**Ecclesiastes 2**

**“Our ‘God-Shaped’ Hole”**

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

**Memory Verse:** Luke 12:34 *“Where your treasure is, there your heart will also be.”*

**Lesson Focus:** In these verses, we will look at Solomon’s attempt to find joy, happiness, and satisfaction in things merely “under the sun”. We will follow him on his journey as he tries to fit different things into the “God-shaped hole” that he and all of us have in our hearts. We will see how at every stop, nothing fits.

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring Picture of “Christ is our Treasure”, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Make It Real Discussion for 3rd – 5th.

Craft for 1st & 2nd: Treasure Craft

**Introduction:**

Last week we introduced Ecclesiastes as a book that challenges us to THINK.

To get kids brains in “think” mode, we will introduce each lesson of Ecclesiastes with some sort of riddle or brain teaser. For this week:

Q: I’m not alive, but I have five fingers. What am I?

A: The glove

**Starter Activity:** Ask the kids who has been on a boat before and where? Maybe a speed boat on Lake Pueblo or even a sail boat somewhere….perhaps share an interesting experience of yours on a boat.

Then ask them who has seen the movie or read the book, “*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*”? This is one of the Chronicles of Narnia stories and features Aslan, Lucy, and Edmund from the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe as slightly older children.

Teachers: Show them a picture of *The Dawn Treader* attached at the end of the lesson.

In the story, the main characters travel “from island to island” encountering different adventures on each. Can you imagine being on a boat and encountering different islands?

In our Bible study today we will join **Solomon** on his “**Self-Seeking Satisfaction Sailing Safari**”. Solomon is on a “treasure hunt” to find meaning in happiness in life and we will follow him as he travels “from island to island”.

**All aboard!**

**Bible Study:**

**Eccl 2:1a**: “*I said in my heart, “Come now, I will test you…..”*

Thus begins this treasure hunt for joy and happiness that we will join Solomon in.

All of us, including Solomon, have a “God-shaped hole” in our hearts that we are longing to fill. On this voyage, Solomon is going to explore different things of this world (represented by islands on our pretend adventure) to try and fill this God-shaped hole.

**Teachers:** Please plan to illustrate this God-shaped hole either by drawing on the white board or with a puzzle. The point is to show that nothing fits in this hole except God. There is a preschool puzzle that I will plan to use that has different shapes (square, circle, etc.) to show that only one thing fits into that hole (I plan to use a puzzle with a cross-shaped hole to represent God) .

**Eccl 2:1b**: First island/thing: “Pleasure/Desire”

Q: Who loves doughnuts? That first bite is SO good. What if all you had to eat were doughnuts? How many do you think you would eat before you would begin to hate them and want something else?

Sweets and goodies are one of many desires that we long for. But we all know deep in our hearts that they don’t satisfy us. If we have only one, we want more. Once we have more, we get sick of them and want something else.

Solomon learns that pleasure/desire does not bring ultimate joy and so he sails on.

**Eccl 2:2**: Second island/thing: “Laughter/Comedy”

Tell a few jokes. Below are a few examples:

1. What do you call a bear without teeth? A gummy bear!
2. What do you call cheese that isn’t yours? Nacho cheese!
3. What do you call a cow with no legs? Ground beef!
4. Why can’t you give Elsa a balloon? Because she will “let it go”.
5. Have any of you ever read “Temper Tantrum” by “Anita Knapp”?

While laughter is a gift from God and there are times when it is OK, sometimes people don’t want to take anything seriously and they use jokes to ignore or hide the truth. Some things just are not funny: bullying, suffering, hell, etc.

Solomon learns that laughter/comedy does not bring ultimate joy and so he sails on.

**Eccl 2:3**: Third island/thing: “Alcohol/Drugs”

**Read Proverbs 23:29-30**

Q: Continuing the discussion on things that are not funny, how many of you know someone whose life has been ruined by alcohol/drugs? This is real pain and not funny.

The Bible is clear that avoiding alcohol/drugs is wise and our experience of watching how it has ruined people and hurt us corresponds with what the Bible teaches.

Solomon continues in his search…

**Eccl 2:4-6**: Fourth island/thing: “Building/Working”

Q: How many of you guys like playing with Legos?

Imagine having the most exquisite Lego set there is with infinite resources and being able to build whatever you want!

Q: Who has been to Legoland to see the Lego sculptures?

How fun would it be to have put those together!

Solomon decides to get to work! He builds palaces, gardens, pools, all sorts of beautiful places.

But notice the subject of these verses. Who did he build these for? Himself….it is all about him. He is still just looking “under the sun”.

**Read Eccl 2:18-19**

Solomon realizes that after he dies, all of his great works will be left to someone else and he will be forgotten!

Solomon’s quest continues…..

**Eccl 2:7-9**: Final island/thing: “Wealth/Fame”

In v. 9, it says that Solomon was wealthier, more famous, and greater than everyone who was before him. He had it all!

If he were around today, he would be featured on TV, Justin Bieber would be the lead singer at his birthday party, and most of the world would want to be him. This is as good a life you can possible have “under the sun” and the best of what the world offers.

**Eccl 2:10**: Solomon looks back on his voyage and reflects.

Looking back he sees that EVERYTHING he wanted, he got (pleasure, laughter, alcohol, etc.)! There was NOTHING that he kept himself from. Remember he was powerful, the king, with wealth and fame so he could snap his fingers and get whatever he wanted.

This is like being in a candy store and you were told you could have whatever you want!

You’d think that Solomon would have found his treasure by now, right? But….

**Eccl 2:11**: We are at the end of our joining Solomon on his “**Self-seeking Satisfaction Sailing Safari**”. He actually continues on, but we are going to get off here.

Q: What does this verse say he learned?

A: Still NOTHING satisfied! Everything he tried and tested to find lasting joy and happiness in life left him sad and depressed. (**Read Eccl 2:17 for more of his reflection**)

Q: As we look back at all of the islands/things Solomon pursued on his treasure hunt, what was the one that he did not pursue?

A: God! We see a lot “me, myself, and I” in these verses, but not God.

**Key Point:** We are designed with this God-shaped hole in our hearts. God made us to be in relationship with Himself. We harm ourselves and break God’s heart when try and fill that hole in our hearts with things of this world.

Solomon treasured things of this world and none of them filled that hole in his heart.

In our memory verse, **Luke 12:34**, Jesus teaches us that wherever our treasure is, there our heart will also be. If you long for things of this world, then your heart is for the world and you will end up just as miserable as Solomon was!

Teachers: Show the picture of Reepicheep at the end of the lesson (a character from Voyage of the Dawn Treader) and ask the kids if anyone recognizes him. Ask them also if they know what he is doing in this picture. This is the end of the story where they have found Aslan’s country which represents heaven.

This is what Reepicheep said in the story:

“*My own plans are made. While I can, I sail east in the Dawn Treader. When she fails me, I paddle east in my coracle. When she sinks, I shall swim east with my four paws. And when I can swim no longer, if I have not reached Aslan’s country, or shot over the edge of the world into some vast cataract, I shall sink with my nose to the sunrise*.”

Reepicheep longs to be with Aslan, His King and His Lord. Aslan is his treasure.

In this picture he is going off alone into Aslan’s country where he longs to be.

Kids: Do you long to be with Jesus? Is He the treasure of your heart? Nothing else will fill that hole in your heart!

**Scripture from Lesson**: Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

**Lesson Theme**: “Our God-Shaped Hole”

**Memory Verse:** Luke 12:34 “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will also be.”*

**Teachers/Parents:** Think of a famous person that you may have looked up to and admired at one point, but then they got consumed by one of the many vices that Solomon pursued and they fell and had their career, legacy, or maybe even their life ruined. What did you learn from their downfall?

**Discussion Questions:**

1. We sketched the idea that all of us have a “God-shaped hole” in our hearts that only He can fill. What are some things that we keep trying to fill this hole in our hearts with that we need to surrender to the Lord?
2. Are all of the things that Solomon pursued in these verses bad in and of themselves (pleasure, laughter, food/drink, building/making things, money, etc.)? **Read 1 Timothy 4:4-5.**

A: From the context of food, Paul makes the point that these things are good as they are from God. This idea would include all things created by God. It is when we make them our treasure and focus that they begin to have control over us and ruin us.

1. How many times did you see Solomon referencing himself in these 11 verses? How many times did you see Solomon referencing God in these verses? Does that give a hint as to why his conclusion is v. 11 is so gloomy?
2. It has been said that the “**wise** person learns from his/her mistakes”. **Read Proverbs 26:11**. What does this verse say you are like if you don’t learn from your mistakes?
3. It has also been said that the “**wiser** person learns from **other people’s** mistakes.” Here we have seen Solomon’s mistakes and the question we must ask ourselves is will we learn from his mistakes?
4. In our lesson today we referenced *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, one of the books in the Chronicles of Narnia. Have you read these? These are great stories to read together as a family or independently as each story teaches foundational truths about the Christian faith.



