

Happy New Year!

LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: We don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future.

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 8:7

Memory Verse: Since no one knows the future, who can tell someone else what is to come? - Ecclesiastes 8:7

The Children's Sermon

This morning I have two calendars with me. This calendar is for the year 2xxx. As you know, we have finished up the year 2xxx. You can see that my calendar is all marked up with the things I did over the past year. This calendar is of no use to me now except to help me to remember what I did last year.

This is my new calendar for the year 2xxx. You can see how nice and clean all of the pages are. This calendar is all ready for me to start planning for next year. Whenever I make an appointment or have something important to remember, I will mark it on this calendar. Pretty soon, my new calendar will start to look a lot like the old calendar as I make plans for the future.

There is nothing wrong in planning for the future, but we need to remember that no matter what our plans may be, we can't know for sure what is in the future. The Bible says, "Since no man knows the future, who can tell him what is to come?" We can put appointments on this calendar from now to next December, but the only day that we can be sure of is today!

Some people become worried and frightened because they can't be sure of the future, but we don't need to worry, because even though we don't know what the future holds, we know who holds the future. The future is in God's hands, so we can rest easy in the plans that He has made for us. We can't be sure of tomorrow, but we have today, so we need to try to live it the way God planned it!

Dear Lord, thank you for giving us today. Help us to live it the way you have planned it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Now, let's talk a bit more about this idea of future uncertainty. It's like when you're planning to go to the park tomorrow, but then it rains. You didn't know it was going to rain, right? That's a little bit like how the future works. We can make plans, but sometimes things change, and that's okay.

God knows all about future uncertainty, and He tells us not to worry about tomorrow because He's already there. He's like a friend who walks into a dark room first and turns on the light for us. With God, we don't have to be scared of what's coming because He promises to be with us every step of the way.

Imagine you're on a big, exciting adventure, but you're walking through a thick fog. You can't see very far ahead, and that might make you a bit nervous. But what if I told you that you have the best guide in the universe with you? God is that guide. He knows the path perfectly, even when we can't see it because of the fog of future uncertainty.

Sometimes, we might wish we had a special machine that could tell us everything about the future. But think about this: if we knew everything that was going to happen,

we might miss out on the fun of surprises and the lessons we learn from challenges. God gives us just enough light for the step we're on, teaching us to trust Him more.

Let's also remember that God wants us to talk to Him about our worries. Just like you would tell a friend if something is bothering you, God wants you to tell Him. When we pray and tell God about our feelings, He listens. And even though the future uncertainty might not go away, we can feel peace in our hearts knowing that God is in control.

God also gives us stories in the Bible of people who trusted Him during times of future uncertainty. Think of Noah, who built an ark even though he didn't understand why at first. Or Abraham, who went on a long journey not knowing where he was going. They didn't have all the answers, but they knew God was with them, and that was enough.

So, what can we do when we feel worried about the future? First, we can pray and talk to God about our feelings. Second, we can remember the stories from the Bible and how God helped those people. And third, we can try to live each day the best we can, doing kind things for others and following what God teaches us.

In the end, future uncertainty is a part of life, but it doesn't have to be scary. It can be an adventure where we learn to trust God more and more. And remember, no matter what happens tomorrow, next week, or next year, God's love for us is certain. That's something we can always be sure of.

Dear Lord, even when we're not sure about what's coming, help us to trust You. Thank you for being with us always, even in times of future uncertainty. Help us to remember that Your love is something we can always be sure of. Amen.

Bible Memory Verse

Since no one knows the future, who can tell someone else what is to come? - Ecclesiastes 8:7

You Will Need:

- A large piece of poster board or a whiteboard
- Markers or colored pencils
- Stickers or small images that can represent different future events (like a sun for sunny days, a cloud for stormy days, a question mark for unknowns)

Get Ready:

- Gather all your materials and set up a space where all the children can see the poster board or whiteboard.
- Write the memory verse at the top of the board, leaving space below for the activity.

Do This:

1. Start by explaining the memory verse to the children, emphasizing that we cannot predict the future, but we can trust God who knows our future.
2. Ask the children to think of different things they hope for or worry about in the future. As they share, draw or write their ideas on the board and add a sticker or image next to each idea to represent it visually.
3. After everyone has shared, discuss how even though we don't know what will happen in the future, we can have hope and not worry because God is in control. Encourage the children to look at the board and remember that God holds our future, just like the verse says.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A large piece of poster board or a whiteboard
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- A Bible

Get Ready:

- Write Ecclesiastes 8:7 at the top of the poster board or whiteboard, leaving space below for writing and sticking notes.
- Prepare sticky notes by writing different scenarios on them (e.g., "It will rain tomorrow," "You will have pizza for dinner," "You will get a new friend this year," etc.), including both possible and certain future events.

Do this:

1. Begin by reading Ecclesiastes 8:7 together: "Since no one knows the future, who can tell someone else what is to come?" Discuss in simple terms that the verse tells us we can't know everything about the future.
2. Hand out the prepared sticky notes to the children and ask them to think about whether the scenario on their note is something they can know for sure or if it's uncertain. Have them come up one by one to stick their note under two columns you've drawn on the board: "Certain" and "Uncertain."
3. After everyone has placed their sticky note, discuss how most things about the future are uncertain, but we can be sure that God knows everything that will happen. Conclude by emphasizing that even though we don't know what the future holds, we can trust God because He holds the future. Encourage the children to share a moment

when they trusted someone who knew more than they did (like a parent or teacher) and relate that trust back to how we can trust God.

Snack Activity: Future's Mystery Trail Mix

You'll Need:

- A variety of nuts (like almonds, walnuts) or seeds (for those with allergies)
- Dried fruits (raisins, apricots, cranberries)
- Something sweet (chocolate chips, M&Ms)
- Small bags or containers
- Stickers or markers to decorate the bags

Get Ready: Gather all your ingredients and make sure you have a clean, large mixing bowl ready. Wash your hands well.

Do this:

1. Talk about Ecclesiastes 8:7, explaining that just like we mix different ingredients without knowing exactly how they'll taste together, we don't know what the future holds. But we trust God who is holding our future, just like we hold our trail mix.
2. Let each child choose their mix of nuts, dried fruits, and something sweet to put into the bowl. Stir together gently. This represents how our lives are a mix of different experiences, and God mixes them together for our good.
3. Divide the mix into small bags or containers. Allow the children to decorate their bags with stickers or markers, reminding them that even though we can't see our future, we can trust God to make it beautiful. Each time they eat from their trail mix, they can remember that God holds their future.

Game Activity: Future Steps

You'll Need:

- Chalk
- A large, open sidewalk or driveway
- Small stones or beanbags

Get Ready: Draw a large spiral on the ground with the chalk, making sure there are at least 10-15 large, numbered sections. Each section represents a step in our journey through life.

Do this:

1. Have each child stand at the beginning of the spiral. Explain that the spiral represents our path through life, and just like in the game, we don't know what lies ahead in our future. But we know God is with us every step of the way.
2. The children will take turns tossing their stone or beanbag onto the spiral. Whatever number it lands on, they hop on one foot to that number, stopping to stand on both feet. Before they hop, they say, 'Even though I don't know my future, I know God is with me.'
3. When they reach their stone or beanbag, they pick it up, hop back to the start, and pass it to the next player. If a player loses balance and touches the ground with their other foot, they say, 'God, help me trust you every day,' then continue.
4. Play continues until everyone has had several turns. Conclude with a short discussion on how we can trust God with our future, just like we trusted Him with each step in the game.

Craft Activity: Future in His Hands Globe

You'll Need:

- A clear plastic ornament that can be opened in half
- Blue and green permanent markers
- A small piece of paper
- A ribbon or string

Get Ready: Write Ecclesiastes 8:7 on the small piece of paper and fold it so it can fit inside the ornament.

Do this:

1. Open the clear plastic ornament. On the inside of one half, use the blue and green markers to draw the Earth. It doesn't have to be perfect, just fun and colorful!
2. Place the piece of paper with Ecclesiastes 8:7 written on it inside the globe, on top of the half with the drawing. This represents God's word being in the world.
3. Close the ornament and tie the ribbon or string through the loop at the top. Hang it somewhere as a reminder that even though we don't know what the future holds, we know who holds the future - and our world.

Prayer Activity: God Holds Our Future

You'll Need:

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

Get Ready: Before the class, write 'Our Futures' at the top of the poster board or paper and draw a big pair of hands underneath it, leaving the rest of the space empty for the children's contributions.

Do this:

1. Start by explaining Ecclesiastes 8:7 in simple terms, like 'Sometimes, we don't know what will happen tomorrow, next week, or when we grow up. But God knows everything, and He holds our future in His hands.'
2. Ask the children to think about their dreams for the future or things they wish for themselves or their family. They can think about being a doctor, an astronaut, having a pet, or anything they wish for.
3. Give each child a sticky note and a marker or crayon. Let them draw or write their dream or wish on the sticky note. Then, one by one, have them come up and stick their note onto the poster board, inside the big hands you drew. As they place their note, encourage them to say a short prayer, asking God to take care of their future and trust that He knows what's best for them.