**Lesson Plan**

October 26th, 2025

**This Month’s Truth:** I Am Forgiven

**Bible Story:** Joel, the Prophet to Judah (Joel 1–3)

**Theme Verse:** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

**Teachers rally with your team a few minutes before kids start to arrive:** Rally is a pre-service time for you to be expectant and equipped before the kids start arriving. Go over the lesson and any ideas for the day! Pray over your space and for the kids that will be coming that they will be connected to the person of Jesus!

**Share:** Today, we are teaching the story of when Joel received a special message from God. Because of the people’s wrong choices, God punished them. The locust overtook the land and there was no food. But when the people listened to Joel and turned away from their sin, God showed them mercy and forgave them. He made their land new again and sent away their enemies. (Read Joel 2:26-27.) The kids will learn that God loves them and is ready to forgive them if they ask. They can trust in Him to make everything new because He is the only true God.

**Pray:** Lead the group in prayer, thanking God for the team and inviting Him to work in big ways in the hearts of kids today.

**Pre Service**

**Arrival time, please use this time to build relationships with kids and encourage them to build relationships with one another.**

**Service**

**What To Do:**

* **Teacher** Start 5-minute countdown **5 minutes prior to service start time.** The Countdown Video is meant to be played as a signal to transition to Large Group. The video is fun and interactive with opportunities for the kids to respond and cheer. Help kids engage and interact with the video by calling out what's happening, asking for their guesses, and cheering with them.

**Teacher Opener:** Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_ , and I am so happy to see you here today! We will spend some time talking today about how great it is that God makes us totally new. Everyone, stand up, turn around in a circle, and say, “Totally new!” (Totally new!) Sit down, turn to a friend, and say, “Let’s go!” (Let’s go!)

**Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament**

**Game Rules:**

1. Place kids in groups on each side of the room. The group to the front left is Team A, and the group to the front right is Team B. Form evenly numbered teams.
2. Instruct kids from each team to face each other, finding a player from the other team to play against.
3. Share that this is a “Rock, Paper, Scissors” tournament with a twist! The goal of this game is for either Team A or Team B to win by having the most winners (participants standing) at the end of the game.
4. Explain that each pair will play a round of “Rock, Paper, Scissors.” The winners of that round will stay standing while the kids who did not win that round will sit down on their knees. Once each round is over, kids will find a new player from the opposite team and play the game again either on their knees or standing up. Winners always stand, and losers always kneel.
5. Demonstrate a practice round with two leaders to show how the game works.
6. Count how many kids from each team are still standing. The team with the most kids standing wins.

**What You Say:** We are going to play “Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament”! Say, “Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament!” (“Rock, Paper, Scissors” Tournament!) In this tournament, you will be placed in two teams—Team A and Team B. Team A will go to one side of the room, and Team B will go to the other. Both teams will face each other. Team A players will find a player from Team B to play “Rock, Paper, Scissors” against. (Assign kids to teams and their team to a side of the room. Allow them to face a player from the opposite team.) Look at me, point to your eyes, and say, “I’m looking!” (I’m looking!) Point to your ears, and say, “I’m listening!” (I’m listening!)

When we start you will play “Rock, Paper, Scissors.” Whoever wins that round will remain standing and find a new player to battle. Whoever does not win that round will find a new challenger and play the next round on your knees. On your what? (Knees!) (Invite leaders to demonstrate.) You will have two and a half minutes to play as many rounds as you can until the timer goes off! (Use a phone timer or timer on TV.) At the end, the team with the most members standing wins! Ready? Set. Go!

**Leader Tip:** Invite leaders to play, ensuring that you have an even number between the teams. Interact with the kids as they are playing, and make comments about how the game is going as they play. Play multiple rounds.

Our timer is up! Finish up the round you are in, and then stay still while our leaders count how many members on each team are standing! You did an excellent job! Everyone, say, “That was awesome!” (That was awesome!)

(Invite leaders to count how many kids on each team are still standing.)

After our trusted leaders have faithfully counted each of our friends who are standing, we have concluded our game. (Pause for dramatic effect.) Drumroll, please! (Kids and leaders pat their knees to make a drumroll.) Team \_\_\_\_ has won the game!

Wow! Both teams did amazing jobs! Imagine if you played the game with real rocks, real pieces of paper, and real scissors. If a pair of scissors really went up against a sheet of paper, the paper would get cut, right? (Yes!) Yes! That’s right! The paper would be broken, and it would not be one whole sheet anymore. If a real huge rock tried to smash a real pair of scissors, it would smash the scissors into pieces and break it, right? (Yes!) That’s right!

Today, we are going to talk about the truth that, no matter how hard we try, we cannot love and follow God on our own. But there is good news! Everyone, say, “Good news!” (Good news!) The good news is that we can count on God to forgive us and make the way for us to have a relationship with Him. Everyone, say, “I am forgiven!” (I am forgiven!)

**Transition Script to go into the Intro Video:** It is time for action! We get to see the best, most incredible, super intense—but still safe—action-packed event called “The Totally New Challenge” Wow, that’s a mouthful! If you are ready for the action, let me hear you say, “I’m ready!” (I’m ready!)

**Play Intro Video**

**What You Say:** We know we should not try and break the world free fall record, even if we have feathers or a parachute. Like Jet Viper, we may think we know what will happen, but we cannot be sure! One thing we can be sure of is the hope we have because of God’s forgiveness. Hope means trusting that something good will happen. We have hope when we have confidence that God will keep all of His promises to us because He is in control. When we experience the forgiveness only God can give, we have a new hope that we get to live with Him now and forever. Say, “God gives me a new hope!” (God gives me a new hope!)

**Worship**

**What You Say:** Who’s excited for worship this morning? I am! Let’s stand up and sing together!

**What To Do:**

* Turn lights off
* 2-3 songs of worship
* **Teachers and Small Group Leaders worship with the kids, modeling what it looks like to give God our praise. Stand in the front of the room, or next to the kids- but not in the back.**
* Dismiss the kids back to their seats when the songs are over

**Bible Story Video**

**Transition script Teachers please use this to set-up the Bible Story and to encourage the use of Bibles in the classroom with the Kids:** (Open the Bible to Joel 1–3.) Today, we are going to talk about a man named Joel. He was a prophet, a person who shared special messages from God. Joel was given special messages from God to share with God’s people. Our story comes from all three chapters in the book of Joel. Joel is one of many smaller books that make up the entire big book of the Bible. The book of Joel is in the Old Testament—the first part of the Bible. Let’s see what Joel says about God making us totally new. Everyone, say, “Totally new!” (Totally new!)

**What To Do:**

* Play the Bible Story
* When it’s over, turn lights back on and ask what the Bible story was about (as well as the questions below), have kids respond, take some answers from the **small group leaders** and share some yours as well, use the script below to help make the connection for the kids.

**Questions to consider asking after the video:**

* What is something that you learned about God from the video?
* What is something that you learned about people?
* What can you take away from the video?
  + How can you apply the lesson from today into your life?

**Making The Connection Script:** God’s people were doing what they wanted to do, and they deserved judgment and punishment for their sins. Sin is when we choose to do what we think is best rather than follow what God says is best. God’s people deserved judgment and punishment for their sin, but God also offered them forgiveness. After Joel gave his special message from God to His people, they turned away from their sins and asked God to forgive them. When God forgives us instead of punishing us, this is called mercy. When God gives us love we do not deserve, this is called grace.

**Offering**

**What To Do:**

* Play video explaining offering to kids
* Play offering time video while kids pass the bucket
* Ask a student(s) to come up and pray over the offering

**Theme Verse Review:**

Choose between the Video-Led Theme Verse option or the Host-Led Theme Verse option.

**Theme Verse Motions:** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, (Point to the sky.)

he is a new creation; (Cross open palms in front of your body, moving upward.)

the old has passed away, (Start with your hands out, right hand facing up and left hand facing down. Flip your hands so that the right hand is facing down and the left hand is facing up.)

and see, the new has come! (Spread your hands in front of body with palms facing up.)

2 Corinthians 5:17 (Hold your hands out like a book.)

**Option #1:** Put the memory verse slide on the screen.

**What You Say:** Now we will take some time to learn a verse about how God makes us totally new when we trust and follow Jesus. Everyone, say, “Totally new!” (Totally new!)

Repeat after me: (Use the motions above.)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, (Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,)

he is a new creation; (he is a new creation;)

the old has passed away, (the old has passed away,)

and see, the new has come! (and see, the new has come!)

2 Corinthians 5:17 (2 Corinthians 5:17)

You all did a great job! Let’s say it one more time. This time let’s sing it in a new voice, like we are opera singers!

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, (Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,)

he is a new creation; (he is a new creation;)

the old has passed away, (the old has passed away,)

and see, the new has come! (and see, the new has come!)

2 Corinthians 5:17 (2 Corinthians 5:17)

God gives us a new hope when we trust and follow Jesus because He makes us a new creation. We become totally new because God gives us new life in Jesus; this new life lasts forever!

**Option #2:** Play Memory verse video

**What You Say:** Now, we will take some time to learn a verse about how God makes us totally new when we trust and follow Jesus. Everyone, say, “Totally new!” (Totally new!)

**Play Memory Verse Video**

**What You Say:** God gives us a new hope when we trust and follow Jesus because He makes us a new creation. We become totally new because all our sins are forgiven; they are gone forever so we can have a new life with Jesus forever!

**Large Group Closing:**

**What You Say:** All the times we choose to do what we think is best instead of following what God says is best, we are sinning. But there is good news! When we trust and follow Jesus, God forgives our sin and gives us a new hope that lasts forever. Everyone, say, “God gives me a new hope!” (God gives me a new hope!) This new hope is God’s free gift to us when we trust and follow Jesus. It is the best gift we will ever receive because it means we have life forever with Him! Let’s thank God for the new hope He gives us.

**Closing Prayer:** God, thank You for giving us a new hope when we trust and follow Jesus. Thank You that this new hope means having life forever with You. Help us remember the new hope You give will never go away, no matter how hard things in our lives may seem. Amen.

**Transition to Small Group Time:** Split the kids into small groups. This can be done either by age, grade, or gender.

**Small Group Time:**

**Option #1:** Connection Questions

**What To Do:** God makes us totally new when we trust and follow Jesus. Let’s talk more about what that means.

1. What are some things you get excited about, like getting an award at school, scoring in a game, or simply because it is a Friday? (Allow kids to answer.)
2. If you see someone with a big bag of candy, do you want some? Does it encourage you to act differently in hopes that you will get a reward? What is the difference between looking forward to someone sharing candy with you and looking forward to the love and forgiveness that God gives us? (Allow kids to answer. Point out that God’s offer of a new hope is for everyone. It will never run out. We do not have to worry if we may or may not get it. God loves us and wants us to follow Him with how we live, but He will not leave us when we are not perfect or when we make wrong choices. God’s love and forgiveness are a gift, not something we earn.)
3. The Bible tells us God gives us a new hope when we trust and follow Jesus because He forgives all our sins. Let’s open our Bibles to Joel 2:26-27 and 32 and read about it together. (Invite kids to open their Bibles. Read the verses aloud, or invite a kid who volunteers to read the verses aloud. Be sure to have Bibles available for kids who need one. Help kids find the verses so everyone can follow along together.) God gives those who trust in Him some wonderful promises in these verses. He promises to always satisfy us, that we will never be put to shame, and that everyone who calls on Jesus will be saved. How do we get this new hope that God offers? (Allow kids to answer. God gives us a new hope when we trust and follow Jesus.)
4. Not only does God give us a new hope when we trust and follow Jesus, but He also forgives all our sins. How can this hope of forgiveness help when we make wrong choices? What can we do when we make wrong choices? (Allow kids to answer. Tell kids God does not count any of our sins against those who trust in Him. He takes our sins away so we can have life with Him forever. When we make wrong choices, we can turn to God for forgiveness. When we trust in Jesus and ask for forgiveness, God forgives—forever.)
5. The Bible tells us God makes us totally new when we trust and follow Jesus because He forgives all our sins. What is something you learned today? Is there anything you have questions about? (Allow kids to answer, and share your own answer.)

**Option #2:** Stick Stacker

**What To Do:** Our Theme verse tells us that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. What does anyone in Christ become? (A new creation!) That means God makes us totally new when we trust in Jesus. Today, you will work together to put the Theme verse in order. Form groups of four friends, and I will give each group a set of sticks. Each stick has one word from the verse on it. How many words are on each stick? (One!) Your group will stack the verse by stacking the sticks in the order of the words in the Theme verse. Can you stack the sticks? If you think you can do it, say, “I am a stick stacker!” (I am a stick stacker!) Ready, set, stack!

**Younger Option:** There are craft sticks with more than one word to allow for an easier option.

**Keep It Going:** Allow kids to shuffle the sticks and replay. Consider using colorful craft sticks, one color per group. Also, time the kids to see which group can stack the verse the fastest. Then, have a stick stacker standoff where the fastest two groups compete.

**Leader Tip:** Place younger kids or new readers with older kids or strong readers.

**Loud And Clear:** God makes us a new creation when we trust in Jesus! We become a new creation because God forgives all our sins. Everyone, say, “I am forgiven!” (I am forgiven!) This verse gives us a great truth to remember; anyone in Christ is a new creation! As new creations, we have a new hope that we can look forward to living with God now and forever. Everyone, say, “Totally new!” (Totally new!)

**Option #3:** Activity Page

**What To Do:** This activity page helps us remember some big things we have learned about today. As you color and work on activities, talk to a friend about some of your favorite parts of our time together.

**Leader Tip:** Get to know the kids better. Ask them what they remember about the Bible story, or remind them God gives those who trust in Him a new hope, like the message Joel shared with the people of Judah. We are made totally new when we trust and follow Jesus, and we have life with Jesus forever.

**Loud And Clear:** Joel gave a message that was filled with some sad news but also filled with some happy news. The amazing news Joel gave then is true for us now. God will forgive us for all our sins and make us totally new when we trust in Jesus!

**Close out in prayer:**

**What To Do:**

* Ask for any specific prayer requests
* Pray with the group
* Lead the group in the prayer below.

**What You Say:** God, thank You for giving us a new hope by forgiving all our sins when we trust and follow Jesus. Thank You that this new hope will never end. We have it now, and we will have it forever because You give us life with You forever! Help us to remember the hope You give us is the best kind of hope because it lasts forever. Amen.

**Dismissal:**

**Leader Tip:** Work with your team to dismiss the kids in a fun, manageable, and safe way. As kids leave, make sure they have all of the crafts and papers. Share with the person picking them up something positive you observed today. Invite them back next week.