

There is None Like God

MAIN IDEA

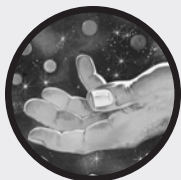
- **There is none like God; nothing and no one compares with God.**

MEMORY VERSE

...I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.
—Isaiah 46:9b

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Isaiah 40:12-22, 25-26
- 2) Isaiah 46:9b
- 3) (Isaiah 40:11)



TEACHER INTRODUCTION

The words "...I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me" from Isaiah 46:9 can be so familiar to us that we overlook the staggering reality that God is in a category all by Himself. In all the universe there is *none* like God. *Nothing* and *no one* compares to God, who is infinite in wisdom and power. Unlike the idols of man, God is self-existing, eternal, and active.

Pray that this truth will land on you in a fresh way this week and that you will worship this God who is so uniquely above all else. Pray that God would open the eyes and hearts of the children you teach this week to show them that there is none like Him.

TEACHER PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Paper Airplanes Instructions (1A)
- Airbus (1B)
- Isaiah 40:25-26 (1C)
- Isaiah 46:9b (1D)
- Growing in Faith Together for Lesson 1 (one per student)
- Overview for Parents (one per student)

OTHER VISUALS

- Bible
- 4-6 sheets of 8.5" x 11" paper (to make paper airplanes)

VISUALS PREPARATION

- As students are coming in to class, hand 4-6 students a sheet of paper and ask each of them to quickly make a paper airplane. You can use the paper airplane instruction sheet (1A) to help with this, if needed.
- If you will be filling out the chart in the lesson on a whiteboard, draw the empty chart before class and have the appropriate materials ready.
- **Note:** You may want to keep the Verse Visuals (1C-1D) displayed in the room for a few weeks.

NOTEBOOK NOTE

- Throughout the lesson, in the student notebooks, there are questions to answer and fill-in-the-blank sentences to complete. Whenever you see underlined words and the word (Notebook) in parentheses in the lesson, it might be helpful for you to slow down and possibly repeat what you have said so that your students can follow along and complete their notebook pages. As much as possible, though, do this in a way that doesn't interrupt the lesson flow.

Large Group Lesson

Illustration

PAPER AIRPLANES

(Call the students with the **paper airplanes** to the front of the class. Note that all the planes are similar; quickly point out a few unique features. Ask each student to throw his airplane to see how far it goes. Comment on the airplane that goes the farthest.)

Though it is fun to make and design paper airplanes, they are only airplanes made of paper. They have many limitations—like short flights, the inability to carry a load, and they break easily. They are, after all, only paper airplanes.

There is a plane, however, that doesn't have those same limitations. The Airbus A380—nicknamed Superjumbo—has two decks and is the largest passenger plane in the world. Standing six stories tall and stretching two-thirds of the length of a football field, there is room to seat 853 people.



(Display **Airbus**.)

Flying at about 560 miles per hour, the Airbus A380 is in an entirely different class than a paper airplane. It is absurd even to compare the two kinds of planes.

But as absurd as it is to compare a paper airplane to the Airbus A380, it is far more absurd to compare anything or anyone to God. In fact, a paper airplane and an Airbus are more closely alike than anything is like God. God is totally and completely in a category by Himself—far superior to anything or anyone else.

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God's Greatness

The Bible shows how absurd it is to compare anything to God.

(Ask the students to turn to Isaiah 40:12-17 and read it aloud together. Also, note the first of the fill-in-the-blank questions in the Student Notebook, indicated by the underlining in the answer to the question following the Scripture.)

Isaiah 40:12-17—Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? ¹³ Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? ¹⁴ Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? ¹⁵ Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold,

he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. ¹⁶Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. ¹⁷All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

? *What is Isaiah's point in this passage?* [God is great, and His power and understanding are unlimited.] (See Notebook.)

- Isaiah is giving us a word picture of the immense greatness of God.
- He is so great that it is as though all the waters of the world could be held just in the hollow of His hand. (Demonstrate the hollow of your hand.)
- A span is the distance between the thumb and your pinkie (or smallest) finger in an outstretched hand.

Illustration

(Ask a student to quickly come to the front of the room and measure a table or other object in spans.)

- Isaiah says that the immense heavens—galaxy after galaxy—is measured by a span of God's hand.
- Isaiah is trying his best to show that God is infinite in greatness—so great, that we really can't comprehend His greatness.
- Not only is God great, but He is also infinitely wise. (See Notebook.)
- No man can give Him advice or teach Him anything.

? *What are some of the things we must learn after we are born?* [skills—how to eat, talk, tie a shoe, dress ourselves...; relational skills—how to greet people, how to apologize...; math, science, geography, history...; who God is, His plan of salvation...] (Don't try to get a long list. Just ask for quick responses to show the vast amount of knowledge that we must be taught.)

God knows it all—and more. And He knows what we have not yet discovered—the cure to every disease and every imaginable and even unimaginable technological advance. He knows what will happen tomorrow and next year, and He knows what happened in the past—every detail of every war, every history of every nation, even the secrets of every government. He knows the secrets of the entire universe—things we can't even imagine. He knows the right decision in every situation and how that situation will be resolved. And He knows every thought you and I think, everything we desire, every cell in our bodies, and every hair on our heads.

Illustration

(Ask two girls to come to the front of the class. Instruct one of the girls to start counting the number of hairs on the other girl’s head. You may also do this illustration with the whole class, pairing them up, boys with boys and girls with girls. Be sure to progress through the illustration quickly. After they have counted long enough to see how futile the task is, ask the following rhetorical questions that will lead them to see the awesomeness of God.)

How long do you think it would take you to count the hairs on your neighbor’s head? How about the hairs on the heads of five people in the room? Could you count the hair on the heads of everyone in our church?

God knows not only the number of hairs on the heads of everyone in our church, but of everyone in our town...everyone in our state...everyone in our country...and everyone in the whole world. He knows how many hairs you have on your head even after you comb your hair and some of it falls out in your brush (Luke 12:7). Do you know anyone else who can do this?

.....

? *What does Isaiah say about the nations—the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Japan, Brazil...? [Compared to God, they are "as nothing." They are as a drop of water in a whole bucket of water. They are insignificant. God is so great and so worthy of our worship that a nation cannot contain enough wood and animals to make a sufficient sacrifice to Him.] (See Notebook.)*

God is Greater than Idols

Isaiah then makes a comparison. (Ask a student to read Isaiah 40:18-20.)

Isaiah 40:18-20—To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? ¹⁹An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. ²⁰He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move.

(Ask the students to turn to the chart in the Notebook and fill it out together, talking through verses 19 and 20. You may want to fill out a chart on the board at the same time.)

- Men (craftsmen and goldsmiths) make idols out of existing materials like wood—they are man-made. No one made God. He had no beginning—He is self-existing (Colossians 1:17; Acts 17:25).

There is None Like God

- Idols are temporary—they are made of materials that rot. God is eternal (Revelation 1:8).
- Idols don't move. They can't do anything. They are inactive. God is active—He speaks and works (Psalm 50:1, John 5:17).

IDOLS	GOD
Man-Made	Self-Existing
Temporary	Eternal
Inactive	Active

❓ *What point is Isaiah making by showing this comparison?* [the absurdity of comparing anything to God or worshipping anything other than Him] (See Notebook.)

God is Greater than Man

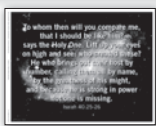
Isaiah shows us another comparison to make his point even stronger. (Ask a student to read Isaiah 40:21-22.)

Isaiah 40:21-22—Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²²It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in.

❓ *What comparison does Isaiah make in these verses?* [He compares God and man. God is so great that He “sits above the circle of the earth,” sustaining and controlling the whole universe. In comparison to God, men are like tiny grasshoppers.]

- The greatness of God is so immense, so magnificent that Isaiah says it should be shouted about—shouted out loudly from the top of a high mountain (Isaiah 40:9).
- The whole world should know of God's greatness. Everyone should know the greatness of God—it is obvious if you only open your eyes and look.
- There is no one or nothing like the God of Isaiah.

Only One God



(Display **Isaiah 40:25-26** and **Isaiah 46:9b**, while reading the verses with vigor and enthusiasm.)

Isaiah 40:25-26—To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. ²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.

Isaiah 46:9b—...I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.

(See the final question in the Student Notebook: "What does God say about Himself in Isaiah 46:9b?" Answers will vary.)

(End the teaching time by singing a worship song showing or praising the greatness of God, or with a prayer praising God for His greatness—as shown in Job 38:4-39:1.)

Small Group Application

The following are some possible discussion topics.

None Like God

List some things that show that no one is like God and no one can do the things God can do. For example:

- He is the only One who can part the sea.
- No one else can cover the earth with a flood.
- No one else can be everywhere all the time.
- No one can pardon sin like God.

What then should be our response to the God who has no equal, who has no comparison?

After the students respond, ask what this would look like practically in their lives. For example: "We should respect God." What does respect for God look like as you go to school tomorrow?

Shepherd

Isaiah shows Israel the greatness of God in the context of extending God's comfort to a downtrodden people (40:1-11). Read Isaiah 40:11.

There is None Like God

Isaiah 40:11—He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

What does this verse in the context of the other verses from Isaiah 40 in this lesson tell you about God?

If you have trusted Christ as your Savior, then the God of Isaiah 40 is your Shepherd. What struggle, problem, or situation can you trust to God, who is both great and personal?

Herald Good News

When was the last time you told someone about the greatness of God? What was his response?

Is there anything that holds you back from “heralding the good news from a high mountain”? How can we pray for you this week?

Encourage the students to look for opportunities this week to give testimony to God’s greatness, and then come back next week ready to share.

Lift Up Your Eyes and See

God’s greatness is everywhere, but we often miss it because we are not alert and looking for it.

Are you ever in awe of God? What causes you to be in awe of God? Can you tell us about a time when you saw a little glimpse of the greatness of God?

Encourage the students to be alert to God’s greatness this week.

Notes to Small Group Leaders

Explain to the students how to use the Growing in Faith Together pages, pointing out the space provided this week for recording their ideas on how they can “Herald Good News.” They should be prepared to share their response next week in the small group.

Student Notebook

Complete your application time by having the students (as a group and individually) complete the Student Notebook pages for this lesson. Challenge them to think about what they learned today and decide on an action step they can take during the week ahead. Have them record this action step in the space indicated in the notebook, and explain that you are going to ask about how they did with this during the next class time.

Notebook Answer Key

Word Search with 19 Attributes of God



- All-Knowing
- Eternal
- Faithful
- Good
- Holy
- Just
- Loving
- Omnipotent
- Omnipresent
- Powerful
- Righteous
- Self-Sufficient
- Sovereign
- Trustworthy
- Truthful
- Unchanging
- Understanding
- Wise
- Zealous

Secret Message

...I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.

Optional Activities

If time allows, choose one of the following optional activities:

- Make up a worship song or a poem about the greatness of God.
- Read Job 38:4-39:1 and make a list of things that show the greatness of God.
- Create a small group newspaper. Have each student write a short paragraph about something they have observed this week that tells something about the greatness of God. Have students arrange their paragraphs on a larger piece of construction paper and add illustrations.

Curriculum Overview Activity

On a bulletin board in your classroom, post a class newspaper template (e.g., the front page spread of the “[Church name] [Grade] Observer”). As students collect stories and testimonies of God’s providence throughout the year, help them write a paragraph-length news story about the testimony and post it on the bulletin board. Post each story until you need to make room for new ones; taking down the older stories first. Keep all the testimonies as you collect them. At the end of the year, type up the stories in booklet form to give to all the students.

Send Home

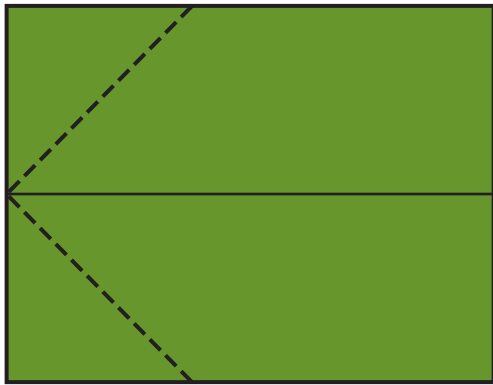
- Overview for Parents (one per student)
- Growing in Faith Together for Lesson 1 (one per student)

“Nakamura Lock” Paper Airplane Folding Instructions

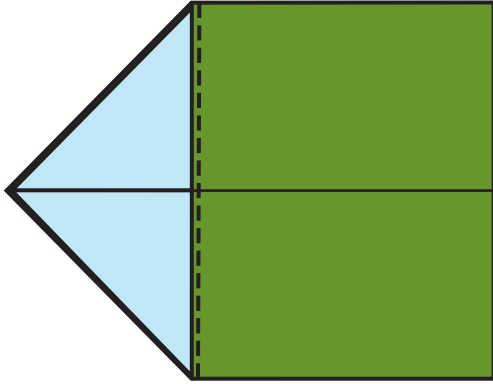
SAMPLE LESSONS



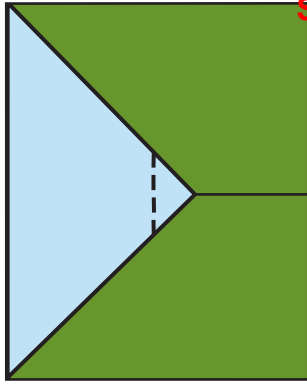
1 Fold a sheet of paper in half lengthwise and crease it. Open it back up ‘valley’ side up.



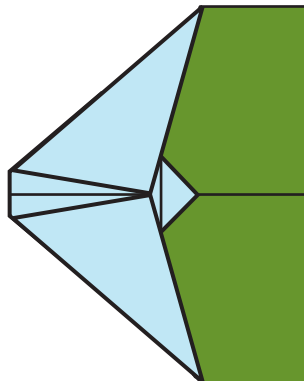
2 Fold the top corners down to the center fold to create a triangle at the top of the page.



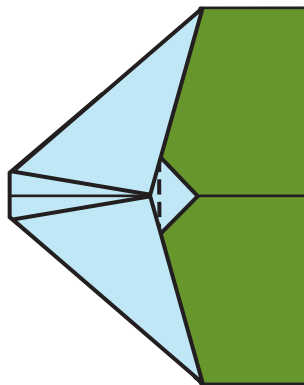
3 Fold the tip of the paper down at the base of the triangle.



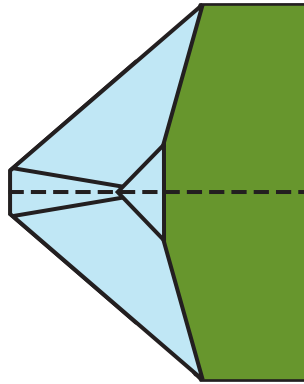
4 Fold up about one inch of the tip, crease, then unfold.



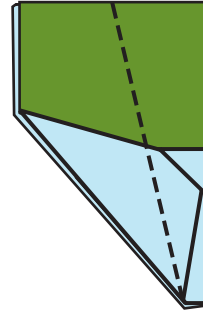
5 Fold the top corners down to the center fold so they meet above the fold of the tip. The plane’s nose will be blunt.



6 Fold the tip up to hold the corners in place. This creates the “Nakamura lock.”



7 Fold the entire plane in half so the tip is on the outside.



8 Fold the wings down on each side. Grasp the plane at the folded tip and let it fly!

Adjustments: A small adjustment can go a long ways in helping the plane fly in a gradual arch. If the nose drops and the plane dives to the ground, bend the back of the wings up. Bend down the back of the wing to keep the plane from stalling mid-flight.

THE AIRBUS A380

HOW Big is It?

Three Two-story Houses
90 Feet



Height of Airbus A380
79 Feet

SAMPLE LESSONS

Length of Airbus A380
239 Feet



Length of a Football Field
360 Feet

**To whom then will you compare me,
that I should be like him?
says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes
on high and see: who created these?
He who brings out their host by
number, calling them all by name,
by the greatness of his might,
and because he is strong in power
not one is missing.**

Isaiah 40:25-26

...I am God,
and there is
no other;

I am God,
and there is none like me.
Isaiah 46:9b

There is None Like God

MAIN IDEA

- **There is none like God; nothing and no one compares with God.**

MEMORY VERSE

...I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.—Isaiah 46:9b

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Isaiah 40:11-22, 25-26 2) Isaiah 46:9b

LESSON TIME

1. Isaiah’s point in chapter 40:12-17 is that God is _____, and His power and understanding are _____.
2. Not only is God great, but He is also infinitely _____.
3. In the same passage Isaiah says that compared to God, the nations are like a _____ in a bucket of water.
4. Isaiah 40:18-20 shows the foolishness of comparing idols to God. Complete this chart:

IDOLS	GOD

5. By pointing out the difference between God and idols, Isaiah is showing the absurdity of _____ anything to God or _____ anything other than God.
6. What does God say about Himself in Isaiah 46:9b? _____

There is no other real god than Jehovah God. There is none like Him.

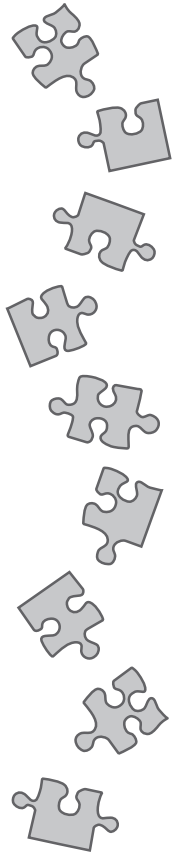
ACTION STEP FROM OUR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

ON YOUR OWN

Circle all the attributes of God you can find in this word search. Words are placed horizontally, vertically and diagonally, both forwards and backwards. Then, use the left over letters to reveal the remainder of this secret message.

I

Check off a puzzle piece for each word you find.



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



WITH YOUR SMALL GROUP

Take turns explaining one or more of the attributes of God to your group. How does this aspect of God's character affect your life? (i.e. "God is self-sufficient means I do not have to help Him out. He does not need my efforts to help Him. Because He has no needs, He is free to bless me. So instead of thinking that I am doing something great for God when I spoke up in class defending pro-life legislation, I should be grateful for the privilege of speaking truth.")



There is None Like God

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MAIN IDEA

- **There is none like God; nothing and no one compares with God.**

.....
MEMORY VERSE

...I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.—Isaiah 46:9b

.....
SCRIPTURE

- 1) Isaiah 40:11-22, 25-26
- 2) Isaiah 46:9b



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LESSON SUMMARY

In all of the universe, there is none like God. Nothing and no one compares to God, who is infinite in wisdom and power. Unlike the idols of man, God is self-existing, eternal and active. This is a staggering reality! Meditating on it should draw us to worship Him.

Rejoice in a God who is so uniquely above all else. Draw your son/daughter into your worship of Him.

.....
AS YOU WALK BY THE WAY

Bible verses must be understood in their context. The context is the setting of the verse—the verses before and after it, the chapter and book in which it appears.

...remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.—Isaiah 46:9b

- **What word does Isaiah use to refer to the Israelites?** Now read verses 5-9a together.

To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be alike? ⁶Those who lavish gold from the purse, and weigh out silver in the scales, hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god; then they fall down and worship! ⁷They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble. ⁸“Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, ⁹remember the former things of old. —Isaiah 46:5-9a

- **Why did God say, “I am God, and there is no other”?**

A little historical context: Isaiah was a prophet to the Southern Kingdom (Judah) during the time of the Assyrian captivity of the Northern Kingdom (Israel).

- **What warning can you take from understanding the context of your memory verse?**

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ACTION STEP

During application time, each student was asked to decide on a personal response to what was learned. After recording this step below, discuss how your child can apply this response to his or her life this week.

SUGGESTION FOR JOURNALING

Pastor and author John Piper says, “There are eyes in pencils and in pens.”¹ What do you think he means by this? Writing helps us to slow down and to think about what we have read. From your Bible reading this week, write about where you see the greatness of God in the world around you.



SEEING GOD AT WORK

The Great True God

by Carrie R. Zeman

On a bright August Sunday in 1862, two Dakota Indian churches gathered at the Riggs’ house at Hazelwood to celebrate communion. After twenty-five years among the Dakota in western Minnesota, the Riggs and other missionaries had translated the Bible into the Dakota language and helped many Dakota learn to read and to write. The missionaries were also teaching them how to farm, because the traditional Dakota way of life—hunting buffalo for food and trapping fur animals for trade—was rapidly disappearing as treaties granted Indian lands to white settlers. Many Christian Indians who worshipped *Tahkoowakan*, or the Great True God, gathered at the Hazelwood church for communion that Sunday. But most Dakota still worshipped false spirits.

News of trouble reached Hazelwood late that afternoon: settlers had been killed by Dakota many miles away. Rumors like this were common. Many Dakota were angry with the United States government for not keeping promises to regularly distribute provisions and money in exchange for Indian land. The missionaries had talked to government officials and had even written to the President on the Dakota’s behalf. They had often shared their own food when their Indian neighbors were starving. But many Dakota were still discontent. That evening, some Indian strangers stole the Riggs’ horses. Later, the missionaries heard that the traditional Dakota had declared war on everyone who was not like them—whites and Christian Indians alike. Christian Dakota men guarded the Hazelwood house that night while their wives prayed inside with the Riggs family and sang, “Tahkoowakan is the refuge of His saints, an ever-present help in trouble.”

About midnight, word came that hostile Indians were on their way to Hazelwood. Taking little more than the clothes they were wearing, the missionaries escaped to a hiding place on an island in the Minnesota River. It rained all night as they huddled together for warmth

and prayed. By noon the next day, the rain had stopped, but they were cold, muddy, hungry, and eager to return home.

“Seek not what you shall eat, nor what you shall drink,” Mr. Riggs reminded his family, quoting the words of Jesus to His followers. “But rather seek the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.”

He had hardly finished speaking when they heard rustling in the grass along the river bank. A Dakota woman emerged from the brush carrying a bundle. “Tahkoowakan told me to bring this to you,” she said. She handed them a bag of food wrapped in extra shawls.

The woman also brought a message: white people were being killed or taken captive wherever hostile Dakota found them. Their house at the mission had been plundered. It was not safe to return home. The Riggs considered the food God had provided and the messenger He had sent to them. They prayed once more for God’s protection and left the island.

As the family struck out east over the vast prairie, their hearts were heavy with thoughts of the home, the friends, and the lifetime of work they had left behind. Then, as if to dampen their spirits even more, a storm blew in. Steady, soaking rain accompanied them all afternoon as they trudged across the prairie. They didn’t know it then, but hostile Indians were following close behind, tracking the trail of tall grass bent as they pushed through. But the rain refreshed the grass, making it spring up behind them like a wall. Tahkoowakan erased their trail, hiding and protecting His people.

The story of the Riggs family in the Dakota Conflict of 1862 continues in Lesson 22.

How did God show Himself as faithful to the Riggs family? What did God do for the Riggs family that they failed to notice? At the time it was happening, do you think the Riggs were praising God for the rain that soaked them as they fled? Why not? What do these works of God show us about what God is like? When something hard is happening in your life, do you always understand why God is causing it to happen?

1. Piper, John. *When I Don’t Desire God: How to Fight for Joy*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004), 123.

God's Sustaining Providence

MAIN IDEAS

- **God created and sustains the universe.**
- **God acts in sustaining life. Without God's sustaining providence, we would die.**

MEMORY VERSE

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
—Colossians 1:17

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Colossians 1:16-17
- 2) Hebrews 1:3a
- 3) Job 38:39-41
- 4) Acts 17:28a
- 5) Romans 11:34-36
- 6) Acts 17:24-25
- 7) Psalm 145:9
- 8) Lamentations 3:22-23
- 9) (Psalm 119:90-91)



TEACHER INTRODUCTION

God's providence is His act of "providing" for the universe, sustaining it from moment to moment. We are not often consciously aware of how dependent we are on God every moment of the day. Yet if God withdrew His sustaining providence the world would cease to exist, since He holds all things together (Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:3a). This points to the utter folly of presuming that we do not need God.

Though we usually don't consciously presume that we do not need God, we do this in countless ways every day as we go about our lives in seeming independence. This week, consciously focus on your need for God—for life, breath, and all things—including your lesson preparation. Humbly ask Him how to best prepare this lesson, and ask Him to subdue the independence in your heart.

TEACHER PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Providence Visual (first used in lesson 2)
 - › Providence (2H)
 - › Present (2A)
 - › Active (2B)
 - › Watching Eye (2I)
 - › Working Hand (2J)
- Uphold (3A)
- Creation (3B)
- Sustain (3C)
- Watching (3D)
- Powerful (3E)
- Unchanging (3F)
- Acts 17:28a (3G)
- Growing in Faith Together for Lesson 3 (one per student)

OTHER VISUALS

- Bible
- Large paper or poster board (to cover the Providence Visual at the start of the class)
- Whistle, flute, recorder, or similar instrument
- Tape or tacks
- Manual bicycle pump

NOTEBOOK NOTE

- Throughout the lesson, in the student notebooks, there are questions to answer and fill-in-the-blank sentences to complete. Whenever you see underlined words and the word (Notebook) in parentheses, it might be helpful for you to slow down and possibly repeat what you have said so that your students can follow along and complete their notebook pages. As much as possible, though, do this in a way that doesn't interrupt the lesson flow.

Transition Activity

Action Step from Last Week’s Lesson

Encourage the students to share their experience of taking an action step from last week’s lesson.

Large Group Lesson

Illustration

WHISTLE OR
OTHER WIND
INSTRUMENT

(Blow the **whistle, flute, or recorder**. Blow one quick blast. Then blow a long sustained note.)

What was the difference between the two notes I blew? [One was a quick blast; the other was a long sound.]

With the first sound, after the one quick blast the sound was over; there was no more sound. But the second time I kept blowing the [whistle]. To keep blowing the [whistle] is to “sustain” the sound; it keeps the sound existing.

This illustration about sustaining sound will help us learn something more about the providence of God.

.....

Review



(Cover **Providence** visual.)

(Have students open their notebooks, fold them so that the left hand side is visible and then fill in as much as they can of the providence visual. Then remove the cover and let students correct their answers if necessary before reviewing the emerging definition.)

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD
God is PRESENT and ACTIVE in all His creation.
His EYE is watching,
His HAND is working

God’s providence is His act of “providing” for the universe. It is God “taking care” of the universe.

? *How did God create the universe?* [He spoke.]

- God’s voice created the universe. He spoke and the universe was created (Genesis 1; Psalm 33:6-9). (See Notebook.)
- *This is like one short blast on a [whistle, flute, recorder, etc.].*
- But God did not just create the universe and then leave it alone. He is still active in the universe—God is working in the universe, or providing for the universe. (See Notebook.)
- *This is like the sustained whistle.*
- Part of the providence of God is His active sustaining of the universe.

Illustration

WHISTLE OR
OTHER WIND
INSTRUMENT

(Ask a student come to the front and blow on the **whistle** as long as he can.)

What happened when you stopped blowing the whistle? [The sound stopped.]

As long as you were blowing the whistle, the sound existed; as soon as you stopped, the sound ended.

- The universe is like the sustained whistle sound. God keeps the universe existing.
- If God were to stop sustaining the universe, the universe would cease to exist. There would be no more universe. There would only be God, as there was only God in the beginning.

.....
(Have a sword drill with the following verses. Ask a couple of students to read the verses, and then direct the students to the fill-in-the-blank in the Notebook.)

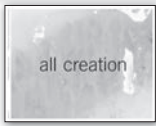
Colossians 1:16-17—For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Hebrews 1:3a—He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

? *What do these verses say about God’s providence?* [God, the Creator, “holds together” the universe—all things in creation are sustained by His upholding power; Jesus, by His mere word, is sustaining the universe.]



(Add **Uphold** and **Creation**, and review the emerging definition.)



THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD
 God is **PRESENT** and **ACTIVE** in all His creation.
 His **EYE** is watching,
 His **HAND** is working
 to uphold all creation

Illustration

WHISTLE OR
 OTHER WIND
 INSTRUMENT

(Ask a child to blow the [**whistle**] and to sustain the sound until the end of class. When he protests that he can't, ask him to try.)

Why did you stop blowing the [whistle]? [I needed to breathe.]

God is Able to Sustain the Universe because He is Unlimited

? *Why can God sustain the universe?* [God can do anything; nothing is too hard for God] (See Notebook.)

- God has no needs—He does not need “to take a breath.” He does not need to sleep, or get more energy.
- It is not hard for God to sustain the universe, and He can sustain it as long as He wants, because God is not limited in any way.²



(Display **Sustain**.)

Every day the sun comes up in the morning, the stars are in the sky, and rain waters the earth. Year after year, seeds grow into flowers that make more seeds that grow into flowers winter always comes after fall and spring and summer after winter.

This is God sustaining the universe. He “keeps the universe going.” Everything in creation is a message to us from God. Every morning when the sun comes up, it is a reminder that God is watching over us.



(Display **Watching**.)

When the stars come out at night, it is like God saying, “I am still here.” When thunder, lightning, strong wind, and rain appears, it is God showing us that He is powerful.



(Display **Powerful**.)

2. If your students have studied *How Majestic Is Your Name*, you may want to ask them which name of God reflects this characteristic. [*Jehovah, Yahweh*—Self-Existent One]

God's Sustaining Providence

The rain is God providing water for us to drink and to water the plants so that we have food to eat. Every time winter follows fall and spring follows winter, God is saying, "I am unchanging. You can count on me."



(Display **Unchanging**.)

- All things—the sun, rain, oxygen, gravity, everything in the universe, exists by God’s creation and by His sustaining providence.

(Have a sword drill with the following verses. Ask a student to read the verses, and explain that God is talking to Job in these verses.)

Job 38:39-41—“Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, ⁴⁰when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket? ⁴¹Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God for help, and wander about for lack of food?

? *What do these verses say about the sustaining providence of God?*

- God gives the animals their food. God shows them how and where to hunt. He places and keeps within them the hunting instinct.
- God is attentive to His universe and all the living things in it. When God’s eye is watching the universe, His hand is also working in the universe. When God sees, He acts.
- Without God’s sustaining providence, all animals would die.

God Sustains Life



(Display **Acts 17:28a**, and ask a student to read the verse. Also, see the Notebook.)

Acts 17:28a—...In him we live and move and have our being...

- We owe our very lives to God. God sustains the life of every living creature. He provides for all living things.

Optional Illustration

BICYCLE PUMP (Display the **bicycle pump**, and ask a student to demonstrate how it works.)

What happens if the person pumping the pump stops moving? [Air no longer comes out of the pump; the pump won’t work.]

This is an illustration of the providence of God over our lives.

- Without the hand of God on our lungs, our lungs would no longer breathe. Every breath we take is a gift from God.

.....

- God’s hand on our lives is like the hand on the pump. He makes our lungs work pumping air in and out of our bodies continually (Job 12:10).
- He circulates blood through our veins. He makes our muscles work, and our brain respond to the command to raise our arm or wiggle our fingers. (Demonstrate this.)
- But if God were to withdraw His sustaining providence, we would stop breathing and die (Job 34:14).

? *Some people say they “do not need God.” Why is this statement so foolish? [Without God’s sustaining providence they would die.]* (See Notebook.)

- Every person needs God, whether or not that person admits or even understands that he needs God. He is totally dependent on God every minute of every day (Psalm 104:29).

Why has God blessed us with His sustaining providence? Is it because He owes His creation something? Is it because we are so wonderful that He just has to sustain our lives? Is it because He needs us, and therefore can’t afford for us to die?

(Discuss the above questions. Some verses you may want to bring in are below.)

Romans 11:34-36—*“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” ³⁵“Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” ³⁶For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

Acts 17:24-25—*The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.*

Psalms 145:9—*The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.*

Lamentations 3:22-23—*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

(Summarize the discussion with the following thoughts.)

God's Sustaining Providence

- God does not owe His creation anything. It is a mercy from God that He provides for us and keeps us living.
- God does not need anything. He is Jehovah, and He exists without the help of anyone or anything else.
- God's sustaining providence is on our lives because He is good and gracious and merciful.

Without God's sustaining hand of providence over the universe, it and we would cease to exist. No one and nothing exists without the help of God. God sustains all things. He alone does not need to be sustained. There is none like God!

(End in prayer, thanking God for His mercy of sustaining providence.)

Small Group Application

The following are some possible discussion topics.

Evidences of Providence

What evidences of God's providence did you see this week? What do they tell you about God?

God's Appointment

Read Psalm 119:90-91.

Psalm 119:90-91—Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast. ⁹¹By your appointment they stand this day, for all things are your servants.

What does this verse tell you about God? [God is faithful; eternal—His faithfulness endures to all generations; Creator—He established the earth; Sustainer—the universe stands fast because of God; authoritative—the earth stands by God's appointment; God commands and it happens; sovereign—He is in charge of all things; all things are the servants of God; all things are subject to God's rule.]

How does God's sustaining providence show His faithfulness? What does this tell you about the kind of trust you can have in God?

In what ways do you take His sustaining providence for granted? Why is it wrong for us not to acknowledge God's faithfulness? Why doesn't God owe us anything? How can you respond to God's faithfulness in sustaining you and your family?

Suggest to the students that they ask God to personally show them His sustaining providence as a means of increasing their trust in Him.

Messages from God

What “messages from God” were evident in your life today? Did you notice them? How can you be more aware of God’s work in the world? What can you do this week to begin seeing God’s hand at work? For example, each day make an intentional effort to stop and reflect on God’s works and what He is saying about Himself through them.

Keep a list on the Growing in Faith Together page for this lesson and be ready to share your list with the small group next week.

God’s Attentiveness and Our Trust

Job tells us that God is paying close attention to the world—giving animals their food, even birds that seem very insignificant. What does that tell you about the attentiveness God has over your life?

Are there times when you are tempted to think that God isn’t paying attention to you? Are your feelings always right? Can you trust them? What situations in your life do you need to trust to the attentive eye and the working hand of God? What does trusting God in these situations look like? Why is God worthy of our trust?

Pray for each other.

Student Notebook

Complete your application time by having the students work (as a group and individually) to complete the Student Notebook pages for this lesson. Challenge them to think about what they learned today and decide on an action step they can take during the week ahead. Have them record this action step where indicated in the notebook, and explain that you are going to ask about how they did with this during the next class time.

Optional Activities

If time allows, choose one of the following optional activities.

- Ask a series of “What if...” questions that illustrate the necessity of the sustaining providence of God. Hold up a different question mark for each question. You may want to tape each question mark to the wall as you ask your question. For example:
 - *What if the sun no longer came up in the mornings?* [the earth would grow colder and colder; the plants wouldn't grow; all the rivers and lakes would freeze; we would die]
 - *What if God no longer sent rain on the earth?* [everything would dry up and turn into a desert; there would be no water to water crops; we would die]
 - *What if God no longer sustained the oxygen on earth?*
 - *What if gravity disappeared?*
- Read Psalm 104 and ask the students to look for evidences of God's sustaining grace in the Psalm.
- Using magazine images, make a collage bulletin board, poster, or picture of living things. Label it “The Lord God Made Them All” or “In Him We Live and Move and Have Our Being.”

Send Home

- Growing in Faith Together for Lesson 3 (one per student)

to uphold

all creation

*I sustain
the universe.*

*I am
watching over you.*



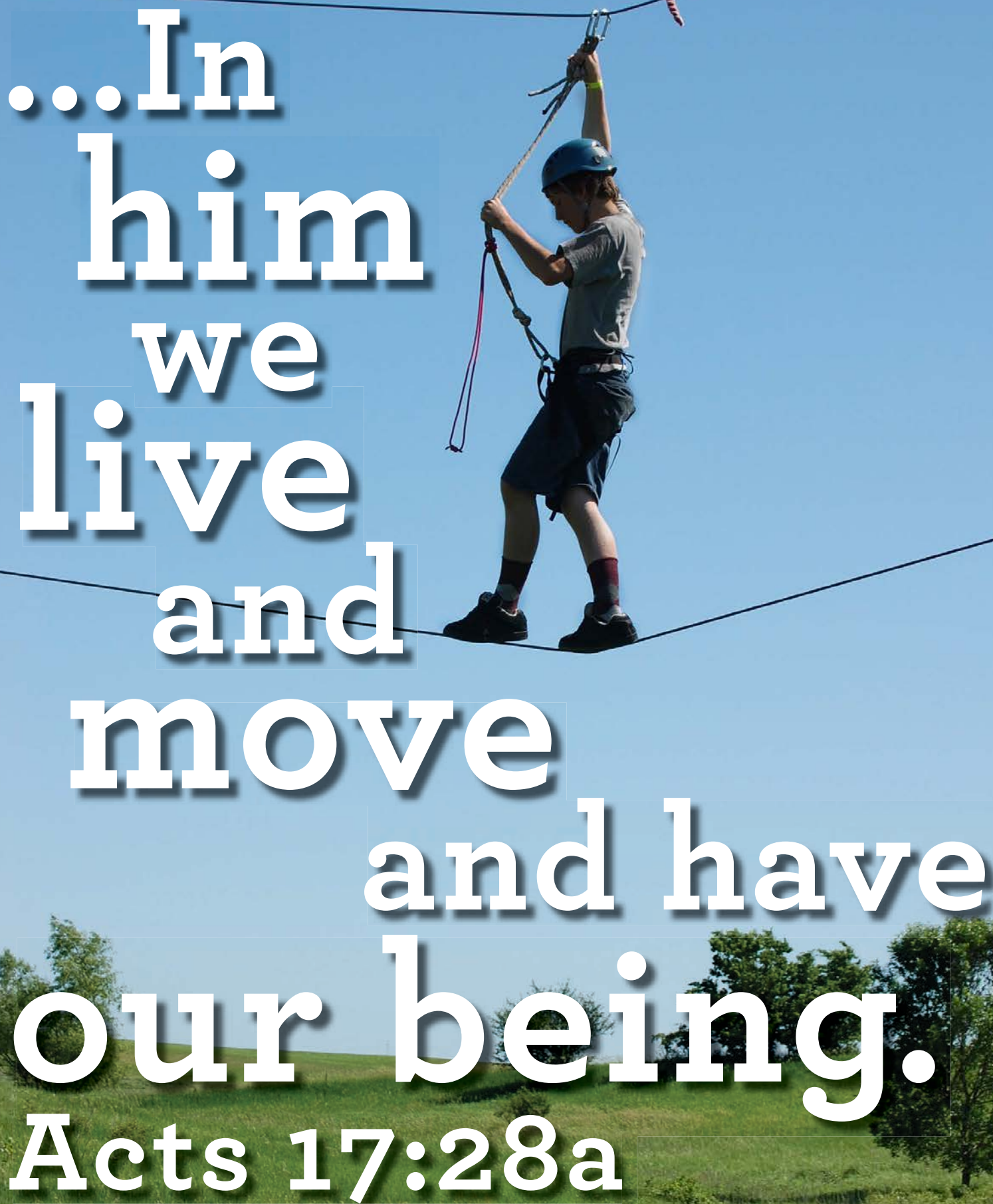
*I am
powerful.*



I provide for you.

*I am unchanging.
You can count on me.*





...In
him
we
live
and
move
and have
our being.
Acts 17:28a

God's Sustaining Providence

MAIN IDEAS

- God created and sustains the universe.
- God acts in sustaining life. Without God's sustaining providence, we would die.

MEMORY VERSE

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.—Colossians 1:17

SCRIPTURE

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Job 38:39-41 | 3) Psalm 145:9 | 5) Acts 17:24-25, 28a | 7) Colossians 1:16-17 |
| 2) Psalm 119:90-91 | 4) Lamentations 3:22-23 | 6) Romans 11:34-36 | 8) Hebrews 1:3a |

LESSON TIME

1. God's _____ created the universe.
2. TRUE or FALSE: God created the universe and then, as some people believe, just left it.
3. Colossians 1:17 says that "in Him _____ things _____."
4. Why can God sustain the universe? _____

5. It is in God that we _____ and _____ and have our _____ (Acts 17:28a).
6. Why is it foolish for people to say that they do not need God? _____

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

God is _____ and _____ in all His creation.
His _____ is watching, His _____ is working to _____
all _____.

ACTION STEP FROM OUR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

ON YOUR OWN

What must God sustain to keep the world existing? Think creatively, and try to come up with some ideas that no one else will consider.



GOD SUSTAINS...

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

WITH YOUR SMALL GROUP

Share your ideas with your small group. Now brainstorm some ideas of how you can become more aware of God's work in the world. Write them below.



God's Sustaining Providence

MAIN IDEAS

- **God created and sustains the universe.**
- **God acts in sustaining life. Without God's sustaining providence, we would die.**

MEMORY VERSE

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
—Colossians 1:17

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Job 38:39-41
- 2) Psalm 119:90-91
- 3) Psalm 145:9
- 4) Lamentations 3:22-23
- 5) Acts 17:24-25, 28a
- 6) Romans 11:34-36
- 7) Colossians 1:16-17
- 8) Hebrews 1:3a



LESSON SUMMARY

God's providence is His act of "providing" for the universe, sustaining it from moment to moment. If God withdrew His sustaining providence, the world would cease to exist, since He holds all things together (Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:3a). It is utter folly to presume that we do not need God.

This week, rejoice with your son or daughter in God's merciful sustaining of the universe and review the Providence definition in progress:

God is **PRESENT** and **ACTIVE** in all His creation.
His **EYE** is watching, His **HAND** is working to uphold all creation.

AS YOU WALK BY THE WAY

Read Psalm 104. Look at the Psalm again and notice how the Psalmist switches between "you" and "he."

- **What is the difference between using the second person (you) and the third person (he)?**
- **What does this going back and forth from observing God's work in the world (he) and addressing God personally (you) show us?** [Observing God's providential work in the world should lead us to praise Him for who He is.]
- **How should we respond to God when we see His work?**

Have your child share his or her observations of God's works of providence in the world, your family, and his or her personal life. Praise God for His faithfulness.

ACTION STEP

During application time, each student was asked to decide on a personal response to what was learned. After recording this step below, discuss how your child can apply this response to his or her life this week.



SUGGESTION FOR JOURNALING

Record your praises to God in response to observing His works of providence this week.

If you have no praises, think about what prevents you from praising God. Write a prayer sharing your struggle with God and asking for His help.

SEEING GOD AT WORK

The Greatest Juggler

by Sally Michael

Have you ever seen a juggler smoothly sustaining balls in the air? He needs a sense of timing; he needs to throw the balls the right distance and in the right spot. If his rhythm is broken, he drops balls. When we see a gifted juggler, we marvel at his skill.

Yet there is juggling going on around us all the time—and we forget to marvel at the Juggler. The balls are the planets. And the Juggler is God. God perfectly sustains the planets in their orbits around the sun—and never drops a ball.

All the planets in our solar system orbit the sun in the shape of an oval or an ellipse. But all the ellipses are not the same size or the same shape. The shape of the orbit of Mars is very oval, but the Earth's orbit is almost round. Why? Because God has planned this to sustain life on earth. The earth is never more than 94.5 million miles away from the sun—never so far away that the earth would freeze and life would die off. It is never closer to the sun than 91.4 million miles—or we would burn up. If our orbit were more oval-shaped, life on earth would not be sustained.

What keeps the planets from spinning off in space? Why do they continue to orbit around the sun? Not until the time of Sir Isaac Newton did man understand the great sustaining work of God in the universe. Newton discovered gravity and the reason the planets orbit the sun. The sun's gravitational force pulls planets toward it.

But why aren't the planets pulled into the sun and burned up? The answer is in the speed of the planets. Each planet's speed is perfectly set to be slow enough so that it does not escape the sun and fling out into space, and yet fast enough that it is not pulled into the sun. Who designed all this? This is what Sir Isaac Newton said, "The motions which the planets now have could not spring from any natural cause done but were impressed by an intelligent agent...The universe was rightly designed a Temple of God. This Being governs all things...as LORD over all." The next time you marvel at a juggler, marvel at God, the greatest juggler of all.

Look through a science book or book about nature to find other evidences of God's sustaining providence. In what ways does God work to sustain life? During the week, write a list of the different ways God sustains life. See how long you can make your list. Then praise God for being such an awesome God.