

KIDMUNITY | This I Believe

Lesson 08: Saved by Grace

Small Group Guide

Bottom Line:

I am saved by grace through faith in Jesus – not by being good enough.

Memory Verse:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

Activity: The Gift You Can't Earn

Supplies Needed:

- A wrapped gift (box with something small inside)
- Optional: extra small prizes (stickers, candy, etc.) to give to everyone

How It Works

Bring out the wrapped gift and build curiosity. Tell the group: *"I have a gift, and I'm going to give it to someone... but first, you have to show me who deserves it first."*

Start giving them challenges:

- Do 10 pushups the fastest
- Answer a random question (the closest person to guess the year you were born)
- Who can hold their breath the longest

Let a few kids attempt to "earn" it, but don't give it to them yet.

Pause. "Okay, let me ask you something. Is this really a gift if you have to earn it?"

Let them respond. Technically, something you earn or win would be a prize. But that's not a gift.

“A real gift isn’t something you earn. It’s something that’s given.”

Choose a student and hand them the gift freely.

Leader Debrief

- What were you trying to do to get the gift?
- Did anyone actually earn it?
- What changed when I just gave it away?

Then connect clearly:

“At first, you were trying to earn the gift. You were working for it. But that’s not how gifts work. A gift is something you receive, not something you earn.”

“That’s exactly what the Bible says about salvation. We don’t earn it by being good enough, trying harder, or doing more. God gives it to us as a gift. Everyone who wants it can get it.”

”Because I don’t want to leave anyone out, here’s a gift/candy for everyone.”

Activity: Not Fair

How It Works

Have everyone sit in a circle and set the tone like a conversation, not a game. You might say something like: *“Alright, we’re going to talk about something that every single one of you cares about... fairness.”* Let that land for a second, then continue: *“I’m going to give you a couple of situations, and I want you to tell me—does this feel fair, or not fair?”* You can have them respond with a thumbs-up or thumbs-down, or just call it out.

Start with just a couple of examples to get them going:

- “You’ve been waiting in line for a long time... and someone cuts in front of you.”
- “You studied really hard for a test... and someone else didn’t study at all but gets the same grade as you.”

Let them react. Laugh with them. Let them feel it a little.

Then shift it to them:

“Alright, now I want to hear from you. What’s something that feels really unfair? Maybe something that’s happened to you... or something that just always seems to happen.”

Let a few kids share. This is where the gold is. Affirm their answers, laugh with them, and occasionally repeat one back to the group so everyone hears it. You’re building a shared sense of: *we all feel this.*

After a few responses, bring it together:

“Okay, so we all agree on something... we really care about fairness.”

Name What’s Going On

From there, guide them a little deeper: *“There’s something inside of us that wants things to be right. We want people to follow the rules. We want people to get what they deserve. And when that doesn’t happen... it bothers us.”*

Let that sit for a moment before shifting.

The Turn

Now gently flip it:

“But let me give you a different kind of situation.”

Read these one at a time, slower:

- *“You mess something up... and instead of getting in trouble, someone forgives you.”*
- *“You break something... and someone else pays for it.”*
- *“You didn’t earn a reward... but someone gives you one anyway.”*

After each one, ask: *“Is that fair?”*

They’ll hesitate or say no.

Then ask: *“But... do you like it?”*

Let them smile, laugh, or admit it.

The Tension

Now connect the dots in a paragraph, not punchlines:

“Isn’t that interesting? When something unfair happens to us in a bad way, we get frustrated. We say, ‘That’s not fair!’ We want things to be made right. But when something unfair happens to us in a good way—when we get something we didn’t earn or don’t deserve—we’re actually really okay with it.”

Pause. *“So on one hand, we want fairness... but on the other hand, we also really love grace.”*

The Connection

Now bring clarity:

“Fairness means getting what you deserve. Grace means getting something you don’t deserve.”

Let that sit, then take it one step deeper: *“And if we’re being honest... when it comes to God, we don’t actually want fairness.”*

Slow this part down: *“Because all of us have sinned. All of us have messed up. All of us have chosen our way instead of God’s way. So if we got what we deserved... that wouldn’t go well for us.”*

Pause. *“But God doesn’t treat us with fairness. He treats us with grace.”*

Bring It to Jesus

Wrap the truth clearly in a paragraph:

“Jesus took what we deserve—our sin, our punishment—so that we could receive what we don’t deserve: forgiveness, a new heart, and a relationship with God. That’s what grace is. It’s not something we earn. It’s something we receive.”

Leader Closing Moment (Invitation Space)

Keep this calm and simple:

“Some of you might realize right now that you’ve never actually received that. Maybe you’ve tried to be good, or do the right thing, or earn your way... but you’ve never just trusted Jesus and received what He’s offering.”

“You can talk to God anytime—even right now—and tell Him you trust Him.”

Discussion Questions

Kindergarten / 1st Grade

- What are some things people do that are wrong (sin)?
- How does it feel when we do something wrong?
- Can we fix our sin all by ourselves?
- Who helps us and makes things right again?

2nd / 3rd Grade

- What is sin, and how does it affect our relationship with God?
- Why can't we fix our sin on our own?
- What did Jesus do for us when He died on the cross?
- What does it mean that Jesus gives us something better in exchange?

4th / 5th Grade

- Why does sin separate us from God, and why is that a problem?
- What does it mean that Jesus was our substitute?
- Why did Jesus have to die to pay for sin?
- What difference does it make that Jesus came back to life?

Leader Wrap-Up & Prayer

"We all want fairness, especially when things feel wrong or unjust. But when it comes to us and our relationship with God, what we really need is grace. And that's exactly what God gives. Not because we earned it, but because He loves us."

Prayer

"God, thank You for Your grace. Thank You that You don't treat us the way we deserve, but instead offer us forgiveness and new life through Jesus. Help us to trust You and to live in the grace You've given us. We love You. Amen."