

SOUTH CAROLINA
BAPTIST CONVENTION

Cooperative Program/Stewardship Development Group

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Stewardship... God's Way

Preschool Edition

Continue

Continue Group Time as parents come to pick up their children. Greet them promptly when they knock on the door. Give parents the Take Home Page and the offering bank their child made.

Follow-up

Do you need to make a few more phone calls this week? (See Week 1 for details)

Send a note to the children who were in Sunday School, encouraging them to give God their best this week.

Contact any guest in Sunday School. Call first and ask to make a short visit. Take a *ParentLife* magazine for mom and/or dad and a book or game from an old Leader Pack.

Send a “missed you” note to any children who were not there.

Make special visit to any child who has a birthday this week. Sugar cookies cut in the shape of their age will make a great surprise. (You can bake a whole batch and freeze for birthdays to come.)



Honor God by Giving Our Best

Session Overview—Week 3

Bible Setting: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Biblical Setting: As the Hebrew people prepared to enter the Promised Land, instructions were given for how they were to live and worship. This included instructions for giving offerings.

Bible Truth: We honor God by giving Him our best offerings.

Key Bible Phrase: Honor God with your best gifts.
Proverbs 3:9

Life Question: How can I honor God with my gifts.

Life Impact: I can honor God by giving Him my best gifts. Have you ever watched and waited for the first tomato of

Teacher's Personal Bible Study

the season to ripen in your garden? Have you eagerly watched the produce stands for the arrival of the earliest baskets of plump, juicy peaches in spring or crisp apples in fall? There is something special about the very first of the produce crop to be ready for harvest. Imagine how special the first fruits of the harvest would seem to a people who had been away from their homeland for hundreds of years, and who had wandered in the wilderness for forty years! Read Deuteronomy 26:1-11 to find what God expected the Hebrew people to do with their first fruits.

When the offering was presented to the priest, the giver was to tell about how God had taken care of their people. The gift showed their thankfulness for God's care. It showed that the people knew that all the good things they had were gifts from God. They honored God by bringing the very best they had as an offering to Him.

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

You may need to explain to the boys and girls that the baskets of food were then used to feed the priest who served in the temple, and to help needy people in the land.

Pray

Lead boys and girls in a prayer asking God to help us always to give our best to Him. Sometimes it is our time, even children need to spend a quiet time with God. Sometimes it is our talents, what can we do for God. Sometimes it is our tithe, from their allowances and gifts, they may be learning a new discipline.

Take a look at the "Gifts Chain"

Bring the "gifts chain" to Group Time. Allow children to tell you some of the ideas they had. Commend and encourage boys and girls for their ideas.

Lead in a group discussion

Give boys and girls different situations and ask which would be considered our "firstfruits", that is our best.

- We give a needy child our worn out and torn jacket.
- We get \$5 for our birthday and spend it all at the candy store.
- A friend at school asks to use your blue crayon. You keep the broken one and give them the new one.
- It is almost bedtime and you spend a few minutes looking at your Bible Story Book instead of watching television.

Continue, allowing children to come up with different situations, also.

The offering (Deuteronomy 26:1-4)

In giving the first fruits, the people were acknowledging that God was the giver of all the good things that had come to them. They were serving and honoring Him with the most special part of their increase, the first and best they had.

It called for a sacrifice on their part, giving up those long-anticipated clusters of grapes, heads of wheat, handfuls of figs, olives, and dates. Yet what joy there could be in carefully choosing the very best produce to place in the offering basket.

Although our society uses money rather than the exchange of goods, the idea behind the offering is the same for us as it was for the Hebrew people. As we give a portion of what God has given us, we serve and honor Him. We acknowledge that He is the source of all that is good. We give up something of value to us to show that we value our relationship with God even more.

The confession (Deuteronomy 26:5-11)

As the basket of produce was presented to the priest, a confession was made. In it, the giver remembered the humble beginnings of their nation. Jacob, their ancestor, lived for a long time in Aram. Later came the famine that resulted in the family moving to Egypt. The years of slavery, the exodus, and the wanderings were followed by God's leading the people back to the Promised Land.

Through this confession, the giver recalls the workings of God in the past. He recognizes that both the land itself and the fruit grown there is a gift of God. Finally, he rejoices in all the good things that God has given. The first fruits are a symbol of the many gifts of God.

The use of the offering and the promise of blessing (Deuteronomy 18:1-5, Proverbs 3:9-10)

The first fruits offerings were used to support the priests and the ministries for which they were responsible. Our offerings are used to support the ministers serving in our churches and to finance the ministries of the church locally and, through the Cooperative Program, around our nation and our world.

Play a game

Place several different fruits and vegetables on a tray. Talk about what each piece is and if it is a fruit or vegetable. Ask boys and girls to close their eyes. Remove a piece of fruit. When they open their eyes, call on a child to tell you which piece was missing. Continue game as long as children show interest.

Variation: Occasionally remove two pieces. The last time remove them all. Older preschoolers may be able to name all the pieces on the tray. Choose fruits and vegetables that may not be familiar to boys and girls such as kiwi fruit or brussel sprouts.

Tell the Bible Story

Open your Bible to Deuteronomy 26:1-11 and be prepared to tell the Bible story in your own words:

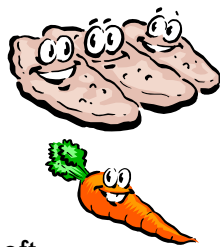
God's people were at an exciting time in their lives. Moses had led them out of slavery in Egypt. They had spent years wondering in the wilderness. They were about to enter the new land God had promised them.

God wanted the people to remember where they had come from. He wanted them to be thankful for the ways He had taken care of them. One way they could show their thanks was to give an offering to God. He had Moses tell them what to do. They were to take the best of the fruit, grains, or vegetables they had grown on the land God had given them.

Perhaps the people walked carefully through their gardens and fields when it was time to pick the crops. They may have chosen the very prettiest fruits, the very best stalks of grain, the finest vegetables. These were gently arranged in a basket. These first items to be picked, called the "first fruits", would be their offerings. The basket would be given to the priest during the worship service.

Homeliving – Wash vegetables

Gather: Bible; large towel; several smaller towels; plastic dish pan; hard vegetables such as potatoes and carrots; vegetable scrubber



Prepare: Spread the large towel over the table. Pour about two inches of water into the plastic dishpan. Place the vegetables and brush to the left of the dishpan.

Teach: Holding the Bible open to Bible story passage, tell the story when children show an interest in washing the vegetables. Continue with conversation as boys and girls wash vegetables. Use extra towels for drying hands.

Variation: You might consider tasting the vegetables after they have been washed. If so, be sure to post an allergy notice.

Group Time

Move around the classroom and tell the children quietly that in a few minutes you will ring a bell. When you ring the bell it will be time to come to Group. This gives them opportunity to complete what they are working on without rushing.

Do a movement activity

Start the chant and follow the directions:

Reach up high,
Now bend down low.
Turn to each side,
And touch your toes.

You may choose to continue several times until all the children have come to Group Time and had an opportunity to participate.



Along with the instructions about giving an offering comes a promise. Proverbs 3:9-10 directly links the offering of the first fruits with a promise of blessings. Although God expects us to give up something of value, we can never out give Him!

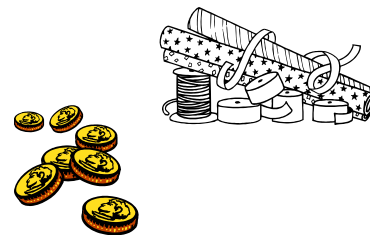
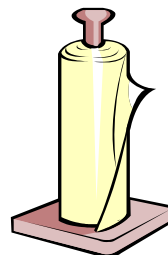
Encounter

Art – Make a bank

Gather: Bible; empty paper towel tubes; tissue paper; tape; ribbon; stickers; craft knife (for teacher use only)

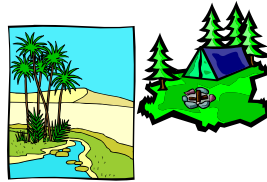
Prepare: Cut the tissue paper, in various colors, to size four inches longer than the paper towel tubes. Cut ribbon into six-inch lengths. Each child will need two. Arrange the items on the table for children to select tissue paper, ribbons, and stickers. Open the Bible to Deuteronomy 26:1-11 and be prepared to tell the Bible story.

Teach: When children come to the table tell them the Bible story and discuss with them their gifts. Gifts to God are not always in the form of money. Tell boys and girls that today we are going to make a bank for our offering. Allow children to choose the color tissue paper they would like to use. Place the roll in the center of the tissue paper. Wrap one side of the tissue paper around the roll and secure it to the roll with tape. Wrap the tissue completely around the roll and secure the complete edge with tape. Help him gather the ends of the tissue paper and tie each with ribbon. Then you, the teacher only, cut a slot through the paper and tube to insert coins. He can now decorate his tube with stickers. As children work guide conversation to what happens to our offerings when we give them at church.



Blocks – Build a town

Gather: Bible; picture with desert terrain, if available; construction paper in shades of tan and browns; brown yarn; hole punch; scissors; green construction paper; paper towel and toilet paper tubes; glue; masking tape; markers; small brown paper bags; newspaper



Prepare: Assemble items to make tents, trees, and mountains in separate areas of the Block Center. If picture is available place it near by, as well as the Bible.

Teach: Guide boys and girls in creating a desert town. For tents, fold the tan and/or brown construction paper in half and cut along the crease. Place one piece on top of the other and punch holes about an inch apart down the length of the tent pieces. Using yarn, lace the tent pieces together. For trees, allow children to cut or tear green construction paper into tree-tops. Several layers of green pieces will look like palm trees. Then use glue and/or masking tape to attach the treetops to the cardboard tubes to assemble trees. For mountains, guide children to crumple newspaper and stuff the small brown paper bags. Fold over the top edge and secure with masking tape. After directions have been given and children are working, tell the Bible story and discuss what our best gifts are compared to okay gifts.

Puzzles – Make a gifts prayer chain

Gather: Bible; various bright colored construction paper; clear tape; markers or crayons; stickers; a picture of a child giving a gift, if available

Prepare: Cut the construction paper into one-inch strips the length of the paper. Arrange items on the table with Bible and picture of a child giving a gift.

Teach: As children show interest in the items on the table, tell them we are going to make a gifts chain. Explain that when you say “gifts” we are referring to what we give to God. Tell the Bible story. Help children think of things they can do for or give to God. Sometimes it is money, sometimes it is time, and sometimes it is talent. As you discuss with them, remind them that God desires our BEST gifts. Help children record their answers on a construction paper strip. They may choose to decorate them with markers and or stickers. Help them add their pieces to the chain, securing it with clear tape. Create one long chain.



Variation: For kindergarteners, you may want to draw the lines and allow them to cut the strips needed for the gift chain.

Nature – Taste fruits

Gather: Bible; a variety of fruits to taste; at least one piece of fruit that is rotten; basket; plates; napkins; plastic knife; allergy notice

Prepare: Place the allergy notice on the door for parents to see. Arrange the fruits attractively in the basket, with the rotten piece included. Open the Bible to the story reference.

Teach: When children come to the Nature Center be prepared to tell the Bible story. Ask them which of the fruits they see is the best fruit. Give them opportunity to taste fruits they choose. Guide conversation to what “first/best fruits” means to us. Explain that God desires our best. Encourage children to pray, thanking God for being able to give Him our best.

