

GOD OFFERS A NEW PURPOSE AS AMBASSADORS WHEN WE ARE REBELS

STORY: NEW CREATION

BIG TRUTH: GOD OFFERS A NEW PURPOSE AS AMBASSADORS WHEN WE ARE REBELS

2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:17-24; 6:10-20; Colossians 1:1-23; 3:5-8, 12-17

BIBLE VERSE: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us, we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

BIG IDEAS

- In our sin we choose to live for self.
- Through Jesus we are given a new purpose to be ambassadors.
- Ambassadors represent someone else.
- Ambassadors have a message to proclaim.

BIBLE STORY: ACTS 14:8-17

Paul and Barnabas fled to Lystra to escape being stoned because they were preaching the gospel. While they were in Lystra, Paul healed a lame man and the people wanted to sacrifice offerings to Paul and Barnabas. Paul didn't allow them to make offerings to him because he proclaimed the true God. Those who are saved by Jesus are then His ambassadors or messengers.

STORY: NEW CREATION

Part of the beauty of the gospel is that God does not just rescue us from the power of sin, but He is also making everything new. God offers new creation to those who place their faith in Jesus. This newness comes in two ways. The first is that by breaking the power of sin, Jesus is making men and women into brand new people with new identities. Second, God is not only making people new, but He is also going to make a new heaven and a new earth for us to live on and worship Him in.

BIG AIMS



Every child should know that:

- God offers us a new relationship with Him through Jesus



Every child should feel:

- Valued by God because of the new relationship He offers



Every child should:

- Remember the sacrifice of Jesus that makes it possible to have a new relationship with God



Every child should want:

- To be a part of God's family as one of His holy, chosen people

FAMILY DEVOTION: SAVED TO PROCLAIM

Everyone who has experienced the salvation of Jesus is called to proclaim this good news to everyone. Just like Paul and Barnabas proclaimed the good news about Jesus to all people they met, those who have followed Christ are called to proclaim the truth, too.

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BIBLE VERSE: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us, we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

We are God's messengers.

- God uses His people to carry His message to the world.
- Just like we are reflections of His image to show His glory, we are also used as His messengers to carry His message of salvation to others.
- Paul wrote to the church at Corinth to remind them that they were God's ambassadors.
- They had been given a special job to share the good news about Jesus with others.

God makes His appeal through His followers.

- God uses His followers to appeal to others.
- Because we are all sinful and we all reject God, when we come to know Christ and choose to follow Him, our testimony is powerful.
- God uses those who have placed saving faith in Jesus to show the world the power of His salvation.
- Our changed hearts and lives show the world the power of God's salvation to anyone who believes.

We have a responsibility to share the good news of Christ with others.

- Because we are the way in which God has chosen to share the gospel, we have a responsibility as His people to obey Him.
- It is God's command and desire that we be His hands and feet.
- When we obey God by sharing the gospel with those who do not know Him, we are walking in obedience to Him.
- He allows us the privilege to be used by Him to bring others to a knowledge of Him.
- He does not necessarily need us to share the gospel, but He allows us to be part of His work on earth.

BIBLE STORY: ACTS 14:8-17

Paul at Lystra

Opening Illustration:

Make a "Pearl of Great Price" by folding a small white paper plate in half. Using paint, crayons or markers color the outside of the plate gray and the inside pink to resemble an oyster. Glue a copy of the Bible verse for the week inside the oyster along with a small white bead as the pearl."

After the children finish making their oysters, help them think of the different things that God offers us in place of our sin, such as joy instead of emptiness, a new eternity instead of our sinful life, etc. Lead the children in a discussion about how God offers us many things that are better and perfect compared to our sinful choices.

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BIG IDEA: IN OUR SIN WE CHOOSE TO LIVE FOR SELF.¹

Our sin causes us to live for our own gain.

- Because of our sin nature, we choose to live for ourselves.
- We seek our own good and not the good of others.
- Often, even when we're doing something good for another person, we are doing it to make ourselves feel good or look good.
- Our sin nature keeps us from truly serving others because it keeps us focused on ourselves.



Play a game of beanbag toss. When someone hits the designated spot, he or she gets to name something that is difficult to share or some way that we act selfishly.

Our sin causes us to choose ourselves over God.

- Our sinful hearts are set on our own way.
- We do not seek God or naturally love Him.
- We choose ourselves over God and choose to reject Him.
- Our sinful hearts cause us to love ourselves more than we love anyone else.
- We reject God by living for ourselves and not living for Him.

Our sin causes us to choose ourselves over others.

- By nature, we are selfish people.
- From a very young age, we seek our own good over the good of others.
- We do not have to be taught to be selfish.
- We naturally struggle to share with others.
- We become envious when someone else gets something we want or would like.
- We are jealous and resentful when someone else succeeds at something.
- Our sin leads us to focus on ourselves and to love ourselves over others.

In what ways does our sin make us selfish? (We choose ourselves over God and others.)

1. Psalm 119:36: We must ask God to use His Spirit to help us not to live out of selfishness or vain conceit.

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BIG IDEA: THROUGH JESUS WE ARE GIVEN A NEW PURPOSE TO BE AMBASSADORS.²

In our sin we live for ourselves.

- When we are sinful, we do not live for Christ.
- We live for ourselves.
- We do not seek to please Christ or to tell others about Him.
- We seek to make ourselves happy.

Christ's death is for everyone.

- Jesus came to earth and lived a sinless life that He might pay our sin debt on the cross.
- He died on the cross and took on our sins.
- He died so that anyone who believed in Him would have eternal life.
- When we have saving faith in Jesus, we have a new purpose.
- Our new purpose is to live for Him, and we do this by sharing His message with others.
- Paul and Barnabas had a new purpose after they followed Christ.
- Their purpose was to share the gospel with others.

Living for Christ means no longer living for self.

- Before Paul believed in Christ, He lived for himself.
- He did what made him happy or what he thought was best.
- After he met Jesus, he began living for Jesus.
- Living for Jesus means we no longer seek our own good, but we seek His glory instead.
- When we seek His glory, we will do what He asks us to do

When we live for Christ, how is our purpose different? (Our purpose changes from doing what makes us happy to what pleases Christ.)



Play a game of charades with the children. Create charades that involve doing things that please God, such as telling others about Jesus. After everyone gets a chance to play, remind them that we receive a new purpose when we follow Christ. We become His ambassadors.

2. 2 Corinthians 5:11-15: When we live for Christ, we have a responsibility to Him to share His message with the world.

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BIG IDEA: AMBASSADORS REPRESENT SOMEONE ELSE.³

In our sin, we reject Christ.

- Before we follow Christ, we reject Him.
- Our hearts are sinful and they lead us away from God.
- We rebel against Him and do not seek to please Him.
- Paul lived this way before he met Jesus.
- He sought to kill Christians instead of helping them.
- He lived to please other people who were like him instead of pleasing God.

When we follow Christ, we become His representative.

- Our lives change when we follow Christ.
- We are no longer the ruler of our own lives.
- Instead, we submit to Christ's leadership.
- We follow Him and obey His commands.
- After we repent of our sin and have saving faith in Christ, we are known as His people.
- Being His people means we reflect Him to the world.



Divide the children into groups. Give each group a poster board and markers. Ask the groups to decorate their poster board to represent each member of their group. When they finish decorating their poster boards, ask the groups to choose one person to present them to the class. Talk with them about how the poster's represent each person in the group like Christ's followers represent Him.

What does it mean to be Christ's representative? (It means that we live for Him and obey His commands. It means we reflect Him to the world.)

3. 2 Corinthians 5:17: We become new creations when we follow Christ and we receive a new purpose to represent Him to the world.

GOD OFFERS A NEW PURPOSE AS AMBASSADORS WHEN WE ARE REBELS

BIG IDEA: AMBASSADORS HAVE A MESSAGE TO PROCLAIM.⁴

Christ reconciled us first.

- While we are sinners, we live separate from God.
- We are not in a relationship with God while we live as sinners.
- God made a way for us to overcome this through Jesus.
- Jesus came to pay our sin debt so that we might be in a relationship with Him again.
- He came to reconcile us, not because we sought Him, but because He sought us.
- Christ reconciled us to Himself to be His people.



Role-play the healing of the lame man in Lystra. Talk with the children about how Paul was Christ's ambassador by sharing the good news of the gospel.

We are reconciled to reconcile others.

- Though we are saved from our sins and receive eternal life with God, we receive a greater purpose in our salvation.
- Christ reconciles us to be His people and to fulfill His purpose.
- He gives us a new purpose to live for Him by sharing the gospel with the world.
- Our purpose is a ministry of reconciliation.
- We are sent out by Christ to bring others to Him by sharing the truth of the gospel.

We proclaim the good news of the gospel to the world.

- When we are reconciled to Christ, His message becomes our message.
- We are His ambassadors and the message is to share with the world that Jesus saves from sin.
- This message is the gospel of Jesus Christ and it is our purpose once we become believers.
- Paul and Barnabas shared the gospel throughout their lives because they lived as Christ's ambassadors.

What is the message given to God's people to proclaim? (God's people proclaim the good news of the gospel.)

4. 2 Corinthians 5:18: Christ brings us back to Himself that we might share with others the good news of the gospel.

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HOOKS



Good News Comic Strips

Give each child several strips of paper and colored pencils. Help the children name the main ideas from Paul and Barnabas' trips to Lystra. Ask the children to create comic strips that show Paul and Barnabas as Christ's ambassadors. Allow them to share when they finish and then lead them in a discussion about how we are called to be Christ's ambassadors, too.



- Paul and Barnabas were Christ's messengers.
- They traveled sharing the good news about Jesus with others.
- When we become followers of Christ, we also become His ambassadors.
- We should share the good news of the gospel with others.



Ambassadors For Jesus

Help the children create wordless books using construction paper and staples. Use the following colors in order: green, yellow, black, red, and white. Fold the papers in half and staple the book in the center. Help the children practice sharing what each color means. Use the following as a guide: the first page of green represents how things grow. Yellow represents heaven, but we are unable to go with God to heaven because of our sin. Black represents our sin, which keeps us from God. Red represents Jesus on the cross and His death that paid for our sins. White represents the washing away of our sin when we have saving faith in Jesus. The second yellow represents our eternal life in heaven with God and the last green represents our "going out" to share with others. We are Christ's ambassadors when we believe in Him.

