



PRETEEN

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. Because God's promises and plans came true in Jesus, we can be with God forever. 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.



WEEK
TWO
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LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

GETTING READY

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

WEEK 2

Key Question: How do you pray to God? Kids in your ministry will have varied experiences with prayer. Many might just be starting to discover that they can pray more than before meals and at bedtime. Others might never have prayed out loud on their own. Whatever their experience with prayer, we hope all kids can learn that they can talk to God through prayer whenever they feel like praying, with whatever words come to mind. God is always there to listen and cares about what we have to say.

In **Matthew 6:9-13** we find Jesus talking about prayer during His Sermon on the Mount. Jesus shared a model for prayer that helps us understand more about how we can talk to God. We can pray with gratitude and honesty, pray for our needs, and ask for forgiveness. It's comforting to know that we can pray while remembering that God knows us and wants to hear from us.

Bottom Line: Practice praying to God. Even if kids have grown up in a home where practicing faith is a priority, they might still think prayer is something they do before they eat dinner or get tucked into bed for the night.

Of course, prayer is so much more than that. And, as kids learn about Jesus' model prayer, we want them to understand that they can pray anytime, anywhere, and about anything—because God is always listening and wants to hear from us. We hope kids will understand more about prayer and find that talking to God can be an important part of growing in their faith.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

You Say
The Lord's Prayer
Matthew 6:9-13

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

How do you pray to God?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Practice praying to 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
- 8-10 cones for relay race (See What You Do)
- 2 basketballs
- 2 soccer balls
- 2 hockey sticks with ball or pucks
- 2 ping pong paddles with ping pong balls

LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Slide
- "The Training Camp Bob 'N Weave" Title Slide

3. COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Communicator
- Host
- Bible

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS:

- Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room

LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Background Slide
- Key Question Slide
- Theme Slide



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LARGE GROUP
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PRELUDE **SOCIAL** **STORY** **WORSHIP** **GROUPS** **HOME**

25 MINUTES 10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

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The Lord's Prayer
Matthew 6:9-13

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"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."
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MONTHLY VIRTUE

Commitment—Making a plan and putting it into practice

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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

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

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: "Welcome to another week, my friends! So glad to have you all here! We're continuing our training this week—making a plan and putting it into practice—and to kick things off today I'll need eight volunteers. (pause)

"Yep. We're having a relay race that we're calling 'The Training Camp Bob 'N Weave!'

SLIDE: "THE TRAINING CAMP BOB 'N WEAVE"

Choose eight volunteers and put them into two teams of four.

"Four kids. Four sports. Two teams. One winner. Here's how this works. Each kid chooses a sport—basketball, ping pong, hockey, or soccer. On my 'GO,' the first person will hustle down, bobbing and weaving through the cones, around the last cone, and back through the cones again, tagging the next person. One of you will dribble the basketball, one of you will move the hockey puck with a stick, kick the soccer ball, or keep the ping pong ball in the air, with the paddle, while running the course.



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

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

“If you lose the ball or miss a cone, reset and start right where you were. The first team to make it through all four players and back to the start wins! Are we ready? GO!”

AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC

Run the relay. Keep the energy up by cheering for both teams throughout.

Declare the first team to finish as the winner. Play with new volunteers if time allows.

“Incredible job! Let’s hear it one more time for all our volunteers! *(Lead applause)* Let’s take some of that energy and use it to worship our great big God—let’s stand together and worship!”



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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY **WORSHIP** GROUPS HOME

10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: “Hello, friends! It’s great to be here with you. Right now, we have the chance to lift our voices and praise God together. This first song is a way for us to celebrate and thank God for loving us. Let’s stand and sing.

AUDIO: “YOUR LOVE” / TRACK 7 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU
OPTIONAL VIDEO: “YOUR LOVE” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

“Yes—God’s kindness and love are far beyond anything else that we’ll experience in this life. Before we continue in worship, let’s watch this.

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

“This next song is called ‘My Life for You.’ As we commit to grow in our faith, we can choose to make our relationship with God our number-one focus in life. We can choose the things we say and do for one purpose: to bring honor and glory to God. Let’s lift this up.

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

“That’s so good! Every day, we can choose to live our lives for God. I love these words about God from Psalm 105:3: ‘Praise him, because his name is holy. Let the hearts of those who trust in the Lord be glad.’ (NirV) I’m thankful that **[Basic Truth] we can trust God no matter what.** God is faithful and good. Let’s declare our trust in God now as we worship.”

AUDIO: “TRUST YOU WITH MY HEART” / TRACK 9 FROM THIS LOVE
OPTIONAL VIDEO: “TRUST YOU WITH MY HEART” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



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HOME

25 MINUTES

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Hey, everyone! I'm so glad to be together again today. All month we're looking at the ways we practice our faith in Jesus. These are some of the ways we get to know God and follow Jesus. And today we're doing a deep dive into one of the most important ways we can get to know God . . . talk with God. In other words: prayer.

"As we get started, I have a question for you. When have you seen people pray? Are there certain times or places you are more likely to see people pray? What do you think? Let's hear from you.

Open to responses. Interact with the answers.

"Yeah! That's great . . . people pray before eating meals or before they go on a long trip. Others pray when they wake up in the morning or right before bedtime. And, of course, people pray at church or in Small Group, like we do here at [Name of Environment].

"Okay, how about another question? And maybe this might be harder to answer, but let's give it a try. *Why do you think people pray? What do you think?*

Allow for responses again.

"Absolutely. Those are some great ideas. People pray for all sorts of reasons."

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "They pray to say thank You to God, they pray for someone who is sick, and they pray for protection or for help in a tough situation. Which might make you wonder: is there a right or wrong way to pray?

"Are there certain words you have to use? Do some prayers 'not work'? Or are there prayers that God just simply ignores or doesn't answer because they're not said the right way?

"What about time? Do you have to pray for a certain amount of time before God hears it? How much do you have to pray to get good at it?

"Those are some great questions, and I'm guessing they're maybe even questions you've had yourself. But remember when we have some big questions, we have a source for some big answers: the Bible. Remember, the people who wrote the Bible had personal experiences with God. And God inspired them to write about those experiences so people like us could get to know God better. Let's check out what they have to say about prayer!"

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: "Prayer is one of those things that seems like not a 'for sure' thing. Like you do it hoping something will happen, but if it doesn't, you might think you did it wrong.

"Thankfully, our story today will dig deep on this, for sure! Let's discover more about prayer . . ."



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25 MINUTES

Host enters. They are a caricature of a self-righteous person, very exaggerated and possibly with a Shakespearean/posh British accent, rolling their 'R's.'

HOST: "Prrrrayer? Did I hear someone say prrrrrayer?"

COMMUNICATOR: "Uh, yeah, we're about to talk about prayer. *(pause)* Why are you talking like that?"

HOST: "Ha! Ha, Ha! Surely you jest, thou yeasty swag-bellied flap-dragon! I always talk like this!"

COMMUNICATOR: *(dryly)* "You're from [Name of Host's hometown]."

HOST: "Nay, I say! Prrrrayer just *happens* to be my expertise!"

COMMUNICATOR: "Your expertise?"

HOST: "Aye, 'tis mine expertise. I am so good at prrrrayer that scientists use my prrrrayer to calibrate their instruments!"

COMMUNICATOR: *(confused)* "I . . . I don't think that's how that works . . ."

HOST: *(cutting him off)* "So gather near!! *(pause)* Or stay there. Whatever floats thine boat. I will begin my prayer thusly, in the most perfect manner . . ."

COMMUNICATOR: "I really don't think there's a perfect . . ."

HOST: *(Cutting him off again, very loud, showy and lavish)* "OH HOLY, OMNIPOTENT, OMNISCIENT, OMNIPRESENT, FATHER OF OUR LORD, GOD IN HEAVEN . . . we bequeath unto Thee, as we bestow unto Thou, for Thine longest . . . and longeth . . . as we shall longeth, on this celestial sphere we call . . . Earth. And I, but a mere, *humble*, dankish, clay-brained bum-bailey, seek to find and find to seek thou-est thine-est thee-est glory!"

COMMUNICATOR: *(cutting him off this time)* "Amen! Wow, that was . . . something. I want to thank you so much for that . . . whatever that was . . ."

HOST: "Huzzah! And again, I say . . . huzzah!"

Host exits.

COMMUNICATOR: "Okay. So. That happened.

"Let's back up and start again. *(pause)* Hi! So glad to be with you here today!

"The story we're focusing on is from the gospel of Matthew. Matthew wrote one of the books in the Bible that chronicles the life of Jesus. Matthew was there. Right beside Jesus. Matthew gathered numerous stories, miracles, and parables and wrote them all down in this book.

"For three years, Jesus traveled from town to town, sharing about God's Kingdom, God's love, and healing people. Near the start of His ministry, Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down to teach His followers. What Jesus shared has come to be known as the Sermon on the Mount. Pretty famous as far as sermons on mountains go.



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25 MINUTES

"Jesus explained what it means to be part of God's Kingdom and what it means to show love to God and to others. During this important teaching, Jesus taught His followers how to talk to God in prayer.

"Think of it as an outline. A road map. It's not that you have to only pray these specific words in this specific order—Jesus wanted to give people a simple way to pray to God.

"This teaching wasn't only for the best of the best prayer people out there. This was for everyone. Right away in His teaching, Jesus started talking about the kinds of people who are welcome in His Kingdom . . . and boy, is it different from what most people would think! The humble, the peacemakers, the mourning, those who are insulted . . . God's kingdom is for *all* of them.

"As Jesus continued to teach, He made something clear. God's not interested in a show. Whether you're giving, helping others, or even praying . . . God doesn't want our motivation to be to *look really good* while we're doing it.

"Jesus said it this way—be careful not to do good deeds in front of other people, just to be seen by them. That even goes for prayer."

Host enters again as the same caricature.

HOST: "Prrrrayer?! Did you sayest prrrayer?"

COMMUNICATOR: "Oh no."

HOST: "'Tis mine specialty!"

COMMUNICATOR: "Are you sure about that? Well, then this is perfect timing! We were just getting to what Jesus said about prayer in His teaching on the mountainside . . . and I think it would be great to have you help me. Do you mind?"

HOST: "Does a rapier have wit? Does thine mother smell of elderberries? Does a sponge crab wear a funny hat?!"

COMMUNICATOR: *(stymied for a moment)* "Um . . . yes?"

HOST: "Huzzah!"

COMMUNICATOR: "Thanks. I'd love to have you read how Jesus taught people how to pray."

HOST: "Oh . . . I *know* how to pray. *(takes a deep breath)* OH MY LORD AND SAVIOR CAST THINE EYES UPON ME AS I LOUDLY PROCLAIM YOUR MAGNIFICENCE AND . . ."

COMMUNICATOR: "Yeah, that's not *exactly* what I was thinking. Here, read this."

Hand the Host a Bible.

He carries the accent and self-righteous posture for a bit but begins to lose it as they come to the realization of how simple the prayer should be.

Open the Bible to Matthew 6:9 (NIRV) and read.



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

25 MINUTES

HOST: "This is how you should pray.

*'Our Father in heaven,
may your name be honored.'*

(Breaking character) Huh. That doesn't sound all that complicated. It's actually rather simple."

COMMUNICATOR: "I know, right? Keep going, it gets better."

Open the Bible to Matthew 6:10-13 (NirV) and read.

HOST: *"May your kingdom come.
May what you want to happen be done
on earth as it is done in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
just as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.
Keep us from sinning when we are tempted.
Save us from the evil one.'*

Host pauses and looks up and down the Bible, as if to see if there is more that is missing.

"That's . . . it?"

COMMUNICATOR: "That's it. Simple. But listen, don't mistake the fact that it's simple for it being weak. This is a powerful prayer, and Jesus was teaching us a lot through it. Let's break it down together. Can you reread that first part?"

Open the Bible to Matthew 6:9 (NirV) and reread.

HOST: *"Our Father in heaven,
may your name be honored."*

COMMUNICATOR: "Jesus was inviting us to call on God as our heavenly Father—in a personal, praising, humble way. First thing, honor God. Keep going."

Open the Bible to Matthew 6:10 (NirV) and reread.

HOST: *"May your kingdom come.
May what you want to happen be done
on earth as it is done in heaven."*

COMMUNICATOR: "You're saying God knows what's best to do—that God's will is the most important thing and you want God's will and desire to reign supreme over the earth. God's kingdom.

"Keep going!"

Open the Bible to Matthew 6:11 (NirV) and reread.



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

25 MINUTES

HOST: *“Give us today our daily bread.”*

COMMUNICATOR: “Without worrying about the future or reliving the past, we’re in the moment, asking God for what we need, right now. Today. Daily. It’s not a one-time thing but an ongoing one, day after day, asking God to give us what we need to sustain ourselves.

“We can trust God to hear us when we take our needs to God in prayer. We can talk to God about anything. It may be something we can see like food—daily bread—or it could be something we can’t see, like patience to deal with a difficult person, wisdom in a tough situation, or joy when we’re feeling down.”

Motion for the Host to continue.

Open the Bible to Matthew 6:12 (NIRV) and reread.

HOST: *“And forgive us our sins,
just as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.”*

COMMUNICATOR: “This one is so important. We mess up every day, right? Sometimes we hurt other people. Sometimes we hurt God. Sometimes we get hurt. God invites us in prayer to wipe the slate clean—to love others by forgiving them. After all, this is what God has done for us, and we are invited to ask God to do this every day! And finally . . .”

Open the Bible to Matthew 6:13 (NIRV) and reread.

HOST: *“Keep us from sinning when we are tempted.
Save us from the evil one.”*

COMMUNICATOR: “There are many ways we can be tempted to sin. There are many ways to break our relationship with God. We can ask God to help us make choices to love God and love others, even when it’s really difficult.

“Now, here is the thing—Jesus wasn’t saying this is the *only* way to pray. And He wasn’t saying these words are magic words. He was giving us a model, an outline, a guide, to pray and keep our sights on His Kingdom and not ours. A way to pray and ask Him for what we need each day and a blueprint for forgiving others and asking for forgiveness.”

HOST: “Would you mind if I took a shot at praying this prayer Jesus taught now . . . in my own words?”

COMMUNICATOR: “That would be amazing!”

HOST: *(Praying)* “Dear God, thank You for being a good Father! Please help everyone here to see how much You love them. Please make everything right in our world, just like it already is in heaven. Please give me food to eat and everything I need today to be who You have asked me to be. Forgive me for the wrong things I’ve done and help me be quick to forgive others, too. And when I’m tempted to make wrong choices and leave Your path, please give me the strength to follow you and choose wisely. Amen.”

COMMUNICATOR: *(with a smile and an accent)* “Huzzah!!”

HOST: *(gasps, falling back into the caricature)* “Huzzah! A man of quality!”



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25 MINUTES

COMMUNICATOR: "I took a theater class in high school. What can you do?"

Host exits, waving to the Large Group.

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: "Whether you take time in quiet to pray the prayer Jesus taught us or just use a small part of it to talk to God—God hears every word.

"The more you practice talking to God, the more natural it will start to feel. Kind of like talking to a friend. Remember, God is not impressed by big words, loud voices, or over-the-top acting. What God wants is you, the real you! God wants your time, your honesty, and your heart.

"So whenever, wherever, however you need to talk to God, just do it. Just tell God what's on your mind and what you're going through."

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

"How do you pray to God? Do you have a time? A place? Maybe you've never really prayed before—and that's okay, too. Whenever you're ready, God will be there to listen. You'll talk all about this and more with your Small Group. You might even get a chance to pray! And before you head out, let's do just that and ask God to help us find the time and the words to pray."

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Pray, then dismiss students to their Small Groups.

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

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP