

Lesson 1



**A soft answer turns away wrath.
Proverbs 15:1**

Preparation

Lesson Components

- Read the section *Lesson Components*, p. —, for additional ideas for each component.
- Determine which components you want to use, the order that you want to use them, and the amount of time you want to spend on each.
- **Important!** Adapt each component to the age of the children you teach.
- Idea: Have different people responsible for some components of the lesson.

Puppet Skit

- The skits are written for two puppets, a girl and a boy. The part for the teacher is written as a male, but if a female is narrating it can be easily changed.

The Gospel

- This section is designed to put the verse in the context of the Gospel.
- If the children memorize every verse, but do not understand the Gospel, they can easily think they must do these things to merit salvation.
- This material will be repeated in various ways in each lesson. The objective is for the children to be able to explain the Gospel to others.

Small Groups

- If possible have only five or six children in each small group. If you have a wide age-range in the teaching and puppet time, you may want to divide them by ages for small groups.
- If you don't have small groups, you may want to use the discussion questions in your teaching time.

Worksheets

- There are two worksheets for each lesson, one for non-readers and one for readers. These are at the end of each lesson plan.

Recitation

- Have a designated time and listeners for individual recitation. Keep an accurate record of who recites each verse.

Personal Preparation

- Read the commentary material on Proverbs 15:1 (below). Prayerfully reflect on this verse and ask the Lord to prepare your mind and heart to teach the children.

Commentary for your reflection: Proverbs 15:1

Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible

Purpose [of Proverbs]: To provide a resource for teaching wisdom to young people, primarily for the royal family and secondarily for all other families in Israel.

Key Truths:

- God is the source of all wisdom, and he has revealed wisdom for humans to learn.
- Human wisdom can be gained only in the context of reverence for God.
- Young people need instruction from older and wiser fathers and mothers.
- The leaders of God's people especially must be schooled in the ways of wisdom.



Christ in Proverbs:

Proverbs, like the Law of Moses, bears witness to Christ by portraying his person and work . . . In Proverbs (and in the Wisdom Literature as a whole) we see the discernment and work of the wise disciple. Only the Lord Jesus completely fulfills this vision. Proverbs, in conjunction with all the Wisdom Literature, also reveals that likeness into which all true Israel will be conformed by grace through faith: the likeness of Jesus, the Wisdom of God incarnate (1 Co 1:24, 30; Col 2:2-3)(pp. 968-969).

Proverbs, Geneva Series of Commentaries, Charles Bridges on Proverbs 15:1

What a mine of practical wisdom is this Book of God! Let us ponder this valuable rule for self-discipline, family peace, and Church unity. Scripture often illustrates the different effects of the tongue. *The soft answer* is the water to quench—*Grievous words* are the oil to *stir up the fire*. And this is, alas! man's natural propensity, to feed rather than to quench, the *angry* flame. We yield to irritation; retort upon our neighbour; have recourse to self-justification; insist upon the last word; say all that we could say; and think we "do well to be angry." (Jonah, iv. 9.) Neither party gives up an atom of the will. Pride and passion on both sides strike together like two flints . . . Thus there is the self-pleasing sarcasm; as if we had rather lose a friend, than miss a clever stroke. All this the world excuses as a sensitive and

lively temper. But the Gospel sets before us our Saviour's example; imbues with his spirit; and imparts that blessed "charity, that is not easily provoked" (1 Cor. 13:5); and therefore is careful not to provoke a chafed or wounded spirit. If others begin, let us forbear from continuing the strife . . . *Soft and healing words gain a double victory—over ourselves and our brother* (p. 196).

Lesson Plan

1. The Verse: A — A soft answer turns away wrath. Proverbs 15:1

YOU WILL NEED

- A visual of the letter and verse for A (flash card or power point). The visualized letters and verses are on p. —.
- A Bible

The Bible is God's Word. It is His gift to us. In the Bible God tells us what He wants us to know and what He wants us to do. We are going to memorize a Bible verse for each letter of the alphabet. Can any of you say the alphabet?

Let one child or all of the children recite the alphabet, then show the visual of the letter A. Read the verse and then let the children read it with you.

Ask: Which book of the Bible does this verse come from? Which chapter? Which verse?

Let the children locate the verse in their Bibles, or show the children the verse in your Bible.

The verse for A comes from Proverbs chapter 15.

Let the children hop fifteen times and then recite the verse.

Idea: If you are teaching younger children, march around the room reciting the verse. If the children are older, say the verse and leave out a different word each time for them to say.

What do you think "a soft answer" means?

A gentle, kind answer. The words we speak should always be words that are true and loving. Soft answers are never disrespectful or sarcastic.

What do you think "wrath" means?

Anger, an argument.

This verse from God's Word teaches us that we glorify God when we stop arguments by using kind and gentle words. We should always speak to others in ways that show them the kindness and love of Jesus.

This is hard—actually it is impossible! We cannot do this in our own strength. But God has given us another gift. When Jesus left to go back to heaven He sent His Holy Spirit to live in His children. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to obey God's Word. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to give a soft answer even when someone says something mean to us.

Emphasize that we need to pray and ask the Lord to give us wisdom so that we will know what to say when someone is unkind, and ask Him to give us the power to give a soft answer.

2. Puppet Skit



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(Enter Missy, obviously irritated.)

Missy: I am sooo irritated!

Teacher: Missy! How are you doing? I haven't seen you in a while!

Missy: Oh, hi Mr. _____. I'm not doing so well. My brother can be so mean.

Teacher: I'm sorry to hear that. Maybe this will cheer you up—I have a lot of friends here and I want to introduce you to them.

Missy (noticing all the kids): Wow! You do have a lot of friends!

Teacher: These are the kids from church I've been telling you about.

Missy: Oh . . . well, hello kids! My name is Missy. (Change to a grumpy voice) I have a brother Bill, but he's not here right now.

Missy: No Sir.

Teacher: Are you sure? We'd like to help.

Missy: Well . . . you see . . . I'm kinda mad at my brother, Bill.

Teacher: Why are you mad?

Missy: Because he went to the candy store and he didn't tell me! And I really wanted to go.

Teacher: I'm sorry you were left behind.

Missy: Bill is going to be sorry when he gets home.

Teacher: Missy, have you ever heard Proverbs 15:1?

Missy: Hmm ... is that the one about bad brothers?

Teacher: No, it's not. (To the kids) Can anyone tell Missy what Proverbs 15:1 says?

Missy: Oh, no . . . I know where this is going.

Teacher: That's right, Missy. If you are unkind to Bill when he gets back, how do you think he will respond to you?

Missy: He's going to be unkind back to me.

Teacher: Do you think Bill *meant* to leave you behind?

Missy: No, sir. Actually, he didn't know I wanted to go with him.

(Enter Bill)

Bill: Hi, Mr. _____.

Teacher: Hi, Bill! We were just talking about you. I want you to meet all of my friends.

Bill (to kids): Hi guys! Good to meet you! My name's Bill. (To teacher) Guess where I've been!

Teacher: Ummm, the candy store?

Bill: That's right! How did you know?

Missy: I told him because I was sad I didn't get to go with you.

Bill (surprised): You were? I didn't know you wanted to go . . . I'm sorry.

Missy: That's okay . . . it's not your fault.

Bill: How about if I share my candy with you later?

Missy: Thanks, Bill. You're a good big brother.

(Bill exits)

Teacher: See, Missy. Wasn't that better than yelling at Bill?

Missy: It sure was, but you know what . . . when I first saw Bill, I said a quick prayer asking God to soften my heart and help me not talk mean to Bill.

Teacher: And God did help you didn't He?

Missy: He sure did! Nice to have met you guys. See you next week.

(Missy exits)



3. The Gospel

YOU WILL NEED

- A mirror

That was amazing. Missy was really mad at Bill, but then she was kind to him. How did that happen?

Let the children articulate that God changed her heart.

The Bible tells us that the Gospel is powerful. It is powerful enough to save us, and powerful enough to change us. Let's think about the Gospel.

The Bible tells us that when God made the first people, He made them in His image.

Ask a child to look into the mirror. Ask what he sees. Explain that he sees his image. Does he see everything about himself? Does the image show what he is thinking, or how he is feeling, or what he ate for breakfast? An image does not show everything, but it does show some things about the one being reflected.

To be created in God's image means that He made us to live in relationship with Him and to reflect some of who He is. We can't show everything about God, but when we live in relationship with Him we will reflect some things about Him. We can show His love and kindness and mercy. When we reflect Him, we glorify Him.

If the children are learning the *First Catechism* use questions 1- 5.

Q. 1. Who made you?

A. God

Q. 2. What else did God make?

A. God made all things.

Q. 3. Why did God make you and all things?

A. For His own glory.

Q. 4. How can you glorify God?

A. By loving Him and doing what He commands.

Q. 5. Why are you to glorify God?

A. Because He made me and takes care of me.

What were the names of the first man and woman? (Adam and Eve.)

They disobeyed God and became sinners, but God gave them a wonderful promise. Do you know what He promised? (He promised to send a Savior.)

Adam and Eve were the first people, so everyone born after them is a sinner. When we do what God tells us not to do, we sin. When we don't do what He tells us to do, we sin. Disobeying God is sin. I'm a sinner and you are a sinner, but all through the Bible God told His people about the promise that one day the Savior would come.

Who is this Savior? (Jesus.)

God kept the promise when He sent Jesus to live on this earth and to die for the sins of His people. Jesus is God, but He became a man so He could die to pay for our sin. Then He rose from the dead. This shows that He really is God and that He conquered sin and death. This is the Gospel.

The Bible is the story about God's promise to send a Savior. It's the story of the Gospel. It's the story of Jesus.

We do not become God's children by obeying Him. We can be God's children because Jesus obeyed for us. But, when we trust Jesus to save us from our sins, then we can obey Him. When we obey Him we reflect Him. We glorify Him.

One way we glorify Him is by giving soft answers even to those who are unkind to us.

4. Small Group Ideas

YOU WILL NEED

- A copy of the worksheet for each child. There is a worksheet for non-readers at the end of this lesson plan.
- Crayons, pencils
- A chart or notebook to record recitation of the verses

The worksheet: Use the one that is best for your group.

- Idea: Make copies of the visualized letter and verse, p. —, and copy the worksheet on the back.

Let's Talk: Discuss the application of the verse by giving the children various scenarios. You may want to role play these situations. Adapt the examples for the children in your group.

- Your friend says, "That's my doll! You can't play with it." What is a soft answer you could give? Suggestion: "I'm sorry. I should have asked you first."

- You are almost finished with a project (think of something you enjoy such as legos or a craft) and your younger brother or sister breaks it. What are some soft answers? What are some "hard" responses? When something like this happens, which type of answer comes to your mind first? What should you do when something like this happens? Encourage the children to ask the Lord to give them wisdom to know what to do and grace to do it.
- The referee at your ballgame made a terrible call against you. What do you do?

Recitation: Practice recitation and use this time to let children who are ready to recite a verse do so.

Prayer: Teach the children to pray Scripture, and to pray in Jesus' name. This is an essential part of their discipleship. For example, explain that they need God's grace to give soft answers. Let each child pray, "Father, please give me grace to give soft answers. In Jesus' name, amen." Explain that we end our prayer by saying, "In Jesus' name" because the only way we can know and talk to God is through Jesus. It is because of what Jesus did for us that we can talk to God.

5. Activity Ideas

- (1) Color the A visual. Decorate it by gluing an object that begins with the letter A onto the letter.

Materials

- Copy of the A visual for each child
- Item that begins with A. Suggestion: Applejack cereal pieces
- Crayons, markers
- Glue sticks

- (2) Soft or Hard?

Materials

- 10 lunch bags
- 5 soft items (cotton, felt, silk, feather, stuffed animal, etc.)
- 5 hard items (rock, coin, nail, etc.)

Procedure

- Put one item in each bag. Close it so that no one can see what is in it.
- Ask a volunteer to select a bag, show the item to the group, identify whether it is soft or hard, and give an example of a soft or hard answer.
- You may want to have candy. Give the child one piece for giving an example and a second piece if she can recite the verse.
- If you have more than 10 children, scramble the bags and play again.

6. Closing

Recite Proverbs 15:1.

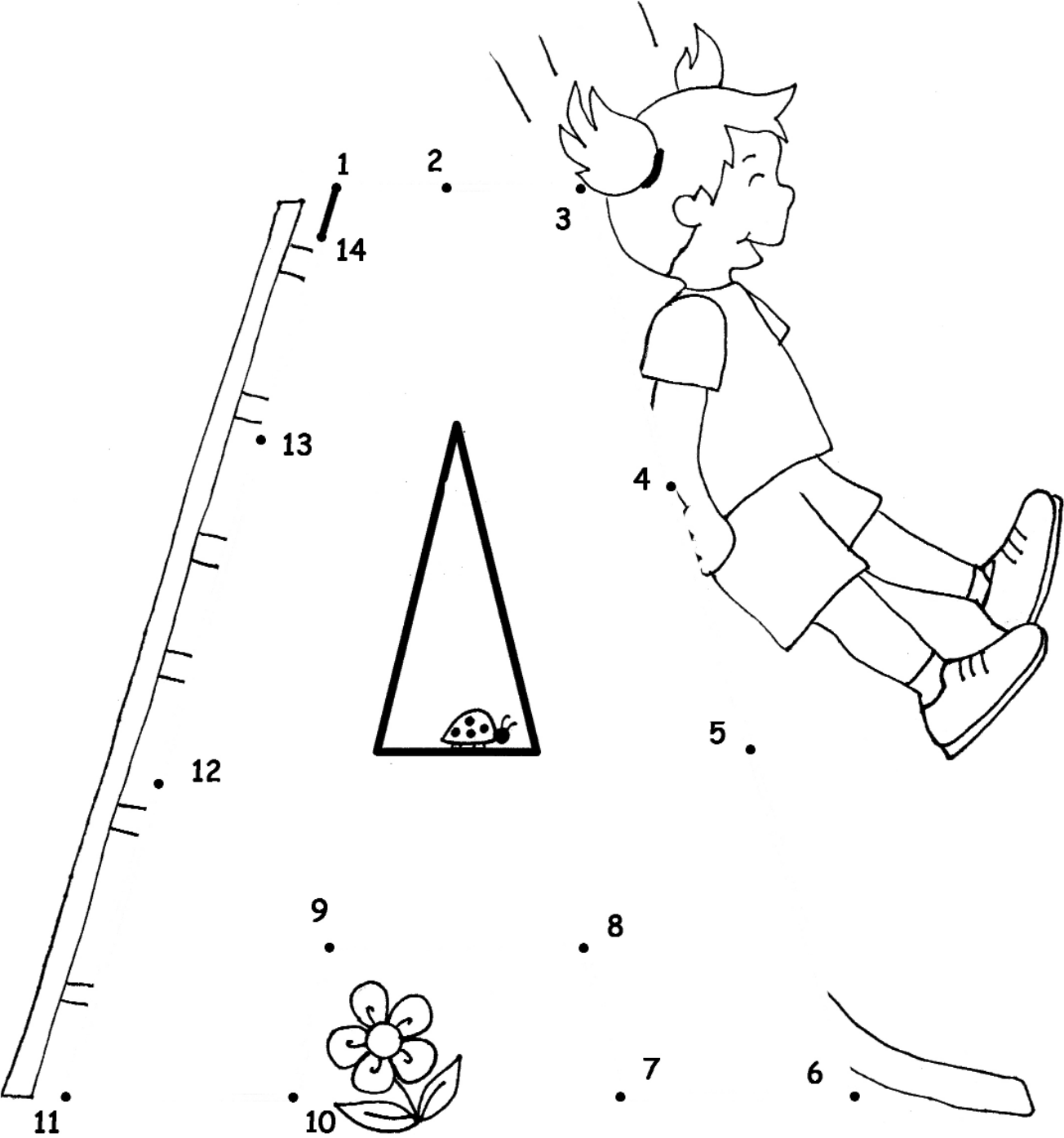
The Bible tells us the wonderful story of Jesus. Jesus always gave true and gentle answers. When Jesus was dying on the cross to pay for our sins, He looked down at the soldiers who had nailed Him to the cross and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) He was not only praying for those soldiers. He was praying for us.

Explain that Jesus' gentle and obedient life turned God's wrath—His anger at sin—from us. Because of His lovingkindness—His grace—we do not suffer the wrath of God against our sin.

When we trust Jesus to be our Savior, our sins are forgiven. He gives us His Holy Spirit so that we can show His kindness and gentleness to others, even when they are unkind to us.

Close in prayer, thanking the Lord for the Gospel and asking Him for wisdom and grace to give soft answers that will glorify Him.

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SOFT
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