

The Essentials

The Verses

Genesis 4:1-9
Also Galatians 5:24,
Proverbs 5:22

Movie Clip

Monsters vs. Aliens

Activity Prep

None

Activity Supplies

A bag of candy

Topics

Being Passionate,
Selfishness

The Essential ?'s

What Are You Trying to Teach Them?

The dangers of selfishness.

How Do You Know They Got It?

They can connect selfishness to unhappiness.

What Do You Do With Those That Don't?

Emphasize specific examples and parallel selfishness and the way it makes us feel to other things that separate us from God, such as unforgiveness, desires, greed and hatred.

What About Those That Already Had It?

Challenge them throughout the week to check their selfishness at home with family.

Shadowland

Old Testament: Lesson 2

Opening Questions

- ❖ What makes you give 110% towards something?
- ❖ How do you motivate yourself to do something you don't care about?
- ❖ When are you happiest?

Activity: Rooting for Sugar High

Bring a bag of candy with you to class. Announce that you're going to give the bag of candy to the person that shows the most enthusiasm for something they love. (It can be their favorite sports team, school, candy, etc.) Students can express their enthusiasm and loyalty any way they want (within reason, of course.) Ask for volunteers and go one by one. Don't let them all go at once, or else you're looking at mass chaos. Let the students vote on who deserves the candy most.

Activity Questions

- ❖ Look at each statement. Would any of these beliefs keep you from a personal relationship with God?
- ❖ At what point do misperceptions and bad theology stop someone from being a Christian?
- ❖ Is getting along as Christians more important than being right? Where do you draw the line?

The Story: Cain Kills Abel

Here we see our first act of conscious rebellion against God in the Bible. While Adam and Eve were conned into sinning, Cain just flat out disobeys out of selfishness. God wanted the first fruits of his labor and Cain didn't want to give them.

Abel willingly gave God his best, but Cain did not. He became angry over the issue, and God confronted him. God told him that he must do what is right, but instead Cain took his brother Abel into a field and killed him.

Movie Clip: Monsters vs. Aliens (0:50:09 – 0:55:46)

Susan Brings Her New Friends Home

Susan has gone from a girl in love on her wedding day to a freak of nature that has to be hidden away from the world. But when disaster threatens in the form of an alien robot, she saves the day and becomes a national hero. As a reward, she is allowed to go home to visit her parents and Darryl, her fiancé that she unexpectedly had to leave at the altar. Much to her surprise, Darryl isn't interested in seeing her again, now that her size and heroic acts will take the spotlight off of him and his career as a weather reporter.

Movie Questions

- ❖ What did Susan learn about Darryl that she couldn't have before?
- ❖ How is Darryl's selfishness like Cain's?
- ❖ How did Susan become a martyr like Abel?
- ❖ What is the root of the problem with Darryl? What exactly makes him the bad guy?
- ❖ Where do you see that in your world?

What They Have in Common

There's nothing quite like a story with an obvious hero and bad guy. No guessing, no twists in character, just someone that's easy to hate. Both of these scenes offer that. Cain is as likable as they come. All he wants to do is please God and share the love. Susan is also full of good intentions, saving people with no concern for herself despite everything that has happened to her.

Cain, on the other hand, is just a selfish jerk. If they say misery loves company, here's a prime example. Cain was trying to look out for number one, and nothing or nobody, not even God himself was going to get in the way. Darryl is the same type. He didn't love Susan as much as he loved the idea of the way being married would help him climb the social ladder. When she looks like she'll be more popular than him, his hatred of being in someone else's shadow far outweighs any love he had for her.

What We Can Learn

What is your passion? Who do you live for? It's an extreme change of circumstances, or an encounter like Cain had with God that answers those questions.

Cain shows that rebellion against God comes down to one thing. Selfishness. When God commanded a sacrifice, he wanted selflessness. Unlike Cain, that's what Abel was willing to offer. So was Susan. She was willing to step out into the public and not hold anything back, despite all her newfound insecurities.

God told Cain that if he did what was right, he would be accepted. Do what is right, have a clear conscience about who you are at the end of the day, and that's all anyone can ask.

On the other hand, if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door, warned God. (4:7) Sin will hide in the shadows, ready to spring as hard as the other team on every play in that game.

How does this apply to giving back to God? When the Bible tells us to tithe, it's not because God is short of cash. It's because God wants us to always remember that everything we have comes from him. By giving back to God we are showing him that we really trust him. This is one area of our faith that can't be talked about. It can only be displayed through our actions.

God wants us to give him our best, not our leftovers. Paul tells that to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 9:24) and Jesus explains to the rich young ruler what following him will cost in Luke 18:22. When you stop looking at yourself and begin to focus on God, you'll find a whole new level of happiness and contentment.

Why are some willing to give their best when others weren't? Many times, it's because they've tasted victory in smaller things. Abel knew the feeling of leaving the altar with a clear conscience. Paul knew how great it felt to give everything to God, and Jesus knew how much happier and at peace the rich young ruler would be if he gave up his earthly possessions. They knew what others didn't yet, and they were willing to do whatever it took to be who they wanted to be.

Ending Questions

- ❖ Where do you see selfishness around you?
- ❖ Are selfish people generally happy? Why or why not?
- ❖ What does giving our first fruits mean for us today? Is it money, time, energy, resources?
- ❖ When can you recall a time when you gave God your best? What did God do with it?
- ❖ What are specific ways you give God your first fruits?