



# EXPLORE OLDER KIDS the Bible.

Leader Guide > Winter 2017-18  
Danny Akin, General Editor

## MATTHEW

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST  
An account of the genealogy of  
Christ, the Son of David, the  
son of Abraham.

### FROM ABRAHAM TO DAVID

Abraham fathered Isaac.

Isaac fathered Jacob,

and his brothers.

Judah fathered Perez and

by Tamar.

Perez fathered Hezron.

Hezron fathered Aram.

Aram fathered Aminadab.

Aminadab fathered

Naasson.

Naasson fathered Salmon.

Salmon fathered Boaz.

Boaz fathered Obed.

Obed fathered Jesse.

Jesse fathered David.



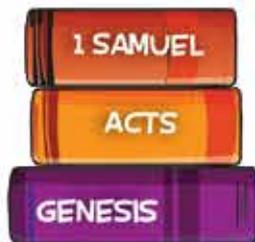
MATTHEW, 1 PETER, 2 PETER,  
JUDE, JOSHUA



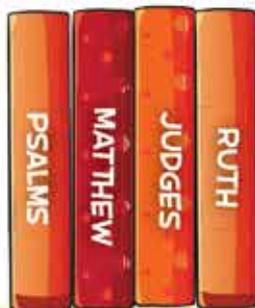
# BIBLICAL OVERVIEW 2017-2018

This year kids and preschoolers will be studying the following books as they explore the Bible.

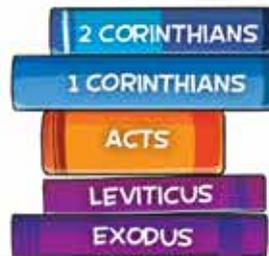
**FALL 2017**



**WINTER 2017-18**



**SPRING 2018**



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## EXPLORE THE BIBLE: OLDER KIDS LEADER GUIDE

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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.

To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit [www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline](http://www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline).

This study of Matthew, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude, & Joshua was written by Leslie Peacock Caldwell. Leslie has served in a variety of children and youth ministry positions over the years. She is currently serving at Corinth Baptist Church. Leslie is also the mom of 4 teenagers.

# AT A GLANCE

SESSION	SUGGESTED FOR THE WEEK OF	BIBLE STORY TITLE	BIBLE PASSAGE
<b>1</b>	Dec. 3	The Ministry of John the Baptist	Matthew 3:1-17
<b>2</b>	Dec. 10	Jesus Called Disciples	Matthew 4:18-25; 9:9-13; 10:2-4
<b>3</b>	Dec. 17	Jesus Taught His Followers	Matthew 5-7
<b>4</b>	Dec. 24	Jesus Was Born	Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20
<b>5</b>	Dec. 31	The Wise Men Visited Jesus	Matthew 2:1-15,19-23
<b>6</b>	Jan. 7	Peter Wrote a Letter	1 Peter 1:1-25; 2:1-17,20-25
<b>7</b>	Jan. 14	Peter Encouraged the Believers	1 Peter 3:8-18; 4:1-19; 5:1-11
<b>8</b>	Jan. 21	Resist False Teachers	2 Peter 1:1-21; 2:1-3; 3:1-18
<b>9</b>	Jan. 28	Jude's Letter to the Believers	Jude 1:1-4,10-25
<b>10</b>	Feb. 4	The Israelites Crossed the Jordan	Joshua 3-4
<b>11</b>	Feb. 11	Jericho Was Conquered	Joshua 2; 6
<b>12</b>	Feb. 18	Joshua Prayed for Help	Joshua 10:1-14
<b>13</b>	Feb. 25	Joshua's Final Instructions	Joshua 24:1-28

	<b>TEXT TRUTH</b>	<b>MEMORY VERSE</b>
	John called for the people to repent and prepare for the Messiah's arrival.	John 1:29
	Jesus called the disciples to join Him in His mission of seeking the lost.	Matthew 4:19
	Jesus taught His followers how to love and obey God with their thoughts, attitudes, and actions.	Matthew 6:33
	Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God.	Luke 2:11
	Jesus is worthy of worship.	Matthew 2:2
	We can endure difficult times because we have hope in our future with Jesus.	1 Peter 1:22b
	Even during suffering, our actions should honor God.	1 Peter 5:7
	We should grow in our knowledge of Jesus so we can resist false teaching.	2 Peter 3:18a
	Be ready to defend and share the gospel with false teachers.	Jude 1:20-21
	We can have courage because God is always with us.	Joshua 1:9b
	When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.	Psalm 28:8a
	God answers the prayers of His people in the way that is best for them.	Psalm 62:8
	We should be completely devoted to God.	Joshua 24:24





Session

1

# JOHN THE BAPTIST



## Matthew 3:1-17

John, born to the priest Zechariah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was the first prophet in 400 years to preach to Israel. John's ministry and message fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of a voice crying out in the wilderness (*Isaiah 40:3*). John preached repentance. The Greek word *metanoeo* means "to change the mind." John's message to the crowd encouraged them to change the way they were thinking and to change their actions. John's message prepared the people for the coming Messiah who would also teach of repentance.

John wore odd clothing that would have reminded the people of Elijah, the prophet of old. Actually, the last prophet to prophesy before John, Malachi, ended his prophecy by encouraging the people to look for Elijah who would come "before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes" (*Malachi 4:5*). John's choice of clothing and message should have been a clear sign to Israel that the Messiah was coming soon.

Not everyone appreciated John's message. Matthew 3:7-10 introduces the Pharisees and Sadducees, the religious leaders of the day. These leaders had likely come to the place John was baptizing, not to be baptized, but to observe what John was doing. John's message to those leaders was stern and straightforward—if you are repentant, produce fruit that shows you are repentant.

John spoke next of his baptism and compared what he was doing to the One who was coming after him. John understood his role and clearly defined the more powerful One coming as one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. The reference to baptism by the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on Pentecost as the Holy Spirit came to the apostles and other believers. The reference to baptism by fire foreshadows the final judgment where Christ will separate the chaff to be burned with everlasting fire. As John taught, Jesus came to the Jordan River and John baptized Jesus. As soon as Jesus was raised from the water, God's Spirit descended and a voice was heard announcing that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 3:1-17

**MEMORY VERSE:** John 1:29

**TEXT TRUTH:** John called for the people to repent and prepare for the Messiah's arrival.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** In the Book of Matthew, Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises. He is the King that God's people had been waiting for. As Matthew told the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, he described Jesus as King and Messiah. Jesus reigns over all and He has power over everything—even death.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *Bibles, "Matthew" (Books of the Bible Posters), index cards, marker*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *"Locust" (DVD-ROM), "Locust Facts Strips" (enhanced CD)*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Judea Map" (Poster Pack)*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse:** *"John 1:29" (Poster Pack), index cards, marker*
- Prayer:** *whiteboard, dry erase marker, Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *none*
- Make:** *"Judea Map" (Poster Pack), Bibles, paper, whiteboard, dry erase marker, pencils*
- Explore:** *none*

**NOTE:** Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible](http://ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible).

# THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

## Matthew 3:1-17

*God chose John, the cousin of Jesus and son of Zechariah, to be His messenger. The prophets Isaiah and Malachi had said that a special messenger would come to tell people about Jesus. They said, "A voice will cry out from the wilderness. He will prepare the way for the Lord."*

*John was preaching in the wilderness near the Jordan River. John wore camel-hair clothes. He liked to eat wild honey and locusts. People from all over Jerusalem, Judea, and around the Jordan River came to hear John. John preached that people needed to repent of their sin to receive forgiveness. Then he baptized the people as a sign of their repentance.*

*Some of the religious leaders, called the Sadducees and the Pharisees, came to see John preach. John knew that these leaders did not love God, so John used some words to get their attention. "Brood of vipers! You should produce fruit that shows your repentance. Just because you are an Israelite does not mean you have repented of your sin. There is One coming who is more powerful than me. I am not worthy to even remove His sandals."*

*John said that Jesus will know who has repented of their sins and loves God. He will gather those people like a farmer gathers the good wheat into the barn. He will know those who have not repented and don't love God. Those who haven't repented are like the chaff that is burned up because it is bad.*

*One day as John was baptizing the people, Jesus came to him and asked to be baptized. Jesus was showing people that He was the Messiah they had been waiting for. As Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended on Him as a dove and a voice from heaven spoke, "You are My beloved Son. I take delight in You!"*

### KEY POINTS

- Jesus obeyed God by being baptized. He set an example for us to follow.
- The religious leaders did not like John the Baptist.
- John the Baptist was a special messenger, chosen by God, to prepare the people for Jesus.

### TEXT CONNECTION

- Matthew 3 sets the stage for the coming Messiah. John the Baptist was preaching in the wilderness and baptizing those who had repented of their sins. John preached to prepare the people for the Messiah.
- Jesus came to the Jordan River as John was baptizing. As Jesus approached John, Jesus asked John to baptize Him. John was unsure, but to ensure that prophecy was fulfilled, John baptized Jesus.
- Once Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened up and God's Spirit came, and a voice was heard clarifying for all those present that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.
- Paul later preached that Jesus truly was the Son of God. In Acts 13, Paul clearly identified Jesus as the Messiah who had been promised in the Old Testament.
- Today we rejoice that Jesus has paid for our sin. We can repent and follow Jesus' example of baptism.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: Bibles, “Matthew” (Books of the Bible Posters), index cards, marker

### PREPARATION:

- Print the letters *M, A, T, T, H, E, W* on separate index cards or pieces of paper. Have enough sets for each small group. Mix the cards for kids to unscramble during the session.

### BIBLE SKILLS

- Form groups of four. Ask kids to work together to unscramble the name of the book of the Bible that you will be studying. You can give the hint that it is a common boy’s name.
- After they unscramble *Matthew*, explain that Matthew is one of the four Gospels in the Bible.
- Ask: “Who knows the other three Gospels?” (*Mark, Luke, John*) “Are the Gospels in the Old or New Testament?” (*New Testament*)
- Invite kids to find Matthew in their Bibles. Demonstrate how to use the table of contents to locate Bible books.
- Show the “Matthew” poster.
- Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 3:1-6 aloud, while others follow along in their Bibles.
- Explain that this is a chapter where we can find the story of John the Baptist, a key person in the Bible. John the Baptist helped prepare the way for Jesus.

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Identifies prominent Bible people by the books in which their stories are recorded.
- Names the 10 divisions of the Old and New Testaments in a limited time frame and identifies examples of books in each division.
- Understands the Bible teaches that salvation through Jesus is God’s gift of forgiveness.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Greet kids as they come to the large group.
- Say: “I am so glad that you are at church today. Take a look at this picture.”
- Display the “Locust” visual.
- Ask: “Who knows what this insect is?” (*locust*)
- Ask the kids why they think you are showing a picture of a locust. (*Matthew 3:4 tells us that John the Baptist ate locusts and wild honey.*)
- Most kids will think that eating locusts sounds gross. Ask them about unusual foods they have eaten.
- Distribute the “Locust Facts Strips” to volunteers. Ask them to stand and read their fact to the group.
- Ask if kids have seen locusts in their communities. Depending on where you live, locusts may or may not be a common site.
- Say: “It’s fun to study bugs, but we need to study other things in Matthew 3. Let’s get going!”

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Lead boys and girls to open their Bibles to Matthew 3:1. Ask for a volunteer to read verses 1-6.
- Explain the importance of John’s ministry by telling the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page has been provided for you to use as a guide.
- Ask: “What was John the Baptist’s message?” (*Repent and prepare for the Messiah’s arrival.*) “Why was this message so important for the people to hear?” (*They needed to know that it wasn’t enough to call themselves Jewish or say that they followed the laws of the Old Testament. They needed to understand that their sin was not pleasing to God. They needed to repent—ask for forgiveness.*)
- Show the “Text Truth Strip” and read the statement: **John called for the people to repent and prepare for the Messiah’s arrival.** Ask kids to keep this in mind throughout the session.
- Direct their attention to verses 13-17, the baptism of Jesus. Ask a volunteer to read this passage.
- Display the “Judea Map” poster. Point out where Jesus was probably baptized and the spots along the river where John and Jesus traveled.
- Ask why John did not want to baptize Jesus at first. (*He did not feel worthy to baptize Jesus, who was the Messiah. If anything, John thought Jesus should baptize him!*)
- Explain that Jesus’ baptism was an important example for Him to set for us and it also marked the beginning of His public ministry. The Bible does not tell us much about Jesus between age 12 (*close to your kids’ ages; see Luke 2:42*) and when John baptized Him.

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: “Locust” (DVD-ROM), “Locust Facts Strips” (enhanced CD)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack), “Judea Map” (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “John 1:29” (Poster Pack), index cards, marker
- Prayer: dry erase board and marker, Family Cards

**MEMORY VERSE****PREPARATION:**

- Write each word of the Memory Verse on a separate index card or strip of paper. Hide them around the room.

**DEFINITION:**

- Repent: To turn or change from disobeying God to obeying Him.

**TIP:**

“The Gospel” poster is available on the enhanced CD to help you share the gospel message with your boys and girls throughout the quarter. A video of a gospel presentation is available on the DVD-ROM. You can use it to help you prepare or show the video to your girls and boys.

**PLAY THE VIDEO**

- Play the “Session 1” video.
- Ask: “Who wants to live in the wilderness like John the Baptist? John told the people to repent. What does it mean to *repent*? Who are some of the people we can tell about Jesus?”

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Display the “John 1:29” poster. Invite kids to read the Memory Verse with you. Say it a few times together, then hide the poster so they can’t see it.
- Tell kids that you have hidden the words of the Memory Verse around the room.
- When you give the signal, tell them to get out of their seats and search for the words. When they find a word, tell them to bring the word to the front of the room and work together to put the words in order. If your group is large, select a few volunteers to bring the words to the front to put in order.

**PRAYER**

- Print the definition of *repent* on a whiteboard.
- Briefly explain again how important repentance is to the gospel. Jesus asks each of us to repent and change our sinful behavior. If appropriate, briefly share a time you repented of a sin and changed your behavior.
- During a time of silence, instruct kids to ask God what needs to change in their lives. Tell them to repent of that sin.
- Close the silent prayer time by thanking God for His gift of forgiveness.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help boys and girls locate today's pages, "John the Baptist."
- Review today's object by asking a volunteer to read aloud about the "Locusts." Invite another volunteer to read "John's Hairy Garment."
- Lead boys and girls to read silently about "Vipers." Then guide them to complete the "Fruit of Repentance" activity.
- Guide kids to follow along as you read about the "Refiner's Fire."
- Instruct kids to think of words as a group that can be used to complete the "Acrostic."

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## ABOUT FACE

*Tools: none*

- Tell kids that "About Face" is a military term meaning to quickly turn in the opposite direction. If a military leader yells, "About face!" soldiers will turn the other way without questioning their leader.
- Direct kids to stand on one side of the room and begin walking in one direction. When you say, "About face," direct them to immediately turn and walk in the other direction. Give volunteers a chance to say, "About face," to the others. If your room is small, or to make the activity more challenging, instruct them to crawl, crab walk, or walk backwards.
- Ask how this activity demonstrated repentance (*to repent includes turning away from the sinful behavior*). Explain that John wanted the people to know that they needed to stop their sin and turn in the other direction. They needed to follow the Messiah who was coming. Emphasize that repentance is a crucial part of following Jesus as Savior. Repentance is being sorry for our sin, but also changing our attitudes and actions so that we are more like Jesus.
- Review the Text Truth: **John called for the people to repent and prepare for the Messiah's arrival.**



## FOLLOW THE JORDAN



Tools: “Judea Map” (Poster Pack), Bibles, paper, whiteboard, dry erase marker, pencils

- Print the following Scripture references on the board: *Genesis 13:5-11*; *Joshua 3:14-17*; *2 Kings 5:1-14*.
- Display the “Judea Map” again.
- Instruct kids to look up the Scriptures and note the different times the Jordan River region is mentioned in the Bible.
- Encourage kids to write a brief summary of what happened in each passage.
- Answers:
  - 1) *Genesis 13:5-11*—Abraham decided it was best if his nephew Lot raised his family and herds in a different place. Lot chose the Jordan Valley for his home.
  - 2) *Joshua 3:14-17*—When the priests carrying the ark reached the Jordan River, the water stopped flowing and the people were able to cross over on dry ground.
  - 3) *2 Kings 5:1-14*—Elisha told Naaman to bathe in the Jordan River seven times to cure his skin disease. When Naaman obeyed, he was healed.
- Explain: “God selected an important place for Jesus’ baptism. This river had been a part of Israel’s history.”
- Say: “Let’s review the message that the people heard at the Jordan River on the day that Jesus was baptized.”
- Review the Text Truth together: **John called for the people to repent and prepare for the Messiah’s arrival.**

## HOW TO CHANGE



Tools: none

- Review the Text Truth: **John called for the people to repent and prepare for the Messiah’s arrival.**
- Read a statement and allow kids to discuss suggestions for changing that behavior. There are often many ways to change a sinful behavior. Confessing in prayer and asking for God’s forgiveness is always the first step.
  - 1) Jason told his mom he was finished with his chores when he wasn’t, so that he could go outside to play.
  - 2) Megan’s brother made her angry and she called him a bad name.
  - 3) Whenever Todd is with a certain friend, he plays a video game that he knows his parents would not approve of.
  - 4) Josie looks on her friend’s paper during a test to make sure she has the right answer.
  - 5) LaMar really likes a friend’s toy and takes it when the friend isn’t looking.
- Possible Answers:
  - 1) Jason: Confess his lie to his mom and ask for her forgiveness. Work hard at his chores from now on, even doing more than his mom asks.
  - 2) Megan: Ask her brother to forgive her and ask God to make her aware of what she says so that she does not curse or say bad words.
  - 3) Todd: He should suggest doing other things when he’s with that friend or consider spending less time with that friend if he continues to be a bad influence.
  - 4) Josie: She needs to confess to her teacher and ask to sit somewhere where she will not be tempted to look on other’s papers.
  - 5) LaMar: He needs to return the toy and ask for forgiveness. Then he needs to practice being thankful for the things he has and not wish he had other people’s toys.



## Session 2



# THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

**Matthew 4:18-25; 9:9-13; 10:2-4**

After Jesus' public ministry began, John the Baptist was arrested and Jesus went into the region of Galilee to preach the message of repentance. While Jesus was in Galilee, He walked by the sea where He came upon two men, Peter and Andrew, fishermen casting their nets into the sea. Andrew had previously been a disciple of John the Baptist and had begun to follow Jesus, as had Peter (*John 1:35-42*). Their encounter with Jesus in Matthew 4 was not the first time they had been with Jesus. When Jesus asked Peter and Andrew to follow Him, they immediately left all they had and followed Him.

As He had done with Peter and Andrew, Jesus also called James and John from their fishing business to be His disciples. Both verses 20 and 22 use a word translated "immediately" when referring to the response given by both sets of brothers. The men not only left their businesses, but James and John also left their father sitting in the boat with nets that needed to be mended. They rightly obeyed immediately, probably not knowing fully what following Jesus would entail.

Taking with Him His new companions, Jesus ministered all over Galilee. The remainder of Matthew's gospel shares how Jesus encountered many people who needed the good news. Jesus ministered to the lame, sick, and those suffering from various diseases. Later, as Jesus departed from a boat, He met Matthew and called him to be His disciple. Matthew's response, not surprisingly, was to get up and follow Jesus. Like the others, Matthew obeyed immediately.

Matthew 10 records the first comprehensive list of the 12 men Jesus chose to become His closest followers. This passage serves as a public commissioning service for the Twelve when Jesus sent them out on their own to do the work of ministry. The number 12 is most likely symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel. These men were those with whom Jesus worked closely in His mission of seeking and saving the lost.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 4:18-25; 9:9-13; 10:2-4

**MEMORY VERSE:** Matthew 4:19

**TEXT TRUTH:** Jesus called the disciples to join Him in His mission of seeking the lost.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** In the Book of Matthew, Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises. He is the King that God’s people had been waiting for. As Matthew told the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, he described Jesus as King and Messiah. Jesus reigns over all and He has power over everything—even death.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *Bibles, paper, pen, basket*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *Bibles, “Galilean Boat” (DVD-ROM), fishing net or pole*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack)*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse:** *“Matthew 4:19” (Poster Pack)*
- Prayer:** *Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *Bibles, “Review Questions” (enhanced CD), chairs or mats, scissors, basket, paper, pen*
- Make:** *“Fish Invitation” (enhanced CD), markers, stickers*
- Explore:** *Bibles, “12 Disciples Chart” (enhanced CD), pens*

**NOTE:** Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible](http://ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible).

# JESUS CALLED DISCIPLES

**Matthew 4:18-25; 9:9-13; 10:2-4**

*One day Jesus entered the region of Galilee and began to preach to the people about the gospel. He called for the people to repent.*

*While walking by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw two fishermen, Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea when Jesus called to them, "Follow Me and you will fish for people!" Peter and Andrew immediately followed Jesus.*

*Jesus saw more fishermen. James and his brother John were in a boat with their dad fixing their fishing nets. Jesus called to James and John. The men followed Jesus.*

*Later Jesus saw a tax collector, Matthew. Matthew was working in his tax office. Jesus told Matthew, "Follow Me." Matthew got up and followed Jesus.*

*Jesus called twelve disciples to follow Him. Their names were Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Thaddaeus, Simon, and Judas.*

## KEY POINTS

- Jesus wants us to join in His mission. He wants us to seek the lost.
- We can tell others the good news.

## TEXT CONNECTION

- When Jesus began His public ministry, He looked for men to come alongside Him and learn from Him. Jesus declared to the men, who were fishermen by trade, that He would lead them to become fishers of men.
- Jesus chose not only fishermen to be His disciples, but He chose men from all walks of life to tell others about Him.
- Jesus, along with His disciples, performed miracles by healing the crowds and sharing the message of repentance.
- Paul was not one of the original disciples chosen by Jesus, but Jesus certainly called Paul to be His disciple and tasked Paul with telling others about Jesus. (See Acts 9.)
- Paul continued Jesus' mission by healing the crowds and sharing that repentance comes through belief in Jesus. Paul's message was not always well received, yet Paul continued preaching the gospel throughout the world.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: Bibles, paper, pen, basket

### PREPARATION:

- Print the Matthew Statements without the answers on pieces of paper. Place the papers in a basket.

### BIBLE SKILLS

- One at a time, have volunteers select a statement out of the basket and read it aloud.
- Select one side of the room to be “Matthew” and one side to be “Not.”
- Ask whether or not we find that story in the Gospel of Matthew.
- Ask the reader to select a side to stand on, then ask others to stand next to the wall that they think is true.
- After everyone has selected whether or not they think that story comes from Matthew, reveal the answers.
- Ask a volunteer to find the chapter (*or book*) in his Bible.
- After all the statements have been read, emphasize that with daily Bible reading, we will learn more and more about what the Bible teaches us and where we can find the stories recorded in the Bible.

### Matthew Statements and Answers:

1. Wise men came to see Jesus and brought Him gifts. (*Yes, Matthew 2*)
2. Jesus told the parable about a wise man who built his house on the rock. (*Yes, Matthew 7*)
3. Jesus told the disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. (*Yes, Matthew 28*)
4. Jonah tried to run away from God and was swallowed by a big fish. (*No, Jonah*)
5. Young David killed Goliath. (*No, 1 Samuel 17*)
6. Daniel survived being thrown in a den with lions. (*No, Daniel 6*)

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Identifies prominent Bible people by the books in which their stories are recorded.
- Establishes the discipline of daily Bible reading.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Welcome kids and ask if anyone has a story about going fishing or about being on a boat.
- If possible, bring in a fishing net or fishing pole (*without a hook*) for kids to see and touch.
- Display the “Galilean Boat” visual.
- Say: “This is a picture of the kind of fishing boat that was common when Jesus was on earth. Some of His best friends were fishermen and worked on boats like this one. Their job was to catch and sell fish.”
- Explain that today, most fishermen who fish for a job use large boats with huge nets.
- Ask if anyone has been on a large fishing boat or been with people who fish for a living.
- Continue: “Let’s look at some fishermen in the Bible who met Jesus. Everything changed for them after that.”

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Lead the boys and girls to open their Bibles to Matthew 4.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and read it together: **Jesus called the disciples to join Him in His mission of seeking the lost.**
- Tell the kids to turn to Matthew 4 and ask a volunteer to read Matthew 4:18-24.
- Now tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page has been provided for you to use as a guide.
- Ask: “Who are the first four disciples mentioned in this chapter?”
- Remind kids to look at the verses to find the answers. (*Andrew, Peter, James, John*)
- Ask: “How did the fishermen respond when Jesus told them to follow Him?” (*Pause for response.*) “Why do you think that they immediately stopped working and obeyed Jesus?”
- Say: “The Bible doesn’t tell us what they were thinking when they followed Jesus, but what we need to understand is that they did exactly what Jesus told them to do.”
- Ask: “What do you think they had to give up in order to follow Jesus?” (*their jobs, homes, boats, friends, family*)
- Ask someone to read Matthew 4:19 again.
- Ask: “What do you think Jesus meant when He said that they would fish for people (*or become fishers of men*)?”
- Say: “Just like our Text Truth says, Jesus was inviting his friends—the disciples—to join Him in bringing lost people into the kingdom of God. That was better than fishing for fish!”

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: Bibles, “Galilean Boat” (DVD-ROM), fishing net or pole
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “Matthew 4:19” (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: Family Cards

**PLAY THE VIDEO**

- Play the “Session 2” video.
- Ask: “Who has been fishing before? Did you catch anything? What did Joel catch in today’s video? Why did Jesus tell the disciples He would make them fishers of men? Who can you tell about Jesus?”

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Display the “Matthew 4:19” poster. Invite kids to read aloud the verse with you.
- Form two groups.
- With the poster displayed, ask one group to start the verse by saying the first word of the verse. The second group should then say the next word.
- Continue back and forth, with each group saying the next word in the verse.
- Say the verse several times, asking them to speed up each time.
- After several times of repeating the verse, word-by-word, see if everyone can say the verse together without looking at the poster.

**PRAYER**

- Ask: “If Jesus says ‘Follow Me’ to you, how will you respond? Take a minute in silence to ask God how you need to respond to Him.”
- After a short time of silent prayer, close aloud asking God to help each of you be obedient to follow Him.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help girls and boys locate today's pages, "The Twelve Disciples."
- Review today's Bible story as kids solve the "Disciple Scramble." Guide kids to use their Bibles if they need help.
- Invite kids to read "Spotlight on Matthew" and about the "Fishermen Who Became Fishers of Men."
- Select a volunteer to read aloud the information about today's object, the "Galilean Boat."
- Conclude by asking kids to quietly complete the "My Top 5" activity. Help kids think of places as needed.

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## DON'T ROCK THE BOAT



*Tools: Bibles, "Review Questions" (enhanced CD), chairs or mats, scissors, basket, paper, pen*

- Arrange the chairs or mats on the floor in a circle or like they are sitting in a boat. One person should be standing without a seat. She will be the first person to ask a question.
  - Cut the review questions apart and place them inside the basket. Add a few slips of paper with the command *Don't Rock the Boat* written on them to the basket.
  - Kids should have Bibles ready to look up answers to questions.
- Ask the kid who is standing to draw a question from the basket and try to answer it. They can ask friends who are seated to help them answer the question.
  - Remind them that they will need their Bibles to answer some of the questions.
  - This person will continue asking questions until "Don't Rock the Boat" is drawn from the basket.
  - When someone draws the "Don't Rock the Boat" paper, everyone should quickly stand up and find a new seat. The person standing should quickly find a seat, leaving a new person standing.
  - Continue playing until all the questions have been answered. To extend the game, play again using last week's Review Questions.
  - Close by reviewing today's Text Truth: **Jesus called the disciples to join Him in His mission of seeking the lost.**



## FOLLOW ME

Tools: "Fish Invitation" (enhanced CD), markers, stickers

- Make copies of the "Fish Invitation" for each kid to have one to decorate.
- Plan to provide the details of an upcoming event at your church, Sunday morning activities, or your mid-week activities.
- Review the Text Truth: **Jesus called the disciples to join Him in His mission of seeking the lost.**
- Say: "Being a disciple means following Jesus and joining Him in His mission to save the lost."
- Ask: "What are some ways we can join His mission today?"
- Say: "One way we can invite others to be followers of Jesus is to invite them to church. This is one place where they will hear about Jesus."
- Distribute the invitations and allow kids to decorate them.
- Give kids the details (*time/place*) to fill in on the invitation.
- Ask boys and girls to think of someone they can invite to church and write that person's name on the invitation.
- Encourage them to invite their friends this week, using the invitations they have made.



## WHO FOLLOWED JESUS?

Tools: Bibles, "12 Disciples Chart" (enhanced CD), pens

- Make a copy of the "12 Disciples Chart" for each kid.
- Encourage kids to work together to add the names of each disciple to the chart, in the order they are mentioned in Matthew.
- Ask someone to look up the first Scripture reference on the page and read it aloud.
- Pause to let them record the names of the disciples.
- Continue until each Scripture is read and all 12 names are recorded.
- If time allows, the kids can draw a picture next to each name of what they think the disciple might have looked like.
- Close the activity by reminding them that **Jesus called the disciples to join Him in His mission of seeking the lost.**



# THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## Matthew 5–7

Matthew 5–7 is traditionally called the Sermon on the Mount. Looking at parallel gospel accounts it is really unclear if this sermon was delivered in its entirety in this form, or if this is a collection of things Jesus taught throughout His ministry, all brought together in this format by the writer Matthew. Whether preached as one sermon, or preached over time, this portion of Scripture gives several examples of how a person dedicated to living a life of love and obedience to God should choose to live.

Jesus went aside to a hilly region of Galilee. Here He began to teach His disciples. We don't know where this spot was located, but we do know that the area would have been the perfect place for thousands of people to hear Jesus' message.

The first section of Jesus' sermon is what most call the Beatitudes. The word *beatitude* comes from the Latin word for "blessing." These short statements were intended by Jesus to highlight characteristics of a disciple and also serve as somewhat of an outline for the rest of the sermon. The first three beatitudes deal with heart issues, as does the rest of Chapter 5. Matthew 6 describes what it looks like to hunger and thirst for righteousness as does the fourth beatitude. Finally the remaining four beatitudes, and Matthew 7, deal with people's interpersonal relationships.

Following the beatitudes, Jesus began teaching through a series of short statements that gave those who truly wanted to follow Him examples of personal behavior that would lead to a life honoring God. The statements Jesus preached to the crowds that day are still valid and appropriate for us to follow. We should live lives that are clear examples to others that we follow God by being salt and light in the community. We should think thoughts that honor God and not thoughts that would dishonor His name. We should be generous, devoted to prayer, and rely fully on God to meet our needs. Finally, our lives should be grounded on the solid foundation of faith in God.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 5–7

**MEMORY VERSE:** Matthew 6:33

**TEXT TRUTH:** Jesus taught His followers how to love and obey God with their thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** In the Book of Matthew, Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises. He is the King that God’s people had been waiting for. As Matthew told the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, he described Jesus as King and Messiah. Jesus reigns over all and He has power over everything—even death.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *Bibles, “Bible Books” (Books of the Bible Posters), “Christ in Context: Matthew” (Poster Pack)*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *“Lighthouse” (DVD-ROM), salted and unsalted pretzels or crackers, “Allergy Alert” (enhanced CD), Bibles*

- Examine the Text:**

*Bibles; “Text Truth Strips,” “Sermon on the Mount Topics,” and “Topic Circles” (Poster Pack); tape*

- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*

- Memory Verse:** *“Matthew 6:33” (Poster Pack), index cards, markers*

- Prayer:** *Bibles, Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *Bibles*
- Make:** *“Daily Time with God” (enhanced CD), markers, stapler*
- Explore:** *individual salt packets, small light bulbs, plastic sandwich bags, index cards, markers*

**NOTE:** Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle.

Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle.

For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible](http://ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible).

# JESUS TAUGHT HIS FOLLOWERS

## Matthew 5–7

*Crowds of people gathered to hear Jesus teach. When He saw the people, He went up on the mountain and sat down. His disciples came near and Jesus began to teach them.*

*“You are the salt of the earth. If salt is no longer tasty, it is not good. It can only be thrown away. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden from sight. People do not light a lamp and cover it up with a basket. People light a lamp and put it on a stand to give light to the entire house. Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to God.”*

*Then Jesus taught His disciples about prayer and how to pray. He gave them an example: “Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, Your name is honored and holy. May Your kingdom come and Your will be done on earth just like it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we forgive those who owe us. Please help us resist the devil and his temptations.”*

*Jesus told the people not to worry. God takes care of the flowers and the birds. They don’t worry about what to wear or eat. God cares for them. Jesus said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And God will provide for you. Don’t worry.”*

*Jesus also told parables. He said, “People who hear what I say and believe and act on it will be like the sensible man who built his house on the rock. The rain came, the rivers rose, and the winds blew hard against the house. But the house didn’t fall because it was built on the solid rock foundation. People who hear My words and ignore them are like the foolish man who built His house on the sand. The rain came, the rivers rose, and the winds blew hard against the house. Then the house collapsed.”*

### KEY POINTS

- How we live (*our actions, attitudes, and so on*) shows others what we believe.
- God always cares for His people.
- God should be the our top priority (*most important*) in life.

### TEXT CONNECTION

- Jesus knew He wouldn’t always be on earth, so Jesus preached to the crowds that followed Him so that they could learn what it meant to be true followers.
- Jesus taught that people could align their heart attitude with that of God, seek righteousness in all their dealings, and treat others with love and compassion.
- By the time Paul was preaching, many followers of Jesus had forgotten some of what Jesus taught. In Acts 15, Paul heard men preaching that Jesus had different requirements for Jews to become followers than for non-Jews. Paul knew this was not right.
- Paul and Barnabas traveled to Jerusalem to speak to the church leaders and remind them of the things Jesus taught. Church leaders agreed and sent Paul to spread the news.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: Bibles, “Bible Books” (Books of the Bible Posters), “Christ in Context: Matthew” (Poster Pack)

### BIBLE SKILLS

- Display the “Bible Books” poster.
- Remind kids what divisions the New Testament books represent: Gospels, History, Paul’s Letters, General Letters, and Prophecy.
- Instruct kids to open to the Book of Matthew, where today’s lesson will be found. As you reference a particular Scripture, ask boys and girls to find it in their Bibles.
- Say: “Christians often call Matthew 5–7 the Sermon on the Mount. That’s because Jesus was actually sitting on a mountainside to teach the people. It’s packed with important topics for Christians to know.”
- Ask kids to call out some of the topics (*usually noted by subheadings in most translations*) they see in this sermon.
- Direct them to turn to Matthew 6:9-13.
- Say: “This passage is often called The Model Prayer or the Lord’s Prayer.”
- Ask someone to read it aloud.
- Review with the kids by asking: “Where do we find the Sermon on the Mount?” (*Matthew 5–7*) “Where do we find the Model Prayer in Matthew?” (*Matthew 6:9-13*)
- Conclude: “Every book of the Bible teaches us something about Jesus—especially, the gospels.” Display the “Christ in Context: Matthew” poster and invite a volunteer to read it aloud.

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Locates from memory often-used Bible passages and memory verses.
- Names the 10 divisions of the Old and New Testaments in a limited time frame and identifies examples of books in each division.
- Learns the Bible is God’s message about Himself and how He rescues and transforms us.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Welcome everyone to the group and ask if anyone has ever seen or been to a lighthouse.
- Allow a few minutes for kids to share about the lighthouses they have seen.
- Display the “Lighthouse” visual.
- Say: “Lighthouses serve a very specific purpose. Jesus compared Christians to being light in the darkness. He has a specific purpose for us in the world. Let’s read more about it in Matthew 5:13-16.”
- Lead boys and girls to open their Bibles to Matthew 5. Ask for a volunteer to read the passage aloud.
- Ask: “What do you think Jesus means by saying that Christians should be salt and light?”
- Pass out the salted and unsalted pretzels or crackers. Let them discuss the difference and how they think the salt adds flavor.
- Some kids might not like the salt, so be prepared to discuss other important uses for salt (*preserving, healing*).

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Display the “Text Truth Strip.”
- Say: “We’re going to take a closer look at the Sermon on the Mount that we find in Matthew 5–7. In this sermon, **Jesus taught His followers how to love and obey God with their thoughts, attitudes, and actions.** We have a lot to learn!”
- Show the “Sermon on the Mount Topics” poster and distribute the “Topic Circles” that Jesus taught in this passage.
- Say: “As we read the passage that matches the topic on your circle, come tape it on the poster.”
- Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 5:3-10. Then let the kid with the Beatitudes circle tape it to the poster.
- Direct kids to turn to Matthew 5:13-16.
- Say: “We read this passage about salt and light earlier, but let’s get that circle taped to the poster.”
- Continue asking kids to read the following passages and pausing for boys and girls to finish the poster: Matthew 6:9-13; Matthew 7:7-8; Matthew 7:24-27.
- After the two foundations passage from Matthew 7:24-27, ask: “What was the difference between the foundation made of rock and the one made of sand?” (*The rock foundation was solid and protected the house; the sandy foundation washed away.*)
- Discuss the kinds of tough times that we might face in life.
- If appropriate, share a struggle from your own life and how having a faith in Jesus (*the Rock*) helped you.

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: “Lighthouse” (DVD-ROM), salted and unsalted pretzels or crackers, “Allergy Alert” (enhanced CD), Bibles
- Examine the Text: Bibles; “Text Truth Strips,” “Sermon on the Mount Topics,” and “Topic Circles” (Poster Pack); tape
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “Matthew 6:33” (Poster Pack), index cards, markers
- Prayer: Bibles, Family Cards

**PLAY THE VIDEO**

- Play the “Session 3” video.
- Ask: “Where did Joel visit in today’s video? What is the purpose of a lighthouse? Why did Jesus tell us to be a light? How can we do that?”

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Display the “Matthew 6:33” poster on one wall of your room.
- Say the verse aloud together.
- Ask: “What does it mean to seek God and His righteousness?” (*to find out about God and how He wants us to live*)
- Ask the group to stand and recite the verse while looking at the poster.
- Now turn to another wall and say it again, without looking at the poster.
- Turn toward each wall in the room while repeating the verse.
- Ask the kids to copy the verse onto an index card and take it home to help them memorize it this week.

**PRAYER**

- Turn in your Bible to Matthew 6:9-13.
- Remind kids that this is a prayer that Jesus prayed and used to teach His followers how to pray.
- Read the prayer aloud, pausing after the verses for prayer prompts. Allow for silent prayer after each prompt.
  - ▶ Verses 9-10: Take a minute to praise God for who He is.
  - ▶ Verse 11: Ask God to provide for your needs.
  - ▶ Verse 12: Ask for forgiveness for your sins and tell Him you will forgive others.
  - ▶ Verse 13: Ask God to help you stay away from sinful things.
  - ▶ Amen.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help girls and boys locate today's pages, "The Sermon on the Mount."
- Invite kids to recall today's Bible story by using their Bibles to complete the matches in the "The Sermon on the Mount" activity.
- Select a volunteer to read about "Fallingwater." Choose another volunteer to read about the "Lighthouse" and the "Fun Facts!"
- Guide kids to quietly read "Light of the World."
- Invite kids to complete "Worry Reflection."
- Read "How Should We Pray?"

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## COME TO JESUS

*Tools: Bibles*

- Read Matthew 5:1 aloud.
- Say: "When Jesus sat down, His disciples came to Him. They wanted to hear what He had to say."
- Instruct the kids to stand on one side of the room. You, or another volunteer, will stand on the opposite side of the room.
- Call on kids to tell you one thing they've learned or remember from the Sermon on the Mount. Allow kids to use their Bibles for help.
- When they answer, they can take one step toward you.
- Continue to call on kids until someone reaches you.
- Remind kids that Jesus wants us to seek Him, to come close to Him, and to understand how He wants us to live.
- Review the Text Truth as you conclude the activity. **Jesus taught His followers how to love and obey God with their thoughts, attitudes, and actions.**



## DAILY DEVOTION GUIDE



Tools: "Daily Time with God" (enhanced CD), markers, stapler

- Distribute the devotion guides to each kid.
- Explain that this guide has five days of personal Bible reading and questions based on the Sermon on the Mount.
- Remind kids that daily time spent alone with God is important for spiritual growth.
- Give boys and girls time to decorate their guides and assemble them with a stapler.
- Remind them that in the Sermon on the Mount, **Jesus taught His followers how to love and obey God with their thoughts, attitudes, and actions.**
- Tell them to look for what Jesus wants to teach them during their personal time with God this week.



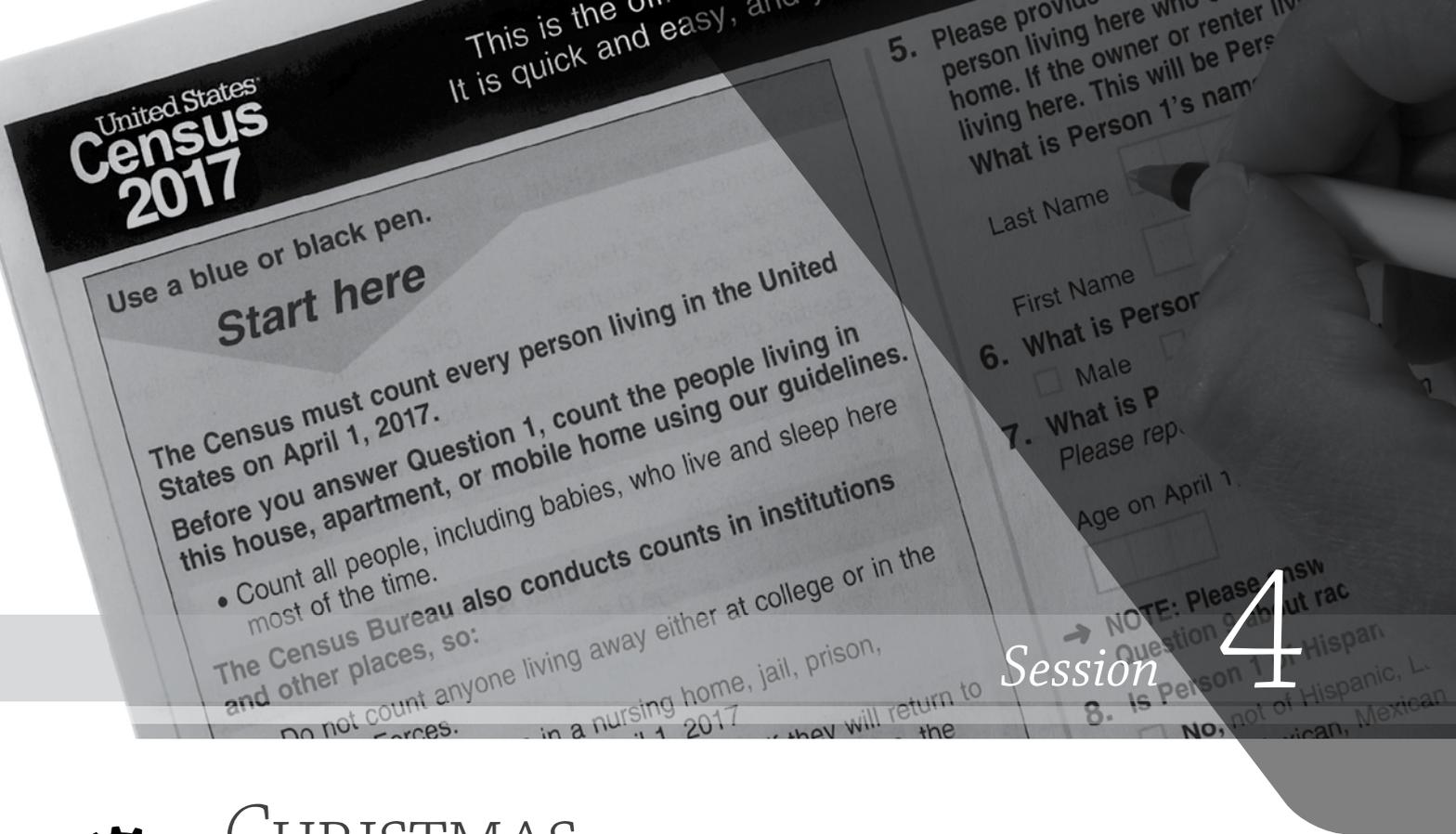
## SALT AND LIGHT

Tools: individual salt packets, small light bulbs, plastic sandwich bags, index cards, markers

- Bring enough supplies so each kid can make a small bag with a salt packet, a light bulb, and a Bible verse.

- As a group, read Matthew 5:13-16 together again.
- Remind kids how much Jesus wants His followers to make a difference in the world, like salt and light do.
- Explain that they are going to make reminder bags to take home with them.
- Encourage kids to put the bags in a place where they will see them every day and be reminded to live as Jesus wants them to.
- Instruct boys and girls to write out one verse from Matthew 5:13-16 on an index card and put it in the bag where they can read the verse through the bag.
- Give them time to assemble their bags.
- Review the Text Truth as you conclude the activity. **Jesus taught His followers how to love and obey God with their thoughts, attitudes, and actions.**

*Additional Light Options: small flashlights, battery-operated tea lights, Christmas light bulbs, or glow sticks*



# CHRISTMAS

**Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20**

Matthew wrote his gospel to prove that Jesus was the Messiah as well as the Son of God. The opening verse identifies Jesus as Christ and Matthew begins to build his case. Matthew spends 17 verses connecting Jesus with Abraham and David, which would have helped his Jewish readers understand that Jesus' lineage certainly qualified Him to be Messiah. In verse 18 Matthew begins to define Jesus' deity to prove that He was the Christ.

Mary and Joseph were engaged, or betrothed, to one another. In Jewish culture this engagement was as legally binding as the marriage, but the couple did not live together until after their wedding. When Joseph, clearly unaware of the supernatural conception, discovered Mary's pregnancy, he wanted to act in a righteous manner. Joseph did not want to embarrass Mary publicly, so he decided to divorce her privately. Later, while Joseph slept, an angel arrived to give him the good news that Mary's conception was from the Holy Spirit. Joseph was told to not worry but marry Mary, which he did.

Matthew 1:22-23 shows how the birth of Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. The Jews who were waiting for the Messiah would have been familiar with Isaiah 7:14, so when Matthew declared Jesus' birth a fulfillment of this prophecy, he left no doubt for his readers that Jesus was indeed the promised One.

Luke was the only other gospel writer who covered the birth of Jesus, and he was quite thorough. Luke described why Mary, a resident of Nazareth, ended up in Bethlehem when she was ready to give birth. Mary traveled with Joseph who had to return to his hometown of Bethlehem to register for the census. While in Bethlehem, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped her baby gently in cloths and laid Him in a manger bed. Shepherds in the field were visited by angels and went to see the baby who had been born. The shepherds left and told anyone they saw about the baby. Jesus' birth was good news and the shepherds eagerly shared it. Celebrate this week as you share the good news of Jesus' birth.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20

**MEMORY VERSE:** Luke 2:11

**TEXT TRUTH:** Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** In the Book of Matthew, Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises. He is the King that God's people had been waiting for. As Matthew told the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, he described Jesus as King and Messiah. Jesus reigns over all and He has power over everything—even death.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *Bibles, bookmarks or ribbons*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *Christmas music, plain paper, marker, "Bethlehem" (Poster Pack), "Census Form" (DVD-ROM)*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, "Bethlehem" and "Text Truth Strips" (Poster Pack)*

- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*

- Memory Verse:** *"Luke 2:11" (Poster Pack), "Jesus Is Born Bookmarks" (enhanced CD), markers*

- Prayer:** *nonbreakable ornament, Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *Christmas music, "Bethlehem" (Poster Pack), "Review Questions" (enhanced CD)*
- Make:** *paper, crayons or markers*
- Explore:** *brown box to symbolize a manger, markers, crayons, poster boards*

**NOTE:** Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible](http://ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible).

# JESUS WAS BORN

**Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20**

*Long ago the prophets promised that a baby would be born. The baby would be a boy and He would be called Immanuel, which means “God is with us.” The time for this special promise to happen arrived. God told Mary and Joseph that Mary would have a special baby. They should name the baby Jesus. Jesus was God’s Son and would rescue the world from sin.*

*The ruler Caesar Augustus sent a decree to the entire empire. He wanted all of the people to register. Everyone had to travel to their hometown to be registered. Joseph lived in Nazareth but was from Bethlehem, the city of David. He was a descendant of King David. So Joseph traveled to Bethlehem with Mary. Mary was pregnant. While in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to give birth. The lodging place was full, so Mary gave birth and wrapped her firstborn Son in cloth and laid Him in a feeding trough or manger.*

*At the same time, shepherds were nearby watching over their flocks of sheep during the night. Suddenly, an angel appeared. The glory of the Lord shone around them and the shepherds were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I have good news for you that will bring people great joy. Today in the city of David, a Savior, Messiah the Lord, was born for you! As a sign to you, you will find the baby wrapped snugly in cloth and lying in a feeding trough.”*

*Then a multitude of heavenly host appeared with the angel and they praised God, saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on earth to the people He favors!”*

*The angels left and the shepherds said, “Let’s hurry to Bethlehem. We need to see what the Lord has told us.”*

*The shepherds hurried and they found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the feeding trough.*

*After seeing them, the shepherds reported the entire message they were told about the baby. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds said. Mary treasured the things she heard in her heart and she thought deeply about them. The shepherds returned to their fields, praising God for everything they had seen and heard.*

## KEY POINTS

- God kept His promises about Jesus’ birth.
- The Messiah (*Jesus*) came to rescue us from our sin.

## TEXT CONNECTION

- Matthew 1 records an angel’s visit to Joseph. Joseph was engaged to Mary and had learned she was pregnant. Joseph wanted to respect Mary and planned to quietly divorce her.
- The angel that visited Joseph sent a message of hope, telling Joseph that Mary’s baby was special and Joseph should go ahead and marry her. Joseph obeyed and was instructed to give the baby the name *Jesus*.
- Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem in accordance with a mandate from the government to be registered. While they were there, Mary gave birth to a son—Jesus.
- Shepherds received the first announcement of Jesus’ birth when angels proclaimed His coming. The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and celebrated Jesus’ birth.
- Later, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple and dedicated Him to the Lord. In the temple, Simeon and Anna praised God for Jesus.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: Bibles, bookmarks or ribbons

### BIBLE SKILLS

- Greet kids and say: “We’re celebrating Christmas, so let’s find the Christmas story in the Bible.”
- Ask kids to look up Matthew 1 and put a bookmark or ribbon in their Bibles to mark the chapter.
- Then tell them to look up Luke 2 and put another ribbon there.
- Say: “These are New Testament records of Jesus’ birth, found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Now let’s look at an Old Testament passage that tells us about the birth of the Messiah.”
- Guide the kids to find Isaiah 7:14 and ask a volunteer to read the verse aloud.
- Say: “This verse is called a prophecy. It told the people that a Messiah was coming. Jesus was that Messiah.”
- Review the Scripture references where they can find the Christmas story: Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1, Luke 2.

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Locates from memory often-used Bible passages and memory verses.
- Begins to tell others the meaning of the biblical content of a verse or passage.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Welcome kids with Christmas music playing.
- As they come in, direct them to write their names on a piece of paper labeled “Census.” Tell them you need a record of who has come. Thank them for registering.
- Ask: “Who travels on Christmas or who has taken a trip at Christmas before?”
- Let volunteers tell about their trips: who they visited, how long it took to get there, favorite memories, and so on.
- Say: “It wasn’t called Christmas yet, but at the time of Jesus’ birth, His parents had to go on a trip to Bethlehem.”
- Show the “Bethlehem” poster.
- Explain that Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem because the government was requiring a census.
- Display the “Census Form” visual.
- Say: “A census was a registration of people who were from or born in that town. Joseph had moved away from Bethlehem, but had to return to register. Mary went with him, and she was expected to have baby Jesus any day. We could say that this was the first Christmas trip!”
- Turn off the music and prepare the kids to open their Bibles.

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Invite kids to open their Bibles to Luke 2.
- Tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page has been provided for you to use as a guide.
- Ask for volunteers to read aloud Matthew 1:20-21 and Luke 2:8-12.
- Ask: “In the verses in Matthew, whom is the angel speaking to when he says, ‘Don’t be afraid?’” (*Joseph*) “And in the Luke passage, whom are the angels speaking to when they say, ‘Don’t be afraid?’” (*the shepherds*)
- Discuss why the events of the birth of Jesus might make people afraid. (*Joseph was not prepared to have a baby, yet. The shepherds were afraid of the sight of the angel.*) Be open to ideas the kids might have and how they might have felt if they had been the shepherds.
- Re-read Luke 2:12 aloud and show the manger on the reverse side of the “Bethlehem” poster.
- Ask: “A manger doesn’t exactly seem like a good crib for the Son of God, does it? Much of the story that we see in Matthew and Luke doesn’t seem to fit the coming of the Messiah, the King of kings! But God had planned that all this would take place. It was God’s choice to send His Son to the world in this way.”
- Show the “Text Truth Strip” and read it together: **Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God.**

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: Christmas music, plain paper, marker, “Bethlehem” (Poster Pack), “Census Form” (DVD-ROM)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Bethlehem” and “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “Luke 2:11” (Poster Pack), “Jesus Is Born Bookmarks” (enhanced CD), markers
- Prayer: nonbreakable ornament, Family Cards

### JUMP IN PREPARATION:

- Write *Census* at the top of the plain piece of paper.

**PLAY THE VIDEO**

- Play the “Session 4” video.
- Ask: “Who did Kaileigh meet? What did she learn about? Name one of the three main parts of the Bible? (*Creation, The Fall, Redemption*) What is the greatest story we can tell?”

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Show the “Luke 2:11” poster.
- Ask for a volunteer to read the verse aloud.
- Explain that Bethlehem is called the city of David, because that is the town where King David was born. Joseph was a descendant of King David (*the same David who killed Goliath as a boy*). King David and Joseph’s family both came from Bethlehem.
- Distribute the bookmarks and direct kids to write the Bible verse on the bookmarks.
- Say the Bible verse together and encourage kids to take their bookmarks home and practice their Memory Verses.
- If time allows, let them practice saying the verse with a partner.

**PRAYER**

- Stand in a circle.
- Show the kids the small ornament in your hand.
- Tell them that you will pass the ornament around.
- If someone would like to say a prayer aloud, they should hold the ornament when it comes to them.
- After they pray, they can pass the ornament to the next person.
- If someone does not want to pray aloud, they should simply pass the ornament to the next person.
- Begin the prayer time by thanking God for sending Jesus, the Savior He promised for us.
- After prayer time, distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help boys and girls locate today's pages, "Christmas."
- After reading about the "Census," invite kids to complete their own census in the "Kid Census" activity.
- Select volunteers to read aloud about "Bethlehem" and the "Family Tree of Jesus."
- Encourage kids to quietly complete the "Christmas Reflection."

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## TRAVEL TO BETHLEHEM



*Tools: Christmas music, "Bethlehem" (Poster Pack), "Review Questions" (enhanced CD)*

- Display the "Bethlehem" poster on one side of the class where kids can reach it. Use a long hallway if possible.

- Tell kids that it's time for them to take their own trip to Bethlehem.
- Line the kids up on the opposite wall or at the far end of the hallway from the "Bethlehem" poster.
- Tell them when the music plays, they can begin moving in baby steps (*one foot directly in front of the other*) toward the picture of Bethlehem.
- When the music stops, they must freeze in place.
- Anyone still moving when the music stops has to go back to the beginning.
- You can choose to have them crawl or move backward, to make it more difficult.
- When the music stops, call on someone to answer a review question from the Bible story.
- At the end of the game, remind kids of the Text Truth: **Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God.**



## ANGELS PRAISE

Tools: paper, crayons or markers

- Review the Text Truth: **Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God.**
- Read Luke 2:13-14 aloud.
- Say: “The angels praised God on that first Christmas night. Let’s spend some time praising God, too!”
- Tell them to use the acrostic A-N-G-E-L-S to prompt their time of praise.
- Direct them to write praises to God starting with each letter in the word *angels*. (Ex: *A—Awesome God, You are My Savior!*)
- These can be their own words, Scripture verses, or lyrics from a praise song they might know.
- Let them openly voice some of their praises to God when they have completed the sheet.



## MISSION MANGER

Tools: brown box to symbolize a manger, markers, crayons, poster board

- Let kids help plan a church-wide collection for new socks and gloves to be given to a clothes closet or homeless shelter in your city. If your city is warm in the winter, collect other items like soap or toothbrushes.
- Review the Text Truth: **Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God.**
- Tell the kids that they are going to design a collection spot and posters for a socks and gloves collection.
- Say: “Since Jesus came to be our Savior and Messiah, we need to share His love with others. We can do that this Christmas by collecting things that others might need to stay warm this winter.”
- Let the boys and girls decide what information needs to go on the posters and how they want to decorate the “manger” or box where the items will be collected.
- Your church might have a wooden manger that they would like to use instead.
- Lead them in decorating the posters and include the dates of the collection.
- Let the kids display the posters in the church and find a spot in a visible place for the collection box.
- If possible, plan a time when kids and their parents can go with you to deliver the items to a shelter or clothes closet.



# THE WISE MEN

## Matthew 2:1-15,19-23

Micah prophesied that the city of Bethlehem was the place where the Messiah would be born. In the opening sentence of Chapter 2, Matthew identifies Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus.

Judea was ruled by Herod. Herod had been granted by the Roman senate the title “king of the Jews,” so when wise men came asking who it was that had been born king of the Jews, Herod’s paranoia set in. Herod had not been born with the title “king of the Jews,” and to think that now there was one born with this title, made him both curious and furious. Herod’s advisors knew Who the wise men had come to see and where to find Him.

Concerned only for himself, Herod’s new plan was to use the wise men to help him determine where the child was. Herod summoned the wise men to his chamber to ask when the star appeared. The timing of this event would have given Herod great insight into the approximate age of the child. Herod asked the wise men to return with news once they found the child so Herod could also worship Him. The wise men were unaware of Herod’s intent and left on their journey only to be warned in a dream later not to return to Herod.

When the wise men found the home where Mary, Joseph, and Jesus lived, they were overjoyed. The men brought with them gifts appropriate for royalty. Gold, a precious metal, would have been useful during the wise men’s travel. Both frankincense and myrrh were scents that were common currency for the day. It is likely the wise men used some of these as payment for their travels from afar, and Jesus’ family would need a form of currency soon when they would travel to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod.

The wise men returned home without alerting Herod to Jesus’ whereabouts. And once again warned in a dream, Joseph took his family to Egypt. The worship of Jesus by the wise men serves as an example to us of the worship Jesus deserves. Jesus is worthy of worship. Encourage boys and girls to worship Jesus together and with their families at home.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 2:1-15,19-23

**MEMORY VERSE:** Matthew 2:2

**TEXT TRUTH:** Jesus is worthy of worship.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** In the Book of Matthew, Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises. He is the King that God's people had been waiting for. As Matthew told the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, he described Jesus as King and Messiah. Jesus reigns over all and He has power over everything—even death.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *Bibles, "Bible Books" (Books of the Bible Posters)*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *"Satellite" (DVD-ROM)*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" (Poster Pack)*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse:** *gift bag, "Matthew 2:2" (Poster Pack), index cards, marker*
- Prayer:** *Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *cardboard wrapping paper rolls or pool noodles, tennis ball, tape, 2 gift boxes opened on one end, "Review Questions" (enhanced CD)*
- Make:** *"Christmas Journey Map" (Poster Pack), yarn, tape or tacks, marker, Bibles*
- Explore:** *"My Gift" (enhanced CD), markers*

**NOTE:** Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible](http://ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible).

## THE WISE MEN VISITED JESUS

### Matthew 2:1-15,19-23

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. They asked, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”*

*King Herod was greatly disturbed when he heard about the wise men and the king. The whole city was disturbed too. Herod gathered all the chief priests and the scribes and asked them where the Messiah was to be born.*

*“The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem,” they told Herod. “This is what the prophet Micah promised long ago.”*

*Herod secretly spoke to the wise men and asked them exactly when the star had appeared. Then he sent the men to Bethlehem to find the child. He also asked them to come back and tell him where he could find the child.*

*The wise men saw the star again. And they followed it until it stopped above the place where Jesus was. When they saw the star, the men were filled with joy. They entered the house and found Jesus with His mother Mary. They fell to their knees and worshiped Jesus. They also gave Him special treasures—gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

*The wise men were warned in a dream not to go back to King Herod. So they returned home taking another route.*

*After the wise men left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Take Mary and Jesus and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you to leave. Herod is about to search for the child.”*

*Joseph got up and took Mary and Jesus during the night to Egypt to escape Herod. They stayed in Egypt until after Herod died. This fulfilled a prophecy about Jesus, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”*

*After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Take Mary and Jesus back to Israel. It is now safe.”*

*So Joseph got up and returned to Israel with Mary and Jesus. They settled in the town of Nazareth. This fulfilled another prophecy that Jesus would be called a Nazarene.*

### KEY POINTS

- We can worship Jesus.

### TEXT CONNECTION

- Matthew 2 gives details of a visit from men who traveled from the east to see Jesus. The men had seen a new star appear and knew that it meant a special birth had occurred. The men went to find the one who had been born “King of the Jews.”
- The wise men stopped in Jerusalem to inquire of the whereabouts of this new baby. When Herod heard the news, he was not pleased and tried to trick the wise men into telling him the location of the newborn King.
- The wise men were faithful and obedient to find the child. They also were obedient to a heavenly message that told them not to return to Herod.
- Paul returned to visit the churches in which he had previously ministered. Then, he began a second journey to new churches, taking along another faithful leader, Silas. (See Acts 15:36-41.)
- Paul and Silas, like the wise men, were faithful to complete God’s call by spreading the message of Jesus.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: Bibles, “Bible Books” (Books of the Bible Posters)

### BIBLE SKILLS

- Display the “Bible Books” poster and point out the divisions of the New Testament.
- Hide the poster and review together the Books of the New Testament in order.
- Say the first book (*Matthew*), then ask for someone to raise their hand to continue. Let them continue until they get stuck, and then allow another volunteer to pick up from there and continue.
- Congratulate those who know all the Books of the New Testament in order, and encourage others to try to memorize them.
- If your group needs help, let them turn in their Bibles to see which is the next one. Discourage using the table of contents for this exercise.
- Say: “As you grow closer to Jesus, you will want to know more about Him and more about His Word. Knowing how to use our Bibles is important as we grow in our understanding of Jesus.”

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Names all the books of the Old Testament and all the books of the New Testament.
- Establishes the discipline of daily Bible reading.
- Names the 10 divisions of the Old and New Testaments in a limited time frame and identifies examples of books in each division.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Ask: “Who can tell me about a satellite? Where are they and what do they do?”
- Display the “Satellite” visual.
- Say: “Satellites are sent into orbit to receive information and send it back to Earth. They are usually launched into space on rockets. There are actually thousands of satellites up in space that send messages back to people on earth.”
- Ask: “Can you think of ways that you or your family use satellites?”
- Be prepared to prompt them with statements like, “Your parents use this on their phone when they need directions.” (*GPS*) “You might use this to receive more than 100 channels on your TV.” (*satellite TV*)
- Point out that some of them might have a satellite dish on their home. These are receiving messages from a satellite in space.
- Other common uses include radio, phones, weather data, and other scientific information.
- Say: “Some scientists spend every day studying the messages they receive from satellites. Today we’re going to talk about some men who studied the sky for information, but this time the message came from God, not a satellite.”

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Invite kids to turn in their Bibles to Matthew 2.
- Say: “We hear stories and sing songs about the wise men at Christmastime. If we want to read what the Bible tells us about the wise men, we have to turn to Matthew 2. This is the only Gospel that tells us about them.”
- Explain that sometimes the wise men are called *magi* or *kings*. These names refer to the same men.
- Tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page has been provided for you to use as a guide.
- Direct kids to look at Matthew 2.
- Ask: “According to the Bible, how did the wise men know to travel to Bethlehem?” (*the star in the east*) “Why did the wise men want to find the King of the Jews?” (*to worship Him*)
- Discuss Herod’s reaction to the wise men. Explain that Herod was probably threatened that a new king might be coming to challenge him. If all the Jews followed a new king, it would cause a lot of trouble for Herod.
- Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 2:7-8.
- Ask: “Do you think that Herod really wanted to find Jesus to worship Him? Why or why not?”
- Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 2:9-12.

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: “Satellite” (DVD-ROM)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: gift bag, “Matthew 2:2” (Poster Pack), index cards, markers
- Prayer: Family Cards

- Ask kids to describe the wise men’s reactions to seeing Jesus for the first time.
- Say: “We can follow the example of the wise men by worshipping Jesus.”
- Display the “Text Truth Strip.” Read the Text Truth together: **Jesus is worthy of worship.**

## PLAY THE VIDEO

- Play the “Session 5” video.
- Ask: “What type of journey did Joel go on today? Why did the wise men go on a long journey? Why should we worship Jesus?”

## MEMORY VERSE

### PREPARATION:

- Print one word or phrase of Matthew 2:2 on each index card. Place the cards inside a gift bag.
- If you have a large number of kids, consider making multiple sets of the supplies and forming smaller groups of kids.

## MEMORY VERSE

- Display the “Matthew 2:2” poster to review the Memory Verse, then cover it up.
- From a gift bag, allow kids to choose a word or phrase from Matthew 2:2.
- Let kids work together to put the phrases in order to complete the Memory Verse.
- Practice saying the verse together.
- Encourage volunteers to take away one phrase at a time, and continue to recite the verse.

## PRAYER

- Ask kids to think of words of worship for Jesus.
- Allow a moment of silent prayer, telling them to offer those words of worship to Jesus.
- Ask if anyone would like to pray his prayer of worship aloud.
- Challenge them to include worship in their prayer times because **Jesus is worthy of worship.**
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help girls and boys locate today's pages, "The Wise Men."
- Invite kids to review today's Bible story as they complete the "Count the Gifts" activity.
- Invite a volunteer to read "Are We There Yet?" Ask another volunteer to read "The Wise Men's Journey."
- Review today's object by reading aloud the information in "Satellite."
- Choose a volunteer to read "Space: It's Out of This World!"
- Lead kids to choose a partner and complete the "Worthy of Worship" activity. After kids finish, allow volunteers to share some of their responses with the group.

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## PAPER ROLL HOCKEY



*Tools: cardboard wrapping paper rolls or pool noodles, tennis ball, tape, 2 gift boxes opened on one end, "Review Questions" (enhanced CD)*

- Position the gift boxes on each end of the room to be used as goals. Use tape to indicate the middle of the room. Each player will need a paper roll. If paper rolls are not available, consider cutting pool noodles in pieces about the length of a roll of wrapping paper.

- **Form two teams. If your room is small, choose 2 players at a time.**
- **Tell them that they will play hockey with the paper rolls and the tennis ball.**
- **If their team is scored on, they will stop to answer a review question from the Bible story.**
- **To make it more challenging, allow the team who scored to think of a question.**
- **Play as long as time allows or until you run out of questions.**
- **Conclude the game by reviewing the Text Truth: Jesus is worthy of worship.**

## CHRISTMAS JOURNEY



Tools: “Christmas Journey Map” (Poster Pack), yarn, tape or tacks, marker, Bibles

- Display the map on a bulletin board or foam core board if you’re using tacks.
- Work together to draw the path that Jesus’ family took at the time of His birth and in the events recorded in Matthew 2.
- Ask for volunteers to read the following verses, then another volunteer to use tacks (or tape) and yarn to trace the path.
- First stop: Luke 2:4 (Nazareth)
- Second stop: Luke 2:4 (Bethlehem in Judea)
- Third stop: Matthew 2:13 (Egypt)
- Fourth stop: Matthew 2:19-23 (Nazareth)
- Conclude by reminding kids that learning about Jesus is an important part of our worship and **Jesus is worthy of worship.**

## WHAT GIFTS DO I BRING?



Tools: “My Gift” (enhanced CD), markers

- Make copies of “My Gift” for each participant.
- Review the Text Truth: **Jesus is worthy of worship.**
- Remind kids that when the wise men saw Jesus, they worshiped Him and brought Him gifts.
- Ask if someone remembers the gifts that are recorded in Matthew 2. (*gold, frankincense, myrrh*)
- Say: “These were pretty expensive gifts for them to bring. They wanted Jesus to have the best.”
- Briefly discuss the kinds of gifts that we can bring Jesus as part of our worship: time, obedience, talents, tithes, and offerings.
- Ask: “How can things like obeying our parents or spending time with someone who needs a friend be a gift to Jesus?”
- Direct their attention to “My Gift.”
- Ask them to fill in the gift boxes with something they can offer to Jesus. Challenge them to be specific.
- If time allows, let them share with each other some of the gifts they put on their sheets.



## Session 6



# PETER'S LETTER

## 1 Peter 1:1-25; 2:1-17,20-25

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, wrote a letter to the Christians who had been scattered among several areas of Asia Minor. The theme of Peter's letter to these Christians is a message of hope. Who better to write a letter of hope in the face of persecution than Peter? Peter, on many occasions, had been arrested and persecuted for sharing the gospel, so sharing a message of hope was something he could do from personal experience.

The letter of 1 Peter is addressed to those who had been scattered due to serious Christian persecution in Jerusalem. These churches would have been made up of both Jewish and Gentile (*non-Jewish*) Christians, so the message Peter shared is one of hope and encouragement for everyone. The believers' escape from persecution in Jerusalem did not mean they had escaped persecution forever. Christians in Asia Minor were still being persecuted for their faith, but not at the extent those in Jerusalem were experiencing.

Peter opened his letter by encouraging the church to recall with joy that temporary suffering may come, but God, through His great mercy, provided Jesus. Jesus, through His death and resurrection, provided a new birth into what Peter termed a living hope. Believers can endure temporary trials because they know that they have a hope that is living and vibrant for a future that is sealed by faith in God.

Because of God's great grace of sending Christ, the main body of Peter's letter is a call to holiness. Peter encouraged the believers to live lives that would identify them as a set apart people, living differently from those around them. Peter listed a holy life as one being free from malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. The life of the believer should be one that shows sincere love for others, obeys the truth, and submits to human authority.

Rejoice together that we can share in the same hope Peter preached. When we endure trials in life, we can hold on to the hope that earthly trials will one day cease and we will be with God forever.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 1:1-25; 2:1-17,20-25

**MEMORY VERSE:** 1 Peter 1:22b

**TEXT TRUTH:** We can endure difficult times because we have hope in our future with Jesus.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** The Book of 1 Peter reminds believers that they will face difficult times because of their belief in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ suffered as the spotless lamb to pay the price for our sin. He was rejected by men, but has become the cornerstone on which believers have a firm foundation. The Book of 1 Peter encourages believers to live godly lives and hope in the future coming of the eternal King.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *“Bible Book Cards” (enhanced CD); “1 Peter,” “2 Peter,” “Jude,” and “Bible Books” (Books of the Bible Posters)*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *whiteboard, dry erase marker, “Silver Cup” (DVD-ROM)*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack)*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse:** *“1 Peter 1:22b” (Poster Pack), 3 pieces of paper, marker*
- Prayer:** *Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *chairs or mats, music, Bible*
- Make:** *“Scroll Template” (enhanced CD), Bibles, ribbon, markers*
- Explore:** *“Prayerwalk Photos” (Poster Pack), tape*

**NOTE:** Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible](http://ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible).

# PETER WROTE A LETTER

## 1 Peter 1:1-25; 2:1-17,20-25

*Peter was a disciple of Jesus. After Jesus was resurrected, He told Peter to care for Jesus' followers. Peter wrote a letter to the believers who were scattered through the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. These believers were facing persecution because they believed in Jesus. Peter understood that the believers needed encouragement.*

*Peter told the believers, "Because of God's mercy, we have a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus." Believers have an eternal inheritance with God. Peter reminded the people to rejoice in their salvation and understand that their earthly trials will one day be gone.*

*Peter also wrote that the people should not return to their past actions. "Be holy," Peter said. "Jesus, the sacrificial lamb, was chosen before the world was created. His sacrifice happened in God's perfect timing. God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. Your faith and hope are in God. Obey God. Love one another. Remember that people and things fade away, but God's Word lasts forever."*

*Peter reminded the people to get rid of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. Christians should desire to grow spiritually like babies grow physically. Peter reminded the people that Jesus was rejected by men and sometimes Christians will be. But God has chosen believers to be His special people, a holy priesthood. Peter told the believers, "God has chosen you to share His praises with everyone. You were once in darkness, but God called you into His marvelous light."*

*Then Peter said, "Remember to act honorably. When those who do not believe see your actions, they will end up glorifying God. God desires for you to do good. Honor everyone. Respect God. Love other believers. Honor those in authority."*

*Peter continued, "Remember that Jesus suffered for you. He gave you an example. You should follow His example. He did not sin, but suffered for our sins. You were like sheep that had gone astray, but you have returned to your Shepherd."*

*The believers were facing difficult times, but Peter reminded them to always follow Jesus.*

### KEY POINTS

- Peter wanted to encourage the church to stay true to Jesus.
- We can encourage others who are experiencing difficult times.

### TEXT CONNECTION

- Peter was one of Jesus' closest disciples. Peter spent more time with Jesus than many of the others, so when it came to sharing Jesus' message, Peter was uniquely qualified. Peter wrote two letters that are included in the Bible.
- The Book of 1 Peter was written to churches in Asia that had been started after persecution from Rome. Peter told the believers that they had a living hope through Jesus Christ.
- Peter encouraged the believers to be examples to others of godly living.
- The lives of Paul and his traveling companion, Silas, exemplified Christ. Paul and Silas had experienced persecution and were in prison for preaching about Jesus (Acts 16:23-24).
- While imprisoned, an earthquake came and broke open the jail cells. Paul and Silas did not leave, but preached the message of Jesus to the jailer and his family. Everyone in the jailer's house became a believer that day.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: “Bible Book Cards” (enhanced CD); “1 Peter,” “2 Peter,” “Jude,” and “Bible Books” (Books of the Bible Posters)

### PREPARATION:

- Print the book cards for the General Letters (Hebrews–Jude) and cut them apart.

### BIBLE SKILLS

- Welcome kids and distribute the book cards for the General Letters division.
- Ask kids with cards to stand in a line.
- Ask other kids to put the books in the order that they are found in the Bible.
- Say: “These books of the Bible are letters written by believers to churches and other followers of Jesus. These letters were an important way to communicate.”
- Ask the kids with the 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude cards to step forward.
- Say: “These are the letters that we will study for the next few weeks. The messages in these letters are important lessons for us about how to live the Christian life by following Jesus.”
- Show the “Bible Books” poster and review where the General Letters are found in the New Testament.
- Display the “1 Peter,” “2 Peter,” and “Jude” posters. Invite volunteers to read some questions and answers from each poster. Explain that you will be studying these books more over the next few weeks.

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Names the 10 divisions of the Old and New Testaments in a limited time frame and identifies examples of books in each division.
- Learns the Bible teaches people how to live a Christian life by following Jesus.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Ask: “If you want to communicate with someone today, how would you do it?”
- Discuss the many ways that we can communicate today: video calls, social media, and so on.
- Make a list on a whiteboard to see how long the list can be.
- Say: “Today we have many ways to talk with others, but in the biblical times, it was a very different situation. In Bible times, letters were often written on scrolls or strips of parchment.”
- Explain: “Letters were a key way for people to communicate. Peter, one of Jesus’ disciples, wrote letters to Christians to encourage them in their faith and help them live holy lives. The letters were passed from one church to another or from one believer to another. Letters were carried by hand from town to town. Letters in the Bible were sometimes called *epistles*.”
- Say: “The letters in the New Testament were written many years ago, but they still tell us important things we need to know about following Jesus and loving others.”
- Display the “Silver Cup.”
- Continue: “In the letter we are studying today (*1 Peter*), Peter tells the people that they were redeemed not with silver but by Jesus. What does *redeemed* mean?” (*Redeemed: To have paid a price in order to get something back from someone. Jesus paid the price to redeem believers from their sin.*)

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Direct kids to open their Bibles to 1 Peter.
- Summarize the first two chapters of 1 Peter in your own words. A Bible story page is provided for you.
- Ask a volunteer to read 1 Peter 1:3-9.
- Direct their attention to verse 6 and explain that many believers during this time were going through hard times. They were often persecuted, or mistreated by others, because they chose to follow Jesus.
- Ask: “When you are going through a hard time, what encourages you?”
- Take time for their responses.
- Say: “Receiving a letter from someone, like Peter, who understood what they were going through was probably very encouraging! Peter knew the truth about Jesus and he knew what it felt like to be persecuted. He was the perfect one to encourage and teach them.”
- Ask a volunteer to read 1 Peter 1:22-23.
- Ask: “What does it mean to be born again (*vs 23*)? This is a phrase we see in other parts of Scripture.” (*to repent of sin and receive the gift of eternal life through Jesus*)

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: whiteboard, dry erase marker, “Silver Cup” (DVD-ROM)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “1 Peter 1:22b” (Poster Pack), 3 pieces of paper, marker
- Prayer: Family Cards

- Say: “Throughout this letter, Peter wrote about how followers of Jesus could love each other better and have hope in Jesus.”
- Show the “Text Truth Strip” and read it together: **We can endure difficult times because we have hope in our future with Jesus.**
- Ask: “How is this an important message for us to hear today?”
- Be sensitive to kids who might be going through a specific hard time. Allow time for kids to encourage each other.

**PLAY THE VIDEO**

- Play the “Session 6” video.
- Ask: “What did Kaileigh learn about this week? Why did people place candles in their windows? Why do believers have hope?”

**MEMORY VERSE**

**PREPARATION:**

- Divide the Memory Verse into three sections on three pieces of paper.

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Form three groups and give each group one section of the Memory Verse.
- Recite the verse with each group saying their section aloud.
- Switch papers and recite the verse again, until each group has recited the whole verse.
- Display the “1 Peter 1:22b” poster and encourage kids to keep working on memorizing the verse.

**PRAYER**

- Say: “I will give you a prompt for prayer, based on something we learned from 1 Peter. If you want to pray aloud after each prompt, you may, but it’s fine to pray in silence.”
- Read each prompt and allow time for prayer after each one:
  - ▶ Thank God that we have hope through His Son, Jesus.
  - ▶ Ask God to help us through hard times in our lives.
  - ▶ Ask God to help us stay away from sin and live holy lives.
  - ▶ Ask God to help us treat others with love.
- Close the prayer time, thanking God for the messages of 1 Peter.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help girls and boys locate today's pages, "Peter's Letter."
- Review today's Bible story as you help kids solve the "Hidden Message."
- Guide boys and girls to apply today's Bible truths in the "Show Love" activity. Allow kids to share aloud some of their ideas.
- Select a volunteer to read the "Spotlight on Peter." Choose another volunteer to read "Peter's Purpose."
- Conclude by reviewing today's object, the "Silver Cup."

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## MUSICAL MESSAGES

*Tools: chairs or mats, music, Bible*

- Arrange chairs or mats in a circle for a game of musical chairs. Make sure you have one less chair or mat than you have kids.

- As the music starts, direct kids to walk around the circle.
- When the music stops, kids should quickly sit in a chair or on a mat.
- Whoever is left standing should give a message similar to ones that Peter included in his letter. These can be general messages, like "Love each other," or "Have faith in Jesus," or specific messages from the text. Kids may use a Bible for help.
- Remind kids that the messages should be encouraging to Christians and reminders about our hope in Jesus.
- Close the activity by reminding them of the Text Truth (**We can endure difficult times because we have hope in our future with Jesus**) and the Memory Verse (*1 Peter 1:22b*).





## MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Tools: “Scroll Template” (enhanced CD), Bibles, ribbon, markers

- Make a copy of the “Scroll Template” for each kid.
- Tell kids to think of someone who might need a message of encouragement this week.
- It could be a teacher, a friend who is going through a hard time, a new Christian, or even one of their parents.
- Distribute the templates and tell them to write a note that will encourage the person they thought of.
- Tell the kids to include a Bible verse from 1 Peter 1–2 in their notes.
- If time allows, they can also draw a picture on the page.
- When they are finished, show them how to roll their papers like a scroll and tie a ribbon around them.
- Encourage them to hand-deliver their notes this week.
- Conclude by reviewing the Text Truth: **We can endure difficult times because we have hope in our future with Jesus.**



## PRAYERWALK FOR THE PERSECUTED

Tools: “Prayerwalk Photos” (Poster Pack), tape

- Prior to the activity, tape the four “Prayerwalk Photos” around the room.
- Form four groups and station each group in front of one of the photos.
- Explain that people today also face persecution for their faith in Jesus. In some countries, the persecution is worse than others.
- Say: “We will take time today to pray for followers of Jesus who are facing persecution, or even death. They need our prayers to stay strong in their faith and believe in the promise of eternal life with Jesus.”
- Tell them that they are to pray silently in front of each picture, then move to the next picture when you tell them.
- Give each group a minute to pray at each prayer photo.
- Close by reminding the kids that **we can endure difficult times because we have hope in our future with Jesus.**



## Session 7



# DO WHAT IS RIGHT

**1 Peter 3:8-18; 4:1-19; 5:1-11**

The last few chapters of 1 Peter continue Peter's encouragement for believers to live holy lives. Peter moved from preaching about societal constructs to the interpersonal relationships those in the church would have been familiar with. The example Peter used of the relationship between husband and wife is one that can represent other relationships as well. In all relationships Christians should always treat one another with a godly love and respect. Compassion, humility, and no desire for revenge are further qualities Peter highlights as those a Christian should possess.

Peter acknowledged, once again, that Christians will endure suffering for the name of Jesus. Peter's encouragement during that suffering was pretty straightforward. Peter said, "Don't fear, Jesus has already suffered." It may have been difficult for the believers to endure the suffering that came along with the persecution of the church, but, as Peter reminded them, Jesus Christ had already suffered much more than they had. Walking in that knowledge would give the people joy when they too suffered.

Continuing his theme, Peter told the believers that since Jesus suffered, it was time for them to stop living in sin and live with love towards one another. Interestingly, Peter even told them that unbelievers would consider the Christian's actions strange and would be surprised that a believer would not join in the unrighteous living of an unbeliever.

Peter ended his letter with an exhortation for pastors—those shepherding the church. Peter reminded these men that they should act eagerly and humbly to attend to the spiritual needs of the people. Peter closed in the same way he opened his letter, reminding the people of God and His immense grace in sending Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sin. A believer's actions should guide others to view a life of following God as something to be desired even during tough times.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 3:8-18; 4:1-19; 5:1-11

**MEMORY VERSE:** 1 Peter 5:7

**TEXT TRUTH:** Even during suffering, our actions should honor God.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** The Book of 1 Peter reminds believers that they will face difficult times because of their belief in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ suffered as the spotless lamb to pay the price for our sin. He was rejected by men, but has become the cornerstone on which believers have a firm foundation. The Book of 1 Peter encourages believers to live godly lives and hope in the future coming of the eternal King.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *Bibles, "Bible Skills" (enhanced CD)*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *adhesive bandages (1 per kid), "Egyptian Sled" (DVD-ROM)*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Christ in Context: 1 Peter" (Poster Pack)*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse:** *"1 Peter 5:7" (Poster Pack)*
- Prayer:** *Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *"Text Truth Strips" (Poster Pack), index cards, marker, paper bags, masking tape*
- Make:** *watercolors, paintbrushes, paper cups with water, paper, waterproof markers*
- Explore:** *"1 Peter Script" (enhanced CD)*

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# PETER ENCOURAGED THE BELIEVERS

## 1 Peter 3:8-18; 4:1-19; 5:1-11

*Peter was a disciple of Jesus. After Jesus was resurrected, He told Peter to care for Jesus' followers. Peter decided to write a letter to some believers who were facing persecution because they believed in Jesus.*

*Peter wanted the believers to remember that despite all the tough times they were facing, they were called to live their lives in a way that honored God. Peter said, "Be compassionate and humble. Don't pay back someone who does wrong to you. You must seek peace."*

*Then Peter wrote, "If you suffer for following God, you are blessed. Always be ready to tell others about Jesus, but be prepared to do it with gentleness and respect. It is always better to suffer because you did good, not because you sinned. Remember, Christ suffered to pay for your sin."*

*Peter told the believers, "Be serious about prayer. Love one another. Be kind without complaining. Use the gift God has given you to serve others. Remember, those who suffer for obeying God should trust their faithful Creator. Be humble. Trust God to care for you. Resist the enemy and be firm in your faith."*

*Peter understood that a believer's actions should honor God. When a believer does what is right, God receives glory.*

*Finally, Peter closed his letter by praying that God would restore, establish, strengthen, and support those who had suffered. Then he reminded everyone that God is all-powerful.*

### KEY POINTS

- We should tell others about Jesus.
- Jesus experienced suffering, so He understands when we have tough times.
- Always trust God.
- One day, God's people will be with Him forever. There will be no more suffering when that day comes.

### TEXT CONNECTION

- Peter finished his first letter by encouraging Christians to be prepared at all times to share the message of Jesus with anyone who asked. Peter continued his explanation of what a life lived for Christ looked like and encouraged believers to live in such a way that people would notice a difference.
- Peter also encouraged believers to live with hope that Jesus Christ would one day return. This hope would guide their desire to share with others.
- Paul was one who lived a life of hope, looking forward to the eventual return of Christ. In one of Paul's travels, he stopped in Athens and saw a statue built to an unnamed god (Acts 17:22-23).
- Paul talked with the people of Athens and introduced to them the God they did not know. Paul preached boldly the message of the gospel. In response, many in the crowd asked to hear from Paul again about these things. Others chose not to listen. Paul faithfully shared his hope in Christ.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

**TOOLS:**

- Bible Skills: Bibles, “Bible Skills” (enhanced CD)

**BIBLE SKILLS**

- Welcome kids and form them into pairs or small groups as they enter.
- Explain that the Bible is the only inspired, written Word of God, so it’s important that we read it and apply what it says to our lives.
- Give each pair or group a copy of “Bible Skills” and one of the following Scriptures: 1 Peter 4:12-13; 1 Peter 5:6-7.
- Tell them to look up their Scripture, read it together, discuss its meaning, and decide how that Scripture applies to their lives.
- Give them 5-6 minutes to complete this activity, then ask them to explain their Scripture and application to a group who had the other Scripture.
- Be prepared to match the groups or pairs—one pair who had the 1 Peter 4 passage with a pair who had the 1 Peter 5 passage.
- Emphasize the importance of understanding the truth of the Bible and applying its teachings to our everyday lives.

### BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Begins to tell others the meaning of the biblical content of a verse or passage.
- Applies biblical principles to personal and social issues.
- Knows the Bible is the only inspired, written Word of God.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Ask kids to share a story of the last time they were hurt or sick.
- Ask: “How bad were you hurting? How long were you sick? How did you act when you were hurt or sick?”
- After a kid shares, give him a bandage and ask him to stick it somewhere visible for the rest of the session.
- Ask: “Does anyone get grumpy when they are sick or hurt?”
- Say: “When we’re in pain, or when we just don’t feel well, we can get unkind or grumpy with people. It’s easy to let how we’re feeling at the time affect our actions.”
- Explain that the apostle Peter reminds us that we can honor God and do what is right, even if we’re suffering.
- Ask if anyone else would like to wear a bandage to remind them how we should act when we’re hurting.
- Give out bandages to those who didn’t share a story, but would like one.
- Display the “Egyptian Sled.” Explain that the sled was invented to help carry a heavy load. We have someone who can carry our heavy load (*burden, cares*). Peter will remind the believers of this in 1 Peter.

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Direct kids to open their Bibles to 1 Peter 3.
- Explain that the Bible study today comes from chapters 3, 4, and 5.
- Tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page is provided for you.
- Say: “Let’s take a closer look at a few of these verses.”
- Ask a volunteer to read 1 Peter 3:15.
- Ask: “How do we honor Jesus, Who is the Messiah?”
- Allow time for response, then ask: “What do you think it means to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you?”
- After they answer, explain that Peter was telling Christians that they should let others know that Jesus was the One who gave them hope.
- Ask someone to read aloud 1 Peter 4:12-13.
- Say: “This sounds scary—like the Christians could expect bad things to happen to them! Well, the truth is that we can expect bad things to happen. We will suffer sometimes, but so did Jesus.”
- Ask: “In what ways did Jesus suffer?” (*mocked, beaten, crucified, hurt by His friends*)
- Explain that we can have hope and strength, even in suffering, because we always have Jesus with us.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip.”
- Say: **“Even during suffering, our actions should honor God.”**
- Ask someone to read 1 Peter 5:7.

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: adhesive bandages (1 per kid), “Egyptian Sled” (DVD-ROM)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” and “Christ in Context: 1 Peter” (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “1 Peter 5:7” (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: Family Cards

- Say: “Remember the sled that carries the heavy burdens? Instead of a sled, we have someone to help us! Who can help us with our troubles? How does it make you feel to know that we can tell Jesus all our troubles?”
- Display the “Christ in Context: 1 Peter” poster. Invite a volunteer to read aloud the statement. Allow kids to ask any questions they have.

**PLAY THE VIDEO**

- Play the “Session 7” video.
- Ask: “Who has seen calligraphy before? Have you ever been given a card that encouraged you? How can you use your talents to encourage someone?”

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Ask the group to stand in a circle, facing one another.
- Display the “1 Peter 5:7” poster and read the Memory Verse aloud together.
- Ask for a volunteer to recite the verse as a rap or with a different rhythm.
- After he “raps” the verse, ask the group to repeat it just as he did it.
- Ask if anyone else has a different rhythm or rap for the same verse.
- Keep repeating the verse until the group knows it well.
- Be prepared to lead this yourself, if you do not have a volunteer.

**PRAYER**

- As you gather for prayer, ask kids to put their hands over the bandages they are wearing.
- If some chose not to wear a bandage, ask them to put their hands over their hearts or over a place where they had a sore or wound.
- Tell them to remember that Jesus has the power to help us through our suffering.
- Allow a moment of silence and ask kids to thank Jesus that He is always with us.
- Now direct them to pray that our actions, even when we’re suffering, would honor Jesus.
- Close the prayer out loud, thanking God for your time together.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help boys and girls locate today's pages, "Do What Is Right."
- Invite a volunteer to read aloud about the "Egyptian Sled." Review today's Memory Verse and help kids understand that God will help them during tough times.
- Direct girls and boys to complete the "What Else Did Peter Say?" activity.
- Choose a volunteer to read "Pack Mules."
- Help the kids complete the "Honoring God" activity to apply the Bible truths from 1 Peter.
- Conclude by reviewing "The Gospel." Allow kids to ask any questions they have about becoming a Christian.

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## TRUTH TRAVEL



*Tools: "Text Truth Strips" (Poster Pack), index cards, marker, paper bags, masking tape*

- Create a starting line and finish line in the room with the masking tape. Write each word of the Text Truth on an index card. Place the word cards in the paper bag. Each group needs a bag of word cards.
- Form two or more even groups.
- Instruct kids that they will travel one at a time from the start to the finish. At the finish, they will retrieve one word of the Text Truth and bring it back to the group.
- The first kid will tag the next person in line, who will travel to retrieve the next word, and so on.
- When all eight words are back, the team should assemble the Text Truth and sit down to indicate they have finished. The first team to retrieve all the words and assemble the Text Truth wins.
- Before they begin the relay, however, each person must choose a different way to travel to the finish line and back. For example, one person may crawl, one may walk backwards, one may hop on one foot, one may dance. But no two people on a team can travel in the same way. They must watch their team members to be sure they do not repeat a travel method.
- Play until all teams have finished. Review the Text Truth: **Even during suffering, our actions should honor God.**

## WATERCOLOR ENCOURAGEMENT



*Tools: watercolors, paintbrushes, cups of water, paper, waterproof markers*

- Encourage kids to print the Memory Verse on their papers.
- Distribute the watercolors and allow kids to paint a design on the paper as well.
- As kids work, guide them to name several people they know who could use a little encouragement. (*Examples: moms, dads, siblings, friends, and so on*)
- Challenge kids to select one of these people to give their watercolor encouragement to.
- Review the Text Truth: **Even during suffering, our actions should honor God.**
- Invite kids to name and discuss times or situations that kids their age need to remember this Bible truth.

## 1 PETER SCRIPT



*Tools: “1 Peter Script” (enhanced CD)*

- Make 2 copies of the script and ask for two volunteer readers: one to read the part of Peter and one to read Questioning Kate/Ken (Kate if your reader is a girl, Ken if your reader is a boy).
- Ask the volunteer readers to come to the front with their scripts.
- Explain that Peter and Questioning Kate/Ken will read a short scene, and then pause.
- When they pause, others in the group will raise their hands and if called on will say how they would respond next in the scene.
- The group will give the next lines, for example.
- After the reading, remind kids that the messages of 1 Peter—including the Text Truth: **Even during suffering, our actions should honor God**—are important for us as Christians today.



# Session 8



## GROWING IN FAITH

**2 Peter 1:1-21; 2:1-3; 3:1-18**

This is the last letter Peter likely wrote before his death. Unlike his first letter, this letter is not addressed to a specific group of people. The main purpose of Peter's second letter was to alert Christians to the presence of false teachers and to give them strategies to defend their faith against those false teachers.

Peter had been an eyewitness to the events of Jesus' life. Peter, one of three disciples Jesus spent virtually every moment with, learned a great deal from Jesus' teaching. Peter cleverly used several eyewitness accounts in this letter to let his readers know that what he was telling them was not a made up story; it really happened, and he saw it as it did. In light of his authenticity, Peter began by warning the early Christians to watch out for false teachers spreading a false gospel.

Peter shared several characteristics of these false teachers living among them—destructive heresies designed to infiltrate the church with destructive teachings; depraved ways which would bring dishonor to the name of Jesus and the church; and teaching which denied the sovereignty of God Who brought the church together. These leaders, however, were not free from God's wrath. Peter gave three examples of times God judged sin. God didn't spare the angels who rebelled against Him. God flooded the entire earth to judge the ungodly, saving Noah and his family. God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to make them an example. God would do the same to these ungodly false teachers.

Peter encouraged the believers to look forward to the return of Christ when these earthly trials would end and life in God's presence would begin. Before that time, however, Peter reminded the Christians to live lives of faithfulness to God and to keep from being unfruitful in God's kingdom or drawn to the teaching of the false teachers. Peter encouraged devotion to the Word and each other as a way to remain faithful to God until Jesus comes again.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** 2 Peter 1:1-21; 2:1-3; 3:1-18

**MEMORY VERSE:** 2 Peter 3:18a

**TEXT TRUTH:** We should grow in our knowledge of Jesus so we can resist false teaching.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** The Book of 2 Peter affirms that Jesus will come again. Jesus is God's Son whom Peter witnessed in His time on earth. Believers should pursue a God-honoring life, trusting God to provide everything they need, until Jesus returns.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *paper; pencils; a collection of Bible study resources such as a Bible dictionary, commentaries on 1 and 2 Peter, study Bibles, copies from trustworthy online resources on Peter and his letters*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *collection of different Bibles, "Gutenberg Bible" (DVD-ROM), "We Can Trust the Bible" (Poster Pack)*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" (Poster Pack)*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video, "Christ in Context: 2 Peter" (Poster Pack)*
- Memory Verse:** *"2 Peter 3:18a" (Poster Pack)*
- Prayer:** *Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *"Fact Check Stories" (enhanced CD)*
- Make:** *strips of colored construction paper, stapler or tape, markers, scissors*
- Explore:** *Bibles, paper, pencils, whiteboard, dry erase marker*

**NOTE:** Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible](http://ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible).

## RESIST FALSE TEACHERS

**2 Peter 1:1-21; 2:1-3; 3:1-18**

*The apostle Simon Peter wrote a second letter to those who followed Christ. Peter had witnessed the miracles and teachings of Jesus. He saw Jesus' death on the cross and He saw Jesus after He rose from the grave. Peter was getting old and knew that soon he would die. But before he did, Peter wanted to encourage the church to remember some important truths.*

*Peter wrote, "God has given you everything you need to grow in your faith—in your knowledge of Jesus. Add these things to your faith: goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. These things will keep you from being unfruitful or useless."*

*Peter also warned of false prophets who will only live selfishly. "Don't forget what the prophets and apostles have taught," Peter warned the believers.*

*Then Peter reminded the people that God does not experience time like we do because He invented time. "To the Lord one single day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a single day. Jesus' return is not delayed. God is patient and wants all to repent of their sin. However, one day Jesus will return. Remember you are waiting for the new heavens and the new earth, just like Jesus promised."*

*Peter ended His letter with these words, "Dear friends, while you wait for Jesus, be on guard against false teachers. Continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. Glory to God. Amen."*

### KEY POINTS

- We should always learn more about God.
- God wants people to repent of their sin.
- Jesus is coming back.
- People will tell us things that are wrong. We need to read the Bible so we can recognize when this happens.

### TEXT CONNECTION

- Peter's second letter to the churches encouraged a devotion to God's Word. The Bible is the message of Christ given to people. Followers of Jesus need to be devoted to His Word.
- Peter wrote this second letter to warn believers that there were false teachers infiltrating the churches. The teachers led the people away from the truth. Peter's solution for this problem was fairly simple—know the Word. Peter told his readers that if they knew what the Scripture said, they would not be led astray by false teachers.
- Paul and Silas encountered false teachings in their travels. On one occasion, Paul, in the name of Jesus, healed a girl who had been tormented by an evil spirit and was being used by her owners in ways that did not honor God (Acts 16:16-18).
- Both Paul and Peter understood the truth of God's Word. Knowing the truths of Scripture allowed Paul to heal the girl and allowed Peter to encourage faithfulness to the truth.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: paper; pencils; a collection of Bible study resources such as a Bible dictionary, commentaries on 1 and 2 Peter, study Bibles, copies from trustworthy online resources on Peter and his letters

### BIBLE SKILLS

- Welcome kids and ask each person a few questions about themselves as they enter.
- Ask questions such as: “How old are you? How long have you lived here? Do you go to school nearby?”
- When they are seated, tell them that we ask questions to get to know someone better. We also learn about people by spending time with them.
- Say: “We get to know Jesus by spending time with Him and His Word, the Bible. We can also get to know more about the people we read about in the Bible, but it takes a little work. We can’t just sit down with them and ask questions.”
- Show the resources you brought and briefly explain how to use them.
- Say: “Let’s get to know Peter a little better. Here are some resources that I trust to give you information about Peter.”
- Explain that not every resource is accurate, especially resources online. Advise them to check with parents or other trusted adults to be sure the information is correct.
- Form small groups, each with a Bible study resource.
- Tell them to work together to find three facts about Peter and/or his letters from the New Testament. Each group can record their facts on a piece of paper.
- Give them a few minutes to work together then share their answers.

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Uses Bible study resources to gather information about Bible writers.
- Uses other resources to enrich her Bible skills and knowledge (Bible dictionary, commentary, concordance, atlas, digital sources).

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Show a collection of different Bibles or look at the different Bibles in your room.
- If you have a very old personal Bible, show it to the kids.
- Say: “Bibles can be packaged differently, but the words that we have in the Bible are all inspired by God and written by people that He chose to record His messages for us. We can believe that the words of the Bible are true.”
- Show the picture of the “Gutenberg Bible” and explain that the message of the Bible hasn’t changed for thousands of years.
- Display the “We Can Trust the Bible” poster.
- Ask for volunteers to read some of the reasons we can trust that the Bible is true.
- Say: “Peter, one of the disciples and writers of the Bible, reminded believers that they should be growing in their knowledge of God. Let’s take a look at his second letter.”

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Direct kids to turn to 2 Peter.
- Explain that Peter expected the believers to whom he was writing would learn more and more about Jesus and grow in their faith.
- Share the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page has been provided for you.
- If you are comfortable, briefly share how you have grown in your faith since you became a Christian.
- Ask a volunteer to read 2 Peter 1:5-7.
- Direct the kids to look at those verses in their own Bibles.
- Ask: “What do you see that we are supposed to add to our faith?” (*goodness, knowledge, and so on*)
- Now ask a volunteer to read 2 Peter 1:20-21.
- Remind them of the “We Can Trust the Bible” poster and say: “According to these verses, who spoke the messages in the Bible?” (*God, the Holy Spirit*)
- Explain that the Holy Spirit spoke the message of God to the writers, like Peter, who recorded it. That’s why we can have God’s trusted message today.
- Show the “Text Truth Strip” and read it together: **We should grow in our knowledge of Jesus so we can resist false teaching.**
- Say: “Some people don’t believe the Bible. They might even make fun of it or of us for believing it! But we can know that it is true and shouldn’t believe people who tell us things that are not in the Bible.”

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: collection of different Bibles, “Gutenberg Bible” (DVD-ROM), “We Can Trust the Bible” (Poster Pack)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video, “Christ in Context: 2 Peter” (Poster Pack)
- Memory Verse: “2 Peter 3:18a” (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: Family Cards

**PLAY THE VIDEO**

- Play the “Session 8” video.
- Ask: “Where did Joel go? What did he learn about eternal life? Why did Peter want the church to continue learning about Jesus? How can you continue to learn about Jesus?”
- Display the “Christ in Context: 2 Peter” poster and discuss how 2 Peter teaches us about Jesus.

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Display the “2 Peter 3:18a” poster and read the Memory Verse together.
- Ask for volunteers to give you simple motions for the words or phrases *grow*, *grace and knowledge*, and *Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*.
- For example, they could go from squatting to standing for *grow*, point to their heads for *grace and knowledge*, and spread their arms above them for *Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*.
- Lead the kids to do the motions and say the verse together.
- Repeat, asking kids to whisper, then get louder and louder each time you repeat the verse with motions.
- Encourage kids to practice this verse throughout the week.

**PRAYER**

- Ask kids to stand as you pray to show that you are growing in your faith.
- Tell kids that they can pray aloud if they’d like to by saying, “Lord, help me to grow by ...” and finishing the statement.
- Close the prayer time by asking God to help you to keep growing in your faith.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help girls and boys locate today's pages, "Growing in Faith."
- Invite kids to review today's Bible story by solving the "Be Fruitful Wordsearch."
- Select volunteers to read aloud the "Bible Facts."
- Direct kids to examine the information about the "Ancient Bible." Remind kids that in Bible times, people did not typically own copies of Scripture. Challenge kids to think of how many Bibles they have at home.
- Select volunteers to read "How Do I Study My Bible?"
- Read aloud the "Test for Truth" and remind kids how to use their Bibles to find the truth about God.
- Conclude by guiding kids to complete the "What Would You Say?" activity. Kids may work together to think of their responses.

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## FACT CHECK

Tools: "Fact Check Stories" (enhanced CD)

- Print the "Fact Check Stories" and use these to start each story chain.

- Tell kids to scatter around the room, leaving space between them and the other kids.
- Explain that you are going to tell one person a short story. Then that person will whisper the story to a friend, but will change one detail of the story.
- For example, if the story is about a girl, the person might change it by saying it's about a boy.
- That person will then tell the story with another changed detail to another person.
- Let this continue through several kids.
- When you say, "Stop," ask the last person who heard the story to tell it aloud.
- Compare the story to what you originally read.
- If time allows, continue with the other stories, asking kids to choose friends who have not yet participated.
- Close the activity by explaining that stories can easily change when we're just telling them over and over. That's why it's important to go back to the original source to find out the truth.
- Say: "For us, as Christians, the Bible is our source of truth. The more we know about the Bible, the better we will understand when we hear something that is false."
- Review the Text Truth: **We should grow in our knowledge of Jesus so we can resist false teaching.**





## FAITH CHAIN

*Tools: strips of colored construction paper, stapler or tape, markers, scissors*

- Cut strips of construction paper before the activity that kids will use to make a paper chain.
- Review the Text Truth: **We should grow in our knowledge of Jesus so we can resist false teaching.**
- Give strips of construction paper to each kid.
- Tell them to look in their Bibles again at 2 Peter 1:5-7.
- Direct them to write each characteristic, starting with *Faith*, on a separate strip of construction paper.
- If time allows, they can also decorate each strip.
- Show them how to assemble a simple paper chain by forming loops with a staple or tape, then looping a strip through the circle.
- When they are finished, ask them to hold their chains so they hang down.
- Say: “Put this somewhere you can see it this week. It will remind you to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus so that you can resist false teaching.”
- Challenge kids to break one link off the chain each day this week. They can carry the link with them to remind them that they can seek to grow in their faith throughout the day.



## IN CONCLUSION

*Tools: Bibles, paper, pencils, whiteboard, dry erase marker*

- Print the following two questions on the whiteboard: *What are some harmful things that I need to avoid? What are some things that I should do to grow in my faith?*
- Review the Text Truth: **We should grow in our knowledge of Jesus so we can resist false teaching.**
- Ask kids to turn in their Bibles to 2 Peter 3:14-18.
- Say: “This the very last part of Peter’s letter.”
- Ask volunteers to take turns, each reading one verse.
- Explain that Peter was warning of people who would change parts of Scripture so that it was no longer true. They would twist the meanings of things and Peter did not want the Christians to believe things that weren’t true. Paul also wrote that we are to be wise and understand what is actually true about Jesus.
- Give each kid a piece of paper and a pencil.
- Ask them to use 2 Peter 3:14-18 to answer the questions: “What are some harmful things that I need to avoid? What are some things that I should do to grow in my faith?”
- Remind them of the Text Truth and tell kids to take their sheets home as a reminder to grow in their understanding of Jesus this week.



## Session 9



# DEFEND YOUR FAITH

## Jude 1:1-4,10-25

The Book of Jude was written by Jude, the half brother of Jesus. Jude identifies himself as the brother of James, another New Testament writer, and also a half brother of Jesus. Jude's letter is written to friends who had been called by, were loved by, and being kept for Jesus by God. Jude's language denotes the past, present, and future sovereignty of God.

Jude's message was short and addressed a problem that had arisen in the church. Jude identified false teachers who had infiltrated the church and were teaching things contrary to God's message. Jude called these men ungodly men who used God's grace as an excuse for immoral living. These men denied the person of Jesus Christ as Master and Lord. As did Peter, Jude included several illustrations of times when God sent judgment on those who were not followers of His.

Jude spends considerable time helping the church identify the characteristics of those false teachers. Jude said they would reject authority (v. 8), wander blindly in sin as did Cain (v. 11), lead out of selfishness (vv. 12-13), and were self-serving discontented grumblers (v. 16). Jude's encouragement to the church was that those false teachers would suffer the same fate as unbelievers from the past.

At the close of his letter, Jude encouraged the church to combat false teachers by growing strong in their faith. Jude gave four ways that Christians could do this. First, build yourself up in your faith by increasing your knowledge of God and His Word. Second, pray as you are directed by the Holy Spirit. Third, keep yourselves in the love of God by living faithful and obedient lives. Finally, wait expectantly for Christ's return.

Jude's letter helps us see that lives which honor God are ones that stand firm on faith in Christ and are ready to share the truth of the Scriptures when confronted with false teachings. Be mindful of God's Word and grow in your faith as you guide boys and girls.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Jude 1:1-4,10-25

**MEMORY VERSE:** Jude 1:20-21

**TEXT TRUTH:** Be ready to defend and share the gospel with false teachers.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** Jude was the half-brother of Jesus and wrote his letter to warn Christians against the false teachers who were trying to lead believers astray. The Book of Jude encourages believers to rely on Jesus Christ to provide for them and to serve as their example so they can be pleasing to God in all ways.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** “*What Books Are Missing?*” (enhanced CD)

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** “*Fake Money*” (DVD-ROM), fake money from a game
- Examine the Text:** Bibles, “*Text Truth Strips*” and “*Christ in Context: Jude*” (Poster Pack), “*Jude*” (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location* video
- Memory Verse:** “*Brick Template*” (enhanced CD), tape, “*Jude 1:20-21*” (Poster Pack), marker
- Prayer:** Family Cards

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens
- Move:** masking tape or small goal, rubber balls
- Make:** Bibles, paper, markers
- Explore:** “*The Gospel*” (enhanced CD)

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## JUDE'S LETTER TO THE BELIEVERS

### Jude 1:1-4,10-25

*Jude was a follower of Jesus. He was the brother of James and both men were half brothers of Jesus. Jude decided to write a letter to some of his friends who believed in Jesus. He originally planned to write about salvation, but Jude had heard some bad news. His friends were around some people that were not following God. These people were false teachers and they had become a part of the church.*

*Jude warned, "These people are dangerous. They fellowship with you but only care about themselves." Jude gave the people an image to think about. He said the false teachers were like dangerous reefs, hiding below the water, that could harm a ship.*

*Jude continued describing the false teachers, "They are unhappy grumblers. They are selfish and speak with arrogance. They try to flatter people to gain an advantage. Remember what the apostles of Jesus said. They warned that false teachers would exist. The false teachers would create division among the believers."*

*Then Jude challenged his friends, "Grow strong in your faith and pray. Stay in God's love. Have mercy on others who doubt and carefully help them understand about Jesus."*

*Finally, Jude ended his letters with some praise for Jesus, "To Him who can protect you from stumbling and help you. To only God our Savior, through Jesus our Lord, we give glory, majesty, power, and authority."*

### KEY POINTS

- We can help people learn the truth about Jesus.
- God has told us what is true.
- We can read God's Word to help us know what is true.

### TEXT CONNECTION

- The Books of Jude and 2 Peter are very similar in their encouragement to the church. Both books focus on the nature of false prophets and warn believers to be ready to share their faith when confronted with false teaching.
- Jude expanded on Peter's urgings to know the truth. Jude told believers that they should also defend their faith against false teaching. Standing firm in the truth was a sure way to combat false teachers.
- In Acts 18, the church in Ephesus had a new visiting preacher. Apollos was not exactly teaching falsehoods, but he also was not teaching the whole truth. Priscilla and Aquila, a couple whom Paul had previously met, approached Apollos and helped him understand the full truth about Jesus.
- Knowing the full truth proved useful for Priscilla and Aquila and aligned with Jude's admonition to his readers to know the full truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Priscilla and Aquila defended the full faith.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: “What Books Are Missing?” (enhanced CD)

### BIBLE SKILLS

- Welcome kids and distribute copies of “What Books Are Missing?”
- Explain that each book in the Bible is important and that God included these messages for a reason.
- Say: “Memorizing the Books of the Bible in order helps us find passages quicker and makes it easier to share with others. Remember that the Bible is God’s message about Himself and how He rescues us from our sin.”
- Tell kids to fill in the missing books without using a table of contents from the Bible or the “Bible Books” poster.
- Allow them to work together in pairs or small groups.
- Encourage them to recite the books aloud as they work.
- If they have missing books remaining at the end of your time, invite them to use a Bible to complete the page.

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Knows and recites all the books of the Bible in order in a limited time frame.
- Learns the Bible is God’s message about Himself and how He rescues and transforms us.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Ask: “How many of you would like \$1,000? If you had \$1,000 to spend today, how would you spend it?”
- Distribute the fake money and display the “Fake Money” visual.
- Ask: “If you went to buy [something they mentioned before] with this money, what would happen?”
- Allow time for them to respond, then say: “The problem with fake money is that it isn’t real! We can’t spend it like real money. It’s actually worthless.”
- Ask: “What about religion? Can people have a fake or false religion?” (*Yes. Any religion apart from trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is a false religion.*)
- Say: “As a teacher, I want you to understand the Bible because it is true! There’s nothing fake or false in the Word of God, but some people might change the words or the meanings to lie about what it says. I want you to know the difference between false teaching and the true messages of the Bible.”

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Invite kids to turn in their Bibles to Jude.
- Ask them what they notice about the Book of Jude. (*It’s very short! It’s one of the shortest books of the Bible.*)
- Display the “Jude” poster and the “Christ in Context: Jude” poster. Allow kids to read some information from the two posters before you continue your study of Jude.
- Say: “Jude was a half brother to Jesus. We don’t know a lot about him from the Bible, but we know that he believed in Jesus as the Messiah and wanted to tell others.”
- Explain that Jude wrote a letter to encourage believers to recognize false teaching and be ready to defend the truth of the gospel. We need to be able to do that today, too.
- Tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page is provided for you.
- Ask someone to read verses 12-13 aloud.
- Ask: “What are ways that Jude describes false teachers in these verses?” (*dangerous reefs, waterless clouds, fruitless, and so on*)
- Say: “Those are some strong word pictures! Jude was really warning about the dangers of people who say things about the gospel that aren’t true.”
- Ask: “What are some things we can do to know the truth of the gospel?” (*read the Bible ourselves, listen to trusted Christian teachers, ask questions, memorize Scripture, pray*)
- Show the “Text Truth Strip” and read it aloud together.

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: “Fake Money” (DVD-ROM), fake money from a game
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” and “Christ in Context: Jude” (Poster Pack), “Jude” (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “Brick Template” (enhanced CD), tape, “Jude 1:20-21” (Poster Pack), marker
- Prayer: Family Cards

- Say: “This is our goal—to **be ready to defend and share the gospel with false teachers.**”
- Say: “Let’s remember that God will protect us and help us as we defend His Word. It says so right here in Jude.”
- Ask a volunteer to read verses 24-25 in closing.

**PLAY THE VIDEO**

- Play the “Session 9” video.
- Ask: “Who wants to be paid with fake money? Why or why not? What did Joel learn in today’s adventure? How do we learn the truth about God?”

**MEMORY VERSE**

- This is a lengthy memory passage, so encourage kids to work hard this week to memorize it.
- Display the “Jude 1:20-21” poster and review the verse a few times with the boys and girls.
- Form groups. Distribute the “bricks” with the words of the verses.
- Allow kids to work together to build the verse on the floor or tape it to a wall.
- Remind them that they will need to start with the end of the verse at the bottom, so that it can be read from the top down.
- They might choose to build different structures or designs.
- Encourage them to keep repeating the verse as they build.

**MEMORY VERSE PREPARATION:**

- Make copies of the “Brick Template.” Write the words of the verse on the paper bricks. Make one set for each group of kids.
- You may opt to tape the paper bricks to cardboard bricks for kids to stack while they learn the memory verse.

**PRAYER**

- Say: “Defending our faith might seem difficult, but let’s remember that we have God and each other to help us.”
- Invite kids to use a different posture of prayer: kneeling, standing, hands raised to God.
- Direct them to pray silently for a moment, asking God to help them defend their faith and share truth with false teachers.
- Close by praying aloud for the kids to be aware of things that are not true and to trust God to help them.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help boys and girls locate today's pages, "Defend Your Faith."
- Select two volunteers to take turns reading the "Spotlight on Jude."
- Choose volunteers to read about the "Key Features of Biblical Letters."
- Lead girls and boys to complete the "My Letter" activity.
- Review today's Bible story as you read about "Fake Money" and "Dangerous Reefs."
- Conclude by helping kids respond to the "Share the Gospel" activity.

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## DEFENSE!



*Tools: masking tape or small goal, rubber balls*

- Prior to the activity, set up a small soccer goal on one side of the room. You can also use masking tape to make a goal on the floor or bottom of the wall. The goal should be large enough so that it's difficult to defend with just one person. You could even use an entire wall, depending on the size of your room.

- **Say:** "It's time to strengthen our defense."
- **Ask** what a defense does in sports.
- **Explain** that you will start with one defender in front of the goal.
- **Choose** 3-4 kids, each with a ball, to try to score by rolling the ball at the goal.
- **Say:** "If your ball touches the wall, you score."
- **This activity** should be difficult for one defender, but then begin to add defenders.
- **Keep** adding defenders, until the kids rolling the balls are having trouble scoring.
- **As time** allows, encourage kids to switch positions.
- **Give** kids time to debrief by asking questions like, "How did it feel as defenders were added to the game?"
- **Say:** "Defending our faith can feel like defending a large goal. It's seems hard to do by ourselves, but much easier to do with others, and God will always help us!"
- **Review** the Text Truth: **Be ready to defend and share the gospel with false teachers.**



## WHO'S JUDE TALKING ABOUT?

Tools: Bibles, paper, markers

- Review the Text Truth: **Be ready to defend and share the gospel with false teachers.**
- Ask a volunteer to read Jude 1:10-11.
- Say: "Jude referenced some people from the Old Testament when he was describing false teachers. Let's find out who he was talking about."
- Allow kids to work in pairs or small groups to make a poster of facts about one of the people Jude mentioned.
- Assign one Bible person to each group and read them the background statements.
  - 1) Cain: Genesis 4:1-16 (Background: Cain was the first son born to Adam and Eve. He was very different from his brother Abel and struggled to respect the Lord.)
  - 2) Balaam: Numbers 22:22-35 (Background: Balaam was prophet of God. Balak, a king, wanted Balaam to curse his enemies, but God had already blessed these people. The king was willing to pay Balaam a lot of money if he would bring this false message.)
  - 3) Korah: Numbers 16:1-35 (Background: Korah was an Israelite leader who had traveled with Moses through the desert. He was supposed to respect the words of the Lord spoken through Moses and Aaron.)
- Direct the groups to look up the Old Testament references in their Bibles, then write down a few facts about their assigned person.
- As they finish, remind them that we can recognize false teachers by studying the Bible and learning from trusted teachers.



## GOSPEL TRUTH

Tools: "The Gospel" (enhanced CD)

- Display the "The Gospel" handout. You may wish to print a copy of the handout for each group or pair to reference.
- Review the Text Truth: **Be ready to defend and share the gospel with false teachers.**
- Say: "In order to defend and share the gospel, we need to understand it and be able to explain it to others. This poster of 'The Gospel' is an easy way to tell someone how to become a Christian."
- Form small groups or pairs.
- Using the poster as a guide, tell them to take turns explaining the gospel to each other.
- Encourage them to look for opportunities to share this truth with their friends.
- As a leader, be aware of kids who have not made a personal commitment to follow Christ. Be prepared to talk with them further outside of class. Include their families and church staff as appropriate for those who want to make decisions.

*Tip: "The Gospel" handout can also be found in the back of each kid's Explorer Guide.*



# Session 10



## CROSSING THE JORDAN

### Joshua 3–4

As the first of the Old Testament history books, Joshua is a book that highlighted Israel's past and outlined its preparation for a new beginning and future. Joshua had been chosen as Moses' successor and, when Moses died, Joshua became the leader of the Israelite nation. Joshua's job was to lead the nation of Israel into the land God had promised and guide the Israelites to destroy the inhabitants of the land.

Two spies previously had entered the land and spent the night at the home of Rahab. Rahab hid the spies and when they returned to Joshua, they gave a great report stating that all the inhabitants of the land were worried and scared because the Israelites were gathered on the banks of the Jordan River ready to cross. The next morning Joshua assembled the Israelites and gave them instructions to gather at the river. For three days the nation waited for God's direction. On the third day Joshua instructed the priests who were carrying the ark of the covenant to go in front. As soon as the feet of the priests touched the river, the water dried up and people crossed, being careful not to come too close to the ark.

To highlight the miracle God performed, Joshua made reference to the fact that it was the time of year when the Jordan River overflowed its banks. Even at flood stage, the river dried up as soon as the feet of the priests stepped in the water. Each of the twelve tribes selected a man who would choose a large stone from the riverbed that would be carried to their campsite. These stones were set up in Gilgal as a memorial to remind the people, and future generations, of the abundant grace God had shown them on their journey.

Joshua had been commanded by God to be courageous. God told Joshua that He would always be with Joshua. Joshua prepared to lead the people into the promised land. The crossing of the Jordan River highlights God's ever-present grace and protection. His presence is no less present today. We can have courage knowing that God is always with us.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Joshua 3–4

**MEMORY VERSE:** Joshua 1:9b

**TEXT TRUTH:** We can have courage because God is always with us.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** The Book of Joshua is a reminder of God’s divine provision for His people. God, as a part of His covenant relationship with the Israelites, chose Joshua to lead the people to enter the promised land and a time of rest. Through Jesus, God has established a new covenant of grace and forgiveness of sin through faith. Jesus will one day lead His people into their inheritance, an eternity with God, and an everlasting rest.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *Bibles, “The Name Is the Name” (Poster Pack), marker, “Joshua” (Books of the Bible Posters)*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *“Acacia Grove” (DVD-ROM), pictures of local trees*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, “Jordan River” and “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack), personal keepsake*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse:** *“Joshua 1:9b” (Poster Pack), plain paper, marker, tape*
- Prayer:** *Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *masking tape, 24 stones cut from construction paper*
- Make:** *small smooth stones or rocks, paint, paintbrushes*
- Explore:** *Bibles, “What’s in the Ark?” (enhanced CD), markers, scissors*

**NOTE:** Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible](http://ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible).

# THE ISRAELITES CROSSED THE JORDAN

## Joshua 3–4

*After Moses died, God chose a new leader for His people. God chose Joshua to lead His people into the promised land. It was a big job, but God promised to be with Joshua and to help him.*

*Joshua gathered all of the people at the edge of the Jordan River. Joshua told the people to get ready to follow the ark of the covenant. He told the priests to carry the ark of the covenant ahead of the people.*

*Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, “Tell the priests to carry the ark of the covenant to the Jordan River. At the river, they should stand in the water.”*

*This was the time of the year that the Jordan River was full of water. It had so much water that it overflowed and spilled out over the edges.*

*Joshua prepared the people with special instructions. He picked one man from every tribe of Israel.*

*Joshua said, “When the feet of the priests carrying the ark enter the Jordan River, the water will stop and stand up in a mass.”*

*And that is what happened. While the priests stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed, all of the Israelites crossed on dry ground to the other side of the river.*

*After they all crossed, Joshua sent the 12 men to each get a stone from the middle of the riverbed. Joshua called to the priests, “Come up from the Jordan.” As soon as the priests were on solid ground, the waters of the Jordan flowed again like normal.*

*Joshua stacked the stones together and made a memorial. The stones were a reminder of how God stopped the Jordan River so His people could walk into the land He had promised them so long ago.*

### KEY POINTS

- God is all-powerful.
- The people obeyed God.
- God keeps His covenants (*promises*).

### TEXT CONNECTION

- Following the death of Moses, God commissioned Joshua to lead the nation of Israel. Joshua was given the task of leading the nation across the Jordan River into the promised land. God’s promise to Abraham was about to be fulfilled.
- Joshua commanded the people to consecrate, or cleanse, themselves in anticipation of God’s miraculous deliverance. God promised to stop the waters of a rushing river to allow the people to enter the land on dry ground.
- Joshua gave the people careful instructions. As the people followed the instructions, God delivered the people safely into the land He had promised Abraham.
- Just as Joshua led the people to live holy lives, Paul also encouraged believers in holy living. In Acts 20, Paul told the church in Ephesus that God desired holy living. Paul told the believers what his life had been like and encouraged them to follow his example of following Jesus.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: Bibles, “The Name Is the Name” (Poster Pack), marker, “Joshua” (Books of the Bible Posters)

### BIBLE SKILLS

- Say: “Today we begin learning about the Book of Joshua. This book is named after the person whose story is recorded there.”
- Display the “Joshua” poster and allow kids to take turns reading information about the Book of Joshua.
- Ask kids to turn to the table of contents in their Bibles.
- Say: “There are other books of the Bible that are named after people, too. Let’s see if we can identify them all.”
- Direct their attention to the “The Name Is the Name” poster.
- As kids find a book that looks like a name, tell them to raise their hand and call it out.
- Help them with pronunciation if needed. *(Note: This poster does not include a line for Song of Solomon, as some versions call it Song of Songs. If a child mentions it, simply write it in.)*
- Say: “Let’s try to get them in order.”
- Write in the names on the lines on the poster or ask for a volunteer.
- Explain that it’s easy to find the stories about many of these people in the Bible, because we just look for the book with their name.

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Identifies prominent Bible people by the books in which their stories are recorded.
- Pronounces most of the names of Bible people, places, and things mentioned in the Bible.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Invite kids to sit in a circle.
- Ask: “What kinds of flowers and trees grow around your home?”
- Give them time to answer if they know.
- Show a few pictures and identify the trees that grow in your community. Then show the “Acacia Grove” visual.
- Say: “Our Bible passage today starts in an Acacia Grove. Joshua and the Israelites had camped in the grove, probably because of the shelter that Acacia trees provide.”
- Say: “Now let’s find out what happened to Joshua when he left the Acacia Grove.”

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Ask kids to turn in their Bibles to Joshua 3.
- Say: “Today we will hear about a brave man who obeyed God and how the people learned that they could have courage when God tells them what to do.”
- Tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible script has been provided for you.
- Ask for a volunteer to read Joshua 3:1-5.
- Display the “Jordan River” poster.
- Remind kids that this was a very important river in many Bibles stories and the same river where Jesus was later baptized.
- Display the reverse side of the “Jordan River” to reveal the ark of the covenant. Remind kids that this ark was a large wooden box covered with gold, not a big boat!
- Ask kids, based on the Bible story you told, what was so incredible about the way the Israelites crossed the river. (*The water stopped flowing so the people could cross on dry ground.*)
- Ask: “What did Joshua tell the people to get from the river?” (*12 stones*)
- Ask for a volunteer to read Joshua 4:19-24.
- Ask: “What does the Bible say is the reason that Joshua set up the stones?” (*To remember how Israel crossed on dry ground and that the Lord is mighty*)
- Discuss with the kids special keepsakes that people have today to help them remember something about the Lord. If you’ve brought something personal, show it to the kids and explain its significance and how it reminds you about God.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and read it together: **We can have courage because God is always with us.**
- Say: “We can have a lot of courage when God is leading us.”

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: “Acacia Grove” (DVD-ROM), pictures of local trees
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Jordan River” and “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack), personal keepsake
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “Joshua 1:9b” (Poster Pack), plain paper, marker, tape
- Prayer: Family Cards

**MEMORY VERSE  
PREPARATION:**

- Divide the Memory Verse into 4 sections and write each section on a separate piece of paper.

**PLAY THE VIDEO**

- Play the “Session 10” video.
- Ask: “Where did Kaileigh visit today? What is Meriwether Lewis known for? What Book of the Bible did Kaileigh learn about? What did she learn? Why can we have courage?”

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Display the “Joshua 1:9b” poster and review the verse.
- Tape the four parts of the Bible verse to four walls or different spots in your room.
- Explain that you will all move together reading the verse when you come to it.
- If your group is very large, ask a small group to lead by moving around the room while the rest of the kids remain seated.
- After reading the verse together 3 times, direct kids to turn their backs to the papers.
- Move around the room repeating the verse without looking at the words.
- Encourage kids to continue to memorize the verse through the week.

**PRAYER**

- Ask kids for prayer requests they have regarding something they might need courage for this week. Perhaps they need courage for a test or to talk with a friend about Jesus.
- Take time for requests, then pray that God will give everyone courage to obey Him completely.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help girls and boys locate today's pages, "Crossing the Jordan."
- Choose two volunteers to take turns reading the "Spotlight on Joshua."
- Read for boys and girls the information in "What is a Levitical Priest?"
- Invite a volunteer to read aloud the information about today's object, the "Acacia Tree."
- Review today's Bible story as kids solve the "Joshua 3 Crossword."
- Direct kids to read "How Many Israelites Crossed the Jordan?"
- Lead kids to complete the "Memorial Stones" activity.

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## CROSS THE JORDAN



*Tools: masking tape, 24 stones cut from construction paper*

- Using masking tape, make two sides of the "river" on the floor of your room. Place the "stones" in the middle.

- Divide the group into two teams.
- Explain that one at a time, they are to wade into the river (*walk on their knees*), pick up a stone, and carry it to the other side.
- They should stay on their knees for the whole journey.
- When one person reaches the other side, the next player on their team can go.
- The first group to have all 12 "stones" across the river is the winner.
- Remind kids that Joshua asked the people of Israel to do something hard, but he knew that God would give them strength and courage to complete the task.
- Conclude the activity by reviewing the Text Truth: **We can have courage because God is always with us.**



## ROCK THE PAINT

*Tools: small smooth stones or rocks, paint, paintbrushes*

- Provide enough paint sets and paintbrushes for each kid to paint their own stone.

- Review the Text Truth: **We can have courage because God is always with us.**
- Say: “Joshua used stones from the Jordan River to remind the people what God had done for them. They knew that they could have courage because God led them safely across the Jordan River.”
- Invite kids to paint their stones with colors, words, or pictures that remind them about what God has done for them.
- If they cannot think of anything, suggest that they paint the Memory Verse or the word *Courage*.
- Here are some other things they might want to paint: rainbow, cross, flower, church.



## ARK REVIEW

*Tools: Bibles, “What’s in the Ark?” (enhanced CD), markers, scissors*

- Provide enough copies of “What’s in the Ark?” for each child.

- Say: “Let’s remind ourselves about what was in the ark of the covenant.”
- Ask a volunteer to read Hebrews 9:3-4.
- Give kids time to color the pictures, cut out the items, and glue them to the ark.
- As they work, explain that each of these items was like the stone memorial from Joshua. They were reminders of what God had done for the Israelites and how they could trust Him.
- Review the Text Truth: **We can have courage because God is always with us.**
- Invite kids to discuss times they need to trust God.



Session

11



# THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

## Joshua 2; 6

Fresh from the crossing of the Jordan River, the people again listened to Joshua as he gave instructions for God's miraculous conquest of Jericho. God had given Joshua quite a battle plan; march around the city, not saying anything, once a day for six days. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times then blow the trumpets and shout and God would provide the victory. The Israelites, to their credit, followed God's instructions exactly.

Jericho had been sealed, as Rahab had reported, because of the people's fear of the Israelites. Nobody came in; nobody left. Joshua, priests carrying the ark of the covenant, priests with trumpets, and armed men, gathered to march around the city. Each day they marched once around the city and went back to their tents. Modern excavations of Jericho estimate the city spanned about 9 total acres, and with a wall 20 feet thick and 25 feet high, it would have taken roughly 20 minutes to make one loop around the city. Imagine the residents, perhaps standing on the wall taking it all in. What are these Israelites doing? How do they think they are going to win a battle against us with this silly strategy? Little did the residents of Jericho know what would happen next. God was in control.

Early on day seven the same people marched seven times around the city. As the priests blew their trumpets and the people shouted, the walls fell in such a way that each armed man was able to go directly into the city. As the residents were recovering from the shock of what just happened, they had no time to prepare for the fighting men entering the city from every side. God's victory was swift and complete.

Joshua sent the two men who had spied the land to Rahab's house to rescue her and those who had gathered with her. Once Rahab was safe, Israel burned Jericho to the ground. Israel's obedience to a battle plan that was odd led them to victory. God's victory was so miraculous that Israel could not deny it had come from Him. We should trust God and obey Him as Israel did. When we truly trust God, we will obey Him completely.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Joshua 2; 6

**MEMORY VERSE:** Psalm 28:8a

**TEXT TRUTH:** When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** The Book of Joshua is a reminder of God’s divine provision for His people. God, as a part of His covenant relationship with the Israelites, chose Joshua to lead the people to enter the promised land and a time of rest. Through Jesus, God has established a new covenant of grace and forgiveness of sin through faith. Jesus will one day lead His people into their inheritance, an eternity with God, and an everlasting rest.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *“Unscramble History Books” (enhanced CD), “Bible Books” (Books of the Bible Posters)*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *“Rahab Script” (enhanced CD), “Scarlet Cord” (DVD-ROM), short red ribbon*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack)*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse:** *“Psalm 28:8a” (Poster Pack), short red ribbon*
- Prayer:** *long piece of ribbon or rope—long enough for the whole class to hold the same rope; Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *chair or obstacle for kids to run around*
- Make:** *pieces of ribbon (1 per kid), construction paper, markers, glue, scissors*
- Explore:** *Bibles, index cards, marker*

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# JERICHO WAS CONQUERED

## Joshua 2; 6

*God had promised His people the land of Canaan, but other people lived in the land. The other people did not love God or honor Him. They worshiped false gods.*

*The people of Israel prepared to battle the city of Jericho. Joshua sent two spies to the city. A woman named Rahab hid the spies and protected them from being found. The men promised Rahab that she and everyone in her house would be saved if she tied a scarlet cord to her window.*

*Rahab helped the men escape the city and tied the scarlet cord to her window. The spies hurried back to Joshua and reported that God would give them the victory.*

*Jericho was a strong city with a big wall. No one was entering the city or leaving the city because they were scared of the Israelites. God told Joshua, "March around the city one time for six days. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times. The priests will blow their trumpets and the people will shout. Then the wall will collapse."*

*Joshua summoned the people. The soldiers lined up. Seven priests with seven trumpets stood behind the soldiers. More priests followed them, carrying the ark of the covenant. Joshua told the people not to say a word until he said, "Shout!" They marched around the city once and returned to camp. The next day they did the same thing. They marched around the city once and returned to camp. On the third day, fourth day, fifth day, and sixth day, they marched around the city once and returned to camp.*

*Finally, the seventh day arrived. At dawn, they began to march. Once around the city. Twice around the city. They marched around the city seven times. After the seventh time, the priests blew the trumpets and this time Joshua yelled, "Shout! God has given you the city." The people shouted, the trumpets blew, and the walls of Jericho fell down.*

*Joshua sent the two spies to Rahab's house and rescued all of the people in her home. From then on, Rahab lived with the Israelites. God had helped the Israelites defeat the city of Jericho.*

### KEY POINTS

- God gave Joshua and the Israelites instructions. They obeyed.
- God defeated Jericho.
- Rahab was rescued.

### TEXT CONNECTION

- Once God led the nation of Israel into the promised land, the time had come for the Israelites to take the land from those who lived there. The first city on their plan was the city of Jericho. Jericho was a fortified city, but God instructed Joshua and the people not to worry because He would provide the victory.
- Before the conquest started Joshua sent two spies into the city. The spies were sheltered by Rahab, who hid the spies when men from the city came to look for them. After the city was taken, Rahab and her family were saved because of her trust in God's mission.
- The salvation afforded to Rahab and her family was a picture of the salvation provided ultimately through Jesus Christ. Paul, in Acts 22, told of his salvation and the new life he had in Christ.
- Paul recounted his dramatic conversion and told of his commitment to trust and obey God in all he did. Like Paul, we should trust and obey God in our daily lives.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: “Unscramble History Books” (enhanced CD), “Bible Books” (Books of the Bible Posters)

### BIBLE SKILLS

- As kids come in, give them a copy of “Unscramble History Books.”
- Explain that your Bible story is from Joshua, which is one of the books of history found in the Old Testament.
- Direct kids to work in pairs or small groups to unscramble the names of the other books of history found in God’s Word.
- Say: “One hint is that the Old Testament books are in order and there’s only one book of history found in the New Testament.”
- When they have completed their sheets, show them the “Bible Books” poster. Point out the other divisions of the Bible.
- Say: “The books of history help us to know that the Bible is true. We can trust that it is the inspired, written Word of God!”

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Names the 10 divisions of the Old and New Testaments in a limited time frame and identifies examples of books in each division.
- Knows the Bible is the only inspired, written Word of God.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Before class, recruit a girl to read the short “Rahab Script.”
- Show the piece of red ribbon that you’ve brought.
- Ask: “What are some things that we use cord or rope for today?” (*holding things together, rope swing, pulling or dragging things, attaching things like boats to a trailer*)
- Show the “Scarlet Cord” visual.
- Explain that today’s Bible story introduces a woman named Rahab who used a scarlet (*a deep shade of red*) cord.
- Ask the girl to read the script aloud.
- Say: “We can all be used by God when we’re obedient. When you see a rope or cord this week, remember how God used Rahab to protect the spies.”

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Invite kids to turn in their Bibles to Joshua 6.
- Point out that we first meet Rahab in Joshua 2, but the rest of today’s story comes from Joshua 6.
- Tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page is provided for you.
- Say: “Let’s look again at the instructions God gave to Joshua and his men.”
- Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 6:1-5.
- Ask: “Do these seem like strange instructions to you? What would you have thought if you had heard this?”
- Explain that these instructions came from God. The plan to march around the city seven times made perfect sense to Him and was all a part of His plan.
- Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 6:20-21.
- Ask: “What happened when they obeyed God?” (*the walls fell*)
- Say: “Joshua and his people learned that they could obey and trust God, and we can too!”
- Also point out that Rahab and her family were saved, just as was promised.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip.”
- Say: **“When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.”**

### PLAY THE VIDEO

- Play the “Session 11” video.
- Ask: “What did Joel want to climb? Was he successful? Why not? What challenge did the Israelites face? Were they successful? Why? What does that tell us about obeying God?”

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: “Rahab Script” (enhanced CD), “Scarlet Cord” (DVD-ROM), short red ribbon
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “Psalm 28:8a” (Poster Pack), short red ribbon
- Prayer: long piece of ribbon or rope—long enough for the whole class to hold the same rope, Family Cards

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Show the “Psalm 28:8a” poster.
- Practice saying the verse together.
- Ask everyone to stand in a circle.
- Hand the red ribbon to someone and ask them to say the verse. Then ask them to give the ribbon to someone else. Whoever has the ribbon should recite the verse before passing it to someone else.

**PRAYER**

- Ask everyone to stay in the circle and hold the long piece of ribbon or rope.
- Tell kids to focus on God’s strength and how He saves us.
- Begin the prayer by saying, “God, you are my strength because ...”
- Invite kids to say a phrase that completes the sentence. (*because You helped me with my test, because You sent Jesus to earth, and so forth*)
- Allow time for children to pray aloud if they feel led.
- Close with your own ending to the sentence.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help boys and girls locate today's pages, "The Battle of Jericho."
- Review today's Bible story as volunteers read aloud about the "Scarlet Cord," "Why Seven?" and "Not a Small Wall."
- Challenge girls and boys to solve the "Message Scramble."
- Invite kids to apply the truth of today's Bible story by completing the "Trust Scale."
- Read about the "Colorful Symbols."

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## SEVEN SPINS

*Tools: 2 chairs or obstacles for kids to run around*

- Clear space for a relay race with the 2 chairs or obstacles for kids to run around.

- Form two teams.
- Tell them that this will be a relay race.
- The first person will run across the room, run around their team's chair seven times, then return to the group, tagging the next person in line to run.
- After the game, say: "Some directions may seem strange to us, like the directions that Joshua heard. But when God gives the directions, we can always trust Him. The most important thing for us to do is obey."
- Review the Text Truth: **When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.**



## RIBBON PRAYER REMINDER



*Tools: pieces of ribbon (1 per kid), construction paper, markers, glue, scissors*

- Tell kids to create a prayer reminder with the ribbon. They can write words or draw pictures on the construction paper (*keeping them small in size*), cut them out, and glue them on the ribbon.
- For example, a kid might attach a picture of a cross and the word *trust*.
- The words or pictures should remind them of things God has done for them or how they should respond to God.
- They should glue the pictures so that when they hold the ribbon hanging down, they can see what they have attached.
- Tell them that when they see this ribbon, they should stop and thank God for His strength and protection.
- Conclude by reviewing the Text Truth: **When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.**

## TRUST AND OBEY



*Tools: Bibles, index cards, marker*

- Print each Bible name and reference(s) on a separate index card. Stack the cards.
  - ▷ Noah: Genesis 6:12-22
  - ▷ Moses: Exodus 3:7-12
  - ▷ David: 1 Samuel 17:37-50
  - ▷ Daniel: Daniel 6:10-22
  - ▷ Esther: Esther 5:1-5; 7:1-4
  - ▷ The Disciples: Matthew 28:16-20
- Say: “We see the example of other people in the Bible who trusted and obeyed God.”
- Invite kids to select a name from the stack.
- If they know the story already, they can share how that person trusted and obeyed God.
- If they do not know, they can ask the group to look up the Bible reference.
- If time allows, let them share about modern-day people they know who are trusting and obeying God.
- They might think of missionaries or people in your church who are in ministry.
- Remind kids that each of us needs to trust God and obey Him every day.
- Conclude by reviewing the Text Truth: **When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.**

# THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL



## Joshua 10:1-14

Once Israel captured and destroyed Jericho, they had a good grip on the central portion of the promised land. Joshua 10 records a battle against five kings from the southern portion of Canaan that would give Israel a handle on the southern half of the land God had promised them.

Israel's fame had spread. Joshua had been tricked into making a treaty with a city in southern Canaan called Gibeon. The other southern kings took up arms together and attacked Gibeon, partly to punish them for making a deal with Israel, and partly to engage Israel with their combined strength. When word got to Joshua that Gibeon was in trouble, Joshua and his men, encouraged by God, marched all night to confront the attackers and fulfill a promise Joshua had made to Gibeon. The battle raged and, as the armies of the southern kingdoms fled, Joshua's men were in pursuit.

In one of the most amazing miracles recorded in the Bible, Joshua publicly prayed to God to extend the daylight so Israel could finish the job God had sent the Israelites to do. God, in His sovereignty, heard Joshua's prayer and answered it. The event was so dramatic that later, as Joshua recalled this event, he was most amazed, not by the fact that God stopped the sun, but by the fact that God listened to a man. The Hebrew phrase used here carries with it the connotation of obedience. In essence, God was obedient to the voice of a man, not the other way around. God had no compulsion to obey Joshua's prayer, but He did, making that day one like there had never been before or since.

As recorded in Scripture, Joshua's prayer sheds light on the fact that God does indeed listen to us when we pray. Prayer is one way we communicate our thoughts and our feelings to God. God hears us pray and He always answers prayer in the way that is best for us. God answered the prayers of Joshua in a spectacular way and can certainly do the same for us as we pray in His will.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Joshua 10:1-14

**MEMORY VERSE:** Psalm 62:8

**TEXT TRUTH:** God answers the prayers of His people in the way that is best for them.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** The Book of Joshua is a reminder of God's divine provision for His people. God, as a part of His covenant relationship with the Israelites, chose Joshua to lead the people to enter the promised land and a time of rest. Through Jesus, God has established a new covenant of grace and forgiveness of sin through faith. Jesus will one day lead His people into their inheritance, an eternity with God, and an everlasting rest.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills: *Bibles*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In: *white night or midnight sun phenomenon photos from the internet, "Gibeon Water Shaft" (DVD-ROM)*
- Examine the Text: *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" (Poster Pack), whiteboard, dry erase marker*

- Play the Video: *Explore the Bible on Location video*

- Memory Verse: *"Psalm 62:8" (Poster Pack)*

- Prayer: *Family Cards*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides: *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move: *"Review Questions" (enhanced CD), plain white paper, markers, Bibles*

- Make: *"Sun Drawing" (enhanced CD), markers, scissors, Bibles*

- Explore: *"Joshua's Battle Map" (Poster Pack), scissors, Bibles with maps*

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## JOSHUA PRAYED FOR HELP

### Joshua 10:1-14

*Joshua and the Israelites defeated the people at Jericho by following God's instructions. When the people of Gibeon heard what happened at Jericho, they came up with a plan to trick the Israelites. They lied to Joshua about where they were from. Joshua agreed to make a treaty with the people of Gibeon.*

*Later, the king of Jerusalem heard about the treaty the Israelites made with the people of Gibeon. He was worried. Gibeon was a large city with warriors. So the king of Jerusalem sent word to the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. The five kings agreed to attack Gibeon.*

*The five kings attacked Gibeon. The men of Gibeon sent a message to Joshua asking for help. Joshua and the Israelite army traveled to Gilgal.*

*God gave Joshua a special message, "Do not be afraid. I will give you the victory."*

*Joshua and his men marched all night from Gilgal and surprised the armies of the five kings. The Lord caused the men in the other armies to be confused and Israel defeated them. Then as the other armies tried to flee, God sent hail to stop them.*

*On that day, Joshua prayed to God, "Please let the sun and the moon stand still." And that is what happened. God heard Joshua's prayer and answered it. God fought for the Israelites.*

### KEY POINTS

- God answered Joshua's prayer.
- God protected His people, the Israelites.

### TEXT CONNECTION

- Joshua made a treaty with Gibeon, a nation he thought was living outside the promised land. When Gibeon needed help, God told Joshua to go and help just as Joshua had promised.
- Joshua, in defense of Gibeon, marched with his army all night to confront the attackers. As they fought, daylight was fading. Joshua prayed for God to extend the day. God listened to Joshua's words and kept the sun in the sky so Joshua and the Israelites could finish what they started. God led Joshua and the people to a victory over the five kings.
- Joshua was a faithful follower of God. Paul is also described as a faithful follower of God and on one occasion, he had the opportunity to tell the king of the radical change that Jesus Christ had made.
- In Acts 26, Paul remained faithful to God and told King Agrippa the story of his conversion.
- God hears our prayers. We can pray for help to share the gospel.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

**TOOLS:**

- Bible Skills: Bibles

**WINTER MEMORY VERSES:**

- John 1:29
- Matthew 4:19
- Matthew 6:33
- Luke 2:11
- Matthew 2:2
- 1 Peter 1:22b
- 1 Peter 5:7
- 2 Peter 3:18a
- Jude 1:20-21
- Joshua 1:9b
- Psalm 28:8a
- Psalm 62:8
- Joshua 24:24

**BIBLE SKILLS**

- Using the Winter Memory Verses list, assign each kid a different verse to look up in the Bibles.
- Help those who may not know how to use their Bibles.
- When they find the verse, ask them to read it aloud (*or say it from memory*).
- After each verse ask: “How can we apply this verse to our lives today?”
- If time will not allow you to complete the list, choose only a few verses.
- Note that today’s Memory Verse is Psalm 62:8 and you will be learning more about it in Bible Study.

### BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Knows the Bible is the only inspired, written Word of God.
- Memorizes Bible passages and quotes individual verses when given the reference.
- Applies biblical principles to personal and social issues.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- When children are gathered, ask: “Have you ever heard of *white nights*? What about a *midnight sun*?”
- Show the photos and explain: “White nights happen in certain parts of the world, very far north, where the sun does not go below the horizon for a period of time. This usually happens mid-June to early July. In these cities, like St. Petersburg, Russia, it stays light all night long. Some cities have festivals to celebrate the white night. In Alaska they call this phenomenon the midnight sun.”
- Introduce today’s Bible study by saying that Joshua experienced something like a white night. He was in battle and asked God to keep the sun up so he could fight through the night. God answered his prayer.
- Say: “This battle took place in a city called Gibeon.”
- Display the “Gibeon Water Shaft” visual and explain that this was a major water source for the city in Bible times.

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Invite kids to turn in their Bibles to Joshua 10.
- Tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page is provided.
- Say: “Now let’s look closely at all the things we see the Lord doing in this passage.”
- Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 10:6-9 and another volunteer to read verses 10-14.
- Say: “Let’s list the things we see the Lord doing to help Joshua and the Israelites.”
- Write these on a whiteboard as kids mention them. Some will include:
  - ▶ He reassured Joshua.
  - ▶ He threw the enemies into confusion.
  - ▶ He struck down the enemies.
  - ▶ He threw large hailstones at the enemy.
  - ▶ He gave the Israelites victory.
  - ▶ He made the sun (*and the moon*) stand still.
  - ▶ He answered Joshua’s prayer.
- Show the “Text Truth Strip” and read it together: **God answers the prayers of His people in the way that is best for them.**
- Say: “Passages like this one from Joshua 10 show us that God is very powerful and will certainly answer the prayers of His children.”

### PLAY THE VIDEO

- Play the “Session 12” video.
- Ask: “What did Joel learn about scuba diving? What situation did Joshua and Israel face in today’s Bible story? How did God help them? What can we learn from that?”

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: white night or midnight sun phenomenon photos from the Internet, “Gibeon Water Shaft” (DVD-ROM)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack), whiteboard, dry erase marker
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “Psalm 62:8” (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: Family Cards

### JUMP IN PREPARATION:

- Before the session, download and print photos of a white night or midnight sun phenomenon. This phenomenon occurs in Russia, Alaska, Iceland, Greenland, Norway, and other areas of the northern hemisphere.

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Show the “Psalm 62:8” poster.
- Form small groups or pairs.
- Ask each group to take a few minutes to plan a rap, chant, or song using the words of the Memory Verse.
- Allow time for each group to share its song.
- Encourage them to continue to memorize this verse during the week.

**PRAYER**

- Discuss times that God answered prayers.
- Remind kids of things you have prayed for as a group.
- Ask: “How did God choose to answer that prayer?”
- Explain that God does not always answer our prayers the way we want, but we can always trust that He will do what is right.
- Close in prayer, thanking God for the way He answers prayer.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help boys and girls locate today's pages, "The Day the Sun Stood Still."
- Review today's Bible story by having volunteers read "The Day the Sun Stood Still" and "Five Kingdoms."
- Choose a volunteer to read about today's object, the "Water Shaft."
- Invite girls and boys to complete the activities "Answered Prayers" and "Prayer Time."
- Conclude by reading "Safety and Refuge."

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## FAST FEET

*Tools: "Review Questions" (enhanced CD), plain white paper, markers, Bibles*

- Form two teams.
- Have each team send one player to you.
- You will ask them a review question from the Bible study, and the players will sit, remove one sock and shoe, hold the marker with their toes and write the answer to the question.
- Team members should help their player by looking at Joshua 10 for the answer.
- Some questions will be difficult!
- The teams get a point if their contestant finishes first.
- After a point is given, two new players come forward.
- Keep points and congratulate the winners.
- Remind kids about the important truths from today's Bible story, including the Text Truth: **God answers the prayers of His people in the way that is best for them.**





## SUN PROMISE

Tools: “Sun Drawing” (enhanced CD), markers, scissors, Bibles

- ☐ Make a copy of the “Sun Drawing” for each kid to have one.
- Guide kids to use their Bibles to locate these verses about prayer: Psalm 32:6a; Matthew 5:44; 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Briefly discuss each verse.
- Ask kids to share what they have learned about prayer from these verses and today’s Bible story.
- Distribute a “Sun Drawing” to each kid. Tell kids to color the “Sun Drawing” and cut it out.
- On each ray of the sun, instruct them to write out a way that God has answered a prayer.
- Tell them to post their drawing somewhere at home to be reminded that **God answers the prayers of His people in the way that is best for them.**



## MAP PUZZLE

Tools: “Joshua’s Battle Map” (Poster Pack), scissors, Bibles with maps

- ☐ Cut out the pieces of the “Joshua’s Battle Map” puzzle.
- Allow kids to work together to complete the puzzle.
- When the puzzle is complete, ask kids to find the city of Gibeon—the city where the sun stood still.
- Ask them what other cities are shown on the map.
- Say: “Joshua was victorious in battle because God was on his side. He was claiming the land that God had promised the Israelites.”
- Remind kids about the important truths from today’s Bible story, including the Text Truth: **God answers the prayers of His people in the way that is best for them.**
- Ask: “What other cities on the map do you recognize?”
- Show kids how to use their own Bibles and locate the “maps” section in the back. (*Note: Some Bibles may not have any maps. Provide a few extra Bibles that do in case a kid needs to borrow one.*)
- Allow kids to explore the maps, calling out names of cities and other geography that they recognize from the Bible.



## Session 13



# THE COVENANT RENEWED

## Joshua 24:1-28

Joshua had been Israel's faithful leader following the death of Moses. As his life was about to end, Joshua summoned all of Israel together to give them one final charge. The people assembled in Shechem, the same city where God promised Abram the land would belong to his future offspring (*Genesis 12:6-7*). God's promise to Abram had certainly been fulfilled and this site was an appropriate place for the nation to renew their covenant with God.

Joshua began by quoting God's words about His history with Israel. The story started at the beginning with Terah, the father of Abraham, and hit the highlights of God's faithfulness to the people. These highlights included the birth of Isaac, Jacob's move to Egypt, the escape through the Red Sea, the wilderness wanderings and confrontation with Balaam, the crossing of the Jordan, and the defeat of the Canaanite cities. God reminded the people that the place they lived was a place they did not work for or build; they lived there because of the grace of God. Each event was significant in showing God's sovereign plan in bringing the people to where they stood at that moment.

Joshua spoke next and commissioned the people with a straightforward commission: since God was so faithful to you, be faithful to Him. In one of the more frequently quoted verses of Scripture, Joshua delivered his famous message, "Choose to follow the made up gods of your ancestors, or the one true living God! As for me and my family, we are going to follow the one true God" (*Joshua 24:15*). The people whole-heartedly agreed to be followers of the one true God, instead of following the made up gods of their ancestors.

In a final warning, Joshua alerted the people to the consequences of failing in their promise to follow God. As the people agreed to worship only the Lord God, Joshua established the covenant in writing and set up a large stone to mark the occasion. In the future, as the people passed the stone it would be a reminder of the promise they had made to be faithful followers of God. Devote yourself fully to the one true God!

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Joshua 24:1-28

**MEMORY VERSE:** Joshua 24:24

**TEXT TRUTH:** We should be completely devoted to God.

**CHRIST IN CONTEXT:** The Book of Joshua is a reminder of God's divine provision for His people. God, as a part of His covenant relationship with the Israelites, chose Joshua to lead the people to enter the promised land and a time of rest. Through Jesus, God has established a new covenant of grace and forgiveness of sin through faith. Jesus will one day lead His people into their inheritance, an eternity with God, and an everlasting rest.

### GET STARTED TOOLS

(10 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills: *Bibles*

### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In: *"Abraham Illustration" (DVD-ROM)*
- Examine the Text: *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" (Poster Pack)*
- Play the Video: *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse: *"Joshua 24:24" (Poster Pack)*
- Prayer: *Family Cards, "Christ in Context: Joshua" (Poster Pack)*

### SMALL GROUP TOOLS

(30 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides: *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move: *red, blue, yellow, and green pieces of construction paper; tape; marker*
- Make: *paper or index cards, pens, Bibles, markers*
- Explore: *"Abraham to Joshua Timeline" and "Timeline Cards" (Poster Pack), tape, scissors*

**NOTE:** Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle.

Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle.

For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible](http://ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible).

# JOSHUA'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

## Joshua 24:1-28

*Joshua's time of leading the Israelites was coming to an end. Joshua called all of the people together. He needed to teach them one more time about loving and obeying God. Joshua had a message from God for the people. Joshua began to remind the people of all of the things God had done for them. "Long ago, God chose Abraham and led him to the land of Canaan. God gave Abraham children and grandchildren. Jacob and his sons later traveled to Egypt."*

*Eventually the people had become slaves. So God sent Moses and Aaron to rescue His people. God sent plagues on Egypt until Pharaoh agreed to let the people go. Then God parted the Red Sea so the people could walk across on dry land. God protected the people from Pharaoh's army. The Israelites lived in the wilderness for many, many years.*

*Joshua continued the story, "Later, God brought you to the promised land. The Amorites fought you, but God helped you defeat them. A man named Balaam tried to curse you. But God protected you and Balaam blessed you instead. When you crossed the Jordan River, you came to Jericho."*

*Now Jericho had been a large city with a huge wall around it. Joshua shared God's message, "The people of Jericho and many other peoples fought against you, but God helped you defeat them." God told the people, "I gave you a land that you did not work to get. I gave you cities that you did not build. You are eating from plants that you did not plant. Therefore, worship only the Lord." God told the people to get rid of any idols and worship only Him—the one true God.*

*Then Joshua said, "Choose today whom you will worship. Will you worship the false gods? My house will worship the Lord."*

*The people all agreed to worship only God. "We will worship the Lord, because He is our God."*

*Joshua warned the people that God was a holy God. God is a jealous God. He cannot allow His people to worship anything other than Him. The people again agreed to worship only God. The people made a covenant with God and Joshua wrote it down. He also set up a large stone under an oak tree next to the tabernacle to remind the people of their promise.*

### KEY POINTS

- Like the Israelites, we have a choice to make. We can worship God or we can worship other things or people. God wants us to worship Him.

### TEXT CONNECTION

- Joshua spent many years leading the Israelites to conquer the land that God had promised them. At the end of the conquest, once peace arrived, Joshua gave one final commission to Israel. Joshua challenged the people to be faithful followers of God instead of following the false gods the other people of the land worshiped. The Israelites agreed to follow only God.
- Joshua told the people to love God more than anything. Many years after Joshua's challenge, Paul was found to be one who loved God more than anything.
- Paul had been given many opportunities to tell about God's love to many different people. Paul, under house arrest awaiting trial in Rome (Acts 28:16), wrote his letter to encourage the believers to do as Joshua had commanded—follow only the one true God.
- Just as Joshua and Paul taught, true faithful devotion to God is important and we must choose whom we will serve.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE AT HOME

See the enhanced CD for additional family resources.

## GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Bible Skills: Bibles

### BIBLE SKILLS

- Welcome the kids and ask them to line up for a Bible-drill style activity.
- Tell them that they will review finding the books of the Bible used in this quarter's Bible studies.
- One by one, call out the names of the books.
- When you say, "Go," direct children to find that book in the Bible.
- If your kids are used to Bible drills, you can use the "Attention, Present Bible, Start" commands.
- As kids open their Bibles to that book, they should step forward.
- Ask for the names of the books directly before and after the one you called.
- Let the kids work together to answer if they don't know.
- Direct kids to find the following books in the Bible: Matthew, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude, Joshua, Psalms, Luke, John.
- Close the activity by reminding them about the importance of reading God's Word and knowing how to use it.
- Say: "The message from the Old Testament to the New Testament is about God's love for us and His plan for our lives."

## BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Locates all the books of the Bible in a limited time frame.
- Learns the Bible is God's message about Himself and how He rescues and transforms us.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### JUMP IN

- Ask: “What kinds of things do you learn in history class? For example: Who were some past leaders of the country? Who are some other leaders you’ve learned about in history?”
- Give time for kids to answer.
- Say: “The history of the Israelites started with Abraham and the covenant God gave to him.”
- Show the “Abraham Illustration” visual.
- Ask if anyone remembers hearing Bible stories about Abraham.
- They might remember that Abraham and Sarah had their first child when they were very old or the story of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac.
- Say: “Even though today’s story takes place many years after Abraham had died, he is still a part of the history of the Israelite people and continues to be important. In today’s story, Joshua reminded the people about the way God loved them and the promise He made to Abraham that the Israelites would be God’s special people.”

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Direct kids to turn in their Bibles to Joshua 23.
- Explain that today’s Bible story comes from chapters 22, 23, and 24.
- Tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page has been provided.
- Ask a volunteer to read aloud Joshua 24:14-16.
- Say: “God wants our complete devotion. He doesn’t want us to love anyone or anything more than we love Him.”
- Ask: “What are some things today that we might love more than God?” (*sports, video games, phones, friends*)
- Discuss with kids how we can show our devotion to God. (*spending time with Him every day, reading the Bible, being with other Christians, being obedient to tell others about Him, worshiping Him by singing, praying*)
- Ask another volunteer to read Joshua 24:22-24.
- Say: “The most important thing in these verses is that the people obeyed. They renewed their covenant, or promise, to be people completely devoted to God.”
- Show the “Text Truth Strip” and read it together: **We should be completely devoted to God.**

### PLAY THE VIDEO

- Play the “Session 13” video.
- Ask: “What did Kaileigh learn? What special ‘memories’ did Joshua want Israel to remember? Why was it important that they remember all God had done? Who did Joshua want the people to love and worship? Why should we love and worship God more than anyone or anything else?”

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: “Abraham Illustration” (DVD-ROM)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, “Text Truth Strips” (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “Joshua 24:24” (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: Family Cards, “Christ in Context: Joshua” (Poster Pack)

**MEMORY VERSE**

- Display the “Joshua 24:24” poster and read it together.
- Remind kids that Joshua was telling the people that he had decided that he would be fully devoted to God. He wanted to know if the people were also choosing to be devoted to God.
- Say the beginning of the verse, “The people said (*un*)to Joshua” and ask for kids to raise their hands to say the rest of the verse.
- Encourage them to say the rest of the verse without looking at the poster.
- See how many kids can say the end of the verse from memory, after you give the beginning prompt.
- Encourage kids to continue learning their Memory Verses at home.

**PRAYER**

- Display and review the “Christ in Context: Joshua” poster. Invite kids to think about all that God has done for His people, including sending Jesus!
- Spend some time in silent prayer, asking kids to think about things in their lives that they show too much devotion to.
- Tell them to ask God to help them keep those things from becoming more important in their lives than He is.
- Ask for a volunteer to close the prayer time by praying aloud.
- Distribute a Family Card to each boy and girl. Invite someone to read aloud the description on the card. Challenge kids to share their cards with their families during the week.
- Dismiss to small groups.

## SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help girls and boys locate today's pages, "The Covenant Renewed."
- Review today's object by asking a volunteer to read about "Abraham."
- Select two volunteers to take turns reading the "Spotlight on Moses."
- Invite boys and girls to review today's Bible story as they solve the "Order Up!" activity. Allow kids to use their Bibles for help.
- Invite more volunteers to read "Plant Provision" and "Israel's History."
- Conclude by inviting kids to quietly think about and complete the "What Would You Say?" writing response.

### TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" on the app.

### ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

## COLOR CODED

*Tools: red, blue, yellow, and green pieces of construction paper; tape; marker*

- Tape the colored paper to different walls. Write what the color stands for on the paper to help kids remember. Kids will move around the room and stand in front of the paper.

- Say: "Let's see how much you care about things in life."
- Explain that each color stands for how much they care about something:
  - 1) Red = Can't live without it!
  - 2) Yellow = I really like it.
  - 3) Green = Not bad, every once in a while.
  - 4) Blue = I could do without it.
- Direct kids to get up and go stand in front of the color that best represents how they feel about each thing you call out.
- One by one call out the following, leaving a few seconds for kids to move after each one: pizza, sports, video games, family, friends, school, phone, toys, candy, bicycle, pets, church.
- After the activity, say: "None of these things are bad, we just have to learn that nothing can be more important to us than God."
- Review the Text Truth: **We should be completely devoted to God.**



## LOVE LETTER TO GOD



Tools: paper or index cards, pens, Bibles, markers

- Tell kids to write out a letter to God, telling Him how they will be devoted to Him.
- Explain that sometimes it's hard to show God complete devotion, but that through His power we can always be growing in our devotion.
- Tell them to include thanks to God for some specific things He has done for them before.
- Say: "Just as Joshua reminded the people, it's important for us to be reminded of what God has done for us."
- If time allows, tell them they can decorate their letters and then plan to keep them somewhere safe, like in their Bibles.
- If kids struggle with what to write, encourage them to read a Scripture passage and consider rewriting it in their own words. (Examples: Psalm 25:4-6; 33:1-5; 34:1-4; 62:5-8)

## TIMELINE TRAVEL



Tools: "Abraham to Joshua Timeline" and "Timeline Cards" (Poster Pack), tape

- Cut out the "Timeline Cards" and place the "Abraham to Joshua Timeline" poster on a wall where kids can see it. The cards should not be in order when you distribute them.
- Tell the kids to open their Bibles to Joshua 24.
- Explain that Joshua reminded the people about their history.
- Distribute the "Timeline Cards."
- Tell the kids to work together to get the cards in order on the timeline.
- The correct order should be:
  - 1) God came to Abraham and made a covenant with him.
  - 2) God brought Abraham to Canaan.
  - 3) God gave Abraham a son named Isaac.
  - 4) Isaac had sons, Jacob and Esau.
  - 5) Jacob and his sons moved to Egypt.
  - 6) God sent Moses and Aaron to rescue the people from slavery in Egypt.
  - 7) God protected His people as they wandered in the wilderness.
  - 8) God protected His people from many enemies in the lands near Canaan.
  - 9) God gave them the land of Canaan.
- When the timeline is complete, remind kids that God was with the Israelites in every part of their history, just like He is with us.
- Review the Text Truth: **We should be completely devoted to God.**
- Say: "God deserves our complete devotion."

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Each of these terms will help you as you delve into teaching Explore the Bible: Kids.

- **BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT**

The specific Bible skills practiced in the session.

- **CHRIST IN CONTEXT**

The message of Jesus in a particular Bible book.

- **CONTEXT**

The words or environment around what you are studying that help you understand what it means.

Examples of types of context: historical context, cultural context.

- **CROSS-REFERENCING**

Examining a second (*third, fourth, and etc.*) biblical text to gain greater understanding of the first biblical text.

- **GENRE**

A specific form or type of writing or literature. Each form has rules or basic features. In the Bible, there are six genres: Law, History, Poetry and Wisdom, Prophecy, Gospel, and Letters.

- **ORIGINAL AUDIENCE**

The author of each Bible book wrote to a specific audience. The original audience is the first audience to receive the Bible book. All other readers, including today's readers, are not the original audience. The original audience is key to understanding the author's purpose for the Bible book or text.

- **TEXT CONNECTION**

Connects kids to what their parents are studying in Explore the Bible: Adults.

- **TEXT TRUTH**

The main point of the Bible Passage to communicate to children.

# COMING NEXT QUARTER

## SPRING 2018

DATE	BIBLE STORY	BIBLE PASSAGE	MEMORY VERSE
Mar. 4	Jesus Healed People	Matthew 8:1-15	Matthew 9:36
Mar. 11	Jesus Calmed the Storm	Matthew 8:23-27	Matthew 8:27
Mar. 18	Jesus Fed the Crowds	Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-39	Matthew 15:32a
Mar. 25	Jesus Entered Jerusalem	Matthew 21:1-17	Matthew 21:9b
Apr. 1	Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection	Matthew 27:11-52; 28:1-15	Matthew 28:6
Apr. 8	God Sent Judges to Help His People	Judges 2:11-19; 3:7-31	Judges 2:16
Apr. 15	Deborah Led Israel	Judges 4-5	Judges 5:3b
Apr. 22	Gideon Learned to Trust God	Judges 6-8	Judges 6:16a
Apr. 29	The Life of Samson	Judges 13-16	Proverbs 8:33
May 6	Ruth Showed Kindness to Naomi	Ruth 1:1-2:3	Psalms 46:1
May 13	God Provided for Ruth and Naomi	Ruth 2; 4	Psalms 117:2
May 20	Delight in God's Word	Psalms 119	Psalms 119:160a
May 27	God Created You	Psalms 139	Psalms 139:14

# TOOLS FOR DIGGING DEEP!

## OLDER KIDS TOOL KIT

**The resources you need to lead one class:**

- One Older Kids Leader Guide
- One Older Kids Explorer Guide
- One pack Kids Family Cards
- One Older Kids Poster Pack
- One Kids Enhanced CD
- One Kids DVD

## OLDER KIDS LEADER GUIDE

**Helps older kids connect the Bible to present day**

- Leader-friendly session plans for small- and large-group learning
- Activities to encourage kids to dig, explore, and discover the Bible

## OLDER KIDS EXPLORER GUIDE

**Engage older kids with a colorful, fact-filled magazine.**

- Identifies each object that reminds kids of the Bible story and Text Truth
- Weekly pages with colorful illustrations, info-graphics, and photos
- Fun-to-do Bible-focused activities relate to the Bible content and application
- Send home at the end of the quarter for kids to keep

## OLDER KIDS POSTER PACK

**Filled with leader-friendly resources that make teaching easy**

- Christ in Context poster(s)
- Text Truth statements
- Family Memory Verse posters (*CSB, ESV, KJV, NIV*)
- Additional visual aids and resources

## KIDS FAMILY CARDS

- Equip parents with discussion questions that relate to each session

## KIDS ENHANCED CD

- Bible-related music
- Printable teacher tools and session helps

## KIDS DVD

- Includes a video for each session to help kids connect the biblical text in the cultural and historical context of the session

## KIDS TOOL KIT WITH WORSHIP

- Second-hour option
- Kid-friendly worship experience that reinforces every weekly session



# THE GOSPEL

## GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation.



**GOD RULES.** The Bible tells us God created everything, including you and me, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to recite Genesis 1:1 from memory or read it from his Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 and Colossians 1:16-17.



**WE SINNED.** Since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God (Romans 3:23). The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death (Romans 6:23).



**GOD PROVIDED.** Read John 3:16 aloud. God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read Ephesians 2:8-9.



**JESUS GIVES.** Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



**WE RESPOND.** We can respond to Jesus. “The ABCs of Becoming a Christian” is a simple tool that helps us remember how to respond when prompted by the Holy Spirit to the gift Jesus offers.

### ADMIT

Admit to God that you are a sinner. The first people God created chose to sin and disobey God. Ever since then, all people have chosen to sin and disobey (Romans 3:23). Tell God you messed up and you are sorry for doing your own thing and turning away from Him through your thoughts, words, and actions. Repent, turn away from your sin. (Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:9) *Repent* doesn't just mean turning from doing bad things to doing good things. It means turning from sin and even from your own good works and turning to Jesus, trusting only in Him to save you.

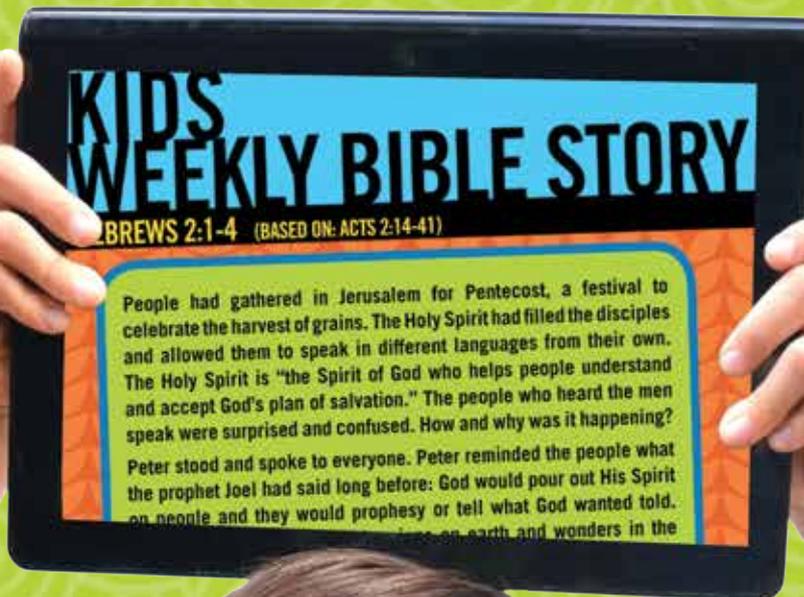
### BELIEVE

Believe that Jesus is God's Son and receive God's gift of forgiveness from sin. You must believe that only Jesus can save you and you cannot save yourself from your sin problem—not even by praying to God, going to church, or reading your Bible. Your faith or your trust is only in Jesus and what He did for you through His life, death, and resurrection. (Acts 16:31; Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-9)

### CONFESS

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Tell God and tell others what you believe. If Jesus is your Savior, you are trusting only in Him to save you. Jesus is also Lord, which means He is in charge and calling the shots in your life. You can start following Him and doing what He says in the Bible. You are born again into a new life and look forward to being with God forever. (Romans 10:9-10,13)

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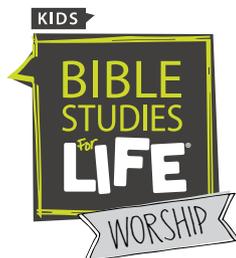
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