

General Church Education



Cain and Abel

Genesis 4:1-16

Lesson 3

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

Cain and Abel

Genesis 4:1-16

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

Adam and Eve represent people from the Most Ancient Church who lived in innocence and peace in the beginning of creation. They loved the Lord above all things and trusted in His care. But they could reason and freely make choices. When they chose to disobey the Lord, they were sent out of the garden and had to work for their food. After this time the design of the human mind changed. The capacity to think and to love were separated into the understanding and the will.

This is represented by Cain and Abel. Cain, who tilled the ground, represents the cultivation of an understanding in which faith in the Lord is formed. Abel, who kept sheep (which represent good affections) represents love for the Lord in the will. Cain's worship was insincere. It was like the worship of someone who knows what is right but doesn't do it. This led to unhappiness. Cain's killing Abel represents the destruction of love in our hearts. However, the Lord protected Cain. This is because even if we are just "going through the motions" of worship, there is a chance that we will turn our path toward the Lord again.

Ideas for Children

- Covetousness, envy, jealousy and murder are against the Lord's commandments.
- Cain did evil and was punished.
- The Lord put a mark on Cain so no one would kill him even though he had done something wrong.

From the Writings

The people of the Most Ancient Church enjoyed perception of love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, and had teaching about love and charity inscribed within them. Some at that time favored faith, and when they separated faith from charity they were called Cain. See *Arcana Coelestia* 2417

Truth is not of faith until a person wills and does it. So far as a person does this, the Lord conjoins them to Himself and to heaven, and, from love, flows in with good, and by means of good into truths learned from childhood. He conjoins these truths to good and causes them to become truths of faith. See *Apocalypse Explained* 427

Evil carries its own punishment with it, as does falsity. Consequently the punishment and torment which anybody suffers they bring upon themselves, and at such times expose themselves to the devilish crew who inflict them. The Lord never sends anyone to hell, but wishes to lead all away from hell; less still does He bring anyone into torment. See *Arcana Coelestia* 696

Cain and Abel

In the last story we learned about how the Lord created our beautiful world. He made a lovely garden and put the first people there.

Do you remember the names of the first people the Lord created? (Adam and Eve.)

What was the name of the beautiful place where they lived? (The Garden of Eden.)

The Lord provided everything Adam and Eve needed, and they were very happy at first. After a time, they disobeyed the Lord and had to leave the beautiful garden. They made a new home, but now they had to work to grow their food.

Two Brothers

Adam and Eve had two sons. The first one was named Cain. He worked the ground to grow food. The second son was named Abel. He was a shepherd and took care of the sheep. The Lord had given Cain and Abel many things. They had food, clothing, and a place to live. One day they each brought an offering to the Lord to thank Him for all that they had. Listen to find out what happened.



Read Genesis 4:3-5. What offering did Cain bring? (The fruit of the ground.) Can you think of some examples of food that grows in the ground? (Fruits and vegetables.)

What offering did Abel bring? (The firstlings of his flock. Firstlings are young animals, so this means lambs from his flock.)

How did Cain feel when his offering was not accepted? (Cain was angry.)

The Lord accepted Abel's offering but not Cain's. Abel was truly thankful and loved the Lord with all his heart. Cain did not really love the Lord. Cain brought his offering to the Lord pretending that he loved Him, but Cain was thinking more about himself than about the Lord.

The Lord sees everyone’s heart and knew that Abel was truly worshiping Him while Cain was not. Let’s read on to see that the Lord tried to tell Cain why his offering was not accepted. The word “countenance” means the appearance of someone’s face. A “fallen countenance” means an unhappy look on someone’s face.

Read Genesis 4:6-7. What kind of an expression do you think was on Cain’s face? (Angry.)

The Lord told Cain, “If you do well, will you not be accepted?” This means that if Cain obeyed the Lord’s commandments, he would be happy. The Lord also told Cain that if he did not obey, then sin would rule over him. Sin means purposely disobeying the Lord. When people disobey on purpose, it becomes easier to do more bad things. The Lord told Cain that he should get rid of his selfish desires so that they would not take control of him.



But Cain was still not satisfied. He was jealous, and it made him angry to think that Abel’s offering was accepted but his was not. He became so angry that he forgot about loving and obeying the Lord. He also forgot about loving his brother. At last he became so filled with anger that when the brothers were alone in a field, Cain killed Abel.

Read Genesis 4:8-9. Cain did a very wicked thing, didn’t he? Then when the Lord asked Cain where Abel was, he did another thing that was wrong. What was that? (He lied.)

What answer did Cain give to the Lord? (“I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?”) Was this true? (No.)

Cain lied. It is easy for one wrong thing to lead to another. But the Lord knew that Cain was lying. He knew that Cain had killed his brother and that now Cain must be punished. Cain could not be a farmer because the ground was cursed, and plants would no longer grow for him. He would have to wander around looking for food. A “vagabond” is a person who wanders around and does not have a home. A “fugitive” is a person who is running away. Let’s find out how Cain felt about his punishment.

Read Genesis 4:10-16. What did Cain say about his punishment? (It is greater than I can bear!)

Cain was afraid that someone might kill him because of the terrible wrong that he had done. What did the Lord do so that Cain would not be destroyed? (The Lord put a mark on him.)

You Shall Not Covet

Do you know what it means to covet something that someone else has? It means to be jealous of what another has. It means that you wish you could have it for yourself instead. You might even think that you deserve it more than the person who has it. Sometimes when people feel jealous or envious, they become angry and even want to hurt others. But the Lord tells us to love each other and that it is wrong to hurt others. But when we are angry, we often forget what the Lord said. We let evil spirits come into our minds and fill us with wicked thoughts. Sometimes we try to hurt others, either by saying unkind things or hitting. This is what happened with Cain. He became so angry he forgot everything except how very much he hated Abel. And he killed Abel, his own brother, and then lied to the Lord.

If we allow anger to fill our hearts and minds, they will become like the ground was for Cain when it would no longer bring forth fruitful plants. Good and beautiful thoughts and feelings will not grow in our minds and hearts and we will be unhappy.

So when we worship the Lord, let's think of all the wonderful gifts the Lord gives us. Let's remember that the Lord loves everyone. And let's think about how we can be helpful to the other people in our lives. We can be thankful for our many blessings. We can thank the Lord for our parents and friends, for His Word that teaches us, and especially for His tender care of everyone.



Discussion Questions

- Why do you think doing one wrong thing often leads to another? (Answers may include that it makes it easier once you do something you know is wrong to keep going, that you invite evil spirits into your mind and they tempt you to do further wrong things, that you try to hide the wrong you have done by lying about it.)
- Do you think the Lord loves us even when we do wrong things? Why? (Yes. Answers may also include that the Lord loves everyone and that He is always trying to lead us to heaven.)
- What kinds of things do selfish people do?
- What kinds of things do unselfish people do?

Activity Overview | Cain and Abel

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

The Lord is my Shepherd;

I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul;

He leads me in paths of righteousness, For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;

For You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil;

My cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23

Songs

The Sun Shines in Splendor

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-sun-shines-in-splendor/>

Stand Still, Sun!

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-stand-still-sun/>

Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Model Cain and Abel's Offerings
- Activity 2 | Complete the Sentences
- Picture to color

Activity 1 | Model Cain and Abel's Offerings

Use play dough or a modeling clay to make “offerings” Cain and Abel’s offerings to the Lord.

Supplies needed

- Play dough or modeling clay in a variety of colors

Directions

1. Cain offered the Lord fruits of the earth that he had grown. Make models of fruits that Cain might have brought before the Lord.
2. Abel’s offering was the first babies from his flocks. Make a model of a lamb.
3. When you have finished making the models, label Cain’s offering and Abel’s offering.



Cain



Abel

Activity 2 | Complete the Sentences

Tell the story of Cain and Abel by filling in the blanks. Use the word bank to help you.

Cain and Abel

Write these words in the correct places below.

offering
Cain
farmer

Abel
punished
killed

sons
shepherd

1. After Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden of Eden, the Lord gave them two _____.
2. The name of the older son was _____ and the younger son was _____.
3. Cain was a _____, and Abel was a _____.
4. Both Cain and Abel made an _____ to the Lord.
5. But the Lord only accepted the offering of _____.
6. Cain was so angry he _____ his brother.
7. Cain was _____.

