

Genesis 2:8-25; 3

Aim of lesson

To show how disobedience brought punishment, and how God in his mercy made a great promise.

Background study

Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-23; James 1:14-15; 1 John 2:15-17. Study the location of Eden, and consider the perfection that prevailed.

Suggested outline of lesson

Recall the previous lesson by discussing with the children Adam and his environment. Create an impression of the beautiful and luxuriant garden in which peace and happiness reigned and involve the children in a discussion about the birds, animals, flowers, trees and fruit that abounded there. All the living creatures came freely and fearlessly to Adam. His was the pleasure of naming them all, and his the responsibility for caring for them and for the garden. There was but one thing forbidden to Adam - the fruit of a particular tree.

A lonely man

Ask the children how Adam might have felt, and try and help them to appreciate the joy and pleasure of living in the garden but also to recognize his loneliness. Something was lacking - he needed another human being with whom he could share his life. God was sensitive to Adam's need and created a woman. The unique method of her creation should be described simply, the significance being that she was part of him, and their close affinity was a great blessing, which was to foreshadow God's ordinance of marriage. How happy Adam must have been when he woke to find her standing by him. Just as the animals needed no clothes, so also Adam and Eve (as he was later to call her) were naked and felt no embarrassment. Eve his wife could share his experiences, talk with him, and give him the companionship he needed. Adam and Eve were superior to the animals, for they alone were capable of thinking, making decisions, developing attitudes, expressing voluntary praise, and worshipping their Creator. The pleasure of working in the garden was increased now that it was shared. The work was not hard because the ground was fertile. There were no weeds or diseases, and Adam and Eve benefited from their work, eating the food they produced. God had made it clear to them both that they could eat everything, except for the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were warned that if they disobeyed, the punishment would be death.

Temptation

Describe what took place when first Eve, and then Adam, was tempted. Ask the children, at the appropriate point, what Eve's response should have been to the serpent's suggestion.

As the story proceeds, ask the children once more what Adam's response should have been when Eve brought the fruit to him. Emphasize that the serpent lied to them and questioned their faith in God's wisdom and goodness. His suggestion appealed to them on three counts: they had seen that the fruit was desirable, they realized that it would be good to eat, and they were attracted to the idea of becoming like God.

Disobedience

Having disobeyed God, the feelings of Adam and Eve underwent an immediate change. The fruit itself had no special, harmful properties; it was the conscious act of disobedience that desecrated them. They knew they had done wrong and felt very guilty. Their shame led to embarrassment and fear. Their first reaction was to cover themselves, as if that might hide their sin. So they made clothes by sewing together large, strong fig leaves. On becoming aware of God's presence, they felt they could not face him and endeavoured to hide. Convey their replies to God by putting their excuses into modern idiom, showing how immediately each put the blame elsewhere. Discuss with the children how wrong their attitude was, and ask them what should have been their response to God's challenge.

Curse

Put into plain words the punishments meted out by God, upon the serpent, upon Eve, upon Adam, and the curse that was put on the earth. Although Adam and Eve deserved to die for what they had done, God was merciful, and the sentence was not carried out immediately. They were given time to raise a family and had the opportunity to live more faithfully. However, life was never to be the same again. They were banned from the beautiful garden, which was guarded by angels and a flaming sword, in order to prevent them returning and eating the fruit of the tree of life. Outside the garden, the weeds and rough ground made the work of producing food a constant struggle. For the first time animals were killed so that their skins could be used to make clothing. The sense of shame continued, and Adam and Eve were to know pain and sorrow. However, verse 15 leads us to believe that there is still hope for mankind and that one day someone will come who, having destroyed sin, will restore the world to what God intended when he created it.

Relevance to the children's lives

Every day we have a choice, to do right or wrong. The idea of doing wrong things can come from our own thoughts, or from the suggestions of other people. Can you think of examples of things we are tempted to do, but which we have been told are wrong? What can we learn from Adam and Eve's wrong actions about the way to deal with temptation? What should we do when we know we have done wrong?

Worksheets

The solution to the puzzle is:

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Prayer

Dear Lord God, help us to see the difference between right and wrong, and help us to choose the right way to behave. Amen.

Memory verse

but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. (Genesis 2:17)