

95 Theses

REFORMATION DAY



THE REFORMATION

BIBLE PASSAGE

Romans 10:9; Ephesians 2:8-9 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

Only Jesus Saves Us.

FOCUS VERSE

“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from death, then you will be saved.” Romans 10:9 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Paper | Wastebasket | *Martin Luther* Activity Page | Large Feathers | Washable Craft Paint | Plastic Portion Cup | Cardstock | Painting Smocks (optional) |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is your favorite holiday?
- Did you know that Christians have special holidays? Can you name one?



AS THE CHILDREN ARRIVE, PLAY “WHAT A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD” FROM *THE GETTY KIDS HYMNAL, HYMNS FROM HOME* (AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE).

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, “When we worship God, we are showing Him how much we love Him. Did you know we can worship in all sorts of ways? For example, singing, quietly listening to God, praying, thanking God for all of His many blessings – these are all acts of worship!” Before you sing together, ask volunteers to name something for which they are thankful.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Gather the children for prayer. Say, “God loves for us to praise Him and thank Him.” Ask if someone would like to pray today, or you can lead in prayer.

SAMPLE PRAYER: “Dear God, we are so thankful for all of the many blessings You give us. We are most thankful that You gave Your Son. We know that only Jesus saves us. We love You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

BACKGROUND: Say, "Today, we are taking a break from our regular lessons to talk about the Church. We will learn about something that happened a long time ago, but that is still so important today. On October 31st, we celebrate the beginning of the Protestant Church. [In short, Protestants base their beliefs on the Bible and teach that salvation requires placing your faith in God alone, not any other specific actions.] We call this Reformation Day! Has anyone heard about the Reformation? Good answers! We are going to learn about this special time in Christian history! Who is ready?" (There is no puzzle piece for today's lesson.)



A RESOURCE TO HELP YOU TEACH ABOUT THE REFORMATION IS *WHY DID THE REFORMATION HAPPEN?* BY DANIKA COOLEY. THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN TO GIVE CHILDREN THE "WHO," "WHAT," AND "WHY" OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

TRANSITION: Say, "First, let's play a game."

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Paper (5-10 pieces per child) | Wastebasket |

Say, "Did you know that a long time ago, some people thought they had to buy their way to heaven? They were taught that if they paid a priest [or preacher] money, he would give them a piece of paper called an *indulgence* and this paper would help "save them" in God's eyes. Let's play a game called *Toss the Indulgences* to help us get started on our lesson."

GAME GOAL: For each team to toss their crumpled pieces of paper into a wastebasket. The team that gets the most pieces of paper in the basket wins!

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Divide the class into two teams.
2. Give each child 5 to 10 pieces of paper and have them stand several feet (more or less depending on age and ability) from a wastebasket.
3. Tell the children to crumple each piece of paper.
4. When you say "Go!" a child from each team will toss their papers into the basket.
5. The team with the most "indulgences" in the basket wins.



USE TWO BASKETS IF YOU HAVE TEN OR MORE CHILDREN IN YOUR GROUP.

VARIATION: Small groups can play as individuals. The child who gets the most "indulgences" in the basket wins.

TRANSITION: Say, "You did an awesome job playing *Toss the Indulgences*! Now, let's learn more about the Reformation."

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Martin Luther* Activity Page |



GIVE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN YOUR OWN WORDS.
TELLING A STORY OFTEN HOLDS A CHILD'S ATTENTION BETTER THAN READING, AND IT ALLOWS FOR QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED WHEN USING NEW OR HARD-TO-UNDERSTAND WORDS.

Say, "Our lesson today is about the Reformation. Has anyone ever heard of the Reformation? This was a time when a big change was taking place in the Christian Church. Hundreds of thousands of people left the Catholic Church and formed a new group of Christ-followers called the Protestant Church. The Catholic Church believed in the Bible, but they started adding to God's Word. And God tells us in Deuteronomy 4:2, 'Don't add to these commands. And don't leave anything out. But obey the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.'

"The Catholic Church had priests [who are like preachers] who would not allow the people to own Bibles or read God's Word. They said the people had to come to the priests and buy indulgences [slips of paper sold and approved of by the Pope, the leader of the Catholic Church] if they wanted God to forgive their sins. They also made up other rules. For example, the Catholic Church taught people to pray to Mary [Jesus' mother] and other Christians who had died. They taught that doing good works [good deeds] could save you too.

"However, other Christians helped the Church by translating the Bible into languages the people could understand. These men and women were called Reformers. They believed exactly what the Bible says - that the ONLY way to become a Christian is to ask Jesus to forgive us and believe in Him. The Bible also tells us that we cannot save ourselves, that salvation is a gift from God, and that doing good works cannot save us." Read Romans 10:9.

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from death, then you will be saved.

Now, read Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ I mean that you have been saved by grace because you believe. You did not save yourselves. It was a gift from God. ⁹ You cannot brag that you are saved by the work you have done.

Ask, "How does the Bible say we are saved? [Wait for responses.] Right! The Bible says that our salvation is a gift from God! This verse tells us that we become Christians by believing that Jesus is Lord!

"Has anyone ever heard of Martin Luther [show the children the *Martin Luther* Activity Page]? Well, Luther was one of the Reformers who knew that **only Jesus saves us** because that's what the Bible says. He thoroughly studied the New Testament and understood that we have the right to come to God ourselves. We don't need anyone to speak for us or give us a piece of paper. Each of us is equally important to God; no one is more important than another.

"Luther protested [meaning he disagreed with] the Catholic Church's selling of indulgences as a way to be saved [meaning a person could buy their forgiveness]. Martin Luther wrote a list of 95 questions or concerns regarding this and other Church practices. This list is called the 'Ninety-Five Theses,' and he nailed it to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517. This was the beginning of the Reformation.

"In 1521, Martin Luther was called to meet certain leaders at a place called Worms. This meeting was called the Diet [pronounced dee-et] of Worms (pronounced Vermz). These leaders wanted Luther to take back what he had said in his 'Ninety-Five Theses,' but he would not, and he was punished for his beliefs.

"Martin Luther translated the Bible into the German language so the German people could read it themselves. After that, it was translated into other languages so that people all over the world can know how to become a Christian. Aren't you thankful we have the Bible in our language so we can read it ourselves? We don't need men to make up rules telling us how to be saved from our sins; we need to know the truth of God's Word. 1 Timothy 2:3-5 says, 'This is good, and it pleases God our Savior. God wants all people to be saved. And He wants everyone to know the truth. There is only one God. And there is only one way that people can reach God. That way is through Jesus Christ, who is also a man.'" (If you played "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" earlier, mention that Martin Luther is the author of that famous hymn.)

Ask, "Who learned something today that you would like to share? [Wait for responses.] Great! It is important to know how to be saved, and that is found in God's Word."

TRANSITION: Say, "I'm so thankful God called people to stand up and proclaim His Word and then translate the Bible into other languages so that we can read it ourselves. Now we know that Jesus is the only way to be saved!"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk about this lesson to make sure we understand this important time in our history: The Reformation."

1. Can we save ourselves?

Response: No, only Jesus saves us.

2. What was the Reformation?

Response: A time when a great change took place in the Christian Church.

3. Why did the Reformation take place?

Response: Christians, like Martin Luther, knew that God's Word says that only Jesus saves us. These Reformers were angry because some leaders were teaching that you had to pay money or do good works to be forgiven, so these men and women decided to speak up and teach the truth of the Bible.

4. What are indulgences?

Response: Slips of paper people bought because they thought that was how their sins would be forgiven.

5. What big event started the Reformation?

Response: Martin Luther wrote out 95 concerns about the leaders' wrong teachings and nailed them to the church door.

6. What is the Diet of Worms?

Response: This was a special meeting where Martin Luther was told to take back his words.

7. What did this lesson teach you?

Response: Answers will vary.

8. What does this lesson teach you about God?

Response: **Only Jesus saves us.** Jesus gives us the courage to do the right thing. Jesus is Lord. God gave us the Bible so that we can know the truth, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job listening to our lesson today!"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Large Feathers (purchased from a local craft store, 1 per child) | Washable Craft Paint | Plastic Portion Cup (1 per child) | Cardstock (1 per child) | Painting Smocks (optional) |

Say, "Martin Luther probably used a quill [feather] and ink to copy the Bible into the German language. He wanted all people to be able to read God's Word. Today you will try your hand at using a feather and paint to write words on a sheet of paper."

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child a feather, a plastic portion cup with paint poured beforehand, and cardstock paper.
- Instruct the children to dip the quill (feather) into the paint and try their hand at writing with a quill. (You could have them write out this week's memory verse.)
- Place the papers out so the paint can dry.
- If you have extra time, the children can share their writing.

OPTIONAL IDEA: If you have time for a snack, eat a "Diet of Worms." Ahead of time, prepare a bowl of "dirt" and "worms." Recipe: Crumble Oreo cookies in a large bowl. Add chocolate pudding and mix the two so that it looks like potting soil. Then, add dye-free gummy worms to the mixture. Serve each child a small cup of dirt and worms. Enjoy! (**Important: Always check with parents about allergies before serving food to children!**)

TRANSITION: Say, "You have done an awesome job writing with your quills. Don't forget... the Bible was translated into many languages so that people could read it for themselves."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "We have a memory verse just for this week, and it reminds us that only Jesus saves us. Let's learn it together." Read the verse aloud a few times. Then, invite the children to join you in saying it.

"If you declare with your mouth [cup your hands around your mouth], 'Jesus is Lord' [make an "L" with your pointer finger and thumb, bring it across your body from your shoulder to your waist], and believe in your heart [put your hands over your heart] that God raised [raise both arms from waist to sky] Jesus from death, then you [point to someone] will be saved."
Romans 10:9 (hold out hands like a book)

CHALLENGE: Ask questions to make sure the children understand the meaning of the verse. For example, say, "What does this verse mean?" or "How can we be saved?"

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Who has learned something about the Reformation? Me too! God uses Christians like Martin Luther to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. We know that only Jesus saves us because the Bible tells us so. I am so thankful for God's Word."

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, thank You for making a way for us to be saved and for giving us the Bible. We know You love us and that You died and rose again for each of us. Help us tell others about You. We love You. In Jesus' name. Amen."*

RELEASE —

If you have extra time, replay *Toss the Indulgences* or play a memory verse game.

