GOD’S BIG STORY
Week 3: Redemption—The World Can Be Fixed

This includes:
1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW
This lesson moves your group into the third “part” of God’s Big Story, building on the previous themes of how God created the world as something good, and how Adam and Eve made a choice that caused the world to become broken. This week, we see how God provided a way to fix our brokenness, but the remedy of Jesus is one we must receive for ourselves. God does the fixing, and we can only receive it—we can’t do it ourselves.

LESSON OBJECTIVES
1. WHAT: Although our world is broken, God has a remedy to fix things.
2. WHY: Redemption adds purpose to our lives as we join God in his plan for the world.
3. HOW: Students will examine God’s plan to fix our broken world through Jesus, and they’ll see how each of us must decide if we will receive the gift God offers.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE
Romans 6:23

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE
Ephesians 2:8-10

TEACHING PREP
The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you’ll definitely want to refer to it as you lead your lesson.

Read Romans 6:23.

This week’s lesson focuses on God’s plan to fix the world broken by sin. As you know, each lesson in this series has two key words associated with it. This week’s words are “Fix” and “Receive.” These key words form an easy handle for your students to remember each lesson’s theme and the central story of God’s work in this world.

When we talk about God “fixing” the world, we’re really talking about God’s plan of redemption—that which was broken can now be fixed, restored, redeemed through Jesus Christ. And the word “receive” is important because God is the one who does the fixing. We can only receive his gift of being “fixed” or redeemed through Jesus—we can’t do it ourselves.

We’ve selected Romans 6:23 as the primary verse for this lesson because it effectively summarizes our need for God’s fixing in our lives—“For the wages of sin is death”—and the details of how we can receive God’s remedy—“the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”
You can communicate the idea of redemption through two activities this week. In the suggested Getting Things Started activity, students will receive tickets for playing various games, and those tickets can then be redeemed for prizes—presenting redemption as trading in one thing for something else of greater value. When we accept God’s gift of forgiveness through Jesus, we exchange our broken lives for something of greater value.

The second hands-on way to present this idea is through the ongoing flowerpot illustration we’re using in this series. You can have your students work together to repair the pot you broke in the previous lesson—or you can repair it yourself before your group meets and simply display how it has been fixed. Similarly, God restores us to a place where we are again useful and are of greater value than when we are broken in pieces.

As you prepare for this week’s lesson, be ready to communicate the gospel and salvation in a way that is clear to your students. Many of them may have already chosen to follow Jesus, but it’s likely some haven’t—or they haven’t made it a truly personal decision yet.

**Other Notes**
If you plan to do the redemption activity in Getting Things Started, collect some small prizes for the games you play (fun-size candy bars, carnival prizes, and so on). You’ll also need the supplies required for any of the games you play. Finally, you’ll need “tickets” of some sort. One idea is to cut sheets of paper into small “tickets.”

If you’re using the illustration of the flowerpots, you’ll need the broken pot from last week, and a tube of fast-acting adhesive, such as SuperGlue or Krazy Glue. You also may want to display an unbroken pot.

**THE BEFORE & AFTER [optional]**

**Text Message Questions**
We’ve provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- Have you been using your notebook [or 3X5 card] to keep track of the consequences from Adam and Eve’s choice? Bring your notebook [or 3X5 card] to small group!
- Did you know that God has a plan for fixing our broken world? Let’s talk about it at small group tonight.

**Parent Email**
We’ve provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

This week, our small groups examined the third “part” of God’s Big Story. Our key words for this lesson were “fix” and “receive,” and we focused on Romans 6:23. This verse effectively summarizes our need for God’s fixing in our lives—“For the wages of sin is death”—and the details of how we can receive God’s remedy—“the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”
When we talk about God “fixing” the world, we’re really talking about God’s plan of redemption—that which was broken can now be fixed, restored, redeemed through Jesus Christ. And the word “receive” is important because God is the one who does the fixing. We can only receive his gift of being “fixed” or redeemed through Jesus—we can’t do it ourselves.

Here are some questions that might help you engage in conversation with your teenager about this week’s lesson:

- How has Jesus fixed problems or challenges in your life?
- Tell me in your own words what it means to “become a Christian” and how you make the choice to receive God’s remedy of forgiveness and redemption through Jesus Christ.
- What do you think it means to be God’s masterpiece? How would you explain that idea to your friends?

I pray that you and your family have a great week!
GETTING THINGS STARTED
Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then jump into the activity below:

Have your students compete in some simple games for about 10 minutes. You’ll want to set up the games before your teenagers arrive; consider enlisting the help of extra adults. If you have enough adults, run two or three games simultaneously, which is ideal. Make sure you have a stash of prizes available. Award tickets liberally to students. When the game time is up, allow students to redeem their tickets for prizes before you resume the lesson. We’ve provided suggestions for three simple games; feel free to use these, modify them, or replace them with other ideas.

Game ideas:
- **Clothespin Drop**: Gather three to five clothespins and a can, a pickle jar, or any container that has a fairly narrow mouth. Have students stand on a chair directly over the can and drop the clothespins from waist level trying to get them into the can.
- **Ball on Stairs**: This works well if you meet in a two-story house or in a church facility with multiple floors. Write a number from 1 to 5 on each of five 3X5 cards or slips of paper. Put one card on each of five stairs going in sequential order up the stairs. Put number 1 on a stair that is about eye level with the contestants and work up from there. Gather three tennis balls and have contestants try to land each tennis ball on a stair. Students get one ticket for each number the ball lands on (three tickets if it lands on the third stair, five for landing on the fifth, and so on).
- **Random Selection**: Cut about 20 slips of paper. Write a number from 1 to 3 on some of the slips, and leave others blank. Put the slips into a paper bag. Contestants simply pull a slip out of the bag and receive the number of tickets written on the slip.

After about 10 minutes, allow your teenagers to redeem their tickets for prizes. Then bring your students back together and **SAY SOMETHING LIKE**: I hope you had lots of fun with that—especially the chance to redeem your tickets for some prizes! When we talk about redeeming tickets, it was a way for you to receive something better. A candy bar is much better than a stack of small slips of paper, right? Our lesson this week also talks about something being redeemed for something else of greater value—in this case, our broken world can be redeemed because of God’s love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

If you came up with an opening activity, movie clip, or game that worked well with your group, and you’d like to share it with other youth workers, please email us at ideas@simplyyouthministry.com.

TEACHING POINTS
The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen here are (1) God provided a way to FIX the world, and (2) We must choose to RECEIVE God’s remedy.
Remember: All throughout these lessons, it’s up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your students.

Read Romans 6:23 together as a group. Consider allowing one or more of the teenagers to read the text.

**Say something like:** In the previous weeks in this series, we’ve seen how God created the world and it was good, and how Adam and Eve chose to sin, and the world became broken. We’re going to continue looking at God’s Big Story today, and our two key words for this lesson are **fix** and **receive**.

1. God provided a way to fix the world

**Ask:**
- God created the world, and it was good. Adam and Eve chose to sin, and the world became broken. How is Jesus the solution to the world’s brokenness?
- How has Jesus fixed problems or challenges in your life?
- What do you think Romans 6:23 means when it says “the wages of sin is death”? How would you explain that phrase to one of your friends?
- Earlier, you redeemed your paper tickets for something better—some cool prizes. What’s the similarity between that experience and Jesus helping you and me experience something better in our lives?

**Say something like:** Being a “slave” to sin is like having sin as your boss; that’s why the Apostle Paul talks about the “wages of sin” in this verse. When you work at a job, you receive money—wages from the boss. So, if we’re working for sin as our boss, we’ll receive the payment of death—eternal separation from God. But God’s remedy for our sin and for our broken world was to send Jesus to pay the price for our sins by dying on the cross—and then coming back to life again. God redeems through his Son Jesus—but it’s a solution we must choose to accept and receive.

2. We must choose to receive God’s remedy

**Ask:**
- What is the best Christmas or birthday present you’ve ever received? What made it so great?
- Romans 6:23 says that “the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” How would you explain this to your friends?
- Explain in your own words what it means to “become a Christian” and how you make the choice to receive God’s remedy of forgiveness and redemption through Jesus Christ.

**Say something like:** When we talk about God “fixing” the world, we’re really talking about God’s plan of redemption—that which was broken can now be fixed, restored, redeemed through Jesus Christ. And the word “receive” is important because God is the one who does the fixing. We can only receive his gift of being “fixed” or redeemed through Jesus—we can’t do it ourselves.
You may want to pause here and give students a chance to pray to receive God’s gift of salvation.

**Activity [optional]**
Display one pot that is “perfect” plus the pot you broke last week. Ask your students to work together to glue back together the broken flowerpot. Give them a tube of glue and the pieces of the pot. Be careful to help them not cut themselves as well as not glue themselves together. If there is more than one adult in your group, you may want to have that adult do this while the rest of you talk through the questions. Alternative: You can glue the pot back together prior to the meeting and display it during your lesson.

**ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [optional]**
*Say something like:* As you accept the gift of God and see that your life is redeemed from a broken mess and restored to something useful again, the next step is to join God in his plan for fixing the brokenness in our world. When we live the way God intended us to live, we bring small pieces of redemption to the world we live in. This is what God intended us to do.

*Ask:*
- What would it be like to live the way I just described—to share God’s message of hope and help to your broken world?
  
  - Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How do these verses help your perspective on how much God loves you and wants the best for your life?
  
  - What do you think it means to be God’s masterpiece? How would you explain that idea to your friends?

  - What do you think are some of the “good things” God wants you to do?

**APPLICATION**
Ask each student to share the 3X5 card or notebook they’ve kept this past week with their list of sin, pain, and consequences that can be traced back to the choice Adam and Eve made. Spend a few minutes going around the group, asking individual teenagers to talk about what they observed and how these observations affected them.

After your discussion, *Ask*:
- How might you and I go about helping to make the world closer to the way God designed it to be? [Ideas might include being honest, working hard, putting others before ourselves, treating people with respect, and so on. Only offer suggestions if your students have a difficult time getting started.]

  - Choose one thing from the list that we just compiled. What will you commit to doing this week, and why did you choose that thing to do?

Take time to pray as a group. Thank God for the solution he offers to fix the problem of sin. Thank God for the remedy of his Son Jesus. Pray that each of the students in your group will have the courage to receive the gift of salvation through Jesus, if they haven’t already. You may want to give them a chance to respond and pray to become a follower of Christ.
SUMMARY

End your small group lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).*