



ELEMENTARY

MAY 2024

FOR LEADERS ONLY

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
THREE
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 3

For week 3, we head to **Matthew 16:13-20**, where Jesus asked his disciples: *"Who do you say I am?"* After everything they'd seen Jesus do and heard Jesus say, what did they really think about Jesus? This gave Peter the perfect moment to declare what he believed: that Jesus truly is the Son of God.

Bottom Line: **Practice talking about God.** God is continually working in our lives. When we talk about those moments with others, we can actually end up growing in our relationship with God. As kids process their growing faith, they will have questions and doubts. We want them to know that no question is off-limits when it comes to their faith. We hope that as they practice talking about God, they'll discover that sharing about their faith isn't so daunting. We pray that kids will find trusted adults who believe in Jesus who will help them talk through their questions about God.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Speak Now
Peter Says That Jesus
Is the Messiah
Matthew 16:13-20

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Practice talking about 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 can trust God no matter what.

Host

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- Small Group Leaders
- Table
- Lots of unsharpened pencils; up to 10 for each leader
- Baskets or trays (one per leader)

3. BIBLE STORY

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Storyteller
- Six kid volunteers
- Hat with a large "J" on it
- Bible

LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Background Slide
- Bottom Line Slide



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WEEK
THREE
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LARGE GROUP
K-3

PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Speak Now
Peter Says That Jesus
Is the Messiah
Matthew 16:13-20

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Practice talking about God.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**"Training the body has some value.
But being godly has value in every
way. It promises help for the life
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MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Commitment—Making a plan
and putting it into practice**

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: "Hello, everyone! My name is [your name], and I'm pumped that you're here with us at [name of your environment] because it's one of my favorite places to be! We always have so much fun around here. All month long, we're talking about how God can help us live with commitment.

SLIDE: VIRTUE

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO VIRTUE

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

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): VIRTUE TRANSITION TO THEME

"We've made a really great training plan so far that will help us grow in our relationship with God. We've talked about how we can HEAR from God by reading the Bible . . . and also how we can PRAY to God. If we can be committed to those good habits, then we'll be able to grow in our faith—and we've got another important habit to talk about today. We'll talk about that in just a minute.

"Now, if we're going to live with commitment, we'll need to work out and build our strength and physical fitness. So I'll need our Small Group Leaders to come up on stage for this exciting challenge!

Bring all of your Small Group Leaders onto the stage.

(To leaders) "Okay, leaders. I have a pencil here for each of you.

Give an unsharpened pencil to each leader.



TRAINING CAMP

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PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

"You'll balance the pencil on top of your flat hand, straight out in front of you, like this. (*Demonstrate.*) Then, when I say 'go,' you'll toss the pencil in the air and catch it in the fist of that same hand. (*Demonstrate.*) Easy enough, right? Now you can try it. Ready? Go!

Let the leaders catch their pencil a few times.

"Looking good, everyone! Let's make this a little more difficult. For the next round, you'll hold TWO pencils, and then try to catch both of them.

Have each leader grab an unsharpened pencil from their basket.

(*To audience*) "Let's have a drumroll, everyone.

The kids make a drumroll with their hands on the floor.

(*To leaders*) "Three, two, one, go!

The leaders try to catch both pencils. Congratulate those who are successful and have them remain in the game. Also clap for those who were unsuccessful and have them stand to the side.

Keep going through additional rounds of the game, adding a pencil each time for the leaders who are still in the game. Have the kids do a drumroll each time for maximum suspense. Keep going until you have a winner. (If your finalists are all "out" at the same time, declare them co-winners.)

Collect the pencils as you dismiss the leaders to their seats.

"Wow! That was incredible! What amazing concentration and commitment. Let's give ALL our leaders a hand as they head back to their seats. AND let's all jump up on our feet so we can lift our voices in worship!"



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10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Yes! I've been waiting for this moment. Together we get to lift our voices. We get to move our bodies as we dance and jump and clap our hands. Our God is incredible and absolutely amazing! This is your time and moment to sing God's praise. Don't hold anything back. Come on!"

AUDIO: "SING YOUR PRAISE" / TRACK 2 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "SING YOUR PRAISE" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"I love how worship creates space for us to sing about God. We're singing TO God, and we're also singing ABOUT God. That's a good thing, and it's something we were made to do. As we read in Solomon's words from Psalm 72:18: 'Give praise to the Lord God, the God of Israel. Only he can do wonderful things.' (NirV) Yes, our God does wonderful things! Our God is super wonderful. Let's sing this together."

AUDIO: "SUPER WONDERFUL" / TRACK 5 FROM KIDMIN WORSHIP VOL. 6

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "SUPER WONDERFUL" LIVE LYRICS VIDEO



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PRELUDE SOCIAL **STORY** WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

BIBLE STORY

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "I'm excited to be here with all of you as we continue our training plan. Today we'll get to look at a conversation Jesus had with His closest friends, the disciples. We can read about it in the book of Matthew. *(Hold up Bible.)*

"First, who would like to play the part of Jesus up here on stage? Raise your hand if you do.

Choose one older boy to come up on stage. Give him the hat with the "J" on it to wear.

"For three years, Jesus traveled from town to town. He taught people about God's kingdom and the things that are most important to God. Jesus healed people and performed amazing miracles. It was clear that Jesus was special! But everyone had a different idea about who Jesus really might be.

SON OF MAN

STORYTELLER: "One day Jesus traveled with His disciples to the city of Caesarea Philippi. Let's see . . . who would like to play some of Jesus' disciples? We'll need a few of you.

Bring up five other kids to play the disciples.

"Disciples, you can go ahead and sit in these chairs here.

Cue the kids to sit in the chairs in a semicircle pattern, facing the audience. Have the boy playing Jesus stand in the middle, also facing the audience.

(To the kids on stage) "Actors, when I tap you on the shoulder, then you can stand up and repeat after me. Sound good? *(Pause for response.)* Okay. Back to the story.

"Jesus and His disciples had entered this town where many people worshipped false gods. Jesus knew this. He also knew that people had been talking about Him and trying to figure out who HE was.

"So Jesus asked His friends:

Open the Bible to Matthew 16:13 (NirV) and read.

"Who do people say the Son of Man is?" *(NirV)*

Tap the kid playing Jesus on the shoulder to cue him to repeat after you. (You may need to repeat the phrase first.)

KID: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" *(NirV)*



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PRELUDE SOCIAL **STORY** WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

STORYTELLER: "This might seem a little confusing to us today. But basically, when Jesus said 'Son of Man,' He was using a phrase that the prophet Daniel had used in Scripture long before. Daniel had a vision from God, and he used the name 'Son of Man' to describe the Messiah.

"So when Jesus said:

Open the Bible to Matthew 16:13 (NirV) and read.

"Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (NirV)

". . . He wanted to hear whether His closest friends believed He was the Savior, or Messiah.

"Here's how the disciples answered Jesus.

Open the Bible to Matthew 16:14 (NirV) and read.

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist."

Tap the first "disciple" on the shoulder to cue them to stand and repeat after you.

KID: "Some say John the Baptist."

STORYTELLER: "Others say Elijah."

Tap the second "disciple" on the shoulder to cue them to stand and repeat after you.

KID: "Others say Elijah."

STORYTELLER: "Still others say Jeremiah . . ."

Tap the third "disciple" on the shoulder to cue them to stand and repeat after you.

KID: "Still others say Jeremiah . . ."

STORYTELLER: ". . . or one of the prophets." (NirV)

Tap the fourth "disciple" on the shoulder to cue them to stand and repeat after you.

KID: ". . . or one of the prophets." (NirV)

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

STORYTELLER: "Listen to what Jesus asked next! He said:

Open the Bible to Matthew 16:15 (NirV) and read.

"But what about you?"



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PRELUDE

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STORY

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HOME

25 MINUTES

Tap the kid playing Jesus on the shoulder to cue him to repeat after you.

KID: "But what about you?"

STORYTELLER: "Who do you say I am?" (NIRV)

KID: "Who do you say I am?" (NIRV)

STORYTELLER: "Jesus' friends had been spending time with Him for a while, so they had seen Him do incredible things. They must have hoped that it was true—that Jesus could be God's promised Savior.

PETER'S RESPONSE

STORYTELLER: "But then one disciple spoke up and said what he believed.

Open the Bible to Matthew 16:16 (NIRV) and read.

"Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

Tap the fifth "disciple" on the shoulder to cue them to repeat after you.

KID: "You are the Messiah."

STORYTELLER: "You are the Son of the living God." (NIRV)

KID: "You are the Son of the living God." (NIRV)

STORYTELLER: "Wow—what an amazing answer! Jesus was very pleased to hear what Peter had said. *(To the kid playing Jesus)* You don't have to say this next part after me, but let me see you give a big thumbs-up to Peter. *(He does.)*

"Jesus said:

Open the Bible to Matthew 16:17-18 (NIRV) and read.

"Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! No mere human showed this to you. My Father in heaven showed it to you. Here is what I tell you. You are Peter. On this rock I will build my church." (NIRV)

"There was a hidden meaning in what Jesus said there. In one of the languages that Jesus and His friends spoke back then, the name Peter sounds like the word for 'rock.' Jesus was basically telling Peter that his answer was rock-solid! He was praising Peter for having strong faith."

"Let's give a big hand to our actors!

Send the kid actors back to their seats.



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PRELUDE SOCIAL **STORY** WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “Jesus knew that the time wasn’t right yet for Him to reveal that He was the Savior. So He told His friends not to tell anyone. But the conversation He had with the disciples that day shows us something really important that we can also put into practice today.

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

“We should **practice talking about God.**”

“We can have conversations about what we believe, just like Jesus did with the disciples. That’s an amazing way we can grow in our faith! We can talk with our family and friends, and also here at church. We can share new things that we’ve discovered about God, or share about how God is working in our lives. We can ask questions about things we don’t quite understand.

“Let’s pray and ask God to help us put that plan into practice.”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

PRAY

STORYTELLER: “God, thank You for this story about Jesus and His disciples and the things they talked about that day. Their conversation shows us how helpful it can be when we take time to talk about You . . . and talk about what we believe. Thank You for putting people around us, like our family and friends and our leaders at church, who can help us learn new things about You and grow in our faith each day. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”



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K-3

PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

CLOSER

Host enters as Storyteller exits.

HOST: “That was a really important question that Jesus asked His friends: ‘Who do you say I am?’ (Matthew 16:15, NIV). How do you think you would answer that question? Each of us gets to decide if we believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

“And you know what? That’s a really important thing to talk about with the people in your life. In fact, it’s THE most important thing to talk about. All of us should find times to really talk about what we believe. We should ask questions and share things that we discover about God along the way . . . because that will help our faith grow in a big way!

“We should make this a habit:

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

“Practice talking about God.

“You can practice talking about God as part of your everyday conversations with your family and friends. It could be as simple as talking at the dinner table about ways you’ve seen God at work around you. When we take time to talk about God, it reminds us to keep our eyes open and see what God is doing. It helps us remember that **[Basic Truth] we can trust God no matter what.** And it helps other people see how God is working too.

Share a brief, kid-appropriate personal story about a time when you talked about God and learned something new—like with your family at home, or in a small group at church.

“We meet in small groups here at [name of your environment] so you can get to know your leader and friends who you see each week . . . and so you can **practice talking about God together.** Let’s head to Small Group and do that now!”

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

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

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP