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SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

GRADES 3 & 4

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Cover Photography: © iStockphoto/Rich Vintage Photography

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ISBN 978-1-4707-4162-4

Printed in the United States of America.

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The future of Sunday school + family ministry is NOW.

No doubt about it, the world is changing. Families used to go to church every week. Kids used to have longer attention spans. Teachers used to have more time to prepare. And didn't our budgets used to be bigger?

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It combines Sunday school with family ministry.
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It's simpler and easier.
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It's made for NOW.
Life is complicated and full of distractions. FaithWeaver NOW keeps faith on track through even the most frenzied lifestyles.

What makes FaithWeaver NOW the perfect curriculum for TODAY's church?

- Families learn the same Bible passage in age-appropriate ways.
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- Simple and easy lessons fit even the busiest lives.
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- The Scope & Sequence goes through the Bible every three years.
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Create a vibrant family ministry that's new…that's wow…that's NOW. FaithWeaver NOW gives you a fresh strategy for being more successful than ever in bringing families closer to Jesus.

Thom Schultz Joani Schultz

Thom and Joani Schultz
Chairman and Chief Creative Officer
Group Publishing, Inc.

Elisha Helps a Widow and Her Sons 2 Kings 4:1-7

Third- and fourth-graders want things to be fair, and they may have a hard time accepting that some people are in great need while others have way more than they need. Use this lesson to help kids understand that God was in control of the entire situation involving Elisha and the widow and that God worked through people to care for the widow, just as he works through people to care for those in need today.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Trading Places** *(about 10 min.)* Trade shoes with a partner and perform different actions.	a box of plastic baggies in a size big enough to cover kids' feet	
2 Bible Exploration	**Mr. Nice Guy** *(about 15 min.)* Make their own clay jars, and act out today's Bible passage in a dubbed, foreign-movie style.	Bibles, CD player, 1 small paper cup per child, modeling clay, markers, bottle of vegetable oil (optional) **Teacher Pack:** CD, Bible Timeline	

▶Bible Point
God cares for needy people.

Key Verse
"He [God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing" (Deuteronomy 10:18).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Kids will extend God's care to others by caring for someone in need in a specific way.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**God Will Meet My Needs** *(about 15 min.)* Write their needs and place the lists in the jars they made earlier, and sing a song about God's goodness.	CD player, jars made in previous activity, 1-inch strips of paper (3 per child), scissors, pens, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD	
	Caring Acts *(about 10 min.)* Draw or write one way they will care for someone this week.	Bible Truth Sleuth, pens or markers	Tear out the Lesson 1 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
	Alien Ideas *(about 10 min.)* Learn the Key Verse, and brainstorm caring acts.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, tape, pens, 1 pad of sticky notes per 2 children **Teacher Pack:** "Alien Love" poster	
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Commit to caring for someone in need in a specific way.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.	Bible Truth Sleuth	Tear out the letter to parents from the back of each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Elisha Helps a Widow and Her Sons

2 Kings 4:1-7

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Elisha the Prophet

Elisha was a prophet who ministered in Israel during the time of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Elisha's ministry spanned the reigns of four kings: Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Jehoash. And he was even consulted by Jehoshaphat, a king of Judah.

In 2 Kings 4:1-7, it is interesting to note that the husband who died had been from "the company of the prophets." During this time in Israel in which few people followed God, groups of people gathered to promote the worship of God, with older prophets acting as spiritual mentors to younger ones. Thus it is quite possible that Elisha was familiar with the widow and her sons.

It Seems Cruel, But...

Apparently the man who died had left significant debt. Though it seems cruel, Mosaic law provided that a creditor could force debtors or the children of debtors into slavery in exchange for unpaid debt. And even though the widow had just lost her husband, a creditor was apparently threatening to take her two sons.

The oil the woman possessed wasn't even enough to cook with. The Hebrew word for *oil* used here indicates that she had only a small flask of oil that was used for anointing, not cooking.

God's Creative Plan

God didn't respond to the widow's need by having Elisha produce a bag of gold coins that would enable her to pay her debt. Instead, knowing that they had only a tiny bit of oil, Elisha asked her and her sons to gather jars from their neighbors to fill with oil. In this way, Elisha made the widow act on her faith in God.

It would have been easy for the widow to refuse Elisha's instructions, fearing that the neighbors would think her crazy for asking for jars when they knew she didn't have anything to fill them with. But she was faithful in following the instructions that came from God through Elisha. And her faithfulness was rewarded!

The Jesus Connection

Jesus showed even more care and compassion for needy people than Elisha did. And as followers of Jesus, we can model the same care.

Having needs can lead us to greater dependence on God. How has God helped you with needs already? What needs do you need to commit to him now? Ask God for help to depend on him with your needs. You can write your prayer here.

Trading Places Supplies

a box of plastic baggies in a size big enough to cover kids' feet

1 GETTING STARTED

Trading Places

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Say: **Sometimes people say things like "I'd hate to be in his shoes" or "I wonder what it's like to walk in her shoes." What that means is that we understand other people better when we live like them—even if only briefly. But for now, we're going to discover what it's like to be in someone else's shoes—literally!**

Ask kids to each find a partner and trade shoes with that person. If kids aren't wearing socks, give them plastic baggies to put on their feet instead. Tell kids not to worry if the shoes don't fit, but tell them not to force their feet all the way into shoes that don't quite fit. Kids can still play the game without the shoes completely on their feet. Help kids line up on one side of the room and place their partners' shoes on their own feet. Ask kids to walk backward to the other side of the room and back. Have kids repeat this several times and perform different actions each time, such as skipping, clapping their hands while walking, or hopping on one foot.

After kids have made two or three trips across the room and back, have them return their partners' shoes.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to walk across the room in your partner's shoes instead of your own?**
- **If you were to trade places for a day in the life of your partner, what do you think it would be like?**
- **Who (outside of our group) would you not want to trade places with or "walk in that person's shoes"? Why?**

Say: **Sometimes people go through hard things in their lives, and we wouldn't want to be in their shoes. But God will always be there for people no matter what they're going through. God often uses people to help other people in need. Today we're going to see how God used the prophet Elisha to help some people in need. Let's learn about this Bible passage as we discover how ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Mr. Nice Guy

What You'll Do

Say: **In today's Bible passage, jars play an important role. So before we look at our Bible passage, let's make our own jars to use during our time together today.**

Give each child a small paper cup, and have kids write their names on the bottoms of the cups with markers so they'll be sure to get their own cups back later in the lesson.

Then give each person enough modeling clay to make a "rope" to coil around the cup. Have each child roll the modeling clay into a long rope. Then show kids how to wrap the clay around their paper cups until they've covered the cups.

Gather kids in a circle on the floor, and have each child hold his or her jar.

Say: **We all need God in our lives, no matter who we are or where we live. ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE. But not everyone knows that God cares for him or her. God can use people like you and me to share God's love with those living in really hard times. Let's see how God used Elisha to help a widow in need.**

Show kids the "Elisha Helps a Widow" picture on the Bible Timeline, and after making sure everyone has a Bible, ask them to open their Bibles to 2 Kings 4:6 and have them follow along as you read the verse.

Ask one child to be the widow, another child to be Elisha, and two others to be the widow's sons. The rest of the group will be the widow's neighbors. Explain to the actors that they will act along with the CD as it plays, moving their mouths with the voices in the style of a dubbed foreign movie in which the mouth movements don't match the spoken words. It would be best if you demonstrate this before beginning the activity.

Play a small portion of the "Mr. Nice Guy" segment (track 2 on the CD), and really ham it up. Get kids laughing! Let kids see that they can have fun with their roles. Then, restart the CD at the beginning of the track, and encourage the actors to listen for their roles.

At the appropriate time in the track, have the widow and her sons walk all around the circle collecting the jars from each of the children in the circle and placing them in the middle of the circle. Optionally, provide a plastic bottle of vegetable oil with the lid screwed on tightly for the widow to use as a prop.

Mr. Nice Guy
Supplies

Bibles
CD player
1 small paper cup per child
modeling clay
markers
bottle of vegetable oil (optional)
Teacher Pack
CD: "Mr. Nice Guy" (track 2)
Bible Timeline

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What can you learn about God as you think about your role in acting out this Bible passage?**
- **What does this Bible passage tell about how God cares for people in need?**
- **Think about how God used others to care for the widow in need. What might that look like today?**

Say: **Sometimes people find themselves in desperate situations as the widow did. She knew she needed to pay her debts, but she didn't have any money. God used Elisha and her neighbors to care for her in her tough situation. ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE. And one way he cares for others is through us. God wants us to help one another the way Elisha helped the widow.**

Let's make something to help us understand that God always cares for needy people, no matter what the needs are.

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

God Will Meet My Needs

God Will Meet My Needs
Supplies

CD player
jars made in previous activity
1-inch strips of paper (3 per child)
scissors
pens
copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "He Is Good" (Nahum 1:7) (track 3)

What You'll Do

Have kids get the jars they made earlier. Then give each child three strips of paper and a pen.

Say: **God continues to care about our individual needs. Take a minute to think about needs you may have. They can be things you've been struggling with for a while or something that's just come up. They can be really big problems or just little things that are bugging you. For example, maybe you need someone to help your family get along. Or maybe you need someone to listen to you when you're sad. When you've thought of your needs, write each need on a separate slip of paper.**

Give kids a few minutes to think of their needs and write them down, and play "He Is Good" (Nahum 1:7) (track 3 on the CD) while kids work.

Have kids form pairs and pray for each other's needs. After they've finished praying, remind them to pray at home, too.

Say: **Fold your slips of paper, and place them inside your jar. Take them home today as a reminder of how God took care of the widow's needs by providing oil to fill all the jars she'd gathered—and how God will take care of your needs, too! Anytime**

you have a need, write the need on a slip of paper, and place it in your jar. When you place your written need in the jar, pray that God will show you how he'll meet your need.

Have kids fold their slips of paper and place them in their jars.

Say: **God is good and we can count on him to meet our needs. Let's listen to a song that talks about how God is good.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "He Is Good" (Nahum 1:7) (track 3 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along and do the motions if they're comfortable doing so.

(Verse)
The Lord is good, *(point finger to heaven)*
A refuge in times of trouble. *(arms over head like an "O")*
He cares for those who trust in him. *(clasp hands in prayer)*
The Lord is good, *(point finger to heaven)*
A refuge in times of trouble. *(arms over head like an "O")*
He cares for those who trust in him. *(clasp hands in prayer)*

(Chorus)
The Lord is good, good, good, good, good. *(point finger to heaven)*
He's good, good, good, good, good. *(point finger to heaven)*
He's good, good, good, good, good. *(point finger to heaven)*
He's good, good, good, good, good. *(point finger to heaven)*

(Repeat from the beginning; then repeat from the beginning again, singing verse and chorus simultaneously.)

He's good.

"He Is Good" (Nahum 1:7) by Jay Stocker. © 2004 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to list your needs and have someone pray for your needs?**
- **When you need something, how quick are you to bring God your needs?**
- **How can you know God cares about your needs?**

Say: **We know that ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE. God is good because he meets the needs of desperate widows like the one in the Bible as well as desperately needy people today. Let's see how we can share that truth with others.**

Caring Acts
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth pens or markers

Caring Acts
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 1 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Caring Acts

What You'll Do

Say: **God can use us in many ways to care for people in need everywhere. We can save allowance money to send to various organizations that provide clothes and food for those in need. We can donate clothes to those who need clothing. We can help serve meals at a soup kitchen. Maybe when you get older you'll want to be a missionary and travel to tell people in need about God's love. You can do many things for God to care for those in need.**

Distribute today's Bible Truth Sleuth pages, and have kids find the "My Caring Act" section. Have kids draw a picture or write about one thing they'll do this week to care for someone in need—whether it's caring for someone in a country far away or someone in their very own neighborhood or home.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What are some of the things you'll do to help people who are in need?**
- **What are other ways you've seen people help those in need?**

Say: **We know that ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE. We saw that today in our Bible passage when God met the needs of the widow and her sons through the prophet Elisha. God can use us like he used Elisha to care for needy people.**

Alien Ideas
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
tape
pens
1 pad of sticky notes per 2 children
Teacher Pack
"Alien Love" poster

Alien Ideas

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Deuteronomy 10:18, and read the verse aloud: **"He [God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing" (Deuteronomy 10:18).** Have kids repeat the verse with you several times.

Ask:

- **What do you think it means that God "defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow"?**
- **Who do you think an "alien" is?**
- **Why is giving an alien food and clothing important?**

Say: **An alien is someone who's not in his or her own home. This person probably feels out of place and uncomfortable. God wants aliens to be loved and cared for. Let's take a look at what we can do to help aliens feel that way.**

Tape the "Alien Love" poster where everyone can see it. Help kids form pairs, and direct them to turn to the "Alien Love" section on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Have them

look at the pictures on the poster and discuss in their pairs ways God can use each of us to care for the people in need. Instruct kids to write their ideas on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages during their discussions. While kids are discussing, give each pair a pad of sticky notes. When kids have finished discussing,

Say: **With your partner, write on your sticky notes the ideas you came up with. Write one idea on each sticky note. When you've finished writing, come up to the poster with your partner and stick your ideas all over the poster. When you've all finished sticking your ideas to the poster, we'll see what kind of impact we can make on the world.**

Give kids time to work and put their sticky notes on the poster.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What feelings do the pictures on the poster bring out in you? Explain.**
- **What are your thoughts as you look at the sticky notes and think about the kind of impact we can have on the lives of people in need?**
- **If you were to dream big, what would you want our church to accomplish to help needy people?**

Say: ▶ **GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE. Our Key Verse reminds us of that: the widows, the fatherless, and the aliens, like the widow in our Bible passage. The people on our poster are aliens because they don't have a home. You came up with lots of great ideas to fill our poster. Can you imagine how much caring could happen if we just did the things we wrote down? God's caring can stretch to a lot of people in need!**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how ▶ GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE this week.**

Tell kids that their Daily Challenge this week will be to follow through with the action they chose to do on the "My Caring Act" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Be sure to commit to a specific act as well, and tell kids what you've decided to do. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: ▶ **GOD CARES FOR NEEDY PEOPLE. The way God cared for the widow in the Bible shows us that every need is important to God. Let's show God that we care for people too by following through with our Daily Challenges.**

Weaving Faith at Home
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

Weaving Faith at Home
Easy Prep

Tear out the letter to parents from the back of each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Weaving Faith at Home

Send the letter to parents home with your kids or give it to parents when they pick up their children. This is a great way to show families they're important to your church and to support their role as spiritual leaders to their children.

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the commitment they made to caring for someone in need in a specific way and what they learned about God's care of needy people. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God for caring about people in need and asking him to help us find ways to show God's love to people in need.

Lyrics

He Is Good (Nahum 1:7)

(Verse)
The Lord is good,
A refuge in times of trouble.
He cares for those who trust in him.
The Lord is good,
A refuge in times of trouble.
He cares for those who trust in him.

(Chorus)
The Lord is good, good, good, good, good.
He's good, good, good, good, good.
He's good, good, good, good, good.
He's good, good, good, good, good.

(Repeat from the beginning; then repeat from the beginning again, singing verse and chorus simultaneously.)

He's good.

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God Heals Naaman's Leprosy

2 Kings 5:1-16

Third- and fourth-graders are an interesting mixture of bravado and kindness. One minute they're bragging about their abilities and the next minute they're sharing toys with other kids. They alternate between wanting to follow instructions and wanting to do things their way. Use this lesson to help kids know God wants them to be humble and follow what he asks them to do.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Slimy Hands** *(about 10 min.)* Discuss leprosy, Naaman's skin disease.	large bowl, water, several different colors of food coloring, basic white toothpaste, wet wipes	Fill a large bowl with warm water, and add food coloring to make the water brown. You may want to use several bowls or fill a sink instead if you have a large group.
2 Bible Exploration	**A Sure Cure for Naaman** *(about 20 min.)* Create a river, and use a poster to see how Naaman was healed.	Bible, sponges, scissors, 3 shallow bowls to hold paint, white tempera paint, brown tempera paint, blue tempera paint, large sheet of paper, wet wipes **Teacher Pack:** "Naaman" poster	Cut sponges into smaller pieces that children will dip into paint. Pour the paint into shallow bowls, one color per bowl.

▶Bible Point

God wants us to be humble.

Key Verse

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (1 Peter 5:6).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Kids will practice humility by quietly doing something kind.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Humble Yourselves!** *(about 15 min.)* Explore ways they can be humble in their lives.	Bible Truth Sleuth, pens, tempera paint and sponges from previous activity, slips of paper, an uninflated balloon **Teacher Pack:** "Being Humble" cards	Tear out the Lesson 2 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book. Separate the "Being Humble" cards.
	Lifted Up *(about 10 min.)* Learn the Key Verse, and talk about pride and humility.	Bibles, CD player, slips of paper, pens, electric fan, table, poster board, tape **Teacher Pack:** CD	Plug in the fan near the table.
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Commit to doing one act of kindness in complete secrecy.	pens, paper	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

God Heals Naaman's Leprosy

2 Kings 5:1-16

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Victory for the Enemy?

As this passage begins, it's easy to be confused by the statement that the Lord gave victory to a commander in the army of Aram. However, it's unlikely that these victories were over Israel. Instead, they were likely victories of Syria (Aram) over the Assyrians who were threatening them. No doubt Naaman didn't recognize God's assistance at the time, but the writer of Kings did.

Young Girl Offered Advice

At this time a peace treaty between Israel and Aram was in effect, but part of the border was in dispute. It was likely during one of these border skirmishes that the young Israelite girl was taken captive and became a servant in Naaman's household. This girl was aware of the miracles Elisha had performed, and she had faith that he could work a miracle in Naaman's life as well.

It's interesting that a slave girl from Israel was aware that God was working through Elisha, but that the king of Israel didn't think of Elisha when Naaman came to him for healing. The king of Israel saw only a deception designed to provoke a war between the two countries.

Naaman Struggled With His Pride

When Naaman left for Israel to see Elisha, he took about 750 pounds of silver and 150 pounds of gold. At current prices, that would equal over $200,000 in silver and nearly $3 million in gold! Naaman was prepared to pay well for his healing!

Even though Naaman was willing to pay so much money to be healed, initially he was unwilling to follow Elisha's instructions to rinse himself in the Jordan River. Naaman may have hoped for an instant, easy cure, but God apparently wanted Naaman to learn something from the experience. The Jordan was no doubt muddy, and God may have used this method to reveal Naaman's pride and test his faith. When Naaman's servants finally convinced him to humble himself and do as the prophet said, God healed him.

The Jesus Connection

Jesus set the prime example of humility, giving up his place in heaven and taking his place on earth as a relatively poor Jewish man.

What prideful things are you holding onto? Which of God's commands feels too "beneath you"? Ask God to humble you and help you follow Jesus' example, giving up anything you feel entitled to. You can write your prayer here.

Slimy Hands
Supplies

large bowl
water
several different colors of food coloring
basic white toothpaste
wet wipes

Slimy Hands
Easy Prep

Fill a large bowl with warm water, and add food coloring to make the water brown. You may want to use several bowls or fill a sink instead if you have a large group.

1 GETTING STARTED

Slimy Hands

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Gather everyone together.

Squeeze a quarter-sized dollop of toothpaste into each child's hand. Have kids rub the toothpaste over their hands and wrists.

Ask:

- **How do your hands feel right now?**
- **What kinds of things would or wouldn't you want to do with your hands the way they are right now?**

Have kids shake hands with five other people.

Say: **Imagine you had a skin disease that made your skin look somewhat as it looks right now. Then think about what it would be like if you had that disease all over your body.**

Have kids wash their hands in the brown-colored water you've prepared; then give each person a wet wipe to clean up.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to use your hands when they were covered with toothpaste?**
- **How long would you be willing to leave the toothpaste on your hands? What would you avoid doing while toothpaste was covering your hands?**
- **What would you be willing to do to get rid of it?**
- **Did you trust that the water would wash the toothpaste from your hands and make them clean? Why or why not?**

Say: **In our Bible passage today, we'll learn about a man named Naaman who had a terrible skin disease called leprosy. Leprosy can make a person's skin white and flaky and cause painful sores. People can even die from leprosy. Even though Naaman was a powerful man, he didn't have the power to get rid of this disease. Let's find out how Naaman was cured of leprosy and discover that ▶ GOD WANTS US TO BE HUMBLE.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

A Sure Cure for Naaman

What You'll Do

Display the "Naaman" poster where kids can reach it. Both sides of the poster will be exactly the same, so it doesn't matter which side shows. Later you'll turn the poster over.

Say: **Our Bible passage today is about a man named Naaman and the lesson he learned about humility. Let's look at it together.**

Open your Bible to 2 Kings 5:1-16, and show kids the passage.

Say: **Naaman was a powerful and successful army commander of Aram, one of the enemies of Israel. Although Naaman was powerful, he had leprosy. Let's take a look at what Naaman may have looked like with leprosy.**

Show kids how to dip pieces of sponge into the bowl of white tempera paint. Have each child come up to the poster and lightly blot some white tempera paint onto a part of Naaman's skin.

Say: **The young slave girl knew what Naaman needed to do to be cured of his leprosy, and she told Naaman's wife about the prophet Elisha. Naaman was desperate! He went to Israel and finally found Elisha, who told Naaman to wash himself seven times in the muddy Jordan River. But Naaman didn't want to do that—and he was angry that Elisha wouldn't just wave his hand and call on God to heal him. Let's create the muddy Jordan River now.**

Set out a large sheet of paper, and have kids create the Jordan River by using sponges to paint the paper with blue and brown tempera paints. Keep in mind that the Jordan was a muddy river! After kids have finished making the river, provide wet wipes if necessary, and ask two kids to hold up each end of the river.

Say: **Naaman's servants went to Naaman and told him that if Elisha had asked him to do some great thing, he would have done it. Why, they asked, would Naaman not do the simple act of getting in the muddy river? So Naaman went to the river and got in.**

Then have kids form seven groups (a group can be one child) and take turns "dipping" Naaman into the Jordan by walking behind the "river" with the "Naaman" poster six times. Have the seventh group take the poster behind the river one last time, and turn the poster around so that Naaman is "cleansed" of his leprosy.

Say: **Naaman was cured and his skin became like a young boy's!**

A Sure Cure for Naaman
Supplies

Bible
sponges
scissors
3 shallow bowls to hold paint
white tempera paint
brown tempera paint
blue tempera paint
large sheet of paper
wet wipes
Teacher Pack
"Naaman" poster

A Sure Cure for Naaman
Easy Prep

Cut sponges into smaller pieces that children will dip into paint.

Pour the paint into the shallow bowls, one color per bowl.

Naaman almost went home without being healed. He had so much pride that he thought Elisha himself should have come to the door and waved his hand over him to heal him. But it was Elisha's servant who came and talked with Naaman. The servant told Naaman to go and dip himself in the Jordan River seven times. But the Jordan River was muddy! Naaman didn't think he should get into a muddy river when there were plenty of sparkling clean rivers at home!

Naaman had to humble himself in several ways before he was healed. First, he had to do what a young slave girl told him to do and go visit Elisha. Then he had to dip himself in the muddy Jordan River—because Elisha's servant told him to.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What does it mean to be humble?**
- **What can we learn from Naaman's pride and change of attitude?**
- **What are some ways you can be humble?**

Say: ▶ **GOD WANTS US TO BE HUMBLE. Being humble means not to be proud or think too highly of yourself. God used the people in Naaman's life to help him realize that his pride was getting in the way of his healing. When he humbled himself, he was cured. Let's explore some ways we can be humble in our lives.**

Humble Yourselves!
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth
pens
tempera paint and sponges from previous activity
slips of paper
an uninflated balloon
Teacher Pack
"Being Humble" cards

! BALLOON WARNING
To avoid choking hazards, be sure to pick up pieces of any broken balloons promptly. Balloons may contain latex.

Humble Yourselves!
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 2 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Separate the "Being Humble" cards.

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Humble Yourselves!

What You'll Do

Say: ▶ **GOD WANTS US TO BE HUMBLE. Naaman was too prideful at first to accept a simple solution to his leprosy. But his soldiers reminded him that he would've been willing to do much more to be healed! It's a good thing Naaman humbled himself or he could've missed out on healing. Let's see how we can be humble in our lives.**

Place a "Being Humble" card in each corner of your room. Have kids form four groups, and have each group go to one of the corners. Distribute pens and the Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Have kids look at the picture and read the caption at the bottom of the "Being Humble" card that's in their corner. Then have kids discuss in their groups how the person shown in the picture can demonstrate being humble. Have kids record their responses in the appropriate section of the "Give God the Glory" area of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Give groups about two minutes in each corner before rotating through the remaining three corners.

Say: **Let's do something that only God will notice right now. We're going to make an encouragement balloon for our pastor. Think of something encouraging you can write or draw on slips of paper to put in a balloon; then we'll work together to fill the balloon.**

As kids think about encouraging words for their pastor, set out slips of paper.

Have kids write and draw on the slips of paper their words or pictures of encouragement. Make sure no names are written on any slips of paper. Have kids decorate their papers as much as they want. When the slips are full, have kids wrap the slips into tight rolls. Ask willing kids to help you stuff the deflated balloon with the slips. Blow up the balloon and tie it off. Then secretly head to the pastor's office, and set the balloon on your pastor's desk or hang it where your pastor will see it.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Which "Being Humble" card reminded you most of a situation you've faced? Talk about that.**
- **What was it like to give the balloon gift without getting praised for it?**
- **Explain whether you think it's ever okay for people to know you did a good thing.**
- **Have you ever done something good, but no one noticed? What was that like?**
- **How could you act humbly in that situation?**

Say: ▶ **GOD WANTS US TO BE HUMBLE. When we're humble in all our actions and attitudes, God will notice and he'll be pleased with us. That doesn't mean no one else can know about the good things we do. But it does mean that we don't brag about it. And it means our attitude is focused on God, not ourselves. Naaman had to learn to focus on what God wanted him to do rather than his own wishes. Let's look at our Key Verse and think more about how to be humble.**

Remind kids not to tell anyone about the balloon.

Lifted Up

What You'll Do

Have kids open their Bibles to 1 Peter 5:6, and ask a willing child to read the verse aloud: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

Lifted Up
Supplies

Bibles
CD player
slips of paper
pens
electric fan
table
poster board
tape
Teacher Pack
CD: "Humble Yourselves" (James 4:10) (track 28)

Lifted Up
Easy Prep

Plug in the fan near the table.

Say: **Think of some things in your life you're proud of. Maybe you hit a winning home run in baseball or you got straight A's on your report card. Think about several things you've done that you're proud of; then I'll have you write them down.**

Give kids slips of paper, and have kids write things they've done that they're proud of.

Ask:

- **What do you think when someone else notices those things and talks about them?**
- **Do you feel better when you brag about yourself or when someone else talks about the good things you've done? Explain.**

Have kids place their slips of paper on a table. Position the electric fan near the table, and turn it on. When all the slips of paper have blown onto the floor, turn off the fan.

Say: **We're going to pick up all the slips of paper, but if you find one that belongs to you, leave it on the floor and let someone else pick it up.**

Have kids gather the slips. After kids have done this, have each child read what's written on the paper. After a slip has been read, tape it securely to the poster board. After you've taped down all the slips, turn the fan toward the poster board, and turn it on. Leave the fan on long enough for kids to see that this time the slips of paper aren't blowing away.

Say: **When we brag about ourselves, which isn't being humble, it's not likely that people will be very impressed. Just as the fan blew the slips of paper away, almost everyone except us quickly forgets about the things we do. It's important to let God be the one who lets others notice the good things you do, rather than bragging about them yourself. That way God will be honored and you will get "lifted up" and noticed for the right reasons.**

Say: **Let's sing a song that expresses what it means to humble ourselves before God.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "Humble Yourselves" (James 4:10) (track 28 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along.

Sometimes we think we know it all,
We've got it all together.
But we don't know what's goin' on,
Who's holdin' us together.
Yeah, yeah.
You gotta learn to listen to his voice
Yeah, yeah.
You gotta learn to put him first.
In everything you do, you must

Humble yourselves before the Lord,
And he will lift you up in honor, in honor.

Humble yourselves before the Lord,
And he will lift you up in honor, in honor.
And he will lift you up.

(Repeat from the beginning.)

Humble yourselves before the Lord,
And he will lift you up in honor, in honor.
Humble yourselves before the Lord,
And he will lift you up in honor, in honor.
And he will lift you up.

"Humble Yourselves" (James 4:10) by Jay Stocker. © 2007 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Have a willing child again read aloud 1 Peter 5:6: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **The slips of paper blew off the table the first time. How is that like what happens sometimes when we brag about ourselves?**
- **When other people "lifted us up" onto the poster board, the papers stayed firm when the fan blew. How is that like what happens when we wait for others to notice the good things about us?**
- **How might God lift us up, as our Key Verse says, if we're humble?**

Say: ▶ **GOD WANTS US TO BE HUMBLE. Naaman learned that he could be healed of a terrible disease if he would humble himself and follow Elisha's instructions. Even when other people may not notice good things we do, God does notice! And that's the only thing that matters. God's the one who'll lift you up at the right time.**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

Daily Challenges
Supplies

pens
paper

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how ▶ GOD WANTS US TO BE HUMBLE.**

Say: **As your Daily Challenge this week, silently and secretly write down one nice thing you'll do for others this week. You can do anything kind, but here's the catch:**

You can't tell anyone. This kind thing has to be done in secret. I'll give you one minute to think and write.

Be sure to commit to doing a secret act of kindness, too. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What excites you about your Daily Challenge? Remember not to share specifics!** Allow time.

Say: ▶ **GOD WANTS US TO BE HUMBLE. God showed Naaman that his biggest problem wasn't his leprosy as much as it was his pride. And Naaman humbled himself and received healing for both of his problems. Let's humble ourselves before God this week by following through on our Daily Challenges.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they commited to and what they learned about how ▶ **GOD WANTS US TO BE HUMBLE**. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, asking God to help us show humility.

Lyrics

Humble Yourselves (James 4:10)

Sometimes we think we know it all,
We've got it all together.
But we don't know what's goin' on,
Who's holdin' us together.
Yeah, yeah.
You gotta learn to listen to his voice
Yeah, yeah.
You gotta learn to put him first.
In everything you do, you must

Humble yourselves before the Lord,
And he will lift you up in honor, in honor.
Humble yourselves before the Lord,
And he will lift you up in honor, in honor.
And he will lift you up.

(Repeat from the beginning.)

Humble yourselves before the Lord,
And he will lift you up in honor, in honor.
Humble yourselves before the Lord,
And he will lift you up in honor, in honor.
And he will lift you up.

"Humble Yourselves" (James 4:10) by Jay Stocker. © 2007 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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Jonah Learns a Lesson

Jonah 1–3

Third- and fourth-graders are old enough to know they need to obey their parents, teachers, and other adult authorities. Yet they also can show great resistance and downright rebellion when they get angry, frustrated, or scared. Use this lesson to help kids understand that following God's ways can sometimes feel scary or strange, but that it's always the right choice to obediently follow God.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Opposites Attract** *(about 10 min.)* Play a fun game in which they do the opposite of what they're instructed to do.		
2 Bible Exploration	**Ticket to Tarshish** *(about 10 min.)* Participate in a fun, interactive expression of the Bible passage.	Bibles, plastic wrap	
	A Fishy Situation *(about 15 min.)* Work in groups to make a giant mural of the Bible passage.	Bibles, CD player, 5 sheets of white poster board, markers, crayons, paper, tape, colored tissue paper, glue sticks, scissors, construction paper **Teacher Pack:** CD	

▶Bible Point
Following God is always the right choice.

Key Verse
"The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them" (Hosea 14:9).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Kids will follow God in a specific situation.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
2 Bible Exploration *(continued)*	**Timeout!** *(about 15 min.)* Look at the "timeouts" God gives us, and sing a song about trusting God.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, pens, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD, Bible Timeline	Tear out the Lesson 3 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Righteous vs. Rebellious** *(about 15 min.)* Learn the Key Verse, and run a race and think of how to walk in God's ways.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, pens, scrap paper	
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Commit to two ways they'll follow God's direction this week.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Jonah Learns a Lesson

Jonah 1–3

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

The Setting

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. The Assyrians were known for their power and cruelty, and it was because of their wickedness that God commanded Jonah to preach to them (Jonah 1:2). According to classical writers, Nineveh was the largest city in the world at that time, encompassing an area about eight miles in circumference. In addition, a group of four large cities in the area was also referred to by the name *Nineveh.*

The Conflict

Jonah's reluctance to go to Nineveh may have arisen from fear for his own safety—no one likes the bearer of bad news! Or it may be because he feared that the people of Nineveh would repent of their evil ways and that God in his compassion would forgive them. Jonah may have selfishly felt that the salvation of the Ninevites would ruin his credibility as a prophet, since he had foretold their destruction. He also may not have thought it would be fair if God saved Nineveh since his own people, the Israelites, had been punished for their sins. Whatever the reason, it's clear Jonah had no interest in God's call.

Strange Salvation

Being swallowed by a fish would be traumatic, to say the least, but in this case the event was arranged by God to save Jonah's life. For in the belly of that fish, Jonah came to his senses and realized that he needed to obey God.

We don't know why the people of Nineveh responded so positively to Jonah's message. Perhaps God had prepared their hearts. Or maybe Jonah looked really odd after having spent three days in the digestive juices of a fish, and his journey shook them up. At any rate, God spared the Ninevites when they repented—until about 150 years later when God exacted judgment on them for returning to their evil ways.

The Jesus Connection

Jesus is often associated with Jonah, because he spent three days in the tomb just as Jonah spent three days in the fish. But he wasn't there for his own lack of following God—he was there for ours.

In what ways have you run from God? How can you follow him better this week? Talk with God about how you're like or unlike Jonah, and thank God for his faithful direction in your life. Ask God to help you follow him even if you don't like where he leads. You can write your prayer here.

1 GETTING STARTED

Opposites Attract

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Say: **Let's play a fast, fun game of opposites. You'll have to listen carefully to my directions. Here's how we'll play.**

Explain that kids will line up shoulder to shoulder, facing you. You'll call out a command, and kids will respond by doing the opposite of that command. For example, if you direct kids to stand up, they'll actually sit down. If you tell them to act as if they're hot, they should pretend to shiver.

After kids understand how to play, quickly call out the following directions or think of your own: stand up, sit down, look up, act cold, look down, look to the left, look to the right, face forward, face backward, shake your head no, and nod yes.

Talk With Kids

After the game, let kids sit down to rest. Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to do the opposite of what I directed?**
- **Tell about a time you've wanted to do the opposite of what someone told you to do.**
- **What helps you determine which directions to follow?**

Say: **In today's Bible passage, we'll meet a prophet named Jonah. God gave Jonah specific directions about what to do, but Jonah did the exact opposite! Jonah found out the hard way that ▶ FOLLOWING GOD IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE. Let's see if we can learn from Jonah's mistakes.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Ticket to Tarshish

Ticket to Tarshish Supplies

Bibles
plastic wrap

What You'll Do

Say: **Today's Bible passage comes from Jonah 1–3.**

Open your Bible to Jonah 1–3, and show kids the passage. Distribute Bibles, if necessary, and help kids find the passage themselves.

Say: **Jonah was a prophet of God. A prophet is a person chosen by God to give God's messages to the people. You would think that a prophet would always obey God. But that's not exactly what happened in Jonah's case.**

Our Bible passage opens with God telling Jonah to deliver a message to the people in Nineveh. Let's read what the Bible says in the first two verses of Jonah.

Ask a willing child to read Jonah 1:1-2: "The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.' "

Say: **From just these two verses, we can tell that Nineveh was a big place, full of wicked people. God told Jonah to go there and preach against the wickedness. Let's see how Jonah responded.**

Ask another willing child to read the first part of verse 3: "But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish."

Say: **God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, but he headed for Tarshish instead. Tarshish was a town in the opposite direction! Jonah thought he could hide from God. Let's see what it might have been like to try to hide from God.**

Carefully tear off a long sheet of clear plastic wrap. Invite two children to hold the ends of the plastic wrap. Ask two outgoing children to be Jonahs. Have the Jonahs stand behind the plastic wrap, but in clear view of the whole group.

Explain that you'll lead the Jonahs in silent actions as you tell the next part of the Bible passage. The rest of the kids will imitate the actions of the two Jonahs as they view them through the plastic wrap.

Say: **When Jonah heard what the Lord commanded, he shook his head vigorously and thought, "No way am I going to Nineveh!"**

Pause for the Jonahs to act, and have the rest of the kids imitate them. Then select two new Jonahs and two new kids to hold the plastic wrap.

Say: **Then Jonah had an idea! He clapped his hands and jumped up and down.**

Pause for the Jonahs to act, and have the rest of the kids imitate them. Then select two new Jonahs and two new kids to hold the plastic wrap.

Say: **So Jonah ran down to the town of Joppa, which was near the water. He thought the Lord couldn't see him.**

Lead the Jonahs in slowly "running" in exaggerated fashion to the other side of the room. Make sure the kids with the plastic wrap move with the Jonahs. Then lead kids in the response. Then select two new Jonahs and two new kids to hold the plastic wrap.

Say: **Jonah looked all around and finally saw a ship headed for Tarshish.**

Pause for the Jonahs to act, and have the rest of the kids imitate them. Then select two new Jonahs and two new kids to hold the plastic wrap.

Say: **Jonah ran right up to the ticket window.**

Lead the Jonahs in slowly "running" in exaggerated fashion to another part of the room. Make sure the kids with the plastic wrap move with the Jonahs. Then lead kids in the response. Then select two new Jonahs and two new kids to hold the plastic wrap.

Say: **Jonah counted out his money and paid for a ticket to Tarshish.**

Pause for the Jonahs to act, and have the rest of the kids imitate them. Then select two new Jonahs and two new kids to hold the plastic wrap.

Say: **Then Jonah climbed aboard the ship.**

Pause for the Jonahs to act, and have the rest of the kids imitate them. Then select two new Jonahs and two new kids to hold the plastic wrap.

Say: **Jonah still thought God couldn't see him!**

Lead the whole group in a response to Jonah's thoughts. Have your actors take a bow as you lead the whole group in a round of applause for everyone's participation.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How well did our Jonahs hide behind the plastic wrap?**
- **What was it like to watch our Jonahs try to hide from us, even though we could see them?**
- **Do you think it's ever possible to hide from God? Explain.**

Say: **It's impossible to run away from God. It's impossible to hide from God. God saw every move Jonah made, just as we saw every move our Jonah actors made. Let's find out what happened next as Jonah learned the hard way that**
▶ FOLLOWING GOD IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE.

A Fishy Situation

What You'll Do

Have kids form five groups, and give each group one sheet of white poster board. Set out markers, crayons, paper, tape, colored tissue paper, glue sticks, scissors, and construction paper.

Explain that each group will create part of a 3-D mural to tell the next part of what happened to Jonah. Assign each group one of the following passages: Jonah 1:4-5; Jonah 1:6-10; Jonah 1:11-13; Jonah 1:14-15; and Jonah 1:16-17.

Distribute Bibles, and have groups read their passages. Then have kids in each group work together to create their group's mural section. Ask each group to write on the top of the poster board a one-sentence summary of its part of the passage. Play "Trust in the Lord" (Proverbs 3:5-6) (track 4 on the CD) while kids work.

Encourage kids to make each mural section as 3-D as possible. For example, kids can fold construction paper and tape it in place to form a ship, and they can crumple and attach tissue paper to form raging waves.

Walk around the room to offer groups encouragement and help as needed. Allow about eight minutes for groups to work.

In sequence, let each group present its mural section to the whole group. Have groups tape their mural sections to a wall. After the presentations, lead the whole group in a round of applause for everyone's efforts. Then have kids answer the following questions in their groups:

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What does your section of the mural show you about what can happen when we don't follow God?**
- **Tell about a time you wished you could hide from God as Jonah tried to do.**
- **Tell about a time you learned the hard way—as Jonah did—that ▶ FOLLOWING GOD IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE.**

Say: **Jonah finally realized he couldn't hide from God. And he realized God had sent the storm to get his attention. He probably thought he was going to die when the sailors tossed him into the sea. But God loved Jonah and had a plan for him. That's why he sent the fish to swallow Jonah: to save his life. Jonah was beginning to learn that ▶ FOLLOWING GOD IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE. Now let's find out about Jonah's time inside that fish.**

Have kids remain in their groups for the next activity.

A Fishy Situation
Supplies

Bibles
CD player
5 sheets of white poster board
markers
crayons
paper
tape
colored tissue paper
glue sticks
scissors
construction paper
Teacher Pack
CD: "Trust in the Lord" (Proverbs 3:5-6) (track 4)

Timeout!
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
CD player
pens
copies of the lyrics page (found at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "Trust in the Lord" (Proverbs 3:5-6) (track 4)
Bible Timeline

Timeout!
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 3 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Timeout!

What You'll Do

Show kids the "Jonah Learns a Lesson" picture on the Bible Timeline. Say: **Your parents or teachers may have given you a "timeout" when you disobeyed. Timeouts give people time to think about their poor choices and actions. Jonah's three days and three nights inside the big fish were kind of like a timeout. He had plenty of time to think about how he had disobeyed God. He really began to realize that ▶ FOLLOWING GOD IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE. Let's look at Jonah's experience and what we can learn when God gives us "timeouts."**

Distribute pens and this week's Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Direct kids' attention to the "Timeout" activity. Give kids several minutes to answer the questions inside the fish shape. Then have group members compare answers. Invite willing kids to share their answers with the whole group.

Say: **Let's sing a song that talks about following God.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "Trust in the Lord" (Proverbs 3:5-6) (track 4 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along.

Trust in the Lord (trust in the Lord)
With all your heart (with all your heart).
Lean not on your own understanding (understanding).
In all your ways (in all your ways),
Acknowledge him (acknowledge him);
He will make your paths straight.

Once you begin that way,
Don't you ever, ever stray;
You'll be on your way to an amazing life.
Once you begin that way,
Don't you ever, ever stray;
You'll be on your way to an amazing life.

(Repeat from the beginning.)

Trust in the Lord (trust in the Lord)
With all your heart (with all your heart).
Lean not on your own understanding (understanding).
In all your ways (in all your ways),
Acknowledge him (acknowledge him);
He will make your paths straight.
Yeah, he will make your paths straight.
Oh, yeah, he will make your paths straight.

"Trust in the Lord" (Proverbs 3:5-6) by Rob Biagi. © 2005 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Say: **Jonah was grateful to God for saving his life. He realized that he had disobeyed God but that God still loved him enough to save him. It's the same way with us. We all disobey God at times, but God wants to forgive us and help us get back on the right track. This week's Key Verse can help us remember that ▶ FOLLOWING GOD IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE. But before we explore it, let's find out about the second chance God gave to Jonah and to the Ninevites!**

Explain that you'll lead the kids in silent actions as you tell the next part of the passage. The kids will imitate your actions. But here's the catch—they'll do a totally different action the first time they imitate you. Then you'll say "second chance!" and they can do the correct motion.

Say: **God told Jonah a second time to go to the great city of Ninevah and proclaim the message God would give to him.** (Put your hand to your ear.) **This time, Jonah obeyed God and went to Ninevah.** (Walk in place, and then stop.)

Say: **When Jonah got to Ninevah, he proclaimed loudly so that all could hear: "Forty more days and Ninevah will be overturned."** (Proclaim loudly "Forty more days!" while cupping your hands around your mouth.)

Say: **What happened next surprised Jonah: All of the Ninevites, including the king himself, believed what Jonah told them. The whole city fasted and put on special clothes to say they were sorry so that God would not destroy them.** (Get on your hands and knees and say, "We're sorry, God!")

Say: **When God saw that the Ninevites were sorry and had turned from their evil ways, God had compassion and did not destroy them as Jonah had proclaimed.** (High five someone.) **Everyone got a second chance! Whew!**

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What do you usually think about during a timeout?**
- **What are the benefits of a timeout?**
- **In what areas do you need to give yourself a timeout so you can take a good look at how well you're following God?**
- **Why are second chances so valuable?**

Say: **▶ FOLLOWING GOD IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE. But that doesn't make it an easy choice. Sometimes, as Jonah did, we want to do the opposite of what God asks us to do. Let's think of some situations where, no matter how tough it is, we can remember to follow God.**

Righteous vs. Rebellious
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
pens
scrap paper

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Righteous vs. Rebellious

What You'll Do

Say: **Jonah finally learned that ▶ FOLLOWING GOD IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE. Our Key Verse for today helps us remember that lesson so we don't have to learn it the hard way as Jonah did. Let's find out how we can follow God in our lives.**

Open your Bible to Hosea 14:9, and show kids the verse. Help kids find the Key Verse in their own Bibles. Then read the verse aloud: **"The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them" (Hosea 14:9).**

Say: **Let's play a game to find out what it means to say "The righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them."**

Help kids form two teams—the Righteous and the Rebellious—and have the teams line up in single-file lines at one end of the room. Scatter several pieces of scrap paper on the floor. Keep the pieces of paper close together, but not touching. Kids will need to step between the pieces of paper.

Say: **The members of your team are going to take turns running this course. The Righteous team will run forward, but the Rebellious team will face the opposite way and run backward. You have to get to the other side of the room without stepping on a piece of paper. If you step on a piece of paper, you have to come back, but you'll get to go again. When the person in front of you has made it to the other side, it will be your turn to run. When everyone has made it to the other side, we'll switch teams. Ready? Go!**

Remind members of the Rebellious team to face backward as they run, and make sure kids aren't stumbling on the paper. When both teams have reached the end, have them switch. The Righteous team will become the Rebellious team, and the Rebellious team will become the Righteous team. Run the race again.

Direct kids' attention to the "Righteous Walk" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Say: **Think about some reasons you sometimes stumble and disobey God. Maybe you're afraid that your friends will make fun of you if you obey God when they don't. Or maybe, like Jonah, you think God won't really see you disobeying. Inside the two rocks in the picture, write the things that make you stumble.**

Make sure everyone has a pen, and give kids several minutes to write. Then invite children to share their ideas with the whole group.

Say: **Now, inside the two footprints, write two ways you can follow God this week. Maybe you'll write that you'll stand up for God even when it's hard. Or you may write that you won't be afraid to share your faith. You could even think of something you know God wants you to do but you've been afraid to, such as telling your mom or dad the truth about a mistake you made.**

Give kids time to write; then invite kids to share their thoughts with the whole group.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was hard about being the Rebellious team?**
- **How was being the Rebellious team like not following God?**
- **How were the pieces of paper like or unlike things we stumble over in our lives?**
- **Why is it important to be righteous and follow God in our lives?**

Say: **We all had a chance to see what it's like to stumble. When we follow God, he leads us away from stumbling blocks in our lives. Like Jonah, we've learned that ▶ FOLLOWING GOD IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE. We can learn from Jonah's mistake and follow God right now, this week! Let's follow God instead of stumbling as Jonah did.**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

What You'll Do

Tell kids that everyone's Daily Challenge for the week is to follow through with the two things they wrote on the footsteps in the "Righteous Walk" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Be sure to commit to two actions as well, and be sure to tell kids what you've decided to do. Kids will be more likely to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: ▶ **FOLLOWING GOD IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE. Jonah learned that lesson in a really hard way by getting a timeout for three days in the belly of a fish. The good news is that we can learn from his mistakes by following through on our commitments to follow God this week.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the commitment they made to follow God's direction this week and what they learned about how following God is always the right choice. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God for always watching over us, and asking for help to make the right choice to follow God.

Lyrics

Trust in the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Trust in the Lord (trust in the Lord)
With all your heart (with all your heart).
Lean not on your own understanding (understanding).
In all your ways (in all your ways),
Acknowledge him (acknowledge him);
He will make your paths straight.

Once you begin that way,
Don't you ever, ever stray;
You'll be on your way to an amazing life.
Once you begin that way,
Don't you ever, ever stray;
You'll be on your way to an amazing life.

(Repeat from the beginning.)

Trust in the Lord (trust in the Lord)
With all your heart (with all your heart).
Lean not on your own understanding (understanding).
In all your ways (in all your ways),
Acknowledge him (acknowledge him);
He will make your paths straight.
Yeah, he will make your paths straight.
Oh, yeah, he will make your paths straight.

"Trust in the Lord" (Proverbs 3:5-6) by Rob Biagi. © 2005 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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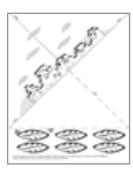
Jonah Complains About God's Compassion Jonah 3:10–4:11

Third- and fourth-graders have a great capacity to show love to others. They also have great capacity for tantrums and self-centeredness, and sometimes can be cruel to other kids. Use this lesson to show kids that God really does love each and every person, including people they may not like. Challenge kids to show God's love.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Beach Ball Bop** *(about 10 min.)* Play a fun game trying to keep a beach ball away from others.	beach ball, permanent marker	
2 Bible Exploration	**Picture This!** *(about 20 min.)* Create a craft to tell about Jonah's complaints with God's compassion.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, glue sticks, several pairs of scissors, markers, crayons, chenille wires, tape, stapler **Teacher Pack:** copies of the "Picture This!" handout (4 per child), "Scorching Sun" pieces 	Tear out the Lesson 4 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book. Optionally, you can make a sample craft before the lesson. Make the entire craft, or simply assemble one quarter of the craft so kids can see a finished section. Just follow the instructions in the activity.

▶Bible Point
God wants us to love everyone.

Key Verse
"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Kids will have compassion for others by showing three people the love of God.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Don't Be a Jonah** *(about 15 min.)* Discuss how to help others be cured of their sin.	Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, pens, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD	
	Patience, Patience *(about 15 min.)* Learn the Key Verse, and play a game about patience.	Bibles, 4 spoons, 2 golf balls	
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Commit to showing God's love to three people.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Jonah Complains About God's Compassion Jonah 3:10–4:11

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Not Enough Change

From this passage, it's apparent that Jonah's experience in the belly of the great fish had changed his course of action, but it hadn't really changed his heart. Essentially he told God, "I told you so!" Jonah hadn't really wanted the Ninevites to be saved from destruction, but God saved them anyway, and that made Jonah angry.

Down in the Dumps

Jonah had preached that Nineveh would be destroyed, so he may have felt that his reputation was at stake. He would have been glad to see Nineveh destroyed. When Jonah complained to God, God rebuked him, so Jonah went out of the city to wait and see what would happen to it.

God made the vine spring up with miraculous speed in order to shade Jonah. God also provided the worm that cut through the plant and caused it to die. Jonah was devastated by its destruction because he had appreciated the shade it provided. Now for the second time since Nineveh had been saved, he expressed a desire to die.

Great-Hearted God

God put up with Jonah's bad attitude throughout this whole episode. God spared Jonah's life when he disobeyed, and continued to provide for him even after Jonah expressed his anger toward God. God saved the people of Nineveh through Jonah's preaching. But Jonah only responded that it was unfair to save Nineveh. Jonah was selfishly concerned about the vine because it shaded him, but he had no compassion for the more than 120,000 people of Nineveh who needed God. And God didn't like it. When Jonah whined about the destruction of the vine—which God had miraculously provided—and said he wanted to die, God had enough!

The Point

Was God infuriated or brokenhearted when he spoke the words recorded in Jonah 4:10-11? After all that God brought Jonah through, God sorrowfully acknowledged that Jonah still hadn't gotten the point: God loves everyone, and he wants us to love them, too.

The Jesus Connection

Jesus showed love to a lot of people that other Jews didn't like. He shows us what it looks like to love everyone!

Who are some people you have a hard time loving? What can you do to share God's love with those people? Ask God to help you love everyone as he does. You can write your prayer here.

Beach Ball Bop
Supplies

beach ball
permanent marker

1 GETTING STARTED

Beach Ball Bop

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Gather kids in a circle, and show them the beach ball.

Say: **Today we're going to begin with a fun game of Keep Away. But before we do, let's write some things on this beach ball that we know about God. Share some things you know about God.**

Have kids call out things they know about God. For example, a child might call out, "God is love," or "God made everything." Write kids' ideas on the beach ball until it's covered with facts about God.

Ask for two willing kids to stand in the middle of the circle. Explain that everyone will bat the beach ball back and forth, trying to keep it from the two kids in the middle.

If a child in the middle manages to grab the beach ball, that child will move to the circle and choose a new child to stand in the middle. Continue playing until all kids have had a chance to be in the middle.

Talk With Kids

After the game, gather kids to answer the following questions.

Ask:

- **What was it like to try to keep the beach ball away from the kids in the middle?**
- **What was it like to be in the middle and have others keep the beach ball away from you?**
- **When have you felt like people were trying to leave you out?**

Say: **It's never fun to feel left out. But in today's Bible passage, we'll meet someone who wanted to leave others out of experiencing God's love! We'll find out how God reacted to that kind of thinking. In the process, we'll learn that ▶ GOD WANTS US TO LOVE EVERYONE. Let's get started.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Picture This!

What You'll Do

Say: **Let me tell you what happened to Jonah before we get started with today's lesson. Jonah was a prophet who ran away from God instead of obeying God. God wanted Jonah to preach to the wicked people in Nineveh, but Jonah hopped on a boat that sailed in the opposite direction. Jonah went overboard in a storm and was swallowed by a fish! God had the fish spit Jonah onto dry land, and then Jonah went to Nineveh to share God's message. The Ninevites were sorry for disobeying God and changed their ways. This week, we'll find out what Jonah did next.**

Open your Bible to Jonah 3:10–4:11, and show kids the passage. If kids have their own Bibles, help them find the passage.

Set out the craft supplies for kids to share. Give each child four copies of the "Picture This!" handout. Then have everyone cut off the bottom portion of the handouts so that each child has four square pieces. Have kids save the leaves from the bottom portion to use later in the activity.

Say: **As we go through today's Bible passage, you'll each get to make a craft that tells what happened. Let's get started!**

Invite someone to read Jonah 3:10. Then have kids color in the city on each of their "Picture This!" pages as you explain the directions (you can use the photos on the next page as a guide) and show that God spared Nineveh.

Demonstrate the craft as you show kids what to do to make a 3-D version of Nineveh. First, fold the top left corner of the square down to the lower right corner and crease. Open the page and repeat the fold with the opposite corners. Open the page and cut on the dashed line where indicated.

Hold the page so the cut is at the bottom. Then show kids how to overlap the two triangles on the bottom of the page and glue them in place using a glue stick. Repeat with all four pages, and staple them together to form a pyramid as shown in the photos.

Say: **God felt compassion for the people of Nineveh when they repented. But let's see how Jonah felt.**

Invite someone to read Jonah 4:1-4. Then distribute the Bible Truth Sleuth pages, and have kids cut out the first picture of Jonah where he looks angry. Have kids fold where indicated and glue it so Jonah is standing in one section of their Nineveh craft.
Invite someone to read Jonah 4:5, and then, from their Bible Truth Sleuth pages, have kids cut out the picture of Jonah sitting. Kids can attach the picture to a second section of their Nineveh craft.

Picture This!
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
glue sticks
several pairs of scissors
markers
crayons
chenille wires
tape
stapler
Teacher Pack
copies of the "Picture This!" handout (4 per child)
"Scorching Sun" pieces

Picture This!
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 4 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Optionally, you can make a sample craft before the lesson. Make the entire craft, or simply assemble one quarter of the craft so kids can see a finished section. Just follow the instructions in the activity.

Invite someone to read Jonah 4:6, and then have kids cut out the third picture of Jonah, where he looks happy. Kids will attach this picture to a third section of their Nineveh craft. Say: **Let's add a leafy vine to shade Jonah.** Have kids find the leaf section they cut off earlier, and have them color six of the leaves green before cutting the leaves out. Then have kids glue the leaves to the top of the scene, above Jonah, to represent the leafy vine that provided shade.

Invite someone to read Jonah 4:7-9, and then have kids cut out the fourth picture of Jonah, where he is sweating. Kids will glue this picture to the final section of their Nineveh craft. Say: **Let's add some more pieces to show what Jonah experienced.** Have kids color six of their leaves brown, then cut them out and twist and crumple them so they look "dead." Then have kids glue these leaves to the bottom of the scene. Give each child a 2-inch length of chenille wire, and demonstrate how to bend it to form a worm. Tape the worm near the brown leaves.

As kids work, give a "Scorching Sun" piece to each child. Have kids cut out the sun and then tape one end of a chenille wire to the sun piece, make an arch out of the chenille wire, and then tape the other end to the scene so the sun dangles over Jonah's head.

Invite someone to read Jonah 4:10-11.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **When you look at your craft, how do you see the city of Nineveh? Explain whether your view is more like Jonah's or God's.**
- **Do you think Jonah had a right to feel angry with God? Why or why not?**
- **Have you ever gotten mad when you thought someone deserved to be punished but wasn't? Talk about that.**
- **What seems fair and unfair about God's love?**
- **What can you learn from Jonah's attitude?**

Say: **God was trying to teach Jonah an important lesson. By giving Jonah the leafy vine and then taking it away, God tried to show Jonah that God is in charge. Jonah cared more for the vine than for the people of Nineveh who really needed God in their lives. God loves us and understands our frustrations when we don't understand his actions. As Jonah said, God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in love. And that's not just for us—that's how God treats the people that are hard to love, too. That's why ▶ GOD WANTS US TO LOVE EVERYONE.**

Encourage kids to take their crafts home as a reminder of the Bible passage and to look at the backs of their Jonah figures for this week's "The Word for the Week."

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Don't Be a Jonah

Don't Be a Jonah
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth
CD player
pens
copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "The Lord Is Merciful" (Psalm 145:8) (track 27)

What You'll Do

Ask kids to lie down and close their eyes.

Say: **Think about a time you were sick. Think about what it was like and how you felt. Did someone take care of you? Were you sick long? Quietly think about how it felt to be sick.**

Give kids 30 seconds to think.

Say: **Now think about going to the doctor. You've felt awful for a long time, and you really want to feel better. You go to the doctor to get some medicine to make you all better.**

Ask:

- **Why is it important for the doctor to give you medicine?**
- **Tell about a time you felt like a doctor really didn't help you feel any better.**

Say: **That's kind of like the people of Nineveh and Jonah. The people of Nineveh were sick with sin, and God was the only medicine that could cure them. But Jonah didn't want to share God with those people. He didn't think they deserved to be cured.**

Have kids look at the "Don't Be a Jonah" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Set out pens for kids. On each leaf, have kids first write the name of someone they can show God's love to this week and then how they'll do it. Encourage kids to write an actual sentence on each leaf that describes what they could do to show God's love to someone. For example, kids might write, "I can tell someone that God is love" or "I can help someone in need."

Then gather kids in a circle along with their student pages. Begin a prayer, asking God to help each person show God's love to others.

After the prayer, say: ▶ **GOD WANTS US TO LOVE EVERYONE. That can be very difficult in a world where there's so much hate, fear, and anxiety. Fortunately, God is merciful and helps us to show mercy. Let's sing a song about that now.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "The Lord Is Merciful" (Psalm 145:8) (track 27 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along.

The Lord is merciful and compassionate,
Slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.
The Lord is merciful and compassionate,
Slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

There is nothing that I could do
That you would not forgive.
Your grace is more than enough,
More than enough for me.

The Lord is merciful and compassionate,
Slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

There is nothing that I could do
That you would not forgive.
Your grace is more than enough,
More than enough for me.

The Lord is merciful and compassionate,
Slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love,
Slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

"The Lord Is Merciful" (Psalm 145:8) by Jay Stocker. © 2011 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Have you ever thought that someone didn't deserve God's blessings? Tell about that time.**
- **How can we have compassion for people who don't know God?**
- **What can it show others about God when we refuse to love certain types of people?**

Say: **Like Jonah, we're God's representatives in this world. It's easy to criticize Jonah, and we can choose to *not* follow Jonah's example. Instead we can follow God, who is loving and compassionate. ▶ GOD WANTS US TO LOVE EVERYONE. And because God has been so loving to us, we can share his love with others.**

Patience, Patience

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to 2 Peter 3:9, and show kids the verse. Have kids find the verse in their Bibles. Then read the verse aloud: **"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).**

Have kids repeat the verse until they can say it themselves.

Say: **Let's play a game that shows us what patience is and how God is patient with us.**

Divide into two teams. Give each team two spoons and a golf ball.

Say: **The goal of this game is to go as fast as you can but still be careful as you move a golf ball from person to person with spoons. You may not use your hands to touch the golf ball and if the ball falls to the ground, your team needs to start over. You'll need to use patience but go as fast as you can. After you pass the golf ball to the next person, give the spoon to the next person to receive the golf ball.**

Start the game. If you have time, play another round.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to patiently pass the golf ball while going as fast as you could?**
- **How was our game like or unlike the way the Key Verse describes God's patience?**
- **What does the Key Verse tell you about how God wants you to be patient with those who don't know him?**

Say: **You had to play this game somewhat slowly and patiently, because if you rushed you'd drop the ball and have to start over. God is patient and intentional like that with people, because he wants to give everyone a chance to follow him. And we're patient with other people because ▶ GOD WANTS US TO LOVE EVERYONE. We need to have love for people who don't know God. That means everyone. Jonah just couldn't get to a place where he could feel love for the Ninevites. But God's promise holds true for every single person. Now that's real love!**

Patience, Patience
Supplies

Bibles
4 spoons
2 golf balls

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

4 LASTING **IMPRESSIONS**

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how we can show God's love this week.**

Have kids look at the three names they wrote in the "Don't Be a Jonah" section on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Tell kids that showing God's love to the three people will be their Daily Challenge for the week.

Be sure to commit to the same challenge. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: **Jonah is an interesting person because God showed him enormous love and yet Jonah resented God's love for the citizens of Nineveh. Don't be a Jonah. Instead, follow through with your Daily Challenges and show how ▶ GOD WANTS US TO LOVE EVERYONE.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the commitment they made to show God's love to three people this week and what they learned about God's desire that we love everyone. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Encourage kids to find opportunities to show the love of God in their world. Remind kids to take their crafts home and use them to tell their families today's Bible passage.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God for loving us beyond imagination, and asking for help in loving others, especially the people we may not like.

Lyrics

The Lord Is Merciful (Psalm 145:8)

The Lord is merciful and compassionate,
Slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.
The Lord is merciful and compassionate,
Slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

There is nothing that I could do
That you would not forgive.
Your grace is more than enough,
More than enough for me.

The Lord is merciful and compassionate,
Slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

There is nothing that I could do
That you would not forgive.
Your grace is more than enough,
More than enough for me.

The Lord is merciful and compassionate,
Slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love,
Slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

"The Lord Is Merciful" (Psalm 145:8) by Jay Stocker. © 2011 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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God Calls Isaiah

Isaiah 6:1-8

Third- and fourth-graders are old enough to respond to God's holiness by completely participating in worship services. However, they might not fully know why they worship. Use this lesson to encourage kids to respond to God's holiness with all of their hearts in *all* of their lives!

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Whom Shall I Send?** *(about 10 min.)* Play a game in which they respond to a call in a variety of ways.	pillow	
2 Bible Exploration	**God's Holiness** *(about 15 min.)* See God's throne, find things that remind them of God, and listen to how seraphs worshipped God.	Bibles, CD player, paper, large chair, bedsheet, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD	
	Hot Forgiveness *(about 10 min.)* Tell God they're sorry for sins, and then taste God's forgiveness.	Bible, bowl, cinnamon-flavored candies	

▶Bible Point

God is holy.

Key Verse

"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" (Psalm 95:6).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Kids will respond to God's holiness in specific ways at home, in their neighborhoods, at school, and at church.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Responding to God** *(about 15 min.)* Think of ways to respond to God in different aspects of their lives, and pray for God's holiness.	Bible Truth Sleuth, markers	Tear out the Lesson 5 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
	Worshipping God *(about 10 min.)* Learn the Key Verse, and worship God in song.	Bible, CD player, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD	
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Commit to respond to God's holiness this week.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

God Calls Isaiah

Isaiah 6:1-8

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

The Setup

This passage describes God's call upon the life of Isaiah, yet it occurs in the sixth chapter of the book rather than at its beginning. From the earlier chapters, we learn that Judah's relationship with God was deplorable and that God's anger was burning against his people (Isaiah 5:25). We discover that Isaiah had a terribly difficult task ahead of him if he accepted God's call, because he would be preaching of God's displeasure and the coming destruction of Judah to a people who believed they were in line for God's blessings. These chapters also help to explain Isaiah's statement in today's passage that he lived "among a people of unclean lips."

The Holiness

In Isaiah 6:1-4, Isaiah describes the experience of witnessing the awesome holiness of God. In this passage, he attempts to describe a heavenly experience, but he has only earthly terms at his disposal. He says that the train of God's robe filled the spacious hall of the heavenly temple; this emphasizes the splendid magnificence of God's glory. Seraphs are a kind of angel not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. The Hebrew root word for seraph means "burn," which may be related to the seraphs' purity in serving God. Their cry of "holy, holy, holy" emphasizes God's indescribable holiness.

The Glory

The shaking of the doorposts and thresholds and the smoke that filled the temple also describe Isaiah's experience of God's glory and power. All of this likely reminded Isaiah's Hebrew listeners how God's voice shook the earth and terrified the people when God gave the law at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:18-19).

The Forgiveness

Isaiah knew that he was unclean and unworthy, but God prepared a cleansing for him. The burning coal was a symbol of both God's wrath and his forgiveness. The live coal didn't cleanse Isaiah; God did. Once his sin was forgiven, Isaiah demonstrated his faith in God by agreeing to serve God by speaking his message.

The Jesus Connection

Greater than a mere symbol of forgiveness like coal, God sent his Son, Jesus, to offer us forgiveness. It is through a relationship with Jesus that we have hope of one day being in God's holy presence.

How has God shown his holiness to you? How have you responded? Ask God to show himself to you more fully. You can write your prayer here.

Whom Shall I Send?
Supplies

pillow

1 GETTING STARTED

Whom Shall I Send?

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Gather kids in a circle. You'll stand in the center of the circle holding a pillow.

Say: **In this game I'll ask, "Whom shall I send?" Then I'll call a name and toss the pillow high in the air. That person will run to the center of the circle and catch the pillow before it hits the ground, and I will take that person's place in the circle. Then the new center person will ask, "Whom shall I send?" and call someone else's name. Ready? Whom shall I send?**

Call someone's name, toss the pillow high in the air, and then exchange places with the person. Throughout the game, change the actions kids do when they respond to the call. Have them hop on one foot, turn in a circle, skip, or jump on two feet. Then sit down on the pillow as you lead the following discussion.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like for you when someone called you during the game?**
- **How did you decide how quickly to respond?**
- **What is it like when someone calls you to do something special?**

Say: **Today we're going to learn about a man who heard God ask, "Whom shall I send?" and responded by saying, "Here am I! Send me!" The man was Isaiah, and he responded to God's holiness by telling people about God. Today we'll focus on how ▶ GOD IS HOLY. We'll explore how Isaiah responded to God's holiness, and we'll discover that we can respond to God's holiness.**

God's Holiness
Supplies

Bibles
CD player
paper
large chair
bedsheet
copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "Holy, Holy, Holy" (track 5)

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

God's Holiness

What You'll Do

Say: **God is holy—he's the one and only God who is totally without sin. God is filled**

with goodness, love, and power! God is awesome. Our Bible passage tells about Isaiah seeing our holy God in a vision, which is a special picture God gives people to see with their minds.

Open your Bible to Isaiah 6:1, and read it out loud. Have kids help you set out a large chair as a throne. Elevate it somehow—on a table, perhaps—so it's "high and exalted." Have kids help you unfold a bedsheet for the "train of his robe" and drape it over the throne.

Give children each a sheet of paper, and have them fan themselves and the people on either side of them as you read Isaiah 6:2. Tell kids that seraphs were angelic beings with six wings each. Then have kids lay the papers on the area surrounding the throne.

Say: **Wow! It would have been awesome to see our holy God sitting on his throne!**

Have kids form pairs, give each pair a Bible, and have kids find something that shows God is holy, such as a cross or a picture of Jesus, God, or a Bible scene. One at a time, have the pairs show their items, tell why the items remind them that God is holy, and place their items on or by the throne. Then have kids read Isaiah 6:3-4 in their pairs.

Say: **The seraphs were angelic beings, and they called to one another and worshipped our holy God. When they spoke, the temple shook and was filled with smoke. Let's sing a song that reminds of us of that holy moment.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "Holy, Holy, Holy" (track 5 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids have the kids join you in worshipful singing.

Holy, holy, holy!
Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning, our song shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy!
Merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

(Repeat from the beginning.)

"Holy, Holy, Holy" by Reginald Heber.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to try to explain God's holiness by finding items in our room?**
- **What has helped you understand God's holiness better?**
- **What can we learn from Isaiah's response to God's holiness ?**
- **How can we respond to God's holiness?**

Hot Forgiveness
Supplies

Bible
bowl
cinnamon-flavored candies

ALLERGY ALERT

Say: **When Isaiah saw God and all his power and holiness, he knew he needed forgiveness for all the wrong things he'd done. One way that we know that ▶ GOD IS HOLY is that we become aware of how *un*holy some of our actions are. So one way Isaiah responded was by telling God what he'd done wrong. We can do the same. Let's experience that now.**

Hot Forgiveness

What You'll Do

Set a bowl of cinnamon-flavored candy by the "throne." Open your Bible to Isaiah 6:5, and read the verse aloud.

Say: **Isaiah told God he had sinned and that he lived with people who were sinners, too. We all do things that are wrong and need to tell God about them. Let's do this right now.**

Have kids think of a sin they're sorry for without saying it out loud. Ask them to turn away from the throne and close their eyes.

Say: **When we sin, we feel bad. We might feel as Isaiah did when he said, "Woe to me!…I am a man of unclean lips." And each time we sin, it's like we're turning away from God. We need to tell God we're sorry, and God will forgive us because he loves us. Then we'll be close to God again, and we can know that ▶ GOD IS HOLY.**

Have kids keep their eyes closed as you read Isaiah 6:6-7 aloud. Take the bowl of cinnamon-flavored candy to each of the children. Tell the kids that cinnamon-flavored candy represents the "live coals." Have them open their eyes as you offer them each a piece of hot candy to eat. Ask kids to turn back to the throne.

Say: **God forgave Isaiah, and God forgives us. God loves us and forgives us of our sins, including the ones you just thought about.**

Read Isaiah 6:8 aloud.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Why does God's holiness remind us of our own unholiness?**
- **How can God's forgiveness help us understand his holiness even better?**
- **How was the burning of Isaiah's lips with "live coals" like or unlike the way you've experienced God's forgiveness?**
- **How can we respond to God's holiness in the way we view ourselves?**

Say: **One way to respond to God's holiness is to confess our own sinfulness and to allow God to touch us—to change us—even if it that means we'll feel some pain in the process of changing. When Isaiah saw God's awesome holiness, he felt awful**

because his own sinfulness was so far apart from God's holiness. But God always meets us where we are and if we're open to him, he'll change us. It's up to us to respond to the reality that ▶ GOD IS HOLY. Let's look at how we can respond to God's holiness.

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Responding to God

What You'll Do

Set out markers, and have kids turn to the "Responding to God" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Ask kids to draw ways they can respond to God's holiness at home, at church, in the neighborhood, and a place of their choice in the empty box. Ask kids to share their ideas for how to respond to God's holiness with the whole group.

Say: **Thanks for sharing your ideas! These ideas help us see how we can show our love to God. These are all wonderful ways to respond to God's holiness with worship. Sometimes we might think of worship as just singing and praying in church. But everything we do can be worshipful to God, including** [repeat things kids said to respond to God].

Say: **Another way to respond to God's holiness is to go to him through prayers of praise. Let's respond to God's holiness right now, and worship God through prayer. I'll begin the prayer; then we'll go around the circle to my right. When it's your turn, thank God for something that reminds you of his holiness, such as something in nature, his love, or your family.**

Pray: **Dear Lord, you are so holy and worthy of our worship. We praise you today for these things.** Pause to allow kids' responses. **You're an amazing, holy God. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What ideas from the drawings on your Bible Truth Sleuth page have you already tried? Talk about why you responded to God that way and what the outcome was.**
- **What was it like to respond to God in prayers of praise without asking him for anything?**
- **Why does God deserve the kinds of worship we talked about?**

Say: **It's a huge idea that ▶ GOD IS HOLY. It's almost too big to even begin to understand. Yet God calls us to respond with "Here I am, Lord. Send me." That's**

Responding to God
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth markers

Responding to God
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 5 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

how Isaiah responded, by accepting God's call to act as a prophet and to help the people know God and what to do to follow God. When we respond to God in prayer, and show a willingness to do what he asks, we tell the world that ▶ GOD IS HOLY.

Worshipping God
Supplies

Bible
CD player
copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "Let Us Bow Down in Worship" (Psalm 95:6-7) (track 6)

Worshipping God

What You'll Do

Gather kids in a circle around the "throne" you set up earlier. Open your Bible to Psalm 95:6, and read the verse aloud: **"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" (Psalm 95:6).**

Say: **One way we can respond to the truth that ▶ GOD IS HOLY is in worship—by using our voices to sing and pray. Let's do that right now!**

Encourage kids to kneel and bow down as you sing "Let Us Bow Down in Worship" (Psalm 95:6-7). Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "Let Us Bow Down in Worship" (Psalm 95:6-7) (track 6 on the CD). After they listen once, have the kids join you in singing.

Come, let us bow down in worship.
Let us kneel before the Lord.
Let us bow down in worship.
Let us kneel before him.

(Chorus)
For he is our God,
Yes, he is our God.
We are always under his care.
He is always there.

(Repeat from the beginning; then repeat chorus.)

Always there.
He is always there.

"Let Us Bow Down in Worship" (Psalm 95:6-7) by Ben Glover and Jay Stocker. © 2004 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Talk With Kids

Have kids stand up from being on their knees, take a seat, and then lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to kneel throughout our worship song?**
- **Why do kneeling and bowing down show respect for God's holiness?**
- **What's the most meaningful way that you like to respond to God's holiness, such as singing, praying, reading the Bible, telling others about him, or showing God's love to everyone?**

Say: **Isaiah saw God's holiness in the temple. And his entire life was an act of worship as he shared God's message. He didn't just respond to God's holiness in the moment of the amazing experience we learned about today—he responded with the rest of his life. We too can make worship a daily practice. By doing so, we'll be in a place to know and to see that ▶ GOD IS HOLY. May we know and respond to God's holiness every day!**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

What You'll Do

Say: **As your Daily Challenge, take your Bible Truth Sleuth page home with you today and remember to respond to God's holiness this week in at least one of the ways you drew on your page.**

Make sure you make a commitment to respond to God's holiness and tell the kids what you chose to do. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: ▶ **GOD IS HOLY. When we pay attention, we can see glimpses of God's holiness like a small picture of Isaiah's experience. Let's show that we respect God's holiness by following through on our commitments this week.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the commitments they made and what they learned about God's holiness. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, allowing for a few seconds of silence, and then thanking God that he is holy, and asking God to help us respond to his holiness every day.

Lyrics

Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, holy, holy!
Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning, our song shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy!
Merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

(Repeat from the beginning.)

"Holy, Holy, Holy" by Reginald Heber.

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Lyrics

Let Us Bow Down in Worship (Psalm 95:6-7)

Come, let us bow down in worship.
Let us kneel before the Lord.
Let us bow down in worship.
Let us kneel before him.

(Chorus)
For he is our God,
Yes, he is our God.
We are always under his care.
He is always there.

(Repeat from the beginning; then repeat chorus.)

Always there.
He is always there.

"Let Us Bow Down in Worship" (Psalm 95:6-7) by Ben Glover and Jay Stocker. © 2004 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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Josiah Promises to Follow the Lord 2 Chronicles 34

Many third- and fourth-graders enjoy reading. Often they have a favorite author or type of book they enjoy reading. Because of their improving reading skills, kids can begin to read larger sections of the Bible. Use this lesson to encourage kids to make it a regular habit to read the verses on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages every day. God's Word can change the lives of the kids in your group!

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Follow What?** *(about 10 min.)* Try to follow a leader without being able to see what they're being told to do.		
2 Bible Exploration	**Broken Idols** *(about 10 min.)* Break up cookies, and discuss how King Josiah had the idols destroyed.	Bibles, paper plates, cookies, disposable spoons, wet wipes	
	God Search *(about 15 min.)* Search for cards throughout the room to learn more about Josiah's search for God.	Bibles, pens **Teacher Pack:** "I'll Obey God's Word" cards	Separate the "I'll Obey God's Word" cards, and hide them around your room.

▶Bible Point
God's Word changes our lives.

Key Verse
"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Kids will read and share God's Word with others.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**God's Word for Me** *(about 15 min.)* Make a decorated box to hold favorite Bible verses.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, 1 copy per child of the "God's Word for Me When…" handout (at the end of this lesson), 1 copy per child of the"God's Word for Me" pattern (at the end of this lesson), tape, several pairs of scissors, markers, pens	Tear out the Lesson 6 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
	God-Breathed *(about 10 min.)* Discuss and sing the Key Verse, and think of ways to share God's Word with others.	Bible, CD player, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD	
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Josiah Promises to Follow the Lord

2 Chronicles 34

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

The Boy King

Josiah began to rule Judah when he was only 8 years old, but he probably didn't rule by himself. Although his father and grandfather, Amon and Manasseh, were evil and cruel, someone had apparently trained Josiah in the ways of the Lord. Fortunately, he chose to follow in the footsteps of his great-grandfather Hezekiah and his ancestor David by obeying the Lord. When he became king, he was advised by others who were faithful followers of God.

Josiah's Reforms

When he was 20, Josiah demonstrated maturity and wisdom far beyond his years as he began wiping out the places in Judah—and even in the northern kingdom of Israel—that were dedicated to worshipping idols.

When he was 26, Josiah decided to repair and restore the Temple, which had been turned into a house of idolatry by his father, Manasseh. It was during this cleansing that the Book of the Law was found. This was either the book of Deuteronomy or the entire five books of the Law, lost for years under the rule of kings who worshipped idols.

Josiah's Passion to Follow the Lord

Josiah may never have actually heard the words of the Law before this book was found. When it was read to him, he tore his clothes in grief over the sins of his people. He knew that God must have been terribly angry with the people of Judah and Israel.

Because Josiah humbled himself before God, God honored him and Judah. Josiah humbly read God's Word to the people. And before God and the people, Josiah vowed to return Judah to obedience to the Lord. God's Word revealed to Josiah the sins of his people, and it caused him to see what he needed to do to truly serve God. And what a change it made! For the rest of Josiah's life, the people of Israel "did not fail to follow the Lord."

The Jesus Connection

John 1 describes Jesus as the Word made flesh, and he changes our lives!

Consider this: How much do you read the Bible? What's good about your Bible-reading habits, and what needs to change? No matter what you have going on today, be sure to take some time to open God's Word and listen to God's voice. Then pray that God will change you because of what you read. You can write your prayer here.

1 GETTING STARTED

Follow What?

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Have kids form several rows. Stand in front of kids and face them.

Say: **We're going to play a following game today! I'm going to lead you in some motions, but you must keep your eyes closed the whole time.**

Have kids close their eyes. Then begin doing actions such as marching in place, making circles with your arms, hopping, turning, and doing jumping jacks. After performing several actions,

Ask:

- **Hey, why aren't you following me?**

Say: **Let's see if it would be easier to follow someone else.**

Ask for someone to help you lead the group, and have the rest of the kids close their eyes. Have the helper watch you and then try to lead the group in the same motions—but this time the helper will speak instructions to the group. Repeat the motions you did the first time, having the helper copy you each time and say the instructions.

Repeat the game several times with a different helper each time.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Was it easier to follow me or** [name of helpers]**? Why?**
- **What changes in the game made it easier to follow my instructions?**
- **What are ways that we can know how to do the things we need to do in life?**

Say: **In today's Bible passage, we're going to learn about a boy named Josiah who became king when he was only 8 years old. The people in his country weren't following God because they didn't know how. They had begun doing some wrong things, like worshipping fake gods. Then God's Word was discovered in the Temple! That was like having someone tell you my instructions. King Josiah then knew what the people needed to do to follow God's laws! Today we'll learn that ▶ GOD'S WORD CHANGES OUR LIVES.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Broken Idols

What You'll Do

Have kids form groups of four, and give each group a Bible. Have kids open their Bibles to 2 Chronicles 34.

Say: **Josiah became king when he was just 8 years old, and from an early age he sought after God and wanted to do what was right. He knew God hated that the people of Israel served other gods and worshipped idols. Josiah got rid of the false gods and idols the people had made. The Bible says he crushed the idols to powder. We're going to re-enact that in our time together today.**

Give kids wet wipes, and have them clean their hands. Also give each child a paper plate, a couple of cookies, and a spoon.

Say: **In your groups, read through 2 Chronicles 34:1-7 and look for ways that Josiah smashed idols. When you find one, smash your cookies. Please keep your smashing limited to your plate. When you find another way Josiah smashed idols, smash the cookie again. Keep smashing until you get through the Bible passage.**

Give kids time to read and smash their cookies. Then invite kids to eat their smashed cookies with their spoons as you discuss the following questions.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to "smash idols" in our activity?**
- **How was our smashing of the cookies like or unlike the smashing of the idols in our Bible passage?**
- **Why is it wrong to worship someone or something other than God?**
- **How can we show God that we are worshipping him alone?**

Say: **Josiah was determined to stop the worship of idols in his kingdom. He traveled all over his kingdom, smashing idols. He knew that something was wrong and wanted to make things right with God. While we don't need to go around smashing things, we can get rid of things in our lives that we know God doesn't like. But where do we go for guidance? As Josiah was about to learn next,**
▶ GOD'S WORD CHANGES OUR LIVES. Let's find out how.

Broken Idols
Supplies

Bibles
paper plates
cookies
disposable spoons
wet wipes

! ALLERGY ALERT

God Search
Supplies

Bibles
pens
Teacher Pack
"I'll Obey God's Word" cards

God Search
Easy Prep

Separate the "I'll Obey God's Word" cards, and hide them around your room.

God Search

What You'll Do

Say: **The next thing Josiah did was have the Temple repaired. While the Temple was being repaired, something that had been missing for a long time was found—God's laws! I've hidden some cards around our room today, and you get to search for them. On one side of each card are these words: "I'll obey God's Word." Let's go!**

Have kids search for the cards you hid beforehand. As children find the cards, have them sit down. When everyone has found a card, have kids form groups of four by forming the phrase "I'll Obey God's Word" with their cards.

Make sure that each group of four has a Bible and everyone has a pen.

Say: **In your groups, read through 2 Chronicles 34:8-33, and look for specific ways the various people did or did not choose to obey God's Word. If you have an *I'll* card, look for ways that people made promises or pledges to obey God's Word. If you have an *Obey* card, look for signs of obedience. If you have a *God's* card, look for God's role in the passage, and if you have a *Word* card, look for ways that the Law changed people. You can write your ideas on your cards.**

Give groups about five minutes to work, and then gather everyone's attention. Ask kids to share what they wrote on their cards and why.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How was our searching for these cards like or unlike the way the Book of the Law was found?**
- **How can searching through the Bible for answers to your questions and problems be helpful?**
- **What are some things you can do to let God change you through his Word?**
- **Why is God's Word important?**

Say: **Josiah was repairing the Temple out of devotion to God. He was determined to honor God and follow him. When Hilkiah found God's laws, Josiah knew the people hadn't been following the laws. But he wanted to do what was right. Because of Josiah's attitude and desire to serve God, the people could follow God. And because you have the Bible, you can read God's Word to know what God wants you to do. ▶ GOD'S WORD CHANGES OUR LIVES. Let's make something to remind us of God's Word in our lives.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

God's Word for Me

What You'll Do

Give each child a copy of the "God's Word for Me" pattern, and let the kids decorate the pattern using markers. Then have kids cut out the pattern, fold the flaps and sides, and then cut a slit in the top as indicated. Have kids form a box, and then tape the flaps in place.

Have kids turn to the "God's Word for Me" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages, and give them a copy of the "God's Word for Me When…" handout.

Make sure kids have Bibles, and ask them to look at some of the passages from the "God's Word for Me When…" handout. Have them write some of the passages that speak the most to them today on the designated section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. If some of the children need additional help thinking of verses, share some of your favorite verses and invite other kids to share some of their favorites.

Have kids cut out the Bible passages they've written on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and place them inside their Scripture boxes.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What Bible verses spoke the most to you from the list?**
- **How do you want these Bible passages to change your life?**
- **What can we do to let the Bible continue to change our lives?**

Say: **Josiah was one of the few kings of God's people who took the Bible seriously and used it to change his kingdom for the better. ▶ GOD'S WORD CHANGES OUR**

God's Word for Me
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
1 copy per child of the "God's Word for Me When…" handout (at the end of this lesson)
1 copy per child of the "God's Word for Me" pattern (at the end of this lesson)
tape
several pairs of scissors
markers
pens

God's Word for Me
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 6 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

LIVES, too. The Bible helps us know God and grow closer to him. Keep your Scripture box, and use it to hold the Bible verses God uses to change your life. You can continue to add Bible verses that you think help you learn more about God and grow closer to him. Just write those verses on slips of paper, and put them inside the box.

God-Breathed
Supplies

Bible
CD player
copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "All Scripture" (2 Timothy 3:16-17) (track 8)

God-Breathed

What You'll Do

Say: ▶ **God's Word teaches us what we need to know so we can live lives that please God.**

Read today's Key Verse, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, aloud: **"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).**

Say: **Our Key Verse says that the Bible was God-breathed. This means that even though many different people wrote the Bible, God was the one who directed them.**

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 again: **"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).**

Say: **Our Key Verse song also talks about the different ways ▶ GOD'S WORD CHANGES OUR LIVES. Let's sing it now.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "All Scripture" (2 Timothy 3:16-17) (track 8 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along and do the motions if they feel comfortable doing so.

All Scripture is God-breathed *(open Bible and lift up)*
And useful for teaching, *(point to heart)*
Rebuking, correcting, *(create an "X" with index fingers)*
And training in righteousness, *(hug self)*
Training in righteousness, *(hug self)*

That the man of God *(flex arm muscles)*
May be thoroughly equipped *(take stance of readiness)*
For every good work, *(raise arm to sky)*
That the man of God *(flex arm muscles)*
May be thoroughly equipped *(take stance of readiness)*
For every good work, *(raise arm to sky)*
Every good work. *(raise arm to sky)*

(Repeat from the beginning 2x.)

"All Scripture" (2 Timothy 3:16-17) by Carol Smith. © 2003 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Say: **What our Key Verse says is that the Bible teaches us things we need to *know*, rebukes us about things we need to *stop*, corrects us in areas we need to *change*, and trains us in the things that God wants us to *do*.**

Let's play a game that illustrates the words Know, Stop, Change, and Do. When I say, "The Bible helps us *know* God," point to your head. When I say, "The Bible helps us know what to *stop* doing," put both hands up like you're telling someone to halt. When I say, "The Bible helps us *change*," move from side to side. When I say, "The Bible trains us in the things that God wants us to *do*," hold your hands over your heart. You're going to have to listen carefully because I'm going to change up the motions at random times.

Play the game by saying the above phrases in random order. Get faster and faster as you go.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Which of the four words of our game made the most sense about what God's Word does for you?**
- **What can you do to help others follow God?**
- **Why is God's Word important?**
- **How can reading God's Word change our lives?**

Say: **Because of Josiah's obedience to God's Word, the people began following God. Josiah is a wonderful example of a child about your age who chose to follow God. You'll probably never be a king of a country, but you're always the "king" or "queen" of the choices you make in your life. Josiah knew that God's Word was the most important thing in his life. That's because ▶ GOD'S WORD CHANGES OUR LIVES. It can change yours, too!**

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

4 LASTING **IMPRESSIONS**

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how ▶ GOD'S WORD CHANGES OUR LIVES.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Read two chapters of any book in the Bible and look for ways God is speaking to you through them.**
- **Memorize this week's Key Verse, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.**
- **Ask an adult about a time the Bible helped him or her find a solution to a hard problem.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: **▶ GOD'S WORD CHANGES OUR LIVES. Let's follow Josiah's lead and take God's Word deep into our hearts. Let's follow through on our Daily Challenges this week and see how God uses his Word to change us.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about how God's Word changes lives. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God for the gift of the Bible and asking him to change our lives as we follow his Word.

Lyrics

All Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

All Scripture is God-breathed
And useful for teaching,
Rebuking, correcting,
And training in righteousness,
Training in righteousness,

That the man of God
May be thoroughly equipped
For every good work,
That the man of God
May be thoroughly equipped
For every good work,
Every good work.

(Repeat from the beginning 2x.)

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God's Word for Me When...

... I'm angry
Proverbs 15:1 • "A gentle answer…"
Proverbs 19:11 • "A man's wisdom…"
Luke 6:27-30 • "But I tell you who hear me…"
Luke 6:31 • "Do to others…"
John 13:34-35 • "A new command I give you…"
Ephesians 4:26-27 • "In your anger…"
Ephesians 4:31-32 • "Get rid of all bitterness…"
Colossians 3:8-10 • "But now you must…"

...I'm anxious
Psalm 46:10 • "Be still, and know…"
Isaiah 40:31 • "But those who hope…"
Matthew 6:25-26 • "Therefore I tell you…"
Matthew 6:33-34 • "But seek first his kingdom…"
Matthew 11:28 • "Come to me…"
Romans 8:28 • "And we know that…"
Philippians 4:6-7 • "Do not be anxious…"
1 Peter 5:7 • "Cast all your anxiety…"

...I lack confidence
Psalm 139:14 • "I praise you because…"
Matthew 5:16 • "In the same way, let your…"
John 15:5 • "I am the vine…"
2 Corinthians 5:17 • "Therefore, if anyone…"
Ephesians 6:11-12 • "Put on the full armor…"
Philippians 4:13 • "I can do everything…"
Hebrews 4:16 • "Let us then approach the throne…"

... I don't know what decision to make
Deuteronomy 6:5-6 • "Love the Lord your God…"
Isaiah 40:8 • "The grass withers and the flowers…"
Matthew 19:19 • "Honor your father and mother…"
Luke 6:31 • "Do to others…"
John 14:26 • "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit…"
Romans 12:1-2 • "Therefore, I urge you, brothers…"
Galatians 6:7 • "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked…"
Ephesians 6:11-12 • "Put on the full armor of God"
Philippians 4:8 • "Finally, brothers, whatever is true…"
James 1:5 • "If any of you lacks wisdom…"

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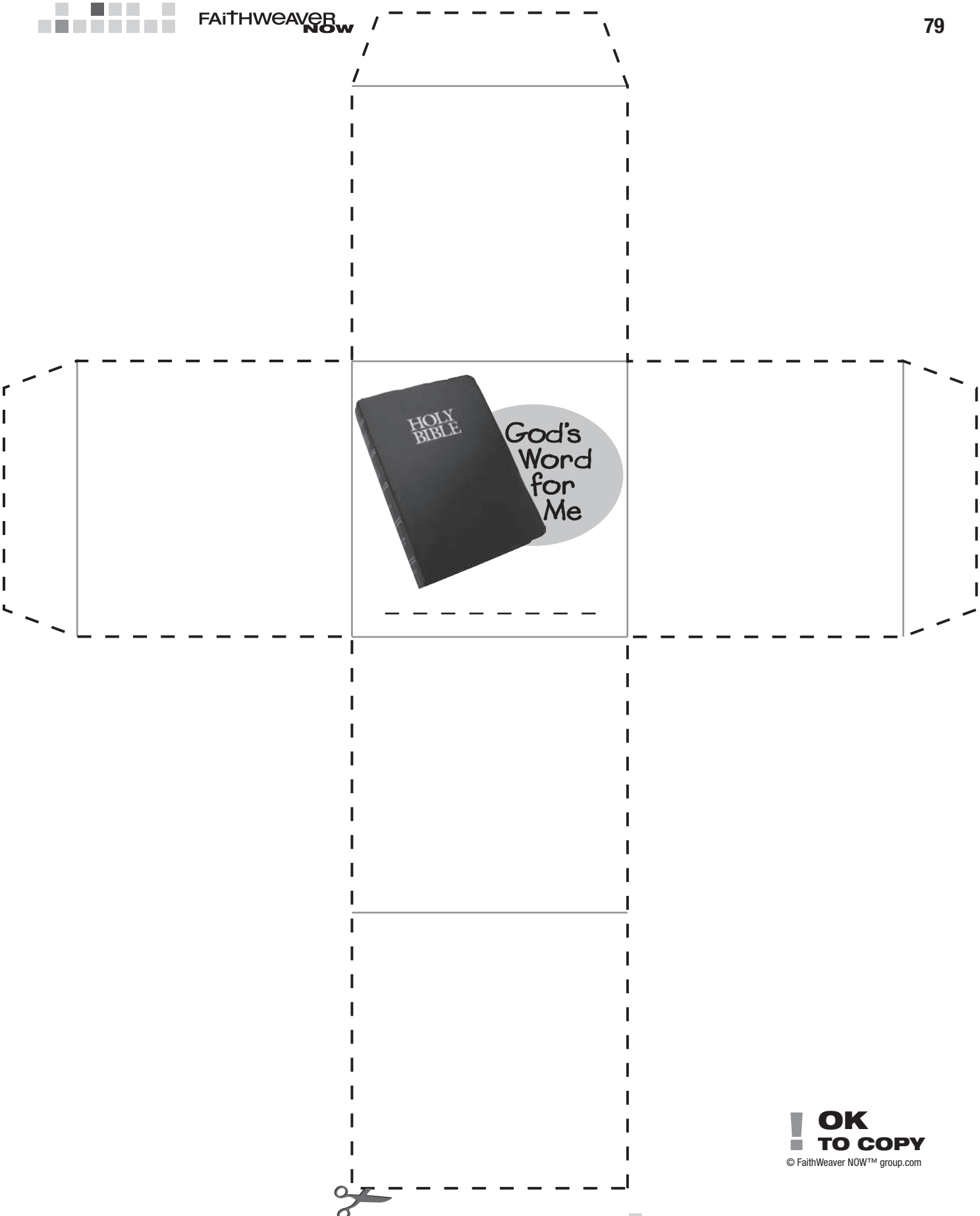

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Daniel's Friends Are Safe in the Fiery Furnace Daniel 3

Third- and fourth-graders care about what their friends think and do. Peer pressure to do the wrong thing grows greater and greater the older children get. Use this lesson to help kids know it's important to do what's right and to stand strong for God. Then they can be a positive peer influence to help their friends do what's right, too!

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Stand Up!** *(about 10 min.)* In this game, kids will work to stand strong in pairs, foursomes, and larger groups.		
2 Bible Exploration	**Now, That's High!** *(about 10 min.)* Build structures with index cards, and talk about things people might worship other than God.	Bible, index cards, pens	
	Into the Furnace *(about 10 min.)* Kids will feel and hear furnace-like heat.	Bible; red, orange, and yellow streamers; aluminum foil; hair dryer (optional)	

▶Bible Point
Stand strong for God.

Key Verse
"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Kids will stand strong for God in different situations.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Target Practice** *(about 10 min.)* Kids will stand strong for God as paper balls are thrown at them.	Bible, duct tape, scrap paper, scissors	
	I Believe! *(about 15 min.)* Kids will say what they believe, write it, and then tell others.	Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, pens **Teacher Pack:** CD, popping eyeballs	Tear out the Lesson 7 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Daniel's Friends Are Safe in the Fiery Furnace Daniel 3

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Daniel and Friends in Exile

When the people of Judah turned away from the Lord, God allowed Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to defeat Judah. At that time, the invaders took a group of young hostages, the brightest and best Judah had to offer, back to Babylon with them. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were among the hostages. We know Daniel's three friends best by the names given them by the Babylonians: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Daniel's Friends Refuse to Bow to Idols

Nebuchadnezzar's name meant "Nebo, protect your servant!" The statue Nebuchadnezzar built was perhaps meant to represent the god Nebo. The statue was 90 feet high, but this measurement probably included a tall pedestal, and the statue itself was probably gold-plated, not solid gold. Nevertheless, it must have been an impressive structure, standing about as high as a 10-story building.

Despite an impressive statue that demonstrated the political power of the king, and under threat of death, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were willing to trust God. If God saved them, great! But even if he didn't, they were willing to die before they'd worship Nebuchadnezzar's idol.

Daniel's Friends Survive the Heat

The furnace the three were thrown into was likely used to fire bricks or to smelt metal. Certainly at its normal operating temperature—probably between 1,600 and 2,300 degrees Fahrenheit—survival inside such a furnace would be humanly impossible. But Nebuchadnezzar had the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual. It was so hot that the soldiers who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace died from their proximity to it! Even so, God saved the three trusting Israelites from harm.

We don't know for sure who the fourth person in the furnace was. Certainly it was a supernatural being, either an angel or possibly Jesus himself. Either way, God was there for them, blessing them for standing strong.

The Jesus Connection

Jesus can relate to the challenges we face as we stand up for God because he has experienced them—and much more.

Are you facing a situation in which you're challenged to stand strong for God? Do you feel ready for the challenge? Rely on him. Pray that he'll give you the strength to keep standing even when everyone around you bows to the pressure. When we stand up for God, he will help us, protect us, and reward us. You can write your prayer here.

1 GETTING STARTED

Stand Up!

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

After everyone has arrived, play a game in which kids can practice standing strong! Have kids form pairs and then sit back to back, hook arms, and try standing. Make it a bit harder by placing a book or ball between the partners' backs. Have kids try to stand without letting the object fall to the ground. Next, ask kids to form groups of four, sit back to back, and try standing. Finally, have kids sit back to back in two long rows, hook arms with the children next to them, and try to stand.

Applaud all their attempts to stand.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like for you to try to stand up during this game?**
- **When was it easier for you to stand strong? When was it harder? Explain.**
- **Tell about a time that you found it hard to stand strong when faced with trouble.**

Say: **Today we're going to learn about three men who stood strong for God and did what was right. The passage is from the book of Daniel in the Bible; the three men were friends of Daniel. We'll learn that how we can ▶ STAND STRONG FOR GOD, too.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Now, That's High!

Now, That's High!
Supplies

Bible
index cards
pens

What You'll Do

Have kids work in teams of three. Give each team a supply of index cards, and make sure each team has a Bible and pens.

Say: **Today we're going to have a contest to see which team can build the highest tower of index cards. Before you start building, however, you'll need to make**

"bricks" by writing down things that people worship other than God, which are called idols. On each of your cards, write down what people worship instead of God. Then build a tower of those idols as high as you can. Remember, the towers have to stand on their own.

Give kids several minutes to work on their idol towers. Give warnings at two minutes and one minute.

Ask each team to explain the idols that make up their towers, and give a little special recognition to the team with the highest tower.

Say: **Those towers were amazing, but let me tell you about something King Nebuchadnezzar built!**

Open your Bible to Daniel 3:1-7, and show kids the passage. Say: **When God's people were forced to live in the foreign land of Babylon, they were often faced with difficult decisions about how to remain pure to their faith while having to live under non-Jewish rulers. In this Bible passage, King Nebuchadnezzar built a 90-foot statue of gold. It was dedicated with a lot of fanfare. The people were told that when they heard the horn sound, they were to stop whatever they were doing and bow down to worship the statue. And those who chose not to? Well, we'll get to that in a minute.**

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What does it mean to worship something?**
- **How worthy of worship are the things you wrote on your index cards?**
- **What makes God more worthy of worship than anyone or anything else?**

Say: **King Nebuchadnezzar made a 90-foot-high image out of gold—not index cards! Now, that's high! He told people everywhere that when they heard a signal, they had to fall down and worship the golden image. To worship something is to place it first in our lives or give it honor that only God deserves. Although we don't worship golden images today, we might want to place other things first in our lives. Instead, we're called to ▶ STAND STRONG FOR GOD, too, and not bow down to idols. Three friends of Daniel's stood strong for God and refused to worship the tall golden image. Let's see, hear, and feel what happened!**

Into the Furnace

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Daniel 3:8-26, and show kids the passage.

Say: **Three of Daniel's friends—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—refused to do what the king commanded. Here's what they said to the king.**

Into the Furnace
Supplies

Bible
red, orange, and yellow streamers
aluminum foil
hair dryer (optional)

Read aloud verses 17-18.

Say: **Well, the king was furious. A fiery furnace was ablaze and awaiting some fuel! Let's act out this part of the Bible passage.**

Invite three kids to be Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Have them stand in the center of the room. Give red, orange, and yellow streamers to the other children, and tell them to move the streamers up and down to imitate flames.

Say: **Wow, what a furnace! Well, the king was so mad at these three friends that he ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual!**

Turn on the hair dryer (if you have one), and gently blow the hot air on the kids throughout the activity. If you don't have a hair dryer, just have kids act like they're really hot.

Say: **You could feel the heat!**

Give a few of the kids each a piece of aluminum foil to crumple and then open again and again to imitate the sound of flames.

Say: **You could hear the flames! Then the king had the three friends put into the furnace.**

Have kids move the streamers up and down and around the three friends.

Say: **The furnace was so hot! The fire was crackling!**

Pause as kids keep moving the streamers and crumpling the foil.

Say: **All of a sudden, the king said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire unharmed!**

Choose a fourth person to stand in the flames with the three friends. Have all the kids say, "Look! I see four men!"

Say: **God had sent an angel to rescue his servants. The king shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So the three friends came out of the fire.**

Motion to the three friends to step out of the "flames," and have the angel join the rest of the kids. Ask kids to put the streamers down and quit crumpling the foil. Turn off the hair dryer.

Turn in your Bible to Daniel 3:27-30, and show the kids the passage.

Say: **The people were amazed because the three friends weren't harmed at all. In fact there was not even any smell of smoke on them! The king praised them for standing up for their faith in God—and even gave them a promotion!**

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to experience our fiery furnace?**
- **What can we learn from the three friends about what it means to stand strong for God?**
- **What are some opportunities you've had to put your faith into action?**

Say: **We ▶ STAND STRONG FOR GOD when we do what God wants us to do—even when it's risky. That's what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did. We also ▶ STAND STRONG FOR GOD when we keep God first in our lives—not money, sports, movie stars or the idols you wrote on the index cards "bricks" you built your towers with.** Have kids knock down their towers. **Let's look a little deeper at how we can stand strong.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Target Practice

Target Practice Supplies

Bible
duct tape
scrap paper
scissors

What You'll Do

Say: **Our Key Verse for today echoes what the three friends in the fire went through.**

Open your Bible to 1 Corinthians 16:13, and read the Key Verse aloud: **"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13).**

Say: **Sometimes other people might make fun of us because of what we believe. They might laugh when they see us going to church or reading our Bibles or talking about Jesus. Sometimes we might rather sleep in on a Sunday morning or blend in with what everyone else is doing. We need to remember to do what's right and ▶ STAND STRONG FOR GOD!**

Have kids form groups of four and choose one person in each group to be the "Target." Wrap a strip of duct tape around the target several times—sticky side out. Give others in the group several pieces of scrap paper and have kids make paper balls.

Say: **The Target is the Christian who will say again and again, "I'll stand strong for you, God." The paper balls will represent things that make it difficult to be a Christian. The rest of the group will throw the paper balls at the Target and try to get as many as possible to stick to the tape. Make sure you throw only at your group's Target. When you throw a paper ball, name a time it might be hard or risky to stand strong for God—"When I'd rather sleep," "When people make fun of me," or "When I don't have enough time," for example.**

Play the game for a minute, and then see how many paper balls are sticking to the Targets. Play four times so that everyone has the opportunity to be a Target one time. After everyone has had a turn, have kids use scissors to remove the duct tape as they repeat the Key Verse along with you.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to be the target in this game?**
- **How can you stand strong for God in the midst of all those things we've said?**
- **What does it mean to "stand firm in the faith" in our Key Verse?**
- **When is it hardest for you to stand firm? How can Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's example challenge you in those times?**

Say: **When you ▶ STAND STRONG FOR GOD, the things that make it difficult to be a Christian become like these paper balls. They may get thrown at us, but they won't hurt us. Daniel's friends remind us that it *is* possible to stand strong for God, even when the way looks scary or dangerous. We can help one another stand firm in our faith. We can encourage one another, pray for one another, help one another live our Christian lives, and do what's right!**

I Believe!

Tip The popping eyeballs work best when placed on a hard surface. They will not pop up high enough if placed on a carpeted floor. So if you have carpeting in your room, place a book or other hard object on the floor in the middle of the circle and set the popping eyeballs on it.

I Believe!
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth
CD player
pens
Teacher Pack:
CD:"Stand Strong" (track 24), popping eyeballs

I Believe!
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 7 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

What You'll Do

Ask kids to turn to the "I Believe!" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Set out the pens, and have kids write their responses. Offer suggestions if kids need help. Then have them write on the page their personal beliefs about God. Let kids know they'll have a chance to share what they wrote in a game later on.

Have kids form two groups, and have each group sit in a circle. Give each group one popping eyeball.

Say: **Your eyeball can pop high in the air. Don't pop it yet, but talk about why you believe it could pop.** Allow time.

Invert one of the popping eyeballs, and place it on a hard surface in the center of the circle. When it pops into the air, have the person closest to it stand and catch it and then say one thing he or she believes about God, based on the "I Believe!" activity on the Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Also challenge kids to think of actions that show those

beliefs. Let everyone have a chance to respond with comments such as "God created the world—that means I don't trash it," "God loves me—that means I talk with God in prayer," and "God forgives me—that means I can forgive others."

Say: **We've shared a lot of our beliefs! ▶ STAND STRONG FOR GOD means doing what's right and telling people through your words and actions what you believe about God. Let's take time right now to sing a song that tells us how to stand strong for God.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "Stand Strong" (track 24 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along and do the motions if they're comfortable doing so.

(Chorus)
Stand strong *(stand straight and tall each time you sing "stand strong")*
When life changes. *(hold fists in front in one position; then rotate fists to the opposite position)*
Stand strong through the ups and downs. *(stand on tiptoes; then bend knees)*
Stand strong, for you know that *(point both pointer fingers to head)*
God is in control. *(move hands back and forth as if you're holding reins)*

Stand strong when life changes.
Stand strong through the ups and downs.
Stand strong, for you know that
God is in control.

The storms of life *(move arms back and forth overhead)*
Will push and pull. *(push hands forward; then pull them back)*
But we are standing *(stand straight and tall)*
On the Rock that never rolls. *(hug self as you move in a circle)*

The storms of life *(move arms back and forth overhead)*
Will push and pull. *(push hands forward; then pull them back)*
We will keep standing. *(stand straight and tall)*
God is in control. *(move hands back and forth as if you're holding reins)*

(Repeat from the beginning; then sing Parts 1 & 2 simultaneously 2x.)

(PART 1)
Stand strong when life changes.
Stand strong through the ups and downs.
Stand strong, for you know that
God is in control.

Stand strong when life changes.
Stand strong through the ups and downs.
The storms of life
Will push and pull.

(PART 2)
The storms of life
Will push and pull.
But we are standing
On the Rock that never rolls.

Stand strong, for you know that
God is in control.
We will keep standing.
God is in control.

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Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How was popping the eyeballs different from just *talking* about popping them? How is that like or unlike just believing and acting on our beliefs?**
- **How can you stand strong for God when faced with "fires" in your life?**
- **When you feel weak in your faith, what can you do?**

Say: **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew what they believed and then stood strong for God because of what they believed. We all have the responsibility and joy of figuring out what we believe. Then when the testing comes, we'll be ready to ▶ STAND STRONG FOR GOD.**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how we can ▶ STAND STRONG FOR GOD this week.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Read your list of beliefs about God to someone who doesn't know about Jesus.**
- **Ask a trusted adult about a time he or she took a stand for God.**
- **Ask God to give you the courage to stand strong for him when it's really hard.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: **Most of us will never have to worry about walking into a fire to stand strong in our faith. But all of us will face some sort of difficulty because of our faith. Let's ▶ STAND STRONG FOR GOD this week by following through on our Daily Challenges.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about standing strong for God. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, asking God for his presence and power to help us to stand strong for him—even if it's risky.

Lyrics

Stand Strong

Stand strong
When life changes.
Stand strong through the ups and downs.
Stand strong, for you know that
God is in control.

Stand strong when life changes.
Stand strong through the ups and downs.
Stand strong, for you know that
God is in control.

The storms of life
Will push and pull.
But we are standing
On the Rock that never rolls.

The storms of life
Will push and pull.
We will keep standing.
God is in control.

(Repeat from the beginning; then sing Parts 1 & 2 simultaneously 2x.)

(PART 1)
Stand strong when life changes.
Stand strong through the ups and downs.
Stand strong, for you know that
God is in control.

Stand strong when life changes.
Stand strong through the ups and downs.
The storms of life
Will push and pull.

(PART 2)
The storms of life
Will push and pull.
But we are standing
On the Rock that never rolls.

Stand strong, for you know that
God is in control.
We will keep standing.
God is in control.

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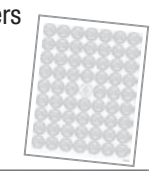
God Protects Daniel in the Lions' Den Daniel 6:1-23

Third- and fourth-graders love action and suspense—and they like animals, too. That's why they'll love the account of Daniel in the lions' den. Use this lesson to show them that when they're faced with the "lions" in their lives God will protect them, too.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Wolf and Sheep** *(about 10 min.)* Play a fun game in which kids try to protect one another.		
2 Bible Exploration	**Plot Against Daniel** *(about 20 min.)* Listen to how rulers went against Daniel, make a lions' den, and act out ways to show they believe in God.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, tables or chairs, blankets or sheets, pens **Teacher Pack:** CD	Tear out the Lesson 8 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
	Daniel's Choice *(about 15 min.)* Make lions' heads, and learn what happened to Daniel.	Bible, construction paper, several pairs of scissors, crayons, markers **Teacher Pack:** Bible Timeline, "Trust God" stickers 	

▶Bible Point
God protects us.

Key Verse
"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Children will seek God's protection in a hard time by spending time in prayer.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Trust God!** *(about 15 min.)* Learn the Key Verse, sing a song based on it, and write and share trust prayers.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, pens, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD	
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

God Protects Daniel in the Lions' Den

Daniel 6:1-23

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Daniel Faces Political Turmoil

Daniel was a highly respected adviser to King Darius. Daniel did such a good job as one of three administrators that Darius decided to set him above the others—above the whole kingdom, in fact. The other administrators didn't like that idea one bit, so they sabotaged Daniel. First they tried to find evidence that would discredit him, but they could find no corruption or negligence in his record.

So the officials resorted to deceit to derail Daniel, and they decided to do it on the basis of his faithfulness to God. They knew that Daniel wouldn't give up his faith for any king. They lied to Darius when they said that the royal administrators had all agreed to the edict. They knew that Daniel wouldn't have agreed had he been told about it.

The administrators thought they'd found a way to defeat Daniel, because in Medo-Persian law, once a law was issued by the king, it couldn't be changed. This was based on the idea that the king embodied the law. If a king made a law and then retracted it, there would be a contradiction in the law, which was unthinkable.

Darius Reluctantly Throws Daniel to the Lions

When Daniel was found praying to God, Darius was trapped. Apparently there was nothing he could do to prevent Daniel from being thrown into the lions' den, and the king was distraught. As unlikely as it seemed that Daniel could still be alive the next morning, Darius was the first one to the den to find out if God had, indeed, saved Daniel. And he had!

There was no law prohibiting Darius from punishing deceitful schemers, so he had Daniel's accusers thrown into the lions' den. They were torn apart by the hungry lions before they hit the floor! Daniel's life of faith and his trust in God saved him from destruction and brought glory to God.

The Jesus Connection

Jesus promised that we'd face trouble in this world—but that he had overcome it. We may be punished or ridiculed for our faith, but we know Jesus has the power to save us.

When Daniel's circumstances turned negative, he maintained a rhythm of thanksgiving and prayer. What are your hardships? What hungry lions do you face? What are you thankful for today? What do you need from God? Tell him! Ask him! You can write your prayer here.

1 GETTING STARTED

Wolf and Sheep

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Once everyone has arrived, choose one child to be the Wolf, and have the rest of the children form trios or foursomes.

Say: **Let's start things off today by playing a game about protection.**

Explain that the person in each group whose birthday is closest to Christmas will be the Sheep, who needs protection. The other people in the group will be the Protectors, who will hold hands around the sheep. The Wolf will try to tag one of the Sheep, while the Protectors try to shepherd the Sheep away from the Wolf. If a Sheep is tagged, he or she will become the new Wolf.

Play the game for a few minutes, and then have kids exchange roles. Play several rounds of the game, and then have kids sit in their groups. Let the Wolf join the smallest group.

Talk With Kids

Have kids discuss the following questions in their groups. After each question, invite kids to share their group's answers with the rest of the group.

Ask:

- **What was it like to be a sheep that needed protection?**
- **In what ways do you need protection in your life?**
- **Tell about someone who protects you.**

Say: **In this game, the sheep needed protection from the wolf. In today's Bible passage, we'll meet a man who needed protection from an animal, too—in fact, more than one large hungry animal. He learned what it meant to trust God for protection. By the end of today's lesson, we'll have learned that ▶ GOD PROTECTS US. Let's meet the man in our Bible passage.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Plot Against Daniel

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Daniel 6:1-23, and show kids the passage. Help kids find it in their own Bibles.

Say: **In this Bible passage, Daniel was one of the three highest rulers under the king. In fact, Daniel was doing such a good job for King Darius that the king planned to give Daniel even more power. Let's see how the lesser rulers and administrators reacted to Daniel.**

Distribute pens, and have kids turn to the "Plot Against Daniel" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Play "Plot Against Daniel" (track 10 on the CD), pausing the CD when the narrator instructs you to. Give kids several minutes to answer the questions, and then continue with the CD track. Stop the CD when the narrator instructs you to stop.

Say: **The Bible says the jealous rulers went to the king with a new plot against Daniel. Daniel 6:6-9 tells us what that plot was.**

Have kids form four groups, and give each group a Bible. Let kids read Daniel 6:6-9 aloud in their groups. Then have kids answer the following questions in their groups. After each question, invite willing children to share their answers with the rest of the group.

Ask:

- **Daniel showed he believed in God by praying. What are some ways you show you believe in God?**
- **Daniel faced being thrown into the lions' den if he kept praying to God. What can you do if the rules tell you not to do something that shows you believe in God?**

Say: **Before we see what happened to Daniel, we need a lions' den. Let's make one together.**

Set out blankets or sheets. Designate one side or corner of your room as the "lions' den." Begin by placing two chairs or tables a few feet apart to form an entrance area to the den. Make sure the area behind the entrance is large enough for the entire group to fit into. Then have kids create a "lions' den" out of blankets or sheets. Make sure the opening is large enough for kids to easily enter and exit. Then lead kids to the other side of the room.

Plot Against Daniel
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
CD player
blankets or sheets
tables or chairs
pens
Teacher Pack
CD: "Plot Against Daniel" (track 10)

Plot Against Daniel
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 8 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Have kids stand in one large circle. Tell each person to think of one way to silently act out a behavior that shows belief in God. For example, a child might pantomime praying, reading a Bible, singing praise songs, or telling another person about Jesus.

Explain that kids will take turns standing inside the circle and performing their pantomimes. As each child performs, the children in the circle will link arms and march forward until they reach the child in the center. Then they'll all chant, "We told you if you did that again, you'd have to go to the lions' den!" Then the child in the center will go sit inside the lions' den.

Continue until there's only one child performing and one child to link arms with you. Then let the last child perform his or her pantomime as you say the chant and lead the child to the lions' den. Sit with the kids inside the den.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like when you were in the circle and everyone was coming toward you?**
- **Tell about a time you felt punished for faith in God.**
- **Are there times it's hard for you to show you believe in God? Talk about that.**

Say: **Sometimes you'll experience the jealousy of other people, such as the people who wanted to set up Daniel for breaking the law. But Daniel had trust that ▶ GOD PROTECTS US. And that trust made all the difference. Still, Daniel had a choice. He could obey the king's law and stop praying to God, or he could continue praying and risk being thrown in the lions' den. Let's find out what he did.**

Daniel's Choice
Supplies

Bible
construction paper
several pairs of scissors
crayons
markers
Teacher Pack
Bible Timeline
"Trust God" stickers

Daniel's Choice

What You'll Do

While you're all still in the lions' den, show kids the "God Protects Daniel" picture on the Bible Timeline. Ask a willing child to read aloud Daniel 6:10-12.

Say: **Daniel knew that ▶ GOD PROTECTS US. So Daniel chose to keep right on praying no matter what might happen to him. And because King Darius couldn't change the law he had made, Daniel was thrown into the lions' den. Before we find out the ending to Daniel's experience, let's make some lions of our own.**

Lead kids out of the lions' den and over to work tables to make the craft. Set out construction paper, crayons, markers, and scissors. Explain that kids will be making paper lion heads with mouths that open and shut. Demonstrate each of the following steps as you lead kids in making their lions, and use the illustrations on the next page as a guide.

1. Fold a sheet of construction paper in half horizontally, and crease (see diagram 1).
2. Make a cut approximately 1 ½" long on the folded edge of the paper just about halfway down from the top (see diagram 2).
3. Carefully fold back the cut edges to form two triangles, making sure both folds have sharp creases. Turn the paper over, and then crease the triangles again. This will allow them to bend easily from both sides (see diagram 3).
4. Next, while the paper is still folded in half, push the two folded triangles you just made inward (see diagram 4). The pop-up triangles will form a mouth (see diagram 5).
5. Now draw a lion's head around the mouth, adding eyes, a nose, and a mane.

When they have finished making their lions, have kids hold the cards with the mouths facing away, one hand on each side of the card, and have them open and close the lion's mouth by opening and closing the lion craft card. Lead kids back inside the den. Let them mill about the den, opening and shutting the mouths of their lions as they add roaring sound effects. After a minute or so, have everyone sit in a circle outside the den.

Say: **Hungry lions in that den surrounded Daniel. When morning came, King Darius hurried to the den to see what had become of Daniel. And he found that an amazing thing had happened! God had sent an angel to close the lions' mouths. Daniel was perfectly safe!** Have kids hold their lions with the mouths closed.

Talk With Kids

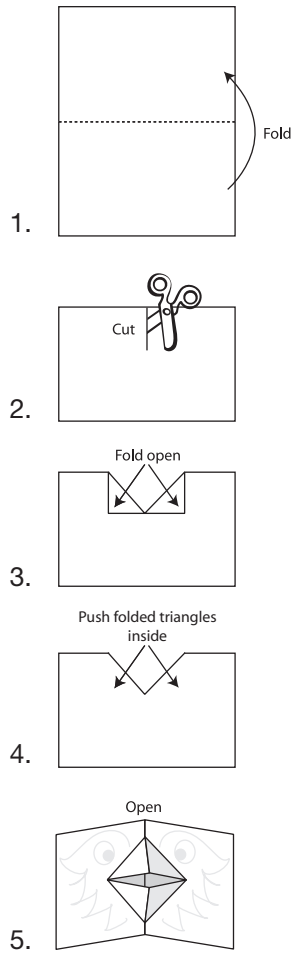
Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What can we learn for our own lives from how God protected Daniel?**
- **Does God's protection always mean protection from physical danger? Why or why not?**
- **What can we do to show that we trust God to protect us?**

Say: **God protected Daniel and gave him peace. And God will do the same thing for us. ▶ GOD PROTECTS US. We can always trust God to know exactly what's happening and do exactly what's best for us.**

Give one of the "Trust God" stickers to each child. Show kids how to place the stickers over the lions' mouths in the crafts they've made to hold the mouths shut. Encourage kids to take their crafts home as a reminder that God helped Daniel and God can protect them, too.



Trust God!
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
CD player
pens
copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "Do Not Be Anxious About Anything" (Philippians 4:6-7) (track 11)

3 WEAVING FAITH **INTO LIFE**

Trust God!

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Philippians 4:6-7, and show the passage to the kids. Then help kids find the passage in their own Bibles. Read the verse aloud: **"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).**

Have kids read the passage aloud several times.

Say: **Our Key Verse says that when we're anxious we can pray to God, and God will give us peace. That reminds me of our Bible Point today: ▶ GOD PROTECTS US. Daniel trusted God to protect him and showed a remarkable lack of fear and anxiety about his situation. He had peace! Let's sing a song based on our Key Verse about how we can trust God and not become anxious.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "Do Not Be Anxious About Anything" (Philippians 4:6-7) (track 11 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, aah.

Do not be anxious about anything,
But in everything, by prayer and petition,
With thanksgiving,
Present your requests to God.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, aah.

And the peace of God, (peace of God)
Which transcends all understanding, (transcends all understanding)
Will guard your hearts (guard your hearts)
And your minds in Christ Jesus. (minds in Christ Jesus)

Do not be anxious about anything,
But in everything, by prayer and petition,
With thanksgiving,
Present your requests to God.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, aah.

And the peace of God, (peace of God)
Which transcends all understanding, (transcends all understanding)
Will guard your hearts (guard your hearts)
And your minds in Christ Jesus. (minds in Christ Jesus)

Do not be anxious about anything,
But in everything, by prayer and petition,
With thanksgiving,
Present your requests to God.
Yeah, yeah.

Do not be anxious about anything,
But in everything, by prayer and petition,
With thanksgiving,
Present your requests to God.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, aah.

"Do Not Be Anxious About Anything" (Philippians 4:6-7) by Jay Stocker. © 2007 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Have kids turn to the "Let's Pray!" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages, and make sure each child has a pen.

Say: **Daniel continued to pray to God even though he was in a situation where he could've been worried and scared. When he trusted God to protect him in his situation, he found peace in God. The same thing goes for us. ▶ GOD PROTECTS US. God gives us his peace, and we don't have to worry anymore. Let's pray to God right now by filling in the blanks in the prayer on your page.**

Explain that kids will read their prayers to partners. Give kids time to write, and then have them form pairs. Ask partners to read their prayers to each other if they feel comfortable doing so.

Say: **Now, share with your partner about one thing that's worrying you this week. It can be something you wrote on your Bible Truth Sleuth page or something totally different. Tell your partner what that thing is, and then tell your partner how you'll pray and trust God for peace in that situation. For example, if you have a big baseball game coming up, you can say that you'll pray before the game and trust God to help you have confidence.**

Give pairs time to share, and then ask them to pray for each other, mentioning the things they've promised to pray about and trust God for this week.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What situations make you anxious and worried?**
- **Based on our Key Verse, what can we do when we're anxious?**
- **How does God protect us in tough situations?**

Say: **God protected Daniel in the lions' den. Daniel never stopped praying, and refused to give in to ways that wouldn't please God. ▶ GOD PROTECTS US, too, from the "lions' dens" in our lives by giving us his peace and by being with us.**

Distribute the remaining "Trust God" stickers evenly among the children. Encourage them to stick them to something that will help them remember to trust God.

4 LASTING **IMPRESSIONS**

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how we can trust in God's protection this week.**
Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Read your prayer from your Bible Truth Sleuth page every day this week as you ask God to give you peace.**
- **Pray for the situation your partner mentioned he or she is worried about this week.**
- **Write down on a sticky note one way God has given you peace, and stick that note somewhere so you can remember to trust God to protect you.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: ▶ **GOD PROTECTS US. God may not always protect us from harm like he did for Daniel, but he can protect us by filling us with the kind of peace Daniel had. Let's trust God's protection by following through on our Daily Challenges this week.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about God's protection. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Gather everyone inside the lions' den. Close with a prayer, asking God to protect each child during the coming week, just as he protected Daniel. Then thank God for being so trustworthy.

Lyrics

Do Not Be Anxious About Anything

(Philippians 4:6-7)

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, aah.

Do not be anxious about anything,
But in everything, by prayer and petition,
With thanksgiving,
Present your requests to God.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, aah.

And the peace of God, (peace of God)
Which transcends all understanding, (transcends all understanding)
Will guard your hearts (guard your hearts)
And your minds in Christ Jesus. (minds in Christ Jesus)

Do not be anxious about anything,
But in everything, by prayer and petition,
With thanksgiving,
Present your requests to God.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, aah.

And the peace of God, (peace of God)
Which transcends all understanding, (transcends all understanding)
Will guard your hearts (guard your hearts)
And your minds in Christ Jesus. (minds in Christ Jesus)

Do not be anxious about anything,
But in everything, by prayer and petition,
With thanksgiving,
Present your requests to God.
Yeah, yeah.

Do not be anxious about anything,
But in everything, by prayer and petition,
With thanksgiving,
Present your requests to God.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, aah.

"Do Not Be Anxious About Anything" (Philippians 4:6-7) by Jay Stocker. © 2007 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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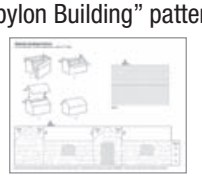
God Promises to Restore Israel After the Exile Jeremiah 29:4-14

Third- and fourth-graders are learning to make more of their own choices. They like the sense of control over certain situations. Use this lesson to help kids understand that ultimately God is the one in control, and that's a good thing for them. Help them understand that the key is to keep seeking God, no matter what happens. Just as God had good plans for the Israelites, he also has good plans for *their* lives, both now and in the future.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**What Does This Do?** *(about 10 min.)* Look at what various household utensils and tools do.	various household tools and utensils	Gather various household items and tools, such as a strainer, fork, spoon, hammer, screwdriver, and broom. You also may want to bring in items kids may not recognize, such as a melon baller, egg separator, or paint scraper.
2 Bible Exploration	**Building Where You Are** *(about 10 min.)* Build buildings and create "gardens"; then experience having to wait for a snack.	Bible, several pairs of scissors, glue, graham crackers, paper plates, green food coloring, vanilla frosting, colored sprinkles, plastic knives **Teacher Pack:** 1 copy per child of the "Babylon Building" pattern 	Create green frosting by stirring a few drops of green food coloring into a can of vanilla frosting.

▶Bible Point

We seek God no matter what happens.

Key Verse

" 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' " (Jeremiah 29:11).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Kids will seek God's guidance in their lives in a specific way.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
2 Bible Exploration *(continued)*	**Puzzling Plan** *(about 10 min.)* Form groups and put puzzles together, and then search for where their "odd" puzzle piece fits in.	Bibles, bags **Teacher Pack:** 3 blank puzzles	Place the pieces of the 3 puzzles into a separate bag for each puzzle. Take 1 piece from each set, and put it with another set. You'll now have a full puzzle with 1 wrong piece for each of 3 groups.
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Whose Plans Do You Trust?** *(about 15 min.)* Learn the Key Verse, discuss God's plans in tough situations, and look at how to live in the here and now.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, paper, pens **Teacher Pack:** CD	Tear out the Lesson 9 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Commit to seeking God's plans for their lives no matter what.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

God Promises to Restore Israel After the Exile Jeremiah 29:4-14

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Jeremiah's Tough Career

Jeremiah's ministry outlasted five Judean kings, and he witnessed numerous political wranglings as leaders who ignored God attempted to save Judah from destruction through alliances with Egypt and Babylon. Eventually he witnessed the fall of Judah to Babylon in 587 B.C., and died in Egypt a few years later.

Jeremiah prophesied that doom would befall Judah if the people didn't return to the Lord. He was persecuted because he spoke words from the Lord that people didn't want to hear. But he was faithful to God's call in spite of his increasingly difficult circumstances.

Letter to the Exiles

Jeremiah 29:4-14 is part of a letter to the people of Judah who'd been taken into exile in Babylon. Jeremiah instructed the exiles to settle in, work toward the good of their captors' city, and even to pray for Babylon! This was likely greeted as another unwelcome message from the unpopular prophet.

The "prophets and diviners" Jeremiah mentions were probably false prophets who had been turning Judeans away from God or lying about the amount of time in the exile. Jeremiah knew that the 70-year exile would be a time for Judeans to turn back to God in trust.

Jeremiah's Glimmer of Hope

Jeremiah 29:10-14 offers hope, a promise of restoration. Why did the Judeans have to remain captive in Babylon for 70 years before experiencing this restoration? Perhaps it was because an entire generation had to live and die in exile because of the sins of its ancestors. Or maybe it was because 70 years equaled the number of sabbath years that the people had disobeyed God by not letting the land rest (see 2 Chronicles 36:21).

Even as his people were dragged off to Babylon, God had marvelous plans for them—plans that included hope and a future. If the people would call upon God and seek him with all their hearts, turning from the evils of idol worship, then the Lord would restore them to their land.

The Jesus Connection

If we live in a growing relationship with Jesus, we fix our eyes on him and seek him no matter what.

How would you describe the landscape of your spiritual life right now? How do you need to accept the place God has called you to up to this point? What about the future? Reflect on these questions, and write your thoughts in the form of a prayer. You can write your prayer here.

What Does This Do?
Supplies

various household tools and utensils

What Does This Do?
Easy Prep

Gather various household tools and utensils, such as a strainer, fork, spoon, hammer, screwdriver, and broom. You also may want to bring in items kids may not recognize, such as a melon baller, egg separator, or paint scraper.

1 GETTING STARTED

What Does This Do?

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Gather everyone's attention, and form as many groups as you have household items. Give one household item to each group.

Say: **Your group has a unique object. Your job is to come up with a demonstration for what your tool or utensil does. If you have an ordinary item, you can't demonstrate just the obvious way to use the item—you must come up with something new.**

Give kids several minutes to come up with ideas, and encourage them to be creative. For example, if they have a strainer, kids could demonstrate how they could use the strainer as a back scratcher. After several minutes, have groups demonstrate the uses of their tools. Then explain what each tool really does.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Was it a surprise to you to learn the real use for any of these tools? Explain.**
- **How do these tools or utensils help you get a job done?**
- **What are the benefits of using these tools to do those jobs?**
- **What tools can help you figure out what to do when life is hard?**

Say: **In our activity we had to figure out what our tools and utensils did, and come up with creative uses for them. In today's lesson, we'll see how God's people had to figure out how to live as captives to another country. We'll see what God did for the Israelites, the promises he made to return them to their own country, and that ▶ WE SEEK GOD NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Building Where You Are

What You'll Do

Say: **Our lesson today comes from Jeremiah 29:4-14. Let's read what God had to say to the Israelites who were held captive in Babylon.**

Open your Bible to Jeremiah 29:4-7, and show the kids the Bible passage.

Say: **For hundreds of years, the Israelites had been led by kings in their own land. Some of the kings obeyed God and tried to do what was right. Sadly, most of the kings didn't follow God and worshipped various false gods. God decided finally to end the rule of the kings and allowed Jerusalem—including the Temple—to be destroyed by the Babylonians. Many of the Israelites were taken captive and forced to move to Babylon. Their challenge was to keep seeking God as prisoners in a strange land. In a letter to these people, called the exiles, Jeremiah told them that God wanted them to build homes, plant gardens, and have families. They were to work hard where they were. That meant that they wouldn't be going home to Judah anytime soon.**

We're going to build houses and plant gardens today to re-create what the Israelites were told to do.

Give each child a copy of the "Babylon Building" pattern, and have kids cut out the patterns. Make sure kids leave the instructions intact so they can use them to make their buildings.

When kids have finished their buildings, give each child one-half of a graham cracker on a paper plate. Have kids spread green frosting on the graham crackers and then put colored sprinkles on top. Have them set the graham crackers along the sides of their buildings. Let kids know they'll eat their "gardens" later as their snack.

Say: **Now that we have our buildings and our gardens, let's find out what God told the Israelites next. This is from Jeremiah 29:8-9. God knew the Israelites wanted to hear the good news that they would go back home to Israel soon. Apparently there were false prophets and diviners telling the people what they wanted to hear: that they'd go home soon. And that's just what these "prophets" and "diviners" told the Israelites. But these prophets and diviners weren't from God. So they weren't telling the truth. Let's find out what God was really telling the Israelites.**

Read aloud Jeremiah 29:10.

Say: **Wow! These people wouldn't go back home for 70 years! That's a long time! Let's stand and get a sense of just how long that would be.**

Building Where You Are
Supplies

Bible
several pairs of scissors
glue
graham crackers
paper plates
green food coloring
vanilla frosting
colored sprinkles
plastic knives
Teacher Pack
1 copy per child of the "Babylon Building" pattern

ALLERGY ALERT

Building Where You Are
Easy Prep

Create green frosting by stirring a few drops of green food coloring into a can of vanilla frosting.

Have kids stand in rows, raise their arms to shoulder level, and spread out so that no child is touching another.

Say: **In case you're wondering, I promise that we're going to enjoy our snack—but first, to give you a little idea of how long 70 years might feel like, I want all of you to wind your arms around for a count of 70. Each time you wind your arms around represents one year. Is everyone ready? Go!**

Have kids wind their arms like windmills as you count to 70. If some kids can't continue, it's okay for them to stop. After counting to 70, have kids sit down.

Let kids enjoy their "garden" snacks while they rest their arms and discuss the following questions.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to have to exercise so hard as you waited for your snack? How does that remind you of the kinds of things the Israelites had to do while they waited?**
- **What are ways we can show patience the way Jeremiah told the exiles to?**
- **What's it like to trust in God even when things aren't going well for us?**

Say: **We had to wait for 70 arm circles before enjoying our snack. But the Israelites had to wait for 70 years until they could go back home. That's more than eight times your age! That's a long time to wait. And it meant that almost everyone who heard the letter from Jeremiah knew that they themselves would never again see the Promised Land. They realized that their job was to make it possible for their children and grandchildren to return home by being faithful to seek God. Sometimes we don't get what we want from God right away, either. We have to learn what the Israelites did: ▶ WE SEEK GOD NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.**

Puzzling Plan
Supplies

Bibles
bags
Teacher Pack
3 blank puzzles

Puzzling Plan
Easy Prep

Place the pieces of the 3 puzzles into a separate bag for each puzzle. Take 1 piece from each set, and put it with another set. You'll now have a full puzzle with 1 wrong piece for each of three groups.

Puzzling Plan

What You'll Do

Have kids form three groups. Give each group one of the puzzle sets (each with a misfit piece), and have groups go to separate areas. Make sure each group has a Bible. Ask a willing child in each group to find and read Jeremiah 29:11-14.

Say: **God had a plan. God knew the Israelites wanted to go home, but it wasn't time yet. When God has a plan, though, things fit together just right—kind of like a puzzle. To help us understand how things fit together in a plan, we're going to put these puzzles together. Work with one another to complete your puzzles. When you've finished, raise your hand.**

Kids will soon find that one of their pieces doesn't fit into their group's puzzle. After kids begin to state that they have a "weird" or "odd" piece, say: **Even though that piece may not fit into your particular puzzle and may not seem important to you, it is important because it fits into one of the other puzzles here.**

Have kids go around the room to the other groups' puzzles to find where their odd piece fits. When kids have completed all the puzzles, have them sit down.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like when you found the odd piece that didn't fit into your puzzle?**
- **What did you think you needed to do with that piece? Explain.**
- **What was it like when you found where the piece belonged?**
- **How do these puzzle pieces remind you of the way we fit into God's big plan?**

Say: **Just as we found that our odd pieces fit into another puzzle to complete the picture, God has special places for us in his plan. It may not always be where we think it should be, but God has good plans for us. The exiled Israelites in Babylon had to keep plugging away at the "puzzles" in their lives as they sought God's direction in difficult circumstances. Like Jeremiah instructed them, ▶ WE SEEK GOD NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS. We can trust God to place us where we'll fit in best. Let's talk more about God's perfect plans in our lives.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Whose Plans Do You Trust?

What You'll Do

Help kids find Jeremiah 29:11 in their Bibles, and ask a willing child to read the Key Verse for today aloud: " 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' "

Say: **Sometimes we hit some rough spots in life. Things don't go the way we plan for them to, and it seems hopeless. But this verse says that God has plans for us. When we know him and follow him, God's plans will work out in our lives. Let's think about tough situations going on in our world today. Then we'll talk about what God's plans can do in those situations.**

Have kids form pairs, and give each pair paper and pens.

Whose Plans Do You Trust?
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
CD player
paper
pens
Teacher Pack
CD: "The Plans I Have for You" (Jeremiah 29:11) (track 12)

Whose Plans Do You Trust?
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 9 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Explain that each pair will share some of the tough situations that people they know have faced. Then pairs will brainstorm how God's plans can work out in that situation. For example, if a pair knows someone who experienced a house fire, they can brainstorm how the family comes to know God through helpful neighbors and kindness from the local church.

Give kids about five minutes to brainstorm, and then have pairs summarize their situations for the whole group and list their brainstormed ideas. When each pair is finished, have the whole group brainstorm additional ways.

Thank kids for their participation and ideas.

Say: **Let's sing a song to remind us that God has plans to give us hope and a future.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "The Plans I Have for You" (Jeremiah 29:11) (track 12). After they listen once, have kids sing along and do the motions if they're comfortable doing so.

(Chorus)
"For I know the plans I have for you," *(point to self)*
Declares the Lord. *(point to heaven)*
"I know the plans I have for you," *(point to self)*
Declares the Lord. *(point to heaven)*
(Repeat.)

They are plans to prosper you *(nod head yes)*
And not to harm you, *(shake head no)*
Plans to give you hope and a future. *(nod head yes)*
They are plans for good and not disaster. *(shake head no)*
Why? Because he tells us so. *(point to heaven)*

(Repeat from the beginning; then repeat chorus.)

"The Plans I Have for You" (Jeremiah 29:11) by Ben Glover. © 2005 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Have kids turn to the "Whose Plans Do You Trust?" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Say: **We've learned today that God has good plans for us. Let's take a look at plans other people may have for us along with what we think God's plans might be. First, let's think about plans our families might have for us.**

Ask:

- **Has your family talked about some things they hope you become when you grow up? What are they?**

Let several kids share their answers. Then have kids write their answers in the "Family" space provided on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Say: **Now let's think about what teachers might hope for your future.**

Ask:

- **What are some things a teacher would hope for his or her students?**
- **What can a teacher do to help a student reach a certain goal?**

Let kids share their answers with partners. Then have kids write their answers in the "Teacher" space provided on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Say: **I'm sure you have some hopes and dreams for yourself! Those don't necessarily have to do with what you want to be. Your hopes and dreams can be for you to help a friend get to know Jesus or for your new class to be as good as your class last year.**

Ask:

- **What are some things you hope for in your future?**

Have kids write the things they hope for in the "Self" space provided on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Say: **The Israelites' greatest hope was to return to their homes in Israel. Even though they had to wait 70 years, they knew God would keep his promise and allow them to return. Not only that, they knew God had good plans for the Israelites, both now and in the future. And God has good plans for you now and in the future, too.**

Sometimes God wants us to wait. After all, he had the Israelites wait for 70 more years! Sometimes God's plans happen right away, but sometimes we have to be patient. Even though God has plans for you, he knows when you'll be ready to carry out those plans.

Ask:

- **What are some things that you think God might have planned for you?**

Have kids share with partners what they hope for from God and what will help them wait for that thing. Then give kids time to write their hopes in the "God" space provided on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What does our Key Verse tell you about God's plans for you, both now and in the future?**
- **What does this verse tell us about difficult situations?**
- **What can help you seek God in your life even when things appear to be bad for you?**

Say: **We know that God guided the Israelites. God was with them for 70 years in Babylonian exile. We know that God promised to restore Israel after the exile.**

We may not know what God's plans are, but those plans are guaranteed to help us grow closer to him and serve him. The key is to remember that ▶ WE SEEK GOD NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how ▶ WE SEEK GOD NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS this week.**

As your Daily Challenge this week, commit to seeking God's plans for you no matter what happens. In the Daily Challenge section on the front of your Bible Truth Sleuth pages, write what you'll do this week to seek God. Maybe you'll pray every day for God to tell you a special job he wants you to do. Or you can read your Bible every morning for five minutes to find out how God has guided his people before.

Make sure you commit to seeking God's plans for you no matter what happens, too. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: **▶ WE SEEK GOD NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS. For 70 years, God's people had to seek God as they settled down in a foreign land, built homes, planted gardens, and had families. They had to wait and trust God's promise to return their people to Israel knowing that they wouldn't live to see it happen. Let's use this one week to seek God by following through with our Daily Challenge commitment.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about their Daily Challenges and what they learned about seeking God no matter what happens. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God for the good plans he has for us, both now and in the future, and asking him to help us to trust in those plans, no matter what happens.

Lyrics

The Plans I Have for You (Jeremiah 29:11)

(Chorus)
"For I know the plans I have for you,"
Declares the Lord.
"I know the plans I have for you,"
Declares the Lord.
(Repeat.)

They are plans to prosper you
And not to harm you,
Plans to give you hope and a future.
They are plans for good and not disaster.
Why? Because he tells us so.

(Repeat from the beginning; then repeat chorus.)

"The Plans I Have for You" (Jeremiah 29:11) by Ben Glover. © 2005 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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Nehemiah Seeks God's Forgiveness for Israel Nehemiah 1:1–2:9

Third- and fourth-graders know what sin is. They know the differences between doing right and doing wrong. They know what "timeouts" are as well as other forms of discipline. Sometimes, however, they hear a lot more about the consequences of their actions than about God, who's always ready to forgive them of their sins. Use this lesson to help kids see why it's good to seek forgiveness and commit to a better way.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Turn…** *(about 10 min.)* Play a game about following directions to find treats.	treats, 5 bowls	Hide 5 bowls or bags of treats in 5 locations in your room. Be sure they aren't immediately obvious, but remember where each one is.
2 Bible Exploration	**The Nehemiah Show** *(about 10 min.)* Experience a talk show with Nehemiah as the host.	Bibles, CD player, paper, markers, tape, Legos or other building blocks **Teacher Pack:** CD	

▶Bible Point
We seek God's forgiveness.

Key Verse
"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Children will seek God's forgiveness, and commit to making a specific change in their lives.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Ask Nehemiah** *(about 20 min.)* Read letters, give advice to the writers of the letters, and commit to making changes in their lives.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, paper, pens, 1 copy each of the "Torn in Toledo" and "Guilt-ridden in Augusta" handout (at the end of this lesson)	Tear out the Lesson 10 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
	Turn to God *(about 10 min.)* Discuss turning to and away from God, learn the Key Verse, and sing a song.	Bibles, CD player, tape, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD, "Jesus" poster	
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Write a letter to God seeking forgiveness, and make a specific change.	paper, pens	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Nehemiah Seeks God's Forgiveness for Israel Nehemiah 1:1–2:9

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Bad News Broke Nehemiah's Heart

The events described in this passage occurred 90 years after the first large group of Hebrews had returned to the land of Judah. And 70 years had passed since the Temple in Jerusalem had been rebuilt. In addition, about 12 years had passed since Ezra had begun to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and had returned to Jerusalem with a large contingent of men, women, and children, as well as excellent funding from the king. It appeared that God was working to restore his people, just as he had promised through Jeremiah and other prophets. Thus Nehemiah was surprised to hear from his brother, Hanani, that Jerusalem still lay in ruins. And that news grieved Nehemiah greatly.

Nehemiah Responded and Acted Wisely

Nehemiah's initial response wasn't to run to the king for help; rather, he turned to God in prayer. Nehemiah's mourning and fasting demonstrated to God and to those around him how sincerely he cared about the situation in Jerusalem. Nehemiah confessed the sins that he and his ancestors had committed against God.

Then he turned to the king. Nehemiah must have done a good job as cupbearer: Artaxerxes was king for 40 years before dying of natural causes. But even for someone in Nehemiah's trusted position, coming before the king was a scary proposition. And Nehemiah was boldly asking for two enormous favors: permission to make the trip and the king's assistance in making it. Even after having prayed for days, Nehemiah silently said a quick prayer to God before making his request.

Nehemiah's Faith and Risk Paid Off

Nehemiah's prayer was answered abundantly. Artaxerxes gave him the time off he needed, letters assuring safe passage through lands along the way, and a guarantee of building materials. In addition, the king gave him and his entourage an escort of officers and soldiers on horses! When Nehemiah prayed and humbled himself before God, God answered.

The Jesus Connection

Sin damages our lives and pulls us from God. But Jesus gives us a path to seek God's forgiveness.

Do you need God to restore an area of your life that has been broken down by sin? Talk to God about it. You can write about it by filling in this prayer:

God, I confess this sin to you:

_____

_____

_____

Here's how I want your help to begin the work of rebuilding:

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for hearing my prayer and helping to restore what is broken.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Turn…
Supplies

treats
5 bowls

ALLERGY ALERT

Turn…
Easy Prep

Hide 5 bowls or bags of treats in 5 locations in your room. Be sure they aren't immediately obvious, but remember where each one is.

1 GETTING STARTED

Turn…

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Say: **Today, we're going to play a game in which you'll have to turn in a specific direction to find something hidden in our room.**

Have kids form five groups and sit down.

Say: **Each group will take a turn trying to find a special treat. But you must follow my direction. You'll walk slowly together in one direction. When I say "turn," you must turn to your right and keep looking.**

Have the first group start looking for one of the bowls or bags, directing them as they go. Continue saying "turn" until the kids head in the direction of one of the bowls or bags. When the first group has found the treat, have kids in that group sit down but not eat the treats yet. Then send the second group. Continue in this manner until all five groups have found the treats, and then allow kids to enjoy their treats.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How did it help you knowing which way to turn to find the treats?**
- **How did knowing you'd get something good help you obey my instructions?**
- **When you have a decision to make, how do you know which way to turn?**

Say: **In the Bible, to repent from sin literally means to "turn away." When we sin, we do wrong things and need to turn to God and seek God's forgiveness. In today's Bible passage, we'll learn about a man who knew it was important to turn to God, seek forgiveness, and choose to obey God. We'll learn what happens when ▶ WE SEEK GOD'S FORGIVENESS. Let's find out more.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

The Nehemiah Show

What You'll Do

Say: **Our Bible passage today is about Nehemiah, and how he wanted to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem.**

Have kids open their Bibles, and help them find the book of Nehemiah.

Say: **For centuries the wall had protected Jerusalem from countless enemy attacks. So the first thing we're going to do is build a wall.**

Give kids each several sheets of paper and have markers available. Ask them to make "bricks" for a wall by drawing a solid line around the edge of the sheets of paper. Then have kids use tape to build a wall of paper bricks on one wall of your room. Take several minutes to build a substantial wall, allowing the kids to do the bulk of the work.

Say: **Over time, many of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem turned away from God and followed false gods of other people. God sent many prophets to tell the kings and the people to turn away from worshipping false gods, but in the end it was clear that God had lost patience and allowed the Babylonians to conquer and destroy Jerusalem and take many of its people into captivity. They looted the treasures from the Temple, burned it, and tore in down. Then they tore down the walls around Jerusalem.**

Have kids tear down the wall and leave the pieces on the floor.

Say: **For many years, the walls around Jerusalem were in ruins, as was much of the city. Then a man named Nehemiah, who lived in the country that had conquered his people, began to weep when he heard that the walls were still torn down. He fasted and prayed for many days seeking God's forgiveness for the people of Israel.**

Then he took action. We're going to imagine that Nehemiah has a radio show. We're going to listen to a talk show to hear what Nehemiah had to do to get the wall in Jerusalem rebuilt. Let's listen.

In this activity, "Nehemiah" will host a talk show in which he interviews people who were involved in rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem.

Play "The Nehemiah Show" (track 13 on the CD). After the applause, stop the CD.

Read the following text, pretending you are Nehemiah hosting a talk show, and interact with the CD. Play the CD tracks at the appropriate times.

The Nehemiah Show
Supplies

Bibles
CD player
paper
markers
tape
Legos or other building blocks
Teacher Pack
CD: "The Nehemiah Show" (track 13), "Hanani on the Phone" (track 14), "King Artaxerxes on the Phone" (track 15)

Say: [as Nehemiah] **Hello and welcome! We've got a great show planned for you today. We'll be talking to a few of the people I met during my quest to restore the walls around the fair city of Jerusalem. I'm sure you'll be touched—and entertained.**

First, let's talk to Hanani (pronounced huh-NAW-nee)**, who'll be joining us via telephone.**

Hanani, my good friend and brother, welcome to the show. Tell us how this whole thing began.

Play "Hanani on the Phone" (track 14 on the CD). After the applause, stop the CD.

Say: [as Nehemiah] **That's right, Hanani. I was so sad to hear about what happened! I can't tell you how much I cried!**

For many days, I mourned. I fasted and I prayed to God. We'll hear about that in a moment.

But for now, I want to thank you, Hanani, for being with us today. It was your visit to Susa that really got the whole thing started.

But enough about me for the moment. I'd like to hear from some of you about times you've been sad about something. Anyone care to come up here?

Have kids who want to be interviewed come near you with their chairs. Ask these kids about times when they've been sad. When done, ask kids to return to where they were sitting.

Say: [as Nehemiah] **I was very upset by the news from Hanani. And I turned to God and poured out my heart to him. I knew that my people were in exile because they'd disobeyed God. We needed God's forgiveness. And we needed God to restore us. Our God is a great God, and had promised to forgive us if only we would return to him in obedience. So I confessed my people's sins to God, and I asked God to help us. I also asked God to help me speak to the man who's our next guest, King Artaxerxes** (pronounced ar-tuh-ZERK-sees)**. Let's welcome the king, who also joins us via telephone.**

Welcome to you, King Artaxerxes! Thank you for joining us today. Please tell us what happened next.

Play "King Artaxerxes on the Phone" (track 15 on the CD). After the applause, stop the CD.

Say: [as Nehemiah] **And I can't begin to tell you how much I appreciate everything you've done for my people and me. You truly are a great king. Thank you, king, for your help and thank you for visiting my show and telling about what you did for the people.**

And you know what? You've been such a great audience, you deserve a prize!

Give kids each a few building blocks.

Say: **Where was I? Oh yeah, I left as soon as travel arrangements were made. When I got to Jerusalem, I examined the situation and found that Hanani was accurate in everything he said. The city was in terrible shape. The walls were in pieces, and the gates had been burned. Jerusalem was left unguarded and unprotected. It was clear that rebuilding the walls would take great effort. I knew I would need to be very persuasive when I presented my plan for rebuilding the walls to the people.**

I explained the situation to the people. And then I told them about how God's gracious hand had been upon me and about the king's kind words and his support.

To my delight, the people responded with enthusiasm, and we all began to rebuild the walls. We'll talk more about that next time.

I'd like to thank my guests, Hanani and King Artaxerxes! You're great, guys!

Say: **When Nehemiah heard that the walls around Jerusalem were in ruins, he knew he had to do something. The first thing he did was seek God's forgiveness for his people. So Nehemiah turned to God, and he poured out his heart to God. He asked God to forgive the Jews, and he asked God to provide a way for him to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls. God heard Nehemiah's prayer because God always hears us when we turn to him. And God helped Nehemiah return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. So, studio audience, it's time for a little challenge for you! Your own walls had a problem staying up...so how quickly can you build a stronger wall using the blocks you received earlier? And how well can you work together while you do it? Ready, set, go!**

Allow time for kids to work together to build a wall using the building blocks. Cheer them on, and applaud their work when they finish.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to have the wall you worked so hard to build torn down?**
- **What problems did you have in building your wall the second time? How did you figure out what to do? How did you have to work together?**
- **Why do you think it was important for Nehemiah to seek God's forgiveness when the obvious problem he faced was building a wall?**

Say: **Nehemiah wasn't just a great leader and builder. He was also a person of prayer. He knew that when people rebel against God, the first thing to do is to seek God's forgiveness. When we've done something wrong, ▶ WE SEEK GOD'S FORGIVENESS, and then commit to changing our ways.**

Ask Nehemiah
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
paper
pens
1 copy each of the "Torn in Toledo" and "Guilt-ridden in Augusta" handout (and the end of this lesson)

Ask Nehemiah
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 10 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

3 WEAVING FAITH **INTO LIFE**

Ask Nehemiah

What You'll Do

Say: **Now it's time to move on to the "Ask Nehemiah" segment of our show. For this part, we'll have two groups to help two people deal with problems.**

Form two groups. Give one of the groups the copy of the "Torn in Toledo" handout, and give the other group the copy of the "Guilt-ridden in Augusta" handout. Tell kids that their job is to give advice to the person based on what they've learned today and how Nehemiah acted in today's Bible passage, Nehemiah 1:1–2:9. They'll need to work together to come up with advice, and each group needs to appoint a spokesperson to report to the whole group.

The text of the handouts is printed here for your convenience:

Dear Nehemiah:
I'm so confused! I don't know what to do. My parents tell me how important it is to serve God. But lots of my friends say God isn't real. They laugh at me for being a Christian. My parents teach me what the Bible says, and they tell me to obey God. My friends tell me the Bible isn't true and that I can decide for myself what the right thing to do is. What my parents say sounds right, but I don't want my friends to laugh at me anymore. I sound like a wimp when I say I can't do something because the Bible says not to. Help!

Torn in Toledo

If kids get stuck with how to answer Torn in Toledo, you can give them ideas from the following:

("You're in a tough spot, Torn in Toledo. It sounds like you want to please your parents and you want to please your friends. Friends are important, but your friends are leading you down the wrong path. It sounds like you know for certain that the Bible is true. And it sounds like you really know deep down in your heart that your friends are wrong. You're at a place where you need to make a decision. Who's more important to you, God or your friends? I hope you choose God, because he's your creator and he's Lord over the universe. Serving God is always the right thing to do. It's going to be tough to follow through with your decision, but God will help you. Turn to God and tell him about your struggles. Ask God for strength. Then depend on him to give you the strength to serve him.")

Here's the letter from "Guilt-ridden in Augusta":

Dear Nehemiah:
I know the Bible says we're supposed to serve God and do whatever he wants us to do. But I like to make my own decisions. Sometimes I feel I know what's good for me better

than God does. I know God's been telling me he wants me to pray more and spend more time reading my Bible. I know it's the right thing to do, but I just want to have fun with my friends. I don't want to be all serious about religion. I figure that I'll have time to serve God when I grow up. Right now is the time to have fun and do what I want to do. But I feel guilty about disobeying God—how do I stop feeling guilty?

Guilt-ridden in Augusta

If kids get stuck with how to answer Guilt-ridden in Augusta, you can give them ideas from the following:

("Well, Guilt-ridden in Augusta, it sounds like you're rebelling against God. That's just what the Jews did. They decided to do their own thing instead of seeking God. Let me tell you, they regretted that decision! The Bible tells us that God wants us to serve him and him alone. God isn't pleased when we rebel against him. You'll never have peace when you live in rebellion against God. If you know God wants you to do something, your best bet is to do it, right then and there. You need to turn to God and confess your sin. Ask God to help you. Then obey God! Your guilt will go away, and you'll feel a lot better.")

Give kids several minutes to work on their responses to the two letters. Then have each group's spokesperson share how they'd answer the letters. Thank kids for their work and participation.

Say: **That's all the time we have on the program today for letters. But a few extra letters did come in the mail. Look over the letters, and give the writers your advice. I know you'll do a great job! We'll see you next time on *The Nehemiah Show*. Goodbye!**

Have kids find partners and turn to the "Ask Nehemiah" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Distribute Bibles, pens, and paper, and then have pairs read the letters, look up the Scriptures, and write down the advice they'd give to each of the letter writers to help persuade them to seek God's forgiveness and to change their ways. Give kids several minutes to finish at least one letter. They can finish all three if time allows. Invite children to share insights and highlights of their discussions and how they'd answer the letters.

Say: **When we do something wrong, God wants us to turn to him. When we're in trouble, God wants us to turn to him. No matter what's going on in our lives, God wants us to turn to him as ▶ WE SEEK GOD'S FORGIVENESS. Sometimes turning to God requires a change in our lives. If we think about Nehemiah's example, we'll see that the writers of the letters we just read needed to make some sort of a change.**

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What are some examples of things we can turn to God with?**
- **What does it really mean to turn to God and seek his forgiveness?**
- **What are the benefits of turning to God and seeking his forgiveness?**

Say: **The Israelites learned the hard way about disobeying God, but God still forgave them through the sincere and ongoing prayers of Nehemiah. In a similar way, ▶ WE SEEK GOD'S FORGIVENESS. We just need to turn to him and talk to him about how sorry we are. God's always ready for us. There's no problem that's too big for him to solve, and there's no sin that's too big for God's forgiveness.**

Turn to God
Supplies

Bibles
CD player
tape
copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "If We Confess Our Sins" (1 John 1:9) (track 25)
"Jesus" poster

Turn to God

What You'll Do

Tape the "Jesus" poster on a blank wall. Have kids stand and look at the picture.

Say: **Look at Jesus and think about these things. First, think about all the good things God has done for you. Second, think about how God is a good friend to you and the benefits of having a relationship with him. I'll give you a minute to think about those things.**

Pause for one minute.

Say: **Now pretend that you've decided to be rebellious and disobey God. Think about the things you've done that you know God doesn't want you to do. Turn away from the picture of Jesus, and think about what it means to turn away from God and do your own thing. I'll give you a few moments to think about those things.**

Pause for one minute. Turn in your Bible to 2 Chronicles 7:14, and have kids turn in their Bibles to today's Key Verse, too.

Say: **Listen to what God says in the Bible: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).**

Say the verse again, pausing after each phrase to let kids repeat after you. When kids are done, have them turn back toward the Jesus poster.

Say: **Let's sing a song to remind us that God wants us to confess our sins and seek forgiveness.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "If We Confess Our Sins" (1 John 1:9) (track 25 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along.

Bu-bu-bu-but if we confess our sins to God,
He-He-He is faithful and just to forgive us.
If we confess our sins to God,
He-He will cleanse us from wrong,
And we'll sing this song. (Right on!)
Yeah.

If you did it—you know it,
Say sorry—and show it.
God knows you've been mean.
He sees where you've been.
Oh yeah! (Oh yeah!)

Bu-bu-bu-but if we confess our sins to God,
He-He-He is faithful and just to forgive us.
If we confess our sins to God,
He-He will cleanse us from wrong,
And we'll sing this song.

If we confess our sins to God,
He is faithful and just to forgive us.
If we confess our sins to God,
He-He-He will cleanse us from wrong,
And we'll sing this song.

If we confess our sins to God,
He-He-He is faithful and just to forgive us.
If we confess our sins to God (to God),
He will cleanse us from wrong,
And we'll sing this song, right on, right on, right on!
(Let me hear that!)

"If We Confess Our Sins" (1 John 1:9) by Rob Biagi. © 2004 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How have you experienced God's forgiveness in the way our Key Verse talks about?**
- **What good things happen when we seek God's forgiveness?**
- **Why do you think some people choose not to seek God's forgiveness?**

Say: **Turning to God is always the right thing to do. Sometimes it's hard to humble ourselves and turn away from the wrong things we've done. It took many years for God's people to humble themselves and confess the wrong things they'd done that resulted in their captivity. Fortunately, Nehemiah sought God's forgiveness for his people with all of his heart. ▶ WE SEEK GOD'S FORGIVENESS, no matter what we've done, and God will help us.**

Daily Challenges Supplies

paper
pens

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how ▶ WE SEEK GOD'S FORGIVENESS this week.**

Give each person paper and a pen.

Say: **As your Daily Challenge this week, think for a minute about something that needs to change in your life. We're going to write "Dear God" letters. In the letter you write, ask for forgiveness for something wrong you've done, and describe the change you're going to make as you turn to God. Make sure it's something specific you can do this week. It can be something as simple as remembering to thank him for a new day each morning this week or something harder like letting your sister play your video games with you.**

Allow kids a minute to think and write. Encourage them to commit to making the changes in their lives this week.

Make sure you make a commitment to ask for forgiveness and turn to God. Tell the kids what you're going to do. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: ▶ **WE SEEK GOD'S FORGIVENESS. We've seen how Nehemiah sought first for forgiveness for his people because they hadn't followed God. Let's choose to act like Nehemiah to seek God's forgiveness as we follow through on our Daily Challenge.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the commitment they made and what they learned about seeking God's forgiveness. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, asking God to help us to seek forgiveness for our sins and for strength as we seek to change our ways.

"Torn in Toledo"

Dear Nehemiah:
I'm so confused! I don't know what to do. My parents tell me how important it is to serve God. But lots of my friends say God isn't real. They laugh at me for being a Christian. My parents teach me what the Bible says, and they tell me to obey God. My friends tell me the Bible isn't true and that I can decide for myself what the right thing to do is. What my parents say sounds right, but I don't want my friends to laugh at me anymore. I sound like a wimp when I say I can't do something because the Bible says I shouldn't. Help!

Torn in Toledo

"Guilt-ridden in Augusta"

Dear Nehemiah:
I know the Bible says we're supposed to serve God and do whatever he wants us to do. But I like to make my own decisions. Sometimes I feel I know what's good for me better than God does. I know God's been telling me he wants me to pray more and spend more time reading my Bible. I know it's the right thing to do, but I just want to have fun with my friends. I don't want to be all serious about religion. I figure that I'll have time to serve God when I grow up. Right now is the time to have fun and do what I want to do. But I feel guilty about disobeying God—how do I stop feeling guilty?

Guilt-ridden in Augusta

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Lyrics

If We Confess Our Sins (1 John 1:9)

Bu-bu-bu-but if we confess our sins to God,
He-He-He is faithful and just to forgive us.
If we confess our sins to God,
He-He will cleanse us from wrong,
And we'll sing this song. (Right on!)
Yeah.

If you did it—you know it,
Say sorry—and show it.
God knows you've been mean.
He sees where you've been.
Oh yeah! (Oh yeah!)

Bu-bu-bu-but if we confess our sins to God,
He-He-He is faithful and just to forgive us.
If we confess our sins to God,
He-He will cleanse us from wrong,
And we'll sing this song.

If we confess our sins to God,
He is faithful and just to forgive us.
If we confess our sins to God,
He-He-He will cleanse us from wrong,
And we'll sing this song.

If we confess our sins to God,
He-He-He is faithful and just to forgive us.
If we confess our sins to God (to God),
He will cleanse us from wrong,
And we'll sing this song, right on, right on, right on!
(Let me hear that!)

"If We Confess Our Sins" (1 John 1:9) by Rob Biagi. © 2004 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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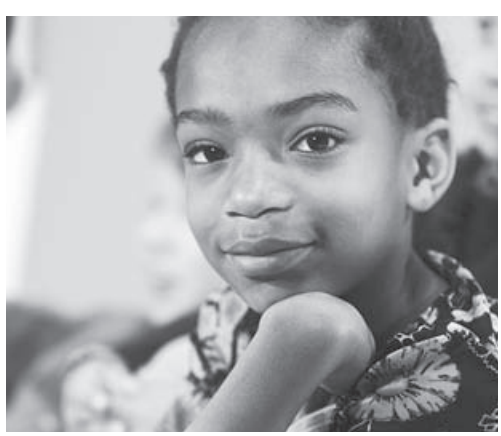
Nehemiah Rebuilds the Wall

Nehemiah 2:11–6:19

Third- and fourth-graders are beginning to take on more responsibility. Their homework is more complicated than it was a couple of years ago, and their parents probably give them more chores at home. Kids this age may be starting to feel anxious about the amount of work they have to do. They may face the temptation to start doing something but then leave the task when they tire of it (with the intention of coming back), and not return to the task. Use this lesson to help them know that God wants us to face our challenges with determination and hard work.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Job Descriptions** *(about 10 min.)* Write job descriptions for challenging jobs, and talk about how to face tough challenges.	paper, pens, markers, tape	Write the following job titles each on a separate piece of paper, and tape them to a wall: "World Peace Promoter," "World Hunger Ender," and "Builder of Bridge to the Moon."
	Tough Job *(about 10 min.)* Build tall towers with cotton balls, and talk about how they've faced tough challenges.	cotton balls, tape, paper, glue, scissors, stapler, pens	
2 Bible Exploration	**Nehemiah's Challenges** *(about 10 min.)* Break into groups and explore Scripture.	Bibles, index cards, tape, pens **Teacher Pack:** "Nehemiah's Challenge" cards	



▶Bible Point
God helps us face challenges.

Key Verse
"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Kids will devise a plan to face a challenge in their lives.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Wall of Challenges** *(about 20 min.)* Work with partners to devise strategies to face their challenges, and sing a song about doing all things for God.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, pens, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD	Tear out the Lesson 11 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Nehemiah Rebuilds the Wall

Nehemiah 2:11–6:19

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Scoping Out the Opposition

Nehemiah 2:10 hints that the task facing Nehemiah would not be easy. At least two of the leaders of people living near Jerusalem—Sanballat and Tobiah—were unhappy about Nehemiah's plans. They didn't want anyone to help the Israelites.

Nehemiah inspected the wall in secret because he wanted to keep his intentions to himself until the time was right to reveal them. He already knew about the opposition of Sanballat and Tobiah, but he didn't know if other opposition existed, even within the city of Jerusalem. After conducting an exploratory examination of the ruined wall, he gathered the Jewish officials and told them of his plan, of God's blessing, and of the king's help. And they were ready to start building!

A Series of Challenges

After the work began, it wasn't long before opposition arose. Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, just to the north of Jerusalem, mocked the Jews. Tobiah, probably the leader of the Ammonites just to the east of Jerusalem, stood beside Sanballat in his opposition.

The secret of the Jews' early success in rebuilding the wall is revealed in Nehemiah 4:6: "the people worked with all their heart." When the wall was about halfway rebuilt and the gaps were being closed, Sanballat and Tobiah met with other enemies of the Jews and plotted their next steps. The Jews responded by praying and posting guards. Half the men worked, as the other half—well-armed—stood guard.

From within the wall, another problem lurked: impoverished Jews in need of loans were being further extorted for more money. Nehemiah quickly rectified the situation.

The final opposition to the rebuilding came in two phases: first an attempt to draw Nehemiah out so that he could be injured or killed, and then an attempt to deceive him into showing fear and weakness by hiding in the Temple. Both attempts failed, and the rebuilding continued.

Despite the challenges, the wall was rebuilt in only 52 days! The people had accepted Nehemiah's goal, and God helped them overcome the challenges along the way.

The Jesus Connection

Jesus was never one to shy away from challenges. He was constantly challenged by religious authorities, and he met those challenges head-on.

What challenges are you facing? How do you need God's help to face them? Read Nehemiah 6:9. Then pray that God will strengthen you as you combat the challenges in your life. You can write your prayer here.

Job Descriptions
Supplies

paper
pens
markers
tape

Job Descriptions
Easy Prep

Write the following job titles each on a separate piece of paper, and tape them to a wall: "World Peace Promoter," "World Hunger Ender," and "Builder of Bridge to the Moon."

Tough Job
Supplies

cotton balls
tape
paper
glue
scissors
stapler
pens

1 GETTING **STARTED**

Job Descriptions

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

When kids finish sharing, ask them to form pairs, and give each pair paper and a pen. Show kids the job titles you taped up, and have pairs write job descriptions for each of the three jobs. Ask them to consider what skills and previous experience would help a person applying for the job.

Give kids several minutes to work. Then have each pair of kids share what they've written with one other pair.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What kinds of skills would someone need to have to apply for one of these jobs?**
- **What kind of personality would someone need to have to apply for one of these jobs?**
- **Based on the qualifications you listed, which job would you find most challenging? Explain.**

Say: **I think we can all agree that *any* of these jobs would be very challenging. We're probably never going to be asked to build a bridge to the moon, but we do have to face challenges in our own lives. ▶ GOD HELPS US FACE CHALLENGES, so it only makes sense that we work at everything as if we're doing the jobs for God. We'll explore that as we look at today's Bible passage. But first, I've got a challenge for you.**

Tough Job

What You'll Do

Have kids form groups of three. Give each group several handfuls of cotton balls. You'll also want to have the other supplies available for kids to share.

Say: **I've got a tough job for you to do. Your group has now become a construction company. Your job is to build a tall tower of cotton balls. You've got five minutes. You may use any supplies you find in the room to build your tower. Work together with your group to come up with a plan, and then build your tower.**

Make sure kids understand that although they may use supplies from around the room, they must not harm or destroy anything. For example, it would be inappropriate to glue things to the wall or to rip the cover from a book.

Give groups five minutes to build their towers.

At the end of five minutes, have each group show its tower to everyone. Thank kids for their creativity and participation.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What made this activity difficult?**
- **How did you solve the problems you faced?**
- **What kinds of attitudes or emotions did you have during this activity?**
- **Tell about a time you faced a challenge with determination and creativity.**

Say: **It's tough to build a tower out of something as flimsy as cotton balls. But there are some awesome towers of cotton balls in this room. Today we're going to talk about a man in the Bible who faced a really tough challenge. After learning about him and what he did, we'll see how ▶ GOD HELPS US FACE CHALLENGES.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Nehemiah's Challenges

Nehemiah's Challenges Supplies

Bibles
index cards
tape
pens
Teacher Pack
"Nehemiah's Challenge" cards

What You'll Do

Have kids form five groups. Give each group a Bible and one of the "Nehemiah's Challenge" cards.

Say: **Nehemiah knew the wall around Jerusalem needed to be rebuilt. It was in ruins, and Jerusalem was left vulnerable to attack from its enemies.**

In your groups, you're going to help build a replica of the wall of Jerusalem. You'll also explore one of the challenges Nehemiah faced. Your job will be to read the card I've given you. Read about the challenge Nehemiah faced and the Scripture listed on your card. Then talk about how Nehemiah faced the challenge and what you can learn from his response.

Have kids read the challenges on the "Nehemiah's Challenge" cards. Then have them look up the Scriptures and discuss how Nehemiah faced the challenge. During the time kids are talking in their groups, walk around and facilitate their discussions. If kids need help, you can use the summaries on the next page to help guide their discussions.

In the Challenge 1 passage, Nehemiah 2:11-18, Nehemiah secretly examined the wall to discover the extent of the work that needed to be done. He also encouraged the workers to build so Jerusalem would no longer be in disgrace.

In the Challenge 2 passage, Nehemiah 3:1, 3, 6, 13-15, 17, 22, and 28, Nehemiah had everyone work on different parts of the wall at the same time. People worked side by side to get the job done.

In the Challenge 3 passage, Nehemiah 4:1-4, Nehemiah took the criticisms he heard to God in prayer. He knew God would help his people face the challenge of rebuilding the wall.

In the Challenge 4 passage, Nehemiah 4:6-13, 16-18, Sanballat and Tobiah tried to stop the work, but Nehemiah again prayed and then posted men to guard while others worked. This way the people could keep working and were protected from attack at the same time.

In the Challenge 5 passage, Nehemiah 5:1-12, Nehemiah defended his people by going directly to the officials who were treating people so badly and telling them to stop. He spoke the truth, and the officials listened and agreed to stop treating the people so badly.

After kids have finished talking, hand out index cards, pens, and tape.

Say: **Now write on your index cards the ways Nehemiah faced the challenge. Write one idea per card. Have each person in your group write each of the ways you come up with so we have lots of "bricks" prepared to build the wall.**

Have each of the five groups explain to the other groups the challenge Nehemiah faced and how he dealt with the challenge. As each group makes its report, have kids tape their index card bricks together to make a house of cards. After all the groups have reported,

Say: **Here's the result of Nehemiah's hard work. Let's hear what Nehemiah said about the completion of the project.** Read Nehemiah 6:15-16.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What did you learn about handling challenges from Nehemiah's example?**
- **What kinds of challenges do you face?**
- **How can you face your challenges with God's help?**

Say: ▶ **GOD HELPS US FACE CHALLENGES. With God's help, Nehemiah faced each of his challenges head-on. He worked hard, and he encouraged the people around him to work hard. Nehemiah went to God with his challenges. And Nehemiah also came up with practical solutions for each problem. Now let's see how we can take Nehemiah's principles and apply them to our own lives.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Wall of Challenges

What You'll Do

Have kids form pairs, and make sure everyone has a pen and a Bible.

Say: **Nehemiah faced a tough challenge. He needed to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. Nehemiah faced that challenge with God's help and worked hard to accomplish his goal. Let's talk about the challenges that we face in our own daily lives.**

Have kids turn to the "Wall of Challenges" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Say: **In the left column of bricks, you'll have room to write some of the challenges you face in your life. Please write those challenges now. For example, if you're facing the challenge of telling your friend about your faith in God, you could write that in one of the bricks. Or it can be a challenge you're facing at home.**

Give kids several minutes to write.

Say: **You'll notice a Bible verse listed in the next column. That's our Key Verse for today; let's look it up.**

Have kids turn to Colossians 3:23 in their Bibles, and ask a willing child to read the verse: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."

Say: **Talk with your partner about what could happen if you were to choose not to follow the advice of this verse when you face each of the challenges on your page. Write your ideas in the space that looks like broken bricks.**

Give kids about five minutes to work.

Say: **Now talk with your partner about what you hope will happen if you choose to follow the advice of the verse. Write your ideas in the last column of stones that form the wall.**

Give kids about five minutes to work together.

Say: **Now you and your partner can come up with a specific plan for how you want to face one of the challenges you wrote down. Talk about how you can face your challenge with God's help.**

Give the children a minute or two to discuss. Ask willing children to share their challenge and their plan for meeting it.

Wall of Challenges
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
CD player
pens
copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "Whatever You Do" (Colossians 3:17) (track 26)

Wall of Challenges
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 11 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Say: **Let's sing a song based on our Key Verse about how we can face challenges by doing everything as if we were doing the work for God.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "Whatever You Do" (Colossians 3:17) (track 26 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along.

(Chorus)
Whatever, whatever,
What- what- what- what- whatever.
Whatever, whatever,
What- what- what- what- whatever.

(Verse)
And whatever you do,
Whether in word or deed,
Do it all in the name
Of the Lord Jesus.
And whatever you do,
Whether in word or deed,
Do it all in the name
Of the Lord Jesus.

Giving thanks to God the Father through him,
Giving thanks to God the Father through him,
Giving thanks to God the Father through him,
Giving thanks to God the Father through him.

(Repeat verse 2x; then repeat chorus.)

"Whatever You Do" (Colossians 3:17) by Jay Stocker. © 2006 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What are some of the ideas you had for facing your challenges by working for God?**
- **What difference does it make to work for God instead of tackling challenges by ourselves?**
- **If God helps us face challenges, why do a lot of people refuse God's help?**

Say: **Challenges will always come up in our lives. They can make us stronger as we count on God for help. That's because ▶ GOD HELPS US FACE CHALLENGES. Nehemiah faced huge challenges with confidence that God would help. Let's all follow his example when challenges come up in our lives.**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how we can rely on God to help us face challenges this week.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Talk with a parent about how he or she has turned to God to face challenges.**
- **Make up a Daily Challenge based on the idea you discussed with your partner on your "Wall of Challenges."**
- **When a frustrating challenge comes up, choose to stay calm and pray instead of getting angry or scared.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: ▶ **GOD HELPS US FACE CHALLENGES. Nehemiah had a challenge to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and he encountered more challenges as he worked. He sought God's help, and God helped him overcome each challenge. Let's follow his lead by following through on our Daily Challenges this week.**

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about facing challenges with God's help. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God for life's challenges and asking for help in facing them.

Lyrics

Whatever You Do (Colossians 3:17)

(Chorus)
Whatever, whatever,
What- what- what- what- whatever.
Whatever, whatever,
What- what- what- what- whatever.

(Verse)
And whatever you do,
Whether in word or deed,
Do it all in the name
Of the Lord Jesus.
And whatever you do,
Whether in word or deed,
Do it all in the name
Of the Lord Jesus.

Giving thanks to God the Father through him,
Giving thanks to God the Father through him,
Giving thanks to God the Father through him,
Giving thanks to God the Father through him.

(Repeat verse 2x; then repeat chorus.)

"Whatever You Do" (Colossians 3:17) by Jay Stocker. © 2006 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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Esther Saves Her People

Esther 2–9

Third- and fourth-graders are still developing the skills and qualities God has given them as they grow older and become able to explore more areas of interest. Use this lesson to show your kids that as they discover what they like and what they're good at, they can put those things to use by serving God.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Hidden Treasure** *(about 10 min.)* Discover treasures wrapped inside paper wads.	1 small wrapped candy per child, paper, tape	Wrap each piece of candy in a wad of paper, and cover the wad with tape.
2 Bible Exploration	**Pictures of Service** *(about 20 min.)* Draw pictures of Esther's experience while they listen to a dramatized telling of it.	Bibles, CD player, paper, markers or crayons **Teacher Pack:** CD, Bible Timeline	

▶Bible Point

Everyone can serve God.

Key Verse

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Kids will use their unique abilities and personalities to serve God in a specific way.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**People With a Purpose** *(about 10 min.)* Learn and discuss the Key Verse, and sing.	Bible, CD player, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD	
	Self-Portrait *(about 15 min.)* Think about and discuss their unique abilities and personalities.	Bible Truth Sleuth, pens **Teacher Pack:** "I'll Serve God" cards	Tear out the Lesson 12 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book. Separate the "I'll Serve God" cards.
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Esther Saves Her People

Esther 2–9

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Esther Becomes Queen of Persia

Xerxes, the Persian king, wanted to replace his queen, whom he'd banished from his presence because she had disobeyed one of his commands. Esther was one of many young virgins brought into Xerxes' harem to be considered for the position. Esther didn't reveal to anyone that she was a Jew. Chosen by the king as the most attractive of all the women brought before him, Esther was made queen.

Commercial and legal affairs were conducted at the king's gate. The fact that Esther's cousin Mordecai sat at the king's gate indicates that he held a high position in Xerxes' government. In his station there, he overheard the plot to assassinate the ruler. After reporting the plot to Xerxes through Queen Esther, Mordecai definitely attained a position of favor with the king, but apparently he was given no reward at the time.

Haman's Evil Plot

Mordecai's refusal to bow before Haman probably stemmed from his insistence on worshipping God alone. He wasn't about to let Haman, an Amalekite and a descendant of ancient enemies of the Jews, take the place of God. Haman apparently hated all Jews and loved to wield the power of his high position in Xerxes' government. When Mordecai refused to bow to him, Haman decided to wipe out all the Jews in the kingdom.

Esther and God's People Fast

When Esther realized what the king's decree meant, her response was to fast and to have all the Jews in the city fast as well. Though prayer isn't mentioned here, the intent of the fast was to seek God's favor and direction.

It may seem an easy task for Esther to stand up and tell the king of Haman's plot, but she risked her life by approaching the king uninvited. After Haman was hanged, there was still a problem: The edict to kill all the Jews couldn't be withdrawn. However, Xerxes commanded Esther and Mordecai to write a new decree allowing the Jews to defend themselves. Esther was obedient in serving God where he had placed her, and God used her actions to preserve his people.

The Jesus Connection

Jesus said that he came not to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). And he wants us to do the same! How is God calling you to serve him? In what ways do you feel ill-equipped for the role? Talk to God about your calling to serve, and ask him to help you clearly see that everyone—including you—can serve God. You can write your prayer here.

Hidden Treasure
Supplies

1 small wrapped candy per child
paper
tape

ALLERGY ALERT

Hidden Treasure
Easy Prep

Wrap each piece of candy in a wad of paper, and cover the wad with tape.

1 GETTING **STARTED**

Hidden Treasure

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

When everyone has shared, give each child one candy wrapped in a wad of paper.

Say: **There's a treasure hidden in your wad of paper. Your job is to figure out the best way to get to the treasure using just one hand. Ready? Go!**

Give children a few minutes to unwrap their wads of paper, and then continue.

Say: **Each paper wad had a treasure hidden inside it. You and I are like the paper wads. We all have treasures, or gifts, inside us. Sometimes it takes others to help us see the treasures.**

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to have to work to find out what your treasure was?**
- **What did you think your treasure was?**
- **What treasures do you think are inside you?**

Say: **Just as you uncovered the hidden treasure in your wad of paper, God knows what treasure is inside each one of you. You may have a gift or ability that you know about, such as playing a musical instrument. Or you may not be sure of the treasure inside you. In today's Bible passage, we'll meet a young woman named Esther. God was able to uncover her hidden treasure to serve him. As we explore what happened to Esther, let's think about how ▶ EVERYONE CAN SERVE GOD.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Pictures of Service

What You'll Do

Have kids form pairs. Provide pairs with Bibles, markers or crayons, and four sheets of paper. Have kids label the pieces of paper 1, 2, 3, and 4, leaving lots of room to draw on each sheet of paper.

Show kids the "Esther Saves Her People" picture on the Bible Timeline.

Say: **Today's Bible passage is from the book of Esther. It tells how God used some people in special ways. To help learn the passage, I'm going to play a simple retelling of it from the CD. While I do that, each pair will draw what they hear. The passage will be told in four parts. Everybody find sheet 1 now.** Pause. **Each pair will draw all four parts of the passage. I'll also tell you which Bible verses the passage is based on so you can look those up as well. There are four main people in our passage: King Xerxes** (pronounced ZERK-sees)**, Mordecai, Esther, and Haman. As you draw the pictures of the Bible passage, think about how the people in the passage are serving God or not, and incorporate that into your drawing. Ready?** Pause for any responses.

Play "Esther: Part 1" (track 16 on the CD), and then pause for kids to finish and share their drawings. Repeat with tracks 17, 18, and 19 in the same manner. For your reference, each track is based on the following Scriptures. You may want to suggest to kids that they can refer to the Bible passages as they complete each drawing.

Part 1: Esther 2:2-10, 15-18
Part 2: Esther 3:1-11
Part 3: Esther 4:1-3, 11-16
Part 4: Esther 5:1-8; 6:1-11; 7:1-6

Talk With Kids

Have pairs discuss the following questions. After each question, invite a few children to share the highlights of their discussion with everyone.

Ask:

- **Which people in this Bible passage were serving God? not serving God? Explain.**
- **How did you see God give people special talents, personality traits, or opportunities to serve him?**
- **How can Esther's example encourage you to serve God right where he has put you?**

Pictures of Service
Supplies

Bibles
CD player
paper
markers or crayons
Teacher Pack
CD: "Esther" (tracks 16–19)
Bible Timeline

Say: **Because Esther was willing to risk her life to serve God, she convinced King Xerxes to help save her people. We learned in this passage that ▶ EVERYONE CAN SERVE GOD. God had a plan for how Esther and Mordecai could serve him, and he has a plan for each of us, too. Let's see how we can serve God in our lives.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

People With a Purpose

People With a Purpose Supplies

Bible
CD player
copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "Let's Go!" (Ephesians 2:10) (track 20)

What You'll Do

Say: **God made us for a reason. Today's Key Verse will help us see this.**

Open your Bible to Ephesians 2:10, and read the verse aloud: **"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10).**

Form two groups. Have the first group repeat the first half of the verse with you: **"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works."** Then have the second group repeat the second half of the verse with you: **"which God prepared in advance for us to do."** Have kids repeat their parts of the verses in order several times until they can say it together smoothly.

Ask:

- **What do you think the first half of our Key Verse for today means?**
- **What do you think the second half of the Key Verse means?**

Say: **God made us for a reason. God made each one of us with unique abilities, a unique personality, and a unique heart. God will use all those special things for good works that he has planned for us. Maybe we won't even recognize them as "good works." Perhaps someone just needs an encouraging word to lift her up. God may bring us in contact with that person at just the right moment for us to lend a smile or to cheer that person on. Not a coincidence! Remember the second half of our Key Verse!**

Have kids again repeat the Key Verse.

Say: **Let's sing a song about our Key Verse as a commitment to use our abilities to serve God.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "Let's Go!" (Ephesians 2:10) (track 20 on the CD). After they listen once, have kids sing along.

We are God's workmanship,
Created in Christ Jesus
To do good works, which
God prepared in advance for us to do.

We are God's workmanship,
Created in Christ Jesus
To do good works, which
God prepared in advance for us to do.

Let's go! There's work to do
Let's go! That means me and you
God calls us, so
Let's go!

(Repeat from the beginning.)

Let's go! There's work to do
Let's go! That means me and you
God calls us, so

Let's go!
Let's go!
Let's go!

"Let's Go!" (Ephesians 2:10) by Carol Smith. © 2003 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

After singing the song, lead children in prayer.

Pray: **Dear God, thank you for the way you made us and are preparing us to serve you. Show us how you want us to serve you. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Based on our verse and song, what does it mean to be God's workmanship?**
- **How are we "created in Christ Jesus"?**
- **What are some examples of good works we can do as God's workmanship?**

Say: **God is our creator, and we're his creations. It kind of hard to fully understand how we're created in the image of God, but the Bible repeatedly assures us that we are. And each of us has a unique purpose in God's creation. God put Esther in a special place to serve him, and we know that ▶ EVERYONE CAN SERVE GOD, because he's created us to do his good works.**

Self-Portrait
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth pens
Teacher Pack
"I'll Serve God" cards

Self-Portrait
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 12 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

Separate the "I'll Serve God" cards.

Self-Portrait

What You'll Do

Ask kids to form groups of four and turn to the "Self-Portrait" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Make sure everyone has a pen.

Say: **When we know God and have a relationship with his Son, Jesus, we can do things to serve him. ▶ EVERYONE CAN SERVE GOD. And we have unique abilities and personalities to use in serving him. We're going to look at what we're good at doing and what our individual personalities are right now. Then we'll think about how we can serve God with those qualities.**

Let's start with things we think we're good at. For example, I think I'm good at teaching, so I would write that under "Quality 1."

Ask kids to look at the frame with "Quality 1" in it and think about how they would finish that statement. For example, kids can write things like "playing the piano" or "painting pictures." Give kids about one minute to write.

Say: **Now think of what other people have told you you're good at. For example, maybe your teacher told you you're good at writing, or your mom told you you're great at doing the dishes.**

Direct kids' attention to the "Quality 2" frame. Give groups about four minutes to work on this section. Encourage kids to focus on things they're good at, not personality traits.

Say: **Now let's think about personalities. Your personality is who you are and what you're like. It could mean joyful, shy, outgoing, or caring. Think about your personality, and then write what you think of under "Quality 3."**

Encourage kids to think about different aspects of their personalities, such as kind, quiet, energetic, or friendly. Give kids one minute to write their personality qualities.

Say: **Finally, you're going to think about good things others have told you about your personality. Write down anything that comes to mind.**

Allow time for writing, and then have kids tell their group about qualities they've written on their pages. Encourage kids to help each other think about things God might be able to do with each of the qualities. Encourage kids to think big. Remind them of how Esther probably never could have imagined what God had planned for her.

While groups are discussing, give each child an "I'll Serve God" card.

Say: **I'm going to let you decide how you'll serve God this week. Think about everything you talked about in your groups about your personality, your abilities, and how God might want to use you. Then write on the card how you'll serve God**

this week.
Allow a few minutes for kids to write. Then ask for willing kids to share with everyone.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What new talents did you discover or remember when you made your self-portraits?**
- **What can we do to discover the talents God has given us?**
- **What was surprising to you as you thought of ways to serve God with your talents?**

Say: ▶ **EVERYONE CAN SERVE GOD. You don't have to be a queen like Esther or anyone else but the person God created you to be. God made you to serve him in a special way! Let's commit to serving him this week.**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how we can serve God this week.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Follow through with how you'll serve God as you wrote on your "I'll Serve God" card.**
- **Ask a parent or other trusted adult what qualities he or she sees in you that can serve God.**
- **Tell a friend what God-given qualities you see in him or her and encourage that person to use them in God's service.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: ▶ **EVERYONE CAN SERVE GOD. Today's Bible passage about Esther shows how God can use everyone to serve where they are with the qualities God's given to them. Let's serve God where we are by following through on our Daily Challenges this week.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about how everyone can serve God. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God for the qualities we've been given and asking for strength and courage to use them for God's service.

Lyrics

Let's Go! (Ephesians 2:10)

We are God's workmanship,
Created in Christ Jesus
To do good works, which
God prepared in advance for us to do.

We are God's workmanship,
Created in Christ Jesus
To do good works, which
God prepared in advance for us to do.

Let's go! There's work to do
Let's go! That means me and you
God calls us, so
Let's go!

(Repeat from the beginning.)

Let's go! There's work to do
Let's go! That means me and you
God calls us, so

Let's go!
Let's go!
Let's go!

"Let's Go!" (Ephesians 2:10) by Carol Smith. © 2003 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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Job Remains Faithful in Suffering

Job 1:1–2:10; 42:1-6, 10-17

Third- and fourth-graders can accept that there are things about God we don't understand. Why Christians suffer is one of those things. If children ask about personal situations they've faced, or even about why Job had to suffer, be sure to emphasize that God was in control of Job's situation at all times, and goodness and glory were the ultimate outcome. Reassure kids that although we all face hardships, God is always in control and we can always remain hopeful in the Lord.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**How Long?** *(about 10 min.)* Stand in increasingly difficult positions.	a timing device	
2 Bible Exploration	**Personal Posters** *(about 20 min.)* Create personal posters of their lives, learn what happened to Job, and compare their reactions with Job's.	Bibles, CD player, index cards, one 11x17 sheet of paper per child, markers, crayons, pens **Teacher Pack:** CD	

▶Bible Point
God brings us hope when we're hurting.

Key Verse
"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Kids will pray for God's hope through a certain challenge in their lives.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Hope in the Lord** *(about 10 min.)* Discuss finding hope in the Lord.	Bible **Teacher Pack:** balancing eagle	
	Soar Like Eagles *(about 15 min.)* Learn the Key Verse, make paper eagles, and sing.	Bible, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, several pairs of scissors, glue, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) **Teacher Pack:** CD	Tear out the Lesson 13 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Commit to praying for God to give them hope during a difficult challenge.		
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Job Remains Faithful in Suffering

Job 1:1–2:10; 42:1-6, 10-17

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Job Is Tested

In the book of Job, Satan came before God and claimed that Job, a righteous and extremely wealthy man, remained faithful to God only because he had been blessed by God. Satan suggested that Job would reject God if all Job had was taken from him. God allowed the test, and Job was stripped of everything: his wealth, his family, and his health. Three friends tried to comfort him but ended up criticizing and blaming him instead. All the while, Job insisted on his innocence and refused to turn against God. In the end, God spoke to Job and chastised Job as well as his three friends for the fallacies in their arguments.

Job Asks God the Eternal Question: Why?

When Job lost his family, he didn't hesitate to express his grief. He didn't lose his faith in God, but he expressed human emotions. And his words indicated that he knew God was in charge and was worthy of praise even in the midst of suffering. Even when he lost his health, Job "did not sin in what he said" (Job 2:10). He simply questioned why God would allow such suffering to be inflicted on an innocent man.

God spoke to Job, answering Job's questions with a series of questions that underlined how little Job knew about God (Job 38–41). Job had begun to question God's righteousness and love. God silenced those doubts, but also made it clear that he owed no one an explanation for the reasons for Job's suffering.

Job Believes

Realizing that God hadn't turned against him, Job was willing to accept that God had a reason for allowing him to suffer, even though God never revealed that reason. Job was relieved to discover that God still cared about him and was with him through all he had endured. And the restoration of Job's wealth along with the blessing of a new family demonstrated to Job that God had not abandoned him.

The Jesus Connection

In his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5), Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." We're blessed when we suffer because then we can experience Jesus' hope all the more clearly.

When have you suffered, and what part did hope (or a lack of hope) play in that suffering? What's an area of pain in your life right now? Ask God to use it to reveal more of himself and his hope to you. You can write your prayer here.

How Long?
Supplies

a timing device

1 GETTING **STARTED**

How Long?

What You'll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Say: **Today we're going to do a little experiment. First, I need everyone to stand and face me. Stand at least an arm's length away from the next person.** Pause as kids comply. **Okay, now I want you to stand silently with your eyes closed for a certain length of time, but only I will know how long. Are your eyes closed? Here we go; I'll start timing right now.**

Have kids stand silently with their eyes closed for about two minutes. It will probably seem much longer to the kids. If they complain, just encourage them to follow your instructions. After two minutes, continue.

Say: **Now I want you to keep your eyes closed and raise both your arms out to the side. Keep standing that way until I tell you to move.**

Have kids stand in this position for another one to two minutes. Then add one more instruction.

Say: **With your eyes still closed and your arms still raised out to the side, I want you to stand only on your right foot until I tell you to move.**

Have kids stand in this position for another minute. Then tell kids to open their eyes.

Talk With Kids

Let kids sit in trios to answer the following questions. After each question, invite willing kids to share their answers with the whole group.

Ask:

- **What was it like to stand in those positions without moving?**
- **What thoughts were going through your mind as you waited for me to tell you that you could move?**
- **How was not knowing how long you'd have to stand in an uncomfortable position like how you feel when you're going through a hard time?**
- **What's the hardest time you've ever been through? If you feel comfortable sharing, tell your partners about that time.**

Say: **In this activity, it was uncomfortable to stand in those positions, especially as I kept making them more and more uncomfortable. It was also uncomfortable not knowing how long you'd have to stand like that. But that's nothing compared with what the main person in today's Bible passage went through. He wasn't just**

uncomfortable—he was truly suffering. But he got to experience how ▶ GOD BRINGS US HOPE WHEN WE'RE HURTING. Let's find out more about that now.

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Personal Posters

Personal Posters Supplies

Bibles
CD player
index cards
one 11x17 sheet of paper per child
markers
crayons
pens
Teacher Pack
CD: "Job," Parts 1 and 2 (tracks 21 and 22)

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Job 1:1–2:10, and show kids the passage. If kids have their own Bibles, help them find the book of Job.

Say: **Today's Bible passage is about a man named Job. Before we get into the passage, we're going to make posters that will help us begin to understand exactly what happened to Job.**

Give each child an 11x17 sheet of paper. Set out crayons and markers for kids to share.

Say: **As we go through the Bible passage, we're going to draw pictures that show how our situations relate to Job's. I'll let you know what to draw. First, because Job is the main person in the passage, you need a main person for your poster: you. In the center of your poster, draw a picture of yourself. Make it big enough so you can add some detail, but it shouldn't take up the whole poster. You'll be drawing six other pictures around it.**

Give kids time to draw pictures of themselves.

Say: **The Bible tells us that Job was a good man who followed God and stayed away from evil. Around the picture you drew of yourself, write a few words that describe the kind of person you are.** Pause to let kids write.

The Bible tells us that Job had seven sons and three daughters. Above the picture of yourself, draw a picture of your family. Pause to let kids draw. **Next the Bible says that Job owned 7,000 sheep. Owning that many sheep meant Job was wealthy. Now we all may not be wealthy, but we probably have much more than most of the rest of the world. For instance, you probably have a place to live or warm clothes to wear. Draw a picture of where you live or a warm outfit.** Pause to let kids draw.

In addition to the sheep, the Bible says that Job owned 3,000 camels. I realize that most of us don't own any camels, but we do own things that mean a lot to us. Draw a picture of something you or your family owns that means a lot to you. Maybe it's a pet or a special toy. Pause to let kids draw.

That's not all Job owned! The Bible says he also owned 500 yoke of oxen. Draw another picture of something special that you or your family owns. Pause to let kids

draw. **That's *still* not all Job had. He also owned 500 donkeys. So draw another picture of something special you own.** Pause to let kids draw.

You're not going to believe this, but that's *still* not all Job owned. He also had a large number of servants. So draw one more picture of something special you own. Pause to let kids draw.

Go around the room and let each child explain the pictures he or she has drawn.

Say: **Now we're ready to see what happened to Job. We're going to use these posters to help us visualize what he went through. We'll listen to the first part of this Bible passage on the CD.**

Play "Job, Part 1" (track 21 on the CD).

Say: **In this part of the passage, Satan basically says to God, "Sure, Job praises you now, but that's because he's got it easy. But take away what he has, and he'll curse your name." Satan was really challenging God here. But God knew what kind of man Job was, so he let Satan have his way—but only to a point. God said that Satan couldn't do anything to hurt Job himself. Let's find out what happened next.**

Have kids form trios, and give each group at least one Bible. Ask a willing child from each group to read aloud Job 1:13-15. After everyone has finished reading, say: **After the attack, Job's oxen and donkeys were gone. So put a big X through two of the pictures on your poster of things you own.**

Pause as kids respond. Then have another person in each trio read aloud Job 1:16.

Say: **After this, Job's sheep and servants were gone. So put a big X through two more of the pictures of things you own.**

Pause as kids respond. Then have another person in each trio read aloud Job 1:17.

Say: **Wow! We already knew that most of Job's servants were gone. But now Job's camels were gone too. Put a big X through one more of the pictures of things you own.**

Pause as kids respond.

Say: **Next to the picture you crossed out, write words to describe how you've reacted when you've lost something important to you.**

Give kids time to write, and then ask willing kids to read the words they've written. Ask the final trio member in each group to read aloud Job 1:18-19.

Say: **Job had lost everything—even his family. Cross out the picture of your family on your poster.** Pause. **Now, next to this crossed-out picture, write another few words about how you've reacted when bad things have happened to your family.**

Pause. Then invite willing kids to read what they've written.

Say: **Let's see how Job responded to all the hurts that happened to him. Have someone in your group read aloud Job 1:20-22.**

Pause as kids read.

Say: **Near the words you wrote to summarize your feelings after a loss, summarize Job's reaction to what had happened to him.**

Give kids time to respond, and then invite willing kids to share what they've written.

Ask:
- **How did your reactions compare with Job's reaction?**
- **What can you learn from Job's reaction about how to approach hard times?**

Say: **Job knew that ▶ GOD BRINGS US HOPE WHEN WE'RE HURTING. But there's more to the passage. Let's listen.**

Play "Job, Part 2" (track 22 on the CD) for the group.

Then have another trio member read aloud Job 2:7. Have kids make marks all over the pictures they've drawn of themselves. Give each child an index card, and have kids label one side of the card "My Diary" and the other side "Job's Diary." Then have kids write about a time they were very sick on the "My Diary" side of the index card. Invite willing kids to share their responses. Have the next child in each trio read aloud Job 2:9-10, and have kids summarize Job's reaction on the "Job's Diary" side of the index card.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:
- **How did your reaction compare with Job's?**
- **What do you think about how Job responded to all the bad things that happened to him?**
- **What are some good and bad ways to respond to hard times?**

Say: **Job loved and trusted God. He knew that no matter what happened in his life, he could always have hope in the Lord. Let's find out how ▶ GOD BRINGS US HOPE WHEN WE'RE HURTING.**

Hope in the Lord
Supplies

Bible
Teacher Pack
balancing eagle

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Hope in the Lord

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Isaiah 40:31, and read the verse aloud: **"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31).** Then have kids repeat the verse with you several times until they can say it themselves.

Say: **This verse describes exactly how Job reacted to all his troubles. He hoped in the Lord, and God gave him the strength to go on. He never grew tired in his faith, and he never gave up. He hoped in the Lord, and God helped his spirit soar like an eagle.**

Hold up the balancing eagle, and then balance it on your fingertip.

Say: **When we're hurting, it's all too easy to blame our troubles on God and to lose faith. When we're hurting, we can hope in the Lord, and God will renew us. Oh! I never told you how Job's passage ended, did I? Turn with me to Job 42:10-17.**

Have kids read the Bible passage in their trios, and then have everyone sit in a circle on the floor.

Say: **God restored to Job everything he had lost. In fact, God gave him twice as much as he had before. When we're hurting, we can have hope in the Lord. He'll help us soar like eagles.** Balance the eagle on your fingertip.

Think of a struggle you're going through right now where you need to have hope in the Lord. Maybe you're nervous about starting school or you have a friend who's angry with you for something.

Give kids time to think. Then encourage them to commit to praying for God's hope during that challenge this week.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How is dealing with life's struggles like or unlike balancing the eagle on your finger?**
- **What are ways that you have faced pain in your life?**
- **How have you seen God bring you hope and help you soar like an eagle?**

Say: ▶ **GOD BRINGS US HOPE WHEN WE'RE HURTING. He helped Job through all the pain of suffering and ultimately gave him more than he'd started with. When we know and love God, we can have hope that things will be okay in our troubles. We'll pass this eagle around the circle, fingertip to fingertip, as we pray for God to help us hope in him. When the eagle comes to you say, "Lord, help me to have hope when…" and fill in the blank with the challenge you're facing. If you don't want to share something personal you can just say, "Lord, help me to have hope in you and soar like an eagle."**

Start the prayer by sharing a struggle. Then pass the eagle to the child next to you. Have kids pass the eagle around the circle, and then close the prayer.

Encourage kids to remember to pray for God's hope in their tough situations this week.

Soar Like Eagles

What You'll Do

Have kids say the Key Verse with you again: **"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31).**

Say: **Let's make eagles to remind us of this verse and that God gives us hope when we're hurting.**

Have kids turn to the "Soar Like Eagles" activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Have kids cut out the parts and assemble the eagles according to the directions.

Play "Those Who Hope" (Isaiah 40:31) (track 23 on the CD) while kids work. After kids make their eagles, pass out copies of the lyrics, and play the song again. After they listen once, have kids sing along while flying their eagle crafts around the room. Sing the song several times if you have time.

Who can soar on wings like eagles?
Who can run and not grow weary?
Who can walk and not be faint?

(Chorus)
Those who hope in the Lord
Will renew their strength.
Those who hope in the Lord
Will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;
They will run and not grow weary.
They will walk and not be faint.

(Sing chorus.)

Soar Like Eagles
Supplies

Bible
Bible Truth Sleuth
CD player
several pairs of scissors
glue
copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: "Those Who Hope" (Isaiah 40:31) (track 23)

Soar Like Eagles
Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 13 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.

I wanna soar on wings like eagles!
I wanna run and not grow weary;
I wanna walk and not be faint.

(Sing chorus 2x.)

"Those Who Hope" (Isaiah 40:31) by Carol Smith. © 2005 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What can we learn from our Key Verse about having hope in the Lord?**
- **Based on the song we sang, how can God's hope help us when we're hurting?**
- **What does it mean to "hope in the Lord"?**
- **How can God "renew our strength" even if the bad things in our life continue?**

Say: **When you hear someone say that they've been suffering like Job, now you know just how much pain they're feeling. But suffering really isn't the main issue—what God wanted from Job was for him to trust God and not lose faith. Even though Job voiced his pain, he never gave up hope. Job shows that ▶ GOD BRINGS US HOPE WHEN WE'RE HURTING.**

Encourage kids to take their eagles home to remind them to have hope in the Lord during the difficult challenges they thought of earlier.

4 LASTING **IMPRESSIONS**

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Say: **Let's think about how ▶ GOD BRINGS US HOPE WHEN WE'RE HURTING this week.**

As your Daily Challenge this week, commit to praying to God to help you have hope during a difficult challenge this week.

Make sure you commit to praying to God to help you have hope during a challenge this week as well. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: ▶ **GOD BRINGS US HOPE WHEN WE'RE HURTING. He helped Job to know that even in painful times, God was still in control. Let's show our hope in God by following through on our Daily Challenges.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about the hope God brings in suffering. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God for his presence, especially when we're hurting. Also pray for patience and hope in the midst of painful times kids are experiencing right now.

Lyrics

Those Who Hope (Isaiah 40:31)

Who can soar on wings like eagles?
Who can run and not grow weary?
Who can walk and not be faint?

(Chorus)
Those who hope in the Lord
Will renew their strength.
Those who hope in the Lord
Will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;
They will run and not grow weary.
They will walk and not be faint.

(Sing chorus.)

I wanna soar on wings like eagles!
I wanna run and not grow weary;
I wanna walk and not be faint.

(Sing chorus 2x.)

"Those Who Hope" (Isaiah 40:31) by Carol Smith. © 2005 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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