

We Are...Epistles

- All Pre-Class
- Arrange tables and chairs.
 - Pray for tonight's class.
 - Have music playing.
 - Take attendance.

7:00-7:20

REVIEW

Choose an activity or activities from the following ideas:

- Review previous lessons.
 - Ask questions regarding the last few lessons using the "We Are... Review Questions" and "Jesus is...A through Z Review Questions" (in KPH binder). Reward correct answers with Starbursts, etc.
 - Play "baseball" with the review questions. Have the entire class play as one team, trying to beat a score of 20 runs (their record), or divide them into two teams and see which team can score the most runs. An incorrect answer equals an out. After three outs, it's the other team's turn to "bat" (or if playing with the entire class as one team, clear the bases of "runners" after three outs). Make sure each team gets an equal number of "at bats." Have another teacher keep track of outs and points on the marker board.
 - Play musical chairs. When the music stops, ask the player without a chair a review question. If the student answers correctly, he or she gets to stay in the game.
 - Divide the group into pairs. Give each pair one of the "mini posters" with adjectives and titles of Jesus (i.e., the "A" sheet or the "B" sheet, etc.; in KPH binder). Have each team work together to memorize every adjective or title on their sheet. Then have them come up front and recite them to the class.
 - Have a student come to the front of the class and pick a letter (A-Z) out of a bag and then try to remember all the adjectives/titles that go with that letter.
 - Play A-M or N-Z "BINGO" with adjectives/titles.
- Review other previously memorized items. Use cardboard chart and cards with books of the Bible, as well as other props.
 - "One God," "Sin and Repentance," etc., verses that students have been working on.
 - Sing verses set to song
 - Books of the Old and New Testaments
 - Divisions of Old and New Testaments

All 7:20-7:40

BIBLE MEMORY WORK

Divide the class into four groups: two each for 5- to 7-year-olds and 8- to 10-year-olds, one teacher with each group. (To cut down on noise and confusion, two groups may leave the room to practice verses in the hallway, stairwell, or another classroom.)

Students will work on memorizing doctrinal verses. Each student will have his/her own list or booklet to work from, containing a chart for teachers to initial as students quote the verses one at a time, two at a time, etc. (Teachers: Please read instructions on the bottom Bible memory work charts or in the front of the booklets.)

Coloring pages with the 10 Commandments or other Bible verses are available (in the KPH binder) to help occupy visitors or younger/distracted students while their classmates are working on verses.

- Remind students that there will be prizes for those who pass with a score of 80 percent or better.
- Remind students that during Bible Memory Work time, everyone must be working, not distracting others. They should help each other learn the verses. It's fun working together!

7:40-7:45

RULES & PRAYER

- Review "Power Hour Promises" with the students, reminding them of proper behavior during class.
- Pray together, thanking God for your time together and praying that each person will understand and obey God's Word and grow into a strong Christian.

7:45-8:05

BIBLE LESSON

Teacher Prep: Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-3 and Jeremiah 31:31-34. Pray for anointing.

Items Needed: "We Are..." display board; different types of letters (e.g., letter from a friend, thank note, business letter, note from a student, etc.); "Epistles" Visual.

Introduction

During the first part of the year we learned about Jesus' titles and adjectives from A through Z. Refer to the "Jesus is...A through Z" board.

Now we are learning about some of the things that the Bible says we Christians are. Refer to the "We Are..." display board.

In this verse from 2nd Corinthians, listen for something that we are:

Read 2 Corinthians 3:2 from your Bible.

- What are we? (*our epistle*)
- What is an epistle? (*a letter*)

Show and discuss different types of letters and briefly read parts of some.

- Do you enjoy getting letters and notes? (*I do!*)

Lesson

- What do you usually write letters with? (*pen/pencil, paper*)

Listen to the next verse from 2nd Corinthians 3:

*"You show that you are a letter from Christ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."
(2 Corinthians 3:3 NIV)*

- We are a letter from whom? (*Christ*)
- We are written not with ink but with what? (*the Spirit of the living God*)
- Instead of writing on paper or tablets of stone, where has Christ written His letter? (*on human hearts*)
- What famous Old Testament items were written on tablets of stone? (*the 10 Commandments*)
- What happened to the first set of stone tablets? (*Moses threw them down and broke them when he saw the Israelites worshipping a golden calf*)

One problem with letters written on stone tablets or on paper is that they can be ruined (or lost or stolen) so you can't read them anymore. Jesus writes His letter right on our hearts. No one can ruin it or steal it away.

- When Moses saw the people worshipping the golden calf, which commandment were they already breaking? (2nd: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." Exodus 20:4)

We have trouble obeying God's Word when it's just written on a stone tablet or a piece of paper. God said through the prophet Jeremiah that it was time for something new:

Read Jeremiah 31:31-33 from your Bible (highlight the most important parts).

- What is a covenant? (*agreement, promise*)
- God's new covenant is that His law will be written where? (*in hearts*)

Have a student attach the "Epistles" visual to the "We Are..." display board.

Life Application

Listen to 2 Corinthians 3:3 again and tell me what writes Christ's epistle, or letter, in our hearts:

*"You show that you are a letter from Christ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."
(2 Corinthians 3:3 NIV)*

- What writes Christ's letter in our hearts? (*the Spirit of the living God*)
- Have you received the Holy Spirit? (*take time to note responses*)

When you receive the Holy Spirit, Christ's epistle is written in your heart. And we're not talking about your blood-pumping organ.

- What heart are we talking about? (*the center of your personality [who YOU are], your feelings and emotions*)
- If Christ puts His letter right at the center of YOU, do you think it will be easier to obey His words? (*yes; when His Word is in your heart, you will LOVE it!*)

Once Jesus writes His letter in your Heart, you become His epistle to everyone around you. How you act shows people what is written there.

- How should we act to show people that Jesus has written in our hearts? (*show the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering [patience], gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance [self-control]*)

Let's pray right now and ask Jesus to write His epistle in our hearts. If you've never received the Holy Spirit, ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins and to fill you with His Spirit. If you have received the Holy Spirit, ask Jesus to refill you and help you show the fruit of the Spirit in your life.

Lead the kids in prayer—response to lesson.

8:05-8:15

BIBLE SKILLS

Use the "Books of the Bible" display board to point things out as you ask these questions:

- How many books are in the New Testament? (*27 [3 letters in the word "New" x 9 letters in the word "Testament" = 27]*)
- Tonight our lesson was about us being "epistles." What is an epistle? (*a letter*)
- How many Epistles or Letters are there in the New Testament? (*21*)

Most of the books of the New Testament (21 out of the 27) are Epistles!

- Who wrote most of these Epistles? (*Paul*)
- Who else wrote some of the Epistles? (*James, Peter, John, Jude*)

Hand out Bibles. Remind students to handle Bibles carefully and to help younger students find verses.

Find Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.

- What do letters usually begin with? (*Dear _____; a greeting; a salutation*)

Find Paul's greeting in Ephesians 1:1 *(Have a student read this verse out loud.)*

- **Is this Epistle written to one person or several people?** *(several people: to the saints [holy, set-apart ones] at Ephesus and to the faithful [believers] in Christ Jesus)*

Now find Paul's greeting in 2 Timothy 1:1-2. *(Have a student read these verses out loud.)*

- **To whom did Paul write this Epistle?** *(Timothy, his dearly beloved son [spiritual, not natural, son])*

Whether Paul's Epistles were originally written to a few people or one person, they have now been read by millions! The information in them was given by God to help us all become better Christians.

Read an Epistle to become a better Epistle. ☺

Choose a couple of students to carefully collect the Bibles.

8:15-8:30

ACTIVITY/SNACK

Supplies:

Fun stationery

Pencils, pens

Alpha-Bits cereal

Napkins

Drinks (drink boxes/something that won't spill easily)

Give kids some stationery and pens or pencils. Encourage them to write a letter to someone. It can be letter of encouragement, a letter just to say "hi," a thank-you letter, etc.

As the kids are writing their letters, give them some Alpha-Bit letters to snack on, as well as a drink that won't spill easily.

Remind kids to say a prayer of thanks for their snack.

Also remind them: Jesus has written His Epistle in our hearts. How we act shows everyone what is written there.