

# God Loves Us This Much

## UPPER 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
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Glue sticks
- Stickers (optional)

Get Ready:

- Cut the colored paper into large heart shapes, one for each child.
- Write '3 John 1:4' on the top of each heart shape in advance to save time.

Do This:

1. Give each child a heart shape and ask them to decorate it with markers, crayons, and stickers. Encourage them to think about what it means to walk in the truth as they decorate.

2. Once they have finished decorating, have each child write the memory verse, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. - 3 John 1:4', on their heart.

3. Create a 'Wall of Truth' in the classroom where the children can display their hearts. Discuss as a group how each of them can walk in truth in their daily lives, giving practical examples. Conclude by praying together, asking God to help them walk in His truth every day.

## Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Bibles or printed copies of 3 John 1:4
- Large poster board
- Markers, crayons, and colored pencils
- Sticky notes
- "Walking in Truth" path template (create a simple path on a large sheet of paper with various steps labeled with life scenarios)
- Small prizes or treats

Get Ready:

- Print or ensure there are enough Bibles for each child to have one.
- Create the "Walking in Truth" path template. Include steps like "Helping a Friend," "Telling the Truth," "Praying," "Reading the Bible," etc.
- Write down different scenarios on sticky notes that test honesty, kindness, and faithfulness and stick them along the path.
- Set up the poster board and art supplies on a table.

Do this:

1. Start by reading 3 John 1:4 together. Discuss what it means to walk in truth and how it relates to being a child of God.
2. Divide the children into small groups and give them a scenario from the "Walking in Truth" path. Each group discusses how they would respond to the scenario in a way that reflects walking in truth, then shares their decision with the class.
3. After discussing the scenarios, each child writes or draws on the poster board what walking in truth means to them personally, using the scripture as a guide.
4. To conclude, each child picks a scenario from the path and commits to applying walking in truth to their life that week. Offer small prizes or treats as a reminder of their commitment to walk in truth as beloved children of God.

## Snack Activity: Walking in Truth Fruit Skewers

You'll Need:

- Assorted fruits (grapes, strawberries, blueberries, and melon balls)
- Skewers or long toothpicks
- Small cookie cutters (star or heart shapes)
- Yogurt or melted chocolate for dipping

Get Ready: Wash all the fruits and prepare a clean workspace. Cut larger fruits like melons into slices thick enough to use the cookie cutters on.

Do this:

1. Discuss 3 John 1:4, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth.' Ask the kids what it means to walk in truth and how following Jesus is like walking a path led by truth and love.

2. Have the children use the cookie cutters to cut shapes out of the melon slices, representing the different aspects of walking in truth, such as love, joy, peace, and kindness.
3. Thread the fruits onto the skewers, alternating types and colors to make them visually appealing. As they do this, encourage them to think of each fruit piece as a step towards walking in truth, following Jesus' teachings. Once done, they can dip their skewer in yogurt or melted chocolate as a 'reward' for their commitment to walking in truth.

## Game Activity: Path to Joy

You'll Need:

- A large open space (indoors or outdoors)
- Chalk (for outdoor use) or tape (for indoor use)
- Cards with Bible verses that lead to understanding salvation and 3 John 1:4 written on them
- A bell or any sound-making item

Get Ready: Use the chalk or tape to create a large hopscotch-like path on the ground. Number each square from 1 to 10, and at random squares, place a card with a Bible verse next to it. Ensure 3 John 1:4 is included among these verses. The path should end at a 'Salvation' square, where the bell is placed.

Do this:

1. Divide the children into two teams. Each team lines up at the start of the path.
2. The first player from each team hops through the path, stopping at each square with a Bible verse next to it. They must read the verse aloud to their team. If they correctly

explain how the verse relates to salvation or the joy of following God's ways, they can move on. If not, they skip their next turn.

3. After reading and explaining the verse at a square, the player continues hopping to the end of the path, where they ring the bell and say, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth.' (3 John 1:4).

4. The next player in line then takes their turn. The game continues until all players have completed the path.

5. The team that finishes first, with all players correctly explaining their verses and ringing the bell, wins.

This game encourages children to learn and reflect on Bible verses about salvation and the joy of living according to God's Word, focusing on 3 John 1:4.

## Craft Activity: Walking in Truth Lanterns

You'll Need:

- Colored construction paper
- Markers or crayons
- Clear plastic jars or cups
- LED tea lights
- Glue or tape
- Scissors

Get Ready: Cut the construction paper into strips long enough to wrap around the plastic jars or cups.

Do this:

1. Have each child write the verse 3 John 1:4 on a strip of construction paper using markers or crayons. They can decorate around it with drawings that represent walking in truth, such as paths, light, or footsteps.
2. Wrap the decorated strip around a plastic jar or cup and secure it with glue or tape. Make sure the writing and decorations are facing outwards.
3. Place an LED tea light inside the jar or cup to illuminate it. Explain that the light represents the joy and guidance we receive from walking in truth, just as John expressed joy in hearing his children walk in truth.

## Prayer Activity: Walking in Truth Prayer Path

You'll Need:

- A Bible or printed copy of 3 John 1:4
- Several large sheets of paper
- Markers or crayons

Get Ready: Before the class, write 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.' on a large sheet of paper. Create a path on the floor with the other large sheets of paper leading up to the verse. Each sheet should have a different word from the verse, but leave them blank for now.

Do this:

1. Start by reading 3 John 1:4 together as a class. Discuss what it means to walk in truth and how it relates to living a life that shows we are saved by Jesus.
2. Give each student a marker or crayon and ask them to write one way they can walk in truth on a blank sheet of paper along the path. Examples could include 'being honest', 'helping others', or 'praying daily'.



3. Once all the sheets have words on them, have the students walk the path they created, stopping at each sheet to say a prayer asking God to help them live out the word written on the paper. When they reach the end of the path, they should say a prayer of thanks for the salvation and truth found in Jesus.