

Today's Suggested Schedule—May 2024, Week 3

Today's Bible Story: Speak Now (Peter Says That Jesus Is the Messiah) • *Matthew 16:13-20*

Today's Bottom Line: Practice talking about 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 can trust God no matter what.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Reflect on what you believe about Jesus and what led you to believe in Him as the Messiah. Ask God to help the kids in your group to become more confident in how they talk about God with others. Pray for those kids with questions and doubts – that your group would be a safe space for them to practice talking about 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: Basketball Review

Application Activity: Beach Ball Bounce

Memory Verse Activity: Verse Accordion

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.

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

Story Exploration

Before you talk to other people about God, it might help for you to take some time to think about what God has done in your life. What is your story? How has God shown up in your life to show you more about who He is and how much He loves you?

Write your story – The story of how God has shown up in your life. Answer the following question on a blank piece of paper. (mainly for 2-5th Grade, K and ! can do if you think your group is ready).

- When and how did you first believe in God?
- How has God changed your life?
- How has God answered prayers for you?
- What has God taught you?

And these questions could be great to ask your friends and family about too. You never know what you can learn about God when you talk to others about God.

Read Acts 4:1-3 and 4:10-13 and 4:18-20

Peter and John were two people who both like to talk about Jesus. These two guys hung out with Jesus. In fact, they were in Jesus' friend group. They knew Him well. And because they knew Jesus- they saw what Jesus did and heard what Jesus said-it made them want to talk about Him like crazy.

We see where they got in trouble for talking about Jesus. Some of the religious leaders weren't convinced that Jesus was really who He said He was. So, they threw Peter and John in jail for the night. The next day, the religious leaders told Peter and John they could go as long as they promised to stop talking about Jesus.

You've probably felt that way before. Like you just can't stop talking about something even if you tried. That's how Peter and John felt. They had heard Jesus teach many amazing things. They had seen Jesus work incredible miracles. And most of all, they were there when Jesus was crucified on the cross, and then they saw Him alive three days later. Who wouldn't talk about that! Okay, it might be easier for those guys to talk about Jesus. After all, they did walk around with Him for a few years.

But you know something about Jesus too. You know what He has done in your life and the way He has used others to help you lean more about Him and His love for you. That's something about Jesus that no one else knows, unless you talk about it.

Some things just don't work when you are the only one doing them. Knowing and following God is one of those things. If you want to keep getting to know God better, it's important to hang around other people who know God-to talk with other people who believe in Jesus.

READ Hebrews 10:25, Proverbs 13:20, and 1 Peter 3:15

How do these verses help you to talk about Jesus with others?

1. Basketball Review

[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: “Basketball Review” Activity Page, blank papers, and a small basket or bin

What You Do:

- Divide your group into two teams.
- Direct both teams to gather with their team on one side of your group space.
- Place the basket or bin on the other side of your group space.
- Spread out the blank pieces of paper on the floor in the space between where the kids are gathered and the basket or bin.
- Choose a team to go first.
- Read a question from the “Basketball Review” Activity Page.
- Encourage the group going first to work together to come up with an answer.
- If the group gets the answer correct, award that group one point.
- Instruct one kid from their team to walk to a blank piece of paper on the ground, ball up the paper, and try to make a basket from that spot.
- If the kid gets the ball into the basket, award that team a second point!
- Continue playing, alternating between each team, until all questions and blank pieces of paper have been used.
 - Repeat some questions as needed.

What You Say:

“Great job answering our questions! Jesus’ friends had a lot of questions too. They didn’t always know what to think. Jesus’ friends had to decide what they believed about Jesus, and so can we: Do we believe He’s the Messiah, the Son of God?”

“When there were questions, Jesus started the conversation and challenged His friends to speak up and talk about it. Just like Jesus’ friends, we can also **[Bottom Line] practice talking about God!** It’s important to move from just *thinking* about God to actually *talking* about God. We can talk about God in our everyday conversations with our family and friends!”

[Make It Personal] (Share about ways you talk about God in your life. Who do you share with about what you see God doing in your life?)

* 2. Beach Ball Bounce

[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: Prepared beach ball, and black permanent marker

What You Do:

- Direct kids to spread out in your group space.
 - Give one kid the prepared beach ball.
- Encourage kids to gently toss the prepared beach ball with the questions on it to each other.
- After a few moments of the kids gently tossing the ball, say: “Freeze!”
- Instruct the kid who is holding a ball to answer the question their left thumb is nearest to.
- Continue the game until all kids have a chance to answer.
 - Since questions are open-ended, it’s okay if questions are repeated!
- Use this as an opportunity for kids to practice talking about their life and experiences with God!

What You Say:

“That was so much fun! I loved hearing about your thoughts, feelings, and experiences—especially about God. It felt like the more we played our game, the more comfortable we all were talking! In fact, the more we **[Bottom Line] practice talking about God**, the more we can keep our eyes open and be aware of all that God is doing. We can notice God doing amazing things all around us if we keep paying attention! When we **[Bottom Line] practice talking about God**, we can help people see who God is and how God is working too!”

3. Verse Accordion

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: Colorful cardstock (cut into strips), markers, and tape

What You Do:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up this month's Memory Verse, 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.

- Invite kids who would like to read the verse out loud to the group to do so.
- Set out the markers and cardstock strips.
- Invite the kids to choose eight strips.
- Direct them to write a section of the verse (a few words) on each strip, saving one strip for the reference.
 - Instruct the kids to use all eight strips.
- When kids finish writing out the verse, encourage the kids to line up their strips in verse order, leaving a small space in between each strip.
- Set out the rolls of tape.
- Instruct the kids to tape the strips together in order on one side, making sure the verse isn't covered up.
- Direct the kids to repeat with tape on the back side.
- Instruct the kids to fold the verse back and forth in different directions into an accordion shape!
- Say: "You can keep this pocket-sized Memory Verse with you wherever you go."

What You Say:

"Look at all of these amazing verse accordions! They fold up so small, you could carry it with you in your pocket or bring it along if you have a sports game or play practice. Just like we practice soccer, singing, or dancing, we can also **[Bottom Line] practice talking about God**. When we fill our minds with God's Word and memorize Scripture, we can be even more ready to talk about God when we're with our family and friends. Let's find a time to **[Bottom Line] practice talking about God** to someone this week by showing them our verse accordions!"

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: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to form groups of two or three.
- Once everyone has picked a spot to gather with their group, invite them to share something good God has done with their group.
- Once everyone has had an opportunity to share, direct the kids to come back in a circle as a whole group.
- Invite anyone who would like to share with the group.
- Close the group time in prayer.

What You Say:

"Dear God, thank You for our time in groups where we can practice talking with others about You. Help us to slow down, keep our eyes open, pay attention, and be ready to notice what You are doing all around us. Give us the courage to share what You are doing with others. Thank You that we can grow in our faith as we practice talking about You. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, invite kids to show them their verse accordions and to read the verse.

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 #2.*

Story Exploration – paper and pens/pencil

1. Basketball Review

[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:

- Print “Basketball Review” Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group
- Blank pieces of paper, at least ten for each Small Group
- Small basket or bin, one for each Small Group

* 2. Beach Ball Bounce

[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:

- Beach ball, one for each Small Group
- Black permanent marker, one for each Small Group
- Before group time:
 - Use the black permanent marker to write the following questions (spread out) on the inflated beach ball:
 - What is something true about God?
 - What is something you can thank God for?
 - What is something you can ask God for?
 - Who can you talk to about Jesus?
 - Where is one place you can talk about God?
 - When can you talk about God?
 - How can you help others see who God is?

3. Verse Accordion

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Colorful cardstock
- Markers, enough for a Small Group to share
- Tape, a few rolls for each Small Group
- Before group time:
 - Cut each piece of cardstock into thick, even strips—eight strips 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**