

 Teach | Talk | Walk



Know **GOD'S** Heart

*The Gospel: God sees you,
cherishes you and seeks you.*



Since 1937

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Reaching children worldwide™

OFFERING QUALITY TRAINING THAT IS ACCESSIBLE FOR THOSE TEACHING GOD'S WORD TO CHILDREN HAS always been a priority for *Child Evangelism Fellowship*® (CEF®). This is why we have launched the "D6:7" (*Deuteronomy 6:7*) training series—a new resource allowing you to access foundational CEF training from your own home or church, at any time! D6:7 booklets are designed to help you as you teach (formally), talk (informally) and walk (live out) the truths of God's Word to children. *Love God Most* and *Choose God's Ways* are the first books we have produced in this format as a small group/self-study training resource. Our prayer is that as you work through the various sections of this book, *Know God's Heart*, not only your skills in communicating truth from God's Word to children will develop, but also that your life and personal relationship with Him will be enriched.



Iulian Mangalagiu (CEF European Regional Director)

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D6:7 resources are offered freely as digital downloads (teachkids.eu). For more information about printing these resources please contact us at: education@cef europe.org.

D 6:7 Deuteronomy 6:7

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D 6:7

*You shall teach them
diligently to your children,
and shall talk of them
when you sit in your house,
and when you walk by
the way, and when you lie
down, and when you rise.*

DEUTERONOMY 6:7

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How to lead a child to Christ

Make sure the child understands about:

God

- Who is God?
- God made us. He speaks to us through the Bible.
- God is holy and pure. He loves us.

Sin

- What is sin?
- Sin is disobeying God's commands. It is against God.
- Speak about specific sins.
- The child is a sinner by nature and act. (We sin because we are sinners.)
- Sin deserves punishment.

The Saviour

- Who alone can take away your sin?
- God the Son died on the cross for sinners.
- The Lord Jesus rose again from the dead.
- He is Lord of all.

Explain how the child can be saved

- Explain what the Lord wants us to do, and what He will do.

Use a Bible verse. (*John 1:12, John 3:16, John 6:37, Acts 16:31, Romans 6:23 or Romans 10:13.*)

What does the Lord want you to do?

What will the Lord do?

- Warn about difficulties.
- Ask, "Do you want to trust Christ, or would you rather wait and think about it?"
- Encourage the child to pray audibly (if ready).

Speak about assurance of salvation

- Go back to the Bible verse you used.
- Speak about a changed life.
- Tell him what the person who is truly trusting in Christ can know.

Give the child (later) some advice about the Christian life

- Read and obey your Bible.
- Talk to God, your Heavenly Father.
- Tell others what the Lord has done for you.
- Ask God to forgive you when you sin.
- Meet with other Christians.
- Remember the Lord promises, "I will never leave you" (*Hebrews 13:5*).

A.W. Tozer's foundational philosophy was that our lives (*thoughts, feelings, actions, etc*) grow out of our understanding of who God is. Have a wrong idea about God's character or nature, and your life will reflect that false idea in one way or another. It is so important that you, as a parent, Sunday school teacher or children's worker are leading children to know that God's heart is towards them, that He is gracious and kind, that He seeks after them their whole life long, and that a life in relationship with this generous God is the best thing of all. This is the beauty of the Gospel!

As you do this, remember:

YOU can make a difference.

No one has a perfect view and understanding of God. Sin deceives us into believing lies about God and questioning His good heart. This is part of living in a fallen world. Don't believe the lie that you can't point children to the true heart of God. God's Spirit lives in you and will guide you and your children into truth! (*John 16:13*)

Knowing God's true heart is what leads children to believe in Jesus.

Romans 2:4 reminds us that it is the kindness of God that leads to repentance. This is true for children and adults alike. When a person recognises the love God has towards broken people, the desire He has to be in relationship with them, and the great sacrifice Jesus made to make this possible, the Gospel can be seen as the beautiful gift it is.

This booklet provides inspiration and practical ideas to help you share the beauty of the Gospel with children. If you teach children who have not yet believed in God, ask the Holy Spirit to draw them to salvation. Then, present the Gospel and invite them to believe in Jesus. Useful principles designed to help you share the Gospel and lead a child to Christ are located in the final section of this booklet.

Meditate on the Gospel yourself.

The Gospel is important not only for the unsaved children around you, but for yourself and for believing children too. In the Gospel we can see the true heart of God. We see His delight and kindness. We see His seeking of us and His good heart. The more you steep yourself in the truths of God's goodness as seen in the Gospel, the more you will know His true heart and the better you will be able to communicate the beauty of the Gospel to children.

As you work through this booklet, know you have been prayed for! We echo the words of Paul in Ephesians 1:15-22 and thank God for your faith in Jesus and love for His children. We ask that God would give you wisdom in the knowledge of Himself and in how to share truth about God with children. We pray that your heart would see and be amazed at the hope and power of the Gospel through Christ, and that your lips would be filled with joy and praises to Him.

Getting Started

You can work through this book on your own or with a small group of friends, parents or fellow-teachers. Each chapter ends with a reflection section.



READ IT
(*Scriptural basis*)



THINK ABOUT IT
(*Personal reflection*)



TALK ABOUT IT
(*Questions for group discussion*)



PRAY ABOUT IT
(*Personal and/or group prayer prompts*)



DO IT
(*A simple idea to implement or question to consider*)

These questions are designed to help you reflect on ideas, process truths, and identify ways to implement them. You will get the most out of the ideas here when you take the time to answer the questions and talk about the ideas with others (*if possible*).

If you are leading a small group of parents, Sunday school teachers or children's workers in your church, there are tips and additional content in the Leader's Guide in the back designed to help you go deeper. Be sure to take a look (*even if you're going through the booklet on your own*)!

You might also consider forming a group through a social media or communications platform (*WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom, etc*) with those you will lead through the study. This will not only allow you to remind them of the next meeting, but also allow you to share Bible verses and encouragement from time to time.

We also strongly recommend that as a small group leader, you read through the entire book before beginning the study. This will allow you to see the development of teaching in the various sections and also enable you to guide the group through the book more effectively.

The world is broken

Romans 3:10-12—“As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

Something inside us wants to look for the good—in people and things. We want to believe people can change and grow and become better. But is this the natural order of things? Not really.

Can you think of something that actually gets better on its own, if left to itself indefinitely? Maybe a handful of foods come to mind—aged cheeses or meats, herbal infusions, fermented foods. And while these do become more nourishing and sometimes tastier on their own over time, they can’t be left on their own too long or else they too will dry out, turn mouldy or rot in some way.

Evidence of a broken world

The natural order of a fallen creation is to get worse and wear out. Romans 8 speaks of creation being subjected to frustration as it decays. Droughts, famines, widespread pests, wildfires, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, and strong winds are all frustrations for sure, not just for the people that have to endure them, but for the very created world itself.

Even within the animal kingdom, we see animals that bring harm like ticks or bees, some animals who prey on others, and animals who just can’t survive when the environment becomes too harsh.

The world today isn’t as God created it in the Garden of Eden. There life flourished and everything lived together in harmony in a perfect environment. When sin entered the world, so did brokenness, death, decay and frustration.

People are broken too

We see this all around us today. Not just in the created world, but in the 8 billion people alive on it. Read the news and you see stories of hatred and deceit everywhere. Murder. War. Oppression. Vies for power or control.

People don't get better over time as they age. In fact, if left to themselves, people grow more set in their ways and less willing to change over time. Entitlement, selfishness, greed and deceit become entangled in a person's heart and soul and lead to actions that are harmful both to them and to those around them.

Babies don't naturally grow into compassionate, loving, considerate adults who willingly sacrifice for the benefit of others. Sin affected not only creation but also destroyed the wholeness of our own souls. Every person is born broken, apart from God, the source of life and goodness and wholeness.

What a sad state. This is the context in which to read the verses from Romans written at the beginning of this section. These verses are a lament of the soul regarding the state in which we find ourselves, not a condemnation of us as people.

Why it matters

But why is this important? Why must we know, and ensure our children know, the world is broken by sin and beyond repair by any human no matter how powerful or brilliant?

1. It reveals our deep need.

Often people don't seek out help until they realise they have a need. There's no need for a doctor until symptoms appear and lead to misery. There's no need for a dentist until there's unrelenting tooth pain. There's no need for a Saviour, until we see the depth of our own brokenness and need. Acknowledging our need leads us to see God as the answer to it.

2. It reminds us our effort cannot produce the needed restoration.

No matter how hard we try, we cannot make things permanently better. We plant a garden and within weeks, weeds are crowding out what we planted. We clean, and it is dirty again within minutes or hours. We can never be good on our own. If left to ourselves, we can never flourish and be all we desire to be. On our own, we will simply spin our wheels as we travel through life. We need Someone who can do what we can't!

3. It orients us towards hope.

Many today try to talk themselves into making the most of life in this broken world by simply accepting life the way it is and lowering their expectations. But there is a longing deep within for something more, Someone more. This is not as good as it gets. We were made for more! One day everything wrong will be undone, restoration will come and we will enjoy life as it was truly meant to be. Acknowledging the brokenness leads to recognition of our deeper, truer longing and the surety that it will one day come to be.

Reflection



Romans 8:20-22

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

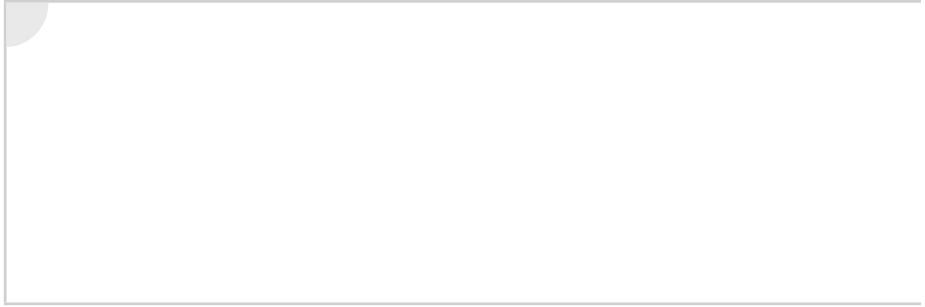
Romans 15:13

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

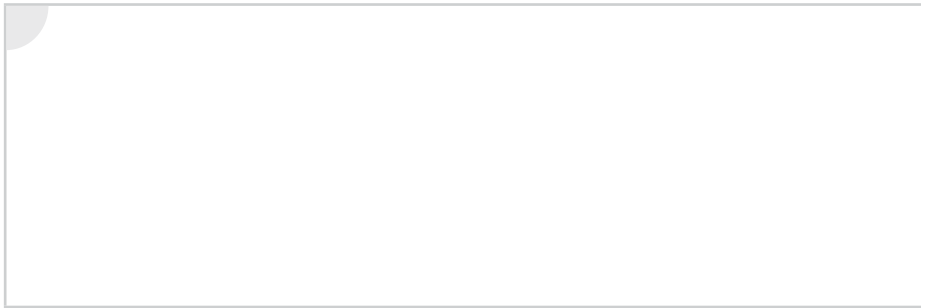


NOTE: We all have room to grow. As you complete this section, don't grow discouraged by your answers or believe the lie that God is condemning you (Romans 8:1). Simply confess anything God shows you, tell Him you want to enjoy Him, and ask Him to show you one way to do that this week.

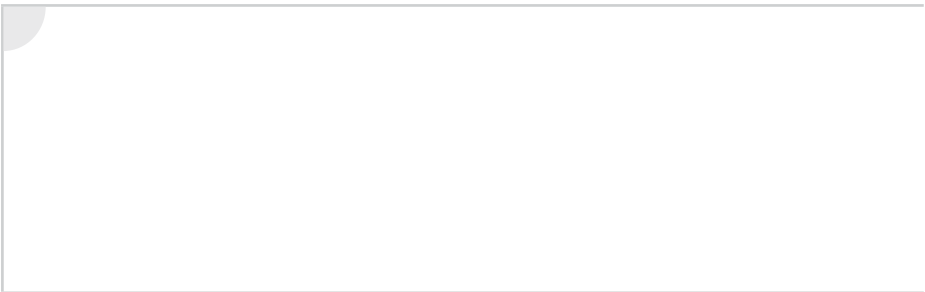
How have you experienced the world being broken in your own life circumstances? How do you see brokenness within yourself?



Meditate on Romans 15:13. What are the results of hope? Who is responsible for instilling hope and bringing about its results? What does it mean to abound in something? How can someone abound in hope related to what is true instead of despair related to the pain in the world?



What are some ways children experience a broken world in their own lives?



Why is the hope of salvation and restoration so important when thinking about the brokenness of the world? What might happen in the mind and heart of someone who only dwells on the brokenness and pain?

Which point under “Why it Matters” resonates the most with you? Why do you think that is?



Pray Romans 15:13 for the children you lead. Ask the Holy Spirit to work hope, joy and peace into the lives of saved children even as they experience the brokenness around them. Ask Him to draw unbelieving children to salvation as they see their great need for their brokenness to be restored.



Write down 3-5 bullet points from this first section of what you could say to someone who asks you, "Why do I need God?" Find someone you can role play with and practice saying your points out loud.



You are broken

Romans 7:15, 18-19 – “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.”

It's often easier to look outside ourselves and acknowledge the brokenness of the world in both creation and other people than it is to look internally and acknowledge the same. We often avoid the pain of looking internally to see the broken state of our own soul.

We do this in other areas of life too. Have you ever avoided looking in a mirror or stepping on a set of scales because you didn't want to face some reality about your own body? We'd rather pretend things aren't as bad as they really are and deny reality as long as possible.

While it's a difficult process at times, it's important we don't just see this brokenness in the world at large, but also personally in our own hearts. It is an internal problem that works itself out in every aspect of our lives.

Ways we are broken

Some brokenness is obvious. We grow angry when things don't go our way. We lie to protect our reputation. We boast to make ourselves look better.

But some brokenness is hidden, sometimes even from ourselves. Our brokenness goes so deep that we can do what seems good and kind, but is actually from a place of brokenness and woundedness.

For example, we can accommodate another person's desires instead of our own. But why do we do it? Is it truly to help them and bring about something good in their lives? Or do we compromise our values because we want to please them?

Or what about working hard to achieve success. Do we do it because we are diligent people desiring to serve God? Or are we trying to earn accolades and attention in order to feel better about ourselves?

Our brokenness is deep and has fundamentally changed who we are and how we go about living our lives. We are people who care too much what others think about us. We are never satisfied, never fulfilled, and never able to find true and lasting peace, hope, or joy.

In many ways, life seems futile. And, to a degree, this is true. We are fundamentally damaged by sin in the depths of our soul. We cannot mend these broken places and become people who are whole and put back together. And yet, we try. Over and over, year after year.

How brokenness leads to God

This reality is what the author of Romans recounts in chapter seven. He can't do the good he wants to do because sin still reigns in his body. You can feel the futility rising as he describes what this looks like and feels like from day to day.

His anguish reaches a climax with the words, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (v 24) And then, his answer is beautiful—Jesus Christ our Lord! He is the One who can restore and repair everything that is broken inside us. He is the One that has won the victory over sin and death. He is the One who gives life and freedom and peace.

Jesus is the only answer to the brokenness found inside. It is only through Jesus that we become who God intended us to be from before the foundation of the world.

When we allow God's word to act like a mirror so we can see ourselves for who we actually are, and the deep ways we are broken, it shouldn't bring shame and condemnation. It should, instead, cause us to recognise the depth of the brokenness in which we find ourselves and go running straight to Jesus who is waiting for us with open arms to give salvation and healing and restoration and hope. Only He can restore us, beginning at salvation and completing the process once we are in Heaven (*Philippians 1:6*).

Why it matters

This personal acknowledgement of brokenness resulting from sin is required in order for a person to accept God's gift of life through salvation. Why?

1. God calls people one by one to salvation.

God calls and saves those broken by sin personally, one by one. God doesn't call and save entire nations, or families, or groups based on the awareness and desire of one individual, or even a handful of people.

God doesn't force people to believe in Him. Instead, individuals seek Him and accept Him and follow Him. God's heart is towards every person. He is not far from each one of them and even initiates interactions, so that people can find Him when they search for Him (*Acts 17:27*).

2. Jesus is the only answer.

This is the ultimate answer to the original question, "Why do I need God?" We need God because He is the only One who can fix what is broken inside us.

He is the One who fashioned us with His own hands. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He has good things planned for our lives. He knows what He intends for us and the person we will become. And only He can bring those things about.

It is through His work of salvation and healing and restoration that we are changed into His image and grow to produce fruit. He is the way. He is truth. And He is life (*John 14:6*). And we need Him desperately.

Reflection



Romans 7:15–8:11

Luke 5:31–32

"And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

John 8:31–32

"So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."



As you read the passage in Romans, can you relate to the author's experience? How do you feel the brokenness of sin in your own soul? What feelings arise in you as you think about how Jesus replaces your brokenness with true life? What phrase from this passage stands out to you the most?

Do you try to cover your brokenness? Or do you welcome the Holy Spirit's loving exposure of sin that entangles your soul? Would you like your response to be different? Why or why not?



Which is easier for you—to acknowledge brokenness in the world around you or internally? Why do you think this is?

Have you ever known someone who was quick to acknowledge their own sin and brokenness? What do you think enabled them to do this?

Describe what it would be like to acknowledge your brokenness as God sees it and to experience life and freedom as a result. How would it feel? How would you grow? What might be noticeable to those around you?



Ask God to help you see yourself as He sees you—as someone broken by sin deep within, as someone He longs to draw near to and heal and help, as someone who can live in life and freedom and wholeness as He makes you new.

Pray these things for the children around you as well.



Make a list of 10 examples of internal brokenness you could use as you teach children that would help them see the way sin affects them. Share one with them next time you teach or interact with them.

God's design for relationship

Acts 17:24a, 26a, 27-28a – “The God who made the world and everything in it, ...made from one man every nation of mankind ... that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for “In him we live and move and have our being”.

Have you ever heard the expression, “You don’t get something for nothing?” There’s a bit of practical truth there—especially in the context of daily life. You can’t simply sit at home all day and expect to earn enough money to live. You can’t ignore the laundry and have clean clothes ready to wear.

This principle, however, isn’t always true in every arena. There are times when we receive unexpected gifts and blessings from others. These aren’t earned or even deserved at times, and yet we do “get something for nothing.” We see this idea play out especially as it relates to God.

God as a triune being

God is loving and kind and generous. He is first and foremost a relational God. Even before man was created, God shared his love and kindness in generous ways. How? Within the trinity.

There is a communal nature to the trinity—they exist together, separate and distinct persons, each with their own role, and yet, they are one, living in perfect harmony and relationship to each other perpetually. From before the dawn of time, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit were loving, kind and generous towards each other.

They experienced a loving, mutual, reciprocal relationship along with the delight and joy and wholeness that came with that relationship. They also desired to share this with others—people made in their own image.

God's desire to share Himself

Foundationally, God created man in order to have a relationship with him—one marked by mutual love. God wanted to care for man, to provide extravagantly for him, and to enjoy close fellowship with him as a good God and loving Father. He didn't create man so He could have power over him and order him around. He wanted to walk and talk together and enjoy his company.

This is what we see in the garden of Eden, after all. A God who comes to man, who delights in being close, who desires to share Himself and His good gifts with those He has set His love upon. What a beautiful picture that showcases the heart of God.

God chose to create and relate to man. He chose to have man reflect His own goodness, beauty, truth and kindness. Everything about creation and God's relationship to man was initiated and orchestrated by God Himself. God didn't give out of compulsion or because it had been earned in some way. No, He gave out of His own generous and overflowing heart.

Nothing changes God's desire

If you've read the first three chapters of Genesis, you know what man's response was to this generous and gracious God who came alongside and interacted in relationship with man—a breaking of the terms of the relationship, a doubting of the character of God, a rebellion against the very One who had loved and given so much. And yet, even as man ruined God's plan, God did not abandon His desire for relationship with man.

In fact, He already knew this day was coming. He had already planned for it long ago, before the foundation of the world. He would restore what man destroyed. He would seek after, even when man pushed away. He would spare nothing to win back what had been lost. He would continue to love and give and show kindness, because this is the heart of God. It is His nature and He cannot go against it.

Why it matters

Understanding God's role in desiring and seeking relationship with man is so important because it impacts the way we live our lives. First, we need to understand ...

1. God acts from His own nature.

God does not look outside of Himself to decide what is wrong and right, good and bad. He doesn't look at situations or people to determine what is needed at a certain point in time. Instead, He lives out of His very nature 100% of the time. He shows kindness because He is good. He extends mercy because He is forgiving. He gives what we don't deserve because He is gracious. He rules with justice because He is holy and righteous.

God's character and nature have never changed, nor will they ever change at any time in the future. He is faithful and steady. He lives out of His own values at every moment of every day. Why is this point so important?

Because you can't do anything to change this. You can't get more of God's love by being good. You can't get less of His kindness by going against Him. Now, you can reap the blessings of choosing life or the consequences of death by following your own desires, but no matter what you choose, God will continue to seek after you, desire relationship with you, and offer salvation to you every day of your life. He doesn't do these things because of you. He does them because they are an outpouring of who He is.

2. Who I believe God to be determines the way I live.

The first point leads into this next one. If I believe God's kindness and generosity towards me are based on what I do, then I always feel like I have to earn His attention and favour or will feel like I never measure up and so, why bother.

But if I truly believe that God's kindness and generosity are towards me well, then I am humbled and delighted and amazed. I run to Him, rest in Him, cry out for His help, and fall to my knees in praise and worship of Him. I am willing to follow Him anywhere, to bear any burden, to take any risk because He is good and He will never leave me. He is mine. And I am His. And this is the way He designed it to be.

Reflection



I John 4:16-19

“So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us.”



How is God closer to us than we realise? (Acts 17:24a, 26a, 27-28a)

How have you experienced the love of God towards you during your lifetime? During the past week?

Are you able to accept and delight in God's love for you? Does this come naturally or not? Why do you think that is?



Think of someone you know who embodies the characteristics of love, kindness and generosity. What kinds of things do they do? How do others benefit from their lives? How have you been the recipient of their love, kindness or generosity? How do these things affect your own desire to reciprocate these character traits towards others?

How do the three persons of the trinity relate to each other in community? What are some of the ways each uniquely shows love to the others?

If someone asked you, "Does God really care about me?", what would you say?




Take one minute to quietly meditate on God's initiative in seeking after a relationship with you. What emotions are stirred as you consider this glorious truth? What do you want to say to God? Take a few minutes to praise and worship Him.

Think of someone you know who doesn't see God's heart in the ways described in this section. Pray and ask God to continue His seeking of their heart. Ask Him to soften their heart and open their eyes to His true nature that they might see Him for who He truly is and respond with joy towards Him.



Choose a characteristic of God's nature you want to identify evidence of in your own relationship with Him (*His generosity, kindness, patience, goodness, etc.*). Use a dictionary to help you define this characteristic. Think about how God has displayed it to you personally. Start a list of times you notice this characteristic in your own life. How many different characteristics do you want to look for? One each week for a year? One a day? 100? Choose a number and keep adding till you get there!



NOTES



God's ongoing seeking

1 John 4:19 – “We love because he first loved us.”

Being sought after can be terrifying, thrilling, or even exasperating depending on who or what is seeking you. For example, no one wants to be sought out by a dog who is barking and aggressive. But being sought out for the job position you've had your eye on? Yes, please!

Sometimes we get disgruntled by people seeking us out—perhaps a small child who has been clingy all day. Other times, we feel special and treasured by the friend who makes a point to reach out to us during a tough season of life.

What about God? What feelings arise for you as you think about God seeking after you? Fear? Peace? Like you need to hide? Like you want to run into His arms? Considering the heart of God and His intent in seeking after us helps us see God's pursuit of people properly.

What it means to seek

First, a basic definition of seek:

to go in search of, to go to, to try to find or discover

No matter the one doing the seeking, there is action and movement, a close proximity that is implied here. And the one doing the seeking has a goal in mind. The dog desires to defend his territory. A hiring team wants to fill the position with the best candidate possible. A child needs comforting and security. A friend longs to ease the burden and encourage the heart.

What then is God's purpose within this context? What is His goal in seeking after people? As mentioned in the last section, God desires to give of Himself, to show love and kindness, to come alongside in order to help and rescue.

What God's seeking looks like

Sometimes as we think about God seeking people out, we immediately think of Jesus' coming to earth as a human and His sacrificial death on the cross. This event did indeed showcase the way God seeks us, and His willingness to do so no matter the cost. And while it might be the climactic centrepiece of God's seeking, it was not the first act nor is it the final one.

God sought us even before our birth (*Psalms 139:13-16*). He chose us even before the foundation of the world (*Ephesians 1:4-6*). The prophet Jeremiah reminds us that God is present every morning, ready to give to us again (*Lamentations 3:22-24*) and that He will be present into the future bringing about the good that He wills (*Jeremiah 29:11*).

God's seeking after people is a daily occurrence. He seeks out unbelievers in order to draw them to salvation, and, once saved, is always present and active in the lives of His children. He is always on the move, drawing alongside in order to help, rescue, come to the aid of, shelter, bless, or otherwise interact with and seek after the hearts of people He made to be in relationship with Him.

God's seeking as seen in the Bible

We can see God's seeking after in daily life throughout Scripture beginning with the very first people created. God sought out Adam and Eve. He came to them in the garden. Even after they sinned. He came looking for them. He provided covering for them and protection so they would not live eternally in a state of sin and brokenness. He continued caring for them and loving them throughout the remainder of their lives.

We see God come down to Jacob. A man who deceived others in significant ways. A man who took matters into his own hands to get what he wanted. God even got close enough to wrestle with him in order to get his attention and cause him to move toward the God who diligently sought him throughout his life. And why did God do this? So he could bless Jacob and make him the father of the nation of Israel.

In Jeremiah's story we see God's seeking after him even in his youth. He came to Jeremiah not only to tell him of the role he would have within the nation of Israel, but also of the ways in which He would come alongside and help. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations. ... to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am

with you to deliver you, declares the Lord" (*Jeremiah 1:5, 7-8*). God carried and comforted Jeremiah through much pain and anguish.

This is the heart of God. Not just towards those we read about in Scripture, but towards everyone. He wants everyone to come to repentance (*2 Peter 3:9*), and desires abundant life in fellowship with Him for everyone as well (*John 10:10*).

Why it matters

See what a difference it makes when we know the heart of God that is behind His seeking after us? When we believe God sees us where we are, knows us intimately and individually, and still cares and wants a relationship with us, it changes the way we respond to His seeking. We're no longer afraid or feel condemnation.

1. It softens the heart.

Instead, our hearts are softened by His love, His care, His concern, His goodwill. We don't have to be strong and carry the burdens of life or muscle our way through. We can breathe deeply and know He is able and more than willing to come alongside us exactly where we find ourselves in life.

2. It causes us to turn towards God.

The reality of seeking is that the one doing the seeking goes wherever the object of its search goes. God will continue to seek after us no matter how far we go or how fast we try to get there. But a change in the relationship comes when we stop running and turn towards Him. When God is someone we long to be in relationship with, who is a safe place for us, whom we can trust, then we are willing to have Him draw alongside, to speak words of life, to help and encourage and shelter. And in so doing, we live out the abundant life He desires for us all.

Reflection



Lamentations 3:22-24

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

Luke 15:1-10



When did God first love you? At what other points in time has He loved you? When is the most recent time He showed love to you? How has God sought after you?

How do the words of Lamentations 3:22-24 relate to God’s seeking after you? How does God’s seeking never cease or come to an end? How is it new every morning? How does this give you hope?



How do the parables in Luke 15:1-10 help you understand and describe God's seeking? What adjectives would you use to describe the way God seeks after people based on these stories? How would you describe God's behaviour or emotions after getting what He seeks?

If you had to list reasons God seeks after people, what would you say? Do these all reflect the true heart of God? What reasons do we sometimes think God seeks after people that actually have nothing to do with His character?



Thank God for His ongoing seeking after you and recount some of the specific times you can identify His search. Describe how His care and concern help you. Tell Him you want to turn towards Him and journey alongside Him throughout your days and weeks.

Think of someone you want to understand God's true heart and His loving search for them. Pray they would see God's seeking and His heart behind it in clear and true ways. Pray for their heart to soften and turn towards Him. Thank God for His perseverance and patience as He seeks after them.



At the end of each day this week identify two ways or times you knew God was seeking after you. Perhaps He ran to comfort you. Perhaps He carried you. Perhaps He strengthened you. Perhaps you felt His love and mercy being poured on. Perhaps He intervened in a miraculous way. Take a few minutes to write each one down. Thank God for them and ask Him to give you eyes to see Him even more of the time.

Jesus did what you can't

2 Corinthians 5:21 – “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Introduction

There are two lines repeated often in the song, *Jesus is the Answer*, by Andraé Crouch,

Jesus is the answer for the world today

Above Him there's no other; Jesus is the way

This is the central truth of the Gospel and where our faith must be placed for salvation.

A review

It's easy to want to jump right to this truth and use it to evangelise others since it's the pivotal truth of the Gospel. And yet the truths we've covered leading up to this point are necessary in order to lead us to the place of embracing God's plan.

Before I can accept Jesus as the way of salvation, I must realise that I need saving. I must believe the world around me, and even my own soul, is broken and acknowledge I can't fix it, and no man-made program or system can either.

I must also be convinced in the core of my being that God wants a relationship with me. Not one I have to earn. Not one where He uses me to accomplish what He wants. But an authentic, intimate relationship that is for my good and His glory. I must believe He is seeking for me, constantly looking for opportunities to reach out and invite me to Himself.

If a person doesn't believe these things, why would they turn to Jesus? Why would they need Him? How would they know His true heart that draws them to repentance and faith? But, once the soil is prepared, they are ready to know why Jesus is the only way to everything they need.

Jesus' life

Belief begins by acknowledging that God is above us—in authority and in power. He is the Creator. We are the created. This means He is the One in charge. He designed life and relationship and has the right to determine the terms of the relationship—which is holiness.

God is perfect and whole and requires the same of those who are in relationship with Him. He doesn't need anything, but wants a mutual relationship—to give of His goodness and abundance, and to receive our love and admiration and praise in response. The problem is, we can't do this on our own. Our brokenness makes it impossible.

So what did God do? He entered into the human condition in order to redeem and restore it. Jesus took on flesh and gave up His privileges. He bound Himself to time and space. He exposed Himself to hurt and pain and humiliation. All the while maintaining His holiness. He lived perfectly in a broken world and in so doing, met every one of God's conditions for relationship.

Jesus didn't need to do this for His own sake. He has always been in perfect relationship with God and maintained that relationship during His life on earth. No, He did it for our sake. He did it so that He could stand in our place before the Father, exchanging our sin and brokenness for His perfection and holiness.

Jesus' death and resurrection

This is the transaction that took place on the cross—Jesus bore the weight of our brokenness on Himself, suffering its consequence. He did this, not because He deserved it, but in order to keep us from experiencing eternal separation. Jesus faced death and separation from God so that those who believe in Him would not have to.

Jesus is the only person who has ever lived that could do this because He's the only one who lived a perfectly righteous life. He's the only one who could take the place of another, and He willingly sacrificed everything in order to make it possible for mankind to have a relationship with God. He's also the only one who could defeat death and prove His power over sin and the grave.

Jesus' gift

In so doing, Jesus secured God's abundant life for anyone who trusts in Him. Wholeness, peace, hope, and joy can be ours. Not because we earn them or deserve them, but because our relationship with God has been restored through Jesus' sacrifice.

Why it matters

God offers the only way of salvation. Jesus did what no one else can.

1. Jesus is the only way.

This is the truth of John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." God made a way. His gift of salvation was extravagant and costly and exclusive. Jesus must be the object of faith for anyone who wants to be in relationship with God. This is why we must come to God in the manner He lays out. Nothing else will work.

Reflection



1 John 3:5

"You know that he [Jesus] appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin."

Acts 4:12

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."



What idea stood out to you? How does this expand or further deepen your understanding of the Gospel?

How did you grow in awareness of your own need for Jesus' salvation? What was it about the heart of God that led you to repentance? Had you heard about Jesus' life and death numerous times before you placed your trust in Him? Why do you think that was?



Why is it important to progress in teaching or conversation to the pivotal teaching that Jesus is the way of salvation? When would it not be conducive to share the story of Christ's life and death?

How can you discern where a person is in the progression of understanding ...

- the depth of sin and brokenness in the world and in themselves?
- the truth that God wants to be in relationship with them and is seeking after them?
- that Jesus is the only way of salvation?

Do you think it's harder for those inside the church or outside the church to place their faith in Jesus as the only way of salvation? Why do you feel that way?



Think of the children you teach and ask God for discernment in sharing the truths of the Gospel relative to them specifically. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes that you may know where they are in the process of understanding. Ask Him to lead them into truth related to their own brokenness, God's good heart, and Jesus' ultimate way of salvation.



Practice telling someone why Jesus is the only way of salvation. Be sure to say something about God's requirement for relationship and how Jesus met that requirement through his life, death, and resurrection.



God invites you to come

Matthew 11:28-30 – “Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Life is hard. Broken dreams and broken promises. Fractured relationships and fractured hearts. Disillusionment and despair fill the mind. Striving becomes the norm. Each new day a repeat of the one before. Living life in this way—a broken person in a broken world—is wearying and impossible.

God knows this. And He wants something so much better. He desires life as He originally intended it when He first made man and woman. And so, He invites us into this life—the abundant life (*John 10:10*).

Come for salvation

In order to enter this life, God doesn't ask you to try harder or do better. He doesn't shame you because you tried other ways to earn His love or because you doubted His heart.

No, instead, He simply invites again and again to come to Jesus. He extends and offers the invitation, waiting until the heart is softened and ready.

He is not willing that any should perish. He is patient and longsuffering and offers again and again to come alongside anyone in need of salvation.

This is the choice offered to anyone—the choice to believe Jesus is the only way to come to God and to be made whole, the only way for brokenness and a severed relationship with God to be restored, the only way to experience rest and wholeness with God.

Come for life

But the offer and invitation don't stop there. As mind boggling as it may be, there's more. God doesn't just offer salvation, He offers life. Not just life to come in eternity, but real life, true life in the here and now, day to day experience in which we live.

What does Jesus offer? Rest. Rest from achievement, from people-pleasing, from hopelessness, from striving to measure up on our own merit, from apathy, from the sicknesses that invade and destroy our souls. He offers freedom and hope in a world that loves to pile on the burdens.

How do we receive these gifts? We walk to Jesus in faith and then with Him through life. We learn to trust His good heart and look to Him for help. We watch His gentle and lowly ways and become people who generously share what we have received.

And what a difference such a life makes. A difference in our own outlook and countenance, a difference in our families and churches, a difference in our communities and neighbourhoods.

This is what the Gospel offers. This is the outworking of God's heart and His plan. This is what He has offered to you, and what you, in turn, have the joy of sharing with others around you.

Why it matters

1. The Gospel leads us into a new way of life.

The Gospel is not just a set of beliefs or an event in history. It's not living by a new standard (*although that is often a byproduct*). It's actually living in an interactive way with God in both the mundane and the exceptional moments of the day and experiencing His help and peace and joy in every moment along the way.

This new way of life is not oriented around rules or behaviour, but rather, around a person—Jesus. Jesus shows us how to live life with God in whatever situations we actually find ourselves, relying on His wisdom, His strength, His Word, and His guidance instead of our own.

When we live this way, it becomes a pleasing aroma to God and a refreshing and enticing aroma to others around us.

2. The Gospel offers real answers and real hope to real questions and real pain.

Far too often people in the world can't relate to God. They don't understand His good heart that is turned towards them. They can't see why God would even desire relationship with them. They can't grasp His invitation to come and experience abundant life as He always intended it.

And so here is our responsibility and challenge, to share the Gospel and connect their experiences of brokenness both internally and externally to the compassion and tender heart of God. We can showcase to them His generous nature and share His invitation to experience His loving care. We can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to soften their hearts and open their eyes. We can ask God to save and give new life. And then we can rejoice along with the angels in Heaven when they embrace and follow Jesus!

Reflection



Jeremiah 2:13

"...for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

John 10:10b

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."



How does God describe the life He offers in the verses above from Jeremiah and John? What words or phrases would you use to further describe this life? How do people try to make it through life on their own? How could the things they do compare to the description of a broken cistern?

How have you experienced abundant life and rest in your life with God? How is God inviting you in the circumstances of life right now to come to Him?



How would you describe the beauty of the life God offers to someone who has not yet believed in Jesus?


What do you think it means that Jesus is gentle and lowly in heart? In what ways can we see how Jesus acted in these ways during His time on earth?



Take some time to thank God for inviting you into life with Him. Praise Him for the difference it has made in the way you live.



Make a list of the ways you experience and live life differently since accepting God's invitation to come. Add to your list ways you want to more deeply experience the life God offers you.



NOTES

SECTION 4 – SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN

Philemon 1:6 – “I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.”

In this section you will find practical teaching ideas you can use to help you prepare to present the Gospel to children. You will find five different areas you can focus on that will provide different ways to better understand and then explain the Gospel. There are several scenarios and samples included that give you suggested wording you can use directly with children.

These five areas can be used together or individually, depending on the situation. They are designed to simply give you various tools and helps that you can then draw on as needed. You can use them with groups of children or individuals, in a classroom or at home. Simply use what is needed, when it is needed to best serve you and your children!

FOCUS 1

Meditate on the Gospel in your own life

What you think about has a profound effect on the rest of you—your physical body, attitude, behaviour, desire and affection. This is because your mind is linked together with all the other parts of you. Your thoughts can influence you in positive ways (*Isaiah 26:3*) or negative ways (*James 1:8*).

Based on this understanding, God directs us to fix our minds on what is true and good (*Philippians 4:8*) and to meditate (*Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1*). Meditating is more than just reading Scripture or having a quick thought about who God is. It is not just an academic exercise, but a way of thinking deeply that leads to greater intimacy with God. As you consider who He is and what He has done, you come to know Him better, trust Him more and deepen your intimate relationship with Him.

For this reason, it is so important to regularly spend time meditating on the Gospel. Thinking deeply about the wonder of God reaching down to sinful man and the benefits you now enjoy because of it will change you in deep and profound ways. The more you are amazed and changed by the Gospel, the better you will be able to communicate the beauty of it to children.

ACTIVITY: Meditate on Psalm 53

READ PSALM 53: Read it slowly, then out loud, then in a different version if possible.

THINK: (*Consider journaling your answers as a way to help you think more deeply about each question.*)

- How do you see yourself in this psalm? What words or phrases could describe you?
- How do you turn away and hide from God?
- How has sin destroyed and corrupted your soul?
- What must it have been like for God to look down on all He created and see no one wise or seeking Him?
- What word or phrases describe a God who would enter into this situation in order to help those who despise Him?
- What might it be like to enter into such devastation with a goal of rescuing and restoring what had been done?
- What words and phrases describe a God who continually seeks after people in spite of how they treat Him?
- Imagine a God who sees you for who you really are and yet makes a way to seek for a relationship with you. Who gives you all of himself without holding back. Who puts you and your life back together again, better than you ever dreamed possible, exactly as he originally intended it to be.

RESPOND: What responses occur as you meditate on this passage? What do you want to say to God? How do you feel towards Him? How are you drawn towards Him in a deeper way?

ACTIVITY: Reflect on the song, *Goodness of God* by Jenn Johnson

LISTEN: Listen to the song and/or read through the lyrics.

THINK:

- Remember times God's mercy has helped and sustained you.
- Imagine God holding you in His hands during times of hurt and pain and trouble.
- Recount God's faithfulness to you throughout your life—as a child, teen, young adult, and now.
- Think of times when God's voice led you and strengthened you.
- When has God been close to you? When did He catch your tears? When did He give you hope or peace when there was no earthly reason to have them?
- How has God been your Father? Your Friend?
- Imagine God's goodness running after you. How has His goodness sought after you? How does this make you feel?
- What would it look like to sing of God's goodness from the moment you wake up until you lay your head? How can you do this with every breath you take?

RESPOND: What is rising up in your soul as you listen to this song and think about its truths? Do you too want to sing of God's goodness? Do you want to write your thoughts to Him? Do you want to speak to God directly and share your heart? Choose a way to respond to Him now.

FOCUS 2

Learn the three questions and answers

There are many methods you can use to share the Gospel with children. In this booklet we have used three basic questions and their related answers to help us present the basic truths of the Gospel.

Question 1: Why do I need God?

Answer: Because the world is broken, and you are broken too.

Question 2: Why would God care about me?

Answer: Because God's design is for relationship with people. His heart is towards you, and He seeks after you relentlessly.

Question 3: How can God help me?

Answer: God invites you into relationship with Him. Only Jesus can make your relationship with God what He always intended for it to be.

These three questions represent thoughts many people have. Since they are questions people naturally have, they provide the perfect opportunity to point them to the truth and beauty of the Gospel. Take some time to become familiar with these questions and answers so you can recognise natural opportunities to share with the children around you (*and adults as well*).

ACTIVITY: Familiarise yourself with the questions and answers

POST THEM SOMEWHERE: Put the questions and answers somewhere you will see them regularly during the week—in front of your kitchen sink, on a piece of paper in your car, on a mirror, in your Bible, etc. Whenever you see them, pause and read through them.

WRITE THEM DOWN: If you are a visual or kinaesthetic learner, writing the questions and answers down will help cement them in your brain. Write them a couple of times each day for a week and see how well you remember them!

TAKE AWAY: Once you become familiar with them, write out just the questions in the same way you did above. Whenever you see them, read the question and then see if you can remember the answers for each one on your own!

HAVE SOMEONE QUIZ YOU: Once you're feeling really confident, ask someone to quiz you. They can ask the questions and check your answers. Then they can read the answer and you get to supply the question. (*Tip: get a child to do this and they will LOVE getting to help you study!*)

ACTIVITY: Play a game to review the questions and answers

DESCRIPTION: If you are leading a small group, divide the participants into two groups. Find a buzzer, bell or object to grab. Have one person from each team stand with the item between them. The game facilitator reads one of the statements or questions below. The first person to grab the item gets to answer. If they are right, they earn points for their team. If they are wrong, the person from the other team gets a chance to answer the question. Enjoy this friendly competition as you cement these ideas in your mind and heart!

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS: (Note: some of these are written with different words and phrases since sometimes people will say things in slightly different ways. These will help you identify the heart of what a person is asking and help you connect different words with these same three questions and answers.)

What would you say to someone who said ...

- Why would God care about me?
- How can God help me?
- Why do I need God?
- God doesn't care about me.
- I can take care of myself.
- God can't help me. He's too far away.
- I'm not important to God.
- God doesn't want to be my friend.
- I'm a pretty good kid and try to be nice to others.
- This world is a pretty good place to live!
- There are lots of ways to get to Heaven.
- God just wants to tell me what to do.

FOCUS 3

Initiate conversation

Sometimes children come to us with needs or concerns. While they might not be asking one of the three questions specifically, there are various ways we can guide the conversation and help address one of these core ideas. A little practice, much prayer, and reliance on the Holy Spirit to guide our conversations can provide ample opportunities to share aspects of the Gospel in natural and meaningful ways.

Example 1:

Child: My grandpa is in the hospital. The doctors say he's going to die soon.

Adult: I'm so sorry to hear that. Are you close to your grandpa? (*allow response*)
What's a good memory you have of your grandpa? (*allow response*) Did you know that death makes God sad too? When God made people, He made them to live

forever, but sin messed up God's good plan. I'm so glad God sent Jesus to make it so that those who believe in Him can live forever with God in Heaven! Can I pray for you and your Grandpa?

Example 2:

Child: My day was awful. My friends laughed at me, and my brother won't stop teasing me. My mom was too tired to play with me. And my dad's away on a work trip.

Adult: Those things do make for a very long and hard day, but do you know what? God saw every single thing that happened to you today and He cares about how you feel. He wants to comfort you and remind you that He loves you and always wants a friendship with you no matter what. Did you know that God says He is always ready to help? What's one thing we can ask God to do for you today? (*pray together*)

ACTIVITY: Brainstorm other conversation starters

DO: Think of other conversations you've recently had (*or could have*) with children. Connect each one with one of the three questions that would relate the best. Think of how you could transition from what the child says into a conversation about an aspect of the Gospel. You can fill in the chart below to help you match up your ideas with the questions.

| Why do I need God? | Why would God care about me? | How can God help me? |
|--------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Why do I need God?

Why would God care about me?

How can God help me?

FOCUS 4

Use a tool

Sometimes it is helpful to have a small visual to use with children as you share the truths of the Gospel. There is a dual benefit to using a tool. First of all, it gives you something you can practice with ahead of time to help you learn the words you want to say. Secondly, the visuals help to hold the attention of the children as you share the Gospel (*and help you remember what comes next*).

Here are two Gospel tools we recommend:

1. Broken Gospel Tool

This Gospel tool was created using the language covered in this training booklet. It is designed around the idea of brokenness and the three questions, with their accompanying answers. You can find a sample script, as well as a visual at the back of this booklet.

2. The Wordless Book

This Gospel tool is produced by *Child Evangelism Fellowship* and is taught in many of its trainings. It uses simple colours to communicate the truths of the Gospel.

You can find a sample script for *The Wordless Book* at the back of this booklet. Contact your local *CEF* worker or visit the *CEF* National Office or web shop to purchase a personal copy of *The Wordless Book*.

Help a child express his or her belief

Once you have presented the Gospel to a child, it is important to offer the child an opportunity to express his belief in Jesus. This provides an opportunity for some further clarification and teaching on your part and also serves as a time for the child to solidify the decision he made.

Child Evangelism Fellowship regularly trains volunteers in the following process:

- 1 Ask the child a few questions to make sure she understands the Gospel.
- 2 Use a verse to explain the child's part in salvation (*believing, receiving, etc*) and God's promise (*salvation, eternal life, etc*).
- 3 Ask if the child wants to trust Christ today.
- 4 Encourage the child to pray out loud.
- 5 Give a simple assurance of salvation and some basic steps to grow in Christ.

At the front of this booklet (*p.6*) you will find further helps, ideas, and questions for each of these steps in the process. After becoming familiar with it, feel free to cut it out and keep it with you as a quick reference guide when counselling children for salvation.

NOTE: *Child Evangelism Fellowship* offers more in-depth training on how to share the Gospel with children using these tools and others, as well as, *How to lead a Child to Christ*. Contact your local *CEF* worker, National Office or connect to their webpage and find out more.

If you are leading a group, don't panic! Your goal is only to facilitate conversation and encourage others. Leading doesn't mean you have all the answers or do everything perfectly. It simply means you want to help God bring about change in the lives of a group of people committed to helping children know God's heart.

Meeting

You should plan to work through this book in 5-8 weeks. Participants should work through the content before each meeting and come prepared to discuss the ideas.

Depending on your available time, participants could work through one or both topics of a section each week. (*Doing one topic a week would mean you would meet for 7-8 weeks. Doing an entire section each time would mean you would meet for 5-6 weeks.*) Use the last week or two you meet to try ideas from the final section with children and discuss how it went.

Schedule

Allow 30-60 minutes for your group discussion each week. Larger groups will need a longer time in order for everyone to share.

Use the Reflection section at the end of each topic to guide your discussion. General ideas to facilitate each part are given below.

- Read It: Ask, "What verse stood out to you? How did God use it to teach you?"
- *Think About It: Ask, "What idea or question challenged you the most in this section?"
- Talk About It: Discuss as many questions as time allows.
- Do It: Ask, "Who would like to share what they plan to do this week?"
- Pray About It: Spend time praying all together, in small groups, or in pairs.

Be prepared to share your personal observations or reflections as needed to get conversation going.

For each topic, you will find other specific ideas to use for the discussion times in the sections that follow.

** Some personality types desire perfection, others feel they are never enough, and still others believe their weaknesses define them. While God is against sin, He is for His children (Romans 8:31). Reinforce the truth that God does not condemn (Romans 8:1) and is instead gracious and kind towards His children (Psalm 86:15). He desires and will enable our growth in Christ-likeness!*



Specific discussion ideas for section 1 ***Why do I need God? – The world is broken***

Consider talking together about the truths that can be found in Romans 15:13. Here are some ideas:

- The source of hope is God. Hope is built on His character and promises and cannot be changed or removed.
- Hope is an assured outcome. Much different than, “I hope it doesn’t rain today!”
- The idea of believing here is similar to trusting. Joy and peace come as we trust in Him.
- The ability to hope does not come from within or simply from a change in mindset. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that works this deeply into our lives.
- To abound means to overflow, to have more than enough. What would it look like to overflow with hope as you move through your day?

To help think about different ways children experience a broken world, consider the different arenas in which they live and move.

- Home: yelling, discord, neglect, abuse, loneliness, distraction
- Entertainment: violence, unbiblical worldviews, consumerism
- School: bullying, performance orientation, desire to conform
- Hobbies: success, being the best, greed

- Friendships: pleasing others, compromising personal values, deceit

If possible, model a conversation as suggested in the Do it section. Have another person ask the question, “Why do I need God?” and then take 2 minutes to answer based on the points in this section. Keep the language simple and the concepts tied to what was read so that those listening will have help putting the concepts into their own words. You could then have everyone practice together with someone else at the end of the session time.



Specific discussion ideas for section 1 ***Why do I need God? – You are broken***

If possible, read Romans 7:15-8:11 out loud using your voice as the author might have if he were talking to you in person. (*Or ask someone else who could do this well to do it.*) Let both the anguish and joy of the author be evident as it is read aloud. This will help highlight the depths of the truths found here.

As you dialogue together, consider providing some more depth and insight about these words and the true gift they are from God to us.

- **Life:** Jesus says life is meant to be abundant (*John 10:10*). Adam and Eve truly lived as God intended in the garden. And believers will one day fully live as God intended in Heaven. For now, we can experience more of this kind of life as we grow in maturity.
- **Freedom:** God desires that we are free from all fear—fear of failure, fear of what others think, fear of being wrong or “unspiritual”. The entire book of Galatians was written so that we can have example after example of what it means to live a free life—a life that is even free of self and selfishness that naturally takes root in our hearts.
- **Healing:** By definition, this means to make whole or restore to health. This is what God does. Not only does He forgive and save, but He heals. Whatever is broken inside, He sets to work to make whole. Whatever is damaged, He restores. What love! (*Read Psalm 103 to see a thorough description of this. It’s a beautiful expression of so many ways God heals. And it includes the exaltation that comes from the Psalmist’s heart as a result.*)

- **Wholeness:** This is the result of healing and what is necessary to live the abundant life. We will never be fully whole until Heaven, but we can become people who are more whole and put back together—people that regularly and naturally bear the fruit of Christ’s life in our own.

Here are some ideas of internal brokenness that could be used as examples with children.

- 1 You feel like you’re never good enough.
- 2 You feel scared to let other people know what you really think.
- 3 You believe no one could ever love you.
- 4 You believe your parents’ problems are all your fault.
- 5 You think you have to take care of yourself because no one else will.
- 6 You think your way is the best way and get angry when others don’t agree.
- 7 You act like you are more important than other people.
- 8 You act out in ways you know will get other people’s attention.
- 9 You tell others what they want to hear instead of what is true.
- 10 You tell others what is not true in order to protect yourself.



Specific discussion ideas for section 2

Why would God care about me? – God’s design for relationship

Here are some ideas to help you think through how the persons of the trinity relate to each other:

- The Father exalted Christ to His right hand.
- The Father put all created things in subjection under the Son.
- The Son gave up His rights and privileges when He was born as a human.
- The Son glorified the Father by reflecting His nature during His time on earth.
- The Spirit strengthened and enabled Christ as He was on earth.
- The Spirit prays to the Father and communicates His will.

The last Talk about it question (*If someone asked you, “Does God really care about me?”, what would you say?*) is designed to help everyone formulate the ideas of this section into their own words so they are able to articulate an answer. You can

collaborate with participants to create an outline (*such as the one below*) to guide them through the key points. You could model how you would answer someone using this outline as a guide, or the one you create. If time allows, you could also have them pair up and practice using their own words to talk through the outline.

- God imagined you and created you and loves you more than you will ever understand.
- God's nature is to be in relationship. He is in relationship within the trinity—Father, Son and Spirit. And he wants to be in relationship with you too.
- God doesn't relate to you based on who you are and what you do, but based on who He is. He is a God who is kind and good and generous.

Consider creating a handout for the Do it idea to help everyone practically implement it. You could choose ahead of time a number of characteristics to look for—either a number that would last through the rest of your time together while you work through the booklet, or one that would challenge them through the end of year. Check in with them during other times you are together to see how their list is coming. Give opportunities for individuals to share how their concept of God is changing through this practice or to share something they wrote down that they wouldn't normally have noticed.



Specific discussion ideas for section 2 ***Why would God care about me? – God's ongoing seeking***

The goal of this *Think about it* section is to help individuals see the true heart of God and experience His compassionate seeking after them. Sometimes stories help people get a feel for this better than straightforward words or truths. Consider your own life and something from these questions that stood out to you or a story of a time you realised God was interacting with you in these ways and take a few minutes to share it with the group.

Here are some descriptions to guide the discussion around the parables in Luke 15:

- God is alert and knows when something is not right.
- God goes after those who are lost or hurting.
- God desires to rescue and help.
- God cares for the individual.

- God risks everything to find and save the one who is lost.
- God is diligent in His seeking.
- God perseveres and doesn't stop His seeking of an individual.
- God rejoices over the one He finds. (*He doesn't ridicule.*)
- God embraces the one He finds. (*He doesn't push away.*)
- God celebrates the reunion. (*He doesn't punish.*)
- God shares the good news with others. (*He isn't embarrassed because of what happened.*)

Taking time to list the reasons God **actually** seeks after people **AND** the reasons we sometimes **believe** He does will help to juxtapose these ideas to see what is in line with God's heart and who He actually is versus what lies we have believed. Consider making these lists in a visible place and in two different columns—one that represents God's heart and one that doesn't to help differentiate the two.

God Seeks Us Because:

- He loves unconditionally
- He sees our great need
- He desires to help
- He wants to rescue
- He wants to give life
- He desires relationship

God Doesn't Seek Us Because:

- He is judgemental
- He wants to condemn
- He needs to punish
- He feels vindictive
- He hates us
- He wants to teach us a lesson



Specific discussion ideas for section 3 ***How can God help me? – Jesus did what you can't***

For the *Think about it* section, consider sharing your personal testimony about coming to faith in Christ. Use the questions listed to serve as a guide to share your journey of understanding and acknowledgement of your own need, the grace and love of God, and belief in Jesus as the way of salvation. Share how long the process took—perhaps you heard about Jesus for years before you realised your own need, or perhaps you felt the depths of your need for a long time before you understood the heart of God towards you and heard of Christ's sacrificial death to make a relationship with God possible.

As you help your group think through how to discern where a person is in the progression of understanding salvation and placing their faith in Christ, point them back again to the foundational questions.

- Can the person describe why they need God?
- Do they believe God's heart is towards them and He is seeking after relationship with them?
- Can they accept and believe that God made the only way of salvation through Jesus?

People inside and outside the church both have obstacles that can keep them from personally believing in Jesus for salvation. Here are some examples to help guide the conversation together.

Inside the church:

- Have heard the Gospel truths so much, they equate believing they are true with a personal faith in Christ.
- Hear a false gospel of works and endeavour to earn their salvation.
- See people who profess faith in Christ behave in ways that are not Christlike and become disillusioned.
- Don't understand the true heart of God.

Outside the church:

- Hear of many "paths" to God and choose what fits best with their philosophy of life.
- Don't see their own need for salvation.
- See people who profess faith in Christ behave in ways that are not Christlike and become disillusioned.
- Don't understand the true heart of God.



Specific discussion ideas for section 3 ***How can God help me? – God invites you to come***

It might be helpful to describe a cistern and help your group better understand the word picture Jeremiah gives. A cistern was a reservoir of some kind that was dug into the earth in order to hold water. It was different than a well in that a well was constantly filled by underground water. A cistern had no natural source of water, but could only hold what was added to it. Cisterns, over time, could become cracked or broken which either let dirt into the water being held, or allowed the water to seep out. Both of these issues were highly problematic!

Discuss which is easier—to drink from a fountain of water that naturally flows OR to hew out a cistern and fill it with water. Jeremiah says our tendency is to turn away from God—the source of life-giving water and try to make a way to capture whatever we believe will give us life and joy and peace and hope. What a heavy, useless burden to bear!

Take some time to define the words gentle and lowly in order to come up with more examples.

- Gentle: kind, humane, tender, peaceful, merciful, not severe or violent
- Lowly: humble, meek, unpretentious, simple, modest

For further insight into these words and ideas, consider reading or recommending Dane Ortlund's book, *Gentle and Lowly*.

If there's time, share together some items from the lists everyone made for the Do It section. Being open about the blessings of living life alongside God and ways to more fully enter this life will encourage each other and perhaps prompt some new ideas to consider.



Specific discussion ideas for section 4

Sharing the Gospel with children

You can move through this section in a variety of ways depending on the need of your group and the amount of time you have.

Each of these five focuses could be covered more in depth in a separate meeting. This would allow you time to introduce one focus, discuss it together and then spend some time either teaching it more in depth or having participants practice the idea together.

If you or your participants have never used a Gospel tool or have not led a child to Christ, consider spending some extra time on focus numbers four and five. *Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF)* has instructors and training options that can help prepare your participants to be confident in sharing the Gospel clearly and leading children to Christ. What a great time investment with eternal rewards!

Consider having participants complete some of the focuses on their own during the week. Then when you get back together you can have everyone share how it went and offer tips and encouragement.

Remember, focuses 1-3 are for the adult to do first—before actually presenting the Gospel to children. If at all possible, spend a full meeting time on these points and stress the importance of preparing themselves for the opportunities God will place before them.

Game key for Focus 3

| Why do I need God? | Why would God care about me? | How can God help me? |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| I can take care of myself. | God doesn't care about me. | God can't help me. He's too far away. |
| I'm a pretty good kid and try to be nice to others. | I'm not important to God. | God doesn't want to be my friend. |
| This world is a pretty good place to live! | God just wants to tell me what to do. | There are lots of ways to get to Heaven. |

Depending on your group and their past experience or training, focuses 4-5 might be new ideas. The newer these ideas are, the more your group will benefit from additional time to understand and practice together.

Gospel Tool: Broken

The dotted lines on the tool show where it should be folded.

(Show panel 1)

Many people wonder, “Why do I need God?” Maybe they think, “I can take care of myself! I don’t need God’s help.” or “I’m a pretty good person!”



But stop and think for a minute about all the things that are wrong in our world today—war, sickness, disease, famine, death. Our world is actually a pretty broken place—broken because of sin. Sometimes we feel the brokenness of the world in our own lives when we get hurt by someone or when someone close to us dies.

Even when people try to make the world better, they can’t help everyone or stop everything bad from happening. Only God has the power to fix everything that is broken. We need Him every day.

Even our own hearts are broken and cause us to want our own way and hurt others. No matter how hard we try, we can never do good all the time. Romans 3:12 tells us, “*There is no one who does good, not even one.*”

Only God can fix what is broken in us and in the world. When we really stop and think about it, you and I need God a lot!

(Reveal panels 2, 3 and 4 and hide panel 1)

Another question many people sometimes ask is, “Why would God care about me?”



It’s easy to think that God is really big and powerful and doesn’t care about people at all, but that’s not true. God made people so that He could show them love and share His life with them. God wants a relationship with people!

God is the One who made you with His very own hands! He chose everything about you and made you special. He knows you better than anyone and loves you more than anyone else does.

In Jeremiah 1:5, God says, “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.*” God has always known you and He has always wanted to have a relationship with you—that’s why He made you! He is always seeking you and is always ready to help you.

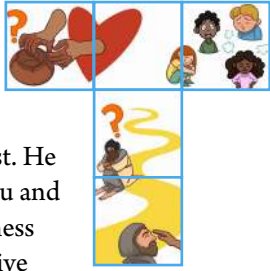
No matter if you’re having a good day or a bad day, if you’re angry or scared, if you’re lonely or sad, God sees and cares. You are His special creation and He can’t ever stop loving you.

Because God made life, He knows how life works best and He wants what is best for us. But our broken hearts and

lives don't always know or want what is really best.

(Reveal panels 5 and 6)

God wants you to come to Him. He knows that life with Him is really best. He wants to help you and fix your brokenness so that He can give you everything He has planned for you—including a perfect place to live with Him forever when your life on earth is over.



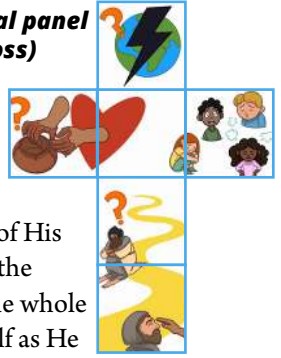
Maybe you're thinking, "I want to come to God. How can God help me?"

God made a way to fix your brokenness so you could come and enjoy life with Him. He did this by sending His Son, Jesus, to live perfectly in our broken world. Jesus showed us that God's way to live really is best—and He was able to live it!

Jesus did many miracles to undo some of the brokenness in people's lives. He made sick people well, and blind people see. He showed compassion and love to people others didn't like.

(Reveal the final panel to show the cross)

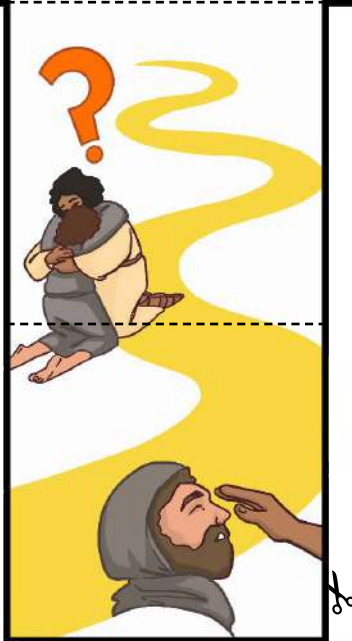
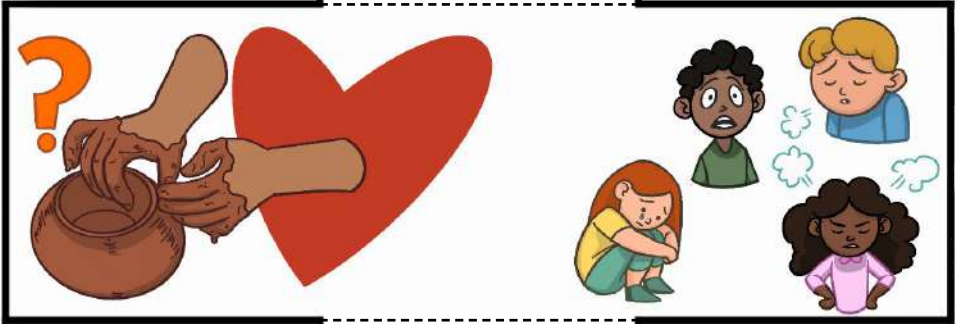
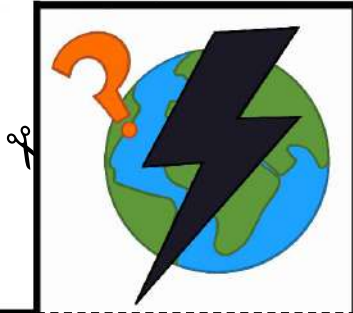
And then, because He was perfect and didn't have any brokenness of His own, Jesus took the brokenness of the whole world on Himself as He died on the cross. He took our brokenness so that He could give us His perfectness and so that we could have a way to come to God.



This is what 2 Corinthians 5:21 means when it says, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

This is God's beautiful way for people to come to Him and have life with Him, under His care, forever. You can come to God too by believing in Jesus, the One who died to fix your brokenness, and is now alive to bring you into relationship with God. Will you believe in Him today?

Cut out the cross shape, fold on the dotted lines.



Use this QR code to download and print an A4 or A3 version of this Gospel tool.

How to use The Wordless Book

Gold page:

In the Bible we read about God's home, Heaven. It is a beautiful place, with no sadness or pain. The streets of Heaven are made of gold. Gold makes us think of treasure or riches. God is very rich. He owns the world, the sun, the moon, the stars and much more. He owns them because He made them. He made you too. Shining gold is something pure. God is pure and perfect. He has never done anything wrong—He is always right and good. The Bible says, "For God so loved the world" (*John 3:16*). God loves you and wants people like you and me to live in Heaven with Him, but there is a big problem ...



Dark page:

It is sin! That is what the dark page reminds us of. Sin is thinking, saying and doing things God says are wrong, like hating, lying and stealing. The Bible says, "all have sinned" (*Romans 3:23*). That means you and me too. Everyone is born with a "want to" to do wrong. Nobody had to teach us how to disobey or to tell lies. God is so pure and holy He cannot accept sin or say that it is okay, and He cannot allow sin in Heaven. Sin keeps you away from God now and will one day keep you far from God's love and goodness for ever. That is the punishment you and I deserve. God knew about the sin in your life and mine. He knew that we could do nothing to solve the problem of our sin.



Red page:

God loves us so much that He sent His only Son into the world. The Lord Jesus was born as a baby. He grew up like you and me; but He had no sin in His life. He was perfect.

The Bible says, "Christ died for our sins" (*1 Corinthians 15:3*). Jesus gave Himself to die on a cross. He took the punishment we deserve. The red reminds us of His blood which poured out for our sins.



The Bible also tells us that Jesus “rose again the third day” (*1 Corinthians 15:4*). After three days Jesus came back to life. He is alive today and rules for ever in Heaven.

Clean page:

Acts 16:31 says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved ...” Do you believe Jesus died for you? You could talk to God right now. Tell Him about your sin and what you believe Jesus did for you and trust in Jesus as your Saviour. The clean page reminds us that when you trust Jesus as your Saviour, your sin is no longer a problem between you and God—God sees you as clean and pure because of His Son. You will not have to take the for ever punishment you deserve. You can thank God for saving you and ask Him to help you live His way. God promises, “I will never leave you” (*Hebrews 13:5*).



Green page:

Green reminds us of things that grow, like green grass or green plants. If you have trusted Jesus as your Saviour, then God wants you to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (*2 Peter 3:18*).

These things will help you grow to know God better:

Read the Bible and do what it says.

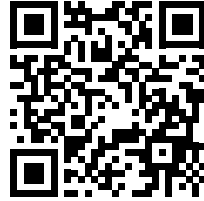
Pray—talk to God about everything (*tell Him when you sin again*).

Go to church to meet with others who have trusted Jesus.

Tell others about Jesus.



*For more information about the CEF
training ministry in Europe check out our
website at cefeurope.com/education*



*Find out more about CEF resources:
cefeurope.com/resources/*

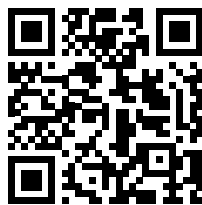




IF YOU LIKED
Know God's Heart, CHECK
OUT THE COMPANION BOOKS,
Choose God's Ways
AND ***Love God Most***.



Available on
[teachkids.eu/training](https://www.teachkids.eu/training)



Watch for more helpful **D6:7** books to come!

Know **GOD'S** Heart

GOD'S HEART IS TOWARDS US, AND YET THAT'S NOT ALWAYS HOW WE FEEL. IT'S EASY TO HAVE THE WRONG PERSPECTIVE AND think that God's heart is to punish, judge, and require perfection from us. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Our God is different than the gods of other religions. We don't have to perform for Him. We aren't required to earn His favour. And we don't have to vie for His attention.

God created man to have fellowship. God accepts us where we are, despite who we are. God seeks after our hearts at great cost to Himself. God remains faithful even when we are not. God made it possible for us to come to Him and be in relationship with Him.

This is the good news of the Gospel. Good news that is a balm to the soul of anyone exhausted by trying to make it in this broken world on their own, anyone trying to earn love and acceptance.

The Gospel can heal, restore and offer hope. Our children desperately need the Gospel, but how can we clearly communicate God's heart to them? How can we communicate the beauty of the Gospel?

In this booklet, you will find three questions and answers to help you understand and explain God's heart to the children you lead. You will also learn how to weave these truths into everyday conversations with your children.

The Gospel is glorious. It is the only way to the life God always intended for us. Let us do all we can to pass along the true heart of God to the children around us.