



## TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

#### Exile

Jesus Tempted in the Desert  
Luke 4:1-13  
(Supporting: Matthew 4:1-11)

### TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

When is it hard to  
do the right thing?

### TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Be ready to do the right thing.

### MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"God's power has given  
us everything we need  
to lead a godly life."  
2 Peter 1:3a, NIV

### HOST SUPPLIES

- 12 volunteers
- Four chair
- 6 Matching pairs of 8 1/2 x 11 cards (memory game)

### STORY SUPPLIES

- A serving platter with rocks on it with a lid on top
- Another serving platter with bread on it with a lid on top

### 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:

- HAPPY NEW YEAR

- Invite Challenge

- This is a **NEW YEAR** and people are ready to start some new habits
- Our challenge is for you to think of someone you can invite in the month of January to come with you to church

#### MONTHLY WORSHIP LINEUP:

**Week 1 - This Is Living & Way Maker**

Week 2 - There's Nothing That Our God Can't Do & Graves Into Gardens

Week 3 - The Best Is Yet To Come & Way Maker

Week 4 - Might Get Loud & Graves Into Gardens

Week 5 - Real Love & Way Maker

### SMALL GROUP

25  
MIN



WEEK  
**ONE**  
JANUARY 2022

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

PRELUDE

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WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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## MONTHLY LIFE APP

Self-control—Choosing to do  
what you should even when  
you don't want to

## BASIC TRUTH

I need to make the wise choice.

## 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:** "Yes, stay up on your feet! Happy 2022. We get to kick off this year celebrating all that God has done, and all that God is doing in our lives. What a happy day!"

**AUDIO:** *This Is Living*

**AUDIO:** *Way Maker*

*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 (latest Marvel movie, etc.), 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, friends! If you haven't heard it already, let me be one of the first to tell you Happy New Year! I don't know about you, but 2021 felt like a roller coaster! I'm for sure looking forward to a bigger and brighter 2022!"



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"Now, last year wasn't as crazy as 2020, but boy, there was a lot of figuring things out that I had to do in 2021. Lots of decisions. Lots of choices. Moments that could have had either great outcomes or terrible consequences. And since we're in the first month of a brand-new year, I thought I'd kick things off with a fun game about exactly that—making choices! I'll need quite a few volunteers for this one. Who's up for a little Live Action Memory?"

**SLIDE: GAME TITLE**

*Choose twelve volunteers. Have them come to the stage and introduce them. Continue with the explanation.*

"Okay! Here we have our twelve volunteers. Each one will hold a sign. On these signs could be a symbol, a face, or a picture. But first let's line you up

in a grid—three lines of four, first row on their knees, second row sitting in chairs, and third row standing. You'll each hold your sign face-down, so no one out there can see what's on them."

*Have 12 volunteers get into place.*

"Awesome! Now, we need two more volunteers (Or two teams of two) to play!"

*Host chooses two/four volunteers to play the game. If you have a lot of kids, you could also have two sides of the room play against each other. Choose a set of volunteers each round that represent each side of the room.*

"Those contestants will take turns each choosing two kids, who will hold up their signs in front of their faces. If they match, you collect the signs and they exit the grid! If they don't match, they stay and they put their signs back face down."

"The one (or team) with the most collected pairs at the end of the round wins! Let's play!"

*Hand out the Live Action Memory Game Cards, remind the twelve to keep them face down, and play the game. At the end, count the matches and declare a winner. If time permits, choose others to play the game again.*

"Fantastic! Now, let's make one of the best choices you can make this morning. Let's stand to sing and worship our amazing God!"



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## COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

### INTRODUCTION

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Hey, friends! Hope you’re all doing great today! That opening game was incredible! Like our opening game, self-control is basically about choice, isn’t it? You can choose to keep things locked down and in control, or you can throw that choice out the window and totally lose it. Instead of eating the whole sleeve of Girl Scout cookies, choose control and stop at like four. If on your Mario Odyssey speed run you keep dying when trying to clip through the wall, maybe choose self-control instead of chucking your Joy Cons at the cat.”

“Self-control is choosing to do what you should do even when you don’t want to. It’s all about making the wise choice. And speaking of that, I have some choices for you—and you’ll vote with your feet. I’ll read a scenario and you’ll use your feet to walk to the side of the room which represents the choice made. But, be wise about your choice because I may ask you to defend why you made it!”

*Use the following choices, assigning one side of the room or the other for the answers. At random, choose kids to answer why they picked what they picked. Optional: Feel free to tweak the following scenarios based on the kids who attend your environment.*

### Scenario 1

You’re losing really badly at a board game with your younger brother. He gets up to get a snack and there’s a way you can cheat without him ever knowing. Do you do it, yes or no?

### Scenario 2

Your aunt made her world-famous chocolate chip cookies and they’re sitting on the counter. They’re piled high, and you could take one or two and then rearrange the pile to make it look like none were taken. Do you take them, yes or no?

### Scenario 3

You’re invited to a pool party with friends but can’t swim and are secretly super scared of the water. You’re not sure how your friends will react. Do you make up an excuse and stay home or do you risk it and go to be with your friends?

### Scenario 4

OK, let’s try a silly one. An alien lands in your backyard, comes out of its spaceship, and offers you a choice. You can either become the most famous person in the world (by being the one who discovers aliens) or be given the knowledge to cure all diseases on planet earth but no one will know it’s you. Which one do you choose?

### Scenario 5

You’re out shopping with your family, and when you’re on the way back out to your car, you notice that the case of Coke that was on the bottom of the cart never got scanned. No one paid for it. Do you say anything or just keep it because, hey, free Coke?

### Scenario 6

You’re out with friends at the movie theater to see a movie you all have permission to see. On your way in, one of your friends suggests sneaking into a movie you know your mom wouldn’t like you to watch. Do you follow your friends into the new movie or suggest you stick with the movie you all have permission to see?



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"It's interesting when you have to defend your position, right? Sometimes the right choice is harder when no one will find out the wrong choice!"

### TENSION

**COMMUNICATOR:** "When faced with choices like these, how do you find the strength to choose? Or, like with frustrating video games or confusing math class or fickle friends, when you're faced with trying times that make you want to go kick a wall, how do you find the strength to control yourself? How do you know what to do? How do you find the wisdom to make the right choice?"

"What will help you know how to respond?"

"Great questions to think about! A lot of our choices are shaped by the adults in our lives, our friends, or our circumstances. And when it's left up to us, sometimes making the best choice that shows self-control isn't exactly the easiest thing in the world. We'll need some help figuring this out."

*Hold up the Bible.*

"We just so happen to have the best resource available on planet Earth—the Bible. This book is full of wisdom, stories, one-liners, knowledge, and all kinds of examples to help us. If we pay attention to what's in these pages, we can learn a thing or three. Let's dive in!"

### TRUTH

**COMMUNICATOR:** "We're kicking off the first Bible story of the year in the book of Luke—more specifically, Luke 4. Luke was a historian who hung around with the first Jesus followers. He wrote down all of these stories so people like you and me could know more about Jesus. Before we get to our story for today, let's set up what's happening."

"Jesus was an adult, around 30 years old, and He had just been baptized by John the Baptist. This was the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. In other words, this was the start of Jesus traveling, meeting people, choosing His disciples, and telling everyone about God's plan for the world.

"When Jesus was baptized, something amazing happened. Here's how another Jesus follower, Matthew, recorded it for us:

*Open the Bible to Matthew 3:16-17 (NIRV) and read.*

"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.""

"Soon after He was baptized, the Holy Spirit led Jesus out into the desert, into the wilderness. Jesus was there, but He wasn't exactly alone. Let's head to Luke 4 and find out who was with Jesus.

*Open the Bible to Luke 4:1-2a (NIRV) and read.*

"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan River. The Spirit led him into the desert. There the devil tempted him for 40 days."



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“Hold up. The devil? Tempted him for 40 days? Good grief, that’s a long time!”

**AUDIO: “THE TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLAR PYRAMID” THEME SONG**

*The Host enters as a game show host alongside another volunteer as the “presenter.” He affects a “Wink Martindale” voice, over the top, slick game show host persona.*

**HOST:** “Thaaaat’s right everybody, it was a long time! Welcome to everyone’s favorite game show, ‘Lost in the Wilderness!’ I’m your host, Lou Cifer, here to tempt our first (and only) contestant! He’s fresh out of the Jordan, about to start changing the world for the better! It’s Jesus of Nazareth—but I’m going to see what I can do derail that ministry train before it even leaves the station! Ha ha ha!”

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Yep, Jesus was tempted. The whole time. For 40 days straight.”

**HOST:** “Jesus, it’s a wilderness out there! Give up communicating with God, and I’ll show You the way out of here . . .”

**SLIDE: GAME SHOW SLIDE 1: 1950S STYLISH CAR**

“. . . with a brand-new car! It’s okay that cars haven’t been invented yet—just make sure You don’t keep praying!”

**COMMUNICATOR:** “OK. Now, clearly the devil wasn’t tempting Jesus with vintage cars, but Jesus did go through a difficult 40 days alone. During this time, Jesus focused on God. He also didn’t eat anything. He fasted. Fasting is something that is directly tied in with prayer—it’s when you spend time focusing on God instead of on something else. Some people fast a meal, some people do it for two or three days, some take a break from social media or spending money. Fasting often goes along with praying a lot. Jesus fasted for 40 days straight to focus on God.”

“Being in the wilderness that long was a definitely a spiritual journey, along with a physical one. Jesus spent that whole time with God—and the devil kept tempting Him.”

**HOST:** “Shivering on those cold desert nights?”

**SLIDE: GAME SHOW SLIDE 2: WINTER COAT**

“. . . how about a brand-new fur coat? This lush, designer fleece is made from only the smallest of baby raccoons, sure to beat those frigid overnight temperatures!”

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Wow. Anyway! We don’t know exactly what it looked like for the devil to tempt Jesus for 40 days. It probably didn’t involve a fur coat. But what we do know is how Jesus was feeling at the end of the 40 days. Luke wrote:”

*Open the Bible to Luke 4:2c (NIRV) and read.*

“‘At the end of the 40 days, he was hungry.’ (pause) Yeah, I’d imagine I’d be hungry too. I mean, I get hungry if I don’t have breakfast! But Luke also tells us that the devil wasn’t finished with the temptations.”

“The devil was still there, still waiting, still tempting. He saw that Jesus was hungry.”



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**HOST:** "Ooh, I can hear that stomach a-growlin'. Sounds to me like You could use a snack! Let's see what we have for our lovely contestant!"

*Host goes over to the preset serving platter with a cover. Picks it up, and in game show "displaying the prizes" style, he or she removes the cover to reveal large rocks.*

**HOST:** "That's right, folks! We've got stones! Large stones, smaller stones, stones as far as the eye can see . . . because we're in the wilderness! And guess what—since You're the Son of God . . ."

*Host picks up another serving platter and removes the cover, revealing a loaf of bread.*

"You can wave Your hand and turn these stones into bread! In fact, You don't even have to move—You can just command these stones to be bread!"

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Now, for someone who hadn't eaten for 40 days, that choice must've been really, really hard. Remember, Jesus is God's Son, filled with the Holy Spirit and could perform miracles, but Jesus was also a human, just like you and me."

"And as Jesus grew up, He studied the Jewish scriptures! God had sent Jesus to earth, and Jesus knew what God wanted for His life. Instead of making Himself a bite to eat, Jesus said this instead:"

*Open the Bible to Matthew 4:4 (NirV) and read.*

*"Jesus answered, 'It is written, 'Man must not live only on bread. He must also live on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

"Jesus quoted Scripture. This is right from Deuteronomy 8:3. Jesus knew it by heart, and when He was tempted, He could pull out a Scripture that spoke directly to the devil's temptation! The devil wanted to distract Jesus from His purpose, to make Him begin to doubt God's plan for His life. But Jesus wasn't having any of it. Bread miraculously made from stones is great for sandwiches, but it won't feed your spirit. Jesus knew this, and His answer was the perfect response to quiet down the devil."

"But unfortunately, the devil wasn't finished."

**HOST:** "But wait! There's more!"

**COMMUNICATOR:** "He wasn't giving up that easily."

**HOST:** "Just wait until you see what's behind . . . Door Number Two!"

*Open the Bible to Luke 4:5-7 (NirV) and read.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** *"Then the devil led Jesus up to a high place. In an instant, he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world."*

**SLIDE: GAME SHOW SLIDE 3: MAP OF THE WORLD**



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**HOST:** "That's right! It's an all-expenses paid trip to . . . everywhere!"

*Open the Bible to Luke 4:5-7 (NIRV) and read.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** "'He said to Jesus, 'I will give you all their authority and glory. It has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.''"

**HOST:** "That's right! Everyone, everywhere, will work for You! You can rule over them however You wish, and not only that, I'll throw in . . ."

**SLIDE: GAME SHOW SLIDE 4: TWO JET SKIS**

*". . . a brand-new pair of his and her jet-skis! Whisk Your way around the Red Sea in style! All for the low, low price . . . of bowing down to me!"*

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Yeah, that Jet-ski part didn't happen . . . but other than that, this sounds like it could be a pretty good deal, right? Supreme authority over everyone? All the kingdoms of the world? Jesus would be like the president of the planet!"

"This was another attempt to get Jesus' focus off of God's plan and onto something else. He was trying to distract Jesus from His mission, His ministry, and His path. Plus, if he could get the Son of God to worship him, it would be a big deal."

"Jesus, in the same way, answered the devil not with a simple, 'No way. Go take a long walk off a short pier,' but He answered him with Scripture."

*Open the Bible to Luke 4:8 (NIRV) and read.*

*"'Jesus answered, 'It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve.''"*

"Again, straight out of the book of Deuteronomy and right to the point. No way would Jesus worship the devil, because God is the only One to worship! Jesus, again, said the perfect thing to counter the devil's questions and shut him down."

"But unfortunately, the devil still wasn't finished."

**HOST:** "But wait! There's more!"

**COMMUNICATOR:** "He wasn't giving up that easily."

**HOST:** "Just wait until you see what's behind . . . Door Number Three!"

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Now, the devil was pretty crafty. Still is, in fact. He will use any and all means necessary to get Jesus, and us, to stop trusting God. The crazy thing is that the devil tried to turn God's words around. Check out what he did."





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**HOST:** "You've been quoting Scripture to answer my questions, so let's see if I can quote some right back at You!"

*Open the Bible to Luke 4:9-11 (NIV) and read.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** "'Then the devil led Jesus to Jerusalem. He had Jesus stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down from here. It is written, 'The Lord will command his angels to take good care of you. They will lift you up in their hands. Then you won't trip over a stone.''"

"He led Jesus to the top level, maybe even on the roof, of the tallest temple in Jerusalem. Looking down, he then quoted from the book of Psalms. He tried to use the Bible to lead Jesus astray one more time!

**HOST:** "Leeeeeeeeet's see what we've got for our final temptation!"

*Host holds up a Bible.*

"That's right. Prove that You're the Son of God—toss Yourself off this building and have the angels save You!"

**COMMUNICATOR:** "I can just picture Jesus looking down at the streets below, maybe with a small smile on His face. Even though He was hungry, tired, and probably growing sick of the devil's constant temptations, Jesus trusted God, He knew God's heart behind the Scripture, even when the devil was quoting Scripture. He addressed this latest challenge this way:"

*Open the Bible to Luke 4:12 and read.*

"'Jesus answered, 'Scripture says, 'Do not test the Lord your God.''" Deuteronomy again, this time out of 6:16. With that, Jesus shut down the devil's tempting once and for all."

#### **AUDIO: "THE TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLAR PYRAMID" THEME SONG**

**HOST:** "Well, it seems that's all the time we have for today, folks! Let's not give a big round of applause to our contestant because He really didn't listen to anything I said! I'm your host, Lou Cifer, and be sure to tune in later for more of 'Lost in the Wilderness!' Until then . . . stay up past your bedtime and eat all the cookies without brushing your teeth!"

*The Host and the 'presenter' exit.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Whew. Thank goodness. Luke says that when the devil finished all this tempting, he left Jesus . . . until another time. And right after that, God sent a bunch of angels to take care of Jesus and give Him everything He needed."

#### **APPLICATION**

**COMMUNICATOR:** "The devil's temptations of Jesus are similar to some of the ways he tempts us today. The first temptation had to do with food, right? We often experience this as the 'just do what feels right' temptation."



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“There are things that we crave—not just some mac n’ cheese but things that feel good, too—things that might not be the best things for you to do. It is why people get addicted to certain things like drugs or their phones. It’s like they just can’t stop themselves from satisfying that physical side of themselves.”

“In the second temptation, the devil offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world if He would worship him. We don’t face that exact temptation, but we are faced with the temptation to do whatever we can to be recognized, to get fame, to be popular.”

“Everyone wants that, right? Sometimes you want to be liked by your friends, you want to be the first one picked when splitting up the teams, you want to be the one who gets chosen for the lead or the solo—and sometimes getting a laugh or getting the attention involves putting someone else down or cheating your way to get there.”

“The third is when the devil asked Jesus to jump off a building and have His angels save Him. In a way, the devil was trying to get Jesus to test God’s love for Him. For us, this temptation can look more like us questioning God’s love for us. It’s a simple answer, though. You don’t have to prove anything. You don’t have to put God to the test to see if God loves you. God loves you no matter what. Period. End of story.”

“If you’ll remember, Jesus quoted Scripture when the devil tempted Him. But the devil quoted Scripture sometimes, too. Jesus knew the Scriptures, yes. But more importantly, He knew God’s heart behind the Scriptures. So when the devil quoted Scripture in a way that went against God’s heart, Jesus knew what God wanted and didn’t fall for it.”

“Jesus relied on His understanding of who God is and His knowledge of the Scriptures to resist the enemy’s temptations. We can use our understanding of who God is and the truths in the Bible to help us make the wise choice, too!”

## LANDING

**COMMUNICATOR:** “As you head to Small Groups, think about this question:

### SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

**“When is it hard to do the right thing?”** Think about some situations you might find yourself in where it’s super tough to make a good decision. And not only that, where can you find the wisdom like Jesus did to have the right answers to those tough situations? You’ll talk more about this in Small Group, but before you head out, let’s pray. Let’s thank God for sending Jesus and ask God to point us in the right direction to find wisdom in tough situations. Let’s pray.”

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

**AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.**

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