JESUS DECLARES HE IS GOD



## I AM: PART 1 MONTHLY PREPARATION GUIDE

#### **UNIT 3 - ELEMENTARY**

This month's focus is on the "I Am" sayings of Jesus. By stating "I Am...," just as God did in the Old Testament, Jesus established His deity, His oneness with God. We chose these passages to give the kids a deeper understanding of who Jesus is and why God sent Him. The verse the class will be memorizing is found in Exodus 3:14 (ICB)— "Then God said to Moses, 'IAM WHO I AM. When you go to the people of Israel, tell them, "I AM sent me to you."" Remind the kids that even though Jesus is God (which means He's the creator of the universe, the only Way we get to Heaven, and so much more), He is also our best friend and the Shepherd that protects us.

#### WEEK 1

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (one per class), White Balloons (20 per class), Sheep Faces Activity Page (20 faces per class), Masking or Painter's Tape, Green Blanket (1 per class), Cotton Balls (about 20 per class), Wolf Activity Page (about 6 per class), Jesus Activity Page (1 per class), Plain Shepherd Activity Page (1 per child), Scissors, Glue Sticks, Markers or Crayons

#### WEEK 2

**LESSON MATERIALS:** Puzzle Piece (1 per class), Small Bean Bags (4 per class), Box (1 per class), Masking Tape, *I Am the Door* Activity Page (1 per child), Popsicle Sticks (6 per child), Glue Sticks, Markers or Crayons

#### WEEK 3

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), "Jesus Is" Riddles Activity Page (1 per pair), Braille Code Sheet Activity Page (1 per pair), Slice of Bread (1 per class), Jesus Activity Page (1 per class), Bread of Life Booklet Activity Pages 1-4 (1 set per child), Scissors, Stapler, Markers or Crayons

#### WEEK 4

**LESSON MATERIALS:** Puzzle Piece (1 per class), *The Way, The Truth, and The Life Pathway* Activity Page (1 per child), *I Am* Activity Page (1 per child), Pencils, Markers or Crayons

# IAM: PART 1 UNIT 3 - JESUS DECLARES HE IS GOD

WRITER - TIFFANY CRISP
MANAGING EDITOR - KRISTI CAIN
EDITOR (PRE-K) - JENNIFER MCGHEE
COPY EDITOR - TIFFANY TRAINOR
DESIGNER - EMMALEE BELL



## I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

#### **BIBLE PASSAGE**

John 10:11-15, 18 (ICB)

#### **BIG IDEA**

God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd.

#### **FOCUS VERSE**

"Then God said to Moses, 'IAM WHO I AM. When you go to the people of Israel, tell them, "I AM sent me to you."" Exodus 3:14 (ICB)

#### **LESSON MATERIALS**

| Puzzle Piece | White Balloons | Sheep Faces Activity Page | Masking or Painter's Tape | Green Blanket | Cotton Balls | Wolf Activity Page | Jesus Activity Page | Plain Shepherd Activity Page | Good Shepherd Activity Page | Sheep Activity Page | Scissors | Glue Sticks | Markers or Crayons |

#### **GREET** — 15 MINUTES

Connection guestions to ask as the children arrive:

- Where do you go when you want to feel calm and peaceful?
- Name a job you do not want to do when you grow up.

#### **WORSHIP** - 10 MINUTES

A great song to use throughout this unit is "I Am" by Eddie James (found on YouTube). You can play it as the kids enter the classroom each week or during your worship segment. You'll be surprised how many "I Am" statements the kids will be singing throughout the week on their own.

People worship in so many different ways, and the Bible has a lot to say about how we worship. Before you sing, read Colossians 3:16 (ICB) aloud to the children. It says, "Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God." Let's show our kids what it means to sing to the Lord with thankfulness.



IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN WHO DISTRACT OTHERS DURING WORSHIP, MIX THE GROUP UP IN A WAY THAT SEEMS LIGHTHEARTED. FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE ALL THE KIDS WITH WINTER BIRTHDAYS STAND ON ONE SIDE OF THE ROOM, THE CHILDREN WITH SPRING BIRTHDAYS SIT IN ANOTHER SECTION, ETC. FIND A REASON TO MOVE KIDS AROUND WITHOUT MAKING IT FEEL DISCIPLINARY.

#### **PRAY** – 5 MINUTES

Start your lesson with prayer. Let it be the thing that sets the tone for the rest of your time together.

**SAMPLE PRAYER:** "God, help us learn today. Your Word says that You gave Your Holy Spirit to us to reveal Your truth to us [John 16:13]. So, reveal something new about Yourself. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Your Son, Amen."



USE THE SAMPLE PRAYER AS A TEACHING TOOL. IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASS WHO ARE NOT COMFORTABLE PRAYING ALOUD, ASK IF THEY ARE WILLING TO READ THE PREWRITTEN PRAYER INSTEAD.

#### **REVIEW** — 5 MINUTES **MATERIALS:** | Puzzle Piece |

**BACKGROUND:** Say, "In the past couple of months, we have been learning about Jesus and His ministry. First, we talked about Jesus' upside-down teachings from the Sermon on the Mount, and then we discussed four of Jesus' big miracles! This month, we will continue to learn about Jesus, but we will be talking about His big and important I Am statements. Jesus made eight 'I AM' statements in the Bible, and each one teaches us something important about who He is.

"When Jesus said, 'I Am,' He was claiming to be God [Exodus 3:14]! This made a lot of people VERY angry, but Jesus has something to teach us about Himself with His big 'I Am' statements. Are you ready to hear our first big 'I Am' statement? Me too!" Take a moment to place this week's puzzle piece on the wall before transitioning to the game.

TRANSITION: Say, "Who knows what time it is? [Wait for responses.] Right! It is game time!"

#### **ENGAGE** – 15 MINUTES

**MATERIALS:** | White Balloons (20 per class) | *Sheep Faces* Activity Page (20 faces per class) | Masking or Painter's Tape |

Say, "Today, we are going to play a new game called *Protect the Sheep*. Sheep, when not in their pen, can get hurt or eaten by other animals. To stay safe, they need to remain in the sheep pen! Let's play!"



**GAME GOAL:** To protect the sheep (inflated white balloons) from thieves by getting them all into the sheep pen.

#### **HOW TO PLAY:**

- Before beginning the game, use the tape to outline a sheep pen (square) on the floor of your activity area. Then, spread the balloons or "sheep" around the room. (None of the sheep should start in the sheep pen.)
- Next, choose one person to be the "thief" who steals the sheep from the pen and moves them around the room.
- Everyone else will be "shepherds" who try to protect the "sheep" by putting them into the sheep

pen one at a time.

- When you say, "go," the thief should start moving sheep away from the sheep pen while everyone else puts the sheep in the sheep pen.
- Note: while the thief is allowed to take multiple sheep from the pen, the shepherds can only move one at a time.
- Switch roles and continue playing for as long as time allows.

**CHALLENGE:** For a larger group, you may need to designate more than one thief.

**TRANSITION:** Say, "Great job playing *Protect the Sheep*! Do you think you did a good job of protecting the sheep by putting them in the sheep pen? Well, there is a reason we took turns being shepherds, and you are about to find out what that reason is right now!"

#### **LEARN** — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Green Blanket (1 per class) | Cotton Balls (about 20 per class) | Wolf Activity Page (about 6 per class) | Jesus Activity Page (1 per class) | Plain Shepherd Activity Page (1 per class) |



USE THE MATERIALS FROM THE MATERIALS LIST TO MODEL THE STORY. THE GREEN BLANKET REPRESENTS THE GRASS AND THE COTTON BALLS ARE THE SHEEP. CUT OUT THE IMAGES FROM THE ACTIIVTY PAGES AND USE THEM TO SHOW HOW JESUS PROTECTS THE SHEEP (US) FROM THE WOLF WHILE THE HIRED SHEPHERD RUNS AWAY.

Say, "In this story, Jesus made a huge claim—a claim that made many people angry! Jesus used the phrase 'I AM' to tell His listeners that He is God. The Jews knew what Jesus was saying because as far back as Moses [thousands of years earlier], God used this same phrase, 'I AM', to describe Himself. [See Exodus 3:14.] Many people, even the religious Jews, did not believe that Jesus was God's Son and thought that He was trying to destroy their faith. Those Jews hated Jesus for claiming to be God. The 'I AM' statement [or sentence] we will read today compares Jesus to a shepherd. Shepherds were common in Jesus' day, so by using examples like this, the Lord made it easier for people to understand Him. Someone tell me what a shepherd's job is? [Wait for responses.] Right! Shepherds protect sheep from danger, just like our game showed us! Let's read Jesus' first 'I AM' statement." Read John 10:11-15, 18 (ICB).

- 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. 12 The worker who is paid to keep the sheep is different from the shepherd who owns them. So when the worker sees a wolf coming, he runs away and leaves the sheep alone. Then the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. 13 The man runs away because he is only a paid worker. He does not really care for the sheep.
- <sup>14</sup> "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me, <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I give my life for the sheep.
- <sup>18</sup> No one takes it away from me. I give my own life freely. I have the right to give my life, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father commanded me to do."

Say, "Jesus didn't just say that He was a shepherd, He said He is THE Good Shepherd. Did you know that **God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd**?"

Ask, "What makes Jesus better than a normal shepherd? [Wait for responses.] Normal shepherds, who are paid to watch sheep, run away when they see danger coming, but Jesus doesn't move or run away from the wolf. Instead, Jesus sacrifices His life to protect His sheep from the wolf. In this story, Jesus tells His people that they are the sheep, and He is the Good Shepherd. When Jesus said this, He knew He was going to die in our place to save us. **God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd** because He loves us. Jesus is no ordinary shepherd. He is the perfect Good Shepherd."



WITH THIS "I AM" STATEMENT, JESUS PREPARES HIS PEOPLE FOR HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. REMIND THE KIDS THAT JESUS WILLINGLY LAID HIS LIFE DOWN FOR US WHEN HE WAS CRUCIFIED FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS. HE DIED SO WE COULD LIVE WITH HIM FOREVER.

TRANSITION: Say, "Do you see why God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd?"

#### **DISCUSS** – 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's see what you remember about today's story."

1. What does today's lesson teach us about why God sent Jesus?

Response: God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd.

2. Why did Jesus' 'I AM' statement make some Jewish people angry?

Response: By saying, "I AM," Jesus was claiming to be God. This sounded blasphemous (or the worst kind of insult to God) to many Jews. But, Jesus IS God, so His statement is right.

3. How do you think Jesus is like a Good Shepherd?

Response: Answers will vary.

4. How is Jesus, the Good Shepherd, better than an ordinary shepherd?

Response: Answers will vary; however, be sure to mention that the hired shepherd in this passage protected himself first and did not lay his life down for his sheep.

- 5. What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "I know my sheep, and my sheep know me"?

  Response: Answers will vary. However, use this moment to discuss how the Holy Spirit is present in every believer's life. As we grow in relationship with Christ, we learn to hear His voice through the power of the Spirit.
- **6. Why does the ordinary shepherd run away from the sheep when danger comes?** Response: The ordinary shepherd loves himself more than the sheep.
- 7. What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "I have the right to give my life, and I have the right to give it back"?

Response: Jesus is claiming to have power over life and death. This statement foreshadows His death and resurrection.

8. What do we learn about Jesus in this teaching?

Response: **God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd**, Jesus is the Good Shepherd, Jesus protects us with His life, Jesus loves us more than we could ever imagine, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job with those questions! Remember, God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd,

who lays His life down for His people."

#### **RESPOND** — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Good Shepherd Activity Page (1 per child) | Sheep Activity Page (1 per child) | Scissors | Glue Sticks | Markers or Crayons |

Say, "For today's activity, we will create a picture to help us remember that Jesus loves us so much that He will do anything to protect us even if it means laying down His own life."

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Give each child a *Good Shepherd* Activity Page, a *Sheep* Activity Page, scissors, a glue stick, and markers or crayons.
- Instruct the children to color their *Good Shepherd* and *Sheep* Activity Pages.
- Then, cut out the Shepherd from the *Good Shepherd* Activity Page, and glue it in the middle of the *Sheep* Activity Page to "protect the sheep."



**TRANSITION:** Say, "Great job! Remember, **God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd** because He loves us."

#### **MEMORIZE** – 5 MINUTES

Say, "We have an exciting new verse to memorize this month. Do you remember when I said that in the Old Testament, long before Jesus was born, God used the phrase 'I AM' to describe Himself? Well, this verse reminds us that Jesus is God, and God sent Jesus to earth as Himself. I'll say the verse, and then you can repeat it after me."

"Then God [point to heaven] said to Moses [cup hands around your mouth], 
'I AM WHO I AM [stand straight with your arms by your sides].' When you go to the people of israel [point faraway], tell them, [cup hands around your mouth], "I AM sent me [point to heaven] to you [point to the class]."

Exodus 3:14 (ICB) (hold out hands like a book)

**CHALLENGE:** Talk about what the verse means. Here are questions to get you started:

- 1. Why do you think God calls Himself "I AM"?
- 2. What do you think Moses thought when God spoke these words to him?
- 3. What can we learn about God from this verse?

#### **REFLECT** — 5 MINUTES

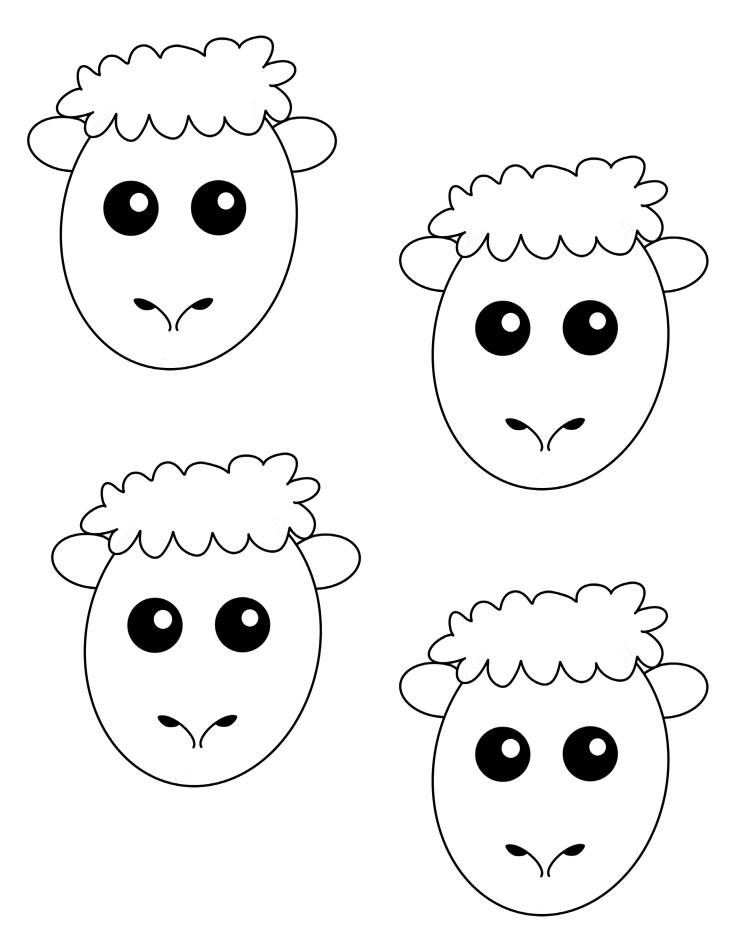
Say, "God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd. Jesus loves us so much that He was happy to lay down His life so we could be free from sin and live with Him forever. Let's thank God for sending Jesus to be our Good Shepherd." Encourage the children to take turns stating aloud how they are thankful for Jesus, our Good Shepherd.

**SAMPLE PRAYER:** "God, thank You for sending us Jesus, Your Son. We are grateful that Jesus knows us and that we, His sheep, can know Him too. Help us understand Your great love a little more each day. In Christ's name, Amen."

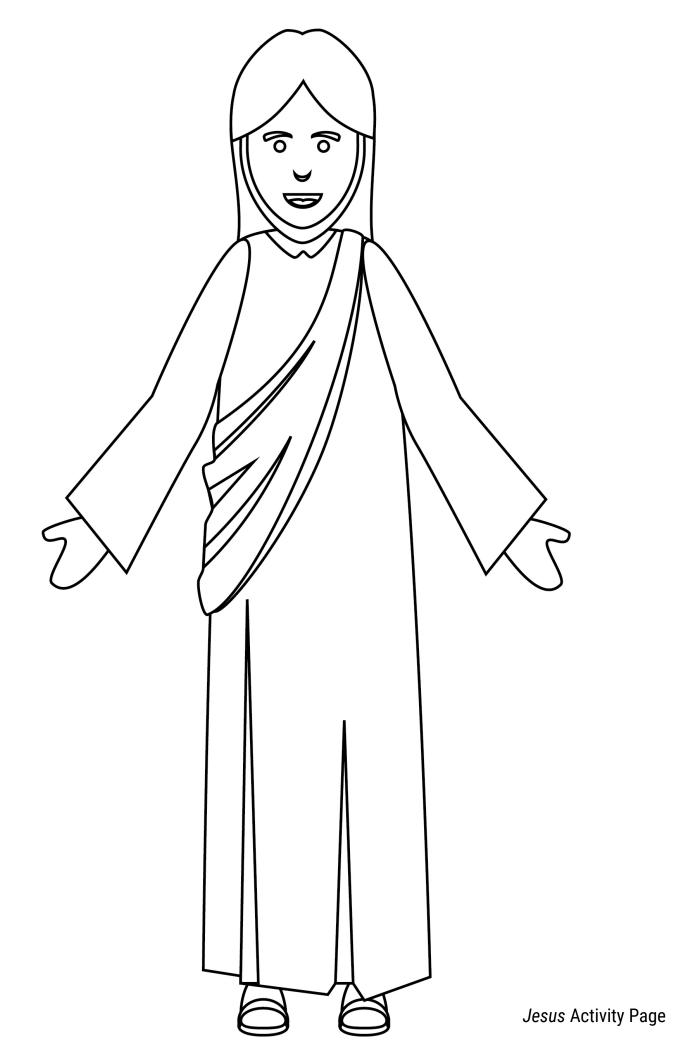
#### **RELEASE** — 5 MINUTES

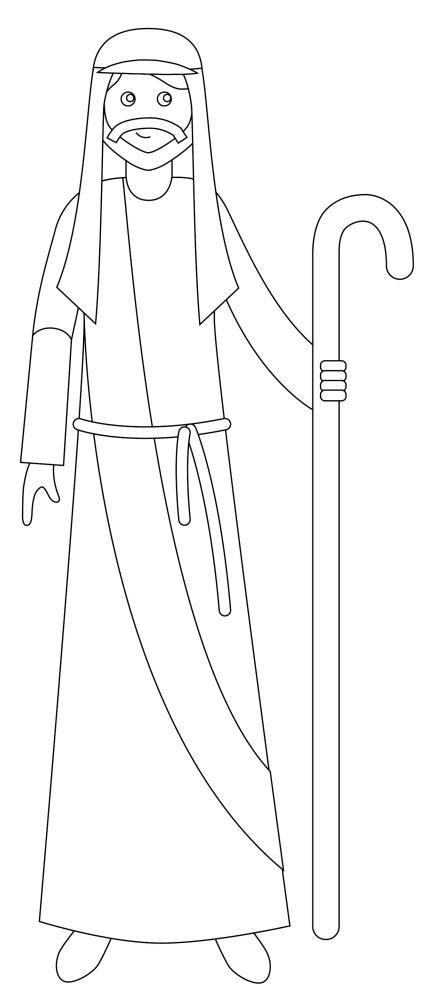
If you have extra time at the lesson's conclusion, have the children retell the story using the materials from the LEARN section. You can also continue practicing the memory verse or replay the ENGAGE game. When parents arrive, please give them a copy of the monthly Parent Guide (downloadable).

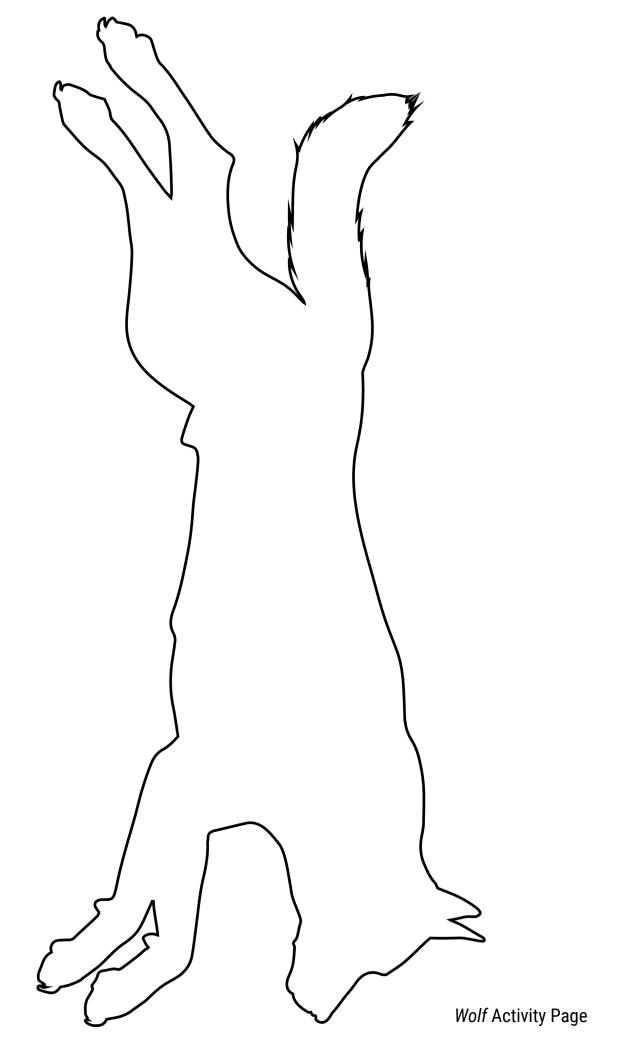


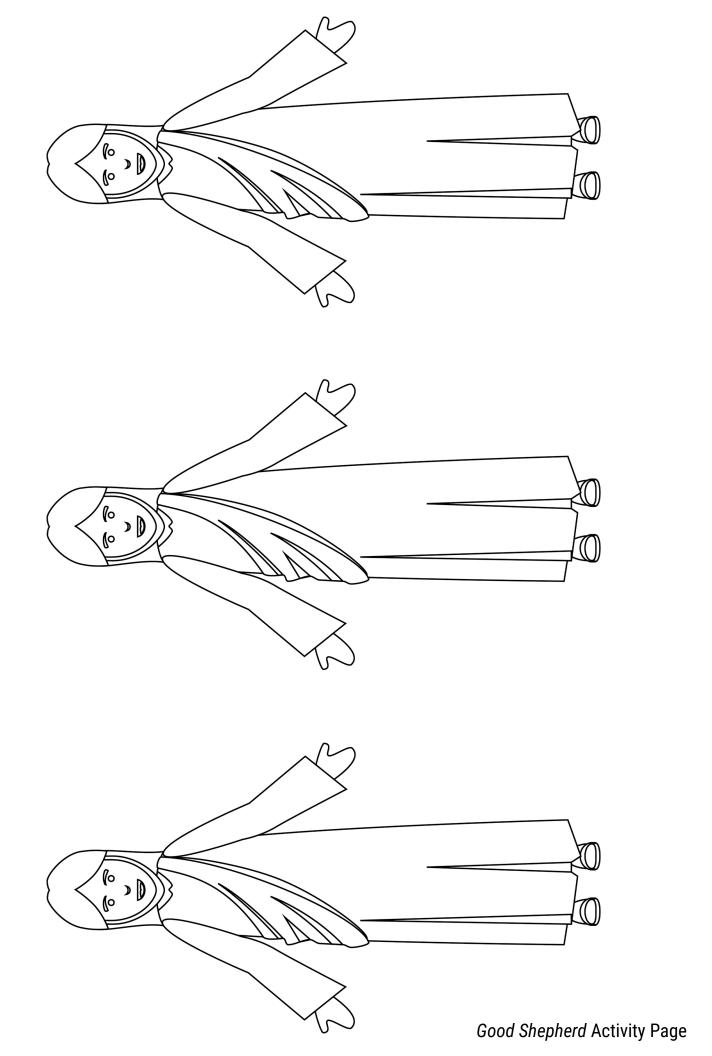


Sheep Faces Activity Page

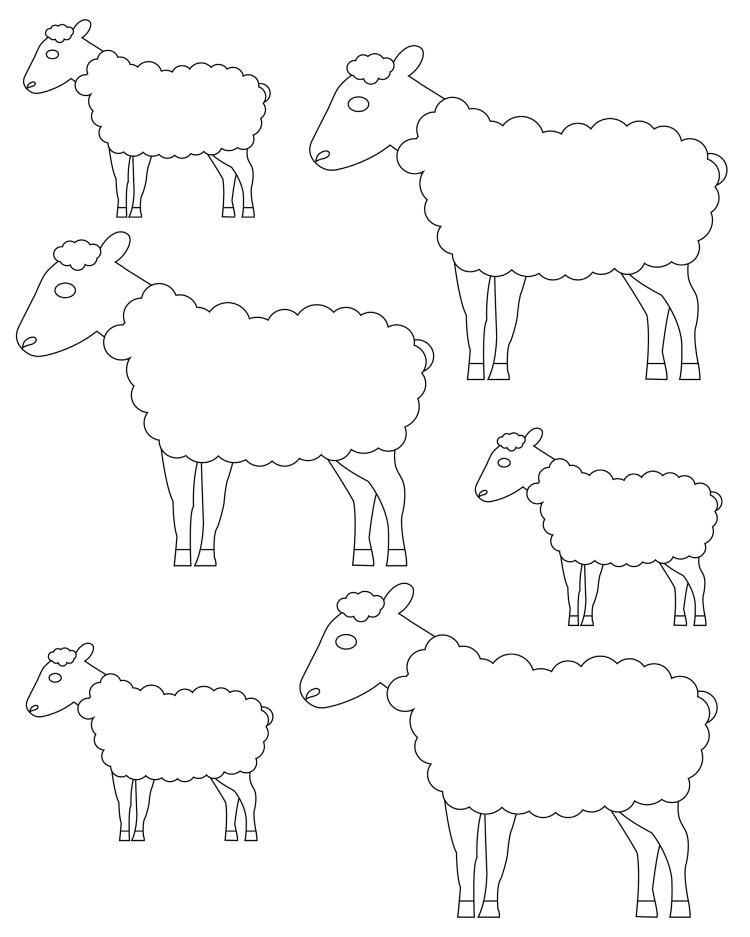








#### GOD SENT JESUS TO BE OUR GOOD SHEPHERD



Sheep Activity Page

## I AM THE DOOR

#### **BIBLE PASSAGE**

John 10:1, 7-10 (ICB)

#### **BIG IDEA**

God sent Jesus to be the Door.

#### **FOCUS VERSE**

"Then God said to Moses, 'IAM WHO I AM. When you go to the people of Israel, tell them, "I AM sent me to you."" Exodus 3:14 (ICB)

#### **LESSON MATERIALS**

| Puzzle Piece | Small Bean Bags | Box | Masking Tape | I Am the Door Activity Page | Popsicle Sticks | Glue Sticks | Markers or Crayons |

#### **GREET** — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Tell me about a time when you felt alone.
- Do you know someone who feels alone? How can you help them?



KIDS NEED TO FEEL HEARD AND ONE WAY TO DO THAT IS BY REMEMBERING DETAILS THEY SHARE. EVEN IF IT IS ON YOUR PHONE, MAKE NOTE OF EACH CHILD'S RESPONSES TO THE CONNECTION QUESTIONS SO YOU CAN RETURN TO THEM LATER.

#### **WORSHIP** - 10 MINUTES

Connecting songs to your story will help increase the children's retention and comprehension of the weekly Bible story. We recommend incorporating "I Am the Door" by Seeds Family Worship (found on YouTube). The song is straight from Scripture and fun to sing!

#### **PRAY** – 5 MINUTES

Start your lesson with a designated time of prayer.

**SAMPLE PRAYER:** "God, thank You for bringing us here to learn about You. Thank You that we can know You like a best friend. Teach us how to know You and love You more. In Jesus' name, amen."

#### **REVIEW** – 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

**BACKGROUND:** Say, "For the next two months, we will be learning about Jesus' 'I Am' statements in a series called *I Am*. Last week, we learned that **God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd**. We read about how the Good Shepherd lays His life down for His sheep when danger comes. We also discovered that by saying, 'I Am,' Jesus was claiming to be God [Exodus 3:14]! That made a lot of people VERY angry; however, Jesus did not stop with just one 'I Am' statement. He said lots of them! Are you ready to hear our second 'I Am' statement? [Wait for responses.] Great! Let's start by putting up this week's puzzle piece." Take a moment to place this week's puzzle piece on the wall before transitioning to the game.

TRANSITION: Say, "Let's play a game to get our minds ready to understand our story!"

#### **ENGAGE** – 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Small Bean Bags (4 per class) | Box (1 per class) | Masking Tape |

Say, "Today's activity is called *Through the Door*. In this game, you will divide into four teams and compete to win points by getting your team's bean bag 'through the door."



IF YOU DON'T HAVE BEAN BAGS, YOU CAN SUBSTITUTE FOUR IDENTICAL, LIGHTWEIGHT BALLS. TO SET UP THE GAME, SIMPLY PLACE THE BOX IN THE CENTER OF YOUR SPACE. PLACE A TAPE LINE ON THE FLOOR 8' FROM EACH SIDE OF THE BOX. SO YOU WILL HAVE 4 DIFFERENT TAPE LINES FOR THE FOUR DIFFERENT TEAMS.

**GAME GOAL:** To win the highest number of points by getting your team's bean bag "through the door" (or box) more times than any other team.

#### **HOW TO PLAY:**

- Split the kids into four teams and have them line up behind the 4 different tape lines on each side of the box (or "door").
- Give each group a beanbag. When you say "go," the first person in each line will stand at their tape line and attempt to throw their bean bag into the box. The first team to get their bean bag "through the door" (or into the box) gets the point.
- Have each child retrieve their bag and hand it to the next person in line. Whey you say "go," the children now holding the bean bags will play. The team will continue the process until every child has taken a turn. The team with the most points at the end wins!
- If you have a small class, play for a specific amount of time instead of playing until all team members have taken a turn.

**CHALLENGE:** Have teams pass the bean bags through their legs to the first person in line before they step up to the tape line and throw the bean bag.

**TRANSITION:** Say, "Great job playing *Through the Door*! It wasn't always easy to make it "through the door," was it? Well, in today's story, Jesus will tell us how we can be sure we make it through the most important door of all!"

Say, "In last week's 'I Am' statement, we discovered that Jesus was the Good Shepherd, and we were His sheep whom He loves. In today's teaching, Jesus made another 'I Am' statement that is similar to the one from last week. This teaching made lots of people angry too! Before we read, remember, that when Jesus said He was 'I AM', He said that He was God [Exodus 3:14]. This week we are going to learn about a time when Jesus said, 'I am the Door.' Let's read it together." Read John 10:1, 7-10 (ICB).

<sup>1</sup> Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. The man who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber.

<sup>7</sup> So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth. I am the door for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All the people who came before me were thieves and robbers. The sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door. The person who enters through me will be saved. He will be able to come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> A thief comes to steal and kill and destroy. But I came to give life—life in all its fullness.

Say, "Jesus didn't just say that He is one of the doors, He said He is THE Door. Did you know that **God sent Jesus to be the Door** for us?"

Ask, "Is entering through Jesus the ONLY way to have life forever? [Wait for repones.] Yes! Jesus said that He is the Door because **God sent Jesus to be the Door**. Robbers and thieves came in the wrong way by climbing into the sheep pen, but that is not the way! Only God can save us [forgive our sins and give us eternal life] the right way. That means Jesus can save us because He IS God and our safe Door to heaven. To show you what I mean, let's think about rules. At the park, we don't climb up the slide; we go down the slide, so we don't hurt ourselves. At home, we don't jump on the couch; we sit on couches, so we don't get hurt. When we are walking outside, we don't run in the middle of the road; we run on the sidewalk, so we don't get hurt by a car. It is the same way with Jesus! Jesus said that He is the only one who brings us safely to heaven! He is 'the Door' we enter heaven through. We cannot sneak into heaven by being the smartest person or the kindest person. We can only enter through Jesus! **God sent Jesus to be the Door** to heaven for us!"



**TRANSITION:** Say, "Do you see why God sent Jesus to be the Door?"

#### **DISCUSS** – 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's see what you remember about today's story."

1. What did God send Jesus to be?

Response: God sent Jesus to be the Door.

2. Why did Jesus' 'I AM' statement make many of the Jews (or church leaders) angry?

Response: Jesus claimed He was God when He called Himself, "I Am." Because some Jews couldn't understand that Jesus really is God, they thought Jesus was lying about who He was.

#### 3. What do you think it means that Jesus is "the Door"?

Response: Answers will vary.

#### 4. What makes Jesus different from the robbers and thieves?

Response: Robbers and thieves climb over the pen in the wrong way, and their goal is to steal the sheep and harm them. Jesus is the loving Shepherd who gives His sheep forgiveness and life. Jesus is the only way to heaven.

5. Jesus says when we go through Him,"the Door," we will find "pasture." What is "pasture"? What does that mean for those of us who are His sheep?

Response: Answers will vary.

#### 6. What do we learn about Jesus in this teaching?

Response: Jesus is the Door, **God sent Jesus to be the Door,** Jesus is the only way to eternal life, Jesus is God, Jesus is safe and protects us, Jesus brings us safely to heaven, etc.

**TRANSITION:** Say, "Thank you for answering those questions! Remember, **God sent Jesus to be the Door**. He is the only way to heaven."

#### **RESPOND** – 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | I Am the Door Activity Page (1 per child) | Popsicle Sticks (6 per child) | Glue Sticks | Markers or Crayons |

Say, "For today's activity, we will make a door to remind us that Jesus said, 'I Am the Door' who leads to eternal life. Loving and following Jesus is the only way to enter heaven. Who is ready to make the door?"

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Give each child an *I Am the Door* Activity Page, six popsicle sticks, a glue stick, and markers or crayons.
- Then, tell the kids to glue the six popsicle sticks to the middle of the *I Am the Door* Activity Page (vertically, side-by-side) to resemble a wooden, slatted door.
- Finally, have the children color the rest of their *I Am the Door* Activity Page.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job! Remember, God sent Jesus to be the Door for us."

#### **MEMORIZE** – 5 MINUTES

Say, "It is time to memorize this month's verse! These words will help us remember that God was the first to call Himself 'I AM.' When Jesus used the same phrase over one thousand years later, He was teaching His followers that He is also God. Let's say the verse together."

"Then God [point to heaven] said to Moses [cup hands around your mouth],
'I AM WHO I AM [stand straight with your arms by your sides].' When you
go to the people of israel [point faraway], tell them, [cup hands around
your mouth], "I AM sent me [point to heaven] to you [point to the class]."
Exodus 3:14 (ICB) (hold out hands like a book)

**CHALLENGE:** Try doing a call and response while reciting the verse. For example, the leader can say the first portion of each sentence, and the children can finish with the last half. Repeat this recitation and switch roles.

#### **REFLECT** — 5 MINUTES

Say, "God sent Jesus to be the Door. Don't be tricked into believing you can get to heaven another way. 'Thieves and robbers' will try to steal our hearts away from God, but He is the only right way. Aren't you grateful God sent Jesus to be the Door so we could be saved [receive forgiveness and live with God forever]?"



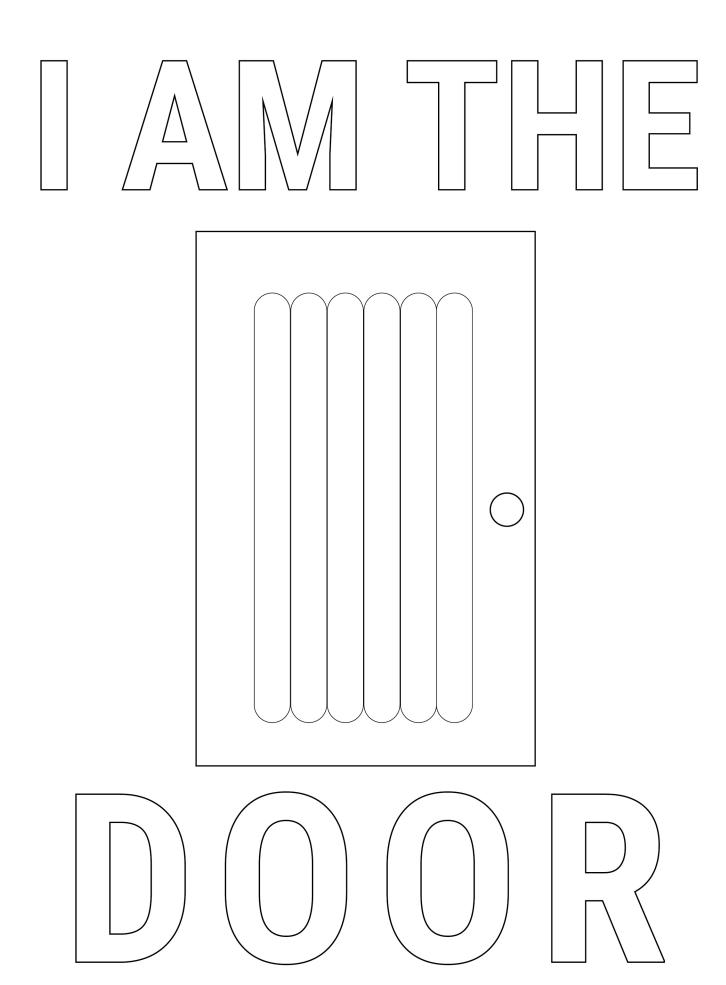
ALLOW TIME HERE FOR CHILDREN TO PRAY AND ASK GOD TO SPEAK TO THEM. IF A CHILD IS PROMPTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ACCEPT JESUS AS THEIR LORD AND SAVIOR, LEAD THEM IN THE SALVATION PRAYER (ROMANS 10:9). OR BETTER YET, WHEN THE PARENTS ARRIVES FOR PICK UP, ASK THEM TO LEAD THEIR CHILD IN THE SALVATION PRAYER. IF THE PARENT DOESN'T FEEL COMFORTABLE LEADING, THAT'S OK. ASK THE PARENT TO PRAY ALONG WITH YOU AS YOU LEAD. THIS IS A HUGE MILESTONE IN THE LIFE OF A CHLD, INCLUDE THE PARENTS IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

**SAMPLE PRAYER:** "God, thank You for sending us Jesus, Your Son, to be our 'Door.' By the help of Your Holy Spirit, help us hear Your voice and follow You all the days of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen."

#### **RELEASE** — 5 MINUTES

If you have time to spare, replay *Through the Door* or allow the kids to ask questions about the story.





## I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

#### **BIBLE PASSAGE**

John 6:35, 38, 47-51 (ICB)

#### **BIG IDEA**

God sent Jesus to be the Bread of Life.

#### **FOCUS VERSE**

"Then God said to Moses, 'IAM WHO I AM. When you go to the people of Israel, tell them, "I AM sent me to you."" Exodus 3:14 (ICB)

#### **LESSON MATERIALS**

| Puzzle Piece | "Jesus Is" Riddles Activity Page | Braille Code Sheet Activity Page | Slice of Bread (ALLERGY ALERT) | Jesus Activity Page | Bread of Life Booklet Page | Markers or Crayons |

Scissors | Stapler |

#### **GREET** — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is your favorite kind of sandwich?
- Do you know someone who needs to hear about Jesus? How can you share His love with them this week?

#### **WORSHIP** – 10 MINUTES

Begin with a "call to worship." A "call to worship" includes reading a Bible verse that will encourage your kids to prepare their hearts to worship God. You can use Psalm 66:1-2 this week. Your "call to worship" can sound something like this:

"I'm so excited all of you are here! Let's stand and get ready to worship God! Psalm 66:1-2 [ICB] says, 'Everything on earth, shout with joy to God! Sing about his glory! Make his praise glorious!' Let's sing with joyful hearts, knowing God deserves our best worship!"

#### **PRAY** – 5 MINUTES

It is important to start every lesson with prayer!



**SAMPLE PRAYER:** "Jesus, thank You for bringing each of us here safely! We pray that You, in Your love, would teach us more about how good You are! In Jesus' name, amen."

#### **REVIEW** – 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

**BACKGROUND:** Say, "We are in the middle of lessons about the 'I Am' statements of Jesus. We have learned about Jesus being our 'Good Shepherd' and our 'Door' to heaven! God sent Jesus to be everything we will ever need! Before we jump into the lesson, though, why did Jesus' 'I Am,' sayings make some people VERY mad? [Wait for responses.] When Jesus said, 'I Am,' He was claiming to be God [Exodus 3:14], and many of His listeners didn't believe Jesus was telling the truth. [Keep in mind that Jesus was disliked more and more every time He made a big 'I Am' statement.] Let's read Jesus' next 'I Am' statement." DO NOT PUT UP THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE PIECE YET! PUT IT UP AFTER THE ENGAGE GAME!

TRANSITION: Say, "I cannot wait to hear our story, but first, it is time to play a game!"

#### **ENGAGE** — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | "Jesus Is" Riddles Activity Page (1 per pair) | Braille Code Sheet Activity Page (1 per pair) |

Say, "Today's game is called *Code Cracker*! In this game, you will use a code sheet to figure out who Jesus says He is. Let's pair up and see if you can 'crack the code."

**GAME GOAL:** To be the first pair to "crack the code" by discovering who Jesus says He is.

#### **HOW TO PLAY:**

- Pair your students and give each team a "Jesus Is" Riddles Activity Page and a Braille Code Sheet Activity Page.
- When you say "go," each pair must quietly work together to discover the hidden message on the "Jesus Is" Riddles Activity Page (using the Braille Code Sheet Activity Page as a key).
- Allow all of the children time to solve the riddle before revealing the answer (if time permits). If no one has won in the allotted time, start displaying random letters of the puzzle until at least one team has solved it.

**CHALLENGE:** If you want your class to get moving during this activity, only print off one *Braille Code Sheet* Activity Page for the whole class and put in on the floor on the opposite side of the room. Then, for each letter of the riddle, one person from each pair must run to the Braille Code Sheet to find the letter that matches the dot pattern on their "Jesus Is" Riddles Activity Page. (FYI: This challenge will make the game much longer.)

**TRANSITION:** Say, "Great job playing *Code Cracker*! That was fun, wasn't it? We figured out that Jesus is the Bread of Life. Now, let's read about what that really means."

#### **LEARN** — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Slice of Bread (1 per class) | Jesus Activity Page (1 per class) |

Say, "In today's story, Jesus makes a great 'I Am' statement right after He miraculously feeds more than

5,000 people with only five loaves of bread and two fish! Jesus first showed that He is the 'I Am' [or God] by performing a miracle, then He taught that He is our special Bread of Life. Let's read about Jesus' 'I Am' statment in God's Word to find out why it is so great that **God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life**." Read John 6:35, 38, 47-51 (ICB).

- <sup>35</sup> Then Jesus said, "I am the bread that gives life. He who comes to me will never be hungry. He who believes in me will never be thirsty.
- <sup>38</sup> I came down from heaven to do what God wants me to do. I did not come to do what I want to do.
- <sup>47</sup> I tell you the truth. He who believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread that gives life. <sup>49</sup> Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert. But still they died. <sup>50</sup> Here [Jesus is referring to Himself] is the bread that comes down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will never die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever."

Say, "Jesus said that He is our Bread of Life. Did you know that God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life?"



Ask, "What did Jesus mean when He said He is our Bread of Life? [Wait for responses.] Yes! Jesus didn't say He is our Bread of Life because He is the kind of bread we eat. No! Jesus taught that He is the One who gives us life forever. He also reminded the people that there was a time in their history when God rained down bread, called manna, from heaven to save His people from starving. However, God sent Jesus from heaven to be more than normal bread—**God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life.** Jesus is so much better than physical bread. The bread we eat is important, and it helps us stay full and grow, but Jesus gives us Himself! He is the Bread that gives us eternal life [through His death for all sins]. He is our Bread of Life!"

**MODEL IT:** Use the slice of bread and *Jesus* Activity Page (see Materials List) to help the children visualize the story. Hold the bread up high and explain that there was a time when God sent bread from heaven to save His people from hunger. Then, hold Jesus up high and show how God sent something (or someone) even better than bread—Jesus—from heaven to save His people from death.

TRANSITION: Say, "Do you see why it was so important that God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life?"

#### **DISCUSS** - 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's see what you remember about today's story."

- 1. What did God send Jesus to be?

  Response: God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life
- 2. Is Jesus really bread?

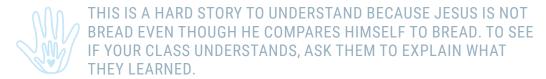
Response: No! Jesus isn't bread. Jesus is a person!

- 3. Why did Jesus compare His arrival from heaven to the manna God sent the Israelites?

  Response: Answers will vary. However, remind the children that when God sent manna to the Israelites, it fed their physical bodies and helped them live. However, Jesus, as the Bread of Life, feeds our spirits and souls and gives us life everlasting (in heaven).
- 4. If someone asks you what you learned today, what will you tell them?

  Response: Answers will vary.
- 5. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus came as the Bread of Life for you? Response: Answers will vary.
- 6. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you with this story?

  Response: Jesus is the Bread of Life, God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life, Jesus is better than bread, Jesus offers eternal life, Jesus came from heaven to save us, etc.



**TRANSITION:** Say, "Thank you for answering those questions! Remember, **God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life** who gives us life forever."

#### **RESPOND** – 15 MINUTES

**MATERIALS:** | Bread of Life Booklet Activity Pages 1-4 (1 set per child) | Scissors | Stapler | Markers or Crayons |

Say, "For today's activity, we are making a little bread book that will help us remember what it means that **God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life**. Who is ready to get started?"

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Give each child a set Bread of Life Booklet Activity Pages, scissors, and markers or crayons.
- Have each child color the pictures and cut out the bread-shaped pages.
- Next, they should stack the Bead of Life pages on top of each other and staple the pages on the left side of the paper together to make a mini book explaining how Jesus is our Bread of Life. (Page order doesn't matter.)

**TRANSITION:** Say, "Great job! Remember, **God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life!** The bread we eat can make our bodies strong and help us grow, but how is Jesus the better bread—the Bread of Life? [Wait for responses.] Yes! Aren't you thankful that **God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life**?"

#### **MEMORIZE** – 5 MINUTES

Say, "You know what time it is! It is time to practice our memory verse! Remember when we talked about how the phrase 'I Am' is one God used to describe Himself long before Jesus came to Earth? Well, this verse helps us connect Jesus' 'I AM' sayings to His [and our] heavenly Father's words."

"Then God [point to heaven] said to Moses [cup hands around your mouth], 
'I AM WHO I AM [stand straight with your arms by your sides].' When you go to the people of israel [point faraway], tell them, [cup hands around your mouth], "I AM sent me [point to heaven] to you [point to the class]."

Exodus 3:14 (ICB) (hold out hands like a book)

**CHALLENGE:** If you have an incredibly active class, add additional movement into your motions. For example, whenever you use the word "AM," twirl in a circle, or whenever you use the word "SENT," leap forward.

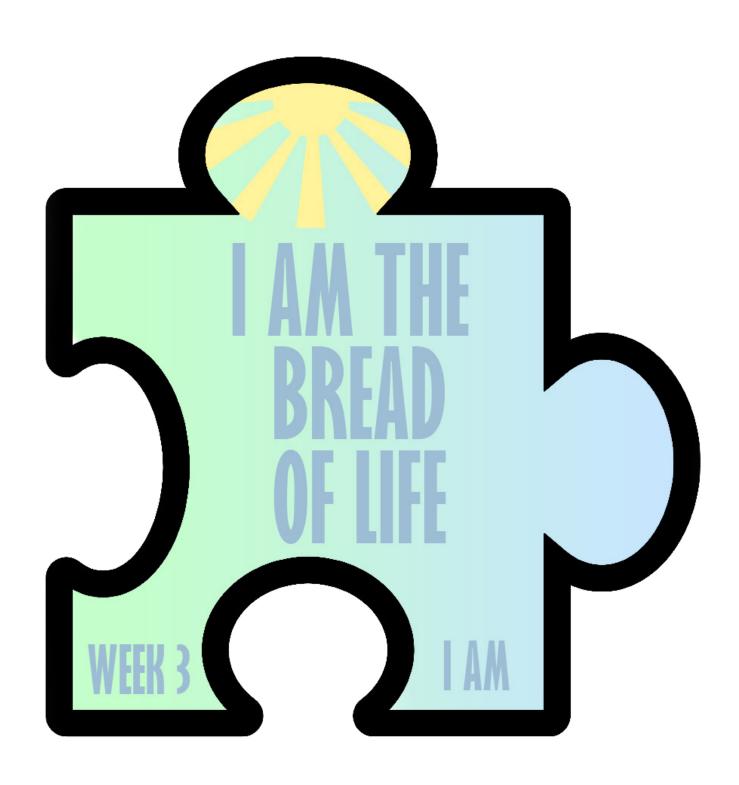
#### **REFLECT** — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Jesus loves us enough to come down from heaven to be our Bread of Life. The first bread God gave from heaven only satisfied His people's hunger for a few hours, but Jesus gives us spiritual food that lasts forever. Aren't you glad Jesus has made a way for us to live forever with Him? Remember, **God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life**."

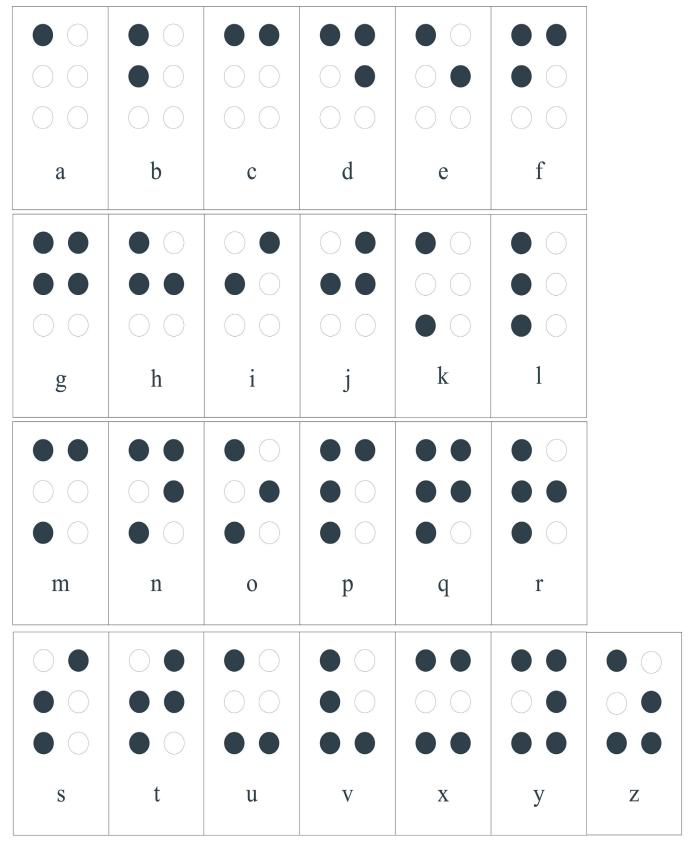
**SAMPLE PRAYER:** "God, thank You for sending something [Someone] better than regular bread. Thank You for sending Your one and only Son to be the kind of Bread that enables us to live forever. Your love is amazing! Now, go with us, and help us love you more every day. In Jesus' name, amen."

#### **RELEASE** — 5 MINUTES

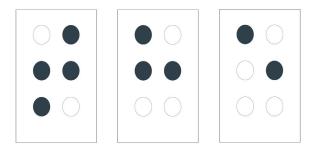
It is so important that our children understand Jesus' "I Am" statements. Use the remaining time to review previous "I Am" statements or continue discussing what it means that Jesus is our Bread of Life. If you still have extra time, let the children create their own secret codes using the *Braille Code Sheet* Activity Page from the ENGAGE game above.

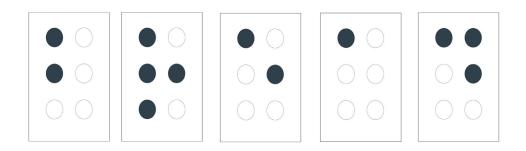


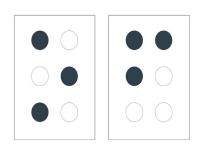
### **BRAILLE CODE SHEET**

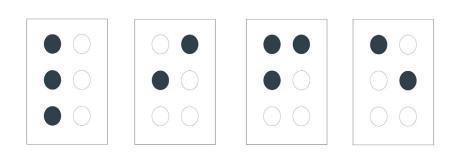


## "JESUS IS" RIDDLE

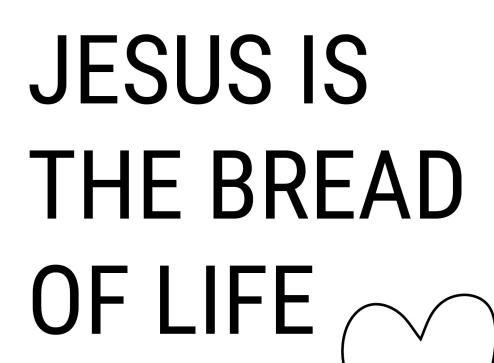






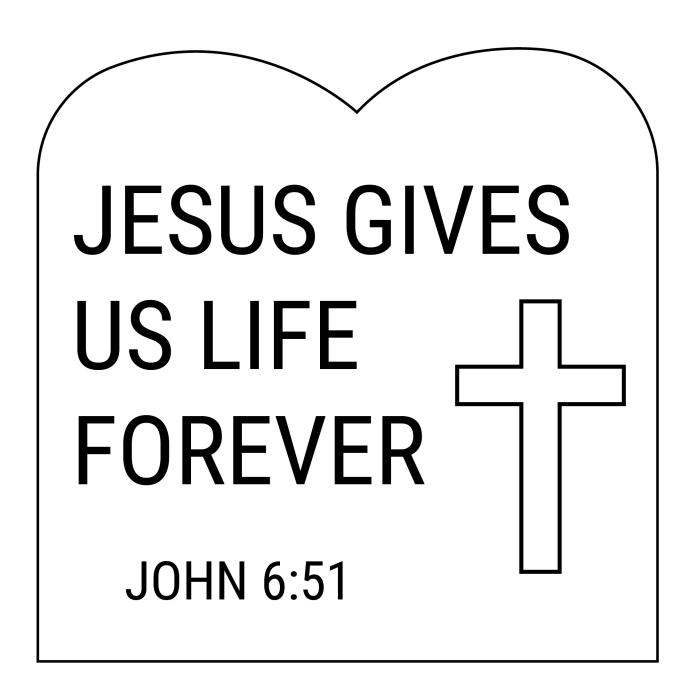


# HOW IS JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE?

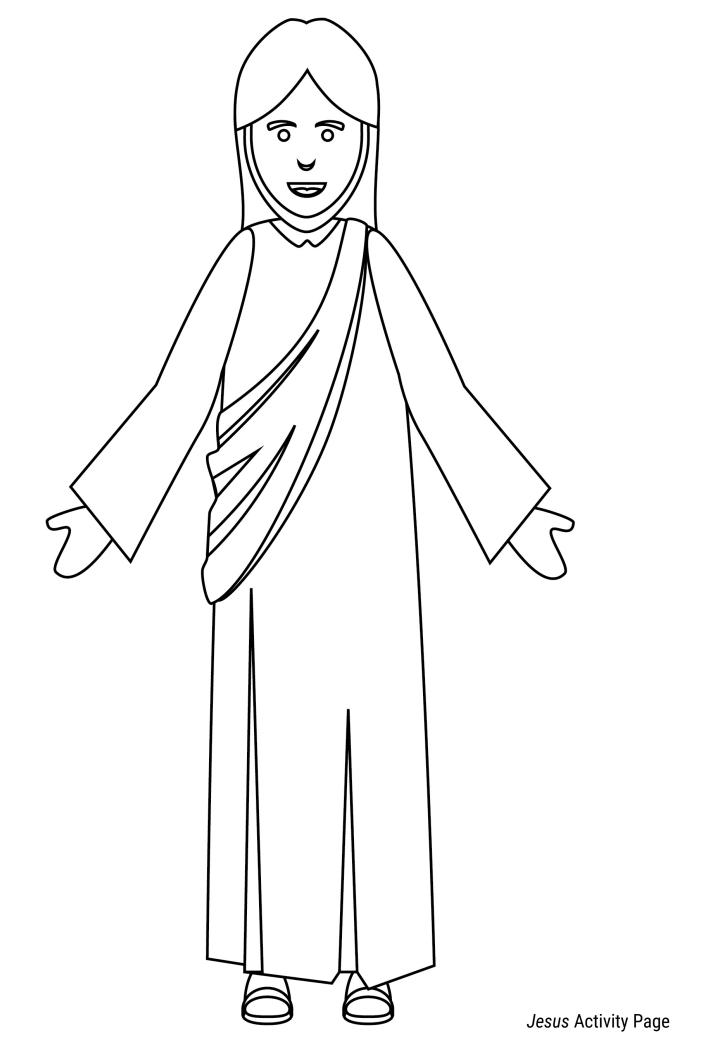


**JOHN 6:35** 

## GOD SENT JESUS TO BE THE BREAD OF LIFE **JOHN 6:38**







## I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

#### **BIBLE PASSAGE**

John 14:2-6 (ICB)

#### **BIG IDEA**

God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

#### **FOCUS VERSE**

"Then God said to Moses, 'IAM WHO I AM. When you go to the people of Israel, tell them, "I AM sent me to you."" Exodus 3:14 (ICB)

#### **LESSON MATERIALS**

| Puzzle Piece | The Way, The Truth, and The Life Pathway Activity Page | I Am Activity Page | Pencils | Markers or Crayons |

#### **GREET** – 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Name something you have always wanted to own but don't.
- Tell me about the coolest thing that happened to you last week.



#### **WORSHIP** - 10 MINUTES

A great way to make your teaching "stick" is by singing songs about the lesson! Because the kids will be learning about Jesus' statement, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," choose songs dedicated to that theme. Here are a few we recommend from YouTube:

- 1. "The Way, The Truth, and The Life" by Kickstart Worship
- 2. "The Way (The Truth, The Life) by Doorpost Songs
- 3. "The Life" by Seeds Family Worship

#### **PRAY** – 5 MINUTES

Pray with the class.

**SAMPLE PRAYER:** "God, we are so grateful for You! You love us so well and hear us every time we talk to You. Thank You in advance for helping us to learn. In Jesus' name, amen!"

#### **REVIEW** — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

**BACKGROUND:** Say, "This is the fourth week of our lessons about Jesus' 'I Am' statements. One unique thing about this unit is that it is extra-long. Usually, we do a new series every month [or every four weeks], but we want to give each of Jesus' 'I Am' statements a whole week, so we'll stay with this topic for two months. Yay! Who remembers some of Jesus' 'I Am' statements that we have already talked about this month?"

- WeeK 1: "I am the Good Shepherd."
- Week 2: "I am the Door."
- Week 3: "I am the Bread of Life."

"Great! This next 'I Am' statement is pretty good too! Let's put our puzzle piece on the wall to give us a clue." Take a moment to place this week's puzzle piece on the wall before transitioning to the game.

TRANSITION: Say, "I cannot wait to hear our story, but first, it is time to play a game!"

#### **ENGAGE** – 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | The Way, The Truth, and The Life Pathway Activity Page (1 per child) | Markers or Crayons |

Say, "Today, we will be playing a game about finding the right path! There is only one correct path for our activity that will get you all the way to the other side of the page, but there will also be wrong ways that try to trick you and get you off the right path. Let me show you what I mean."

**GAME GOAL:** To make your way around *The Way, The Truth, and The Life Pathway* Activity Page by starting with the word "truth" and connecting words to create a path.

#### **HOW TO PLAY:**

- Give each child (or each pair) a writing utensil and a copy of *The Way, The Truth, and The Life Pathway* Activity Page.
- Starting with the word "truth" in the top left corner, you will make a path around the board with every word connecting to the previous word.
  - For example: Once "truth" has been circled, start the next word at the last letter of the previous word. So, your next word will start with an "h" and be connected to the end of the word "truth."
- There will be words that will lead down an incorrect path. If you've found one of those words, look to the word before it and try to find a different word to put you on the right path.
- Continue through the entire puzzle until you find all the words. (Hint: Your last word on the path should end on the bottom right corner.)

**MODIFICATION:** If you have younger elementary students who do not know how to read, pair them with an older elementary child who excels at reading. If the game is still too challenging, complete this activity as a group.

**TRANSITION:** Say, "Great job! Who was able to find the right way and the right path to get you to the end? Yay! Well, today's story is about following the right way too. Let's hear what Jesus says about how we can find the right way."

#### **LEARN** – 15 MINUTES

Say, "Jesus made today's 'I Am' statement knowing He would soon be crucified and then return to God, His Father. He wanted His disciples to know that He was leaving to make a place for them in heaven. You may recognize this 'I Am' statement when you hear it; it is a popular one. Let's read it together!" Read John 14:2-6 (ICB).

<sup>2</sup> "There are many rooms in my Father's house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you to be with me so that you may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going."

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. So how can we know the way?"

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, "I am the way. And I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me."

Say, "Jesus said that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Did you know that **God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life** for us?"

Ask, "How can we know the way to heaven? [Wait for responses.] When we know Jesus, we know the way to heaven because Jesus IS our way to heaven. Jesus doesn't just say that He is the Way, though; He also says He is the Truth. Did you know that Jesus cannot lie? There is only truth in Jesus. But, Jesus doesn't stop at just telling His disciples that He is the Way to heaven and the Truth; He also says that He is the Life. Jesus is the only one who gives us life forever—not just life while we are on Earth, but also perfect and forever life in heaven. **God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life**. So, if you feel lost or confused, remember to stay close to Jesus. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Can you say that with me?" Say that together as a class.



TRANSITION: Say, "Do you see why it was so important that God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life for us?"

#### **DISCUSS** – 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk about the story a bit more."

#### 1. What did God send Jesus to be?

Response: God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

#### 2. Is Jesus the ONLY way to heaven? How do we know?

Response: Yes! Jesus is the only way! The Bible says that we cannot get to the Father (God) without first believing in Jesus (John 14:6).

3. Jesus made this 'I Am' statement close to when He was crucified (or killed). Why was it necessary that Jesus tell His followers He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life?

Response: Answers will vary.

#### 4. Where can we go when we don't know the truth?

Response: We can go to Jesus because Jesus is the truth! He never lies. Satan, the father of lies, has no truth in Him (John 8:44).

#### 5. How do we "go to Jesus"?

Response: We "go to Jesus" by praying, worshiping Him, and going to church. (Encourage the children to ask you or other adult believers how to grow closer to Jesus.)

6. What does it mean to you that God has many rooms in His house in heaven (v. 2)? (You could also ask how they feel about that verse. Does it give them comfort? Peace? Joy? Excitement? Anxiety?)

Response: Answers will vary.

#### 7. What do you think Jesus was trying to teach you with this story?

Response: Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; **God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life;** Jesus is the only way to heaven; God sent Jesus to us; Jesus is getting rooms ready for us in God's house, etc.

**TRANSITION:** Say, "Wow! What great answers! The most important thing to remember, though, is that **God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life** for every one of us!"

#### **RESPOND** — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | I Am Activity Page (1 per child) | Pencils | Markers or Crayons |

Say, "Our next activity will help us remember this week's big 'I Am' statement. Who is ready to get to work?"

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Give each child an I Am Activity Page, pencil and markers or crayons.
- There are three open boxes on the page with the words, "WAY," "TRUTH," and "LIFE" underneath them.

In the first box, have the kids draw a picture of Jesus being "the Way." In the second box, have them draw a picture of Jesus as "the Truth." Finally, have each kid draw a picture of Jesus as "the Life" in the last box.

- After they have finished drawing, the kids can color in their pictures with markers or crayons.

**TRANSITION:** Say, "Great job! Remember, **God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life!** Which one of those descriptions, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, feels most important in your life right now? Why?"

#### **MEMORIZE** – 5 MINUTES

Say, "It is time to recite our memory verse again! Our Scripture passage reminds us that God specializes in sending the right person at the right time. Who did God send to you to tell you about Jesus?" If kids are willing, have a few people say the verse with the actions.

"Then God [point to heaven] said to Moses [cup hands around your mouth],
'I AM WHO I AM [stand straight with your arms by your sides].' When you
go to the people of israel [point faraway], tell them, [cup hands around
your mouth], "I AM sent me [point to heaven] to you [point to the class]."
Exodus 3:14 (ICB) (hold out hands like a book)

**CHALLENGE:** Take a moment to ask your kids how they best memorize things. Give them a choice in how they would like to practice learning the verse.

#### **REFLECT** — 5 MINUTES

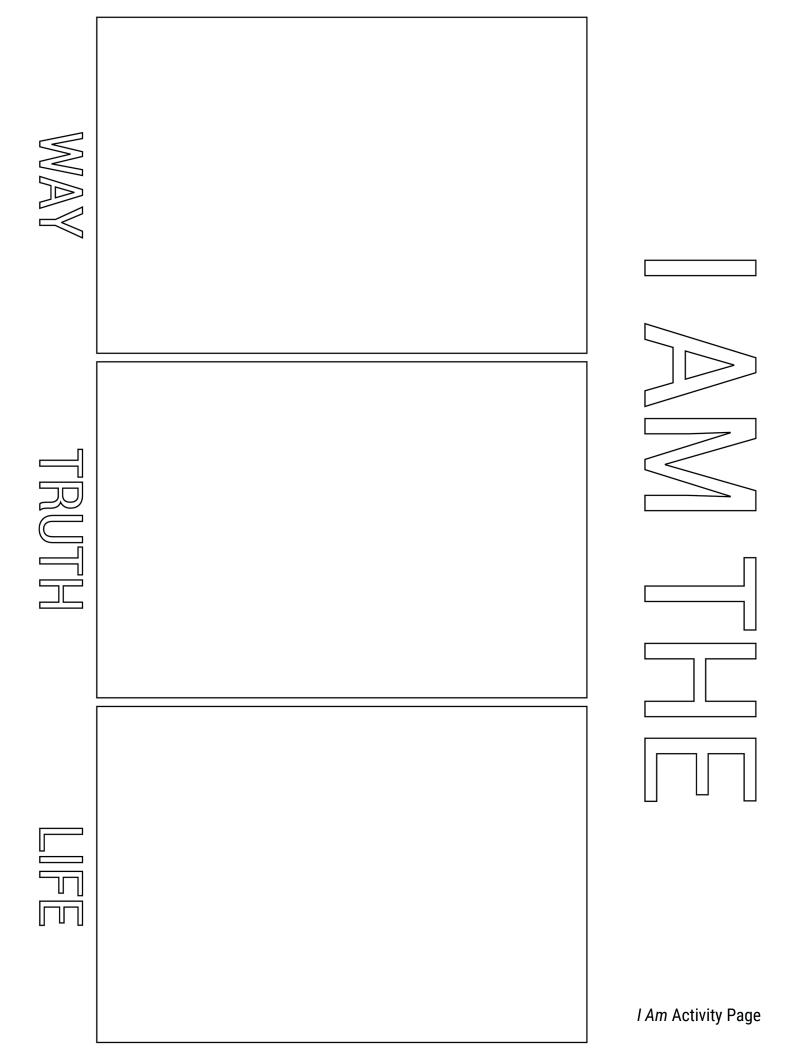
Say, "God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Jesus said, 'The only way to the Father is through me' [John 14:6]. If we believe in Jesus and declare Him as our God and Savior, we do not have to worry about finding the way to heaven, because Jesus is the Way! Isn't it amazing that God loves us SO much that He sent His Son? Let's take a moment and tell God and Jesus how thankful we are that we have a place in heaven."

**SAMPLE PRAYER:** "God, thank You for sending Jesus to show us the right and true way. Protect us from thinking there are other ways to know You and be with You. And Jesus, thank You for coming to the earth to show us the way to our forever home. We are so grateful for Your love! Help us fall more in love with You every day. In the loving name of Jesus, amen."

#### **RELEASE** — 5 MINUTES

It is easy to pray the "Sample Prayer" and then release the kids to play until parents or guardians arrive, but try something outside of your comfort zone. Devote the rest of this week's time to prayer. Encourage everyone to say a prayer of thankfulness. If your class is shy about praying out loud, give each child a piece a paper and have them write a prayer to Jesus.





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#### **WORD BANK**

\*Truth Life Heart Disciples God Tell Lord Trust Doing Time Seen Show Going Way You Understand Greater