

What Happens When We Try to Be Like God? • by Isaac Landis

KEY VERSE:

"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3: 5.

FAITH STORY:

Genesis 3: 1-7

FAITH FOCUS:

The serpent was the most crafty of all animals God created. The serpent convinced Eve that it was okay to eat from the tree that God told them not to. So, Eve took some of the fruit and gave some to Adam, who also ate. Their eyes were opened and they realized that they were naked, so they covered themselves.

SESSION GOAL:

To help students realize that sin, at its roots, is how we try to be like God.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify two times in the last week when they are trying to be like God.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Healthy snacks (carrots, veggies, fruit, etc.)
- 2 Dozen donuts. Cut six of the donuts into smaller pieces
- 3 Tray and small table for the snacks
- 4 Orange juice and/or hot water and hot chocolate mix
- 5 Small plates or napkins and cups
- 6 A large sign that says **HELP YOURSELF** and in smaller letters "Please don't eat the donuts"
- 7 A tree. Options: Fake Christmas tree, a large plant, a tree outdoors, or the outline of a tree taped to the wall
- 8 Yellow, orange, red, purple, green construction paper
- 9 Markers, scissors, string
- 10 Contact a student prior to class and ask them to be the "tempter" in the Focus activity
- 11 Worship music CD and CD player

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (5 minutes)

Set up the table of snacks and beverages so students walk past it as then come into the room. Place the sign above or on the table. As the students enter the classroom, they can choose whether or not to take the food, and what to take. The "tempter" should try to entice some of the kids to take a donut, because "it won't really matter anyway." The tempter can also use the tactic that "a little piece won't matter." You should be "busy" in another part of the room so that students feel they can get away with taking a donut without you noticing.

CONNECT: (5–7 minutes)

Invite students to sit down and eat their snacks. While they are doing that, ask if anyone took a donut.

If so, ask: *Why did you disobey the sign? Did the fact that others took a donut influence your choice? Did you think that taking a small piece wasn't quite as bad as a whole donut?*

If no one took any, then you can ask why they chose not to.

Ask: *the tempter how it felt to encourage others to go against the sign.*

Ask: *students which Bible story they think is the focus for today's lesson.*

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (15 minutes)

- 1 Ask for volunteers or choose students to do a dramatic interpretation of Genesis 3:1-7. Explain that the emphasis here is on the word "dramatic" and that they will exaggerate every aspect of this story as much as possible. You will need students to portray the serpent, Eve, Adam, and a reader. Ask the reader to read very slowly and the actors to exaggerate their parts.

Some examples:

Reader: "Now the serpent was more crafty..."

Actors: Standing, moving hands and face in a "crafty" fashion.

Reader: "...nor shall you touch it or you shall die."

Actors: Touch the fruit, then fall down dead.

Reader: "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened..."

Actors: Pretend to eat, then open eyes really wide.

Reader: "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked."

Actors: Look at each other with big eyes, and scream.

- 2 Before you begin the skit, tell other students to observe what happens and report back on anything that seems new or different to them in the story. Ask them to think about this question as they watch the story: "How were Adam and Eve trying to be like God?"
- 3 After the skit, discuss: How did Adam and Eve's actions separate them from God? What was their relationship with God like before the sin? What was it like after the sin? In what ways is sin, in some form, our way of trying to be like God?

APPLY: (10 minutes)

- 1 Ask students to take a piece of construction paper and draw the shape of one of their LEAST FAVORITE fruits on it, then cut it out.
- 2 Ask students to write on their fruit the things that separate them from God. Encourage them to be specific—not just to say "sin" but to write specifics from their lives.
- 3 Discuss this "bad fruit" as a class. In what ways do we try to be like God? What are the biggest obstacles to our relationship with God?

- 4 Ask students to make a small hole in the top of their fruit and attach a short length of string to it so they can hang it from the tree.

RESPOND: (5–7 minutes)

Say: *Adam and Eve took the fruit from the tree and it caused separation. Now let's put the things that separate us back on the tree as a sign of God's power over them.*

Play the worship music and ask students to hang their fruit on the tree.

Say: *Sin is trying to be like God. Sin separates us from God, others, and ourselves. Sin creates a barrier between us and God, and Jesus is the only way to be reconciled with God. However, God will not let us be tempted beyond what we can handle (1 Cor. 10:13).*

Explain that during the next five minutes, while the music plays, you encourage them to pray about the things that separate them from God, and ask God for the power to overcome those things. Say that five minutes may seem like a long time, but it's okay to just sit in the quiet and talk to God.

Close with a prayer at the end of the five minutes.

INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE:

In this Genesis account, sin creeps into the Story not long after creation. God creates the world out of chaos, and it is all good. However, the serpent enters as the tempter to Eve in the Garden. The book of Genesis—especially the first eleven chapters—is a book that explains why things are the way they are. This story is often thought of as the first of the four fall stories, in which sin is introduced into God's perfect creation. (The other three are: Cain and Abel, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel). In this story, and the tower of Babel, the people are trying to be equal with God. Pride enters the picture. This is sin—sin is trying to be like God.

The phrase, "making one wise" means to be like God in this story. So, when Eve saw that the fruit was pleasing to the eye and could make her wise, it means that she saw it could make her like God. Eating the fruit opened their eyes to their nakedness, which shamed them, and they tried to hide from God. But God here is revealed as a reconciling and gracious God, who makes the first move to seek after the disobedient humans and who makes clothing for them. However, God is also a judge. The humans have to face the consequences of their disobedience—they get kicked out of the garden and have to toil for their livelihood. The serpent is also punished for the role it played in this ordeal.

These first chapters set the stage for the rest of the Bible by defining the sin problem, and therefore introducing salvation history and the need for Jesus. The rest of the Bible follows the story as God works with an unfaithful people. The result of sin is a separation, or loss of a peaceful relationship, between humans and God, with others, with themselves, and all of creation. The order that God brought out of chaos in creation now returns to its original state.