

# Lesson 1: Sin Entered the World

## GENESIS 3 PROFILE



**Genre:** Narrative

**Author:** Traditionally attributed to Moses

**Passage:** Genesis 3:1-11

**Where Is It:** Old Testament: **Genesis**, Exodus, Leviticus

**Key Characters:** God, Adam (the man), Eve (the woman), serpent

**Main Plot:** Adam and Eve were the climax of God's creation—the very reason God created the world. Through the mistakes of the woman and the man, we can learn valuable lessons about how God desires us to live. Adam and Eve teach us about the nature of sin and the consequences of our actions.



## THE WORD

**Genesis 3:1-11**



## ENGAGE THE WORD

### Lesson Overview: Relational Dimension

The creation accounts in Genesis make clear humans have been fashioned for relationship. We, as humans, are meant to be in relationship—to share community—with each other, with creation and with God. As God desired companionship (seen through the creation account), so God created humanity for companionship: women and men together sharing life and love, and caring for the world. Our very nature interweaves us in shared community, in shared responsibility for one another and the entirety of creation. Thankfully we are not asked or meant to take on these magnificent tasks alone.

As the first lesson in this new unit continues, we see how God's story moves from the creation account to the introduction of sin into the world. An important place to start is to address the fact that Adam and Eve's decision hurt God. It hurt them too. Broken relationships with God result in broken relationships with others. When Adam and Eve decided to place their trust in the serpent instead of what they knew to be true about God—God's goodness—they severed a piece of their relationship with God. Creation had rebelled against God.

## Biblical Commentary

### GENESIS 3:1-6

The narrative begins with a description of the *serpent*, a pivotal player in the story. The serpent is described as shrewd, clever, and having the ability to converse with the woman. As the woman and serpent begin to dialogue about the trees within the garden, the serpent sees an opportunity to point out God's minimal prohibition. In that way, he turns Eve's attention away from God's lavish provision. By tricking Eve into looking at what she didn't have (as opposed to everything she did have), the serpent causes the woman to doubt God's Word and alienates her from God.



## THE MAIN IDEA

HUMANS ARE GIVEN THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE. HOWEVER, THEIR DECISION TO DISOBEY COMES WITH UNFORESEEN CONSEQUENCES.

### GENESIS 3:7

The man and the woman received what they desired: an intimate knowledge of both good and evil. As the woman looked at the tree, from which God asked them not to eat, she saw that it was beautiful and wanted the fruit. Often temptation comes from seeing something and desiring to obtain it for ourselves, even if we do not need the object of our obsession. The misdeed is infectious and shared; both the man and woman share in guilt. Once they have taken the fruit, their eyes are open and their innocence lost.

### GENESIS 3:8-11

The woman and man should receive punishment for their willing disobedience to God's command. Yet, the Lord God is heard walking through the garden looking for the created ones. God's presence in the garden signals unexpected grace. His loving call, "Where are you?" graciously beckons them to return.

God's desire was to be in relationship with mankind even after mankind broke the sacred bond between the two. As desperately as Adam and Eve wished it, the trees that had sheltered, nourished, and given them joy could not hide them from God any more than their fig leaf aprons could cover them (*Genesis: A Commentary in Wesleyan Tradition*, page 126).

### REFLECT ON THE TOPIC:

In what ways has Satan tempted you to doubt God's goodness?

What may be a temptation you are struggling with now?

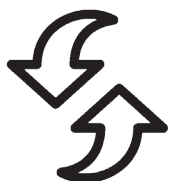
Who do you have in your life to help you deal with temptation?

### REFLECT ON YOUR YOUTH:

What are some of things your students are struggling with currently?

How do your students view the introduction of sin into the world?

How would you evaluate their understanding of Genesis 3:1-11?



### Hebrew Word: Serpent שֶׁפָּן

Snake imagery in the ancient world credited serpents with a special knowledge of death, perhaps because of the serpent's ability to produce venom or its ability to renew itself by sloughing off its own skin. Early Jewish and Christian interpreters identified the serpent as Satan.



### Bible Background

Most evangelical scholars see Genesis 3:15 as a word about God's final victory over the power of sin through the Messiah. Though death was the punishment for sin, God granted continued existence for human life through childbirth.

—*Discovering the Old Testament*, Beacon Hill Press, 2003

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## LESSON OUTLINE



**Main Idea:** Our witness flows from who we are when we are formed by the Spirit and shaped in community.

**Resources:** Bibles, prizes for game (each in a closed box or bag), half-sheets of paper, copies of handout, colored crayons, one black crayon for each student

### **Connect to My Experience:**

Welcome and Prayer  
Smart Phone Show and Tell  
Photo Scavenger Hunt

**Connect to the Word:** Let's Make a Deal

**Connect to My Life and the World:** Skit: Genesis 3, The Darkness of Sin

**Closing:** Affirmation and Prayer



## CONNECT TO MY EXPERIENCE

**Student Goal: Youth will see themselves as part of a larger community that embodies Jesus on earth today.**

### WELCOME YOUR GROUP AND OPEN WITH PRAYER.

Begin with the following icebreaker:

#### SMARTPHONE SHOW AND TELL

Welcome your group and have them pull up photos on their smartphones. Take a few moments to share a recent picture of something fun. If they do not have access to photos, invite your students to share about something that carries significance.

#### PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT

Allow students to use their smartphones and put them into groups of 5-7. Make sure they stay where they can be seen by adult volunteers. Tell them to use their smartphones and try to capture the following:

What is beauty?

How do they see  
creation?

What is their favorite  
thing in nature?

What is represented  
in the narrative of  
Genesis 3:1-11?

When you gather the students back together ask them to share some of their favorite images.



## CONNECT TO THE WORD

**Student Goal: Students will explore how we can be tempted to make bad decisions.**

### LET'S MAKE A DEAL

The first activity in today's lesson will require a bit of set-up time before your meeting. Gather together the prizes and place them all in identical bags or boxes so that students won't be able to see them.

Remember that what is desirable to students may not be what we would want. Often times a six-pack of soda or a full bag of candy is a treasure for teens.

**SAY:** Today we are going to look at the results of our decisions. We're going to start by playing a game.

Explain that you are going to play your version of "Let's Make a Deal." Since this is a game show that many of your kids will not be familiar with, you will need to explain the rules to them. Here's how it works: Ask for a volunteer (or choose someone) to get started. Ask the student to come forward and choose one of the bags or boxes. Don't let them see inside. Once they have made a choice, try to talk them out of it. If you can't talk them out of it, you can offer to buy it from them for money or candy. You'll have several contestants. Ideally, you want to talk some of them out of their decision. It will help to have a range of prizes—from stuff that isn't worth much, like a pencil, to something kids would want to have, like a full bag of candy. Keep playing until all your items are gone or until you determine that the game has gone on long enough.

**ASK:** Was it a hard to make a decision? Why or why not?

How did it feel when you realized you got talked out of a good prize?

How did it feel to pass something up and take a chance on the hidden prize?

**SAY:** We make choices every day. We lean on our past experience, the judgment of people we trust, and a lot of other factors. Today, we are going to continue looking at God's story and see how one bad choice made a really big mess.

Read Genesis 3:1-11.

### SKIT: GENESIS 3

Recruit a few students to act out the reading of Genesis 3:1-11 using the script in the handout for this lesson found in the back of this book.

Now, split students into groups and assign them a set of verses to look over.

Allow them time to read through the verses again. Ask them to share with the group what exactly is happening in their specific verse(s).

Ask the students what is the central message or important theme in their verse(s).

**SAY:** The serpent, which scholars believe is Satan, is trying to confuse the woman and get her to doubt God's goodness. The serpent wants her to trust herself and not the truth God shared with her. Notice she



### Bible Background

Most evangelical scholars see Genesis 3:15 as a word about God's final victory over the power of sin through the Messiah (Jesus).

Though death was the consequence of sin, God granted continued existence for human life through childbirth.

—*Discovering the Old Testament*, Beacon Hill Press, 2003

changes what God actually said in chapter 2 when she speaks. God never says that if the fruit is touched, they will die. He does say that if they eat of it, they will *surely* die. That “surely” is important, and Eve leaves it out.

**ASK:** Let’s keep reading. Read verses 4 and 5 again. What does the serpent say will happen?

Do you think it’s a bad thing to want to be like God? Why or why not?

How many of you are excited to get your driver’s license?

How many of you think you were ready to drive when you were five years old? Realistically, how would it turn out if someone had actually allowed you to have your license at that age?

### Genesis 2:15-17

The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the Lord God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”—Genesis 2:15-17

**SAY:** It is not a bad thing to desire to be like God. After all, we are created in his image! However, the way the serpent tempts Adam and Eve to go about it is wrong. Basically, he invites them to be their own god. There is a reason God put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the garden. At some point, Adam and Eve would have been ready for it, but instead of trusting in God and what he told them, they let themselves be deceived by the serpent (Romans 1:25).

Ask a youth to read verses 6-11.

**ASK:** Can anyone remember a time when you were little, or maybe even recently, when you did something you weren’t supposed to? Thinking back, when your parents found out, did you hide from them because you knew you were in big trouble?

**SAY:** In much the same way, Adam and Eve hide from God. What was once a place freedom where they could walk with God is now a place of shame and fear. What was once whole is now broken. Adam and Eve’s relationship with God is transformed.



## CONNECT TO MY LIFE AND THE WORLD

**Student Goal: Youth will see how their decisions affect their relationship with God.**

**SAY:** It would be easy to blame it all on Adam and Eve, but the truth is the decisions we make are a lot like the one they made. Don’t think so? Check out these verses:

**ROMANS 3:23; JAMES 1:12-15; 1 JOHN 1:8-10**

(On a whiteboard, write out the passage references above. Ask your students to look them up and read them out loud.)

**SAY:** All of us hurt God. We also hurt ourselves in the process of hurting God. When we allow sin to get wedged in between God and us, we miss out on experiencing his love, generosity, wisdom, guidance, and so much more.

### THE DARKNESS OF SIN

Hand out paper and crayons to your students. Do not pass out the black crayons yet. Ask students to draw a picture. After they are done coloring their picture, hand each student a black crayon. Ask them to color over the entire picture with the black crayon (many of us did this as children and know how messy it can get). When they are finished, ask the following questions:

**ASK:** Now that you have covered the whole thing with black crayon, can you see your picture anymore?

Can anyone else see your picture?

Do you remember what your picture looked like?

Just like your picture, when sin enters into our relationship with God, we lose sight of him. What's more, others can't see him in us. We may remember what our relationship was like beforehand, just like we can remember what our picture was, but we can't see it.

Ask students to take a coin and scratch off the black crayon. As they do they will once again reveal their picture.

**SAY:** God doesn't want sin to get in the way of our relationship with him. He doesn't want hurt to be between you and him. When we ask God for his forgiveness, he removes sin and he heals the relationship. There is one more thing that is really important for you to understand in this story. Read *Genesis 3:8-9*. God knows what Adam and Eve have done, but he still seeks them out. Even when God is hurt by their decision, he goes after them. God is pursuing you, too.



## CONCLUSION

### Closing Prayer:

Gracious Lord, as we all seek to know you more fully, may we be aware of the ways you are at work in all of our lives. May we be patient with others and with ourselves when we are prone to our human ways. May we experience your Spirit's presence in a strong and mighty way in the week to come. May we be agents of your peace and hope here on earth. Lord, please lead and guide each of us into the week! Amen.