

**Gen. 2:15–17; 3:1–7**

**Ps. 32**

**Rom. 5:12–19**

**Matt. 4:1–11**

# The Big Mistake

## Goal for the Session

*Children will hear the story of Adam and Eve’s big mistake and thank God for loving them even when they make mistakes.*

## ■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

### Focus on Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–7

#### WHAT is important to know?

—From “Exegetical Perspective” by Judy Fentress-Williams

The serpent’s question is an invitation to question the command of God. The serpent responds with authority, first denying the consequences for trespassing the boundaries established by God and then redirecting Eve by offering an intriguing possibility. Eating of the tree will result in their eyes being “opened.” Then they will be “like God, knowing good and evil” (3:5). The opening of the eyes connotes a kind of seeing that is beyond the physical ability they already possess. It connotes perception and understanding, as does the word for knowing. The promise of the serpent could mean they will understand the difference between good and bad and/or they will have a broad range of experiences, both good and bad.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

—From “Theological Perspective” by William Joseph Danaher Jr.

The Genesis narrative offers a stark depiction of the advent of a sin-sick humanity looking for love in all the wrong places, helplessly yearning for health and wholeness. Augustine uses this perspective to emphasize the utter gratuity of God’s forgiveness and grace. Precisely because the decision to disobey God began in the will, it is the will that must be healed, and this healing can happen only through love. The will is not only the seat of all obedience, but the root of all love, and love alone can heal us—first, God’s transformative love working conversion in us, and then, our love returning to God, which is the end of all human striving and the source of true fulfillment.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From “Pastoral Perspective” by Allen C. McSweeney Jr.

Read from a pastoral perspective, the story lends itself to an exploration of the role of human freedom within limits set by the wisdom and grace of God. The limits God sets to our freedom are not a matter of enforcing conformity to arbitrary rules. The *torah* of God is intended for the well-being of the “image-bearing creature” to whom God has entrusted the stewardship of creation. The flourishing of human life in a good and bountiful, but limited, creation requires both freedom and appropriate constraints on the exercise of that freedom.

#### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

—From “Homiletical Perspective” by Jon L. Berquist

Even our nakedness becomes distracting, and we know wardrobes to cover our nakedness can also distract us. Human excuses for avoiding our mission may start in the garden, but we experience a full range of such excuses today that distract us from our mission. For people of faith, distraction may prove more frequently troublesome than temptation. We think of ourselves for a while, or we focus more on other humans than on God’s mission. With just a glance away, we start to wander from God’s mission. God’s mission has not changed, and in the aftermath of our stumbling, God still calls us back to the right path. God calls us back every day, and every Lent.

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

**Genesis 2:15–17;  
3:1–7**

**YOU WILL NEED**

- ☐ basket
- ☐ purple cloth
- ☐ battery-powered candle
- ☐ Bible, bookmark
- ☐ Color Pack 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 32
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ paper punch
- ☐ glue stick, tape
- ☐ copies of Resource Sheet 1
- ☐ Resource Sheet 2
- ☐ *Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)
- ☐ small heart stickers

**For Responding**

- ☐ option 1: plain paper, markers
- ☐ option 2: plain adhesive bandages, fine-tipped permanent marker
- ☐ option 3: dyed eggshells, white glue, cardstock hearts, scissors

The word *Lent* is thought to originate from the Old English word *lencten*, which means “to lengthen.” It refers to the lengthening of the days as spring approaches in the Northern Hemisphere.

## Focus on Your Teaching

No person of any age likes to be reminded of his or her mistakes. Some children can shrug off their errors in judgment and move on, but others feel overwhelmed by them. The good news you can bring to children is that everyone makes mistakes and that God is always ready to forgive us. God gives us a chance to learn from our mistakes and try again! Even when a mistake we make changes things forever, God is with us and never leaves us alone.

*Forgiving God, hold me close. Help me to be a good model for the children, acknowledging my mistakes, trusting your forgiveness, and thanking you for the chance to start again. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the session*, place in the basket: purple cloth, candle, Bible with bookmark at Genesis 1. Assemble Our Path through Lent by taping Color Pack 1 to Color Pack 2. Cut the picture for the First Sunday in Lent from Color Pack 3. If you are using option 2 in Responding, unwrap two adhesive bandages per child and use a fine-tipped permanent marker to draw a heart in the center of each one. If you are using option 3, dye empty eggshells (save shells as you use eggs for cooking) with Easter egg dye, following package instructions, and break them into small pieces. Cut one 3" heart shape from card stock for each child.

Welcome each child by name as he or she arrives.

Gather around the table. Invite the children to take the items out of the basket and arrange them on the table. As you work, tell learners it is a new season in the church year, called Lent. It is a time of waiting and preparing for Easter.

Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (Litany for Lent). Help learners figure out what words the pictures represent. Light the candle. Read the litany in unison.

Invite learners to sit in a circle with you. Tell about a mistake you made, perhaps not doing something that someone asked you to do. Invite the children to think quietly about mistakes they've made. Ask:

✠ What is scary about making mistakes?

Say that the Bible story today is about two people who made a big mistake.

## EXPLORING

Invite a child to pick up the Bible, open it to the page with the bookmark, and hold it up for others to see. Explain that the story today comes from the very first book of the Bible called Genesis. The word *Genesis* means “beginnings.” Lay the four cards cut from Color Pack 4 and 5 in the center of the circle, face up. Tell the story, using the following script:

God created the world and everything was good. There was enough water and food for every creature. (*Ask a volunteer to point to the picture of this part of the story.*)

God created Adam and Eve to live in God’s wonderful garden and take care of the animals. (*Ask a volunteer to point to the picture of this part of the story.*)

God liked to visit with Adam and Eve. God said, “Enjoy the garden, but leave this one tree alone. If you eat its fruit, you will know things that will make you sad.” One day, a snake told Eve to eat the fruit from that one tree. It told her the fruit would make her wise, like God. Even though God had said no, Eve chose to eat the fruit. Adam decided to eat it too. (*Ask a volunteer to point to the picture of this part of the story.*)

Afterward, Adam and Eve were very sorry and very sad. Choosing to disobey God was a big mistake, and they had to leave the garden. (*Ask a volunteer to point to the picture of this part of the story.*) From that day on, their lives would be very different from the one God had planned for them. What do you think Adam and Eve learned from their mistake?

This story is sad and happy. Adam and Eve knew the right thing to do, but they didn’t do it. God gave them rules to keep them safe, but they disobeyed God’s good rules. However, God never stopped loving Adam and Eve. And God never stops loving us, even when we make mistakes. This is good news!

Gather around Our Path through Lent. Say that Lent is a time to remember that God is with us as we move toward Easter. Ask a child to move the heart marker to the space for Lent 1. Show the picture for the First Sunday in Lent (Color Pack 3) and ask a child to glue it to the Lent 1 space. Review that today’s story is about how God’s love surrounded Adam and Eve. Speak the following cheer, asking learners to repeat each phrase:

*God’s love surrounded Adam and Eve, / and God’s love surrounds us. /  
Thanks be to God!*

## RESPONDING

Mark the activities you will use:

- 1. Everybody Makes Mistakes** Children will see that mistakes can be opportunities to live into God’s love for them. Distribute paper and markers. Instruct each child to make two Xs on his or her paper. Ask: When you see an X on a school paper, what does it mean? (Usually it marks a mistake.) Wonder with the children how they might use markers to make something new from those two Xs. Allow a few minutes for learners to work on

**EASY  
PREP**

their ideas. Invite them to show their work to the group. Discuss: Was it easy or hard to turn the “mistakes” into something else? How does God feel about you when you make a mistake? (Affirm God’s forgiveness and eternal love.) How do you want other people to treat you when you make a mistake? How might you treat other people when they make mistakes? When is it important to say “I’m sorry”? When is it important to say “I forgive you”?

2. **God’s Healing Love** Children will visualize how God’s healing love is bigger than their mistakes. Hold up one of the adhesive bandages and show the heart drawn on it. Comment that we all make mistakes, but God’s love and forgiveness make it possible for us to try again. It’s like God puts a “love bandage” on our mistakes! Tell about a recent mistake you made, perhaps speaking rudely to someone. Ask: How could God’s forgiving love help me make a better choice next time? Welcome their responses. Invite a child to put a “love bandage” on the back of your hand to remind you that God loves and forgives you. Ask learners to tell about mistakes they have made. Let the children take turns putting “love bandages” on the backs of each other’s hands.
3. **Broken Eggshell Mosaic** As they make a mosaic, children will affirm that even though mistakes may change things, as they did for Adam and Eve, God is always with them. Set out the broken eggshells. Ask: Could you put these shells back together into whole eggs? Comment that they can make something new from the broken shells. Distribute 3” heart shapes cut from card stock and white glue (not glue sticks). Demonstrate how to put a dot of glue on the heart and lay a piece of shell on it. Allow time for learners to create eggshell designs on their hearts. Encourage them to take the hearts home as a reminder of how God’s forgiveness gives them another chance when they make mistakes.

## CLOSING

Gather the group around candle. Point to Our Path through Lent and invite the children to tell what they remember about the story of Adam and Eve. Place heart stickers on the children’s hands as a reminder that God’s love surrounds them wherever they are.

### Behold, I Am with You

Behold, I am with you,  
 (Behold, I am with you,)  
 And will keep you wherever  
 you go, (And will keep  
 you wherever you go,)  
 And will keep you wherever  
 you go. (And will keep  
 you wherever you go.)

Repeat

Save the “Our Path through Lent” poster for use during Lent.

Pray aloud, inviting children to repeat each phrase:

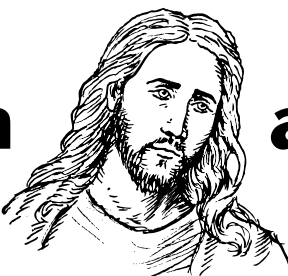

*Dear God, / when I make mistakes, / help me to say “I’m sorry.” / Thank you for loving me, / even when I make mistakes. / Amen.*

Using Resource Sheet 2 (Song Signs), teach the signs for key words in the song, “Behold, I Am with You” (Color Pack 32, [Singing the Feast](#)). Play the song and sing it, including the signs you have learned.

Close with a circle blessing. In turn, each learner will turn to the person on her or his right and say, “(Name), God’s love surrounds you.” Begin this blessing with the person on your right.

## Litany for Lent

**6** weeks to .

**We go with**  **and**  
**our** .

**6** weeks to .

**What will we find?**  
**God's**  **surprise!**

## Song Signs

### Behold, I Am with You

Behold, I am with you,  
*(Behold, I am with you,)*

And will keep you wherever you go,  
*(And will keep you wherever you go,)*

And will keep you wherever you go.  
*(And will keep you wherever you go.)*

