

Youth Sabbath School

The standard Youth Sabbath School materials for the topic “Out of Control” contains a Student Lesson and a Teacher’s Guide. In addition to these materials provided by the General Conference Sabbath School Department, the North American Division Youth Department is providing supplemental materials you may choose to add to this lesson. Think in terms of your specific setting and the young people at your Youth Sabbath School. As you seek to involve them in the study and application of the Bible for this week, prayerfully pick and choose the components that will form the Youth Sabbath School for your young people. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as you make your plan, and then continue to be sensitive for the Holy Spirit to guide you during the Youth Sabbath School.

Session 3 Out of Control (Jan. 19, 2019)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- Genesis 4:1–16

OVERVIEW

What humans lost by choosing to live apart from God, God restores because of his relentless love.

Read the *Student Lesson* as well as the *Teacher’s Guide*. This may provide everything you need to teach the Youth Sabbath School lesson.

real solid stories

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JANUARY 2015

out of control

keytext
“Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why that sound on your face? If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling. But because you have done evil, sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it.” (Genesis 4:7, TEV)

Student Lesson

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JANUARY 2015

out of control

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

II. TARGET

III. EXPLORE

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

22

Teacher’s Guide

Following are additional components that you can pick and choose, use “as is” or adapt to your specific Youth Sabbath School. These supplemental ideas provide more options for this topic. Here’s a brief description of the seven supplemental materials:



1. **Opening activity**

An icebreaker or something to get people focused as you begin.



2. **Video clip and follow-up questions**

A short video clip and an idea for you to create your own video on this week’s topic, plus a few questions to follow up with discussion.



3. **Music**

It’s best if you create your own and choose what’s best in your setting. We are not endorsing a particular style or even a specific song. Select songs related to this week’s lesson. We’ll suggest several different songs with lyrics that relate to the topic for this week. Sing along with a prerecorded track (YouTube is a good source) or better yet, ask youth with musical talent to play instruments and lead the singing.



4. **Bible study guides for Scripture for this lesson**

This is another approach to the same topic found in *Teacher’s Guide*, but approached from a different angle. Expect activities to illustrate the topic, followed by some questions.



5. **Application ideas for living out this lesson this week**

Let this spark your ideas to move from talk to action by living out the lesson in practical ways in your life this week.



6. **Youth leader tip for the week**

This bonus is just for the youth leader—a quick tip and an illustration to enhance your youth leadership. You may already know this, or you may learn it through trial and error. Here’s a way to get it with a quick infusion.



7. **Trending for Teens**

What’s the latest trend, info, stat, opinion, craze, or tip for teens. Gleaned from the current teen world this might be right where your teens are, or maybe it’s not. This gives an overview of the general teen world right now.

And here are those seven supplemental materials in more detail for this week’s lesson: “Out of Control.”

Opening activity

OPTION 1: “POUR IT ALL OUT”

Give each person one glass of water. This could be in a disposable Dixie cup, a glass, a disposable water bottle, or whatever you choose. The size of your group and the resources you have will influence your choice. Try to make the amount of water for each person the same.

Provide six larger containers so participants can pour portions of their water into 6 various containers that will each be labeled. The six containers could be large glasses, pitchers, tall bowls, buckets—ideally something transparent so all can see how full each is once they’ve poured their water in the containers of their choice. Label each container based on the options provided below. The idea is that each person can pour as much of their individual water into the container(s) of their choice, pouring more into the one that is their first choice and little to nothing into the container of their last choice.

The first question is: How do you learn best? Choose from these six options (make simple cards or paper labels for these six options)

1. Read instructions
2. Listen to someone tell you the instructions
3. Watch someone else do it
4. Have someone walk you through it
5. Explore it on your own
6. Watch a YouTube instructional clip

Each participant can then pour as much of their water in the container(s) of their choice. Coach them a little bit by perhaps illustrating your own choice. For example, if you definitely learn best by “Explore on your own” (#5), you might pour half of your water into container #5. If “Read instructions” (#1) is your next best way of learning, maybe you’ll pour $\frac{1}{4}$ or maybe even less into that container. Continue until you have no more water left. Have the other participants respond for themselves.

Get feedback from the group on what they observed with the results. Feel free to entertain some discussion at this time. It will relate to the lesson later during Sabbath School.

You can add a second question by refilling or replacing the individual water for each participant and emptying the large containers. Here’s the second question, with the six options from which to choose:

The second question is: When you make a mistake do you:

1. Deny it
2. Admit it
3. Ask for forgiveness
4. Expect to be forgiven

MATERIALS NEEDED

- 1 glass/bottle of water for each participant
- 6 clear containers to contain water, like pitchers, tall bowls, buckets
- Set of labels (provided to download and print to cut out)

5. Expect to NOT be forgiven

6. Make restitution

Once again, have participants pour out their water into the various containers in the amount that indicates their likelihood for each of the six responses. Once everyone has contributed all the water they have, get their feedback based on what they observe. This also relates to the lesson later in Sabbath School.

Here are the two questions with the 6 options for each. Print these, cut them into their respective sections, and you're good to go:

HOW DO YOU LEARN BEST?

1. Reading instructions	4. Have someone walk you through it
2. Listen to someone giving instructions	5. Explore it on your own
3. Watch someone else do it	6. Watch a YouTube instructional video

WHEN YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, DO YOU...

1. Deny it.	4. Expect to be forgiven
2. Admit it	5. Expect to NOT be forgiven
3. Ask for forgiveness	6. Make restitution

OPTION 2

For this second option for an opening activity, play the simple (but potentially out of control) game of tag. There are many variations of this. The space you have, the clothing people are wearing, their level of intensity or competitiveness, and their speed are all variables that play into how “out of control” this opening activity might be.

You can provide some parameters by limiting the boundaries, moving to an open area, or limit participants to walking rather than running. In a very small area, you could also blindfold people (which creates another “out of control” element).

Depending on the size of your group, you can vary the game. Consider the following:

- 2 people — 1 chases 1; change after being caught.
- 3 people — 1 chases 1; the 3rd person functions as a shield/barrier
- 4 people — 1 chases 1; the 3rd and 4th people form a double-wide shield
- 5 people — 1 chases 1; the 3rd 4th & 5th people form a triangle shield
- 6+ people — do two sets of people from the options above or have half play while half watch; switch.

Note not only the level of participation, but how much people may cheat. The key element you’re looking for when all is said and done is whether or not things start to get out of control. Sometimes it can happen quickly. Sometimes it just takes a certain type of person or special conditions.

TRANSITION: As we consider our topic for today, “Out of Control,” few teens are really out of control, unless conditions are just right. Reflect on when you might have been out of control to some extent over the past week or month. Was there something that triggered it? Was it a crisis for only you, or also for others? Why do people go out of control? And what happens after that?



Video clip and follow-up questions

Create a video clip that shows one person or group of people going out of control. Ask someone in advance to create follow up questions based on these video clips.

You can opt to use the following YouTube video clip “Good Fruit” (about 2 1/2 minutes) and the follow up questions provided (or create your own questions for “Good Fruit”). It shows the opposite of “Out of Control,” which is the topic for this week.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. How can you tell if someone is following God?
2. Who would be more likely to think you’re following God: a stranger or your friends? Explain.
3. Which “spiritual fruit” is most developed in you? Which is least developed? (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control, faithfulness)
4. If fruit is the metaphor Paul used for living a Christlike life (Galatians 5:2-23), what is the soil, the sun, and the water that makes spiritual fruit grow over time?
5. How can you get more love (in order to give more love)?



Music

There are options!

1. It's best to do live music in your own setting, even if people are just learning.
2. Tap into CCLI (Christian Copyright Licensing International) to access Christian music legally. Your local church might already be doing this. If not, we recommend that you start. Here's the website to get you going: <https://us.ccli.com>
3. Sing along with existing music. You can type in song titles on YouTube and see how others are doing the songs you choose. If you need lyrics, you can Google the song title and find the lyrics.
4. Here are 10 songs we think fit in with this week's Youth Sabbath School topic "Out of Control." Feel free to choose from these for your group:
 - Oceans
 - Be Still
 - Trust in You
 - Sparrows
 - By Your Side
 - Gracefully Broken
 - From the Inside Out
 - God is in Control
 - How Can It Be
 - Come As You Are
5. "Your Glory" is an original song, written specifically for this week's lesson. You can download the lyrics, music, and video from the Youth Sabbath School Ideas website to learn and teach this song in your Youth Sabbath School. Learning new songs usually takes several times before people catch on. You may want to have a few get familiar with it in advance so they can lead the rest of the group.



Bible study guides for Scripture for this lesson – "Out of Control"

Another approach to the same topic as the *Teacher's Guide*, but just a different way of looking at it. Expect activities to illustrate the topic, followed by some questions. There are four options here.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- Genesis 4:1–16
- You Call This a Family? (Genesis 4:1–16)
- Life and Death. (Genesis 4:1–16)
- What Will You Do With Your Sin? (Genesis 4:1–16)

You Call This a Family?

(BASED ON GENESIS 3:9–10, 15;
ROMANS 5:12, 15–21; ROMANS 6:23)

HERE'S ONE WAY OF STUDYING
THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

Read aloud Genesis 3:9–10, which describes what happened shortly after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden: “But the LORD God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’ He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so, I hid.’” (Genesis 3:9–10, NIV)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper and writing instrument for each person
- Paper and colored pencils for drawing

THE BIG PICTURE

In today’s lesson, we learn another aspect of God’s plan for human beings on earth—parenthood and brotherhood. Adam and Eve had a son and then another son. The relationship between these brothers reveals a new, tragic perspective on the destruction sin is capable of doing. When Abel’s sacrifice is affirmed and accepted by God, but Cain is reprimanded for his, the sinful pride of Cain causes him to lash out of control. The consequences of sin are made painfully clearer as Cain kills Abel.

Abel is the first human to die on earth, the direct result of sin. It is a devastating experience for Adam and Eve as parents, and Cain is banished.

God’s grace is still in the picture as God promises Cain protection, but Cain still goes out of the presence of God.

A QUICK OVERVIEW

Pray with your group before reading the Bible, asking the Holy Spirit to lead the study and discussion. The Bible background for Genesis 4 is only the first few pages of the Bible (Genesis 1–3). Briefly review the Creation story (Genesis 1–2) and the Fall (Genesis 3). Ask some of the following questions:

1. What was the first relationship on earth and what it was like during Creation week? (God and Adam as Creator and created on day 6)
2. What was the second relationship on earth? (Adam and Eve as husband and wife) What happened in their relationship when Eve made a bad choice?
3. In what ways were these first two relationships changed after Adam and Eve chose Satan over God?
4. What are some of the benefits God designed with relationships? What are some of the challenges with relationships?
5. What makes a relationship strong? What makes it weak?

Read Genesis 4:1–16 to get the Bible version of this fateful story of Cain and Abel. We’ll take it one section at a time a little later in our study, but after reading the passage, choose one of the following two options (or create your own) to make the story more personal.

OPTION 1: WRITE

Give everyone a pen and paper and provide 5-10 minutes for them to write their version of the story of Cain and Abel from one of these three perspectives:

- A. Write the story as if you were one of the brothers—describing how you feel, what you think, why you feel the way you do, etc. Try to understand the actions of both brothers without creating excuses for Cain’s defiant behavior.
- B. Imagine you are a narrator explaining the actions that are taking place in this story. As you narrate, live out the description with facial expressions, use of your voice, etc. Really get into the story! Think of Abel’s confidence and humble obedience. Consider Cain’s diligence and productivity. What might have been Abel’s reaction when he saw Cain’s offering? Create the dialogue in the field following God’s rejection of Cain’s sacrifice. Include the following conversation between God and Cain following the murder. Use creative descriptions to tell what you are seeing in this story.

OPTION 2: DRAW

Sometimes drawing an illustration is helpful in fully understanding the meaning of the story. Give everyone a pencil (or colored pencils) and a sheet of paper, and ask them to draw something to illustrate one of the main themes in the story—obedience, sibling rivalry, grace, pride, anger, innocence, or the shocking result of Cain’s actions—the first death of a human.

After providing time for the drawings, give participants an opportunity to share their drawings. This can be done in groups of two. You may also choose to share these with the entire group. You can also post them and have the young people appreciate them and have a discussion about what they observed in these drawings.

Another option is to take the drawings to another Sabbath School group in your church and get their response to what they see in the drawings. Let this spur dialogue between the two Sabbath School groups.

GETTING INTO THE WORD

What are examples of sin as actions?

Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 4:1,2. One of the greatest gifts God gave man and woman is the ability to have children. When Cain and Abel were born, two new types of relationships were formed. This opens another set of questions:

1. What is the relationship between parents and children?
2. How can/should this change as a child matures?
3. How is your relationship with your parent(s) now?
4. What is the relationship between siblings?
5. What is your relationship with your sibling(s) (if you have any)?

Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 4:3–5. Put yourself in the place of Cain and Abel. You have worked hard and you are giving a sacrifice to God. It is implied that Cain and Abel were both instructed, maybe from their parents, the correct way to offer sacrifices to God. However, Cain wanted to give his fruit and vegetables from his garden. Maybe like Adam and Eve, Cain thought he knew better than God and thought that instead of obeying God he could make his own choice — “I can still worship You by giving You the best of MY livelihood.” But God didn’t go for that, and Cain reacted with anger. This brings up another set of questions:

1. Why might Cain choose to not sacrifice a lamb?
2. Why is this so important to God?
3. What was Cain supposed to do when his work yielded fruits and veggies rather than animals?
4. Do you understand why Cain reacted with anger?
5. When are you likely to react with anger?

Read Genesis 4:6–8. Let’s discuss Cain’s anger. It almost seemed that his anger came from the hurt of rejection, when verse 5 says “his face was downcast.” However, rejection that takes place because of one’s own actions is very different than being rejected because you are being bullied. God was correcting Cain, not bullying him. In spite of interacting with God, and in spite of God drawing near to us, we are not on the same level as God. He is God and we aren’t. When God discusses the situation with him, Cain does not repent.

1. What can we learn from Cain’s reaction?
2. What are some other reactions he could have had?
3. If Cain would have repented, how would the story have been different for both Abel and Cain? For Adam and Even?
4. When faced with a fork in the road between repenting or not repenting, what influences a person to choose one pathway over the other?
5. How does forgiveness work if there is no repentance?

Read Genesis 4:9–16 as a group, taking turns with a verse or two per person until you complete this section. Cain is told that crops would no longer thrive when he tries to operate a farm, and he is banished. However, God places a mark on Cain to protect him from future harm.

1. Why do you think Cain said his punishment was too great?
2. Is God’s mark on Cain a gift or a punishment? Explain.
3. Do you have any of God’s “marks” on you?

SUMMARY

The story of Cain and Abel provides insights about how to live our lives today. God has given us instructions about how to live. We can choose to follow these instructions, ignore them, adapt them, or replace them with our own.

In the days of Cain and Abel, there was no Bible. We have the Old Testament and New Testament readily available to us today. We have the history of Christ’s ministry on earth and his death for us, and his resurrection. We have the presence of the Holy Spirit at all times. We have lots of instructions and examples—far more than Cain or Abel had. Yet Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel had guidelines to follow from God. Abel represents a Christian who joyfully follows God’s commands. Cain illustrates to us what rebellion against God looks like. Their stories serve as a testament to us today about the consequences and curse of sin.

Life and Death

(BASED ON GENESIS 4:1–16)

HERE'S ANOTHER WAY OF STUDYING
THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

Here is a small group Bible study for Genesis 4:1–16. This can be done in small groups of 3–4 people. If your Sabbath School is larger than that, divide into multiple groups of 3–4 people.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bible study handout and writing instrument for each person

Start with the opening question, then read the passage. Have individuals mark responses to the questions before they start to dialogue about them. This gives them a chance to put some thinking into it before they discuss it. There may be more than one answer to some of these questions. They are intended to take the Bible passage as the authority for applying the messages from Bible times to our own lives right now.

You can print out the Bible study (as is) or tweak it for your specific situation by editing the Word document before you print it (1 sheet, front and back).

You can print out the Bible study (as is) or tweak it for your specific situation by editing the Word document before you print it (1 sheet, front and back).

LIFE AND DEATH

What is something about a sibling (or close friend) that really irritates you?

Read Genesis 4:1–16.

1. The chapter begins: Adam “knew” his wife, Eve. What’s that all about?
 - A. They had become friends.
 - B. Sex, made love, sexual relations, intercourse, slept with, etc.
 - C. I’d rather not talk about it.
 - D. Intimacy.
 - E. The way God designed for procreation and the next generation.
 - F. Something that can cause great ecstasy as well as great pain.
 - G. A greater depth reserved for only a marriage relationship.
 - H. God invented sex.
 - I. Other.
2. Why did Eve credit God with the birth of her first child?
 - A. God is the Creator.
 - B. It took Adam plus Eve plus God, but God is the greatest.
 - C. A child is a gift from God.
 - D. Eve didn’t know that it just takes an egg and a sperm; not God.
 - E. This was the first birth on earth.
 - F. God created his creatures to also be creative (be fruitful).
 - G. Eve expect Adam to take all the credit for it.
 - H. She was so overcome by giving birth that she thought of God.
 - I. Other.

3. When have you, like Cain, felt rejected by God (vs. 5)?
 - A. Others have more (talents or friends or money) compared to me.
 - B. Someone or something embarrasses me in a big way.
 - C. My prayers don't seem to be answered.
 - D. One bad thing after another happens to me.
 - E. What I have to offer isn't enough.
 - F. I'm not as blessed as _____.
 - G. I talk to God but get absolutely no response.
 - H. When I feel completely alone.
 - I. Other.

4. Why did Cain lose control to the point of killing his brother?
 - A. Anger, left unchecked, escalates to the point of destruction.
 - B. Abel deserved it.
 - C. Cain's ego prevented him from admitting he needed to change.
 - D. His refusal to repent kept him on the road to ruin.
 - E. It was his parents' fault.
 - F. He started down a path and didn't let anything stop him.
 - G. Everyone has felt that way and must find a way to deal with it.
 - H. Other.

5. What can make you so mad that you'd kill someone?
 - A. Jealousy.
 - B. Desire that can't be satisfied.
 - C. Embarrassment that threatens my identity or reputation.
 - D. Rejection.
 - E. When someone else outshines me.
 - F. Anger that's out of control or misdirected.
 - G. When "my best" gets ridiculed or rejected.
 - H. Other.

5. What was the worst result for Cain because he killed his brother?
 - A. Feelings of guilt that would never leave him.
 - B. Proof that he couldn't control his own temper.
 - C. His failure to repent.
 - D. The pain and disappointment he caused his parents.
 - E. The long-term loss of his brother.
 - F. Feeling banished from God's presence.
 - G. The loss of his talent for farming.

H. Being marked by God.

I. Other.

6. What gift(s) have you given God? What does God want from you?

7. What mark has God put on you?

SUMMARY

The first half of Genesis 4 presents life and death. The birth of the first two babies on earth demonstrate that the life God created was to continue to give life. This passage also includes the opposite—death rather than life as one killed the other.

Very few of us have killed another person. Yet we have hurt others, and that usually happens when we feel hurt. Rather than isolating Cain's crazy act as foreign to us, we can actually identify with the anger and hurt that Cain felt himself and then inflicted on his brother.

At such pivot points, we need a transformative change. The Bible refers to it as repentance. When we attempt to navigate such challenges without God, things only get worse. Yet God sticks with us, correcting and protecting.

What Will You Do With Your Sin

HERE'S ANOTHER WAY OF STUDYING
THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

(BASED ON GENESIS 3:6–7)

Here's an overview of an early story in the Bible.

Cain and Abel, two brothers, brought gifts to God. Abel followed God's instructions and Cain didn't. In turn, God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but didn't accept Cain's.

Cain became angry, and God explained to him (Genesis 4:7) that he knew the right thing to do. God reminded Cain to do what He had told him to do. God also warned Cain what would happen if he refused and chose to continue doing things his own way. Cain ignored God.

Cain then invited his brother into the fields where he killed Abel.

God asked Cain for an explanation. Cain was the first person on record to basically answer an obvious question with, "I don't know." God gave Cain a negative consequence for his

MATERIALS NEEDED

- 2 forks
- 2 toothpicks
- a salt shaker

Have at least 2 sets so at least 2 people can try this. Engage more people by having more sets available. It is recommended that you purchase some cheap metal forks rather than those out of your kitchen drawer.

murder (there's always a negative consequence when you stubbornly choose to disobey God).

The story ends tragically with Cain (again) stubbornly choosing to continue to disobey God, demonstrating that his close relationship with God continued to be fractured.

THE STORY FROM SCRIPTURE

Genesis 4:1–16 New International Version (NIV)

Let's read the story in the Bible, pausing to raise some questions and explore answers. Some will be obvious and others will take some creative thought. Feel free to add your own questions to this as we read these verses from Genesis 4, starting with verse 1. I'll be reading from the NIV.

1. Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." 2. Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.

QUESTIONS

1. God created Adam and Eve from dirt. How did God design for the rest of the people to be created?
2. Who got credit for the birth of Cain?
3. In what ways are all people the same? How are they different? How do we see this with Cain and Abel?
3. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5. but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So, Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Cain give God an offering of fruit?
2. Why did Abel give an offering from his flock?
3. Why did God look favorably on Abel and his offering, but not on Cain and his offering?
4. Do you think this was a surprise to either one of them?
5. What was Cain's reaction?
6. What would be your reaction if you were Cain? If you were Abel?
6. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7. If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."

QUESTIONS

1. Why did God make contact with Cain after Cain turned angry?
2. Why didn't Cain initiate contact with God?
3. Cain knew the right thing to do (vs. 7). Why wouldn't he do it?
4. Where is sin?
5. How does a human rule over sin?

ACTIVITY

We're not going to simulate a murder or play the game of Mafia in attempts to guess who the murderer is. We won't play the board game Clue to role-play as a detective to find the real killer. Instead, we'll do something completely different to focus on doing things our own way or to follow directions.

Pick two volunteers (or divide your group into two fairly equal-size groups). Separate the two groups from each other so they can work on a project without the other group seeing or hearing them.

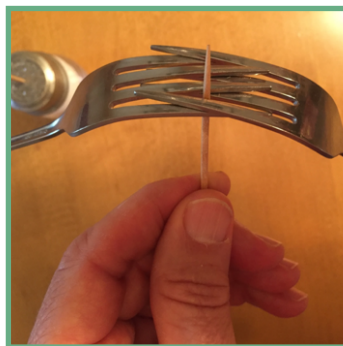
The instructions are to balance one toothpick on another. Place one toothpick in a sturdy upright position (in the hole of a salt shaker works, as does a cork held firmly in place). Give each person/team another toothpick to hold, plus two forks and ask them to balance the loose toothpick on the stationary toothpick. Give both teams two forks that can be used to help balance the free toothpick on the firmly held toothpick. Give both individuals/teams up to 5 minutes to accomplish this task.

With the first person/team, give no more instructions. With the second person/team, give the following instructions, including showing the YouTube clip if possible:

It seems impossible to balance one toothpick on top of another toothpick. But if you use the two forks to provide an equal weight on both sides of the free toothpick, they will cancel each other out and the loose toothpick can then balance on the sturdy toothpick.

Show the following video for instructions: <https://bar-tricks.wonderhowto.com/how-to/balance-toothpick-forks-and-objects-toothpick-370002/>

You can also explain it and show the photos on the next page. (It's a good idea to practice this some in advance.)



1. Start with two toothpicks, a salt shaker, and two forks:
2. Place one toothpick in a sturdy, stationary position, like standing out of the top hole of a salt shaker:
3. Maneuver the two forks together so they are intertwined. This can be difficult. Turn both forks upside down. With a 4-prong fork, put prong 1 on top of the second fork's prong 1; then prongs 2 and 3 under the second fork's prongs 2 and 3; and then pressure prong 4 to go on top of the second fork's prong 4:
4. Press them together so they stick as one piece:
5. Next, take the free toothpick and place it about halfway through the fork web under the first crossing of the fork prongs:
6. Make adjustments until you can balance the combined forks by just holding onto the free toothpick with the combined forks, with the handles of the forks toward you rather than away from you. Move the free toothpick in or out, from side to side, or slightly tilt it until you can balance the combined forks on the toothpick. Once you have it balanced, carefully clasp the combined forks and the toothpick on the other side of the forks so the toothpick doesn't move:
7. Then carefully place the end of the toothpick in the forks on the end of the free-standing toothpick. It should (amazingly) balance.

If it doesn't, try the steps again. You have 5 minutes.

After 5 minutes, debrief with questions such as the following:

QUESTIONS

1. What happened in your attempt to accomplish this task?
2. Did the instructions help or hinder your attempt to accomplish this task?
3. How might this be similar to what happened with Cain and Abel? How might it be different?
4. Balancing forks on toothpicks probably isn't that important. What makes the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, and the instructions they received, be far more significant?

Let's continue with the rest of the Bible study.

8. Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 9. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

QUESTIONS

1. Do you think Cain intended to kill Abel, or did it just mushroom into that?
2. Why did God ask Cain, "Where is your brother?"
3. What is your paraphrase of Cain's response to God?
4. When you lie to God, who's being fooled? How much?
10. The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground 11. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

QUESTIONS

1. How does “blood cry out to God from the ground”?
 2. What does it mean when God places someone under a curse?
 3. The ground was cursed when Adam and Eve sinned. What are the implications for Cain and this “ground curse” at this time?
13. Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. 14. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” 15. But the LORD said to him, “Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. 16. So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

QUESTIONS

1. Are you shocked by Cain’s punishment? Do you think he was?
2. What do you think God should have done after Cain murdered his brother?
3. What were the short-term consequences of Cain’s actions?
4. What were the long-term consequences of Cain’s actions?
5. Did God make any attempts to redeem Cain? How did that go?
6. What questions are you left with after this Bible story?

SUMMARY

This week we looked at the incredible true story of two brothers; two brothers who made two different choices about how they would respond to their sin—in the light of God’s instructions—and the consequences of each of their decisions.

Each one of us will sin. The main question is: how will we deal with our sin? Will we, like Cain, disobey God, try to take care of it ourselves, and stay sinful, or will we, like Abel, obey God, giving it to Him, and have it wiped clean?



Application ideas for living out this lesson this week

Let this spark your ideas to move from talk to action by living out the lesson in practical ways in your life this week. These four options correspond to the three Bible Study Guides above.

- A. Consider the five major figures in the Scripture story for this week (Cain, Abel, God, Eve, Adam). Which one do you relate to the most?

Take time to review your current relationship with any sibling(s) you might have. If you don’t have any siblings, apply this to your closest friends or your parent(s). Compare in your mind (or write it out) the conflicts as well as the things that bring you together. Conflict isn’t that unusual when it comes to relationships, but finding ways to work through it makes all the difference in the world.

Go to your sibling (or other significant person) and make an apology for any wrongdoing or hurt feelings from the past. Ask for forgiveness so you can have a clean slate as you move forward. Be willing to quickly forgive them if they ask for it for any reason. There's no benefit in letting stuff from the past be fuel for potential future anger.

- B. Life and Death—use your right hand to represent life and your left hand to represent death. Each hand has five appendages (4 fingers and 1 thumb). Count on your right hand as you name five things you do that give life (such as encouraging a person who's feeling down, volunteering to help with chores at home, spending time each day in prayer, helping somebody without being asked, etc.).

Count on your left hand as you name five things you do that foster death (put downs, neglecting time with family, failing to take time to listen to impressions from God, defacing or vandalizing, etc.). Pray for God to pass on life through you. Pray a prayer of repentance asking God to forgive you and replace life-taking attitudes and actions with life-giving attitudes and actions.

Use a pen to write notes or symbols on your fingers as a reminder of what to pray for this week.

- C. Submission is hard. The story of Cain and Abel demonstrates how Cain refused to submit, and it led to disaster for Abel, for Cain—for everyone. In the heat of the moment, we rarely take into consideration both the short-term and long-term consequences of actions or reactions we simply want to do immediately.

Use the attached 1-page sheet "Please Remind Me, God" or create your own. The purpose of this is to identify things that have been "Big" (significant) to you.

Start with things from the past that seemed significant at the time (you may have really wanted a pony and prayed for it, but didn't get it, or maybe you experienced something tragic and wondered why God didn't prevent you from the pain suffering that came with it, etc.). Sometimes it's just a matter of the passage of time and what was "Big" in the past isn't big any longer. Put those kinds of things in the first column. Try to put in at least one thing now. You can add more later when they come to mind.

In the second column, list things that are "Big" to you right now (friends, romance, scholastic achievement, sports mileposts, musical excellence, etc.)

In the third column, start a list of instructions God has given in the past (look in the Bible). Glean from passages such as Micah 6:8, Matthew 10:28–30, Deuteronomy 6:5–6, and 1 Thessalonians 5:11. By jotting these instructions from God now, you can more easily draw on them when you face Big things in the future. These are God's instructions for you.

In the last column, make this a place to pray about how you relate to your Big things and how you integrate and apply God's instructions for your life.

PLEASE, REMIND ME GOD

A Big Thing in the Past	A Big Thing Now	God's Instructions	My Prayer



Youth leader tip for the week

This bonus is just for the youth leader—a quick tip, an illustration, and a short paragraph to enhance your youth leadership. You may already know this, or you may learn it through trial and error, or maybe you just need a reminder of something you already know. Here's a way to get it with a quick infusion.

A BIT MORE

There will always be criticism of young people and the ministry done with them and by them. Part of the role of adults who work with you is to take some of the criticism others direct at the youth so they youth don't have to confront it all the time. Valid criticism is something you can choose to process with young people at helpful times. However, items of personal preference (I don't like the clothes or hair styles or type of music the youth are using) are things adults should step in a take the hit rather than have the youth be hit with "friendly fire."

13. Absorb the critical blows from others about the youth so they don't have to.





Trending for Teens

The topic for Trending for Teens this month is “Media Devices.”

1. Online Time Doubled Just how much time do teens spend online?

According to a recent study, the average 12th grader spends approximately six hours a day texting, using social media, and going online during free time. Online time has doubled since 2006, and social media use has moved from a periodic activity to a daily one.

- 2. Constant Companion** Nearly all teens (95%) now own a smartphone, and close to half (45%) say they are online “almost constantly.” While some teens report being “relieved” (17%) and “happy” (17%) while apart from their phone, many say they feel “lonely” (25%) and “anxious” (42%) without their devices. A majority of teens say they “sometimes” (28%) or “often” (44%) check their phone for messages as soon as they wake up.
- 3. Facebook Fading** Facebook is no longer the preferred social media platform among teens. While 51% say they still use Facebook, greater numbers now use Snapchat (69%), Instagram (72%) and YouTube (85%). These are visually rich platforms that use very little text.
- 4. Worry About Overuse** Over half (54%) of teens worry about spending too much time on their cellphones, while similar numbers report taking steps to limit their cellphone usage (52%), use of social media (57%) and video gaming (58%). Parents of teens also struggle with their screen time, with one in three (36%) saying they spend too much time on their cellphones. Half of teens (51%) say they often or sometimes find their parents distracted by their phones while trying to have a conversation with them.
- 5. Streaming Alone** Since the introduction of Netflix and other streaming services, movie-going among teenagers has dramatically lost its appeal. This has completely changed the movie-watching experience: what once was a social experience has often become a solitary one. This is consistent with larger trends: today’s teenagers go out with their friends considerably less than in the past.
- 6. From Books to Posts** Between 1980 and 2016, the percentage of teenagers reading physical or digital books, newspapers, and magazines has dropped from 60% to 16%. For the IGen (the generation born after 1995), these forms of communication are less and less relevant. Teenagers still read, but they tend to read shorter texts (like Instagram captions) and avoid long articles exploring deep themes and requiring critical thinking and reflection. Studies connect this trend to the fact that in 2016 SAT reading scores were the lowest they have ever been since record keeping began in 1972.
- 7. Two-Hour Limit** According to these studies, smartphones are not necessarily an evil—they are the main way through which teenagers maintain social relationships. What is crucial is for teenagers to learn to limit the time they spend with them to two hours of their free time a day. Beyond this limit, research shows that excessive digital media time may lead to mental health issues (for further information, see the article “With teen mental health deteriorating over five years, there’s a likely culprit” on theconversation.com). This may partly explain the contemporary increase of mental health problems among teenagers.

8. **Resources** A helpful book for Christian families wanting to get a handle on their use of media devices is Andy Crouch's *The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place* (Baker Books, 2017). An interesting talk in the same vein is Sherry Turkle's presentation based on her book *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*. Look up "Sherry Turkle On 'Reclaiming Conversation' In The Digital Age" on YouTube.

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Tracy Wood, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Director

Vandeon Griffin, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Associate Director

Armando Miranda, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Associate Director

Steve Case, Editor

AdventSource, Publisher

Contributors to this week's materials: Charmaine Wells, Debbie Battin Sasser, iBelieve Bible, Manuela Yeagley, Milton Coronado, Omar Miranda, Steve Case, Steve Yeagley, Werner Carrasco.