

## Week 17: Providence, Part 2

### Subject Matter

This lesson is week 17 of a 24 week unit. (If the curriculum is being shortened, this lesson would be week 10 of 15.)

The students have finished a week of learning about Providence according to reformed theology, as well as Scripture. This particular lesson is a continuation of the previous lesson, looking at how we can recognize God's providence in our world today.

### Main Idea

God's providence is a promise of God's provision for creation. God has promised to never leave us, even when we feel alone. Through God's providential care, God provides us with persons who step in and care for us physically and love us unconditionally so that we can always feel the love and presence of God that is promised us through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Using the children's book *Before You Were Mine*, students will be reminded that God's providential care does not just extend to the humans of God's creation; rather God's providence extends to all of God's creation. The students will read the book and review the Scripture from the previous week, Psalm 139. They will also have a guest speaker, a veterinarian, who will speak about the animals of God's creation and how we can recognize providence in the lives of stray animals through shelters, doctors and adoptive families.

Note: This class will be a two-part (in the same day) field trip that will last more than one hour. All participants must have appropriate church waivers on file in order to participate in the travel. Bring additional towels and t-shirts for those who forget to bring theirs.

### Lesson Goals

By the end of this lesson, the students will be able to:

- Recognize and appreciate that God's providential care extends beyond humanity
- Practice giving care (as one of God's servants) to abandoned animals in a shelter
- Create "care packages" for the animal shelter and residents as a practical means of care

### Space, Setup & Materials

- Transportation to a local Pet Store
- Local veterinarian to serve as guest speaker and assistant during shopping
- Transportation to a local Animal Shelter or Animal Rescue Mission
- Pad and pencil for each group to make shopping list
- \$30.00 cash for each group to make purchases for care packages for animal shelter
- Copy of each participant's waiver for travel and participation

## **Learning Style & Multiple Intelligences**

- Creative Encounter, Group “Investigation”
- Kinesthetic, Interpersonal (Inter-special)

## **Preparation**

Send an email to all class participants in the middle of the week to remind them to: (1) bring their signed waiver form in order to travel with the class, and (2) wear clothes they don't mind getting messy, or bring a pair to change into following worship. Remind parents that this is a field trip week and that the youth will travel both during Sunday School and after worship. Prepare a list of phone numbers and meeting places to give to the parents on Sunday morning before class.

## **Part One**

### **Opening – Meeting at Pet Store (5 minutes)**

- Welcome
- Announcements & Topic Introduction
- Morning Prayer

### **Explaining the Day (7 minutes)**

Remind the students that today is a two-part mission-style lesson. As you are meeting at a pet store for the start of class, let them know that they will be here during the Sunday School hour, then return to church for worship and commissioning, and then will leave for the afternoon second-part mission experience of the lesson.

Open the lesson by reading *Before You Were Mine* to the class while standing at the front of the Pet Store. Take a minute to remind the class that the week before you discussed God's providence and how it extends well beyond humanity. Ask them to share where they saw God's providence in the story.

### **Guest Speaker (10 minutes)**

- Introduce the speaker for the day, a local veterinarian, and ask him/her to speak for a few minutes about their line of work as well as about the animals of God's creation and how we can recognize providence in the lives of stray animals through shelters, doctors and foster or adoptive families.
- Allow the students time to ask questions.

### **Shopping Lists & Care Packets (25 minutes)**

- Instruct the students to get into groups of two or three (dependant on funds available and the size of the class) and create a shopping list of what they want to put into a care packet for animals at the animal shelter. Ask them to think of items that they might need for comfort, protection, health, and everyday care.
- Remind them that the veterinarian will serve as an assistant in the shopping, should they need any.

- Give each group \$30.00 for shopping, and tell them what time to meet you back at the front of the store – having already checked out.
- Turn them loose to shop for the pets they will spend time caring for in the afternoon.

### **Travel Home (10 minutes)**

- As the youth travel back to church, have them share one or two items of importance that they purchased and explain why they consider it so important for the animals.
- Start them in a prayer, allowing them each a chance to add in their prayers for the animals that God has placed in the care of the shelters, and whom they will have the opportunity to spend time caring for later in the day.

### **In Worship**

During the worship service, have the students come forward for a brief explanation of the afternoon mission plans and commissioning service. Have one of the teachers share the topic of study for the day, and talk about the activities already completed and what is yet to come. Have the congregation commission and pray for the students for their work already completed and work yet to come.

If possible, use the book *Before You Were Mine* in a Children's Sermon led by some of the students in the class. Also, consider taking up a special offering (if Session approves) as a donation to the local animal shelter, and have the students serve as the ushers for the day.

## **Part Two**

### **Travel to the Animal Shelter (20 minutes)**

- Stop as a group for a quick lunch bite following worship on the way to the shelter. Use the time at lunch and in travel to talk about the worship service and the experience from the morning.

### **Service at the Shelter (2 hours)**

- Upon arriving at the shelter, introduce the group to the shelter directors and have them give instructions to the students.
- While at the shelter, the students will participate in many of the daily care needs of the animals, including but not limited to, feeding, play, bathing, and cleaning cages.
- Have the students present their care packages to the shelter directors who will give instructions on how to distribute, and/or use the items.
- Have one or more of the teachers taking pictures, but also participating alongside the students in the activities.

**Reflection and Travel Home**

- At the end of the time at the shelter, gather the group back together for reflection. Have them start by sharing their thoughts from the day, including their observations, their feelings, recognitions, etc.
- Ask for a few volunteers to share the reading of Psalm 139 aloud to the group.
- Close in prayer, giving thanks for the days activities, and travel back to church for pickup.

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