



PRETEEN

AUGUST 2024

FOR LEADERS ONLY

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

Sometimes it's easy to know what the wise choice would be. Let's say you're choosing between having expired milk with your cereal or eating some fruit and a sandwich. You probably aren't reaching for the milk! What about choosing to stay up all night when you have a road trip the next day, or getting some sleep because you're driving first? Every decision you make starts out with a choice. As we "dive deep" into the Bible this month, we'll discover that God is always there to help us make wise choices. God has given us people who can help us make those wise choices too.

CORE INSIGHT: The theological foundation for WISDOM

Truth according to God's Message

What Jesus said and did impacts how I should respond to God's Word in my everyday life.

When Jesus was a boy, He grew in wisdom. God wants us to discover wisdom too. When we make the wise choice, we reflect the character of Jesus to people around us.

WISDOM is about finding out what you should do and doing it.

HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT WISDOM WITH KIDS

As you talk about wisdom this month, keep in mind that some kids approach decisions logically and anticipate what might happen, while others tend to make decisions based on experiences. Don't negate either approach to learning how to make the wise choice. Encourage them to start small by making wise choices where they can. Also, keep in mind that not every decision is one that a kid can make. Kids are heavily influenced by their surroundings, which they may not be able to control. As you have conversations, refrain from playing the blame game. Instead, remind kids of the decisions they DO have the power to make. If your environment is the first point of contact for a kid who addresses being in an unsafe situation—due to unwise caregiver decisions or decisions of any other kind—be sure to have a plan to connect that child to the help they need to ensure their safety.



TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

WEEK 2

Key Question: **What are you learning about yourself?** Preteens are living through a time of change. Maybe they've just picked up a new skill and they really love it, but they still have some improving to do. Or maybe they've noticed that their taste in foods has started to shift. Everyone is always learning something at some point in their life. We hope this question allows kids to begin to see how they can offer grace to others as they learn and grow with one another.

In week 2, we head to **Matthew 7:1-5**, which is part of one of Jesus' most famous recorded messages, the Sermon on the Mount. Throughout this sermon, Jesus touched on many important lessons. One of these truths was that we shouldn't judge other people. When we judge others without first looking at ourselves, we miss out on the work God is doing in us to shape us and help us grow.

Bottom Line: **When you see yourself clearly, you can make the wise choice.** It's easy to see something that others have done to wrong you. But when we wrong someone else? That's not always easy to see. It's important that we take the time to examine ourselves so we can love others the way God wants us to . . . and so we can continue growing in wisdom.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

See Yourself
Speck and Plank
Matthew 7:1-5

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What are you learning about yourself?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

When you see yourself clearly, you can make the wise choice.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone and doesn't find fault.
James 1:5, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Wisdom—Finding out what you should do and doing it

BASIC TRUTH

I need to make the wise choice.

Host

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- Eight 2x2s, 2'-3' lengths each. (See What You Do)
- Blue tarps (Long rectangular - See What You Do)

2. WORSHIP

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Worship Leader(s)

3. COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Communicator
- Host
- Bible
- Communicator's shirt has a small stain on the front (See What You Do)
- Plank (from Opener Game)
- Powered donuts
- Small handheld mirror

DIVE DEEP



There's Always More to Explore

WEEK
TWO
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LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

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MONTHLY VIRTUE

Wisdom—Finding out what you
should do and doing it

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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

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

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: "Hey, everybody! Welcome back for another week of undersea discovery as we Dive Deep to uncover wisdom for life in unexpected places, including our game for today! I call it 'Walk the Plank!'"

SLIDE: "WALK THE PLANK"

"Who wants to play? I need EIGHT volunteers!"

Host chooses eight volunteers and puts them into two teams.

"Alright, so here we have our 'water' (pointing to tarp). As a team, your job is to make it all the way across the 'water' without 'getting wet.' If you do happen to fall in, you have to start over.

"Now, you might be wondering how you can actually make it across the water without getting wet. Glad you asked!"

Host pulls out/holds up a 2"x2".



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

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

"It's time to walk the plank, mateys!"

Host hands four 2"x2" planks to each team.

"If you lay each plank down end to end, you can move your team across the water. When you run out of planks, reach back, grab the back plank, and move it to the front. Keep going like this until you get all the way to the other side.

Consider having them go down and back instead of just one way.

"Everybody got it? Let's do this! On your mark, get set, GO!"

AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC

Host provides commentary and causes disruptions on the water as they try and get across.

(After the game) "What a race! Well done to everyone involved . . . that was pretty amazing. Now let's stand on some solid footing and worship our awesome God together!"



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

10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "All right! I hope you came here to [name of your environment] ready to worship today. One sure thing we have in life is the joy God gives us. God's joy gives us strength. Let's sing 'I've Got Joy!'"

AUDIO: "I'VE GOT JOY" / TRACK 6 FROM START THE PARTY
OPTIONAL VIDEO: "I'VE GOT JOY" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Yes! God gives us joy that nothing can take away. Before we continue in worship, let's watch this.

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

"Last week we taught you a new song called 'Further Faster.' It's a song about wisdom. I know that I need God's wisdom in my life. God's wisdom helps us find out what we should do . . . and do it. Everybody say, 'Further Faster.' (Get a reaction. Repeat as needed.) Yeah! Let's crank this up and sing.

AUDIO: "FURTHER FASTER" / TRACK 6 FROM THIS LITTLE LIGHT
OPTIONAL VIDEO: "FURTHER FASTER" LIVE LYRICS VIDEO, OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE)

"It's really important for us to search for God's wisdom. As we read in Proverbs 16:16: 'It is much better to get wisdom than gold. It is much better to choose understanding than silver.' (NirV) God's wisdom is so valuable! When we take God's wisdom to heart, God guides every step we take . . . so that everything we do can be a way to worship God. Let's sing this next song that says, 'I want to live my life for You!' Here we go!"

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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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit. The Communicator should be wearing a shirt that has a small-ish stain on the front, noticeable but barely.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Hey, everyone! How's it going? I always love when we get the chance to be together! So glad you're all here today!"

Host enters. The Host is chewing on the last bite of a powdered donut, which is all over their face. It is quite an obvious mess.

HOST: *(To Communicator, mouth partially full)* "You gotta get one of these donuts! They're SOOOOO delicious!"

COMMUNICATOR: "I can SEE that . . ."

HOST: "Wow . . . they are so flaky . . . and powdery . . . and *(stopping to notice Communicator's shirt)*. EW . . . what's that on your shirt?"

Communicator looks down.

COMMUNICATOR: "What are you talking about? I don't see anything . . ."

Host points out the small stain.

HOST: "You don't see THIS! Come on now! You can't be coming out here with something smeared all over you like this! Think about the kids, man!"

COMMUNICATOR: "Oh. Yeah, I guess . . . But really . . ."

HOST: "Look, I gotta go get another donut before they're all gone. I'd take care of that stain while you still have your dignity!"

Host runs off.

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: *(laughing)* "Okay . . . let's talk about what just happened. Sure, I missed a dribble of coffee on my shirt. But, wow, that was quite something, right? The powdered sugar alone! But in all honesty, that can happen to all of us, can't it?"

"We can get so focused on something about someone else that we, well, miss something pretty significant or obvious about ourselves. This sort of thing can happen with stains on our shirts and food on our faces, or maybe it's the way we treat others or the effort we put into our homework or extracurricular activities. We talk to others all about their issues without even noticing what issues we might have ourselves.

"This actually brings up a good question about wisdom. What might it mean to have wisdom about ourselves? In other



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25 MINUTES

words, how might wisdom about myself impact how I see and even treat others?

“These are important questions for us to consider as we look at how we can trust God, follow Jesus, and make wise choices with our lives. In fact, people have been wondering about these sorts of ideas for a really long time. Even the people who wrote about their experiences with God had something to say about it in the Bible. Let’s head there now and find out more.”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “First, though, I’d love for [Host’s name] to help us out. Hey, [Host’s name]!

Host comes out. They’re finishing the last of another donut. The mess on their face is way worse.

“Found another donut, huh?”

HOST: “So good! (Looking at Communicator’s shirt) You still haven’t changed your shirt yet? We have plenty of costumes backstage. You could wear a Moses tunic . . . or a David robe . . . or a Joseph coat of—”

COMMUNICATOR: (Cutting off) “I think we’ll just get into the story for today, and it’s a good one! We find it in one of the gospels. Matthew recorded a famous series of teachings, sometimes called ‘The Sermon on the Mount.’ This is one of the longer teachings of Jesus that we have in the New Testament of the Bible. It’s often called ‘The Sermon on the Mount’ because on this particular day, Jesus and His followers were sitting on the side of a small mountain by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus explained ways that His followers could live as part of God’s Kingdom.

“Listen to how Jesus began one part of His teaching.

Open the Bible to Matthew 7:1-2 (NirV) and read.

Do not judge other people. Then you will not be judged. You will be judged in the same way you judge others. You will be measured in the same way you measure others.

“Now, when you think of the word ‘judge,’ maybe you’re thinking about a courtroom. But I don’t think this is really what Jesus had in mind here. Courtroom judges are off the hook here. What does it mean to ‘judge other people’?”

Allow for responses.

“Great responses! Yes, one meaning of ‘judge’ is to form a negative opinion about someone or something. And we judge people all the time, right? Sometimes we don’t even know we’re doing it. Unfortunately, it can be really easy to do. We even judge others when we don’t know the whole story about the person we’re choosing to judge. And at the start of His message on judging, Jesus cautioned us to be aware that it can go both ways.

“Now, like many of Jesus’ teachings, He went on to use a visual picture to get the listener’s attention and really drive His point home.

Open the Bible to Matthew 7:3-5 (NirV) and read.

You look at the bit of sawdust in your friend’s eye. But you pay no attention to the piece of wood in your own eye. How



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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

can you say to your friend, 'Let me take the bit of sawdust out of your eye'? How can you say this while there is a piece of wood in your own eye? You pretender! First take the piece of wood out of your own eye. Then you will be able to see clearly to take the bit of sawdust out of your friend's eye.

"Jesus used a teaching technique called 'hyperbole.' This was something Jesus often did when He told stories to make an important point like this. Hyperbole is when you exaggerate on purpose to make a point . . . like if you want to communicate to someone that you've been waiting for them for a while, you might say: 'I've been waiting for a million years!' or 'I've been waiting forever!' Neither of those is true, but we get the point. Well hurry up already! Jesus did the same thing here. Let me show you.

Communicator grabs one of the boards from the Opener and holds it up as if it's sticking out of their eye.

"Jesus said: 'Imagine there is a guy walking around with one of these bad boys sticking out of his face, and yet he is leaning into others, saying: *(getting up close to a kid or leader)* "Man! Look at that speck of dust in your eye! How can you live like that?!"

"Now, we all laugh because, well, it is ridiculous. And I think that was Jesus' point."

HOST: "Oh wow! That's crazy! Could you imagine pointing out a speck of dust in someone's eye when you have that big ol' board coming out of your own eye? So foolish! So naïve! *(Beat)* By the way, seriously . . . about your shirt . . ."

COMMUNICATOR: *(Ignoring)* "Now, I think there is something important for us to notice about Jesus' teaching here. Did He say we should NEVER correct someone else or tell them there is something wrong?"

Allow for responses.

"No, He didn't say that. What *did* He say?"

Allow for responses.

"Right. He said, **FIRST** *(acting out with the board)* take the plank out of your own eye. Why? Because then you will be able to see the speck in the other person's eye more clearly. Not to **JUDGE** or make fun of them—*(Ha! Nice speck, bro!)*—but to **HELP** them!

"Seriously, how could you ever help someone with one of these *(holding board up)* hanging out of your eye?!"

(To Host) "Speaking of . . . maybe it is time for me to help you out . . ."

Holds a mirror up to the Host.

HOST: "Yowzers! What happened to me?!"

COMMUNICATOR: "Looks like a few donuts happened to you . . ."

HOST: *(Sheepishly)* "Oh . . . I did what Jesus was saying, didn't I? It might as well have been, 'Why do you look at the



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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

small stain on your friend's shirt but pay no attention to the donut disaster on your own face? First, take care of the donut mess . . . and then help your friend with his shirt.'

Host furiously wipes face until clean. Looks in mirror to confirm.

HOST: "[Communicator's name]?"

COMMUNICATOR: "Yeah?"

HOST: "You have a small stain on your shirt."

COMMUNICATOR: "Fair enough."

Both smile and the Host exits.

"Let's read that whole teaching once again.

Open the Bible to Matthew 7:1-5 (NirV) and read.

Do not judge other people. Then you will not be judged. You will be judged in the same way you judge others. You will be measured in the same way you measure others.

"You look at the bit of sawdust in your friend's eye. But you pay no attention to the piece of wood in your own eye. How can you say to your friend, 'Let me take the bit of sawdust out of your eye'? How can you say this while there is a piece of wood in your own eye? You pretender! First take the piece of wood out of your own eye. Then you will be able to see clearly to take the bit of sawdust out of your friend's eye."

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: "I love how practical Jesus' teachings can be. Jesus told us not to judge but then went on to tell us that we should remove the plank from our own eye so that we can clearly see the speck in our friend's eye.

"Notice a couple things in this. I think Jesus was implying that the problem you need to deal with in yourself may actually at times be BIGGER than the thing you're tempted to judge in another person.

"Think that ever happens? We judge someone for sharing something we said, but WE actually have a reputation of NEVER being able to keep secrets. Or we're upset because a sibling wouldn't let us borrow their favorite sweatshirt, but WE never let them use any of our stuff ever!

"The other thing Jesus seemed to be saying is that there can be a place for helping others and showing them what they might need help with. If someone is making a really unwise choice, we don't want to say, 'Well, I shouldn't judge them . . .' Your friend needs you! But just be sure to check yourself first to be sure your heart is right and you can see clearly.

"So, before we go looking for the speck-sized problems in other people, we need to ask God to help us look at the plank-sized problems in our own life and start there. Only then can we see clearly to love our neighbor as ourselves."

LANDING



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TWO
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LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

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

25 MINUTES

COMMUNICATOR: "As you go to Small Groups today, think about this:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

"What are you learning about yourself? When you're willing to look at yourself rather than look at the speck-sized problems of others, what do you see? These are hard questions to ask ourselves, and we might not be sure where to even start. Don't worry, though, you'll get the chance to talk all about this with your Small Group. Before you head out, let's pray and ask God to search our hearts and help us see clearly who we are and where we can still grow in wisdom. Let's pray."

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

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

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP