

Jesus, the Sure Foundation

Main Ideas

- Wise men listen to and obey the words of Jesus; foolish men do not listen to and obey the words of Jesus.
- Those on a solid foundation are safe and will live; those on a sandy foundation will perish.
- Standing on a good foundation is very important.
- Everyone is born in sin on a sandy foundation.
- Jesus is the only sure foundation.

Key Verse

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

Scripture

1. Matthew 7:24-27
2. Romans 5:12
3. Romans 5:18-19
4. 1 Corinthians 3:11

Curriculum Resources

Note: Visuals that do not need to be cut out and/or assembled in some way for use during the lesson presentation are provided as PDFs for electronic display in the Curriculum Resources. These visuals are identified below and in the lessons following with bold text.

- **House on the Rock (1A)**
- **House on the Sand (1B)**
- **1 (1C)**
- **10 (1D)**
- **Question (1E)**
- **Foundation/Cross (1F)**
- Nametags (AR-1, for each student and adult in the classroom)
- Parent Page for Lesson 1 (for each student)

Other Supplies

- Bible (preferably the English Standard Version)
- See Preparation
 - Envelope
 - Pen or pencil
 - Slip of paper
 - Tape
 - Chair (one that can be safely stood on)
 - Index card
- Basketball
- Box filled with sand
- For Application (for each student)
 - Student Workbook
 - Pencil/pen
 - Markers/colored pencils

Materials for Optional Activities

1. **Key Verse Games**
 - See appendix for ideas.
2. **Design a Bookmark**
 - For each student:
 - Cardstock cut into strips for bookmarks

- Markers, colored pencils

3. Mural or Chalk Art

- Large piece of paper and markers/colored pencils
- OR
- Sidewalk and colored chalk

4. Building a Foundation

- See the Optional Activities section for possible supplies.

5. Standing on a Ball

- Basketballs, soccer balls, or similarly sized balls
- Adults to help supervise

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.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the appendix.
- Sections highlighted in gray are parts of the lessons that can be used either in teaching the class as a whole or discussed in small groups.
- **Matthew 7:24-27 Envelope**—Write the reference “Matthew 7:24-27” on a slip of paper and put it into the envelope. Then tape the envelope on a wall higher than your students will be able to reach, even by jumping, but it should be reachable if the student is standing on a chair and stretching.
- **Index card**—Write the reference “Romans 5:12” on an index card.
- **Note:** *The Way of the Wise* is a study in foolishness and wisdom. The curriculum shows the nature of the wise and the foolish and their destinations. Although the curriculum emphasizes principles from the book of Proverbs, it is not limited to the book of Proverbs. The intention of this first lesson is to emphasize that building our lives on anything other than Jesus is pure foolishness and leads to destruction. It is important before embarking on a study of the way of foolishness and the way of wisdom that the students understand that true wisdom cannot be found apart from Jesus. Wisdom is not a way of life that one aspires to by working hard at being wise but rather the fruit of a life rooted in Jesus.

Large Group Lesson

Introduction

Matthew 7:24-27 envelope that you have taped to the wall, basketball

(Ask a student to get the **Matthew 7:24-27 envelope taped to the wall** for you. When he has determined that the envelope is out of his reach, give him a **basketball** to stand on. You may need to help the student balance on the ball so he does not fall and get hurt. Discuss the difficulty he has in standing on the basketball and ask him what he might do as in the example below.)

This doesn't work very well, does it? The ball keeps moving around. I don't think a ball is a very good thing to stand on. What might be a better thing to stand on?

Chair

(Have a **chair** available for him to stand on which the student can use to get the **envelope**.)

What was the difference between standing on the ball and standing on the chair? Why did the chair work better? Do you think it would be hard to paint the wall while standing on a ball? What might happen if you tried to do that?

A good foundation or a good support, something strong that doesn't move when you stand on it, is very important. A ball keeps rolling around, and it is hard to keep your balance on a ball. So a ball is not a good foundation. It is a bad foundation!

.....

Let's see what the Bible has to teach us about foundations.

(Ask the student to open the **envelope** and read the reference so that the class can look up the Scripture. You may want three students to each read a verse aloud.)

Matthew 7:24-27—“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Jesus' story describes two houses—one that was built on a rock...

(Display the **House on the Rock** visual.)

and one that was built on the sand.

(Display the **House on the Sand** visual. Then **tape** both visuals to the wall and discuss the parable, making the following points, adding the commentary if necessary. This can be done with the whole class or in small groups, as indicated in gray below.)¹



Tape

- ① *There were two kinds of men in Jesus' story. How does the Bible describe them? [One was foolish, and one was wise.]*
- ② *What foolish thing did the foolish man do? [He built a house with a bad foundation.] (Make sure that it is clear that the problem with the house of the foolish man was not the construction of the actual house—it may have been built as well as the wise man's house. It may have looked like a very nice house. The problem with the house of the foolish man was the foundation on which the man built.)*
- ③ *Where did the wise man build his house? [on a rock foundation]*
- ④ *What is the difference between a rock foundation and a sandy foundation? [Rock is stable, solid, firm, unchanging, not easily moved; sand is easily changed or washed away, unstable.]*
- ⑤ *What happened to each house when the rain and waters came? [The house with the sandy foundation fell apart; the house with the rock foundation stood firm.]*

(Point to the **House on the Rock** and the **House on the Sand** visuals on the wall.)

¹ You'll see this same gray highlighting throughout the lessons in this study to indicate parts of the lessons that can be used either in teaching the class as a whole or discussed in small groups

? *Why would a person build on a bad foundation?* [he didn't know how important a foundation is; he didn't care about the foundation; he thought he knew how to build a house and didn't care about the right way to build a house; he was stubborn; he was in a hurry]

A person who would build on a bad foundation is a foolish person. Wise men don't build on sandy foundations. Wise men build on rock foundations.

? *What do you think happened to the two men?* [The wise man was safe; the foolish man probably died.]

? *In this story, who does the Bible say is the wise person?* (See verse 24.) [the person who hears and obeys Jesus' words]

? *So what makes a person foolish?* (See verse 26.) [hearing the words of Jesus and disobeying them; not following Jesus]

Both the wise and the foolish "hear" the words of Jesus. The difference between them is how they respond or what they do with those words. The wise person hears the words of Jesus and obeys them; he does what Jesus says to do. The foolish person also hears with his ears, but he does not obey the words of Jesus.

This story that Jesus told about the two builders is called a parable. A parable is a story with a hidden meaning; it tells more than one story and teaches something important.

- This parable is about us. We are all either like the wise man or the foolish man. We are either building our lives on a bad foundation that is shaky and weak like the ball or the sand, or on a good foundation that is solid, firm and strong like the chair or the rock.
- This is the message of the Bible. Everyone builds their life on something—either something solid or something shaky.
- Those with an unstable, weak, shaky foundation will be destroyed; those with a strong, solid foundation will live.

On a scale of 1 to 10...

(Display the **1** and **10** visuals.)

where 1 is not very important at all...

(Throw the **1** visual on the floor.)

and 10 is the most important thing in all of life...

(Hug the **10** visual.)

what number would you give to having a sure, solid, strong, firm foundation?

Having a sure foundation is of the greatest importance—it ranks as a number 10

Tape, chair

(Tape the **10** visual to the **chair** used in the opening illustration.)

If having a sure foundation is such an important thing, then there is a very important question you must ask yourself.

1

10



Chair

(Hold up the **Question** visual. Then, call a student to the front and ask him to read the question on the question mark—“What is my foundation?”)

The Bible can help us to answer that question.

- God created Adam and Eve...

(Climb up on the **chair** used in the opening illustration and stand firmly on it as you are saying “with a sure foundation.”)

with a sure foundation.

- They had a relationship with the living God. He was their Creator, Protector, and Provider—He gave them all they needed and told them to live in obedience to Him.
- God was greater than Adam and Eve—He was their Ruler—and yet He talked with them and took care of them.
- God was the solid, sure, strong foundation for Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve were safe and happy with God to hold them up—with God as their strong Helper. They were like a house built on a rock. But this is what happened:

- Adam and Eve chose to step off that foundation—they disobeyed God and rejected or turned away from His rule over them.

(Step off the **chair**.)

- They did not want to live in obedience to God, but instead they wanted to be like God. They did not think they needed God.
- So they disobeyed God and lost their sure foundation.

(Kick over the **chair**.)

- They were foolish and instead of choosing God, they chose the sandy foundation of sin, selfishness, pride, and disobedience.

But what does that have to do with you? You aren't Adam and Eve.

Illustration

Box of sand

(Call a student to the front. Give him the **box of sand**.)

What is inside this box will help us understand how important the story of Adam and Eve is to us, and it will answer the question, “What is my foundation?”

(Ask the student to open the **box** and tell the class what is inside.)

Why would there be sand in the box? Let's look at a verse from the Bible that will help answer our questions about Adam and Eve, and us, and sand.

(Ask the class to open their **Bibles** to Romans 5:12 and read it aloud together. This section can be done with the class or in small groups.)

Romans 5:12—Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

? What is this box of sand and this verse telling us? [every person is born in sin; every person has turned from God, the sure foundation]

Every person is born on a sandy foundation and will stay on that foundation unless he is rescued.

So how can we be rescued from a sandy foundation?

(Ask the class to read Romans 5:18-19.)

Romans 5:18-19—Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

? What does “by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners” mean? Who is the one man? [Adam's sin made us all guilty and caused all men to be sinners; Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden passed on both guilt and a sin nature to everyone]

? What does “led to condemnation for all men” mean? [every person is a sinner, guilty before God and deserving of punishment]

? Who is the man of obedience? [Jesus] What was His “act of righteousness”? [dying on the cross]

? What did Jesus' death on the cross do for man? [paid the price of sin; rescued man from the punishment for sin]

God the Father made the way of rescue for us by sending His Son, Jesus. Just as sin came through one man, so rescue from sin, foolishness, and a sandy foundation came through one man—one man who obeyed God perfectly, one man who was without sin, one man who paid the price for the foolishness, disobedience, and sin of undeserving sinners.

(Display the **Foundation/Cross** visual.)

Jesus, the Son of God, died on the cross to take the punishment for sin, to rescue man from his foolish, wicked heart and place him on a sure foundation. Through one man came sin, and through one man, Jesus, came salvation from sin.

(Ask a student to come to the front and read the verse on the **Foundation/Cross** visual to the class.)

1 Corinthians 3:11—For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

So does that mean that now everyone is on a sure foundation?

- The sure foundation of Jesus is available to all, but many choose sin and foolishness instead of Jesus.
- Many trust in themselves, their money, or their talents instead of trusting in Jesus. Many continue in their sinful ways, loving sin and loving what is wrong instead of loving Jesus.



- Foolish people *turn away* from Jesus instead of turning to Jesus.

Wise people “grab onto” Jesus. Only those who turn away from their sin and grab onto Jesus have a sure foundation. Only the wise man who builds his life on the Word of God, listens to and obeys God’s Word, and looks to Jesus for the payment for sin and the power to turn away from sin and what is wrong will be rescued from the sandy foundation.

(End with prayer that each person would turn to Jesus and not away from Him. Thank God for providing a way for anyone to have the sure foundation for life by trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin.)

Small Group Application

(Application can most effectively be done in a small group setting. The questions are just suggestions of possible directions to take the discussion. Pray for wisdom and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Be sensitive to the answers and the needs of the students. Be sure to pray for the students and encourage them to pray for each other.)

- ❓ *What are some foundations people build their lives on? [money, good looks, athletic ability, popularity, self-sufficiency, etc.] What is wrong with these foundations?*
- ❓ *Why are all foundations other than Jesus like a sand foundation? (You may want to tell how these foundations easily crumble.)*
- ❓ *Why is a good foundation important? What are the rain, floods, and wind in life? Storms come into everyone’s life. What happens to people when storms in life hit? What kinds of storms do kids have? What different ways do kids react to those storms? How does your foundation hurt you or help you in the hard times?*
- ❓ *Do you believe that everyone starts out on sandy soil? Why? (Make sure that the students understand that God says in the Bible that all men are sinners. It is important that the students see that they must agree with God’s evaluation of their condition and that there is nothing that they can do about their sin problem. Only Jesus can rescue man from his sin problem. Only Jesus can provide a sure foundation for man.)*
- ❓ *What does it mean to have Jesus as your foundation?*
- ❓ *Is Jesus your foundation?*
 - (Read and discuss the following verse:)

1 Corinthians 3:11—For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- ❓ *How can you tell if Jesus is your foundation? If Jesus is your foundation, can you tell me about when He became your foundation?*

(Note: This lesson is not intended to be a full presentation of the gospel. You may want to follow up with a more extensive explanation to those who seem unfamiliar with the gospel and/or who show interest in the gospel. If a child is interested in the gospel and has parents who are believers, it is recommended that you mention the child’s interest to the parents and allow the parents to follow up with the child. (See articles in the appendix on sharing the gospel with children and ministering to children from non-Christian homes.)

- **Student Workbook**—Have the students turn to Lesson 1 in their workbooks. In the top part of the question mark, have the students write or draw examples of foundations that foolish people build their lives upon. In the bottom part of the question mark (the rock foundation), have them write “JESUS” on the rock foundation. In the box at the bottom, have them write the question, “What is my foundation?” Then have them pray and ask God to show them which foundation they have in their life.
- (End with prayer.)

Optional Activities

1. Key Verse Game

- Play a Key Verse game using the Key Verse/s for this lesson. See the appendix for ideas.

2. Design a Bookmark

- Have students design a bookmark. On one side, they can write: “Through one man came sin.” On the other side, they can write: “Through one man came salvation.”

3. Mural or Chalk Art

- Have students make a big mural or picture on the chalkboard of the house on the sand and the house on the rock. You could split the students into teams and encourage each team to see how creative it can be.

4. Building a Foundation

- Divide the students into small teams. Provide a different foundation for each team (e.g., paper, plush material, wood, metal, etc.) Have the teams lay a foundation on a book and then build a structure from sugar cubes or blocks on it. When the teams finish building, have the students watch as each team carefully removes the foundation from the book. Count how long the structure stands before it falls down. As the structures with flimsy foundations fall, comment on the importance of a solid foundation. For those with a solid foundation, talk about the importance of a solid foundation.

5. Standing on a Ball

- Have the students experiment with standing on balls. Help them each get on a ball—working with another adult to hold both the ball and the child. Slowly let go of the child and then the ball. Reinforce that a foundation must be strong and solid or everything will collapse. (Supervise this activity carefully so the students do not get hurt.)

Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 1 (for each student)



Jesus, the Sure Foundation

MAIN IDEAS

- Wise men listen to and obey the words of Jesus; foolish men do not listen to and obey the words of Jesus.
- Those on a solid foundation are safe and will live; those on a sandy foundation will perish.
- Standing on a good foundation is very important.
- Everyone is born in sin on a sandy foundation.
- Jesus is the only sure foundation.

KEY VERSE

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

SCRIPTURE

- Matthew 7:24-27
- Romans 5:12
- Romans 5:18-19
- 1 Corinthians 3:11

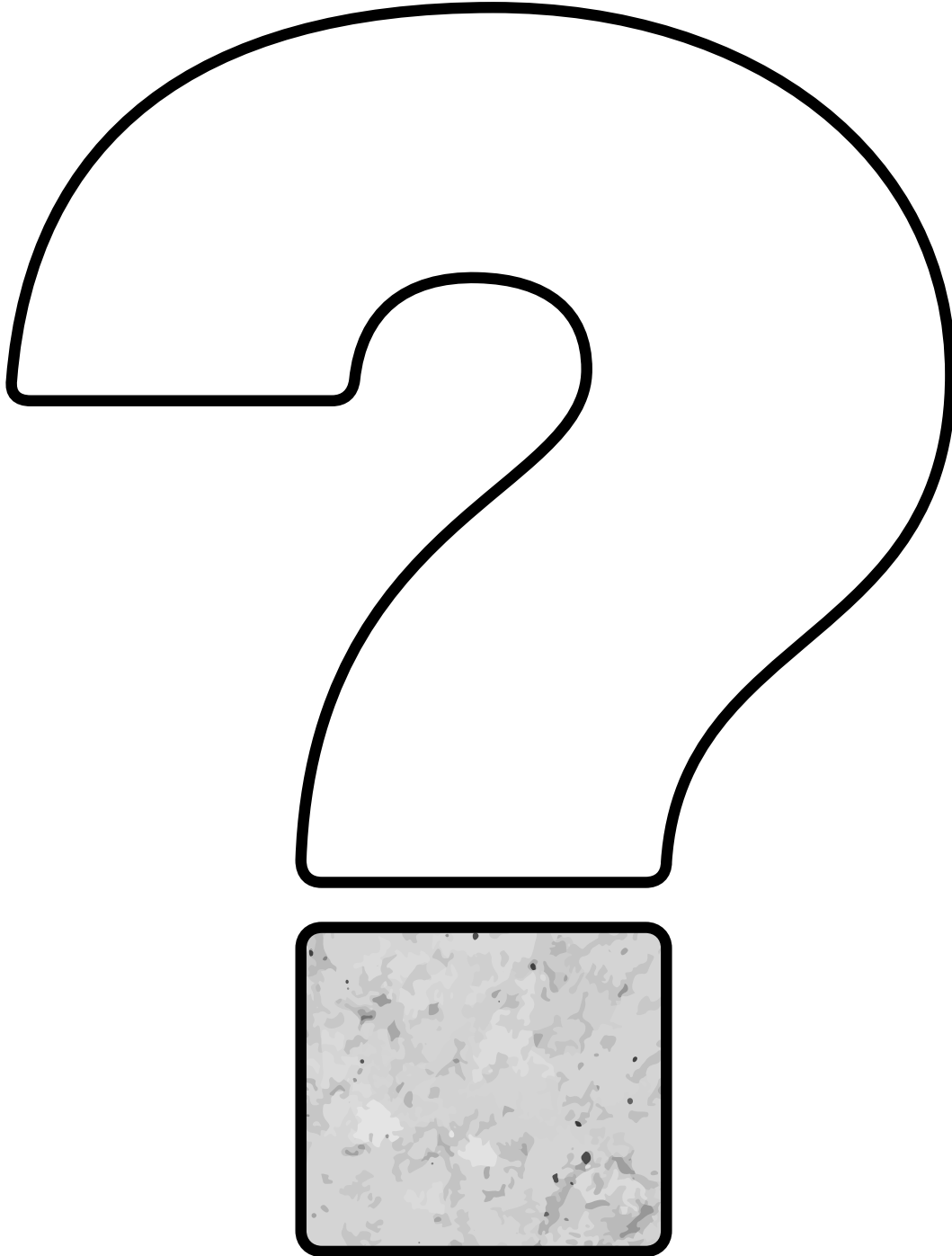
A PROVERB TO THINK ABOUT

The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe. (Proverbs 18:10)

Jesus: The Sure Foundation

In the top part of the question mark, write foundations that foolish people build their lives upon. (You can also draw pictures of them if you want.) Then, in the bottom part of the question mark, write JESUS in the bottom part of the question mark (the rock foundation).

In the box at the bottom, write the question, "What is my foundation?" Then pray and ask God to show you which foundation you have in your life.





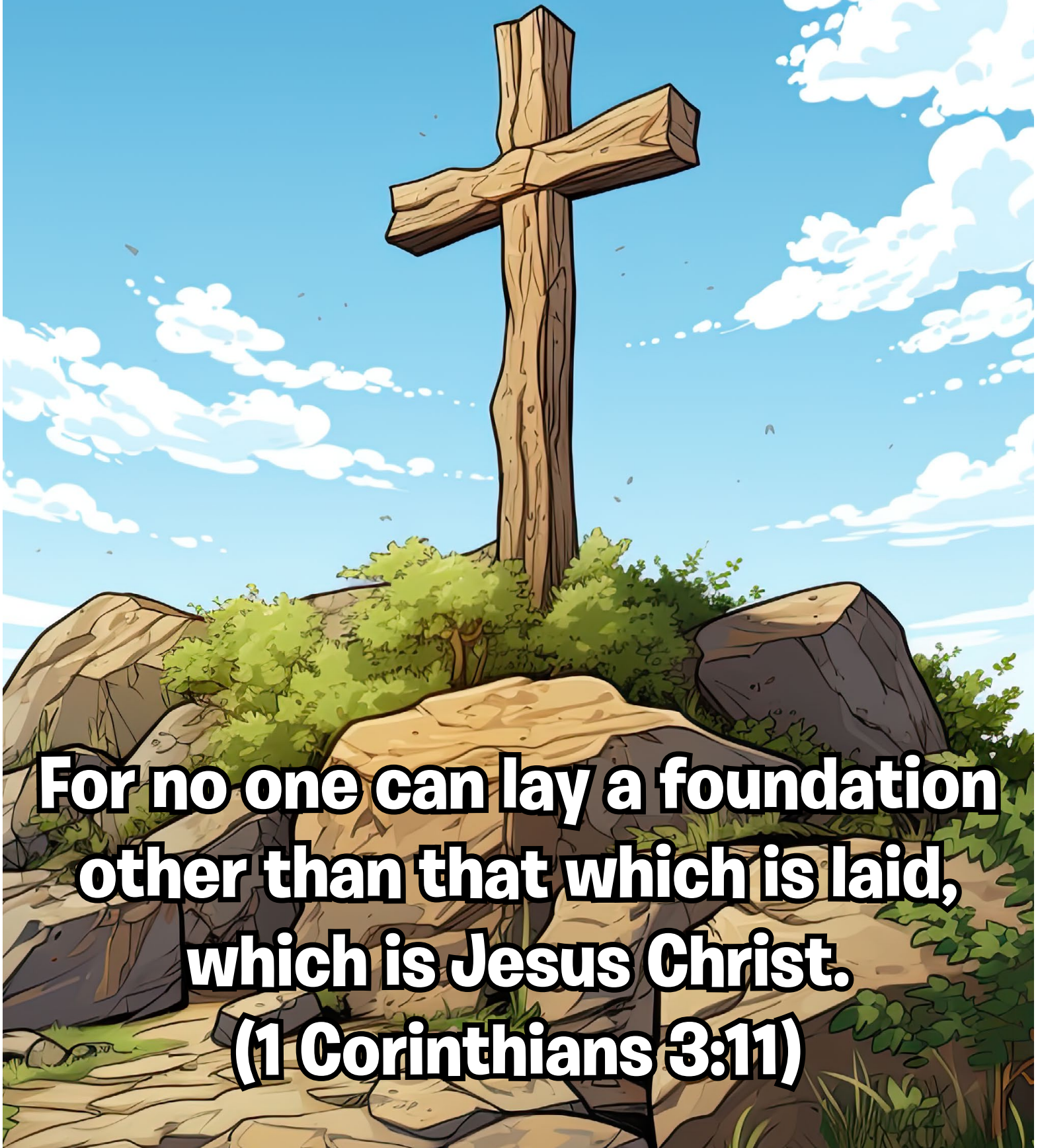




10



**What is my
foundation?**



**For no one can lay a foundation
other than that which is laid,
which is Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 3:11)**



Jesus, the Sure Foundation

MAIN IDEAS

- Wise men listen to and obey the words of Jesus; foolish men do not listen to and obey the words of Jesus.
- Those on a solid foundation are safe and will live; those on a sandy foundation will perish.
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- Everyone is born in sin on a sandy foundation.
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KEY VERSE

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SCRIPTURE

1. Matthew 7:24-27
2. Romans 5:12
3. Romans 5:18-19
4. 1 Corinthians 3:11

THIS WEEK

Notice foundations with your child—watch a building being built and talk about how strong the foundation must be. As he climbs on something to reach an upper cupboard, comment on how important it is for him to have a sure foundation. See if you can find some unsure foundations. Talk about the importance of a good foundation.

Talk about foundations in life—the different things that people trust in. You may want to give your child some examples. Talk about how every foundation other than Jesus fails eventually and help your child to think of examples of this (e.g., a person trusting in good health will eventually die; a person trusting in money, although he may never lose his fortune, cannot buy happiness, good health, or good relationships; etc.). You may want to illustrate this with the life of someone you know.

Help your child notice this week what he trusts. Note: It is not wrong for a child to trust in parents, but ultimately, you must point your child to Jesus as the only sure, eternal, never-failing foundation. Share with your child about the life of someone you know who has died and trusted in Jesus as his sure foundation. Explain to your child some of the hard things this person experienced and how Jesus was a solid foundation for him.

Make sure your child understands that everyone is born with a sandy foundation and remains on that foundation unless he is trusting in Jesus as his Savior. Explain how you moved from a sandy foundation to a solid foundation. Encourage your child to ask other Christians he knows how they came to trust in Jesus as their solid foundation. (You may want to suggest people your child can ask about this and arrange the opportunity for your child to do this.)

Start reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis (or another recommended book) with your child.

**The Way
of the Wise**



**The Way
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**The Way
of the Wise**



Fools: The Simple

Main Ideas

- A simple fool believes anything; a wise man thinks things through.
- Being with wise people can help you become wise; being with fools encourages you to become foolish.

Key Verse

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. (Proverbs 13:20)

Scripture

1. Proverbs 14:15
2. 1 Samuel 15:23b
3. 1 Samuel 24
4. Proverbs 13:20
5. (Psalm 19:7)

Curriculum Resources

- Banner Piece
 - Simple Fool (B-9A)
- You will need these visuals in print even if you plan to display them electronically
 - **Simple Man (9A)**
 - **Prudent/Wise Man (9B)**
- Nametags (cut out)
 - Saul (9C)
 - David (9D)
 - David's Men (9E)
- 1 Samuel 24:4a (9F)
- 1 Samuel 24:6b (9G)
- Parent Page for Lesson 9 (for each student)

Other Supplies

- Bible
- The Way of the Wise Banner
- Mounting putty or sticky tack (for banner pieces)
- See Preparation
 - 2 celery stalks (or white carnations, or light-colored sponges)
 - 2 glasses of colored water (2 different colors)
 - Student or adult volunteer
- \$5 bill
- Pen with a retractable point
- Photographs
- Optional: Robe for Saul with a piece of cloth taped on the edge to pull off easily
- Tape
- For Application (for each student)
 - Student Workbook
 - Pencil/pen
 - Markers/colored pencils

Materials for Optional Activities

1. Key Verse Game

- See appendix for ideas.

2. Proverbs 14:15 Illustrations

- For each student
 - Paper
 - Pen/markers/colored pencils

3. Pictures of Foolishness Versus Wisdom

- **Option 1**
 - Bowl of vinegar
 - Glass of milk
- **Option 2**
 - 2 pans of colored water (2 different colors)
 - 2 pieces of white fabric

4. The Way of the Wise Buttons

- For each student
 - The Way of the Wise Buttons
 - Proverbs Reading Chart (OA-2A)
 - Memorizing Proverbs Chart (OA-2B)
 - The Way of the Wise Bookmark (OA-2C, optional as students complete a chart)

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.
- **Banner Piece**—Cut out the **banner piece**. You will use sticky tack or mounting putty to attach the piece to the banner during the lesson presentation.
- **Celery/Carnations/Sponges and Colored water**—Place each stalk of celery (or the stem of a white carnation) in a glass of colored water (two different colors—one for each celery stalk or carnation). Leave the celery (or carnation) in the water long enough to absorb the color of the water—at least two days is best. The celery (or carnation) should absorb enough color so that there is a noticeable difference between the two stalks of celery (or carnations). (If you do not have two days, you can use a couple of light-colored sponges in class instead of the celery or the white carnation.)
- **Introduction Illustration**—For the introductory illustration, you will need to choose a student who is not easily fooled. If you have a concern that the student may be gullible, you may want to instruct him ahead of time not to trade his money for the “camera pen,” or you may want to choose an adult to help you with the Introduction instead.
- **Note:** A fourth Hebrew word for fool is *peti* or *pethi*. It is “often translated ‘simple.’ The word derives from a root suggesting the idea of being ‘open, spacious, wide.’ *Peti* is the term for ‘fool’ which carries with it the greatest potential that one will welcome instruction and correction from a wise man. One who is ‘open’ is accessible. Though often immature, inexperienced, and easily led into all kinds of enticement, the *peti* is, fortunately, teachable. A ‘simple’ one might be naive, gullible, and easily fooled (see Prov. 7:7ff.), yet his mind is not barred to the entrance of wisdom. Openness has the potential of being turned into virtue as quickly as vice...The *peti* is a person who is usually approachable and hence educable...his folly could be corrected.”¹

1 Marvin R. Wilson. *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1989), 284-285.

Perhaps many of the students you are teaching fall into this category. It is both your privilege and your responsibility as a teacher of truth to lead these immature, easily influenced students into the wisdom of God. Pray that they will be open to God’s Word and closed to the foolishness of this world.

- **Sharing Proverbs**—You may want to ask a student at the beginning of the class to share a verse that he read in the book of Proverbs. Arrange this before the class so the student is prepared.
- **Main Point Review**—You may want to review the main points from the previous lessons using The Way of the Wise Banner or a completed workbook.

Large Group Lesson

Introduction

\$5 bill, pen with retractable point, photographs

(Call a student to the front of the room and give him the **\$5 bill**.)

*Pretend this is your \$5 bill. I know that you have the five dollars, so I pull this **pen** out of my pocket and say to you, “This is a special pen. I know it looks like an ordinary pen, but it is really a secret camera. When I click the end of the pen, it takes pictures. That way I can take all kinds of secret pictures.”*

(Show the student the **photographs**.)

All these pictures came from this pen-camera. I paid \$500 for this special pen, but I will let you have it if you give me your \$5 bill.

What would you do? Would you give me your \$5 bill for my pen? Why not?

Now, instead of offering the pen to you for five dollars, suppose I offered the pen to a four-year-old child for his five dollars. Do you think I would have a better chance of fooling the four-year-old? Why?

It is easier to fool a four-year-old than someone your age because the four-year-old doesn’t understand about being fooled. He is more likely to believe what someone tells him instead of thinking things through. He might be smart, but he easily believes what someone tells him.

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- The Bible tells us about a kind of fool who is like a four-year-old.
 - This kind of fool is called the simple fool. He doesn’t think things through. He believes what others tell him because he doesn’t think for himself. He is easily led by others, and he is immature—he doesn’t have a lot of experience to help him figure out if what he is being told is right or not.
 - Most young students are easily fooled—they believe everything. But as they grow up, they learn that they can’t believe and follow everything they are told.
 - The simple fool is like a person who hasn’t grown up—he is like a person who is still four years old.
 - He often believes whatever he hears and doesn’t stop to think about if it is right or true.

The Way of the Wise Banner and the Simple Fool banner piece

(Ask a student to place the **Simple Fool** banner piece on the way of the foolish side of **The Way of the Wise Banner**. Then, have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

Proverbs 14:15—*The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps.*

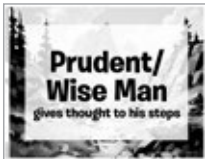
? *What are the two different kinds of people that this verse talks about? [the simple and the prudent]*

- The simple man believes anything. He doesn't stop to think or check out if something is right.



(Display the **Simple Man** visual.)

- “Prudent” is another word for “wise.” The prudent or wise man gives thought to his steps. He thinks about what he has heard and decides if it is true.
- He asks God to help him be wise and to know what is right and what is wrong. He thinks about what will happen if he follows what he has heard.



(Display the **Prudent/Wise Man** visual. Then, tell the students the background of Saul's pursuit of David, making the following points.)

- Saul was the king of Israel, but he disobeyed God. Saul was a rebellious fool. Saul did not walk in wisdom but was foolish.
- God sent the prophet Samuel to Saul, and God spoke these words to Saul through Samuel:²

1 Samuel 15:23b—*“Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.”*

- God took the kingdom away from Saul and promised to make David king of Israel in place of Saul.
- When Saul saw that God was with David, Saul was jealous and angry, and he tried to kill David. He threw a spear at David in the palace, but he missed.
- When David fled from Saul, Saul chased David in order to kill him. David lived in the wilderness in caves, and he moved from place to place because Saul was looking for him so that he could kill him.

3 Nametags and tape

(Tell the students the story of David sparing Saul's life from 1 Samuel 24. Call three students to the front to role play the parts of Saul, David, and David's men, using **tape** to put a **nametag** on each student to identify their roles.³ Make the following points.)

- David and his men were hiding far in the back of a cave.
- Saul went in the cave, and David's men gave him some advice—they told him to do something.

1 Samuel 24:4a visual

(Hand the **1 Samuel 24:4a** visual to the student representing “David's men,” and ask him to read it.)

² You may want to have a student look up this verse and read it to the class.

³ You may want to provide Saul with a robe (tape a piece of cloth on the edge that can be “cut off” by David), or just have the students pantomime the actions.

...**“Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.’”**

The Way of the Wise Banner

- ? What did David’s men want David to do? [kill Saul]
- ? What would a simple fool do in this situation? (Point to the **Simple Fool** banner piece on the **banner**.) [listen to the men and kill Saul]

Let’s see if David was a simple fool.

(Read 1 Samuel 24:4b-6a.)

Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. ⁵And afterward David’s heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul’s robe.

1 Samuel 24:4b visual

(Hand the **1 Samuel 24:6b** visual to “David” to read.)

...**“The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD’s anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD’s anointed.”**

Simple Man and Prudent/Wise Man visuals

- ? Was David a simple fool or a prudent/wise man? (Ask a student to come to the front and take either the **Simple Man** or the **Prudent/Wise Man** visuals—whichever best describes David—and give it to “David” to show the class.) [prudent or wise man]

Was David a simple fool? Did he listen to what his men said and just follow their advice? No. David was a prudent or wise man. He thought through what his men said and what it would mean if he killed Saul. He thought about what his men told him to do, and he thought about if it was the right thing to do or not. He “gave thought to his steps”—he thought about what would be right for him to do.

We said in the beginning of this lesson that young children often don’t think things through. They just blindly follow what others tell them. They often believe whatever they are told.

Even though you are not young children, you are still children and are much more easily influenced than an adult is. You don’t always think for yourselves and will often believe what others tell you. If the person teaching and leading you is trustworthy, you can learn good things. But if the person influencing you is not trustworthy, you can learn bad things.

The Bible tells us about this.

2 stalks of celery, 2 carnations, or 2 sponges –prepared as described in the preparation section

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

Proverbs 13:20—Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

- ? Can you tell me this verse in your own words? (Answers will vary.)

Illustration

I am going to give you an illustration that shows you what this verse means.

(Display a **stalk of celery/a carnation/a sponge** and adjust the wording of the illustration accordingly.)

What color is this stalk of celery? it turned [color] because I placed it in [color] water.

(Display the **other stalk of celery/carnation/sponge**.)

What color is this stalk of celery? This turned [color] because I placed it in [color] water.

2 stalks of celery,
2 carnations, or 2
sponges
—prepared as
described in
the preparation
section

(Pick up **one of the stalks of celery/a carnation/a sponge**.)

Why do you think that this stalk of celery became [color]? What do you think would have happened to it if I had placed it in the [other color] water? The [color] celery is [color] because it was placed in the [color] water. The [other color] celery is [other color] because it was placed in the [other color] water. The celery became the color of the water in which it was placed.

You are like celery. Just like the celery becomes the color of the water, you can become like the people with whom you spend time. This verse is saying that if you are with wise people, you can become wise. If you hang around with foolish people, you can become foolish. And when you are foolish, you could come to harm—hard and painful things could happen to you.

Choosing the right people to be with is very important. If you want to be wise, you must be around wise people, not around foolish people.

Review⁴

- ❓ *What is a simple fool?* [a simple fool listens to everyone and doesn't think things through]
- ❓ *What is a wise or prudent man?* [a person who gives thought to his steps; he thinks things through, decides what is right, and acts on what is right]

Being with wise people can help a person become wise, but being with fools will encourage a person to become foolish.

(End with prayer.)

Small Group Application

(Application can most effectively be done in a small group setting. The questions are just suggestions of possible directions to take the discussion. Pray for wisdom and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Be sensitive to the answers and the needs of the students. Be sure to pray for the students and encourage them to pray for each other.)

- ❓ *What does the Bible mean when it says that a simple man believes anything? What should you do instead of believing everything?*
- ❓ *Does not wanting to be a simple fool mean that you never believe what others tell you? How can you tell if something is good advice or foolishness? How can you find out what is right and good in a situation?*

⁴ You could also turn the Simple Man and Prudent Man visuals over to see if the students can give you the definitions, or you teach these truths using motions. For example: listens=hand to ear; everyone=arms stretched out; doesn't=shake head; think=point to head; steps=walk in place; decides=quick nod; acts=make a fist and bend your arm.

- ❓ *What happens to simple fools? Does this mean that nothing hard, painful, bad, or hurtful can happen to a wise person? What is the difference?*
- ❓ *Do you want to be a simple fool or a wise person? What will you do to become a wise person?*
- ❓ *What kind of people do you have for friends? What do you think about that?*
- ❓ *What are other ways that we are negatively or positively influenced? [books we read; television; etc.] What kinds of influences should we look for? Why? Is there any bad influence in your life that you need to get rid of? What will you do about this? What are some good influences you need to add to your life?*
- Read and discuss the following verse:

Psalm 19:7—The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;
- **(Note:** You may want to encourage the students in their reading of the book of Proverbs. You may also want to encourage them to share with the group some of the verses they have read in Proverbs.)
- **Student Workbook**—Have the student illustrate Proverbs 14:15. For example, they might want to draw an ear for a simple man who believes anything he hears. They could draw an ear and a head for a wise man who hears and then thinks about it, or a head and a foot for the prudent man who gives thought to his steps.
- (End with prayer.)

Optional Activities

1. Key Verse Game

- Play a Key Verse game. See the appendix for ideas.

2. Proverbs 14:15 Illustrations

- Students can write out Proverbs 14:15 and illustrate the verse.

3. Pictures of Foolishness Versus Wisdom

- **Option 1:** Take a bowl of vinegar and liken it to foolish people. Then take a glass of milk and liken it to the children. Ask the students what they think will happen if the milk is poured into the vinegar and sits in the bowl with the vinegar. Then pour the milk into the bowl of vinegar. Talk about Proverbs 13:20 as they are watching the milk change.
- **Option 2:** Two pans of colored water (two different colors) can be used to illustrate fools and wise men. Take a piece of white fabric and lay it in each pan of colored water. Watch the fabric change color as you discuss Proverbs 13:20.

4. The Way of the Wise Buttons

- Work with the students on their buttons or give them opportunity in class to work on their buttons.

Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 9 (for each student)

**Lesson 9****The Way of the Wise**

Fools: The Simple

MAIN IDEAS

- A simple fool believes anything; a wise man thinks things through.
- Being with wise people can help you become wise; being with fools encourages you to become foolish.

KEY VERSE

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. (Proverbs 13:20)

SCRIPTURE

- Proverbs 14:15
- 1 Samuel 15:23b
- 1 Samuel 24
- Proverbs 13:20
- Psalm 19:7

A PROVERB TO THINK ABOUT

Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty. (Proverbs 28:19)

Fools: The Simple

The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps. (Proverbs 14:15)

Illustrate this verse. For example, you might want to draw an ear for a simple man who believes anything he hears. You could draw an ear and a head for a wise man who hears and then thinks about it, or you could draw a head and a foot for the prudent man who gives thought to his steps.

Simple

Prudent

Simple Man

believes anything

Prudent/ Wise Man

gives thought to his steps



Cut apart the cards.

Saul

9C

David

9D

**David's
Men**

9E

**...“Here is the day
of which the LORD
said to you, ‘Behold,
I will give your
enemy into your
hand, and you shall
do to him as it shall
seem good to you.’”**

...“The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD’s anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD’s anointed.”



Fools: The Simple

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KEY VERSE

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. (Proverbs 13:20)

SCRIPTURE

1. Proverbs 14:15
2. 1 Samuel 15:23b
3. 1 Samuel 24
4. Proverbs 13:20
5. Psalm 19:7

THIS WEEK

As you encounter false but believable statements this week, share them with your child (e.g., a slogan from an advertisement, a bumper sticker, something someone at work said, a line from a political speech, etc.). Remind your child that the simple fool believes everything but a wise man thinks things through. Help your child to think these collected statements through and see the foolishness in them. (Or you may want to collect true and false statements and help your child discern which things are true and which are false.) Encourage your child to start collecting statements to evaluate, and then help him to evaluate them biblically and logically.

Make an effort for your child to spend time with a wise person this week (and regularly). For example, visit a godly grandparent or older person. Ask questions that will help reveal to your child the wisdom this person has acquired over the years. For example: "Tell me about some of the lessons you have learned in life. Was there a time when you learned your lesson the hard way? What have you learned about the faithfulness of God during your lifetime?" After the visit, encourage your child to contrast the experience with time spent with his friends. Ask him what he learned from the older person. Remind him that being with a wise person helps a person become wise. You may want to make a conscious effort or a regular time to involve your child with wise people.

Encourage your child in his Proverbs reading and memorizing.