



GETTING READY

1. Opener/Closer

What You Need:

- Host
- Flashlights; one for each Small Group Leader

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter and exit the room
- Limbo music (suggestion: "Limbo Rock")

Large Group Visuals:

- Theme Slide
- Hope Slide
- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide

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

- Theme Loop
- Countdown (30- or 60-second version)
- Theme
- Theme Transition to Life App
- Life App Transition to Theme

What You Do:

- None

2. Bible Story

What You Need:

- Storyteller
- Bible
- Kid volunteer and his/her Leader (same gender)

Large Group Visuals:

- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- Bible Story Images #1-6

What You Do:

- None

3. Worship

What You Need:

- Unshakeable Love
- Wide Open

All I Ask of You

Bible Story: All I Ask of You (Jesus Appears to Thomas) • *John 20:19-29*

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God is bigger than your questions.

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.

All I Ask of You

Bible Story: All I Ask of You (Jesus Appears to Thomas) • *John 20:19-29*

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God is bigger than your questions.

Key Question: What questions do you have for God?

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*

Host enters.

Opener

HOST: “What’s up, everybody? It’s great to see all of your smiling faces here today. I’m [your name] and I’m so glad you’re here at [your environment’s name].”

“This month we’ve been talking about hope.”

CG: *Hope Slide*

Optional Video (Media Package): *Theme Transition to Life App*

Hope is believing something good can come out of something bad.

CG: *Theme Slide*

Optional Video (Media Package): *Life App Transition to Theme*

“We all have those times when things don’t happen like we want them to. When we’re going through something dark or scary, when it seems like everything is falling apart, when we just don’t understand, we can learn to look on the bright side. We can find the light in the dark. We can find hope.”

“Speaking of light, who wants to play a really fun light game? *(Pause for response.)* Awesome. Let’s play ‘Flashlight Limbo’! Your Leaders will be the flashlight holders.

Pass out flashlights to the Leaders and arrange them so that they’re standing across from each other, pointing their flashlight beams straight across to make one strong beam together. Pair them up so that two Leaders are making a limbo beam for their two groups.

“As you can see, we’ve got some limbo beams. Your group will be paired up with one other group. Be sure to stay with your group and your Leader, okay?”

“The object of the game is to walk under the beam without touching it—like this. *(Demonstrate.)* Fun, right? We’ll turn down the lights and turn up the music. All you’ve got to do is line up and show us your skills! Ready, set, limbo!”

*****ROOM LIGHTS: Dim**
SFX: Limbo music

Let the kids limbo for a while, instructing the Leaders to lower their beams every now and then to make it more challenging. Join different groups and try to limbo with them. End the game when the song is over.

“Oh man, that was incredible! You all should have warned me how good you are at limbo. I think maybe I pulled a muscle doing all that crazy bending. You can stay on your feet, because it’s time for us to sing and worship God together.”

*****ROOM LIGHTS: Up**

Dismiss the Leaders to their seats.

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.

“Let’s take some time to worship God and thank Him for being our awesome Creator. Everyone stand up and get ready to sing!”

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!

Unshakeable Love

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!

Wide Open

WORSHIP LEADER: “Thank you guys for worshiping God with us today. Let’s pray and ask God to help remind us that He is with us and He is always waiting, with ARMS WIDE OPEN, to help us through anything we might face!

PRAY

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

Setting up the story

STORYTELLER: “Hi, everyone! Before we pick up our story today, check this out. I need two volunteers.

Choose a small kid and an adult Leader (both the same gender) and bring them up on stage.

(To audience) “How many of you have ever heard of a trust fall? A trust fall is when one person (*move the Leader to be standing in front*) stands in front of another person (*move the kid to be standing a few feet behind the adult*). Then the person in front closes their eyes and falls backward. It’s called a ‘trust fall’ because the person in front has to trust that the person behind them will catch them and not let them fall.

(To the two volunteers) “Okay, are you both ready to do this? We’ll do it on the count of three. One . . . two . . . *(to the kid)* wait. [Kid’s name], why do you look so worried? *(To audience)* What’s the problem here? *(Pause for response.)* OH! Right. Silly me. *(Switch the Leader and the kid.)* Is this better? Okay, now let’s give it a go. [Kid’s name], cross your arms over your chest, and lock your legs so they won’t bend. Then, on the count of three, I want you to fall backward with your body straight as a board. Ready? One . . . two . . . three!

Let the kid “trust fall” into the Leader’s arms.

“Yes! Perfect. *(To the two volunteers)* Thank you both. You can head back to your seats.

Dismiss the two volunteers to their seats.

“Now let’s pick up our story. This happened just after Jesus died on the cross and came back to life. Can you imagine being one of Jesus’ friends and followers when that was happening? After Jesus had died, they must have thought all hope was lost. The news that Jesus was ALIVE must have seemed almost unbelievable!”

the empty tomb

CG: Bible Story Image #1 (Empty tomb)

STORYTELLER: “Jesus was buried in a tomb that would have looked something like this—with a big stone covering the entrance. Mary was the first one to discover that the stone had been rolled away! She ran to tell the disciples that the tomb was empty.

“When Peter and John heard the news, they went straight there to see for themselves. They were amazed to find that that tomb was empty, just like Mary had said.

“Peter and John were so excited that they ran back to tell the other disciples.

CG: Bible Story Image #2 (Mary tells the disciples)

“Mary arrived shortly after them. She told them: *I have seen the Lord! (John 20:18 NIV)* You see, Jesus had actually appeared to Mary at the empty tomb. Mary had seen Jesus with her own eyes. She knew that it was true: Jesus was alive!”

the gang’s all here (almost)

CG: Bible Story Image #3 (Fearful disciples)

STORYTELLER: “Later that evening, Peter, John, and the other disciples were huddled in a house with the doors locked. They were afraid of what the religious leaders might do to them after everything that had happened with Jesus.

CG: Bible Story Image #4 (Jesus appears to the disciples)

“Suddenly, Jesus came and stood among them! He said: *“May peace be with you!” (John 20:19 NIV)* Jesus showed them the wounds in His hands and side to prove that it was really Him.

“Now ALL of the disciples had seen Jesus. *(Pause.)* Well . . . ALMOST all of them. Unfortunately, the disciple named Thomas wasn’t at the house when Jesus came. He missed the whole thing!”

DOUBTING THOMAS

CG: Bible Story Image #5 (The disciples tell Thomas)

STORYTELLER: “Later, when Thomas came back to the house, the other disciples told him what had happened. I bet they were pretty excited, don’t you think? They told Thomas: *We have seen the Lord! (John 20:25 NIV)*

“But Thomas wasn’t so sure. Was it possible? Did they really see Jesus . . . ALIVE?”

Open the Bible to John 20:25 (NirV) and read.

“Thomas said to them: **“First I must see the nail marks in his hands. I must put my fingers where the nails were. I must put my hand into his side. Only then will I believe.” John 20:25**

“Thomas certainly had his doubts. The idea that Jesus was alive again just seemed too good to be true.

“About a week later, the disciples were in the house again, this time with Thomas. Again, the doors were locked, but again, Jesus came and stood among them. Again, He said: *“May peace be with you!” (John 20:26 NirV)*

CG: Bible Story Image #6 (Jesus and Thomas)

“Then Jesus said this to Thomas.

Open the Bible to John 20:27-29 (NirV) and read.

“Put your finger here. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” John 20:27-29

“Thomas DID believe. He cried: *My Lord and my God! (John 20:28 NirV)*

Open the Bible to John 20:29 (NirV) and read.

“Then Jesus told him: **“Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen me but still have believed.” John 20:29**

“Now Thomas knew it was true. He had seen it for himself. Jesus was alive!”

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

wrapping up THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “If you think about it, Jesus wasn’t scared of Thomas’s doubts. He answered Thomas’s questions and proved to him that He was really alive. And you know what? Jesus is big enough and strong enough to handle YOUR doubts and questions too.

Walk over to where the kid and Leader from the trust fall are sitting.

“It’s kind of like that trust fall we did a few minutes ago. When [Leader’s name] was standing in front of [kid’s name], he didn’t want to fall backward because he didn’t want to hurt [kid’s name]. It just wasn’t going to work. But when we switched it around and had [Leader’s name] ready to catch [kid’s name], it totally worked. Do you know why? It’s because [Leader’s name] is big enough and strong enough to catch [kid’s name]. [Kid’s name] can trust that [Leader’s name] is big enough and strong enough to handle it.

“Sometimes there are things that happen that we don’t understand. Sometimes we feel like we’re in the dark. We feel confused or hurt or scared. But here’s the thing. God has a plan. **[Basic Truth] We can trust Him no matter what.** We can talk to Him anytime. We might not always be able to understand His plan, but even when we have questions, we can choose to trust Him.

CG: Bottom Line Slide

[Bottom Line] “Whatever happens, remember God is bigger than your questions.

“Let’s talk to God right now.”

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

Pray

STORYTELLER: “Dear God, thank You for the story of Thomas. Thank You for this great reminder that it’s okay for us to ask You questions. We know You have a bigger plan and Your plan is good. Help us to trust You even when there are things in life that we don’t understand. We love You, and we ask these things In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Host enters as Storyteller exits.

Closer

HOST: “It’s true. God is okay with our questions. His plan is so much bigger than we can imagine. When there are things that are hard for us to believe or even just hard for us to understand, we don’t have to hide those feelings. We can talk to God and be honest about our questions and doubts.

“Sometimes God doesn’t answer your prayers the way you want Him to. And sometimes bad things happen to people we love. It’s hard to understand why those things happened. But even in those times, we can trust God. We can find hope when we remember how much He loves us. We can remember that He has a bigger plan. We can trust Him and believe that He is our light in the darkness.

CG: Bottom Line Slide

[Bottom Line] “Whatever happens, remember God is bigger than your questions.

“So, when you’re feeling scared, sad, or worried, you should talk to God about it. God already knows how you feel and He’s right there with you. You can also talk to the people God has put in your life who love you. God gave you parents and a Small Group Leader who love you and want to help you.

“I’m so glad that we can have hope even when things seem the darkest. You’ll get to talk about that some more back in Small Group. I’ll see you later!”

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

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

CG: Theme Slide

Optional Video (Media Package): Theme Loop