



BELT for Kids

Topics

1. Our Guidebook
2. Spectacular God
3. God's Big Heart
4. Amazing You
5. God's Smart Instructions
6. Breaking God's Heart
7. The Best Gift
8. I Can be a Close Friend of God
9. Gifting our Lives

Key Ideas

- Recognize the importance of the Bible as our map in life which can lead us in the right direction where good things wait.
- Be amazed by the greatness of God. He is the best One to lead us.
- Discover how extremely treasured we are by our Maker. We can trust His loving heart to do what is right in every situation.
- Know we are all of equal and incredible value being made in God's image.
- See how each command of God is designed in love for our very best. They protect us and our friendships with Him and others.
- Understand that sin is doing things our way instead of the way God has told us. It is hurtful to others and ourselves, and especially hurts God.
- Learn about the amazing gift of forgiveness and friendship Jesus offers when He willingly took the punishment for our wrongs. We now can join His family as we ask His forgiveness and make Him our #1 priority.
- Discover how we can be close friends with God. Through the habits of talking, listening and appreciation, we can enjoy growing close to Him.
- Realize we can use our lives to bring joy to God by expanding His family.

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Heidi Evans

Introduction

Though childhood is when most people come to Jesus,¹ in order to grow to emotional and spiritual health, children need positive relationships with many adults.² It takes a community of committed, loving adults to nurture and guide precious young souls on their spiritual journey. Children's ministry really does matter! And 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 five to eleven, lessons in B4K include Bible stories, discussions, games, crafts, object lessons and coloring pages. Though not designed as short lessons (ie. for Sunday school), topics can be broken down into several sessions. Or alternatively, activities and points can be selected that work with your time constraints and needs.

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We'd love to hear about the impact of B4K. Please send any comments or suggestions to 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.
- 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.
- Keep it entertaining. 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.
- Celebrate successes and achievements - even the small ones.
- Praise goes a long way to encourage involvement and good behavior. Provide incentives for helpfulness, participation, quietest girl and boy of the day, etc. (Though the long-term goal is for them to do these things from the heart, in the short time you are with them, moving them in the right direction is the goal.)
- Emphasize topics within the teachings that are most relevant for your audience. Eg With the 10 commands, spend more time on stealing and lying if you have learnt it is a noticeable challenge

¹ 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>.

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

for your group. If fighting and lack of kindness is an issue, emphasize that application with the golden rule. Mold the content to fit your context (for some, this will require probing your host).

- Connect what you're teaching to the children's lives so they can see the Bible is relevant. Bring meaningful application.
- Create a safe space where children feel individually valued and feel comfortable to be open and vulnerable. Be generous with your time and attention.³ Enforce and model respect for all.
- Use Scripture memory which will stay with children their whole life and which God can use to speak to them years later. Scripture in song or competitions works well - saying the most verses, answering the most questions on Bible knowledge, etc. Winning badges or certificates provides motivation to learn verses, books of the Bible, etc.)⁴
- 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 be vulnerable. Make it a priority to help kids get to know each other and feel comfortable together. The interactive activities in the lessons are more than just a learning strategy - having fun together provides opportunity to build a team identity. Here are a few get-to-know-you activities that can be used from the outset.⁵ 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.

³ 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].

⁴ Hill, Harriet and Margaret. *Translating the Bible into Action*. Carlisle: Piquant Editions Ltd, 2008. Print.

⁵ 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].

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.
- In preparing your team, explore topics like understanding and effectively engaging with children, teaching tools, creative techniques, class management strategies, acceptable codes of conduct, etc.
- Use a Bible version that is child-friendly (if that is an option). International Children's Bible, The Living Bible, and The Message were 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.⁶ 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."⁷
- At the start of each new lesson, review the main ideas from the previous session(s) through a time of Question & Answer. By having children come up and summarize the posters, not only does it gauge what they understood from the teaching, but it also provides good review and lead-up to the next teaching. Introduce new topics by linking them to previous teachings (show how everything is connected and building into a cohesive story).
- With each teaching, be clear how each activity relates to the concept being taught.
- Provide opportunities for children to ask questions. Also allow children to share what God has been speaking to them through the teachings (this is especially suitable if small groups are adopted).
- 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.
- Relax and have fun. Let kids know you care by being yourself, but don't try to be "one of the kids." Kids are relying on you to be their leader, not their playmate. If you relax, you'll have fun – and so will they.⁸

Age Group Division:

- Divide children into age groups to meet different needs and varied capacities to listen. A shared time singing and watching a drama or Bible storying works, but then divide them for the teaching from the Bible.⁹ Approximately 5-7 years and 8-11 yrs.
- Very large groups are hard to manage. It is recommended to break very large groups into smaller, manageable sizes (around 25¹⁰). Have extra adults available for safety, crowd control

⁶ 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].

⁷ Children's Ministry. 2020. Think Small, Score Big: How To Do Small Group Ministry Well. [online] Available at: <[>https://childrensministry.com/small-group-ministry](https://childrensministry.com/small-group-ministry)> [Accessed 22 May 2020].

⁸ Children's Ministry. 2020. Think Small, Score Big: How To Do Small Group Ministry Well. [online] Available at: <[>https://childrensministry.com/small-group-ministry](https://childrensministry.com/small-group-ministry)> [Accessed 22 May 2020].

⁹ Hill, Harriet and Margaret. *Translating the Bible into Action*. Carlisle: Piquant Editions Ltd, 2008. Print.

¹⁰ Blatchford, Peter. *The Class Size Debate: Is Small Better?* UK: McGraw-Hill Education, 2003. Print.

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.

Younger Children:

- Children's attention spans are very short. Offer small chunks of information (followed by an activity that illustrates the point or allows them to process the thought, 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, objects they can handle 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.
- With longer sessions and especially in lower socio-economic areas, consider including break times with 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.

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 families, their interests. What's shared in the group, stays in the group.
- During the large group time when there are activities, break them into smaller groups when possible. Vary physical and mental tasks.

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, discipline)
- 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

- △ Recognize the importance of the Bible as our map in life which can lead us in the right direction where good things wait.

Dramatized Story

- △ The two builders. Matthew 7:24-27

Questions

- △ What did the first builder choose to build on? What about the second builder?
- △ What happened when the storm hit? Whose house would you rather be in?
- △ Jesus compared the wise builder to someone who does what? (Hears and obeys Jesus' words.)
- △ What are the results when we practise what Jesus teaches? (Difficult things can come against us, but our lives won't fall apart because we are grounded in truth. We know what is true and live by it.)

Main Ideas

- △ **We all need guidance in life.**
 - *Activity:* blindfolded child leading blindfolded child around. Try again with blindfold removed from the child leading. When navigating obstacles, who would you trust more (the blindfolded person or the one who can see where she is going)? We need someone who knows what they are doing to lead us.
 - In life, we'll have lots of questions - solicit examples. As you get older, questions become more like: what should I do about this situation? Is it ok to do what they are doing? What is the best path to take?....
 - So where do we find answers to our questions? Some people turn to parents; some to friends; some to teachers or other authorities. But how do you know if their advice is the best advice to follow - and we're not just following someone who is as blind (as clueless) as we are? What if the advice varies from person to person? Is there advice we can trust to be the best?
 - Yes! "Your word is a lamp to guide me". Ps 119:105
 - Imagine the electricity going out. What do you want when this happens? *Illustration of the flashlight.* (Give 1-3 older kids flashlights and turn out the lights. What do you look for and move towards? The person with the light). The Bible is like this - when we can't see what to do, when we just can't figure things out, the Bible has solid advice that has worked throughout history on what is best to do in every situation. It guides our feelings, and directs our thinking on things.

△ **You can trust the Bible. It is a reliable map in life.**

- The ideas and truths in the Bible are there to help us in life; to take us in a good direction where blessing is. The Bible leads us to God himself, to be able to know him and listen to his good thoughts and ways.
- The bible is like a treasure map (describe). *Activity:* Pull out a map to a secret treasure. Get 2-3 volunteers 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. The rest of the group can cheer them on.
- How helpful do you think this map was to the treasure seekers? How happy were they to have it?
- So the Bible is a help to us - a source of blessing, taking us to places where treasure can be found - in good relationships with friends and family, in good consequences from good decisions, in a peaceful heart from doing what is right, in the happiness of growing friendship with God.
- Extra: Just like you can trust the manual that comes with mechanical toys written by those who created the toys (with instructions like how to turn them on, type of batteries needed, how to assemble them, etc), in the same way, the Bible is a manual on us, prepared by God who made us. *Demonstration:* you can read instructions to kids on how to make elaborate paper airplanes, including instructions of how to fly them - and not; where to fly them - and not; how to treat them. Now what if you ignored the instructions and decided to fly your plane into this bowl of water? What would happen to the plane? *Demonstrate.* So if you want to keep your plane flying, what should you do? Follow the instructions in the guide. Same for us. The Bible is our guide with instructions from God who made us and wants to keep us from harm.)

△ **A map only helps when we read and follow it.**

- What if our treasure seekers ignored the map they were given? Would they have found the treasure?
- Remember our 2 builders? Even having the right information wasn't enough. What else did they need to do? They needed to act on what they knew.
- We also can know truth from the Bible, but If we choose to ignore it, we are like people who ignore instructions about caring for their car - and decide it's a good idea to put oil where petrol goes in a car. What will happen? They will damage the car. So we damage our lives if we ignore God's instructions.
- What are some results of not following God's treasure map? Bad consequences. Friendships and family relationships that are damaged. Emotions and thoughts that are out of control. We can really wreck our lives.
- What are some results of following God's treasure map? Discuss the benefits. *Draw or post a picture* of a Bible (as you solicit and discuss the benefits, draw or post images around the Bible). Suggestions: Good friendships (2 kids with smiles holding hands). Peaceful home (house with smile). Safety (fence protecting hut from cliff). Happiness (big happy face). Peaceful heart (heart with smile). Things go well (check mark). God's blessing (God smiling on child).



Poster Explanation

- △ God's Word has been given to keep us from getting lost and getting hurt. Many blessings come as we read and follow it: guidance, God's blessing, peaceful family, happy friendships.



Application

- △ 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.



Review Activity

- △ Have kids draw a Bible (or distribute the image). Inside have them draw an image of what the Bible means most to them (they can select one off the board/poster or create their own). Older kids can additionally write out Ps 119:105 "Your Word is a lamp to guide me" inside.
- △ Lesson coloring page.

Spectacular God

Goal

- △ Be amazed by the greatness of God. He is the best One to lead us.

Dramatized Story

- △ God creates the world. Gen 1:1-31 (Summarize with actions the 7 days of creation. Teach the kids.)
- △ Day 1 - light (cover eyes with hands representing darkness, then remove to represent light)
- △ Day 2 - sky (stretch arms upward across from left to right while saying "sky")
- △ Day 3 - land, sea, trees (extend arms broadly like tree)
- △ Day 4 - sun, moon, stars (wiggle fingers to make twinkling motion of star)
- △ Day 5 - sea animals and birds (intertwine thumbs, palms up, wiggle fingers as bird wings. OR if that's too difficult, do a fish - palms together, hands wiggle like a moving fish)
- △ Day 6 - land animals and man (both thumbs point back to self)
- △ Day 7 - rested (palms together like pillow under head)

Questions

- △ Have kids tell you what was created on each day. OR play Days of Creation game below.
- △ Did God call in a construction company when He went about creating the world? What did God do? (spoke things into existence)
- △ What does this show about God's power? (He's really big and really powerful).

Main Ideas

- △ **God is most powerful.** (Have kids flex their muscles and say "powerful".)
 - Ps33:6-9 "God merely spoke, and the heavens were formed and all the galaxies of stars. He made the oceans, pouring them into his vast reservoirs. Let everyone in all the world—men, women, and children—stand in awe of him. For when he but spoke, the world began! It appeared at his command!" (TLB)
 - With just a word, God created seas, animals, plants. With a word, He turned complete darkness into light. Let's give it a try. "Let there be light". Did it work? Say it louder. Anything?
 - Then God took extra time in creating people. Formed from the earth, but made alive by His breath. *Activity:* give everyone playdough to make an animal, bird, person (or you mold it and bring to various kids to breathe life into it). Now have them breathe life into their creations. Whose came alive? God's breath breathed into a pile of dirt and made it come alive. Who do you know that can do that? Isn't it amazing that God can. He is really powerful, really big. More powerful than anything or anyone else around (that includes spirits and demons).

- △ **God is so big, He is everywhere.** (Have kids point all around and say “everywhere”.)
 - *Activity:* have 2-3 kids go into hiding; have the rest of the group look for them. Was it easy to find them? Do you know God saw each of them in their hiding places before we found them.
 - “Where can I go to get away from your Spirit? Where can I run from you? If I go up to the skies, you are there. If I go underground, you are there. If I rise with the sun in the east, and settle in the west beyond the sea, even there you would guide me.” Ps 139:7-10 (ICB)
 - That means He can be with us here and also be with our families down the road and with my family a country away.

- △ **God is so big, He knows everything there is to know.** (Have kids tap their minds and say “knows everything”).
 - *Activity:* Have everyone chat to each other simultaneously. What did the child across the room say? What did your neighbor say? God knows. He knows everything there is to know.
 - “Our Lord is great and very powerful. There is no limit to what he knows”. Ps 147:5 (ICB)

- △ **God is so big, He has no beginning or ending.** (Have kids sway an imaginary baby in their arms and then nod heads “no”, saying “no beginning or end”.)
 - *Illustration:* Put on a birthday hat, inflate a balloon (if applicable). What are these for? You and I celebrate birthdays - they mark the day we were born. But God doesn’t have a birthday - He was never born. And He will never die.
 - Ps 90:2 “Before the mountains were created, before the earth was formed, you are God without beginning or end.” (TLB)

- △ **God is so big, He is invisible.** (Have kids place hand above eye as if searching all around for something, saying “invisible”.)
 - “Honor and glory to the King that rules forever! He cannot be destroyed and cannot be seen. Honor and glory forever and ever to the only God. Amen”. 1 Tim 1:17 (ICB)
 - What does this verse tell us about God? God is unseen; He doesn’t have a body like us. He’s a spirit so doesn’t have the physical limitations we do.

- △ *Review game:* make a motion and have kids list the attribute of God. Next switch and say the attribute and have them do the motion. 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-ending God.



Application

- △ Have you ever counted the stars at night? God has. He’s also counted the hairs on your head. Do you know you’re always on His mind? He’s never too busy with the universe to ever forget about you. Take time to think about that and be in awe of our amazing God.



Review Activity

- △ Make origami birds or something else from creation.
- △ Days of Creation Game - you call out a day, kids need to use motions to indicate what was created. If you want to make it more challenging, you can do the actions with them, but sometimes do them incorrectly. Ones who get it wrong, sit out. Last few can be brought to the front so the group can also judge correctness of their responses. Winner receives a prize.
- △ Lesson coloring page.

God's Big Heart

Goal

- △ Discover how extremely treasured we are by our Maker. We can trust His loving heart to do what is right in every situation.

Dramatized Story

- △ The loving father/run-away son. Luke 15:11-32

Questions

- △ On a poster or chalk board show images of younger son, older son, father. Have kids describe each character.
- △ What happens with the younger son in the story?
- △ How does the older brother react?
- △ How does the father respond to both sons?
- △ What is Jesus saying to us through this story? (For those who have messed up, God is still welcoming you. For those in God's family, celebrate each sinner coming to God no matter what their story.)

Main Ideas

- △ **God is love. He delights to share that love with us.**
 - *Activity:* Have kids come to the board and write a word or draw an image that represents God to them.
 - The Bible gives a summary of God in 1 Jn 16a. "And we know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love. God is love." (ICB)
 - Everything about God breathes out love.
 - *Activity:* Everyone breathe deeply in and out. When you breathe in, it's like God is thinking about you. When you breathe out, it's like He is whispering He loves you.
 - He is eager to pour His never-ending, unstoppable love generously on us (like water out of a jug that doesn't run out). We can trust His love.
 - Love is choosing to do the very best for others. God always chooses the best for us.
 - His love doesn't have conditions. It is not based on feelings. He doesn't love us because we please him. He doesn't love us less when we make mistakes and sin. He loves us simply because He is love.
- △ **Papa God is the perfect parent, even if yours weren't.**
 - Our parents sometimes can let us down - a little or a lot. Maybe one or both of them isn't around anymore.
 - But God is completely reliable, always consistent in His care, will always be there for you, and is crazy about you.

- Listen to what God says about you in the Bible. Kids (strong readers) pick out verses from a bowl and have them read expressively.
 - Zeph 3:17 "The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing." God does a loud song and dance over you! (Activity: Everyone get up and do a short dance. If you have time, do a dance off competition with a prize for best dance.) God is super excited about you.
 - Is 49:16 "...even if mothers forget, I'd never forget you—never. Look, I've written your names on the backs of my hands." (MSG) God won't forget you - you are always on his mind. (Activity: Everyone look at the back of your hands. How often do you use your hands? We use them all the time; they are always before us. Just like we are always on God's mind.)
 - Dt 31:6 "...your God, is striding ahead of you. He's right there with you. He won't let you down; he won't leave you." (MSG) God is watching out for you every day, every moment. (Activity: Have several teams of two (or if space allows, the whole group can do this in pairs). One child is to shadow the other person; always in step with where they are going and what action they are doing. Then switch.) God is always right by your side. He won't ever leave you.
 - Testimony: Anyone share about a time you experienced what these verses are talking about? As the leader, begin by sharing a story from your experience.
- **You can trust God.** He has only good planned for each of us.
 - Jer 29:11 "I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for." (MSG)
 - God is good and loving in all that He does. You can trust Him to do the very best in every situation, in your todays and your tomorrows.



Poster Explanation

- △ Despite the younger son's selfish and dishonorable choices, the father still loves and welcomes him home. The father also cares about the unforgiving, unwelcoming older son. In the same way, God has a father's heart that is big enough to love everyone - including someone who is rebellious or someone who is lost in pride.



Application

- △ Do you sometimes feel like the younger son in our story? Realize God is for you. He doesn't hold our sins against us. He is willing to forgive us. Go to God now. Tell him you are sorry. He's waiting for you with a huge heart of love that only wants your best.
- △ Do you sometimes feel like the older son? Judging others? Feeling like you are better than others? Realize God's love and forgiveness is available for everyone (including you). Ask God if there's someone you need to ask forgiveness from or show love to today.
- △ Have you been disappointed and hurt by parents who didn't represent God's care well? God wants to pour His perfect love into your heart. He wants you to experience His kindness and know you can trust Him. He won't disappoint you.
- △ Sing "daddy loves you this I know, for the Bible tells me so...Yes, daddy loves you/me..."



Review Activity

- △ Make an origami heart. Inside, put a paper that says "Daddy loves you". You are always on the heart of God.
- △ Lesson coloring page.

Amazing You

Goal

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

Dramatized Story

- △ The Shepherd leaves the 99 for the one lost sheep. Mat 18:12-14

Questions

- △ What do you think about the sheep that left the protection and care of the shepherd?
- △ Why did the shepherd leave the 99 sheep to find just 1 lost sheep?
- △ What is Jesus, our good Shepherd, wanting to tell us through this story?

Main Ideas

- △ **We started as a beautiful thought in God's heart.**
 - We began as God's best idea yet. Gen 1:31 "God saw what He had made and it was very good." Each day when God was finished creating, He looked at his work and said it was good. But on the last day, after people were made, and God saw the completed picture of creation, He said it was very good. We are the finishing touch of God's masterpiece.
 - He made us to exchange lots of care and love in a beautiful friendship with Him.
- △ **You are unique.**
 - There is no one like you.
 - Compare noses, ears, smiles, fingerprints. We are all different. God wanted it that way. He loves all our differences.
 - *Activity:* Competition of longest tongue (touch nose), cross eyed, wiggling ears, double jointed....
 - Eph 2:10 "we are God's handiwork". Handiwork means "work performed by power and wisdom". Psalms 19:1 "The heavens are telling the glory of God; they are a marvelous display of his handiwork." (Living Bible). We are a marvelous display of God's power and wisdom.
- △ **You are valuable and irreplaceable.**
 - *Drama:* Short re-enactment as tell story of Matthew 19:13-15. Though some people thought children were a nuisance, 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:* Treasure box with the most valuable thing in the entire world. Any guesses? Have a few swear to secrecy before looking in the box which reveals a mirror. Then show the whole group. Each of you are valuable, irreplaceable treasures.
 - *Demonstration:* hold a local bill of high currency (who wants it?) Crunch it up, step on it, pretend to spit on it. Who wants it now? Did anything I do change its value? It doesn't

matter what has happened to us or what's been said to us or how we've been treated, we are each of high worth and value. God thinks each of you are amazing!

- Ps 139:13-14 "You made my whole being. You formed me in my mother's body. I praise you because you made me in an amazing and wonderful way. What you have done is wonderful. I know this very well." (ICB)

△ We are equal.

- "So God created humans in his own image....He created them male and female". 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 have 'God's stamp'. We are one of a kind. 'Made by God' means we are the best. Each and every one of us is -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 valuable than anyone else.
- *Activity:* distribute badges of honor "Made by God". Each child takes one and gives it to someone else they usually don't associate with and say "you are special".



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 of equal and great value, made in the image of God.



Application

- △ Do you treat everyone fairly and with equal value? The way you treat others affects God, who created them.
- △ Does the care you show for your body and mind reflect your incredible value?
- △ You can't treat others with value or treat yourself with respect if you don't feel valuable. Jesus wants to speak to you through Ps 139:13-14.
- △ *Prayer:* Get words for kids. Speak out God's affirmation over them.



Review Activity

- △ *Activity:* Accordion fold paper and draw an outline of a person, so when you cut it out, it produces lots of people holding hands side by side. (Color) God values each of us, we are all equally loved by Him.
- △ Lesson coloring page.

God's Smart Instructions

Goal

- △ See how each command of God is designed in love for our very best. They protect us and our friendships with Him and others.

Dramatized Story

- △ Jesus and the lawyer. Matthew 22:34-40

Questions

- △ What did the lawyer ask?
- △ What was Jesus' reply? (Love God and your neighbor as yourself.)
- △ Why did Jesus say, "the entire law is based on these two commandments"? (TLB) (If you are loving God and your neighbor, you won't act in a way that is hurtful to anyone.)

Main Ideas

- △ **The 10 commandments show how to love God and our neighbor.**
 - In Exodus, when the Israelites were wandering in the desert, they each did what they wanted to do without caring about God or others. It was unsafe. It's like a classroom without a teacher, without rules, and students without self-control. Would you like to be in that class? So the Israelites needed someone to step in.
 - The 10 commandments were given to Moses to help keep the Israelites safe. The Israelites were lost and they didn't know God's rules of loving or living. They weren't loving God or each other.
 - God writes in stone the 10 commandments. 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 talking
 - #4 - keep Sabbath - rest your cheek on your right hand with thumb folded in, four fingers pointed out (like sleeping)
 - #5 - honor parents - use 5 fingers to salute (yes sir)
 - #6 - not murder - hold up six fingers, pointing two fingers like a gun into the palm of the other hand, with those four fingers extended upwards (like a hold up).
 - #7 - stay committed in your 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"
 - #8 - do not steal - hold up eight fingers: 5 on the left, 3 on the right, then quickly 'bump'

- your hands together and switch to 4 fingers on each hand
- #9 - do not lie - use thumb and 4 fingers to talk like mouth at other four fingers
- #10 - do not be jealous - hold up ten fingers and pretend to "grab" in front on you, "I want!"

△ **The 10 commandments keep us safe and our relationships happy.**

- God who made us knows what's best for us and our relationships. Out of his wisdom and love he gave us instructions on how to love well.
- The commandments are like stop signs or a warning, 'danger ahead'. The 10 commandments are like a fence on a cliff that keeps people from falling over it.
- Draw an image of a house by a cliff. Draw a little toddler crawling close to the edge of the cliff. What should the parents do? Would it be more loving for the parents to leave the child alone to freely explore or to put a fence up? God is a wise parent who loves us. The 10 commandments are God's fence of protection for us.

△ **At the heart of each commandment is wisdom and love.**

- God doesn't like to tell us random things to do to make us miserable. He loves us and knows what's best to protect us and all our relationships.
- *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 right 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 commands 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.
- For you, what does loving God look like? What does loving your neighbor look like?



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 commands to protect us (like a fence) from hurting ourselves or others. Each command is designed in love and for our best so we can live safely and happily together.



Application

- △ We've seen how God wants us to live together well so He told us how.
- △ If God has been bringing something to your attention about how to better love Him or your neighbor, what are you going to do about it? Make a decision in your heart and talk to God about it. Talk to a parent or trusted adult who can also pray with you and follow up with you.



Review Activity

- △ Play 10 Commandments Count Off - you call out a number, children need to use hand motions to indicate what command it represents. If you want to make it more challenging, you can do the actions with them, but sometimes do them incorrectly. Ones who get it wrong, sit out. Last few can be brought to the front so the group can also judge correctness of their responses. Winner receives a prize.
- △ 10 Commandments Pictionary - divide into 2 teams. You whisper a commandment to the team representatives. Both try to draw a depiction of the command on separate poster paper (or act). The team to guess correctly gets a point. Each team member gets a chance to draw (or act). The team with the most points, gets a prize.
- △ Lesson coloring page.

Breaking God's Heart

Goal

- △ Understand that sin is doing things our way instead of the way God has told us. It is hurtful to others and ourselves, and especially hurts God.

Dramatized Story

- △ The first sin. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-13

Questions

- △ Were Adam and Eve happy living under God's care?
- △ What did Satan try to do? (He wanted them to question God's care.) How did he do this? (He appealed to their self-interest). Did he force them to disobey?
- △ Did Adam and Eve know that they were being disobedient? How do you know? (They repeated what God had told them and then hid when God was looking for them.)

Main Ideas

- △ **Sin is doing things our way instead of the way God has told us.**
 - Like with Adam and Eve, Satan can't force us to do the wrong thing. He can encourage us to do what is wrong by appealing to put ourselves first. He makes something we know is wrong look so good. But the choice to sin is always ours.
 - (Pass out verse to strong reader) James 1:14-15a "A person's own evil desire leads him away and (tempts) him. This desire causes sin".(ICB)
 - Like with Adam and Eve, who knew what God wanted them to do, sin is when we know what God wants us to do, but we choose not to do it.
 - (Pass out verse to strong reader) Jam 4:17 "And when a person knows the right thing to do, but does not do it, then he is sinning". (ICB)
 - God isn't fooled by our excuses for sinning. He isn't fooled either if we try to look good before others for selfish reasons. God knows why we do things and sees clearly what is in our hearts.
 - (Pass out verse to strong reader) 1 Sam 16:7 (ICB) "People look at the outside of a person, but the Lord looks at the heart." Are your choices based on loving Him and putting Him and others first or are you thinking only of yourself?
 - Sin is making ourselves more important than anyone - not loving God or our neighbor.
- △ **Sin is hurtful to others and ourselves.**
 - People living for themselves will hurt others around them.
 - Selfishness leads to unkind words and actions, disobedience, disrespect, lies, anger, greed - all these result in dividing people, hurting our friendships, causing us also to feel badly and become isolated because people don't want to be around us.

- *Drama:* Me! "Me" is the only word ever used in this drama. Any activity with another person is possible- sport, singing a duet, friends playing with a toy. Every activity begins amiably, then ME begins to dominate (slowly getting louder, with each person becoming increasingly more aggressive as they alternate saying "me"). Each scene ends with both people angry, storming off. Can do multiple scenarios.
- *Drama:* as you talk about the selfish things you do, slowly wrap a rope around your limbs and body until you can't move ("It's ok that I stole some answers from Tommy's test - he's so much smarter than me. It doesn't matter if I took her pretty bracelet - she has more anyway. I'm not going to give her an invite to my party because people like her more than me. I'm not going to do my chores -I don't care what my parents say. So what if I think wrong thoughts about them - no one knows anyway....") This is where our selfishness leads. We are stuck, entangled in sin.
- Can you think of other examples of the results of putting ourselves first: arguments, friends who don't want to be with us anymore, parents who lose trust in us....

△ Sin always devastates God.

- In our first story in the Garden, does anyone know what was the worst consequence when Adam and Eve disobeyed? (The terrible pain it caused God in losing the close and perfect connection He had with them when they walked together in the cool of each evening. His hopes at the start of creation were crushed.)
- We often forget the one who is most affected by our selfishness is God.
- Ps 78:40-41 "Israel turned against God so often....! They made God very sad. Again and again they tested God. They brought pain to the Holy One of Israel". (ICB)
- Because God loves us so dearly (even when we disobey) and has such high hopes for us, He is hurt the most when we disobey. It's like slapping our parents in the face. God always suffers the most when we choose ourselves over Him.
- Can add a *personal story* of a time in your life when you were defiant of your parents. Share how it impacted them, the pain it brought to them. Even more, when we aren't putting God first in our lives, we break His heart.



Poster Explanation

- △ Like the boy climbing the fence, we get tempted to do things that are not good for us which God lovingly warns us not to do. By choosing to ignore God and by following our own desires, we cause pain to ourselves and others. We hurt friends, parents, and we really hurt God who created us to love and obey Him in a close friendship.



Application

- △ What we say and do shows what is most important to us - God or ourselves. Ask God to show you any ways you have been only thinking about yourself and not caring for Him or others. Consider what you do in secret as well as how you speak and act towards others, especially your family.
- △ Hand out dark paper. Write down or draw pictures of anything you've done that has hurt others or God. If you feel sorry for those things, crumple up the paper and put it at the bottom of the cross (if you have one, otherwise in the waste basket). You can tell Jesus you are sorry. Lead out in a prayer of remorse for hurting others and breaking God's heart.



Review Activity

- △ "Selfishness says". Like Simon Says, someone gives instructions. Other kids only do those things which begin with "selfishness says". Otherwise, if someone in the group follows instructions, he is out. Eg "selfishness says poke your neighbor.... walk away.... grab for something.... whisper a secret.... stick out your tongue.... pinch someone.... make a mean face.... push someone.... "
- △ Lesson coloring page.

The Best Gift

Goal

- △ Learn about the amazing gift of forgiveness and friendship Jesus offers when He willingly took the punishment for our wrongs. We now can join His family as we ask His forgiveness and make Him our #1 priority. (Note: this teaching is particularly long and may need to be broken down into 2 sessions, between point 2 and 3.)

Dramatized Story

- △ Jesus with 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.
 - Tree - What was all the excitement in Jericho? How did it feel to have Jesus' attention?
 - Zaccheus - So why were you so interested in the big commotion? What were you thinking when Jesus began to talk to you - a social outcast?
 - Crowds - So what was going on in your mind when Jesus spoke to this 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 compelled to do as a result?
 - Jesus - Why did you say "salvation has come to this house"? What were you seeing change in Zaccheus? Why invite him to be your friend? (Wants everyone to be His friends. Came to seek and save the lost.)

Questions

- △ Listed with above activity

Main Ideas

- △ **Though we did wrong, God made a way for us to be forgiven and reunited. Jesus offers the best gift ever.**
 - God had a very big problem. What was that? Those He created to be His friends were far off. His dream for a huge family was in ruins because of our selfishness and sin. We couldn't make things better no matter what. Our good works could never cancel out our misdeeds.
 - But Jesus had a plan. He offered a gift that cost Him everything.
 - See our God of never-ending love wants to give, wants to unite, wants a huge family reunion.

- *Activity:* I have something here that is very special. I value it more than anything else. Would anyone like this gift? (present nicely gift-wrapped box/gift bag with small crosses inside for distribution)
- The gift Jesus offers is so much better, much longer lasting and far more expensive than any gift you've ever received. It's the gift of forgiveness for every wrong we've done and the gift of friendship with our Maker.

△ **In the greatest act of love, Jesus willingly suffered a horrible death, taking the consequences for our selfishness.**

- Someone needed to pay for our wrongs. The price for sin is death.
- (Pass out verse to strong reader) Romans 6:23 "The payment for sin is death. But God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus." (ICB)
- Crucifixion was the most cruel and painful and disgraceful way to die.
 - Jesus (who committed no crime or sin) was publicly beaten, whipped, insulted and spat on. A crown of deep thorns was placed on his head.
 - His hands and feet had long stakes driven through into a wooden cross.
 - It was the most painful way to die, and also the most shameful.
- Did Jesus have to die?
- (Pass out verse to strong reader) Jn 10:18 "No one takes my life away from me. I give my own life freely." (ICB)
- Why did he do it?
- (Pass out verse to strong reader) Heb 12:2 "He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy He knew would be His." (TLB) Jesus did it to make a way for friendship with us.
- But Jesus didn't stay in the grave. God's love and power raised him up, defeating sin and death and Satan.
- *Drama:* That's like if (child volunteer) committed a crime (put handcuffs/rope on and start dragging him to prison. Then (child volunteer) came along and said I love them; please put me in prison instead (remove handcuffs/rope and place on other child). That's what Jesus did for us. He took the terrible punishment for our selfishness which is death.
- We were the guilty ones, but now we have received pardon.
- (Pass out verse to strong reader) 1Jn4:9-10 "This is how God showed his love to us: He... sent his Son to die in our place to take away our sins." (ICB)
- And not only are we forgiven, but we are invited to be a part of God's family.
- (Pass out verse to strong reader) 1Jn3:1 "The Father has loved us so much! He loved us so much that we are called children of God. And we really are his children." (ICB)

△ **The right response to Jesus' extreme act of love is to be sorry for our sin and to make Him the #1 priority in our lives.**

- Humble ourselves and turn from selfishness
 - *Drama:* Luke 18:10-14. Who showed real humility and sorrow here? Who was forgiven? The tax collector was made right with God because he humbled himself, admitted his sin, and asked God to forgive him.
 - To be sorry for something means to not want to do it again. So if I'm heading this way to do something I know is wrong, instead I should do what? (head the opposite

way) If I'm taking things from others, instead I should do what? (give it back) If I'm choosing angry responses, instead I should choose what? (kind responses)

- Trust Jesus to forgive us.
 - When people were being mean and cruel to Jesus on the cross, he said, "Father, forgive them..." (Luke 23:34). You can trust (have faith) that Jesus is 100% willing to forgive you too.
 - *Activity (can also be done for the Review Activity):* faith fall. Have a smaller person in standing position fall backwards off a table into the clasped arms of a group (including several adults and older children). Faith is more than mental agreement, it's an action as well. It's taking confident steps towards forgiveness and obedience.
 - In forgiving us, Jesus takes our ugly selfishness (like the paper at the cross) and he burns it up. (Place paper in a box to burn outside now or later). He doesn't bring it up again. He gives us a fresh start.
 - Ps 103:11-12 "As high as the sky is above the earth, so great is his love for those who respect him. He has taken our sins away from us as far as the east is from the west." (ICB)
- Live for Jesus as our new priority in life.
 - "Christ died for all so that those who live would not continue to live for themselves. He died for them and was raised from death so that they would live for Him". 2Cor5:15 (ICB)
 - Make Jesus #1. Everyone hold up pointer finger. Say together "Jesus is #1". Repeat.
 - *Drama:* when I was living my life just thinking about myself, I got weighed down - fast. (Pace with a backpack on your back which gets heavier with each selfish thing you mention. Have someone add a block or big stone for each selfish thing.) I didn't care if I was mouthy to my parents; or insulting to my sister - she deserved it anyway. When I gave away my friend's secret, I don't know why she made such a big deal about it - now she doesn't talk to me. I got lucky when I took something from the store the first time - they didn't see me - but the next time I got caught and now I'm grounded..... Seemed like everyone was against me. Then one day, a teacher at school introduced me to Jesus. She said He could take this weight I'm carrying and give me a fresh start. So I turned to Jesus for help. (Drop backpack.) Everything began to change. Starting with me - I didn't feel so crummy inside and I didn't want to mess up things with my parents or sister or friend. I owed them an apology for sure. I feel like I'm starting over again - but this time, I'm doing things Jesus' way.
- Is 44:22 God's speaking to us today: "I've blotted out your sins; they are gone like morning mist at noon! Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free". (TLB)



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 live for Him. You don't need to work for this gift or be good enough to receive it. Because of Jesus' great love, He willingly took the consequences for our selfishness and

wrongs, suffered a horrible death, and instead offers the opportunity to come into His family and to become His friend.



Application

- △ Yesterday we had the chance to put the things that were hurting God and others at the cross. God sees if we are sorry or not. Maybe He's telling you to apologize to some people and make things right. God sees if we are wanting to follow His good ways and make Him #1. And if we are, He wants to forgive us and give us a new start. So the decision is ours. If you want to give your life over to Jesus, and accept His gift of forgiveness and friendship, let's pray that out together. (Pray)
- △ Burn/bury the papers from the foot of the cross to represent Jesus forgiving and forgetting our sin.
- △ If you prayed for Jesus to be #1 in your life, and you really meant it, He will forgive you and He will bring you into his family. Activity: Distribute to everyone large number 1 bookmarks that say "Jesus is #1" to be a reminder of your choice to live each day for Him.



Review Activity

- △ Repentance Game (Phrases and actions get quicker each successive round. See who can get actions correct the whole time and give him/her a prize. Kids sit out when they make a mistake and then help you find others who make mistakes.)
 - Admit your sin. Action: Point to your mouth.
 - Ask for forgiveness. Action: Clasp your hands together as if you're praying.
 - And turn from sin. Action: Spin around in full circle.
 - Keep repeating phrases/actions more quickly each round after initial explanation. Mix phrases up if you are wanting to make it more challenging.
- △ Lesson coloring page.

I Can be a Close Friend of God

Goal

- △ Discover how we can be close friends with God. Through the habits of talking, listening and appreciation, we can enjoy growing close to Him.

Dramatized Story

- △ Luke 10:38-42 Mary and Martha

Questions

- △ While Jesus was teaching at the home of Lazarus, what were the sisters doing?
- △ How did Martha respond when she discovered what her sister was doing as Martha was busy with hosting preparations?
- △ What did Jesus say was the most important thing to be doing? (Taking time to be with Him.)

Main Ideas

- △ **Knowing about someone isn't the same as knowing someone.**
 - *Illustration:* Show a bill with the face of the country's leader on it. Talk about what a good friend he is. Quote information about him. Then have pre-arranged an audience member who asks questions about the leader's favorite food, his hobbies, what he's most passionate about, when you last had a chat with him etc. Knowing about someone doesn't equate to 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.
- △ **We were created for close friendship with God.**
 - *Picture cards.* (Show picture images or real objects and ask suitable questions): Eg. The road is made for what? A car. A fish is made for what? Water. An umbrella is made for? Rain. A candle is made for? The darkness. Candy is made for? Our enjoyment. Hold up an image of a person - who are we made for? We are made for God. There is a reason we are here on earth. God made us higher than the animals, with amazing abilities, to enjoy a wonderful friendship with Him.
- △ **Friendship habits help build strong connection.**
 - *Drama:* 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? Is that the type of friend we are to God?

- It's fine to talk to God (we call this prayer), but we also need to take time to listen to Him (He wants to talk to us through His Word and to our hearts) and take time to admire and express our gratitude to Him too.
- **Talking Habit**
 - Talking to God is as natural as talking to your best friend.
 - In Mat 6:9-15, Jesus' friends were unsure how they should talk to Papa God. Jesus gave them a simple example. Anyone know the Lord's prayer? Recite. Jesus included in his prayer what things?
 - Appreciate and honor God
 - Pray for His will on the earth
 - Ask for our personal needs
 - Admit our sins
 - Forgive others who have hurt us
- **Listening Habit**
 - John 10:27 "My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me".
 - When Jesus was on earth, his disciples could speak with him face to face. Now that Jesus is gone, he still wants to speak to us.
 - If our parent is whispering something to us from the other side of our house, how are we going to hear them best? (by getting closer to them). That's the same in our friendship with God. The closer we get to Him, the better we'll hear His whispers in our hearts.
 - *Activity:* have a child listen to someone whispering something (John 10:4?) while everyone in the room is being noisy. Could you hear anything? (probably little) God is always speaking - but sometimes, our lives are too busy or too noisy for us to hear. Quiet everyone in the room and let the child listen to the whisper again. Did you hear now? (probably) It takes quieting down and slowing down to hear the gentle whispers of Jesus.
 - You can be sure it is God speaking to you if it is consistent with what He says in the Bible. Ever felt bad for disobeying your parents or being mean to someone? That is Jesus telling you to apologize and change. Ever felt happy about being honest when it was difficult or helping someone out? That is Jesus congratulating you on a job well done.
 - It's super important to be reading God's Word because it is the #1 way God speaks to us. Through the Bible, God tells us how to treat others, how to think and how to speak.
 - God will even make something stand out as you read the Bible that's just for you and for your situation. You may feel your heart becoming warm. You may feel like God is right there with you. You may even cry or smile. God is speaking to you.
- **Appreciation Habit**
 - 1Thes 5:16-18 "Always be happy. Never stop praying. Give thanks whatever happens. That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus". (ICB)
 - Taking time to be grateful to God is good for us - and makes God happy. It reminds us that He's so much bigger than our situation and that He's caring for us and won't stop. It helps us start to see things the way He does.



Poster Explanation

- △ Mary enjoys a special moment with Jesus. She understands what is best as she stops to listen to Him. Martha misses out because she is too busy with her preparations.



Application

- △ (While playing soft music) Take some time to just be with Jesus. Write a letter (or draw) things that you are grateful for. Thank God in a quiet whisper for each thing.
- △ As you begin and end your time, whisper 1 Chronicles 16:34: "I thank you, God, because you are good. Your love continues forever." (can be pre-printed on nice paper)



Review Activity

- △ Telephone Game: To get the message straight, we need to listen carefully. Same with when God is speaking to us. 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.
- △ Lesson coloring page.

Giftng our Lives

Goal

- △ Realize we can use our lives to bring joy to God by expanding His family.

Dramatized Story

- △ Outreach of the 72. Luke 10:1-2,17-21

Questions

- △ When Jesus sent his followers on their very first mission to reach out to others, what did He ask them to pray for? (more people to join them - Jesus was eager to bring many into His family)
- △ What did those followers think of their first mission adventure? (amazed to see the power of God working through them)
- △ How did Jesus respond to their excitement about missions? (rejoiced to see the kingdom of darkness pushed back and people experiencing the ways of his family)
- △ What encouragement did he give his followers? (rejoice that they are friends with God; he also reminded them they have power over Satan)

Main Ideas

△ God's heart:

- God wants all people to be His friends. He wants a huge family.
- 1 Tim 2:4 "God wants all people to be saved. And he wants everyone to know the truth." (ICB)
- 2 Pet 3:9b "God does not want anyone to be lost. He wants everyone to change their heart and life." (ICB)
- *Activity:* partner tag. Two people are "it" (hold hands) and together they try to tag others. (May need a boys' circle and girls' circle). As each person is tagged, they join hands with the group (forming a growing line). Last person tagged grabs the hands of each person at either end of the line, forming a circle. This is God's intent - that no one is left out; together everyone completes God's family.

△ God's instruction:

- Mark 16:15-16 "Jesus said to the followers, "Go everywhere in the world. Tell the Good News to everyone. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved." (ICB) Who do we tell the good news about Jesus to?
- *Activity:* Have large pieces of construction paper scattered on the floor shaped (and labeled if appropriate) like the continents (or neighboring countries or towns). Familiarize the

children with each continent name on each paper. You call out to the group "go into all of ____". The children need to run to that paper and all squeeze on without touching the area outside the continent. (Depending on how many kids you have, you may have to break them into groups). The child that goes to the wrong paper is out. The child that has their foot outside the continent is out. Pick up the speed as you call out continents. Last one or two get prizes.

- Jesus tells us to go to all the world. This is our privilege as his friends. We get to tell the great news about Jesus to everyone we know and meet.

△ God's help:

- Acts 1:8 "...the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses..." (ICB) God is ready to help us do what He asks of us.
- Mat 28:18-20 "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All power in heaven and on earth is given to me. So go and make followers of all people in the world. You can be sure that I will be with you always." (ICB) We're not alone in sharing about king Jesus.
- *Activity:* tug of war. Divide the group into 2 even teams. Place a line in between both teams. Each team is trying to pull the other across that line. Best 2 out of 3. By the end of round 2 (or 3 if necessary), ask which team is most tired. Announce another round - but this time you're going to add a strong adult to the team that is most tired. How well did that round go? The Holy Spirit is like the adult assistant who helps us when we are feeling weak and don't feel like we can do what God has asked. But we don't need to wait until we're tired to ask for His help. He will help us be bold and have the right words to share as we go about being His witnesses.



Poster Explanation

- △ As friends of God, who have experienced His goodness and forgiveness, we get the wonderful privilege of sharing about His great power and love with others. We make God very happy as we invite others to join His family.



Application

- △ Illustration: bring out some objects. Eg a shirt - who does this belong to? Pull out your backpack - who does this belong to? My wallet? Your legs and arms? Your every breath? All belong to Jesus. We give back to Him what is His anyway as a gift of gratitude, to use in the thing that matters most to Him - growing His family. If you want to gift your life to God to grow His family, let's say a prayer together.



Review Activity

- △ Game: build-a-verse. Review the verse with the group, "Go everywhere in the world. Tell the Good News to everyone." With each word of the verse recorded on separate sheets of large paper, distribute them to various children (turned around so the word is unseen). If it's a shy group, let 2 children hold onto one word. A team of 2 or 3 older kids runs around the room trying to put the

verse back together. As they come around, the older kids can glance at the word, but it remains turned over. The older kids have to find the first word first (and remember the others they've seen already). They line up the kids holding the words as they start to put the verse together. When they are finished, ask the group if they got it right. Have kids correct it if necessary. Read the verse together.

△ Lesson coloring page.