



Older Children's (5th-8th Grade) Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- Identify specific faithful actions God calls each of us to do according to Isaiah 58
- Compare and contrast the impact made by working as a team rather than alone
- Discover ways that God is using the money given to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) to “repair the breach” and “restore streets to live in”

Resources and Equipment

- If, Then statements—cut, divide, and place in two baskets (all *If* statements together, all *Then* statements together)
- Bibles
- Activity Sheet for Older Children—Isaiah 58 If-Then Hunt
- Pens
- Stepping Stones (need 1 per participant) with titles and descriptions of One Great Hour of Sharing projects
- Masking tape or 2 ropes (to create a river boundary)
- Optional: a computer to view the interactive world map of OGHS projects (<http://specialofferings.pcusa.org/oghs>)

Set Up

Create a “river” area by setting two boundaries using two ropes or masking tape with a wide space in between them (this is the river). The width of the river depends on the size of the group, but plan for 1–2’ for each participant (so a group of 10 would have a river 10–20’ wide). If there are more than 10–15 participants, create two rivers.

GATHER (20 minutes)

Opening Prayer

As children gather, open in prayer:

Good and gracious God, you are great and faithful and worthy of our praise. You see those who are in need of your special care and you love them. Help us to do the same, reaching out with others to share your love. Amen.

If and Then

Divide the students into two groups. Invite a student from one group draw randomly from the “If” basket and pull out a statement. Invite a student from the other group draw from the “Then” basket. Invite the students to read their phrases (read the “If” statement first). Invite other students to draw and read their statements until all statements have been read.

So did all of these statements make sense? No—some of them were very silly! Let’s see if we can match the correct statements together. *Instruct the children to find the person holding the statement that correctly completes their if-then statement. Read the corrected pairings aloud.*

Isaiah 58: If-Then Hunt

We can also find if and then statements in scripture that show us God’s promises fulfilled when we act in faith. Let’s look at a chapter in Isaiah and see what faithful actions God seeks from us and what God promises from those faithful actions.

Provide the following background on Isaiah 58:

In the beginning verses of Isaiah 58:1–5, we see that the people of God say they worship God and go through all the motions, but their actions are meaningless. They fast, but they still argue and fight and don’t treat people fairly.

Thinking about our If-Then statements from before, let’s go on a hunt for If-Then statements in Isaiah 58. This hunt will give us clues as to what God says about the kind of worship and faithful acts God desires, and what promises come out of those faithful acts.

Option: Break into small groups and use the worksheet on Isaiah 58 provided or use newsprint or a whiteboard to create your own chart modeled after the worksheet.

Hand out copies of the Activity Sheet for Older Children “Isaiah 58: If-Then” to each participant (or one per group if splitting into small groups for this activity). Lead the group through the activity sheet.

Once the exercise is done, ask the participants:
What do you notice about your lists?

God works through us to repair the broken places and situations in our world. Sometimes that task feels really big and it’s hard to know where and how to start. Let’s play a game together that might give us clues on what we can do and how we can do it.

EXPLORE

“The River” (20 minutes)

Gather everyone on one bank of the river, hand each one of them a “stepping stone,” and set up their task with the following story:

This area has experienced massive flooding from a hurricane, and the bridge to reach the other side of this river has washed out. There are people who need help on the other side, but they’re cut off from any assistance. One could say we have a breach that needs repairing! **Our group’s goal is to bring our entire group across the river to provide help.**

The river is running too fast and is too deep to walk or swim across, and if we touch the water it will sweep us away. Luckily, we have these large stepping stones to use to cross the river.

BUT there's a catch: The way these stepping stones work, they must have pressure applied to them at all times once they're in the river so they stay in place. If there's nothing touching them, they'll be swept down the river! Also, if you put your hand or foot in the river, you have to make your way back to the bank and start again.

Invite the group to begin. As the leader, notice if a stepping stone doesn't have anything touching it (even for a few seconds!) and take it away dramatically, stating that the river swept it away. The group will have to communicate with one another and work together to ensure that each stepping stone in the water has a hand or foot on it at all times. Let them struggle! This is where the learning happens.

Debrief (5 minutes)

When the entire team makes it to the other side, celebrate together and then debrief the activity together:

What made this difficult?

What helped your process?

How did this game require you to work together?

If you hadn't been able to work together, do you think you could have made it to the other side to help?

Working Together—One Great Hour of Sharing (10 minutes)

God calls us to the task of feeding those who are hungry, creating fair conditions for others, providing homes for those who are homeless (*remind them of the list of If statements from the activity sheet*). It can seem like a big task, but it's easier and we can accomplish more when we work together (just like we worked together to cross the river).

Our church and our denomination (and many other denominations too!) join together to make an impact on this world through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering we take every spring. Churches all over the country take part in this offering and when we combine our generous gifts together, we are able to do amazing things in this world. Monies raised from One Great Hour of Sharing go to:

- Help victims of natural disasters through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
- Provide food to the hungry through the Presbyterian Hunger Program
- Empower the poor and oppressed through the Self Development of People program

The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering is the single largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world. When we all come together with our generous gifts, we can do far more than we can alone.

Look at the stepping stones we used today. We can read about some of the projects OGHS supports all over the world.

Project names and locations and a brief description are provided on the stepping stones. Invite participants to read about the work that's been done through OGHS. Option: use a computer to view the interactive project map listed in the Resource section above.

CLOSE (5 minutes)

WOW! Think about the impact we make when we all work together and share through the One Great Hour of Sharing! The results of these projects remind me of God's promises in the Then column. God works

through those faithful acts and people are fed, streets are repaired, foundations are rebuilt, and places where there's been division are restored. And you can be a part of that important work too, both here in our community and through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

Closing Prayer

Invite the group to pray using this prayer or one you create on your own:

Dear God, sometimes it seems like there's so much brokenness in this world—people who don't have enough to eat, communities ravaged by hurricanes or other disasters, people who aren't treated fairly and justly. We pray for those who experience hardship. Strengthen us for faithful acts of caring for one another and the world. Remind us that when we work together, we can accomplish so much through your Spirit. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

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