Preschool–Grade 6

Achan's Sin

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Be honest with God. Hidden sin doesn't stay hidden, but God forgives and cleanses everyone who confesses and forsakes it.
Bible passage: Joshua 7:1–26 (and Joshua 6:17–19). Students read Joshua 7:1–13 and 7:19–23 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." *Proverbs 28:13 (KJV)* and "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." *1 John 1:9 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Joshua 6:17–19, Joshua 7 and 1 John 1:9. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Cover It or Say It? (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "cover it" and the other side "say it." Read each situation. Students walk to the side they think most kids their age would really choose. 1) You broke something at a friend's house and no one saw. 2) You copied a classmate's homework and got a good grade. 3) You said something mean about someone online, and they asked if it was you. 4) You took money from your mom's purse. Ask: *Why is covering it so tempting, even when we know saying it is right?* Say: "Achan chose to cover it. Let's see what happened."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Tell the beginning in your own words: God gave Israel Jericho and told them the city was **accursed** to the LORD: 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: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD" (Joshua 6:17–19).

Read out loud: Joshua 7:1–13. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **committed a trespass** (7:1): broke God's command; **the anger of the LORD was kindled** (7:1): God was angry
- **smite** (7:3, 7:5): strike, defeat in battle
- **the hearts of the people melted** (7:5): they were full of fear
- **rent his clothes** (7:6): tore his clothes to show deep sorrow; **eventide** (7:6): evening
- **environ us round** (7:9): surround us
- **transgressed my covenant** (7:11): broke God's agreement; **dissembled** (7:11): lied and pretended
- **sanctify** (7:13): make yourselves ready and set apart for God

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Tell the middle part in your own words: Early in the morning, Joshua brought Israel before the LORD by tribes. The LORD took the tribe of Judah, then the family of the Zarhites, then the household of Zabdi, then man by man, and Achan was taken (7:16–18).

Read out loud: Joshua 7:19–23. Old words in this passage:

- **give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him** (7:19): honor God by telling Him the truth
- **goodly Babylonish garment** (7:21): a beautiful robe from Babylon
- **shekels** (7:21): a weight; 200 shekels of silver was about five pounds
- **wedge of gold** (7:21): a bar of gold; **coveted** (7:21): wanted so badly that he took

Tell the end in your own words: Achan's sin cost him his life (7:25), and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger (7:26). Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed," and gave Israel the city of Ai (8:1). Years later, Israel still remembered: "that man perished not alone in his iniquity" (22:20).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. God warned Israel ahead of time (6:18). Why do you think Achan took the things anyway?
2. Achan describes four steps: "When I saw... then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid" (7:21). Where could he have stopped? Where can you stop when you are tempted?
3. One man sinned, but God said, "Israel hath sinned" (7:11), and the whole army lost at Ai (7:4–5). How does hidden sin affect families, friends and churches?
4. Achan hid his sin until the LORD pointed him out (7:18). Joshua still called him "My son" (7:19). What does that teach us about confessing?
5. Proverbs 28:13 says the one who covers his sins "shall not prosper." What does covering sin do to a person, even if no one else finds out?
6. 1 John 1:9 promises that God is "faithful and just to forgive." Why can we come to God right away instead of waiting to be found out?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **covereth** means hides; **prosper** means do well; **whoso confesseth and forsaketh them** means whoever tells God the truth about their sins and turns away from them; **mercy** is God's kindness we don't deserve. In 1 John 1:9, **faithful** means God always keeps His word, **just** means He is fair and right, and **cleanse us from all unrighteousness** means He washes away every wrong.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Proverbs 28:13 this week; keep working on 1 John 1:9 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Achan tried to cover his sin, and it didn't work. God loves you, and the Bible is honest about all of us: 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**: we stop covering our sin, confess it to God and forsake it, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)." *Pray with the students, 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.*

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Is there something I have been covering instead of confessing?
2. What would it look like to confess it and forsake it this week? Who could I talk to?
3. Write a short prayer thanking God for His mercy and asking Him for an honest heart.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: when you are tempted, remember Achan's steps (saw, coveted, took, hid) and stop at the first one. If you do sin, don't wait to be found out: confess it to God right away.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You see everything, and nothing is hidden from You. Give us honest hearts. Help us confess our sins quickly and turn away from them. Thank You that You are faithful and just to forgive, and for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: Joshua 7:15 and 7:24–26 tell how Achan died and what happened with his family and his things. This lesson says only that his sin cost him his life (7:25). If a student asks, answer honestly and gently: Israel had been warned (6:18), sin is very serious to God, and God is always good and fair. The same God gives mercy to whoever confesses and forsakes sin (Proverbs 28:13).

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