



## FOR LEADERS ONLY

### **GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PATIENCE AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY**

Waiting is a part of life. Thankfully, we don't have to wait on our own. Through the Holy Spirit, God can help us experience the patience we need to wait well. After all, God is patient with us. God is in control and knows what's best for us. Even though God's people had been waiting for years for the promised Savior, at just the right time, God sent Jesus. Because we're created in God's image, we can reflect God's patience in our lives. We can be patient when we remember what God has done. We can lean on God's Holy Spirit to give us the strength we need to trust God and show patience with the difficult circumstances in our lives.

### **CORE INSIGHT: The theological foundation for PATIENCE**

**Transformation** by the power of God's Spirit. God's Spirit is transforming my unique and imperfect life into the character of Jesus.

It can be difficult to find patience while you're waiting for something important—or even something that's not important. At its core, patience is about trust: trusting people to follow through . . . trusting that a process will run smoothly . . . and most of all, trusting that God has our best in mind and that God's timing is better than our own. Thankfully, as we follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit is helping us grow and transform to become more like Jesus. This transformation includes growing in our ability to trust that God will be with us while we wait. As we follow Jesus and trust God, we will grow in patience.

### **PATIENCE is waiting until later for what you want now.**

### **HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT PATIENCE WITH KIDS**

First, areas where people struggle to show patience are subjective. For some, it could be extremely difficult to wait for something that another person might have no problem with at all. It's good for people working with kids not to belittle their experience with patience. We're all on a continuum of growth in this area. Show empathy and lead with love as kids share about their experience with showing patience while they wait. Some kids might even share some very difficult situations where they are waiting for resolution—such as their parents' divorce, unemployment, or illness. Be sure to have a plan for when kids share these sorts of situations. Take time outside of Small Group to have a follow-up conversation, and determine who else needs to know about the situation and how you'll follow up with them.

Patience can also be dependent upon where kids are developmentally. Preteens that are 10 or 11 years old might be able to wait longer because they've had more practice. Kindergarteners can only wait so long before they get distracted, start complaining, or rush to complete whatever they're waiting for. Have . . . patience with kids as they learn patience at their phase of development.

One last thing to keep in mind when it comes to patience: you may have kids in your environment that experience ADHD and struggle with impulse control. You may have other kids with a neurodivergence for whom waiting and demonstrating patience is extremely difficult—or perhaps even impossible. The way you talk about patience and what it means to show patience should be filled with grace for kids in situations where this will be a lifelong struggle. Don't equate a lack of faith as the reason they have difficulty waiting. This is not a faith issue, but rather a neuro-physiological issue over which they have little control.



# COOKOUT

It's worth the wait



WEEK  
**THREE**  
APRIL 2024

LARGE GROUP  
**K-3**

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

## TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

**I Keep Forgettin'**  
Golden Calf  
Exodus 32:1-35

## TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

When you have to wait,  
remember what's true.

## MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**"Wait for the Lord. Be strong  
and don't lose hope. Wait  
for the Lord."**  
Psalm 27:14, NIRV

## MONTHLY VIRTUE

Patience—Waiting until later  
for what you want now

## 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 KIDS ENTER.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

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

Host enters.

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN**

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

## OPENER

**HOST:** "Hi, friends! I'm so excited to see you here today. If you're ready to have some fun, give someone a high-five like this! (*Demonstrate, then pause for response.*) Awesome! All month long at [name of your environment], we're talking about patience.

**SLIDE: VIRTUE**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO VIRTUE**

"Patience is **waiting until later for what you want now.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): VIRTUE TRANSITION TO THEME**

"I bet we can all think of things we really want—things we wish could happen right now. But we often have to wait for those things to happen. And we really need God's help in order to wait patiently.

"I think we've all been waiting patiently for today's game . . . so let's get started! First, I'll need ALL our Small Group Leaders to join me on the stage.

*All Small Group Leaders come to the stage. Give each of them a disposable water bottle and have them stand behind the table(s).*

"Okay. As you can see, each leader has their very own water bottle. We'll set a timer for one minute and see how many water bottle flips each of them can land.

"That means the water bottle lands right side up and doesn't fall over!



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*Pick up a bottle and demonstrate this in slow motion, showing the bottle flipping end-over-end and then landing right side up.*

*(To audience)* "If you've ever played this game before, you know it's not easy. It takes a lot of patience to keep trying until you get your bottle to land just right. *(To leaders)* But leaders, I believe in you—and you know your small group will be cheering for you too!

"Before we start the timer, you can open your bottle and drink some of your water if you think that will make it easier to land. I'll give you a second to get it just the way you want it. *(Pause for response.)*

"Okay, I think we're ready. Please keep track of your own score, leaders. Let's get 60 seconds on the clock. Ready, set, go!"

**AUDIO: FUN MUSIC**

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

*If you're not using an on-screen countdown, set a timer on your phone for 60 seconds.*

*Comment on the action as the leaders play the game. Cheer loudly when anybody lands their bottle successfully. At the end, have each leader share how many flips they landed. Celebrate all of the leaders for their great effort and dismiss them to their seats.*

**SLIDE: THEME**

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

"That was so much fun! Way to go, leaders. You kept at it and kept trying patiently!

"Now I'm about to flip with excitement, because the time has come for us to sing and worship God together. Let's all stand up on our feet!"



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## WORSHIP

*Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Hi, friends! Are you excited to praise God today? *(Get a reaction.)* Great! I am too. Right now we get to celebrate the amazing life that Jesus gives us. This is one of my favorite songs about how He changes us. No doubt about it—today is a happy, happy day. Let's sing this one together.

**AUDIO:** "HAPPY DAY REMIX" / TRACK 1 FROM HAPPY DAY REMIX SINGLE

**OPTIONAL VIDEO:** "HAPPY DAY REMIX" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"The Bible is full of truth. It's the best place for us to turn when we're seeking truth for something we are going through. As we read in Psalm 119:162: *'I'm filled with joy because of your promise. It's like finding a great fortune.'* (NirV) We know this is true: that we are the children of God. Let's worship and thank God for loving us."

**AUDIO:** "YES I AM" / TRACK 5 FROM EVERYTHING TO ME

**OPTIONAL VIDEO:** "YES I AM" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



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## BIBLE STORY

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

*Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.*

### SETTING UP THE STORY

**STORYTELLER:** "Well, hello, everyone! It's great to be here with you. (*Hold up Bible.*) Today's story is from the second book of the Bible, Exodus.

*Reference the numbered boxes on stage.*

"As I tell you what happened, you'll have some chances to come up here, open up one of these boxes, and show us what's inside. So if you want to open up a box, be ready to raise your hand when the time comes, okay?"

"Now, you might remember how God chose a man named Abraham and promised to bless the whole world through his family. Abraham's family eventually became known as the Israelites, and the number of people continued to grow and grow. But the Israelites had to live in slavery in Egypt—for hundreds of years!

"At last, God sent a man named Moses to lead the Israelite people to freedom. Moses led God's people into the wilderness, where God gave them water and food."

### IN THE WILDERNESS

**STORYTELLER:** "Okay, who would like to open box #1?"

*Choose a kid to come up and open box #1 to reveal the sleeping bag.*

"What do you have there, [kid's name]? Yes—a sleeping bag! (*To audience*) To be honest, I don't think the Israelites had sleeping bags like this. But they DID have to travel through the wilderness . . . and that was kind of like camping. (*To the kid*) Thanks, [kid's name].

*Have the kid put the sleeping bag back in the box, and dismiss them to their seat.*

"Now that the Israelites were free in the wilderness, they had to learn what it meant to be God's people. As they camped near Mount Sinai, God's presence appeared on the mountain in fire and cloud. God then called Moses to come up the mountain. God gave Moses these words to say to the people:

*Open the Bible to Exodus 19:4-6 (NirV) and read.*

*"You have seen for yourselves what I did to Egypt. You saw how I carried you on the wings of eagles and brought you to myself. Now obey me completely. Keep my covenant. If you do, then out of all the nations you will be my special treasure. The whole earth is mine. But you will be a kingdom of priests to serve me. You will be my holy nation."* (NirV)

"God then told Moses to give the people a special set of rules and ways to live. These rules were meant to keep the Israelites connected to God, and to keep them safe.



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"When the people heard what Moses shared with them, what do you think they said? Yes or no? Let's find out. Who wants to open box #2?"

*Choose a kid to come up and open box #2 to reveal the "YES" speech bubble sign.*

"The people said . . . YES! They told Moses:

*Open the Bible to Exodus 24:3 (NIRV) and read.*

*"We will do everything the Lord has told us to do." (NIRV)*

*Thank the kid, have them put the sign back in the box, and dismiss them to their seat.*

## IMPATIENT ISRAELITES

**STORYTELLER:** "God then called Moses to come back up the mountain. Moses told the elders of the people to wait for him until he returned. He told them that if anyone had a problem, they could go see his brother, Aaron, or another man named Hur.

"It's time to open our next box! Who wants to do it?"

*Choose a kid to come up and open box #3 to reveal the pair of walking/hiking shoes.*

*(To the kid)* "Looks like you've got some walking shoes. *(To audience)* Again, I doubt Moses had footwear quite like that. But you get the idea. *(To the kid)* Thanks, [kid's name].

*Have the kid put the shoes back in the box, and dismiss them to their seat.*

"Moses and his helper, Joshua, went up the mountain. Joshua waited while Moses went right into the cloud to speak with God.

"Who would like to open box #4?"

*Choose a kid to come up and open box #4 to reveal the wall (or desk) calendar.*

*(To the kid)* "Do you know what that is, [kid's name]? *(Pause for response.)* Right, a calendar. A lot of people nowadays use calendars on their phones instead of one like this. And I don't think the Israelites had these either. *(To audience)* But here's the important thing. Moses was up there on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights! Think about that for a minute. *(Count the days on the calendar)* One, two, three, four, five . . . 40 days! That's a really long time to wait.

"Do you think the Israelites were patient as they waited and waited and waited for Moses to come back? Unfortunately, no. They started to get IMpatient. They wondered what was taking Moses so long. They forgot all the ways that God had already provided for them. *(To the kid)* Thanks, [kid's name].

*Have the kid put the calendar back in the box, and dismiss them to their seat.*

"So what do you think the people did next? This part is a little hard for us to understand. But they went to Aaron and said:



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Open the Bible to Exodus 32:1 (NirV) and read.

*"Come. Make us a god that will lead us. This fellow Moses brought us up out of Egypt. But we don't know what has happened to him."* (NirV)

Aaron told the people to bring all of their gold earrings to him. He melted the gold together and formed a statue of a golden calf. The people saw the calf and said:

Open the Bible to Exodus 32:4 (NirV) and read.

*"Israel, here is your god who brought you up out of Egypt."* (NirV)

"This was NOT good.

"Who wants to come open box #5?"

Choose a kid to come up and open box #5 to reveal the tabletop wacky waving inflatable tube guy. Cue the kid to put the inflatable tube guy on the table and plug it in.

*(To the kid)* "Ah, yes. I'll let you turn this on in just a second. *(To the audience)* Aaron made an altar . . . and the next day, the Israelites had a feast. They danced in front of the golden calf.

Let the kid press the button to turn on the inflatable tube guy so that it dances.

*(To the kid)* "Thanks, [kid's name]."

Have the kid turn off the inflatable tube guy and put it back in the box, then dismiss them to their seat.

## MOSES RETURNS

**STORYTELLER:** "Meanwhile, up on the mountain, God told Moses what was happening. God told Moses to go down to the bottom of the mountain because the Israelites had been making some really bad choices. God said:

Open the Bible to Exodus 32:8 (NirV) and read.

*"They have quickly turned away from what I commanded them. They have made themselves a metal statue of a god in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down and sacrificed to it. And they have said, 'Israel, here is your god who brought you up out of Egypt.'"* (NirV)

Moses asked God to have mercy on the people. And then he started back down the mountain, carrying two stone tablets with God's laws.

"Let's see—I'll need someone to come up and open box #6.

Choose a kid to come up and open box #6 to reveal the two prop stone tablets.



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"Yes—there they are! The two tablets. When Moses and his helper Joshua got close to camp, they heard the people shouting, and they saw the people dancing in front of the golden calf. Moses was so angry that he threw the tablets on the ground, and they broke! *(To the kid)* Thanks for your help, [kid's name].

*Have the kid put the tablets back in the box, and dismiss them to their seat.*

"Moses was very upset that the people had forgotten all that God had done for them. He burned the calf in the fire. Then he ground it up into powder and made the Israelites drink it, as a reminder of what they'd done.

"All right—we have one more box to open—#7.

*Choose a kid to come up and open box #7 to reveal the pitcher of water, stirring spoon, and lemonade mix. (Make sure the kid doesn't pick up the box or jostle it too much as they open it.)*

*(To the kid)* "Kid's name, could you open up that gold powder and put it in the water?"

*Cue the kid to put the items on the table, then pour the lemonade mix into the water pitcher and stir it up. Help, if needed. Then thank the kid and dismiss them to their seat.*

"Moses asked Aaron what the people had done to him to make him lead them into these terrible choices. Aaron didn't tell the truth. He said that he had thrown the gold into the fire, and the golden calf just came out on its own!"

## WRAPPING UP THE STORY

**STORYTELLER:** "The Israelites were impatient . . . and that led to some terrible things. But even when the people turned away, over and over, God was faithful. God continued to provide for them on their journey through the wilderness, toward the land God had prepared for them.

"We need to remember what's true so we don't lose our way like the Israelites did. It can be tough when we have to wait a long time for something to happen. But even while we're waiting, we can remember that God loves us and God is with us.

**SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE**

**"When you have to wait, remember what's true.**

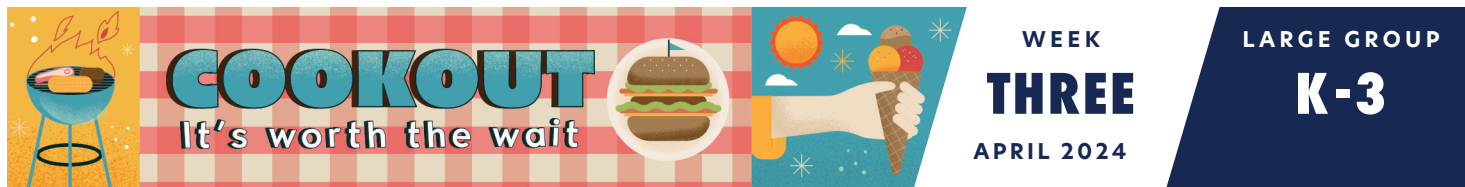
"Let's pray and ask God to help us with that."

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

## PRAY

**STORYTELLER:** "Dear God, sometimes it's so hard for us to be patient. But we can see how when we're not patient, sometimes bad things can happen. Help us to remember what's true, and not forget like the Israelites did. Remind us that You can help us to be patient, even when it's hard. Help us to remember that **[Basic Truth] we can trust You no matter what.** We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."





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## CLOSER

*Host enters as Storyteller exits.*

**HOST:** “Even though God had rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, the people forgot so quickly! They forgot to trust that God was with them . . . and that God would lead them. They tried to do things on their own and find something else to worship.

“When we find ourselves in situations where we have to wait for something we really want . . . or if there’s something that we hope will happen, and we’re not sure that it ever will . . . we need to take time to think about what’s true.

“That’s what we need to focus on today.

**SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE**

**“When you have to wait, remember what’s true.**

“We can remember that God loves us no matter what, and that God is always with us while we wait. We can remember that God can help us to be patient. We can remember that God has put people in our lives who can encourage us and help us wait well.

“Patience isn’t always easy, but when we choose to follow Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit living inside us. Patience is a gift that God’s Spirit creates IN us.

“Our Memory Verse for this month is Psalm 27:14. Let’s say it together.

**SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE**

**HOST AND KIDS:** *Wait for the Lord. Be strong and don’t lose hope. Wait for the Lord. (Psalm 27:14, NIRV)*

**HOST:** “Nice job, everyone! This week, let’s be strong. Let’s remember what’s true. Let’s trust God to help us be patient. You can head to Small Group now and talk about that some more. I’ll see you next time!”

*Dismiss kids to their small groups.*

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

**SLIDE: THEME**

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



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## GETTING READY

HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET READY FOR THIS WEEK

### WEEK 3

In week three, we head to **Exodus 32:1-35**. Moses met with God on Mount Sinai. He left his brother Aaron and the rest of the Israelites to wait. Rather than waiting patiently for Moses to return, the entire nation of Israel rebelled. They built a golden calf and began to worship it instead of worshipping God. If only they had remembered how God rescued them from Egypt and trusted God while they waited!

Bottom Line: **When you have to wait, remember what's true.** We can't avoid having to wait, but we can choose how we respond. A good way to discover patience is to think about what's true about God: God loves us and knows what's best for us. God cares for us and is with us. We can trust God no matter what. We pray that kids remember what's true about God when they have to wait.

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

**I Keep Forgettin'**  
Golden Calf  
Exodus 32:1-35

### TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

**When you have to wait,  
remember what's true.**

### MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**"Wait for the Lord. Be strong  
and don't lose hope. Wait  
for the Lord."**  
Psalm 27:14, NIRV

### MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Patience—Waiting until later  
for what you want now**

### BASIC TRUTH

**I can trust God no matter what.**

### STORY: COMMUNICATING GOD'S TRUTH IN ENGAGING WAYS (25 MINUTES)

#### 1. OPENER/CLOSER

##### WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- Small Group Leaders
- Table(s)
- Disposable water bottles—one for each Small Group Leader
- Host's phone

#### 3. BIBLE STORY

##### WHAT YOU NEED:

- Storyteller
- Kid volunteers
- Bible
- Table
- Seven differently shaped, wrapped boxes, each labeled with their number:
  - Box #1: rolled-up sleeping bag
  - Box #2: "YES" speech bubble sign (made with poster board)
  - Box #3: pair of walking/hiking shoes
  - Box #4: wall (or desk) calendar
  - Box #5: tabletop wacky waving inflatable tube guy
  - Box #6: two stone tablets (these can be an actual 3-D prop, or simply a printout or two cutouts made with gray construction paper)
  - Box #7: Clear pitcher about half full of water, stirring spoon, and pouch of lemonade mix
- Extension cord, plugged into an outlet, so you can plug in the inflatable tube guy when the time comes