper or poster board
- Markers or crayons
- Sticky notes

Get Ready: Before the class, draw a big tree on the poster board, leaving plenty of space for leaves (sticky notes).

Do this:

1. Start by telling the children about how God has a big plan for everything and everyone, just like Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:11-23. God's plan is like a big, beautiful tree that keeps growing.
2. Explain that even though God has a big plan, we also get to make choices every day, like what game to play or being kind to a friend. Our choices are like the leaves that appear on the tree.
3. Give each child a sticky note and ask them to draw or write a choice they made recently or can make that shows they are part of God's plan. It could be helping someone, saying a prayer, or sharing.
4. Have them stick their 'leaf' onto the tree. As they do, discuss how each choice fits into God's big plan, showing how our free will works within God's providence.