

Psalm 95

Jesus: Brag about HIM!

Scripture: Psalm 95

Memory Verse: John 4:24 *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

Lesson Focus: This Psalm is an invitation to come before God in genuine praise and worship. As we unpack this Psalm we will focus on the heart, contrasting just doing the motions of worship from a hard heart vs. a soft heart that humbly approaches God "in spirit and in truth".

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture of Singing Kids, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd -5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: God is #1 Finger

Starter Activity: One-up Game

We will get our lesson started by playing "one-up". This game starts by throwing out a simple starter statement and then having the kids respond by out-doing one another. One example would be to throw out a starter like "I have one pet" and asking the kids if they can "one-up" you. Does anyone have two, three, four, five? A few more examples are below and feel free to bring your own: *

- 1) How many different states have you lived in?
- 2) How old is your oldest living relative?
- 3) How many brothers/sisters do you have?

Teachers: Play a few rounds and make it fun! The point of this is to get kids bragging/boasting just a LITTLE bit so be sure to select softer topics like these above that are less likely to make kids feel bad if they get "one-up'd". (It's not a big deal to get one-up'd on the age of grandma vs getting one-up'd on the number of pretty outfits or Lego sets that you have!). Then transition into the lesson with some discussion:

Q: When we play games like this, what is it that we end up doing? A: BRAGGING!

Q: And who are we bragging about? A: OURSELVES! *

Q: It is way too easy to BRAG about OURSELVES, isn't it? Why do you think that is? *

We all know that it is no fun to be around people who are bragging about themselves all day long. But today you are going to see that bragging itself isn't the problem, but WHO we are bragging about! Let's open our Bibles and see why this is!

Bible Study:

Psalm 95:1: This Psalm begins with an invitation.

Q: What is an invitation? What might you be invited to? (i.e. birthday party)

This Psalm invites us to come and gather with others to a "party" where we celebrate who God is and what He has done! *

This is why we begin our time together every week singing to the Lord. We invite all of you to come before the Lord in faith and SHOUT out to Him that He is great!

Psalm 95:2: So, we've been invited and here we see how we are to join the party.

Q: What should be our **attitude** as we join this celebration?

A: Thanksgiving! Joy! Gratitude! This is talking about the state of our hearts.

Teachers: Consider writing **attitude** on the board and asking the kids what this word means. Then replace the first "att" in the word with "brat". Ask them what this means (BRATitude). * Then erase the "b" and replace with a "g" (gratitude). It is from an "attitude of gratitude" that God would have us join the worship party.

Read John 4:23-24. These were the words of Jesus to the woman at the well that we studied last week. Notice how God is looking for people who will worship Him in "*spirit and truth*". In other words, with truly grateful hearts. Just singing or shouting to the Lord is nothing if our hearts are not in the right place! *

Psalm 95:3: Here is WHY we are to enter worship with gratitude! God ALONE is great!

Boys and Girls: This is what this book, the Bible, is all about! From beginning (**Genesis 1**) to end (**Revelation 22**), it is about God who is the KING over all the universe! *

Psalm 95:4-5: Notice what the Psalmist is doing here. He is BRAGGING!

Q: Is he bragging about himself? NO! He is bragging about God! Instead of saying "look at me and what I've done", he is saying, "look at God and what HE has done! No one can 'one-up' Him!"

Psalm 44:8 says, "*In God we boast (or brag) all day long, and praise Your name forever.*"

Q: What did this verse say they are doing "*all day long*"? A: **Bragging!** Not about themselves, but about God! * Bragging itself isn't bad, but it is WHO you are bragging about that matters! Bragging about yourself? Bad! Bragging about God? Worship!

Psalm 95:6: Here we have another invitation to come, bow down, and kneel before God.

Q: Why do you think kneeling is something that is good to do before God?

A: It demonstrates surrender and admits to God that He is the boss, the King, and that we are not! *

Teachers: Consider kneeling yourself and inviting the kids to kneel with you. On the last page of the lesson there is an image of Calvin (from Calvin & Hobbes) kneeling before the cross. We will leave a copy of this in your room. * Consider showing that picture and talking a little about how kneeling, again, is nothing if it doesn't represent the true posture of our hearts. Again, we kneel in "*spirit and in truth*".

Notice also that in v. 6 it refers to God as our Maker. Some people think that humans made up God. But the Bible, history, and common sense clearly teach otherwise. God made you and me and we are living in His world! *

Psalm 95:7a: Here we see believers in God, His people, described as sheep. His people are a "flock" that He loves and cares for. And Jesus Himself, the Son of God, said that He is the good shepherd and came to die for the sheep! (**John 10:11**)

Boys and girls: So here is the BIG question. Do YOU see and believe in Jesus as your Maker? As your King? As your Savior and Shepherd that you follow and worship in "*spirit and in truth*"? I hope the answer is YES! Because the rest of this Psalm describes what happened to people who answered this question with a giant NO!

Psalm 95:7b-8: These people who said NO to God "**hardened**" their hearts. *

This is the heart that pushes God out! The hard heart that says NO to God is saying YES to something else (maybe sin, maybe selfish pride, or maybe just YOUR own way instead of yielding to God's way).

Psalm 95:9: These people who said NO to God even saw God's power on display! *

Earlier in the year we studied the book of Exodus and learned about how God used Moses to rescue the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt with amazing signs and wonders. He brought the plagues and parted the Red Sea. Afterwards, He sustained them with miraculous food and protected them from attackers. Yet despite all that God had done for them, they didn't have an attitude of gratitude, but one of "bratitude"!

Psalm 95:10: They didn't just say NO once, but continually for 40 years!

God loved these people and He was sad that their hearts had turned "astray" from Him. All they had to do was turn from their wicked ways and turn back to God and His ways. * For God was ALWAYS ready to receive them back if they would just return in "*spirit and in truth*". *

Psalm 95:11: Finally, God's patience ran out and He punished those who said NO to Him. Q: Who knows what amnesia is? A: It is forgetting who you are! These people had a case of spiritual amnesia. They forgot the great things God had done for them and that God loved them!

Key Point: I hope all of you want to say YES to Jesus! By doing that, you are not only believing He exists but also surrendering to Him as King and Lord. This all begins in the heart.

All throughout this lesson we have been talking about our hearts.

When we sing, are we singing from our hearts "*in spirit and in truth*" or are we just going through the motions?

When we kneel to pray, do we have a humble "attitude of gratitude" before God "*in spirit and truth*" or are we just pretending or faking?

We introduced our lesson by talking about bragging. Whatever is really crowned King in your heart is what you will brag about. What is King of your heart? *

Jeremiah 9:23-24 says (slightly paraphrased), "*Thus says the Lord:*

Let not the wise man BRAG about his wisdom,

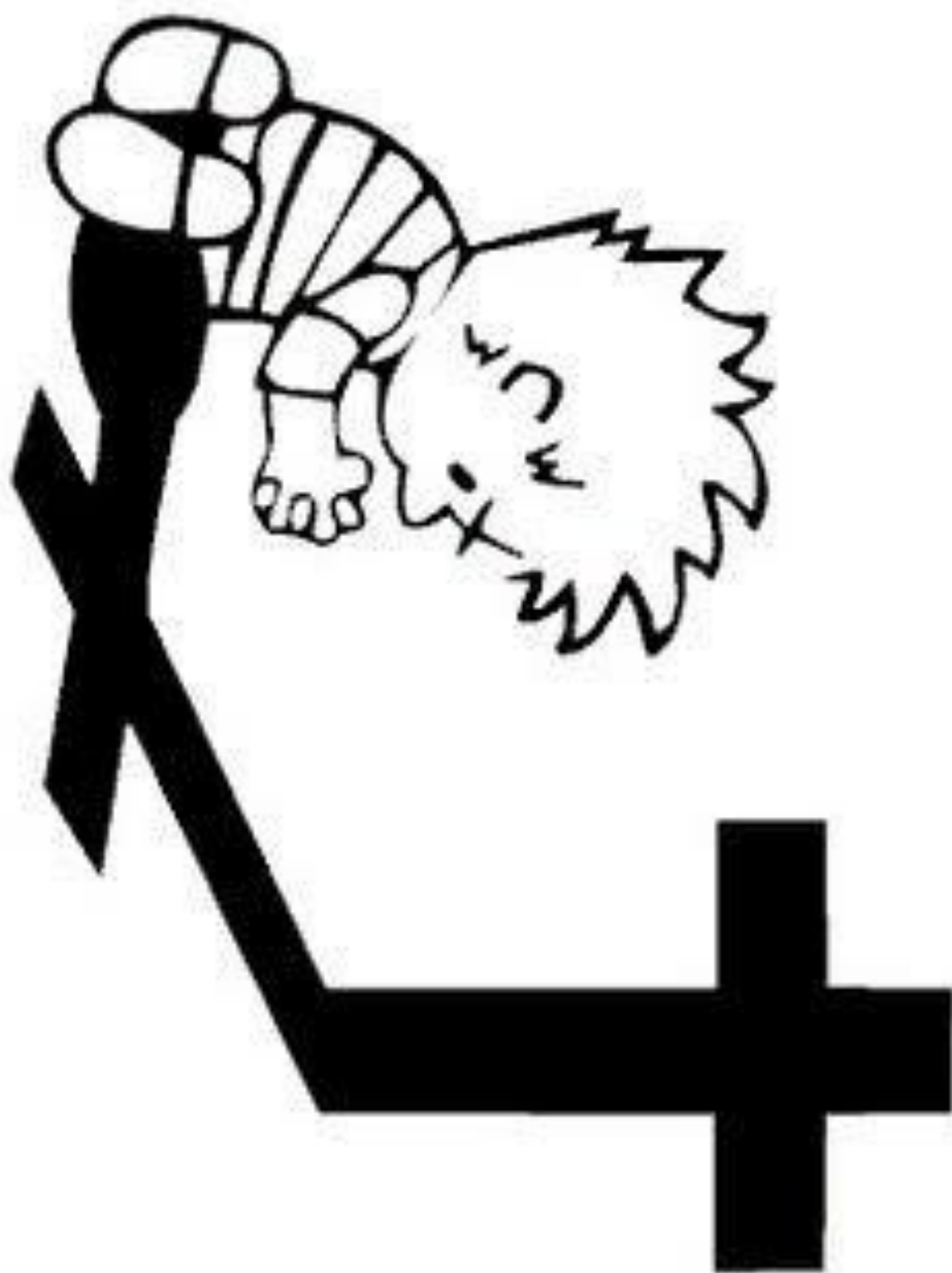
Let not the mighty man BRAG about his might,

*Let not the rich man BRAG about his riches. **

But let him who BRAGS do so about Me. That I am the Lord who exercises love, justice, and goodness on the earth. For I delight in these things."

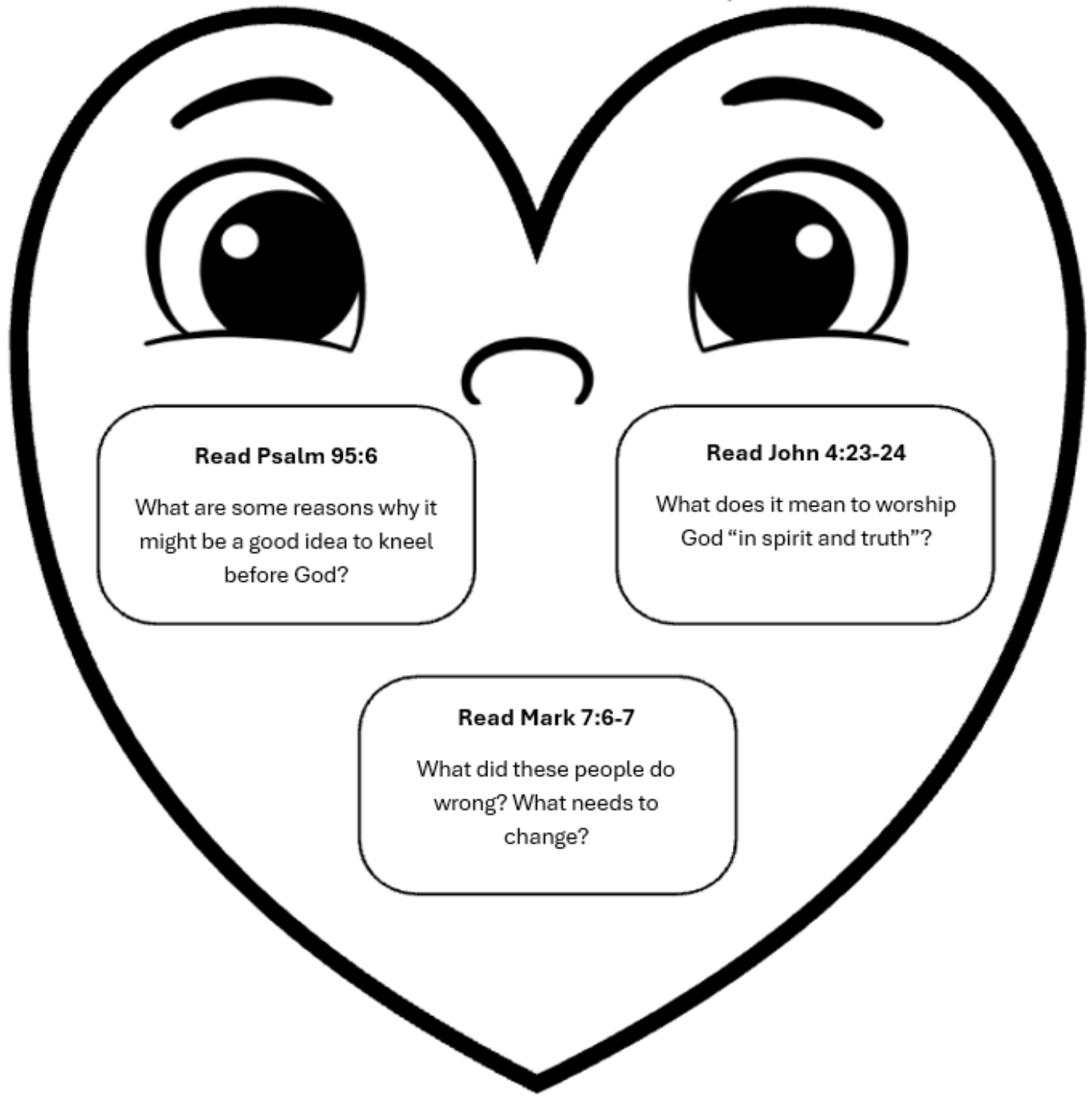
God delights in love, justice, and goodness. And He proved that by coming Himself and dying on the cross for us.

Soften your hearts and turn to Him "*in spirit and truth*"! Let Him be the one you BRAG about this week! *



BRING IT HOME

BEHOLD what manner of **LOVE** the Father has
bestowed on us,



that we should be called children of God!