Family Discipleship Guide

Romans 3:9-20
"The Bad News That Leads to the Best News"

Designed for 30-40 Minutes | All Ages

Main Idea:
We are all sinners who need a Savior, and Jesus is the Savior God has provided.

Opening Activity
"The Spot on the Shirt"

Ask someone in the family:
"Have you ever noticed a stain or spot on someone else's shirt before noticing one on your own?"

Talk about:
Why is it easier to see faults in other people?
Is it harder to notice our own mistakes?
How often do we compare ourselves to others instead of God's standard?

Transition:
"Today we're going to learn that God doesn't compare us to other people. He compares us to His perfect holiness. That's what Paul is teaching in Romans 3."

Read the Passage
Read Romans 3:9-20 together.

For younger children, choose key verses:
Romans 3:9
Romans 3:10
Romans 3:12
Romans 3:20

After reading ask:
"What words or phrases stood out to you?"

-Lesson Part 1: Everyone Is Guilty Before God
Read Again
Romans 3:9

"All, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin."

Family Discussion

Ask:

- What does "all" mean?
- Does that include good people?
- Does that include religious people?
- Does that include us?

Explain:

Paul is saying nobody gets a free pass.

Sometimes we think:

- "I'm not as bad as that person."
- "I go to church."
- "I try to be nice."

But God's question isn't:

"Are you better than other people?"

His question is:

"Are you perfectly righteous?"

And none of us are.

Object Lesson

Give everyone a piece of paper.

Ask them to write down (or think about privately):

- A lie they've told
- A time they disobeyed
- A selfish moment
- A time they were unkind

Explain:

"Those things remind us that every person sins. Nobody is perfect."

Read:

Romans 3:10

"None is righteous, no, not one."

-Lesson Part 2: Sin Affects Every Part of Us (10 Minutes)

Explain: Paul shows that sin affects:

- Our Minds

Romans 3:11

Ask:
Have you ever known the right thing but wanted to do something else?
Our Hearts

We naturally want our own way.

Ask:
- When is it hard to obey God?
- When is it hard to obey parents?

Our words
Romans 3:13-14

Ask:
- Have words ever hurt your feelings?
- Have you ever hurt someone with your words?

Discuss:
- Lying
- Gossip
- Complaining
- Harsh words
- Our Actions

Romans 3:15-17

Ask:
- What kinds of actions hurt people?
- How can our choices bring peace or pain?

Our Relationship with God
Romans 3:18

Ask:
- "What does it mean to fear God?"

Explain:
Fearing God doesn't mean being terrified.

It means:

- Respecting Him
- Trusting Him
- Taking Him seriously
- Understanding He is holy and powerful

Family Activity
The Mirror Illustration

Bring a mirror.
Ask everyone:
"What does a mirror do?"

Expected answer: "It shows what we look like."

Ask:
"If I have dirt on my face, can the mirror wash it off?"

Of course not.

Explain:
Romans 3:20 teaches that God's law works like a mirror.

It shows us:

- Our sin
- Our need
- Our guilt

But it can't remove our sin.
The mirror reveals the problem.
It can't fix the problem.

Ask:
"What fixes the problem?"

Allow responses.

Lead them to:
"Jesus."

-Lesson Part 3: Jesus Is the Good News
Explain:
The purpose of this passage is not to leave us feeling hopeless.

Paul wants us to realize:
We cannot save ourselves.

No amount of:
- Good behavior
- Church attendance
- Kind deeds
- Religious activity

can make us right with God.

But God sent Jesus.

Jesus:
- Lived a perfect life
- Never sinned
- Died for our sins
- Rose from the dead
- Offers forgiveness to everyone who trusts Him

Read Together:
2 Corinthians 5:21

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Explain:
Jesus took our sin so we could receive His righteousness.
That is the gospel.

Family Discussion Questions
Choose several:
- Why is it easier to notice sin in others than in ourselves?
- What part of Romans 3 challenged you most?
- How have your words affected others this week?
- Why can't good works save us?
- What does the mirror illustration teach us?
- How does knowing we're sinners help us appreciate Jesus more?
- What are some ways we can show respect and reverence for God this week?
- What does it mean to trust Jesus instead of ourselves?

Family Application Challenge

This week, before bed each night, ask:

- Where did I see my sin today?
- Where did I see God's grace today?
- How can I trust Jesus more tomorrow?

Remind everyone:

The goal isn't to become discouraged by our sin. The goal is to become amazed by God's grace.

Closing Prayer

"Father, thank You for showing us the truth about ourselves. We confess that we are sinners and cannot save ourselves. Thank You for sending Jesus to do what we could never do. Thank You that He lived the perfect life we could not live and died for our sins. Help us trust Him, follow Him, and grow in our love for You. Show us our sin, but help us see an even greater Savior. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Family Takeaway

The law shows us our need, but Jesus is our Savior.