



## TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

**Change Your Mind**  
Matthew  
Matthew 9:9-13

### TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

How would you describe yourself?

### TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Knowing Jesus changes how  
you see yourself.

### MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

How you made me is amazing and  
wonderful. I praise you for that.  
What you have done is wonderful.  
I know that very well.  
Psalm 139:14, NIV

### LARGE GROUP SUPPLIES

- Smashed Candy on plates (see "What You Do")
- Paper and Pencils for recording answers

### STORY SUPPLIES

- Bible
- Table set up like a tax collector booth (papers, bag of coins)
- Robe for a Pharisee (bath robe, fancy robe, etc)

### 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

Just for Fun  
Opening Activity

### LARGE GROUP

**35**  
MIN

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

##### - Mega Awesome Costume Party

- FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29th - 6:30
- Register online - fliers go out next week
- Only \$15 - entry into prize giveaways
- LIVE DJ
- Games
- Time with your groups/leaders

##### - BAPTISM CLASS

- Every month, we host a class that focuses on taking the next step in your faith. Baptism is a step people take when they want to tell others they are serious about following Jesus. If you want to attend this class NEXT WEEK and learn more, let your SGL know.

#### MONTHLY WORSHIP LINEUP:

- Week 2 – Might Get Loud & Graves Into Gardens
- Week 3 – Real Love & The Blessing
- Week 4 – This Is Living & Holy Spirit Come
- Week 5 – Might Get Loud & Way Maker

### SMALL GROUP

**25**  
MIN



WEEK  
**TWO**  
OCTOBER 2021

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

**PRELUDE**      **SOCIAL**      **STORY**      **WORSHIP**      **GROUPS**      **HOME**

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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### MONTHLY LIFE APP

Individuality—Discovering who  
you're meant to be so you  
can make a difference

### BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

## 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**

## WORSHIP

*Worship Leaders enter*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "It is so good to know Jesus and sing His praises.

**AUDIO: Might Get Loud**

**AUDIO: Graves Into Gardens**

*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! So good to see you here today! Let's get started with a game to test your finer skills of observation—as well as your knowledge of CANDY! We call this game Guess that Candy!"

**SLIDE: GUESS THAT CANDY**



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*Depending on the number of kids you have, you can either send everyone through the gallery as teams or send 1-2 kids from each small group through and then they can describe to the group what they saw.*

“Up here, you can see we have a smashed candy gallery. That’s right. Each plate has a candy on it that, I’m guessing you have probably had before, but the only problem is that this candy has been SMASHED! You may not touch it or taste it, but as you come through [either everyone or small group representatives], write down on your paper what you believe each piece of candy is next to the correct number. At the end, we will reveal the answers and see who got the most right!”

**AUDIO: FUN BACKGROUND MUSIC**

*Pass out papers and pencils, then send kids through the smashed candy gallery. Afterwards, reveal the correct answers.*

**HOST:** “Great job, everyone! You all really ‘smashed’ that game! Sorry, I couldn’t resist. Okay, I gotta go put all these back in the wrappers and try to return them to the store.



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## COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

*Communicator enters.*

### INTRODUCTION

**COMMUNICATOR:** "How's it going, everyone?! Great to see you all. Let's start with an activity. In a few short statements, think about this question:"

**SLIDE: COMMUNICATOR QUESTION 1**

"How would someone describe you? For example, 'tech wizard and gamer' or 'adventurous outdoorsy girl.' Or it can be a characteristic like 'an outgoing friend to everyone.'"

"Take a minute to come up with three or four statements and then share them with your Small Group."

*Give time to come up with statements and share. Have some kids call out statements for the room to hear.*

"Those were awesome! Well done. But you know what I noticed? Most, if not all, of you focused on positive things about you and your personality—which is great!"

### TENSION

**COMMUNICATOR:** "As much as we might describe ourselves with our positive characteristics, I'm sure we have moments when all we can think about is our failures. Maybe they become all we see about ourselves and our failures overshadow what is so amazing about how God created us. Maybe we even start to believe that those are the only things that God can see also? How can we remember that even though we might fail, those failures aren't what get to define us? Wow, that's an important question we need to answer, stat. Last week, we dove headfirst into the truth that we're created in God's image, but I'm sure that we can find something about seeing ourself as God sees us in the Bible too. Check it out."

### TRUTH

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Today, we head to the Gospels, which are the first four books of the New Testament in the Bible. The writers of the Gospels tell us the story about the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. As many of you know, Jesus called disciples to follow Him, to learn from Him, and become like Him. But sometimes—many times actually—the disciples Jesus called were not the people most would expect. We will certainly see that today."

"First, though, we start here."

*Communicator walks over to tax collector's booth.*

"If you can't tell, this is a tax collector's booth. Do you know what you do here? (Pause for responses.) Yes, collect taxes, obviously. Sure, but it's a little more complicated than that. You see, in Jesus' day, the land of Israel was ruled by the Romans. The Jewish people had to pay taxes to the Romans to live in their own land! And to make matters worse, the Romans hired local Jewish tax collectors to do the dirty work of collecting these taxes. And if those



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Jewish people wanted to earn a living for themselves, they'd have to charge extra and keep it for themselves. For Jewish people, tax collectors working for the Roman empire were seen as some of the worst people in the region!"

"But this is where our story starts today."

*Open the Bible to Matthew 9:9a (NirV) and read.*

"As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew. He was sitting at the tax collector's booth."

"So here (*pointing to booth*) sat Matthew. A Jewish tax collector working for the Romans. Hey, I've got an idea. Let's answer that question from earlier about Matthew.

**SLIDE: COMMUNICATOR QUESTION 1**

"How do you think someone would describe him? What are a few short statements?"

*Allow kids to respond. If they need help, prompt them for ideas like works for the enemy, a traitor against his own people, greedy, or money-hungry.*

SLIDE: Theme Background

"Do you think there was a chance that Matthew maybe thought those things about himself, too? And to make matters worse, Jesus showed up. The Son of God. The perfect, sinless One. Jesus came to be near a guy like this? What would Jesus say? Maybe He'd call him one of those statements you just gave me, right? Let's check it out."

*Open the Bible to Matthew 9:9 (NirV) and read.*

"As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew. He was sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him. Matthew got up and followed him."

"Woah! Jesus didn't yell at Matthew. He didn't remind Matthew how terrible it was that he worked for the Romans and took money from his own people. Jesus simply told Matthew to follow Him. But to follow Jesus, what would Matthew have to leave?"

*Pause for responses.*

"Right. All of this (*pointing to the tax collector's booth*). Following Jesus meant becoming a disciple of Jesus. And becoming a disciple of Jesus meant that life for Matthew was about to completely change. And not just for Matthew . . ."

*Open the Bible to Matthew 9:10 (NirV) and read.*

"Later Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house. Many tax collectors and sinners came. They ate with Jesus and his disciples."

"Jesus did not only show up at Matthew's booth; Jesus went to Matthew's house! And apparently so did a whole lot of other people who had some bad reputations. To ask our question from earlier—how would someone describe them?"



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**SLIDE: COMMUNICATOR QUESTION 1**

"They were sinners. They were the kind of people you would not want to hang around. Some might have thought that they were probably too far gone for God to reach. At least that is what others might say. But again here was Jesus pulling up a spot at the dinner table with them."

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

"And Matthew and the disciples weren't the only ones who saw this. Check this out."

*Open the Bible to Matthew 9:11 (NIRV) and read.*

*"The Pharisees saw this. So they asked the disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'"*

"The Pharisees didn't like what they saw happening at Matthew's house. But who were the Pharisees? (Communicator puts on a flowing robe.) They were religious leaders for the Jewish people. Let's go back to our question."

**SLIDE: COMMUNICATOR QUESTION 1**

"If we ask that same question, 'How would someone describe you?' to a Pharisee, they might say 'I know the Scriptures better than anyone else' or 'I keep every single command that God gave us in the Law of Moses' or 'I stay separate from all of the other sinners around here.'"

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

"Actually, though, Jesus had a lot of problems with this group. One of His big problems with them was not that they took God's laws seriously. Rather, it was that they used God's laws as an excuse to look down on other people and make themselves look superior. You can almost hear it in that question they asked, 'Why does your teacher eat with . . . THEM? Ewww!'"

"But Jesus was quick to respond."

*Open the Bible to Matthew 9:12-13 (NIRV) and read.*

*"Jesus heard this. So he said, 'Those who are healthy don't need a doctor. Sick people do. Go and learn what this means, 'I want mercy and not sacrifice.' I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me.'"*

"When do you need a doctor most? When you are sick and hurting. Jesus was talking about people like Matthew. Jesus said, 'I'm like a doctor. I'm here to help those who are sick and hurting. I'm here for the sinners, not for the ones who think they have it all together.'"

"Here's the thing. (Walking over to the tax collector's booth.) What Matthew did at this booth influenced the way everybody saw him and treated him. Except for Jesus. Jesus still came to Matthew and asked Matthew to follow Him."



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"(Picking up the Pharisee robe.) And here's the thing about this robe. What happened in this Pharisee robe influenced the way everybody saw them and treated them. Except for Jesus. He refused to believe that just because they had a special title or looked good on the outside that they were more important than anyone else."

"Jesus can change those who think they are too bad, AND Jesus can change those who think they are too good. Because even though Jesus said, 'I have not come for those who think they are right with God,' people who think they are right with God have come to the wrong conclusion. Nobody is right with God without Jesus! Not even the Pharisees were! Everybody needs Him. Matthew saw it. The sinners saw it. But sadly, not everybody does."

**SLIDE: COMMUNICATOR QUESTION 1**

"We started by asking 'How would someone describe you?' The answers from a tax collector and a Pharisee couldn't be more different. But what if we changed the question? Instead of 'How would someone describe you?' let's ask, 'How does God describe you?'"

**SLIDE: COMMUNICATOR QUESTION 2**

"Loved by God. Created in God's image. Worthy of forgiveness. One who Jesus was sent for. All of these are true. True for Matthew. True for the Pharisees. True for you and for me."

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

**APPLICATION**

- **COMMUNICATOR:** "Let's be honest for a moment. Are we ever guilty of doing what the Pharisees did in this story? We make snap decisions about people or give them a reputation based on the mistakes they have made. We might say (*negative tone*) 'Oh no, that kid! They never do ANYTHING right.' But then we turn around and label others or ourselves by saying, (*positive tone*) 'Oh, that kid? They do EVERYTHING right!' It is easy to start believing these descriptions about other people or about ourselves. The tax collector is the villain and the Pharisee is the hero to most people. But Jesus said they BOTH need God. And God's description of you is the only description that counts."
- "Loved by God. Created in God's image. Worthy of forgiveness. One who Jesus was sent for. This is how God sees you. Is it how you see yourself?"

**LANDING**

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Today as you go to groups, I think more about this question:"

**SLIDE: KEY QUESTION**

"**How would you describe yourself?** Have you ever been tempted to feel like the tax collector, like you're too bad? Or the Pharisee, seeing yourself as too good? Think about those four statements. Loved by God. Created in God's image. Worthy of forgiveness. One who Jesus was sent for. How does that change the way you describe yourself? You'll have a chance to talk with your Small Group about all of this. Before we go to groups, let's pray and thank God for loving us and sending Jesus to rescue and forgive us. Let's pray!"

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

**AUDIO: HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS EXIT.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**