



GETTING READY

1. Opener/Closer

What You Need:

- Host
- Glow sticks; one for every small group leader (per service)
- Bright flashlight (*optional*)
- Blindfold (*optional*)

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room
- Upbeat music to use during the game

Large Group Visuals:

- Theme Slide
- “Dark Corners” Title Slide

Optional Videos (available for purchase through the 252 Media Package):

- Theme Loop
- Countdown (30- or 60-second version)

What You Do:

- To play the “Dark Corners” game, you will need the ability to light up your four corners. If your AV team will do this, they can select a corner at random each time to light up. If this is not an option, consider blindfolding a kid to tell you one of the four corners. However, you should not announce the corner with words. Use a bright flashlight to light up the eliminated corner.

2. Bible Story

What You Need:

- Communicator
- Bible
- Glow sticks; one for everyone
- “Red carpet” (*optional*)
- Tape (*optional*)

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter and exit the room

Large Group Visuals:

- Key Question Slide

What You Do:

- *****Notify the Communicator that the script calls for a time someone broke a promise to him/her. They can come up with a personal story or use the scripted text provided. The story should match the weight of the one scripted.**
- During the “Truth” section, the idea is to paint a picture of the significant moment of Jesus fulfilling the Old Testament prophecy. Kids will waive glow sticks instead of the palm branches.
- Tape a pathway for the Communicator to walk down or literally roll out the “red carpet.”

3. Worship

What You Need:

- Every Beat
- Through It All

This I Promise You

Bible Story: This I Promise You (Palm Sunday) • *John 12:9-16*

Key Question: What promises does God have for you?

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God keeps His promises.

Memory Verse: *“In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged. I have won the battle over the world.”*

John 16:33b, NIV

Life App: Hope—Believing that something good can come out of something bad

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Story: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)

Engage kids’ hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

SFX: *Play high-energy music as kids enter.*

CG: *Theme Slide*

Optional CG (Media Package): *Theme Loop Video*

Optional CG (Media Package): *Countdown Video*

Optional CG (Media Package): *Theme Video*

Host enters.

Welcome

*Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host discusses recent/upcoming events: Masters Tournament, World Table Tennis Championships, The National Cherry Blossom Festival, Major League Baseball Season Kickoff, Earth Day, Arbor Day, April Fools’ Day, National Unicorn Day, National Siblings Day, National Pet Day, National Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day, National Dolphin Day, movie opening (*Breakthrough*, *Penguins*), a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they’re there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what’s happening. The stage should be prepared for the game as kids walk into the large group room.*

Opener

HOST: “Hey, hey everybody! Welcome to the best place to be in the entire world, [Name of Environment]! I want to give a shout out to one of my favorites in the room right now. In fact, we could literally not function without you. You can brighten any moment . . . even on the darkest of days. Let’s give a loud round of applause to all the lights in the room! (*Pause for response*) Can-lights, LED lights, and spotlights . . . I love them all!”

“If we are all being honest with each other, nobody really likes the dark. It’s in the dark where strange things lurk and the unknown hovers like the smell of a still-hidden egg the week after Easter.”

“But! You know what helps in the dark? (*Pause for response.*) Glow sticks! This morning we’ve got a game we are going to play where we need to embrace the dark and avoid the BRIGHT SIDE. It will make sense in a minute. To minimize fears and maximize fun, first we need to pass out glow sticks!”

Host solicits help from Small Group Leaders to pass out glow sticks to everyone.

“The name of this game is “DARK CORNERS.””

CG: “Dark Corners” Title Slide

“It is very similar to the game Four Corners but with a *[Name of Environment]* twist. On my cue, everyone will move to one of the four corners in this room. Once everyone has picked his or her corner, one of the corners will be randomly blasted with a bright light. If you are standing in that corner, you will be eliminated from the game. The last person in the game wins. Make sense? *(Pause for response.)* Good. Then let’s set the mood.”

LIGHTS: Lights dim.

“Nice! Here we go. Pick your corner!”

SFX: High-energy game music

Game is played. If you have a large number of Small Groups, consider asking kids to remain with their Small Groups throughout the game. If you do not have the ability to light up corners of the room with front of house lights, blindfold a kid to pick the corner. Host will need to shine a bright flashlight at the corner.

LIGHTS: Lights turn back on when game ends.

“Wow! That was by far the best . . . and I mean THE VERY BEST game of DARK CORNERS I’ve ever witnessed in my life. Fantastic job to all of our players but a special shout out to our winner!”

Announcements

Use this as an example of what to say. Make it your own and help the kids feel welcomed. Then take a moment to share any/all announcements.

HOST: “I’m so excited to be here with all of you today and get a little crazy! If it’s your first time here, I want to welcome you and I would love to have a chance to meet you and get a high-five! Your group leaders are here almost every week... they’re pretty amazing. Here at Mission, we believe that this is a place for you and you belong here no matter who you are or what you believe. At the core of who we are as a church, we believe that **JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE!**”

“I have just a few announcements for you all today...”

Share any/all announcements.

“One of the things we do each week to help us focus on God is to sing... some of you will know the words to the songs, so we want you to shout and sing them out really loud. If you don’t know the words... they’ll be on the screen for you. Feel free to clap, jump, sing and shout along with us! The best part about this is the message of the song and how good God is! Let’s all stand up and sing together!”

Worship Leaders enter. Host exits.

Worship

WORSHIP LEADER: “Thank you, *[Name of Host]*. Let’s get up and get loud as we sing and dance for who God is and what he’s done for us!

Every Beat

WORSHIP LEADER: “That was amazing! (*Take a moment to say something about the next song*). So let’s give everything we have and worship God together!

Through It All

WORSHIP LEADER: *PRAY*

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT

Introduction

Communicator tells a personal story of a time someone broke a promise made to him/her.

COMMUNICATOR: “Hey everybody! Let’s have a quick show of hands for everyone in this room who loves to go to an amusement park or a state fair. (*Pause for response*) That’s awesome! How many of you love those amusement parks for their food? You know, the funnel cakes, the turkey legs, or the extra-long corn dogs? (*Pause for response.*) Excellent! Now, how many of you love the rides—the tall rides, the loop-to-loop rides, and the rides with sudden drops? (*Pause for response.*) Wow! A whole bunch of you raised your hands. That was me! When I was in sixth grade, there was nothing better than going to an amusement park to eat the food and ride the rides.”

“I remember my parents on occasion would reward my good grades with trips to the amusement park because they knew how much I loved it. To be perfectly honest, my grades rarely warranted any reward. I wasn’t really the best student. However, I remember my dad promising me if I got on the A-B Honor Roll on my final report card, he and I would go to Six Flags® . . . just the two of us. This was a big deal because my dad traveled a lot for work, and I was going to get time with him at a place I loved! I was pumped! Around this time, the park introduced a brand new ride. It was a new type of ride where innovative design, cutting edge technology, and mind-blowing speed combined into a metal, mind-blowing ball of AWESOME!”

“So with that in mind, I worked hard to make the grades. I studied. I focused in class. I even took notes. And the hard work payed off when I was put on the A-B Honor Roll. Anybody want to guess what happened next? (*Pause for response*) That’s what you’d expect—that I would be able to go ride that brand new ride in all its glory! But that’s not what happened. Instead, Dad’s workload picked up at his job, and he wasn’t able to take me to Six Flags. My dad made a promise, but he was unable to keep it.”

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “I was *completely* disappointed. The highlight of my summer was supposed to be this trip, but the trip never happened. This was not the first and certainly not the last broken promise I’d experience in my lifetime. From time to time, friends, strangers, and other family members have all said they would do one thing, but for one reason or another, it didn’t happen. They said they wouldn’t tell my secret, but they did. They promised to help me study for a big test, but they didn’t. Sadly, the promises people make to one another are often broken.”

“Moments like this leave us disappointed. And when people around us break their promises from time to time, it can be hard to trust anyone—including God. Why should we trust God’s promises when we can’t even trust our best friend with our secrets? But does God break His promises like my dad broke his promise? Does God say one thing but do something completely different?”

“Wow! Those are big questions. Questions like these are perfectly normal, and the first place we should look for answers is the Bible. In this case, the Bible is full of promises that God has made throughout history. But like we said, can they be trusted? Well, today, let’s look at one of God’s promises.”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “Over 500 years before Jesus walked the earth, there was a prophet named Zechariah. God would give prophets, like Zechariah, messages to deliver to His people. Many times, these messages offered hope. They revealed God’s future plans of bringing a king more powerful than all other kings. Zechariah had once written, *(Read directly from Zechariah 9:9)* **‘City of Zion, be full of joy! People of Jerusalem, shout! See, your king comes to you. He always does what is right. He has won the victory. He is humble and riding on a donkey. He is sitting on a donkey’s colt.’**” **Zechariah 9:9**

“Many centuries later, a large number of Jews were convinced Jesus was the king God promised long ago. After Jesus brought Lazarus back to life, few could deny the significance of what God was doing through this man.”

“The Jewish religious leaders were not enthusiastic about Jesus. They did not believe He was the Messiah, the Savior that God had been promising for generations. These religious leaders wanted Jesus dead. Knowing their plans, Jesus took His disciples away from Jerusalem to the desert in a town called Ephraim.”

Communicator walks off stage and moves to the back of the room. Communicator should clear a pathway as he/she makes his/her way to the back of the room. Small group leaders distribute glow sticks to each kid. Consider taping the floor in advance to create an aisle or pathway.

“As the Passover celebration neared, many in Jerusalem wondered if Jesus would return to the town for the festivities. Eventually, Jesus and His disciples journeyed back. When they got closer to Jerusalem, people caught wind of His return and gathered to meet Him outside of the city.”

“Jesus knew the time had come for Him to fulfill the prophecy or promise God made long ago through Zechariah. Jesus chose to ride on a colt from a donkey. Historians believe the donkey was a symbol of peace. A powerful king would have ridden a horse, especially in times of war. But Jesus was to be a very different king to serve a very different reason.”

Communicator has kids stand up and begin to waive glow sticks slowly. Communicator slowly walks towards the stage as he/she continues to tell the story.

"The people grabbed palm branches and waived them as He rode by as a symbol of victory. The crowds began to scream and cheer. Many people tossed the palm branches and cloaks on the pathway as Jesus traveled. Covering the road was a way of giving someone the highest honor. Rather like how we roll out the red carpet for people today."

"Even the sulking Pharisees could not dampen the people's spirits. Jesus had just shown His followers yet again that God was fulfilling His promises and would keep on doing it, no matter how dark things became."

Communicator arrives to the stage.

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: "The scene was electric and momentous. This was not random guy riding a random donkey surrounded by a random, cheering crowd. This was the fulfillment of a promise from God many centuries before about our King. God planned this celebration long before. This is a great story in part because it is proof God keeps His promises. Every time. Forever and always."

"Think with me about other stories. God promised Abraham he would have a huge family when he didn't have a single kid. And guess what. Abraham's family grew to be enormous. God showed a young Joseph through a dream that he'd be a ruler one day. And even though he was put into slavery and jail, that's exactly what happened. Over and over again throughout God's Word, we can see God can be trusted."

"Yes, it is true that *people* break their promises. People promise to come with you, but they don't show up. People promise to let you do something, but you're never given the chance. If all of us in this room today are being honest, we might admit we have broken promises, too. I know I have. But God is different from us. When God makes a promise, He keeps it. No matter who breaks a promise or what is going on at school, home, or your neighborhood, God can be trusted."

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "It's not easy to remember God is different than others around us, but it's incredibly important. The promises made by God are not only for a few in the Bible. God has made promises for all of us as well. As you head to Small Group today, think about this."

CG: Key Question Slide

"What promises does God have for you? For example, Jesus promised to always be with us. And don't worry if you have a hard time thinking of some of those promises; that's where your Small Group can help. You'll keep taking about this with them, too. But before you head there, let's take a moment to pray and thank God for always keeping His promises. Let's pray."

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard then dismisses them to small group.

SFX: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.