

## Fear of God

The aim of this session is to understand what fear of God means and to think about how we can fear God.

### Task1: Fear the Lord

#### *Equipment*

A copy of “Homer versus Lisa and the 8th Commandment”, The Simpson's series 2, episode number 7F13, and the means to play it.

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Summary: In this episode, Homer has plugged illegally into cable T.V. Lisa learns about hell in Sunday School, and becomes afraid that the whole Simpson family will be condemned because of the Cable television.

Start time: 6:06 – children seated in Sunday school.

End time: 8:34 Marge, “What's gotten into Lisa?”

Running Time: 2 and half minutes.

Play the clip and discuss these questions:

- Why is Lisa worried about hell?
- Do you think she is right to be worried about stealing cable TV?
- Should we worry about what God thinks when we do things wrong?
- What do you think Lisa thinks God is like?
- When the Bible says that we should fear God, does it mean the sort of fear that Lisa shows in this clip?
- Why are people sometimes scared of God?
- How is “fear of God” different to being scared of God?

**The Point:** The clip leads to discussion about the difference between being afraid of God and fear of God.

## Task 2: They Feared Him

### *Equipment*

Bibles.

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Ask the children to get into small groups of about 5, making sure that each group has at least one confident reader. Give each group a list of references:

Hebrews 11:7 (Noah)

Genesis 22:1-14 (Abraham)

Psalms 5:7-8 (David, you will have to tell them that it is David!)

1 Kings 18:1-6 (Obadiah)

Job 1:8-12, (Job)

Acts 9:31 (Christians)

Ask the children to read the verses in their groups.

When they have read the verses, they need to write down WHO the verse was about, and HOW that person showed they feared God by their life style.

Bring the children together to run through their answers.

Ask the children what they can learn from reading these passages about what it means to “fear” God. How did fearing God make a difference to these people's lives? What things did they do because they were in awe of God? Comment that fear of God isn't the same as being scared of Him. Abraham and David, for instance, both were known as God's friends!

**The Point:** This activity helps the children to understand that people who feared God weren't actually afraid of him! It should give them some idea of how we actually fear God.

## Task 3: How to Fear God

### *Equipment*

Bibles.

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Choose two of the following passages to discuss in small groups. Each group should have a leader with them.

Deuteronomy 10:17-22

- What does this passage say about God's greatness?
- Why should we worship God?

- How does God act toward his people and strangers?
- As a response to God's actions, how should his people react to strangers?
- How does God ask his people to treat him?
- After looking at this passage, what do you think it means to fear God?
- How does fearing God affect the way we act?

Proverbs 8:13 and 14:27

- What will you hate if you fear the Lord?
- What do you think “evil” is?
- Why do you hate evil if you fear God? Can you enjoy sin and fear God at the same time?
- What does fear of God help us to escape from?
- Why is fear of God a “fountain”? What does that mean?
- Can you think of examples of how your life might be better if you really fear God?

Jeremiah 10:7

- What is the title that belongs only to God?
- Why is there no one like God?
- Can you make a list of the ways in which God is different to any person? How is he greater than we can imagine?

**The Point:** To focus on God's greatness and holiness, to think about why and how God is greater than people and how fearing God could impact their own lives.

#### **Task 4: Help me to Fear**

##### *Equipment*

Bibles, paper, pens, scissors.

Read Luke 12:4-5 to the children. (Summary: Don't fear people who want to kill you – they can kill your body but that's it! Fear God who can kill the body and then throw you into hell.) You may like to paraphrase the verses slightly if you want to avoid discussions about hell!

As a whole group, ask the children to think of examples of times when we are afraid of people and it affects our actions. They can bring big and small examples. (For instance, shoplifting because you are afraid that your friend won't like you otherwise, or not saying that you don't like a present because you don't want to offend someone.)

Talk about if it matters when we go against what we want, because we are afraid of people.

What does the Bible mean when it says that the worst a person can do to you is to kill you – isn't that bad enough?

Ask the group whether they can think of times when we disobey God because we are afraid of people. What sort of things do we do and what should we do instead?

Ask each child to think of one specific thing that they know they disobey God in because they are afraid of what people might think – for instance, not inviting friends to church because they are afraid of being laughed at.

Give each child a piece of paper and a pair of scissors. Ask them to cut their paper into a person shape and to write a prayer on the person asking God to help them to fear God rather than man in that specific situation.

Sit in a circle. Ask each child in turn to put their person in the centre of the circle. If they want they can pray the prayer they have written aloud. If not they can just put their person down in silence. Children who want their prayers to be secret can put their people upside down.

Finish the activity by praying this prayer:

*Lord, we know that we should obey you first. We should fear and respect you more than we worry about other people and what they think. Please help us to do what we know you want, even when we are scared to. Amen.*

**The Point:** To think about what it means to fear God in their every day lives.