

LESSON 4

**WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD**

LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** Because of Jesus, I Am a Child of God

**SCRIPTURE:** Galatians 3; 1 John 3

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** In response to confusion about Jesus' message, Paul writes a letter to the Galatians explaining that it is simply through faith in Jesus that we become God's children.

**WORD OF WONDER:** Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?  
—Exodus 15:11b (NIV)

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

Abraham, whose name means “father of many nations,” was the ancestor of the 12 tribes of Israel. As Israel's ancestor and the first convert to the worship of Yahweh, Abraham became the example for Gentiles who turn to Christ and join God's family.

**WHAT?**

Paul tells the Galatian Christians that Abraham's faith made him right with God. Likewise, those who have faith like Abraham are children of Abraham, and more importantly, children of God. Faith—specifically belief in Jesus—makes us God's sons and daughters, led by His Spirit.

**WHERE?**

Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia, a Roman province in central Asia Minor (now modern-day Turkey). Many scholars believe Paul's audience included only the churches in southern Galatia (Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe), but some suggest an audience in northern Galatia.

**WHEN?**

God's promise to Abraham was made about 430 years before the people of Israel received the Law of Moses. Paul's letter is addressed to Gentile Christians, who put their faith in Jesus after His death and resurrection. Paul is comparing their faith to Abraham's.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

God promised to bless the nations through Abraham's descendants. Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, was born to bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Jesus blessed the nations by making the way for all people to be part of God's family.

# Curiosity

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

## Welcome Question

**Make It Inclusive:** This question may be sensitive for kids from less-traditional backgrounds, including children in adoptive or foster families. Be mindful of the kids in your group and emphasize that families look different, and that's great!

### At your start time ...

Greet the group by introducing yourself and inviting kids to share their own names. (If your group is large, encourage kids to share their names with two people sitting near them.)

Also invite kids to share their answers to the Welcome Question:

### Who is in your family?

**Families come in all shapes and sizes. You don't have to be born into a family to become part of a family. Today we'll hear how, because of Jesus, each and every one of us can be called a child of God! But first, it's time to be curious.**

## Curiosity Questions

### I'm curious ...

- **What makes a family?**
- **Do you have to be related to someone to be considered family? Explain.**

If needed, explain that there is wonderful variety in what makes up families, including biological, foster, and adoptive families; friends who are like family; and fellow Jesus-followers in the family of Christ!

## Preteen Brain Teaser: One Cut Only

### PREP

Ahead of time, follow these steps to cut out a paper cross with just one cut. Refer to the [Cross Sheet](#) for step-by-step photos.

1. Fold the top left corner of a blank sheet of paper to the opposite edge of the paper.
2. Fold down the top right corner.
3. Fold in half vertically.
4. Fold in half vertically again.
5. Cut a vertical line all the way through the center.
6. Open the paper on the left to reveal a paper cross.



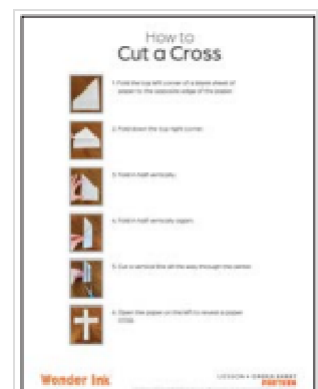
Also ahead of time, print copies of the [Cross Sheet](#) for each kid.

Hold a piece of paper in one hand and the paper cross you prepared ahead of time in the other. **Can you turn this** (hold up paper) **into this** (hold up cross) **with only one cut?** Pause for kids to respond. **Let's practice to see if it's possible!**

Hand out a sheet of paper and scissors to each kid. Allow time for kids to experiment, reminding them to only make one straight cut but to fold the paper one or more times first. Most likely, no one will be able to do it— assure them that's OK!

**Make It Inclusive:** Cutting a cross with just one cut is supposed to be nearly impossible, which might seem especially frustrating for kids who are neurodiverse. Invite them to work with partners, and when they can't figure out how to do it, give them fresh paper and allow them to cut out a cross using as many cuts as they'd like!

When kids have finished trying, gather them around you and demonstrate the cutting trick step by step. Then give each kid a fresh sheet of paper and a copy of the Cross Sheet. Encourage them to try following the steps in order to cut a cross out of paper using just one straight cut. They can work independently or with partners, but be available to help any kids who are struggling. (Have extra paper on hand in case kids need multiple tries!)

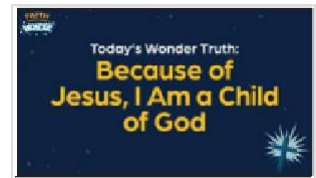


Once kids have succeeded in cutting their crosses, gather them together. Hold up a blank sheet of paper. **Cutting a cross shape out of this paper with just one straight cut seemed impossible, but there is a way!** Hold up a paper cross.

**At first, this activity seemed about as impossible as becoming part of God's family. All of us sin— we do wrong things that separate us from God. And God knew we couldn't be perfect enough or work hard enough to fix the sin and bridge the gap between us and Him on our own. Only God has the power and the love to make it possible! So He sent Jesus—His own Son—to earth to show us who God is and to fix the things broken by sin so we could be near to God again.**

Continue holding up the paper cross. **By dying on the cross and rising again, Jesus made the way for us to be God's kids!**

Today's Wonder Truth is **BECAUSE OF JESUS, I AM A CHILD OF GOD.**



Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

## Word of Wonder Activity

### WORD OF WONDER

**Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?**

—Exodus 15:11b (NIV)

Ahead of time, gather royalty-themed props and place them in bins, preparing one bin per small group. Prop ideas include toy or paper crowns, robes, toy scepters (or decorated cardboard tubes), Bibles, and purple fabric. There can be more than one of each prop per bin. Alternatively, in place of props, print out multiple sets of the Verse Pictures Sheets and encourage kids to choose pictures to accompany their verse motions.

**Today we learned that because of Jesus, we can be children of God! Wow—let's practice our Word of Wonder as a way of telling God how amazing He is!** Open your Bible to [Exodus 15:11b](#).

Place the prop bin in the middle of your group. **As a group, let's come up with motions to help remember the Word of Wonder.**

Invite kids to dig through the prop bin for ideas and items to use and work together to create motions for the verse. Then say the verse several times together using the motions (and props!). If your group has more than six kids, have kids work together with 3–4 others to create motions. Be available to help younger kids read the verse and come up with motions.

## Elementary Questions

- **Through whose family did God promise to grow and bless the world?** (*Abraham's*)
- **Who wrote a letter to the Galatians to help them better understand Jesus' message?** (*Paul*)
- **What did the Galatians think they had to do to become right with God?** (*follow the Law perfectly*)
- **What must we do to become children of God?** (*have faith in Jesus and believe in Him*)
- **When we put our faith in Jesus, who does God send to lead us?** (*the Holy Spirit*)
- **Because of Jesus, we are children of God, and we get to follow Jesus every day! What are some ways you follow Jesus?**

**We become children of God when we believe and trust in Jesus! God loves the world and wants everyone to be members of His family! Let's talk to Him in prayer and thank Him for loving us so much!**

## Preteen Questions

- **Through whose family did God promise to grow and bless the world?** (*Abraham's*)
- **What did the Galatians think they had to do to become right with God?** (*follow the Law perfectly*)
- **What must we do to become children of God?** (*have faith in Jesus and believe in Him*)
- **Is believing in Jesus the only way to God?** (*Look up [John 14:6](#) and read it together.*)
- **God loves us so much He takes people who are far from Him and makes them part of His family through Jesus! What do you want to say to God in response to His love?**
- **We become children of God through faith in Jesus and then get to follow Jesus every day with the Holy Spirit's help! What are some ways you follow Jesus at home? At school? When you're with your friends?**

**We become children of God when we believe and trust in Jesus! God loves the world and wants everyone to be members of His family! Let's talk to Him in prayer and thank Him for loving us so much!**

## Small Group Prayer Time

Open your prayer time by praising God together, encouraging kids to say out loud things they love about God. Then ask kids to share prayer requests and invite kids to pray over each request. Close by thanking God for the truth that because of Jesus, we are children of God!

# Identity

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

## Elementary Responding in Worship: Children of God Collages

Ahead of time, print copies of the [Elementary Collage Images Sheet](#), one per kid. Also print copies of the [Wonder Truth Sheet](#) (on cardstock, if possible) for every kid.

Gather kids together and display the [Children of God Collages Slide](#). **Because of Jesus, we are children of God! Let's make a collage—a collection of words, pictures, and phrases—that reminds us of who we are.**

Give each kid a Wonder Truth Sheet and an Elementary Collage Images Sheet and set out coloring utensils, kids-safe scissors, and glue sticks. Have kids write their names on the back of both sheets.

Hold up an Elementary Collage Images Sheet. **Look at the pictures on this sheet. When you think about Jesus and how He makes it possible for us to live as God's kids, how do you see yourself? Do you feel important? Loved? Treasured?** Talk through some of the words and images on the sheet, such as how the picture of a bird flying away reminds you that Jesus makes us free, or how the word loved reminds you of Jesus' love.

Encourage kids to choose 5–6 pictures or words to color, cut, and glue onto their Wonder Truth Sheets. Provide stickers and colored washi tape for kids to finish decorating, if desired.

**Make It Inclusive:** Some kids may have trouble identifying their worth or potential. Use this time as an opportunity to encourage and build up the children in your ministry. Visit kids as they work, pointing out positive qualities about each (but avoiding physical or appearance-based characteristics).

Play the song “Priceless Treasure” from the [Faith Begins with Wonder Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids work on their collages. As they finish, invite kids to share their collages with each other.

## Blessing Your Kids

**Blessing:** As you go about your week, may you remember that you are special, important, and loved. Because of Jesus, you are a child of God!

## GAME 4: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

In this game, kids will attempt to throw balls or bean bags into baskets. The only catch is that the longer they play, the harder it will be to make those baskets as the subsequent challenges increase in difficulty!

**Leader Tip:** This game can be modified for contexts that have limited space. Volunteers from each group can attempt the different shots while the rest of their group cheers for them.

Ahead of time, place two buckets a couple of feet apart from one other at each team's location, and fill one of the buckets with balls or bean bags (several per team).

Gather kids together, and help them form teams of 5–10. Direct each team to stand near a pair of buckets.

**Today we're going to put your basketball skills to the test! Each team has a basket of balls and an empty bucket that will serve as their hoop. We're going to start out easy and allow each person in your group one chance to stand behind the basket of balls and toss a ball into the empty bucket. Listen up, though! After one time through, the instructions for making baskets will change.**

After everyone has had a chance to try making a basket, give new instructions for the next round, such as moving the baskets/buckets farther apart. With each successive round, the challenges should get harder. Consider challenges like having kids close their eyes before throwing a ball, throwing two balls at a time, or turning around and throwing a ball backwards over their heads.

This game is meant to be more enjoyable than competitive, so there's no need to keep track of score. After several minutes of fun challenges, gather kids back together.

**The Galatians who followed Jesus were confused: some people were incorrectly telling them that they had to obey Old Testament Law perfectly to be followers of Jesus. Paul explained that the Law wasn't what would save them—only faith in God could do that.**

**The challenges in our game became nearly impossible; following the Law perfectly is like that too! For this reason, Jesus came. Just as Abraham had faith that God would make him into a great nation, the Galatians (and all of us!) can be children of God through our faith in Jesus. Because of Jesus, we can be children of God!**

# GAME 6: BOOKS OF THE BIBLE NOODLE RELAY

\*Great game to use every week as practice and keep for future!

In this game, kids will practice putting the 66 books of the Bible in order using sliced sections of a pool noodle!

**Leader Tip:** Using three different colors of pool noodles will help kids learn and remember the order of books. For example, if using one yellow, one green, and one blue noodle, kids will know to start with the books on the yellow noodle before moving on to the ones on green, and so on.

Ahead of time, slice three standard (approx. 55") pool noodles into 22 donut-shaped pieces, each slice 1.5"–2.5" in height. You will have 66 pieces total. With a permanent marker, write the name of one book of the Bible on each donut-shaped piece. Then cut a vertical slit at the back of each piece so that you can easily slide it on and off a PVC pipe or garment rack.

*Old Testament books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*

*New Testament books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation*

Using PVC pipe or a portable garment rack (vertical or horizontal can work!), set up a stand on which kids can slide each of the 66 donut-shaped noodle pieces in the order of the books of the Bible.

Use this game to introduce kids to the books of the Bible or as a review of them! Invite kids to work together to put all 66 books of the Bible onto the rack in order (or, for starters, challenge them to order just the Old Testament or New Testament books).

Encourage them to open their own Bibles to the table of contents for guidance. And play the game either as a team-building activity in which all the kids work together, or set it up as a competition by timing groups to see which group can put the books in correct order fastest. Return to this game week after week, and cheer kids on as they get better each time!

