



# BELT 4 Kids

## Topics

1. Our Guidebook
2. Spectacular God
3. God's Big Heart
4. Amazing You
5. God's Family Rules
6. Breaking God's Heart
7. The Best Gift
8. I Can be a Friend of God
9. Everyone is Invited

## Key Ideas

- The Bible is our map in life which can lead us in the right direction where good things wait.
- There is no one bigger or greater than our God.
- God is crazy about us. We can trust His heart in every situation.
- We are all of equal and incredible value being uniquely made in God's image.
- Each of God's family rules is designed in love and for our very best. They protect us and our friendships with Him and others.
- Sin is doing things our way instead of the way God told us is best. It is hurtful to others and ourselves, and especially hurts and dishonors God. It tears us away from Him.
- Jesus offers us the amazing gift of forgiveness. We can make our heart His home as we admit our wrongs, ask His forgiveness and turn away from doing things our own way.
- Jesus is eager to spend time with us. Through talking, listening and appreciating, we can enjoy growing close to Him.
- Everyone needs a friend like Jesus. The good news is, He invites us all to join His circle of friends. As we pass this news and His love on, we can see His family grow.

## Acknowledgements

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the following for their contributions to the B4K curriculum: Eynn Schlender for the ever delightful artistic work (posters, coloring pages and cover); Stephanie Poulton and Beth Stewart for content contributions; Caleb Nelson and Nathan Wagner for editorial recommendations; and Michael and Eynn Schlender for invaluable practitioner feedback for this latest revision (v3.0). As always, we are grateful for each and every partner in translation who makes this material accessible far and wide. May God be glorified!

Heidi Evans

## Introduction

Childhood is when most people come to Jesus,<sup>1</sup> but in order to grow to emotional and spiritual health, children need positive relationships with many adults.<sup>2</sup> It takes a community of committed, loving adults to nurture and guide precious young souls on their spiritual journey. More important than any curriculum package or lesson plan are the positive relationships with adults which will help children learn to love God and follow Jesus. Together, with the work of the Holy Spirit, you are the key to the success of B4K.

## Use of Materials

We're excited that you're exploring BELT for Kids. Suitable for ages 7 to 11, lessons in B4K include Bible stories, discussions, games, crafts, object lessons and coloring pages. Though suited for VBS or longer training, it is not designed as short lessons (ie. for Sunday school). However, each topic can be broken down into 2 sessions to fit a Sunday School setting. Alternatively, activities and points can be selected that work with time constraints and needs.

Note: in this latest version 3.0, B4K underwent extensive content revisions, title changes (God's Smart Instructions to God's Family Rules; Gifting our Lives to Everyone is Invited), some image modifications (Our Guidebook, Breaking God's Heart), as well as image replacement (Everyone is Invited). New in B4K v3.0 is a Practitioner's Feedback section with sample schedule. Additionally, a Review and Prayer section has replaced the Application section.

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We'd love to hear about the impact of B4K. Please send any comments or suggestions to [info@ywambelt.org](mailto:info@ywambelt.org).

## Helpful Hints

### Motivation and relevance:

- Adjust each activity to fit your group's maturity, skills and interests, as well as cultural context. The discussion questions (along with activities and application) are just suggestions - feel free to adapt or change them up. The actions for the main points you can solicit from the children or create your own.
- Use appropriate, relevant language (using the children's heart language as well as terminology and illustrations they understand best).
- Do your best to learn and use the names of the children right away. This shows they are important.
- Children respond to excitement. If you are enthusiastic about the lesson, children will be also. Use intonation in your voice, animation on your face and movement in your body. Be creative and make a game out of learning.

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<sup>1</sup> Kummer, Tony. (2019, August 9). New Children's Ministry Statistics (2019) How Do Kids Come to Christ. Retrieved from <https://ministry-to-children.com/childrens-ministry-statistics>.

<sup>2</sup> Beckwith, Ivy. *The Ultimate Survival Guide for Children's Ministry Workers*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014. Print.

- Involve the kids in your story telling as much as you can. Give them actions to do, things to yell, or parts to play. They will learn and listen much better.
- Games are important. Do a lot of different challenges in teams where they are moving around. Have questions and activities for them to do along the way so that they are learning and remembering as they go.
- Because remembering and repetition are key to learning, incorporate review into every day. Try to make the main point of each teaching something the kids can easily repeat. Use review games. Have stations where the kids complete a review challenge.
- Create a safe space where children feel individually valued and feel comfortable to be open and vulnerable. Be generous with your time and attention.<sup>3</sup> Enforce and model respect for all.
- Prioritize building community, even in the short time you have. As children build good relationships with one another, they are better able to learn, more eager to participate, and more willing to answer questions. Here are a few get-to-know-you activities that can be used from the outset.<sup>4</sup> Ensure whatever activity you do is culturally appropriate.
  - Name ball toss: Have children stand in a large circle. You start by saying your name and then call out another person's name and then throw the ball to them. That person then says their name and calls out someone else's name before throwing the ball to them. Continue until everyone has been called. Then repeat this same sequence more quickly. The third time, add another ball (or two) and run several sequences simultaneously.
  - Animal gestures: The first person in the group says their name together with an animal gesture and sound. Everyone in the group repeats that person's name and gesture/sound. This continues for each person, selecting a different animal and gesture. See if anyone in the group (or if the whole group) can repeat each person's name and gesture at the end.
  - Common clusters: The teacher calls out a topic (e.g. birthday month, hair color, special places, favorite food, favorite hobby). Students look for all of the other people in the class who share that same month, characteristic or interest and then stand in a cluster together.
  - Fruit basket: The class sits in a circle on chairs (or mats), with one person standing in the middle. Participants are equally divided between three fruits (such as papayas, bananas and pineapples). When the middle person calls out a fruit (eg. "bananas"), all the bananas change chairs, including the middle person. The person without a chair becomes the next caller. If a caller says "fruit basket" all participants have to change chairs.
  - I like my neighbor that...: The class sits in a circle on chairs (or mats), with one person standing in the middle. He/she announces "I like my neighbor that"..... The child fills in the blank with things like "is wearing sneakers" or "has brown hair", etc. Everyone who fits the statement must run to another chair. The object is for the person in the middle to find an empty chair. The person left without a chair goes to the center and begins the next round.

### Preparation and Organization:

- Make praying for each session and each child a priority each day. Be asking God for words of encouragement specific to each child.

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<sup>3</sup> Children's Ministry. 2020. Think Small, Score Big: How To Do Small Group Ministry Well. [online] Available at: <<https://childrensministry.com/small-group-ministry>> [Accessed 22 May 2020].

<sup>4</sup> Kid Activities. 2020. 47 Get To Know You Games For Kids | Kid Activities. [online] Available at: <<https://kidactivities.net/activities-that-connect-kids>> [Accessed 22 May 2020].

- Use a Bible version that is child-friendly (if that is an option). International Children's Bible, The Living Bible, and The Message were primarily used in this curriculum.
- From the outset of your time together, communicate and keep limits that are clear so the children understand what you and your team expect. Take a calm, kind, inquisitive and understanding approach when children break rules or don't listen. Aim to teach (not lecture or dwell on broken rules) and then move forward. This creates trust and invites cooperation.<sup>5</sup> Model kindness, consistency and respect.
- Praise in public; challenge in private. If you need to talk to a child about a behavior issue, do it apart from the group. Doing so communicates respect and lessens the likelihood for a child to feel the need to "save face."<sup>6</sup>
- If possible, provide folders for the coloring pages and have available Bibles for distribution to those who don't have one.
- Come prepared. It shows you value your kids. Gather all needed materials for teaching and activities beforehand. Consider in advance how games can be adapted to the space you have and for the size of group you have.

#### **Age Group Division:**

- Very large groups are hard to manage. It is recommended to break very large groups into smaller, manageable sizes (around 25<sup>7</sup>). Have extra adults available for safety, crowd control and relational impact. It is recommended that in the room there be available one adult to six children with the younger children and one adult to eight children with the older children.
- If you have a large group of kids, divide them into age groups to meet different needs and varied capacities to listen. Approximately 7-9 years and 10-11 yrs.

#### **Younger Children:**

- Children's attention spans are very short. Offer small chunks of information (followed by an activity that illustrates the point and allows them to interact with each other, etc.). Using action songs and music will also help them to focus, learn and remember.
- Give clear step-by-step directions one at a time for games and activities, and repeat as necessary. Model the action you want the children to complete.
- Young children are concrete thinkers. When using abstract terms or concepts be sure to use examples and illustrations that help explain them (honesty, grace, etc).
- Children are more visual in their learning, rather than auditory. So utilize lots of visual aids, dramas, puppets, role play etc.
- Young children rely on structure and rules to create a sense of order in their world. So establish a routine that is consistent each day, along with session guidelines and clear expectations you have of them.
- Breaktimes (around 30 minutes) should include water and healthy snacks (avoid sugary snacks to keep energy levels contained and sustained). Hungry kids can be grumpy kids (just be aware of any food allergies). Be sure to include physical activities for children to expend their reserves of energy as well.

<sup>5</sup> Brill, A., 2020. How To Discipline A Child That Breaks The Rules And Doesn't Listen. [online] Positive Parenting Connection. Available at: <<https://www.positiveparentingconnection.net/how-to-discipline-a-child-that-breaks-the-rules-and-doesnt-listen>> [Accessed 22 May 2020].

<sup>6</sup> Children's Ministry. 2020. Think Small, Score Big: How To Do Small Group Ministry Well. [online] Available at: <<https://childrensministry.com/small-group-ministry>> [Accessed 22 May 2020].

<sup>7</sup>Blatchford, Peter. The Class Size Debate: Is Small Better? UK: McGraw-Hill Education, 2003. Print.

### **Older Children:**

- For older children, discussions can be very meaningful. Ask open-ended questions (rather than yes/no). Have them consider how the Bible story and teaching relates to their lives. Always make eye contact. Give your full attention and hear them out respectfully. Summarize what you heard. Carefully guide them if they are digressing or misapplying/misunderstanding principles. Thank them for their contributions.
- Provide time in small groups (of about 6-8 children) with the same leader each time who can give individualized attention and where healthy bonds of trust can be built within the same group. Get to know each participant, their interests, etc. What's shared in the group, stays in the group.

### **Suggestions from Practitioners of B4K:**

- Aim to have lessons take 30-45 minutes max.
- To lower the kids energy and bring a close to the last 15-30 minutes, do a mini review by distributing the coloring pages. Celebrate your kids talents by displaying their artwork throughout the week.
- Try to make the main point in each teaching something that can be made into a phrase with an action for easy review.
- Kids get more involved if there is an element of competition. For smaller groups, divide into teams of guys against girls. For larger groups, divide them into color-coded teams (eg. The Blue Team...)
- Prizes work great in motivating kids to get involved. If you want to give prizes, give it in a team context, that way no one feels left out. Stickers and snacks work great. At the end of the week during the celebration time, give prizes to everyone (eg. colored pencils, little notebooks, etc)
- Change location within your location often. This helps create a sense of variety for the kids which helps them stay engaged for longer periods of time. For example, have snacks, lessons, stories and games each in different locations (even if it is the same room).
- Lanyards are helpful where parents write their kids' name and age on the front, and allergies, health needs, and emergency contact information on the back. Teachers should wear name tags as well.
- During the welcome, include with your name something funny or interesting about yourself.
- Establishing guidelines for the kids at the outset is very important to set the expectations for the week. Here are 4 recommended guidelines with actions (make sure the kids can remember and repeat them).
  - Go through these guidelines one by one having the kids repeat after you. Do this a few times, calling out the guideline and letting them do the action or doing the action and they call out the guideline.
  - 1. Listen to the Teacher
    - Action: cup hand to ear
    - Game to reinforce: Silent Giraffe. Have your thumb meet your two middle fingers leaving your pointer finger and your pinky free to point upright. Raise your hand high up in the air. This is an action only, you don't say silent giraffe. Learn this action by playing a game. Have the kids be as loud as they can then silently make the action, see how fast they can get quiet and make the action with you.
  - 2. Obey the Teacher
    - Action: Use both hands to make a thumbs up.
  - 3. Be Kind to Everyone

- Action: Make a heart sign with thumb and pointer finger or bring 2 hands together in the shape of a heart.
  - 4. Stay Together
    - Action: put arms around each other
    - Game to reinforce: Bananas. Call out loudly "Bananas!" Raise your hand. The kids are to gather around and grab your hand with theirs, essentially making a bunch of bananas. See how fast they can gather. Good when changing locations or they begin to wander.

## Sample Schedule (VBS style)

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9 - 10:15 am	-Sign-in/Welcome -Guidelines for Fun -Get to Know you Games	-Review Game -Spectacular God	-Review Game -Amazing You	-Review Game -Breaking God's Heart	-Review Game -I Can Be A Friend of God
10:15 – 10:45am	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
10:45am – 11:30pm	Our Guidebook	God's Big Heart	God's Family Rules	The Best Gift	-Everyone Is Invited -Final Review -Celebration
11:30 - 12pm	Coloring Page	Coloring Page	Coloring Page	Coloring Page	Coloring Page

## Helpful Resources

- The Ultimate Survival Guide for Children's Ministry Workers by Ivy Beckwith
- Children's Ministry website: <https://childrensministry.com> (games, teaching tips, crafts)
- International Network of Children's Ministry: <https://incm.org/training> (articles, resources, webinars)
- Kidology website: <https://www.kidology.org> (training, resource library)
- Art for the Nations: <https://www.artforthenations.org> (free art supplies for those working with underprivileged children)

# Our Guidebook

## Goal

- △ Learn how the Bible is our map in life which can lead us in the right direction where good things wait.

## Main Ideas

### 1. The Bible is like a light - it helps us see.

- *Question:* If you find yourself in a dark room, what is the first thing you do? (Turn on the light. Light a candle.)
- The Bible is like turning a light on in a dark room, and all of a sudden we can see. We don't have to stumble around.
- It reminds me of a story Jesus told – a guy who had trouble seeing asked another completely blind person to help him get somewhere. What do you think happens?
- (Can have volunteers dramatize as narrate). "Do not listen to what the blind say... they try to show people which way to go. A blind person cannot lead another blind person. If he does, then both of them will fall into a deep hole." Mat 15:14 (ERV)
- *Activity:* make 2 teams, each with 2 children. One team has a blindfolded person, but the other can see. The other team has two blindfolded people. One of the team members needs to lead the other through an obstacle course.
- Who would you rather have guide you? Someone who can see or someone who can't see at all?
- We all want the person who guides us in life to be someone who can see better than we can.
- In many ways we are like a blindfolded person who can't see very well. But God isn't blindfolded. He can see better than anyone. He is the best one to guide us, and He gave us the Bible to show us the way.
- *Key verse:* "Your Word is a lamp to guide me." Ps 119:105 (Teach it with actions)

### 2. The Bible is like a map for life - it only helps if we follow it.

- *Question:* What if I told you I had a secret treasure? Anyone want it? What would help you find it?
- *Activity:* Pull out a map to the hidden treasure. Get 2 volunteers from each team or the group (if it's small) to find the treasure - a box of erasers or small toys or pens or candy for the whole group to share. But there are dangers to avoid (like the lava floor, a river that is full of crocodiles, etc. Note: the more creative you get with your space, the more fun the kids will have). The kids need to closely follow the directions on the map or they will get lost or get into trouble.

- The Bible is like a treasure map too. It helps us stay on the right path, away from trouble, and takes us in a good direction where the treasure is - Jesus.
- So what if our treasure seekers ignored the map they were given? Would they have found the treasure?
- *Story:* There's a story in the Bible that talks about this. Dramatize the 2 builders with help from the kids. (Mat 7:24-27)
- Even having the right information wasn't enough. The builders needed to act on it.
- In the same way, the Bible is a help to us only if we follow what it says.



## Poster Explanation

- △ God's Word helps us not get lost or hurt. As we read and follow it, it will take us in a good direction where treasure is – Jesus.



## Review Key Points (with actions)

- △ The Bible is like a light – it helps us see.
- △ "Your Word is a lamp to guide me." Ps 119:105
- △ The Bible is like a Map for life - it only helps if we follow it.



## Prayer

- △ Take time to thank God for His treasure map and the good things He has in store for us who follow Him and His map. Take time to commit to listening and doing what God says in the Bible.



## Coloring Page

- △ Distribute crayons and coloring page.

# Spectacular God

## Goal

△ Discover that there is no one bigger or greater than our God.

## Main Ideas

### 1. In the beginning, God creates.

- *Question:* does anyone know how all the animals and trees and oceans came about?
- Let's look at the story that tells us. Focus on Gen 1:1-3 (ICB)
- *Story (dramatize):* "In the beginning God created the sky and the earth. The earth was empty and had no form. Darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit was moving over the water. Then God said, "Let there be.....
- Teach actions for 7 days of creation:
  - Day 1 –light (cover your eyes with your hands representing darkness, then remove them to represent light)
  - Day 2 –sky (stretch arms swooping across from left to right while saying "sky")
  - Day 3 –land, sea, and trees (move hands to simulate waves; extend arms broadly like trees)
  - Day 4 –sun, moon, and stars (wiggle fingers to make twinkling motion of stars)
  - Day 5 –sea animals and birds (palms together, hands wiggle like a moving fish. And/or intertwine thumbs, palms up, wiggle fingers as bird wings)
  - Day 6 –land animals (clasp hands together to make an elephant's trunk and swing it back and forth) and people (both thumbs point back to self).
  - You know God took extra time when He made the first person. Have everyone stoop down and make sweeping motions with their hands over the ground to make it look like they are gathering dirt together. Then have everyone blow air gently, using their hands to direct air from their mouth toward the dirt. Everyone says, "God breathed life into us". God really liked how people turned out and said we were very good.
  - Day 7 –God rested (palms together like a pillow under your head)
- *Activity:* Days of Creation Game - you call out a day, kids need to use words and motions to indicate what was created. Then do action and have them say what was created and the day. Review actions and then divide into 2 teams. Call out or do action - ones who get actions/days wrong, sit out. Last one standing wins a prize for their team.
- So what came first, God or creation? You see, God was not created. He does not have a beginning or end.
  - Action: make an X with crossed arms. Say: "No beginning and no end."

## 2. God is very, very big.

- There's another story in the Bible that shows us very well what God is like. It's the story of Jonah and a whale.
- Tell abbreviated and simple version of Jonah with lots of actions that kids can do with you.
- What do we learn about God from the big storm and the whale that swallowed and spat up Jonah?
- Just like in the creation story, we see God is very big and very powerful.
  - Action: have kids flex their muscles. Say "powerful".
- How did God know where Jonah was, even though Jonah was hiding and trying to run away?
- God is so big, He knows everything there is to know.
  - Action: finger tapping temple of head. Say: "Knows everything"
- God is so big, He is everywhere at once.
  - Action: hold out arms and spin around. Say: "Is everywhere"
- Could Jonah see God? God is so big, He is invisible.
  - Action: have kids place hand above eyes as if searching for something. Say: "Is invisible"
- *Review game:* list each of the 5 attributes of God and have kids do the matching action. Then do the action and have kids list the attribute of God.
  - No beginning or end. Powerful. Knows everything. Is everywhere. Is invisible.
  - There's no one bigger or greater than our God!



## Poster Explanation

- △ God created this world and holds everything together by His great power. He is our ever-present, all-knowing, never tires out God.



## Review Key Points (with actions)

- △ God is the creator, and has no beginning or end.
- △ God is powerful.
- △ God knows everything.
- △ God is everywhere.
- △ God is invisible.



## Prayer

- △ Take time to thank God that He knows everything about you, even the number of hairs on your head. Thank Him that He's never too busy for you or will never forget you.



## Coloring Page

- △ Distribute crayons and coloring page.

# God's Big Heart

## Goal

△ Realize God is crazy about us. We can trust His heart in every situation.

## Main Ideas

### 1. God is love. He has so much love to share with us.

- Dramatize with kids the story of the loving father/run-away son. Luke 15:11-32
- *Questions:*
  - What happens with the younger son in the story?
  - How does the father respond to the younger son?
  - What do you think Jesus wants us to know through this story? (For those who have messed up, God still loves us and welcomes us back.)
- The Bible gives a good summary of who God is and His heart towards us. "We know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love. For God is love." 1 Jn 4:16a (ICB)
- We can count on God's love. His love is not based on feelings. Does He love us only when we please Him? Does He love us less when we make mistakes or dishonor Him? No! He loves us simply because He is love.
- *Craft:* Let kids cut out paper hearts. (Fold red/pink cardstock in half. Draw half a heart along the fold. Cut along the line.) Inside write: "Father God loves you. You can trust that love." (You may have to help younger kids.) Decorate with glitter, stickers, etc.

### 2. You can trust His heart in every situation.

- God's plans and intentions for you are for good.
- "I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for." Jer 29:11 (MSG)
- This was spoken by God to a group of people when things were not going well. God promised to be with them and to work things out. Just like them, you can trust God to work out every situation in your life. He will never abandon you.
- *Demonstration:* Have a child blow up a balloon. Have them draw a smiley face on it with permanent marker. You are all like this balloon - full of life and special to God. Now put long pieces of clear packing tape on the balloon (or tape up the whole balloon). This tape is like God's love protecting us. Push a sharp object through the tape, like a sharp pencil or pin. (Practice in advance. The balloon shouldn't pop.) Even when hard things happen, God's love surrounds us and protects us. We don't have to be afraid—we can trust Him to always be there, helping us through.
- God shows His commitment to us and love for us in so many ways. This includes the gifts He places around us each day that show He cares. Think of what some of those are for you. (Eg

family, friends, a special toy, a beautiful sunset, your daily food, caring teachers, doctors, kindness from others, etc).

- *Activity:* Have some older kids come up and blow up balloons. Now solicit from the group one way God has shown His love towards them, even in difficulties. Goal is for each child to list one thing, even if it is redundant (depending on size of group). Write a single word on each balloon with a permanent marker. God's love fills our lives with good things - even when things aren't perfect, He is there and has left signs of His care and love around us. Then toss each balloon to the group, asking the first few times: "who can you trust?" Group responds: "we can trust God's love". See if the group can keep the balloons in the air without touching the ground.



## Poster Explanation

- △ Despite the younger son's selfish and dishonoring choice, the father still loves and welcomes him home. The father also cares about the proud older son. In the same way, God has a father's heart that is big enough to fully love each of us.



## Review Key Points (with actions)

- △ God is love and wants to share His love with you.
- △ You can trust His heart in every situation, even the difficult ones.
- △ "We know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love. For God is love." 1 Jn 4:16a



## Prayer

- △ Thank you, God, that you are for me. Thank you that you don't hold my mistakes and shame against me. Thank you that you have a huge heart of love that only wants my best. I know I can trust you in every situation, even the hard ones. Help me to trust your heart more and more. Amen.



## Coloring Page

- △ Distribute crayons and coloring page.

# Amazing You

## Goal

△ Know we are all of equal and incredible value being uniquely made in God's image.

## Main Ideas

### 1. You are one of a kind.

- There is no one like you.
- Have some kids come to the front. How are they different? Compare noses, hair, smiles, laugh. We are all uniquely created. God wanted it that way. He loves all our differences.
- *Activity:* Teams compete – who has longest tongue (touch nose), can cross eyes, wiggle ears, are double jointed....
- Did you know you are each as different and unique as the brilliant stars that shine in the night sky – with each star having a different size, color, and life story – just like you. The Bible says it this way: "We are God's masterpiece". Eph 2:10 (MSG)
- *Activity:* Self-portrait. Distribute paper that is titled, "we are God's masterpiece". Each child draws a picture of themselves. Then have them add images of what they like to do, what others like about them, and what they think God likes about them (younger kids can skip the last two). Have kids share drawings and explain various images.

### 2. We are all equal.

- "So God created people in His own image..." . Gen 1:27 (Easy to Read Version)
- Our outsides are different, our abilities are different, our likes and dislikes are different, but being made in God's image means we are equally special. Each and every one of us is important - regardless of age, skin color, the money we have or don't have, if we are a boy or girl, if we get good grades or not, if we are handsome or not, if we are super talented or not. No one is more important than anyone else, or more special than anyone else.
- *Activity:* Accordion fold paper and draw an outline of a person, so when kids cut it out, it produces lots of people holding hands side by side. (Can color later.) God values each of us, and we are all equally loved by Him.

### 3. We are all valuable and irreplaceable.

- *Drama (pending time):* Short re-enactment as tell story of Matthew 19:13-15. Though some people thought children were an annoyance, Jesus wanted them nearby and He wanted to bless them. Jesus wants you close; He thinks you are super special and He wants to bless you.
- *Activity:* I have a treasure box with the most valuable thing in the entire world. Any guesses? Have a few promise to not reveal what's inside before looking in the box (which reveals a

mirror). Then show the whole group. Each of you are God's most treasured possession: super valuable and irreplaceable.



## Poster Explanation

- △ God made and celebrates our differences. Our high value doesn't change because of the family we were born into or birth order, the color of our skin, whether we are a boy or girl, whether we are rich or poor. We all are beautifully unique and of equal and great value, made in the image of God.



## Review Key Points (with actions)

- △ You are one of a kind.
- △ We are all equal.
- △ We are all valuable and irreplaceable.



## Prayer

- △ Speak out God's affirmation over children.
- △ God, thank You that you made me wonderfully. I celebrate who You made me to be. And I also celebrate who You made everyone else to be. Help me treat everyone as the special creation they are. Amen.



## Coloring Page

- △ Distribute crayons and coloring page.

# God's Family Rules

## Goal

- △ Find out how each of God's family rules is designed in love and for our very best. They protect us and our friendships with God and others.

## Main Ideas

### 1. God's family rules keep us safe and happy.

- If there's a fence around your venue, take kids out to it. (Otherwise draw scenario on the board). Ask what the fence is there for. Is it to trap everyone inside? Is it there to protect bad stuff from outside getting in and to keep little kids from running out into the streets and getting hurt.
- In the same way, God has put up a fence to protect us. It's called his family rules. Or 10 commandments. They were given by God to keep us all safe and happy. Anyone know any of them?
- Ex 20:3-17 (*Activity*: Use hand actions to teach them.)
  - #1 - no other gods - hold index finger like #1 - keep God #1
  - #2 - no idols - hold up two fingers together, and make them "bow" up and down
  - #3 - honor God's name - hold three fingers up to your lips, and push them away like you're talking
  - #4 - keep the Sabbath - rest your cheek on your right hand with thumb folded in, four fingers pointed out (like you're sleeping)
  - #5 - honor your parents - use 5 fingers to salute ("yes sir")
  - #6 - do not kill - pointing two fingers on one hand like a gun into the palm of the other hand, with those four fingers extended upwards (like a hold up)
  - #7 - respect marriage - hold out your left hand palm up and have your index and your middle finger of your right hand walk on the palm like they're getting married, and say "one man with one woman for life"
  - #8 - do not steal - hold up eight fingers: 5 on the left, 3 on the right, then quickly 'bump' your hands together and "steal" one finger so now 4 fingers are on each hand
  - #9 - do not lie - use thumb and 4 fingers to talk like a mouth at other four fingers
  - #10 - do not be jealous - hold up ten fingers and pretend to "grab" in front on you, "I want it!"
- *Activity*: 10 Commandments Count Off – divide into 2 teams. You call out a number, children need to use hand motions to indicate what command it represents. Ones who get it wrong, sit out. Last few can be brought to the front so the group can help judge correctness of their responses. Winner receives a prize for their team.

## 2. God's family rules show us how to love God and others well.

- *Activity:* Draw 2 large chalk circles on the ground (if outside) or use masking tape (inside). In one circle, post the words "love God" (or draw a heart pointing to God). In the second circle, post the words "love your neighbor" (or draw a heart pointing to a person). Call out a commandment. The kids need to run to the circle that displays who the command honors. Alternatively, you could break the group into small teams (4-5) and have them place a picture of each commandment into the correct circle (go over the images first so they are clear what they represent). The group with the most correct gets a prize. Discuss any that are wrong.
- Did you notice the first 4 rules are about what? Loving God. They make sure we keep God our #1 priority and show Him respect. Then the last 6 are about? Loving others. Whether it's parents, our siblings, or others. God wants to be sure we take good care of all our relationships.
- If you are loving God and your neighbor, you won't act in a way that is hurtful to anyone. And that's good for everyone.



### Poster Explanation

- △ Love wants to protect. Whether it is parents keeping their children safe from a dangerous cliff by building a fence, or God who gives us rules to protect us (like a fence) from hurting ourselves or others. Each rule is designed in love and for our best so we can live safely and happily together.



### Review Key Points (with actions)

- △ God's family rules keep us safe and happy.
- △ God's family rules show us how to love God and others well.



### Prayer

- △ Ask the kids which rule they struggle with most. Have them pray and ask God to help them so that they can love God and others better.



### Coloring Page

- △ Distribute crayons and coloring page.

# Breaking God's Heart

## Goal

- △ Learn how sin is doing things our way instead of the way God told us is best. It is hurtful to others and ourselves, and especially hurts and dishonors God. It tears us away from Him.

## Main Ideas

### 1. Sin is doing things our way instead of God's way of love.

- Dramatize story of the first sin. Gen 2:16-17; 3:1-13
- *Questions:*
  - Were Adam and Eve happy in the Garden?
  - What did Satan do?
  - Did he force them to disobey?
- Like with Adam and Eve, Satan makes something we know is wrong look so good. But he can't force us to disobey.
- Sin is choosing my way when God has shown us a better way.
- *Activity:* My way vs God's way. Make two paths on the floor: one straight and orderly (God's Way) and one zig-zag and messy/chaotic (My Way). Place signs at the start of each path. One child (or small group) at a time stands at the starting line. You read a scenario. The child/group responds what they would do. Briefly discuss: Is that God's way or your way? Why or why not? (If they chose My Way, have kids discuss why God's way is better.) Let them walk the path they chose. Scenario examples: Your mom asks you to help make a meal, but you want to play. Someone in your class forgot to bring lunch. There is a new kid in your neighborhood playing alone. You break something and no one saw. You see someone today alone at snack time. Your friend tells you to lie so you won't get in trouble... Be sure to keep it light and not shame based.
- Sin isn't just doing 'bad things.' It's saying, 'God, I know better than you. I'll be in charge of my own life.' It dishonors God.

### 2. Sin hurts others, ourselves and especially God.

- People living for themselves will hurt others around them, including themselves.
- When we choose to ignore God or hurt others, it makes His heart very, very sad.
- *Activity:* give each child a paper heart. Ask them to gently tear it into 2 or 3 pieces. On each piece, have them write or draw examples of not loving others well. (Eg saying mean words, not sharing, ignoring someone...) Sin tears apart our relationships with others and God. It dishonors God and hurts His heart the most. But God wants to forgive us and pull us close to Him and one another again. Have them tape the heart back together. Add bandages to show how God's love heals our brokenness and helps us love others better.



## Poster Explanation

- △ Like the boy climbing the fence where a dangerous cliff is, we get tempted to do things that are not good for us which God in His love warns us not to do. By choosing to ignore God, we cause pain to ourselves and others (circles have hurt parents, hurt friend and sad Jesus - with isolated boy as result who is lonely and sad). We hurt God the most who created us and wants the best for us and others.



## Review Key Points (with actions)

- △ Sin is doing things our way instead of God's way of love.
- △ Sin hurts others, ourselves and especially God.



## Prayer

- △ Ask God to show you if there are any ways you have been going your own way instead of His way of love. Consider what you do in secret as well as how you speak and act towards others, especially your family. Ask for His forgiveness and help to love like He does. Take time to apologize to anyone God brings to your mind.



## Coloring Page

- △ Distribute crayons and coloring page.

# The Best Gift

## Goal

- △ Discover that Jesus offers us the amazing gift of forgiveness. We can make our heart His home as we admit our wrongs, ask His forgiveness and turn away from doing things our own way.

## Main Ideas

### 1. The way back to God.

- Dramatize story of Zaccheus. Luke 19:1-10
- After creatively telling the story, allow kids to identify different roles in the story and then everyone takes on a role (can have multiple people acting out 1 person). They re-enact as you narrate again. Then ask different role-specific questions.
- Zaccheus - What were you thinking when Jesus began to talk to you?
  - It was a big deal that someone actually wanted to be around Zaccheus because everyone disliked him. As a tax collector, he lied, stole money and was greedy. That's 3 broken commandments and a lot of hurt people.
- Crowds - So what was going on in your mind when Jesus spoke to the thief - this tax collector? How did you feel when Jesus invited himself to the thief's home?
- Jesus - Why did you choose to speak to the sinner Zaccheus? Why invite yourself to his home?
- Zaccheus - How did it feel to have someone so famous single you out and want to dine with you? What was happening in your heart? What did you feel you had to do as a result?
  - Jesus kindness brings about Zaccheus' desire to change. Zaccheus gave back everything he stole and extra too. So he changed the bad things he was doing and made things right with the people he did wrong to.
- Jesus - Why did you say "salvation has come to this house"? What were you seeing change in Zaccheus?
- Like Zaccheus, we have all done things our way, not God's way. We have prioritized ourselves and left God and others out. Zaccheus shows us the way back. What did you see?
  - Admit our sin and wrongs.
  - Ask for forgiveness from God and others.
  - Turn from sin and do good instead.
- *Activity:* Play The Way Back game. 2 teams. You call out phrase below. Kids must do action. Each successive round gets quicker. See who can get actions correct the whole time and give that team a prize. Kids sit out when they make a mistake and then help you find others who make mistakes. Mix phrases up if you are wanting to make it more challenging.
  - Admit your sin. Action: Point to your mouth.
  - Ask for forgiveness. Action: Clasp your hands together as if you're praying.
  - Turn from sin. Action: Spin around.

## 2. Jesus offers the best gift ever.

- Though we did wrong, God made a way for us to be forgiven. Perfect Jesus took our consequences and shame. He gave up His life to show us that He would do anything for us to be restored to His family.
- We might think that we've done bad things and now God won't love us. Because of what Jesus did, we know that He **DOES** still love us and wants to forgive us. He makes a way for us to return to His family and have all our shame removed.
- *Activity:* Jesus washes our sin away. Label 3 clear cups (US -fill halfway with water. SIN- ¼ cup solution of iodine or food coloring. JESUS- ¼ cup bleach). God made us clean, but when we sin, it changes us. Pour a little "Sin" (iodine) into the "Us" water. It will turn dark. Sin makes our hearts dirty. We can't fix it by ourselves. But Jesus didn't leave us in our sin. He came to take it away. Slowly pour the bleach ("Jesus") into the murky "Us" cup until the dark water turns clear again. Only Jesus can forgive sin and remove shame. Just like this water turned clean again, Jesus makes our hearts clean when we are truly sorry and ask for forgiveness.
- Jesus doesn't just cover our sin—He takes it away. And He doesn't just forgive us once—He's always ready to wash us clean when we come to Him. And that's the best news – and the best gift!
- Maybe you feel like you are dirty inside and want to be made clean. Jesus can do that for you today. Let's pray together.



### Poster Explanation

- △ Jesus offers the wonderful gift of forgiveness and a new start as we humbly come to Him, ask Him to forgive us and begin to do things His way. You don't need to work for this gift or be good enough to receive it. Because of Jesus' great love, He gave up His life for us and offers the opportunity to return to His family.



### Review Key Points (with actions)

- △ Sin pulls us away from God.
- △ The way back to God is admitting our wrongs; asking forgiveness from God and others; and turning from our sin and doing things God's way instead.



### Prayer

- △ Dear Jesus, I know there are many times I did what I wanted to and didn't care about anyone else. I made others feel bad. And now I feel rotten about it. Please forgive me. I want to change. Thank you for forgiving me and bringing me into Your family. Please help me love You and others more each day. Thank you for making my heart your home. Amen.



### Coloring Page

- △ Distribute crayons and coloring page.

# I Can be a Friend of God

## Goal

- △ Realize that Jesus is eager to spend time with us. Through talking, listening and appreciating, we can enjoy growing close to Him. (Note: this is a longer teaching – be selective as needed.)

## Main Ideas

### 1. We were created for close friendship with God.

- *Drama* by staff (short) of Mary and Martha story found in Luke 10:38-42.
- Questions:
  - What were the sisters doing when Jesus was teaching at their home?
  - How did Martha react when she discovered what Mary was doing?
  - What did Jesus say was the most important thing to be doing?
- Jesus is so happy when we take time to be with Him. He loves hanging out with us.

### 2. Knowing about someone isn't the same as knowing them.

- *Illustration:* Talk about what a good friend Spiderman (or some other famous children's character) is to you. Quote information about him. Then have an audience member (pre-arranged) ask questions about Spiderman's favorite food, his hobbies, when you last had a chat with him etc. Knowing about someone doesn't equal knowing him personally.
- Same with God. Many people know lots of things about God and even do lots for Him, but are not close to Him at all. God desires for each of us to be His really good friends.

### 3. Some ways to help build a strong friendship.

- *Drama* by staff (short): two friends meet, one does all the talking only about themselves—without once stopping to let the other speak a word. How would you like a friend like that?
- Good friends talk, listen, and appreciate one another. Same with God.

#### *1. Talking*

- Jesus' friends were unsure how they should talk to God. Jesus makes it easy. He gives them a simple example.
- *Activity:* building the Lord's prayer. Mat 6:9-15. Distribute lines of prayer with culturally appropriate symbols and see if kids can put them in the correct order on the board.
  - Our Father in heaven, we honor You. (What does this mean? Take time to appreciate God. Picture: crown or chief's staff)
  - Do what is best—just like in heaven, so also on earth. (Ask that things would happen God's way everywhere. Picture: cloud)
  - Please give us what we need today. (Picture: bread or normal staple)
  - Forgive us for doing wrong, just as we forgive others. (Picture: stop sign)
  - Help us make good choices and protect us from harm. (Picture: shield or umbrella)

## II. Listening

- *Activity:* Telephone Game. Everyone sit in a circle (may need boys and girls circle). You whisper a message into the first person's ear. They whisper what they heard into the next person's ear and so on. Person at the end announces the message. Play loud music while running the activity.
- To hear whispers, we need to listen carefully. It's the same when God is speaking to us. Sometimes our lives are too noisy or too busy for us to hear. It takes quieting down and slowing down to hear the gentle whispers of Jesus. And just like you need to get close to the person whispering to hear better, so the closer we get to God, the better we'll hear His whispers.
- Not only does God speak to us in whispers to our hearts (like that happy feeling we get when we help someone – it's God congratulating us. Or that lousy feeling we get when we do something wrong – it's God telling us to apologize), God also clearly speaks to us through the Bible. He lets us know His thoughts about us, His hopes for us, and how to love others well.

## III. Appreciating

- Taking time to be grateful is good for us. It reminds us that God is bigger than our problems and that He's caring for us and won't stop.
- *Activity:* pass out cut out flowers (with pipe cleaner stems). On each, have them write or draw some things they are thankful for (family, nature, food, etc). They glue flowers in a flowerpot cut out of cardstock. Ask: How do we feel when someone says thank you? How do you think God feels when we say thank you? Being thankful helps grow our friendship with God. Let's now thank Him together for one of these things in your flower pot.



### Poster Explanation

- △ Mary enjoys a special moment with Jesus. Martha misses out because she is too busy.



### Practice Key Point (or do review)

- △ Let kids have quiet space to listen to God's voice and draw a picture of whatever they receive. (Pair younger kids with staff to help them.) Ask volunteers to share what they receive.



### Prayer

- △ Thank you, God, that we are so lucky to know You as our friend. Amen



### Coloring Page

- △ Distribute crayons and coloring page.

# Everyone is Invited!

## Goal

- △ Realize that everyone needs a friend like Jesus. The good news is, He invites us all to join His circle of friends. As we pass this news and His love on, we can see His family grow.

## Main Ideas

### 1. Everyone needs a friend like Jesus. He is the best friend ever.

- *Activity:* write or draw on a sticky note what you like most about your best friend. Post it on the board. Review.
- Did you know that Jesus is like those things too? He is the best friend any of us could ever have.
- *Question:* What makes Jesus such a perfect friend?
  - He is always with us — at school, at home, even when we're scared.
  - He listens to us.
  - He's kind, generous, gentle and good.
  - He loves us no matter what.
  - He's always ready to forgive.
  - He wants to help us.
  - We can talk to Him anytime, anywhere.
  - He never leaves us.
  - He is always caring about us.
  - We can trust Him completely.
  - People might let us down, but He never will.
- *Activity:* friendship heart chain. Need construction paper cut into strips, markers, crayons, stapler or glue. Each child writes or draws one or more ways God is a good friend on a paper strip (e.g. He listens, He forgives, He helps me.) Loop the strips into a paper chain — one link for each friendship quality (it's ok if there are duplicates). Have children display finished chain. These are all the reasons why Jesus is the best friend ever.

### 2. God wants His invitation to go out to everyone.

- Have kids dramatize the parable of the great banquet (Luke 14:15–24) as teacher narrates and guides.
  - A rich man invites some people to a big feast. Some say no (they are too busy, have other things to do, other people to see...). So the man invites *everyone*—rich and poor, old and young, healthy and sick, near and far. And they all have a great time at the party.
- God is like that man. He wants everyone to be included.
- *Questions:* How does it feel to be included? How can we help others know they are also invited to God's party of friends.

- *Activity:* friendship web. Need ball of yarn or string. Have the children sit in a circle. The first child holds the end of the yarn, says one person they could invite to know Jesus or to go to church, and tosses the ball to another child. Each child does the same — says a name, holds onto part of the yarn, and tosses it to someone else. As the game continues, a “web” begins to form. Once everyone has had a turn, point out how many people can be connected just by one person starting to share.
- Just like this web, when we tell one person about Jesus, it can spread to many more. Jesus wants His invitation to go everywhere!

### 3. Being a good friend makes people want to join His family.

- So what are ways we can be a good friend like Jesus and share His love?
  - Eg Smile. Be kind and friendly. Pray for a friend. Help someone out. Be forgiving....
- Is there anyone you can think of who doesn't know the world's most awesome Friend? Or do you know someone who needs to be reminded how good a friend God is?
- *Activity:* 'You're invited' card. Kids make personalized invitations they can give to friends or family, inviting them to church, Sunday school, or to know Jesus. Using blank cards or folded paper, crayons and stickers, write and decorate the front: "You're Invited!" Inside: "Jesus loves you and wants to be your friend! Please join me to know Him better!"
- Pray out loud for that person.



### Poster Explanation

- △ Jesus is the perfect friend and invites us to His circle of friends. We get the joy of introducing others to Him by sharing His love. This makes everyone happy.



### Review Key Points (with actions)

- △ Everybody needs a friend like Jesus. He is the best friend ever.
- △ God wants His invitation to go out to everyone.
- △ Being a good friend makes people want to join His family.



### Prayer

- △ Thank you, God, for your invitation to be your friend. I want everyone to know how amazing you are. Please help me to show them and tell them what a great Friend you are. Amen



### Coloring Page

- △ Distribute crayons and coloring page.