

MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDE 9

GOD IS REDEEMING A NEW FAMILY

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: I AM IN CHRIST
SERIES: GOD IS HOLY—I AM A SINNER/SAINT

BIG TRUTH: GOD IS REDEEMING A NEW FAMILY

Mark 10:35-45; Philippians 3:3-13; Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1:26-31; Galatians 3:28

BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 3:6

“This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.”

BIG IDEAS

- The Gospel has come to the unexpected and unworthy.
- In His grace, God transforms spiritual orphans into family members and sinful spectators into His ambassadors.
- God’s plan of redemption began before the beginning.

BIBLE PASSAGE: EPHESIANS 3:1-13

TRANSFORM - I AM IN CHRIST

The Transform Year is an exploration of what it means to become a “new creation” in Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17) In order for this to happen, we must first find our identity in Him. Many of us live in a consistent state of identity crises. We wrestle with questions like who am I, where do I belong, why do I exist? The answer to these questions is found in Jesus. Our prayer for this semester is that like the Apostle Paul we would be able to say, “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- God is holy and we are separated from Him in our sin.
- The gospel transforms sinners into saints.
- The Christian life is about becoming who we already are in Christ.



Every student should feel...

- The depth of their sin against the holy God.
- Wonder and awe at the good news of the gospel.
- Secure in the identity that they now have in Jesus.



Every student should strive to...

- Read the entire book of Ephesians
- Memorize the Bible Verse each week during the Ephesians series.
- Learn how to use a commentary.



Every student should want to...

- Be transformed by the gospel.
- Put sin to death and pursue holiness.
- Share the good news of the gospel.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 3:6

“This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.”

Jesus’ death was for all people, not just the Israelites.

“This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs...”

- When God made His covenant with Abraham, He promised that Abraham’s descendants would bless the whole earth. Though, Abraham didn’t understand at the time what this meant, God’s promise of salvation to the world was present in the very beginning. When Jesus died on the cross, His death was not only sufficient for the Jews. Though God set apart the Jewish people as His chosen people, He sent Jesus to die for everyone, Jews and Gentiles.
- Paul explained this glorious truth to the Gentile believers in his letter to the Ephesians. Prior to Jesus’ death, the Israelites had believed that the promised Messiah was for them alone. God showed them through Paul and other apostles, that the Messiah came for all people.

Jesus’ death means that all people can be a part of God’s family if they believe.

“members of the same body...”

- Paul’s letter to the Ephesians delivers the glorious news that all people who have saving faith can be a part of God’s body of believers. Anyone who is not of Jewish ethnicity is a Gentile. This means that everyone can be in God’s family no matter their ethnicity. The only thing required for membership is saving faith in Jesus. Because Jesus paid the sin debt of all people, anyone who believes becomes a member of God’s family.
- That the Gentiles had the same access to God’s family as the Jews was big news to the Ephesians. It was freeing news because it meant that they did not have to become like the Jews in order to have access to God. The only requirement for them was a saving faith in Jesus.

The Gospel is for everyone.

“partakers of the promise in Jesus Christ through the Gospel.”

- The Gentiles during Paul’s day would not have expected to be included in God’s salvation plan. They had always been outcasts and deemed unworthy, yet God made a way for them just as He did for the Jews.
- There are no lines of separation where the Gospel is concerned. Race, ethnicity, economic status, and other dividing things do not determine if someone is eligible for God’s gospel. Only saving faith in Jesus Christ is required to be a part of God’s family and to have access to Him.

BIG IDEA #1: THE GOSPEL HAS COME TO THE UNEXPECTED AND UNWORTHY.¹**[THIS]**

After Paul's conversion, he was given the specific ministry of taking the gospel to the Gentiles. Prior to Paul, the Gentiles had been excluded from God's people. They were pagans and treated as outcasts by the Israelites. The Gentiles most likely did not expect the gospel to be for them. They were not included in the traditions and history of God's chosen people, yet God's plan of salvation is for everyone who by grace through faith repents of their sin and puts their hope in Jesus. It was for all people. None of the Jewish patriarchs would have known God's promised Messiah was coming for the Gentiles, too. But God used Paul, a devout Jew, to carry His salvation to the most unworthy and unexpected people.

[THEREFORE]

What type of people does God choose to rescue and use as his messengers?

In Ephesians 3:8, Paul describes himself as the least of the saints. Prior to Paul's conversion to Christianity, he had vehemently persecuted Jesus' followers. Yet, Paul was chosen as the one to carry the gospel to the world. In Mark 6:15 and Matthew 24:14, we see that the gospel is indeed for all people and God uses all those who believe for His purposes. In 1 Corinthians 1:27, we see that God doesn't just use those who are seemingly wise or strong, but He uses the unworthy and the outcast to do His will.

[THIS]

It was part of God's plan that the Jews be set apart from the Gentiles. God did not reveal the whole scope of His salvation plan to Abraham, Moses, and the other patriarchs, but His plan did always include the Gentiles. In Ephesians 3:6, Paul reminds the Ephesians that Gentiles are fellow heirs with the Israelites. They do not have to become like the Jews in order to become part of God's family. They are included in the promise that anyone who believes in Jesus as Savior receives access to God and inclusion in His eternal family. The gospel is for every outcast and unworthy person because all people are outcasts to God and unworthy of His mercy and grace.

[THEREFORE]

What does it mean to be a "fellow heir" with Christ?

In Romans 8:17, those who believe in Christ are seen as co-heirs with Him. Believers become God's children and share in the same inheritance that His only Son, Christ receives. John 1:12 reminds us of our position with God in that we are no longer outcasts, but children of God. Titus 3:7 teaches us that being justified through Christ makes us heirs of the eternal life promised to those who believe.

How does God's inclusion of the Gentiles help you understand the call to share the gospel with all people?

Romans 10:12 teaches us that God is the God of all people—the Jew and the Gentile. Revelation 14:6-7 shows us that salvation is for all people from all nations, not just one nation. Psalm 96:3 serves as a reminder that all nations will praise God because salvation is for all nations.

1. Ephesians 3:1-6: God's promise of the Messiah was for all people, not just the Jews.

BIG IDEA #2: IN HIS GRACE, GOD TRANSFORMS SPIRITUAL ORPHANS INTO FAMILY MEMBERS AND SINFUL SPECTATORS INTO HIS AMBASSADORS.²

[THIS]

In Ephesians 3:7, Paul writes of the grace God showed him through Jesus. He reminds the Gentiles that they, too, have received this grace. The gospel is transformative. It changes people's lives and their position with God. Through Jesus, God rescues the spiritual orphan and brings them into His family. He makes them His son or daughter and gives their lives new purpose. Paul wrote of this incredible grace in his letter to the Ephesians. As Gentiles, they would have understood what it meant to no longer be seen as an outcast, but to be joined to God's eternal family. It is God's grace that transforms our lives and makes us alive again.

[THEREFORE]

How does God's grace give you hope today and for the future?

In Ephesians 3:8, Paul describes the gospel as the "unsearchable riches of Christ." When we fully understand how unworthy we are, God's grace is an unimaginable gift to us. Because of His great grace, God sent Jesus to adopt the spiritual orphan. 1 Peter 1:3-6 describes the result of this incredible grace and the inheritance that believers receive through Christ.

How does God's grace transform lives?

Hebrews 4:16 teaches a beautiful truth about God's grace. Because of His grace, believers can confidently approach the throne of God and are no longer separated from Him. Romans 5:1-5 tells about the transformation that God's grace effects in our lives. We are no longer hopeless when we have experienced God's grace in salvation.

[THIS]

God's gift of salvation to sinners is a mysterious thing because He shows mercy and grace to people who are hostile to Him. What is remarkable about God's grace through salvation is that He transforms sinners into His children. He brings them into His eternal family and gives them a new purpose. Paul writes to the Ephesians of this new purpose in verse ten of chapter 3. The church is commissioned with the task of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the world. God's people make up the church. God takes sinful men and women, redeems them, and uses them as His ambassadors to the world.

[THEREFORE]

What does it look like to live as God's ambassador in everyday life?

In Acts 1:8, we see Jesus' early followers receiving power through the Holy Spirit to take the gospel to the nations. We, as believers, have this same Spirit to give us boldness to proclaim to the world that Jesus is the Savior. In Matthew 28:19, we see the command to take the gospel to the world and in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Paul writes that we have received through Jesus the ministry of reconciliation. We are rescued to tell others about the grace of God's salvation to the world.

2. Ephesians 3:7-10: God rescues the unworthy and gives them purpose according to His will.

BIG IDEA #3: GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION BEGAN BEFORE THE BEGINNING.³**[THIS]**

Early in Ephesians chapter 3, Paul mentions the mystery of the gospel. This mystery was purposefully hidden from the Israelites according to God's plan. The mystery was revealed through Paul when he was sent to the Gentiles. God revealed the scope and fullness of His plan when He saved Paul and transformed his life. In Ephesians 3:11, Paul shares the eternality of God's salvation plan with the Gentiles and reminds them that Jesus' death was for everyone---Jew and Gentile.

[THEREFORE]

How does knowing that God's plan began before the beginning give us confidence when we share the gospel with others?

Deuteronomy 31:6 and Proverbs 3:26 shows us that we can always have confidence in God and His plan. Acts 1:8 reminds us that we do have the power of God's Spirit when we share the gospel.

How does the "mystery of the gospel" shape our understanding of God's greatness?

Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us the greatness of God. His thoughts and ways are higher and greater than we can even imagine. Job 26:14 is the conclusion of many statements about God's majestic power. Job asks the question who can truly understand the depth of God's power. Psalm 147:5 reminds us that God is great and His power and understanding are beyond our grasp.

[THIS]

God's redemption plan means believers have access to God. We were all once outcasts, but through Christ, we are accepted and redeemed. Ephesians 3:11-13 explains the access that the gospel gives to believers. We were once separated from God and unable to come to Him. Because of Jesus, believers can confidently approach God and enjoy an eternal relationship with Him. It is the faith that God gives to people that allows them to boldly approach Him. It is His work on our behalf that gives us confidence to approach God because it is His righteousness that is applied to each of us who believe.

[THEREFORE]

How does knowing that God is approachable impact your relationship with Him?

In Ephesians 2:13-14, Paul reminds us that it is through Christ that we are reconciled to God. In Ephesians 2:19, Paul shows us that we are no longer aliens to God, but His children. Hebrews 7:25 shows us that our salvation cannot be undone; therefore, we can always confidently approach God who is always present for us. Romans 5:11 speaks of the hope we have through Jesus which results in boldness and confidence.

Grace is not opposed to effort, but it is opposed to earning. In what ways do you try to earn God's favor instead of working from His favor?

Paul teaches that faith is not by our works in Ephesians 2:8-9. Therefore, we cannot trust in our good deeds to save us. Romans 9:16 sets us free from trusting in ourselves because it presents the truth that salvation does not depend upon man. Galatians 2:16 reminds us that no one will be justified by the works of our flesh. We are only justified through faith in the work of Jesus on the cross.

3. Ephesians 3:11-13: God's plan of redemption always included the whole world.