



TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Always on My Mind
Think on These Things
Philippians 4:8

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What do you tend to focus on?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Focus on what's true.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**Anyone who lives
without blame walks safely.
But anyone who takes a
crooked path will get caught.**
Proverbs 10:9, NIV

MONTHLY LIFE APP

**Integrity—Choosing to be truthful
in whatever you say and do**

BASIC TRUTH

I need to make the wise choice.

PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

SMALL GROUP

15
MIN

SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Early Arriver
Opening Activity

LARGE GROUP

35
MIN

STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways **WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God**

Welcome/Opener
Worship ("Lift My Voice" from *Can't Stop Won't Stop*,
"Jesus I Will Trust You" from *This Love*, and "I Can Always
Trust You" from *Can't Stop Won't Stop*)
Bible Story (Communicator Script)
Key Question
Prayer

SMALL GROUP

25
MIN

GROUPS: Creating a safe place to connect

Application Activity: Take a Snapshot and
Discussion Questions
Bible Story Review: Bible Story Review
Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You
Prayer Activity: Make it Personal with Prayer

HOME: Prompting action beyond the experience

Parent Cue Card (print or email)
GodTime devotional for kids
Studio252.tv
Parent Cue App

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WEEK
FOUR
OCTOBER 2020

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30- OR 60-SECOND VERSION)

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

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, movie opening, 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.

OPENER

HOST: "Hey, everyone! Can you believe it is the end of October already? But for today, at least, the fun is just beginning around here!"

To end the month, I've got a fun game wrapped around one of the most famous holiday traditions... **THREE LETTERS...**

P... S... L

Pumkin Spice Latte - OK, well, maybe not the Latte, because most of you kids don't need coffee. So let's just stick with the Pumpkin Spice.

GAME: Did They Pumpkin Spice It? (using slides)

Have kids stand or sit to show whether they think the item displayed has been "pumpkin spiced". For added fun, bring leaders up on stage to have the kids tell them what to guess. Leader with most right answers wins.

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SLIDE: LIFE APP

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO LIFE APP

"Integrity is choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do.

"Our Memory Verse for this month explains it so well. Can you say it with me?"

SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE

KIDS AND HOST: *"Anyone who lives without blame walks safely. But anyone who takes a crooked path will get caught." (Proverbs 10:9, NIRV)*

HOST: "That's right! Our integrity is really important to God. We can choose to follow God, wherever we might be. His way is always best. And with His help, we can live each day in a truthful way.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Save the Date - MEGA AWESOME COSTUME PARTY and MOVIE NIGHT is THIS FRIDAY... October 30th
- fliers going out today

SEGUE INTO WORSHIP

Worship 1: Only Way
Worship 2: Wide Ope

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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: “Hey, everyone! Glad to see you all here today. I have a little experiment I want to do with you. First, close your eyes. Are they closed? Okay, now imagine purple elephants. That’s right, not normal elephants. PURPLE elephants. Get a picture of what they look like, how they move, and what they sound like. Got it?”

“Okay, you can open your eyes now.”

“(Pointing at a kid) What are you thinking about right now? (Response will probably be purple elephants. Repeat with a few more kids).”

“Okay. Now, stop thinking about purple elephants. Got it? Just stop thinking about them and how purple they are. And how elephant-y they are.”

“Did you stop?”

At this point, many will say that they are having a hard time stopping. You may have a few that say they were able to stop. Ask them how they stopped.

“For those who have stopped thinking about . . . those things, how did you do it? *(Pause for responses.)*”

“And that’s the trick, isn’t it? To stop thinking about PURPLE ELEPHANTS, you have to replace that thought with something else. It is not enough to just stop. You have to START thinking about something different—like pink zebras or green camels.”

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “It’s one thing to do this with silly things like purple elephants. It’s another thing to do this with other sorts of thoughts. Thoughts of fear or worry or sadness. Those thoughts aren’t wrong, but they’re also not always helpful. Think about those moments in our lives when we think about negative or untrue things. How can we train our brains to think about what’s positive and true instead? That’s a great question. In fact, it’s something that Paul talked about in a letter he wrote that we find in the Bible. Let’s check it out.

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “Let’s try something unlike anything we have done before. On these sheets of cardboard, I have three words written.

Communicator reveals each cardboard flip board one at a time, being careful not to show the backside.

“These words are a bit heavy. The first is ‘FEAR.’ The second is ‘DISAPPOINTMENT.’ And the last is ‘LONELINESS.’ What do these words have in common? Well, my guess is that you have all experienced each of these at one time or

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another in your life, right? But in addition to that, each of these words has the ability to consume our thoughts and become the thing we focus on, even when they might not be true.”

“So, here’s the plan. I have some markers here. I would like some of you to come up and write around the word on this board some of the times that you have experienced these. You don’t have to be too detailed or write too much, but by the time we are finished, we should have a good idea of where fear, and disappointment, and loneliness are showing up in your *(all)* lives. Let’s write.”

Give some time for kids to write. Small Group Leaders can help guide the process. Especially help kids that might want to “overshare” during this time.

“(After a set time for kids to write on the boards) Wow . . . you all really did a great job filling up these boards with great examples. Let me read some of them out loud.”

Share several appropriate examples from each board.

“Those are some great examples. And I’m guessing that many of you probably thought of some others while you listened to those being read.”

“I want to read to you what Paul wrote in his letter. I’m guessing you know who Paul is, but just in case: Paul was an early follower of Jesus who helped to spread the message of Jesus. He traveled for many years of his life to different cities sharing about Jesus and starting communities of followers that we call churches. Paul lived through some great and exciting moments, like preaching in packed-out theaters and seeing entire households put their faith in Jesus. But Paul also experienced a lot of hard moments. Paul had a lot of opposition. He was attacked, made fun of, and kicked out of cities. His life was tough.”

“Paul certainly had a lot of moments when he probably experienced *(pointing to the boards)* fear. Fear like when an entire mob of people attacked him in Jerusalem. Disappointment. Disappointment like when he was imprisoned for over two years in Caesarea with very little reason given. Loneliness. Loneliness like when he describes how some of his closest companions left him all by himself.”

“Fear. Disappointment. Loneliness. He had certainly been there.”

“When Paul wrote this letter, these three ideas were definitely an option. Paul had just made a life-threatening voyage to Rome. This was not a cruise or a vacation. Paul was there to appear before the most powerful man on the planet—Caesar, the emperor of Rome. Although this was an amazing opportunity, it was also really scary. You see, whatever Caesar decided was final. There was nobody above him. So, if Caesar decided against Paul or even thought Paul was just wasting his time then well, that was it for Paul.”

“Now when Paul got to Rome, he didn’t get to see Caesar away. Or soon for that matter. Actually, he lived under what is called house arrest, guarded night and day, chained to a Roman soldier. And he waited. And waited. And waited.”

“But you know what else he did besides wait? He wrote letters. He sent messages to people and groups of people, like churches that he had started, encouraging them and challenging them and teaching them during this time. We

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actually have a quite a few of them! They are preserved for us in the New Testament of our Bible, including the letter I've been talking about—a letter now called the book of Philippians."

"We know that Paul wrote this letter while he was a prisoner in Rome. He tells us at the start of the letter . . . 'I'm in chains for Christ!' I'm guessing he was probably experiencing some FEAR (*point to board*). I mean, what was going to happen to him when he appeared before Caesar? And Paul was probably feeling DISAPPOINTMENT (*point to board*). He might have imagined things going differently when he finally got to Rome. Probably not rotting away under house arrest. And he was certainly experiencing LONELINESS (*point to board*). Leaving his friends and his family behind . . . not knowing if he would ever see them again."

"With all this said, I would expect Paul to write some pretty sad and depressing words. But check out what he wrote in this letter to the Christians living in Philippi. (*Read directly from Philippians 4:8, NIRV*) 'Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things.'"

"Did you catch what Paul just said? In the midst of a situation that could easily cause fear, disappointment, and loneliness . . . Paul was not going to think about these things. Instead, what was he going to focus on?"

Pause for responses.

"Exactly. Like this . . ."

Communicator flips over the boards and connects them together to reveal all of the words together.

"True. Noble. Right. Pure. Lovely. Worthy of respect. Excellent. Worthy of praise. This was what Paul encouraged others to focus on . . . and I'm sure he himself was choosing to do as well."

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: "Let's think about some of the examples you wrote down earlier. And let's think about what it would mean to change our thinking in those moments to what Paul wrote."

Take some time to read through some of the examples and then show how those examples can change with a new mindset, understanding what is actually true. Be careful of more sensitive examples.

Here is an example of one you might see that would work well: "One of you said that you experienced fear when you have to speak in front of the class. But what is true? What is true is that you studied hard and know what you are talking about. You have something good to share that will help other people in the class. And everyone is a little nervous to share . . . you are not the only one. That is what is true!"

"(After sharing examples) See how a change of focus can change so much? It is so easy to focus on the negative, but when we do, we miss out on what is true. Paul knew that if he just sat under house arrest and dwelled on how bad things were and how disappointed he was, that he wouldn't be doing what God had planned for him. Instead, God was able to still work through Paul despite his tough circumstances in really powerful ways!"

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“The same was true of Jesus. You know, when He faced the cross, it was easy to see that this was a tough circumstance that He didn’t want to go through. But Jesus knew what was true. He knew what His death was going to accomplish. And He knew that He would come back to life on the third day. Jesus chose to focus on what was true and to trust His Father.”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “With God’s help, we can choose to focus on what’s true as well. Today as you go to groups, think about this:”

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION SLIDE

“What do you tend to focus on?” Did you catch that? Not what you should focus on, but what do you focus on? Think about the thoughts that go through your mind. Do you focus on what makes you scared or makes you angry? Do you focus on only having fun, even when you need to take something seriously? There’s no right or wrong answer. After all, when you know what you do tend to focus on, you can figure out how you can choose to focus on what Paul talks about in Philippians. And don’t worry if you’re not sure how to do that. You’ll talk all about it in Small Group. Before we head there, let’s pray and ask God to help us focus on what’s true. Let’s pray.”

HOST: “It’s good for us to think about the things that are ALWAYS true. God loves us. He’s always with us. He has a good plan for our lives. And He’s always WORKING in our lives, even when things don’t go our way. That’s why we need to . . .

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

“focus on what’s true.

“Think about what happened with Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, it was so sad . . . but now we can see how it was all part of God’s plan. To the disciples, it just looked like everything had fallen apart. But when Jesus came back to life, they realized that God’s plan was really good in the end!

“There will be times when all of us have to face things that are difficult. So let’s change our focus and think about what we know is true. Think ON PURPOSE about what’s right and good. Pay attention to what God is doing in your life—in the good times and the bad.

“You can head to Small Group now and talk some more about what that might look like in YOUR life. See you next time, friends!”