

Today's Suggested Schedule—May 2024, Week 1

Today's Bible Story: Light My Way (God's Word Is a Light) • *Psalm 119:105*

Today's Bottom Line: Practice hearing from God.

Monthly Memory Verse: *For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.* 1 Timothy 4:8 (ESV)

Monthly Virtue: Commitment—Making a plan and putting it into practice

Basic Truth: I need to make the wise choice.

As kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Thank God for following through with the plan to send Jesus to rescue us. Ask God to help show each of the kids how God is speaking to them through the Bible. Thank God for allowing you the opportunity to help kids better connect and learn how they can hear from God.

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

SMALL GROUP (15 minutes)

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction

Early Arriver

Opening Activity

LARGE GROUP (35 minutes)

STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God

Welcome/Opener

Worship

Bible Story

Bottom Line

Prayer

Closer

SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Bible Story Review: This Little Light

Application Activity: Highlight God's Word

Memory Verse Activity: Memory Verse Training Camp

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

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.

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 minutes)

Opening Activity

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

What You Need: *Optional: blindfold*

What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Ask kids to go around the circle and say their name.
- Choose one kid to close their eyes or wear a blindfold.
- Without speaking, point to a kid in the circle.
- Instruct that kid to say the name of the kid wearing the blindfold.
- Direct the kid wearing the blindfold to try to identify the voice and say the name of the kid who spoke.
- Play several rounds.
- Switch out kids who are wearing blindfolds as they guess correctly or after a few tries.
- For a challenge, ask kids in the circle to create added noise by snapping, clapping, or tapping their legs lightly.

What You Say:

“Wow, you all did a great job recognizing each other’s voices! Sometimes it felt pretty easy to guess who was speaking, and sometimes it felt a little tricky—especially if there was noise around us. And just like we can learn to recognize the voices around us, we can also learn how to hear from God too!

***[Transition]* Today, we’ll discover how we can get better at hearing from God.”**

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

Story Exploration

Psalms 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, is a treasure trove of insights into God's Word, its significance in our lives, and how it guides and teaches us. If you're seeking to hear from God, this Psalm provides guidance on how to align yourself with God's will and increase your sensitivity to His voice. Below are some ideas drawn from verses of Psalm 119 that can help you hear from God:

Seek God Wholeheartedly

Verse 2: "Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart."

To hear from God, commit to seeking Him sincerely and passionately. This involves more than casual reading or occasional prayer; it requires a dedicated and earnest pursuit of God's presence and will.

Meditate on God's Word

Verse 15: "I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways."

Regular meditation on Scripture helps you understand God's character and His commands. As you reflect deeply on His Word, you become more attuned to His voice and leading in your life.

Value God's Teachings

Verse 72: "The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold."

Treasuring God's Word above worldly riches is crucial. Recognize the Bible as your most valuable resource in knowing and understanding God's mind and heart.

Pray for Understanding

Verse 18: "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law."

Asking God to open your eyes to the truths within His Word is a vital step in discerning His voice. Prayer invites the Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide you as you read and reflect.

Stay Humble and Teachable

Verse 34: "Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart."

Approach God's Word with a humble and teachable spirit. Admitting the need for God's wisdom and guidance is essential in hearing from Him.

Obey God's Commands

Verse 44: "I will always obey your law, forever and ever."

Obedience to God's commands as revealed in Scripture keeps you in alignment with His will.

Obedience also fosters an environment where you can more clearly discern God's directions and corrections.

Trust in God's Protection and Guidance

Verse 114: "You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word."

Trusting in God as your protector and guide reinforces your reliance on His Word and His promises. This trust shapes how you interpret life's circumstances and challenges.

Stay Persistent in Righteousness

Verse 133: "Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me."

Seeking God's guidance to avoid sin and live righteously ensures that your life is on the path He

desires for you. Sin can cloud judgment and distort the voice of God.

Seek God's Will Continually

Verse 147: "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your words."

Make seeking God a priority, not an afterthought. Early morning prayers and study can set a tone of attentiveness to God's voice throughout the day.

By following these principles from Psalm 119, you can cultivate a life that is more attuned to hearing God's voice. Remember, hearing from God is not about seeking new revelations but about understanding and aligning with His will as revealed in Scripture. Keep your heart open and responsive to the teachings of the Bible, and you will find guidance and direction from God.

Discussion Questions

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask:

- How can you hear from God?
- How can you know when you are hearing from God or another voice?
- How can reading about Jesus' life help you hear from God?
- What gets in the way of spending time reading the Bible?
- Is it possible to hear from God in ways other than reading the Bible?

1. This Little Light

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery

What You Need: Flashlights

What You Do:

- Give each kid a flashlight.
- Say: "I'm going to name something you can see around you, and then I'm going to count to five. After I count to five, shine your light on that item."
- *Optional: Dim the lights in your environment, if possible.*
- One at a time, call out an item that can be seen in your group space and count to five.
 - *NOTE: kids may find different items to shine their light on!*
- Start by calling out more concrete items, then call out more abstract items.
- For example:
 - clock
 - TV, computer, or phone
 - sneakers
 - Bible
 - markers
 - paper
 - something happy
 - something fun
 - something safe
 - something warm
 - your favorite thing in the room
- Collect flashlights when completed.

What You Say:

"Great job shining your lights! Today we heard about God's Word being like a lamp, or a light, that lights our way. Does anyone remember what book of the Bible that came from? (*Pause for responses.*) Psalms! Over and over, Psalm 119 showed us how valuable and beautiful God's words are.

“God’s Word is like a light that can shine on things that are hard, difficult, or confusing. We can have the light of God’s Word in our lives when we **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God!** When we practice hearing from God, it helps us grow stronger in our faith. We can do that by making God’s Word part of our life.

“What are some ways we can hear from God? (*Invite responses, like: read the Bible, listen to an app, memorize verses, listen to wise people who love us and who love Jesus, etc.*). The more we practice, the better we can hear from God!”

[Make It Personal] (Tell about how you practice hearing from God. How do you make time to interact with God’s Word? Do you read it in the morning, or maybe listen to it during travel times? Share how reading the Bible has been a light that guides your life.)

* 2. Highlight God's Word

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: “Highlight God’s Word” Activity Page, and highlighters

What You Do:

- Give each kid a highlighter and a “Highlight God’s Word” Activity Page.
- Say: “I’m going to read a verse from Scripture out loud from the page you have in front of you. Highlight the words or phrases that jump out to you.”
- For the first Scripture or two, instruct the kids to keep the cap on their highlighters as you read each verse, and emphasize key words or phrases to help them understand the process.
- After the first couple of verses, challenge kids to highlight words or phrases on their own as you read the verses out loud.
- After each verse, ask: “What words or phrases in this passage of Scripture stuck out to you?”
 - *NOTE: Kids should be encouraged to highlight what’s meaningful to them, which will likely be different from the kids around them! That’s wonderful and shows how God speaks to each of us!*

What You Say:

“I loved hearing what words from all of those verses stood out to each of you. The beautiful thing is that sometimes we had different things highlighted—and that’s great! God speaks to each of us in different ways through the Bible. Reading God’s Word is one way that we can **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God.**

“We can ask God for help to light up certain words for us when we read or listen to the Bible. This is one way we can hear from God! And as you continue to read the Bible, you can see how Jesus lived His life, then follow His example. The more we practice this, the better we can learn to hear God’s voice in our lives!”

3. Memory Verse Training Camp

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up 1 Timothy 4:8 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders: Guide kids 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 “1 Timothy” in the list under “New Testament.” When the kids find 1 Timothy, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find 1 Timothy. Help the kids find the page. When they find 1 Timothy, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 4. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 8 in chapter 4.

- Read the verse a few times together.
- Say: “I challenge you to a Memory Verse Training Camp!”
- Practice repeating the verse together several times, adding an exercise/action with each word or phrase.
- Invite kids to share ideas for each action.
- Here are some examples of actions:
 - When you say the word “value,” do two jumping jacks.
 - When you say the word “life,” do two push-ups.
 - When you say the word “training,” do a body-builder pose.
 - When you say the word “promise(s),” jump as high as you can.
- Repeat several times with different actions, as time and interest allow.

What You Say:

“You all did a great job training for this month’s Memory Verse! The more we practiced, the better we got. When we memorize Scripture, that’s one way we can **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God.** God can speak to our hearts and minds when we take time to read God’s Word and are quiet enough to listen to what God is telling us. When we make a habit of reading the Bible, listening to an app, memorizing verses, or hearing from wise people, we can **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God and grow in our faith.**”

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?

What You Need: Device for playing sound clips of nature, paper, and crayons/pencils

What You Do:

- Give each kid a piece of paper.
- Set out the crayons or pencils.
- *Optional: Invite kids to move around and sit in a direction where they aren't facing anyone else.*
- Say: "God is talking to us all the time—even through nature!"
- One at a time, use the device to play different soundtracks of nature. (Some soundtracks are listed below.)
 - Sources for nature sounds: YouTube, Calmsound, Spotify, etc.
- As kids take time to be quiet and listen, invite them to write words or draw images to explain what they "hear" about God.
- Model this experience by "thinking aloud" while listening to the first soundtrack. For example:
 - **Thunderstorm:** God is big and powerful. God is strong. God is all around us.
 - **Ocean:** God is peace, patient, and kind. God is gentle. God is faithful.
 - **Birds chirping:** God cares about all of creation, even the littlest birds. God is joy.
 - **Wind blowing:** Even though we can't see God, God is everywhere. God is moving.
 - **Crickets:** God is always with us, even at night when we're asleep.
- Close your group time in prayer.

What You Say:

"Today, we talked about many different ways we can **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God**. By making a habit of being quiet and listening, reading our Bible, and learning from wise adults who love us and love Jesus, we can **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God**."

"Dear God, thank You for the many, many ways we can hear from You. Next time we're in nature and hear a sound of Your creation, remind us to be still and quiet and to notice and remember that You are with us. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to share one way they can practice hearing from God together at home this week!

GETTING READY

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

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 Minutes)

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Opening Activity

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

What You Need:

- *Optional: blindfold*

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 #2.*

1. This Little Light

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery

What You Need:

- Flashlights, one for each kid

*** 2. Highlight God's Word**

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Print "Highlight God's Word" Activity Page on paper, one for each kid
- Highlighters, one for each kid

3. Memory Verse Training Camp

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Bibles, one for each kid

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:

- Device for playing sound clips of nature
- Paper
- Crayons/pencils

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 resources: **Parent Cue app**