

Lesson 4

Tell the Truth

Lesson Overview

BIBLE LESSON: Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60

MEMORY VERSE: "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." Luke 6:27-28

CHALLENGE MEMORY VERSE: A trustworthy witness will not lie, but a false witness utters lies. Proverbs 14:5

CATECHISM:

The Eighth Commandment: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not deceitfully belie, betray, backbite, nor slander our neighbor, but apologize for him, speak well of him, and put the most charitable construction on all that he does.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: The student will know:

- God wants us to tell the truth always.
- God will help us tell the truth.

MATERIALS: Lessons, Activity sheets, Bible

LESSON OVERVIEW: This lesson focuses on the Eighth Commandment. A witness tells what he knows about something he saw happen. A witness should always tell the truth. A witness who lies is a false witness. Telling lies causes all kinds of trouble. A false witness sins against God and against other people. The young man, Stephen, was such a good witness that many people believed in Jesus when they heard what Stephen said. Some men didn't like this. They lied about Stephen, saying Stephen was the liar—about God, the temple, and God's Word. They took him before the High Priest, where Stephen told all about God's plan for Jesus to come to be the Savior. Stephen looked up into heaven before he died and saw Jesus. The people were so angry they threw stones at Stephen until he died. Stephen prayed for his enemies, asking God to forgive them for killing him.

Possible questions: 1) What is a witness? 2) What is a witness? 3) What should a witness do? 4) What should the people have done? 5) What should we do when we say mean things or try to make trouble for someone?

ACTIVITY 1: Stephen; we are all sinners and need to ask Jesus to forgive us; Tell the Truth, do not bear false witness, ask Jesus to forgive; he was not telling the truth about God; would not listen and stoned Stephen.

ACTIVITY 2: Draw lines to first or second line for the correct ending. Lines 2,1,2,1,1,2,1,2

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach

Read through the Bible verses and lesson.

Pray that you will wait upon the Lord as He guides you through this Sunday School year.

Prayer Preparation

- Pray for the children who will be in attendance and those who may be absent.
- Thank the Lord for each of the children He has placed in your class this year.
- Spend some time in heart-to-heart conversation with the Lord.

Prepare Materials

- Activity sheets
- Have memory verse(s) written on the board

Bible Background

Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60 Tell the Truth

The commandments reveal God's Law which "points out to us our sins and the wrath of God toward sin, makes us anxious to seek Christ, and shows us the fruit of faith should be" (Cat, Q 16). The Commandments (Law) show us how to live and describe what a "righteous" life should look like. Ever since God handed them to Moses, people have tried to avoid them or re-define them. People will do anything to not have to face God's Law and see their need for a Savior. A common reaction people have is that they might be a "little guilty" in some cases, but not so bad over all. Even Christians fall into that lie. Jesus exposed these lies when he said that the Law is directed, not at behavior as such, but at the thoughts of the heart (Mt 5:28, 15:19,20). Confession must also begin in the heart (Ps 51:10).

Of all the commandments, the one that seems to afflict people the most is "lying," or bearing false witness against a neighbor. Lying might be the "oldest" of the sins, first spoken by the devil to Eve in Eden: "You will not die." (Gen 3:4). Since then our lies have deceived us so as to indulge in all the other sins. Even though we know that "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23a), we also need to know that "the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23b).

God has spoken clearly about the need for truth and the dangers of lying. In bearing witness against an accused person, God says "On the testimony of two witnesses or three witnesses, the condemned shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of only one witness (Deut 17:6, 19:15; Num 35:30). This is true even in (or especially in) the matter of church discipline (Matt 18:16).

Perjury, or lying under oath, has severe consequences in our courts today. Witnesses used to take an oath to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me, God." In many cases today the last part is omitted—to keep God out. Oddly enough it has been shown that witnesses to a crime are notoriously unreliable. They seldom agree on shapes, sizes and colors with respect to a suspects or evidence. (Look at person across the table from you, then look away and describes the clothing and colors they are wearing.)

Lies and false witnesses were part of Jesus' trial: "For many people were giving false testimony against Him, and so their testimonies were not consistent" (Mk 14:56). Later at Stephen's trial "They

put forward false witnesses who said, “This man does not stop speaking against this holy place and the Law” (Acts 6:13).

Lying seems to be a “natural” human response when accused of some crime, great or small. The murderer will say, “I didn’t do it.” A child who has clearly shaved the dog and is covered with hair will say “I didn’t do it.”

God is truth, Jesus is truth (Jn 14:6). Without truth there can be no real morality, justice, equality, unity, freedom, love security, peace. If all these are left to one’s own definition, then who is right? God alone is the standard by which these qualities can be measured and achieved. And that goes back to Genesis where we see that God is the designer and creator and sustainer of the universe. To say that God is truth is to acknowledge that truth itself proceeds from the nature of God.

Paul also stresses the relationship between righteousness and truth and between unrighteousness and falsehood. He refers to people “who are self-serving and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, He will give wrath and indignation.” (Rom 2:8). And he highlights the equality of unrighteousness and lies and righteousness and truth in Romans 3:5,7. From this we learn that God’s moral attribute of truth is also tied to His attribute of holiness.

Truth is also essential as mentioned in Ephesians 4:15 where we are told to “Speak the truth in love.” We must confront people and their sin, but do so with a gentle and reverent spirit. The truth might hurt, but it will also lead to forgiveness, healing and deliverance, and when you know the truth, the truth will indeed set you free (Jn 8:32).

Learn the New Words

It is okay to explain the new words in the beginning or as you encounter them.

witness: someone who tells what he or she has seen or heard.

false witness: A false witness is someone who does not tell the truth about someone, or someone who says thing to cause trouble for someone else.

Stephen: the man we read about in today’s lesson who loved Jesus and told others about Him.

court: A place where people are taken to find out if they have done something wrong.

High Priest: The High Priest was the man who served God in the temple.

gnashed: to bite the teeth together in anger.

bear false witness: to bear false witness means to lie.

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Be enthusiastic to see each of the children as they arrive. Make a note of absent children to pray for and possibly contact. Pray that the children will understand the lesson about Stephen and that we will be careful to say good and true things about each other.

Open the class with prayer, praying for each child by name, if you like.

SHARING: Hand out the books, telling the students that this will be the last book about the Ten Commandments.

Read the Memory Verse

Remember the appendix of ways to teach memorization of the verse. Read it clearly,

“But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”
Luke 6:27-28.

Be sure to read it together aloud. Remind the children you’ll repeat the verse again at the end.

Review the Recent Lessons

Remember we have been learning about the Seventh Commandment.

See if the students can remember something from the stories in the last 3 lessons as we will be moving on to the Eighth Commandment.

TEACHING TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON

Introduce the Lesson

ASK: Can anyone read the title of the lesson? (Tell the Truth). In the Bible God tells us about what we should and shouldn’t say about our neighbor. God will help us say true things about our neighbors.

Read the Lesson

Teacher read the first three sentences:
“Choose your words carefully! That is what the Eighth Commandment teaches us. What we say about others is important.”

SAY: Before we can understand our Bible lesson we need to know what God means in the Eighth Commandment. **ASK: What is a witness? What should a witness do? What do we call someone who doesn’t tell the truth?** (a liar.)

SAY: Another way of saying “liar” is a “false witness.” **ASK: Who do we sin against if we are a false witness?** (God and other people). Move on to the next paragraph. Questions to ask, **who was Stephen? How did he show his love for others?** (served others, told people about Jesus).

ASK: What happened because Stephen was a good witness? (Many people believed in Jesus. Some people got angry because they didn’t want to hear the truth).

SAY: A good witness helps others believe in Jesus by what he/she says and does.

Read (or have volunteers read) the third and fourth paragraphs. Ask the students to tell in their own words what happened.

ASK: What did the people do when Stephen told the truth? (Became angrier, refused to repent).

ASK: What should the people have done? (repented, listened to Stephen).

SAY: They didn’t repent. While Stephen was dying, he kept praying for the people who were throwing stones at him. Stephen asked God to take him to heaven and forgive the people for the sin of killing him. (*Teachers’ Manual Note: That Stephen would intercede with God in prayer on behalf of the people in the act of killing him is an example of putting the most charitable construction on the behavior of the people in the crowd.*)

ASK: What should we do when we say mean things or try to make trouble for someone? (Ask Jesus to forgive us.) **ASK: Will he forgive us?** (Yes—if He is our Savior). **ASK: What does Jesus want to do for us?** (forgive our sin, come into our hearts, be our Savior). He wants to help us keep from sinning—and to tell the truth.

Repeat the Memory Verses

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Do the Activities Together

Story Review

Activity 1

Add details of the story to finish each statement.



Activity 1
STORY REVIEW
Add more details from the Bible lesson to finish each statement.

ACTIVITY CENTER

The main character is Stephen

Stephen told the people we are all sinners and need to ask Jesus to forgive us.

THE MAIN IDEA
Tell the truth
do not bear false witness
ask Jesus to forgive

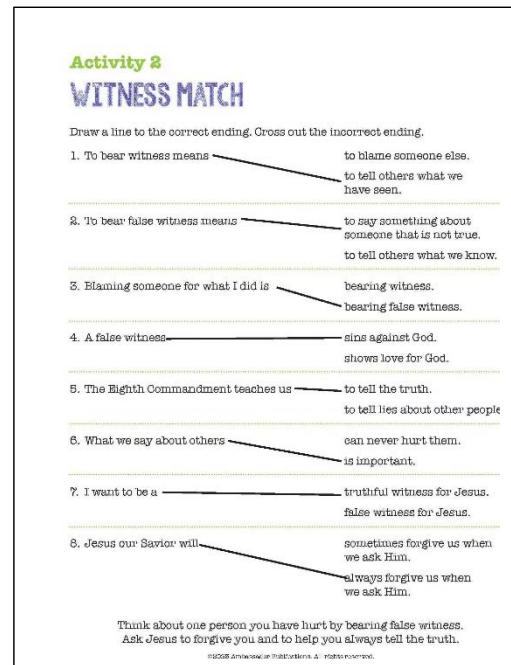
Men who lied about Stephen said that he was not telling the truth about God

Angry men gnashed their teeth and Would not listen.
stoned Stephen

Witness Match

Activity 2

Draw lines to the correct endings.



Activity 2
WITNESS MATCH

Draw a line to the correct ending. Cross out the incorrect ending.

- To bear witness means to tell others what we have seen.
to blame someone else.
to tell others what we have seen.
- To bear false witness means to tell others what we know.
to say something about someone that is not true.
to tell others what we know.
- Blaming someone for what I did is bearing false witness.
bearing witness.
bearing false witness.
- A false witness shows love for God.
sins against God.
shows love for God.
- The Eighth Commandment teaches us to tell the truth.
to tell lies about other people
to tell the truth.
- What we say about others is important.
can never hurt them.
is important.
- I want to be a truthful witness for Jesus.
truthful witness for Jesus.
false witness for Jesus.
- Jesus our Savior will always forgive us when we ask Him.
sometimes forgive us when we ask Him.
always forgive us when we ask Him.

Think about one person you have hurt by bearing false witness. Ask Jesus to forgive you and to help you always tell the truth.

©2008 Abingdon Press Publishers, A. 10000-10000

CLOSING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Closing Prayer

Ask about prayer requests. Allow students to pray if they choose. Allow time for silent prayer. Encourage students to bow their heads and close their eyes.

Additional Teaching Options

Hymns and Songs:

Additional activities for a multi-age class: