

Parent Guide

THEO™

Teaching Children God's Word

God's Love Volume 1

LESSON 1 - Saving Faith

In this lesson, Theo teaches that without faith, it's impossible to please God. Theo doesn't mean the kind of faith that believes in good luck charms or UFOs, but a real faith centered upon God's Son, Jesus Christ. Theo tells the story of how God told Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. Do you know how old Abraham was when God said this? He was 75 years old! Abraham and his wife, Sarah, had no children and were well past the age to have children. But God kept His promise and eventually Abraham and Sarah had a son, Isaac. God made Abraham righteous because he was faithful to God. He believed in God's character and His word. Like Abraham, we receive God's gift of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Genesis 12-22 (story of Abraham)

Romans 4:3 (Abraham's righteousness)

Galatians 3:6-9 (faithful are blessed)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The Bible says that without faith, we cannot please God. But it must be the right kind of faith! Do you remember some of the types of faith that aren't worthwhile?
2. The story of Abraham shows the right kind of faith. Abraham's faith was genuine, because the object of his faith was God Himself. He believed in God's character and Word. What are a few of the ways Abraham was faithful to God?
3. God promised Abraham a child. Twenty-five years later, God gave Abraham and Sarah a son. What does this teach us about God's faithfulness? What does this teach us about being patient?
4. Just as God promised Abraham a son, God promises salvation (eternal life) to everyone who believes (trusts) in Jesus (the object of our faith). We receive this gift of salvation by faith—how can we show our faithfulness to Jesus?
5. What are some ways you can be faithful to God's promises? Keep in mind that continued faith is something you can pray for!

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Remind your kids that it is faith in Jesus that saves us. To illustrate having faith in something, ask your kids if they have faith that the chairs they sit in will hold them when they sit down. Of course they do! Tell them you're going to practice something called a "faith fall," to practice having faith in someone. Have your children stand up and face away from you. They should cross their arms over their chest. Tell them to fall backward while keeping their legs straight. Let them fall a little ways and catch them as they fall backward. It might require a few tries for your children to fall without bending their legs. Ask your kids to have faith in you, that you'll catch them as they fall. Because they trust you, they have faith in you. After completing the exercise, tell your kids that our faith in Jesus is a lot like the "faith fall." We have faith in Jesus, and it is Jesus who saves us.

FINAL THOUGHT

Abraham had faith in God's promise of a child. In the same way, if we have faith in Jesus as the Son of God, as Lord and Savior, we will be saved.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for Your gift of salvation. If we simply believe and have faith in you, we will be saved from the penalty of our sin. Grant us continued faith in You and may our faithfulness be a light to those around us.

In Your name we pray, Amen.

NIGHTLY DEVOTIONS

This lesson's devotionals will include various passages from the Bible. Read the passage each night and follow the devotional questions.

Day 1

Reflect on the story of Abraham. Imagine the faith it took to obey God and leave for a foreign land! Read Genesis 15:6. What can you learn from Abraham's faithfulness? Pray that you might be as faithful as Abraham.

Day 2

Read Genesis 22. In this chapter, God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on an altar. Abraham obeys and just before he sacrifices his son, God intervenes and provides a ram instead. Reflect on Abraham's faithfulness, even to such a big request from God. Pray tonight for God to help you be obedient and faithful to him.

Day 3

Read Romans 4:1-8. Paul writes that believing God is what makes us righteous. What do you think it means to "believe God"? While we cannot earn our salvation through works, how might we show we believe God in our actions?

Day 4

Re-read Romans 4:1-8. Do you know anyone that would benefit from believing in Jesus? Pray tonight for people you know. Pray that they would believe in Jesus and be saved.

Day 5

Read Galatians 3:6-9. Paul says that those who have faith in Jesus are blessed along with Abraham. Recall how God blessed Abraham and called him righteous. What does it mean to be called righteous? Answer: to be right with God. We are made right with God, by grace through faith in Jesus (Romans 5:1). Praise God tonight for His grace and for the gift of faith.

Day 6

Tonight, reflect on what it means to have "saving faith." Jesus' death and resurrection offers forgiveness to anyone who believes and has faith in him. Thank Jesus for His saving gift and pray tonight for continued faith as you grow in your journey with the Lord.

LESSON 2 - Loving Obedience

Luther and Belfry suffer a long fall when they try to reach an apple that's dangerously high up in a tree. Theo knew it was too dangerous and told them so, but they disobeyed. Theo then teaches us about loving obedience toward God. Loving obedience to God means that because we love Jesus, we obey His word. Jesus knows what's best for us and tells us what we can and can't do so that we'll live the best way we can. How do we learn what God wants us to do? We read His Word and study its teachings. Theo tells the story of Jonah to illustrate the costs of disobedience. Instead of preaching to the Ninevites, Jonah tried to run away, only to get swallowed by a giant fish! Theo reminds us that God is merciful to everyone that asks for forgiveness, so even when we disobey, He will forgive us.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

John 14:23 (if we love Jesus, we'll obey him)
Ephesians 6:1 (obey your parents)
1 John 3:24 (obey God's commandments)
John 15:10 (Jesus obeyed God)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happens to Luther and Belfry when they disobey Theo and try to reach the apple? Why do you think they didn't obey Theo? Didn't he know better than they did?
2. If loving obedience means obeying Jesus because we love him, how can we learn what Jesus wants us to do and not to do?
3. What if our hearts are hard and some days we just don't feel like obeying Jesus? What can we do to overcome our own rebellious or disobedient wills?
4. Think about Jonah. What happened to him when he disobeyed God? How did God respond to the Ninevites once they repented? How can this comfort us when we rebel?
5. What are some ways you can obey God better today, this week, this year?

FAMILY ACTIVITY

This activity will role-play the story of Jonah. Use notecards or small pieces of paper and write the following characters on them: Sea Captain, Jonah, BIG FISH, and as many Sailors as there are extra family members. You can find costumes for each character. For the person playing BIG FISH, give them a large blanket (this will come in use later). Put the cards in a bowl and have everyone draw a card. You'll play the character on the card. Have the Sea Captain place everyone in the "ship" (you can use pillows on the floor, all sit on the couch...get creative!) and give orders aboard: Row! Lean to the left! To the right! Narrate that suddenly a storm breaks out, lightning strikes, the waves almost overtake your ship! Drag this on for some time and have everyone roll around. Eventually, you'll have to throw Jonah to the sea. When he's been dumped in the "ocean," have the BIG FISH throw the blanket over Jonah. He's been swallowed! Take the time to remind your kids that Jonah's disobedience caused the storm and that God was merciful in providing the BIG FISH to swallow Jonah and keep him alive. Don't forget that Jonah was only in the fish for three days and nights, during which time he repented!

FINAL THOUGHT

If we love Jesus, we will obey His commandments. Jesus is also merciful and forgives us when we disobey, helping us to be more obedient next time.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, we love You and thank You for everything you've done for us. Help us to study and know God's Word, and to obey you. Forgive us for our disobedience and give us strength when we're tempted to disobey you.

In Your name, Amen.

NIGHTLY DEVOTIONS

This lesson's devotionals include various passages from the Bible.

Day 1

Read John 14:23. What does Jesus say that those who love Him will do? What does it mean to keep His word? Reflect on how you can keep His word better and pray for wisdom to do so.

Day 2

Look again at yesterday's verse, John 14:23. Think tonight about why you love Jesus. You might share with your parent or remind yourself about Jesus' gift of salvation that He purchased for you on the cross. For what other reasons should you love Jesus? Thank Jesus tonight and tell Him you love Him.

Day 3

Read 1 John 3:24. John says that we should keep God's commandments. God loves us so much, He even gives us the Holy Spirit to help us obey him. Pray tonight for strength from the Spirit.

Day 4

Read John 15:10. Notice that Jesus was obedient to God the Father, as well. Think tonight of how Jesus was obedient to God. You might think of the night of His arrest and His crucifixion. Remember, Jesus knows what it feels like to be tempted to disobey and relates to you on every level! Ask for help to be obedient to Him tonight.

Day 5

Read Ephesians 6:1. Paul writes that we should obey our parents. Our parents are older and wiser than us and know better than we do. God gives us parents so they can teach us about Him, and part of the way we obey God is to obey our own parents. Think about the ways you can be lovingly obedient to your parents. Thank God for them tonight as you pray.

Day 6

Our God is a merciful God. Just like He forgave Jonah for his disobedience, He forgives us when we disobey and confess our sins, and helps us to be more obedient next time. Reflect on God's mercy tonight. Pray that you will continue to be lovingly obedient to Him.

LESSON 3 - Forgiveness

At the beginning of this lesson, Belfry eats Luther's cheese and apple tart. How does Luther respond? He gets angry and won't forgive Belfry! Theo teaches us that the word forgive means "to set something free." It also means, "to cancel a debt" and "to remove the punishment someone deserves." Because Jesus forgave us all of our sins, we must also forgive others. Theo tells us the story of the unforgiving servant, a man who was forgiven much but didn't forgive anyone himself. The unforgiving servant was shown great mercy when the king forgave him all his debts, but didn't show any mercy to his own servant. Does that make sense? No! Because Jesus forgave us, He wants us also to forgive others abundantly. The Bible says to forgive someone 70 x 7 times...that means without limit!

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Matthew 18:21-35 (Parable of the Unforgiving Servant)

Matthew 6:14 (forgiving and being forgiven)

Luke 17:3 (forgiving those who ask)

Revelation 14:6 (Church is universal)

Luke 7:47 (the one forgiven much, loves much)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Luther gets angry at Belfry for eating his food. What happens to the two of them when Luther won't forgive Belfry?
2. The word forgive means "to set something free" and "to remove the punishment someone deserves." When we say Jesus forgives us, what does He free us from? What punishment did we deserve?
3. Why do you think the unforgiving servant wouldn't forgive his own servant's debt? Why did this make the king angry?
4. How do you think God would feel if you didn't forgive someone? How can you learn from the story of the unforgiving servant?
5. Why do you think Jesus said to forgive 70 x 7 times? It's such a large number! How can you apply the idea of forgiving others abundantly in your life?

FAMILY ACTIVITY

This focuses on sharing stories of forgiveness. Have your family sit in a circle and ask everyone to think about a time when someone forgave them. If they're comfortable sharing, ask everyone to share the experience: what did they do wrong to the person? What was it like to be forgiven? How did they feel afterward? After everyone's had the opportunity to share, remind them that Jesus forgives us when we disobey Him and that He expects us to be forgiving of others, as well. You might also discuss the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.

FINAL THOUGHT

Because Jesus forgives us our sins (a great debt), we should also forgive others.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for forgiving our sins. Because You show us great mercy, may we be merciful to others. Help us to forgive when those around us hurt us. May we love others as You love us.

In Your name we pray, Amen.

NIGHTLY DEVOTIONS

This lesson's devotionals include various passages from the Bible.

Day 1

Read Matthew 18:21-25. Reflect on the servant's willingness to accept mercy from his king, but not to give mercy to his own servant. Why doesn't this make much sense? How can you learn from the unforgiving servant's mistake? Pray tonight that you would be forgiving to those around you.

Day 2

Read Matthew 6:14. The Bible says that if we forgive others, God will also forgive us. God expects that, because He forgives us, we will forgive others. Think about people in your life that you might need to forgive. What would forgiving them be like? Can you do that this week?

Day 3

Read Luke 17:3. Jesus says that if our fellow Christians ask for forgiveness we should forgive them. Remember how Belfry asked Luther to forgive him for eating all the food? Luther refused at first. Jesus tells us to forgive those who ask for our forgiveness. Is there anyone you need to ask forgiveness? Pray tonight that you would be quick to forgive and quick to ask for forgiveness in the future.

Day 4

Can you think of a time when you forgave someone or someone forgave you? What was that experience like? Forgiveness is a merciful act and can encourage us and remind us of God's mercy for us. Thank God tonight for the mercy and forgiveness He shows you.

Day 5

Look at Luke 7:47. Forgiveness is tied to love. If we love little, we forgive little. Jesus forgives the woman's sins, and because she had been forgiven much, she loved much. It's important to love each other, our families, and our neighbors, for the more we love, the more likely we are to forgive and be forgiven.

Day 6

Reflect on the forgiveness God gives you. Thanks to Jesus, we are able to be forgiven by faith. It makes sense, then, that we should forgive those who do us wrong, right? When someone does you wrong, remember Jesus' forgiveness. Pray tonight for a heart that is forgiving and loving.