



GETTING READY

1. Welcome/Opener

What You Need:

- Host
- Trivia questions (cross out which are used from week to week to avoid repeats)
- Over-sized die
- Small whiteboards and markers for each group to write their answers on (or pieces of paper on clipboards) *Note: You will use these each week.*
- Scoresheet to keep from week to week

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room
- Serious game show music

Large Group Visuals:

- Theme Slide

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

- Theme Loop Video
- Countdown Video
- Theme Video

What You Do:

- Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have CG capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.

- Download music from a resource such as iTunes® and have it ready to play.
- The Opener is “The Big Quiz,” which is a 5-question quiz that builds from week to week throughout the entire month of January. Ideally, it would be fun to have small groups against small groups and keep the same groups throughout the month (even if kids come and go). Each group will have running tally of 20 total questions for the whole month, and a winner will be announced Week 4. An option could be for the Host to take on a game show persona (Bob Barker, Steve Harvey).

2. Communicator Script

What You Need:

- Communicator
- Bible
- Prop Box filled with the following:
 - Snacks you would get from vending machine
 - Cane
 - Handcuffs
 - John the Baptist outfit (robe, fur, wig, etc.)
- Small Group Leader
- Two small group kids

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room

Large Group Visuals:

- One Big Story Intro Video
- Key Question Slide

What You Do:

- Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have CG capabilities, you have Orange’s permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
- The One Big Story Intro Video is available with the monthly download. You can find it in the “Prelude” folder under “Monthly Planning.”
- Collect props and costume pieces and put them in a prop box. Have the box backstage ready for Communicator to bring out on stage.
- Volunteers for the Communicator Script do not need to be preselected.

3. Worship

What You Need:

- Through It All
- Let Go

Take Me to the River

Bible Story: Take Me to the River (Jesus' Baptism) • John 1:19-42, John 3:22-36

Bottom Line: If you want to know God, start with Jesus.

Key Question: How can knowing who Jesus is change your life?

Memory Verse: *The LORD gives wisdom. Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth.* Proverbs 2:6 (NIRV)

Life App: Knowledge—Learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do

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

Host enters.

Welcome

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game (Winter X Games, NFL Playoffs), movie opening (The Voyage of Doctor Doolittle), 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.

**Note: If the Host is taking on a game show persona, you may consider skipping the traditional welcome and moving right into the game show.*

Opener

HOST: “Hey, everyone! Great to see you all. The new year is already off to a great start! Last week, we began an epic, month-long game to test your knowledge. Let’s get right back to it. This is . . . THE BIG QUIZ!”

***NOTE:** If playing in teams rather than Small Groups, get teams back together. Have new kids join groups.*

CG: *Theme Slide*

SFX: *Serious Game Show music*

HOST: “Let me remind you how it works. Each week, your Small Groups are competing against one another by answering a series of five trivia questions. Whichever team has the most questions correct out of 20 by week four will be the winner and crowned reigning champs of The Big Quiz.”

“After I read the question, each group will have 30-seconds to write an answer down on their board. Then I’ll reveal the correct answer and award points. Questions will come from one of four categories: History and Geography. Science. Arts and Entertainment. Or Sports and Games. And remember, we’re choosing the category by rolling this!”

Host reveals large die.

“Of course, there’s also a U PICK, which allows you to pick the category you want, and a HOST PICK, which means the Host, A.K.A. me, gets to pick whatever question I want from my list.”

“Does everybody understand? Are we ready to play? Great! Then, let’s play . . . the BIG QUIZ!”

SFX: *Serious Game Show music*

Each round, do the following: Have a group roll the die. Choose the appropriate category. Read a question. Give 30 seconds. Markers down. Give the answer. Awards points. Cross of the question you used.

(After 5 questions) HOST: "This is going to be tight right to the end! I can't wait for next week's questions. But for now . . . let's stand and worship together!"

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT

INTRODUCTION

CG: One Big Story Intro

During the video, Communicator comes out with a prop box containing the props and costumes he or she needs.

COMMUNICATOR: "Hey everyone! So good to see you here today! I've been wondering: what would happen if you just went out to the mall or to your cafeteria and started asking random people about what they think God is like? What kind of answers do you think you would get? I'm sure there would be quite a variety!"

Communicator pulls out vending machine snacks.

"Maybe some people would say God was . . . like a vending machine. You go to Him when you need something, punch in the right code—or say the right prayer—and BOOM! Out comes what you want!"

Communicator throws snacks out to audience. Communicator takes out a cane.

“Others might say . . . God is like (*acting out*) a sweet old grandpa. He’s been around for a long time, doesn’t always know what’s happening in your life, but you should go visit Him every once in a while, and tell Him what you’re up to. He’s just happy for the company.”

Communicator takes out handcuffs.

“But then you might have some people who say God is something like a cosmic police officer. He’s just waiting in the shadows for you to mess up, and BAM! He’s gotcha. It’s only just a matter of time before He finds you and makes you pay for your crimes.”

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “And that is really just the start. I’m sure you could get a whole bunch of different answers the more people you asked. So if lots of people have lots of different answers to that question, how do we know who’s right? How do we REALLY know what God is like? Or maybe the question is more like *CAN* we really know what God is like? Wow! That’s a big question. And when it comes to big questions like this, the best place to look first is the Bible. The Bible was written by all sorts of people who experienced God first hand. They have the best perspective when it comes to answering big questions like this.”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “To answer our question for today, let’s head to the Gospels in the New Testament of our Bible. The Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—each focus on the life of Jesus, but our story actually requires us to start a little bit before Jesus was born. See, most of us are familiar with the angel that came to visit Mary, Jesus’ mother, to tell her she would give birth. But the angel made another important visit and birth announcement before the one to Mary. If you were around last month, you might remember. Does anyone know who it was to?”

Pause for responses.

“That’s right! The angel visited a man named Zechariah and told him that he and his wife, Elizabeth, would give birth to a son. This boy would be filled with God’s Spirit, and he would prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Messiah. Do any of you remember the boy’s name?”

Pause for responses.

“Yes! John! Now we sometimes call him John the Baptist, but it is not like that was his last name. *(Acting out)* Hello, Mr. The Baptist. No, we call him that because that is what we find him doing in the Gospel story. In fact, we have him right here . . .”

Communicator grabs a Small Group Leader and dresses him/her like John and has him/her stand on stage.

“Looking good, John. So, John was in the desert dressed in strange clothes and eating strange food. People were coming out to him from all over Judea to be baptized in the Jordan River. That’s why we call him John the Baptist, or Baptizer. Oh, and something else you should know: John also had a group of people who followed him much like the disciples who would end up following Jesus.”

Communicator calls up two kids from the Small Group of the leader acting as John and has them stand next to John on stage.

“Well, you could imagine a guy like this would get some attention, and he certainly got the attention of the religious leaders known as the Pharisees. I think they wondered what the big deal was all about and went out to investigate for themselves. John was quick to clear things up for them.”

“(Read directly from John 1:26-27, NIV) “I baptize people with water,” John replied. “But someone is standing among you whom you do not know. He is the one who comes after me. I am not good enough to untie his sandals.””

“John pointed out that there was someone coming after him.”

Communicator prompts the small group leader to point off stage.

“John talks about how this other person is the real deal . . . the One they were waiting for. John was just there to prepare the way for Him. Who was John talking about?”

Pause for responses.

“Jesus, yes! And it was about that time that Jesus actually came out to John at the Jordan River to be baptized. And when Jesus came out of the water, something crazy happened. Check this out. *(Read directly from Matthew 3:16-17, NIV) ‘As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened. Jesus saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove. A voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him.”’*”

“John was there as God Himself confirmed that Jesus is the chosen one sent by God, God’s very own Son!”

“Some time later, John was with his own disciples, *(point to the small group)* like so, when Jesus came walking by. Check out John’s reaction.”

“*(Read directly from John 1:35-36, NIV) ‘John was there again with two of his disciples. He saw Jesus walking by. John said [have small group leader read], “Look! The Lamb of God!”’*”

“John was there with two of his disciples, his followers. John saw Jesus and pointed Him out for who He really is. What do you think the reaction of the disciples might be?”

Pause for responses.

“Let’s find out. *(Read directly from John 1:37, NIV) ‘The two disciples heard him say this. So they followed Jesus.’*”

“Did you catch that? They left John to follow Jesus!”

Two small group kids sit back down.

“. . . And one of them, Andrew, after spending the day with Jesus went and found his brother, telling him that they had found the Messiah!”

“(Walking over to small group leader) I wonder how John felt about all of this. I mean, was this like losing teammates because they want to go play for another team instead? Pretty depressing, right? Actually, I think you might be surprised about John’s reaction. You see, later on John got in a discussion with someone about Jesus. They were saying that everyone was now going to Jesus and not John. You would think John might be a little defensive . . . a little territorial. Feisty, even. Instead, he used a picture of a wedding to explain what is happening. Check this out.”

“(Read directly from John 3:28-29, NIV) ‘You yourselves are witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah. I was sent ahead of him.’ The bride belongs to the groom. The friend who helps the groom waits and listens for him. He is full of joy when he hears the groom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.’”

“At a wedding, the stars are the bride and the groom—everybody is there because of them. John said that Jesus is like the groom, and John was like the groom’s friend there to help Him. When the groom shows up, the friend is so happy and full of joy because that means the wedding is about to take place. And John said it as the same with Jesus—He had come, and John was full of joy because of it!”

“And then John said something pretty powerful. *(Read directly from John 3:30, NIV) ‘He must become more important. I must become less important.’”*

“John was okay losing his disciples to Jesus because he knew his disciples were now following the One he was preparing the way for. Let’s give our John the Baptist a hand!”

Small Group Leader can sit back down.

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “We started earlier by asking how we know what God is like. There are certainly a lot of different ideas of what God is like, some right and some, well . . . not so right! But what I hope you saw today is that the starting place for knowing what God is like is . . . anyone think they know it? Great job! Yes, Jesus! Think about it. John came along and, as the angel said even before his birth, prepared the way for Jesus and pointed everyone to Him. John said, ‘I am not the one—HE is the one.’ John was not upset that his disciples started following Jesus because there is no one better for them to follow! John knew the truth about Jesus.”

“And at His baptism, even the Father Himself said, ‘This is my Son.’ Later on, Jesus would tell His own disciples that He and the Father are one. So if you want to know what God the Father is like, you can just look at Jesus. Even later still, a follower of Jesus would write that Jesus is a mirror image of God . . . He perfectly reflects what God is like.”

“In other words, we don’t have to guess what God is like! Vending machine? Grandpa? Cosmic police officer? No, Jesus is our starting point. Ever wonder if God is kind? Let me ask you . . . is Jesus kind? Ever wonder if God is merciful? Let me ask you . . . is Jesus merciful? Ever wonder if God is bothered by injustice? Is Jesus bothered by injustice? Jesus is our starting point for knowing what God is like!”

“I want to return to one other thing John said . . . maybe you noticed it. If you don’t know what it is about, it can come off a little strange. That day when John was there with two of his disciples and he saw Jesus walk by, he didn’t say, ‘Look, it’s Jesus!’ Instead, he said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God!’”

“John was saying something pretty powerful here. You might remember how, last week we talked about how Jesus’ family went back to Jerusalem every year to celebrate the Passover feast? The Passover celebrated a very important event in the history of God’s people. When God’s people were in captivity in Egypt, God caused the Pharaoh to let them go by bringing a plague of death on each household. You might remember the story. The night the angel of death came, he would pass over homes that had the blood of a lamb painted on their doorways. John here was saying something very important about Jesus, that Jesus would be the ultimate Passover Lamb. This Lamb would not just cover over sins; He would take away the sins of the whole world.”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “Today as you go to groups, I want you to think about this question:”

CG: Key Question Slide

“How can knowing who Jesus is change your life? Think about John and how he didn’t fight for his status or cling to his followers, but he knew what was most important. Think about how Jesus shows us more about who God is. There is a ton we can learn about God from what we know about Jesus—like just how much God loved us enough to send Jesus to save us. You’ll talk more about this in Small Group, but before we head there, let’s pray.”

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

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