

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: On This Rock

Application Activity: Tell What You Know!

Memory Verse Activity: VIR: Very Important Rocks

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.

Who is Jesus: Game (if time)

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

What You Need: Offering container

What You Do:

- Greet kids by name as they arrive.
- Invite kids who have brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Say, “We’re going to play the game, Who Is Jesus?”
- Instruct the kids to ask: “Who is Jesus?”
- Give an answer from the dialog below.
- Direct the kids to act out your answer as best as they can.
- Here are some sample conversations:
 - “Who is Jesus?”
 - Respond by saying: “Jesus is brave!”
 - Direct kids to act out “brave.”
- “Who is Jesus?”
 - Respond by saying: “Jesus is kind!”
 - Direct kids to act out “kind.”
- Continue in the same pattern with the following responses:
 - “Jesus is King!”
 - “Jesus is a friend!”
 - “Jesus is helpful!”
 - “Jesus is God’s Son!”
 - “Jesus is a teacher!”
 - “Jesus is . . .” (*Fill in additional words as time and interest allow.*)

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 learn 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. On This Rock

[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: Black construction paper, and white crayons

What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to gather in a circle.
- Use a white crayon to write “Jesus is . . .” on a piece of black construction paper.
- Show the kids the paper.
- Set the paper out where they can see it.
- Give each kid a piece of black paper and a white crayon.
- Invite them to draw something on their paper to finish the phrase “Jesus is . . .”
 - For example: *crown for king; arm for strong; smiley face for friend; cross for Savior, etc.*
- Review the Bible Story by asking:
 - What questions did Jesus ask His friends? (“*Who do people say the Son of Man is?*” *Matthew 16:13 NIV*. “*Who do you say I am?*” *Matthew 16:15 NIV*.)
 - Which friend answered Jesus first when He asked them, “*Who do you say I am?*” (*Matthew 16:15 NIV*). (*Peter*)
 - What was Peter’s answer? (“*You are the Messiah,*” *Matthew 16:16 NIV*.)
 - How can we be like Peter? (*Answers will vary: we can be brave, we can trust God, etc.*)
 - Who is Jesus? (*Answers will vary: Invite kids to show their pictures.*)
- Show the kids how to crumple their paper to look like a rock.

What You Say:

“Jesus’ friends had questions. They heard what others were saying and the questions that other people had about Jesus. They weren’t always sure what to think. Jesus knew about their questions, and helped them talk about it! You may have questions too. That’s okay!

“Hold your paper rocks up in the air. (*Pause for kids to hold up their rocks.*) In our story today, Peter showed how strong his faith was when he said to Jesus, “*You are the Messiah. You are the Son of the living God*” (*Matthew 16:16 NIV*). Let’s be strong like a rock when we **[Bottom Line] practice talking about God** so the people around us can hear how much God loves them!”

2. Tell What You Know!

[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: Blank paper; markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils; and timer

What You Do:

- Give each kid a blank piece of paper.
- Set out the markers, crayons, or colored pencils.
- Instruct the kids to draw a picture of a story from the Bible they're familiar with.
 - Here are some suggestions:
 - The Creation Story
 - Jesus' birth
 - Palm Sunday
 - Today's Bible Story (Kids can draw Jesus with His friends with question marks.)
- Set the timer for five minutes.
- Start the timer.
- Give the kids five minutes to draw.
- Once they are done, instruct the kids to sit with a partner.
- Invite the kids to share their story picture with each other.
- Remind kids to share as many details as they can from what they know, for example:
 - WHO is in the story
 - WHERE the story takes place
 - WHEN the story happened in the Bible
 - WHAT happened in the story

What You Say:

"The Bible is full of stories that show us who God is and how wonderful God is! When we love Jesus and know how wonderful God is, we should want other people to know that too! We can **[Bottom Line] practice talking about God** to help others see who God is. It can remind us to remember what God has done too!

"What are some ways you could tell people about Jesus or talk with your family and friends about God? (*Invite responses.*) Some of you may love to read stories. So you can read or listen to someone read you a story from the Bible, and then go tell other people about it! Some of you may like to draw! So you can draw something from the Bible and show it to other people. Or some of you may see how God helps you, and that is another great thing you can tell others about. A great place to start to **[Bottom Line] practice talking about God** is just telling the people around you what you do know about God!"

[Make It Personal] (*Share about a time you were able to talk with someone else about God. It could even be how you prepare for Small Group each week, so you can talk with the kids about Jesus!*)

3. VIR: Very Important Rocks

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: Prepared rocks, permanent marker, and hand wipes; *Optional: "VIR Cards" Activity Pages and permanent markers*

What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a line, shoulder to shoulder.
- Place one of the prepared rocks (or "VIR Cards" Activity Page) in front of each child, face down, in verse order.
- Give the first kid in line (the kid with the first word/phrase from the Memory Verse face down on their rock) the marker.
 - If you have less than 15 kids, hand out additional rocks after each kid has completed one (keeping the rocks in order.)
 - If you have more than 15 kids, choose a few kids to help you hand out the rocks each round.
- Instruct the first kid to write the number "1" on their rock (the side that is face up, without the words), then pass the marker to the next kid in line to write the number "2" on their rock, and so on.
- Once each kid has written a number on their rock, collect the rocks, shuffle them, and place them in a pile across from where the kids are seated.
- Provide hand wipes for cleanup, if needed.
- Instruct the kids to take turns (in order), run over to the pile, find their order number rock, turn it over, and place it to the side of where the group is playing.
 - Direct the first kid in line to find the rock with "1" on it, flip it over, and set it to the side.
 - Instruct the second kid to go next to find the rock with "2" on it, flip it over, and set it to the side, etc.
- Continue this way until rocks have been flipped over and lined up, revealing the Memory Verse.
- Read the words on the verse to the kids and invite them to repeat after you.
- Ask if anyone would like to try to read the verse from the rocks.

What You Say:

"Great job putting these rocks in the right order so we could remember our Memory Verse! This is a great verse we can share with other people!

"Today, we heard about how bold Peter was when he shared who Jesus is. Peter had learned about Jesus. What are some ways we can learn more about Jesus? (*Invite responses, like: read or listen to the Bible, talk with grown-ups who follow Jesus, pray to God, etc.*) The more we know about Jesus, the more we can tell others about how good He is! And the more others will learn to trust Him too! Wherever we are and whatever we're doing, we can **[Bottom Line] practice talking about God!**"

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 sit in a circle.
- Ask: "What are some ways you've seen God at work in your life this week?"
 - Be ready with prompts, like: What kind of food did they eat, did they remember their spelling words, figure out how to solve a math problem, grandma got better after being sick, etc.
- Share with the kids that you're going to begin a prayer with an example of your own.
- Encourage the kids who would like to pray out loud to take turns after you.
- Say: "Praying out loud is another great way to **[Bottom Line] practice talking about God!**"
- Close your group time in prayer after everyone who wants to has shared.

What You Say:

"God, thank You for how You love us and take care of us! I want to thank You for _____ this week!"
(Pause and invite kids to thank God for something from their week.)

"Wow, God! You have done so much in each of our lives! Please help us to keep our eyes open to all You are doing around us! Thank You, God, for all You have created and blessed us with! We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to share their Very Important Rocks with their friends and family!

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 #1.*

*** 1. On This Rock**

[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:

- Black construction paper, one for each kid and leader
- White crayons, one for each kid and leader

2. Tell What You Know!

[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:

- Blank paper, one for each kid
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils, enough for a Small Group to share
- Timer, one for each Small Group

3. VIR: Very Important Rocks

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Rocks (big enough to write a few words on, and smooth), 15 for each Small Group
- Before group time:
 - Use the permanent marker to write words and phrases from 1 Timothy 4:8 on 15 rocks.
 - Write the verse reference on the last rock.
- Permanent markers, one for each kid
- Hand wipes
- *Optional: Print "VIR Cards" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart. Use this, and washable markers instead of rocks and permanent markers, one set for each Small Group*

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**