

Today's Suggested Schedule—April 2024, Week 3

Today's Bible Story: I Keep Forgettin' (Golden Calf) • *Exodus 32:1-35*

Today's Key Question: What can you think about when it's hard to wait?

Today's Bottom Line: When you have to wait, remember what's true.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!* Psalm 27:14 (ESV)

Monthly Virtue: Patience—Waiting until later for what you want now

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might be visiting your group for the first time. Reflect on any ways you've fallen short of showing patience this week. Ask for forgiveness and for the continued gift of growing in patience. Pray that during group time, your few would embrace and remember God's love and God's provision as truths to help them wait well.

Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

LARGE GROUP (35 minutes)

STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God

Welcome/Opener

Worship

Bible Story (Communicator Script)

Key Question

Prayer

SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Story Exploration

Application Activity: Take a Snapshot

Bible Story Review: Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions

Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You

Prayer Activity: Make it Personal with Prayer

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Use this if kids have questions about following Jesus.

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word gospel. Clarify that the word gospel means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

If a child has expressed interest in following Jesus, please let the parents know so they can be a part of the conversation that their child is having about faith.

What Now?

If you put your trust in Jesus Christ and believe in Him as the One who forgives your sins and makes it possible for you to know God, we are so proud of you! There is no greater single decision that you could make.

We believe that baptism is an important next step for you. Baptism is your way of telling your friends and family, “Hey, I'm a follower of Jesus!” If you're interested in learning more or participating in baptism, talk to a staff member about the next steps you should take.

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Story Exploration

The story of Exodus 32:1-35, involving the Israelites' creation and worship of the Golden Calf during Moses' absence on Mount Sinai, can be related to the Gospel in several profound ways. Each aspect of the story can be seen as both a reflection of human nature and a precursor to the themes of sin, judgment, intercession, and redemption that are central to the Gospel message.

1. Human Sinfulness and Idolatry

- **Exodus 32:** The Israelites create and worship the Golden Calf, demonstrating their quick turn to idolatry when not directly led by Moses.
- **Romans 1:25:** "...They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator..." This verse underscores the human tendency towards idolatry, which is not limited to physical idols but includes anything that takes the place of God in our hearts.

2. God's Righteous Anger Against Sin

- **Exodus 32:10:** God expresses His anger towards the Israelites' sin, contemplating destroying them but is petitioned by Moses.
- **Romans 2:5-8:** The New Testament speaks of God's righteous judgment against those who are self-seeking and reject the truth. God's response to sin is consistent across both testaments, emphasizing His holy nature.

3. Intercession

- **Exodus 32:11-14:** Moses intercedes for the Israelites, pleading with God not to destroy them despite their sin.
- **1 Timothy 2:5:** "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus." Just as Moses stood in the gap for Israel, Jesus stands in the gap for humanity, interceding on our behalf before the Father.

4. Atonement and Forgiveness

- **Exodus 32:30-32:** Moses offers to atone for the people's sin, highlighting the need for atonement and sacrifice for sin.
- **1 John 2:2:** "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." Jesus is the fulfillment of the need for atonement, offering Himself as the perfect sacrifice to reconcile us with God.

5. The Consequence of Sin and the Need for Repentance

- **Exodus 32:35:** God sends a plague as a consequence of the Israelites' sin with the Golden Calf.
- **Acts 3:19:** "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." The New Testament calls for repentance as the response to God's offer of forgiveness through Christ, emphasizing that turning away from sin is essential for reconciliation with God.

6. The New Covenant

- **Exodus 34:1:** Following the Golden Calf incident, God instructs Moses to chisel out two new stone tablets, symbolizing the renewal of the covenant.
- **Luke 22:20:** During the Last Supper, Jesus speaks of the cup as the "new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." This signifies the establishment of a new covenant through Jesus' sacrifice, fulfilling and surpassing the old covenant.

The story of the Golden Calf, therefore, not only demonstrates the depth of human sin and the seriousness with which God views idolatry but also foreshadows the coming of Jesus as the ultimate mediator and sacrifice for sins, offering a way back to God through repentance and faith.

* 1. Grill That Burger

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: “Grill That Burger” Activity Page, “The Grill” Activity Page, blindfold, and tape

What You Do:

- Use the tape to hang the grill sign from the “The Grill” Activity Page on any wall of your space.
- Instruct the kids to line up about ten feet away (or as far away as possible) from the grill.
- Give each kid a burger patty cutout from the “Grill That Burger” Activity Page.
- Give each kid a loop of tape to stick on the back of their burger patty.
- One by one, blindfold the kids, slowly spin them once, and instruct them to attempt to stick their burger on the grill.
- If a kid gets their burger on the center of the grill, direct them to return to the group and move to the end of the line.
- If a kid does not get their burger successfully in the center of the grill, ask them a review question (below) before directing them to the end of the line.
- Continue until all review questions have been answered correctly and each kid has had the chance to stick their burger patty on the grill.

Review questions:

1. Who did God choose to lead the Israelites out of Egypt? (*Moses*)
2. When the Israelites were camping near Mt. Sinai, what did God tell Moses to remind the people? (*Answers may vary; to remember how God rescued them, to obey God's commandments, to be God's holy nation*)
3. How did the Israelites respond? (*They agreed to do everything God had said.*)
4. Why did God call Moses away from the Israelites and up to the mountain? (*God wanted to give them a special set of rules to follow.*)
5. How long were Moses and Joshua up on the mountain? (*40 days and nights*)
6. How did the Israelites feel when they were waiting so long? (*They felt impatient, forgetting all God had done for them.*)
7. What did the Israelites ask Aaron to do when Moses was up on the mountain? (*They asked him to make them a god to lead them.*)
8. How did Aaron respond? (*Aaron melted the people's gold earrings to form a statue of a golden calf.*)
9. How did Moses first react when he returned and saw what the people were doing? (*Moses was very angry. He threw the stone tablets with the special rules down, and they broke.*)
10. Even though the Israelites were impatient and seemed to forget what God had done, how did God respond even though they turned away? (*God remained faithful and continued to provide for them on their journey to the land promised to them.*)

What You Say:

“When you were blindfolded and spun around, it was easy to forget where the grill was located during our game. Many of you lost sight of the path you planned to be on! In our story today, the Israelites forgot what God had done for them. They became so impatient while waiting for Moses that they forgot all the ways God had already provided for them by bringing them out of Egypt. In the midst of their impatience, they forgot to trust that God would lead them.

“When we grow impatient, it’s easy for us to also lose track of God’s truths and make unwise choices. Like, getting angry instead of calmly waiting. Or, saying something hurtful to someone taking too long. Our story today shows us that there is a wise way and a wrong way to wait. We can allow our impatience to take over and cause harm, or we can let God’s truths lead us in our waiting. **[Bottom Line] When you have to wait, remember what’s true.**”

2. Serving Up Truth

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: “Serving Up Truth” Activity Page, scissors, and glue sticks

What You Do:

- Divide kids into groups of 2 or 3.
- Give each kid a “Serving Up Truth” Activity Page.
- Set out scissors and glue sticks near each group for them to share.
- Direct the kids to cut out the foods on the bottom of the “Serving Up Truth” Activity Page.
- Instruct the kids to work together with their group to take turns reading each scenario at the top of the “Serving Up Truth” Activity Page, then decide which truth from the bottom best fits the scenario.
- Direct the kids to glue the cookout food/promise on the corresponding plate near each scenario.

What You Say:

“Way to work together to serve up God’s truth in each of those situations. Can anyone share the truth they used in situation 1? (*Invite kids to respond. Do the same for situations 2-4. Some answers may vary. Invite kids to share why they chose what they did.*)

“Great job remembering God’s truth for each of those situations. This is exactly what we can do in our everyday lives when facing times of waiting. **[Bottom Line] When you have to wait, remember what’s true.** Next time you have to wait, take time to focus on what’s true. Think of the ways that God has helped you before.

“What are some ways God has helped you before in your life? (*Invite responses.*) Remember that God loves you no matter what, and that God is always with you while you wait. God has also put people in your life to help you while you wait. Who are some people who can help you?” (*Invite responses.*)

[Make it Personal] (*Share about a time you chose to remember God’s truths when facing a season of waiting. Talk about what you chose to focus on or who God brought into your life to help you through that time.*)

3. Remember What's True

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Bibles, "Memory Verse Challenge" Activity Page, and prepared plastic cups

What You Do:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Guide kids to look up the Memory Verse using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Psalms in the list under "Old Testament." When the kids find Psalms, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Psalms. Help the kids find the page. When they find Psalms, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 27. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 14 in chapter 27.

- Review the Memory Verse together a few times as a group.
- Divide your group into two teams.
- Instruct each team to gather with their teammates on one side of your group space.
- Place a plastic cup full of the strips from the "Memory Verse Challenge" Activity Page across from each group on the other side of the small group space.
- Direct each team to one by one run to the cup, grab a strip of paper, and complete the challenge that's written.
- Once a kid completes their action, direct them to bring the strip of paper with the word/phrase from the Memory Verse back to their group.
- Once they return, instruct the team to send a new kid from their team to do the same.
- Direct the kids who are waiting to begin forming their Memory Verse in order as the team retrieves more and more words.
 - Point out the numbers on the verse slips if they need a hint.
- After each team has retrieved a few words, tell the teams that they can continue getting more words, or if they know the Memory Verse by heart, they can choose to say it to you without retrieving the rest of the words.
- The first team to say the Memory Verse to you (whether memorized or by reading it from their game words), wins!

What You Say:

"It may have been hard to wait and find out the next Memory Verse word or phrase your team was going to bring back. But some of you remembered the words without even needing help. This is the power of knowing God's truth. We won't always have our Bibles around us when we're growing impatient, so knowing God's Word can help us anywhere and anytime.

"Let's say our verse together one more time. (*Say the Memory Verse out loud together as a group.*)

This week: **[Bottom Line] When you have to wait, remember what's true** by thinking about how this verse encourages us to stay strong and have hope as we wait for the Lord."

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Say:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember?
- How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission?

What You Need: Small ball

What You Do:

- Invite the group to sit together in a circle.
- Join the circle yourself while holding the ball.
- Pass the ball to the kid on your right, and say something that is true about God.
- Instruct that kid to continue the action: to pass the ball to the kid on their right and say something true about God.
 - If the kids are stumped, offer suggestions of things they can share.
 - They can share things like God loves you, God will always be with you, God is always working for good, etc.
- Continue until the ball has traveled all the way around the circle, back to you.
- Close your group time in prayer.

What You Say:

"Dear God, thank You for the gift of patience. We know that as believers in Jesus, You have given us the Holy Spirit to help us when we wait. We know that the Holy Spirit can help us remember Your truths when we find it hard to be patient. You don't leave us alone in finding strength and joy, but have made a way for patience to be possible. No matter what we find ourselves facing this week, help us be confident in knowing that **[Bottom Line] when you have to wait, remember what's true.** We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, ask kids to show and explain their "Serving Up Truth" Activity Page.

GETTING READY

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible Story applies to real-life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

(Choose as many of these activities as you like.)

** If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #1.*

*** 1. Grill That Burger**

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need:

- Print "Grill That Burger" Activity Page on paper and cut out, one burger for each kid
- Print "The Grill" Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group
- Blindfolds, one for each Small Group
- Painter's tape, one roll for each Small Group

2. Serving Up Truth

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need:

- Print "Serving Up Truth" Activity Page on paper, one for each kid
- Scissors, one for every 2-3 kids
- Glue sticks, one for every 2-3 kids

3. Remember What's True

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need:

- Bibles, one for each kid
- Print "Memory Verse Challenge" Activity Pages double-sided on paper and cut apart, two sets for each Small Group
- Plastic cups, two for each Small Group
 - Before group time, cut apart the two sets of strips from the "Memory Verse Challenge" Activity Page.
 - Put each set of strips in two separate cups.

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need:

- Small ball, one for each Small Group

NOTE: Week 4 will require one empty water bottle for each kid. Continue asking leaders and others to save their bottles!

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resource: **Parent Cue app**