

The Gospel According to Harry Potter Church Series Lesson Plan #2: Chamber of Secrets

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets begins with Harry back in the Dursley's home for the summer. He has not received any letters from his friends, Ron and Hermione, all summer long. His birthday comes and goes without so much as a card or a "Happy Birthday." One night the Dursley's invite a couple over for dinner; they want to impress them so they send Harry upstairs and tell him not to make a sound. While Harry is in his room, a house elf named Dobby appears and tries to persuade Harry not to return to Hogwarts (13). If Harry doesn't, he will be in great danger. When Harry refuses to stay with the Dursley's, Dobby went down stairs and levitates a cake over the heads of the house guests and lets it drop before Harry could stop him. The Dursley's think that Harry did it because Dobby disappears, so they lock Harry in his room and refuse to let him go back to school.

During the night, Harry is awoken by a flying car at his barred window and a freckled faced Ron staring at him (25). Ron and his brothers rescue Harry from the Dursley's house and take him to their house where he is welcomed by the whole family (33). When the book lists arrive from Hogwarts, the whole family takes a trip to Diagon Alley, including Ron's little sister Jinny, who is starting school this year at Hogwarts. At the bookstore they run into Hermione who tells them that a famous wizard is signing his latest book, right there in the store. The wizard, Gildroy Lockhart, is infatuated with himself and upon seeing Harry in the crowd, pulls him up from for a picture and gives him a signed copy of all his books, in order to get more publicity for himself (60).

On the day the children are to get on the Hogwarts Express, Harry and Ron are strangely unable to get through the brick wall when all the rest of the family could. So in order to get to Hogwarts, they steal the Weasley's car and try to catch up to the train by flying. After many scary moments of tenuous control on the car, Ron and Harry crash into the Whomping Willow tree on the school grounds (74). Despite their mishaps, they are not expelled from the school as Snape would want them to be and instead are sentenced to detention later that week.

In the first week of class, Ron and Hermione accompanied Harry to Quidditch practice and were surprised to see that the Slytherin team had a new seeker. During a conversation between the Slytherin and Gryffindor teams, Hermione was insulted by being called a Mudblood (a person who comes from a Muggle family). Ron instantly jumped to her defense with a spell that unfortunately backfired; in which case, he ended up spitting up slugs for the entire afternoon (112).

Later that evening, Harry and Ron had to fulfill their detention, Ron with Mr. Filch and Harry with Gildroy. After four hours, Harry started to hear a hissing voice coming from the walls (120). Gildroy didn't hear it, and later when Harry ran into Hermione and Ron, they couldn't hear it either.

On Halloween, Ron, Hermione, and Harry were on their way back from Sir Nicholas' Death Day Party when they came upon a petrified Mrs. Norris, Filch's cat. She was hanging from a lamp on the wall and written next to her in blood were the words: The Chamber of Secrets has been opened, enemies of the heir, beware (139). Other people began to turn up petrified, Colin Creevey, Justin Finch-Fletchley and Nearly Headless Nick. Since these attacks keep happening, the professors decide to teach the kids how to

dual and defend themselves. When Harry and Malfoy are called up to practice dueling, Malfoy produces a snake Harry tries to control the snake and keep it from hurting anyone by talking to it (194). Harry does not realize that he is using parseltongue, the language of snakes that very few people know. The snake listens and is then made to disappear again. From then on, people look at Harry differently, and some say that he is the heir of Slytherin. Harry also doubts himself and wonders if he is bad. He wonders why the Sorting Hat wanted to put him in Slytherin and what that means about Harry's true character (197).

One day Harry finds a magical diary belonging to Tom Riddle, a student at Hogwart's during the first time the Chamber of Secrets was opened. Through the diary, Harry is transported back in time to discover that Hagrid was blamed for opening the Chamber (247). This was the reason Hagrid was expelled from the school. And now with the Chamber opened again, Hagrid is arrested by Cornelius Fudge and taken to Azkaban Prison; Dumbledore is also taken out of the leadership of the school by a vote of the council (262-264).

When Hermione is petrified and Ginny is taken into the Chamber of Secrets, Harry and Ron decide to go down and rescue her. Finding the entrance to the Chamber in an abandoned women's bathroom, Ron, Harry and Gildroy enter a cave of old pipes and rock (301). In an attempt to seal their memories, Gildroy steals Ron's wand, which backfires, starts a cave in and renders Gildroy's memory into pieces (303). Ron is stuck on the wrong side from the cave in; therefore Harry continues alone. Soon the cave opens into a room and there he finds an unconscious Ginny and Tom Riddle in the flesh. Tom makes it known that he is the heir of Slytherin and his real name is Voldemort, a young

Voldemort preserved in the diary (314). Tom sets the Basilisk to destroy Harry, but Harry conquers it with the help of Fawkes the Phoenix who brings him the Sorting Hat with Godrick Gryffindor's sword in it (315). Harry also succeeds in killing Tom and getting all four of them out of the Chamber.

Dumbledore and Hagrid are allowed to return to the school, all those previously petrified are restored and Harry goes to talk to Dumbledore. He voices his fears about being able to speak parcel tongue and the Sorting Hats desire to put him into Slytherin House. Dumbledore assures him that it is the choices we make that determines who we are, not something that is set in us when we are born (333). Despite holding qualities that are characteristic of both Slytherin and Gryffindor Houses, Harry chose Gryffindor and the good use of his gifts and talents.

There are several moral themes one can choose to discuss from this book as well as from the series as a whole. J.K Rowling tends to repeat and enhance the same core themes throughout the series, while picking one theme to concentrate more on in each book. The core themes are death, prejudice, choice, change and love. While each of these themes can be found in every book in the series, one book will take on one particular theme stronger than the others.

I feel that in the Chamber of Secrets the main theme is that of choice; therefore, this is the topic I have chosen to focus on for this lesson plan. In this book, Harry doubts himself and wonders what type of person he is becoming. With the discovery that he can speak parseltongue and the knowledge that the Sorting Hat might have put him in Slytherin, Harry wonder if he is the Heir of Slytherin and therefore a bad person. Harry

associates being in Slytherin as being bad because he was told that all the dark wizards have come from that House.

In Chamber of Secrets, Harry is surrounded by characters that are not what they previously seemed. The redefinition that Harry goes through with the characters around him, reflect the redefinition that Harry is seeking within himself. Gildroy Lockhart is loved by all, and although he is infatuated by himself, Harry believes that he did the dangerous feats that he claims to have done; yet we find out that Gildroy has been lying to everyone for he did not do any of the things he claims to have done. Gildroy interviewed wizards who had defeated various dangerous creatures, wiped their memories clean, and then claimed their deeds for himself. The character of Hagrid seems to change as well in this book. The reader, as well as Harry, is previously convinced that Hagrid is a “good” character; yet, we are initially led to believe that Hagrid is the Heir of Slytherin and let the monster loose on Hogwarts because of his care of the giant spider years ago. We find out in the end that Hagrid is not the Heir of Slytherin and did not let out the monster in the past nor the present opening of the Chamber of Secrets.

In the end of the book, Harry discovers that our choices is what makes us who we are. We can be on the side of “good” or “bad” depending on ones choices. This is shown, by J.K. Rowling, to be a daily choice. Every discussion we make can potentially be for the “good” or the “bad”. Because of this, Rowling’s characters are not clearly divided into the good and bad categories. Almost every character in the Harry Potter Series has made both good and bad decisions.

In light of this, I feel a brief discussion of Professor Snape is necessary as it pertains to the theme of choice. From the very beginning, Snape is portrayed as the “bad

guy,” yet we find out in the end of Sorcerer’s Stone that Snape tried to save Harry while Quirrel bewitched his broomstick. Snape’s character always keeps the reader, as well as Harry Potter, guessing as to which side he is on. We have seen both good and bad choices from Snape. Where will he end up? Chamber of Secrets does not answer the question of Snape’s loyalties but Harry’s fears about being destined to be “bad” are assuaged and Harry learns a little more about himself and about the person he will become.

Lesson Plan:

I. Introduction to the Second Class (5:00pm -5:05)

1. Introduce the second classes topic: Chamber of Secrets and the theme of Choice. Because there may be new people attending this class, take this opportunity to reintroduce yourself and the other members of the group in order to better get to know one another.

II. Exploring the Theme of Choice (5:05-5:35)

1. Ask the entire group to raise their hands if they have done something they knew was wrong. **(5:05-5:10)**
 - a. How did they feel about the choice they made?
 - b. Call on a couple people to quickly tell how they felt about the decision. Did they regret it afterward?
2. Divide the group into smaller groups of 3 or 4, making sure that both adults and youth are in each group. **(5:10-5:25)**
 - a. Give them the list of three characters (see attached) and have them come up with examples of the choices the characters made and what their choices say about their moral qualities or character.
3. Gather the group back together and go over their character analysis. Write the three character's names on the board and be prepared to write the answers of the group in the appropriate columns. **(5:25-5:35)**

III. Exploring the Christian Aspect of Choice (5:30-5:50)

1. The teacher will lead the discussion. Bring the group together and discuss the following.
 - a. Read page 300 starting with "It looked like an ordinary sink" and ending with "He had made up his mind what he was going to do."
 - b. Ask the class what they would do in this situation if they were Harry.
 - i. Would they go down the pipe into unknown danger?
 - ii. Would they go back and get the professors to go into the chamber?
 - iii. Would they push Lockhart in and shut the chamber, forcing him to save Ginny?
 - iv. Would they have even gotten as far as opening the chamber?
 - c. How would you describe Harry's choice? Ex. Brave, foolish, scary, etc.
 - d. What kind of a person do you think Snape is? Look at his actions? Is he good or bad? Ex saving Harry on the broomstick, giving Harry a hard time in Potions class for no apparent reason.
 - e. Can you remember a time when you made a decision you were proud of? Let a couple people share if they want to.
 - f. Can you remember a time when you made a decision you regretted? Ask them to share the decision if they feel comfortable doing so.

- g. Read Deut 30:19 and Josh 24:15. Ask someone to summarize what each passage was about at the end of each reading.
 - h. In conclusion to the exercise summarize by stating the following: Like Harry Potter, we can make good decisions. The decisions we make and our actions in life lets other people know what type of person we are. While we will all make mistakes occasionally, because we are all sinners; we are all asked to choose who we are going to serve. Will we serve good or evil? This choice is make repeatedly in every decision we make. When we decide to be hurtful to someone at school or when we decide to help some one out with their homework, we are making the decision to work for good or evil.
2. Closing Activity (**5:55- 6:00**)
- a. As you are reviewing Prisoner of Azkaban for next weeks class, be thinking about the characteristics of the different families portrayed in the books.

Handout: Lesson #2 Chamber of Secrets

Character Qualities

For the following three characters, list examples of choices each character had to make and then list the characteristics that those choices portray.

CHARACTERS	CHOICES	CHARACTERISTICS
Gildroy Lockhart		
Harry Potter		
Severus Snape		