



.....so that all children might know their Father

## **LESSON PLANS for CHURCHES on MULTIPLE SUNDAYS before CHRISTMAS**

### **ALSO USER FRIENDLY FOR CAREGIVERS Grades 1-3**

*Gingerboy's Search for Christmas* can be used for up to 5 Sundays of Sunday School or Children's Ministry class sessions. These lesson plans are provided for teachers and parents to help children better grasp the message of Christmas.

We recommend that churches provide a complimentary copy of the book to children in class the Sunday before it will be discussed. **Lesson Plan 5 concludes the story, and would be a wonderful "one time lesson" to utilize on Christmas Eve' or the last Sunday of Advent.** For a 5 Sunday series, the book would need to be provided by mid November. These plans can be easily adapted to use for a shorter series, if desired.

It is recommended that the church encourage parents, grandparents, or caregivers to read the chapter(s) that will be covered the next Sunday, ideally at bed time on Saturday night.

The five lesson plans follow the four chapters of the story. The third chapter has two significant messages in it, so both themes have been addressed.

All approaches are a great way to encourage reading between parents or caregivers and child(ren), and to share how much God loves them through Jesus Christ.

The recommended ages for these activities are grades one through three. **If you are teaching within a classroom, it will be important to have a white board or black board available for times of discussion. A sheet of paper can be easily used by the parent or caregiver.**

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## **Lesson Plan One: Chapter One**

**Lesson Plan One-Objective: For the child to understand that they have been created by a loving Heavenly Father. He cares for them.**

**Lesson Plan One: (Estimated classroom time is 45 minutes.)**

**What you will need:** A copy of *Gingerboy's Search for Christmas*. Each child will need a small piece of gingerbread cookie dough, ( I have included the recipe at the end of the these lesson plans.) They will need a gingerbread cookie cutter, (this can be shared.), a rolling pin, one or two cookie sheets, and of course an available oven. The teacher and/or aide can help roll out each piece of dough, or, if it is easier, the dough can be rolled out before class. Some classrooms do have smaller rollers normally used in play time. If these are sterilized, they can also be used. If you are a caregiver you may adjust this scenario to best fit the child, or children in your care. A "cookie sheet" chart, (much like a seating chart), can be used to help identify the maker of each cookie. (If time is a factor, baking the gingerbread cookies can be done in advance of the lesson. Combining both Lesson One and Two could then be another option).

**I Discuss the story:**

- A, Read page one. Have the children share their own thoughts regarding this first page and the first chapter. Refer to the book whenever necessary.
1. Who is The Baker?
  2. Why does Gingerboy call him " Papa?
  3. How does his Papa feel about Gingerboy?
  4. What things does Papa do with Gingerboy that lets you know how much He loves him?

5. Make sure and to write down each answer. Writing is optional for caregivers.

B. Discuss with the children, the meaning of the word “Creator.”

1. Write these thoughts down as well.
2. Ask them to share those things they see that are “created.”
3. Who created them?
4. How do you think He feels about you?”

**II Make gingerbread cookies. ( The dough should be made in advance.) A recipe is provided at the end of this lesson plan.**

A. Roll out the dough and cut your “Gingerboy” cookie,

1. First have them roll out the cookie dough. If you are doing this for a Sunday School class, one small piece of dough should be placed at each child’s seat. Caregivers are free to make as many cookies as they would like.
2. Have them cut out their gingerbread cookie.
3. Make sure to ask questions.(a) “How do you feel as you make this cookie? (b.)What do you do when you find a broken hand or foot? (c.)Are you feeling excited about making your cookie? (d.) Do you care about how it turns out?”

B. Have the children place their cookie on a cookie sheet.

1. In the classroom, create a “seating plan” for each cookie sheet so the child’s cookie can be identified.
2. A helper will need to take them to an available oven to bake.

**III Clean up.** Children are then instructed to clean up their cooking area. The teacher and available aid can help with cleaning within the classroom. Caregivers may do the same.

**IV Who is our Creator?**

A. Conclude the lesson by asking the children who created them?

1. “Does He love you as much as “The Baker,” loves Gingerboy?”
2. What do we call our “Heavenly Papa?”
3. “Gingerboy is happy to know his Father loves him. How does this make him feel about His “Papa?”
4. How do you feel about your “Heavenly Farther? What does He do for you that lets you know He loves you?”

## B. End in prayer

Thank you, Heavenly Father for creating us, and loving us as much as you do. Amen.

## **Gingerbread Cookie Recipe** (make the night before):

### Ingredients:

- 6 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup shortening, melted and cooled slightly
- 1 cup molasses
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Directions:

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Prep time: 20 min

Cook: 12 min

Ready In: 4 h

1. Sift together the flour, baking powder, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, and cinnamon; set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, mix together the shortening, molasses, brown sugar, water, egg, and vanilla until smooth. Gradually stir in the dry ingredients, until they are completely absorbed. Divide dough into 3 pieces, pat down to 1 1/2 inch thickness, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 3 hours.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough out to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut into desired shapes with cookie cutters. Place cookies 1 inch apart onto an ungreased cookie sheet.

4. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes in the preheated oven. When the cookies are done, they will look dry, but still be soft to the touch. Remove from the baking sheet to cool on wire racks. When cool, the cookies can be frosted with the icing of your choice.
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## **Lesson Plan Two: Chapter Two**

**Lesson Plan Two- Objective: For the child to understand that our Heavenly Father seeks to protect us from what sin can do. His love for us does not change no matter what we do.**

### **Lesson Plan Two: (Estimated classroom time is 45 minutes.)**

**What you will need:** The teacher will need a copy of “Gingerboy’s Search for Christmas.” Each child will need a finished cookie, a small Ziplock bag, cut at the corner with frosting inside, and small edible eyes.

#### **I Finish the cookies.**

- A. Each child will see the cookie they have made waiting for them at their seat.( A caregiver may simply use the kitchen counter or table.)
- B. A pair of edible eyes,( Red cinnamon decors can be used. Edible eyes can also be purchased at most grocery stores.) Frosting and food coloring.( Betty Crocker offers premade frosting.)A small frosting applicator with the instructor’s choice of color frosting will also be at their seat or table.
- C. Let’s frost our cookie.
  1. The children are instructed to place a dot of frosting where the eyes will be.
  2. Each child will then place eyes on each of these dots of frosting.
  3. They can make a smile and add buttons or do whatever else they choose, with red decors and the frosting applicator. It is their

**“creation.” (The opportunity to see a finished cookie will be helpful guide as the child decorates.)**

## **II The Creator: How does He feel about each of us?**

- A. Ask the children how they feel about their finished cookie. Write down answers.
- B. “Do you care about your cookie?”
  - 1. Do you want to protect your cookie from getting broken?
  - 2. How would you feel if you lost your cookie?
  - 3. Why is his Papa worried for Gingerboy? (a.) Read Page 18, vs 3-6., verse 4. (b.) Write down answers.
  - 4. Why does He give Gingerboy a choice? Read page 22. Write down answers.
- C. What happened to “Gingerboy when he chose to disobey?”
  - 1. Did his father try to warn him?
  - 2. What did “Gingerboy” do that was wrong?
  - 3. How did sin hurt “Gingerboy?”
  - 4. Were his “Papa’s rules meant to hurt him or to help him?
  - 5. How does His Papa take care of him?”
  - 6. Does His Papa love him less because he chose to disobey

## **III. “Where’s my cookie?”**

- A. One child will be asked to volunteer to close their eyes, while their cookie is hidden somewhere in the room.
- B. The teacher will then ask the child how he or she feels.
  - 1. Do you want your cookie back?
  - 2. Are you worried the cookie might get damaged?
  - 3. Do you want to save your cookie from harm?
  - 4. How do you feel about your cookie? Other children are encouraged to share. Responses can be written down.
- C. How do you think Gingerboy’s Papa felt when Gingerboy chose to disobey Him?
  - 1. Did it stop Him from loving Gingerboy?
  - 2. Why did he want to protect him? (a.) How do you think your Heavenly Father feels about you when you do something wrong? (b.) Does He want to protect you?

**IV** End in prayer. Thank you Heavenly Father that you love us even when we do something that is wrong. Help us to what is right. Amen

(A reminder that teachers or caregivers, have the option to make this LESSON INTO A ONE TIME CLASSROOM EVENT. Simply bake the cookies in advance and combine both teaching objectives.)

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### **Lesson Plan Three: Chapter Three**

**Lesson Plan Three- Objective: To understand who the Conductor is. What things does the Conductor do that helps us know He is the Holy Spirit?**

**Lesson Plan Three: (Estimated classroom time is 45 minutes.)**

**What you will need:** A copy of “Gingerboy’s Search for Christmas,” and a white board or black board Caregivers may use a writing pad or iPad.

#### **I Who is the Conductor?**

- A. Read page 28 and 29. What does the Conductor do to help Gingerboy?
  - 1. (He protects him from the wolves and is there to give a hug.)
  - 2. Write down answers.
- B. Read page 34. What does the Conductor do to make Gingerboy feel safe and loved?”
  - 1. He gives him a warm coat and a special seat next to Him on the train.
  - 2. Write down answers
- C. Read page 36, vs.3 and 4. “What makes the Conductor angry? How does He solve the problem?”
  - 1. He is angry because Billy”s actions have caused Gingerboy pain.
  - 2. He speaks to the wrong that has been done to Gingerboy.
  - 3. Write down answers.
- D. Read page 38. How does the Conductor respond to Billy? How does He respond to Gingerboy? What does He say Gingerboy must do?
  - 1. He is caring. He does not accuse.
  - 2. He tells him that he must forgive Billy.
  - 3. Write down answers

- E. Read page 41: What does the Conductor tell us about Jesus? Why does He want us to know about Jesus?
1. That Jesus came Christmas Day to heal our hearts when they are hurting.
  2. Forgiveness is the magic that brings us close to Him.
  3. He wants to give us a Heavenly hug.
  4. Write down answers.

II Using the word He, let's think of one sentence to describe the Conductor on each page we read. Write down answers.

- A. He is Gingerboy's protector
- B. He comforts Gingerboy.
- C. He hates those things that hurt Gingerboy.
- D. He does not accuse. He is there to help.
- E. He calls Gingerboy to forgive.
- F. He wants us all to know Jesus.

### III Role Play

- A. Explain that we are all going to write a small play.
  1. Ask the child(ren) if they know what a play is. (a.) Share that it is like a movie. Actors are used to tell the story. (b.) They talk to each other in front of an audience. (c.) They follow a script., or play, so they know what to say.
- B. How do we begin?
  1. Together, have the class, or child(ren), choose one scene from the pages that have been discussed, that they want to write and "act out" as their play.
  2. Who are the characters in our play?
  3. Where is our play taking place?
- C. Let's "BRAINSTORM!"
  1. Ask them to think about what sentences, or dialogue, they want to include in their play. (a.) Explain that they can use the words from the story to help them to know what to write, but they must use their own words. (b.) (**No need to use poetic form.**)
  2. Give an example and write it on the board.
  3. Now invite the children to share dialogue ideas.
  4. Ask the children to put their ideas in order.
- D. Let's write our play.
  1. **Make sure the play is no more than 6 sentences.**



2. If possible it would be helpful to have a teacher and aid nearby to help write down the play as it is written. **(The teacher can guide them; especially if they are new readers.)**
  3. Caregivers may only need to use what they have written on paper.
- E. Time to act it out!
1. When the children are ready, ask those who are comfortable with performing, to set up the scene and act out their play. For those who are not ready to perform, the script can be shared with the class.
  2. Remind them that a good audience listens.
  3. Shut lights on and off for effect. (Children love this!)
  4. Act out the play.
- F. What did you think about our play?
1. Ask the class, or chld(ren) what quality did our Conductor act out today?
  2. Ask the actor who played the Conductor how doing the part made he or she feel.
  3. Ask the class or child(ren) how they feel about Gingerboy?
  4. Ask the class or child(ren) how they feel about Billy?
  5. Ask those playing Gingerboy or Billy how they felt playing each part.
- G. Read John 14:16-17 and John 15:26.
1. Who is Jesus talking about?
  2. Who does it remind you of?
  3. Who is the Conductor?
- H. End the lesson in prayer. Thank you Jesus, for sending the Holy Spirit. Thank you that the Holy Spirit comforts us, protects us, helps us to know what is wrong, and guides us to Jesus for a heavenly hug. Amen.

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## **Lesson Plan Four: Chapter Four**

**Lesson Plan Four- Objective: To understand why we must forgive**

**Lesson Plan Four: (Estimated classroom time is 45 minutes.)**

**What you will need:** A copy of “Gingerboy’s Search for Christmas.” Each child will need a cardboard brick. (If you need to order, go to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and type in “big cardboard blocks”). Large Legos might

also work. “ Post Its” are also desired. Teachers and Caregivers are free to improvise with what is available within the classroom or home.

## I Why is it important to forgive? Read Page 38 and 40

- A. Why is Billy so sad?
- B. How do you feel when you hurt someone?
- C. Why is Gingerboy having such trouble forgiving Billy?
- D. Why is it so hard to forgive someone who has hurt you?
- E. Why is it important that Gingerboy forgive Billy?
- F. Why is it important that we forgive the person who hurts us?
- G. A separate discussion on bullying might also be very helpful.

## II Let's build a wall.

- A. Bring in enough cardboard bricks so each child in the classroom has one. Large Legos will also work. Make sure and build your wall on a table. Small lego blocks may also work.
- B. BRAINSTORM
  - 1. Have the children take turns sharing something someone did that hurt them. Write each response on the board.
  - 2. Make sure to remind each child that they cannot share names.**
- C. Have the children use their ‘Post Its’ to write down one thing that someone did that hurt them. Remind them they can use the responses on the board to help them.
- D. Have them place the “Post It” on their brick or Leggo.
- E. Ask each child to take turns laying their bricks down so that a gradual wall is built. If you are doing this at home the child(ren) are free to share and write down more than one event. The caregiver may want to share as well. This will allow for the building of the wall
- F. The teacher will ask for two volunteers. One will stand on one side of the wall, and the other on the other side. The caregiver may need to stand on one side if only one child is in their care.
- G. The teacher will ask each child to pretend that the one they cannot forgive is standing on one side, and they are standing on the other.
- H. The teacher will ask the children, “What happens when we don't forgive?”
  - 1. Write answers on board.

2. ( Possible answers might include a.) We are separated from them.  
b.) We cannot be friends with them anymore. c.) We feel unhappy.  
d.)They feel unhappy. 6.) We feel cold or frozen inside.

I. Have the children sit down

### III How do we solve this problem?

- A. Reread page 41.
- B. Pray with the children. Ask the Lord to help them to forgive who they cannot forgive on their own.
- C. Then pray a prayer of forgiveness.
- D. When they have done this, ask them to take turns removing their bricks from the wall.
- E. When the wall is gone, ask the two children that are still standing to turn to each other. Encourage them to shake hands, or if they are comfortable, to give each other a hug.
  1. Ask each one how they feel. Ask the class how they feel.
  2. What happens when we forgive someone?
  3. Who helps us to forgive?

### IV Our friendship with Jesus.

A., Ask the children, “ What happens when I do something wrong, and hurt my Heavenly Father?

1. Is a wall built between me and my Heavenly Father?
2. Is that what happened to Gingerboy?
3. Is that why he is separated from His Papa?

B. Ask the children, “How can Gingerboy solve this problem?”  
( By telling his Papa he is sorry)

C. Do we have the same problem? “How do we fix this problem?”

D. What should we make sure and do every day? What will Jesus give us when we ask forgiveness? ( A heavenly hug.)

V End in prayer. “Jesus, help us forgive others. Forgive us for the times we do what is wrong and hurt others. Forgive us for the times we do what is wrong and hurt you. Thank you Jesus,for loving us and always forgiving us when we ask. Thank you for making a way for us to be close to you all the time. Amen!

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## Lesson Plan Five: Chapter Four

**Lesson Plan Five- Objective: To understand why the birth of Jesus has reunited us with Our Heavenly Father.**

**Lesson Plan Five: (Estimated time is 45 minutes.)**

**What you will need:** You will need a copy of “Gingerboy’s Search for Christmas”, a small model of the nativity, an 8 by 10” cardboard heart to trace, red construction paper, scissors, and “Post Its” for each child.

**I** Why is Gingerboy sad? Read page 50 out loud.

- A. What does Gingerboy wish for? What is the problem?
- B. Why does Jesus understand how Gingerboy feels?
- C. How can Gingerboy fix this problem?
- D. What happens at the manger?
  - 1. Read pages 52 and 53
  - 2. Why do the children kneel?
  - 3. What happens that makes Gingerboy feel so loved?  
(There is no judgment on Jesus’ face.)
- E. What does Gingerboy ask Jesus to do?
  - 1. To forgive him
  - 2. To come into his heart.
- F. What promise does Gingerboy make to Jesus? (To serve Him and love Him for all eternity.)
- G. What happens when Gingerboy prays?
  - 1. Why? ( Reread the last verse on page 53.)
  - 2. How did Jesus solve the problem?
- H. Why is Gingerboy so happy? Read page 54
  - 1. He is reunited with his Papa.
  - 2. He knows just how much his Papa loves him.
  
- F. Why is Billy so happy? ( He knows his Heavenly Father.)
  - 1. Can we know Him too?
  - 2. What do you think Billy did?
  - 3. Can we do it too?

**II** Let’s make a heart.

A. BRAINSTORM

1. Invite the child (ren) to share one thing they have done that they knew was wrong. Write down each response. ( Try to keep sentences short.)
  2. The teacher, or caregiver, is encouraged to share and write down something he or she has done that was wrong.
- B. Give each child a piece of red construction paper.
  - C. Pass out a white cardboard heart which they can use to trace the heart onto their piece of construction paper
  - D. Have them cut it out. (Hearts can be cut in advance if time is a factor.)
  - E. Have each child write what they have done wrong on their “Post It.”
    1. They can use the sentences on the board to help them.
    2. If they can think of more than one thing, encourage them to use another “Post It” to write it down.
  - F. Have each child put what they have written on their “Post Its”, on their hearts. (Caregivers can follow these steps, as well.)

III Let’s bring our hearts to the manger. (Each child will be asked to bring their hearts to the manger.) If it is possible have them kneel at the manger Otherwise instruct them to go back to their seats. (It is recommended caregivers find a small model of the nativity and follow these same steps.)

IV Pray with the child(ren).

- A. “Let us pray the same prayer Gingerboy prayed at the manger.” The teacher or caregiver need only speak the prayer found on the top of page 53.
- B. **A teacher or caregiver, may want to share that if a child has already prayed to ask Jesus into their heart, they need only ask Jesus for forgiveness. “Jesus, please forgive the things I have done wrong this day. Thank you for always loving me. Amen**

V What happened when we prayed?

- A. Have each child to take turns coming to the manger to remove the “post its” from their hearts. They can then return to their seats with their hearts.
  1. The teacher will share that Jesus has forgiven their sins.
  2. They have been washed away! They are no longer there!
  3. Jesus now lives in their hearts!
- B. We are reunited with our Heavenly Father!

- 1.. Do you feel happy?
  2. Why?
- C. Why did Jesus come on Christmas Day? (To reunite us with our Heavenly Father!)

**VI** End in prayer: “Thank you so much Jesus for coming on Christmas Day. Thank you for forgiving me. My sins have been washed away and I can talk to you and my Heavenly Father whenever I want to. We will never be apart again! Thank you for how much you love me! Amen!”