

ACHAN'S SIN AND THE DEFEAT OF AI

JOSHUA 7-8



CHRIST CONNECTION: Achan disobeyed God and was punished. Because we sin, we deserve to be punished. Jesus came to take the punishment for us. God forgives us when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Jesus.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful.

KEY PASSAGE: Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty. Psalm 24:8

STORY POINT: God wants us to obey Him.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Joshua's account of Achan's sin and Ai's defeat serves as a "part two" of the Israelites' time in Jericho. Immediately following Israel's victory over Jericho, we read of disobedience and God's declaration to no longer be with Israel unless they removed what was set apart for Him (Joshua 7:12). God demonstrated His holiness by punishing sin, and through this story, we see the reality of God's judgment and our need for a Savior.

What does this passage teach us about God? How do we see God's faithful deliverance in this story despite His people's sin?

First, we witness God's justice and holiness in this passage. Before entering Jericho, God gave His people these instructions: "But keep yourselves from the things set apart, or you will be set apart for destruction. If you take any of those things, you will set apart the camp of Israel for destruction and make trouble for it" (Joshua 6:18). God had already spoken about the consequences of disobedience. Because He is holy and likewise calls His people to pursue holiness, the Israelites were to purge the sin from among them.

The Lord had promised victory to His people if they would walk in His ways. The Israelites, however, were unfaithful regarding God's command to set Jericho's spoils apart for destruction. Sadly, their disobedience led to punishment.

Lead boys and girls to see that this story does not end with dismal destruction; rather, we see the Lord faithfully keep His promise to deliver His people from their enemies. God set Achan apart for destruction, just as He said He would. Destruction, however, does not have to be our end. By placing faith in Jesus, the punishment we deserve has been placed on God's Son instead. Remind kids of God's faithfulness in providing a sacrifice on our behalf and an eternal victory secured in His Son—a victory that transforms hearts and frees people from the destruction they deserve.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach;
plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet
preschoolers and
open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach
preschoolers the
story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers
to love the God
of the gospel

30–40
MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers
to live the mission
of the gospel



BONUS

60–65 MINUTES

Teach
preschoolers for an
additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Complete the puzzle

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster, 2
- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster



LEARN

Tell the Bible story

- ☐ "Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai" video (optional)

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Find silver and gold coins

- ☐ large plastic container
- ☐ sand
- ☐ play coins
- ☐ sand toys (shovels, rakes, etc.)
- ☐ art smocks

Build with interlocking blocks

- ☐ interlocking blocks
- ☐ people figures



LIVE

Create with glitter

- ☐ silver and gold glitter
- ☐ small plastic bin
- ☐ art smocks
- ☐ "Key Passage Phrase Labels" printable

Missions Activity

- ☐ "Singing His Praises" missions video

Snack and Transition

- ☐ hand sanitizer (optional)
- ☐ "Cross Out What Achan Kept" activity page, 1 per child
- ☐ Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Find gold

- ☐ gold bead necklaces, 1 per child

Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker

Hide people figures

- ☐ people figures

Sort plastic jewels

- ☐ plastic jewels



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

COMPLETE THE PUZZLE

Print two copies of the Bible Story Picture Poster. Cut one poster into a simple puzzle. Place the other Bible Story Picture Poster on a table inside the classroom. Post the Big Picture Question and Answer Poster near the entrance to the classroom. Greet preschoolers as they enter the classroom and point out the Big Picture Question and Answer Poster. Hand preschoolers a puzzle piece as they enter the classroom and encourage them to add it to the puzzle. Once the puzzle is complete, remove the pieces for the next preschoolers who arrive.

SAY I am so glad that you are at church today. Our big picture question asks, Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful. We are completing a puzzle in our class today. Can you add this puzzle piece to our puzzle? It is a picture of Achan hiding treasures that he took. Achan disobeyed God. **GOD WANTS US TO OBEY HIM.** Achan disobeyed God and was punished. Because we sin, we deserve to be punished. Jesus came to take the punishment for us. God is faithful to forgive us when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Jesus.

Worship songs
* Praise the Lord
* Declare His Glory

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 PRETEND TO HIDE

Invite preschoolers to pretend to hide as they come to group time. Demonstrate how to quietly crouch down and cover their heads with their arms, peeking out to see if anyone is watching.

SAY “We pretended to hide. Some of the soldiers in our Bible story hid as well. The people listened to God and made a plan to trick their enemies. Some of the army pretended to run away, and some of the army hid.”



2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY video

Open you Bible to Joshua 7–8. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

ACHAN'S SIN AND THE DEFEAT OF AI

SAY “Joshua and the Israelites were in the Promised Land. They won a battle against Jericho, but there was a problem. God’s people did not do what God said. God had told His people that they should keep some things for God and get rid of everything else. The people kept some of the things they were not supposed to.

So, God did not help His people take over the city of Ai. The Israelites lost the battle.

Joshua was sad. He did not understand why they lost. But God told him it was because the people disobeyed. A man named Achan took things he should not have, like a pretty coat and shiny silver and gold. Achan admitted he did wrong, and he and his family were punished.

Then God said the people could battle against Ai again. This time, the people listened to God. They made a plan to trick their enemies. Some of the army pretended to run away, and some of the army hid. When the people of Ai chased after them, the hidden soldiers came out and took over the city!

After the battle, Joshua thanked God. The Israelites made a special place to worship God. They followed His rules and learned that disobeying God has consequences. God forgives us when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Jesus.”

Christ Connection: Achan disobeyed God and was punished. Because we sin, we deserve to be punished. Jesus came to take the punishment for us. God forgives us when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Jesus.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Ask preschoolers how they think different people in the Bible story felt. Invite preschoolers to make each expression with their faces as they answer. Review different people such as: Joshua and the people when they lost the first battle; Achan when he hid the silver and gold; the soldiers when they won the second battle; and the people when they made a special place to worship God.

SAY “ You showed how the people may have felt in the Bible story. The people learned that **GOD WANTS US TO OBEY HIM**. They learned the disobeying God has consequences. God forgives us when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Jesus. ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow”:

Who is the King of Glory?
Who is the King of Glory?
Who is the King of Glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty.

* “Strong and Mighty” worship song

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

* Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 24:8. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Say the key passage phrase together several times as you pretend to wear a crown on your head.

SAY “ The LORD is the King of glory. He is strong and mighty. **GOD WANTS US TO OBEY HIM**. Joshua and the people learned that disobeying God has consequences. God forgives us when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Jesus. ”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for forgiving us when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Jesus.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 PLAY OUT CHOICES



Invite preschoolers to help you play out different scenarios choosing to obey or disobey what God has said. Sample scenarios: taking a toy from a friend, hiding something they are not supposed to have, knocking over a friend's block tower, helping clean up toys, or caring for a friend who is hurt. Demonstrate for preschoolers how to play out each scenario. Lead the group to give a thumbs up or thumbs down to indicate whether the actions were obeying or disobeying what God has said.

SAY 📖 **GOD'S WANTS US TO OBEY HIM.** We can choose to obey or disobey God every day. After the battle against Jericho, God told His people that they should keep some things for God and get rid of everything else. The people did not do what God said. A man named Achan took things, like a pretty coat and gold and silver. God's people lost the battle against Ai because the people disobeyed. Achan disobeyed God and was punished. Because we sin, we deserve to be punished. Jesus came to take the punishment for us. God forgives us when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Jesus.

2 FIND SILVER AND GOLD COINS

Fill a large plastic container about $\frac{1}{3}$ full with sand. Bury coins in the sand. Place the sieves, shovels, and rakes near the container of sand. Invite preschoolers to use the sand tools to find the coins buried in the sand. Once all the coins have been found, encourage preschoolers to bury them again for others to find.

SAY 📖 You found the coins that had been buried in the sand. The Bible says that Achan hid a beautiful coat and shiny silver and gold that he had taken. God had told him to get rid of everything. Achan admitted he did wrong and that he had disobeyed God. He and his family were punished. Because we sin, we deserve to be punished. Jesus came to take the punishment for us.

3 BUILD WITH INTERLOCKING BLOCKS

Place the interlocking blocks and people figures on the floor or low table. Invite preschoolers to build a place that people can go to worship God. Tell preschoolers that we can worship God anywhere. Encourage preschoolers to add the people figures to the structure they created.

SAY 📖 We can worship God anywhere, but sometimes we go to a special place to worship God. The Israelites made a special place to worship God after a battle they won. The second time Joshua and God's people battled against Ai, they listened to God. God's people won the battle. After the battle, Joshua thanked God. The people followed God's rules and learned that disobeying God has consequences.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 CREATE WITH GLITTER

Place the construction paper, glue, glitter, shallow pan, and key passage phrase labels on the table. Place a piece of construction paper in the shallow pan. Invite a preschooler to make a design on his paper with the glue. Demonstrate how to shake the glitter over the glue. Shake the excess glitter off into the shallow pan. Encourage the child to attach a key passage phrase label to his artwork.

SAY “ You created a beautiful picture with the gold and silver glitter. It reminds me of the gold and silver that Achan took. Achan disobeyed God. **GOD WANTS US TO OBEY HIM.** When we obey God, we are showing that we trust Him. Our big picture question asks, **Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful.** ”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Show the “Singing His Praises” missions video.

SAY “ A South Asian woman carried her water pitcher to the village well to get water. The woman and six other women gathered around the well. These women listened to Bible stories from missionaries Brooks and Julia West. Missionaries like the Wests are helping people hear Bible stories in their language by giving them special phone cards with recorded Bible stories. Missionaries also use music to tell people about Jesus. **[Lead a prayer.]** ”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION

Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “ Achan disobeyed God and was punished. Because we sin, we deserve to be punished. Jesus came to take the punishment for us. God forgives us when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Jesus. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 FIND GOLD

Place bead necklaces around the classroom. Encourage preschoolers to find a necklace and bring it to group time. Assist preschoolers as needed so that everyone is able to bring a necklace to the group. Tell preschoolers about a man named Achan who took shiny silver and gold that he should not have taken.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Joshua 7–8. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

ACHAN'S SIN AND THE DEFEAT OF AI

- After the battle of Jericho, Joshua and the Israelites battled at Ai. But they lost the battle!
- Joshua was sad. He did not understand why they lost. God told him a man named Achan took things he should have gotten rid of, like a pretty coat and shiny silver and gold. Achan admitted he did wrong, and he and his family were punished.
- Then God said the people could go to battle again. This time, the people listened to God. They outsmarted their enemies to win. Some of the army pretended to run away, and some of the army hid. When the people of Ai chased after them, the hidden soldiers came out and took over the city!
- Joshua thanked God, and the Israelites made a special place to worship God.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow”:

Who is the King of Glory?
Who is the King of Glory?
Who is the King of Glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty.

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 24:8. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Say the key passage phrase together once. Next, lead the boys to ask the question, “Who is the King of glory?” Lead the girls to respond, “The LORD, strong and mighty.” Repeat the key passage phrase several times, then switch which group asks the question and which group answers.

5 PRAY

Pray, asking God to help us obey Him even when it’s hard.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 DISCOVER WHAT'S MISSING

Gather classroom materials such as a block, marker, baby doll, Bible, and glue stick. Place three of the items on the table. Encourage preschoolers to study and try and remember what is on the table. Direct preschoolers to turn around so they cannot see you as you remove one of the items. Encourage them to turn back around and guess what is missing. Play several rounds of the game. Allow preschoolers to take turns removing the items. For an added challenge, place more than three items on the table to start, or remove more than one item at time.

SAY “ You did a good job discovering what was missing. I hid items from you each time. The Bible says that Achan hid a beautiful coat and silver and gold that he had taken. God had told the people to keep some things for God and get rid of everything else. **GOD WANTS US TO OBEY HIM.** Achan disobeyed God and was punished. Because we sin, we deserve to be punished. Jesus came to take the punishment for us. God forgives us when we are sorry for our sin and trust in Jesus. ”

7 HIDE PEOPLE FIGURES

Encourage preschoolers to help you hide several people figures throughout the classroom. Once the people figures are hidden, invite preschoolers to help you find them again. Play several rounds so that everyone has an opportunity to hide and find the people figures.

SAY “ The first time God’s people battled against Ai, they lost. The people did not listen to God. They disobeyed Him. **GOD WANTS US TO OBEY HIM.** The second time God’s people battled against Ai, they listened to God. They made a plan to outsmart their enemies. Some of the army pretended to run away, and some of the army hid. When the people of Ai chased after them, the hidden soldiers came out and took over the city. After the battle, Joshua thanked God and the people made a special place to worship God. ”

8 SORT PLASTIC JEWELS

Place the plastic jewels and colored construction paper on the table. Invite preschoolers to sort the jewels by color, placing each jewel on the matching piece of colored construction paper. Once all the jewels have been sorted, mix them together again for another preschooler to sort.

SAY “ You sorted the jewels into different groups based on their color. Jewels can be a special treasure. After the battle against Jericho, God told the people to keep some of the special treasures for God and to get rid of everything else, but the people kept some of the things they were not supposed to. The people disobeyed God. **GOD WANTS US TO OBEY HIM.** ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.