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# My Way or God's Way?

**Worship**
We worship God, the Creator.

**POWER TEXT**

"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7).

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Genesis 4:1-12
- *Patriarchs and Prophets,* chap. 5, pp. 71-79
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 73-86
- student lesson on page 52 of this guide

**OUR BELIEFS**

- No. 19, The Law of God
- No. 7, The Nature of Humanity
- No. 8, The Great Controversy

**OBJECTIVES**

**The students will:**

- **Know** that worshiping God is a test of their faith.
- **Feel** God's grace and saving power as they choose to worship God.
- **Respond** by worshipping God the way that is pleasing to Him.

POWERPOINT

**Worship is a test of our faithfulness to God.**

## The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Throughout the ages worship represented a test of faith. Ever since the time of Adam and Eve humans have had the choice between true worship, that is pleasing to God, and false worship, which disregards God's requirements. After our first parents disobeyed God's law, He promised to send a Redeemer who would restore humankind to its original position. Faith in the promised Savior became the mark of true worship. The story of Cain and Abel presents a vivid picture of the consequences that follow as a result of choosing how we worship God. We are also given the choice today. We can decide whether we will worship God through Christ's merits or through our own inadequate merits.

### *This is a lesson about worship.*

We show our allegiance to God or the lack thereof in the way we worship Him. Faith in the sacrifice of the Redeemer is the measure of acceptable worship to God. Otherwise we offer Him the false worship of our own choosing. May we choose to offer God the true worship that He deserves through the merits of Christ.

## Teacher Enrichment

"Cain and Abel represent two classes that will exist in the world till the close of time. One class avail themselves of the appointed sacrifice for sin; the other venture to depend upon their own merits; theirs is a sacrifice without the virtue of divine mediation, and thus it is not able to bring man into favor with God. It is only through the merits of Jesus that our transgressions can be pardoned. Those who feel no need of the blood of Christ, who feel that without divine grace they can by their own works secure the approval of God, are making the same mistake as did Cain. If they do not accept the cleansing blood, they are under condemnation. . . .

"Christ is our only hope. 'There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' 'Neither is there salvation in any other' (Acts 4:12, KJV). True faith, which relies wholly upon Christ, will be manifested by obedience to all the requirements of God. From Adam's day to the present time the great controversy has been concerning obedience to God's law" (*Patriarch and Prophets*, pp. 72, 73).

*How does my worship reflect my obedience to God's commands? Does my faith rest on Christ's merits? What could I do to encourage my students to worship God faithfully?*

# Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

**Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice.** »

# Program notes

| LESSON SECTION | MINUTES | ACTIVITIES | MATERIALS NEEDED |
|---|---|---|---|
| Welcome | Ongoing | Greet students at door.<br>Ask about their week. | |
| 1 Readiness | 10-15 | *A. True or False Worship* | three empty boxes, prewritten slips of paper |
| | | *B. Worship in Music* | *He Is Our Song* books, CD/MP3 player, worship music recordings |
| * Prayer and Praise | 15-20 | See page 47. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program | songbooks, offering plate/basket, world map, pushpins |
| 2 Bible Lesson | 15-20 | Introducing the Bible Story | |
| | | Experiencing the Story | Bibles |
| | | Exploring the Bible | Bibles |
| 3 Applying the Lesson | 10-15 | *Scenario* | |
| 4 Sharing the Lesson | 10-15 | Praise Through Prayer | |
| * Closing | | A. Prayer and Closing Comments<br>B. Reminder to Parents<br>C. Coming Up Next Week | |

# 1

## READINESS ACTIVITIES

*Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.*

### A

**YOU NEED:**
- ☐ three empty boxes
- ☐ prewritten slips of paper

### True or False Worship

Prior to Sabbath School, write on small slips of paper different worship practices. Place all pieces of paper in an empty box. On a piece of paper write "acceptable worship" and on another write "unacceptable worship." Tape these two pieces of paper on the exterior of two empty boxes. Place the two empty boxes that you labeled on a table at the front of the room. Place the box with the paper slips in the middle.

Say: **Please come forward and circle around the table. I have here in a box slips of paper that identify different forms of worship. I will ask you one by one to come to the table and draw a slip of paper. You will read aloud what is written on each paper. Then the rest of us will decide (by raising our hands) whether the slip should go into the box labeled "acceptable worship" or in the box labeled "unacceptable worship."**

***Debriefing***

Ask: **What helps us evaluate whether a form of worship is proper or improper, adequate or inadequate, true or false? What standards can we use to guide us in our worship of God?** (the Bible, God's law) **Could we fail to honor God even when we use an acceptable form of worship?** (See the story of the Pharisee and the publican.) **What can get in the way of our worship to God?** (self, pride, distractions, anything that we place first before God) **How can we have the right attitude when we worship God?** (pray for the help of the Holy Spirit, study God's Word)

**Let's say the power text together:**

***"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7).***

**Our power point today is:**

***Worship is a test of our faithfulness to God.***

**Accommodation for students with special needs:** Allow students who experience difficulty with this activity to work with a partner.

### B

**YOU NEED:**
- ☐ *He Is Our Song* books, or other songbooks or hymnals
- ☐ CD/MP3 player, worship music recordings

### B. Worship in Music

Distribute songbooks to the students.

Say: **Today we will take a few minutes and sing some of your favorite songs. Raise your hand if you would like to sing one that you like best. I suggest we first sing** _____ (Select a song that everyone knows very well and enjoys singing. You may also use a CD/MP3 recording with familiar songs for a sing-along time.)

***Debriefing***

Ask: **How do praise songs help you think of God?** (Music is one of the most effective ways we communicate feelings. It could be used to elevate our hearts in worship to God, or it could be used to focus on selfish interests.) **Does it matter what kind of music we use in worship?** (Yes, we need to ask ourselves: Does this music help me think of God, or does it make me focus on self or on someone else?) **How could we distinguish between types of music that honor God and those that do not honor Him?** (Pray for wisdom from God through the Holy Spirit. Read the Bible prayerfully. Ask whether our choice of music corresponds to the Biblical standard outlined in Philippians 4:8. "Would Jesus listen to or use this music in worship?")

Say: **As with other aspects of worship we need to prayerfully consider what is pleasing to God. After all, we want to worship *Him* with our music offerings. Let's say the power text together:**

***"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7).***

**Our power point today is:**

***Worship is a test of our faithfulness to God.***

# Prayer and Praise

## Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows that they shared with you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

## Suggested Songs

"Father I Adore You" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 32)
"Lamb of God" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 62)
"The Law of the Lord" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 97)

## Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. You may use a map of the world where the students can identify and mark with pushpins the location of the mission story.

## Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Take the time to discuss the meaning and purpose of offerings. You may invite the church treasurer to come in and explain where the money is directed and how it is managed. Such discussions offer the opportunity to train our young about tithe and offerings.
Say: **In our lesson this week we will learn about the difference between true worship and false worship. Through faith in Jesus everyone could offer to God an acceptable worship. We are called to share this good news with many people around the world who have not yet heard about Jesus.**

## Prayer

Ask a volunteer to pray for the people who will benefit from this offering and would learn about Jesus. Invite students to voice their prayer requests and keep a record of these (i.e., list of prayer requests/prayer journal). Give them the opportunity each week to share if they received answers to their prayers. They may also place a mark (i.e., a sticker) on a poster designed for answered prayers. This would help them remember that God is actively involved in their lives and responds to their needs, granting what is best for them.

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

**Notes**

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## BIBLE LESSON

### Introducing the Bible Story

Ask: **Why do parents ask their toddlers to stay away from a hot burning stove?** (They want to protect them from harm or danger.) **Would you say that parents who require their children not to do certain things are too strict or unreasonable?** (no) **Why did God require obedience from Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? Why did He warn them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?**

Say: **Like good parents do, God wanted to protect Adam and Eve from sin, suffering, and death. His law and His requirements serve for our highest good. This week we are going to learn about Cain and Abel whose faithfulness to God was tested. We will learn about the consequences of their obedience or disobedience to God's requirements. Even today, obedience to God's law is a test of faithfulness**.

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles

### Experiencing the Story

Say: **Raise your hand if you are familiar with the story of Cain and Abel. Today we will refresh our memories and revisit this story. We are going to try to retell the story in our own words. This is how we will do it**:

**You will sit in groups of three or four facing each other. One of you will start the first sentence of the story, the person on the right will say the next sentence, the following person on the right will say the third sentence, and so on until you finish telling the story. You need to listen carefully to each other so that you can retell the story as accurately as possible.**

**Alternatively:** Instead of telling the story, students could read it from the Bible (Genesis 4:3-12).

# 3

## APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles

### Exploring the Bible

Have one or two volunteers who read fast and with good diction come to the front of the class with their Bibles. Have them read aloud Genesis 4:3-12 and 1 Samuel 15:1-26, while the rest of the students follow along in their Bibles.

Ask: **How are these two stories similar?** (They both teach about the importance of obedience to God.) **What is the main message of these stories?** (Our choices have consequences. Whether we obey or we disobey seriously affects our lives and our relationships with God and with others.) **What were the consequences of disobedience?** (Both Cain and Saul lost their peace as they separated themselves from God. Cain became a fugitive. Saul became disqualified to be a king.) **How do you show obedience to God's law?** (By being connected to God and by seeking to understand what is pleasing to Him as outlined in His Word.)

Say: **Remember that worship includes more than prayers and church attendance. True worship includes every area of your life. What you eat, what you drink, what you wear, what you say, and how you act, show to others whom you worship or what you worship.**

**Let's say the power text together:**

***"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7).***

### *Scenario*

Read and discuss with your students the following scenario:

**Ruben is a Christian boy who takes his schoolwork seriously. One day at school his teacher announces the date of an exam. Ruben checks the date on his calendar and discovers with disappointment that his exam is scheduled on a Saturday. He is a Bible-believing Christian who observes the Sabbath and attends church on Saturday. So many questions cross his mind. He knows that he can continue his studies only if he takes this final exam. If he does not attend and write the exam, he will fail the course. Yet he knows that he cannot compromise his faith.**

***Debriefing:***

Ask: **What should Ruben do?** (What Jesus would do in his place—keep the Sabbath.) **How would you advise him?** (If you had an experience where God helped you keep the Sabbath share it with him. Advise him to tell his teacher about his conviction that the seventh-day Sabbath is God's holy day and ask for the teacher's permission to take his test on another date.) **How is Ruben's situation a test of faithfulness to God's law?** (Ruben has to decide whether he will be obedient to God's law or to the school's requirements.)

Say: **Let's remember that:**

***Worship is a test of our faithfulness to God.***

# 4

## SHARING THE LESSON

### *Praise Through Prayer*

Say: **Prayer is the most often used form of worship. Yet so many times when we pray we focus on telling God what we need or what we want. We need to praise God more frequently in our prayers. We also need to pray for others more often. Through prayer we could offer God our heartfelt worship.**

**Please form groups of two or three and pray together praising and worshiping God for all that He has done and continues to do in your lives. If you have some prayer requests share them with your group members and pray for one another.**

# Closing

### Prayer and closing comments:

Conclude with your prayer. Ask God to help each person to remain faithful to Him and to His requirements. Say: **This week, reflect on your choices in worship. Read your Bible and ask God to show you how to worship in a way that is pleasing to Him.**

### Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. Give students the link (www.juniorpowerpoints.org /podcast.php?channel=1) to listen to the podcast of the lesson online.**

### Coming up next week:

Say: **Jacob loves Joseph more than his other children. Our true character is revealed as we interact with our family.**

## Notes

# Student lesson

## My Way or God's Way?

*Suppose you are invited to your best friend's birthday party and you know exactly what gift to get for the birthday. It would take some effort to get (even though it wouldn't cost a lot), but it would show how much you care for the friendship. Or you could choose to give your friend a gift that you liked and was easy to get, just so you don't show up empty-handed. Would you prove to be a true friend if you reacted with indifference on your best friend's birthday? Consider the importance of our worship to God as you envision the story of Cain and Abel.*

Much had changed since Adam and Eve had last walked and talked with the Creator in the Garden of Eden. Oh, how they wished they could see God face to face as in the past! With deep regret they remembered what they had lost as a result of their disobedience. All around them in nature they saw the signs of decline as consequence of their disobedience. The animals that once were peaceful had become violent. Thistles and weeds grew everywhere. The signs of decline and death were visible in plant, animal, and human life.

With the passage of time, Adam and Eve became parents. They taught their two sons about the Creator and about life in Paradise. Often the first family went to worship God at the entrance of the Garden of Eden. Cain and Abel remembered the anguish on their parents' faces as they tied the lamb and placed it on the stone altar. While Adam gashed the throat of a lamb they each felt deep sorrow. It was very sad to see the innocent animal die.

"This lamb had to die because we disobeyed the Creator's command," Adam explained as Eve wiped the free flow of her tears. "God never stops loving us. He offered a solution to save us from the penalty of sin. A Redeemer will come and, like this lamb, will sacrifice His life for us. He is our only hope!"

As the years passed, the once-young children became young men, capable of making important decisions. They could now worship God on their own.

"Tomorrow is the big day!" said Abel one day as the brothers returned home from the fields. "I have chosen a newborn lamb from my flock. I will be ready to sacrifice to the Creator. Have you prepared your sacrifice, Cain?"

"Not yet. I don't see why it is such a big deal, Abel. Tomorrow morning I'll just fill my basket with some ripe fruits, and that will be my offering to God."

"But Cain," insisted Abel, his voice filled with concern, "you know what sacrifice is pleasing to God."

"All that matters is that we offer God a gift," said Cain with indifference. "I'll give God some of the fruits I harvested. I will choose the best fruits from my orchard."

"Cain, you know why the Creator wants us to sacrifice a lamb. This is the symbol of His death that will save us from sin," pleaded Abel.

Cain became angry. A shadow swept across his face. He felt rebuked by his younger brother.

"Stop telling me what to do, Abel!" His voice was irritated. "I don't want to hear your words of wisdom. After all, we have the freedom to worship God however we choose."

"My brother," pleaded Abel once again, "please use your freedom wisely. Remember our parents' sad story. If they would have obeyed . . ."

"Enough! I don't want to listen to you anymore!" interrupted Cain, his voice filled with rage as he turned around with fury and left.

The next day Abel offered to God a lamb sacrifice. Cain brought his load of ripe fruits and laid them on the stone altar. The contrast was striking. The significance was crucial. Abel recognized his need of forgiveness and accepted the sacrifice of the Redeemer. Cain in turn relied on the fruits of his labor as being good enough, and he rejected God's forgiveness.

God honored Abel's obedience by sending fire from heaven to consume his lamb sacrifice. Yet God rejected Cain's fruit offering, which was proof of his disobedience. As Abel's love for God continued to grow, Cain continued to do what was right in his own eyes. He started envying his brother because the Creator received Abel's sacrifice favorably. In his rebellion, one sin led to another. It wasn't long before Abel became the victim of the hatred of his brother, who cruelly murdered him.

Two brothers who had the same upbringing, who were equally taught the distinction between right and wrong, and who enjoyed the same privileges! God's expectations were the same. One chose to worship God's way; the other chose to worship his own way. A simple test with eternal consequences that could be summarized in a few simple words:

*How we worship God.*

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Genesis 4:1-12
- *Patriarchs and Prophets,* chap. 5, pp. 71-79
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 73-86
- Our Beliefs, nos. 19, 7, 8

**POWER TEXT**

"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7).

**POWER POINT**

Worship is a test of our faithfulness to God.








## Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 33.

## Sunday

READ Read Genesis 4:1-12 and this week's story, "My Way or God's Way?"

LEARN Write the power text , Genesis 4:7, on a small index card that you could carry in your pocket and repeat during the week. Repeat it three times and start memorizing it.

PRAY Invite God into your heart and ask Him to help you make wise choices.

## Monday

READ Read 1 Samuel 15:22.

THINK What are the things that keep you from being obedient to God's requirements?

WRITE In your Bible journal, rewrite today's text using your own words. Then write down the things that you need to give up in order to do what is pleasing to God.

PRAY Praise God for teaching you to live in obedience to Him.

## Tuesday

READ Read Hebrews 11:4.

REFLECT What does this verse mean to you? What made the difference between Abel's sacrifice and Cain's offering?

SHARE What are some ways you could show your faith in God? Today, share with someone the difference faith makes in your life.

PRAY Pray for a family member who needs to accept Jesus by faith as his or her personal Savior.

## Wednesday

READ Read John 14:15.

REFLECT Notice that love always leads to obedience.

DO Choose to do something today that shows your love and obedience to your parents.

PRAY Ask God to teach you to love Him by walking in obedience to Him.

## Thursday

READ Read Romans 12:1, 2.

REFLECT What does it mean to "offer your body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God"?

DISCUSS Talk with a family member about ways you could offer God your "true and proper worship."

PRAY Thank God for His many blessings, and let your life be a reflection of your praise to Him.

## Friday

READ Read Psalm 119:9-11 several times.

MEMORIZE In addition to your Bible reading, memorize Scripture passages that will help you choose what is right (i.e., Proverbs 1:8, 9; Micah 6:8; Matthew 7:12).

LEARN Repeat the power text by memory.

SING With your family, sing your favorite praise song.

PRAY Praise God for His Word, which teaches us how to serve and worship Him.