

UNIT 14 | SESSION 4

WE ARE TO REPENT OF SIN

MATTHEW 3

CHRIST CONNECTION:

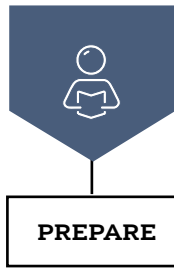
John told people to repent—turn away from their sins—and turn to Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, Jesus changes the way we think and act to help us love God and people.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is repentance? Repentance is choosing to stop making wrong choices and choosing Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE:

Turn away from your wrong choices. Acts 3:19



YOUR HEART TO TEACH



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.”

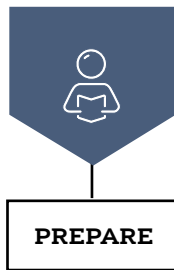
Just two verses earlier, Matthew warned the Pharisees and Sadducees to produce fruit consistent with repentance. And all of this seems to indicate that there is something that happens in the life of someone who is repentant that is visible to those around him. Where there is true repentance, there is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



YOUR HEART TO TEACH

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

Create river waves

- large piece of blue paper, 6-8 feet long
- construction paper (shades of blue, green, and gray)
- Big Picture Question Poster



LEARN

Walk around the river

- river made from "Create river waves"

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture

Learn the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker
- Key Passage Phrase Poster
- plastic megaphone
- disinfectant wipes



LOVE

Dress like John

- Bible times clothing
- wide strips of furry fabric
- leather belt

Enjoy a honey snack

- honey in a squeeze bottle
- biscuits
- plastic spoons, 1 per child
- small plates, 1 per child
- napkins, 1 per child
- cups, 1 per child
- water



LIVE

Make a megaphone

- stickers

Pack a bag

- "Adoniram Judson Photo" printable
- small suitcases or backpacks
- several articles of clothing

Snack and transition

- snacks
- Activity Page, 1 per child



BONUS

Play with a parachute

- bedsheet or parachute

Say the key passage phrase

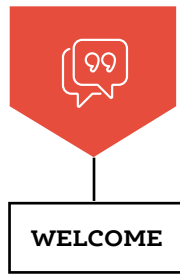
- bedsheet or parachute, used in "Play with a parachute"
- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Paint water pictures

- permanent marker
- bleedable tissue paper (bleeds when wet)
- cups
- water
- paintbrushes
- white construction paper, 1 per child
- smocks

Create a wilderness

- Bible Story Picture Poster
- animal figures
- stones
- plastic trees or plants
- blue paper



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, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

WELCOME

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.

CREATE RIVER WAVES

Position a large piece of blue paper on the floor near the entrance of the classroom. Securely tape it down on all four sides. Arrange glue sticks and shades of blue, green, and gray construction paper next to the large piece of paper. Display the big picture question poster nearby. As children arrive, bend down to greet them at eye level and welcome them by name. Show them the paper on the floor and invite them to help create a river with the materials. Demonstrate how to tear pieces of construction paper into long, wavy strips creating waves for the river. Then, guide them to use glue sticks to attach the waves to the large piece of blue paper, creating a river. Keep the created river to be used in “Walk around the river” later in the session.

SAY “ I am happy to see you at church today. We worked together to create a pretend river with paper. In our Bible story, we will learn about a man named John who lived in the wilderness and baptized people in the Jordan River. He told the people in Judea, ‘Repent because the kingdom of heaven is near!’ **What is repentance? Repentance is choosing to stop making wrong choices and choosing Jesus.** ”

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 WALK AROUND THE RIVER

Invite children to join you for group time at the river that they created during “Create river waves.” As children gather, guide them to line up so they can have a turn walking around the pretend river. Take hold of each child’s hand and help as needed. When every child has had a turn, sit down with the children along the edges of the river.

SAY “ The last few weeks we have talked about the word repent in our Bible stories. Those Bible stories have been in the Old Testament. Today, our story is in the New Testament in the Book of Matthew. We will hear about a man who told people to repent. We are sitting at the edge of a pretend river. In our Bible story today, people came to the Jordan River to do something very special. Listen carefully to the story to hear what they did. ”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Matthew 3 and tell the following Bible story.

WE ARE TO REPENT OF SIN

SAY “ Before Jesus was born, a baby named John was born. John was Jesus’ cousin. When John grew up, he lived in the wilderness. John ate locusts and honey. He wore clothes made out of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist.

John gave a message to the people in Judea: “Repent—turn from your sins—because the kingdom of heaven is near!”

People from all around the land went to see John. They said they were sorry for their sins, and then John baptized them in the Jordan River.

One day, John saw religious leaders coming toward him. He shouted, “Who warned you that God’s punishment is coming? If you really do want to turn from your sins, change how you live.”

John explained, “I baptize you with water, but someone more powerful is coming after me. I am not worthy to take off His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” ”

Christ Connection: John told people to repent—turn away from their sins—and turn to Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, Jesus changes the way we think and act to help us love God and people.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Give the Bible story picture to a child sitting next to you. Lead him to say something he remembers about the story. Instruct him to pass the picture to a child sitting next to him. That child will say something he remembers. Continue the activity until each child has an opportunity to hold the picture and say something he remembers about the story. Preschoolers may repeat answers from other children. Prompt preschoolers with questions if they have a difficulty remembering something from the story. Possible questions include these: “Who was John’s cousin? When John grew up, where did he live? What did John eat? What were John’s clothes made out of? What did John tell the people? What did John tell the people to turn from? Where did John baptize people?”

SAY “ People from all around the land went to see John. John told people to repent—to turn away from their sins—and to turn to Jesus. Many people said they were sorry for their sins and John baptized them. John also told them that Jesus is coming. When we trust in Jesus, Jesus changes the way we think and act to help us love God and people. ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Are You Sleeping?”

“Turn and follow, turn and follow.
Go God’s way, go God’s way.
I can choose to listen. I can choose to listen.
And obey, and obey.”

5 LEARN THE KEY PASSAGE

Place the key passage phrase marker at Acts 3:19 in a Bible. Invite a child to open the Bible to the marker. Say the phrase through a megaphone to the children and prompt children to repeat it together. Give each child a turn to repeat the phrase through the megaphone. Make sure to disinfect the megaphone after each person uses it. If a megaphone is not available, demonstrate how to cup your hands around your mouth to create a megaphone.

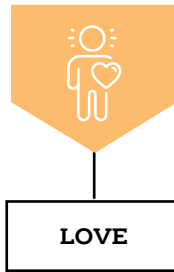
SAY “ When we used the megaphone, our voices were louder when we said the key passage phrase. The key passage phrase reminds us to turn away from our wrong choices. To turn away from wrong choices means to repent. John gave a message to the people who came to see him. He said, ‘Repent—turn from your sins—because the kingdom of heaven is near!’ He wanted people to turn to Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, Jesus changes the way we think and act to help us love God and people. ”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God that He helps us to learn to turn to Jesus and to trust in Him.

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





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 TURN AND STOP



Invite preschoolers to stand with their arms outstretched to the side. Make sure that children are spaced out around the classroom and not near each other, any furniture, or any other possible trip hazards. Instruct preschoolers to slowly turn around with their arms extended, while you say, “Turn, turn, turn.” Then direct preschoolers to stop turning and not move when you say, “Stop!” Play several rounds, changing the directions they turn and varying the number of times you say, “Turn” before saying, “Stop!”

SAY “John gave a message to the people in Judea. He said, ‘Repent—turn [emphasize] from your sins—because the kingdom of heaven is near!’ People from all around the land went to see John. They said they were sorry for their sins, and then John baptized them in the Jordan River. When we trust in Jesus, Jesus changes the way we think and act to help us love God and people.”

2 DRESS LIKE JOHN

Lay Bible times clothing on a table. Place a leather belt and strips of furry cloth nearby. Invite a child to dress like John. Suggest he put Bible times clothing on over his clothes. Lay the furry cloth across the child’s shoulders. Help him fasten the leather belt around his waist. To extend the activity, take a picture and send it to his parents or print it to give to them at a later date. Be sure to follow your ministry’s policies of taking pictures of preschoolers.

SAY “We learned about a man named John. John was Jesus’ cousin. The Bible tells us that He wore clothes made of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist. John gave a message to the people of Judea. He said, ‘Repent—turn from your sins—because the kingdom of heaven is near!’ When we trust in Jesus, Jesus changes the way we think and act to help us love God and people.”

3 ENJOY A HONEY SNACK

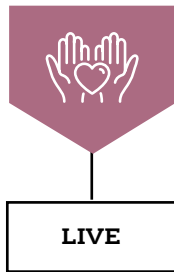


Post an allergy alert. Instruct preschoolers to wash their hands. Invite preschoolers to sit at a table and enjoy a honey snack. Distribute a small plate, napkin, plastic spoon, and a cup of water to each child. Give each preschooler a biscuit. Show children how to separate their biscuits into halves and place them on their plates. Put a little honey on each biscuit half. Demonstrate how to spread the honey on their biscuits with a spoon. Say a prayer and invite children to eat their snacks.

SAY “We ate honey on our biscuits. Do you like the taste of honey? In our Bible story, we heard about a man named John. He lived in the wilderness and ate locusts and honey. What do you think it would be like to live in the wilderness? People came from all over the land to see John. John told them to repent—to turn from their sins and turn to Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, Jesus changes the way we think and act to help us love God and people. We want to please and serve God.”

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





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 **MAKE A MEGAPHONE**

Place construction paper, tape, washable markers, and stickers on a table. Print the key passage phrase on each child's paper. Encourage preschoolers to decorate their papers with washable markers and stickers. Show the children how to roll their papers shaping them into megaphones with the key passage phrase visible. Securely tape the paper edges in place. Demonstrate how to talk through a megaphone.

SAY “ Our megaphones help us to speak louder. In the Bible story, John saw religious leaders coming toward him. He shouted at them, ‘If you really want to turn from your sins, change how you live.’ Our key passage phrase reminds us to do the same thing John told the people—turn away from our wrong choices. When we repent, we turn away from our sins and choose to obey God. ”

2 **PACK A BAG**



Print the “Adoniram Judson Photo” printable. Show the photo to preschoolers. Talk about items you may take with you when you go on a trip. Tell the preschoolers that you will work together to pack a bag like you would if you were going on a trip. As you pack the bags together, remind the preschoolers that the Judsons packed a bag when they left America. Ask a child to pray for missionaries who are preparing to travel or that may be currently traveling.

SAY “ We have been talking about Adoniram and Ann Judson traveling a long way on a ship to tell people about Jesus and to translate the Bible into the Burmese language. The Judsons did important work to help people know about Jesus. What do you think the Judsons packed in their bag? What would you have packed in a bag? ”

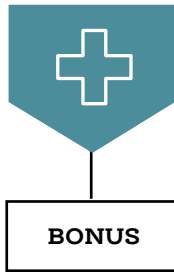
3 **SNACK AND TRANSITION**



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 “ John told people to repent—turn away from their sins—and turn to Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, Jesus changes the way we think and act to help us love God and people. ”

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 the big picture cards for families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 PLAY WITH A PARACHUTE

Lay a parachute or bedsheet on the floor in the group time area. Invite children to bend down and hold onto the parachute's edge. Guide children to lift up the parachute as they stand. Show them how to make small ripples by quickly lifting and lowering the fabric's edges. Make larger ripples and then smaller ripples with the parachute. When finished playing, invite children to lay the parachute on the floor and to sit on it while you tell the story.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Matthew 3 and tell the following Bible story.

WE ARE TO REPENT OF SIN

- Before Jesus was born, a baby named John was born. John was Jesus' cousin.
- When John grew up, he lived in the wilderness. John ate locusts and honey. He wore clothes made out of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist.
- John told people: "Repent—turn from your sins!"
- When people said they were sorry for their sins, John baptized them in the Jordan River.
- One day, John saw religious leaders. He shouted, "If you want to turn from your sins, change how you live."
- John said, "I baptize you with water, but someone more powerful is coming after me. I am not worthy to take off His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song below to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?"

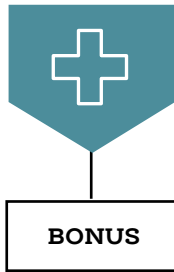
"Turn and follow, turn and follow.
Go God's way, go God's way.
I can choose to listen. I can choose to listen.
And obey, and obey."

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the key passage phrase marker at Acts 3:19. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage phrase. Read the phrase aloud. Invite children to stand and to hold the parachute again. Guide them to lift and to lower the parachute while saying the phrase.

5 PRAY

Pray, asking God to help us to trust in Jesus.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 MATCH SHOES

Invite preschoolers to sit on the floor in a circle. Instruct them to take off one of their shoes. Help as needed with laces or buckles. Place the shoes in a pile in the middle of the circle. Guide children to sit with their feet in front of them. One at a time, invite each child to pick up another child's shoe from the pile. Prompt him to find who is wearing the matching shoe, and to return it to the child. Continue play until preschoolers match all the shoes. Assist preschoolers with putting on their shoes as needed.

SAY “ In our Bible story, John told the people, ‘Someone more powerful is coming after me. I am not worthy to take off His sandals.’ John was talking about Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, Jesus changes the way we think and act to help us love God and people. ”

7 PAINT WATER PICTURES

Print the key passage phrase with a permanent marker on pieces of white construction paper, one for each child. Lay bleedable tissue paper (colors bleed when wet), paintbrushes, and cups half full of water on a table by the prepared papers. Help children put on smocks over their clothes. Show children how to tear pieces of tissue paper and lay them on their pieces of construction paper. Guide them to cover their papers with tissue paper pieces. When their papers are covered with tissue, lead preschoolers to paint with water on the tissue paper. Allow pictures to sit for several minutes before discarding the tissue paper. The tissue paper will bleed onto the construction paper creating colorful pictures.

SAY “ People went to see John in the wilderness. He told them to repent and to turn away from their sins. People heard John’s message, said they were sorry for their sins, and were baptized in the Jordan River. Our key passage phrase also tells us to repent. **What is repentance? Repentance is choosing to stop making wrong choices and choosing Jesus.** ”

8 CREATE A WILDERNESS

Place blocks, stones, plastic plants or trees, animal figures, and blue paper on the floor near a corner in the room. Display the Bible story picture poster by taping it to a nearby wall at the preschoolers’ eye level. Invite children to use the provided supplies to create a wilderness—like the one where John lived. Guide them to tear blue paper to create the Jordan River. Then help preschoolers arrange the other items around the river to create a wilderness.

SAY “ John was Jesus’ cousin. He lived in the wilderness. How do you think the wilderness he lived in was alike or different than the one we made? John told people, ‘Repent—turn from your sins!’ People from all around the land went to see John. They said they were sorry for their sins. When we trust in Jesus, Jesus changes the way we think and act and helps us to love God and people. ”

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.