

God Loves Us This Much

LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Salvation

Scripture: 3 John 1:4

Memory Verse: I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. - 3 John 1:4

The Children's Sermon

Imagine that you made something with your own hands all by yourself. It was very special to you. How does that make you feel? (Call on children for responses.)

You love it very much AND THEN you lose it – How would you feel? (Call on children for responses.)

What if, after searching everywhere for it, for a very long time, you found it – how would you feel? (Call on children for responses.)

What if, after you found this special thing that you made, you discover that it now belongs to someone else, who intends to keep it - What would you give to that person to get it back? (Call on children for responses.)

I would like to read a story to you called Twice Yours written by Nan Gurley.

READ STORY.

This story shows us how much God loves us. God sent His son who would give everything He had - His life - that we might have eternal life. Have you ever seen parents say to a toddler - "How big are you?" And the child will raise his hands over his head and say "So big." Have you seen a child respond to the question, "How much do I love you" - by outstretching his arms and saying, "This much!"

When your arms are outstretched, with your body you are making a cross. That can remind you of God's love for you. If God loves us this much, that Jesus gave his life for you, then He must think that we are very special. God thinks that each one of you is a small wonder!

God's love for you is so big and so wide, like the sky that stretches far and wide above us. Imagine how much God loves us, more than all the stars in the night sky. He loves us so much that He knows each of us by name. He knows your favorite color, your favorite game, and even how many hairs are on your head!

Sometimes, we might wonder, "How can we see God's love for you?" We can see it in the beautiful world He created for us to live in, with its colorful flowers, tall mountains, and deep blue seas. We can see it in the way He provides for us, giving us food to eat, water to drink, and air to breathe.

But the biggest way God showed His love was when He sent His only Son, Jesus, to be with us. Jesus taught us how to love, how to be kind, and how to forgive others. And then, Jesus did something amazing. He gave up His life for us, so we could be close to God forever. That's how much God loves us!

Let's pray together: Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for loving us so much that you sent your son to die for our sins. Help all children to understand what a wonderful gift he or she is. Help them to know that they are a small wonder, one of a kind; that You have given each one special gifts and a special purpose. May they live their lives in such a way as to glorify You. I thank you for Nan Gurley and the special gifts You gave her. Her book has blessed us and brings glory to You. Thank you Lord, in Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Bible Memory Verse

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. - 3 John 1:4

You Will Need:

- Colored paper
- Markers or crayons
- Stickers with stars or hearts

Get Ready:

- Cut the colored paper into heart shapes, one for each child.
- Write the memory verse on a large poster board and decorate it with stickers.

Do This:

1. Give each child a heart-shaped paper and ask them to decorate it with markers or crayons, encouraging them to write the memory verse on it.
2. Once everyone has finished decorating, gather the children in a circle and discuss what it means to walk in the truth and how it brings joy to others, especially to God.

3. Conclude by having each child share their decorated heart and say the memory verse out loud. Hang the hearts around the room or on a bulletin board as a reminder of the lesson.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A large poster board
- Markers or crayons
- Sticky notes
- Bible or a printout of 3 John 1:4
- "Walking in Truth" path template (create a simple winding path on a piece of paper)
- Toy figures (enough for each child)

Get Ready:

- Write 3 John 1:4 on the poster board in large, colorful letters.
- Prepare the "Walking in Truth" path templates, one for each child.
- Set up a reading corner with the Bible or printout of the verse.

Do this:

1. ****Introduction to the Verse:**** Start by reading 3 John 1:4 aloud to the children.

Explain that walking in truth means living in a way that shows we believe in Jesus and His love for us. This makes God very happy!

2. ****Create Your Truth Path:**** Give each child a "Walking in Truth" path template and some markers or crayons. Ask them to decorate their path with drawings or words that represent what it means to live in God's truth (e.g., being kind, telling the truth,

believing in Jesus). As they work, encourage them to think about how these actions show our love for Jesus and lead us to salvation.

3. **Walking the Path:** Place the toy figures at the start of the path. Explain that the figure represents them on their journey of faith. As they move the figure along the path, they should say one way they can live out God's truth that week. This could be helping a friend, praying, reading the Bible, or sharing love with their family.

4. **Reflection and Sharing:** Once everyone has completed their path, gather the children in a circle. Invite them to share their path and one action they plan to take that week to walk in truth. After sharing, encourage the group with a cheer or prayer to support each other in living out God's truth.

5. **Closing:** End with a prayer, asking God to help each child walk in His truth and feel the joy of making Him happy, just like 3 John 1:4 says. Encourage them to take their "Walking in Truth" path home to remind them of their commitment to live in God's truth.

Snack Activity: Salvation Fruit Boats

You'll Need:

- A variety of fruits (like apples, bananas, and grapes)
- Toothpicks
- Paper (to make sails)
- Markers

Get Ready: Cut the apples into halves to serve as the 'boats.' Slice bananas and grapes to use as 'passengers.' Prepare little sails using paper and markers, then attach them to toothpicks.

Do this:

1. Explain that just like our fruit boats need a sail to move, we need Jesus to guide us to salvation. 3 John 1:4 tells us how joyful it is to know that children are walking in truth, just like our fruit passengers are safely in their boats.
2. Let the children assemble their fruit boats by placing the apple halves on plates, adding banana and grape 'passengers,' and then inserting the sails (toothpicks with paper) into the boats.
3. As they enjoy their snack, remind them that accepting Jesus into our lives and following His teachings is like setting sail on a journey towards salvation, where we are guided by His love and truth.

Game Activity: Salvation Steps

You'll Need:

- Sidewalk chalk
- A large, open sidewalk or driveway
- Small stones or beanbags

Get Ready: Draw a large hopscotch grid on the sidewalk or driveway. Instead of numbers, write the steps of salvation (e.g., Love, Sin, Jesus, Believe, Saved) in each square.

Do this:

1. Each player throws their stone or beanbag onto the first square.

2. The player then hops through the squares, skipping the one with their stone or beanbag, while saying the step of salvation written in the square they are hopping on.
3. After reaching the end, the player turns around, retrieves their stone or beanbag while hopping back, and passes it to the next player.
4. The game continues with each player aiming for the next square in sequence, learning the steps of salvation as they play. The aim is to complete the course, reflecting on 3 John 1:4, understanding that walking in truth and following the steps to salvation brings joy.

Craft Activity: Walking in Truth Shoes

You'll Need:

- A pair of white canvas shoes (or paper cutouts of shoes for a less expensive option)
- Fabric markers or crayons
- Stickers with Christian symbols (crosses, fish, hearts)

Get Ready: Make sure each child has a pair of shoes (or paper cutouts) and access to the markers and stickers. If using paper cutouts, prepare them in advance by cutting out shoe shapes from white paper.

Do this:

1. Read 3 John 1:4 together: 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth.' Discuss what it means to walk in truth and how it relates to following Jesus and the salvation He offers.
2. Have the children decorate their shoes (or paper cutouts) with the fabric markers and stickers. Encourage them to think about the symbols and colors they choose, reflecting on the theme of salvation and walking in truth as they decorate.

3. Once everyone is done, gather the children to share their shoes and explain their designs. Highlight how each design represents their understanding of salvation and their commitment to walk in truth, just like the verse says.

Prayer Activity: Walking in Truth Prayer Path

You'll Need:

- Colored paper
- Markers or crayons
- Tape

Get Ready: Before the class, cut out large footprints from the colored paper. Write one word of 3 John 1:4 on each footprint ('I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.') and tape them on the floor in a path leading to a designated 'Salvation Spot' in the room.

Do this:

1. Gather the children and explain that today they will go on a special journey to learn about walking in truth, just like in our Bible verse, 3 John 1:4. Tell them that walking in truth means living in a way that shows they believe in Jesus and His love.
2. Have the children start at the beginning of the path. As they step on each footprint, they say the word out loud. This will help them memorize the verse and think about what each word means to them.
3. Once they reach the 'Salvation Spot,' guide them in a simple prayer. They can repeat after you or pray in their own words. Encourage them to talk to God about wanting to walk in His truth every day and to ask for His help to live in a way that pleases Him.