

IN THE BEGINNING

Bible Basis: Genesis 1:1–2:5, 18–25

Bible Verse: “When God created man, he made him in his own likeness.” —Genesis 5:1, NIV

Bible Point: God made everything. God made you, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 1: “In the Beginning”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Say, **“What is the name of one animal?”** Let one child answer. **“Good. Let’s act like that animal.”** (Act like that animal. Repeat until you have acted out an animal for each child. Duplicate animals are okay.)

Ask:

- How is a cow different than an elephant? A cat than a dog? A snake than a horse?
- How is a cow different than you? An elephant? Cat? Dog? Snake? Horse?

Say, **“God made everything. In our Bible story today, we’re going to hear about how he did that.”**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 1, “In the Beginning,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Say, **“In the beginning, there was nothing. Then God said, ‘Let there be light.’ How did God make light? God spoke.”**

Repeat your question and have children shout, “God spoke.”

Say, **“And there was light. God said the light was day and the darkness was night. He said light was good.”**

Have children cheer, “Hurray for light!”

Say, **“Then God told air to go between the water in the sky and the water on the Earth. How did God separate the water? (God spoke.) And the water was divided. God said the water on either side of the air was good.”**

Have children cheer, “Hurray for air and water!”

Say, "Then God spoke again. He told land, plants, stars, the sun, the moon, birds, and animals to appear. How did God make them? (God spoke.) And there were land, plants, stars, the sun, the moon, birds, and animals. God said that they were all good."

Have children cheer, "Hurray for everything!"

Say, "Then God did something different. He made people out of the dust on the ground. He also made people in his likeness. This means they resembled God. They were similar to him, like when someone tells you that you look like your mom or dad. God breathed life into the people. He made people in a different way than he made everything else. How did God make everything but people? (God spoke.) And then he made people. The first people's names were Adam and Eve. God said that what he made was good. Turn to the child next to you and say, 'God did a good job when he made you.'" (Give children time to do this.)

Say, "On the last day of Creation, God rested. He did not make anything new. The world was ready, and he had made people who could know and enjoy him. God rested because his creation work was done."

After the Bible story, ask:

- **How did God make light? Water? Air? Land? Plants? The sun? The moon? Stars? Birds? Animals?** (*He spoke.*)
- **How did God make people different?** (*God made them in his image and breathed life into them.*)

Pray with the children, thanking God for making everything, including all of you.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: GOD CREATED ANIMALS

Say, "Today we're learning that God made everything. God made all the animals, including birds! What are some of the birds God created? (various answers) We are going to play a game using the names of some of the birds God created!"

Play a simplified game of "Duck, Duck, Goose." All the children sit in a circle and one person is "It." That child taps each child on the head and says, "Duck," until It chooses one child as the "Goose." The "Goose" chases "It" around the circle and tries to tag "It." Whether or not the "Goose" makes the tag, it is that person's turn to be "It." Do not use the "mush pot" in the middle. You can use a different animal pair in each round, such as Fish and Dolphin or Cow and Horse.

Close the game by saying, "God made everything, including all the birds and animals. He made you and me in his likeness."

Option 2: In His Likeness

Have children spread out so they have plenty of space around them. Then act out Genesis 5:1 together:

"When God created man, he made him in his own likeness."

When God (*Point to the sky.*)

Created (*Cup hands as if you are forming a mud ball in them.*)

Man (*Point to yourself and those around you.*)

He (*Point to the sky.*)

Made him (*Cup hands as if you are forming a mud ball in them.*)

In his own likeness (*Act like you are holding up a hand mirror and then point to the sky.*)

Genesis (*Put flattened hands, palms up, together, as if they are a book.*)

5 (*Hold up hand with five fingers splayed.*)

1 (*Hold up one finger.*)

Repeat the actions together until children have learned Genesis 5:1. After the memorization activity, discuss these questions.

- **Whom did God make?**
- **How did he make people different than animals?**

Say, **"God made you special. God made everything. He made you, too!"**

Option 3: God Made Me Special

Stuff you need: paper, finger paint, white card stock, hand wipes

Say, **"When God made you, he made you special. No one else has the same handprint as you. Let's celebrate that right now by making a print of your special hand."**

Coat the children's hands in finger paint and press onto the paper, making a print of their very own special handprint. Immediately use the hand wipes to wipe off extra paint.

Option 4: God Made the Stars and Sky

Stuff you need: foil star stickers, blue construction paper, white crayons

Say, **"It's amazing to think that God created the sky and stars! Let's celebrate God's creation by thinking about the night sky."**

Help the children create a nighttime sky scene. Put the star stickers on the paper, and use the white crayon to create a moon and clouds.

Option 5: "Thank You, God!"

Say, "God created so many good things! Let's thank God for all he created."

Sit in a circle. Have a leader walk around the outside of the circle and randomly tap children on the head. When a child is tapped, that child gets to jump up and say, "Thank you, God, for ____." (The child can fill in the blank with anything they'd like.) The child then sits back down when their turn is done. Try to make sure each child gets a turn.

Option 6: In His Likeness

Stuff you will need: clothespins (not the pinch type; the wooden type with the round top), chenille craft stems in a variety of colors cut in half, markers in a variety of colors

Say, "Earlier we talked about how God made people in his likeness. That means we are similar to God, just as you are similar to your mom or dad. We are going to make clothespin people that look similar to you."

Give each child a clothespin and a chenille stem that is the same color as the shirt they are wearing. Help them twist the chenille stem around the clothespin to create arms. Then help them draw eyes and hair on the clothespin that match their own hair and eye colors.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 1*.

Say, "The front of this card will remind you that God made everything. Show your parents the back and tell them that God made you in his likeness." Have them practice doing this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

ABRAHAM FOLLOWS GOD

Bible Basis: Genesis 12:1–9, 17; 21:1–7

Bible Verse: “Abram believed the LORD. The LORD accepted Abram because he believed. So his faith made him right with the LORD.” —Genesis 15:6, NIV

Bible Point: Abraham trusted and obeyed God. I can trust and obey him, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 2: “Abraham Follows God”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Say, “Today we are learning about obeying and following directions. Let’s see if you can follow my directions. Everyone, please stand up.”

Play a modified game of “Simon Says.” Say, “Teacher Says,” and then model an action and give a direction: pat your head, raise your arms, run in place, etc. Do not give any directions without saying, “Teacher Says,” and do not call anyone “out.”

Ask:

- Was it easy to follow my directions?
- When is it difficult to obey and follow directions? What about when your mom asks you to put away your toys? What about when it’s time to come in from playing outside?

Say, “God asked Abraham to go to a new land. Abraham had a choice. He could obey or disobey God. In our Bible story today, we’re going to hear what he chose.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 2, “Abraham Follows God,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Have children sit on the floor on one side of the room.

Say, “Abraham and his wife, Sarah, wanted children. Abraham prayed, and God said that if Abraham moved, God would give him a family. If you think Abraham should obey God and move, stand up. If he should not move, sit down.” After children respond, have everyone stand up.

Say, “Abraham chose to obey God. Abraham, Sarah, and everyone in their household moved.” Have children walk with you to the other side of the room and sit down.

Say, **“Abraham had a lot of animals. He had a nephew named Lot who also had a lot of animals. There wasn’t enough land for both Abraham’s animals and Lot’s animals. If Abraham should give Lot the best land, stand up. If not, stay seated.”** After children respond, have everyone stand up.

Say, **“Abraham chose to obey God. He gave Lot the best land and moved to a different place.”** Have children walk with you to the back of the classroom and sit down. **“Before long, Lot got in trouble. If Abraham should save Lot from bad guys, stand up. If he should let Lot fight his own battles, sit down.”** After children respond, have everyone stand up.

Say, **“Abraham chose to obey God. He traveled to where the bad guys were and saved Lot.”** Have children walk with you to the front of the classroom and sit down. **“When Abraham was 99 years old, God reminded him that Sarah would have a baby. Abraham thought Sarah was way too old to have children. If Abraham should believe God, stand up. If he should not believe God, sit down.”** After children respond, have everyone stand up. **“Abraham chose to trust God. When Abraham was 100 years old, his wife, Sarah, had a baby boy, and they named him Isaac.”**

Children may return to their seats.

Ask:

- **What did Abraham want?** (*Abraham wanted a child.*)
- **What did Abraham do? Where did he go? Whom did he take with him? Did he choose to obey God?**

Say, **“Abraham did more than just obey God. He also trusted God. That means he believed that what God told him was true. Let’s ask God how he wants us to obey him today.”**

Pray with the children, asking God to show you ways you can obey him.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: I Can OBEY MY PARENTS

Stuff you need: a soft, bouncy ball

Sit on the floor in a circle.

Say, **“A big way we obey God is by obeying our parents. We are going to roll the ball to one another in the circle. We will not throw it—we will only roll it. When someone rolls the ball to you, you say a way you can obey your parents. Then roll the ball to someone else. For example, you can pick up your toys, brush your teeth, put your dirty clothes in the laundry basket, or not hit other people.”** Give the children examples and ideas. It is okay for them to repeat someone else’s idea.

Option 2: Be a God Follower

Stuff you need: butcher paper, markers or crayons

Preparation: Write, "Walk in obedience to all I command you that it may go well with you." (Jeremiah 7:23) across the top of a long strip of butcher paper.

Say, "Our Bible verse today is Jeremiah 7:23. It says, 'Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you.' This means that when we follow God and obey him, he can take care of us."

Spread butcher paper across the front of the classroom. Let children stand on the paper. Trace around their shoes. Once traced, they can decorate their shoe prints with crayons or markers. When they have finished coloring them, help write their names under their shoe prints. Hang up the mural in your classroom.

Ask:

- What is one way you can obey God today?
- What does it mean to trust someone?

Say, "Abraham obeyed God because Abraham trusted God. God is trustworthy. He loves you very much, and he takes care of you, just like he took care of Abraham."

Option 3: I Trust God!

Stuff you need: several cookie sheets (with rims), white card stock or construction paper, toy cars, poster paint, paper plates, hand wipes

Preparation: Spread poster paint on the paper plates.

Say, "Because Abraham obeyed and trusted God, he followed God on a big trip! In this craft, we will pretend we are going on a trip, too. Just imagine all the different turns and twists we'd make. You are going to create your own road for your own pretend trip."

Put a piece of paper down in the rimmed cookie sheet. Have the child dip a car's wheels into the paint of their choice and make car tracks across the paper. Each child can use two or three colors before they are done.

Option 4: God Gives Us a Hand

Stuff you need: God Gives Us a Hand Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child.

Say, "When we obey and trust God, he leads us and helps us. Let's name five times God has helped us." Give examples, such as helping people get better when they are sick or keeping people safe on trips.

Say, “Let’s color the five fingers of these hands to remind us of our five ways God has helped us. You can hang your picture up at home to remind you that God will always help you—or give you a hand—when you need it.”

OPTION 5: GOD’S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

Stuff you need: play dough—homemade or store bought (optional: animal-shaped cookie cutters, plastic knives, and small rolling pins)

Say, “When Abraham followed God to a new land, he trusted God to take care of his animals. Remember that Abraham had so many sheep and cattle that he couldn’t share land with his nephew Lot. Let’s use our play dough to create some of our favorite animals.”

OPTION 6: GOING ON A TRIP

Stuff you need: Going on a Trip Activity Sheet and crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child.

Say, “Abraham and Sarah traveled a long way. Our activity sheet shows us some of the things they saw on their trip. Match the item on the left side of the sheet with the same item on the right side of the sheet.”

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 2*.

Say, “The front of this card will remind you that Abraham obeyed and trusted God. Show your parents the back and tell them how you want to obey God because you trust him.” Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents’ Page.

JOSEPH FORGIVES HIS BROTHERS

Bible Basis: Genesis 37; 39:1–47:31

Bible Verse: “A man may have many plans in his heart. But the LORD’s purpose wins out in the end.”
—Proverbs 19:21, NIV

Bible Point: God took care of Joseph. God also takes care of me.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 3: “Joseph Forgives His Brothers”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: a small animal such as a fish or hamster, or a puppet animal or stuffed animal one would normally have as a pet, such as a dog or cat

Lead the children in a discussion about taking care of an animal. This example contains references to having a fish in the classroom, but if you have a stuffed animal, you can say, “**If this animal were real, what care would it need?**”

Say, “**Everyone come look at what I brought today! Come sit down on the floor by me! I brought in a pet fish. Let’s watch it swim around. Its name is — (fill in name). How do you take care of a fish? (You feed it, clean its water, and add water conditioner.) What would happen if I didn’t take care of it? (It would get sick or even die.) Just as we take good care of our pets, God takes good care of us! Today we are going to learn about a man named Joseph who was in a very scary situation, but God took care of him.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Preparation: On a piece of poster board, make a large star at the top and write, “God took care of Joseph” underneath the star.

First, read aloud Chapter 3, “Joseph Forgives His Brothers,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

When you see (S&W) in the story, have the children smile and wave. When you see (F&C) in the story, have children frown and rub their eyes like they are crying. When you see (*), hold up the star card and have the children say, “God took care of Joseph.” Practice these with the children before you start the story.

Joseph’s father gave him a colorful robe (S&W). Robes are what men wore in Bible times. Joseph’s brothers were jealous (F&C). Even though Joseph’s brothers were mean, God took care of Joseph. (*) One night Joseph had a dream. Stars and hay bowed down to him. Joseph

was really good at knowing what dreams meant, so he told everyone about it (S&W). He told everyone that he would someday be in charge of all his brothers. Well, his brothers did not like the dream. They stole his robe, put him in a deep hole, and sold him (F&C). Joseph was taken to Egypt as a slave. Even though Joseph became a slave, God took care of Joseph. (*)

Potiphar was a powerful man in Egypt. Potiphar bought Joseph and put him in charge of his house (S&W). Potiphar's wife played a mean trick on Joseph, and Joseph was blamed for the mean trick. He was thrown into prison (F&C). Even though Joseph was in prison, God took care of Joseph. (*)

The jailer liked Joseph. He put Joseph in charge of the prison (S&W). A baker and a drink-tester in prison had dreams. God showed Joseph what each dream meant (S&W). Joseph asked them to remember him, but they forgot about him (F&C). Even though people forgot about Joseph, God took care of Joseph. (*)

One day Pharaoh had a dream. Pharaoh ruled all of Egypt. He heard Joseph was good at telling what dreams meant, so he sent for Joseph (S&W). Joseph told Pharaoh what his dream meant (S&W). It meant that Egypt would have years with plenty of food then years with only a little food. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all the food in Egypt so there would be plenty of food all the time (S&W). Pharaoh gave him nice clothes, good food, and a nice place to live (S&W). For seven years, Egypt had a lot of food. Joseph put extra food in a safe place. Then people started running out of food (F&C). People from all over the world came to buy food, even Joseph's brothers. They were shocked to see Joseph, and they were sorry for selling him as a slave. Joseph forgave them (S&W). He told them that what they had meant for evil, God had used for good (S&W). This was God's plan for Joseph's life.

All of Joseph's family moved to Egypt to live with him. God took care of Joseph. (*) God took care of Joseph's family.

Ask:

- What gift did Joseph's father give to him? *(a colorful coat)* Were Joseph's brothers happy for him? *(No, they were jealous.)*
- What did they do to Joseph? *(sold him as a slave)*
- When Potiphar's wife played a trick on Joseph, where was Joseph sent? *(to jail)*
- How did Joseph get out of jail? *(He could tell the meaning of people's dreams.)*
- What job did Pharaoh give him? *(He was in charge of food.)*
- When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt, what did Joseph do? *(forgave them; had them come live with him)*
- Even when times were hard, did God take care of Joseph? *(yes)* Did he take care of Joseph's family? *(yes)* Does God take care of you? *(yes)*

Pray with the children, thanking God for taking care of you.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: GOD TAKES CARE OF ME!

Have the children stand up. Teach the children the point of this lesson by practicing the following motions:

God (*Point up.*)

Took care (*Hug yourself.*)

Of Joseph. (*Motion like you're putting a crown on your head, like Joseph wore when he was deputy pharaoh.*)

God (*Point up.*)

Takes care (*Hug yourself.*)

Of me! (*Both thumbs point to your chest.*)

OPTION 2: QUILT OF MANY COLORS

Stuff you need: a large, colorful quilt—possibly more than one, so all the children can sit on a quilt—bean bag or small soft ball

Lay the quilt on the floor of your room, and have the children sit on it in a circle.

Say, **"This is my colorful quilt! What colors are on this quilt?** (*let children answer; repeat answers are okay*) **This colorful quilt reminds me of Joseph's colorful coat! Do you think his coat may have looked kind of like this? What colors do you think were on Joseph's coat?"**

Say, **"God took care of Joseph in many different places—in a pit, in jail, and in the palace! Where are some places you like to go? We are going to pass the beanbag around the circle. When you have the beanbag, you tell us one place you like to go—it might be a particular store or restaurant or the home of someone special."**

When everyone has had a turn, say, **"You know all those places we just talked about? God takes care of us in all those places! He takes care of us at home, at Grandma's house, at stores, at the playground, and anywhere you can think of!"**

OPTION 3: JOSEPH'S STOREHOUSE

Stuff you need: Joseph's Storehouse Activity Sheet, stickers of food (or pictures of food items cut out of coupon ads and magazines or from the Internet), glue sticks

Give each child an activity sheet. Say, **"God took care of Joseph, and all the people in Egypt, by helping them store up food so there was plenty all the time. Use the stickers to create your own storehouse of food."**

OPTION 4: STOREHOUSE WORKER

Stuff you need: Masking tape for the floor, 4 heavy-quality plastic zippered sandwich bags full of dry beans and 1 laundry basket per game. Double-bag the beans and tape the plastic zippered bag closed. Set up a game for every 4–5 children.

Preparation: Set up the laundry baskets against one wall; put masking tape lines on the floor about 4 feet in front of them.

Say, **“We are going to help Joseph fill his storehouse. He needed lots of food, like these beans, in order to feed all the people in Egypt. Line up behind the tape lines. One at a time, you will stand on the line and toss the beans into the basket to help Joseph fill the storehouse.”** Everyone gets to try until they get all four bags into the basket.

OPTION 5: JOSEPH AND HIS COLORFUL COAT

Stuff you need: Joseph and His Colorful Coat Activity Sheet, coffee filters, colored markers, a spray water bottle (or a paintbrush to flick water), Joseph template, coat template

1. Give each child a coffee filter to color. This will be the coat.
2. Have children color with markers however they wish.
3. Wet the coffee filter.
4. Hang to dry for roughly half an hour.
5. While the coat dries, children will have time to color Joseph.
6. When coffee filters are dry, have children use the template to help cut the coffee filters into the shape of the coat.
7. Glue the coat to Joseph.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 3*.

Say, **“The front of this card will remind you that God took care of Joseph. God loves you, and he will take care of you, too. Show your parents the back and tell them that God takes care of you.”** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

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GOD PROTECTS MOSES

Bible Basis: Exodus 1–16

Bible Verse: “Moses answered the people. He said, ‘Don’t be afraid. Stand firm. You will see how the Lord will save you today.’” —Exodus 14:13, NIV

Bible Point: God watched over Moses and his people. God watches over me, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 4: “God Protects Moses”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Have children sit on the floor.

Say, “**God takes care of you through your parents. I am going to act out a way that your parents take care of you.**” Pantomime how you would make a sandwich and eat it. Let children guess that their parents make food for them to eat. Ask for volunteers to act out other ways that their parents take care of them. If no one volunteers, you can act out bedtime, putting on clothing, holding the hands of parents to cross a street, reading the Bible, etc., and let your class guess each action. Then ask the following questions:

- **Whom does God use to watch over you?**
- **What is one way God takes care of you?**
- **What is one way your parents take care of you?**

Say, “**God watches over all his children. In Bible times, he watched over a man named Moses. Let’s find out how God took care of Moses.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 4, “God Protects Moses,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

When you see (*) in the story, point up and have the children shout, “God watched over Moses!” When you see (!) in the story, wave your hand over the children and have them whisper, “God watched over his people.” Practice these before you begin the story.

Pharaoh thought he was in charge. He did not let God’s people keep their baby boys. Moses was a baby boy. His mother hid him from Pharaoh at home for 1, 2, 3 months. (*) Then his mother put Moses in a basket, and he floated on the Nile River. (*) Moses’ sister watched over

him. (*) Pharaoh's daughter saw baby Moses in the Nile River. She rescued him. (*) Pharaoh's daughter raised Moses as her own son. (*)

After Moses grew up, he started to help God's people. Moses got into trouble with Pharaoh for helping God's people. Moses ran away. (*) Moses ran to a desert and lived there for 10, 20, 30, 40 years. (*) After 40 years, God appeared to Moses in a burning bush. He told Moses to take his people away from Egypt and away from Pharaoh. (!) Pharaoh was in charge of Egypt. Moses told him that God was in charge.

Pharaoh refused to do what God said. So God made many bad things happen in Egypt. Bugs ate all the crops, animals got sick, the sky was dark during the day, and finally, people died. Now Pharaoh knew God was in charge. He let God's people leave. Moses and God's people were safe. (!) God used Moses to watch over his people. (!)

After the Bible story, ask these questions:

- **What did Pharaoh do when Moses was a baby?** *(Pharaoh didn't want God's people to keep their babies.)*
- **What did Moses' mother do to protect her baby?** *(put him in a basket on the river)*
- **Who found him?** *(a princess)*
- **What did God do to watch over Moses?** *(protected him in the river; let him be raised by a princess)*
- **Moses got into trouble when he grew up. After that, how did God speak to Moses?** *(in a burning bush)*
- **What did God want Moses to do?** *(take God's people out of Egypt)*
- **Did Pharaoh agree?** *(no)* **So what did God do?** *(made bad things happen in Egypt)*
- **Then did Pharaoh let the people go?** *(yes)*
- **How did God watch over his people?** *(He sent Moses to lead them out of Egypt.)*

Say, "God watched over Moses and his people. God watches over me, too."

Pray with the children, thanking God that he watches over you.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: GOD TOOK CARE OF MOSES

Stuff you need: a baby doll wrapped up in a blanket

Have the group stand in a circle, with the teacher holding the baby doll. If you have more than 10 or so children, make two circles and use two baby dolls.

Say, **"We are going to pretend this baby doll is baby Moses."**

Pass the baby doll, gently and carefully, around the circle. When a child gets the baby doll, he or she says, **"God watched over baby Moses, and God watches over me,"** then passes the baby doll to the next child.

Option 2: The Burning Bush

Stuff you need: white card stock; sheets of orange, red, and yellow tissue paper ripped into pieces a few inches long; glue; wet wipes

Say, **"God watched over Moses by talking to him through a burning bush. We are going to make our own burning bush."**

Use the glue to make an oval bush on the white card stock. (Use plenty of glue.) Let the children choose pieces of tissue paper to stick onto the glue, creating a burning bush. Use the wet wipes to wipe excess glue off hands.

Option 3: Plague of Frogs Relay

Stuff you need: 1 pillow for each group of 4–5 children

Say, **"One of the bad things God sent to Egypt was a plague of frogs. There were so many frogs they were in people's houses—in their food and their beds! Can you imagine rolling over and seeing a frog on your pillow? Yikes! We are going to leapfrog down to the pillows, pretending we are those frogs."** Demonstrate how to do a leapfrog jump, or recruit an older child to demonstrate.

Set up a relay of 4–5 children per group. Have the children take turns doing a leapfrog jump down to the pillow and back, then tap the next person in line. Do not yell, "Go," or declare a winner—just let the children enjoy pretending to be frogs. Make sure each child gets a turn.

Option 4: Moses to the Rescue

Stuff you need: Moses to the Rescue Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Review how Moses helped rescue the Israelites from Pharaoh. Talk about the way he helped God. Have children color the picture of Moses leading the people. Older children might enjoy tracing the words "Moses was God's helper."

Option 5: River Turns to Blood Plague

Stuff you need: clear pitcher filled with clear water; clear pitcher, empty, except for dry red Kool-Aid powder in the bottom. Cover this object lesson with a sheet so the children don't see it beforehand.

Say, **"Earlier we talked about the 10 plagues God sent to Egypt to convince Pharaoh to let God's people go. In one plague, Moses went to the Nile River and said to Pharaoh, 'If you don't let God's people go, God's power will turn the water in this river into blood.' But Pharaoh's**

heart was hard, and he wouldn't let the people go. So, right in front of Pharaoh and his officials, Moses raised up his staff and changed the water into blood."

At this point, pour the clear water into the empty pitcher with the Kool-Aid powder in the bottom of it. It will look like the water is turning into blood.

Say, "The water turned into blood, so the fish died, and the people couldn't drink the water. But still Pharaoh wouldn't let God's people go! It took a few more plagues before Pharaoh finally let God's people go. Throughout all the plagues, God watched over his people."

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 4*.

Say, "The front of this card will remind you that God watched over Moses. Show your parents the back and tell them that God watches over you, too." Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Bible Basis: Exodus 24–31

Bible Verse: “[God’s people] answered with one voice. They said, ‘We will do everything the LORD has told us to do.’” Exodus 24:3, NIV

Bible Point: God gave us rules so we can live good lives and know God better. God’s rules will help you live a good life and know God and what he is like.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 5: “The Ten Commandments”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Say, “We are going to play a game together. The rule is, you will follow me around the room in a line and copy everything I do. Let’s give it a try.”

Have children stand up, form a single-file line behind you, and follow you as you play “Follow the Leader.” They should copy all your movements. Walk around the room, circle around obstacles, lift your hands above your head, kick your legs out to the side. After a few minutes, have all the children sit down again.

Ask:

- Was it fun to follow those rules?
- Was it easy to follow the rules?

Say, “My rules were silly, but not all rules are like them. God gave us rules. Those rules help us live good lives. They help us know God and what he is like.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 5, “The Ten Commandments,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following story.

Teach the children the following song to the tune of “The Bear Went over the Mountain” or “For He’s A Jolly Good Fellow.” Practice a few times. Then tell the following story. They will sing the song every time you see (*).

“Moses Went Over the Mountain”

Moses went over the mountain,

Moses went over the mountain,

Moses went over the mountain,
And what do you think he saw?

God's people did not know how to obey God. So God gave them rules. These rules told them how to live good lives. They helped people have close friendships with God. God called Moses up to a mountain. Thunder rumbled and lightning flashed. A thick cloud covered the mountain. Moses obeyed God and hiked up the mountain into the thick cloud. (*)

When Moses got to the top of the mountain, God gave him 10 simple rules for the people to follow. God knew these rules would help the people live good lives. He knew they would help the people have close friendships with him.

God gave Moses rule number 1: God is the one true God. Rule 1 means that God is in charge of everything. (*)

God gave Moses rule number 2: Do not worship anyone or anything but God. Rule 2 means that nothing is more important than God. (*)

God gave Moses rule number 3: Do not misuse God's name. Rule 3 tells us that God's name is important. We should only use it with respect. (*)

God gave Moses rule number 4: Keep the Sabbath holy. Rule 4 tells us that God wants us to rest one day a week. (*)

God gave Moses rule number 5: Respect your father and mother. Rule 5 reminds us to obey our parents. (*)

God gave Moses rule number 6: Do not kill. Rule 6 tells us not to hurt people. (*)

God gave Moses rule number 7: Husbands and wives should keep their promises to each other. Rule 7 reminds us to keep our promises. (*)

God gave Moses rule number 8: Do not steal. Rule 8 wants us to treat other people's things with respect. (*)

God gave Moses rule number 9: Do not lie. God wants us to tell the truth. (*)

God gave Moses rule number 10: Do not be jealous of what other people have. God wants us to be happy with what we have. (*)

Moses brought these rules back down to God's people. We can follow these rules even today. They will help us to live good lives and know God and what he's like.

Ask:

- Where were the people when God wanted to give Moses the Ten Commandments? (*by a mountain*)
- Was the weather nice? (*No—it was stormy.*)

- **What was covering the mountain?** (*a thick cloud*)
- **When God told Moses to go up the stormy, cloud-covered mountain, did he obey?** (*yes*)
- **Let's try to think of some of the rules. Who can tell me one of God's rules?** (*varied answers*)
- **Why did God give us rules?** (*God gave them so we can live good lives and know God and what he is like.*)
- **These rules help us know God and what he is like. So, if he doesn't want us to steal or lie, what does that tell us about God?** (*He is kind; he wants us to be kind. He is fair; he wants us to be fair.*)

Pray with the children, asking that God will help them to follow his rules and know him better.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: Get Closer

Have children form a circle. You stand in the center of the circle.

Say, "We just said that knowing and following the Ten Commandments helps us know God and what he is like. We are going to find out exactly how that works."

"Take one step toward me if you have ever followed commandment 4, to keep the Sabbath holy. This means taking time out to spend with God. For example, coming to church this morning!"

"Take one step toward me if you have ever followed commandment number 5 and obeyed your parents."

"Take one step toward me if you have ever followed commandment number 6 and you didn't hit or pinch someone, even when you wanted to."

"Take one step toward me if you have ever followed commandment number 9 and told the truth about something, even when it was difficult."

"Now, take a look around you. You are so much closer to me and to each other when you follow God's 10 simple rules!"

Have everyone sit down again.

Ask:

- **Why should you follow those rules?** (*to live a better life and know God and what he is like*)
- **God loves you no matter what—whether you follow the rules or not! But how does following the rules help us know him?** (*They show us what God is like.*)

Say, "God gave you rules so you can know him better. Learning his rules is a good idea!"

Option 2: Ten Commandment Hopscotch

Preparation: Using painter's tape or masking tape, create a hopscotch board on the floor of your classroom. Make sure you have 10 boxes. If you are unsure of how a hopscotch board looks, you will find several Web pages with instructions.

Say, "We are going to do an activity that will help us remember that God gave us 10 commandments."

Have children form a line at the Hopscotch board. They will hop through the board one child at a time, on one foot or two, jumping on each number in order, and saying the numbers aloud. (This is also good number practice!) When they reach the 10, help them shout, "God gave us Ten Commandments!"

Option 3: The Ten Commandments

Stuff you need: The Ten Commandments Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Read through each of the commandments with the class again, and have them color the tablets as you read and discuss each one. Talk about why these are so important for them to know. Ask what might happen if God had not given the Ten Commandments to his people.

Option 4: Bible Bookmark

Stuff you need: thick card stock, cut into bookmarks, and stickers and markers to decorate; or craft foam and stick-on craft foam shapes

Have the children make bookmarks for their Bibles. Explain that the Bible is a special book in which we can find the Ten Commandments and other rules God gives us to live good lives and know him better.

Option 5: The Cloudy Mountain

Stuff you need: The Cloudy Mountain Activity Sheet thick card stock paper, shaving cream, wet wipes, paper towels

Preparation: Photocopy the Cloudy Mountain Activity Sheet onto card stock.

Give an activity sheet to each child. Spray about a tablespoon of shaving cream in the middle of each paper. Have the children spread it around with their fingers to create the thick cloud over the mountain where Moses went to get the Ten Commandments from God. Wipe hands immediately with wet wipes. Wipe up tables with paper towels. Let the pictures dry, and children can take them home next week.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 5*.

Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that God gave us rules so that we can know him. Show your parents the back and tell them that you can know God by learning his laws."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

TWO BELIEVING MEN

Bible Basis: Numbers 13:1–3, 17–33; 14:1–11, 22, 34–38

Bible Verse: “[Joshua and Caleb] said, ‘If the LORD is pleased with us, he’ll lead us into that land ... He’ll give it to us.’” Numbers 14:8, NIV

Bible Point: Joshua and Caleb believed in God’s promise. I can believe in God’s promises, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 6: “Two Believing Men”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Say, “We are going to play a game called ‘I Spy.’ I will describe something I see in this classroom, and you tell me what it is.” Start your clue with “I spy something ...” (big, tall, orange, round, etc.), and give clues about something in the room until a child guesses the correct answer. Let a few other leaders do an “I Spy” also.

Say, “Today we are going to read a story about two real live spies! Their names were Caleb and Joshua. A spy is a person who secretly watches something to get information.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 6, “Two Believing Men,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

God promised his people a wonderful land—a land with plenty of food and everything they needed to live. He brought them through the desert to the edge of this land.

“Go, go,” God said. “Go into this land that will have everything you need.”

“Hurray!” shouted God’s people. *(Have children jump up and down and cheer.)*

“But first, let’s send in spies to see the land,” God’s people said.

“Go, go,” God’s people said to 12 men, who were the spies. Two of these spies were Caleb and Joshua. *(Have children put their pointer finger in front of their mouths and say, “Shhh.”)*

The spies went into the land God promised his people. They went in secret, and they hid from the people in the land. They were quiet and saw many things without anyone knowing. *(Have children say, “Shhh.”)* They came back and told God’s people what they saw. The spies said, “The land has a lot of food!”

"Hurray!" shouted God's people. *(Have children jump up and down and cheer.)*

The spies said, **"The land is great!"**

"Hurray!" shouted God's people. *(Have children jump up and down and cheer.)*

"Let's go! Let's go!" said Caleb and Joshua. **"Let's take the land like God told us to!"**

"Hurray!" shouted God's people. *(Have children jump up and down and cheer.)*

"I don't know," said the other spies. **"The land is filled with giants."**

"Oh no!" shouted God's people. *(Have children yell, "Oh no!")*

"They are stronger than we are," said the other spies.

"Oh no!" shouted God's people. *(Have children yell, "Oh no!")*

"They will destroy us!" said the other spies.

"Oh no!" shouted God's people. *(Have children yell, "Oh no!")*

God's people were scared. They did not want to do what God told them to do. They were scared of the big, strong people in the land.

"It is a good land," Joshua, one of the spies, said.

"God will lead us," Caleb said.

"He will give the land to us," Joshua said.

"Don't be afraid," Caleb said.

But God's people did not listen to Joshua and Caleb. They did not listen to God. They did not go into the land that God had promised them. They remained in the desert all of their lives. Even Moses did not go into the land God promised. *(Have children rub their eyes like they are crying.)* Caleb and Joshua went into the Promised Land when they were much older, because Caleb and Joshua believed in God's promise. *(Have children clap and cheer and say, "Yeah, Caleb and Joshua!")*

After the Bible story, ask:

- **What was good about the land God had promised?** *(It was big, and there was good food.)*
- **What was scary about the land God had promised?** *(A lot of big people lived there.)*
- **Who believed God's promise that they could go into the land?** *(Caleb and Joshua)*
- **Who was too scared to go into the land?** *(everyone else)*
- **So, in the end, who were the only two to enter the land God had promised?** *(Caleb and Joshua)*

Caleb and Joshua believed in God's promise to them. God keeps his promises to us, too! We can believe God.

Pray with the children that God will help all of you to be confident in his promises.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: We Are Spies

Say, "What do you think it would be like to be a spy? *(various answers)* You would need to be very quiet and act in secret! Let's be spies right now! Very quietly tiptoe around the room. Look at lots of things in our room. Notice things that are big and small. Then we will come back together and talk about what we saw on our spying trip!"

Let the children spy around the room for a few minutes. Encourage them to tiptoe, be quiet, and not talk. Then come back together and have them tell the group a few things they noticed around the room.

Say, "When Caleb and Joshua spied on the land God promised them, they saw some scary things! But they still believed God's promise that the land would be theirs. You can believe God's promises, too!"

Option 2: Land of Milk and Honey

Stuff you need: paper plates, crayons, stickers of various food items, or food items cut out of a magazine or coupon insert and glue sticks.

Say, "When God's people traveled in the desert, they had only two things to eat: manna and quail. They were probably tired of those things! In the land God promised them, there were lots of good foods! What are some of your favorite foods? *(various answers)* Today we are going to make plates with pictures of our favorite foods! Choose the stickers or cutouts of your favorite foods and stick them onto your plate!"

As the children work, ask them their favorite foods. Teachers can use crayons to either write the name or draw the item on the children's plates.

Option 3: Promise Puzzle

Stuff you need: Promise Puzzle Activity Sheet, crayons, round-tip scissors, permanent marker, plastic zippered bags

Give an activity sheet to each child. Say, "God kept his promise to Joshua and Caleb and his people. God keeps his promises to you, too! God promised that the new land would have good food for the people to eat, like the fruit on this activity sheet. We are going to color the fruit

then cut the sheet into a puzzle with four pieces, and you can take it home and put it together again and again.”

Help children color and cut the puzzle. Scissors can be challenging for this age group, but they enjoy trying to use them! Put names on plastic zippered bags with permanent marker, and when the pieces are cut out, put them into the bags for the children to take home.

Option 4: Thank You, God, For Everything!

Stuff you need: Thank You, God, for Everything Activity Sheet, stickers, pictures cut from magazines, glue sticks, crayons

Give each child an activity sheet and a variety of stickers and pictures. Read the directions together and do an example of the activity on the board or chart paper. For very small children, provide a variety of stickers and pictures cut from magazines (and glue sticks). They can stick these in the squares.

Option 5: Spy Gear

Stuff you need: cardboard tubes (from paper towels, toilet paper, wrapping paper, etc.), tape, markers, crayons or paint

Say, “Joshua and Caleb were spies. Today we are going to make spy gear for you to take home.”

1. Give each student a long cardboard tube if you’re making a telescope or two small tubes if you’re making binoculars.
2. Let children decorate their tubes how they wish.
3. If you are making binoculars, tape the two tubes together, side by side.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 6*.

Say, “The front of this card will remind you that Joshua and Caleb were confident in God’s promises. Show your parents the back and tell them that you can be confident in God’s promises, too.” Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents’ Page.

GOD'S HELPER

Bible Basis: Joshua 1:10–11; 2:1–24

Bible Verse: "'Be strong and very brave. Make sure you obey the whole law. ... Then you will have success everywhere you go.'" —Joshua 1:7, NIV

Bible Point: God sent help for his people. God sends me to help others, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 7: "God's Helper"

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: simple musical instruments, such as triangles, finger cymbals, kazoos, maracas, etc. If possible, bring in a trumpet, shofar, or other horn-type instrument to demonstrate.

When children are seated, say, **"People in Bible times had many musical instruments."**

Show how to play the instruments and pass them out for the children to try. Say, **"One of the instruments was a trumpet. Let's pretend we can play trumpets like those in Bible times."** Show children how to place a thumb near their mouth and keep two hands open in a row. Then make a "to-to-too" sound with your mouth. Slightly bend your fingers as if you are pushing down on the valves of a trumpet. Have the class follow you around the room making "to-to-too" sounds. Then have them sit down.

Say, **"Today we are going to find out how God sent a helper to his people. You can be a helper, too!"**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 7, "God's Helper," from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Ask children to put their pretend horns (demonstrated in the first activity) to their lips. They are to blow their horns whenever you see (*) in the story.

God's people were ready to enter the land God had promised them. In the land, there was a city called Jericho. So God's people sent spies into Jericho to check it out. Do you remember what a spy is? (someone who secretly watches and gets information)

The spies went to Jericho. Jericho was a big city. It had a high wall around it. Jericho was not a friendly city. The spies needed help. (*) God sent his people a helper. He sent them a woman named Rahab. She let the spies hide out at her house.

The king found out the spies were in Jericho. "We do not want spies," the king of Jericho said. He sent soldiers to Rahab's house.

"Bring out the men who came to your house," the soldiers said. The spies were in trouble. They needed help. (*) Rahab helped the spies again. She hid the men on her roof.

Then she told the soldiers, "Hurry. Go after them, and you might catch them." The soldiers hurried away.

She told the spies, "Your God is the one true God. He rules over heaven. He rules over the Earth. Please take care of my family and me when you take over Jericho."

"We promise to take care of you," the spies said. They needed to leave Jericho, but they needed help. (*) Once again, Rahab was their helper. Rahab's house was part of the city's wall. She hung a rope outside her window and told the men to climb down. The spies ran to safety.

When the spies returned to Jericho, they brought all of God's people. God's people walked around the city many days. Then one day they walked around the walls, the priests blew their trumpets, and Jericho's walls fell down. Now Rahab was the one who needed help! (*)

God sent Rahab some helpers. The spies brought Rahab, her parents, and her brothers safely out of the city.

God sends helpers to his people when they need them. He uses other people to help you, and he wants you to help other people, too!

After the story, ask:

- **Where did the spies go?** *(to Jericho)*
- **What is a spy?** *(someone who watches and gets information in secret)*
- **Who helped the spies?** *(Rahab)*
- **How did she help them?** *(She hid them from the soldiers; she helped them escape.)*
- **Then when God's people took over Jericho, who helped Rahab?** *(the spies)*

Say, "God sent Rahab to help the spies. He sent the spies to help Rahab. Let's thank God for sending us helpers. Let's ask God to use us to help other people."

Pray with the children that God will use you to help other people.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: HELPING OUR CHURCH

Stuff you need: office supplies, cellophane bags, and ribbon to make goody bags for your church staff members. Steer clear of candy and food items. If you only have a few staff members, you could include some church volunteers.

Preparation: Set up an assembly line on a long table—bags, erasers, sticky notes, pens, boxes of paper clips, ribbon.

Say, **“Our church staff works so hard. I’d like to make them some goody bags to say thanks for all the work they do here at our church! Will you help me? I could really use your help.”** Have the children each go through the line once, opening a bag and placing one of each item inside. Help them tie the ribbon around the goody bag.

Ask:

- Thanks for helping me! Who else can you help today?
- How could you help someone?

Say, **“After our class, I will deliver these goody bags to our church office with a sign that says, ‘Thank you for all your hard work.’ I think these bags you made will really make their day!”**

OPTION 2: FALLING WALLS

Stuff you need: large, empty cardboard boxes taped shut, or cardboard “bricks” found in many church nurseries, or shoe boxes taped shut

Preparation: Build up a circular wall of boxes around an adult, preferably tall enough so the adult is hidden inside.

Have the children pretend to be God’s people around the city of Jericho. Have the children march around the wall, tooting their horns. After a few minutes, have the volunteer inside the circle gently push the boxes down, knocking down the wall. Have the children march a few feet out from the wall so the boxes don’t fall on them. Let the children help build the wall back up and march again!

OPTION 3: HELPING HANDS

Stuff you need: Helping Hands Activity Sheet, crayons, other decorating supplies

Give an activity sheet and crayons to each child. Say, **“You might be small, but you can help other people! What are some ways you can help other people? (put away toys, take dirty dishes to the sink, feed a pet, play with a little brother or sister) This worksheet will help you remember that you have helping hands! You can use them to help others.** Assist each child with tracing their hands on the activity sheet.

Option 4: Musical Instruments

*** Choking Hazard Alert!** If you choose to make shakers, tell parents they contain small parts that could be choking hazards if the child gets the bottle or jar open, and should only be used under adult supervision.

Guitar

Stuff you need: empty tissue boxes, large rubber bands

1. Help children wrap the rubber bands around the box so rubber bands go across the boxes' openings.
2. Pluck strings.

Shaker (for ages 3 and up)

Stuff you need: empty, clean bottle or jar; beads, popcorn kernels, or uncooked rice or beans; glue

1. Help children unscrew the bottle's lid.
2. Fill bottle with beads or uncooked rice or beans, no more than three-quarters of the way full.
3. Put glue inside the lid, then screw the lid back on.
4. Shake the bottle shaker.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 7*.

Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that God sent Rahab to help his people. Show your parents the back and tell them that God wants to use you to help others, too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

A STRONG MAN

Bible Basis: Judges 16:1–31

Bible Verse: “[Samson] said, ‘God, please make me strong just one more time.’” —Judges 16:28, NIV

Bible Point: Samson asked God to help him. You can ask God for help, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 8: “A Strong Man”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Have children stand up.

Say, **“Try to do what I tell you to do. Turn to the front of the classroom.”** (Wait for them to do it.)

Say, **“Turn to the clock on the wall.”** (Wait for them to do it.)

Tell the children to “turn to” a few more things in the classroom.

Have the children sit down. Then ask:

- **What did you do when I asked you to “turn to” something?** (*You faced it; gave it your attention.*)
- **What do you think it means to “turn to” God?** (*You give him your attention; listen to what he says; respect him.*)

Say, **“Today we are going to read about a man who had a time when he disobeyed God. But before he died, he chose to turn to God.”**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Read Chapter 8, “The Strong Man,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Have children spread out so they have room to do actions. As you read the story, have children copy you as you do the motions.

There are two kinds of strong. One strong is to be strong in God. (*Show arm muscles.*) **When we are strong in God, we are strong in wanting to make good choices and follow God. The other strong has to do with being able to lift heavy things—your body is strong.** (*Gently punch one hand into the other hand.*)

Samson was strong in God. (*Hold up muscle arms.*) **He was also strong in body.** (*Gently punch one hand into the other hand.*) **Samson was a leader for God's people. But then he stopped listening to God.** (*Cover your ears.*) **He started listening to a woman.** (*Cup hands to your ears.*) **He thought** (*point to head*) **she was pretty. He thought** (*point to head*) **she was more important than God.**

The woman's name was Delilah. She wanted a lot of money. She could make a lot of money if she could tell others why Samson was so strong. That was Samson's secret. (*Put a finger to your lips and say, "Shhh!"*)

Delilah asked Samson, "What makes you so strong?"

Samson said, "Tie me up with seven new leather straps, and I won't be strong."

So she did. But that wasn't the secret of Samson's strength. (*Shake head "no."*)

Delilah asked, "What makes you so strong?"

Samson told her, "Tie me up with rope that has never been used."

So she did. But that wasn't the secret of Samson's strength. (*Shake head "no."*)

Then he said, "Weave my hair into cloth on a loom. Then I won't be strong."

So she did. But that wasn't the secret of Samson's strength. (*Shake head "no."*)

Finally, Samson got tired of Delilah asking, and he told her the truth. "If you cut my hair, I won't be strong." (*Make a scissor motion.*)

So she did. And he became weak. (*Go limp like a rag doll.*)

Delilah got her money, and bad guys took Samson to prison. He was there for a long time. Slowly his hair began to grow back. One day they took Samson to a place where a lot of bad guys were. The bad guys made fun of him.

Samson knew he had been wrong to make Delilah more important than God. He turned to God. He asked God to help him. He asked for his strength back, both his strength in God (*hold up muscle arms*) **and his strength in his body** (*gently punch one hand into the other hand*).

God gave Samson back his strength. Samson pushed over the pillars that held up the building. He stopped many bad people. When Samson turned to God, God helped him. You can also turn to God and ask him for help.

Ask:

- **Why was Samson so strong?** (*Samson was strong because he had never cut his hair.*)
- **Why did God help Samson after Samson disobeyed?** (*God helped Samson because Samson turned back to God.*)

Say, "At first, Samson disobeyed God. He turned away from God. But God loves us very much, and he forgives us. Even when you disobey, you can turn back to God. He always loves you and forgives you. He is always your friend, and you can turn to him and ask for help. Let's pray."

Pray with the children and thank God that you can always ask him for help.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: STRONG and Weak

***Allergy Alert!** Before you serve food, be sure to find out if any of the children in your class have food allergies!

*** Choking Hazard Alert!** Do not give popped popcorn or whole grapes to children under age three, as they could be choking hazards.

Stuff you need: popcorn kernels, popped popcorn, raisins, grapes (quartered), water, ice cubes, cups, napkins

Say, "**Samson was a strong man.**" Have children look at the popcorn kernels, and then let them eat popped popcorn. Discuss how one is stronger than the other.

Give children raisins and grapes. Let them decide which is stronger.

Give each child a cup of water with an ice cube in it. Talk about how the ice cube is stronger than the water.

Ask:

- **What makes something strong?** *(People can be physically strong or strong in God.)*
- **What can you do if you are strong in God?** *(People who are strong in God can do anything God wants them to do.)*

Close by saying, "**God helps those who turn to him. He is strong. Like Samson, you can ask God for help.**"

Say, "**It's interesting how something can be either strong or weak. We've seen that is true with water, grapes, and popcorn, and we've also seen that it is true with people! Let's try to be strong in God!**"

OPTION 2: I Can Ask God for Help

Teach the children these motions to the phrase, “I can ask God for help.” Practice a few times.

I can (*Point to yourself.*)

Ask God (*Point up.*)

For help! (*Clap.*)

Tell the children the following situations, and help them respond with the words and motions, “I can ask God for help.”

When I have to wake up, but I’m tired, (*I can ask God for help!*)

When someone is mean to me, (*I can ask God for help!*)

When I don’t get to be first in line, (*I can ask God for help!*)

When a friend won’t share, (*I can ask God for help!*)

When I get hurt, (*I can ask God for help!*)

When I have to pick up my toys, (*I can ask God for help!*)

Say, “No matter what is going on in your life, you can always ask God for help!”

OPTION 3: HELPING STICKS

Stuff you need: Helping Sticks Activity Sheet, permanent marker, ribbon or rubber bands, wide craft sticks (about 4 per child), crayons, markers, small stickers

Say, “We learned today that Samson asked God to help him, and we can ask God for help, too! We can also help others. We are going to make some Helping Sticks today so we remember to help people this week. Whom can you help this week?”

Give each child a group of about four sticks. With permanent marker, write the name of a person the child can help this week on each stick. If the child isn’t a big talker, you can write down words like “Mom,” “Dad,” “brother,” and “sister.” Then the child can decorate the sticks with crayons, markers, or small stickers. (Do not give children the permanent marker; if you choose to give them markers, provide washable ones.) Tie the bundle of sticks together with the ribbon or rubber band.

Say, “Take your Helping Sticks home with you this week. Each day you can choose one and an adult can help you read the name and decide how to help that person.”

Give a Helping Sticks handout to each of the parents as they pick up their children.

OPTION 4: A STRONG MAN

Stuff you need: A Strong Man Activity Sheet, crayons

Give each child a coloring sheet and crayons. Say, “God gave Samson strength to do many brave things. The Bible tells us he even fought a lion—and won! We are going to color a picture of a lion so we remember God gave Samson strength, and he gives us strength!”

Option 5: Samson's Hair

Stuff you need: paper cups, markers, fast-germinating grass seeds, potting soil, measuring cups or scoops to scoop the soil, plastic wrap, rubber bands, water in watering can. Attach a label sticker to each cup, instructing parents to remove the plastic wrap when they see sprouts beginning to grow, or instruct parents as they pick up their children.

Preparation: Gather the supplies, including plastic bins or plastic drop cloths or tablecloths; have children plant over these items to keep your floor clean.

1. Pass out a paper cup to each student.
2. Help children draw a face on the front of their cup to represent Samson.
3. Write their name on the back.
4. Fill the cup with potting soil.
5. Sprinkle grass seeds in cup and lightly water them.
6. Cover with plastic wrap and secure with a rubber band.
7. Take the cup home and watch Samson's hair grow.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 8*.

Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that God helps those who turn to him. Show your parents the back, and tell them that you can depend on God, too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

TWO KIND PEOPLE

Bible Basis: Ruth 1:1–2:23

Bible Verse: “[Boaz said,] ‘May the LORD reward you for what you have done.’” —Ruth 2:12

Bible Point: Boaz and Ruth were kind to others. I please God when I am kind.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 9: “Two Kind People”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Gather the children together and have them sit down. In this game, the teacher or other leaders will need to help the children know if they should stand. Some children will stand up at the wrong time; that is okay. Some children will stand up every time; that is also okay. The point is to see that we all have things that are alike and things that are different.

Say, **“Stand up if you are wearing the color blue!”** (*Each time, allow children time to do this; have leaders help.*)

“Stand up if you have black hair.”

“Stand up if you have a nose.”

“Stand up if you are wearing the color red.”

“Stand up if you like ice cream.”

“Stand up if you like to play soccer.”

“Stand up if you have two ears!”

Say, **“In some ways we are alike. In some ways, we are different. Today’s story is about someone who traveled very far to a land where she was very different from other people. But as you’ll see from the story, in some ways, she was the same.”**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Read Chapter 9, “Two Kind People,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Have children sit on the floor. Allow them enough room to move. Every time you see Ruth’s name, have the children wipe their hands in a downward motion as if they are smoothing a skirt or apron.

Every time you see Boaz's name, have the children flex their bicep muscles. Teach the group the motions, and then present the story.

Ruth and Naomi were two women who lived in a far-off land. Naomi was Ruth's mother-in-law. When both of their husbands died, they didn't have any food or money. Naomi knew she needed to go back to her homeland, where she was one of God's people, to try to find food. Naomi told Ruth to stay because Ruth's home was the faraway land. But Ruth was kind, and she did not want to leave Naomi. So she went far from home, back to Naomi's homeland. When they returned to Naomi's homeland, Ruth went out into the fields to pick grain. She took the grain back to Naomi so she could make bread. Ruth was kind to Naomi.

A man named Boaz owned a field where Ruth was picking grain. Boaz saw Ruth in his field. He knew Ruth was picking up grain to feed Naomi and herself. Boaz knew that Ruth was from another land, and he could tell that she was very kind. Boaz gave Ruth lunch. He told his workers to give her more grain. Boaz was kind to Ruth.

Naomi was happy to hear that Boaz was kind. She knew that Boaz was part of her family. Soon after, Boaz and Ruth fell in love and were married. They had a baby boy!

Say, "Great job doing the motions! Good things happened because Ruth was kind to Naomi. Good things happened because Boaz was kind to Ruth. God was pleased with Ruth. God was pleased with Boaz. When you are kind to others, God is pleased with you, too."

After the Bible story, ask:

- **Who was Ruth?** (*Naomi's daughter-in-law*)
- **Who was Naomi?** (*Ruth's mother-in-law, in a far-off land*)
- **What happened to their husbands?** (*They died.*)
- **Where did they go?** (*back to Naomi's homeland*)
- **Was Ruth from Naomi's homeland?** (*no*) **Was she different from those people?** (*yes*)
- **But what could the people tell about Ruth, even though she was different?** (*Ruth was kind to Naomi.*)
- **How did Ruth get food?** (*She picked grain.*)
- **Who owned the field?** (*Boaz*)
- **Was he mean, or kind?** (*kind*)
- **And what happened to Ruth and Boaz?** (*They got married and had a baby boy.*)
- **Why was God pleased with Ruth and Boaz?** (*They were both kind.*)

Say, "God loves us all the time. It pleases him when we are kind to other people. Let's ask God to make us kinder to the people around us."

Pray with the children and ask God to help you all to be kind to the people around you.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: RUTH AND NAOMI'S JOURNEY GAME

Stuff you need: 2 sheets each of about 6 different colors of felt (You can use construction paper if you have to, but felt works better.) If you have a large class, you may want to set up more than one game—maybe one for the girls and one for the boys.

Preparation: Set one sheet of each color randomly on the floor of your classroom. Hold on to the matching sheets.

Say, “Ruth and Naomi traveled a long way, from land to land, until they finally came to Naomi’s homeland. In this game, we are going to take a journey from color to color. This is not a race—we will walk from color to color.”

Hold the matching felt sheets in the middle of the room where all the children can see you. When you hold up a sheet, the children need to walk to the matching color on the floor. They will need more direction and guidance in the beginning of the game. Do several rounds until the children can go to the correct color without any verbal directions at all. For older children, you can use some variations, such as boys go to one color and girls to another, or everyone go to the color of clothes they are wearing.

OPTION 2: THANK YOU, PASTOR!

Stuff you need: poster board, crayons or markers, stickers

Say, “Our pastor works hard to take good care of our church. Let’s show our pastor kindness by making him/her a huge card!”

Have children make a large card for the pastor of your church. If you have a large classroom, have a poster board for every 8–10 children. Children can draw the things they would like to give the pastor or things they would like to do for the pastor. As they work, you can write their names on it. When everyone is done, fold the poster board in half, and write, “Thank you, Pastor,” on the front of it.

While children are working, ask:

- Why should we be kind to others?
- How can you show kindness to someone in your family?

Say, “Boaz and Ruth were kind to others. You please God when you’re kind to others, too.”

OPTION 3: THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS

Stuff you need: Thank You for Your Kindness Activity Sheet, crayons

Give a copy of the activity sheet to each child. Read the directions and have the children color the letters and decorate it. Have the child choose someone to receive the sheet, and write that person's name on it.

OPTION 4: GOOD JOB, BOAZ AND RUTH

Stuff you need: Good Job, Boaz and Ruth Activity Sheet, crayons

Give a copy of the activity sheet to each child. Have the children color the picture of Boaz and Ruth. Have them share with their families and tell the story of Ruth.

OPTION 5: HANDPRINT FLOWERS

Stuff you need: washable paint (the color of flowers), paper plates, white construction paper, stems and leaves made from green construction paper, glue, wet wipes

Say, **"Our parents take care of us day in and day out. Our parents show us a lot of kindness! Let's make our parents a gift to thank them for all their kindness to us."**

1. Squirt a generous portion of paint on the paper plates.
2. Cover hands in paint.
3. Make several handprints on the white construction paper.
4. Wash hands or wipe with wet wipes and allow painting to dry.
5. Each handprint will be a "flower." Glue a stem to the bottom of each handprint flower.
6. Glue leaves to the stem.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 9*.

Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that Boaz and Ruth were kind to others. Show your parents the back and tell them that you please God when you're kind to others."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

GOD HEARS HANNAH AND SAMUEL

Bible Basis: 1 Samuel 1:1–2:2, 21; 3:1–10

Bible Verse: “[Hannah] said, ‘The LORD has filled my heart with joy. He has made me strong.’”
—1 Samuel 2:1, NIV

Bible Point: God answered Hannah’s prayer. God hears me pray, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 10: “God Hears Hannah and Samuel”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Have children sit on the floor with their eyes closed. Say, “**I want you to listen closely. If you hear my voice, raise your hand, and I’ll call on your name to answer.**”

Whisper, “**Who is here today?**” Let children respond.

Shout, “**What is my name?**” Let children respond.

Clap loudly while you softly whisper, “**Who can hear me?**” Let children respond.

Have the children open their eyes. Ask:

- **What was easiest for you to hear?**
- **What kinds of noises get in the way of hearing other people?**

Say, “**Today’s Bible story is about a woman and a boy. The woman talked to God, and he heard her. God talked to the boy, but the boy had to learn to listen and talk.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 10, “God Hears Hannah and Samuel,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Practice the following verse with your class. When you see (*) in the story, have children say the verse and do the actions with you.

Use your mouth. (*Cup hands around your mouth like a megaphone.*)

Use your ears. (*Cup hands around your ears to hear.*)

Talk to God. (*Make praying hands.*)

God will hear. (*Raise arms in the air in the shape of a V.*)

Hannah loved her husband. He loved her. But Hannah wanted a baby. What should Hannah do? (*)

Hannah went to the temple. She told God that if he gave her a baby, she would give the child back to him. Her baby would be God's special helper. An important man named Eli was at the temple. Hannah told Eli that she was praying for a baby. Eli told her that God would give her a baby. Before long, Hannah had a baby boy and named him Samuel. When Samuel grew, she brought him back to the temple to be God's special worker. She gave Samuel back to God. That meant he would live and work at the temple. Eli said he would take care of Samuel. What did Eli tell Hannah that he would teach Samuel to do? (*)

Samuel grew up in the temple. He learned many things. One night Samuel heard a voice calling his name. What should Samuel do? (*)

Samuel hurried to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called me."

"I didn't call you," Eli said. "Go back to bed." Samuel went back to bed.

Before long, Samuel heard a voice say, "Samuel!" What should Samuel do? (*)

Samuel went to Eli again.

"Here I am," he said again. "You called me."

"I didn't call you," Eli said. "Go back to bed."

Samuel did. But still again, he heard someone say his name. What should Samuel do? (*)

Samuel told Eli, "Here I am. You called me."

Eli figured out what was happening. What did Eli know? (*)

Eli knew that God was the one calling Samuel's name. Eli told Samuel, "Go back to bed. If someone calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord. I'm listening.'"

Samuel went back to bed. He heard someone call his name. What should Samuel do? (*)

Samuel did what Eli told him. When God called him, he said, "Speak, Lord. I'm listening."

God heard Samuel and spoke many things to him. Samuel prayed to God many, many times throughout his life. God heard Hannah and Samuel. He can hear your prayers, too.

After the Bible story, ask:

- **What did Hannah want?** (*a baby*)
- **So what did she do?** (*She went to the temple and prayed.*)
- **How did God answer Hannah's prayer?** (*God gave Hannah a son, Samuel.*)

- **Where did Hannah take Samuel** (to the temple, to be God's special worker)
- **How did Samuel learn to talk to God?** (Eli told Samuel to say, "Speak, Lord. I'm listening.")

Say, "God answered Hannah's prayer. God hears me pray, and he hears you pray, too! Say with me, "God hears my prayers!" (Lead children to repeat.)

Say, "God hears our prayers. Let's pray like Hannah and listen like Samuel. What are some things you'd like to tell God?" (Allow children to answer. You may get humorous answers, but that is okay—God loves to hear from these little ones!)

Pray for the children and their requests.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: Focus on Prayer

Stuff you need: a few bottles of bubbles and a few volunteers to blow them; a pair of mittens or socks for each child (Check dollar or discount stores or send home a note a week or two in advance, asking children to bring an extra pair of mittens or socks for a game.)

Have children put the mittens or socks on their hands. Have a few different volunteers stand in different areas of the room and blow bubbles. Have the children try to catch, and not pop, the bubbles. Regardless of the result, praise their efforts.

After you've played awhile, ask the following questions:

- **Did you catch a bubble?**
- **Was it easy or hard?**
- **It was hard, wasn't it? You really had to focus, didn't you? You really had to pay attention to what you were doing. But—it was also a lot of fun!**

Say, "The same is true for prayer. When you pray, you really need to focus and pay attention to what you are doing. A great way to do that is by closing your eyes. (Have children try it.) This keeps you from getting distracted by things around you. Another great way to focus on prayer is to fold your hands in your lap. (Have children try it.) That way you won't be tempted to fidget and play with something. Just as you had to focus and pay attention to catch a bubble, you need to focus and pay attention in order to talk to and listen to God. And prayer is also a lot of fun—it's wonderful to be able to talk to God!"

OPTION 2: GOD HEARS MY PRAYERS

Stuff you need: 4 buckets and 4 beanbags for every 8–10 children, masking or painter's tape, volunteers to retrieve the beanbags

Preparation: Set up a beanbag toss; mark a throwing line with tape, and then set the four buckets one after the other, from closest to furthest away.

Have the children line up and play the game one at a time. They can move up and keep trying until they get all the beanbags into the buckets.

When everyone has had a turn, say, **"It's fun to toss beanbags, isn't it? Sometimes we get the beanbag in the bucket, and sometimes we don't! That's not true of God and prayer. It's not that sometimes he hears us and sometimes he doesn't. He hears our prayers every single time we pray! It's as if you're getting the beanbag in the bucket every single time! Let's say together, 'God always hears my prayers!'"** (Repeat that as a group several times—loudly, softly, standing, sitting, hopping, etc.)

OPTION 3: SPEAK LORD

Stuff you need: Speak Lord Activity Sheet, crayons

Give a copy of the activity sheet to each child. Read the words on the sheet. Shout the words together. Pray the words together. Then have the children color the words and bring the sheet home to share the message with family.

OPTION 4: SAMUEL TALKS TO GOD

Stuff you need: Samuel Talks to God Activity Sheet, crayons

Give a copy of the Samuel Talks to God Activity Sheet to each child. Talk about today's story as the children color the picture of Samuel.

OPTION 5: PRAYER NECKLACE

Stuff you need: string, fishing wire, or yarn; macaroni (or similar) noodles (must have a hole for the yarn); scissors; "I Will Pray" medallions

Preparation: Create an "I Will Pray" medallion for each child. Cut 3-inch circles out of craft foam, and hole punch the tops twice, side by side, so the yarn can be threaded through the medallion and the medallion will face front. On each medallion, use permanent marker to write, "I Will Pray."

Have children string the noodles onto their yarn. When they are about halfway, put the medallion on the string, and then let them finish stringing noodles. Tie the necklaces so the noodles don't slide off. (Optional: If you use yarn, tape the ends to make it easier to thread the noodles.)

Say, **"Hang this prayer necklace on your bedroom doorknob or somewhere in your room to remind you to pray."**

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card* 10.

Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that God answered Hannah's prayer and gave her baby Samuel. Show your parents the back and tell them that God hears you when you pray, too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

DAVID AND THE GIANT

Bible Basis: 1 Samuel 17:1–50

Bible Verse: “David said to Goliath, ‘... I’m coming against you in the name of the Lord who rules over all.’” —1 Samuel 17:45, NIV

Bible Point: God helped David be brave. God can make me brave, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 11: “David and the Giant”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: 1 smooth rock for each child in your classroom (large enough for a craft project later)

Set all the rocks on the floor at the front of the classroom.

Say, “**Come up to the front and choose one rock; then take it with you and sit down.**”

Then ask:

- What made you choose one rock over another?
- Why do you like your rock?
- What kinds of things can you do with a rock? (*play a game, pretend it’s a pet, make a craft*)

Say, “**You chose your rocks for your own reasons. Today’s Bible story is about a young man who chose five rocks. God helped him do something amazing with one of those five rocks!**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 11, “David and the Giant,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Every time you see (*), lead your class in saying, “God helped David be brave!” Practice with your class a few times.

“**Good-bye, Father!**” David called. David left his father’s house. He left his father’s sheep. He left his job of taking care of his father’s sheep. He left to go on a journey by himself. Going on a journey by yourself can be scary. Why wasn’t David scared? (*)

“Good-bye,” his father said. “Tell your brothers I said hello.”

David was taking food to his brothers. They were in the king's army. The army was made up of God's people. Perhaps large animals or other people would want the food that David was bringing to his brothers. Why wasn't David scared? (*)

When David reached the camp, he went to find his brothers. Just then a giant named Goliath appeared. "Who will fight me?" the giant shouted. No one answered him. The giant was big. The giant was mean. Why wasn't David scared? (*)

"Who does that bully think he is?" David asked. His older brothers became upset with him. Having people upset with you can be hard. Why wasn't David scared? (*)

"What have I done now?" David asked. "I just want to know who is going to fight the bully." When King Saul heard this, he sent for David. Going to see someone who is rich and powerful can be scary. Why wasn't David scared? (*)

"Don't worry," David told the king. "I'll fight the giant."

"You are too young," King Saul said. Sometimes people will put you down because you're young. Why wasn't David scared? (*)

"God saved me from a lion. God saved me from a bear. He can save me from a giant," David said.

"Okay," said King Saul. "May the Lord be with you." David was going to fight a giant. Why wasn't David scared? (*)

David found five smooth stones. He put them in his bag. He held a sling. The giant was angry. "I come in the name of the Lord," David shouted. "The battle belongs to the Lord." The giant was ready to fight David. Why wasn't David scared? (*)

David put a rock in his sling and threw it. The stone hit the giant in the forehead. The giant fell to the ground with a crash! David had beaten the giant! All God's people were so happy! They couldn't believe a boy went up against a giant—and won! How did David win? (*)

After the Bible story, ask:

- What was David's job? (*taking care of his father's sheep*)
- Why was he going to see his brothers? (*to take them food*)
- What was the giant's name? (*Goliath*)
- Why didn't anyone want to fight the giant? (*Everyone was scared of him.*)
- Why wasn't David scared? (*God helped David be brave.*)
- What are some things that make you feel scared?
- Who can help you be brave?

Say, "That's right! God helped David be brave. You can ask God to help you be brave, too. Let's pray that God will help us be brave in situations where we are scared."

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: BRAVERY STONES

Stuff you need: Bravery Tags Activity Sheet, stones from earlier in the lesson, squares of fabric cut big enough to wrap up the stones, ribbons

Preparation: Photocopy enough Bravery Tags on colored card stock to tie on each Bravery Stone. Cut them out and punch the hole. If possible, laminate them.

Say, **"You are going to use your stone from story time to create a Bravery Stone. Put this stone on your nightstand by your bed to remind you that you can ask God to help you be brave when you are scared."**

Have children choose a fabric square and a ribbon length. Thread the Bravery Tag onto the ribbon. Place the rock in the center of the fabric square. Gather up the corners and tie the ribbon around the fabric, creating a little gift-like bundle.

OPTION 2: BIBLE VERSE MEMORIZATION

Help children memorize the Bible verse by acting it out:

I am (*Point to yourself.*)

Coming against (*Push a pretend wall in front of you.*)

You (*Point straight ahead.*)

In the name of the Lord (*Point up.*)

Who rules (*Point your index finger as if you are telling people to do things.*)

Over all. (*Fling your arms wide.*)

First (*Hold up one finger.*)

Samuel 17:45

Close by saying, **"God wants you to talk to him like David did. God can make you brave."**

OPTION 3: FIVE SMOOTH STONES

Stuff you need: Five Smooth Stones Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child.

Say, **"David picked out five small stones but used only one of them to beat a giant! He never could have done that in his own strength! He was only able to do that because God helped him be brave. Color the five stones however you'd like."**

Option 4: I Am Brave

Stuff you need: I Am Brave Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have children share about times when they were brave (a thunderstorm, a car accident, a sick parent). Remind them that they can ask God to help them be brave. Have the children draw and color a picture of a time they were brave. Share their stories, and then have them take the pictures home.

Option 5: Sheep's Face

Stuff you need: paper plates, glue, white cotton balls, pink or red chenille craft stems for the sheep's mouth, large plastic eyes, pink and white felt, sharp adult scissors

Give each child a paper plate. Cover plate completely with glue. Attach cotton balls. The whole plate will be the sheep's face.

Glue on the eyes. Cut chenille stems into 2–3-inch sections. Have children bend the edges up to create a U for the sheep's smile, and glue it to the sheep. Cut pink triangles for the nose, and cut large white oblong shapes for the ears out of the felt. Attach the pieces and allow glue to dry.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 11*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that God helped David be brave. Show your parents the back and tell them that you can ask God to help you be brave too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

DAVID IS SORRY

Bible Basis: Psalm 51:1–12; Psalm 32:10–11

Bible Verse: “Wash away all of the evil things I’ve done. Make me pure from my sin.” —Psalm 51:2, NIV

Bible Point: God forgave David’s sins. God forgives me when I’m sorry for doing wrong things.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 12: “David Is Sorry”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: inexpensive cake mix or flour (you won’t be eating it), eggs, oil, water, dirt or worms (something you’d never want to eat), bowl, spoon

Say, “Come on over and sit down, and I’ll show you what I’m doing. My friend is having a birthday this week, so I thought I’d make her a cake. I didn’t get a chance to bake it at home, so I thought I’d mix it up quickly while we’re talking about our lesson today.”

As you talk, put your ingredients into the bowl.

Say, “Okay, here is my cake mix and my egg. Now I’ll put in my oil. I’m going to mix that up a little bit. Now some water and some dirt.”

Let the children react to that last statement.

Say, “Oh no! I didn’t mean to put the dirt into my cake! I messed up! That was a mistake! I was going to use my dirt to plant some flowers later! Well, I’ll just try to pick it out. Do you think I can do that? If I just try to pick out some of the dirt, do you think my friend will eat the cake anyway?” (no)

Say, “I guess you’re right. When I mess up like that, I need to start over completely. You know, that reminds me of God and his forgiveness! When we mess up and make a mistake, he forgives us completely and lets us start over fresh. I want to tell you a story about a time when someone made a mistake and God forgave him and let him start over, completely forgiven.” Give the “cake” to a leader to clean up, or put a sheet or towel over it so it’s not distracting to the children.

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Say, “Do you remember our story from last week? It was about a boy named David who fought a giant and won! After several years, he became the king. This is a story about David when he was the king.”

First, read aloud Chapter 12, “David Is Sorry,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Preparation: In large letters, write “David’s Sin” on a whiteboard or chalkboard. Each time you see (*) in the story, erase a letter.

Say, “King David did many wonderful things as king. He was brave, and he followed God. He helped people who needed help. But then he made a bad decision. He committed a sin. A sin is when you do something wrong, and that makes God sad. God sent a messenger named Nathan to tell David he had sinned. When God showed him his bad decision, King David was very sorry. He wrote a psalm—like a song or poem—to tell God how sorry he was and to ask God to forgive him.”

Say, “On the board, I wrote the words ‘David’s Sin.’ I am going to read to you the psalm he wrote. Each time David is sorry and asks God to forgive him, I am going to erase a letter.”

This is what King David said to God:

God, show me your favor in keeping with your faithful love. Because your love is so tender and kind, wipe out my lawless acts. (*) Wash away all of the evil things I’ve done. Make me pure from my sin. (*) I know the lawless acts I’ve committed. I have sinned against you. I’ve done what is evil in your sight. (*) You are right and fair to judge me. I’ve been a sinner since I was born. (*) You want the truth to be in my heart. You teach me wisdom deep down inside me. (*) Clean me. Wash me. Let me hear you say, “Your sins are forgiven.” That will bring me joy and gladness. Take away all of my sins. (*) God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you. (*) Don’t send me away from you. Don’t take your Holy Spirit away from me. (*) Give me back the joy that comes from being saved by you. Give me a spirit that obeys you. (*)

David asked God to erase his sins, and God did! He forgave David. When you tell God you are sorry, he will forgive your sins and erase them completely.

Ask:

- What did David do when he made a big mistake? (He told God he was sorry.)
- What did David want erased? (David wanted God to erase his sins.)

Pray with the children that when they make a mistake and sin, they will remember to ask God to forgive them. Thank God for erasing our sins when we tell him we are sorry.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: STARTING OVER

Stuff you need: play dough (store-bought or homemade; you can find recipes online), cookie cutters, plastic knives, rolling pins, and anything else to use with play dough

Have the children make something with their play dough. Then have them smash their object and start over, making something new.

Say, **“This is how God deals with our sin. When we do something wrong and ask for forgiveness, he completely smashes our sin and lets us start over, fresh and new.”**

Option 2: Eraser Reminders

Stuff you need: 1 pencil, 1 colorful pencil top eraser, and 1 chenille craft stem per child; glue, card stock, permanent marker (Depending on the number and age of your children, you may want to leave the pencils unsharpened.)

Preparation: Cut out approximately 3 x 2-inch rectangles of thick, colored card stock. On each rectangle, write “God erases my sin!”

Have the children put the pencil top eraser on the pencil and wrap the pencil with the chenille stem; they can do this however they’d like to make the pencil colorful and creative. If necessary, you can glue or tape the chenille stem onto the pencil. Glue the “God erases my sin!” card onto the pencil and let the glue dry.

Option 3: Create in Me a Clean Heart

Have children stand up and teach them the following motions to Psalm 51:10:

Create in me (*Stir like you are stirring cake batter; then point to yourself.*)

A clean heart, (*Point both thumbs to your heart.*)

O God, (*Point up.*)

And renew a right spirit (*Make a thumbs-up sign.*)

Within me. (*Point to yourself again.*)

Psalm 51:10 (*When you say “10,” hold up 10 fingers.*)

Option 4: King David Is Sorry

Stuff you need: King David Is Sorry Activity Sheet and crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have the children color the picture of King David and take it home to share the story with their families.

Option 5: David’s Harp

Stuff you need: 1 empty tissue box per child, 4 large rubber bands per child

Wrap the rubber bands around the box so rubber bands go across the box’s opening. Have children pluck the strings while you lead them in singing praise songs to God.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card* 12. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that David asked God for forgiveness. Show your parents the back and tell them that God forgives you when you say you're sorry."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

WISE KING SOLOMON

Bible Basis: 1 Kings 3:1–15; 4:29–34; 2 Chronicles 9:1–9

Bible Verse: “Don’t be wise in your own eyes. Have respect for the Lord ...” —Proverbs 3:7, NIV

Bible Point: God made Solomon a wise leader. God can make me wise, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 13: “Wise King Solomon”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stand in the front of the room with a clipboard, paper, and pencil. Act deep in concentration as you look at your paper.

Say, “Hello! I am just working on my wish list for my birthday (or Christmas). It’s a list of gifts I would like to get from my family and friends. What are some things you would like to get as a gift? Maybe some toys or games? Raise your hand if you have an idea, and I’ll call on you.” Write answers on the chalkboard or whiteboard.

Say, “Wow! You have some great ideas. Today we are going to hear a story about a king in the Bible. God asked this king what gift he would like. What do you think he said? (various answers) I think we’ll all be surprised by what this king asked.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Say, “Does anyone remember who we talked about the last couple of weeks? He was a boy who fought a giant and won. Then he was a king who made wrong choices and sinned. But he asked God for forgiveness, and God forgave him. What was his name? (David) That’s right! We have been talking about David! David had a son. His son’s name was Solomon. Solomon became king after David. Let’s read about him today.”

Read aloud Chapter 13, “Wise King Solomon,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Divide the class in half. One half should be on your left and the other on your right. Assign one half as the “Solomon” side and the other side as the “God” side. Explain that both halves are going to help you tell the Bible story. The “Solomon” side will repeat what Solomon said. The “God” side will repeat what God said.

Say, “Once, there lived a king named Solomon. Solomon loved God a lot. God loved Solomon. King Solomon showed that he loved God by obeying his parents’ rules. God said, ‘Ask for anything.’ (Have the God side repeat.) He did this because he was pleased with Solomon.”

Solomon told God, "You were good to my father." *(Solomon side repeat.)*

"My father was faithful to you." *(Solomon side repeat.)*

"I want to know right from wrong." *(Solomon side repeat.)*

"I want to be wise." *(Solomon side repeat.)*

"I want to rule well." *(Solomon side repeat.)*

Solomon's words made God happy. God told Solomon, "You did not ask to live a long time." *(God side repeat.)*

"You did not ask to be rich." *(God side repeat.)*

"I will give you wisdom." *(God side repeat.)*

"I will give you understanding." *(God side repeat.)*

"I also will make you rich." *(God side repeat.)*

Say, "God made Solomon wise. Solomon wrote down many of God's wise sayings."

Now, have both sides sit together in the middle, and have them repeat the following sentences together.

Keep God's rules.

Always tell the truth.

Avoid evil.

Watch what you say.

All wisdom comes from God.

Say, "When you follow God's rules, you are wise. People came from far away to talk to Solomon. God made Solomon a wise leader. What does it mean to be wise? He knew lots of things about the world, like plants and animals. But he also knew how to tell right from wrong. That made him a very wise leader. People knew that if they brought Solomon their problems, he would be able to tell right from wrong. God can also help you know right from wrong. You just need to ask him for help."

After the Bible story, ask:

- **How did Solomon show God that he loved God?** *(Solomon showed God his love by obeying God's rules.)*
- **What did God give Solomon?** *(God gave Solomon wisdom, understanding, and riches.)*
- **What is wisdom? Or, what does it mean to be wise?** *(being able to tell right from wrong)*

Say, **"We can ask God for wisdom like Solomon did. Let's ask God together for his wisdom."**

Pray with the children that God will help them to know right from wrong, and that he will help them make wise choices.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Solomon's Temple

Stuff you need: large toy building bricks

Have children sit at tables. Give each a pile of blocks to build a house. Give them several minutes to build. With very young children, you can put them in groups of 3–4 and have them work on a house together with a teacher.

As children finish, let them tell you about their houses. Then place all of them near each other in the center of the table so the homes resemble a city.

Say, **"In Bible times, a king named Solomon built a fancy house, called a temple, for God. The temple pleased God. It was an amazing gift that Solomon gave to God. For seven years, men cut logs, melted gold, and sculpted furniture. The temple was a huge, shiny place where people could worship God. God gave Solomon wisdom. Solomon honored God by making him a beautiful temple."**

Option 2: Walking in Wisdom

Stuff you need: washable finger paint, large paper plates, marker, wet wipes

For each child, coat the bottom of one foot in finger paint and press onto the paper plate, making a print of their very own special footprint. Immediately use the wet wipes to wipe off extra paint. Write at the top of each plate, **"Let us walk in the ways of the Lord."**

Say, **"God gave Solomon wisdom. God can give you wisdom, too. Let's make a footprint to remind us to walk in God's wisdom."**

Option 3: A Place to Talk with God

Stuff you need: A Place to Talk to God Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child.

Talk about the church you attend. Talk about what it looks like, the people and things they see, and the sounds they hear. Then have the children draw and color a picture of the church they attend.

Option 4: "Is It Wise to ...?"

Stuff you need: a beanbag

Stand in a circle with the children. Ask an "Is it wise ...?" question and then toss the beanbag to a child. That child answers whether or not something is wise.

Examples:

Is it wise to make your mom a birthday card?

Is it wise to hit your sister?

Is it wise to hug your grandma?

Is it wise to call people mean names?

Is it wise to come to church?

Is it wise to be kind to your pet?

Option 5: Wise Solomon's Crown

Stuff you need: yellow construction paper, tape, markers, sparkly stickers and stick-on gems and jewels

Preparation: Gather supplies and cut the sheets of construction paper in half the long way.

Give each child one strip of yellow paper. Have them color it and put on sparkly stickers, stick-on gems, and jewels however they'd like. When they have finished, attach the other strip of yellow paper. Place the crown on the child's head and tape to fit.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 13*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that God made Solomon a wise leader. Show your parents the back and tell them that God can make you wise, too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

THE SPLIT IN THE KINGDOM

Bible Basis: 1 Kings 11:4–6; 12:1–33; 14:22–23, 26–28; 15:11–14

Bible Verse: “Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.” —1 Kings 15:11, NIV

Bible Point: God uses bad things to teach his people. I can learn from mistakes.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 14: “The Split in the Kingdom”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Allow children to sit on the floor. Lead a discussion about doing chores. You might bring a feather duster and some cleaning rags. Say, “**Raise your hand if you have to clean your room** (pause for hand-raising), **dress yourself** (pause for hand-raising), **hang up your coat** (pause for hand-raising), **put away your toys** (pause for hand-raising).”

Ask:

- Doing your own chores is kind of fun, isn’t it? It shows you are a big kid!
- What do these chores teach you?
- What happens if you choose not to do your chores?

Say, “In today’s Bible story, many kings of God’s people chose to disobey God. Just as we sometimes don’t do our chores, they didn’t do what God told them to do. These were bad decisions. They were not wise decisions. Until, finally, one king decided to follow God.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 14, “The Split in the Kingdom,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Last week we talked about King Solomon. He was King David’s son. Solomon was very wise. Do you remember what it means to be wise? (tell the difference between right and wrong; make good decisions) When Solomon was young, he loved and followed God. As he got older, he didn’t make very good decisions. Stand up if you think Solomon worshiped God for his whole life. Lie on your tummy if you think Solomon stopped worshiping God. (Let children respond.) Everyone can sit down again.

Solomon did not worship God for his whole life. He stopped listening to God. Rehoboam was Solomon’s son. After Solomon, he became king of God’s people. Clap your hands if you think Rehoboam worshiped God. Stomp your feet if you think Rehoboam stopped worshiping God.

Rehoboam did not worship God. He did things his own way. He was a mean king to God's people. Finally, some of the people decided to leave and start their own brand-new country. God's people were no longer one country. They had split into two countries. One country was called Israel, and the other was called Judah.

These two kingdoms fought all the time. They didn't get along at all. Do 10 jumping jacks if you've ever had a fight with a friend or brother or sister, and then sit down.

Both kingdoms had some good kings and some bad kings. Then a man named Asa became king. Stand up and touch your toes if you think Asa followed God. *(Let children respond.)*

Yes, you are right! King Asa loved God. He wanted to follow God. He knew his grandfather Rehoboam had been a bad king and made a lot of mistakes. He wanted to be a good king and follow God.

One bad thing some of the kings did was worship idols. These are just statues made of wood and metal. They thought these wood figures were alive and would help them. King Asa knew that this was not true! He knew God was the only true God. Stand up and touch your shoulders if you think King Asa got rid of the pretend gods. *(Let children respond.)*

You are right! Asa got rid of all the pretend gods. He found the Bible and read it, and he had other people read it, too.

Over the years, the temple that King Solomon built had broken down. It wasn't beautiful like it was before. Stand up, spread out, and wave your arms in big arm circles if you think King Asa brought silver and gold to fix the temple. *(Let children respond.)*

King Asa completely changed his kingdom. He was a good leader, and he helped the people love and follow God again. He even helped his own family to love and follow God. Asa learned to follow God and not make the mistakes of other kings.

After King Asa died, his son Jehoshaphat became king. Do 10 hops on one foot if you think King Jehoshaphat loved and followed God. Then sit down. *(Let children respond.)*

Yes! Jehoshaphat also loved and followed God. King Asa learned from his grandfather's mistakes. You can also learn from mistakes and follow God.

After the Bible story, ask:

- Did King Solomon follow God his whole life? *(no)*
- Was King Rehoboam a good king? *(no)*
- Since he was such a bad king, what did some people do? *(left and made another country)*
- What were the two countries called? *(Israel and Judah)*
- Was King Asa a good king? *(yes)*
- The people in his kingdom worshiped idols. What is an idol? *(a statue made of wood or metal)*
- What did he do to show that he loved and followed God? *(destroyed the idols, had people read the Bible, fixed the temple)*

Say, “King Asa learned from the mistakes of the other kings. We can learn from mistakes and do what is right. Let’s ask God to show us how to learn from our mistakes like King Asa did.”

Pray with the children.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Puzzles

Stuff you need: a variety of wooden preschool puzzles (If your church does not have these, you may find them available for checkout at the public library.)

Allow children to work on the puzzles alone or in groups of 3–4 with a teacher.

As they work, say, “When you put together a puzzle, you make mistakes, don’t you? You try puzzle pieces in holes, and they don’t fit. But each time you make a mistake, you learn something, don’t you? You learn that your piece is too big or too small for the hole, so you know better what to look for.”

Say, “We can learn from our mistakes in our lives, too. If you get into a big fight with your brother and end up hitting him, you get into trouble, don’t you? You can learn from that mistake, and next time, make a different decision.”

Option 2: King Asa’s Crown

Stuff you need: King Asa’s Crown Activity Sheet, crayons, stickers

Give each child an activity sheet. Have them decorate King Asa’s crown however they would like.

Option 3: Tambourines

Stuff you need: small, sturdy paper plates; markers, chenille craft stems (cut into 4- or 5-inch sections, sparkly stickers, jingle bells

Preparation: Punch 6 holes around the outer edge of the paper plate.

Say, “God’s people were very happy when King Asa loved and followed God. They were very happy when King Asa fixed up God’s temple. They had large celebrations and danced and sang songs to God. Today we are going to make tambourines that we can use when we sing and praise God!”

Have the children decorate the plates as they’d like. Help them string the jingle bells onto the chenille stem, and then thread the chenille stem through a hole in the paper plate. Twist the chenille stem so the jingle bell doesn’t come off. Do this for all six holes on each tambourine.

Lead the children in singing songs to God and shaking their tambourines.

Option 4: Jumping Jacks/Sit Down Game

Have children stand up. Say, “I am going to tell you something that either a good king or a bad king does. If a good king does this thing, do five jumping jacks to celebrate! If a bad king does this thing, sit down as quickly as you can.”

This king listens to God. (*good*)

This king builds idols. (*bad*)

This king reads God’s Word. (*good*)

This king is mean to his people. (*bad*)

This king destroys the idols. (*good*)

This king destroys the temple. (*bad*)

This king learns from mistakes and does what’s right. (*good*)

Option 5: Asa Followed God Scroll

Stuff you need: Asa Followed God Activity Sheet, glue, yellow or brown construction paper, ribbon or yarn, crayons

Read the activity sheet together. Have children color the activity sheet, then glue it onto the yellow construction paper. Roll up the construction paper and tie it with the ribbon or yarn.

Say, “Back when Asa was king, God’s Word was written on scrolls like these instead of in books like we have today. Let your scroll remind you of King Asa, and how he loved and followed God.”

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 14*. Say, “**The front of this card will remind you that King Asa learned from the mistakes of others. Show your parents the back and tell them that you can learn from your mistakes.**” Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents’ Page.

ELIJAH AND ELISHA

Bible Basis: 1 Kings 19:3–16

Bible Verse: “[Elijah said,] ‘I serve the Lord. He is the God of Israel.’” —1 Kings 17:1, NIV

Bible Point: God helped Elijah and Elisha. God helps me.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 15: “Elijah and Elisha”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: paper plates, wooden craft sticks, tape, red and blue markers

Say, “Today we are going to make puppets so we can use them to tell our story.”

Give each child 2 paper plates.

Say, “**Draw a face on each plate. Draw one face with a blue marker; this will be an old man.** (Show children the blue marker.) **Draw the other face with the red marker.** (Show children the red marker.) **This will be a young man.**”

While the children draw the faces, tape a craft stick to the back of each plate so the plates become simple puppets. If there is time, write “Elijah” on the old face and “Elisha” on the young face.

Then ask:

- Do you know any people who are older than you?
- Do you know any people who are younger than you?
- Are you young or old?
- How do older people help younger people?
- Older people love to help and teach younger people. What have older people taught you?

Say, “Today’s Bible story is about two men. One is older and one is younger. The older man helped the younger man learn more about God. We are going to use our puppets to tell our story today.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 15, “Elijah and Elisha,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story, using the plate puppets from “Come Together.”

Have children hold up their older puppet face when you say, “Elijah,” and their younger puppet face when you say, “Elisha.” Practice this together several times. When children know what to do, start the story and pause after you say each name to give children time to hold up their puppets.

Once there was a man named Elijah. He was a prophet. That meant that his job was to give people messages from God. At that time, God’s people had a bad king named King Ahab. God was unhappy with King Ahab because he loved pretend gods made out of wood or stone. These are called idols. They didn’t have any power—only God has power. But King Ahab loved those idols anyway. He wouldn’t stop worshiping them. God sent Elijah to give bad King Ahab a message. Elijah told bad King Ahab that God said he would not allow it to rain for a long time. That meant there would be no water for crops or animals. There would be no water for the people to drink. This was not a happy message, but Elijah wanted King Ahab to know that God was in charge of the weather.

Elijah’s words did not make King Ahab happy. King Ahab wanted to hurt Elijah. So God told Elijah to go far away. Elijah drank water from a brook. Elijah was given food by birds. There was no rain for three years. After three years, God told Elijah he would send rain. So, Elijah went back to bad King Ahab. He told Ahab that God would send rain. When it rained, King Ahab knew that only God controls the rain and weather.

When Elijah got older, he knew he needed a helper. He found a young farmer named Elisha. Elisha was his new helper. Elisha left farming to be Elijah’s helper.

The two men went on a trip together. They had to cross a river. Elijah rolled up his coat, then he struck the water with it. The water parted. Elijah and Elisha crossed the river on dry ground.

Then God sent a fiery horse and chariot. Young Elisha watched as old Elijah got onto the chariot and rode that chariot all the way up into heaven! What would Elisha do now?

Earlier, Elijah had dropped his coat and Elisha caught it. So when Elisha crossed the river again, he copied Elijah, rolled it up, and struck the water. The water parted! This was God’s signal to Elisha that he was a new prophet. He would give people messages from God just as Elijah had before him.

After the Bible story, ask:

- Who was older—Elijah or Elisha? (*Elijah*)
- What was Elijah’s job? What is a prophet? (*a prophet; giver of messages from God*)
- Was King Ahab a good king or a bad king? Why? (*bad; worshiped idols*)
- What message did Elijah give King Ahab? (*wouldn’t rain for a long time*)
- Did this make King Ahab happy or angry? (*angry*)
- Was the message true? (*yes*)
- Who controls the weather? (*God*)
- When Elijah got older, he needed a helper. Who did God send? (*Elisha*)
- What was Elisha’s job? (*farmer, then prophet*)
- What signal did God give to Elisha that he was now going to be a prophet? (*parted the water*)

Say, “God helped Elijah and Elisha. God helps me, too.”

Pray with the children that you all will remember to ask God for help when you need it.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further. Because you made puppets at the beginning of the hour, you will not have as much time as usual.

OPTION 1: RAINDROPS PLACEMAT

Stuff you need: iron and ironing board, waxed paper, blue crayon shavings, silver or blue glitter or sequins, permanent marker, paper cutter

***Safety alert!** Never let the children near the hot iron. If you have enough space and volunteers, iron in another room.

Preparation: Preheat the iron with a volunteer standing next to it at all times. (Do not leave unattended!) Tear off 2 sheets of waxed paper per child, about the size of a placemat. Shave blue crayons using a cheese grater. Put glitter into shaker containers to prevent spills.

Give a sheet of waxed paper to each child, waxed side up. Have them decorate the sheet with the blue shavings, sequins, and glitter. When they are done, put another sheet of waxed paper on top, waxed-side down. Iron the 2 pieces together. (Put a light cloth between the waxed paper and the iron.) Use permanent marker to write the child’s name on the bottom corner of the placemat. Use a paper cutter to slice off any extra paper ends.

Say, “The blue colors and sparkles on your placemat look like rain. When you use this placemat, let it remind you that rain is a gift from God. God controls the weather.”

OPTION 2: PICK A PUPPET

Stuff you need: plate puppets from the Come Together exercise

Have children answer your question about the story by holding up their puppets.

- Who told bad King Ahab that it would not rain? (Elijah)
- Who told bad King Ahab that God was in charge of the weather? (Elijah)
- Who did King Ahab want to hurt? (Elijah)
- Who drank from a brook? (Elijah)
- Who was given food by the birds? (Elijah)
- Who told bad King Ahab that God would send rain? (Elijah)
- Who was a farmer? (Elisha)
- Who found Elisha? (Elijah)
- Who stopped farming to follow Elijah? (Elisha)

- **Who went on a trip?** (*Elisha and Elijah*)
- **Who crossed the Jordan River without getting wet?** (*Elijah and Elisha*)
- **Who rode to heaven in a fiery horse and chariot?** (*Elijah*)
- **Who dropped his coat?** (*Elijah*)
- **Who picked up Elijah's coat?** (*Elisha*)

Say, "God helped Elijah and Elisha do many things. God can help you, too."

OPTION 3: ELIJAH AND ELISHA HAVE FAITH

Stuff you need: Elijah and Elisha Have Faith Activity Sheet, crayons

Give each child an activity sheet and crayons. Have the children color in these two biblical heroes to help them remember that if we ask for help, God will help us.

OPTION 4: THANK-YOU CARD

Stuff you need: construction paper folded in half, markers, stickers, crayons, stick-on foam shapes

Say, "One way God helps us is by sending older people to help us. People like our parents, grandparents, older brothers and sisters, and babysitters help us. Choose one person who helps you a lot, and make a thank-you card for that person."

As the children decorate their cards, ask them for whom they are making their card. Write that person's name on the card.

OPTION 5: IT'S RAINING

Stuff you need: music player and preschool music

Say, "After three years without rain, the people of Israel were very happy when it rained again! I wonder if they went out and danced around in the rain. We are going to play a freeze dance game. When the music plays, keep dancing. When the music stops, freeze!"

Play several rounds of this game.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 15*. Say, "The front of this card will remind you that God helped Elijah and Elisha. Show your parents the back and tell them that God helps you, too." Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

MESSAGES FROM GOD

Bible Basis: Isaiah 3:1–13; 14:1–5; 48:8–9

Bible Verse: “The Lord says to his servant, ‘... When it is time to save you, I will help you. I will keep you safe.’” —Isaiah 49:8, NIV

Bible Point: God doesn’t give up on his people. God won’t give up on me.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 16: “Messages from God”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: chalkboard, whiteboard, or butcher paper and markers

Ask children to sit on the floor.

Say, “**Messages come to people in many different ways. Let’s say I want to send you a message. How could I do that?**”

As children give you answers, draw those items on the board or butcher paper. (Or recruit someone who is good at drawing to do it.) Give suggestions, such as paper, pencils, pens, a letter, phone, bulletin board, blimp, megaphone, microphone, people talking, e-mail on a computer, or cell phone.

Ask:

- What is the best way to tell someone that you want them to come to your birthday party?
- What is the best way to thank someone for a present?

Say, “**There are a lot of great ways for us to send messages to each other. God sends messages, too. In Bible days, he sent his messages through prophets. A prophet is a person whose job it is to give people messages from God. Let’s read a story about one of God’s prophets.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Before class, write each of the six messages below on a separate slip of paper. Number the slips. Give them to six different children. Note which child has which number so you can call their names in order. Tell them to bring the paper to you as a messenger when you call their names. Depending on the number of children in your class, you may want to read the story a few times so each child gets a turn being a messenger.

First, read aloud Chapter 16, “Messages from God,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Say, **"God's people were doing whatever they wanted to do. God did not like that. Isaiah was a prophet. He gave people messages from God. Here is a message God sent them."**

Choose the child who has the first message and read it to the class.

1. Shape up and start obeying God like you're supposed to.

Say, **"Do you think God's people listened to Isaiah? God's people did not listen to Isaiah. They did not listen to God. So, God sent them another message through Isaiah."**

Choose the child who has the second message and read it to the class.

2. Listen to what God says and ask for forgiveness.

Say, **"Do you think God's people listened to Isaiah? God's people did not listen to Isaiah. They did not listen to God. So, God sent them another message through Isaiah."**

Choose the child who has the third message and read it to the class.

3. After bad things happen to you, you will learn to listen to God. Then God will let you go back home.

Say, **"Do you think God's people listened to Isaiah? God's people did not listen to Isaiah. They did not listen to God. So, God sent them another message through Isaiah."**

Choose the child who has the fourth message and read it to the class.

4. After bad things happen to you, you will listen to God. Then it will be time for God to answer your prayers.

Say, **"Do you think God's people listened to Isaiah? God's people did not listen to Isaiah. They did not listen to God. So God sent them another message through Isaiah. Isaiah trusted God, and God let him tell God's people a lot about the coming Messiah. What is a Messiah? The Messiah is Jesus—God's Son! Isaiah told the people that someday God would send his Son, Jesus, to Earth as a baby. What a message!"**

Choose the child who has the fifth message and read it to the class.

5. God will send his Son to Earth. He will be the Messiah.

Say, **"That is such an amazing message! Do you think God's people listened to Isaiah this time? God's people did not listen to Isaiah. They did not listen to God. So God sent them another message through Isaiah about the Messiah."**

Choose the child who has the sixth message and read it to the class.

6. You have not obeyed me or believed me, but the Messiah will take the punishment instead of you.

Say, “Do you think God’s people listened to Isaiah? You won’t be surprised to hear that even with this message they did not listen to God. But Isaiah’s messages from God were written down in the Bible, and we can see that everything Isaiah said is true.”

After the Bible story, ask:

- Who told God’s people that bad things were going to happen? (*Isaiah*)
- Who did God promise to send to save them? (*the Messiah*)

Say, “God doesn’t give up on his people, and God won’t give up on you.”

Pray, thanking God that he never gives up on his people.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Messages from God

Stuff you need: Messages from God Activity Cards, a large jar, bucket, or plastic bin full of beans, rice, or pasta

Preparation: Photocopy the Messages from God Activity Cards so each child has 1 card. Cut the cards apart, fold them in half, and mix them into your bucket of beans, rice, or pasta.

Say, “Back in Isaiah’s time, God used prophets to give people his messages. Today we have the Bible. God gives us his messages in the Bible—all we have to do is open it and read it. There are lots of messages from God in this bucket. When I call on you, come up and dig through the bucket, and pull out a message to you from God. I will read it to you.”

Call children up, one by one, and let them choose a message from the bucket. Then read the messages to the group. Gather the messages as you read them, because you will need them if you choose to do Option 2: Musical Messages.

Option 2: Musical Messages

Stuff you need: a chair for each child, music player, preschool music, Messages from God Activity Cards

Play a modified game of “Musical Chairs”. No one gets “out” so don’t take out any chairs. Set up chairs back to back, as in playing regular “Musical Chairs”. Play the music. The children walk around the chairs, and when you stop the music, all the children find a chair and quickly sit down. When they are seated, read one of the Messages from God Activity Cards. Do this for several rounds.

OPTION 3: The Messiah Will Come!

Stuff you need: egg carton cut into individual cups, Easter grass, play dough that will dry nicely, such as Model Magic

Preparation: Cut egg cartons apart into individual cups, enough for each child to have 1 cup.

Say, “God told Isaiah to tell the people that he would send a Messiah. Do you remember who that Messiah was? It was Jesus! Let’s make a craft to keep in our rooms and remind us that Isaiah told people Jesus was coming, hundreds of years before he was born!”

Have children put a little Easter grass into an egg carton cup—this is a manger. Have the children make a small dough ball and a medium oval, then stick them together. This is to symbolize the baby Jesus. Put the clay symbol of baby Jesus into the manger.

OPTION 4: Isaiah Talks

Stuff you need: Isaiah Talks Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Look at the picture together. Color Isaiah. Have them take the picture home and share the story of Isaiah with their family.

OPTION 5: WATERCOLORS

Stuff you need: white card stock or construction paper, watercolor paints, small paintbrushes, sturdy cups for water, a pitcher of clean water, an empty pitcher for dirty water, paper towels

Have children paint designs, swirls, and pictures. While they paint, remind them that God doesn’t give up on his people, and God won’t give up on them. He loves them and gives them the gift of creativity to do things like paint pictures.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 16*. Say, “**The front of this card will remind you that God did not give up on his people. Show your parents the back and tell them that God will not give up on you, either.**” Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents’ Page.

GOD'S PROPHETS

Bible Basis: Jeremiah 1:4–10; 2:21–28; 5:1–2; 16:17–19; 2 Chronicles 36:1–16; 2 Kings 25:1–12; Lamentations 1:1; 2:17; 3:21–26; 5:1, 15–21; Ezekiel 1:1–2:17; 36:22–36

Bible Verse: “I say to myself, ‘The Lord is everything I will ever need. So I will put my hope in him.’”
—Lamentations 3:24, NIV

Bible Point: God loves his people even when they did wrong. God always loves you.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 17: “God’s Prophets”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Have children stand in a circle. Ask them to repeat your actions. Pat your thighs twice. Have children repeat the action. Clap your hands twice. Have the children mimic you. Pat your shoulders twice. Have the children follow. Clap your hands twice. Have the children clap. Then pat your thighs, clap hands, pat shoulders, pat thighs, pat shoulders, clap hands, pat shoulders, and pat thighs quickly. Laugh with the children when they can’t exactly follow your lead. Have them sit down and ask:

- When I only did one thing, how easy was it to follow what I did?
- What made it hard to follow what I did at the end?

Say, “Sometimes we make mistakes when we try to do too much. In today’s Bible story, God’s people made mistakes. They were too busy to hear what God was telling them.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud chapter 17, “God’s Prophets,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Jeremiah was a young man. He was one of God’s people. One day God said to him, “I have decided that you will talk to my people for me.” Does anyone remember what that job is called? (being a prophet) That’s right! A prophet is someone who gives people messages from God. Who are some other prophets we’ve talked about? (*Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah*)

God sent Jeremiah to the home of a potter. The potter was making a pot out of clay, but it wasn’t working very well. So, he pounded down the clay and started over. Jeremiah watched as the potter started over again. God told Jeremiah that his people were like that clay—they were not good now. They did not follow and obey God. They needed to be remolded and reshaped, and then they would love and follow God.

So, Jeremiah started giving people God's messages. Let's pretend that I am Jeremiah and you are God's people. When I ask you a question, put your hands to your ears and say, "I can't hear you." *(Practice a few times with the children.)*

Pretend to be Jeremiah.

Why have you turned against God? *(I can't hear you.)*

Why don't you love God and follow him? *(I can't hear you.)*

Why do you make idols out of wood and stone? *(I can't hear you.)*

Are you honest? If I can find one honest person, God will forgive everyone. *(I can't hear you.)*

Now, let's think about what the people should have said. I'm going to pretend to be Jeremiah again, and after I say something, you'll repeat what I say. *(Practice a few times with the children.)*

The Lord loves me very much. *(The Lord loves me very much.)*

I will put my hope in God. *(I will put my hope in God.)*

God is good to us. *(God is good to us.)*

But they didn't say those things to God. They didn't pay attention to God. They didn't follow him or love him. Jeremiah warned them that their sin would cause them trouble. For example, if you steal, you have to pay the consequences for that. But Jeremiah also told the people that even when they sinned and did things that were wrong, God still loved them.

God is like that with us, too. We sin and make wrong decisions and do bad things sometimes. But no matter what, God always loves us.

After the Bible story, ask:

- What did the people do when Jeremiah gave them a message from God? *(The people closed their ears.)*
- What should the people have done when Jeremiah gave them a message from God? *(They should have listened.)*

Pray with the children, thanking God that he always loves us, even when we do wrong things.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: THUMBPRINT BOWLS

Stuff you need: play dough (store-bought or homemade; you can find recipes online) or hardening clay, such as Crayola Model Magic; toothpicks

Give the children each a ball of play dough. Have them push their thumbs into the dough and begin to make an indent in the ball. They should rotate the ball and continue to push the indent with their thumbs until they have a small bowl. If you use hardening clay, use a toothpick to write the children's initials on the bottoms of their bowls. Let the bowls dry and send them home next week.

As the children work, remind them of Jeremiah's trip to see the potter.

OPTION 2: YOUR Bedroom

Stuff you need: butcher paper, tape, markers

Hang up a large sheet of butcher paper. Bedrooms can get pretty messy. Draw a bed, a dresser, and a closet on the butcher paper. What makes a room look messy? Have the children give individual answers. Perhaps they'll say clothes on the floor or toys out of the toy box. Each time someone gives an answer, draw the item on the paper. Keep going in this way until no one can think of any other things that could mess up a bedroom.

Say, **"That is a messy room! In today's Bible story, God's people looked a lot like this messy room. They filled their lives with so many things they had no room for God."**

Then ask:

- **What would we have to do to clean this room?** (*dust, vacuum, pick up clothes, throw away garbage, take dishes to the kitchen*)
- **Why would we want to clean up this room?** (*make it easier to play or sleep*)

Say, **"When your room is clean, you can play on the floor, find toys you need, and sleep comfortably in your bed. Keeping things tidy makes your life nicer and easier, doesn't it? That's how our hearts are, too. God's people let their hearts get junked up. They loved idols and didn't follow God. They needed to clean out their hearts to make room for God again!"**

Say, **"What about you? In your head—don't say it out loud—think of a sin or a bad decision that is junking up your heart. Maybe you hit someone. Maybe you don't share very nicely. Ask God to help you clear out the junk and make room for him."**

Pray with the children.

OPTION 3: God Always Loves Me

Stuff you need: God Always Loves Me Activity Sheet, white card stock, black crayons, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, sturdy water cups, pitcher of clean water, empty pitcher for dirty water, paper towels, wet wipes for cleanup

Preparation: Photocopy the activity sheet onto card stock. If you teach toddlers, you may want to trace the hearts for them.

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have them trace the heart in thick black crayon. Teachers may need to help with tracing. Then have them paint the heart with watercolors. The crayon will “resist” the paint and leave an artsy-looking heart—even when children paint outside the crayon line.

Remind the children, **“When you look at your heart picture this week, remember that God always loved his people, even when they did wrong, and God always loves you.”**

OPTION 4: God Loves Me Dot-to-Dot

Stuff you need: God Loves Me Dot-to-Dot Activity Sheet, pencils, crayons

Give each child an activity sheet and a pencil. Have them connect the dots and then color the heart.

OPTION 5: FLOUR DRAWING

Stuff you need: flour, 1 large baking sheet with sides per child, hand vacuum or regular vacuum for cleanup after children leave. (You can also use disposable aluminum pans.)

Scoop a few handfuls of flour onto the baking sheets. As you review today’s story, allow children to draw people or objects from the story in the flour. Tell them it is like drawing in the sand at the beach. (Some children may not want to touch the flour; you can provide paper and crayons for them instead.)

If you’d like, you can provide a few soft, large paintbrushes for the children to brush themselves off before they leave. Vacuum after the children leave. (Do not vacuum with children in the room, as some children may be frightened by the loud noise.)

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 17*. Say, **“The front of this card will remind you that Jeremiah told the people to have hope. Show your parents the back and tell them that God still loved his people, just like he loves you.”** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents’ Page.

ASK GOD FOR HELP

Bible Basis: Daniel 6:1–13, 16–23; Jeremiah 30:1–3, 8, 10–11; 29:10–14; 31:23–25

Bible Verse: “[Daniel] went to his room three times a day to pray. He got down on his knees and gave thanks to his God.” —Daniel 6:10, NIV

Bible Point: Daniel is loyal to God, and God protects him. I can be loyal to God.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 18: “Ask God for Help”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: paper, rubber bands

Have children tear the paper into strips. Rubber-band together a handful of paper strips to make a pompom for each child. Have children shake their pompoms and cheer with you for a local sports team. Then ask children to sit on the floor.

Say, “Many of us are loyal to [name of local team]. That means that we like them the best, and we are faithful to cheer for them when they play other teams even if the other teams are winning.”

Then ask:

- If our team loses, do we stop cheering for them and cheer for the winning team? (*sometimes; no*)
- Why do we cheer for a team we like even when they lose? (*We like the players, the colors; their location in our town; our family likes them; but mostly because we are loyal to that team.*)

Say, “People keep cheering for teams they like because they are loyal to them. Today’s Bible story is about a man who was loyal to God. That means that he showed his excitement for God no matter what other people thought.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 18, “Ask God for Help,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Divide the children into three groups. One group will yell, “I follow God!” when you say, “Daniel.” One group will circle their heads with their hands (like a crown) when you say, “King Darius.” The third group will roar like lions when you say, “lions.” Practice with the children.

A long time ago, the country of God’s people was torn apart. God sent his people to live in a different country and be ruled by a different king. The king’s name was King Darius. (crown)

One of God's people was named Daniel. *(I follow God.)* He loved God and followed his ways. He was an adviser to King Darius *(crown)*, and the king really liked him. The other advisers were jealous and didn't like Daniel. *(I follow God.)* They wanted to throw him in the lions' den! *(roar)*

The advisers tricked the king. They told him to pass a law that said no one could pray to anyone but the king for 30 days. This was a trick, because the advisers knew Daniel *(I follow God)* loved God and loved to pray to him. There was no way he could go 30 days without praying to God, whom he loved so much! They were sure Daniel *(I follow God)* would pray to God and be thrown into the den of lions! *(roar)*

Daniel *(I follow God)* heard the law. Still, he went to his house and prayed to God. The advisers caught him praying and arrested him to be thrown into the den of lions *(roar)* because he had broken the law!

King Darius *(crown)* was very sad. He liked Daniel *(I follow God)* and did not want him to die. But he had to follow the law and throw him into the den to be eaten by the lions. *(roar)* He yelled, "You always serve your God faithfully. May he save you!" Then the guards shut Daniel *(I follow God)* in the den.

Only God could save Daniel. The next morning, King Darius *(crown)* went to the lions' den. *(roar)* He removed the stone and called, "Did your God save you?"

Daniel *(I follow God)* yelled, "My king, may you live forever. My God sent his angel, and the angel shut the mouths of the lions. *(roar)* God did not allow them to hurt me!"

King Darius *(crown)* was so happy! He ordered the guards to get Daniel *(I follow God)* out of the lions' den. *(roar)*

Great job everyone! Now let's talk about the story. Ask:

- Who was the king? *(King Darius)*
- Who was one of his advisers? *(Daniel)*
- Did the other advisers like Daniel? *(no)*
- So what trick did they play on the king and on Daniel? *(They passed a law that people could pray to no one but the king for 30 days.)*
- Who prayed to God anyway? *(Daniel)*
- So what did they do to him? *(They put him in a den of lions.)*
- Did the lions eat him? *(no)*
- Who protected him? *(God)* How? *(God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths.)*

Say, "Daniel trusted in God. He was loyal to God, and God helped him. You can trust in God and be loyal to him, too! Let's ask God to help us be loyal to him like Daniel."

Pray with the children that God will help all of you to be loyal.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: LION RELAY

Set up a relay race, with 3–4 children on a team. Have them crawl on all fours and roar like a lion as they take turns crossing the room and coming back to tag the person next in line.

OPTION 2: GOD'S PROTECTION

Stuff you need: beanbags, trash can, masking tape

Place a masking tape line about 4 feet from a trash can. Have children take turns tossing the beanbags into the trash can. Encourage children to clap and cheer for one another while they take turns.

Say, **"When you are playing a game, it feels nice when people are cheering for you. This is one way we can be loyal to each other—by encouraging each other. What are some ways we can be loyal to God?"** (*spend time with him, tell him we love him, sing praise songs to him*)

OPTION 3: GOD SENDS PROTECTION

Stuff you need: God Sends Protection Activity Sheet, crayons

Give each child an activity sheet and crayons. As they color, remind them that just as God protected Daniel, he also protects us.

OPTION 4: NEVER STOP PRAYING

Stuff you need: Never Stop Praying Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. While they color, ask for each picture:

- **What is that child doing?**
- **Is that a good time to pray to God?** (Yes. We can pray to God no matter where we are or what we are doing.)

OPTION 5: LION PUPPET

Stuff you need: yellow paper plates (found at a party supply store), orange tissue paper, glue, black felt triangles (for nose), googly eyes, black permanent marker, wooden craft sticks, tape

Preparation: Cut out the black felt triangles for the nose. Rip the orange tissue paper into pieces 2–3 inches long.

Give each child a paper plate. Squirt glue all the way around the edge of the plate, and have children stick tissue paper pieces onto the glue to make a mane for their lion. Dot glue onto the plate for eyes and nose, and have children put on the googly eyes and triangle nose. Draw a mouth

with the marker. Write the child's name on the craft stick; then tape the stick onto the back of the paper plate to form a lion puppet.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 18*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that Daniel was loyal to God. Show your parents the back and tell them that you can be loyal to God, too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

GOD'S HOUSE

Bible Basis: Ezra 1:1–7; 3:10–13; Haggai 1:2–11; Zechariah 8:2–22

Bible Verse: “[The Lord said,] ‘...They will be my people. I will be their faithful God. I will keep my promises to them.’” —Zechariah 8:8, NIV

Bible Point: God’s people promised to follow God. God wants you to follow him, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 19: “God’s House”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Play “Follow the Leader.” Have children form a single-file line behind you. Say, “**Will you follow me and do what I do?**” Walk around the room doing silly actions, and have children follow and mimic what you do.

Have children sit down. Then ask:

- What did you like best about following me?
- What does following someone mean you have to do?

Say, “In today’s Bible story, God’s people promised to follow God. Let’s find out why they did this.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: wooden blocks

First, read aloud Chapter 19, “God’s House,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Sit on the floor in a circle with the children and follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Say, “**God’s people lived far away from their true home. Some had been slaves for a very long time. King Cyrus told them that they could go back to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was their home. This made God’s people happy. Their neighbors were happy for them, too. Their neighbors gave God’s people gold and silver to rebuild God’s temple.**”

Say, “**God’s temple is like our church today, only it was bigger and fancier. Even King Cyrus gave God’s people things for their temple. These things were from the temple that used to be in Jerusalem. When God’s people reached Jerusalem, they built the foundation of God’s temple.**”

Hand out one wooden block to each child. If you have a small class, give children two blocks each. Ask them to place their blocks in the center of the circle so that the blocks form a square, the foundation of a block building.

Say, "This is the foundation for a block building. It shows where and how a building will be made. We can put blocks on top of these to make a building. When the foundation of God's temple was built, God's people celebrated."

Say, "Once the foundation of God's temple was made, God's people started to work on their own homes and to plant food for their own families. God told them to work on his temple first. God said he would provide for their needs. He sent Haggai, a prophet, to tell them to make the temple as great as it used to be. Then he sent Zechariah to tell the people exactly how to make God's temple. God wanted to take care of all his people."

Give each child another block. Have them place their blocks on top of the foundation to create a block tower.

Say, "Some bad people tried to stop God's people from building God's temple. These bad people did not like God. They did not like God's people. But King Darius stopped them. He said that God's temple should be built. When the temple was built, they dedicated it to God, which means they said the temple belonged to God. Then they dedicated themselves to God. This means that they belonged to him. They wanted to love him, follow him, and obey him. They wanted to be his people. God's people promised to follow his ways. God wants you to follow him and his ways, too."

After the Bible story, ask:

- **What did God's people build first?** *(They built the foundation of God's temple.)*
- **What did God say he'd do if his people built his temple first?** *(God said he would take care of his people.)*

Say, "God's people promise to follow his ways. God wants me to follow him." Have children repeat the Bible point with you.

Pray with the children that God will help them always follow him.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: BUILDING THE TEMPLE

Stuff you need: wooden blocks

Give each child, or group of children with a leader, their own pile of blocks to build a temple.

OPTION 2: GOD'S WAYS CHARADES

Help children understand God's ways by playing a game of charades.

Say, "I am going to follow God's way. I am going to ...," then proceed to pantomime making your bed. Have children yell out their guesses until someone gets it. Continue saying the line and

acting things out for the children to guess. You can act out cleaning your bedroom, setting the table, sweeping the floor, eating your vegetables, letting someone go out the door before you, petting a dog, giving someone a present, smiling at people, or listening carefully in Sunday school.

Then ask: **"What is one way you can follow God this week?"** Allow time for children to answer.

Say, **"God's people promised to follow God's ways. God wants you to follow him, too."**

OPTION 3: SPONGE PAINTINGS

Stuff you need: several kitchen sponges, each cut into 2 or 3 different sized rectangles, yellow poster paint, paper plates for paint, construction paper, wet wipes

Squirt yellow paint onto a paper plate and put a variety of damp sponge sizes on the plate. Make a paint plate for every 3–4 children. Have the children stamp a variety of rectangles onto the paper to make a fancy gold temple. Immediately use wet wipes to wipe paint off hands.

OPTION 4: GOD'S PEOPLE PROMISE

Stuff you need: God's People Promise Activity Sheet, crayons

Give each child an activity sheet and crayons. Have the children color the temple and take it home to help share the Bible story with their families.

OPTION 5: JOURNEY POUCH

Stuff you need: 9 x 12-inch pieces of felt (1 per child), ribbon or yarn, Velcro strips, hole punch, markers, glitter, glue, stick-on foam pieces, and gems

Preparation: Fold up the bottom third of each felt piece. Keeping the folded part as the bottom, punch holes along both sides.

Give each child a piece of felt and 2 pieces of ribbon or yarn. Help them use the ribbon or yarn to lace up the sides. Tie a knot at the top of each side to secure. To close the bag, stick a small piece of Velcro on the inside of the top flap and another on the front of the pouch near the top. Allow children to decorate their pouch and take it home.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 19*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that God's people promised to follow God's ways. Show your parents the back and tell them that God wants you to follow him, too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

ESTHER GETS READY

Bible Basis: Esther 1–9

Bible Verse: “[Esther said,] ‘... Don’t eat or drink anything for three days. ... I and my attendants will fast just as you do. Then I’ll go to the king.’” —Esther 4:16, NIV

Bible Point: Esther gets her heart ready for a hard job. God helps me when it’s hard.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 20: “Esther Gets Ready”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Say, “Sometimes we need to get ready for things. If you were to get ready for a party, what would you do? (*put up streamers and balloons, make a cake, plan games*) If you were getting ready to eat dinner, what would you do? (*wash hands, set the table*) When you get ready for Sunday school, what do you do? (*eat breakfast, get dressed, get offering money*) When you get ready for bed, what would you do?” (*brush teeth, read a book, put on pajamas*)

Then ask, “Why don’t you put up streamers and decorations before you go to bed? Why don’t you put on pajamas to go to a party? Why don’t you make a cake before you go to Sunday school?” (*We need to do different things to get ready for different events.*)

Say, “In today’s Bible story, we’re going to learn about someone who had to get ready to do a very hard thing. Because she did, good things happened to her and many others.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 20, “Esther Gets Ready,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Esther was a beautiful girl. She was a Jew. When her parents died, her cousin Mordecai took the place of her father. The king’s men saw Esther. They were looking for a new queen. They chose her as one of the girls who might become the queen.

Have children clap three times and say, “Get ready, Esther!”

Esther worked hard to make herself ready. She and all the other girls chosen had to do many things. They ate special foods. They did many things to make themselves more beautiful to the king. Mordecai also asked her to do something. He asked her not to tell anyone that she was a Jew. Esther agreed. What is a Jew? It is someone who is one of God’s people. People would say that Esther was Jewish. It was very special to be Jewish—to be one of God’s people. But

some people were mean to the Jews, and Mordecai didn't want anyone to be mean to Esther because she was a Jew.

Then it was time for the contest. It was time for the king to choose a queen.

Have children clap three times and say, "Get ready, Esther!"

When the king saw Esther, he chose her to be his queen. Meanwhile, the king chose a man named Haman to run a lot of his business. Haman was one of the people who were mean to the Jews. Haman did not like Esther's cousin Mordecai. He wanted to get rid of Mordecai. He wanted to get rid of all of Mordecai's family and friends. So, Haman made a law that would get rid of all the Jews. When Mordecai heard about this law, he told Esther.

Have children clap three times and say, "Get ready, Esther!"

Esther knew that as queen she needed to get ready to save the Jews. How did she get ready? She prayed very, very hard. She asked Mordecai to pray for her. She started to make a plan.

Have children clap three times and say, "Get ready, Esther!"

After praying very hard, Esther went to see the king. He was glad she came to see him. Esther had to tell him what was happening, but not yet. "If it pleases you," she told King Xerxes, "come to a big dinner I've prepared for you. Please have Haman come with you." So he did. After enjoying dinner, the king told Esther that he would give her anything she wanted.

Have children clap three times and say, "Get ready, Esther!"

And she did. She told the king and Haman, "I would like you to come to a big dinner here tomorrow." And they agreed.

Have children clap three times and say, "Get ready, Esther!"

Once again, Esther worked hard to prepare dinner for the king and Haman. The next day when the king came, he said, "Tell me what you want, Queen Esther, and I will give it to you."

Now was the time that Esther had been getting ready for. "Please spare me and my people," she said.

"Who wants to hurt you?" demanded the king.

"Haman," Esther said. This made the king angry. The king punished Haman and did not allow the Jews to be hurt. Because Esther had prayed hard and prepared well, the Jews were not hurt.

After the Bible story, ask:

- Who did the king choose to be his wife? (*Esther*)
- What did Esther ask the king to do? (*She asked him to save her and her people.*)

Say, “Esther worked hard to get ready for a difficult job she needed to do. God will also help you when you have something difficult to do.”

Pray with the children that they will remember to ask God for help when they have something difficult to do.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: ESTHER’S FEAST

Allergy Alert! Check with parents and your Sunday school director to make sure none of the children in your class have food allergies to any of the foods you are serving. As an extra precaution, hang a sign on your door stating which foods you will be serving, so that as parents check in, they can alert you if there is a problem.

Stuff you need: toothpicks, sausage chunks, cheese chunks, bread chunks, carrot slices, grapes cut into quarters, apple slices, cups of juice, colorful paper plates, serving trays

Preparation: Set up the food so that everything has a toothpick in it (except the carrots) and can be served to the children as if they are at a fancy feast. Once children take an item, have them remove the toothpick and place it back on the tray.

Say, “Today we are having a banquet. We have a lot of different kinds of foods, and they are set up fancy. How does good food make people feel after they’ve eaten it? Why do you think Esther invited the king and Haman to have a large meal with her?”

Close by saying, “Esther prepared a feast for the king, and she prepared her heart for what she had to do. God will help you do what he wants you to do, even when it’s hard.”

OPTION 2: GET READY

Stuff you need: a bag of clothes per relay team of about 6 children, which includes one item per child, such as large shirt, gloves, hat, shorts, slippers or shoes, sunglasses, jacket, or socks

Say, “This is a relay game in which we will pretend to get ready for school.”

Put the bags of clothes on one side of the room and have the children sit in relay teams on the other side of the room. One at a time, the children will walk to the other side of the room and pick out an article of clothing to put on. Have adults ready to help. The children will walk back with that article of clothing on, then tap the next person on the head. That person will stand up and walk down and repeat the process until everyone on the team has had a turn.

OPTION 3: Queen ESTHER

Stuff you need: Queen Esther Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. As they color, remind them that just as God helped Esther, he also helps us.

Say, **"Esther became queen for a special reason. She had a hard job to do. But God helped Esther. Color this picture of Esther. Share the story and the picture with your family."**

OPTION 4: ESTHER'S FEAST

Stuff you need: Esther's Feast Matching Game Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Help the children match the items from Esther's feast.

OPTION 5: ESTHER'S CROWN

Stuff you need: large silver or gold doilies, glue, long strips of paper, sparkly stickers, glitter glue, stick-on gems, tape

Preparation: Fold the doilies in half. Slide a long strip of paper inside the folded doily and glue in place to form a crown.

Give a crown to each child. Have them decorate the crown with sparkly stickers, glitter glue, and stick-on gems. After the glue dries, measure them around children's heads and tape to fit.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 20*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that Esther prepared her heart for a hard job. Show your parents the back and tell them that God will help you when life is hard."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

SET APART TO HONOR GOD

Bible Basis: Ezra 7:1, 7, 10–11; Nehemiah 1:2–6, 11; 4:4–6, 13–23; 8:1–12

Bible Verse: [Nehemiah said,] “Don’t be afraid of your enemies. Remember the Lord. He is great and powerful.” —Nehemiah 4:14, NIV

Bible Point: Nehemiah knew God was on his side. God is on your side, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 21: “Set Apart to Honor God”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: yarn, string, or rope

Have children stand in a circle and pass around a ball of yarn so that each child is holding a part of the yarn and the yarn goes all the way around the circle. Or, for an extra challenge, hold a piece of yarn, then throw the ball of remaining yarn to someone across the circle. Continue until everyone is holding a section of the yarn. This will create a spiderweb-like effect.

Say, “**We each have a part in holding this yarn so it doesn’t touch the floor. I will call your name when you should let go of your yarn. Let’s see how many people can let go before the yarn touches the floor.**”

Ask alternating children around the circle to let go of the yarn. When everyone isn’t holding the yarn, it sags. Ask a few more children to let go of the yarn, until only you and one child are holding it. Then slowly ask individual children to hold the yarn again. Roll up the ball of yarn and have children sit down. Then ask:

- **When was it easiest to keep the yarn off the floor?** (*when we all worked together*)
- **When was it hardest to keep the yarn off the floor?** (*when only a few people worked together*)

Say, “**When everyone works together, it is easier to get the job done. In today’s Bible story, God sent an important man to help his people work together and finish a job.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 21, “Set Apart to Honor God,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Periodically, throughout the story, choose a child to come to the front of the room to create a human wall. Have children stand side by side with their hands at their sides. Pace your story so that by the

end of it, all the children are included in the human wall. If you have more than 10 or 12 children in your class, call them up 2 or 3 at a time. (You don't want to interrupt your story too many times or children will lose the story line.)

Say, **"As people build walls in our story, let's build a human wall. When I call your name, come up to the front to help make the human wall. We will begin now."**

God's people returned to Jerusalem, their home city. They built homes. They built God's temple. God's people had many things, but they were missing the wall around their city. In those days, if a city didn't have a wall around it, anyone could attack the city. God wanted his people to build a wall. He wanted them to be safe inside the city of Jerusalem.

God sent a man named Nehemiah. He was a servant for the king of Persia. Nehemiah explained about the wall to the king of Persia. He asked if he could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall. The king told him to go.

Nehemiah knew a city wall was important. He came to Jerusalem. He worked to build the wall. He wanted to work quickly, but he knew that if no one was guarding the city, enemies could attack while God's people worked. Nehemiah had a great idea. Half of the people in Jerusalem worked on the wall, while half of the people stood guard, ready to fight against any attack. Because the people worked together, the wall was finished quickly. God's temple and God's people were safe.

Nehemiah knew God was on his side. God is on your side, too!

After the Bible story, admire your human wall, and then have the children sit down. Ask:

- **What was wrong with the city of Jerusalem?** *(It had no walls.)*
- **Why was that a problem?** *(People could attack easily.)*
- **Who led the project to build the wall?** *(Nehemiah)*
- **What was his job before this?** *(servant to the king of Persia)*
- **How did he protect the city?** *(Half the people worked while half the people stood guard.)*
- **Did Nehemiah work alone on the wall?** *(No, God's people worked together.)*
- **Did Nehemiah know God was on his side?** *(yes)*

Say, **"Nehemiah knew that God was on his side. God wanted the people to rebuild the wall, so Nehemiah knew God would help them. What are some things God wants you to do? (obey your parents, obey the commandments, love and worship God) If these are things God wants you to do, will God help you do those things? (yes) Will God be on your side as you do them? (yes) Let's all say it together: God is on my side. (Repeat together.)"**

Pray for the children to follow what God wants them to do. Pray for God to help them do the right thing.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose any or all of these activities to help explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: BUILD THE WALL

Stuff you need: large cardboard bricks, shoe boxes with lids taped on, or large MegaBlocs or Duplo blocks

Preparation: Clear an area along a wall for children to build a wall.

Have children form a single-file line, and give each a block or brick. One at a time, have them cross the room and place their brick against the wall. After 3 or 4 children have had a turn, guide the next group to begin building upward to create a wall.

After the game, say, **“When we worked together, like the people of Jerusalem did, we all did a little bit of work, and we still built a big wall.”**

OPTION 2: THE CITY’S WALL

Stuff you need: butcher paper, red and brown construction paper, tape

Tape butcher paper across the front wall of the classroom. Give children construction paper that they can tear into the shape of stones. Tape the “stones” on the butcher paper to build a wall. Try to cover the butcher paper.

OPTION 3: REBUILDING THE WALL

Stuff you need: Rebuilding the Wall Activity Sheet, large sheets of sandpaper, unwrapped red and brown crayons

Give an activity sheet, a sheet of sandpaper, and an unwrapped crayon to each child. (The children can take turns and share crayons and sandpaper sheets.) Demonstrate how to place the sandpaper underneath the activity sheet, and then rub the activity sheet with the broad side of the crayons to create a rubbing of the sandpaper on the brick wall on the activity sheet. The rubbing will make the wall look like real bricks.

OPTION 4: THANK YOU, GOD!

Stuff you need: Thank you, God! Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Review the story of Nehemiah. Remind the children that Nehemiah knew God was on his side. Have them color the picture of Nehemiah working.

OPTION 5: WALL OF JERUSALEM

Stuff you need: Wall of Jerusalem Mobile Cards, white card stock, children’s plastic clothes hangers, round-tipped scissors, yarn or ribbon, crayons, adult scissors (to cut yarn), hole punch

Preparation: Photocopy the Wall of Jerusalem Mobile Cards onto white card stock.

Have children color and cut out the four cards or have adult volunteers help with the cutting. Punch a hole in each. Cut four strands of yarn or ribbon in varying lengths for each child. Help children tie the yarn onto the cards; then tie each piece of yarn onto the hanger to create a mobile.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 21*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that Nehemiah was sure of God's power. Show your parents the back and tell them that God is on your side."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

BABY JESUS

Bible Basis: John 1:1–18; Luke 1:26–2:20

Bible Verse: “[The angel said,] ‘Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord.’” —Luke 2:11, NIV

Bible Point: God sent his Son to save all people. You can trust Jesus to help you, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 22: “Baby Jesus”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Say, “**Let’s find out how much you know about babies. If you have ever seen a baby, stand up. If you have never seen a baby, sit down.**” Give children time to move, and then have them all sit down again.

“**If you have ever held a baby, stand up. If you have never held a baby, sit down.**” Give children time to move, and then have them all sit down again.

“**If you have ever fed a baby, stand up. If you have never fed a baby, sit down.**” Give children time to move, and then have them all sit down again.

“**If you have a baby in your family, stand up. If you don’t have a baby in your family, sit down.**” Give children time to move, and then have them sit down again.

Have the whole class sit down, and let a couple of children tell you about babies they know. Then ask:

- Why do people like babies?
- Who usually takes care of babies?

Say, “**Babies are very special people. They need adults, like parents or grandparents, to take care of them, and everyone is very happy when a baby is born. Today’s Bible story is about a baby whom God’s people had waited to see for many years. This baby was God’s Son.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 22, “Baby Jesus,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Divide the class into three groups. The first group will be the Waiting People. When you point to them, they should yell, “We are waiting for a Savior!” The second group will be the Angels. When you point to them, they should wave their arms like wings and say, “Do not be afraid!” The third

group will be the Joyful Ones. When you point to them, they should say, "Jesus is born!" Practice with the children, and then begin the Bible story.

In the very beginning, God created the world. Adam and Eve were the first people. They were also the first people to disobey God and his commands. This is called sin. Then God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. These commandments helped people to know when they had disobeyed God and sinned. People had to bring sacrifices to ask forgiveness of their sin. But God's people also knew that eventually God would send someone to Earth who would not sin. He would be perfect. He would be the one and only sacrifice ever needed. This man would be called the Savior, because he would save people from their sins. *(Point to the Waiting People.)*

Then one day, an angel came to a girl named Mary. The angel spoke to her. *(Point to the Angels.)* "Will you be the mother of the Savior?" he asked her.

Mary said she would. She told Joseph what the angel said to her. What Mary said worried Joseph. Then an angel spoke to Joseph. *(Point to the Angels.)* "Mary will be the mother of the Savior," the angel said to Joseph.

Joseph understood. He and Mary needed to take a long trip to a town called Bethlehem. They spent many days traveling. After Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to Jesus. *(Point to the Joyful Ones.)* Jesus, God's Son, was born! He was the Savior. *(Point to the Waiting People.)*

Nearby, shepherds watched their sheep. Many angels appeared to them. *(Point to the Angels.)* "Go see the Messiah," the angels said. They knew where baby Jesus was, because God put a star over the stable where he was born.

The shepherds went to see baby Jesus. Seeing baby Jesus made them happy. *(Point to the Joyful Ones.)* They had waited so long for a Savior, and he had finally come. *(Point to the Waiting People.)* We call this the very first Christmas.

Ask:

- Who were the first people to sin? *(Adam and Eve)*
- What is sin? *(disobeying God)*
- What did God give to the people so they would know when they had sinned? *(the Ten Commandments)*
- What were the people waiting for? *(a Savior)*
- Who was the mother of the Savior? *(Mary)*
- What was the baby's name? *(Jesus)*
- Who went to see baby Jesus? *(the shepherds)*
- What do we call the holiday that celebrates Jesus' birth? *(Christmas)*

Say, "God sent his Son to save all people. He is the Savior. You can trust Jesus to be your Savior, too."

Pray that the children will understand that Jesus is the Savior.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: STAR ORNAMENT

Stuff you need: stars cut from cardboard, aluminum foil, hole punch, Christmas ribbon

Say, “We are going to make a star ornament to remind us of the star over Jesus’ stable.”

Give each child a cardboard star and a few sheets of aluminum foil. Have them wrap the star in the foil—it doesn’t have to be perfect; there is no right or wrong way to do it. Punch a hole in the top, and string Christmas ribbon through it to create a Christmas tree ornament. If you have extra time, children could put Christmas stickers on their stars.

OPTION 2: BIRTHDAY MUSIC CELEBRATION

Stuff you need: a music player, or piano/piano player

Sing Christmas songs to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

OPTION 3: GOD’S MESSENGERS

Stuff you need: God’s Messengers Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about angels while the children color. Have children take the picture home to remind them of the story of baby Jesus.

OPTION 4: OUR SAVIOR HAS COME

Stuff you need: Our Savior Has Come Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about Jesus’ birth. Ask the children what they think it would have felt like to be there at that special time. Then direct the children to color the picture of the first Christmas.

OPTION 5: CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

Stuff you need: clear glass ornaments (or plastic if you can find ones that have removable tops), acrylic craft paint in a variety of colors. Caution! Have children wear old clothes or smocks, as this paint will stain. Or, for less mess, have children fill the ornaments with lengths of a variety of Christmas ribbons (10–12 ribbon lengths each, in 4 or 5 different colors and patterns).

Preparation: Put a plastic drop cloth on the floor in case some paint spills.

Carefully remove the top of the ornament: pull the top off a little, then pinch the two wires together to pull the top the rest of the way off. Let children pick out their paint colors. Two or three usually work best.

Let child squeeze paint in the ornament. You can add all of the colors at once, because the paint won't mix.

Have child turn the ornament, being careful not to turn it completely upside down so the paint spills out. Keep turning until paint covers the entire inside of the ornament. Let the paint dry before putting the top back on the ornaments for your children.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 22*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that God sent a Savior for the world. Show your parents the back and tell them that you can believe that Jesus is your Savior, too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

THE POWER OF GOD

Bible Basis: Matthew 3:1–17; 4:1–11, 24–25; Mark 1:31–2:12; 3:9–15; Luke 8:1–3; John 1:19–34

Bible Verse: “People brought to him all who were ill with different kinds of sicknesses. ... Jesus healed all of them.” —Matthew 4:24, NIV

Bible Point: Jesus shows people the power of God. I can look for God’s power in my life.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 23: “The Power of God”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Say, “Tell me about your week. What is something that happened to you this week? What is something funny that happened? Tell me about somewhere you went. Did you go to preschool? Did you go shopping with your mom?” Spend several minutes discussing the week.

Say, “You have been telling me true stories about your life. Today I am going to tell you a story about Jesus. It is a true story from his life.”

Say, “First, who is Jesus? Does anyone remember from last week? He is God’s Son—the Savior whom God sent to Earth. He was perfect—he never sinned. When we first heard about him last week, he was a baby. Today we are going to talk about something that happened to him when he grew up and was a man.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: a fur hat or vest for John the Baptist, 4–5 robes for Jesus and the people

First, read aloud Chapter 23, “The Power of God,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Ask for volunteers to come up front and help you with the story. John the Baptist should wear the fur hat or vest. The people and Jesus should wear robes.

Jesus had a cousin named John. He lived in the wilderness and ate locusts and honey. (Have John come stand by you.) **John baptized people. Many people came to John to be baptized.** (Have the people come stand by John and say, “We want to be baptized!”)

John told them, “God can wash away your sins!” (Have John repeat.)

One day, Jesus came to the river. (Have Jesus stand by John.)

Jesus said, "Please baptize me." *(Have Jesus repeat.)*

John said, "No way! You are perfect!" *(Have John repeat.)* **"You should baptize me!"** *(Have John repeat.)*

Jesus said, "John, it is right for you to do this." *(Have Jesus repeat.)*

(Have John tap Jesus on the head to symbolize the baptism.)

At that moment, the skies opened up. *(Have everyone look up.)*

God's Spirit came down from heaven in the form of a dove. A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son. I love him, and I am very happy with him!" All the people were amazed. *(Have the people say, "We are amazed!")* **The dove coming down from heaven showed all the people God's power.**

After this, people knew that Jesus was God's Son. While Jesus was on Earth, he showed people the power of God.

After the Bible story, ask:

- **Who baptized Jesus?** *(John)*
- **Who showed God's power to many people?** *(Jesus)*

Say, **"Jesus showed people the power of God. This story about Jesus is true, and God is still powerful today. Let's ask Jesus to show us God's power in our lives."**

Pray with your children that God would show his power in your lives.

Depending on how many children you have in your class, you may want to perform the story a few times, using different groups of children as volunteers.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: NATURE WALK

Stuff you need: a rope, several adult volunteers

Take the children outside for a nature walk. Have them all hold on to a rope, and make sure to station an adult at the beginning of the rope, an adult at the end of the rope, and an adult on each side. Or, if you have enough adults, you can have each adult hold hands with two children. Walk around your church, and point out things God created—the sun, the sky, the breeze, trees, and birds. Remind the children how God's power shows through these things.

OPTION 2: ACT OUT a STORY!

Stuff you need: Bible-time costumes and props, such as robes, head coverings, stuffed animal sheep, shepherd's hook, baby doll

Allow the children to use the costumes to act out today's story or other Bible stories such as the Christmas story they heard last week. You can lead them in this or allow them to have free time for creative play.

OPTION 3: GOD'S POWER on EARTH

Stuff you need: God's Power on Earth Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have children look at the picture of Jesus. Does Jesus look super powerful? What makes Jesus so powerful? Have children color this picture of Jesus to take home.

OPTION 4: WEATHER WHEEL

Stuff you need: Weather Wheel Cards Activity Sheet, paper plates, round-tip scissors, glue or glue sticks, metal fasteners, crayons, construction paper strips about 3 inches x ½ inch.

Give each child an activity sheet and crayons. Have the children color and cut out the Weather Wheel Cards. Glue the cards around the plate. Punch a metal fastener through one end of a construction paper strip, and then punch it through the middle of the plate. The Weather Wheel will resemble a clock.

Say, **"We learned today that God is powerful. God is so powerful that he even controls the weather! Hang up your weather wheel at your house, and each morning, you can move the pointer toward the weather you are having that day. Let that remind you of God's power."**

OPTION 5: DOVE PUPPET

Stuff you need: white paper lunch bag, scissors, white and orange construction paper, googly eyes, glue

Preparation: Cut triangle-shaped wings from the white construction paper and a triangle beak out of the orange construction paper.

Put the bag flat on the table with the flap side up. This will be the front of the puppet, with everything above the fold acting as the dove's head. The rest of the bag will be the body. Be sure to keep the opening at the bottom of the bag facing toward you.

Glue the wings to the back of the body close enough to the outer edge so that you can see them from the front. Glue the eyes onto the middle of the head. Glue the beak under the eyes, being careful to attach it only to the head so the mouth will open.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 23*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that Jesus shows people the power of God. Show your parents the back, and tell them that you can look for God's power in your life."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

JESUS, THE TEACHER

Bible Basis: Matthew 5:2–12; 6:5–15; 14:22–32; Mark 4:30–41; 6:30–44; Luke 10:25–37; 15:1–7; John 6:66–71

Bible Verse: “[Simon Peter said,] ‘We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’”
—John 6:69, NIV

Bible Point: Jesus told stories to teach people. You can learn from Jesus’ stories, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 24: “Jesus, the Teacher”

PREPARATION FOR LESSON 25: This week, take pictures of the children in your class and print them. You will need them for a craft next week. You can take one of the whole group if you are pressed for time, but individual pictures would work best.

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: another adult, rubbing alcohol, cotton ball, ointment, bandage

Say, “Good morning! I am so excited to talk more today about Jesus. The first story we heard was about Jesus being born! What was his mother’s name? (*Mary*) Who came to see him? (*the shepherds*) And who announced his birth to the shepherds? (*angels*)

“Then, last week we talked about how Jesus shows us God’s power. Who baptized Jesus? (*John*) Who came down from heaven? (*God’s Spirit in the form of a dove*) We learned that God’s power shows through Jesus! Jesus is amazing!

“Today we’re going to learn about—”

Have an assistant interrupt you and say, “Excuse me, Teacher! I hurt my finger, and I wondered if you could help me out.”

Say, “Well, I’m right in the middle of teaching these children about Jesus.”

Your assistant says, “It really hurts.”

Help the assistant by treating the wound.

Say, “Well, it’s very interesting that this happened, because today we’re going to hear a story about a man who was hurt.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: Ace bandage, blanket, Bible-time robes (optional)

First, read aloud Chapter 24, "Jesus, the Teacher," from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Say, **"When you go to school, you have a teacher. A teacher tries to explain things to you. Jesus was a teacher, too. He made his lessons fun. Jesus used stories to teach people. People understood his stories. Let's act out this story together."**

Have four volunteers come to the front of the room with you.

Say, **"Jesus told people to help their neighbors. But a man wasn't sure what Jesus meant when he said 'neighbor,' so, Jesus told the following story."**

"A man went on a trip. (Have Volunteer 1 start walking across the teaching area.) But while he was walking, robbers attacked him and stole everything the man owned. They beat him up and left him lying in the dust. (Have Volunteer 1 lie down on the ground.)"

"A church leader walked by. He saw the man, but he thought he didn't have time to help him, so he just kept walking. (Have Volunteer 2 walk by, see the hurt man, and keep walking.) Another church leader walked by. He also saw the man, but he didn't want to help either, so he just kept on walking. (Have Volunteer 3 walk by, see the hurt man, and keep walking.)"

"Then a Samaritan man walked by. Now, God's people didn't like the Samaritans, and the Samaritans didn't like God's people. They were enemies. But when the Samaritan man walked by, he felt terrible for the hurt man! He stopped and helped him up. (Give Volunteer 4 the blanket, and have him help Volunteer 1 up off the floor, put the blanket around his shoulders, and walk him to the edge of the teaching area.) He took him to an inn where they could help the man. (Volunteer 4 wraps Volunteer 1's arm in the Ace bandage.) The Samaritan was a good neighbor and helped the man recover."

Say, **"Let's thank our volunteers!"** Have the children clap while the volunteers go back to their seats.

Say, **"So, Jesus told this story to the crowd. Then Jesus asked, 'Who was the good neighbor?' The man in the crowd said, 'The Samaritan man.' He was right. By telling this story, Jesus was teaching the people that anyone who needs your help is your neighbor."**

Ask:

- **What happened to the man?** (*Robbers beat him up and stole his things.*)
- **Did the church leaders help him?** (*no*)
- **Who helped him?** (*the Samaritan man*)
- **So, who was the hurt man's neighbor?** (*the Samaritan man*)
- **Was this story true?** (*No, this is a story Jesus told to teach a lesson.*)

Say, "Jesus told stories to teach people. We can learn from Jesus' stories, too. For example, today we can learn that, in order to be a good neighbor, we need to help those who need help."

Have the assistant say, "Thanks for helping me with my finger! You were a good neighbor to me by helping me when I was hurt, even though you were busy teaching."

Say, "You're welcome! Let's ask God to help us learn from Jesus' stories."

Pray with your children, asking God for help learning from the stories you read in the Bible.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Bowling

Stuff you need: children's bowling sets, 1 for every 5–6 children. If your church doesn't have any bowling sets, you can make them by filling 2-liter bottles halfway with sand. Use tennis balls to knock them down. Have children line up and take turns bowling. They can be good neighbors to one another by helping each other pick up the pins for the next person in line.

Option 2: The Lord's Prayer

Say, "Jesus taught us how we should pray. He did not want people to say a lot of words that didn't mean anything. He also didn't want people to say loud prayers if they didn't mean them. That's why he told us what should go into a prayer. I am going to say the words to a prayer Jesus taught, and you do the motions with me."

Our Father in heaven (*Raise your hands in the air to God.*)

May your name (*Fold your hands as if in prayer.*)

Be honored (*With folded hands, bow.*)

May your kingdom (*Put your hands on your head, fingers up like a crown.*)

Come (*Wave someone toward you.*)

May what you want to happen be done (*Point up.*)

On Earth (*Make a circle with your arms.*)

As it is done in heaven (*Raise your hands in the air.*)

Give us today (*Hit a fist in the palm of your other hand.*)

Our daily bread (*Pretend to eat.*)

Forgive us our sins (*Cover your face with your hands.*)

Just as we also have forgiven those who sin against us (*Pretend to pat someone on the back.*)

Keep us from falling into sin (*Sway as if you are about to fall.*)

When we are tempted (*Put a finger to your chin as if you are thinking about something.*)

Save us (*Raise your hands in the air to God.*)

From the evil one (*Point behind you as if a bad guy is chasing you.*)

Repeat a few times until children get the motions.

OPTION 3: Jesus Teaches

Stuff you need: Jesus Teaches Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have the children color the picture of the Good Samaritan helping the man on the road. Talk about how we can be good Samaritans today.

OPTION 4: CHALK PICTURE

Stuff you need: black construction paper, chalk, wet wipes

Say, **"You can be a good neighbor by doing nice things for other people. We are going to make chalk pictures, and you can give your picture to someone you love as a gift."**

Give each child a piece of construction paper and some chalk. When they are done making their pictures, wipe hands with wet wipes.

OPTION 5: WRAPPING PAPER

Stuff you need: large sheets of butcher paper, crayons, stamps and stamp pads, washable markers, stickers

Say, **"Another way we can be good neighbors and show other people we care about them is to give gifts. You are going to make your own sheet of wrapping paper, and you can use it to wrap a small gift."**

Hand out supplies, and encourage children to use their imaginations. When parents come to pick up their children, explain the purpose of the wrapping paper.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 24*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that Jesus told stories to teach people. Show your parents the back and tell them that you can learn from Jesus' stories, too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

JESUS AND THE LITTLE CHILDREN

Bible Basis: Matthew 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16

Bible Verse: “[Jesus said,] ‘Let the little children come to me. Don’t keep them away. The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them.’” —Matthew 19:14, NIV

Bible Point: Jesus loved the little children. Jesus loves you, too!

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 25: “Jesus and the Little Children”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Play the game “Red Light/Green Light” with the children. Have them stand on one side of the room, side by side, and you stand on the other. When you say, “**green light**,” they can walk toward you. When you say “**red light**,” they need to stop and freeze. At this age they will likely need to hear “red light” a few times before they actually stop. When they reach you, they can high-five you. Tell each child that they did a good job. Play the game a few times. Then have the children sit down.

Say, “Did you enjoy playing the game? What was your favorite part? Did you like the red light better or the green light better? What if I was your grandma or your grandpa? Then you would have loved coming toward me! You would have been even more excited to get to those special people.”

Say, “Today, we are going to hear a story about some children who wanted to go to someone special, but people gave them the red light.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Say, “What do we know about Jesus so far?” Prompt the children to discuss previous lessons: Jesus’ birth, Jesus’ baptism, Jesus as a teacher.

Jesus was amazing. People loved to hear him teach. Most of all, people loved him because he loved people so much. Let’s hear a story about Jesus and some children.

First, read aloud Chapter 25, “Jesus and the Little Children,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

We are going to work together to tell this story. I will be the disciples and you will be the children in the story.

First, what are disciples? They are Jesus' followers. They went with him everywhere he went. They helped him take care of people and teach people. They were learning and training so they could go out by themselves and tell people how much God loved them.

So Jesus was resting, and the disciples wanted to take care of Jesus. They wanted him to rest. But some parents saw Jesus. Some children saw Jesus. They wanted to go to him. Say, "It's Jesus! Let's go to him!" *(Have children repeat.)*

But the disciples said, "No. Jesus needs some time to rest. You can't see him right now."

The children said, "We want to see Jesus!" *(Have children repeat.)*

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me! Please don't turn them away."

The children said, "Hooray!" *(Have children repeat.)*

The children were very happy to see Jesus. He loved them and prayed for them. He loved and prayed for the babies. Jesus loved all the little children, and he loves you, too!

After the Bible story, ask:

- **Who were the disciples?** *(Jesus' followers)*
- **What was their job?** *(to help Jesus)*
- **In the story, who saw Jesus?** *(children and parents)*
- **What did they want to do?** *(go to him and see him)*
- **How do you think they felt when the disciples said they couldn't?** *(bad, sad)*
- **But what did Jesus say?** *(Let the children come to me.)*
- **Why did he say that?** *(Jesus loved the little children.)*

Pray with your children, thanking God for his love for us.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: PRAISE SONGS

Stuff you need: music player or piano and piano player

Say, "Talking about how much God loves us makes me want to tell God how much I love him! Let's sing and praise God with our voices!" Sing a few praise songs.

Option 2: I Am Precious to Jesus

Stuff you need: photographs from last week, craft foam frames and stick-on foam shapes, tape, permanent markers

Preparation: Print the photographs from last week. You will likely have children in class this week who were not in class last week. You can make a note for their parents to put a picture in the frame they've made, or you can check with church staff to see if they have equipment a volunteer could use to take pictures at the beginning of this session and print in time for the craft. Write, "I am precious to Jesus" in permanent marker on each frame.

Give each child their picture and a frame. Help them tape the pictures into the frames; then let them decorate the frames with the stick-on craft foam shapes.

Option 3: Jesus Loves Children

Stuff you need: Jesus Loves Children Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about today's story as the children color.

Option 4: Jesus Loves Us

Stuff you need: Jesus Loves Us Activity Sheet, heart die cuts in a variety of sizes and colors, glue or glue sticks, heart stickers

Preparation: If you can't find premade heart die cuts, cut out your own heart shapes. Check to see if your church or a friend who scrapbooks has a die-cut machine before you cut them all with scissors.

Give each child an activity sheet, glue, and a variety of heart die cuts and stickers. Encourage them to use their imaginations as they create artwork for a loved one.

Option 5: Red Light/Green Light

Play "Red Light/Green Light" again, but with silly rules. For example, have children hop on one foot, crawl, or take giant steps or baby steps to get to you.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 25*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that Jesus loved the little children. Show your parents the back and tell them that Jesus loves you, too!"** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

JESUS' SACRIFICE

Bible Basis: Matthew 26:26–28, 33–35; 27:46–49; Luke 22:51, 55–62; 23:32–41; John 13:21–24, 25–30; 14:1–15; 18:4–10; 19:30

Bible Verse: “[Jesus said,] ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust in me also.’”
—John 14:1, NIV

Bible Point: Jesus died for our sins so we can live with him in heaven someday. I accept his love.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 26: “Jesus’ Sacrifice”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: a rose with thorns

Allow children to sit on the floor in front of you. Show them a rose. Say, “**What makes this rose beautiful?**” Let children answer. When they answer, give them a rose petal. Give one petal to each child.

Ask:

- **Why do people like roses?** (*They are pretty; they smell good.*)
- **Why wouldn’t someone like roses?** (*They are prickly; they make people sneeze.*)

Say, “Roses are pretty and soft, and they smell nice. Many people like roses. But roses also have thorns that can prick you. So some people don’t like roses. Sometimes people compare Jesus to a rose. He was very loving and kind. He did miracles, and he was a great teacher. But some people did not like Jesus. They didn’t like some of the things he said. They thought he was trying to take over as the ruler. Today’s Bible story is about some of those people.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: whiteboard, chalkboard, or butcher paper, marker

First, read aloud Chapter 26, “Jesus’ Sacrifice,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Say, “Jesus came to Earth to help people. He wanted everyone to know about God’s love. Near the end of Jesus’ life, he had a special dinner with his disciples.”

Have children sit in a circle and pretend to give them food to eat. Ask the whole group to freeze like they are statues.

Say, **"Jesus had a meal with his followers. He told them that some mean people were going to arrest him. He gave them bread and wine."** Have children pretend to eat the bread and wine.

Say, **"Then Jesus and his disciples went to a garden to pray."** Have children stand up and lead them in a circle around the room as if you are all walking to the garden. Return to your storytelling area and have the children sit down again.

Say, **"Here we are at the garden. It is very late and dark outside. Jesus prayed very hard to God. While Jesus prayed, it got even later. His disciples fell asleep."** Have children pretend to fall asleep.

Say, **"Some people did not like Jesus. They were worried he was trying to become king. They were worried Jesus was trying to take over their country. But he wasn't doing that. He was telling people about God's love. Well, on this particular night, these mean people went to arrest Jesus for trying to become king. Roman soldiers came to the garden to arrest Jesus. The disciples woke up and tried to defend Jesus."** Have the children act like they are waking up.

Say, **"But Jesus went with the soldiers."** Have children sit down to listen to the end of the story.

Say, **"The disciples loved Jesus, but they were scared for their own lives. One disciple, Peter, even told people he didn't know Jesus. That night, the Romans decided that Jesus had to die. They hung him on a cross."** Draw a large cross on your whiteboard. **"Two other men also died on crosses that day."** Draw a smaller cross on each side of your main cross.

One of the men on the cross next to Jesus said, "If you are God, save yourself and us."

The other thief said, "Leave him alone. He's done nothing wrong. Jesus, you are God. Please remember me when you go into your kingdom."

"I will," Jesus said.

Then Jesus said, "It is finished." He had done what he needed to do, so he died. Jesus died for our sins so we can be with him forever.

John 3:16 says, "God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life" (NIV). This verse means that God sent Jesus to Earth for a very special reason. When Jesus died, he paid for our sins. But, Jesus' death is not the end of the story! You need to come back next week to hear the end of the story!

After the Bible story, ask:

- **What did Jesus and his disciples do at the beginning of the story?** (*had a special dinner*)
- **Then where did they go?** (*to a garden*)
- **What did Jesus do at the garden?** (*pray*)
- **What did the disciples do?** (*sleep*)

- **What did the Roman soldiers do?** (*arrest Jesus*)
- **What did the Romans decide they had to do with Jesus?** (*hung Jesus on a cross to die*)
- **Is that the end of the story?** (*No, we will hear the end next week.*)

Say, “**Make sure you come back next week. We will hear the rest of the story, and it is a good one! It has a very, very happy ending! Jesus died for our sins so we can live with him in heaven someday. I can accept his love.**” Have children repeat the Bible Point with you.

Pray with your children that they will understand how much God loves them and wants to be with them in heaven someday.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: JOHN 3:16

Teach children the following motions to help them memorize the first half of John 3:16. Practice until they can do it by themselves.

God (*Point up.*)

Loved the world so much (*Hug yourself.*)

That he gave (*Act like you are giving someone a present.*)

His one and only Son. (*Hold up one finger.*)

Close by saying, “**What Jesus did was not easy. He died for our sins so we can live with him in heaven someday.**”

OPTION 2: CROSS DOORKNOB HANGERS

Stuff you need: craft foam doorknob hangers, wooden craft sticks, glue, markers, shirt boxes or edged cookie sheets or baking pans, glitter in sprinkle containers

Write “John 3:16” across the bottom of each doorknob hanger. Have children glue the wooden craft sticks in the shape of a cross on their doorknob hanger. Reposition the sticks if necessary. Lay the hangers down inside a box or pan, next to each other. Squirt a strip of glue across each wooden craft stick and allow the child to sprinkle glitter onto the glue. Shake off excess and set out to dry.

OPTION 3: JESUS’ SACRIFICE

Stuff you need: Jesus’ Sacrifice Matching Game Activity Sheet, white card stock, scissors, crayons

Preparation: Photocopy the activity sheet onto white card stock.

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have the children color the cards. As they color, tell them that the bread and wine can remind them that Jesus and his disciples had bread and wine at their special

dinner. Tell them that the moon and praying hands can remind them that it was night in the garden when Jesus prayed. Then help them cut out the cards, lay them out on the table, and turn them over. Have them flip over two at a time to find the matching objects. When they find a match, they put the cards aside and continue the game until all the matches are found. Allow the children to play separately, or a leader can use one set to play the game with a small group of children.

OPTIONS 4: MY SAVIOR

Stuff you need: My Savior Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Read the words that are on the page together while the children color the page.

OPTION 5: PRAYING IN THE GARDEN

Stuff you need: sturdy plastic or Styrofoam cups, potting soil, water in watering can, annual flowering plants, address labels, large bins or plastic drop cloths

Preparation: Print address labels that say, "Jesus went to the garden to pray. I can remember to pray too!"

Have the children help you plant the flowers in the cups, using the potting soil. Do your planting over a drop cloth or large bin to minimize the mess. Allow them to lightly water their flowers. Give each child a label to stick on his or her flower cup.

Say, "**Jesus went to the garden to pray before he was arrested. What types of things are in a garden?** (plants, flowers, trees) **Let your plant remind you of Jesus praying in the garden.**"

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 26*. Say, "**The front of this card will remind you that Jesus died for our sins so we can live with him in heaven someday. Show your parents the back and tell them that God loves us very much.**" Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

JESUS HAS RISEN!

Bible Basis: Matthew 28:2–8, 16–20; Luke 24:36–49; John 21:1–6

Bible Verse: “[The angel said,] ‘He is not here! He has risen, just as he said he would.’”
—Matthew 28:6, NIV

Bible Point: God gave Jesus new life. He can give you a new life too, if you ask him.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 27: “Jesus Has Risen!”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: the book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, a blanket, Miracle Poster

Preparation: On a sheet of poster board write, “Miracle! 1. An amazing event 2. No person has the power to do 3. Only God can perform, or specifically give someone the power to perform (This is the Miracle Poster.)

Spread out a blanket or two for children to sit on and read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* aloud to the children. If you have a small group, you can sit on the floor, too. If you have a larger group, it will be easier for children to see pictures if you sit in a chair.

When you are finished say, “In this story, the caterpillar ate and ate and ate, and finally wrapped himself up in a cocoon. It looked like he was dead. But inside that cocoon, God performed a miracle. He turned that caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly! What is a miracle?”

Show and read the Miracle Poster.

Say, “In the next few weeks, we will talk about more miracles God performed. Today we are going to learn about the most amazing miracle God ever performed—even more amazing than turning a caterpillar into a butterfly.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 27, “Jesus Has Risen!” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Stuff you need: a locked door in your classroom (If you don’t have a locked door in your classroom, use a doorknob safety cover, found in the baby-proofing section of discount stores.); a brightly colored posterboard, such as yellow or orange, with clouds drawn on it

Preparation: Put the cloud poster on your locked door.

Let's pretend that on the other side of this door is heaven. Heaven is perfect. There is no sin there; everyone make good choices. Because people sin here on Earth, we are not perfect. So, if I'm not perfect, I can't go to a perfect place, can I? So the door to heaven is locked to me. *(Have a few children come up and try to open the locked door.)*

There is no way that any human being could open that door. But we have been learning all year that God loves us! He loves us very much! He wants to help us and spend time with us, and most of all, he wants us to come live with him in heaven forever. God did not want us to be locked out of heaven. But our sins are a problem. Our sin is what locks us out of heaven. So God sent his only Son, Jesus, to open heaven up. Remember, Jesus was perfect. He did not sin or do anything wrong while he was here on Earth. And even more special, Jesus decided to pay my penalty for me—to help me get into heaven with his father. And Jesus was willing to do anything he had to, to help us all.

Last week we learned that the Romans killed Jesus. His followers thought they would never see him again. They thought the door to heaven would always be locked. Jesus' body was placed in a cave, which was where they buried people. *(Refer back to the cross from last week's lesson.)*

On the third day after Jesus died, a group of Jesus' followers rolled back the stone that was in front of the grave. Jesus' body was gone.

"Where is he?" some women asked.

An angel told them, "He is not here! He has risen!" Jesus had risen from the dead, which proved that he had beaten sin and death and had paid our penalty. Jesus' death and resurrection opened the locked door to heaven. *(Open the locked door, or take off the child safety cover.)* Jesus had been dead. He had no life in him, and God raised him from the dead. That is a miracle!

If you believe that Jesus unlocked the door to heaven, pray with me.

Pray with the children:

We admit that we are sinners, and we ask for forgiveness. *(Children repeat.)*

We believe you died on the cross and rose again from the dead. *(Children repeat.)*

We ask you to be our Savior. *(Children repeat.)*

Say, "Remember, God raised Jesus from the dead and gave him a new life. Anytime, anywhere, you can ask God to forgive you and ask Jesus to be your Savior."

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: John 3:16 Review

Review the motions to John 3:16 from last week. John 3:16 is the key to the resurrection story, so it is important that children are familiar with it. The following motions will help them memorize the first half of John 3:16. Practice until they can do it by themselves.

God (*Point up.*)

Loved the world so much (*Hug yourself.*)

That he gave (*Act like you are giving someone a present.*)

His one and only Son. (*Hold up one finger.*)

Close by saying, **"What Jesus did was not easy. He died for our sins because he loves us so much and he wants to live with us forever in heaven."**

Option 2: Clothespin Butterflies

Stuff you need: wooden pinch clothespins, washable markers, spray bottle of water, coffee filters, small googly eyes, glue, chenille craft stems

Lead the children in the following craft. Smooth the pleats out of a coffee filter. Color the filter with the markers in any design. Spray the filter lightly with water so the marker runs and has a tie-dye effect. Fold the filter in strips, back and forth, as if you were making a fan. Pinch it in the middle, and slide the middle into the pinch-side of the clothespin. Spread out the coffee filter to create the butterfly's wings. Cut a 6-inch piece of chenille stem. Fold it in half and fold, roll, or spiral the ends to create the antennae. Slide the fold into the pinch-side also. Glue on the googly eyes.

Option 3: The Right Key

Stuff you need: The Right Key Activity Sheet, crayons

Hand out the activity sheets to the children. Talk to the children about opening locks and doors using a key. (It has to fit exactly, it has to be the right one, you have to hold it the right way and turn it the right way.) Have children color the lock and key.

Option 4: Jesus Is Risen!

Stuff you need: Jesus Is Risen! Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Review the story of Jesus rising from the dead. How did that wonderful event give us new life? Where will that new life be? Talk about heaven and what heaven will be like. Have the children draw and color their idea of what heaven will be like.

OPTION 5: RESURRECTION EASTER EGGS

Stuff you need: hardboiled eggs (a couple for each child to dye), tissue paper, bowls for water, paper towel

1. Tear up tissue paper into sections. Size and shape will not matter.
2. Dip paper towel into the water and wet the egg.
3. Place a piece of tissue paper on the egg.
4. Run a damp cloth over the tissue paper to smooth it down.
5. Repeat steps 2–4 until the entire egg is covered.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 27*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that God raised Jesus from the dead. Show your parents the back and tell them that God is our Savior."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Bible Basis: Acts 1:2–11; 2:1–6, 23–24, 32–33, 43–47; 8:4–8; 9:1–9, 17–19

Bible Verse: “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak in languages they had not known before. The Spirit gave them the ability to do this.” —Acts 2:4, NIV

Bible Point: God gives his people the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can live inside me.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 28: “The Holy Spirit”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: suitcase; variety of items needed to travel, such as toothpaste, toothbrush, socks, pajamas; variety of other items, such as a kitchen funnel, trash can, clock, or jump rope

Preparation: Set everything out across the front of your teaching area.

Say, “Let’s say I am going to a country far, far away. What items do I need to take with me on my trip?”

Let the children choose items for your trip and put them into your suitcase.

Say, “I am prepared to go on a trip! Thank you for your help. Today we are going to read a story about Jesus’ disciples and people from faraway countries who had traveled to Jerusalem.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: red construction paper cut into the shape of flames, chalk, wet wipes, Miracle Poster from Lesson 27

First, read aloud Chapter 28, “The Holy Spirit,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Give each child a red construction paper flame. Let them make flames on it with chalk. Collect the chalk and wipe hands before you begin telling the story. Whenever you mention flames or the Holy Spirit, have the children hold their flame above their heads.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

After Jesus rose from the dead, he talked to his followers and taught them more about God. Then a miracle happened. Jesus went out into the open. With his followers watching, Jesus started to float until he floated up into heaven and they could no longer see him! That was a miracle! What is a miracle? Who remembers from last week? (Get the Miracle Poster and review it.)

Before he ascended (*went up*) into heaven, Jesus told his followers to watch and wait. That is exactly what they did. They went to Jerusalem and waited. Lots of other people were in Jerusalem, too! People had come from different countries. Jesus' followers waited, just as Jesus asked them to do.

One day Jesus' followers were in a room praying together, and they heard a strong wind. The sound came right to where they were. Then they saw something that looked like tongues of flame. A small flame settled on each person. The followers began to speak in languages they had never spoken before. The Holy Spirit had come! The Holy Spirit caused the disciples to speak in languages they didn't know. Why was this important? Because people were in Jerusalem from lots of different countries! The disciples were able to tell those people about Jesus in their own languages.

One of the disciples, named Peter, said, "Long ago, God planned that Jesus would die at your hands. You nailed him to the cross, but God raised him from the dead. God has raised Jesus back to life. Jesus has been given a place of honor at the right hand of God. He has received the Holy Spirit from the Father."

Because the Holy Spirit gave the disciples the ability to speak other languages, 3,000 people followed Jesus that day! Now that is truly a miracle!

The Holy Spirit was Jesus' gift. From that day on, the Holy Spirit has lived inside Jesus' followers. Even today, when you ask Jesus to be your Savior, the Holy Spirit lives inside you. Many people became followers because of the Holy Spirit that day in Jerusalem. These new followers went back to their own countries and told other people about Jesus. The story of Jesus spread throughout the world.

After the Bible story, ask:

- What was Jesus' gift to his followers? (*the Holy Spirit*)
- Who was able to receive the Holy Spirit? (*all of Jesus' followers*)

Say, "God gives his people the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can live inside you, too."

Pray with your children that they receive God's gift of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Telephone Game

Have all the children sit in a circle. Whisper a secret into the ear of the child sitting next to you. Say something silly like, "**My favorite food is broccoli with chocolate sauce.**" Have that child whisper the same secret to the child next to him or her. Continue around the circle until the secret comes back to you. Laugh with your group about how the secret message has changed. Play several rounds. Do some serious messages such as, "**God sent the Holy Spirit,**" and some silly messages.

When you are done say, **"Just like we passed on our silly messages from person to person, the travelers in Jerusalem went back to their countries and passed on the message of Jesus! Fortunately, their message was clearer than our silly messages."**

Option 2: Hot Potato

Stuff you need: beanbag, music player, and music

Sit in a circle with your group. When you turn on the music, pass the beanbag around the group. Randomly stop the music. When the music stops, whoever has the beanbag tells one thing they've learned this year in your class. If the child is new to the class, the child can tell one thing he or she knows about God or Jesus. Start the music again and pass the beanbag. Play several rounds.

Option 3: Come, HOLY SPIRIT

Stuff you need: Come, Holy Spirit Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about the tongues of fire that appeared over the heads of the disciples when the Holy Spirit came upon them. Does the Holy Spirit show up that way today? What might happen if he did? Have children color in the picture. Have the children take the picture home to share with their families.

Option 4: Speaking Other Languages

Look on the Internet or at the library to find out how to say "hello" in several different languages.

Say, **"In today's story, we heard about how Jesus' followers spoke several different languages. I thought it would be fun to practice saying 'hello' to one another in different languages. You can say hello to your parents in a different language when they pick you up."**

Teach the children how to say "hello" in several different languages, and have them practice with one another.

Option 5: Fiery Headband

Stuff you need: red, orange, and yellow tissue paper, construction paper, stapler or tape

Preparation: Cut construction paper lengthwise into 1-inch sections.

Staple or tape ends of construction paper strips together to form circles that will fit around children's heads. You might have to staple a few sections together to make the circle large enough. Have children tear the tissue paper into small pieces and glue around the headband so the pieces look like flames.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 28*. Say, **“The front of this card will remind you that God gives his people the Holy Spirit. Show your parents the back and tell them that the Holy Spirit can live inside of you.”** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents’ Page.

GOD USES PAUL

Bible Basis: Acts 16:16–36; 1 Thessalonians 1:3–5; 3:9–13; 4:16–18; 5:16–28; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 12:12–18, 27; 13:1–7; 15:21; 16:23–24; Galatians 5:22–25; 6:18

Bible Verse: “He asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus.’” —Acts 16:30–31, NIRV

Bible Point: Jesus saves us if we believe in him. I can choose to believe.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 29: “God Uses Paul”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: Go Signs photocopied onto green card stock, Stop Signs photocopied onto red card stock, tape, wooden craft sticks, permanent marker. Templates for the signs are available with this lesson’s activity sheets.

Preparation: Cut out the Go Signs and the Stop Signs.

Give each child a Go Sign, a Stop Sign, and 2 craft sticks. Help the children tape their signs onto the craft sticks. Write their names on the craft sticks.

Say, “Today we are going to hear a story about a man named Saul. We will use our signs to help us tell the story.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 29, “God Uses Paul,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Saul did not like people who followed Jesus. He wanted to put them in jail. Should Saul GO, and keep doing what he’s doing, or should he STOP? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

One day he was going to arrest some of Jesus’ followers, when a bright light flashed in the sky and blinded him. It was Jesus! Jesus said, “Saul! Why are you against me?” Should Jesus GO and talk to Saul, or should he STOP and let Saul throw Jesus’ followers in jail? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

After that miracle, Saul believed in Jesus. A few days later, he got his sight back. He decided to change his name to Paul and travel to many places to tell people about Jesus. Should Saul GO and keep telling people about Jesus, or should he STOP? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

Paul told lots of people about Jesus. But this made some people angry. They wanted Paul and his friend Silas to go to jail! Should the people GO and put Paul and Silas in jail, or should they STOP and let them talk about Jesus? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

The people made the wrong decision. They had Paul and Silas thrown into prison. The guards took Paul's and Silas's clothes. The guards beat them and put chains on their feet. This would be a really hard thing to go through! So what do you think? Should they STOP following Jesus, because sometimes it's difficult, or should they GO follow Jesus anyway? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

Paul and Silas followed Jesus. They sang songs and prayed even while they were in jail. Suddenly an earthquake shook the prison and the prison doors flew open. Should Paul and Silas GO and run from the prison, or should they STOP and be honest with the jail guard? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

I would have wanted to GO! But they didn't. They knew the jail guard would be killed if he lost any prisoners. So they stayed in jail. Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself. We are all here." The jail guard hurried to Paul and Silas. They told him about Jesus, and he believed. The jail guard took them to his home and family, and his whole family believed in Jesus.

Paul and Silas were freed from jail. Do you think they should stay safe and STOP telling people about Jesus, or do you think they should GO and tell people about Jesus, even though they might get into trouble? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

Paul and Silas decided to GO. They kept traveling around, telling people about Jesus. Paul wrote lots of letters to churches he had visited, encouraging them to know and love Jesus. His letters are now part of the Bible!

So, what did we learn from Paul and Silas? Should we STOP believing in Jesus, or should we GO and believe in Jesus and tell other people about him? Hold up the sign you think is correct.

After the Bible story, ask:

- What did Saul want to do to people who followed Jesus? (*put them in jail*)
- What miracle happened to him one day? (*A bright light flashed and blinded him; Jesus talked to him.*)
- What new name did he choose? (*Paul*)
- Whom did he travel with? (*Silas*)
- What happened to Paul and Silas? (*They were thrown in prison.*)
- What did they do in prison? (*They sang praises to God; they prayed.*)
- What did God send? (*an earthquake*)
- After the earthquake, who believed in Jesus? (*the jail guard*)
- Did Paul and Silas stop telling people about Jesus? (*no*)

Say, **"God helped Paul and Silas because they believed in him. You can believe in Jesus, too! You can tell others about him, just like Paul and Silas did."**

Pray with your children that they will be faithful to tell other people about Jesus' love.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: SAUL

Stuff you need: Bible-time costumes and props, or towels, bathrobes, and ropes (to use as belts)

Have children dress in Bible-time costumes and act out Saul's story. Let them all pretend to be traveling on a donkey. When you flip the lights on and off quickly (so no one becomes scared), have them fall to the ground. Then say, **"Saul, why are you hurting me?"** They can answer, "Lord, who are you?" Say, **"I am Jesus."** Have the children sit down and close their eyes. You can touch them one by one and say, **"See, and be filled with the Holy Spirit."** Explain how Paul no longer hurt Jesus' followers, because now he was a follower.

OPTION 2: EARTHQUAKE DANCE

Stuff you need: CD player, children's praise songs

Say, **"The earthquake woke up the jailer when he was sleeping. When I play the music, everyone dance. When I randomly stop the music, everyone stop, drop to the floor, and pretend to be asleep like the jailer. When I start the music again, pretend it's an earthquake waking you up! Jump up and start dancing!"**

Play several rounds of this game.

OPTION 3: MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

Stuff you need: Make the Right Choice Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about making right choices. How do you decide when to STOP and when to GO? Talk about what is going on in each picture. Put an X through the picture that shows a bad choice. Color the pictures that show good choices. (Scribblers will color the whole sheet, which is fine.)

OPTION 4: PAUL AND SILAS

Stuff you need: Paul and Silas Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have the children color the picture of Paul and Silas.

OPTION 5: GOD LOVES YOU GIFT

Stuff you need: God Loves You Hearts Activity Sheet, small terra-cotta plant pots, stickers, markers, stick-on foam shapes, floral foam cut to fit the pots, wooden craft sticks, glue

Preparation: Photocopy and cut out the God Loves You Hearts

Give each child a pot and a variety of stickers, markers, and stick-on foam shapes to decorate the pot. When they are done, put the floral foam into the pot. Put a dot of glue on each craft stick and let the children stick a God Loves You heart to the glue. Have them slide their sticks into the craft foam.

Say, **"Just like Paul and Silas, we can tell people how much God loves them. The heart on your craft says, 'God loves you.' Give this gift to someone to tell them how much God loves them."**

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 29*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that Jesus helped Paul and Silas. Show your parents the back and tell them that you can choose to believe in Jesus."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

GOD'S SERVANT

Bible Basis: Acts 20:22–28, 36–38; 22:22–29; 27:1, 9–41; 28:1–10

Bible Verse: “I want to complete the work the Lord Jesus has given me. He wants me to give witness to others about the good news of God’s grace.” —Acts 20:24, NIV

Bible Point: Paul served God with his whole life. God wants me to serve him, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 30: “God’s Servant”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Create the sound of a rainstorm in your classroom. Have the adult volunteers snap—this sounds like raindrops. Then, as they continue, have half the children beat quickly on their laps—this sounds like heavy rain. As they continue, have a quarter of the children stomp their feet rapidly—this sounds like thunder. As they continue, have a quarter of the children make a wooshing, whistling noise—this sounds like wind. Then, have the whistlers stop. A few seconds later have the stomping stop. A few seconds later have the children patting their laps stop. Finally, after a few seconds, have the adults quit snapping.

Say, “**Wow! Wasn’t that amazing? It sounded like we had a rainstorm right here in our classroom. God made the rain. He controls the weather. Today we’re going to talk about Paul again. Who remembers Paul from last week? What did he do?** *(named Saul; wanted to put Jesus’ followers in jail, blinded, believed in Jesus, told people about Jesus, put in jail, kept telling people about Jesus)* **Let’s read a story about Paul’s amazing trip.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 30, “God’s Servant,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Today’s story is about Paul, a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He lived a life full of adventure. As I tell this story, let’s act it out together.

This adventure, like all good adventures, started with a prayer. *(Have children bow their heads and fold their hands as if praying.)* **Paul prayed, and God told him to go to Jerusalem. People in Jerusalem wanted to kill Paul. His friends didn’t want him to go to Jerusalem.** *(Have children tell each other, “Don’t go. Don’t go.”)* **Paul knew God was in charge. Paul went to Jerusalem.**

In Jerusalem, Paul told people about Jesus. *(Have children ask each other, “Do you know Jesus?”)* **Mean people did not like Paul.** *(Have children put a fist in the air and yell, “Go away!”)* **Paul was**

taken to jail. Mean people could not hurt him, though. He was a Roman citizen. So they sent him to Rome to be punished. *(Have children point as if to tell Paul the way to Rome.)*

Paul was put on a ship. Paul told the leader of the ship that the trip would be dangerous. The captain did not listen to him. He sailed for Rome. *(Have children sway as if they are on a boat.)* Before long, a storm came. *(Have children stomp their feet to sound like thunder.)* The storm lasted a long time. *(Have children clap to sound like rain.)* The sailors threw all their things overboard. On the third day, they could not see the sun or stars.

Paul prayed. *(Have children bow their heads and fold their hands as if praying.)* He told everyone that the ship would be destroyed. He told them that not a single person would die. He told the leader to find a beach. The leader listened to Paul. *(Have children cheer.)*

After fourteen days, the sailors found a beach, but they could not land. Some tried to leave the boat. Paul stopped them. *(Have children hold up one hand and say, "Stop!")* Paul told the people to eat. He thanked God for their bread and made sure everyone ate. *(Have children pretend to eat.)* This made the people on the ship feel better.

The next day, they all reached the shore of an island safely. *(Have children cheer.)* The people from the island built a fire to keep the people warm. Just when things looked good, a snake bit Paul's hand. It was poisonous. Everyone thought he would die, but he didn't. He didn't even get sick. God saved Paul from the snake's poison.

While Paul waited for a new ship, he told people about Jesus. *(Have children ask each other, "Do you know Jesus?")* God let Paul heal many sick people. After three months, another ship came, and it took Paul to Rome.

In Rome, Paul told people about Jesus. *(Have children ask each other, "Do you know Jesus?")* He wrote many letters to friends. Paul died in Rome, but because of him many people learned about Jesus. Paul served God with his whole life.

After the Bible story, ask:

- **What did Paul do no matter where he was?** *(He told people about Jesus.)*
- **What did God tell Paul when Paul's ship was caught in a storm?** *(God told Paul that the ship would be destroyed but not a single person would be hurt.)*

Say, **"Paul served God with his whole life. God wants me to serve him, too."** Have children repeat the Bible Point with you.

Say, **"Let's ask God how he wants us to serve him today."**

Pray with your children, asking God to keep you all close to him and to show you how he wants you to serve him today.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: PAUL'S SHIP

Stuff you need: paper plates (without a plastic coating), black washable markers, tape, straws, construction paper triangles

Lead the children in the following activity. Fold the paper plate in half. Stand it on the rounded edges, with the flat edge on top. This is your rocking ship. Draw three small circles on the middle of each side of the plate to be portholes. Tape the triangle onto the straw; this is your mast and sail. Tape the mast onto one side of the boat. Rock the ship to show what it was like for Paul and the other passengers on his ship during the terrible storm.

OPTION 2: SERVING OTHERS

Stuff you need: whole sheets of construction paper (folded in half), washable markers, glitter, glue, stickers, and stick-on gems and foam shapes

Say, **"Paul told others about Jesus. He helped and served the people. Today we are going to serve others, too."**

Have the class make cards for children who are in the hospital or for elderly shut-ins from your church. You can deliver them later in the week. Ask children to draw pictures and designs that will help people feel better. You can collect the cards, but if a child has a sick friend or family member in mind, let the child take their card to give to that person.

OPTION 3: USING OUR BODIES TO SERVE JESUS

Sing and do the motions to the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes." Do the motions faster and faster each round until everyone is giggling. (If you don't know it, you can find it online.)

Say, **"God gave us our bodies. We can use them to serve God and others."**

Ask:

- **How can we use our heads?** *(use our ears to listen to others, use our minds to think of ways to help)*
- **How can we use our shoulders?** *(let someone who is tired lean on our shoulders; let someone who is sad cry on our shoulders)*
- **How can we use our knees?** *(jump up to help our mom or our teacher)*
- **How can we use our toes?** *(run to the rescue when someone is hurt)*

OPTION 4: PAUL in a STORM

Stuff you need: Paul in a Storm Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have them color the picture of Paul.

OPTION 5: PAPER CHAIN SNAKE

Stuff you need: construction paper cut into strips (about 2 inches wide and 8 inches long), plastic eyes or marker to draw eyes, glue (to attach plastic eyes), tape

Say, **"Just when Paul thought everyone was safe after the shipwreck, he was bitten by a snake! We are going to make our own snakes to help us remember the story of Paul."**

Let children choose about 8 colored strips each. (They can take more and make their snake longer if there is time.) Take a strip of paper and bring the two ends together to form a ring. Tape them together. Next, slide the next strip of paper through the ring. Tape the ends together to form a second ring. Repeat the process until you have used all 8 strips. On the first ring, either glue eyes or draw them with a marker.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 30*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that Paul served God with his whole life. Show your parents the back and tell them that God wants you to serve him, too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

JESUS' RETURN

Bible Basis: Revelation 1:1–20; 4:1–11; 5:13–14; 19:11–15; 21:10–18, 21–27; 22:7–14, 16–21

Bible Verse: “Look! He is coming with the clouds. Every eye will see him.” —Revelation 1:7, NIV

Bible Point: Jesus is coming again. Because you are a child of Jesus, you will be with Jesus forever in heaven!

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 31: “Jesus’ Return”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: dress-up clothes and shoes, costume jewelry, toy crowns and tiaras

Help children to dress up like princes and princesses. Allow them to try different costumes. When everyone is dressed like royalty, say, “When Jesus died and rose from the dead, he made us members of his family. He is the King, so we are the children of the King. The children of a king are princes and princesses!”

Say, “Jesus’ kingdom is different from our countries here on Earth. Today’s Bible story gives us a peek into Jesus’ kingdom.”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 31, “Jesus’ Return,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

You can let the children stay in their costumes for story time if you’d like.

A man named John was one of Jesus’ disciples. He was also one of Jesus’ best friends. After Jesus died and rose from the dead, John became one of the leaders of the church. John told many people about Jesus. When he was an old man, bad people captured him. They made him live on an island all alone. But what the bad men meant as punishment, God used for good! While he was there, God gave him many visions. Visions are like dreams, but you are awake when you have them.

John was able to see many things about heaven. He saw amazing castles and a lot of gold and silver and other beautiful things. The castles were bigger and stronger than any he had seen on Earth. Jesus sat on the throne, and people sang his praises all the time.

Let’s say one of the verses to one of the songs John heard them sing. (*Have children repeat each line. Repeat the verse a few times.*)

Holy
holy
holy
is the Lord God
who rules
over all.
He was
and he is,
and he will come.

Everyone in heaven worshiped God. He is powerful and mighty. John saw Jesus in heaven, too. Jesus was on a huge white horse, and Jesus wore many crowns. His eyes blazed like fire. He was ready to fight for what was good and true and fair. He had died for our sins, and he was called the Word of God.

Behind him was a large army. They followed him and did exactly what he said. They all rode on white horses and were dressed in white. Jesus' army is fearful, but not to us. They are only after bad guys. They fight for you and me. Isn't it wonderful to know that Jesus is fighting for us?

John told us many things about Jesus. One thing he knew: Jesus is coming again, and his children will live in his kingdom forever.

After the Bible story, ask:

- **Who was John?** (*John was one of Jesus' followers and friends.*)
- **What did John say Jesus was doing in heaven?** (*Jesus was leading a strong army and fighting for what was fair.*)

Say, "Someday Jesus will come again to Earth to get his followers. I can live in his kingdom with him forever."

Pray with your children.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: WHAT IS HEAVEN LIKE?

Stuff you need: ball or beanbag

Have children sit on the floor.

Say, "People who are followers of Jesus really like to think about how wonderful heaven will be. They like to think about what they will do, or have, or even eat when they get to heaven. When

I throw you the ball, you tell me one thing you would like to do in heaven, have in heaven, or even eat in heaven. Then throw the ball back to me."

Continue until everyone has had a turn.

Say, **"We don't know exactly what heaven will be like, but we know it is wonderful. It is not scary—it is happy! The most important thing about heaven is that we will be there with Jesus."**

Option 2: Jesus' Army

Say, **"John saw Jesus leading an army. Let's pretend we are part of that army."**

Show children how to pretend they are on a horse and gallop slowly beside you. Gallop as a group around the classroom, saying things like, "Let's follow Jesus," and "Jesus is our leader," until children start saying those things also.

When children have returned to their seats say, **"Jesus is the leader of a large heavenly army. You can be one of his children and live with him forever in heaven."**

Option 3: Thumbprint Flowers

Stuff you need: plain, unlined 4 x 6-inch index cards, stamp pads with washable ink in a variety of colors, wet wipes, green markers

Preparation: Make an example card so the children can see how the thumbprints turn out to be flowers.

Say, **"Our country is so beautiful—it has beautiful rivers, streams, prairies, and mountains. But no matter how beautiful nature is here on Earth, heaven will be even more beautiful. We are going to make thumbprint flowers to remind us of how beautiful nature will be in heaven."**

Give each child an index card. Help each child press their thumb into a stamp pad in the color of their choosing. Help them stamp three or four circles made of thumbprints on their cards. These are the flowers. Draw a dot in the center of the flower; then draw a green line for the flower stem. Wipe ink off thumbs with wet wipes.

Option 4: Heavenly Palaces

Stuff you need: Heavenly Palaces Activity Sheet, crayons

Give each child an activity sheet and crayons. Remind them that in heaven the palaces are bigger and better than anything we could imagine. Have them color the picture.

Option 5: "Jesus is Coming" Clock

Stuff you need: paper plates, construction paper, glue, washable markers, metal fastener

Preparation: Cut circles out of the construction paper. Tracing around a CD works well. Using a black marker, write the clock numbers on the circle. To make this easier, write 12, 3, 6, and 9 first, and then fill in the remaining numbers. Cut small strips that will be the clock hands.

Lead the children in the following craft. Glue the numbered circle onto the paper plate. Have an adult poke a pencil through the center of each plate. Poke the metal fastener through the clock hands; then slide it through the hole in the plate and bend flat. As the children play with their clocks, tell them that ever since Jesus went up into heaven, his followers have been waiting for him to return to Earth.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 31*. Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that Jesus is coming again. Show your parents the back and tell them that you can live in his kingdom forever."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.