



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
FOUR
MAY 2024

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 4

Key Question: **How can you live for God?** Kids might think that they only practice their faith when they come to church, go to Small Group, or sing worship songs during Large Group. But when you practice living for God, you discover that whatever you do—work, play, read, sing, listen, whatever—can be a way you worship God with your life.

We finish the month in **Mark 12:41-44**. Jesus noticed how wealthy people were giving lots of money at the temple. Then a poor widow walked up to the offering box and gave just two small coins. While this seemed like a small gift, Jesus told His disciples that this woman actually gave more than the rich people did—because she gave everything she had.

Bottom Line: **Practice living for God.** We know that many kids love to sing and worship God. But worship isn't just something we do when we sing at church. Worship is really how we honor God with our whole lives—how we love others and serve them, how we give our time and talents, how we follow and praise God, and even how we rest. We want kids to practice living for God and understand what it means to worship God with every part of their life.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

All I Have to Give
The Widow's Offering
Mark 12:41-44

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

How can you live for God?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Practice living for 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
- 2 small burlap/cloth bags
- 2 jars of pennies
- 2 blindfolds (*optional*)
- Scale (kitchen scale, digital bathroom scale, etc.)

LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Slide
- "Pennies from Kevin" Title Slide

3. COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Communicator
- Bible
- Bags of coins from Opener
- Binoculars
- A wooden box/crate
- Chairs

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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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: "What's up, everyone? Can you believe it is the end of the month already? We've been learning, training, racing, practicing . . . it's been quite the month. And today, we're not changing course or slowing down, not one bit! Full speed ahead!"

"Last week of the month, so we saved the best game for last. I need four volunteers for a challenge . . . who wants in?"

Choose four volunteers and put them into two teams.

"This game I call 'Pennies from Kevin.'"

SLIDE: "PENNIES FROM KEVIN"

"One of you will hold one of these (hold up a cloth bag), and the other person will be Kevin. Kevin is amazing.

"Both Kevins will use a jar of pennies (hand a jar of pennies to each "Kevin") to take one penny at a time and chuck them at their partner. Not hard, Kevin! Gently! You want your partner to catch the pennies in the bag!"



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25 MINUTES	10 MINUTES
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“Sixty seconds on the clock, one penny at a time, and see how many you can catch! Only one penny at a time, too, Kevins; don’t take handfuls and launch them at your partner. Oh! Almost forgot!

Give blindfolds to the kids holding the bags.

“Yep. You can’t see. Kevins, be nice. You’re not trying to nail your teammates in the forehead, you’re trying to get them in the bags. Teams, are you ready? Kevins, are you set? Let’s go!

AUDIO: PLAY FUN GAME MUSIC

VIDEO: 60-SECOND COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): 60-SECOND COUNTDOWN

Set the partners equal distance away, making it a challenge. After 60 seconds, count the pennies and announce the winner. You can also extend it 60 seconds and have the partners switch.

Keep the bags to be used later.

“Big round of applause to the volunteers! And a big round for the Kevins, well done. Now, if your name is either Kevin or not Kevin, stand to your feet and let’s worship together!”



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

10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: “Yes, get on your feet, everybody. Focus your attention right now. Get ready to offer up your heart and all that you are in worship. This song says, ‘I’ll give my all to You, whatever You choose for me to do.’ And that’s what commitment is about. We can give everything we’ve got as we follow God. Let’s move and sing. Come on!

AUDIO: “ALL TO YOU” / TRACK 1 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

OPTIONAL VIDEO: “ALL TO YOU” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

“Wow—I love that song so much! You all sound amazing. Before we continue in worship, check this out.

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

“We’ve been singing this song called ‘My Life for You!’ It’s a way for us to say that we want to give all of our lives to God. God created us. God loves us. We can draw near to God as we worship. Let’s lift this song up right now.

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

“I want to choose God above the things that this world gives. It’s like Joshua told God’s people in Joshua 24:15: ‘Choose for yourselves right now whom you will serve. . . . As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.’ (NirV) I want that to be true for me too. Say, ‘I have decided.’ (Get a reaction.) Come on; say it like you believe it. ‘I have decided.’ (Get a reaction.) That’s it! Let’s live for God every day, with all we’ve got. Come on and sing.”

AUDIO: “WHAT I CHOOSE” / TRACK 8 FROM MAKE A MOVE

OPTIONAL VIDEO: “WHAT I CHOOSE” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Welcome, once again, to the greatest place on earth, [name of Environment]. You could've chosen a bunch of different places to be right now, and I'm thrilled that you chose right here, right now!

"Find a partner near you; we're going to have a quick conversation. Tell the person this: Out of all the things on this planet—food, water, air, PlayStation 5s—what are the most important things to you? Give your partner a list of your Top Three Most Important Things.

Let kids chat for a moment. Then ask a few kids to share their responses.

"For me, it's [say a few things that are important]. Can't live without them—next question! Out of all the *people* on this planet, who is the most important to you? A parent? A teacher? Vlad, who gives you cookies? Who's the most important?"

Let kids chat for a moment. Then ask a few kids to share their responses.

"For me, it's [the person who is most important]. Can't go a day without them, for sure. Next question. How do you show the people who are important to you that they are, in fact, important to you? What do you do to show them?"

Let kids chat for another moment, and after, ask a few to share their thoughts.

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "Last question, and this isn't for you to turn and talk . . . just for you to think about.

"Is God important to you? (*pause*) I know the 'church' answer, but think about it. Is God *really* important in your lives?"

"If so, how do you show how important God is? What things do you do? How do you talk, pray, sing even, to let God know how you feel? And is it more than those things? Is there something we can do to worship God?"

"These are pointed questions, for sure. It's one thing to think that God is great . . . but it's another thing entirely to actually do things to show God the gratitude we feel. Thankfully, we've got a great story today that illustrates how we can put our worship of God into action!"

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: "Our story today is from Mark's gospel. John Mark, who wrote the book of Mark, wasn't one of Jesus' twelve disciples. He didn't hang out with Jesus daily. But he was good, good friends with Peter. And Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends. So, the book of Mark is full of insights into who Jesus is.

"The story in the book of Mark begins in a temple. The temple was where the Jewish people would come to worship, pray, and make sacrifices. They would listen to teachings and give offerings. It was where they came to meet with God. It was a holy place, a place of reverence, and a place where people could come and encounter God.



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

25 MINUTES

"And this temple in our story was *the* Temple. The main one in Jerusalem.

"Jesus taught His disciples a lot of lessons at the Temple, including the one we will look at today. Here's the thing . . . Jesus was *always* teaching. He was always looking for something that He could use to better help His disciples understand His ways and His Kingdom. And here at the Temple, Jesus got a perfect teaching moment from an unlikely teacher.

"To tell this story, I'd love a few volunteers to help!

Choose a few "Disciples," a "Rich Man," and a "Widow." Have them join you at the front. Hand the binoculars to the "Disciple" volunteers.

Open the Bible to Mark 12:41 (NIRV) and read.

"Jesus sat down across from the place where people put their temple offerings. He watched the crowd putting their money into the offering boxes. Many rich people threw large amounts into them.

"So, Jesus was sitting with His disciples, so they could see the whole crowd. *(to the "Disciple" volunteers)* Go ahead and grab some chairs and put those binoculars to good use so you can see everyone!

"They made sure they could see people giving their offerings. In many churches, people give offerings by putting money in a box, passing a basket or plate, or setting aside a special time to bring up gifts and offerings. For example, here at [Name of Church], we [describe your offering].

"But in Jesus' day, you would bring your money to the Temple and place it in these wooden boxes *(take out a wooden box)*.

Give the bags of coins from the Opener to the "Rich Man" volunteer and give two pennies to the "Widow" volunteer.

"One of the things Jesus noticed right away was the rich people. *(Point at "Rich Man" volunteer)* Like this guy. Look at him. He's so rich. I bet he's got servants to serve his servants. He's so rich that when he flies, his wallet is considered carry-on luggage.

"Well, this rich person strutted over to the offering box. *(Encourage the volunteers to "strut")* He cut the line, held the bags of money over his head, and dropped them in the box, letting everyone in the whole place know just how much he was giving.

Encourage Rich Man to drop the bags in to make a loud sound. Ask him to repeat it if it's not loud enough.

"Whoa! That is an impressive offering, my friend! VERY generous! Strut back to your spot if you would.

"That would definitely get people's attention. Not only might people whisper to one another, 'Did you see how much that person gave?' but they might even say, 'Did you *hear* how much that person gave?'

(to the "Disciple" volunteers) "Did you two catch that?"



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"Yep. So did Jesus. That was a big offering . . . Then, just after the Rich Man's display, there came a widow up to the box. She was poor, meek, didn't have much.

Open the Bible to Mark 12:42 (NIRV) and read.

"A poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins. They were worth only a few pennies.

Motion for the "Widow" to move toward the box, but don't put anything in yet.

"Mark tells us that she was poor and that she was a widow—meaning she had lost her husband. In Jesus' day, if you lost your husband, you basically lost everything. Men were the sole money-makers and leaders of families, and women, unfortunately, were looked upon as less than that. It's no wonder she was described as poor. (To the "Disciples") Hey, you're going to want to see this.

Have the "widow" drop her coins in the box.

"Did you hear that? Not really. Tink. Tink. Didn't make much of a sound. Certainly wouldn't get anybody's attention. And if it did, people might be thinking 'Really? She called *that* an offering? That rich man gave so much more, that was way more impressive!'

"But it got Jesus' attention. And He used it to get the disciples' attention.

Motion for the "Disciples" to leave their spots and join you.

Open the Bible to Mark 12:43 (NIRV) and read.

"Jesus asked his disciples to come to him. He said, 'What I'm about to tell you is true. That poor widow has put more into the offering box than all the others.'

"I'm sure the disciples were scratching their heads in confusion. (Pause, and stare at the "Disciples" until they do this.) Maybe they were thinking, 'Did Jesus see the same thing we just saw? Does Jesus understand the currency system? Is He not great at math?' Jesus then explained Himself—and when He did, it made perfect sense.

Open the Bible to Mark 12:44 (NIRV) and read to the "Disciples."

"[The rich men] all gave a lot because they are rich. But [the widow] gave even though she is poor. She put in everything she had. That was all she had to live on.'

"Guys, it was everything she had. Instead of keeping it . . . she gave it to God.

"Friends . . . she showed that God was the most important thing in her life—more than money, more than well-being, even more than what she needed. God was the most important thing to her that day."

The volunteers can be seated.



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25 MINUTES

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “Jesus was saying, ‘Sure, if you want to add up the amount, the rich people won. Hands down. They gave the most money. The rich people gave more in gold, but the woman gave more in her offering.

“There’s a difference! The rich people gave a lot but still had a lot left. But for the poor widow, what she gave probably meant she wasn’t going to eat that day or have money for new clothes. The Rich Man’s offering hardly cost him anything. Her offering cost her something.

“This was true worship. A lot of people can say they’re living for God through their words, but this woman proved she was living for God through her actions. She put it into practice.

“Let’s give a big round of applause to our volunteers!

Lead applause, then continue.

“I love this story because it shows us what it means to not hold anything back. That may look like the widow and mean sacrificing our money. But it doesn’t have to be just money. We can give our time, attention, a good attitude, our talents—there are lots of ways to worship God.

“So, as awesome as it is to come together and worship God through singing or reading the Bible each week, God wants us also to go out and live and show love in the world like God really matters to us. Even if it might be difficult.”

LANDING

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

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“How can you live for God? What are some of the ways you can put into practice what you are learning each week? How can you show that God is important? Before you head out, let’s pray and ask God to help us as we live for God this week! Let’s pray!”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Pray and dismiss students to their Small Groups.

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

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP