

Children of God

1

BIBLE PASSAGE: Romans 8:12-39

MAIN POINT: When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children.

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 5:17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 126



TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 128



APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 134



Leader BIBLE STUDY

Rome was one of the most important cities in Paul's day. Paul understood that it was essential that the church in the capital of the Roman Empire be anchored in the gospel. Unlike many of the other churches we read about in the New Testament, Paul didn't help plant the church in Rome; in fact, he hadn't even visited yet. Paul was planning his first visit to this important church when he wrote a letter to make sure the believers there properly understood the gospel.

The Book of Romans contains one of the clearest explanations of the gospel in the Bible. Paul opens his letter by explaining the sin problem that plagues us all. He

then moves on to share how Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection was sufficient to save people who trust in Jesus.

In Romans 5, people are described as helpless, ungodly, sinners, and enemies apart from Christ. Then, in chapter 8, Paul begins to show how having a relationship with Jesus changes us. He describes believers as children of God in Christ. That's quite a change!

The gospel doesn't just spare us from the ultimate consequences of our sin. The gospel doesn't just make us neutral to God. Because of the gospel, we are adopted by God and have the right and privilege to call God our loving Father. Being children of God means we have nothing to fear. Our relationship with God is secure for eternity.

As you share with your kids this week, be aware that some may not have good relationships with their fathers. Some may not have a father at all. Gently and lovingly explain that God is our perfect Father, a Father who is always there for us and who loves us unconditionally because of His Son, Jesus.



MINISTRY GRID
training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Make eye contact:**

Make eye contact with individuals as you tell the story to bring them in and provide a sense of belonging.

- **Display photos:**

Display photos of various families as you tell the story to enhance the image of being part of God's family.

Children of God

Romans 8:12-39

Paul, a leader and teacher in the early church, **wrote a letter to the believers in Rome.** Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire. Paul was planning to visit the believers there, and **he wanted to make sure they believed the right things about Jesus.**

Paul also wanted believers to remember how they should live. Paul wrote that when we trust in Jesus, **God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children. That changes everything about how we think and what we do.**

Paul explained that the Holy Spirit helps believers say no to sin, and He gives us power to live in a way that pleases God. The Holy Spirit makes us God's children! **We do not need to be afraid of God; He is like a Father. He loves us!**

God sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross. Jesus never sinned. He always did what was right, but He died the death we deserve for our sin. When we trust in Jesus, God the Father forgives our sins and treats us as His own children! That is what we are.

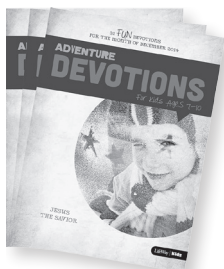
Because we are part of God's family, our future is incredibly bright. We may face problems and sufferings in this life, but God has wonderful blessings for us. **One day we will be with Him forever.**

Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit helps us when we are weak. He helps us pray when we don't know what words to say. He is changing us to be more like Jesus.

God the Father gave us the greatest gift—Jesus—and we know He will give us everything we need. God loves us, and nothing can separate us from His love. Death

cannot separate us from His love. Life cannot separate us from His love. No enemy power can separate us; nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus.

Christ Connection: God is changing believers to be more like Jesus. We are God's children—freed from sin, given power to do what is right, and adopted into God's family. Because Jesus died on the cross, God the Father welcomes us and promises a future with Him forever.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Introduce the STORY

SESSION TITLE: Children of God

BIBLE PASSAGE: Romans 8:12-39

MAIN POINT: When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children.

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 5:17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them about their families. Do they have siblings? Do they ever visit their grandparents? Be sensitive to kids whose home lives may be hard.

SAY • God gives us all kinds of families. Some families have lots of kids, and some only have one. Some families have lived all around the world, and others have all lived in one place. Today we will learn about what it means to be part of God's family.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "Word Search" activity page. Kids should find the words from the word box hidden in the grid of letters.

SAY • Great job finding those words! Each of the words you searched for was a key word that has something to do with our story today. What do you think words like *adopted*, *child*, *Jesus*, and *freedom* have in common? We'll learn more soon.

- "Word Search" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Story starters

Instruct the kids to sit in a circle on the floor. Choose one kid to start a story by saying an opening line such as, “Once upon a time, there was a boy with a helmet.” The next kid in the circle will add a line to the story, and so on until each kid has had a chance to add a line to the story.

SAY • That story started one way, but it quickly changed as people added to it. We don’t always have control over the direction our lives go, but today we will learn why we can trust God no matter what turns or twists our story takes.

OPTION 2: Family trees

Provide each kid with a pencil and a sheet of paper. Explain to the kids what a family tree is, and help them through the first few steps of making one for their family. If this is too difficult for your group, ask them to instead draw a picture of their family. Provide markers or crayons for kids to color their pictures.

SAY • No matter who we are, we all have some kind of family. Sometimes we get along well with our families, and sometimes we may argue or fight, but we all have families that God can use to teach us more about Him. Today we will learn about God’s family. No one is born into God’s family, but anyone can be adopted into it. How do you think we can be adopted into God’s family?



- pencils
- paper
- markers or crayons (optional)

Tip: For this exercise, as well as many in this session, be especially sensitive to kids who may be from difficult backgrounds or broken homes.

Transition to teach the story

Teach the STORY

SESSION TITLE: Children of God

BIBLE PASSAGE: Romans 8:12-39

MAIN POINT: When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children.

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 5:17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Decorate the room to look like a workshop for an inventor. Scatter materials around the stage, such as PVC pipes, old appliances, assorted wires, and duct tape. Place a toolbox on a table. You may display the theme background slide.

Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- power drill (adult use only)
- fork

[Leader enters wearing coveralls and a tool belt. He or she is wearing safety goggles and carrying a power drill with a fork in its tip instead of a drill bit.]

LEADER • Well hello, everyone! I didn't expect my workshop to be filled with kids today. Oh, don't get me wrong, I'm glad to have you here. I love to invent things, and it's great to have some company while I work.

One of my favorite parts about being an inventor is that I get to take old things and change them into new things with new purposes. Take this for example.

[*Display fork/drill hybrid.*] I took a regular drill and a regular fork and changed them to make a Pasta-Twirl 500. If you ever wondered, *Is there an easier way to twirl the noodles onto my fork?* Wonder no more! The answer is yes. Just stick the fork in the noodles and [*pressing drill trigger*] *twirl* the spaghetti. It works great with fettuccine and linguine too!

You know, it may sound silly, but thinking about changing some things into other things kind of reminds me of God. If you are confused, don't worry. We'll learn more here today!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • So, as I told you, inventors like me construct or change tools and appliances into new inventions to make life easier. But I have a big picture question for you: ***Who changes us?*** It's a tough one, but once we hear the Bible story, it will all start to make more sense.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

LEADER • [*Point to timeline.*] Ah! You've been learning about the problems facing the early church and how God led them through the apostles. Well, this week we will begin focusing on how we change after believing in Jesus. Our story today is called "Children of God."

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Romans 8:12-39. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the

• Bibles
• "Children of God" video
• Big Picture Question
Poster
• Bible Story Picture
Poster

story, or show the Bible story video “Children of God.”

LEADER • God’s Word is so amazing! God provides us with such comfort and knowledge through His Word. Today’s story is particularly amazing because it explains what happens to us when we believe in Jesus.

The Bible teaches that all people are born sinners, separated from God. In a way, we are like children who are lost and have no one to take care of us. This is very sad news. There is nothing we can do to remove our sin, but thankfully, there is someone who already defeated sin—Jesus!

Jesus came to earth to live a perfect life and die the death we deserve. When we believe in Jesus, God transforms our lives by giving us Jesus’ righteousness and sending the Holy Spirit to live in us. The Bible teaches that Christians are adopted into God’s family. That means that God becomes our Father, and He is a good and perfect Father, filled with love for us.

Let me say that again: **When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children.** Wow! That means that we are more than just forgiven, we are also given the power we need to live new lives as God’s children. As a result of God’s love and the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives, we go from being orphans to being children of God. So, *who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God’s glory.*

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • God is changing believers to be more like Jesus. We are God’s children—freed from sin, given power

to do what is right, and adopted into God's family.
Because Jesus died on the cross, God the Father
welcomes us and promises a future with Him forever.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 2 Corinthians 5:17.

- Key Passage Poster
- "New Creation" song

LEADER • Our key passage comes from 2 Corinthians.

The Corinthians had a lot of struggles as a church, but Paul wanted to remind them that they were not the same sinful people they were before believing in Christ. This is a great thing for us to learn today, too. When we become Christians by believing in Jesus, we are totally new creations! Our old self passes away and our new self comes!

Lead boys and girls in singing "New Creation."

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Everyone feels afraid sometimes. What are some things you might be afraid of? Think about that as you watch this video.

- "Unit 33, Session 1" discussion starter video

Show the "Unit 33, Session 1" discussion starter video. Discuss with the kids what the cupcakes were afraid of. What helped them calm down and overcome their fear? What kinds of things are we afraid of? How does having God as our Father calm our fears?

LEADER • Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins. As a result, God declares those who trust in Jesus as righteous and clean, as if we are without sin. God adopts us into His family. He sees us as He sees Jesus and loves us as His children. Nothing can separate us from His love. One day we will be with Him forever

in a new, perfected, and restored earth.

• “Our God Who
Changes Us” song

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • When we trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives in us and transforms our lives. Let’s sing a song of praise to our God who changes us.

Sing together “Our God Who Changes Us.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, it is so wonderful to know that we can call You that. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for us so that we can be adopted into Your family as sons and daughters. Help us to live transformed lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the STORY

SESSION TITLE: Children of God

BIBLE PASSAGE: Romans 8:12-39

MAIN POINT: When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children.

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 5:17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.

• Key Passage Poster

Tip: Consider looking up video tutorials online to incorporate sign language into the hand motions you develop.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

Work with the kids to develop hand motions to help them remember the key passage. Say the verse multiple times with the newly created hand motions. You may use the suggested motions below.

Suggested motions:

If anyone [*Move hand outward in front of you to indicate a crowd.*]

is in Christ [*Touch the middle finger of each hand to the center of the palm of the opposite hand.*]

he is a new creation; [*Hold up three fingers on each hand, move them in a circle at chest level, and then strike them together.*]

the old has passed away [*Hold your right hand palm up and your left hand palm down at hip height, then flip your hands to the left, switching which hand is palm up.*]

and see, the new has come! [*Hold your left hand with a slight curve in front of your chest. Use your right hand to scoop behind your left palm and lift it up to resemble a plant growing.*]

SAY • Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write these

words of our key passage. Paul was teaching the church in Corinth that their old sinful way of living was gone. When you trust Christ, you become a new person with a new heart. ***Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.***

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Form two teams. Give each team a miniature dry erase board and markers or a chalkboard and chalk. Ask questions aloud and give teammates time to work together to come up with an answer. Instruct each team to write its answers on its board. After a minute or so, count down from three and both teams will hold up their board to show their answer. You may keep track of right answers or award bonus points to teams who provide a Scripture reference where the answer is found.

If this game is too difficult for your group, or you have nonwriters, consider altering the activity to ask the kids questions one at a time while sitting in a circle, allowing them to answer verbally instead of writing.

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- mini dry erase boards or chalkboards
- markers or chalk

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Questions:

1. Who wrote the letter that we learned about today? (*the apostle Paul, Rom. 1:1*)
2. Whom was the letter written to? (*Christians living in Rome, Rom. 1:7*)
3. Who does God give us when we trust Jesus? (*the Holy Spirit, Rom. 8:15-16*)
4. What do we become when we trust Jesus? (*children of God, Rom. 8:14-15*)
5. ***Who changes us? The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God's glory.***

SAY • When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy

Spirit and makes us His children. We don't have to be afraid of God. Our Father loves and forgives us.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Family ties

Write different family members on index cards, such as *mother, father, brother, sister*, and so forth. Invite volunteers to come and draw a card. Kids must attempt to describe the person on the card without using proper nouns, synonyms or “rhymes-with” words.

For example, if a kid drew the card *grandfather* he could not say “another word for *grandpa*,” or “It rhymes with *and bother*.” He could say, “This person is married to your grandmother,” or “This person is your father/mother’s dad.”

SAY • Most of the time, when we talk about family members, we are speaking of people who live in the same house with us or are related to us by blood. But **when we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children.** If we all share one heavenly Father, that means we are all brothers and sisters in Christ! The family of God is all the people around the world who love Jesus and believe in Him for forgiveness of their sin. Just like our earthly family, the family of God is joined together by love and works together to help one another. We are all on mission together to glorify God and spread the gospel.

OPTION 2: Stronger than glue

Give each child two small plastic chips. Help the kids write their name or initials on one plastic chip and *God’s Love* on the other. Go around the room applying a small dot of

LOW PREP

- index cards
- pens

- small plastic chips
- non-toxic super glue
- cotton swabs
- acetone nail polish remover
- Allergy Alert download

non-toxic super glue. Instruct the kids to stick their two chips together. The glue will set almost instantly, making the chips nearly impossible to get apart.

If kids accidentally get their fingers stuck together, a small amount of acetone nail polish remover on a cotton swab should dissolve the glue and unstick fingers.

SAY • Super glue forms a very tight bond that can be nearly impossible to pull apart. Our Bible story today taught us that the bond between God and those who believe in Jesus is stronger than the strongest glue! The Bible says that nothing can separate us from God's love. **When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit and makes us His children.**

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.