

To the Teacher

The information below is to help you in teaching the lesson. DO NOT read this page to the students. Instead, teach the information in your own words. Be sure to finish the student's lesson as well. The Scripture references in parentheses are for additional study, to round out the information given in the lesson. Become familiar with these passages as well, to provide additional Scriptures to your students.

Lesson 1 – God, Our Father (Teacher's Lesson)

Opening: Discuss several memories that the people in the group have of their earthly parents. As a group, present some words or phrases that describe the ideal father. Point out that the Bible often refers to God as our Father. God specifically chose this image to teach us about Himself. Explain that you will explore some Scriptures that will describe God as Father to help us understand a little more of who He is.

Study Notes:

Deuteronomy 1:30-31

This passage refers to a time in Israel's history when the people were at the border of Canaan, ready to enter. Moses reminds the people how God cared for them in Egypt and in the desert, protecting and providing for them. God fought against the Egyptians with plagues (Exodus 7:14-11:10) and the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14). He provided for the Israelites sending them manna (Exodus 16:4-5, 31), quail (Numbers 11:4, 31-32), and water (Exodus 17:1-7).

Deuteronomy 32:6

Technically, our earthly fathers did not create us, rather they were involved in the process of giving us life. This gives them a certain authority over us. God, our creator, has the authority over us. Also, even though life is a free gift given to us, that we are thankful for, we realize that we owe a lot to our heavenly Father.

Deuteronomy 8:5

Many times, our earthly fathers discipline us. The best fathers discipline their children with a sense of love for their child, desiring to teach him or her what is best. That is the way God teaches us. A child who has never been corrected will ultimately destroy himself. The discipline of God is a sure sign of God's love for us (Hebrews 12:4-11).

Summary: The Bible uses the image of God as our father to teach us that He is our provider, protector, and creator. He disciplines us for our good because of His love for us.

Now, each person in the group should complete the diagram of "The Love of a Father." For example, share your thoughts and feelings of how your relationship with your earthly father has affected your relationship with God. Explain how prayer, based on the truth of Scripture, will help to better our relationship with God, not matter what our relationship with our earthly father. Also, the prayer of Jesus reveals a lot about the fatherly character

of God. Jesus refers to God as “Father” during the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). In fact, it is the title He uses most frequently to refer to God.

Study Notes:

Matthew 6:9

Fill in the blank: God is in heaven and His name is holy.

God is not like us. (Isaiah 55:8-9) – He is perfect and just (Psalm 119: 137). The word “holy” means “to be different. Explain that the perfect and just character of God means that He is not fallible, like our human fathers are.

Matthew 6:10

Fill in the blank: The kingdom of God will come.

At that time, the reality of life on earth will be the same as it is in heaven. In heaven, there is no pain, death, nor sin. But now, God works all things out for our good (Romans 8:28), and desires that all trust in Him (2 Peter 3: 9).

Matthew 6:11

Fill in the blank: God provides our daily bread.

God is our provider and we can trust that He is faithful. He provides us not only the food that our bodies need, but also our spiritual “bread” (Matthew 4:4).

Matthew 6:12, 14-15

Fill in the blank: God forgives us as we forgive others. God is perfectly holy and just (see above), but He forgives us when we receive Christ as the Lord of our lives. He does not hold our sin against us (1 John 1:9). He hopes that we will treat others the same way.

Matthew 6: 13

Fill in the blank: God does not want to let us fall into temptation, but to deliver us from the evil one. God’s desire is that we remain pure (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7). He will direct away from temptation and will free us from the deceit of sin in our lives, if we are willing to accept His direction.

Application:

Give personal testimony about what it means to you that God is your father. Help the others in the group to discover what it means to them. Point out that our mental image of God as Father can be colored by our past, a true understanding of His fatherly love will motivate us in our service to Him.

Lesson 1 – God, Our Father

The Ideal Father

List in the space below some words or phrases that describe your ideal father.

In the book of Deuteronomy, the people of Israel are on the border of the land God promised them. On the other side of the Jordan River, Moses reminds them of what God had done for them up to this point. Read the verses below and, in the spaces below each, write some fatherly characteristics of God.

Deuteronomy 1:30-31 –

Deuteronomy 32:6 –

Deuteronomy 8:5 –

The love of the Father

On the line below, put a mark in the place that you think best describes the closeness of your relationship with your earthly father (or those who filled the role of father in your life).

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Very close

Average

Not close

Many times, the relationship that we have with our earthly father will affect the way we relate to God. If our fathers were very harsh on us, we probably tend to see God as critical (judgmental) and angry, overlooking His love for us. If our fathers were very indulgent, we probably tend to see God as soft, overlooking His hatred of sin. In either case, the way to correct our relationship with God is to spend time with Him. The best way to do this is with prayer. Jesus' example of how to do this is found in Matthew 6:9-15.

Conversation with Our Father

Probably the most famous reference of God as Father is found in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-15). Study this passage verse by verse and fill in the blanks below. Write down anything that catches your attention in these verses about the character of God.

Verse 9: God is in _____, and His name is_____.

Verse 10: _____of God will come.

Verse 11: God provides our _____.

Verse 12: God _____us as we _____ others.

Verse 13: God does not want to let us fall into _____, but deliver us from the _____.

What does it mean to you personally to know that God is your Heavenly Father?

Scripture to memorize:

Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Isaiah 64:8