

Lesson 3: God the Father

Aims for each learner:

- To rejoice to speak to God as Father.
- To explain at a basic level why Christ's followers call Jesus the Son of God.
- Memorize 1 John 3:1.
- To grasp God the Father's unconditional love and try to model this love towards children.

Cultural clues:

- Calling God 'Father'
- Nearness to God

Prepare:

'Father's love letter' video clip or song during the conclusion.

Opening

Pray for today's lesson. Review last week's practical task: Did you fight against three bad habits from your old nature? How was this for you? Was it a struggle? Did you make progress?

Lesson 3 home study review:

Question 1: a) Father; b) Father

Question 2: a) True; b) True; c) True

Question 3: Great love, the Father has lavished upon us, children of God, is what we are.

Introduce today's topic: Muslims think that to pray to God as Father is blasphemy or *shirk!* (see 'Cultural clues'). But in a spiritual way this is possible. As Christ's followers, it is our great privilege.

Discussion

Jesus called God 'Father' (Questions 3-9)

Question 4: Read the passage in the box.

- How many times did you circle 'Son' and 'Father'?
- Why do our Muslim friends object to the titles Son and Father?

- It should be Son 4 times, Father 4 times.*
- They think Christians teach that God had physical relations with a woman to produce a son. But this thought is offensive for Christians too.*

Question 6: We saw how the Old Testament used 'son' for some special people who lived close to God, showed some of his qualities, or ruled with his authority.

- In this passage which phrases speak of Jesus Christ being close to God his Father?
- Which phrases speak of Jesus Christ sharing the qualities of God his Father?
- Which phrases speak of Jesus Christ ruling with the authority of God his Father?

- 'The Father loves the Son and shows him all he does'.*
- 'Whatever the Father does the Son also does'. 'For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself'.*
- 'Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him'. 'And he has given him authority to judge'.*

Question 7: Read the first paragraph.

- Can you think of any examples from your culture when you call someone a 'son' but it does not actually mean a physical son?

Question 8: Read the first paragraph.

- What claim did Jesus Christ make which shows that he shares God's very nature? *'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father'.*

Read the rest of question 8. *Divide into pairs. One person should take the role of Christ's follower. Take three minutes to explain briefly to the other person, as if to a non-Christian, why we use the title 'Son of God' for Jesus Christ. Now swap around, so that the second person now explains the same thing to the first person.*

We too may call God Father (Questions 10-18)

Question 11: Read 1 John 3:1 and then the first paragraph of question 11.

- We can call Jesus Christ the Son of God. Discuss the bigger step we take when we call God our Father, through Christ.
- Why can we speak to God as our Father in a spiritual way?

Because God has adopted us as his spiritual children, through Jesus our 'older brother'.

Discover the memory verse 1 John 3:1 in a practical way.



- Write each word on a different piece of paper and mix them up.
- Ask the learner(s) to arrange them in the right order and recite the verse.
- Then remove 2 or 3 pieces of paper and recite the verse again.
- Continue this until the learner(s) can say the whole verse without any piece of paper.

Question 12: Read the whole question.

- What is one difference between our human father's love and our heavenly Father's love?
- Does God love us always, or only when we are good?
- Should we love our children always, or only when they are good?

*Our human fathers might love us according to our achievements, but our heavenly Father loves us however we are.
Always.
Always.*

Question 13a: No one has a perfect relationship with their earthly father.

- Do you want to say what your earthly father was like when you were growing up?

Encourage people to share, but be sensitive that some may have unpleasant memories and may not want to share, or to dishonour their fathers.

Question 13b: Read the second and third paragraphs of question 13.

- Do we ever fear that God would be like that father who let his son crash to the ground?

Let the learner(s) describe their fears honestly. Then assure them that God will never let us down! He has promised 'Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you' (Hebrews 13:5).

Question 14-15: Read the box in question 15 (Luke 15:20-24)



- What is very surprising about the father in Jesus' story?
- What do you think Jesus Christ is teaching us about God in this story?

He welcomed back his son who had brought him so much dishonour.

God is like the generous father. He welcomes us back and forgives us even when we have brought him so much dishonour!

Question 16: Read Nazir's story in the box.

- Have any of us faced an experience like Nazir?
- What is the difference between Nazir's father and our heavenly Father?

They may not yet have been rejected, but maybe it will happen later when family find out about their faith in Christ.

Our heavenly Father will never reject us!

Question 18: Read the entire question. Repeat together this verse from the *Zabur* (Psalms).
'Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.'

Conclusion

Obeying today's teaching: What difference will today's lesson make in your life? **Read together the practical task.**

- Do you have a friend you could do this task with?
- Keep going with the home study!

Watch: 'The Fathers love letter' which can be found on youtube in various languages.

Or Sing: A song about the Father's love.

Pray together: Thank God that we can rely on him more than any human father and that he always welcomes us even when our parents reject us.