**10 Sunday School Lesson Theme Ideas**

**By Julie David**

Theme: What is God Like? He is Eternal

Passages: Genesis 1:1-2; Revelation 1:8; Isaiah 43:10b

Questions: Who is the oldest person you know? Do you know what the words Alpha and Omega mean? (Most won't know what a Greek alphabet is, so put it in kid-friendly terms.) What are the first and last letters in our alphabet?

Activity: Make a card with each letter of the alphabet. Give multiple letters to each child if you have a small group, or have pairs with one letter for a larger group. Challenge kids to stand up one at a time and say the alphabet according to the card they have been given. Have fun, trying to go as fast as possible. Discuss how there are no letters before A and no letters after Z, just as God is the beginning and the end.

Theme: Jesus Hears Our Prayers

Passages: 1 Timothy 2:1-4; James 5:16; Philippians 4:6-7

Questions: How do you react when someone you hope to talk to starts a conversation with you? Have you had that happen — maybe with a sports figure, famous author or favorite teacher?

Activity: Using some effervescent tablets (monitor kids so they don't eat tablets or try to drink the water afterward!) and colored sparkling water to illustrate that our prayers get a reaction from God — like when the tablet goes into the water. He is excited to hear us pray because we are building a relationship with him.

Theme: I Spy with My Little Eye … Jesus Sees Me!

Passages: Luke 15:3-7; Psalm 33:18

Questions: Can you think of a time that you or one of your parents got really worried because something got lost? What do you do when you look for something — are you focused or distracted?

Activity: Gather one hundred of a common household item (pennies, paper clips, o-shaped cereal) and spread it out on a table. With the class gathered around, take one away, but keep it visible. Start a discussion about how important that one item is. What does this tell us about how important we (and those who are lost) are to Jesus? Couldn't we just focus on the fact that we still have 99 left? For younger children, you can play a simple game of "I Spy" around the classroom or have printable sheets that challenge the students to find hidden pictures.

Theme: Jesus is Our Anchor

Passage: Hebrews 6:19a

Questions: Has anyone ever seen an anchor hanging off a boat? What does an anchor do when it is lowered into the water? What is something that makes you feel scared? Does it help when someone hugs you or holds you tight?

Activity: Tie a piece of string to a suction cup and attach to a plastic boat. Use a tile floor or smooth table to demonstrate how the boat doesn't go anywhere when the suction cup is put down. Have students take turns pushing the boat around and then attaching it with the "anchor." Explain that Jesus helps us not float away into sin by anchoring our soul to heaven.

Theme: Becoming a Fisher of Men

Passage: Luke 5:1-11

Questions: Have you been fishing and caught something besides a fish? How did you feel? In our Bible reading, was there someone who was disappointed with what they caught? What happened when Simon obeyed Jesus and let his net down?

Activity: Using a blue sheet or piece of large paper, have two volunteers hold it up high. Have students take fishing poles made of dowel rods, string, and paper clips and cast their lines over to the other side. A teacher can attach die cuts of people with words like "friend at school" or "person at store." When children catch a paper person, you can talk about how they can live out their faith so that person "catches" the idea of what it is like to be a Christian.

Theme: I Am the Vine, You are the Branches

Passage: John 15:1-5

Questions: What does it mean to prune a bush? What have you seen that needs to be pruned in your life? (They may want to answer this silently or write it out as a prayer to God in a journal.)

Activity: Middle schoolers still love to play with dough, and you can make your own for this activity. Use green dough for the vine and brown dough for the branches. Have students illustrate the verse by creating a vine with branches that are both bearing new green leaves and ones that need to be pruned. Ask students to "prune" one branch and then one by one add more new leaves to it than before. Explain how God cuts off branches that are useless, but he also prunes/cuts branches to encourage healthy growth. Have students share what might need to be pruned in God's eyes and what new growth looks like (kindness, humility, self-control, etc.).

Theme: Convicted for Christianity

Passage: Acts 12:1-17

Questions: How can you tell someone is a Christian? What are the signs we are doing God’s work? What do you say if someone asks you about your faith?

Activity: Being a Christian in the early days after Jesus’ crucifixion was a dangerous proposition. Set up a fake court, with the premise of “If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” Divide into two teams with a pretend set of facts about a person. Have each side argue their case — whether the person should be convicted or acquitted.

Theme: Friendships that Flourish vs. Friendships that Flail

Passages: Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 27:6; 1 Corinthians 15:33

Questions: What does the verb "flail" mean? What about the word "flourish?" Have you ever felt like this in a friendship? What was that like? What kind of friendships help us flourish? Are your friends causing you to flourish or flail in your faith?

Activity: Ask students to have a heart to heart with themselves about their friendships. Divide a piece of paper in three sections (flourish, float and flail) and put the initials of friends who encourage them (flourish), don't affect them that much (float) or cause them to stumble (flail). At the bottom of the page, write out a prayer asking God to help them have the courage to choose friends who will help them flourish.

Theme: Take Time to Rest and Enjoy God

Passage: Genesis 2:2-3

Questions: What kinds of things do students like to do on vacation? What do you think God did when he rested? This verse just tells us what he didn't do. He didn't work or create anything. He just enjoyed his creation.

Activity: Fill a pillow case with four random items from home. Take time passing the items around the class, one at a time, and share the story behind each item or its unique qualities. Encourage your students to think of something they appreciate that gets overlooked most of the time such as a warm shower or a car to get to church. Remind them that God wants us to take time to rest and appreciate everyday things, people in our lives and circumstances that help us grow.

Theme: Me and My Big Mouth — Understanding Gossip

Passages: Proverbs 13:3; Proverbs 4:23; Luke 6:45; Matthew 12:35

Questions: What is gossip? Why do people gossip about each other? (Answer: To exalt themselves or to point out faults of others.)

Activity: Before teaching this lesson, brainstorm some conversation starters on index cards that are gossip, and some that are not. Ask a volunteer to come to the front of the class and read the cards. Have students clap when you are just sharing information and stomp their feet if it is gossip. For example: "Did you hear Alex came in last on the mile today?" (Stomp) versus "We ran the mile today and it was brutal!" (Clap) If someone asks who came in last, you can be honest, but that's all you need to say.

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This article may not be written by an Apostolic author, but it contains many excellent principles and concepts that can be adapted to most churches. As the old saying goes, “Eat the meat. Throw away the bones.”