

Wisdom (2 Lessons) part of a series on Character-Building from the Bible

Preface:

The Sinner's Prayer

The sinner's prayer is referred to in all the lessons. We always want to take advantage of the opportunity by offering every student a chance to receive the Lord. One version of the prayer is printed below. It is not necessary that these exact words be used, but the idea should be the same. This is not any general prayer for blessing or help or the dog who is sick. This is a sinner's cry for salvation, and it cannot be anything else! You should also be aware that it is not the repetition of these words that saves. The words are effective only if they express the true heart-cry of a sinner turning to God. If they are repeated as a formality, they have no power at all. It is not the prayer itself, but rather the heart's turning to God that saves. Use the prayer carefully keeping these things in mind.

The Sinner's Prayer:

Dear God, I admit that I am a sinner.

I need Jesus as my Savior.

I am sorry for my sin.

Right now, I am turning away from my sinful life.

I am asking you to forgive me.

I believe that Jesus is God's Son who died to become my Savior.

I believe He rose from the dead.

Thank you for taking away my sins and making me a real Christian.

Help me to love and obey You.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

WISDOM (2 lessons)

Introduction: This unit of 2 lessons consists of two Bible stories showing a common character trait--one story from the Old Testament, and one story showing that trait in the person and life of Jesus Christ. Two Bible verses will be learned as a class for each unit of 2 lessons (these verses in bold face), with awards for those who choose to learn additional verses at home. The character traits are presented as desirable qualities in our lives, and Jesus Christ as the only one who ever fulfilled them perfectly. In the beginning of the series, refer to the word CHARACTER in the dictionary. Ask these thought questions:

What are YOU really like? What is JESUS really like? We will be thinking a lot about both these questions during this series.

WISDOM

Learning about the word WISDOM, WISE:

Definition: Wisdom: 1. being wise, knowledge and good judgment based on experience. 2. Wise conduct, wise words.

Wise: Having or showing knowledge and good judgment

Opposite: Foolishness, foolish, unwise, stupid, ignorant

Bible Memory Verse:

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally, and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

Adaptation Grades 1-2 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God."

Bible Stories:

Solomon chooses wisdom as his one request from God

I Kings 3:3-15

Jesus shows that he has the wisdom of God in the way he asks and answers questions.

Luke 2:40-51

Unit Lesson Aim: At the conclusion of these lessons, the student will KNOW that God is the only One who has adequate understanding to be truly wise, for God knows and understands everything. As a result, he will begin to seek God's wisdom by reading the Bible and praying for God's guidance in his life, and will seek wisdom from God rather than from shrines, idols, or magicians.

Lesson 1

THE WISEST MAN WHO EVER LIVED

Review for Older Students:

Why did Ananias and Sapphira say a lie? (In Ghanaian English you say a lie rather than tell a lie.)

Why did they die? (Because they lied, but more so because God wants us to know how much He hates lying.)

For Younger Students:

Tell one Bible person who told the truth when it was hard.

Tell some Bible people who told a lie.

How did God punish them?

Beginning the Lesson:

Suppose you could have one wish fulfilled--whatever you wanted. What would you ask for? Would you ask for lots of money? Maybe for nice clothing or a beautiful home? Would you ask to be able to go to college someday? What would YOU ask for? (Let the children respond briefly.)

Transition to the Lesson--Not many of us ever get a wish like that. But there is one man who did. His name was Solomon, and his story is in the Bible...

Solomon chooses wisdom as his one request from God**I Kings 3:3-15**

And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.

The phrase "except for" shows that God was not pleased with this aspect of Solomon's life. The high places were places where the former idolatrous inhabitants of the land had worshipped their false gods. While Solomon was not worshipping their idols, he was worshipping in the places set aside for idols. He should have been wholeheartedly seeking the Lord.

4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, 'Ask! What I shall give you?'

God gives Solomon a test to see what he will really seek and where he will seek it.

6 And Solomon said: You have shown great mercy to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

7 And now, O LORD my God, You have made your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

8 And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered nor counted.

9 Therefore give to your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?

10 The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

Solomon passed the test! God was pleased with his response.

11 And God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice,

12 Behold, I have done according to your words: see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.

13 And I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor: so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days.

14 So if you walk in my ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.

15 Then Solomon awoke; and indeed, it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

Main Ideas to Emphasize:

God told Solomon He would grant him one wish.

Solomon asked for wisdom to rule his people wisely.

God was pleased with his request, and granted him that and much else besides.

God gave Solomon such wisdom that he was the wisest man who ever lived.

God is the only one who can give wisdom like that. He can give wisdom because He knows and understands everything.

God wants His people to look to Him for wisdom.

Skit:

Ask for two volunteers to act out the story. One will play the part of Solomon; the other will be God's voice. The other children will bring riches and show honor to Solomon after he chooses wisdom.

Application--Step of Growth for the Saved Child:

Follow Up--Ask who is praying every day for God's help to tell the truth. Congratulate and pray for those who are.

Who is the only One who knows everything? Yes, God is the only one who knows and understands everything. Whom should we go to when we need wisdom? Yes, we should go to God. One way to do this is to pray and ask God for wisdom. Then He can guide us and help us to make the right choices. Are you facing something hard this week? Let's pray and ask God for wisdom right now. (Take time to pray for wisdom for each child.)

Every time this week that you don't know what to do, what can you do? Yes, pray and ask God for wisdom. He will help you.

Invitation--Giving the Unsaved Child an Opportunity to Receive Christ:

The wisest decision you could ever make is to receive Jesus as your Savior. Then He will be right there with you to help you in every decision of life. The Bible tells us in Colossians 2:3 that in Christ are hidden ALL the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. If you have never received Jesus as your Savior, but today you would like to do so, pray this prayer in your heart right now. (Teacher, lead in the sinner's prayer, found in the preface to these lessons. Then ask those who prayed to raise their hands briefly. You pray for God's blessing on them.)

Lesson 2

AN EVEN WISER MAN

Review for Older Students:

What did God say to Solomon in a dream?

Why did Solomon ask for wisdom?
 What else might he have asked for instead of wisdom?
 How did God feel about Solomon's request?
 How did God show Solomon He was pleased?
 How do we know Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived?
 How can we get wisdom today?

For Younger Students:

Who was the wisest man who ever lived?
 How did he get to be wise?
 Who is the only One who can make us wise?

Beginning the Lesson:

Review--The last time we were together, we learned about a very wise man--the wisest man who ever lived. Do you remember his name? (Let the children answer.) Do you remember how he got so wise? (Let a child answer briefly.) Yes, Solomon was wise because he asked God for wisdom. Only God is truly wise, so when we ask God for wisdom, He shares His wisdom with us. Then we become wise, too.

Transition to the Lesson--

Now here is something strange. The Bible says Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived (I Kings 3:12). Yet it also says that one person was even wiser than Solomon! How could that be? The Bible says, "a greater than Solomon is here" (Luke 11:31). Who could it be talking about? If Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, someone wiser than him would have to be more than a man. He would have to be---well, he'd have to be a lot more than just a man. Who was this one that the Bible says is greater than Solomon? It is Jesus. Let's see today how wise He was.

Jesus shows that he has the wisdom of God in the way he asks and answers questions.

Luke 2:40-51

And the Child grew, and became strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.

41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.

43 When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and his mother did not know it;

44 but supposing him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey; and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

46 Now so it was that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

47 And all who heard Him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and his mother said unto Him, Son, why have You done this to us? Look, your father and I have sought You anxiously.
49 And He said to them, 'Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?'
50 But they understood not the statement which He spoke to them.
51 And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them: but his mother kept all these things in her heart.

Main Ideas to Emphasize:

Even when Jesus was 12 years old, He was very wise.

He was asking questions that made the teachers really think.

He was answering their questions.

Jesus was wise because He was God's unique Son.

God is the source of all wisdom. He is the One we should seek to make us wise.

Acting:

We will provide several pictures of places people look for wisdom. You will show the cards. At each card, the children will shake their heads "No", and reach both hands up to heaven, then down to themselves, saying, "Wisdom comes ONLY from God."

Application--Step of Growth for the Saved Child:

Follow up from Lesson 3--How many of you asked God for wisdom or guidance since our last lesson? Who would like to tell how God gave you wisdom? One way to get wisdom is to pray and ask God for it. Another is to read what God has already told us in the Bible. As we follow the Bible's teachings, we will become wise.

Younger children--Suggest that there may be someone in their home or near them they could ask to read Bible stories to them each day. At least, they could come to Sunday school and listen to Bible stories there each week. (Suggest several Sunday schools in the area.)

Older children--Ask if there is a Bible in their home. If there is, they could read one paragraph each day from the book of Mark. (Show them how to find Mark and how to tell what a paragraph is. We suggest Mark because it is an easy book divided into many short paragraphs.)

Invitation--Giving the Unsaved Child an Opportunity to Receive Christ:

Jesus was a wise teacher, but He was much more. He was the Savior who died to pay for our sins and rose again from the dead. Maybe you have questions about Jesus. It would be very wise for you to talk your questions over with a Christian friend. We will be here to talk over any questions you have (tell an agreed upon date and time to meet with any who want to talk with you.) If you have never received Jesus as your Savior, but today you would like to do so, pray this prayer in your heart right now. (Teacher, lead in the sinner's prayer, found in the preface to these lessons. Then ask those who prayed to raise their hands briefly. You pray for God's blessing on them.)

A brief introduction to some African teaching methods

(You are not limited to these methods. These are given only to acquaint you with some of the methods the children are already familiar with.)

Repetition

There is a lot of emphasis of repetition in African schools and often in sermons as well. That is, the preacher may say something and ask the congregation to repeat it. African children have more patience with this than American children do, and it can be a valuable method. The teacher needs to make sure that the children understand what they are repeating, however.

Rhythm

African children love rhythm and lively music. Drums are found in nearly every church and are the main instrument in most of them. Group dancing permeates every part of social, civic and religious life and is a part of most public celebrations. One African asked me one time, “How can you Americans praise God standing still like that? Don’t you know He is a great king?” To Africans, standing still is considered disrespectful to God, in the same way that some conservative churches consider dancing disrespectful. This is a major cultural difference. As an American, you can join or not join in the movement, as you feel comfortable in doing, but prepare yourself to see a much more lively service than you may have anticipated. This is especially true if people stand still during your worship services.

You can use rhythmic activities in teaching. You can put a memory verse or a key phrase from the lesson to music and include clapping, stomping, swaying, marching, hand and body motions. You are limited only by space considerations, since most of your teaching will be done with large groups in small spaces. You can also speak verses rhythmically without the musical melody. We will practice some of these methods as a group.

Acting Out

Acting out stories is a traditional African teaching method, used effectively with all ages. Children are not as familiar with role play acting—more familiar with acting out stories. For younger children, Grades 1 & 2, have all the children act out the same character or action simultaneously. For older children, assign individual parts.

Storytelling—(Parables)

African sermons often include long and complicated stories to teach a lesson. Stories from life are effective, but these will need to be crafted by your Ghanaian partners in order to relate to life as the children know it. Animal parables are also common and effective.

Respect for Ancestors & Elders

Age is greatly respected in African culture. Older people are assumed to be wiser. They are afforded many privileges—eating first, getting the best seats, etc. Sometimes younger children are even expected to cater to older ones in the family and sometimes to afford them special terms of respect. This means you can freely use stories and examples of older people even with younger children.

Proverbs

Proverbs—pithy little sayings that express truth succinctly—are a main characteristic of teaching as given by African elders. African proverbs are similar to the proverbs of the book of Proverbs in the Bible. We will discuss with our Ghanaian staff some well known “proverbs of the elders” that may help to drive home the truths of the lesson. Use of African proverbs has the additional benefit of helping the older generation understand and accept Bible truths.

We encourage you to keep your eyes and ears open to new methods you see as you visit African church services and schools. Ask questions if you don't understand. You will see many interesting and useful methods and may learn to use some of them.

DICTIONARY

Abomination: an extremely awful, horrible wicked act or practice that God hates. Something so awful it makes God sick.

Astrologers: Those who decided what to do by looking at the arrangement of the stars in the sky. It was common for those who did not know God to make decisions in this way, but God told His people not to do this. He wanted them to ask Him for wisdom about the decisions they make. (Deuteronomy 4:19, 17:3-4, 18:10,12, Isaiah 8:19-20, Jeremiah 10:1-2). The sun, moon and stars were often worshipped as false gods, but God wanted his people to worship only Him (Amos 5:8).

Believer in Jesus: Someone who believes that Jesus is really God just like He said, someone who believes that Jesus will save him and take away his sins.

Chaldeans: People from the country of Chaldea, of which Babylon was the capitol. They worshipped false gods or idols, and made war on those who loved and worshipped God.

Character: What someone is really like on the inside, what someone is really like when no one is looking.

Interpretation: Telling what something means

Jesus: His name means "The LORD saves", so His name shows that He is the Savior and the Lord God. In fact, that is who He claimed to be. Jesus was a great teacher and much more. He proved who He was by healing the sick, raising the dead and doing many other miracles, but mostly by rising from the dead. He died to pay the punishment for our sins, then rose from the dead just like He had said He would do. Jesus' work on earth was finished, so after many people saw Him alive, He went back to heaven. He is alive in heaven today.

Magic, magician: Someone who does unusual things or even miracles by the power of evil spirits. God tells His people not to have anything to do with magic because He knows evil spirits are liars and really want to hurt and destroy us. Besides, He Himself wants to help us, and He has far greater power than any spirit, so we do not need magic. (Exodus 22:18, Leviticus 19:26, 20:27, Deut. 18:10-11)

Punishment: A bad, extremely painful penalty for sin or wrong. The worst punishment of all is to be sent away from God's presence to a place of suffering

Repent: To change your mind about something so much that you also change the way you act and stop doing it. To change your mind that sin was OK, and to begin to see sin as awful, the way God sees it. To turn away from sin and to God.

Saved, Salvation: To be forgiven of all your sins and to have a new, clean heart. To become a child of God by trusting in Jesus.

Savior, Saviour: One of Jesus' titles that showed He would die on the cross to take away our sins

Sin: An act, thought, or word that God hates. An act, thought or word that brings dishonor to God and that hurts ourselves and others.

Soothsayers: Those who could tell the future, interpret dreams, or reveal secrets through divination--by the power of evil spirits who told them those things. God told His people to have nothing to do with telling the future or finding out secret things in this way (Deuteronomy 18:9-10, Joshua 13:22, Jeremiah 27:9-10, Ezekiel 13:6,17-23, Zechariah 10:2). God Himself will tell us all He wants us to know, and evil spirits are liars, so if we listen to them we cannot be sure we know the truth anyway (John 8:44b, 1 Timothy 4:1)..

Truth, truthful, truthfulness, true: Words and acts that are real, genuine, not deceitful.

Vision: Seeing something in your mind or in a dream. Some visions come from God, but not all of them.

Wise, wisdom: Knowing what to do and how to act in difficult situations, using what you know if a good and helpful way

Extra notes on wisdom:

1 Corinthians 2:5-12

There are two different kinds of wisdom:

--vs 6—the wisdom of the princes of this world (demonic) that comes to naught
It is not lasting. It will face final judgment.

--vs 5—called the wisdom of men

--vs 11-12—The revealed wisdom of God