

# “Trees Make a Good Example”

*January 14, 2024 Sunday School Devotion*

**Introduction:** Say, “What good is a tree? Do you ever try to climb up its trunk? Have you picked fruit to eat from its branches? Is it pleasant in the summer to sit in its shade? Does the wind rustle its autumn leaves to make music? Are there animals that find shelter inside of it or inside nests made from its branches? We can think of plenty of things a tree does and is that we would call ‘good’. God designed and made trees in the beginning and called them ‘good’. You can read all about this in Genesis 1.”

**Activity:** Say, “Look out of a window to find a tree. Let’s take turns sharing observations about the tree.” (*examples: there are still a few dried leaves hanging on the branches, the bark looks rough, a squirrel is peeking out of a hole, the top of the tree seems to be swaying in the wind while the bottom part of the trunk is not moving at all*) For younger children, pretend to be trees and do the things that trees do: grow, sway in the breeze, hold nesting animals, shed their leaves, etc. Say, “Not only did God design and make trees and record that story in the first part of the Bible, but God also talks about trees in other parts of the Bible and uses them as examples for US!”

**Teaching:** Say, “Let’s read together from the Bible. (*Read aloud or take turns reading Psalm 1.*) In this first psalm, which is written as a poem about God and His relationship with His people, we can see God’s good plan for us to be like trees that have all they need to grow and thrive. What does a tree need in order to live and be healthy? (*allow for answers- examples: water, sunlight, soil, nutrients*) God created people very special! Not only do we have a body that can grow and be healthy, but we also have a spirit that can grow in maturity. What does your spirit need to grow up healthy and strong? Look at Psalm 1 to find out. (*verse 1 says not to be surrounded by wicked people; verse 2 says to delight in the law of God, which is the Bible*) How does God want you to grow strong and healthy in your spirit? (*allow for answers- examples: spend time reading the Bible, memorize Bible verses, take time to think about what you hear or read in the Bible and what it teaches you about God*) What does Psalm 1 tell us will happen to those of us who are ‘like a tree planted by streams of water’, which is like someone who does not surround him/herself with wicked people but instead fill him/herself with God’s Word? (*allow for answers- examples: yields fruit = produce godly fruit through the Holy Spirit’s power as in Galatians 5:22-23; leaf doesn’t wither = God will strengthen; prospers = God will bless*)

**Application:** Say, “How will you respond to God from this psalm?”

- “Spend time with God’s Word: reading, listening, thinking/meditating, memorizing, praying. Make sure to remember that your time in the Bible is time with God in a relationship with Him. Ask God to help you ‘delight’ in His Word so that you might grow strong and healthy spiritually.”
- “Choose to not surround yourself with people who are living in sinful patterns. It’s easier for the habits of others to rub off on you than it is for your habits to rub off on them. Ask God to help you be wise in choosing your best friends. Be bold in asking Him to bring you close friends who love God and will encourage you to love Him and follow Him.”
- “Does the Lord know your way? In verse 6, we read that ‘the Lord knows the way of the righteous’. The ‘righteous’ person is one who is not perfect but has been drawn into relationship with God through faith in Jesus and has been forgiven, receiving Jesus’s righteous (perfect) record through God’s grace. God knows that the way of the righteous leads to eternal life. Read more about these ideas of justification and grace in Romans chapter 5. If you do not yet have a relationship with God through faith in Jesus as your Savior from sin, then the rest of Psalm 1:6 is a warning to you: ‘but the way of the wicked will perish’. Take some time thinking on these truths. Talk about any questions you still have about Jesus, your sin, and your salvation.”

**Listen:** Enjoy listening (and maybe even singing along) to the following songs...

(“Like a Tree (Psalm 1)” by Caroline Cobb:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=biJ5-kRWDuk>

or find lyrics here: <https://www.carolinecobb.com/songs/like-a-tree>)

**Memorize:** Choose one verse from Psalm 1 to memorize together as a family or challenge each member of your family to memorize a different verse.

**Pray:** Spend some time together praying through the truths you learned in Psalm 1.

**Make:** Create a paper tree to display on a windowsill or shelf to remember how the Lord desires to grow YOU- spiritually healthy and strong and mature to grow good fruit, like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control through the Holy Spirit’s power...

(Easy “Origami Tree” directions: <https://the-daily-dabble.com/easy-origami-tree/>)

(Challenging “Origami Tree” directions:

<https://jonakashima.com.br/2020/05/20/one-sheet-origami-tree-v4/>)

**Look Up:** Find out more about God's good design of trees...

(Easy Article on Tree Design: <https://answersingenesis.org/kids/plants/gift-trees/>)

(Easy Activity Sheet: <https://answersingenesis.org/kids/activities/quizzes/fun-in-trees/>)

(Challenging Article on Tree Design- with experiment:

<https://answersingenesis.org/biology/plants/why-not-square-tree/>)

**Further Study:** Read Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 5