

UNIT 14 | SESSION 4

WE ARE TO REPENT OF SIN

MATTHEW 3

KEY PASSAGE:

Acts 3:19

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

John called people to repent. When we realize that our sin deserves God's punishment and trust in Jesus to save us, we can turn from our sins and live for Jesus. Jesus changes our hearts so we can love God and people.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

The popularity of true crime shows reveals something interesting about people. Whether it be a television show, a streaming series, or a podcast, audiences love a good thrilling episode that takes you on a journey from the mind-captivating details of a crime, through the exploration of the evidence, to the identification of a suspect, and concluding with the resolution of who did it, how they did it, and whether or not they are found guilty.

One shared characteristic between each story is this: there is no case if there is no evidence. Evidence is everything to making a determination about a suspect and building a case.

When it comes to repentance, we understand from this biblical word and its contexts throughout Scripture that it requires both an internal and external turning from sin and movement toward God. Repentance is something that takes place inside someone’s heart and mind while also bringing visible evidence of sorrow about sin and the desire to change.

Matthew 3 contains a subtle but direct indication that true repentance always produces evidence of change. Matthew 3:10 says, “Therefore, every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be cut down and

thrown into the fire.”

Just two verses earlier, Matthew warned the Pharisees and Sadducees to produce fruit consistent with repentance. And all of this seems to indicate that there is something that happens in the life of someone who is repentant that is visible to those around him. Where there is true repentance, there is always evidence.

We cannot see the thoughts and intentions of the heart; however, we can look for evidence of repentance. What begins in the heart will certainly impact the life of the believer. When this happens, it becomes visible that change has occurred.

Take time this week to ask the hard question of whether or not there is fruit, or evidence, of repentance in your own life. Has the change of heart that repentance begins led to visible change in your life?

If so, find great confidence in the grace of God that led you to repentance. And if not, ask the Lord to help you understand why.

VERSES TO KNOW

Acts 17:30-31: “Having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed.”



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “ If you had a very important message to tell people, how would you get them to listen to you? How would you feel if people didn’t listen to your message? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “John’s Message” on the activity page.

SAY “ John the Baptist had a very important message to tell people. The prophet Isaiah even prophesied that John would bring this message to the people. John called the people to repent to prepare them for the saving work of Jesus Christ. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: RECOGNIZE THE VOICE



Guide all kids to sit in a circle. Explain that when everyone’s eyes are closed, you will tap on someone’s shoulder. The person who gets tapped should shout, “Repent!” Everyone will then open their eyes and guess who said “Repent.” Once the group guesses the correct speaker, the speaker will become the one to tap the next kid on the shoulder. Direct everyone to close their eyes and start a new round. Continue until every kid has a turn to say “Repent.”

SAY “ The prophet Isaiah foretold a man who would get people ready for Jesus to come. Isaiah called him ‘a voice in the wilderness.’ Some people recognized the man Isaiah foretold when he started proclaiming a message of repentance, but others did not recognize his voice. ”

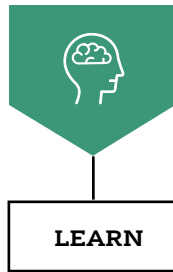
OPTION 2: WILDERNESS SURVIVAL GUIDE

Form kids into groups of three or four. Distribute paper and pencils to each group. Guide kids to plan a wilderness survival guide. Lead kids to think about what they might need if they were stuck in a mountainous wilderness for three days.

Ask kids what they would expect to see and what they would eat. Throw in a couple of challenge questions, such as, what would they do if a storm popped up? Or what would they do if they saw a bear? When each group has finished writing their answers, go around the room and encourage groups to share their survival guides.

SAY “ The prophet in today’s Bible story, John the Baptist, was called ‘a voice in the wilderness.’ He lived in the wild, just like Isaiah foretold, and ate locusts and honey. John told people to repent because Jesus was coming. ”





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi, everyone! I’m so happy you are here! Who brought their Bibles with them today? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] The Bible is full of historical events, narrations, and poetry. More than that, though, the Bible is God’s Word. Whether we read a poem from Psalms, wise teaching from the prophet Zephaniah, or a story from Matthew, God uses it to teach us about who He is.

The Bible also helps us to know how we should respond because of who God is. God’s holy character cannot tolerate sin. Therefore, our response to our sin against a holy God should be repentance. In today’s Bible story, we will learn that all people should respond to God with a repentant heart. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

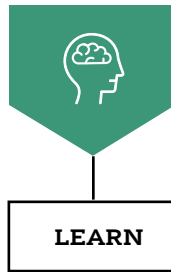
SAY “ We have learned that God is holy, just, and merciful. Because God is holy, He cannot allow sin into His presence. Because God is just, He judges sin. Because God is merciful, He created a plan to save us from sin, if we repent. **What is repentance?** [Allow kids to respond.] **Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.**

Let’s repeat our big picture question and answer one more time. **What is repentance?** **Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.** ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ The prophets Isaiah and Zephaniah foretold God’s judgment when the people of Judah turned away from God and turned to worship idols. But, they also gave a message of hope. God promised to save His people when they repented from their sin and lived by faith in the coming Savior. At the perfect time, God would send His Son, Jesus, to save us from our sin so we could live with God forever. In today’s Bible story, John the Baptist prepared the people for the arrival of Jesus through a message of repentance. ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 3. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “We Are to Repent of Sin.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

WE ARE TO REPENT OF SIN

“ Around the time Jesus came into the world, a baby named John was born. John was Jesus’ cousin. When John grew up, he lived in the wilderness, eating locusts and wild honey. John wore clothes made out of camel’s hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist.

John brought a message to the people in Judea: “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!”

People from Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the area of the Jordan were going to John. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

One day, John looked up and saw religious leaders coming toward him. He spoke up, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you that God’s wrath is coming? Show that you really do want to turn from your sins. Being part of Abraham’s family will not save you.”

John explained, “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

Christ Connection: John called people to repent. When we realize that our sin deserves God’s punishment and trust in Jesus to save us, we can turn from our sins and live for Jesus. Jesus changes our hearts so we can love God and people. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Dress as John the Baptist: Wear clothes that resemble the description of John the Baptist such as fur and a leather belt.

Write key points: Use a dry erase board or poster board to write the key points of John’s message. Examples to include: *Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near; Being part of Abraham’s family will not save you; The one who is coming after me is more powerful than I; etc.*



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ God gave John the Baptist an important message. John told everyone that Jesus, the One Isaiah and Zephaniah had foretold, was finally coming! Like Isaiah and Zephaniah, John warned the people to repent from their sin and turn back to God.

Is there anyone that does not need to repent? [Allow responses.] No, we all sin. Only Jesus lived a perfect life without sin. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matt. 3:9.] The Pharisees and Sadducees thought they would not be judged for their sin. The Pharisees and Sadducees looked really good on the outside. They taught the Jews about God’s Law and even made up extra rules for people to follow. However, God wanted the Pharisees and Sadducees to repent of their sins and love God with all their hearts. John explained that they would act differently when they truly repented.

Why is Jesus more powerful than John the Baptist? [Allow responses.] Only Jesus is able to save us from our sins. He gives us the Holy Spirit when we repent and turn to Him in faith. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matt. 3:11.] John baptized people with water to symbolize repentance, but Jesus will give people the Holy Spirit when they repent of their sin and turn to Him in belief.

Jesus also holds the power to judge sin. John had an important job in teaching God’s people to repent. However, God gave Jesus the bigger job of judging sin. Only someone holy and just, like Jesus, could judge sin. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ John called people to repent. When we realize that our sin deserves God’s punishment and trust in Jesus to save us, we can turn from our sins and live for Jesus. Jesus changes our hearts so we can love God and people. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 14, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Do you need to say sorry if you’re really not?
2. What does it look like to confess your sin?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the photo of Adoniram Judson.

SAY “ Adoniram Judson’s first wife, Ann, became sick and died while they were serving in Burma. The Judsons also had three children die while they were in Burma. Still, the Judsons continued to tell others about Jesus during their sad times, illnesses, and disappointments. Today, missionaries face these same challenges. However, missionaries are willing to go through hard times so that others



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

| can hear about Jesus. ”

Explain that many people in Myanmar became believers in Jesus due to the work of the Judsons so long ago. Judson’s work of translating the Bible into the Burmese language helped future missionaries continue the work that the Judsons started. Pray, thanking God for the important work they did to help future missionaries tell others about Jesus in Myanmar.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Acts 3:19 together.

SAY “ God loves us so much that He will forgive us if we truly repent. If we ever get turned around and disobey God, it is never too late to repent. ”

Write each word of the key passage on a separate sheet of paper. Tape the pieces of paper to a wall in a random order. Direct the kids to start in one corner of the room. When you say “Go,” guide them to find the first word of the verse on the wall, touch it, and run back to the corner. Lead them to continue searching the room for the next word until they have completed the key passage.

Lead kids to sing “Repentance (Acts 3:19).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ God, thank You for teaching us how to repent. Thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to save us from our sin. Help us remember to that a truly repentant heart desires to live for Your glory. Amen. ”

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

