

## 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 Key Question:** How can you hear from God?

**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.*

### **PRELUDE: Setting the Tone for the Experience**

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

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**

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. Take a Snapshot

### [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:** "Bible Verse or Song Lyric?" Activity Page, Bible or smart phone Bible app; *Optional: Printed Devotional from the Home folder*

### What You Do:

- Invite kids to sit in a circle.
- Explain that you will be reading a list of quotes out loud for kids to decide whether each quote is a Bible verse or a popular song lyric.
- Read a quote from the "Bible Verse or Song Lyric" Activity Page.
- Pause for kids to discuss; encourage them to come up with a consensus.
- Once the group decides, let them know whether they gave the correct answer.
  - Recruit a kid to keep track of how many the group guessed correctly.
- Repeat for each quote from the "Bible Verse or Song Lyric?" Activity Page.
- After going through the entire list, see how many the group guessed correctly.
- Lead a group discussion on the importance of learning to hear God's voice by asking the following questions:
  - Is it difficult to distinguish between God's voice and another?
  - How can you know when it's God's words, and not someone else's? (*God will never be the one leading you to do something wrong; When you have a relationship with God, you have the Holy Spirit to guide you; God's words will lead us to love others.*)
  - What are some ways you can practice hearing God's voice? (*Reading God's Word, learning from people who have a relationship with God, making space for quiet time of reflection, etc.*)
- **[Make it Personal] Use the Bible or a Bible app on your smartphone to show kids how you like to spend time in God's Word.**
- *Optional: If your church uses the provided weekly devotionals show kids how to use one and encourage them to utilize these devotionals as a structure for their time spent reading their Bible.*

## 2. Bible Story Extension

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

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

**What You Need:** “Acrostic Verses” Activity Page, dry erase board, dry erase marker, Bibles, pens or pencils

#### What You Do:

- Talk with the group about the book of Psalms by asking the following questions:
  - What was unique about the way Psalm 119 was written? *(It's very long! It was written in the form of an acrostic: each chapter begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet.)*
  - Are there any well-known verses from the Book of Psalms that you can think of? *(Prompt kids with the following verses, if needed.)*
    - *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. —Psalm 23:1*
    - *Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. —Psalm 34:8*
    - *Find delight in the LORD. Then he will give you everything your heart really wants. —Psalm 37:4*
    - *The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? —Psalm 27:1*
    - *Be still, and know that I am God. —Psalm 46:10, NIV*
    - *He heals those who have broken hearts. He takes care of their wounds. —Psalm 147:3,*
- On the dry erase board, write the letters H-E-A-R vertically.
- Using the letter, “H,” write the word, “Hebrews.”
- Using the letter, “E,” write the word, “Ephesians.”
- Using the letter, “A,” write the word, “Acts.”
- Using the letter, “R,” write the word, “Romans.”
- Divide kids into four groups and give each group a Bible, one of the “Acrostic Verses” Activity Page, and a pen or pencil.
- Explain that groups will work together to form an acrostic, like Psalms, by looking up the verses on their page and writing down what those verses say about God.
- Once each group has finished their Activity Page, invite each group to share what the verses they looked up had to say about God.
  - Write down some of the things they share next to that letter on the dry erase board.
- Remind kids that even though we may not physically be able to see God, we can hear from God through the words in the Bible.

### 3. 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?

## 4. Verses to Take with You

### [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, dry erase boards, dry erase markers; *Optional: Timer or timer app*

#### What You Do:

- Divide the group into two teams.
- Ask each team to choose a volunteer to look up this month's memory verse.
- Give each team's volunteer a Bible and direct them to look up the verse using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

**Finding verses with 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders:** Our verse is from 1 Timothy. Ask kids to tell you whether that's in the Old Testament or the New Testament. (*New*) So we know it's toward the back of the Bible. When they find 1 Timothy, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Tell them to find chapter 4. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell them to then find verse 8 in chapter 4.

- Direct each team to form a parallel line with plenty of space between each team.
  - The kids with the Bibles should be at one end of their team's line.
  - At the other end of each line, place a dry erase board and dry erase marker.
- Explain that when you say, "Go!" the kid on each team with the Bible will whisper the first word of 1 Timothy 4:8 into the ear of the person next to them. That person will whisper the word to the person next to them and so on. Once the word reaches the kid at the other end, they will use the dry erase marker to write the word on the board.
- After the word is written on the board, they will run to the opposite side of their line near the Bible. Everyone in the line should shift accordingly, so that a new person is now at the white board.
- The kid who is now at the Bible will look to see what the second word of the verse is to whisper it to the next person in line. The word should continue down the line until it reaches the board.
- Continue this way, shifting the lines, until every word of 1 Timothy 4:8 has been written on the board. (*The reference, 1 Timothy 4:8, can be considered one word.*)
- The team to complete the entire verse on the board first is the winning team.
- *If your group is smaller, this can be played with all kids in one single line to write the verse, rather than as a race against two teams. Race against the clock if time allows!*
- Once the game has ended, ask the following questions for discussion:
  - What does this verse have to do with commitment?
  - What is something you are committed to or would like to commit to?

## 5. Make It Personal with Prayer

### [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:** "Scripture Prayers" Activity Page, pens or pencils

#### What You Do:

- Invite kids to sit together in your group space.
- Explain how prayers are written throughout scripture. Many Bible verses are prayers to God that people wrote.
  - For example, Psalm 119:105 was written as a prayer, thanking God for how God's Word brings us light.
- Give each kid a copy of the "Scripture Prayers" Activity Page and a pen or pencil.
- Before you begin reading, encourage kids to listen to each verse and circle any of the prayers that stand out to them.
  - Explain that this could mean a verse resonates with them for some reason, and they may want to use it as guidance for their own prayer time later.
- Ask for volunteers to take turns reading each of the verses on the Activity Page out loud for the entire group.
- After all the verses have been read out loud, invite kids to spread out and find a place to pray silently.
  - Encourage them to use the verses they circled to guide what they pray about. They can also talk to God about anything in their life they may be committed to right now. They can spend time asking God for help with their commitment.
- After everyone has had several minutes to pray silently, close by saying a prayer for the entire group.



## 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.

**(Choose one or both of these activities.)**

#### **1. Just for Fun**

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

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

- Offering container, 1 for each Small Group
- Large box, 1 for each Small Group
- The following items, 1 of each for each Small Group:
  - Small bell
  - Retractable pen
  - Plastic candy wrapper
  - Can of soda
  - Scissors
  - Stapler
  - Keys on a key ring
  - 2 pieces of paper towel attached with perforation
- Before kids arrive, place all the noise making items inside the box so they cannot be seen.
- *Optional: Internet capable device to play video instead of physical items.*
  - <https://bit.ly/42auCDS>

#### **2. Opening Activity**

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

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

- Large bags, 2 for each Small Group
- Set of the following items, 2 sets for each Small Group
  - Ball cap
  - Jersey or sports team t-shirt
  - A pair of long socks
  - Masking tape
  - Piece of paper
  - Marker
  - Small gym bag, duffel bag, or backpack
  - Baseball
  - Water bottle
  - Small towel
- Before group time: Place one of each of the above items in each of the 2 large bags.

### **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.)**

## 1. Take a Snapshot

### [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 “Bible Verse or Song Lyric?” Activity Page on paper, 1 for each Small Group
- Bible or Bible App on Smartphone
- *Optional: Printed Devotional from the Home folder*

## 2. Bible Story Extension

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

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

#### What You Need:

- Print “Acrostic Verses” Activity Page on paper, 1 set for each Small Group
- Pens or pencils, 4 for each Small Group
- Dry erase board, 1 for each Small Group
- Dry erase marker, 1 for each Small Group
- Bibles, 4 for each Small Group

## 3. 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

## 4. Verses to Take with You

### [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:

- Bible, 2 for each Small Group
- Dry erase board, 2 for each Small Group
- Dry erase marker, 2 for each Small Group
- *Optional: Timer or timer app*

## 5. Make it Personal with Prayer

### [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

#### What You Need:

- Print “Scripture Prayers” Activity Page on paper, 1 for each kid
- Pens or pencils, 1 for each kid

## 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**