

# WEEK 2

## GOD RESTORES RELATIONSHIPS

### GOD RESTORES OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

#### ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

## THE FOUR KEYS . . .

### KEY VERSE

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7

### KEY IDEAS

1. Sin destroys relationships with others.
2. Through Jesus we can be reconciled to others.
3. The gospel changes our heart and mind toward others.

### KEY PASSAGE

Matthew 18:15-20

### KEY PRINCIPLES



#### EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW . . .

sin causes division and hurts our relationship with others but through Jesus we can be healed and restored.



#### EVERY CHILD SHOULD FEEL . . .

glad that broken relationships can be mended when we rely on Jesus for help.



#### EVERY CHILD SHOULD BE ABLE TO . . .

practice Biblical reconciliation.



#### EVERY CHILD SHOULD WANT . . .

to forgive as they have been forgiven.

# INTRODUCTION

Relationships can sometimes be hard because we are all sinners by nature. There will be times in life when things go wrong and we let others down or they let us down. This can lead to arguments and disagreements, and it can be difficult to get back on track and forgive one another. But God has a plan for repairing broken relationships. God desires for us to work hard to be peacemakers and be unified in Him. It's especially important for the Church, the people of God, to be unified so that the world might come to know His love for them. The Bible gives us a model for what we should do when we have conflicts with others. The first step should be to communicate with the one who hurt us or the one we hurt. Sometimes that doesn't resolve the conflict, and we need to go another step further by bringing in a trusted helper. This might be a friend, parent, or pastor. If that still doesn't resolve the conflict, sometimes we have to have boundaries to help us live at peace, but this should always be done in love with the hope that one day our conflict can be resolved.

## OPENING ILLUSTRATION

Begin class by showing pictures of different famous bridges. Ask, "What is the purpose of a bridge? A bridge helps connect two opposite pieces of land that have a space between them. Bridges have to be built, right? They don't just appear because we need them to. It's the same way with our relationships with one another. Sometimes we sin against one another and it can create a space between us, a conflict. It can cause us to not want to talk or be around each other. But God calls us to be peacemakers. Think of that like a bridge builder. If we want our relationships to be restored, we have to recognize where we went wrong and ask for forgiveness or if we've been hurt, we have to be willing to forgive others, right?" Jesus is the ultimate peacemaker and bridge builder because He made a way to bridge the gap between us and God. Because we have been forgiven, we should want to do the same for others, too.

## KEY IDEAS

Read Matthew 18:15-20. Then use the following points for guided discussion.

- Sin destroys relationships.
  - How does sin destroy relationships? Our sin causes us to be separated from God. When we are not at peace with God, we are not at peace within our hearts. When we have conflicts within ourselves, that can sometimes be shown outwardly by how we treat other people. (James 4:1)
  - Is it hard to talk to someone who has done something wrong to you? What might help you do that better?
- Through Jesus we can be reconciled to others.
  - What should the conversation look like? Try "I'm sorry for \_\_\_\_\_. You hurt me when \_\_\_\_\_." Sometimes we might not think that we have done as much wrong as the other person, but in almost all conflicts, there is something we can apologize for. Even if you have only hurt the other person 10% and they hurt you 90%, you can own up to your 10% first. Sometimes our 10% might even be our bitter hearts and lack of willingness to forgive. When we approach others with a humble heart, offering our apologies first, it is much easier to find resolution. (Matt. 7:3-5)
  - Are relationships always reconciled? True reconciliation takes both people being willing to forgive and make peace, and that does not always happen. Even when we follow Jesus's model, sometimes the other person is not willing to repent or offer forgiveness. Forgiveness does not always mean a relationship is restored but it does mean that we give up our desire for revenge and we do not hold bitterness in our heart. Sometimes we still have to put boundaries in place for protection, but we can always pray for the other person to surrender their heart to the Lord. We must first be at peace with God before we can be at peace with others.
- The gospel changes our heart and mind toward others.
  - How does the gospel change our heart and mind? It helps us see that we should treat others as we desire to be treated. Jesus himself came not to be served, but to serve and give His life. As Christians, we should desire to be like Jesus, serving others with a glad and sincere heart. It also helps us look past small offenses whenever we can, particularly when we know the other person meant no harm. (Matt. 7:12, Phil. 2:3, Matt. 20:28, Rom. 12:18, Prov. 19:11, James 1:19-20)

## Activity

Have two volunteers stand against opposing walls facing one another. Instruct them to reach their arms out and try to touch the other person without leaving the wall they are on. When they can't, advise them to recruit help from the rest of the class to form a bridge that will reach all the way across the room. When the bridge is formed, explain that sometimes we have to have help when there are conflicts that separate us. This is one reason why the church is so important because we can remind one another of how we are to live as Christians and help find our common ground that unites us in Jesus. When we live in community together, we can help one another as we try to glorify God with our lives.

## Prayer

Thank God that He restores our relationship to Himself in Jesus and because of Him, we can have relationships with others restored, too. Thank God for giving us a model to help us be unified. Ask God to help you practice restoring relationships with those who have hurt you and offering forgiveness just as He has offered you forgiveness.

# FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

## ACTIVITY

Memorize the key verse 1 John 1:7.

Take time this week talking with your child about how our sin distorts our view of others. Use a pair of sunglasses and some plastic wrap to illustrate the idea. First, allow your child to wear the sunglasses as normal. What do they see? Next, wrap the sunglasses in plastic wrap and give them back to your child. Now, what do they see? Discuss the differences in what they see with and without the plastic wrap.

Lead them in a discussion using the questions below about how our sin distorts our view of others.

## DISCUSSION

- Think of a time when sin has distorted your view of someone else. (An example could be when our frustration with our parents for not giving us something we want could cause us to feel like they don't care for us and therefore act out in anger.) Share an example with your child from your own life and ask them to share an example with you.
- How should we see others? When we have saving faith in Jesus, we can see others with grace and mercy because we understand the grace and mercy that has been shown to us.
- What is the Biblical model for restoring relationships? (Refer back to Matt. 18:15-20 and the lesson)
- Who in your life do you need to practice the Biblical model of restoration with?

## PRAYER

Thank God that He sent Jesus to be our bridge, offering us restoration to Him through faith in Jesus. Thank Him that He is a God who desires us to be in harmony and peace with one another and that He is the way to that. Thank Him for giving us a model to help restore relationships with one another. Ask Him to help you see others through His eyes to offer grace and mercy whenever possible.