

Romans 3:21-28

Justified By Faith!

Scripture: Romans 3:21-28

Memory Verse: Romans 3:28 “...a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.”

Lesson Focus: The shocking BAD NEWS of our text from last week (our sin) set us up for the equally shocking GOOD NEWS of our text for this week: that God made a way to declare sinners forgiven and righteous. This is justification and it is at the heart of the gospel and the Christian faith. This passage of Scripture opens the lid, so to speak, on how the gospel really works. Our prayer is the kids will leave this lesson either more confident in their salvation or justified/saved for the first time!

Activities and Crafts: Memory Verse Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, New Bring it Home Sheet for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: Justified Cross Craft

Starter Activity: You Be The Judge

Get the lesson started by taking the kids to court! Consider setting up a bench for the judge and a witness stand for each character in the case. See the last page of the lesson where there are a few example court cases. Choose a kid to be the judge who will decide the innocent or guilty verdict. You will need kids or leaders to play each character. Have them each come to the witness stand and read their part. Since there are several cases to choose from, consider doing more than one and have a different kid be the judge each time. * If you have them available, bring in a black cape and gavel to use.

You will need to narrate and help the kids understand the evidence, but after everyone takes the stand and “pleads their case” ask the judge for their verdict. After each verdict, * ask all of the kids these questions and have some discussion:

Q: Was this a just decision? Why or why not?

Q: If guilty, what would be a just punishment?

1st & 2nd Grade Teachers: If this is too complicated, consider playing the game “Hello, Mr. Judge” with your kids instead. This is a fun guessing game where kids take turns being “the judge”. You can find instructions for it [here](#)).

As we continue our study of Romans, we are going to learn about God’s courtroom. However, what we will find is that HE is the judge and WE are on the one’s on trial! Let’s take a look!

Bible Study:

It is really important that we review what we learned last week before we move on. Last week we learned just how bad and HEAVY our sin * is. **Romans 3:10** says that **NO ONE** is righteous. **Romans 3:19** says that all the world stands **GUILTY** before God. * (**Teachers:** Please familiarize yourself a little with last week's lesson) *

Q: If we are **GUILTY** before God, what do we deserve? A: Punishment! And the Bible is clear that hell is where the guilty will be punished for their sins forever. This is **BAD NEWS!** * But this is where the **GOOD NEWS** of the gospel comes in! God has made a way for guilty sinners like us to escape the punishment we deserve!

Romans 3:21: Now God has revealed a righteousness which is separate from our own hopeless efforts to be good and righteous. And this righteousness didn't just come out of nowhere, but it was witnessed, evidenced, and promised all throughout the Old Testament (the books of the Bible before Jesus came).

Q: Who are some of the most famous Old Testament characters? A: Noah, Moses, David, Isaiah, Elijah, Daniel, etc. In various ways, they all witnessed to the future Messiah (Jesus) that would come and bring this righteousness.

Romans 3:22a: Here is where we learn how guilty sinners can receive this righteousness that is not their own. (**Teachers:** Consider re-reading to ensure kids get this point!)

Q: Did you hear how we receive this righteousness? A: Through faith and believing in Jesus Christ.

Q: Did it say through being good? **NO!** Did it say through trying really hard? **NO!**

Romans 3:22b-23: And just to remind us of what we learned already from last week, Paul repeats again that **NO ONE** is righteous. **ALL** have sinned. It is **IMPOSSIBLE** for us to satisfy God's perfect righteousness on our own.

This is so **RADICALLY** different from anything we hear in the world! The world, including all other world religions, says that we need to look to ourselves, be better, work harder, etc. Then, maybe, we will get to heaven. Christianity says the opposite: We are not the solution, we are the problem! We need to look **OUTSIDE** ourselves to Jesus Christ for He is the solution. And since He is the solution, heaven is guaranteed for those who what? Believe and trust in Him! This is wonderful news! *

Romans 3:24: And here is a big word that describes what God does when people believe in Jesus Christ. God **JUSTIFIES** them. This means that not only does He declare them not guilty, but He declares them **RIGHTEOUS!** He gives them **HIS** righteousness. *

But wait a minute! Remember in our pretend courtroom before our lesson, so-and-so was guilty. To let them off without punishment wouldn't be just, right? Or let's say someone stole your Mom's car. If they get caught and the judge let's them off, you don't get your car back. Is that OK? **NO!** Justice demands that you get your car back, right? *

So in the same way, doesn't it seem unjust or wrong of God to let believers off without punishment? Or how can He declare believers righteous, when they are actually guilty? The next two verses have a lot of big words in them, but they give us the answer. *

Romans 3:25-26: The answer is that Jesus Himself took the punishment and Himself satisfied the demands of justice! God doesn't wink at sin when He justifies believers. Rather, when people trust in Jesus, their sin was paid for by Him on the cross!

So if people point the finger at God saying that He is a bad judge to let guilty sinners off, God simply says, "NO. SOMEONE DID PAY. MY OWN SON PAID THE PRICE!" Therefore, God is both just AND the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus.

Teachers: These verses describe the "nuts & bolts" of justification which is at the heart of the gospel. * But they are probably hard to understand for many of the kids. Therefore, use this illustration below geared toward each age group to help them better understand.

1st-2nd grade: We will provide you with some sticky notes for writing on.

- 1) Ask the kids to think of some basic sins or bad things that we all have done and then write or draw them on the sticky notes. Then put them on yourself (or consider having the kids put them on themselves) to illustrate that we all have done bad things. Point out that this is a problem we all have and that because God is a just Judge, He must and will punish all sin! *
- 2) Write "Jesus" on the whiteboard and have the kids list some of the good things that Jesus did during His life (i.e. help others, serve people, heal people, etc.). Write or draw each of these on sticky notes also and then put them on the "Jesus board". **Emphasize that Jesus lived a perfect life of righteousness!**
- 3) Now explain that when Jesus died on the cross, an amazing trade took place:
 - a. First, Jesus took our sins upon Himself and paid for them all! (Put our "sin stickers" now on the Jesus board). When He died on the cross, He took OUR sin and guilt! He took OUR shame! Remember, He did not have any Himself! This is WHY our sins are forgiven, because Jesus paid for them!
 - b. Second, Jesus gives His perfect righteousness to us! (Take Jesus's "righteous stickers" off of His board and put them on individual kids or yourself). His perfect life of righteousness becomes OUR righteousness! He "swaps" with us. He takes our sin and gives us His righteousness!

3rd-5th grade: We will provide you with "report cards" that you will pull out as described below. See the blank sample toward the end of the lesson.

- 1) The first envelope labeled "Me" contains "our" report card. Pull out the blank one first and explain that instead of schoolwork, we earn grades for living the way God wants: obeying your parents, telling the truth, putting yourself last, etc. Ask the kids what grades they think they should get for each "subject". Some may think Bs or Cs thinking they are OK, but that they can do better.
- 2) Then explain that God actually gives us all the same grades and pull out the actual report card which will have "Fs" for each one! Let that sink in and in case of any objections, refer back to **Romans 3:23** or read **Isaiah 64:6**. Ask the kids what would happen if they brought a report card like this home: **Punishment!!**

- 3) Now shift the focus to Jesus. First, point out that when Jesus died on the cross, He took the punishment that WE DESERVE for our Fs upon Himself! It's like He erases our Fs. Refer back to the blank report card. But is this all He does? If He earns us only a blank report card, we are still burdened to try and earn perfect grades and we already know that we can't. Toss that blank one away! *
- 4) The other thing Jesus did was live a perfectly righteous life. To illustrate this, now show the second envelope which contains Jesus's report card. Pull it out and show the A+ in every subject. But then to illustrate what actually happened on the cross, put Jesus's report card into the envelope marked "Me" and put your Fs report card into Jesus's envelope! Let that sink in and ask the kids how they would feel going home with a straight A+ report card! Also point out how great a price Jesus paid to take all of those "Fs"! Jesus gives us His perfect report card and He takes our awful one Himself! It is the most outrageous and gracious swap offered by God to all who believe! (**2 Corinthians 5:21**)

It is important to remember that not everyone gets the Jesus stickers (1st-2nd) or the A+ report card (3rd-5th). Rather, only those who trust and believe in Jesus through faith! And as the text continues, if it is all received by faith, we did not earn any of it nor do we deserve any of it!

Romans 3:27-28: And if we did not earn or deserve any of it, we have nothing to brag about! Jesus earned it all for us. Therefore, if we brag, we brag about what He did for us!
*

Key Point: When we stand before God in His courtroom, we can have absolute confidence in His verdict, because we will possess His perfect righteousness. *

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, know that you are declared righteous by God! * It is finished! What now? Some of you may be wondering if how you live your life now even matters if salvation is all by faith. It does and we will talk about this in our lesson next week. God wants you to live His way now BECAUSE of His love, NOT to earn His love! Tell others the good news and brag about what Jesus can do for them too!

If you aren't sure what you believe, come and trust in Jesus today. If you do, you will leave today with the assurance that when you stand before the great Judge, He will declare you not guilty, but righteous!

BRING IT HOME

Read Ephesians 2:8-9.
According to this text,
why is it wrong to brag
about being saved?

Parent Signature:

Parent Challenge:
What is justification?

Why should today's
Scripture give believers'
absolute confidence they
are going to heaven?



Sample Report Card

Subject

Grade

Sharing

Obeying Parents

Telling the Truth

Speaking Kind Words

Letting Others Go First

Loving Your Enemies

Kids Court Cases

Crime: Chewing With Mouth Open (Boy on trial)

Witness #1: He doesn't close his mouth while chewing and it is gross.

Witness #2: The smacking is so loud I can't hear myself think!

Defendant (while chewing candy with mouth open): She started it!

Narrator: Your Honor! What is your verdict, Guilty or Innocent?

Crime: Messy Room (Girl on trial)

Witness: She has been told many times to clean up her room because we are having company over.

Defendant: I started to clean my room, but there was a spider.

Narrator: Your Honor! What is your verdict, Guilty or Innocent?

Crime: The Last Cookie Went Missing (Girl on trial)

Witness #1: She was the last one in the room.

Defendant: I really wanted it, but I promise I did not take it.

Witness #2: Wait, is that Fido over there licking his chops? (Bring in dog stuffed animal or have a kid pretend to be a dog!)

Narrator: Your Honor! What is your verdict, Guilty or Innocent?