

Therefore, if anyone is
in Christ, the new
creation has come:
The old has gone,
the new is here!

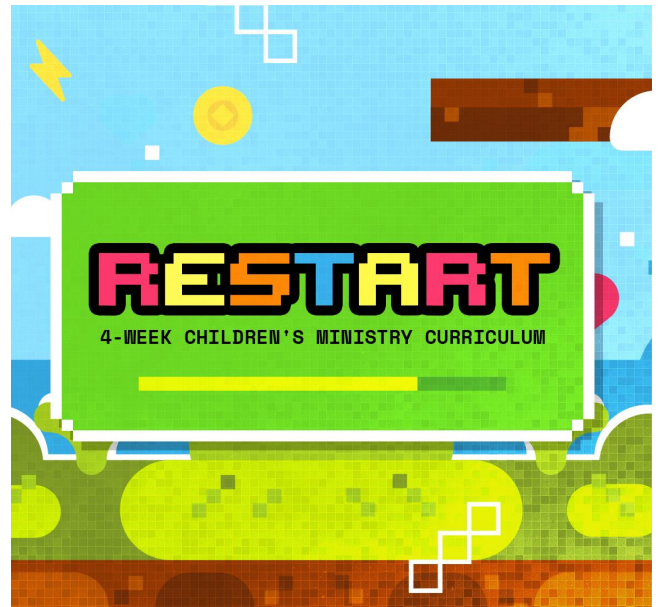
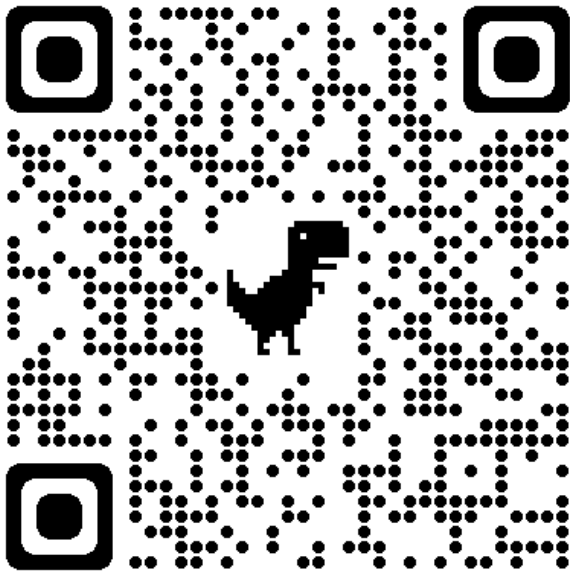
2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV



RESTART

4-WEEK CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CURRICULUM

You are viewing the free sample lesson from [Restart: 4-Week Children's Ministry Curriculum](https://sundayschool.store/products/restart-4-week-childrens-ministry-curriculum), To purchase visit: <https://sundayschool.store/products/restart-4-week-childrens-ministry-curriculum>



Restart is a 4-week children's ministry curriculum about the power of repentance and making a fresh start. Judgment and shame are everywhere in our culture. That's why kids need to understand God's grace and mercy. The Lord knows our brokenness and wants to give us a new beginning. By embracing the love of Jesus, we can truly **Restart!**

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17. This series is available in the NIV, KJV, or ESV Bible translation.

1. Start Here "Follow Him Wherever You Are" Luke 5:27-32

Sometimes we believe that we are not the "right kind of person" to follow Jesus or be close to Him. But the Bible tells us that we all have the chance to START OVER and choose to follow Him in whatever state he finds us. Bible Story: Jesus calls Matthew the Tax Collector.

2. Roll Again "Jesus Gives Us Chances to Get it Right" John 21:15-17

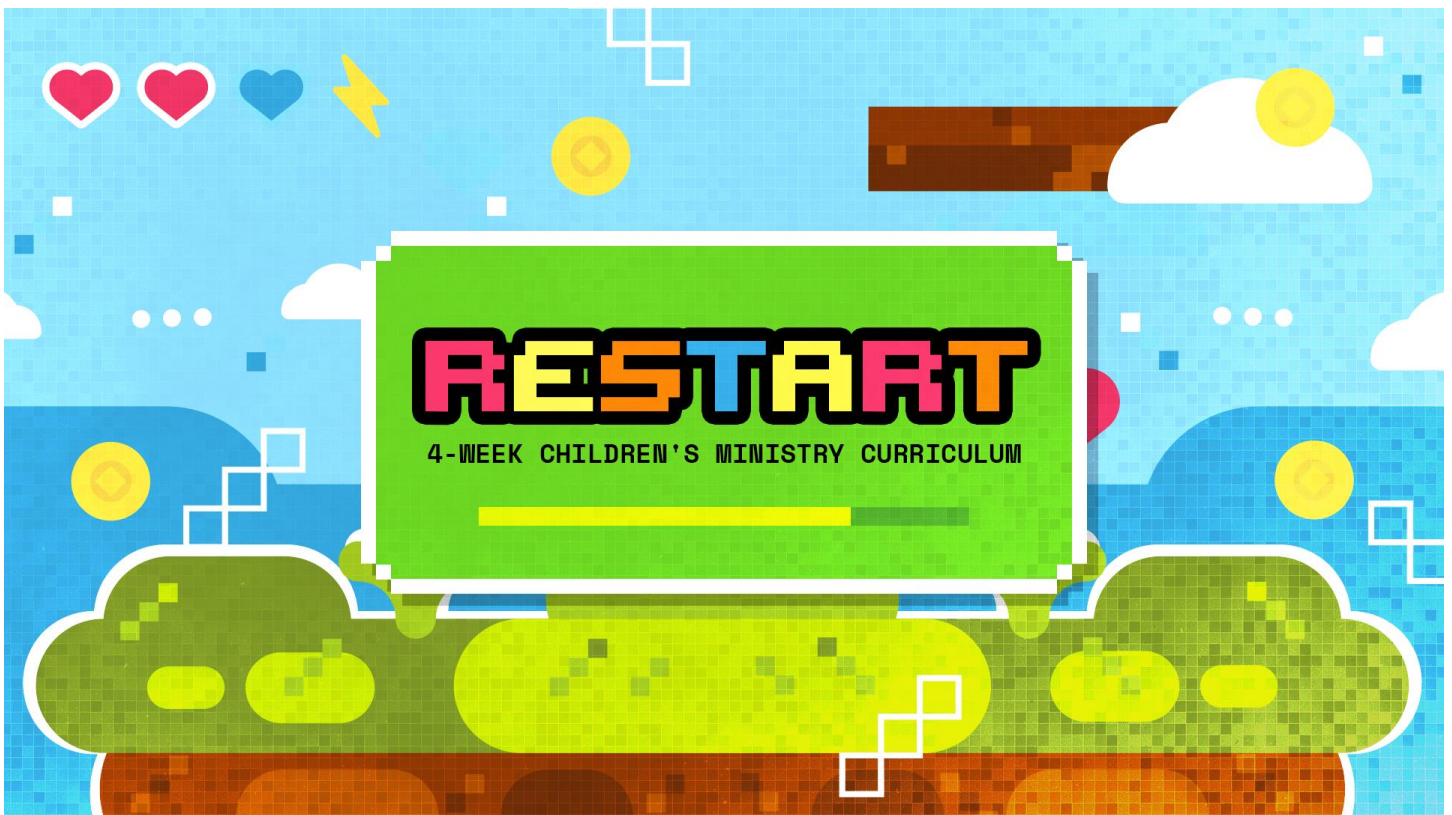
We are forgiven by God because of Jesus' sacrifice. Even when we sin, Jesus' sacrifice allows us to experience God's grace by giving us the chance to "roll again" by being forgiven for those sins. Bible Story: Jesus restores Peter.

3. Don't Get Stuck "God Knows We're Not Perfect" John 4:42

God knows that we are not perfect. His Son was the only perfect person to walk the earth. God simply wants us to accept Jesus and follow Him. Once we accept Jesus, we can START OVER and become a new creation in Christ. Even when we make mistakes, we still never lose His love. Bible Story: Jesus meets the Samaritan woman.

4. Back to Start "God is Waiting with Open Arms" Luke 15:11-32

Sometimes we feel like we are too sinful to be close to God. We fear that he will reject us or be mad at us for the things we've done. But the truth is that he is always there for us, ready and willing to accept us and give us a chance at a new beginning. Bible Story: The Parable of the Prodigal Son.



Start Here

“Follow Him Wherever You Are”

Luke 5:27-32

Summary: Sometimes we believe that we are not the “right kind of person” to follow Jesus or be close to Him. But the Bible tells us that we all have the chance to START OVER and choose to follow Him in whatever state he finds us.

When Jesus finds Levi (Matthew), he is a tax collector. Church leaders at the time looked down on people who collected taxes. They thought they were too sinful to be righteous. But Jesus calls Levi to follow him anyway and helps him to start a new life bringing others to Christ.

Gospel Connection: This lesson will help children realize that God loves us unconditionally, even when we sin. When we realize we’ve sinned, He wants us to evaluate where we are in our walk with him, and choose to follow Jesus from that point on.

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Additional Passages and Stories: *Luke 5:27-28, Luke 5:29-32, Job 8:7*

Memory Verse Activity

Erase the Word

Use this simple game to help kids learn the scripture verse:

1. Write it on a whiteboard or another large writing surface.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

2. Ask one student to erase one word of the sentence.
3. Invite the class to repeat the complete passage, adding the missing word from memory.
4. Repeat with another student, then another, until the verse is completely gone.
5. Then have a volunteer re-write the complete verse from memory on the board.

Lesson Illustration

Slides and Ladders

Suggested time: 5-10 minutes

Supplies: Slides and Ladders-type game board

Instructions:

- Hold up the “Slides and Ladders-type board game” game board for the class to see.
- Discuss the rules and allow the kids to play a few turns of the game.

LEADER: In a game like slides and ladders, sometimes you might get knocked back super far, and other times it will feel like you are making great progress towards the goal. But no matter where you are in the game, on each turn, you have to do your best to move forward. We start from where we are. It is the same for our walk with Jesus. Do you think Jesus needs us to look a certain way or be on a certain level to love and accept us? No. Jesus finds us where we are in life and says, “Let’s START HERE.” Then he guides us towards a life that looks more like his. He loves us unconditionally. That means he loves us no matter what. In our lesson today, we will talk about someone who thought he wasn’t worthy to be a friend of Jesus. Let’s find out what happens when he encounters Jesus.

Transition to **Large Group Teaching.**

Large Group Teaching:

Suggested Time: 15–20 minutes

LEADER: When Jesus was starting his ministry, he wanted to assemble a group of followers that he would later call his “disciples.” We know that Jesus was perfect and holy because he was God’s son, so do you think he expected his disciples to be perfect and holy as well? (allow responses) No! He called them from where they were in the state that he found them. This was true for when he called a tax collector named Levi (later called Matthew). Let’s read in the book of Luke about when Jesus encountered this man.

READ: Luke 5:27-28 NIV After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, (28) and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

LEADER: To understand this scripture, we have to know the history of this time period. During Jesus’ life, the Pharisees were an important group of rulers in the Jewish world. They enforced the rules that all of the Jewish people (God’s people) were to follow. They thought they determined who was a sinner and who was considered a righteous or holy person. So, we can already see this is going to be a problem because who is supposed to judge whether we are sinners or not? God! That’s right.

People also didn’t like tax collectors. Tax collectors were considered thieves and traitors because they were helping Rome collect money. So, the Pharisees decided that tax collectors, like Matthew, were “unclean” or sinners. That meant that if you wanted to seem holy and righteous, you could not hang out with someone who was considered a sinner. So, the fact that Jesus went up to Matthew, a sinful tax collector, and asked him to follow him was a big deal.

The other important part of these verses is that Matthew “got up, left everything, and followed him.” Matthew knew that he was considered a sinner. He knew that being a tax collector made him unclean in the eyes of his religious leaders. But instead of refusing Jesus’ invitation because he thought he might not be worthy, he decided to follow him and start over from where he was in his life at that moment.

Let’s keep reading and see what happens next after Matthew follows Jesus.

READ: Luke 5:29-32 NIV Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. (30) But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to

his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" (31) Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. (32) I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

LEADER: So, what happened after Jesus called Matthew to follow him? [Allow responses.] Matthew invited him to his home for a big dinner party with all of his tax collector friends. The Pharisees couldn't understand why Jesus wanted to eat with this group of sinners. They thought God would not approve. But how did Jesus respond? He talked about doctors and sick people! What do you think He meant by this?

Jesus was trying to help the Pharisees understand that God's grace is for everyone, especially the people who seemed the most lost. Everyone is a sinner, and no one can obey God perfectly. We all need the love and forgiveness only God can provide.

Jesus did not come to condemn sinners, but to offer grace and forgiveness to everyone who trusts in Him. We don't need to work hard to make ourselves worthy of forgiveness and mercy; Jesus offers forgiveness and mercy freely to everyone.

Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can ask God for forgiveness, and he will show us mercy. God doesn't need us to be perfect people to follow him. He wants us to be willing to follow Jesus, just like Matthew was. And when we are willing to follow Jesus and live like him, God blesses us. This doesn't mean that our lives will be easy, but it does mean that God will be with us and give us real peace and joy. God gave Matthew important jobs in his kingdom because of his willingness to follow Jesus. God is waiting for us to ask him to forgive us and to "start over" where we are in our lives.

Small Group Discussion and Prayer:

Suggested time: 10–15 minutes

Discuss the following questions. Choose questions that are most appropriate for your group's age and attention level.

- Jesus called a special group of people when he began his ministry? What was that group of people called?
- Who did Jesus call to follow him that the Jewish leaders thought was “unclean?”
- Does God expect us to be perfect when we follow him?
- Who did Jesus say he came for?
- What can we do if we're ready to “start over?”

Take some time to share prayer requests. Then lead the kids in prayer. You may also read the prayer below.

Dear God,
Thank you Lord for giving us Jesus
so that we may be forgiven of our sins.
If we feel unworthy today, Lord,
help us to ask for your forgiveness
and start over from where we are today.
Guide us in our new journey and give us the peace and joy
that comes when we follow you with our whole hearts.
In Jesus name, Amen!

Application Activity

Start Over Freeze Tag

Suggested time: 15-20 minutes

Supplies: Large open area for children to move around; timer

Instructions:

- Form two teams of kids. One team will be the “Sliders” and the other team will be the “Ladders.” The Sliders will slide around the room on their bottoms and the Ladders will march around the room (no running).
- Set a timer for 2 minutes and then say “go.” When the leader says “go,” the Ladders will march to different spots in the room and the Sliders will slide around the room and try to tag the Ladders.
- When a Ladder is tagged, they must freeze in place. Another Ladder, who has not yet been tagged, can tag a frozen teammate to unfreeze them, but they must say “Start Over.” If they don’t say “start over,” then they, too, will be frozen.
- Play continues for two minutes and then the Ladders become the Sliders.

LEADER: Was it more difficult being a Slider or a Ladder? In the board game Slides and Ladders, the slides are not very much fun. When we hit a slide, we fall a little further behind. Sometimes life is like that. But do we give up? No! We start from where we are and we keep believing in the path that God has for us. This game also helps us remember that we need to help others on their journey to find God. If our friends are struggling with forgiveness and sin, we should pull them alongside us and help them find their way to God. We shouldn’t judge them and condemn them like the Pharisees condemned Matthew and his tax collector friends. We should be like Jesus and pray for them and help them find their way.

Bonus Activity

“Start Here” Game Board

Suggested time: 10-15 minutes

Supplies: “Start Here” Game Board printable for each child; markers/crayons; pencils/pens; square magnets with an adhesive backing

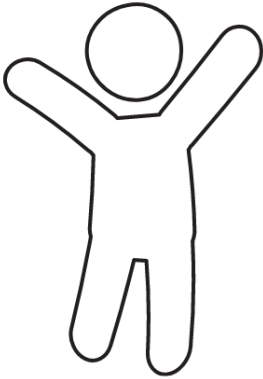
Instructions:

- Before class, print a “Start Here” Game Board for each child. Create an example for children to look to when you explain the craft activity. You will fill in the blank squares from “Start Here” to “A Closer Bond with God” with examples of things you can do to get on the right path towards a closer relationship with God. It can be phrases like, “Ask God for forgiveness,” “Spend time reading the Bible,” “Share about Jesus with a friend,” or “Do something kind.” Use different colors and decorate each square so it is eye-catching.
- Provide each child with a “Start Here” Game Board. Explain that they will be filling the squares with things that will help them get on the right path towards a closer relationship with God. Show them your example and provide markers/crayons, pens/pencils. Smaller children may draw pictures if they aren’t able to write out each action.
- After they’ve filled their squares, kids will color the person at the bottom of the paper to look like themselves. When they are finished coloring, they will cut out the person and place a square magnet on the back.
- Encourage kids to hang their game board on their refrigerator (or another magnetic surface) at home and every time they complete one of the items on their game board, they can move their “person” towards “A Closer Bond with God.”

LEADER: We learned that Jesus didn’t expect his disciples to be perfect people, but he did expect them to focus on loving and obeying God. As they followed Jesus, they learned more about him and their Heavenly Father and became closer to God.. Even if we’ve made mistakes in the past, we can start from right now, right where we are today, and start following Jesus. What are some ways that we can start having a closer bond with God? Take your game board home and put it on the refrigerator (or another magnetic surface) and every time you complete one of the items on your game board, you can move your “person” towards “A Closer Bond with God.”

		A CLOSER BOND WITH GOD
START HERE		

cut here





Bible Word Search

CREATION - DOCTOR - FEAST - FOLLOW - HOUSE - JESUS - LEVI

NEW - PHARISEES - REPENTANCE - RESTART - SICK - SINNERS

C	C	R	E	A	T	I	O	N	X	B
H	F	E	A	S	T	G	G	A	U	G
W	P	P	H	A	R	I	S	E	E	S
X	L	E	V	I	H	O	U	S	E	F
C	Z	N	O	S	G	E	P	N	X	I
Q	O	T	P	D	F	D	O	Z	Z	M
D	J	A	N	P	F	O	L	L	O	W
Q	E	N	N	S	I	C	K	U	Q	L
Y	S	C	R	E	S	T	A	R	T	K
R	U	E	O	G	W	O	L	W	C	E
V	S	I	N	N	E	R	S	M	G	L

Word Search Answers

C C R E A T I O N X B
H F E A S T G G A U G
W P P H A R I S E E S
X L E V I H O U S E F
C Z N O S G E P N X I
Q O T P D F D O Z Z M
D J A N P F O L L O W
Q E N N S I C K U Q L
Y S C R E S T A R T K
R U E O G W O L W C E
V S I N N E R S M G L

A Note for Parents

Today we learned that we don't have to be the "right kind of person" to follow Jesus or be close to Him. The Bible tells us that we all have the chance to START OVER and choose to follow Him in whatever state he finds us.

When Jesus finds Levi (Matthew), he is a tax collector. Church leaders at the time looked down on people who collected taxes. They thought they were too sinful to be righteous. But Jesus calls Levi to follow him anyway and helps him to start a new life bringing others to Christ.

As we go through these lessons, spend some time at home talking about each principle and what was discussed. Guide your kids to put into practice the principles they are learning in church. Some possible suggestions for conversation or activity include:

- Jesus called a special group of people when he began his ministry? What was that group of people called?
- Who did Jesus call to follow him that the Jewish leaders thought was "unclean?"
- Does God expect us to be perfect when we follow him?
- Who did Jesus say he came for?
- What can we do if we're ready to "start over" and start moving towards a closer relationship with God?
- Suggested Activity: Play a few rounds of a "Slides and Ladders" board game and talk about how your game pieces must move from where they land. Sometimes the game pieces have setbacks and have to start over, but they keep moving towards the finish line. Explain that as Christians we all face setbacks and obstacles throughout our lives, but we can never be so far from God that His love cannot reach us.!

Review and discuss the lessons with your children regularly. You might already have a dedicated prayer or Bible time in your home. If so, great! If not, perhaps it is the time to start one. It doesn't have to be formal. You can speak about God's truth on the way to activities or around the dinner table. Remember that training a child is a constant task, but it is also the most significant and rewarding one we can undertake.