Bible Point

We please God with our thoughts.

Bible Verse

“Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise” (Philippians 4:8b).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Students will
- play a game in which “thoughts” are powerful,
- learn that Jesus compared anger to murder,
- compare how we look or talk to how we think or feel, and
- choose to think appropriate thoughts.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis
- Don’t covet.

Exodus 20:17

The commandment not to covet pushes the commandment not to steal beyond simple behavior. It is not enough merely to refrain from taking what doesn’t belong to us; God wants us to avoid the inappropriate sort of desire that leads to stealing or committing adultery in the first place.

When we covet someone else’s possessions or life situation, two things happen, both of which are bad. First, we show a lack of faith when we question God’s wisdom in taking care of us. Second, coveting is an attitude of theft. When we covet, we secretly resent that God has blessed someone else in a certain way, and we wish to steal that blessing to have as our own. When God calls us to love our neighbors, he is calling us to trust him to provide for our own joy so we can be instruments of joy in the lives of others. One cannot fulfill this calling with a covetous heart.

Covetous people think they would be happy if they could just get their hands on what belongs to someone else. Ironically, covetousness ultimately leads only to loss—loss of joy and, at times, loss of integrity as a person acts improperly on covetous desires.

Other Scriptures used in this lesson are Psalm 139:1-2, 13-14, 16-17, 23-24; Matthew 5:21-22; 15:18-19.

Prayer
- How was Paul able to be content despite adverse circumstances?
- Are you sometimes discontent, even covetous?
- Pray: Dear God, teach me to be content with what I have. Help me never to doubt your wisdom in providing for my needs. Rather, help me be joyful so I can bring joy to others. In Jesus’ name, amen.
**Lesson 9**

**Before the Lesson**
- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your students.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

**This Lesson at a Glance**

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Welcome

As kids arrive, ask them how they applied last week’s lesson to their lives. Ask questions such as, “What did you tell the truth about, even though it was difficult?” and “What surprised you the most about when you told the truth?” Let kids whisper their responses in your ear, if they prefer.

Tell kids that whenever you blow the trumpet twice, they are to stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you. Explain that it’s important to respond to this signal quickly so kids can do as many fun activities as possible.

Module Review

Use the casual interaction time at the beginning of the class to ask kids the following module-review questions:

• In what creative ways have you worshipped God during the past few weeks?
• In what restful ways did you remember the Lord’s Day?
• What nice things have you done for your family members recently?
• What’s your favorite of all we’ve learned during the past few weeks? Why?
• How is your life different as a result of what we’ve learned during the past five weeks?

Attention Grabber

Swami

SUPPLIES: Bibles, 9 books or magazines, meter stick or long pointer

Before class, you’ll have to let one of your students in on the secret of this game, which is that the first position you point to on the book represents the position of the book the kids choose. For example, if you point to the upper right corner of a book, you’re indicating that the secret book is the one in the upper right corner of the grid. If you point to the middle of the book, the secret book is the one in the middle of the grid. You may want to practice once or twice before performing for the class.

Gather the kids together. Say: We’re going to play a game called Swami. In this game, we will send a volunteer out of the room. You’ll choose a book from the ones that I spread out, and then I’ll send my thoughts to our volunteer, who will read my mind and choose the correct book. Ready?

Ask for a volunteer, and choose the student who is in on your secret. Send that child from the room. Set out your books or magazines on the floor in three rows of three, and ask the kids to quietly choose one. Invite the volunteer back in the room. Point to any book by placing the pointer in the correct area of its cover to indicate the chosen book, and asking, “Is this the one?” Continue in this fashion until you get to the one

It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.

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the kids chose. If you have time, repeat the game a few times, and see if any kids can guess how it works.

After the game, thank your volunteer.

Ask: • What was it like to see me share my thoughts with [name of volunteer]? (It was fun; it was scary; I think there was a trick to it.)

• What would it be like if I could control people with my thoughts in real life? (It would be cool; fun; scary.)

• How would you feel if people could control you with their thoughts? (It would be terrible; awful; scary; I wouldn’t like it.)

Say: There was a trick to our game. We can’t really control people with our thoughts, but our thoughts are still very powerful. Let’s find out more. Distribute Bibles, and help kids find Matthew 5:21-22. Have a volunteer read the passage aloud while others follow along in their Bibles.

Ask: • What are the things in this passage that Jesus said we will be judged for? (Murder; anger; calling names; cursing.)

• How are anger and murder alike? (Sometimes you’re so mad that you want to kill someone; when you feel angry, you might wish someone were dead.)

Say: Jesus tells us that what we think has a big effect on how we act. When he came to be an example for us, he loved everyone. His thoughts were always about how he could show love and serve others. Just as Jesus taught, we please God with our thoughts.

Collect the books and pointer and place them out of sight.

Bible Exploration & Application

Wishful Thinking

SUPPLIES: Bibles, CD player

Say: Sometimes our thoughts can lead to harmful actions. I’ll play a conversation for you. One voice represents what the person actually says. The other voice represents what the person is thinking.

Play “I Only Thought It” (track 10) on the CD. Then ask the kids to stand.

Say: Raise your hands when you think of an answer to each of the questions I’m about to ask. I’d like to hear lots of different, interesting answers. When someone gives an answer you thought of and you don’t have anything more to add, you may sit down. When everyone is seated, I’ll ask you to stand again for the next question.

Ask: • What feelings did you have as you listened to this CD track? (I felt bad for the other kid; it was kind of scary; I wondered if lots of people think things like that.)
• What was the person on the CD doing? (The person was saying one thing and thinking something else; the person seemed to be a friend but really wasn’t; the person wanted things that belonged to the other person.)

• How do you think the person on the CD felt? (Jealous; unhappy; sad.)

• How is what you heard on the CD like what can happen in real life? (People often want what other people have; kids feel bad when their things aren’t as good as somebody else’s.)

Say: Let’s see what the Bible says about wishing for things that belong to other people.

Have kids form pairs, and help them find Exodus 20:17 in their Bibles. Have a volunteer read the verse aloud as others follow along in their own Bibles. Then help kids find Matthew 15:18-19. Have partners each read a verse aloud.

Then have partners discuss the following questions. Pause after you ask each question to allow time for discussion.

Ask: • What is God telling us in these verses? (It’s wrong to want what belongs to someone else; we should control what we wish for; God doesn’t want us to even think about taking someone else’s stuff; bad actions begin in our hearts and our thoughts.)

• Why do you think God cares about what we think? (Bad actions begin with bad thoughts; wanting what belongs to your friend can ruin your friendship; wishing for more things makes you unhappy with what you have; you could start to hate other people because they have more things than you do.)

• If people did what they were thinking, what could happen? (They might steal or lie; they could hurt someone; somebody could get killed.)

• When have you done something wrong because of what you were thinking? (I hit my brother because I was mad; I broke my friend’s game because I didn’t want her to have it.)

• When have you done something good because of what you were thinking? (I did something special for my sister because she was feeling unhappy; we gave food to the homeless.)

Blow the trumpet twice, and wait for kids to respond. Invite them to share insights from their discussions.

Say: Thinking wrong thoughts can lead to wrong actions. God likes our thoughts to be about things that are good and right. We please God with our thoughts. Let’s look at another Bible verse that tells more about the ways people think and the actions that come from their thoughts.

Bible Insight

The Hebrew root for the word covet in the tenth commandment (Exodus 20:17) means “to desire earnestly” or “to long after” and is a term used, not to mean specifically a greed for material gain, but to mean a more general type of covetousness. The same usage denotes the craving for secular satisfactions (1 John 2:16).

Supplies: Bibles, newsprint, tape, markers

Help kids find Philippians 4:8-9, and ask a volunteer to read aloud the passage, which includes today’s key Bible verse: Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Ask: • What do you think happens when people follow this advice? (They are happy; people like them; they have a good life from God.)
Lesson 9

- **What are some thoughts that God would consider good and right?** (Love for your family; kind thoughts about your friends; ideas to do good deeds for others.)

  Say: Let’s brainstorm about good actions that come from good thoughts.

  Have kids form no more than four groups. Say: Quickly choose a Recorder to write your ideas, an Encourager to urge people to contribute to your discussion, and a Reporter to read your ideas to the class.

  While kids are assigning roles, give each group a sheet of newsprint, a marker, a strip of masking tape, and five prism shapes. Then say: Brainstorm about “shining good actions” that come from good thoughts, such as sharing things with your friends or playing with your younger brother or sister. Recorders, write your groups’ ideas on your newsprint. Tape a prism shape next to each shining good action. Try to think of at least five good actions.

  After two minutes, blow the trumpet twice, and wait for kids to respond. Ask Reporters to read their groups’ shining good actions. Tape the sheets of newsprint to a wall. Ask kids to choose one action they will do this week. Ask kids to take a moment to tell God about their action.

  After all ideas are reported, say: God knows that our thoughts are important because good thoughts lead to good actions. When we think in loving ways toward others, we please God with our thoughts.

  Leave the sheets of newsprint taped to the wall throughout the lesson. Then return the prism shapes to the Learning Lab.

### Who Should Know?

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles

Say: When you think or do something you’re ashamed of, you probably don’t want many people to know about it. When you think or do something great, you probably want lots of people to know. Let’s play a game to find out what you might or might not want people to know.

Use the curling ribbon to outline a large circle on the floor. Have everyone stand outside the circle.

Say: I’m going to ask some questions. If your answer is “yes,” step inside the circle. If your answer is “no,” step outside the circle.

Pause after you ask each question. Allow kids time to discuss their responses with others close by. Prompt discussion with questions such as, “When has something like this ever happened to you?” and “What do you think would happen if you shared what you were thinking?”

Ask: • Would you tell your mother what you’re thinking of buying her for her birthday?

  • Would you want your teacher to know that you were daydreaming and didn’t hear half the words he read?

  • Would you want your brother to know that you think his hair is too long and he needs a haircut?

  • If your dad bought tickets for a play and you’d rather go to a ballgame, would you tell him?

  • Would you tell your best friend that you’re jealous of her because she always gets good grades?
Hands-On Bible Curriculum—Grades 3 & 4

Don’t Covet

• Would you tell your parents that the idea you thought of for school safety week was voted best in the class?
  Have kids sit in a circle around the curling ribbon.
  Ask: • What’s it like when somebody finds out you’ve thought or done something that you’re proud of? (I’m happy; people tell me they’re proud of me; I feel glad.)
  • What’s it like when somebody finds out that you’ve thought or done something that you’re not proud of? (I’m embarrassed; I wish it hadn’t happened; I try to do better the next time.)
  Return the curling ribbon to the Learning Lab.
  Say: We may be able to keep our thoughts hidden from other people, but we can’t hide our thoughts from God. Let’s look at a Bible verse about God and our thoughts.
  Help kids find Psalm 139:1-2 in their Bibles. Ask a volunteer to read the passage aloud as the others follow along in their own Bibles.
  Ask: • What is your reaction to God knowing your thoughts? (OK, because I can pray silently in my mind and know God still hears me; it’s not so good because God probably doesn’t like all my thoughts.)
  • What can you do about your not-so-good thoughts? (Think about something else; tell God I’m sorry; think good thoughts instead.)
  Say: When we have the wrong kinds of thoughts, it’s important to ask God to forgive us. One person wrote a prayer about this. Let’s look up that prayer and use it for our prayer.
  Help kids find Psalm 139:23-24. Read the verses aloud together as a prayer.
  Say: God knows all about us, and he knows what we’re thinking. God wants our thoughts to be good. ►We please God with our thoughts.

HANDS-ON BIBLE

Give each student a highlighter, a red marker, another color marker, and a map of your town. Make sure kids have their Hands-On Bibles.

Have students turn to page 608 in their Bibles and complete the “God Knows” activity found there. When kids are finished, ask:

• How does knowing that God knows all your thoughts and loves you anyway make you feel? (Good; special; amazed that he would still love me anyway.)

Closing

Happy to Be Me

SUPPLIES: Bibles, paper, pencils

Say: Today we discussed our thoughts and how good thoughts lead to good actions. Now let’s think about thoughts we have about ourselves. Sometimes we want to be someone else because we think that person is more talented than we are or has a better life than we do. It’s easy to
compare ourselves to others and feel jealous. And it’s easy to get mad at ourselves when we think we can’t do things as well as others.

Give each person a sheet of paper and a pencil. Say: Think about the negative messages you tell yourself; for example, “I’m no good at sports.” Write a few negative messages on your paper.

After about one minute, ask:

• Why do we think negative thoughts about ourselves? (We get jealous; we’re too hard on ourselves; we compare ourselves to others.)

• How do you think God wants us to think about ourselves? (God wants us to like ourselves; God doesn’t want us to compare ourselves to others.)

Say: We can turn to the book of Psalms to find out more. Read aloud Psalm 139:13-14, 16-17. Then ask:

• According to these verses, what does God think about us? (He created us and loves us; we are amazing and wonderful; God knows all about us.)

Say: Now, turn your paper over and write a few positive messages about yourself; for example, “God made me in an amazing and wonderful way” and “God loves me.”

After a minute, say: God made each person here. He knows all about us—even our thoughts. God wants us to think good thoughts and follow his commandments. We’re happy when God please God with our thoughts.

Close with a prayer thanking God for creating each wonderful student in your class.

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week’s topic.
We please God with our thoughts.

Bible Verse: “Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise” (Philippians 4:8b).

Stop Check: Every time you think a bad thought this week, stop! Ask God to help you change it to a good thought. Work on making good thoughts a good habit.

Check It Out

Read Psalm 119:36-37. Think of a time you didn’t get a possession you wished for. How are you a better person as a result of not getting what you wanted?

Read Psalm 119:97. What Bible stories or Bible verses do you like to think about? Why?

Talk It Over

We please God with our thoughts—with our good thoughts, that is.
• What are some great family memories you can think about when you’re in need of some God-pleasing thoughts?
• How can your family members encourage one another to think about things that are pure and lovely and excellent and worthy of praise?

Faith Walk: During dinner one night this week, have all family members think back about the day or the week. Tell each other good thoughts you’ve had about each family member during the day or the week.