

I AM

JESUS DECLARES HE IS GOD



I AM: PART 1

MONTHLY PREPARATION GUIDE

UNIT 3 - PREK

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, ' I AM 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 (20-30 per class), Masking or Painter's Tape, Timer, 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), *Sheep Pen Activity Page* (1 per child), *Good Shepherd Activity Page* (1 pre-cut image per child), Cotton Balls (8 per child), Glue Sticks, Crayons

WEEK 2

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), *Door Activity Page* (1 per class), *Window Activity Page* (1 per class), *Ceiling Activity Page* (1 per class), *Wall Activity Page* (1 per class), *I Am the Door Activity Page* (1 per child), Popsicle Sticks (6 per child), Glue Sticks, Crayons

WEEK 3

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), 5-Gallon Bucket (1 per class), Small Throwing Balls (30-50 balls per class), Poster Paper and Markers (Optional), Timer (Optional), Slice of Bread (1 per class), *Jesus Activity Page* (1 per class), *Jesus, the Bread of Life Activity Pages 1-2* (1 double-sided paper per child), Crayons

WEEK 4

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), Masking or Painters' Tape, *I Am the Way Activity Page* (1 page printed on cardstock per child), Tiny Stones or Sequins (1 small handful per child), Liquid Glue, Crayons

IAM: PART 1

UNIT 3 - JESUS DECLARES HE IS GOD

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I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

BIBLE PASSAGE

John 10:11-15 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd.

FOCUS VERSE

“Then God said to Moses, ‘I AM 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 | Masking or Painter’s Tape | Timer | Green Blanket | Cotton Balls | Wolf Activity Page | Jesus Activity Page | Plain Shepherd Activity Page | Sheep Pen Activity Page | Good Shepherd Activity Page | Glue Sticks | Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Where do you go when you want to feel safe?
- What is a job that 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 UP THE KIDS. FIND A REASON (ALPHABETICALLY, GENDER, AGE-LEVEL) TO MOVE THE KIDS AROUND WITHOUT MAKING IT FEEL DISCIPLINARY.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Let prayer set the tone for your time together.

SAMPLE PRAYER: “God, help us learn today. Your Word says that You gave us Your Holy Spirit to show us

Your truth [John 16:13]. So, show us something new about Yourself. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Your Son, Amen.”



THE KIDS IN YOUR CLASS MAY NOT KNOW HOW TO PRAY, SO TRY REPEATING PRAYERS. PRAY ONE SENTENCE AT A TIME AND HAVE THE KIDS REPEAT IT AFTER YOU.

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “In the past couple of months, we have been learning all about Jesus. First, we talked about Jesus’ strange, upside-down teachings from the Sermon on the Mount, and then we discussed Jesus’ miracles! Do you remember that? Jesus is so great and powerful!

“This month, we will be learning about Jesus, but we will talk about the things He said. Who is ready to learn about Jesus’ sayings in our new unit called, *I Am*?” 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 (20-30 per class) | Masking or Painter’s Tape | Timer |

Say, “Today, we are going to play a new game called *Protect the Sheep*. Sheep can get hurt or eaten by other animals if they do not stay inside their sheep pen [or fenced-in area]. The sheep need to stay in the sheep pen to stay safe, but they keep getting taken out of the pen! Let’s see what we can do to protect our sheep!”



INFLATE THE WHITE BALLOONS BEFORE CLASS BEGINS.

GAME GOAL: To protect the sheep (inflated white balloons) by moving all of them into the sheep pen (or square taped on the floor).

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.
- Set the timer for 2 minutes. 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 (15+ kids), designate more than one person to be the thief.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job playing *Protect the Sheep!* Did you protect all the sheep? Well, there is a reason we worked so hard to protect the sheep, because that's what sheep protectors do! Now we're going to learn about the BEST sheep protector ever known as the Good Shepherd!"

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) |



WHEN TELLING/READING MORE ABSTRACT STORIES, IT HELPS TO HAVE VISUALS FOR THE KIDS. THE GREEN BLANKET REPRESENTS THE GRASS, AND THE COTTON BALLS SYMBOLIZE SHEEP. CUT OUT THE IMAGES FROM THE WOLF, JESUS AND PLAIN SHEPHERD ACTIVITY PAGES AND USE THEM TO SHOW HOW JESUS PROTECTS THE SHEEP (HIS PEOPLE) FROM THE WOLF (SATAN) WHILE THE ORDINARY SHEPHERD RUNS AWAY WHEN HE SEES A WOLF.

Say, "Today, we will be reading about who Jesus says He is. Jesus used the words 'I AM' to tell people that He is God [Exodus 3:14]. Wow! Today, we learn that Jesus is like a shepherd. Remember, shepherds protect sheep from danger and keep them safe, just like we played in our game! Let's read Jesus' first 'I AM' statement." Read John 10:11-15 (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.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I give my life for the sheep.

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 a GOOD shepherd? [Wait for responses.] Jesus is the Good Shepherd because He protects us, His sheep! Jesus loves us so much that He does whatever He has to do to keep us safe. Jesus even died on a cross for you and me. Jesus gave up His life because He is the Good Shepherd. The ordinary shepherd sees danger, but he saves himself instead of saving the sheep. Aren't you grateful that Jesus is a better shepherd than that? He is the Good Shepherd. **God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd** because He loves us. Jesus saves us because He is the Good Shepherd. Thank You, God, for sending us Jesus—our Good Shepherd."



IF THE KIDS ARE HAVING A HARD TIME UNDERSTANDING THAT EACH OF THEM IS ONE OF JESUS' "SHEEP," GIVE EACH OF THE KIDS A WHITE BALLOON FROM THE ENGAGE GAME TO HOLD WHILE RETELLING THE STORY. BE SURE TO POINT TO THE KIDS AS YOU MENTION THE SHEEP.

TRANSITION: Say, "Can 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. God sent Jesus to be our...

Response: **God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd.**

2. Why is Jesus the BEST shepherd?

Response: Answers will vary.

3. What does the wolf do to the sheep if there is no shepherd (or no one to protect them)?

Response: The wolf attacks the sheep when the shepherd is not around. The shepherd is there to protect the sheep.

4. How is the ordinary shepherd different from the Good Shepherd?

Response: Answers will vary; however, be sure to mention that the ordinary shepherd in this passage protected/saved himself instead of his sheep.

5. What do you think it's like to be one of Jesus' sheep? What would it be like to be the ordinary shepherd's sheep?

Response: Answers will vary.

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

Response: Jesus is the Good Shepherd, **God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd**, Jesus protects us and keeps us safe, Jesus loves us more than anyone else, Jesus knows us, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job with those questions! Remember, **God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd** who protects and saves us from danger."

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Sheep Pen Activity Page* (1 per child) | *Good Shepherd Activity Page* (1 pre-cut image per child) | Cotton Balls (8 per child) | Glue Sticks | Crayons |



BEFORE CLASS, BE SURE TO CUT OUT THE GOOD SHEPHERDS IMAGES FROM THE *GOOD SHEPHERD* ACTIVITY PAGE. YOU'LL NEED ONE GOOD SHEPHERD PER CHILD.

Say, "For today's activity, we will create a picture to remind us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who dies for His sheep. Jesus loves us so much that He never runs away when danger comes. He protects us instead! Jesus is so good."

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child a *Sheep Pen Activity Page*, one cut-out *Good Shepherd* image, eight cotton balls, a

glue stick, and crayons.

- Instruct the children to color their *Sheep Pen* Activity Page and their *Good Shepherd* image.
- Then, glue the cotton balls (or sheep) into the sheep pen on the *Sheep Pen* Activity Page and then glue the *Good Shepherd* image next to the sheep to watch over them and protect them.



REINFORCE THAT **GOD SENT JESUS TO BE OUR GOOD SHEPHERD.**
HE IS OUR GREAT AND BEST PROTECTOR.

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

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, “Before Jesus came to Earth, God used the words ‘I AM’ to tell His friend, Moses, who He was. Then, in our story today, Jesus used those same words, ‘I AM,’ to teach His people: ‘I am the Good Shepherd.’ Our new memory verse will help us think of God whenever we hear the words ‘I AM’ in the Bible! Are you ready to hear our new memory verse? I’ll say it first, and then you 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: Get the kids moving around as you practice the verse. For example, start the verse while everyone is seated, but then have the kids jump up and stand as straight as possible when they say, “I AM WHO I AM.”

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, “**God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd.** Jesus loves us so much that He was happy to give up His life for each of us! Jesus is our Good Shepherd who protects us and keeps us safe no matter what. Wow! I sure am grateful for Jesus. Let’s thank God for sending Jesus to be our Good Shepherd.” After you pray, ask the children to share one thing they especially like about Jesus being our Good Shepherd.

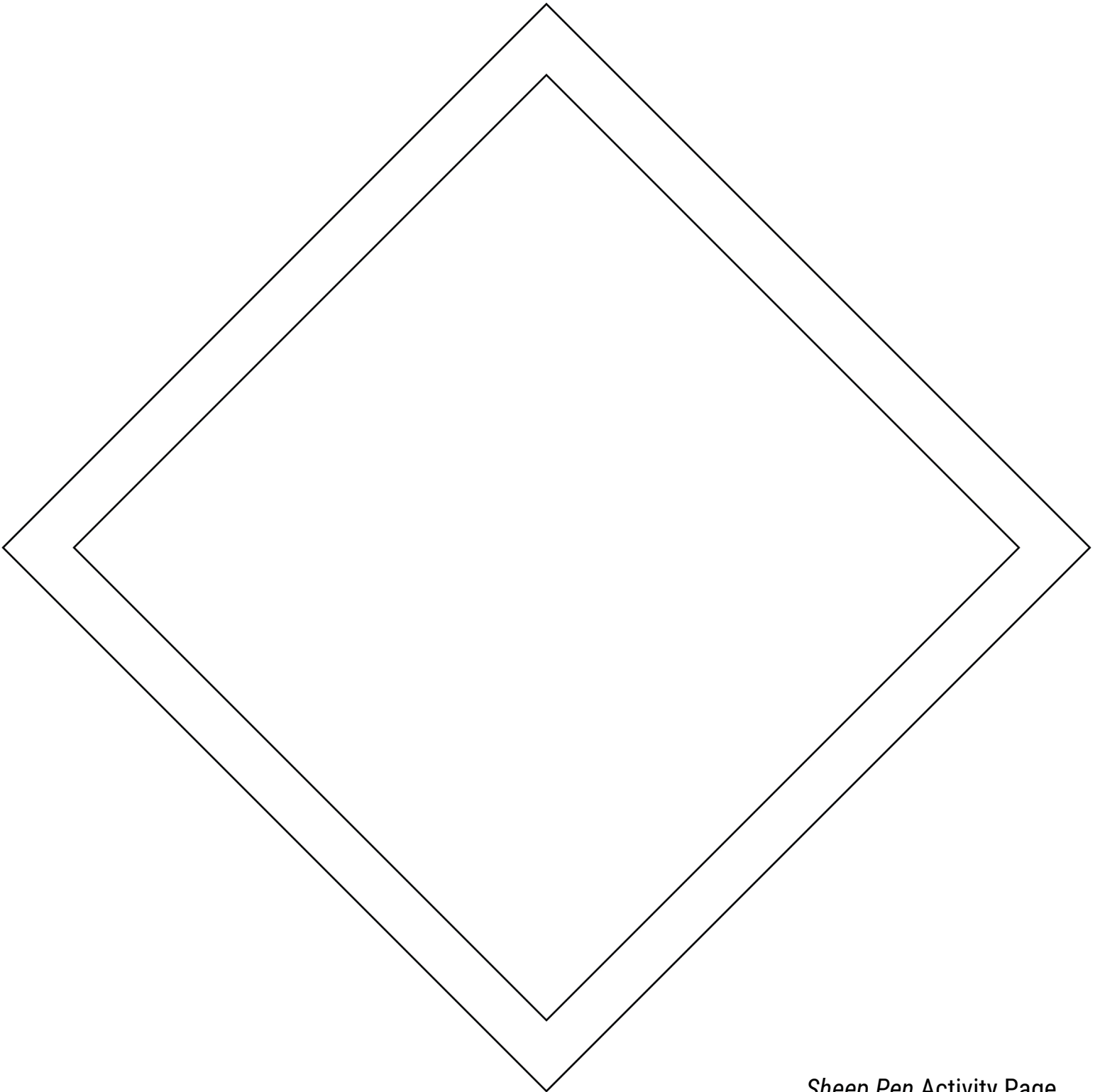
SAMPLE PRAYER: “God, thank You for sending us Jesus, the best Shepherd we could ever have! Every day, help us learn a little bit more about how much You love us. In Jesus Christ’s name, amen.”

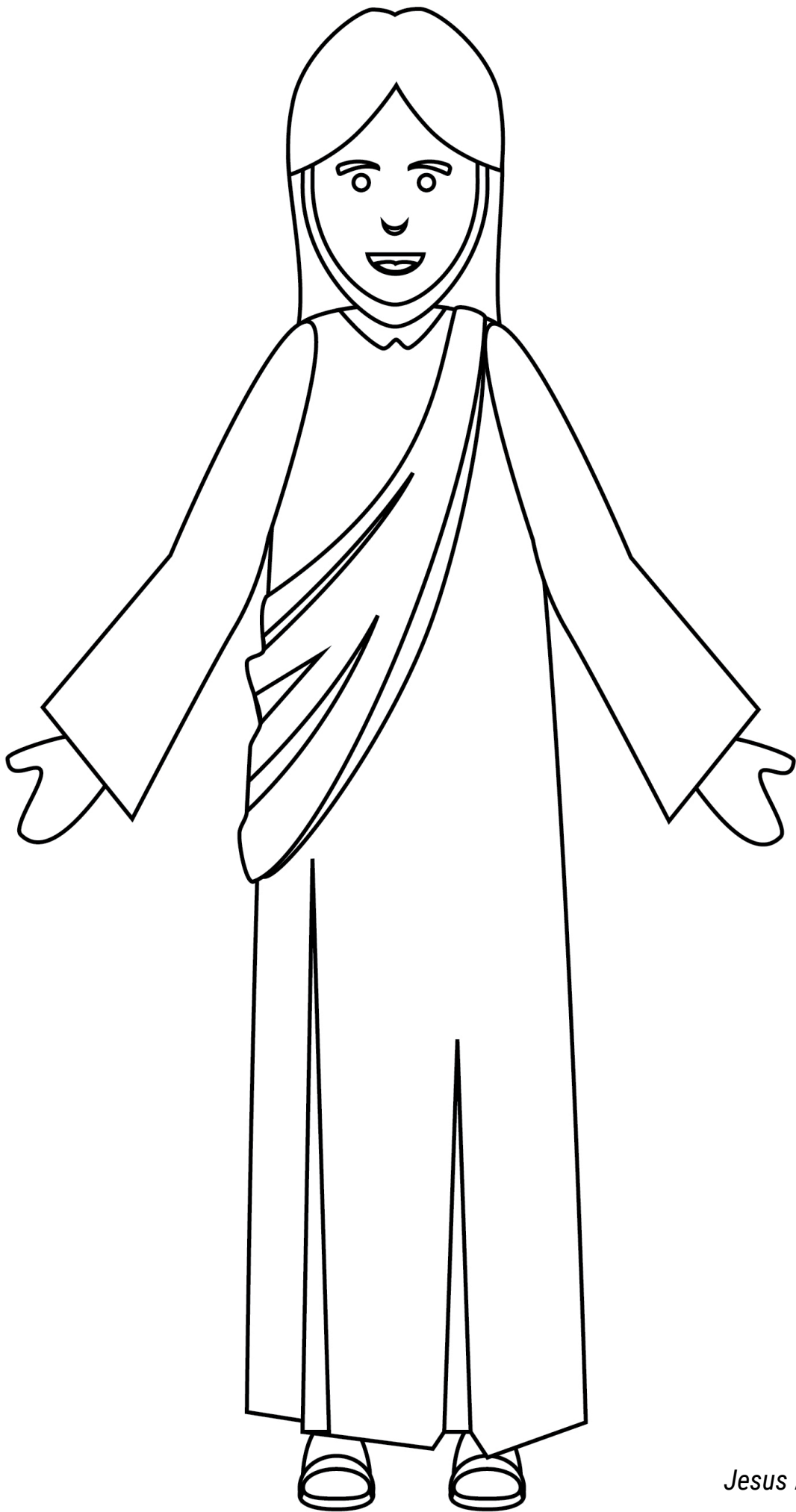
RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

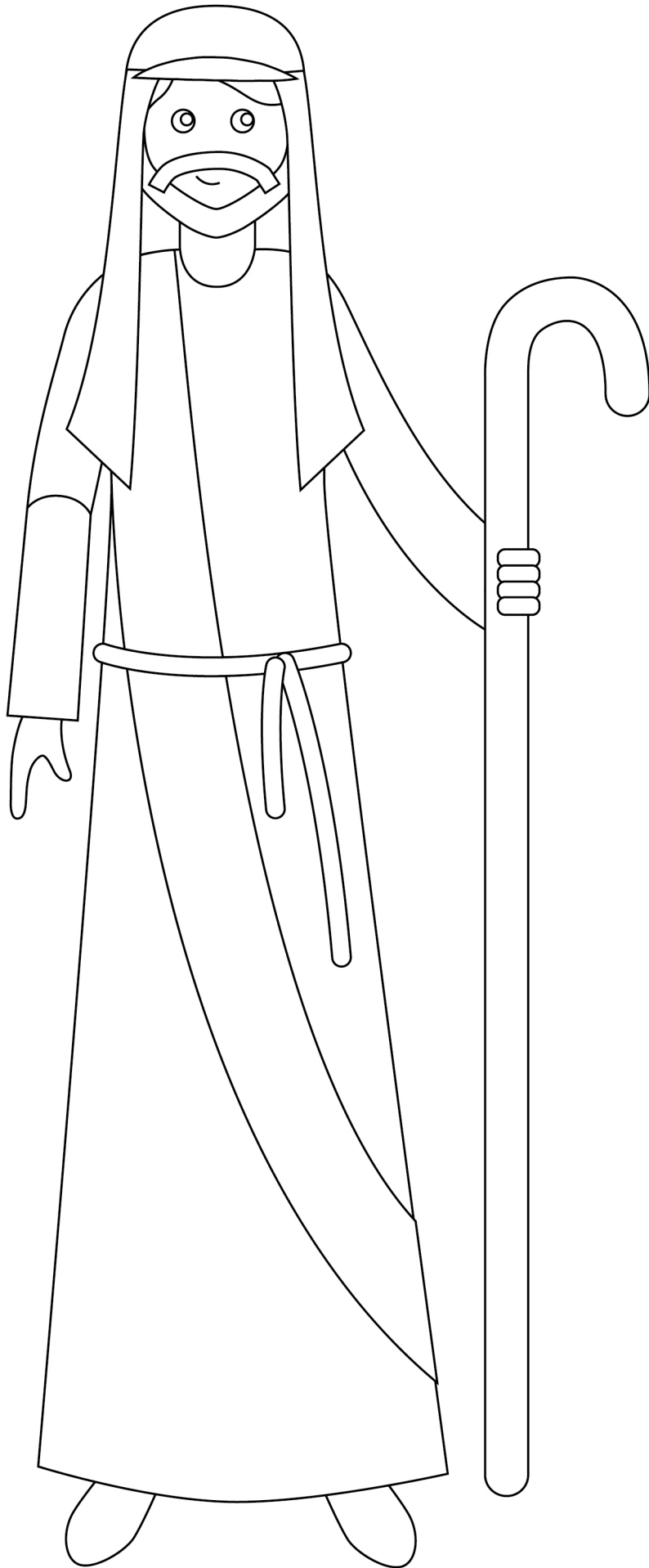
If you have extra time at the lesson’s conclusion, have the children practice retelling the story using the LEARN section’s materials. (When the children can accurately retell the story, you can be sure the kids understood the lesson.) You can also continue practicing the memory verse or replay the ENGAGE game—*Protect the Sheep*. When parents arrive, give them a copy of the monthly Parent Guide (downloadable).

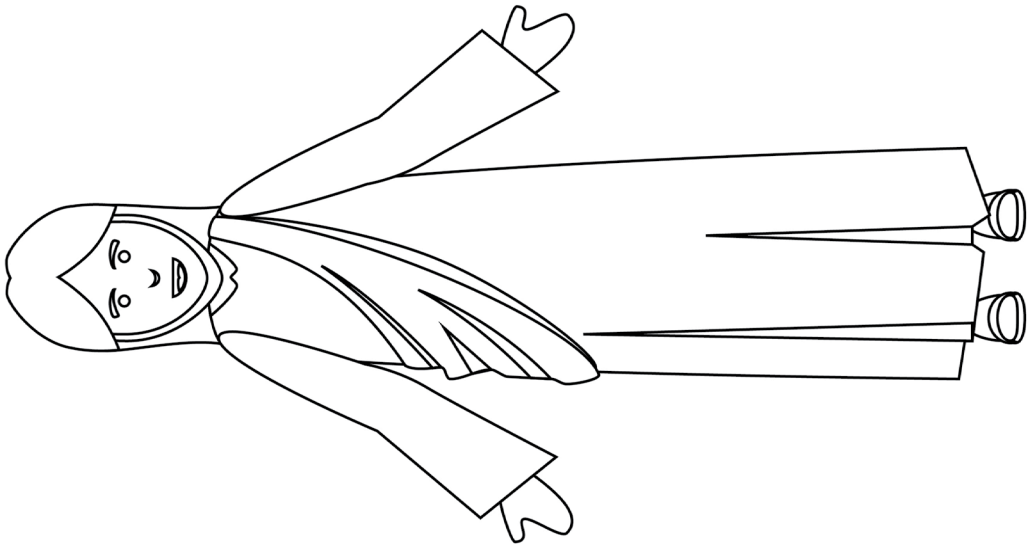
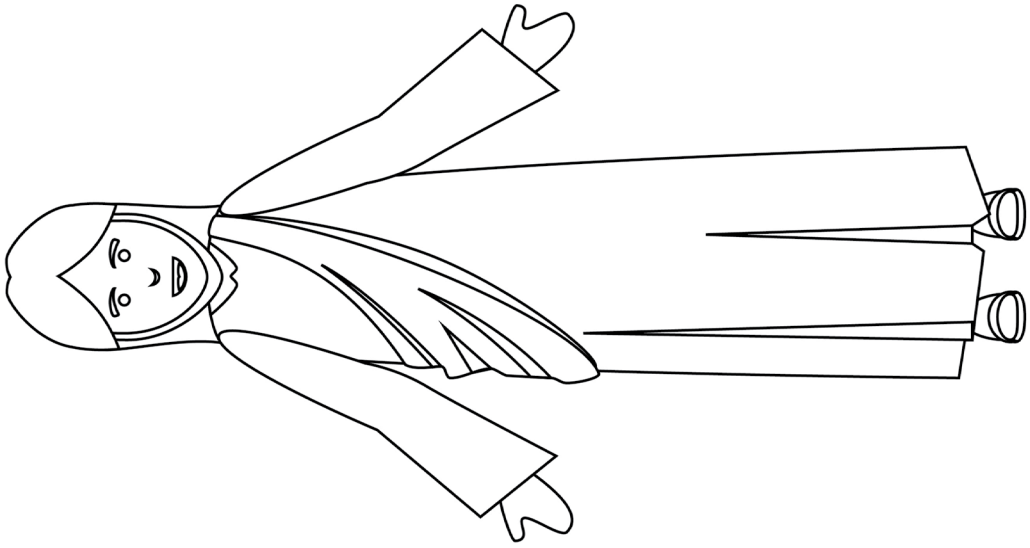
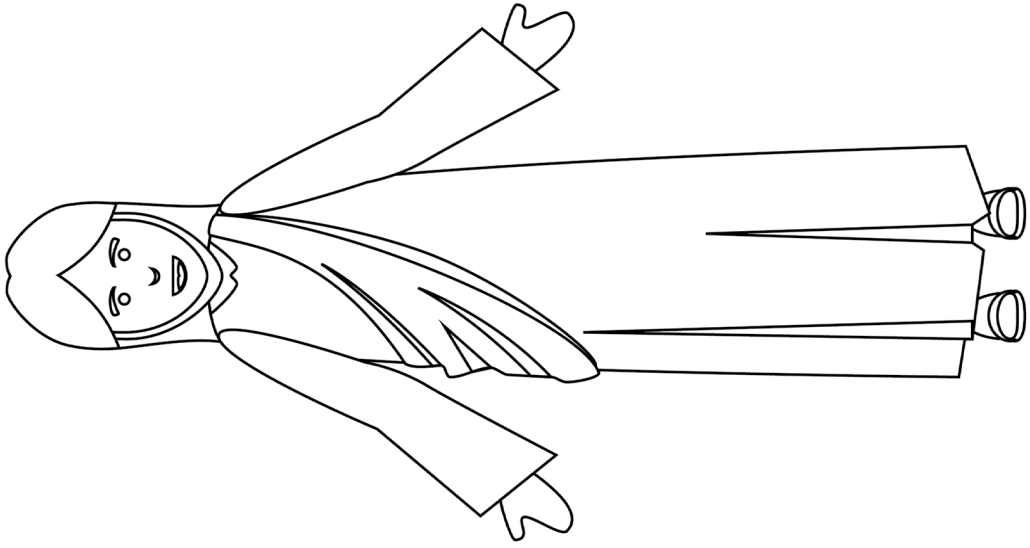


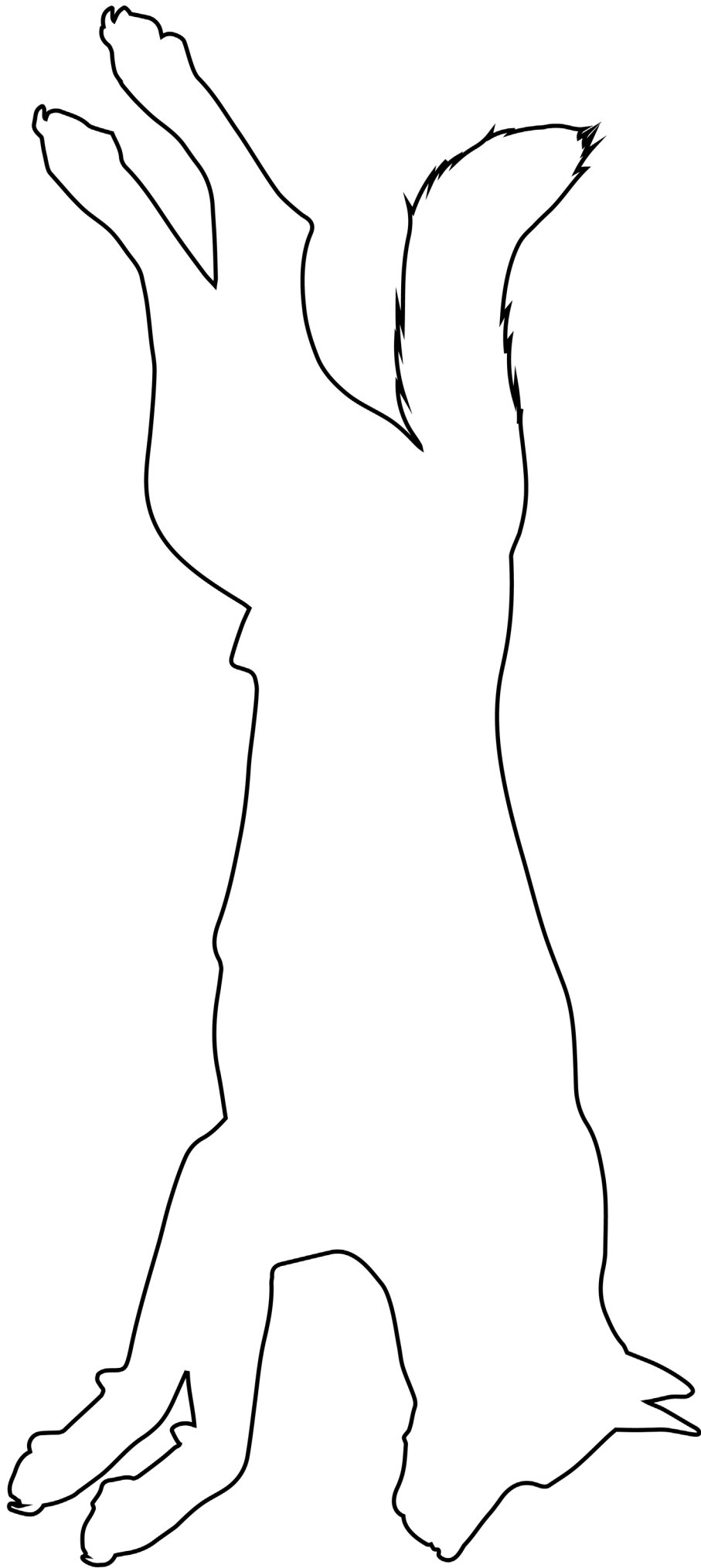
GOD SENT JESUS TO BE
OUR GOOD SHEPHERD











I AM THE DOOR

BIBLE PASSAGE

John 10:7, 9-10 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

God sent Jesus to be the Door.

FOCUS VERSE

“Then God said to Moses, ‘I AM 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 | *Door Activity Page* | *Window Activity Page* | *Ceiling Activity Page* | *Wall Activity Page* | *I Am the Door Activity Page* | Popsicle Sticks | Glue Sticks | Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- If you could be any age, how old would you be? Why?
- What animal do you think has the cutest face?



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 the story will help increase the children's retention and comprehension of the lesson. 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 every day. In Jesus' name, Amen."

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “Today, we are going to keep learning about Jesus’ ‘I Am’ sayings! Last week, we read that **God sent Jesus to be our Good Shepherd**. The Good Shepherd protects us and keeps us safe. We also learned that whenever Jesus says, ‘I Am,’ we must pay attention! [Sit up straight and cup your ears.] The words ‘I AM’ are super important in the Bible because Jesus uses them to help people understand that He is God. Are you ready to hear our next ‘I Am’ saying of Jesus? [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: | Your Classroom Door |

Say, “Today’s activity is called *Through the Door*. We will be entering through the doorway of our class in lots of different and fun ways. Would you like to try it?”

GAME GOAL: To move through the door in as many ways as possible.

HOW TO PLAY:

- Line all of the kids in front of the door.
- One at a time, instruct the kids to go through the door in different and funny ways. Here are some possibilities: dancing, skipping, crawling, spinning, shuffling, lunging, squatting, walking, running, jogging, hopping, rolling, singing, waving, tiptoeing, crab-walking, etc.
- Don’t forget to ask the kids to share their suggestions for creative ways to enter through the door.
- Play as time and interest allow.



SOMETIMES YOUNGER KIDS ENJOY THE SIMPLEST GAMES BEST.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job playing *Through the Door*! We went through the door lots of ways, but there was only ONE door. In this week’s story, Jesus will teach us an important lesson about the only Door [the only Way] to get to heaven. And it’s the greatest Door. Who is ready to hear it?”

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Door Activity Page* (1 per class) | *Window Activity Page* (1 per class) | *Ceiling Activity Page* (1 per class) | *Wall Activity Page* (1 per class) |

Say, “Do you remember from last week’s story that Jesus said, ‘I Am the Good Shepherd’? Well, Jesus made more than just one ‘I Am’ saying. Let’s learn about another one of them right now! Are you ready?” Read John 10:7, 9-10 (ICB).



USING PHRASES LIKE, “PUT YOUR LISTENING EARS ON” OR “SHOW ME WHAT GOOD LISTENING LOOKS LIKE,” ARE GREAT WAYS TO DRAW THE CHILDREN’S ATTENTION TO GOD’S WORD. USING THE SAME PHRASE WEEKLY CAN ALSO HELP THE KIDS GET IN A HABIT OF PREPARING THEIR MINDS TO LISTEN.

⁷ So Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth. I am the door for the sheep. ⁸ All the people who came before me were thieves and robbers. The sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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? That sounds silly, doesn’t it? Jesus isn’t really a door, but He says He is like a door.”



WHEN EXPLAINING THE STORY, USE THE *DOOR*, *WINDOW*, *CEILING*, AND *WALL* ACTIVITY PAGES. AS YOU ASK THE KIDS HOW THEY ENTER A ROOM, SHOW THEM THE DIFFERENT OPTIONS ON THE ACTIVITY PAGES. THEN ASK THEM TO TELL YOU WHY “A DOOR” IS THE BEST OPTION.

Ask, “Why do you think Jesus said He is the Door? [Wait for responses.] Great guesses! Jesus said He is the Door because we can only know God by knowing Jesus. Jesus is the Door we must use to get to God. Should you get into a room by crawling through a window? What about walking through a wall? What about coming into a room from the ceiling? No! That might sound like fun, but we know those are the wrong ways to get into a room. How should we enter a room? [Wait for responses.] Right—through a door! Thankfully, **God sent Jesus to be the Door** for us! If we tell Jesus we are sorry for the bad things we have done and ask Him to save us, we can become friends of God! Isn’t that amazing?! **God sent Jesus to be the Door** for us!”

TRANSITION: Say, “Aren’t you grateful that **God sent Jesus to be the Door** for you? God must love us a lot, huh?!”

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, “Let’s see what you remember about today’s story.”

1. God sent Jesus to be the...

Response: **God sent Jesus to be the Door.**

2. What was your favorite part of our story? Why?

Response: Answers will vary.

3. Why is Jesus called our Door?

Response: Jesus is called the Door because we have to know Him (be forgiven by Him) to be saved and become friends with the Father.



IF THE KIDS ARE HAVING A HARD TIME ANSWERING THIS QUESTION, USE THE ACTIVITY PAGES FROM THE LEARN SECTION AND WRITE "GOD" ON THE BACK OF THE *DOOR* BUT LEAVE ALL THE OTHER BACKS BLANK. THEN, YOU CAN "OPEN" (OR TURN AROUND) EACH ACTIVITY AND SEE WHAT IS BEHIND IT. EXPLAIN THAT GOD IS BEHIND THE DOOR OF JESUS—NOT BEHIND ANY OTHER IMAGES!

4. How can you go through the Door (be saved) to get to God? (Reread verse 9.)

Response: Jesus is our Door, and He saves us. (Tell the kids that you will teach them how to ask Jesus to save them [or be their Door] later in the lesson.)

5. Why do you think God loves us so much that He would send His Son, Jesus, to be our Door?

Response: God loves us because He made us! He loves being friends with His people. God was happy to send His Son so we could know God.

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 God, Jesus is God, Jesus is kind, Jesus is the Way (or Door) to heaven, Jesus helps us know God, etc.

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

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

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

Say, "For today's activity, we will make a door to remind us that Jesus said, 'I Am the Door.' Loving and following Jesus is the only way to be friends with God and go to heaven. Who is ready to make a door to help us remember that Jesus is our Door?"

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child an *I Am the Door* Activity page, six popsicle sticks, a glue stick, and 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 hear this month's memory verse again and get it in our brains! These words help us remember that Jesus is God's Son because both God [the Father] and Jesus [the Son] use these very special words: 'I AM.' 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: Do a "call and response" activity while reciting the verse. For example, the leader can say the first portion of the 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.** When we love and trust Jesus, we start to understand that He is the only right way. Aren't you grateful **God sent Jesus to be the Door** so we can be saved and live with God forever? If you want Jesus to be your Door - to forgive your sins, so you can know God – here is a prayer you can say. Will you repeat it after me?"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus – I know that you made me and want me to obey you with all my heart. I know I have disobeyed and wanted to be my own boss. I am sorry. I know you gave up Your life to save me from these sins and make me your child. I accept your promises and ask you to please save me now and forever. Amen."*



AN ALTERNATIVE TO LEADING THE CLASS IN THE PRAYER OF SALVATION IS TO WAIT UNTIL THE PARENTS ARRIVES FOR PICK UP, AND 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.

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

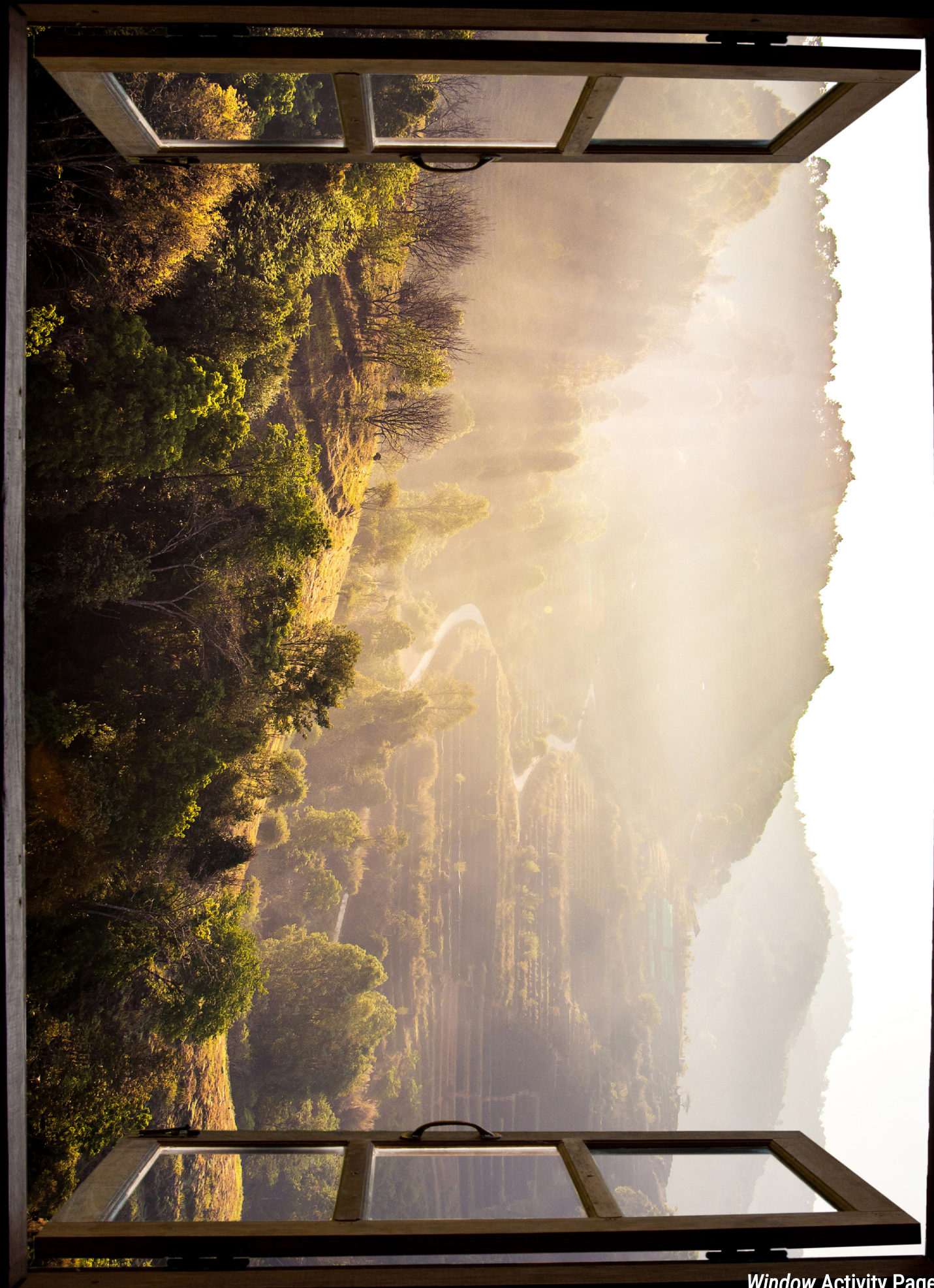
If you have time to spare, replay *Through the Door* or allow the kids to ask questions about the story.



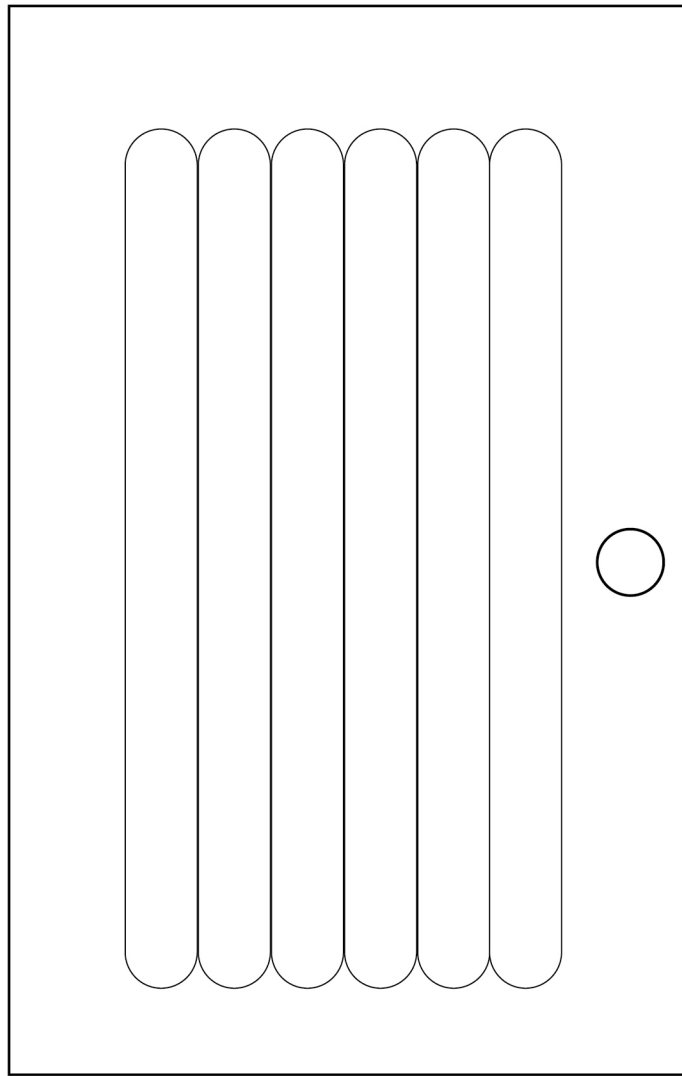








I AM THE



DOOR

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, ‘I AM 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 | 5-Gallon Bucket | Small Throwing Balls | Poster Paper and Markers (Optional) | Timer (Optional) | Slice of Bread (ALLERGY ALERT) | *Jesus Activity Page* | *Jesus, the Bread of Life Activity Pages 1-2* | Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is your favorite kind of sandwich?
- If you could spend the day with Jesus, what would you want to do together?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Begin this week’s time with a “call to worship.” During your “call to worship,” read a Bible verse that will encourage your kids and help them focus on God. Psalm 66:1-2 is an example of a Scripture passage that works well for this situation.

Say, “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 and shout to God with joyful hearts, knowing He deserves our worship!”

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Gather your children for prayer.



SOMETIMES, WE THINK WE NEED TO SWITCH UP OUR CLASS SCHEDULE TO KEEP THINGS “INTERESTING” AND “FUN,” BUT THE MOST EFFECTIVE LESSONS ARE THE ONES THAT FOLLOW A PREDICTABLE STRUCTURE. CHILDREN FIND COMFORT IN KNOWING WHAT IS COMING. KEEP YOUR ROUTINE!

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! Thank You, Jesus. Amen.”

REVIEW – 5 MINUTES**MATERIALS:** | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “For the past few weeks, we have been talking about the ‘I Am’ sayings of Jesus. Does anyone remember one of Jesus’ ‘I Am’ sayings? [Wait for responses.] Great! Jesus is the Good Shepherd who keeps us safe, and He is the Door that makes a way for us to be with God! God sent Jesus to be everything we will ever need! What good news! Now, let’s read Jesus’ next ‘I Am’ saying.” 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! Who likes games?”

ENGAGE – 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | 5-Gallon Bucket (1 per class) | Small Throwing Balls (30-50 balls per class) | Poster Paper and Markers (Optional) | Timer (Optional) |

Say, “The game we will be playing is called, *Feed the Monster!* The monster is so hungry, and we want to make the monster full. Let’s feed our monster these balls until he is full!”

GAME GOAL: To work together to fill the “monster’s” stomach (or bucket) with the balls until the “monster” isn’t hungry anymore.



TO MAKE IT FEEL MORE LIKE YOU ARE FEEDING A “MONSTER,” DRAW A CREATURE ON POSTER PAPER, AND TAPE IT TO THE WALL BEHIND THE 5-GALLON BUCKET.

HOW TO PLAY:

- First, spread the balls out over the activity area. Then, place the bucket next to a wall opposite the balls.
- Tell the kids that the bucket is the “monster’s” stomach, and it is their job to fill up his tummy.
- When you say “go,” have the kids grab one ball at a time and run it to the bucket to *Feed the Monster!*
- Play as time and interest permit.

CHALLENGE: To make this game competitive, use a timer to monitor how long it takes the class to fill up the monster’s “stomach.” Then, have the group repeat the game to see if they can beat their previous time.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job playing *Feed the Monster!* That was fun, wasn’t it? When we are hungry, we want to eat lots of food too! In our story, Jesus is going to talk about a different kind of hunger. Who is ready to hear it?”

LEARN – 15 MINUTES

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

Say, “In today’s story, Jesus says a confusing ‘I Am’ saying. Jesus says, ‘I am the bread that gives life.’

When we eat bread, our bellies get full [kind of like the monster in our game], but Jesus teaches us about a different kind of bread—bread that we do not eat! Let's listen to God's Word to find out what it means that **God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life.**" Read John 6:35, 38, 47-51 (ICB).

35 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.

38 I came down from heaven to do what God wants me to do. I did not come to do what I want to do.

47 I tell you the truth. He who believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread that gives life. 49 Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert. But still they died. 50 Here [Jesus is referring to Himself] is the bread that comes down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will never die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever."

Say, "Before you heard this story, did you know that **God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life?**"



JESUS REFERENCES THAT HE IS BETTER THAN THE MANNA (OR BREAD) THAT GOD GAVE HIS PEOPLE IN THE DESERT. READ EXODUS 16:4, 15 TO YOUR CLASS FOR CONTEXT.

Ask, "Is Jesus saying that we need to eat Him? [Wait for responses.] Haha! No! That would be silly! Jesus is telling His people that He is better than bread [or any other food]. When you eat regular food, how long is it before you want to eat again? [Wait for responses.] Right! We want to eat again in a couple of hours. Food only fills us up for a little while, but Jesus said that His love lasts forever!

"Say this with me, '**God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life.**' Good! God gives us regular food, too, doesn't He? He gives us plants and animals for food. Sometimes, He even does miracles to feed His people [like when He sent bread from heaven]. However, when God sent His Son to us, He gave us His best gift. He gave us a person who can save us and give us life forever—Jesus, 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 the food we have (like bread) is a good gift from God. However, God's best gift (raise the image of Jesus) is His Son – the Bread of Life.

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? Do we eat Jesus?

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

3. If we don't eat Jesus, why is He called the Bread of Life?

Response: Jesus is the Bread of Life because He makes it possible for us to live forever with God. He is the life-giver.

4. What kind of good gifts does God give us? Why is Jesus the BEST gift?

Response: Answers will vary.

5. If someone asks you what you learned today, what will you tell them?

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.



THIS IS A HARD STORY TO UNDERSTAND BECAUSE JESUS IS NOT BREAD EVEN THOUGH HE COMPARES HIMSELF TO BREAD. TO SEE IF YOUR CLASS UNDERSTANDS, ASK THEM TO EXPLAIN WHAT THEY LEARNED.

TRANSITION: Say, “Next time you are hungry and eat bread, I want you to think of this story. Bread only fills our tummies for a short time, but Jesus fills our hearts forever! Remember, God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life.”

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Jesus, the Bread of Life* Activity Pages 1-2 (1 double-sided paper per child) | Crayons |

Say, “For today’s activity, we will color a picture we can show our friends when we tell them that Jesus is the Bread of Life! I can’t wait to see your pictures!”

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child a *Jesus, the Bread of Life* Activity Page (printed double-sided) and crayons.
- On the side of the activity page that looks like bread, have the kids color it to make it look like a slice of bread. On the flip side, have the kids color in Jesus, emphasizing that He is not physical bread; He is our Bread of Life.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job! Will you use your craft to tell your neighbor or a friend about today’s ‘I Am’ saying? 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! Does anyone think they remember it?” Allow volunteers to say the verse aloud. “Great job! Now, let’s say it 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: If you have an incredibly active class, add additional movement to your motions. For example, whenever you use the word “God,” have the kids quickly stand up straight, and when you say “AM,” encourage everyone to twirl in a circle.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

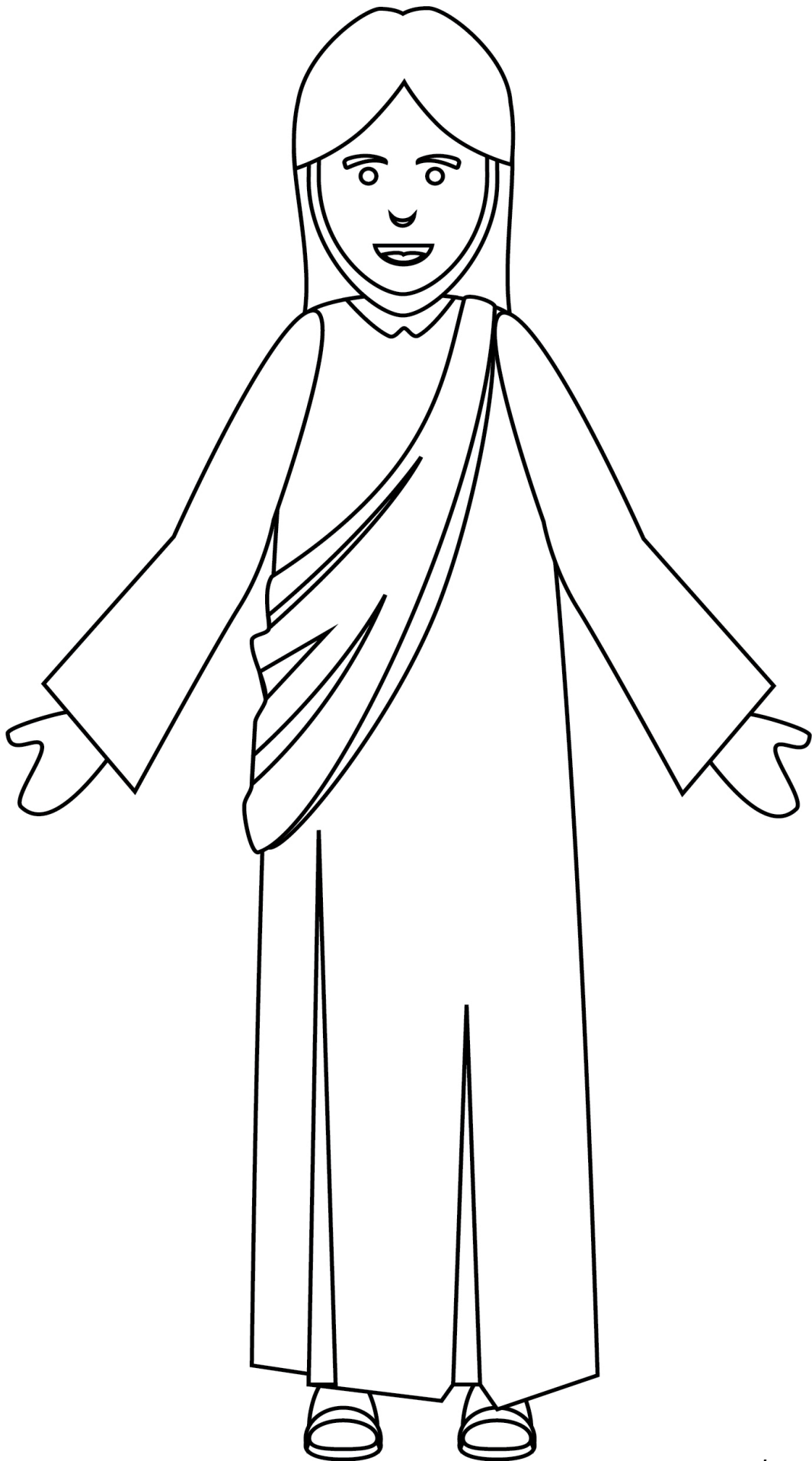
Say, “Jesus loves us enough to come down from heaven to be our Bread of Life. He is so much better than normal bread because bread only fills us up for a short time! God wants to fill our hearts with Jesus forever! Our hearts never have to be hungry when we love Jesus. **God sent Jesus to be our Bread of Life.**”

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“God, thank You for sending Your one and only Son to be everything we need. Your love is so amazing! Amen.”*

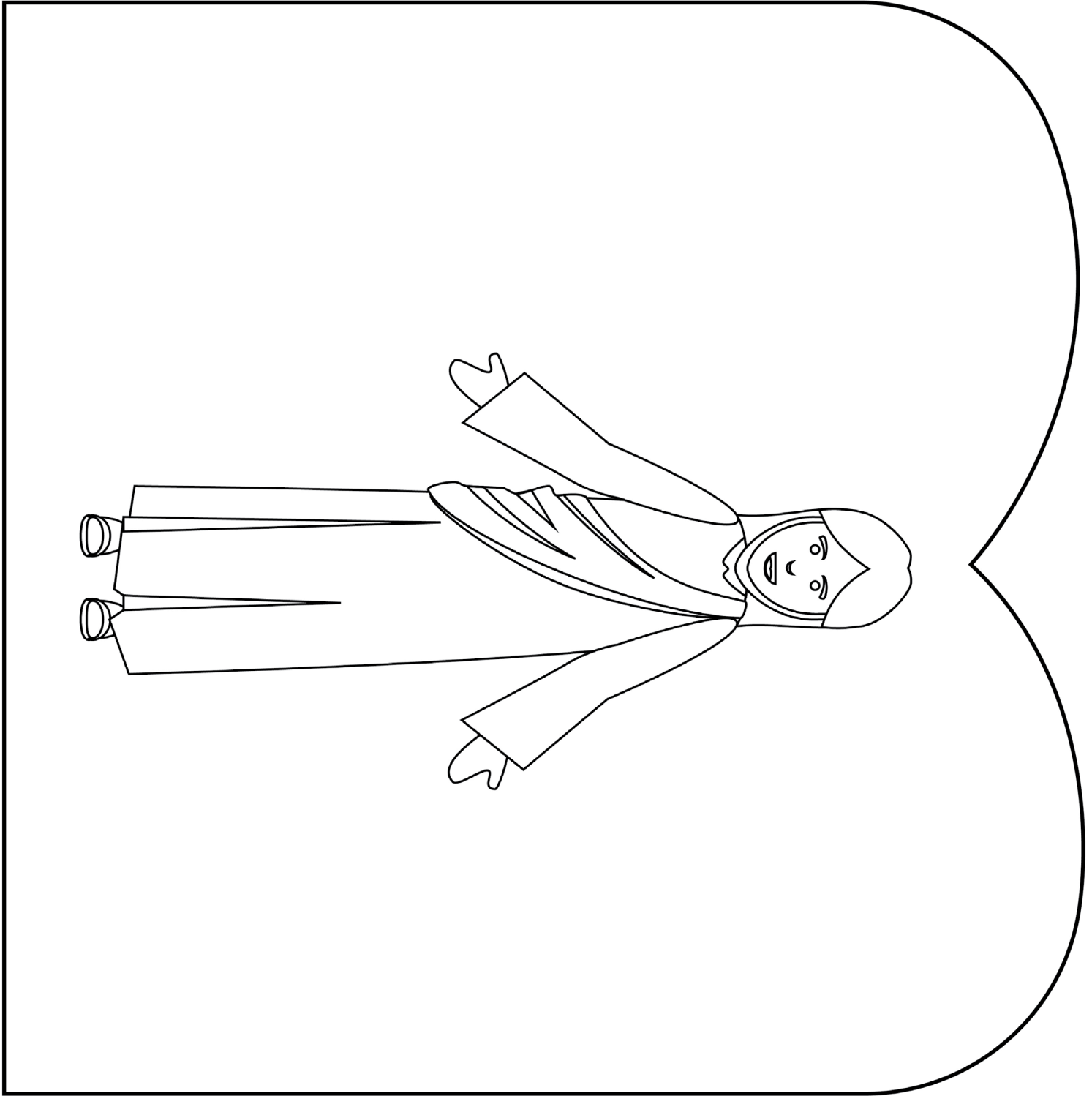
RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

Use any extra time to replay *Feed the Monster*, review the previous “I Am” statements (“I am the Good Shepherd,” and “I am the Door”), or sing together. This is also a great time to introduce new worship songs!





JESUS IS
THE BREAD
OF LIFE



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, 'I AM 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 | Masking or Painter's Tape | *I Am the Way* Activity Page | Tiny Stones or Sequins | Liquid Glue | Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is one toy you have always wanted?
- Would you rather be super fast or super strong? Why?



WHEN YOU ASK CONNECTION QUESTIONS, SHOW THE KIDS YOU ARE HEARING THEIR ANSWERS BY ACTIVELY LISTENING (NODDING, MAKING EYE-CONTACT, ASKING FURTHER QUESTIONS, ETC.).

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: "We are so thankful for You, God! You love us so much and hear us every time we talk to You. We are so happy to be Your children! In Jesus' name, amen!"

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “This is the fourth week of our lessons about Jesus’ ‘I Am’ sayings. Who remembers some of Jesus’ ‘I Am’ sayings that we have already learned?” (Use the puzzle pieces to help “jog” your kids’ memory.)

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

“Great! Jesus’ next ‘I Am’ saying is pretty great too! I cannot wait for you to hear it. Let’s put up our next puzzle piece.” Take a moment to place this week’s puzzle piece on the wall before transitioning to the game.

TRANSITION: Say, “Before we read the story, we are going to play a game!”

ENGAGE — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Masking or Painters’ Tape |

Say, “Today, we will be playing a game called, *Follow the Path!* You have to do your very best to stay on the path the ENTIRE time! Do you think you can do it?”

GAME GOAL: To follow the path without ever stepping off of it.

HOW TO PLAY:

- Tape a long path on the ground. (The path can go all around the room, crossing over itself and going in all directions.)
- When you say, “go,” have everyone find a spot on the line and start “following the path.”
- The children must keep their feet on the path the entire time. If they step off the path, they are “out” and must sit on the side.

CHALLENGE: If this activity is too simple, put obstacles along the way for the kids to navigate as they continue “following the path.” Some obstacles may include chairs, balls, tables, buckets, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job playing *Follow the Path!* Who was able to stay on the path the ENTIRE time? It was hard sometimes, wasn’t it? Well, today’s story is about following the right path too. Let’s hear what Jesus says about staying on ‘the path!’”

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

Say, “Jesus talked about many ‘I Am’ sayings, but the one we are hearing today might be the most popular [or common]! Jesus knew He would one day return to heaven to be with His Father, God. Jesus also knew that when He left, His followers would be sad and miss Him very much. Jesus’ followers might wonder

why He had to leave, so Jesus made sure to tell His friends some happy news. Jesus promised that when He left, He would go to heaven to make a place for them!" Read John 14:2-6 (ICB).

² "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. ³ 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. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going."

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

⁶ 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, "Why did Jesus leave His followers? [Wait for responses.] Jesus loved His friends, but He also knew that He needed to be in heaven to prepare a very special place for His followers to live one day. Did you know that Jesus is making a special place for YOU in heaven? When we know and love Jesus, we know the way to heaven because Jesus is the Way! **God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life.** If you ever feel lost or confused, remember that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Can you say that with me?" Say that together as a class.

TRANSITION: Say, "Why did **God send 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 know the Father (God) without coming to Jesus and believing in Him first (John 14:6).

3. Why do you think Jesus told His followers He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life?

Response: Jesus told His friends that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life so they would know to follow and love Him more than anyone else.

4. Why does God have many rooms in His house?

Response: God has many rooms, so there will be a place for everyone who believes in God. If you love and follow God, you will have a room in God's house one day too!

5. (Reread John 14:2-6.) How do you think Jesus' followers felt after He said these things?

Response: Answers will vary.

6. 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 the Way* Activity Page (1 page printed on cardstock per child) | Tiny Stones or Sequins (1 small handful per child) | Liquid Glue | Crayons |

Say, "To help us remember Jesus' big 'I Am' saying—I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life—we are going to make a special craft. Who is ready to get to work?"

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child an *I Am the Way* Activity Page and crayons.
- Instruct the kids to color the *I Am the Way* Activity Page.
- After the kids have colored their entire Activity Page, give each child a handful of tiny stones (or sequins). Help them to glue the stones to the path.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job! Remember, **God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life!** Aren't you thankful Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life?"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "It is time to say our memory verse again! Our verse reminds us that Jesus is God, the great I AM. Let's say it 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: Play *Gotcha!* with this unit's memory verse: Misquote the verse to your kids, each time omitting or changing a keyword. Ask the kids to shout, "Gotcha!" when they hear the "mistake." Then quote the verse accurately together.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "**God sent Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life** for us. Jesus said that we know the way to heaven if we know Him because He is the Way! God loves us SO much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to save us and make a place for us in heaven. Let's take a moment and tell God how thankful we are that He loves us enough to send us Jesus."

SAMPLE PRAYER: "God, thank You for sending Jesus to show us the way to forgiveness and to our forever home in heaven. We are so grateful for Your love! In the great name of Jesus, amen."



THIS WEEK WHY NOT TRY SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT? DEVOTE ANY EXTRA TIME TO PRAYER. ASK EACH CHILD TO PRAY WORDS OF THANKFULNESS TO GOD. IF YOUR CLASS IS SHY ABOUT PRAYING IN FRONT OF OTHERS, PROVIDE EACH CHILD WITH A PIECE OF PAPER AND HAVE THEM DRAW A PRAYER TO JESUS. THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO PRAY!

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

See the “Helpful Hint” in the REFLECT section for an extension activity if you have extra time remaining before the children leave.

