

## 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.

### **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

Story Exploration

Bible Story Review: Whisper and Draw

Application Activity: Animal Sound Charades

Memory Verse Activity: Lighting the Way

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**

### **Opening Activity**

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

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

#### **What You Do:**

- Direct the kids to stand up, facing you.
- Say: "I'm going to lead you through a plan for some warm-up exercises. I'll call out an exercise and tell you how many to do!"
- Demonstrate or give a more detailed explanation, when needed.
- One at a time, call out the following:
  - 5 jumping jacks
  - 4 high knees
  - 4 squats
  - 2 push-ups
  - 1 crunch
  - 5-second plank
- Feel free to mix up or add to the exercises above.

#### **What You Say:**

"Great job, everyone! You knew what to do because you listened carefully! Some of you even looked around or asked questions to know what to do. It's important to listen carefully! Sometimes hearing takes practice! **[Transition] Today we're going to discover Who we can always hear from, no matter what's going on around us!**"

## **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.

## \* 1. Whisper and Draw

### [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

*Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing*

**What You Need:** Marked Bible, blank paper, pencils or crayons, prepared drawing, black permanent marker, and timer

#### What You Do:

- Say: "I am going to give you instructions for drawing two different pictures. Everyone is going to be drawing the same pictures, but they'll all turn out differently, and that's okay!"
- Give each kid a piece of paper and a pencil or crayon.
- Instruct the kids to listen carefully to your instructions.
- One at a time, whisper the following set of instructions, pausing after each one to allow time for kids to draw.
- Try not to repeat instructions unless you're sensing frustration.
  - On the left side of the paper, draw a tree with a trunk and leaves.
  - On the right side of the paper, draw a house. Make sure to leave room between the tree and house.
  - In the middle of the paper, between the tree and house, draw a small hill.
  - Draw three flowers on the hill.
  - In the sky, draw a smiling sunshine above the house.
  - Draw five apples on the tree.
  - Draw two birds flying above the tree.
- Once kids have finished their drawing, invite them to share their first drawings with the group.
- Instruct them to turn their paper over.
- Say: "I'm going to show you a picture for 30 seconds and then put it away. Then, I'd like you to draw what you saw."
- Set the timer for 30 seconds.
- Start the timer and show the kids the prepared drawing for 30 seconds.
- Once the timer had ended, turn the paper over with the prepared drawing.
- Allow the kids some time to draw.
- Once kids have finished, invite them to share their second drawings with the group.
- Read Psalm 119:05 from the marked Bible to the group.

#### What You Say:

"It was fun to see how your different pictures turned out. Some of you had an easier time following the directions you could hear, and some of you had an easier time being able to see the picture. There are different ways we can learn, and God knows that about us because God made us!

"God might speak to us through songs we sing at church or through a beautiful moment in nature. We can also always hear from God through God's Word, the Bible. When we **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God**, we can grow in our faith. This takes practice! All of our lives, we need to **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God!**"

## 2. Animal Sound Charades

### [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

#### What You Need: “Animal Charade Cards” Activity Page

#### What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Set out the “Animal Charade Cards” Activity Page cards face down in a pile.
- Direct one kid to pick the card at the top of the deck.
- Instruct the kid to read their card, keeping the type of animal a secret, and make the animal’s sound.
- Encourage the rest of the group to guess what the animal is.
- Share that the kids are allowed to ask you for help during the activity. They can ask you to:
  - Read the card and make the animal sound along with the kid.
  - Read the card and give a few helpful hints to the group if more help is needed.
- Instruct the kid who guesses correctly to choose the next card from the deck and take a turn.
- Continue until all animals have been guessed.

#### What You Say:

“Some of these animal sounds were easy to recognize because we learned about them when we were babies—maybe we played with toys or heard songs about these animals and the sounds they make. Other animals we may have learned as we’ve gotten older and some we may not have known about just yet.

“What happened during our game when you didn’t know what sound to make or if you couldn’t figure out what the sound was? (*Invite responses.*) You had to ask for help! There are many different ways we can hear from God! We can hear from God when we read or listen to the Bible, when we talk to God in prayer, and when we ask for help from adults we know who love God too! When we read the Bible, we can see how Jesus lived and then follow His example. All of these things and more are ways that we can **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God!**”

**[Make It Personal] (Share about how to make a habit of hearing from God. If possible, share about a time you heard from God and how that helped you make a decision or know what to do.)**

### 3. Lighting the Way

#### [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

**What You Need:** Bibles marked at 1 Timothy 4:8, and small flashlights

#### What You Do:

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

**Finding verses with kindergartners:** Guide children to open the Bibles to the marked page. Point to the word 1 Timothy at the top of the page as you say “1 Timothy” aloud. Then guide children to find the big number 4 on the page. Explain that this is the chapter number. Finally, guide them to look under the big 4 for the little 8; this is the verse number. Tell them to leave their finger on the verse as you read the verse aloud. Then lead everyone to say the verse together.

**Finding verses with 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1 Timothy in the list under “New Testament.” You can help by telling them that 1 Timothy starts with the number 1 followed by the letters T-I. 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 Memory Verse to the group.
- Give each kid a flashlight.
- Instruct the kids to shine their lights on the verse in their Bibles as you read it again.
- Invite any kids who would like to read the verse a chance to do so.
- Instruct the other kids to illuminate the verse in their Bibles each time someone reads.
- Ask: “What do you think it means to be godly?” (*to be like God, become more like Jesus, etc.*)

#### What You Say:

“Knowing God’s Word is a great way to help us be godly! Like anything else we want to get better at, we need to make a plan and put it into practice! What are some things you practice? (*Invite responses, like: sports, dance, instruments, etc.*) What plans can we make to get better at those things? (*Invite responses, like: taking classes, watching others, using our time to practice, etc.*)

“We can see in our verse that God has promised help for the life we are now living and in our future! Our Bible is a great place to start **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God**, since it’s God’s Word! God’s Word can shine a light on everything in our lives, and that is really helpful when things get confusing or hard!”



## 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:** No supplies needed

#### What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Say: "Everyone is going to have the opportunity to **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God!**"
- Instruct the kids to sit with their eyes closed as you pray the first lines of the prayer below (Prayer Section #1), then pause for a few seconds.
- At the time of the pause, encourage kids to be quiet and focus their thoughts on the silence.
- After the pause, invite the kids to share what they heard during the silent time.
  - It may be a clock ticking, someone moving, another group's noises, a knock on the door, etc.
- Then, ask kids to continue being quiet, and this time, to think about what they did and heard about at church today.
- Continue with the second part of the prayer below. (Prayer Section #2)
- After the time of prayer, invite kids to share what came to mind during the second pause.
  - Encourage kids that it's okay if they didn't hear anything at all! Listening and hearing from God is something we'll get better at with practice.
- Finish by praying the last few lines of the prayer below. (Prayer Section #3)

#### What You Say:

Prayer Section #1:

"Thank You, God, for being here today with us. Thank You for speaking to us in so many different ways. We want to practice hearing from You. *(Pause to encourage kids to focus their thoughts on the silence. Then continue as above, asking kids to share what they heard in the silence.)*

Prayer Section #2:

"Thank You, God, for quiet times when we can focus on You! Please help us to hear You as we practice listening and thinking about You. Is there anything You would like to say to us today?" *(Pause to invite kids to listen to God.)*

Prayer Section #3

"Thank You, God, for speaking to us in so many ways! Thank You for giving us the Bible so we can learn about who You are and hear from You. Help us learn to hear from You. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to share their drawings from the Whisper and Draw Activity along with one way they can practice hearing from God.

## 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 Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body*

##### **What You Need:**

- No supplies needed

### **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. Whisper and Draw**

##### **[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]**

*Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing*

##### **What You Need:**

- Bible, one marked at Psalm 119:105
- Blank paper, one for each kid
- Pencils or crayons, one for each kid
- Large piece of paper
- Black permanent marker
- Timer
- Before group time, draw an illustration of Psalm 119:105 on the large piece of paper.
  - Draw a path in the center of the paper moving through some trees.
  - Draw an open book (Bible) as the path's destination.
  - Draw a lamp above the open book.
  - *Optional: Include some footprints on the path.*

#### **2. Animal Sound Charades**

##### **[Live for God | Application Activity]**

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

##### **What You Need:**

- Print "Animal Charade Cards" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, one set for each Small Group
- Before group time, familiarize yourself with the following animal sounds:
  - crow
  - hermit crab
  - dolphin
  - koala
  - cricket
  - donkey

- kangaroo
- goat
- hummingbird
- coyote
- giraffe
- rabbit

### 3. Lighting the Way

#### [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

#### What You Need:

- Bible (marked at 1 Timothy 4:8), one for each kid
- Flashlights, 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:

- No supplies needed

### **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**