Preschool–Grade 6

Achan's Sin

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Be honest with God. Sin can't stay hidden from Him, but whoever confesses and forsakes sin finds mercy.
Bible passage: Joshua 7:1–26 (and Joshua 6:17–19). Read it before class.
Memory verse: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." *Proverbs 28:13 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a tray, 8 to 10 small things from around the room (a pencil, a crayon, a key, a cup), a towel, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Put the small things on the tray and cover it with the towel.

1. Opening game: What's Missing? (5–10 minutes)

Uncover the tray for 20 seconds while the kids look hard. Cover it, take one thing away and hide it behind your back, and uncover the tray again. The first child to name the missing thing hides the next one. Play a few rounds. Ask: *Was it easy to hide something from people who were looking carefully?* Say: "Today we will meet a man who hid something, and he thought no one would ever find it. But God sees everything."

2. Bible story: Sin Can't Stay Hidden (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Joshua 6. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

God's command at Jericho. God gave Israel the city of Jericho. **Look up Joshua 6:18–19.** The city was **accursed** to the LORD, which means it was given over to God, and no one could take anything from it for himself. "All the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD." **Consecrated** means set apart for God. They went into the **treasury** of the LORD, the place where God's treasures were kept.

Defeat at Ai. Look up Joshua 7:1. Achan, from the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing, and the anger of the LORD was kindled, which means God was angry. Joshua didn't know. He sent men to view the small city of Ai, and they said two or three thousand men would be enough (7:2–3). About three thousand men went up, and they fled before the men of Ai. About thirty-six of Israel's men died, and the people's hearts "melted, and became as water," which means they were full of fear (7:4–5). Joshua and the **elders**, the older leaders, tore their clothes and lay on their faces before the **ark of the LORD** until evening, with dust on their heads to show their sorrow (7:6).

God tells Joshua why. Look up Joshua 7:11. God said, "Israel hath sinned." They had taken of the accursed thing, stolen, **dissembled** (lied and pretended), and put it among their own stuff. Israel could not stand before their enemies until the accursed thing was taken away (7:12–13).

Found out. Early in the morning, Joshua brought Israel tribe by tribe. The LORD took the tribe of Judah, then the family of the Zarhites, then the household of Zabdi, and then man by man, until Achan was taken (7:16–18). **Look up Joshua 7:19.** Joshua spoke kindly ("My son") and said, "make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me."

Achan confesses. Achan said, "Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel" (7:20). **Look up Joshua 7:21.** He saw a **goodly Babylonish garment** (a beautiful robe from Babylon), two hundred **shekels** of silver (a shekel is a weight; this was about five pounds of silver) and a **wedge** of gold (a bar of gold) that weighed fifty shekels. He **coveted** them, which means he wanted them so badly that he took them. Then he hid them in the earth in the middle of his tent, with the silver under it. Notice the steps: he **saw**, he **coveted**, he **took**, he **hid**.

The messengers run. Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent. It was all there, just as Achan said (7:22). They brought it to Joshua and all Israel and laid it out before the LORD (7:23). Achan's sin cost him his life (7:25), and the LORD turned from His fierce anger (7:26). Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Fear not," and gave Israel the city of Ai (8:1).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Achan's sin started with his eyes: "When I saw..." (7:21). How can what we look at lead us to want wrong things?
2. Achan's sin hurt all of Israel, not only Achan (7:1, 7:5). How can one person's hidden sin hurt other people?
3. Achan hid the things, and God still knew (7:11). Why do people try to hide what they did wrong?
4. Achan confessed only after the LORD showed it was him (7:18–20). Why is it better to tell the truth right away?
5. Proverbs 28:13 says whoever confesses and forsakes sin "shall have mercy." What does it mean to forsake a sin?

Recall questions

1. Where did the silver and gold from Jericho belong? *(In the treasury of the LORD, Joshua 6:19)*
2. What three things did Achan take? *(A Babylonish garment, 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold, 7:21)*
3. Who ran to Achan's tent? *(Messengers Joshua sent, 7:22)*

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4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **covereth** means hides, **prosper** means do well, **whoso confesseth** means whoever tells God the truth about it, **forsaketh** means turns away from it and leaves it, and **mercy** means God's kindness we don't deserve. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Achan covered his sin, and it didn't stay covered. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We don't cover our sin; we confess it and forsake it. We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: if you do something wrong, don't cover it. Tell God and the person you hurt the truth right away.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Joshua 6:18: What did God tell Israel to keep themselves from? *(The accursed thing)*
2. Joshua 7:1: What tribe was Achan from? *(The tribe of Judah)*
3. Joshua 7:3: How many men did the men Joshua sent say should go up to Ai? *(About two or three thousand)*
4. Joshua 7:6: Before what did Joshua fall on his face? *(The ark of the LORD)*
5. Joshua 7:10: What did the LORD tell Joshua to do? *(Get thee up)*
6. Joshua 7:14: When were the people to come before the LORD? *(In the morning)*
7. Joshua 7:22: How did the messengers go to the tent? *(They ran)*
8. Joshua 8:1: What did the LORD tell Joshua not to do? *(Fear not, neither be thou dismayed)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You see everything, even what we try to hide. Help us not to covet, and help us tell You the truth right away when we do wrong. Thank You for Your mercy, and for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: Joshua 7:15 and 7:24–26 tell how Achan died and what happened with his family. This lesson says only that his sin cost him his life (7:25) and leaves out the details. If a child asks, answer simply: sin is very serious to God, and the same God shows mercy to whoever confesses and forsakes sin (Proverbs 28:13).

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