

# The Gray Elephant From Delaware

## UPPER 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
- Glue sticks
- Stickers or glitter

Get Ready:

- Cut the colored paper into large, heart-shaped pieces, one for each child.

-Set up a crafting station with markers, scissors, glue sticks, and decorations like stickers or glitter.

Do This:

1. Have each child select a heart-shaped piece of paper. Explain that the heart represents them, and how God has chosen each of us for a purpose, just like the verse says.
2. Ask the children to decorate their hearts using the markers, stickers, and glitter. While they work, encourage them to think about what it means to be chosen by God and how they might live to fulfill God's purpose for them.
3. Once everyone has finished decorating, gather the children in a circle. Let them share their decorated hearts and talk about what they believe God's purpose for their life might be. Conclude by praying together, asking God to help each child understand their unique role in His plan.

## Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A large printout of Ephesians 1:11-23
- Highlighters (different colors)
- Sticky notes
- Pens
- A large map of the world or a globe
- Small stickers or flags
- A "Prayer and Providence" worksheet (create a simple worksheet with prompts related to the themes of providence, inheritance, hope, and power in the scripture)

Get Ready:

- Print out a large version of Ephesians 1:11-23, big enough for the kids to read together when placed on the wall.
- Prepare the "Prayer and Providence" worksheets with prompts like "How does God's plan give us hope?" and "What does it mean to inherit God's kingdom?"
- Set up a station with the large map or globe, placing the stickers or flags nearby.
- Arrange chairs in a circle or semi-circle around the scripture printout and the map station.

Do this:

1. **Discover and Highlight**: Gather the kids around the Ephesians 1:11-23 printout. Hand out highlighters and read the scripture together. Ask them to highlight phrases that stand out to them about God's providence (God's plan) and our inheritance in Christ. Discuss their choices briefly.
2. **Mapping God's Family**: Move to the map station. Explain that God's plan includes people from all over the world. Have each child place a sticker or flag on a country they feel drawn to pray for, explaining that God's providence extends globally. They can write the name of the country on a sticky note and stick it to the map next to their flag.
3. **Prayer and Providence Worksheet**: Hand out the worksheets and pens. Let the kids reflect on and answer the prompts based on the scripture and the discussion. Encourage them to think about how they fit into God's plan, emphasizing that God's providence doesn't negate our free will but rather works through it.
4. **Share and Pray**: Bring the group back together and invite them to share their thoughts from the worksheet and their chosen country. Lead a prayer session where you pray for the countries they chose, asking for God's providence to be evident in

those places and in their lives, reflecting on the hope and power found in Ephesians 1:11-23.

## Snack Activity: Providence Pretzel Pops

You'll Need:

- Pretzel rods
- White chocolate chips
- Sprinkles (various colors)
- Wax paper
- Microwave-safe bowl
- Spoon
- Small plates or bowls for sprinkles

Get Ready: Lay out a large sheet of wax paper on a flat surface. This is where you'll place your pretzel pops after dipping them in chocolate.

Do this:

1. In the microwave-safe bowl, melt the white chocolate chips in 30-second intervals, stirring in between, until smooth. The white chocolate represents God's purity and the foundation of our faith, as mentioned in Ephesians 1:11-23.
2. Dip half of each pretzel rod into the melted white chocolate, letting the excess drip off. This step symbolizes how we are covered by God's grace and providence.
3. Before the chocolate hardens, roll the dipped pretzel rod in the sprinkles or gently sprinkle them over the chocolate. Each color of the sprinkles represents the diversity of God's creation and the variety of gifts He gives us, as well as the choices (free will) we have within His plan.

4. Place the pretzel pops on the wax paper to harden. As they set, discuss Ephesians 1:11-23, focusing on how God has a plan for us, how we are chosen and predestined according to His purpose, and how we can see His power at work in our lives.

## Game Activity: Ephesians Quest

You'll Need:

- A large open space (indoor or outdoor)
- Several small objects to serve as 'blessings' (e.g., small stones, beanbags, or paper hearts)
- Two large baskets or boxes
- Index cards with Ephesians 1:11-23 written out, split into key phrases or verses
- Tape or a way to mark starting lines and boundaries

Get Ready: Before the activity, hide the small objects (blessings) around the play area. Write out Ephesians 1:11-23 on the index cards, breaking it down into manageable parts, and tape these cards in various visible locations around the play area. Set up a 'home base' area with the two baskets or boxes placed at opposite ends.

Do this:

1. Divide the children into two teams. Explain that they are on a quest to discover the blessings and inheritance we have in Christ, as described in Ephesians 1:11-23. Each team's goal is to collect as many 'blessings' as they can and learn the key verses along the way.
2. When you say 'Go,' team members will race from the starting line to find and collect the 'blessings.' Once a player finds a blessing, they must also find a verse card, read it aloud to a teammate or teacher, and discuss for a brief moment what it means in the



context of God's providence and our free will. After discussing, they can place the 'blessing' in their team's basket and go search for more.

3. The game ends when all the 'blessings' have been collected or after a set time limit. Gather everyone together and count the blessings in each basket. Open a discussion about how the verses they found and read relate to the blessings we have in Christ and how this ties into the concept of God's providence and our choice to follow Him. The team with the most blessings wins, but emphasize that in Christ, we all win because of the inheritance and the hope we have in Him.

## Craft Activity: Journey of Faith Map

You'll Need:

- A large piece of poster board or construction paper
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Stickers or stamps
- A Bible

Get Ready: Read Ephesians 1:11-23 together as a class, focusing on the themes of God's plan, inheritance, and power. Discuss how our journey with God is like a map filled with different paths, choices, and destinations.

Do this:

1. Have each student draw a large 'map' on their poster board, imagining their life as a journey with God. Encourage them to think about their past, present, and future with God's guidance.
2. Using the scripture as inspiration, ask them to mark significant moments where they've seen God's plan in action in their lives (these can be symbolized with stickers or

stamps). They can also add paths leading to future hopes and dreams, acknowledging that God has a plan for their lives.

3. Along the paths, have them write verses from Ephesians 1:11-23 that speak to them about God's providence, inheritance, and the power available to us as believers. This can include phrases like 'In him we were also chosen,' 'the riches of his glorious inheritance,' and 'his incomparably great power for us who believe.'

4. Encourage the students to share their maps with the class, explaining the significance of the moments and verses they've chosen. This activity not only reinforces the scripture but also allows for personal reflection on how God's plan and free will intersect in our lives.

## Prayer Activity: Exploring God's Plan and Our Choice

You'll Need:

- A Bible or printed copy of Ephesians 1:11-23
- Blank paper
- Colored pencils or markers

Get Ready: Familiarize yourself with Ephesians 1:11-23, focusing on themes of God's providence and our freewill.

Do this:

1. Begin with a group reading of Ephesians 1:11-23. Encourage the children to listen closely for words or phrases that stand out to them about God's plan and how we fit into it.
2. Hand out the blank paper and art supplies. Ask each child to draw a picture that represents what they think God's plan looks like, including where they see themselves

in that plan. Encourage creativity and reassure them that there are no right or wrong answers.

3. After everyone has finished their drawings, gather the children in a circle. Invite volunteers to share their artwork and explain how it represents God's plan and their own free will. Conclude with a group prayer, thanking God for His plan for us and asking for guidance to make choices that align with His will.