

CHAPTER 2

GOD: OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

Refer to **pg 19** in the workbook

Summary

Here the learners will get to know some attributes of God. God is also seen as our Heavenly Father who loves us. The emphasis is on the relational aspect.

The practical section teaches the learner to respond to God in worship. This can be integrated into the daily practice of the Quiet Time.

To get ready

1. Extra Bibles, pens and pencils
2. Photocopies of situation slips on page 13
3. Optional - photocopy of flash cards on pages 11 and 12
4. Words of songs for worship
5. Memory verse Romans 8:16

Teacher's Guide

The maze should be easy to negotiate. What is important is to let them express their feelings at being found when lost. Let them suggest their own words. Examples are 'happy' or 'relieved'.

Refer to **pg 20** in the workbook

1. Let the learners look up Psalm 51:5 themselves and write it down in the scroll given.

Explain how deep set is sin in our lives. Even from the moment of conception, we are already sinners.

Psalm 51:5

Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my
mother conceived me.

This maze is **in** and it **separates** us from God.
(look at Isaiah 59:2)

Isaiah 59:2

But your iniquities have
separated you from your
God; your sins have hidden
his face from you, so that
he will not hear.

He has found us in the maze. When we respond to him, take His hand, and allow Him to lead us out, we are saying that we are His **children**.
(see John 1:12)

John 1:12

Yet to all who received him,
to those who believed in his
name, he gave the right to
become children of God.

Refer to **pg 21** in the workbook

2. It will be good for the learners to practise making references to the Bible. So allow them to look up the verses in their Bibles. The verses and the answers are given below.

HOLY - Leviticus 11:44

I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.

ALL-KNOWING - Psalm 139:2-4

You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

ALL-POWERFUL - Luke 1:37

For nothing is impossible with God.

EVERYWHERE - Jeremiah 23:24

Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

UNCHANGING - James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

LOVE - 1 John 4:8

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

JUST - Psalm 140:12

I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy.

ETERNAL - Revelation 1:8

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

GOOD - Psalm 107:1

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

The statement at the bottom should read

GOD THE FATHER LOVES YOU

Refer to **pg 22** in the workbook

3. Now most of the attributes of God mentioned above will need further explanation. See below. There are optional flash cards for your use at the end of the chapter on pages 11 and 12. You can photocopy them onto 2-sheet cards and use them to focus the attention of the learners as you tackle each attribute of God.

Here are some sample explanations that you can use. Try to give relational definitions rather than doctrinal statements.

HOLY - this means God is totally different from us. His purity is like nothing we can ever know or imagine.

ALL-KNOWING - God knows our thoughts, our future, past and present. In fact, God knows everything.

ALL-POWERFUL - God created the universe by just speaking the word. He can direct events and move people the way He wants.

EVERYWHERE - There is just no place where you can hide from God.

UNCHANGING - We grow old, our bodies wear out but God is always the same in His dealings with us and in His person.

LOVE - God always loves us even when He has to punish us.

JUST - God acts in a very fair manner whenever there is any wrong.

ETERNAL - Sometime ago, your mother gave birth to you and then you began to exist as a human being. But God has always been there. And He will continue to be there. He was not given birth to and He does not die.

GOOD - You know someone who is good and kind to you? That tells you only a little about what God is like. He always wants the best for us and He is absolutely good.

Feel free to think of your own.

There are speech bubbles in the workbook so that the learner can note the explanations you give. If they have their own ideas, encourage that. Do correct gently if their ideas are wrong, though. You may get some good definitions from them.

Emphasize the fact that God always shows His Fatherly love towards us all as given in the 'secret' phrase of the puzzle on page 21 of the workbook.

Refer to **pg 21** in the workbook

4. The reality of God as Trinity is put separately. Tell the learners that you will say more when the topics of Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit are reached in the following chapters.

The word is "TRINITY" when unscrambled. Let them write it into the circles.

What this means is that there is **one God** but **three persons** .

There is God the **Father** , Jesus the **Son** and God the **Holy Spirit** .

All are **united** but have different **functions**.

At this point you may like to use the example of the person (like you the teacher) in three relationships with his father, child and spouse. You are child, parent and spouse but still one human being. Another illustration is the water in the states of steam, liquid and ice. There are three states of matter but still good old H₂O. However, tell them that all these illustrations fall short of the reality of the Trinity. It is an unimaginable concept but as Christians, we experience God as Trinity in our lives.

God is our Father, God is our Savior and God is our Comforter and His real presence is always with us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

The learners may write down some notes of your explanations in the 'scroll'.

Depending on the level of the class, you can find the reference verses and information regarding the Trinity on pages 22 and 23 of Foundation (a Manual for Christian Growth) Chapter 3 - God. However, do not get bogged down with intellectual discussions. Emphasize the relational reality of the Trinity. We are enabled by the Holy Spirit to relate to the Father through the Son.

Refer to **pg 24** in the workbook

Get the situation sheets ready (given at the end of the chapter page 13) and hand them out to the learners. Have some paper glue ready. Tell them to find some facts about who God is that gives them hope and comfort and strength during such situations. There may be more than one answer. Encourage them to thank God for who He is.

Some suggested answers are given but they are free to give others. The order of the situations may differ from student to student.

My family is moving to another town because my father is transferred. I am afraid because it will be a strange place. I may not find friends in the new school.

***THANK YOU, FATHER,
THAT YOU ARE.....***

unchanging, good, everywhere
.....

Things have been difficult when my father lost his job. I have been praying hard that he will find another one. And just yesterday, his old boss gave him a job. Isn't that great?

***THANK YOU, FATHER,
THAT YOU ARE.....***

all-powerful, love
.....

Refer to **pg 25** in the workbook

I felt really bad when my parents split up. They said they don't love one another anymore. Why did they change like that? Will you also change, God?

***THANK YOU, FATHER,
THAT YOU ARE.....***

unchanging

I am so happy that my sister did well in her exams. And the scholarship really helped. My sister prayed very hard and we are all so glad at the way God has answered her prayers.

***THANK YOU, FATHER,
THAT YOU ARE.....***

good, all-powerful

My school friends always bring those dirty pictures and say a lot of bad words. But I don't want to join them because I know you don't like this, God. You can give me strength to resist.

***THANK YOU, FATHER,
THAT YOU ARE.....***

holy

Refer to **pg 26** in the workbook

1. Answers to Quiz.

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. T
5. F

The quiz above tries to anticipate some questions the learners may be asking. You may like to discuss the details with the group with reference to the worship dynamics of the youth group. Some suggestions are given below.

1. We can worship personally or worship in a group.

There is both personal and corporate worship and both are important and complement each other. We cannot say one is better than the other.

2. There is only one way to worship God.

Some may want it loud and active because it better expresses joy and celebration. Good. Others may prefer it quiet and meditative. It is also genuine worship. Remember God sees the heart of worship. In your short worship session afterwards, try to have both elements of loud praise and moments of quiet and rest. The level of physical activity is not an indication of the depth and sincerity of worship. Some lift their hands, others are bowed in prayer.

3. We must always have music to worship God.

Worship is 'state-of-the-heart' and not 'state-of-the-art'. Music and instruments (for that matter, flowers and banners) are the props that seek to enhance worship. If we get too caught up with the trappings, we are no longer worshipping God because our focus has shifted away from Him. Many Christians in other parts of the world worship God using their voices as the only instrument of praise.

4. We are worshipping God when we praise Him.

Praise is definitely an important aspect of worship. Others are praying, listening to the Word, giving, going out in obedience.

5. There is no need to worship God in heaven.

And can we be more wrong. Worshipping will be the most enjoyable and eternally practised activity in heaven when we are face to face with the Christ who loves us and died for us. Don't worry - it will not be boring. Our new beings will just respond beautifully to worshipping God endlessly with the millions of the redeemed.

Refer to **pg 27** in the workbook

2. End with a time of prepared worship. Choose some familiar choruses of praise and thanksgiving. Find someone to play the guitar or keyboard if you cannot do it yourself. Alternatively, play sections of a CD of worship songs. Make sure the learners have the words.

Encourage the learners to tell God how good and how great He is. Encourage body language. Allow times of silent meditation to listen to God and also times of joyful lifting of hands and voices in praise.

Encourage your learners to worship God at home either on their own or with a friend. Suggest that they do that together with their Bible reading everyday. Remind them that worship is also an important factor in their Quiet Time together with Bible Study.

Follow up the next week or when you meet them to see how they are faring.

3. The memory verse is Romans 8:16. Have the cards ready to be given to all the learners.

Romans 8: 16

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Let them write it down. It helps the process of memorization.

Refer to **pg 28** in the workbook

Let the learners go through the summary themselves though they may need some help here and there.

TODAY I LEARNED...

1. that sin separates us from God who is holy
2. that God knows everything, He is everywhere and nothing is impossible with Him
3. that God is unchanging and eternal . His great love for me has been constant since the beginning
4. that God is just and good
5. that God the Father wants us to be His children
6. that God is Trinity which is something we cannot understand
7. that one of the greatest thing we can do in heaven and even right here on earth, is to worship God
8. that worship is not so much what we do but the condition of our hearts before God

AND I LEARNED HOW

to start to worship God our Father

See pages 3 and 4 above

HOLY

ALL-KNOWING

ALL-POWERFUL

EVERYWHERE

UNCHANGING

GOD: OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

See pages 3 and 4 above - continued

LOVE

JUST

ETERNAL

GOOD

See pages 6 and 7 above

My family is moving to another town because my father is transferred. I am afraid because it will be a strange place. I may not find friends in the new school.

I am so happy that my sister did well in her exams. And the scholarship really helped. My sister prayed very hard and we are all so glad at the way God has answered her prayers.

My school friends always bring those dirty pictures and say a lot of bad words. But I don't want to join them because I know you don't like this, God. You can give me strength to resist.

Things have been difficult when my father lost his job. I have been praying hard that he will find another one. And just yesterday, his old boss gave him a job. Isn't that great?

I felt really bad when my parents split up. They said they don't love one another anymore. Why did they change like that? Will you also change, God?