Preschool–Grade 6

Achan's Sin

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Be honest with God. Sin can't stay hidden from God, but God has mercy when we tell Him the truth and turn away from our sin.
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, 6 paper strips, a marker, tape, a small paper robe, a yellow paper bar and a gray paper bar (cut from paper), a blanket, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 paper strips (see part 4). Put bookmarks in your Bible at Joshua 7:19 and 7:21.

1. Opening game: Find It! (5 minutes)

One child covers their eyes. Hide the paper robe somewhere in the room. The child looks for it while the class helps: they clap softly when the child is far away and loudly when the child is close. Play a few times with different children. Then ask: *Could the robe stay hidden?* Say: "Today we will meet a man who hid something in his tent. He thought no one would ever know. But nothing is hidden from God."

2. Bible story: Achan Hides His Sin (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Joshua 7, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

God had just knocked down the walls of **Jericho** for His people, Israel. Before that, God told them not to take anything from Jericho for themselves. The silver and the gold belonged to the LORD (Joshua 6:18–19). God called those things the **accursed thing**, which means things that were God's, and no one else could take them.

But one man did. His name was **Achan**, from the tribe of Judah (7:1). He took some of those things, and he didn't tell anyone.

Next, Joshua sent about three thousand men to fight the little city of **Ai**. But Israel ran away from the men of Ai (7:4)! Some of Israel's men died, and everyone was afraid (7:5). Joshua tore his clothes and fell on his face before the LORD until evening (7:6). He asked God why Israel had lost (7:7–9).

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The story continues: The LORD said, "Get thee up... **Israel hath sinned**." Someone had taken of the accursed thing and hidden it among their own stuff (7:10–11). God said Israel could not win until the stolen things were taken away (7:12–13).

Early the next morning, all the people came before Joshua, tribe by tribe, family by family, and man by man. The LORD showed who it was (7:14–18). It was Achan.

Read Joshua 7:19 from your Bible: "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." Say: "**Make confession** means tell the truth about what you did wrong. Joshua said, 'Don't hide it!'"

Achan said, "I have sinned against the LORD" (7:20). He told what he did. He saw a beautiful robe from Babylon, called a **Babylonish garment**, and silver, and a bar of gold, called a **wedge of gold**. He **coveted** them, which means he wanted them so much that he took them. And he hid them in the ground, in the middle of his tent, with the silver under it (7:21).

Joshua sent **messengers**. They ran to Achan's tent, and there it all was, hidden in the ground, with the silver under it, just like Achan said (7:22)! They brought it all to Joshua and laid it out before the LORD (7:23). Achan's sin was very serious, and it cost him his life (7:25). Then the LORD turned from His anger (7:26), and God told Joshua, "Fear not," and helped Israel win at Ai (8:1).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What did God say about the silver and gold from Jericho? *(It belonged to the LORD, Joshua 6:19)*
2. Who took the things God said not to take? *(Achan, 7:1)*
3. What happened when Israel went to fight Ai? *(They ran away from the men of Ai, 7:4)*
4. Where did Achan hide the things? *(In the ground in the middle of his tent, 7:21)*
5. What did Joshua tell Achan? *("Hide it not from me," 7:19)*

4. Memory verse: Uncover the Verse (5 minutes)

Tape the 6 strips on the wall in order: *He that covereth his sins / shall not prosper: / but whoso confesseth / and forsaketh them / shall have mercy. / Proverbs 28:13.* Cover each strip with a sheet of paper. 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 and leaves it, and **mercy** means God's kindness that we don't deserve. Uncover one strip at a time and read it together. Then cover them all again and say the whole verse from memory.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Achan hid his sin, but God saw it all. We can't hide our sin from God either. Everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. But God loves you very much. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We don't hide it; we tell God the truth. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
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: when you do something wrong, don't hide it. Tell God and your parents the truth, and say you are sorry.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Achan word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/achan-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/achan-craft), or **Run to the Tent:** spread the blanket on the floor as Achan's tent and hide the paper robe, the yellow bar (the gold) and the gray bar (the silver) under it, the silver at the bottom. Choose two or three "messengers." They run to the tent, find all three things, and bring them back to you. Each messenger answers a question from part 3. Play again with new messengers.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You see everything, and nothing is hidden from You. Help us be honest with You and tell You the truth 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 7:24–26 tells 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), which is true, and leaves out the details, which are not for young children. Keep the focus on being honest with God and on God's mercy.

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