

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 Key Question: Who do you talk to about God?

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 (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

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. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: “Talk Time” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Invite the group to sit in a circle.
- Choose a kid to go first and let them pick one of the “Talk Time” Activity Page cards. Ask them to read what’s written on the card out loud for the group.
- Once they have read the scenario, give them a chance to answer the question about how they can talk about God in that scenario.
 - If they are having trouble thinking of an answer, they can choose another kid in the group to help them. Allow the group to contribute to the discussion for each scenario.
- Continue passing the stack of cards around the circle until everyone has had a chance to read a scenario or you have gone through the entire stack.
- Remind kids that the way we live our lives and our interactions with those around us can lead to conversations about God. Sometimes just choosing to be a good listener is what helps others trust us and become more receptive to what we have to say.
- ***[Make it Personal] Share a story about a time where you talked to someone else about God. Be sure to explain how you felt. Were you nervous or apprehensive? Allow kids to see that even adults find it challenging sometimes to talk to others about God. But when we do, we are helping someone else see and understand who God is.***

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: Prepared “Commit or Split” Activity Pages, bowl or bucket

What You Do:

- Divide the group into two teams.
- Invite teams to sit together on opposite sides of your group space, facing each other.
- Place the prepared bucket centered between the two teams.
- Explain they are going to play a game called “Commit or Split.”
 - Teams will take turns picking a card from the bucket to read out loud.
 - It will either be a scene from the Bible story or a prompt to monologue about something. *Explain that a monologue is typically a long, dramatic, side speech an actor gives during a conversation in a play.*
- Once they read it, their team will then have the choice to *Commit* or *Split*.
 - If they commit, their team will follow the prompt on their card. They can select what person or combination of people on their team are going to be involved. They will receive a point after.
 - If they split (preferring to wait for a different prompt but risk getting stuck with a more difficult or perhaps the same one again), they choose to pass up the opportunity, place the card back in the bucket, and do not get a point.
- Continue alternating turns between each team until the entire bucket of prompts has been used. At that time, the team with the most points is the winning team.
- After the game ends, ask:
 - How do you think Peter decided what to say about Jesus? *(He used the miraculous things he had witnessed to form his own belief in who Jesus is. Jesus tells Peter, “. . . this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.”)*
 - How can you decide what you believe about Jesus?
- Remind kids that we all have our own set of unique experiences that will reveal to us who Jesus is. Assure them that you, as their Small Group Leader, are here for them to ask questions as they learn about Jesus and explore what they believe.

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:

- Who do you talk to about God?
- What kinds of things can you say about God?
- Is it difficult for you to talk to others about God? Why or why not?
- How can you overcome a fear of talking to others about God?
- Why does talking about God take practice?

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, “Free Throw Verses” Activity Page, bucket, small plush basketball or other ball, masking tape

What You Do:

- Place the bucket on one end of your group space and place the “Free Throw Verses” Activity Page cards inside.
- Place the Bible on the floor next to the bucket.
- Use the tape to make a line on the floor roughly 8-10 feet away from the bucket (or as much as your group space allows).
- Invite kids to line up behind the taped line.
- Explain to kids that in the game of basketball, there is a shot called a free throw. In order for basketball players to consistently make their free throws, they have to spend a lot of time practicing. That takes commitment!
- Tell kids that they will be practicing their free throws in this game. They will take turns shooting the ball into the bucket.
- If they make their shot, they will pick one of the cards out of the bucket. On the paper will be a Bible verse reference. They should use the Bible to look up the verse, and then they should read it out loud for the group.
- If they miss their shot, they should go to the end of the line, and it becomes the next person’s turn to shoot.
- Continue rotating through the line until all Bible verses have been read.
- Assure kids that just like it takes practice to improve our free throw skills, it also takes practice talking to others about God. The more we do it, the more comfortable we will feel when it comes to telling others about things God has done.

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: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Invite kids to sit in a circle.
- Explain to kids that one of the purposes of being in a Small Group is to have people you can feel safe and comfortable with when it comes to talking about God. You can be there to encourage, build each other up, and give confidence to tells others outside of the group about God as well.
- Ask:
 - What is something you know about God?
 - What is something that God has done?
 - What questions do you have about God? *(Ask this question without the purpose of answering kids' questions. Simply give them a safe place to voice questions they may have about God and reassure them that it's absolutely normal to have questions!)*
- Encourage kids to think of one person in their life, outside of church, that they can tell about God. If they feel comfortable sharing with the group, invite them to do so.
- Say a prayer for the group. Reserve some time during the prayer where kids can pray silently about the person whose name came to their mind. Close the prayer time by thanking God for the group.

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.)

Story Exploration – blank paper and pencil/pen

1. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Print "Talk Time" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, 1 set for each Small Group.

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need:

- Print "Commit or Split" Activity Pages on paper and cut apart, 1 set for each Small Group
- Bucket or bowl, 1 for each Small Group
- Before group time: Place the cut cards into the bucket or bowl.

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:

- Bucket, 1 for each Small Group
- Print "Free Throw Verses" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, 1 set for each Small Group
- Bible, 1 for each Small Group
- Small plush basketball or other ball, 1 for each Small Group
- Masking tape, 1 long piece for each Small Group

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:

- No supplies needed