

WE REJECT GOD'S LOVE

STORY: FALL / YEAR: PURPOSE

BIG TRUTH: WE REJECT GOD'S LOVE

Judges 2:11-12; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jonah 2:8; Malachi 1:2-5; Matthew 23:37; John 3:16-20; Acts 7:51-53; 2 Timothy 3:1-5

BIBLE VERSE: ROMANS 1:21

"For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

BIG IDEAS

- God is love.
- Sin is an intentional and willful rejection of God's love for us.
- Sin makes us dishonorable, unthankful, and deceived.
- We cannot love others rightly because we have rejected love.

BIBLE STORY: LUKE 15:11-32

The parable of the prodigal son shows the way we reject God's love and the way He continues to love us steadfastly. Our sin is a rejection of God's love and His care for us just like the prodigal son rejected his father's love and care.

STORY: FALL

Everything was perfect in the world until we broke it. When humanity chose to sin, the world that was once perfect became messed up and broken. Sin is ultimately a rejection of God Himself. Because of sin bad things happen, we experience all types of pain, and death has come into the world. All of creation groans and wishes that the world be perfect and good like it was before.

BIG AIMS



Every child should know that:

- Our sin is a rejection of God's plans and purposes



Every child should feel:

- Sorrowful over their tendency to elevate their plans over God's plans



Every child should:

- Repent of their rejection of God



Every child should want:

- To faithfully follow God's plan and purposes for their lives

FAMILY DEVOTION: A PRODIGAL HEART

Our hearts are sinful and set on ourselves. Our sin is a rejection of God's love and His purpose for our lives. Just like the prodigal son rejected his father's love and care, we reject God.

BIBLE VERSE: ROMANS 1:21

“For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

We knowingly reject what is revealed about God.

- God has revealed Himself through His creation.
- We can look at the natural world around us and see evidence of God.
- Sin is rejecting what is revealed and looking for another explanation.
- When we seek to explain creation, mankind, and the world around us by any other means than God as the Creator, we are rejecting God.
- Because of our sinful hearts, we do reject God.
- We live as if He does not exist and we claim to know better than He.

Sin is a willful rejection of God.

- Sin is not just a bad choice that has terrible consequences.
- It isn't just disobeying God.
- It is knowingly rejecting God.
- God has placed His imprint on creation.
- We can see around us that a divine power exists.
- In our hearts, we can know that there is a right and wrong and this points us to God.
- Sin is rejecting this knowledge of God and choosing instead to worship something else.

Rejecting God leads us to darkness.

- When we reject God, we are turning away from the light because God is the light.
- He illuminates the truth and gives us understanding. When we turn away from Him, we turn away from any understanding.
- Our thinking is futile and meaningless because we are not drawing from the true source of wisdom, which is God.
- This rejection leads us deeper into darkness as we move away from God.
- Sin leads us to death and destruction.

BIBLE STORY: LUKE 15:11-32

The Prodigal Son

Opening Illustration:

Have each child make his or her own scepter using empty paper towel holders. You can use different colors of wrapping paper, stickers, and markers to decorate the “scepters”. After the children make their own “scepters”, talk to them about what a scepter symbolizes (power and authority) and then talk about how we want to rule ourselves. We reject God and His joy, power, and rule and desire to rule ourselves.

BIG IDEA: GOD IS LOVE.¹**Love is from God.**

- We know God's love when we know Him.
- He showed His love to the world by sending His Son to pay the world's sin debt.
- God is the beginning of all things and all things come from Him.
- Love is from God because God is love.
- Because He is perfect, God is always loving.



Divide the children into pairs and have each pair write their definition of love. Next, help the children see that God explains love in His Word. Read several verses, especially 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, to them. Remind them that God is love and we know how to love because God first loved us.

We know how to love because God shows us how to love.

- God sets the example of how to rightly love others.
- God loves steadfastly and sacrificially.
- We understand what love is because God loved us first.
- When God created us, He loved us and made us with the ability to be loved and show love.
- We know how to show love to others because God has shown love to us.

We love because God first loved us.

- God created us and He loves us.
- He made us in His image and He gave us the ability to love.
- He created us in such a way that we can love others.
- God created us firstly to love Him and to be in a relationship with Him.
- Because God loved us, we know what it feels like to be loved and we can in turn show love to others.

How do we know what love is? (We know what love is because God first loved us.)

1. 1 John 4:16: We know what love is because God first loved us.

BIG IDEA: SIN IS AN INTENTIONAL AND WILLFUL REJECTION OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US.²**God has revealed Himself to us, yet we reject Him.**

- We can know that God exists when we look at His creation.
- All around us is evidence of God's existence.
- There are invisible and visible traits about God that can be seen in His creation.
- God chose to reveal Himself to us through His creation, yet we still choose to reject Him.
- We see evidence of His existence, but we explain it away as something else.



Give the children a paper plate and markers. Ask the children to draw a world on their paper plate and to include the evidences of God's existence in their drawing. Talk with them about how we can see some of God's characteristics in creation, such as His power and His creativity.

We reject God's love when we refuse His care.

- God not only has revealed Himself through His creation, but He has shown Himself to us through His care for the world and mankind.
- The world and people continue to exist because God sustains them.
- We have life because God allows us to continue having life.
- We reject His care of us just like the younger son rejected his father's care.
- We choose to turn away from God and to seek our own pleasure.

We walk in darkness when we deny God.

- When we reject God, we turn away from truth and wisdom.
- As we walk away from God, we walk farther into darkness and wickedness.
- Our sin is not just a poor choice. It is a decision to deny God's existence and to reject His work in our lives.
- The younger son rejected his father's care of him and chose instead to seek his own way in the world. This led him into despair and destruction.

How do we willfully reject God? (We can see evidence of God's existence in the world around us and yet we seek to explain it away or ignore Him altogether.)

2. Proverbs 1:24-25: *We chose to reject God, though He has revealed Himself to us. We choose instead to not listen to His wisdom and to make our own way.*

BIG IDEA: SIN MAKES US DISHONORABLE, UNTHANKFUL, AND DECEIVED.³**Our sin nature is easily deceived.**

- We are blinded by our sin.
- Our sin nature is deceived by the lies Satan tells and the lies our hearts tell us.
- Sin leads us down a path of darkness that continues to make us more like the world and less like God.
- The younger son was deceived into thinking that his life would be better away from his father.
- We are deceived into thinking that we don't need God or that He doesn't even exist.

Sin deceives us and leads us to make poor choices.

- Sin is deceptive. It is enticing and looks fun, but it takes us farther than we really want to go and costs us a lot more than we really want to pay.
- Our sinful hearts lie to us and cause us to think that we are better off doing our own thing than following God.
- Because we believe our sinful hearts, we make really poor choices that have bad consequences.
- These consequences are sometimes, if not all the time, very difficult to deal with.
- The younger son found himself penniless and hungry, and living among pigs.

Sin makes us ungrateful.

- God has given us everything. Every good gift comes from God.
- Even our abilities to achieve things are from God, yet we still choose to reject Him.
- Sin makes us ungrateful toward God.
- We wrongfully think we are the reason we have success or achieve anything instead of recognizing that everything we have is from God.
- The younger son was at first ungrateful towards his father. He mistreated his father by taking his inheritance and then wasting it.
- We are ungrateful toward God because we reject Him and we misuse the gifts that He has given us.

How does sin affect us? (It makes us deceived and unthankful.)

3. 2 Corinthians 11:3: *Just as the serpent deceived Eve, we are easily deceived because of our sin nature.*

BIG IDEA: WE CANNOT LOVE OTHERS RIGHTLY BECAUSE WE HAVE REJECTED LOVE.⁴

To know God is to know love.

- When we know God, we know love.
- God is love and to know Him is to know what it means to be loved and to love others.
- We are known by the way we love others.
- If we love according to God's Word, then we know God.
- If we do not show love rightly, then we do not really know God.



Play a game of musical beanbag. The person holding the beanbag when the music stops gets to name something that makes him or her feel loved. Remind the children that we know how to love rightly when we know God.

When we reject God, we cannot truly love.

- We cannot really love others when we do not know God.
- Because God is love, it's impossible for us to love others without knowing God.
- We can think we are loving others, but really we are not.
- God shows us how to love others when He rescues us and makes us His sons and daughters.

Knowing God enables us to rightly love others.

- When we know God, we are made more like Him every day.
- As He makes us more like Him, we are able to love others more like as He loves us.
- When we love others as He loves us, then we are showing the world that we know God.
- Only God loves perfectly and only when we know God can we love rightly and justly.

How can we love others rightly? (When we know God, we can show the right love to other people.)

4. 1 John 4:8: *If we show love, then we know God. If we do not abide in love, then we do not know God.*

HOOKS

**Prodigal Relay**

Bring in a rope to tie two children's ankles together. Ask the children to try walking in the opposite direction of one another with their ankles tied. Lead the children in a discussion about how we reject God because of our sin.



- The younger son rejected his father's care just like we reject God.
- Sin is a rejection of God.
- Just like you can't go your own way when you're tied to one another, we can't go our own way and stay connected to God.

**Rejection Connection**

Help the children plan the menu for their own celebration feast. Place a poster board on the wall and give each child a marker. Ask the children to take turns writing a food he or she would like to have at the celebration feast. Once every child has written a food, go over each one and have the whole class vote if they want to keep it on the list or not. Make a list of the rejected foods and point them out to the class. Lead them in a discussion about how sin is a rejection of God.

