

LESSON 2

Jesus' Followers Accept God's Gifts Through Faith



Accepting God's gift of grace and love is the foundation of our relationship with Jesus and the starting point of our friendship with God. Until we recognize that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and accept this incredible gift, we won't fully know what it means to be followers of God. The same goes for your kids. Accepting Jesus' gift is based on abstract faith, and for literal-minded and practical kids, this can be tough to grasp.

This lesson will give kids hands-on experiences in trusting and accepting unwarranted gifts so they can better grasp what God's done for them. By taking away confusing language and examining God's gift to us through a simple object lesson, you'll show kids how easy it is to become Jesus' followers. You can help kids embark on their relationship with Jesus and look to build on that foundation for the rest of their lives.

Scripture Foundation

JOHN 17:7-8

Jesus prays for his disciples.

EPHESIANS 2:4-9

Paul explains that we're saved by grace because of God's love.

THIS LESSON AT A GLANCE

SEQUENCE	EXPERIENCES	SUPPLIES
<p>SET THE FOUNDATION (about 10 minutes)</p>	<p><i>Grateful Gifts</i> Kids choose to accept or reject a gift based on its outward appearance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 mini or fun-size candy bar per child • fancy wrapping paper • small bow • transparent tape • scissors • pieces of scrap paper, each large enough to wrap a small candy bar • basket large enough to hold all the wrapped candy bars
<p>PRESENT THE BIBLE FOUNDATION (about 25 minutes)</p>	<p><i>Gift Wrap</i> Kids explore what Jesus says about God’s gifts to them as they respond to writing prompts and then gift wrap the message.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • several kid-friendly Bibles (preferably NLT) • 1 copy per child of the “Gift Box” handout (at the end of this lesson) • pens • 1 pair of scissors per child • transparent tape
<p>BUILD ON THE FOUNDATION (about 10 minutes)</p>	<p><i>Tie It With a Bow</i> Kids write on ribbon and then use the ribbon to decorate their gift boxes as they thank God for the gifts he gives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fine-tipped markers • curling ribbon, 3/8-inch size • 1 pair of scissors per child • transparent tape • reflective music and music player (optional)

Before the Lesson

SET THE FOUNDATION: GRATEFUL GIFTS— Wrap a mini or fun-size candy bar for each child. Neatly wrap one candy bar in fancy wrapping paper and add a bow. Wrap the rest of the candy bars individually inside scrunched-up pieces of scrap paper.

PRESENT THE BIBLE FOUNDATION: GIFT WRAP— Copy the “Gift Box” handout, enlarging it to 122 percent. Use card stock, if desired, or you can use regular paper.

BUILD ON THE FOUNDATION: TIE IT WITH A BOW— Cut the curling ribbon into 12-inch lengths. You’ll need five lengths per child.

Grateful Gifts

(about 10 minutes)

Welcome children, and have them sit in a circle.



See page 8.

ASK:

- Tell about the best gift you've ever received.

SAY:

Today I have a gift for each of you. It may not be the best gift you've ever received, but I chose these gifts with you in mind. You can decide whether to take the gift or not; it's up to you.

Show kids the gift wrapped in fancy paper and then all the other gifts wrapped in scrap paper, and then place all the gifts in a basket.

ASK:

- Explain which gift you'd prefer—and why.

Offer a gift from the basket to each child one at a time, including the nicely wrapped gift. As you do, remind kids that you chose the gifts for them and you think the gifts are special. Allow each child the option to choose to accept or reject the gift, and then move on to the next child. After offering a gift to everyone, let the kids who chose to accept a gift unwrap theirs.

ASK:

- Explain what it was like to accept your gift based on its outward appearance.
- Now that you know what the gift is, explain whether you wish you'd chosen differently.

Let kids who didn't accept a gift take one, and then have everyone enjoy their treats together.

SAY:

When you couldn't tell what the gift was based on its wrapping, you had to trust me when I told you you'd like it. God has gifts for you, too.

And just as you had to trust me that my gifts were good, the Bible tells us to trust God and accept his gifts through faith. Let's learn more about what the Bible says about God's gifts for us.

PRESENT THE BIBLE FOUNDATION

Gift Wrap

(about 25 minutes)

SAY:

One place the Bible talks about the gifts God has for us is in a prayer from Jesus. Let's check it out.

Read aloud John 17:7-8.

While praying, Jesus told God that his disciples knew that everything Jesus had was a gift from God.

ASK:

- Explain what gifts you think Jesus is talking about in this passage.
- Why do you think it's important that Jesus told his disciples about his gifts from God?

Then read Ephesians 2:4-9 aloud to the kids.

ASK:

- Describe some gifts God has given you.
- According to this passage, why do you think Jesus gave these gifts to you?

SAY:

Let's think some more about what these verses mean.

Encourage kids to spread out around the room. Give each child scissors, a pen, and a copy of the "Gift Box" handout. Instruct kids to carefully cut out the gift box on the solid lines.

Ask kids to spend time thinking about each phrase on the handout and then write down a short phrase based on what they've learned from the verses and what they know about God through their relationship with him. Be ready with examples for each phrase. Encourage kids to look back at Scriptures discussed in their Bibles if they need more direction.

After a few minutes, gather kids back together and demonstrate how to create the finished gift box. Make a crease along each dashed line, and then show kids how to tape each small folded lip to the back of the unattached square next to it so the words face inward. Continue taping each section until you've created a cube minus the bottom of the box. (The bottom remains open so kids can look inside and remember what they wrote in response to these verses.)

ASK:

- **What kinds of things did you write about on your gift box?**
- **Explain why you have or haven't accepted these gifts God has for you.**

SAY:

God's greatest gift to us is his Son, Jesus. God sent Jesus as a gift to us—to die for us—so we can be free of sin and death forever. When we believe that Jesus died on the cross for us and accept God's incredible gift, we become followers of God. We can accept God's gifts through faith. Let's thank God for his amazing gifts to us.

BUILD ON THE FOUNDATION

Tie It With a Bow

(about 10 minutes)

Give each child a fine-tipped marker and five strips of curling ribbon.

SAY:

Jesus is God's greatest gift to us. To follow Jesus, we have to accept this amazing gift through faith.

ASK:

• **Describe other gifts God has given us.** (Along with practical necessities, encourage kids to think about the spiritual gifts God's given them, such as love, joy, and peace.)

Ask kids to write one gift God has given them on each strip of the curling ribbon. Allow time.

Then show kids how to carefully run a ribbon along the sharpened edge of open scissors. Explain to kids that they'll curl each one of their ribbons. As they curl each ribbon, encourage kids to silently say, "God, thank you for the gift of [name what's written on the ribbon]." You may want to quietly play reflective music in the background while kids talk to God.

Give kids tape. Ask kids to continue to talk privately to God as they tape each ribbon to the top of their gift boxes from the previously activity. As they tape each ribbon, encourage kids to silently say, "God I accept your gift of...[name what's written on the ribbon]."

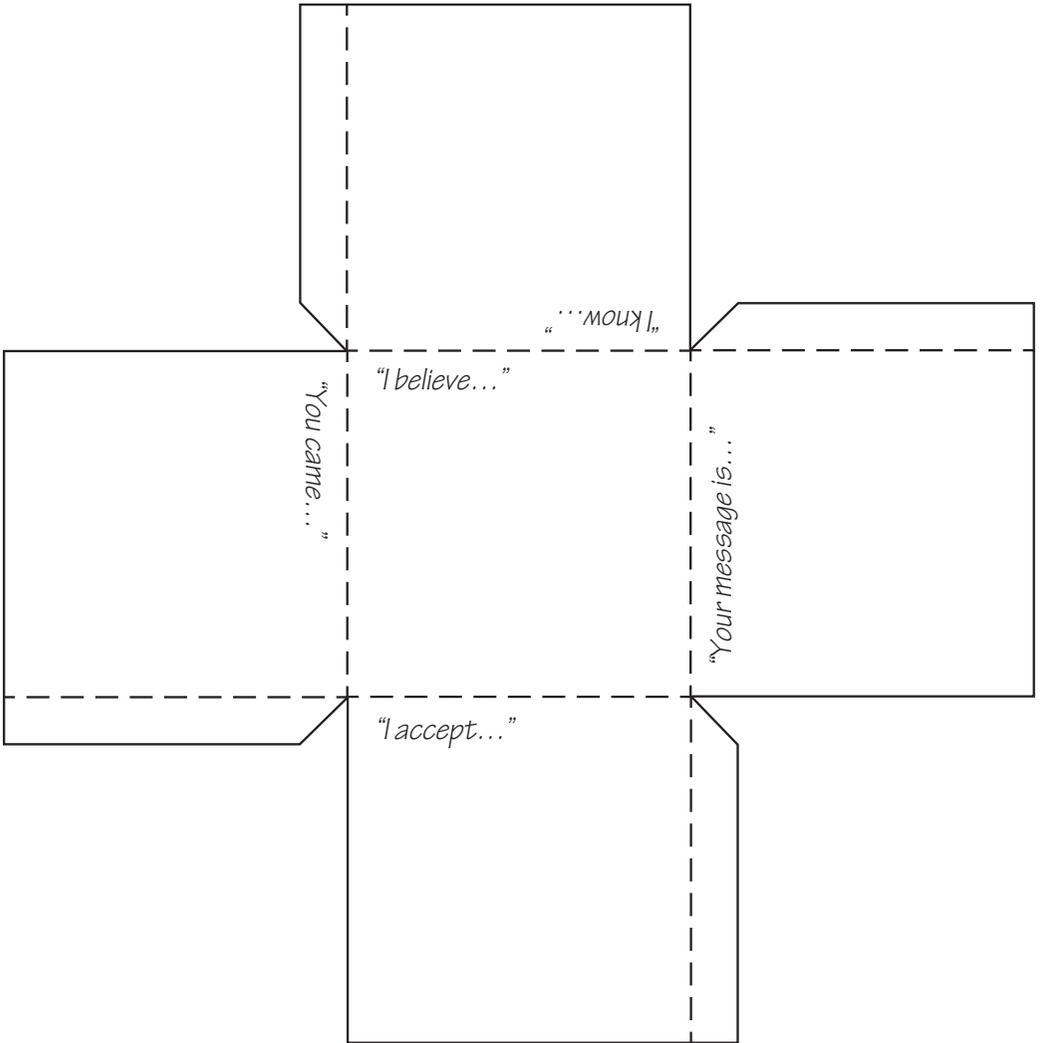
PRAY:

Dear God, you've given us more than we can ever understand or deserve. Help us to accept through faith the gift of Jesus' sacrifice and every other good and perfect gift you give us. Thank you for loving us! In Jesus' name, amen.

LEADER TIP

Kids may want to accept God's gift of Jesus' sacrifice as a result of this lesson. If you have a child who shows interest or has questions, talk with the child and follow your ministry's guidelines for walking a child through this life-changing commitment.

GIFT BOX



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