



**ELEMENTARY**

MAY 2024

## FOR LEADERS ONLY

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

Growing in faith is not something that happens by simply cramming more information about the Bible into a child's brain. All of that knowledge in their head means nothing if we don't help them experience how that knowledge can transform their heart. To experience faith, we want kids to practice their faith, and that takes commitment.

Commitment is part of God's nature and how God interacts with us, keeping promises and putting plans into action. God's commitment to us is just one of the many reasons we can trust God no matter what. We reflect God's character when we make a plan and stick to it.

This month, we'll help kids discover that one of the best plans they can make is to commit to an ongoing relationship with Jesus. We hope they commit to practicing their faith by reading God's Word, praying to God honestly and consistently, talking about God with others, and living for God in how they show love throughout the everyday moments of their life.

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

**Connection** because of God's love I live in pursuit of an infinite God who desires an eternal relationship with me.

From the very beginning, God's plan was to have a meaningful relationship with creation. Even when people chose to live life apart from God, God continued to pursue them with unending love. God's ultimate demonstration of love was sending Jesus to make an eternal relationship with God possible for everyone.

Because God loved us first, we can respond in faith and put our trust in Jesus to live forever with God. However, just because we put our faith in Jesus, this doesn't mean we are finished in our faith journey. We can continue to show our commitment to God as we practice our faith and pursue a growing relationship with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **COMMITMENT** is making a plan and putting it into practice.

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

As you talk about faith skills this month, it's important to have realistic expectations for how kids will put these ideas into practice. We all want kids to prioritize time spent growing in their faith, but it's good to keep in mind that every kid is on a unique faith journey, with their own individual life experiences that impact how they'll connect with God. Be sure to create an atmosphere of grace that doesn't unintentionally shame kids for not spending time working on these faith skills. Some kids may not have chosen to put their faith in Jesus yet. Other kids might experience special needs or developmental diversity that prevents them from being able to practice these faith skills on their own. Not to mention that much of the way elementary kids spend their time is beyond their control. However you find kids in your ministry, meet them where they are and provide attainable next steps for their journey of faith.

This is also a great month for leaders in your ministry to model what it looks like to practice their faith. Be sure to encourage your leaders to share the ways they connect with God through these faith skills. Kids can learn a lot about practicing their own faith from watching and hearing about the diverse ways the adults in their lives practice theirs. We think this could be a powerful month for everyone in your ministry environment to renew their commitment to growing in faith as they head into summer.



# TRAINING CAMP

PLAN. PRACTICE. GROW.



WEEK  
**ONE**  
MAY 2024

LARGE GROUP  
**K-3**

PRELUDE      SOCIAL      STORY      WORSHIP      GROUPS      HOME

## GETTING READY

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

### WEEK 1

We start the month with **Psalm 119:105**, where David wrote, *"Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me."* When we read what the authors of the Bible wrote, we can find out how God wants us to live. It's like we're listening to God. God offers us wisdom throughout the pages of the Bible that can guide us to not only discover more about ourselves, but also how to love God, trust Jesus, and treat others well.

**Bottom Line: Practice hearing from God.** Part of growing in our faith includes learning about what God has planned for our lives. In order to do that, we need to take time to listen to what God is telling us through the Bible, and through those who've read the Bible who can help us understand what it means for our life. While kids might not be able to read and understand everything they encounter in the Bible, we still pray that, through this lesson, they'll get the foundation they need to navigate and personalize the Bible. On top of that, we hope they will eventually make reading the Bible a regular part of their faith journey as they grow in their relationship with Jesus.

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

**Light My Way**  
God's Word Is a Light  
Psalm 119:105

### TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Practice hearing from God.

### MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**"Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come."**  
1 Timothy 4:8, NIV

### MONTHLY VIRTUE

Commitment—Making a plan and putting it into practice

### BASIC TRUTH

I need to make the wise choice.

### HOST

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- Two squares on the floor made with masking or gaffer's tape; each square should be 5 feet by 5 feet, spaced 3 to 4 feet apart
- Two large, tall buckets
- Lots of ball pit balls (about 50 total), scattered inside the taped squares
- Two balloons, inflated with air (not helium)
- Host's phone
- Bible

### 3. BIBLE STORY

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- Storyteller
- Bible
- Pack of trading cards (could be baseball cards, Pokémon™, etc.)

#### LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Background Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- Trading Card Slides



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LARGE GROUP  
**K-3**

PRELUDE	SOCIAL	STORY	WORSHIP	GROUPS	HOME
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25 MINUTES      10 MINUTES

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## MONTHLY VIRTUE

Commitment—Making a plan  
and putting it into practice

## 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 KIDS ENTER.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

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

Host enters.

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

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

## OPENER

**HOST:** "Hey, everybody! I'm so excited to be here with you today at [name of your environment]. We've got a lot of fun planned for today, and I'm so glad you're here to be a part of it! This month we're talking about commitment.

**SLIDE: VIRTUE**

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

"Commitment is **making a plan and putting it into practice.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

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

"We need commitment for lots of different things in life. If you take piano lessons, then that means you're putting your plan to be a musician into practice. Or you might play on a soccer team. You can't just show up for the game, right? You've got to put in the work. You've got to practice hard so you can be strong and ready to play.

"We also need commitment in our relationship with God. We need to make a plan to grow in our faith in God, and then put that plan into practice!

"Now, I've got a fun game to start off our time today, and I'll need two Small Group Leaders to come up and play. We need one leader to represent each side of the room. This will be a great chance for our leaders to work out, train hard, and build up their strength!

Bring two Small Group Leaders up on stage.



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<b>PRELUDE</b>	<b>SOCIAL</b>	<b>STORY</b>	<b>WORSHIP</b>	<b>GROUPS</b>	<b>HOME</b>
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25 MINUTES      10 MINUTES

(To the two leaders) "Okay, [leaders' names], as you can see, there are two squares taped on the floor, with a bucket in the middle of each square. (Hold up one of the ball pit balls.) There are also lots of these little ball pit balls inside each square. In just a minute, you'll stand inside your square and try to pick up as many ball pit balls as you can and toss them into your bucket.

"But here's where your training and commitment come into play.

*Hand an inflated balloon to each leader.*

"You see, while you try to toss those ball pit balls into the bucket, you must ALSO keep your balloon in the air at all times. If the balloon touches the floor, OR if you step over the line and outside of the square, then you must stop and do five jumping jacks before you can continue.

"You get one point for every ball that makes it into the bucket. When time's up, we'll see which of you has the most points. (To audience) Okay, everybody get ready to cheer for your leader! Let's count it down: three, two, one, GO!

**AUDIO: FUN INSTRUMENTAL 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.*

*Cheer for the leaders as they try to complete the task. If their balloon hits the floor, or if they step over the tape line out of the square, make sure they stop and do five jumping jacks before they continue with the game.*

*When time's up, count the number of ball pit balls in each bucket to determine the winner. Collect the game supplies and dismiss the two leaders to their seats.*

**SLIDE: THEME**

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

"That was incredible! Put your hands together for our contestants. I'm so impressed by their commitment to try to win. Now, let's all jump up on our feet and get ready to sing, dance, and worship God together."



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10 MINUTES

## WORSHIP

*Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Hi, friends! It's a great day for us to sing and give praise to God. We can choose to follow God every single day. We can trust that God's ways are always best. This song says, 'I will follow, follow, follow.' Let's sing it!"

**AUDIO:** "FOLLOW YOU" / TRACK 5 FROM CAN'T STOP WON'T STOP  
**OPTIONAL VIDEO:** "FOLLOW YOU" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Yes! Every day, we can choose to live the way God has taught us to live. Before we continue in worship, let's watch this."

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE):** LIVE LOUD VIDEO FROM GET REEL

"We have a new song to teach you today. It's called 'My Life for You.' God created each of us with a purpose. We can live our lives for God with our whole heart. As we read in Psalm 104:33: 'I will sing to the Lord all my life. I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.' (NIV) Sing along with us as you catch on."

**AUDIO:** "MY LIFE FOR YOU" / TRACK 9 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU  
**OPTIONAL VIDEO:** "MY LIFE FOR YOU" 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:** "Hi, friends! I've got a question for you.

*Hold up the pack of trading cards.*

"Do any of you collect trading cards? Maybe baseball cards or Pokémon™ cards? I like trading cards because they give you fun facts and interesting information. So, just for fun, I thought we'd use our own version of trading cards to tell the story today! We'll put them up on the screen so you can see them.

*Put the trading cards away.*

"We'll use these cards to look at some wise words from the book of Psalms in the Bible. (*Hold up Bible.*) This verse we're looking at will help us discover an important way that we can grow in our relationship with God. If we can put this idea into practice, I know it'll make a BIG difference in our lives. It'll help us grow stronger in what we believe.

"We can find the book of Psalms in the Old Testament. It's actually a book of songs that were written over many years. About half of the Psalms were written by King David.

SLIDE: TRADING CARD 1 (DAVID)

(*Reference the screen*) "Whoa—isn't that cool? A David trading card!

"David played a big part in God's Story in the Bible. God chose David to be king over the Israelite people. David was especially famous for defeating the giant Goliath. And he was quite a songwriter too. The psalms he wrote are full of amazing words of praise to God, or cries for help in a tough situation.

### LIKE A LIGHT

**STORYTELLER:** "Psalm 119 is actually the longest chapter of the whole Bible. We don't know if David or someone else wrote it.

SLIDE: TRADING CARD 2 (???)

"But we DO know that this psalm has some amazing wisdom about how valuable and beautiful God's words are.

"In this psalm, we read that God's words are sweeter than honey.

SLIDE: TRADING CARD 3 (HONEY)

". . . and that God's words are more valuable than gold.



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25 MINUTES

**SLIDE: TRADING CARD 4 (GOLD)**

“And then in verse 105, we read this.

**SLIDE: TRADING CARD 5 (LAMP)**

*Open the Bible to Psalm 119:105 (NirV) and read.*

*Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way.  
It is like a light that guides me. (NirV)*

## LIGHTING THE WAY

**STORYTELLER:** “I love that. God’s words are like a light that guides us!

“I don’t know if you’ve ever been in a room when it was REALLY, really dark—like without a night-light or anything. Or maybe you’ve been outside at night where there were no city lights to help you see.

“That’s what it was like for people back when these words were written. They didn’t have lights like we do, everywhere we go. They didn’t have electricity. They HAD to have lamps so they could see which way to go.

“In the same way, God’s Word—the Bible—can light the way for us.

**SLIDE: TRADING CARD 6 (THE BIBLE)**

“The Bible can show us how to **[Basic Truth] make the wise choice** when things in our life might seem dark or confusing.

“You might just be getting started with reading the Bible. (*Hold up Bible.*) Maybe you’ve heard some verses and stories here at church. Maybe you’ve read the Bible at home, like with someone in your family who can help you understand it. Or maybe it’s all brand-new for you.

“The Bible isn’t just one book. It contains lots of different books that were written by lots of different people. Some of these books were written to tell the history of God’s people, the Israelites. Some of the books are prayers or songs to God, like the book of Psalms. Some books tell about the life of Jesus. And some books are actually letters that people wrote to encourage others to follow God.

## WISDOM FROM GOD’S WORD

**STORYTELLER:** “The more you read the Bible, the more you’ll see how different things you’ve read can give you wisdom when you need it most.

**SLIDE: TRADING CARD 7A (ARGUMENT)**

“For example, let’s say someone makes you mad, and you really want to get back at them. But then you remember something you’ve read in Ephesians 4:32:

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



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*Be kind and tender to one another. Forgive one another, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done. (NirV)*

“Or maybe you remember something that you’ve read in James 1:19:

*Open the Bible to James 1:19 (NirV) and read.*

*Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak. They should be slow to get angry. (NirV)*

“Wow. That really changes things when you think about those Bible verses. What do you say we flip the card over and see what happens when we choose to follow this wise advice from God’s Word?”

**SLIDE: TRADING CARD 7B (RELATIONSHIP RESTORED)**

“Wow. That looks much better, doesn’t it? It’s like we just heard: God’s Word is like a light that can show us what to do. God’s Word can help us to forgive, and to be slow to get angry . . . so we can keep our relationships strong and healthy with the people around us. There are so many ways that God’s Word can help us as we grow and follow Jesus!

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

## WRAPPING UP THE STORY

**STORYTELLER:** “It was cool to look at those trading cards to see why it’s important for us to read and discover God’s Word for ourselves. I know you’re just getting started with reading the Bible at your age. But if you can commit to get to know what’s here in these pages (*hold up Bible*), then as you grow, then the Bible will be like a light for you. It’ll help you to know what’s true.

“See, the very best way to make God’s Word a LIGHT in your life is to make God’s Word a PART of your life. The truth of the Bible can light the way for you, and for the people around you.

“When we read the Bible, it’s a great way for us to HEAR from God. And that’s an important part of our training plan. Remember:

**SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE**

**“Practice hearing from God.**

“Let’s pray and ask God to help us do that.”

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

## PRAY

**STORYTELLER:** “God, thank You so much for giving us the Bible. Your Word lights the way for us and help us to **[Basic Truth]** make the wise choice! Please help us to get in the habit of hearing from You. Give us the commitment we need to read the Bible and learn to live Your way every day. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”





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25 MINUTES

## CLOSER

*Host enters as Storyteller exits.*

**HOST:** "I really love the verse we just heard from Psalm 119:

*Open the Bible to Psalm 119:105 (NirV) and read.*

*Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way.  
It is like a light that guides me. (NirV)*

"We need the light of God's Word in our lives . . . and we can find God's truth and wisdom as we read the Bible. We can read about Jesus and then choose to follow His example. If we do those things, that's a great way we can grow in our faith. So we should make this part of our training plan:

**SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE**

### "Practice hearing from God.

"Some people have heard God's voice out loud, but that's not something everyone experiences. The best way to learn to hear from God is to start with reading God's Word, the Bible.

"If you've never picked up the Bible before for yourself, then I know it can seem pretty big. It IS pretty big . . . and there are a lot of big words to know that you might not have heard yet. That's why it can really help to ask someone to help you—like maybe a parent, or an older sibling, or someone else who lives with you. As you read, you can ask questions and write down new things that you hadn't thought about before. You can also pray and ask God to help you understand what you're reading so you know how it might connect to your life today.

"Another great way to hear from God is by memorizing verses, like we do here at [name of your environment] every month. If you know these verses by heart, then hopefully you'll be able to remember them later when you need them!

"This month's memory verse comes from 1 Timothy 4:8, which is a letter the apostle Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy. Here it is:

**SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE**

*Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come. (1 Timothy 4:8, NirV)*

"That's so good! We can ask God to help us to be committed as we train and grow stronger in our faith. You can head to Small Group now and talk about how we can **practice hearing from God.**"

*Dismiss kids to their small groups.*

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

**SLIDE: THEME**

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