

The Way of the Wise

Scope and Sequence

Target Grade: 3rd

Intended Use: Midweek

Lessons: 28

ESV



The Way of the Wise is a midweek study for children on wisdom and foolishness. The curriculum contrasts the foolish person and the wise person by discussing the characteristics of each. It also teaches that the way of the foolish ends in destruction, but the way of the wise leads to life. The curriculum challenges students to look beyond outward behavior and to look at the heart. *The Way of the Wise* uses the book of Proverbs to encourage children to pursue wisdom and to shun folly.

Lesson 1: Jesus, the Sure Foundation

Key Scripture: Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 7)

The curriculum begins by establishing a key difference between the wise and foolish person: Ultimately, wise men listen to and obey the words of Jesus; foolish men do not listen to and obey the words of Jesus. Students will learn that those on a solid foundation are safe and will live, but those on a sandy foundation will perish. The lesson teaches that standing on a good foundation is very important, but everyone is born in sin on a sandy foundation. Jesus is the only sure foundation.

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 3:11

Lesson 2: The Path that Leads to Life

Key Scripture: Proverbs 4 (A Father's Wise Instruction)

This lesson illustrates that there are two paths in life. The way of the wise leads to heaven, and the way of the foolish leads to hell. Students will see that the Bible warns us to follow the way of the wise and to avoid the way of the foolish. The lesson also teaches that Jesus is the only way to enter the way of the wise.

Key Verse: Proverbs 4:13

Lesson 3: Wisdom and Foolishness

Key Scripture: Acts 4-5 (Ananias and Sapphira)

This lesson seeks to distinguish between wisdom and foolishness. Children will learn that wisdom is loving what God says is good and right and doing it, while foolishness is loving what God says is bad and wrong and doing it.

Key Verse: Proverbs 10:23

Lesson 4: A Call to Wisdom

Key Scripture: Various Passages from Proverbs

This lesson focuses specifically on wisdom. Students will learn that wisdom is beautiful and brings happiness. Wisdom needs to be in the heart, not just in the head. They will also learn that those who are children of God are called to a life of wisdom.

Key Verse: Proverbs 3:1

Lesson 5: A Call Away from Foolishness

Key Scripture: Various Passages from Proverbs

Whereas the previous lesson focused on wisdom, this lesson focuses on foolishness. Students will learn that foolishness is not just doing things that are silly and stupid. It is doing things that are wrong and loving things that are wrong. The lesson teaches that a call to wisdom is a call away from foolishness. Therefore, to walk in the way of wisdom, a person should hold on to instruction, guard his heart, and keep his feet from evil.

Key Verse: Proverbs 4:27

Lesson 6: Fools: The Mocker

Key Scripture: Various Passages

This lesson is the first in a short series of lessons on different kinds of fools. The focus of this particular lesson is the mocking fool. Students will first be introduced to the idea that there are different types of fools. In Scripture, students learn that a mocking fool does not respect God or love what is good. They will also be taught that the wise person does not participate in the actions of mocking fools.

Key Verse: Psalm 1:1

Lesson 7: Fools: The Rebel

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 2 (Eli's Worthless Sons)

This lesson introduces children to another kind of fool: the rebel. They will see that rebellious fools are stubborn and continue in evil. They will also look at Hophni and Phinehas (and briefly at the character of Absalom) to see that foolish children bring grief to their parents, but wise children bring their parents joy.

Key Verse: Proverbs 10:1b

Lesson 8: Fools: The Godless

Key Scripture: Luke 16 (The Rich Man and Lazarus)

Students are introduced to the godless fool in this lesson. Students will see that fools have no room in their hearts for God and even say that there is no God. Children will look at the rich man and Lazarus to learn the consequences of being a godless fool. They will also briefly examine a modern-day atheist to see the state of the heart of a godless fool.

Key Verse: Psalm 14:1

Lesson 9: Fools: The Simple

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 24 (David Spares Saul's Life)

The simple fool is the focus of Lesson 9. In this lesson, students will learn that a simple fool will believe anything, but a wise man is discerning. Students will also examine how being with wise people can help you become wise, whereas being with fools can help you become foolish.

Key Verse: Proverbs 13:20

Lesson 10: Foolishness Leads to Destruction

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 13-15 (The Lord Rejects Saul); Proverbs 1 (The Call of Wisdom)

This lesson shows students the consequences of foolishness. Students will look at the first chapter of Proverbs to examine what is so bad about foolishness. Then they will study the life of Saul and learn how foolishness led him into a downward spiral that eventually led to the end of his reign as king.

Key Verse: Proverbs 1:32

Lesson 11: Driving Out Folly

Key Scripture: Numbers 12 (Miriam and Aaron Oppose Moses)

This lesson shows students that God uses discipline to purge our hearts of folly. Students will learn that folly is within the heart of everyone. Discipline is an act of love, and we should welcome discipline for it is keeping us from further folly and, as seen in the previous lesson, destruction.

Key Verse: Proverbs 22:15

Lesson 12: Seek Wisdom

Key Scripture: Proverbs 3-4 (Blessed is the One Who Finds Wisdom)

This lesson encourages students to seek wisdom and to seek it intensely. Children will study Proverbs 3 and 4 to see that wisdom is a treasure; it will protect you, and it is worth pursuing even if it costs all that you have.

Key Verse: Proverbs 4:7

Lesson 13: The Beginning of Wisdom

Key Scripture: Various Passages

Since the previous lesson showed students that wisdom is a treasure worth pursuing fervently, Lesson 13 shows students where the beginning of wisdom lies. Students will study a number of passages to see that salvation, wisdom, and knowledge are found in God/Jesus and that the key to obtaining these treasures is the fear of the Lord. The lesson then continues by teaching children more about this *fear* by demonstrating that God is both a *consuming fire* and He is good. Students will see this proved true in the Scriptures and also read a portion of the book *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, in which the character Aslan exemplifies this point.

Key Verse: Proverbs 9:10

Lesson 14: The Fear of the Lord: Awe of God's Worth and Position

Key Scripture: Luke 5 (Jesus Calls the Disciples)

To expand on the previous lesson, this introduces a short series of lessons meant to more clearly define what the fear of the Lord entails. Students will see that the fear of the Lord means to be in awe of God's worth and position. They will be reminded that there is no one like God. He is in a category all by Himself. They will see the fear of the Lord demonstrated in Simon Peter's reaction to Jesus after the miraculous catch of fish in Luke 5.

Key Verses: Psalm 89:6-7

Lesson 15: The Fear of the Lord: Admiration of God's Attributes

Key Scripture: Exodus 7-14 (The Plagues and Crossing of the Red Sea)

This lesson shows students that the fear of the Lord also includes admiration of His attributes. To practice this, students will look at the demonstration of God's power as He sent the plagues upon Egypt and delivered the people of Israel by parting the Red Sea. Students will be reminded that God is perfect in everything He does and everything He is. We should admire God because of what He is like—because of His perfections.

Key Verses: Jeremiah 10:6-7

Lesson 16: The Fear of the Lord: Amazement at God's Love

Key Scripture: Acts 9 (Conversion of Saul)

This lesson follows up on the previous lesson by specifically asking students to focus on God's love. In Scripture, students will see God's faithful love to Israel during the period of the judges, and the way God chose to love and draw the Apostle Paul (then called Saul) to Himself, even though Saul hated Him. Students will see that the love of God is truly deserving of our awe.

Key Verse: Psalm 147:11

Lesson 17: Imitate Your Father

Key Scripture: Various Passages

After several lessons examining the greatness and worth of God, this lesson encourages students to walk in His footsteps and to imitate Him. Through a number of Bible passages, the lesson demonstrates that God can give us an undivided heart, and He can teach us the way of wisdom. It is to Him that we must look if we wish to live a life of wisdom.

Key Verse: Psalm 86:11

Lesson 18: Characteristics of the Wise: Seeks Knowledge

Key Scripture: John 3 (Jesus and Nicodemus)

This is the first in a series of lessons on the characteristics of the wise. In this lesson, students will learn that the wise person seeks knowledge and understanding. Seeking knowledge is active—it takes work. The lesson also teaches that fools do not seek knowledge and understanding but rather remain in their ignorance.

Key Verse: Proverbs 18:15

Lesson 19: Characteristics of the Wise: Delights in God's Commands

Key Scripture: Portions of Psalm 119

Another characteristic of the wise person is that they delight in the Lord's commands. Students will examine various portions of Psalm 119 to see that God gives love for His commands. Students will see that they can fill their minds with God's Word and His commands, but it is only God who can make their hearts love what is good and right.

Key Verse: Psalm 112:1

Lesson 20: Characteristics of the Wise: Turns Away from Evil

Key Scripture: Genesis 39 (Joseph and Potiphar's Wife)

This lesson leads students through the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in an age-appropriate manner to show that another characteristic of a wise person is shunning evil. The lesson teaches that, while a wise person turns from evil immediately, fools are hotheaded and reckless. In addition, the wise man does not merely shun evil—he hates evil.

Key Verse: Job 28:28b

Lesson 21: Characteristics of the Wise: Listens to Advice

Key Scripture: 1 Kings 12 (Rehoboam's Folly); 1 Samuel 25 (David and Abigail)

This lesson shows students that the wise person listens to advice and accepts instruction. Students will see that good advice points a person toward God and doing what is good and right. In contrast, bad suggestions point a person toward what is bad and wrong. The lesson teaches that God sometimes warns us against wrongdoing through the good advice of others. Students will learn that listening to advice and accepting instruction is a matter of having a right attitude of the heart.

Key Verse: Proverbs 19:20

Lesson 22: Characteristics of the Wise: Heeds Correction

Key Scripture: 2 Samuel 12 (Nathan Rebukes David)

In this lesson, students will examine how a wise person responds to discipline and correction. God's discipline can be gentle or harsh, and God's discipline is for our good. Students will also learn that God only disciplines us as much as is necessary. The lesson teaches that we can respond quickly and positively toward discipline, or we can be stubborn and refuse to learn easily.

Key Verses: Proverbs 3:11-12

Lesson 23: Characteristics of the Wise: Self-Controlled

Key Scripture: 2 Samuel 16 (Shimei Curses David)

Self-control is the characteristic of the wise introduced in this lesson. By studying a number of Scripture passages, particularly David's response to the curses of Shimei, students will see that the wise man speaks to himself rather than listening to himself. Students will learn that the wise man has self-control, while the fool is impulsive.

Key Verse: Proverbs 29:11

Lesson 24: Characteristics of the Wise: Looks Ahead

Key Scripture: Judges 11 (Jephthah Delivers Israel)

This lesson demonstrates for students that the wise person sees danger and hides from it. He looks ahead and makes good choices. Students will also see that the wise person sees beyond immediate results to eventual consequences and corrects his swerving to the right or the left (to correct a wrong direction).

Key Verse: Proverbs 27:12

Lesson 25: Characteristics of the Wise: Trusts in God

Key Scripture: Psalm 78 (Tell the Next Generation)

This lesson asks students to look at several biblical passages to see that God promises to keep us in the way of the wise—to make us strong—if we trust in Him. As students examine Psalm 78, they will analyze why the Israelites were unable to trust in God with all their hearts, and see that we too do not have enough understanding to always make wise decisions—we must trust God to make us wise.

Key Verses: Proverbs 3:5-6

Lesson 26: The End of the Path

Key Scripture: Psalm 73 (God Is My Strength and Portion Forever)

This lesson encourages students by showing that one way to remain on the way of the wise is to focus on the destination (heaven), because this helps Christians persevere. The small group application time of this lesson also asks students to study the parable of the rich fool from Luke 12 and discuss what this man's folly was.

Key Verse: Ecclesiastes 7:2

Lesson 27: The Conclusion of the Matter

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10 (Warning Against Idolatry)

As the curriculum draws to a close, this lesson challenges students by teaching them that a person can know about wisdom but not walk in the way of the wise. A person can know about God but not love or honor God. Students will look at Solomon and see that, though Solomon was the main writer of the book of Proverbs, Solomon sought happiness in other things and lived a life of folly.

Key Verse: Ecclesiastes 12:13

Lesson 28: Jesus Is the Bridge

Key Scripture: Genesis 18-19 (Sodom and Gomorrah)

The final lesson in this study reinforces that behaving like a Christian does not make a person a Christian. No one can persevere in the way of the wise by his own effort. His heart must be changed to love what is good and right. The lesson emphasizes that Jesus is the only way to the Father. He is the bridge that must be traveled to get from the way of the fool to the way of the wise.

Key Verse: John 14:6

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