

CONNECTING FAITH AND LIFE

KIDS & YOUTH STUDY GUIDE | MARCH 3



KEY POINT

Jesus gives us courage to keep going in tough times.

SHARE

Highs & Lows

Story Review (younger students)

Read: Storybook Bible Page 372

Do: After telling the story, ask the following questions:

- Why does the owner want to cut down the fig tree?
 - *It will not produce fruit.*
- How does the gardener react when the owner says that they want to cut down the fig tree?
 - *The gardener asks the owner to keep the tree for one more year and then cut it down if it does not produce fruit.*

Say: God wants us to keep trying, and not give up. When we mess up, it is sometimes easiest to just want to give up and not care. But God wants us to ask for forgiveness and repent.

- Can you think of a time when you have made the wrong decision and hurt someone? Would you like to ask for forgiveness?
 - accept all answers given

Story Review (Older Students)

Read: Ask a volunteer to read Luke 13:6-9.

In the Bible, “bearing good fruit” often means the same thing as acting with love like God wants us to.

- What is wrong with the fig tree?
 - *It is unable to produce fruit.*
- How does the gardener react when the tree’s owner wants to cut it down?
 - *The gardener asks the man to let the tree go for one year, and only cut it down after one year if it does not produce any fruit.*
- Why do you think Jesus gives the fig tree another year to bear fruit?
 - *He is showing love and grace.*
- Why do you think Jesus told this parable?
 - *It reminds us that we should repent.*
- What do you think the fig tree represents?
 - *The tree represents us, humans.*
- Who wants us to bear good fruit?
 - *God*
- Now, what do you think this story is telling us about how God wants us to act?
 - *God wants us to act with love towards others.*

Say: God wants us to keep trying, and not give up. When we mess up, it is sometimes easiest to just want to give up and not care. But God wants us to ask for forgiveness and repent.

- Can you think of a time when you have made the wrong decision and hurt someone? Would you like to ask for forgiveness?
 - *accept all answers given*

ACTIVITIES

See attached sheets for activities

PRAY

Dear God, thank you for loving us. Thank you for forgiving us. Help us remember that we should always repent and return to you. Amen

BLESS

Mark the sign of the cross and say “Jesus loves you!”



Coming Clean (Younger Students)* Consider how repentance is like coming clean.

Supplies: Washable Markers and Baby Wipes

Say/Ask: Today's story asks us to think about what it means to repent. Do you know what that word means?

[Answers will vary.]

Do: Look at your hands.

- Do our hands always stay clean?
 - *No*

Say:

- Are we always clean and perfect?
 - *No*

Say: We are not always clean and perfect. In fact, we can say and do a lot of things that hurt other people.

Sometimes, we even do something wrong and blame another person, even though we are the ones who should come clean.

- Do we stay dirty?
 - *NO*
- How do we get clean?
 - *We take baths, we wash our hands.*

Do: Let's try a little fun experiment. Write on your hands with these markers. (Use the washable markers) Get your hands dirty. And then, use the baby wipes to wipe your hands clean.

Say/Ask: Now, let's think about people again.

- Do we always stay unclean and imperfect?
 - *varied answers*
- What happens when we admit that we have done something wrong?
 - *We are made clean again; we receive forgiveness.*

Say: Sometimes people say that when you have admitted that you did something wrong, you have "come clean." When we admit that we have done something wrong, when we "come clean," then Jesus helps us become clean again, too. That is what repentance is: it is coming clean and admitting that you were wrong, instead of blaming someone else for your problems.

The Meaning of Repentance (Older Students)

Supplies: Glass, Can of dark cola, buttons

Before class: You may want to try this experiment beforehand so you are familiar with the process & timing.

Do: Place a clear glass in a location where the class can see it. Fill the glass with cola.

Do/Ask: Hold up a couple of buttons for the class to see.

- Do you think you will be able to see these buttons if I drop them in my glass of cola?
 - *Answers will vary.*

Do/Say: Drop the buttons into the glass of cola. Tell students to continue watching the glass until you see the buttons rise to the top, which may take some time.

- Did the buttons stay hidden for very long?
 - *No*
- What happened to them?
 - *They floated to the top and you could see them.*
- Has there ever been a time in your life when you have done something wrong and tried to hide it, maybe by blaming another person? What happened?
 - *Answers will vary.*

Say: We are not perfect. Sometimes we do things that are wrong, and we try to blame others for our wrong actions. However, we cannot keep these things hidden for very long. Like the buttons, these actions float to the surface for everyone to see. To repent means to admit and apologize for these wrongdoings. When we repent, we tell God (or others) about the wrong things we may have done and follow God's ways.

Secret Smiles (All Ages)

Supplies: Postcard Size Paper (one side printed with "Turn Me Over" for younger students), markers, stickers, etc

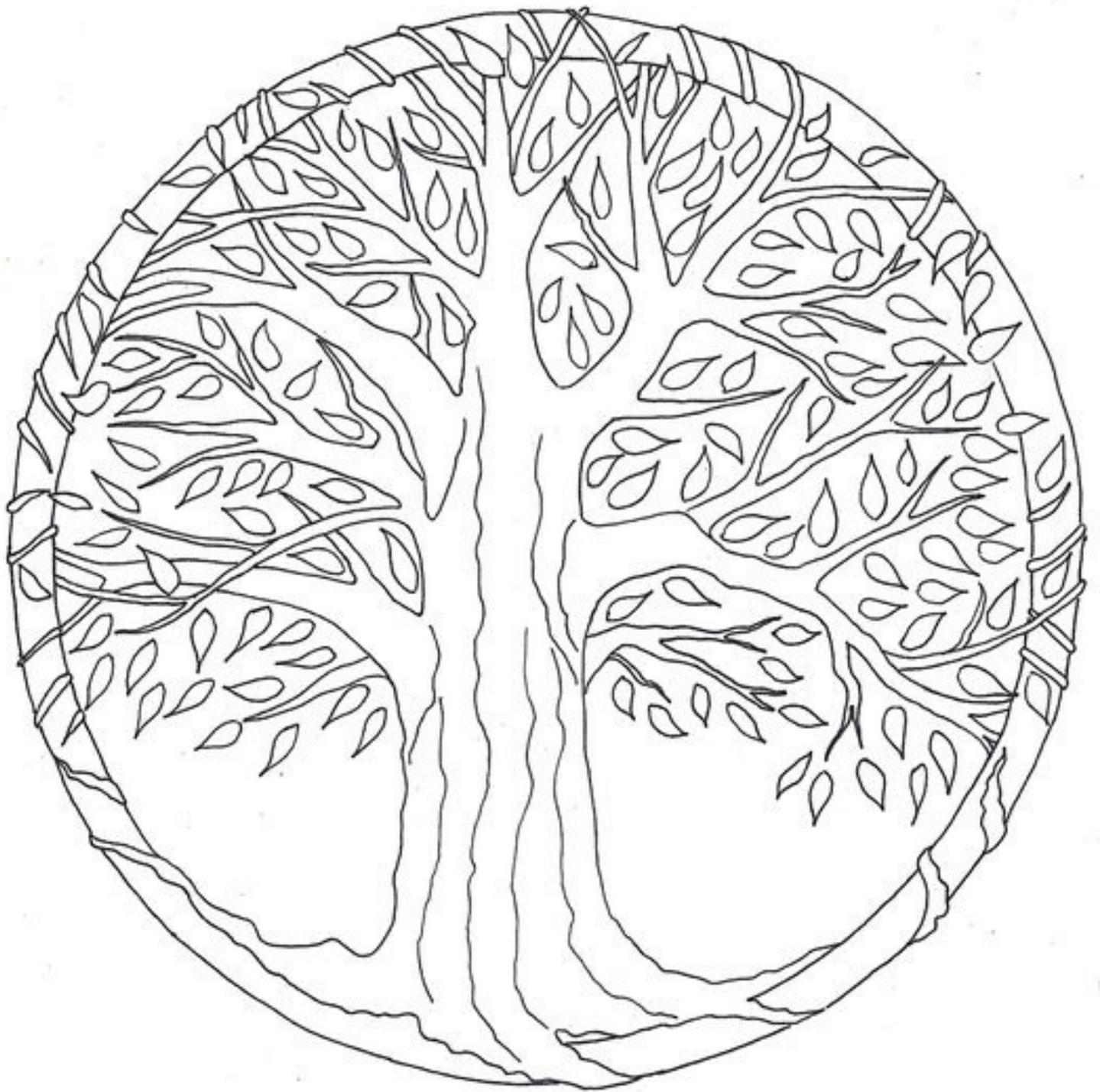
Say: Remember, repenting is turning in the right direction - away from the bad things that tempt us - toward the good things that God gives us. It is not easy, so we need lots of reminders. Lets make some reminders for others that will hopefully, make them smile.

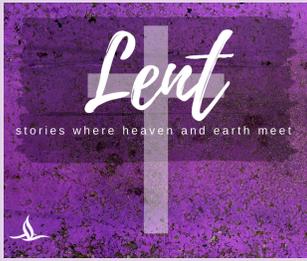
Do: Hand out materials. If your postcard is not written on one side write "Turn Me Over". Then decorate the other side in any way that gives the message "Happy."

Say: We know that repentance may not be easy, but it does lead to happiness that is deeper than just the smiley face kind. Knowing that God forgives us makes it easier to share that happiness.

Discuss: Have students make a plan for where they can leave this card. "Turn Me Over" side up, as a way of thanking Jesus for offering forgiveness and to share the message with others.







KEY POINT

Jesus gives us courage to keep going in tough times.

Story Summary

Jesus Preaches Repentance

While Jesus is speaking to the gathered crowds, some people tell him about fellow Jewish believers from Galilee whom Pilate killed during their own worship service. These people may have thought that because the Galileans died in a horrifying way, they were especially sinful. Jesus rejects this idea, saying that everyone needs to repent. He reminds the people of another tragedy, a fallen tower of Siloam, and repeats his call to repentance.

Jesus then tells a parable about a fig tree that will not produce fruit. It does not do what it is supposed to, and no one knows why. The owner wants to cut it down, but the gardener asks for one more year to tend it and care for it, to try to get it to be what it is meant to be—a fruit-bearing tree, not a dead stump. Jesus is then warned that Herod wants to kill him. But Jesus will not turn his face away from Jerusalem. He insists that he is going to go to the holy city, even though it is a place that rejects and kills prophets. Jesus mourns that Jerusalem cannot see holiness when it comes to it.

Today we hear of how God cares for those who are suffering, whether they caused their own pain (Jerusalem), are victims of others' violence (the Galileans), or simply do not live in a nurturing environment (the fig tree).



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HIGH SCHOOL GUIDESHEET | MARCH 3

SHARE

Highs & Lows

OPENING PRAYER

God, please help us see that even though suffering is not always caused by our sin, everyone should repent. Amen.

READ

Luke 13:1-9, 31-35

DISCUSS

Use the following questions to discuss the day's Bible passage and how it relates to your lives.

Understand

- What does it mean to repent?
- What stories did Jesus use to make his point about repentance?

Wrestle

- Why do we have a rating system about degrees of sin when Jesus does not see anyone as a worse sinner than another?
- Why are we so quick to blame the suffering of others on their sin?
- How can we know when our suffering is related to our own sin and when it is simply a part of living in a sinful world?

Share

- Share, write, or draw about an experience when you realized you needed to repent. Include what it was like for you after you repented.

Apply

- Focus on loving others rather than accusing them. Pray to turn around and give your all to God.

ACTIVITIES

Use the attached activities to have a hands on way of sharing the message of this week's lesson.

PRAY

Dear God, thank you for loving us. Thank you for forgiving us. Help us remember that we should always repent and return to you. Amen

BLESS

Mark the sign of the cross and say "Jesus loves you!"