

LESSON 24: What Went Wrong?


AIM

To lead the children to understand that the present condition of the world is not as God intends it (2.2.7)

OUTCOME

Learners understand sinfulness as going against God's will for creation and humanity.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 Get the children ready for the **meditation** based on the creation story which emphasizes chaos and darkness in the beginning. ⇒ Ask them to close their eyes and do a short relaxation exercise: "Breathe in slowly, breathe out slowly, letting worry and tension drop away." As soon as they are relaxed guide them in the meditation, which can be pre-recorded and replayed in class, or read live. After the meditation you can discuss with the children what they think of light after being in the chaotic darkness.
- 2 Read the **story of creation** [Genesis 1:1-2:4]. Emphasize the goodness of creation, the creation of human beings in God's image, and the stewardship we are entrusted with. If the learners have Bibles, ask them to count the number of times the following words occur: And God saw how good it was. (Note that the exact words will vary from translation to translation.)
- 3 Ask the children to **relate what they hear or see** on the news, or read in the newspapers that happen to people daily. The responses you get will most probably include stories of crime, wars, and environmental destruction. (From the responses you can gauge the level of awareness in the class.)
- 4 Sing: *Look Around You, Can You See?*
- 5 If the children had already been asked to bring articles or newspaper headlines, this is the time to ask for them. Otherwise, have **an assortment of short articles** with striking headlines ready to distribute to them. As soon as the articles are ready classify them as good/caring or bad/uncaring.
- 6 To prepare for the next lesson on 'original sin' and its effects, ask the children to read the **story of Pandora** on the worksheet.  ⇒ They might also question their parents about how the world came to be in the condition it is in now.



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Meditation in print or pre-recorded (1) ⇒
- * Bibles (2)
- *  *Look Around You, Can You See?* (4)
- * Some newspaper articles and headlines (5)
- *  Story: *Pandora's Box* (6) ⇒
- * Handkerchiefs or scarves for blindfolding (8)
- *  Story of Mayimba (10) ⇒

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 The children are asked to **write a summary** of the main points of the lesson.

- 8 In the place of the 'darkness' meditation use the **blindfolding technique** and let the children discuss their experience of this activity. Learners are paired and take turns leading their partner on a 'trust walk' of five minutes before changing roles. It is important to emphasize in this exercise that fooling will destroy it, and may even be dangerous. The object is to be trustworthy.
- 9 If it seems that the children do not read or listen to the news discuss the purpose of doing this with them in a bit more detail. We should get to **know what happens in the world**, and in our area. Knowledge is power, and without it we will not be able to make a difference.
- 10 Read the **story of Mayimba** which explains how evil came into the world. 📖 ➡

MATERIALS

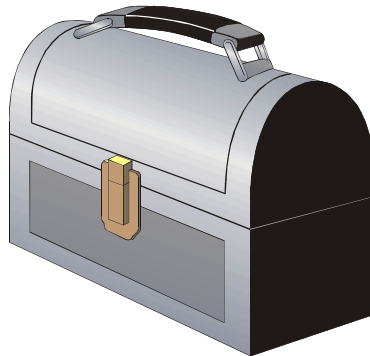
MEDITATION

You walk into a dark room which you have never been in before. You cannot see because the blacked-out windows are all closed and there isn't even a sliver of light. You bump into something. As you try to avoid this you step on something soft, then you knock your toe on the edge of something hard. The only way out of this situation is to find a source of light.

Suddenly you remember that you have a penlight torch in your pocket. You use this as your first light to find the wall switch or the window. As soon as you have light, things seem better, and you can fix the chaos. It becomes easy to avoid bumping into objects and you can therefore put the room in order.

Now imagine what the world was like before God put some order into it. The Book of Genesis begins: In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light." Does this give you an idea of how important light was for creation? Now slowly open your eyes, come back to this room and let us share what our feelings were while we were in the dark room.

Pandora's Box



One day the God Zeus sent a beautiful woman called Pandora to Epimetheus. Pandora came carrying a small wooden box. Epimetheus was overcome with admiration for this beautiful woman. He asked her to be his wife, and she agreed.

When they went to his house, he asked her what was in the box. "I don't know," Pandora said. "When Zeus gave it to me he said I must keep it, but never open it. If I do all sorts of problems will come." Epimetheus looked serious, "We must put it on the shelf out of harms way," he said.

Pandora and Epimetheus were very happy together. She was a good hardworking wife, and the house was always in perfect order. But as time went on she became more and more curious about what was in the box. She spent hours wondering and the box seemed to become more attractive. When Epimetheus went on a long journey and she was alone, she took the box from the shelf and put it on the table. It was made of polished wood and had a special clip. She stroked the wood and undid the clip almost by accident. Nothing happened. 'What could be inside such a small box?' she thought. She put out her hand and opened the lid.

Immediately, a swarm of little winged insects flew out of the box. They went around the room and then out of the open window before Pandora could do anything. She quickly closed the box and put it on the shelf again. She wondered what those little insects could be.

In fact, they were the Troubles, spirits which brought pain, worry and sickness into the world which did not know them. However there was one good spirit called Hope which helped the human race to put up with all the other evil spirits.

(An old Greek story retold in John Henze, *More Short Stories*, Mission Press, Ndola, 1985)

Mayimba

Leza made the first man and the first woman, Mulonga and Mwinambuzhi. Afterwards he called the bird, Mayimba. He gave Mayimba three pots. The pots were tightly closed. Leza said: “Take these three pots to Mulonga and Mwinambuzhi. But do not open them on the road. Tell Mulonga that he can open the first and second pots. They hold seeds. Pot number three must not be opened until I, Leza, arrive.”

On the way Mayimba could not control himself. He wanted to know what was in the pots. He opened the first: it had seeds. He opened the second: it had more seeds. Then he opened the third pot. In this pot were sickness, death and all kinds of dangerous animals and snakes. They all came out of the pot and ran away. Mayimba could not catch them. Then Leza appeared and said to Mayimba: “You have been wrong. You have opened the pot and all those bad things have got away.” Mayimba was very much afraid and flew away into the bush. He no longer lives among men.

Leza said to Mulonga and Mwinambuzhi: “Mayimba was very wrong. I told him not to open the pots, but he did not do what I said. He has brought you much trouble, death, sickness and danger from lions, leopards and snakes. These cannot be caught now, so you must build houses and fences to protect yourselves.” So because Mayimba did not do what Leza said, we are afraid of sickness, death and wild animals and snakes.

An African Creation Story (52 Stories. J. Henze (ed), Mission Press, Ndola 1982)

LESSON 25: Original Sin

AIM



To lead the children to an understanding of original sin as an inherited inclination to do wrong, and thereby cause suffering (2.2.7)

OUTCOME


The learners understand sinfulness as going against God's will for creation and humanity




WHAT YOU NEED

- * Bibles (1)
- *  **Pandora's Box** LESSON 24 (2)(6) ⇨
- * Bible (3)(6)(7)
- *  **The Story of Miguel** (10)(11) ⇨

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 Read [Genesis 1: 28 -31] again to the children, or invite them to read it. Explain to them how God had blessed human beings and given them the care and **stewardship of the earth**.
 - 2 Review the story of Pandora's Box  LESSON 24, LEARNING ACTIVITY 6. Discuss the replies the children got from their parents in the previous lesson. Introduce **the idea of sin** using some of the newspaper headings from LESSON 24. A definition is given below.
⇨
 - 3 Where did sin come from? Read **the story of the fall** of human beings from Genesis [3:1-7]. Ask the learners at this point - before reading further - to imagine and to write down what they think the effects which breaking the commandment not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had on the life of the man and woman. Invite the learners to share their responses. Complete the story [Genesis 3: 8-19].
 - 4 **The consequences of the Fall:** The consequences of the act of Adam (the man) and Eve (the woman) which we call 'original sin' were:
 - a damaged relationship with God
 - a damaged relationship between themselves - man and woman
 - a damaged relationship with the world and its creatures

Give the learners a definition of Original Sin ⇨
 - 5 **All human beings** - the descendants of First Man and First Woman - inherit this condition which has become a condition of the world we live in. A useful analogy is that of the factory which pollutes the atmosphere and the rivers. All those who live in its environment suffer the effects even though they may not be responsible for them.
 - 6 Invite the learners to **compare the story** of the Fall in Genesis with the story of Pandora's Box.  ⇨ What similarities and differences are to be found?
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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 **Cain and Abel** [Genesis 4:3-16] Ask the learners to read this story and to discuss what the story tells us about sin and its consequences.

- 8 Remind learners of the definition of **'saint'** they met in LESSON 15. If they are Catholics they can also find out names of some of the family's patron saints and what they are known for. (This gives the opportunity to see that human beings are not only known for their bad choices but that many of them make a positive difference in their communities and the world.)
- 9 Let the children write **their own reactions** to times when a promise is broken or a friend does not follow the group's agreed code. Discuss how they think God feels when we break a promise or even forget his commandments.
- 10 Use the **Story of Miguel** to illustrate the bondage of sin. 📖 ⇒ In this story Miguel has an addiction to soccer and is determined to be the best player there is but he neglects other aspects of learning and being at school.
- 11 Give the children an opportunity to **write a conclusion to Miguel's story**. 📖 ⇒ (They may indicate how well they understand that freedom of choice brings with it responsibility as well as unpleasant consequences. However, leave it to them to decide).

TO REMEMBER

Sin is any deliberate thought, word, or action which goes against the loving nature of God. It harms ourselves, our fellow human beings and the whole creation.

Original Sin is the condition into which all human beings are born as a result of sin having entered human history at its very beginning.

The Story of Miguel

This story can be used in many ways, one being as an assessment of how well the children were able to grasp the idea of sin having certain consequences.

Another could be to explain the effects of sin on the relationships between people and God and others in their circle.

For the first time ever Lincoln Junior High had a winning soccer team. And everyone said it was because of Miguel Rivera.

Miguel's parents had come to the United States from Guatemala when he was too young to remember. They both worked hard to give their children a good education. Miguel worked hard too. He worked at being a world class soccer player, like Pele, his hero. One night as he practiced juggling the ball from knee to knee his father called him in to do his homework. Miguel was annoyed at the interruption. His father did not appreciate how much concentration soccer required. To him it was just a game.

"Why can't I decide when to do my homework?" Miguel asked as he stormed into the house. "I know what I have to do. I thought this was a free country." The look on his father's face told him he had gone too far. But his father remained calm.

"It is a free country, Miguel," he answered. "But freedom is not a game. It is a grave responsibility."

"Come on, Dad, give me a break. I'm old enough."

Then to Miguel's surprise, his father said, "Very well, we will try it your way for this term."

Miguel took full advantage of his unexpected freedom. He practised kicking, passing and heading for hours at a time. Sometimes the long hours of practice made him too tired for homework. But there was always tomorrow. And his father respected his freedom.

On the last day of term Miguel burst into his father's shop. "Dad, Dad," he cried. "You've got to help me. They've cut me from the team!"

"But why?" his father asked.

"They say my grades have gone down. But..."

"Have they?" his father wanted to know.

"Well, yes, but that's not the point. The playoffs are next Saturday. We could be league champions. The whole team will suffer if I can't play. Talk to them, Dad. They'll listen to you. Please."

"Miguel," his father was gentle, "I love you so much. It hurts me to see you suffer like this. But I love you too much to take away your dignity as a man. I will be glad to help you next term. We can make a plan. But for now, you told me you could take the consequences of your choices. And this is one of them."

"I didn't choose THIS," Miguel protested.