

God's Warning to Seven Churches

BIBLE PASSAGE: Revelation 2–3

MAIN POINT: Jesus sent messages to the seven churches.

KEY PASSAGE: Revelation 21:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What will happen when Jesus comes back? Jesus will make all things new.

2

**TEACH
THE STORY**
(15–20 MINUTES)
PAGE 114



**EXPERIENCE
THE STORY**
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 116



**REVIEW
THE STORY**
(10+ MINUTES)
PAGE 118



Leader BIBLE STUDY

The Book of Revelation opens with John's description of a vision. In the vision, Jesus gave John messages for seven local churches. Jesus told John to write these messages on a scroll and send them to the churches.

In most cases, Jesus commended the church for their good work, warned them about the areas in which they needed correction, and urged them to return to Him. Among other things, He warned the churches not to forget their love of

the Lord. He encouraged them not to be afraid of being tested. He urged those who were surrounded by evil to not deny their faith. Each time, Jesus promised to reward those who remain faithful to Him.

The church is made up of people who have trusted in Jesus, who are committed to one another, and who meet together to worship Jesus and share the gospel. Jesus loves the church as His bride. (See Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7-9.) Jesus' message called the churches to turn away from their sin and remain faithful to Him. The Lord is slow to anger (Ex. 34-6-7) and patient, wanting everyone to repent (2 Pet. 3:9).

Jesus warned specific churches in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), but the problems they faced can still be found in churches today. Help preschoolers understand some of the problems the early churches faced: They did not love like they should, they believed false teaching and did wrong things, and they were lukewarm—useless to the cause of Christ.

We can pray for our churches to be faithful, effective instruments in spreading the gospel. We should love the church because Jesus loves the church. Through the church, Jesus helps believers work together to do God's plan. Finally, Jesus warned believers to stay alert because He will come like a thief when no one is expecting Him. Believers—then and now—must always be ready!



Additional resources for each session are available at [gospelproject.com](http://www.gospelproject.com). For free training and session-by-session help, visit <http://www.ministrygrid.com/web/tbegospelproject>.

2

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

God's Warning to Seven Churches

Revelation 2–3

- **Move with it:**

Draw simple church images on paper and label each church with the name of a church in today's Bible story. Tape the pictures in various spots around the room. As you read each church's letter, stand next to the church's name.

- **Read letters:**

Write the words to each church on a piece of paper and put it in an envelope. Open each letter and read it aloud during that church's part of the story.

John was on a small island when he saw a vision of Jesus. Jesus told John to write down a message for the churches in these seven cities: Ephesus (EF uh suhs), Smyrna (SMUHR nuh), Pergamum (PUHR guh muhm), Thyatira (THIGH uh TIGH ruh), Sardis (SAHR diss), Philadelphia (FIL uh DEL fih uh), and Laodicea (lay AHD ih SEE uh).

John obeyed Jesus. This is what he wrote: **“To the church in Ephesus: You keep working hard and are sad when people do evil things. You used to love God more, though. You need to love Him like that again.**

“To the church in Smyrna: You are poor and hurting, but really you are rich! I know that people say mean things to you. You might be put in jail or be killed, but do not be afraid.

“To the church in Pergamum: Your neighbors do evil things, but you are faithful. You tell others about Me even when it is hard. But not everyone in the church is doing what is right. Turn away from your sin and turn to Me!

“To the church in Thyatira: I know you are loving and faithful. You serve others. But some of you believe the lies you hear, and I will punish you. Keep believing the truth.

“To the church in Sardis: You used to love Me and be faithful to Me. You stopped serving Me and loving Me. Be ready for Me to come again. Stop sinning and remember the good news about Jesus.

“To the church in Philadelphia: You are a small church, but you listen to Me and obey My Word. I am coming soon. Be ready and keep believing.

“To the church in Laodicea: You are not hot or cold, so you are not good for anything. I will spit you out of My mouth! **You think you are rich, but you are actually poor,** blind, and naked. **Come to Me, and I will make you rich.** I will make you see, and I will put clothes on you.

“I am here! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear My voice and open the door, I will come in and eat with you, and you will eat with Me.” **Jesus will reward every faithful and obedient believer. John wrote, “Anyone who has ears should listen to the Spirit’s message to the churches.”**

Christ Connection: Jesus loves the church. He warned seven churches and told them to turn away from their sin and follow Him. Jesus works through the church to help believers work together to do God’s plan.

Teach THE STORY

SESSION TITLE: God's Warning to Seven Churches

BIBLE PASSAGE: Revelation 2–3

MAIN POINT: Jesus sent messages to the seven churches.

KEY PASSAGE: Revelation 21:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What will happen when Jesus comes back? Jesus will make all things new.

Welcome and worship with song

- “One Heart” song
- “I Stand Amazed” song

Greet preschoolers with a smile. As preschoolers arrive, sing an action song such as “One Heart” to engage them and help them feel welcomed. Begin worship by leading preschoolers in “I Stand Amazed.”

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Bible
- letter
- “God’s Warning to Seven Churches” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Invite a pastor to write a letter to the children before class. Open the letter and read the encouraging words to the preschoolers.

SAY • Just like we read a letter from our pastor encouraging us, seven churches read the letter from Jesus. Jesus wanted to encourage them and warn them about some of their sin. John saw a vision of Jesus and wrote down everything Jesus wanted to tell the seven churches.

Open your Bible to Revelation 2. Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

- Bible
- Key Passage Poster
- Bible marker or ribbon
- “Making Everything New” song

Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

Place a Bible marker or ribbon at Revelation 21:5. Invite a few volunteers to come up one at a time and open your

Bible to the key passage.

SAY • Jesus is still helping churches turn away from their sin and follow Him today. Jesus is sitting on the throne and one day, He will come back and make all things new, which means there will be no more sin!

Sing the key passage song “Making Everything New” together.

Learn the big picture question and answer

SAY • Does anyone remember our big picture question? *What will happen when Jesus comes back?* That’s right! We know that *Jesus will make all things new.* Until then, Jesus wants His churches to remember His Word and love each other.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Respond through song and prayer

SAY • **Jesus sent messages to the seven churches.** Jesus loves the church. He warned seven churches and told them to turn away from their sin and follow Him. Jesus works through the church to help believers work together to do God’s plan.

Sing “I Stand Amazed” and “God Alone” as preschoolers move with the music. Prepare for prayer by singing “Jesus, Thank You.” You may also collect an offering.

SAY • God, thank You for loving the church and helping us turn from our sin and obey You. Help us to work together to do Your plan while we wait for Jesus to come back and make all things new. Amen.

• Main Point Poster
• “I Stand Amazed” song
• “God Alone” song
• “Jesus, Thank You” song
• offering basket

Transition to experience the story

• countdown video (optional)

Experience THE STORY

SESSION TITLE: God's Warning to Seven Churches

BIBLE PASSAGE: Revelation 2–3

MAIN POINT: Jesus sent messages to the seven churches.

KEY PASSAGE: Revelation 21:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What will happen when Jesus comes back? Jesus will make all things new.

A circular icon with a dark, textured background and the words "LOW PREP" in white, bold, uppercase letters inside a white, rounded rectangular border.

LOW PREP

- blocks
- paper

Build seven churches

Lead preschoolers to use blocks to build seven church buildings to represent the seven churches in the Bible story. Suggest preschoolers roll up a sheet of paper like a scroll and play out delivering Jesus' message to each church.

SAY • Jesus sent messages to the seven churches. A church is made up of people who follow Jesus. Jesus loves the church. He wanted to warn the churches and tell them to turn away from their sin and follow Him. Jesus works through the church to help believers work together to do God's plan.

A circular icon with a dark, textured background and the words "LOW PREP" in white, bold, uppercase letters inside a white, rounded rectangular border.

LOW PREP

Knock and hear

Invite all of the children to sit in a circle with one leader and close their eyes. Choose one child to go outside the door with the another leader and shut the door. The child outside will knock on the door and say something. The children, with eyes closed, will get three chances to guess who knocked. Play again as time allows.

SAY • Jesus sent messages to the seven churches. Jesus said that He will knock and whoever hears His voice and opens the door will get to eat with Him. When we trust in Jesus, we will be with Him forever!

Write and respond

Form two groups with an adult leader for each. A leader will write a message and send it to the other group. The other leader will read it and the group will perform the action. Actions may be silly (wave, jump, wiggle) or Bible story-related (tell friends about Jesus, pretend to knock).

SAY • **Jesus sent messages to the seven churches.** He gave directions to the churches. He told the churches to turn away from their sin and obey God.



- paper
- pencil

Sort warning signs

Print several copies of the “Warning Signs” printable. Cut apart the warning signs. Tape one of each warning sign to the outside of a separate bin. Invite a preschooler to sort the warning signs into the appropriate bin.

SAY • These warning signs remind us of Jesus’ warnings to the seven churches. **Jesus sent messages to the seven churches.** Jesus wanted to warn them to turn away from their sin and follow Him. Jesus loves the church. Jesus works through the church to help believers work together to do God’s plan.

- “Warning Signs” printable, multiple copies
- scissors
- bins
- tape (optional)

Play out delivering a message

Set out junk mail, toy phones, keyboards, and toy computers. Guide children to play out sending and receiving messages.

SAY • We send messages many ways today. In our Bible story, **Jesus sent messages to the seven churches.** Jesus sent His message through John writing what Jesus said on a scroll. Jesus loves the church. He warned the churches to turn away from their sin and follow Him.

- junk mail
- toy phones
- keyboards
- toy computers

Transition to review the story

- countdown video (optional)

Review THE STORY

SESSION TITLE: God's Warning to Seven Churches

BIBLE PASSAGE: Revelation 2–3

MAIN POINT: Jesus sent messages to the seven churches.

KEY PASSAGE: Revelation 21:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What will happen when Jesus comes back? Jesus will make all things new.

Review

Point to the giant timeline or big story circle as you review today's Bible story. Ask the following review questions:

1. How many churches received a message from Jesus? (*seven*)
2. Who wrote down the messages from Jesus? (*John*)
3. What did Jesus tell the churches to turn away from? (*sin*)
4. What are the churches supposed to listen to and obey? (*Jesus' voice*)
5. ***What will happen when Jesus comes back? Jesus will make all things new.***

SAY • **Jesus sent a message to the seven churches.** Jesus loves the church so much that He wanted to warn them to turn away from their sin and obey His Word. Jesus told the churches to love more like Him, to do what is right, to keep believing truth, and to remember the good news about Jesus. Jesus helps believers work together to do God's plan and be ready when He comes back again. One day, Jesus will come back and make all things new!

Sing the unit theme song or key passage song.

- Bible
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle
- Main Point Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Key Passage Poster
- "I Stand Amazed" song
- "Making Everything New" song

Pray

Invite preschoolers to tell you any prayer requests they have.

SAY • God, we ask You to help us turn away from our sin and obey You. Help us to be ready for You to come back and make all things new. Amen.

Missions story

If your preschool ministry is planning a missions activity, discuss the activity, the reasons for it, and your group's progress. If you are not participating in a missions activity, talk about how many missionaries leave their home and family to move to another part of the world to tell people about Jesus. You may also show the "That's Why We Give" video.

SAY • This missionary family left their home to move to Central Asia to tell people there about Jesus. Just like Jesus warned the seven churches about their sin, missionaries tell people about sin and how God loved them so much He sent His own Son to pay the punishment for their sin. Let's think about a friend we can tell about Jesus.

- "That's Why We Give" video
- "Missions Prayer Cards" printable, 1 per child

Make a pattern

Invite the preschoolers to sit in a circle. Choose a child to create a sound pattern by knocking on the floor or table and guide the other children to repeat the pattern. Continue playing the game until all children have had the opportunity to create a sound pattern.

SAY • Jesus said He will stand at the door and knock. We want Jesus to be most important in our lives and our church. One day, *Jesus will make all things new.*