

Leader's Guide

Let's Explore Our Faith

Lesson 3 · God the Father

Aims:

- To know how much greater God the Father is than any earthly father
- To understand that they can become God's child and affirm those who already are.

Preparation:

- Read through *Article of Faith 1.b.* (concerning God the Father). Note any questions that come to mind. Any question(s) you have may be the same one(s) your students ask.
- Read the Scriptural basis for the *Article of Faith 1.b.*: Genesis 1:1; Psalm 90:2; John 13:3; 16:28; Ephesians 1:3-4; 1 Peter 1:2-3; 1 John 2:23; 3:1
- Review the *Article* again. Highlight the connections between key points of the lesson and the Scripture passages referenced.
- Prepare the student lesson.

Needed:

- Student workbook, Bible and pencil for each student
- Copy(ies) of *MC Constitution with Articles of Faith and Practice*
- Chalkboard, marker board, or writing pad (with markers or chalk)
- Family photograph (yours or another family children will recognize)
- 2-3 round balloons
- Masking tape

Getting Started:

Begin your class with a short prayer. Ask God to help students understand what He wants to say to them about Himself as their Father.

Show your family picture to the children. Tell some of the ways you are like

or unlike other members of your family, particularly your father. Distribute *Student Workbooks*, Bibles and pencils. Students respond to the first statement, thinking about their dad. **How are you like your dad?** Give sample answers, if needed (physical features, emotions, attitudes, etc.) **How are you different from your dad?** Again give sample answers, if needed (age, size, knowledge, etc.)

Direct students' attention to the second statement. **Now think about God, our Heavenly Father. How are earthly fathers like God?** Give sample answers, if needed (have children, love, etc.) **How are earthly fathers NOT like God?** Again give sample answers, if needed (strength, age, knowledge, etc.) Ask for volunteers to share their answers, and write their responses in two lists on the board.

Then ask students, **Which of the differences between an earthly father and God the Father show us that God is greater?** Of course, the answer is that all of them should. Stress the fact that the Bible tells us much about God's greatness.

Study:

Direct students' attention to the *Article of Faith* paragraph in their workbook. Read Article 1.b. from the Constitution while students follow along. Have students circle any words that are new to them. Write any words on the board. (Words printed in **bold** are listed in the *Glossary*.) Take time for students to discuss possible meanings for new terms they identify and look up those listed in the *Glossary*. Then discuss the paragraph, noting any concepts that may require more explanation during the study time.

Have students unscramble the words, and fill in the blanks for truths 1-4.

Truth 1. (*Answer: existed*) Have a volunteer read the paragraph. Explain that only people are begotten. They are given life by their parents. Emphasize that God the Father has no parents. He always was and always will be. In Genesis 1:1, God was before the world was made. In Exodus 3, God told Moses to tell the Israelites that "I AM" sent him. He has always existed, and will always exist.

Truth 2. (*Answer: Son*) Have a volunteer read the paragraph. This truth is closely tied to Truth 1. Explain that the word *eternal* means "without beginning or end." The Bible tells us that God is eternal. And since God is triune (refer to discussion on the Trinity in lesson

2), each person of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—is eternal or “without beginning or end.” So we can know that God the Father has always and will always have a Son.

Truth 3. (*Answer: salvation*) Have a volunteer read the paragraph. Then ask students, **What is an inventor?** Allow student responses. Make the point that an inventor is someone who makes up, produces or devises a new method, process, plan or device first. The idea begins or originates with them. At this point, play a little game of *Name that Inventor*. Say some well-known objects and see if students can name the person credited as the inventor (telephone—Alexander Graham Bell, penicillin vaccine—Jonas Salk, printing press—Gutenberg, etc.) Then make the correlation between an inventor of something—like an author is to a book—and God the Father. The whole idea, plan and provision for salvation began with God because He loves us (Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:10).

Truth 4. (*Answers: life, believe*) Have a volunteer read the paragraph. Direct the students’ attention to the definition of faith. Emphasize that the concept of faith is really quite easy to understand. Daily each of us exercises faith in something or somebody. Use the example of sitting in a chair or crossing the street in a crosswalk. You have faith the chair will hold you up off the floor, or that the drivers of oncoming cars will stop. As a Christian, faith is vital to receiving Jesus as our Savior (Acts 10:43). God the Father wants us to be in His family, but we must believe or trust in Jesus to save us from our sin. There is no other way to become God’s child.

Now direct students’ attention to the difference statement exercise. Explain the assignment of correcting the sentence by crossing out one of the CAPITALIZED words in the sentence. Read the difference statement with each of the possible options. Have students mark their answers. Discuss the correctly marked statements with the class. (*Answers: beginnings, Son, Father, salvation, new life*)

Let’s Review.

Explain the triple match review. The words in the center column will be matched with a definition on the right and a related Scripture on the left. Allow students time to complete the exercise. (*Answers: Eternal—with no beginning or end, Psalm 90:2; Begotten—was given life by someone*

else; Matthew 1; Author—the inventor of something written, 1 John 4:9-10; Faith—to trust in something or someone, John 1:12; Salvation—freedom from sin’s penalty and power, Acts 4:12) Leader, beware! Be sure you are familiar with the correct responses, so that you can recognize the “sounds-right-but-is-wrong” answers included as choices. For example, *eternal* does not mean, “born before time began” since the eternal God was never born at all. Persons are *begotten*, not things. And while it may be true an *author* reads many books, this is not the point. It’s a common misconception to think that *faith* means believing in something you know isn’t true. Finally, another popular fallacy is that *salvation* is doing good works to get to heaven. Wrong!

Emphasize the *Scripture to Learn*. Use the following exercise to teach Philippians 4:20. Review the verse with the students. Ask, **Why do you think God put this verse in the Bible? How can this verse be helpful to you?** Divide the class into two groups. Instruct students to stand on opposite sides of a masking tape line. Each team is given five points. A balloon is set in motion and bopped back and forth across the line. The first person to hit the balloon says the first word of the verse. The next person to bop the balloon says the second word, and so on. If the balloon hits the ground on their side, or a person cannot say his/her word, the team loses a point. The goal is for both groups to work together to say the entire Scripture verse while keeping the balloon airborne.

Response.

Allow students to complete the *My Response* section of their workbook. The first two questions may be used to summarize the lesson with the students, either as a personal “quiet time,” or as a final group activity. The last “Yes” or “No” response should be completed individually and privately.

Ask for questions from your students, especially as it relates to becoming a child of God. Though there will be more focused evangelistic opportunities in later lessons, ask the Holy Spirit to help you be sensitive to students who may express a desire to receive Jesus Christ as Savior or want to talk about their relationship with God. It would be best to get together with the student(s) away from the class to prevent distractions.

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Think about your dad.

Write or draw your answer.

How are you alike? How are you different?

Now think about God, our Heavenly Father.

How are earthly fathers like God? List some ways.

How are earthly fathers not like God? List some ways.

An earthly father is a man who has children and is responsible to love, provide for and protect them. Looking at earthly fathers may help us picture or understand some things that are true about God, our Heavenly Father. The Bible tells us that God is our Heavenly Father once we accept Jesus as our Savior, and He is much greater than any human being, including earthly fathers.



Article of Faith

In our last lesson, we studied the first part of the *Article of Faith* that explains what God tells us about Himself and what He is like. The second part of that *Article of Faith* about God explains some of the important truths that the Bible teaches about God the Father specifically.

We believe that the Father is begotten of none. He is the eternal Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Author of salvation, the Father of all who are begotten into newness of life through faith in Christ.

This *Article* identifies four biblical truths about God the Father. Each is an important way God is greater than a human father.

Unscramble the following words and place them in the correct spaces below.

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Truth 1. God has always _____.
He had no beginning. To “beget” means to “give life to.” An earthly father gives life to or “begets” his child. God is not “begotten” because no one had to give Him life. He always has been and always will be alive.

Truth 2. God has always had a _____.
The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have always existed together—one God in three Persons. And just like God the Father always has been and always will be alive (truth 1), God the Father always has been and always will be the Father of God the Son, who is Jesus Christ (truth 2). He is the **eternal** or everlasting Father of the Lord Jesus—forever and ever.

Truth 3. God is the inventor of _____.
Just as an author is the inventor of a book that is written, so God is the inventor of **salvation**. Salvation—what’s that? The Bible says that all people have a problem: SIN. Sin is anything we do, say or think that displeases God and keeps us away from His great love for us. So God had the idea to rescue or save us from the penalty of sin, which is death, by sending Jesus Christ to die in our place. God’s plan of salvation through Jesus is the only way to receive forgiveness for sin.

Truth 4. God gives new _____ to those who _____ in His Son.
Faith is believing in or trusting in something or someone. Having faith in Christ means believing or trusting in Him to save us from our sin. This is the plan of **salvation** that God invented. And two things happen when we believe in Jesus—we are forgiven of our sin and God the Father gives us new life. This new life frees us from the power of sin and helps us live to please God. The Bible also says that when God forgives our sin and gives us new life, we become His child, “**begotten**” by the Heavenly Father.

Read each sentence below describing the difference between earthly fathers and God the Father. Correct the sentence by crossing out one of the CAPITALIZED words.

Difference #1: Earthly fathers have BEGINNINGS / CHILDREN; God did not.

Difference #2: Men become earthly fathers when they have children; God has always had a WIFE / SON and has always been a FATHER / HUSBAND.

Difference #3: Earthly fathers cannot invent, design or create HOUSES / SALVATION; God did.

Difference #4: Once they are born, earthly fathers cannot give NEW LIFE / NEW CARS to their children; God can.



LEF'S REVIEW.

Without looking back, draw lines to match each word in the middle with the supporting Bible verse on the left AND with the correct definition on the right.

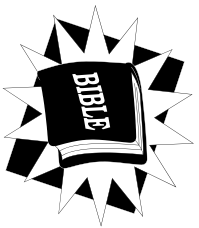
John 1:12 ETERNAL Someone who reads many books
Purchased with great wealth

1 John 4:9-10 BEGOTTEN Doing good works to get to heaven
To believe something you know isn't true

Acts 4:12 AUTHOR Freedom from sin's penalty and power
Born before time began

Psalms 90:2 FAITH The inventor of something written
With no beginning or end

Matthew 1 SALVATION To trust in someone or something
Given life by someone else



Scripture to Learn.

“To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Philipians 4:20 (NIV)

My Response.



Finish the following sentence. List as many reasons from the lesson as you can remember.

God the Father is greater than any earthly father because...

Finish the following sentence. List all the reasons you can think of.

I would want to be a child of the Heavenly Father because...

God loves you very much, and He wants you to be His child. In fact, only someone who is God's child has the right to call Him "Father." Are you His child? Have you asked Jesus to forgive your sin and received Him as your Savior and Lord? **Circle one.**

Yes No

If you are not already a Christian or God's child, you can be. Simply pray or talk to God. Admit that you have done wrong. Tell God that you believe that Jesus died and rose again for you.