



DiscipleLand

Missions Education

Level 2, Quarter A—How We Got the Bible

Integrate these World-missions concepts into your **DiscipleLand** lesson. Introduce your children to one missions truth each lesson.

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2A—Missions Education

The Universal Message

Teacher Intro—God is the Great Communicator. He created the universe by simply speaking it into being. God designed humans to have a relationship with Him, giving us the ability to hear, understand, and respond to His voice. All relationships require communication and God has always taken the initiative in providing meaningful communication about Himself.

We can learn much about what God is like through observing His creation. The ultimate reflection of God's nature came through His Son, Jesus. Through the centuries, God continues to communicate with us through His Word. He speaks with life-giving power through the Bible, bringing salvation, comfort in sorrow, strength to resist temptation and to stand strong for Him, motivation to serve Him and bless others, and hope as we anticipate being in His presence throughout eternity.

Optional Supplies: Posters of different ways God communicates to use throughout the quarter (picture of two people facing each other, picture of Jesus, picture of a Bible, picture of things in creation including the sun)

Lesson 1—God Speaks Through His Creation

Supplies: an illustrated copy of a “Nate the Great” book, a pair of sunglasses, globe or world map

How many of you like to solve mysteries? Here's a famous detective you may recognize. Read the book title and look at illustrations of Nate searching for clues. Discuss how clues helped Nate solve the mystery. **Someone left clues in plain sight for Nate the Great to observe. One way that God helps us to know what He is like is by leaving clues in His creation. Let's think about one thing that God created.** Put on the pair of sunglasses. Lead a discussion of different ways that the sun is important. Include ideas such as light, heat, growth, and delineating day from night. Remove sunglasses.

God used the sun as a clue to help a South American king learn more about Him. Ask a child to find the continent of South America on a map. **Around the time of Columbus, an important king named Pachacuti ruled the Inca people in this area.** Point to the country of Peru. **During his reign, he built a great temple where the Incas worshipped their sun god, Inti. Pachacuti, himself, began to doubt that Inti could be God. The sun always followed a set pattern—rising in the east, passing overhead at noon, and setting in the west. If Inti were really God of the universe, why didn't he do**

anything more creative? Pachacuti also noticed that clouds sometimes blocked the sun's rays. If Inti were really the most powerful God, why did he let something small like a cloud block his light?

The Inca king realized that Someone greater than the sun created this fiery ball of light. He asked the other ruling families to stop worshipping Inti and begin worshipping the Creator God who made all things, including the sun. Today, God continues to give the people of the world clues to who He is through His creation.

Pray: Have students brainstorm clues in nature that show that God is—powerful, detailed, a lover of variety. Have students thank God for His creation and what it communicates about Him.

Lesson 2—How Did God Speak to the First Humans?

Supplies: cell phone or toy phone, sticky note, email address printed in large letters

Suppose you received a new bike for your birthday and wanted to share the news with your best friend. How could you communicate? Show the sticky note. **You could leave your friend a note.** Show the email address. **You could use the computer to send your friend an email.** Show the cell phone. **You could call your friend. However, the most personal way to share your good news would be face to face.** Let students act out ways face-to-face communication about the bike could occur.

Ever since God created the first humans, He has wanted to know each of us in a “close up and personal” way. God created the first people, Adam and Eve and gave them a beautiful garden home in Eden. Each day as the sun was setting and a cool evening breeze began to blow, God came to the Garden to walk and talk with Adam and Eve face to face. Imagine what a wonderful time they spent together as friends!

Sadly, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and had to leave the Garden. The close friendship between God and people was broken, but God did not give up on the humans He had created. His heart was full of love and He still wanted to share about Himself with them. God kept communicating with people in various ways.

Pray: Thank God that He wants to know us as His good friends.

Lesson 3—God Speaks Through His Son

Supplies: Bible, outline drawing of a rabbit, realistic drawing or photo of a rabbit, stuffed rabbit

Review different ways that God communicates. **How did God communicate through nature to the South American king? How did God communicate with the first humans, Adam and Eve?** Choose three volunteers to stand in front of the group and hold up the two pictures and the stuffed rabbit. As a group, put the items in rank order from least realistic to most realistic. Let students share their reasoning. **These are just models. What could we bring in to help you know exactly what a rabbit is like?** (A real rabbit or video of a rabbit.) **When God wanted people to know exactly what He was like, what did He do?** Read Hebrews 1:1-3a. **If we had been alive when Jesus was on the earth, we could have watched what He did and listened to His words. These verses tell us that Jesus always acted exactly like God, the Father.** Invite children to recall accounts from the life of Jesus that show the following characteristics of God.

- How did Jesus show us that God is in control of nature?
- How did Jesus show us that God can heal our bodies?
- How did Jesus show us that God welcomes all different kinds of people?
- How did Jesus show us that God is stronger than death?

Pray: Praise God for showing us exactly who He is by sending His Son, Jesus.

Lesson 4—God Speaks Through His Word

Supplies: two or three children's storybooks, Bible

Review different ways that God communicates—through nature, face-to face, and through His Son, Jesus. **Let's learn another way God communicates. Do you like stories? I do! Today I have brought some that may be your favorites. I'll read a little from them.** Read excerpts with expression, stopping at interesting points. **Have you ever met the people who wrote these books? We can enjoy these stories without knowing who wrote them or without the author knowing us.**

There is one Author who knows everything about you because He created you. Who is He and what book did He write? Hold up your Bible. The Bible is a special book, unlike any other. It is not just a story meant to entertain us. Sometimes we call the Bible "God's Word" because when we read it, God speaks to us. The words in the Bible are never make-believe. They are always true. Did you know

that some people wait in line in bookstores just to meet a favorite author and get their autograph? Just think, the Author of the Bible wants you for His best friend!

Pray: Sing "The B-I-B-L-E" song and think about the words. Thank God for communicating His words to us through the Bible.

Lesson 5—God's Special Message

Supplies: Bible, diary or journal, John 3:16 written on an overhead or chart

Review the ways God communicates—through nature, face-to-face, through Jesus, and through the Bible. Hold up the sample diary or journal. **Do you know anyone who writes in a journal or diary?** Let the students share. **Because diaries and journals contain private thoughts, some people hide them when they are finished writing. Some diaries even have locks on the covers to keep other people from reading the pages inside.**

God does not put a "private, keep out" sign on the Bible. He wants everyone to open it and read the words inside. Here is part of God's special message. Read John 3:16 on the overhead or chart. Then invite the students to read it with you.

What word in this verse tells you that God includes everybody in His special message? (World.) **And what is the message?** (He offers eternal life to everyone who believes on Jesus.) **Suppose God had sent this message to you, but you never read it or even knew about it. That would be so sad! The words in the Bible are so important that people called translators are working to write the Bible in other languages.**

Pray: Have the students whisper these words: "God's message is not private." Then have them say loudly, "God's message is for everyone to read." Thank God for giving His special message to everyone in the world. Ask God to be with translators who are working to write His message in other languages.

Lesson 6—Is God’s Message For Me?

Supplies: Bible, gift tag with to and from, notecards, pencils

Review the ways God communicates—through nature, face-to-face, through Jesus, and through the Bible. **Imagine that it is Christmas and presents are piled up under the tree.** Hold up the gift tag. **How can a gift tag like this help?** (Indicates who each present is for.) **We learned that God’s special message is for the whole world. What might a gift tag on the Bible say? To ... From ... ?** (To the whole world, from God.) **Even though the Bible is for everyone, it is also written for you personally. This gift tag might say, “From God, to ...** (Insert the names of some of your students as well as your name.)

Here is a part of God’s message addressed to you! Read Jeremiah 31:3. **What does it tell you?** (God loves me with a love that will never stop. He shows me how He feels about me through loving, kind actions.) Pass out the notecards and pencils. Ask the students to write their first names on the cards. **I am going to read the verse from Jeremiah 31 again. Whenever I come to the word “you,” I will stop. I want you to hold up your card and read your own name.** If you have a small group, give each student a chance to respond individually.

God gave you the Bible because He wants you to know Him, and He wants you to understand that He knows you and loves you. How does this make you feel?

Pray: Have the students stand in a straight line. Hand a Bible to the first person in line. Have the student hold the Bible and say, “This is God’s message to me.” Then direct them to hand the Bible to the next student in line. That student should say, “This is God’s message to me.” Continue down the line. Thank God for loving each of us and giving us the Bible so we can understand who He is.

Lesson 7—What Do I Do With God’s Message?

Supplies: Bible, recipe or cookbook, medicine bottle, road map or atlas

Review the ways God communicates—through nature, face-to-face, through Jesus, and through the Bible. **God communicates about Himself through the message of the Bible. He also shares the plan He has for your life. We all use plans every day.** Show the recipe or cookbook. **This is a plan for ...?** (How to make a special dish or food.) Show the words on the back of the medicine bottle. **These words are a plan for ...?** (How to take the pills inside, how often, how many.) Show the road map or atlas. **This helps you plan ... ?** (A trip, a good route, how to get somewhere.)

Hold up the Bible. **Here is God’s plan for us. The message inside is for you, and it is important that you not only believe it, but act on it. What would happen if we read a recipe, but ignore the directions while we cook? Don’t follow the directions on the medicine bottle? Decide not to use a road map?** Let small groups of students act out each situation.

When we follow God’s plan in the Bible, it is called obedience. God’s plan is always best because He created you and knows all about you. Read Jeremiah 29:11-13. **God’s plan gives you hope that He has good things in store for you. He wants you to come to Him and pray to Him. He promises to listen to you and allow you to come to know Him. What other plans does God have for you?** Allow responses. **Part of God’s plan for you is to pass His message on to people you know and pray for those who have never heard God’s message.**

Pray: Have students think of one person they know with whom they can share God’s message. Lead prayer for students to act on the parts of God’s message that they know and have courage to share God’s message with their friends and family.

Lesson 8—Is God’s Message for Everyone?

Supplies: Bible, world map or globe.

List the following on board or chart: lunch money, homework, keys, cell phone, pencil, library book. Review the ways God communicates: through nature, face-to-face, through Jesus, and through the Bible. Call students’ attention to the list on the board or chart and have them read it. **This is a list of common things many people forget. Have you ever forgotten anything on this list?** Allow a few concrete stories here. **God is perfect so He never forgets anything, especially not us. In the Bible, Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd. His sheep know His voice, and He calls each one by name.** Read John 10:11. **How did Jesus lay down his life?** Encourage responses. **Jesus loves each one of us so much that He gave His life—He died in order to save us from sin and give us eternal life.**

Read John 10:16. **Jesus, the Good Shepherd knows every single person—not one is left out.** Hold up the Bible. **This message of God’s love is not just for us. It is for everyone. It is important for people who speak different languages to get God’s message in words they can understand. When Bible translators think about the idea of God’s love, they need to find the best words to describe it. Sometimes this is hard work and takes a lot of time, because God’s perfect love is hard to understand for groups of people who have never heard of a loving God.**

Here are some ways the phrase “God is love” has been translated:

Find the Philippines on the map. **God has a big breath.**

Find Bolivia on the map. **God is the owner of loving.**

Find Sudan on the map. **God is what is in the middle of love.**

Repeat the three translations of love. **What do these translations show us about God’s love?** Allow responses and let students explain their ideas.

Pray: Thank God for His wonderful message of love for us and for all the peoples of the world. Pray for people who are translating the Bible for groups who have never heard God’s message.

Lesson 9—Why So Many Languages?

Supplies: Bible, 6-8 alphabet blocks, conversational language learning cassette or CD with song in another language (borrow from a library), cassette or CD player, table

Play a 2-minute excerpt from the language learning tape or song. **Did you enjoy this story (song)?** Allow students to share their thoughts. **It was confusing because the words were in a language you do not speak or understand. Why doesn’t everyone in the world speak the same language? The Bible says that at one time, they did.**

God created people with the ability to communicate with Him and with each other. He wanted people to love and worship Him in every part of the earth He created, so He gave them a command. Read Genesis 9:1 to the group. **To fill the earth, God wanted people to spread out in different places.** Have the students spread out around the room. **Instead, people decided to stick close together and do something that would make them famous.** Have the students come together near the table. **These people began to build a great tower—one that would stretch up to heaven.** Pass out the alphabet blocks to children and have them build a block tower on a table.

God knew that these people were proud. They wanted to live without loving God and listening to Him. So God caused them to start speaking many different languages. When they could not understand each other, it was difficult to work together as a team. They stopped building their great tower and soon moved apart to settle in other places. Today people live all around the world. They speak many different languages. As these groups learn about God, they will each praise God in their own heart-language.

Pray: Divide the children into small groups and have them scatter around the room. Give each group an alphabet block and have them look at the letters on each side. Give groups 1 minute to think of characteristics of God that begin with any of the letters on their block. For example, A, God is almighty, B, God is the biggest, C, God created the world. Come back together and let groups praise God by sharing their ideas.

Lesson 10—Is God’s Message in Every Language?

Supplies: world map, six 3” x 5” cards printed with the following words: (bonjour, hola, shalom, guten tag, jambo, nee-how), three see-through plastic cups of the same size (label cups A, B, and C). Fill each cup with the following number of colorful candies like M & Ms® or Skittles®: Cup A=68, Cup B=25, Cup C=30

Review the ways God communicates—through nature, face-to-face, through Jesus, and through the Bible. **God loves people from all language groups and wants to communicate His message of love to each of them. He desires to welcome people from every culture into His family. Here are some ways that people around the world welcome each other by saying “hello.”** Read the words on the index cards one at a time. Let pairs of students shake hands and repeat the words after you.

When God gave people His wonderful book, the Bible, they wrote in Hebrew and Greek, the languages spoken by most people in Israel at that time. Because people in other areas spoke different languages, they did not understand God’s message. They needed someone to translate the Bible words and ideas—change them into words they could understand.

Show the three cups. Point to Cup A. **Each piece of candy in this jar stands for a language that people speak somewhere in the world today—between 6,000-7,000 languages.** Let students count the items in the cup and write the number on the outside. Point to Cup B. **The whole Bible or at least a part of it is translated into about 2,500 languages.** Let students count the items in the cup and write the number on the outside. Point to Cup C. **Today, there are people in about 3,000 language groups who still need God’s Word translated into words they can understand.** Let students count the items in the cup and write the number on the outside. Point to areas on the world map where people groups live that need the Bible translated into their language: Africa, Asia, Indo-Pacific.

Pray: Thank God for Christians who many years ago translated the Bible into English, so we can understand it. Have three students hold Cups A, B and C. Have other students touch the areas on the world map that need Bible translation. Pray that each language group will have God’s entire message in words they can understand.

Lesson 11—The Unheard Message

Supplies: Bible, birthday card or invitation, red construction paper heart (draw a cross in the center of the heart)

Review the ways God communicates—through nature, face-to-face, through Jesus, and through the Bible. **The main way that God communicates His message today is through the Bible.**

Show the birthday card or invitation. Allow the students to tell about a birthday party they attended. **Suppose all the kids are discussing a fun party. You feel sad because you didn’t go. The birthday boy asks, “Why didn’t you come? I was expecting you. I had cake, ice cream, and other treats for you.” You answer, “I never got your invitation.”**

The Bible is like that birthday invitation. God’s Word is for all people in the world, but what if you never got the message? Call ten students to the front and have them stand in a straight line. **These boys and girls stand for all the people in the world. How many do you think have heard God’s message, believed it is true, and received Jesus into their heart?** Allow guesses. Give the heart to one student. **One out of ten people are believers in Jesus. Some people have heard the message of Jesus, but decided not to believe it. Others live in places where they could learn about Jesus if they were interested.** Have 7 students stand with their arms crossed in front of them. **What about the people who are left?** Have the remaining two students put their hands over their ears. **Two out of every ten people in the world have never heard God’s message.** Let the students from the demonstration sit down.

Before these people (put your hands over your ears) **can hear and believe God’s message, something must happen.** Read Romans 10:14-15. **How can people who already have God’s message help out?** Let students respond. (Send people to preach, share God’s message yourself)

Pray: Have the students put their hands over their ears. Pray for more people to take God’s message to all the people in the world. Pray that they will preach God’s message in a way that people can hear and understand.

Lesson 12—God's Universal Message

Supplies: Bible

Review the ways God communicates—through nature, face-to-face, through Jesus, and through the Bible. **Will God's message ever reach people from every language group? Can we know for sure? In the last book of the Bible, God describes a wonderful celebration in heaven with so many people that no one can count them all. In this crowd are people from every nation, tribe, people and ... (emphasize) language. Everyone is wearing a white robe and waving palm branches before the Lord. The multitude is praising God and His Son, Jesus.** Read Revelation 7:10. **Then let the students act out what this heavenly scene might look like.**

Will everyone praise God in their heart-language, using words they spoke when they talked in a familiar way to loved ones? Will we speak a new heavenly language? Whatever words we use, we know we will be praising God for His wonderful message that reached into every language group.

How will God communicate with us in heaven? Read Revelation 21:3. **God will live with people and speak face to face. When did God do this before?** (In the Garden of Eden, with Adam and Eve.) **Why did God stop speaking with Adam and Eve in a face-to-face way?** (They disobeyed, sinned.) **Heaven will be a perfect place without sin. When sin is removed, God chooses to communicate with us as friends, in the most personal way possible.**

Pray: Thank God that His message will reach people speaking every language on earth. Thank God that He chooses to speak with us face-to-face.