

WHO IS JESUS?



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MONTHLY PREPARATION GUIDE

YEAR 3, UNIT 01 - ELEMENTARY

This month's lessons ask the question, *Who is Jesus?*, and they are focused on helping children understand who Jesus is. He is our God, our Messiah, our Friend, and our Redeemer. As you prepare, consider how you can invite the kids to connect with Christ as they worship, learn, and play. Give them an opportunity to think about Jesus in every part of your time together.

WEEK 1

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), Fabric Strips (1 for every 2 kids, 2' long each), *Stained-Glass Window* Activity Page (one per child) | *Jesus* Activity Page (one *Jesus* figure per child) | Tissue Paper Pieces (variety of colors) | Crayons | Scissors | Glue

WEEK 2

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), Mystery Items (4-6 items), Blindfolds (1-2), Container and Lid, Paper, Pencils, White Cardstock Squares, Glass Bowl, Olive oil or Fractionated Coconut Oil (½ cup), Scented Perfume or Essential Oil(s) (several drops), Cinnamon (1 tsp), Cotton Swabs (1 per student)

WEEK 3

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), *Cloud Example* Activity Page (1 per class), *Cloud* Activity Page (1 per child), Rainbow Colored Construction Paper Strips (1 set per child), Markers (1 per child), Glue Sticks

WEEK 4

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), *Hidden Pictures* Activity Page (1 per 2 students), Pencils, Crayons

JESUS: IS HE REALLY GOD?

BIBLE PASSAGE

John 1: 1-3; 14

BIG IDEA

Jesus wants you to know Him.

FOCUS VERSE

“Jesus answered, I am the way. And I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me. If you really knew me, then you would know my Father too.” John 14:6-7 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Fabric Strips | *Stained-Glass Window* Activity Page | *Jesus* Activity Page | Tissue Paper Pieces | Crayons | Glue |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Do you remember a time when you were happy, sad, etc.?
- Would you tell me about it?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

This month's lessons ask the question, *Who is Jesus?*, and they are focused on helping children understand who Jesus is. He is our God, our Messiah, our Friend, and our Redeemer. As you prepare for worship, consider how you can invite the kids to connect with Christ as they sing and learn. Give them an opportunity to think about Jesus and give Him praise.

The more we know about God, the easier it is to worship Him. So select songs that focus on learning more about Jesus. We recommend introducing “My Best Friend” by Hillsong Kids as a theme song for this unit.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

SAMPLE PRAYER: “Dear Jesus, we are glad that You are God. We can trust that You are who say You are. Help us to know You better and thank You for loving us; we love You too. Amen.”



THIS YEAR WE ARE PLACING A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON HELPING CHILDREN DEVELOP A BIBLICALLY ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD. LOOK FOR THIS SYMBOL FOR SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO NATURALLY EMPHASIZE THIS TOPIC IN EACH LESSON.

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

BACKGROUND: Say, “Last month, we talked about the birth of Jesus. It’s important to remember that the birth of Jesus as a human baby was not the beginning of Jesus. Although Jesus did live on Earth, He is so much more than that. He is God! This month, we are talking all about Jesus, and one incredible thing you’ll learn is that **Jesus wants you to know Him!** Now, who wants to put up the first puzzle piece for this new series?”

TRANSITION: Say, “Let’s play a game together before we read our story!”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES**MATERIALS:** | Fabric Strips (1 for every 2 kids, 2’ long each) |

GAME GOAL: Pairs of students will unite to win a three-legged race.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Have students pair up, side-by-side.
2. Tie the partners’ legs together (one person’s left and the other person’s right).
3. Partners will race to the finish line—walking quickly in sync.
4. Play several rounds as time allows.



PLAY OUTSIDE IF YOU CAN! ALSO, HAVE A PLAN FOR KIDS WHO DON’T WANT TO PARTICIPATE. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY MAY BE WILLING TO STAND AT THE FINISH LINE AND CHEER ON THEIR FRIENDS! FINALLY, IF THERE ARE AN UNEVEN NUMBER OF KIDS, MAKE SURE SOMEONE (OR YOU) WILL PARTICIPATE.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job, everyone! Wow! It’s hard for two people to race like you are one, isn’t it? Today we are going to learn something very important about Jesus! He was a person like us, but He is also so much more.”

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

Say, “The best place to learn about Christ is in God’s Word. Who knows the name of the book God gave us? [Wait for responses.] Right! God speaks to us through the Bible, and He gave it to us so that we can learn more about who He is because **Jesus wants you to know Him!** Let’s read what Jesus wants us to know about Him today!” Read John 1: 1-3 (ICB).

¹Before the world began, there was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ All things were made through him. Nothing was made without him.

Read John 1: 14 (ICB).

¹⁴ The Word became a man and lived among us. We saw his glory—the glory that belongs to the only Son of the Father. The Word was full of grace and truth.

Say, "We can't remember anything that happened before we were born, but Jesus had already lived forever in heaven before He was born into our world. He even made this world! He made you too!"

"Today, we are learning that Jesus was more than a person who lived on Earth. He is God who became a human. John, one of his disciples, wrote the Bible verses we read today. He saw Jesus and touched Jesus. This means Jesus was 100% [completely or all] God and 100% [completely or all] human at the same time! This might seem hard to understand, but Jesus wants you to know Him! He wants you to know that He was a person, but He is also God."

Ask, "What do you think? How could God be completely [all] human and completely [all] God at the very same time?" (Give the children a chance to wonder at this truth.)

TRANSITION: Say, "It's incredible to think that Jesus made the world He came to live on. He also made all the people! He made you and me! Jesus was with God in the beginning but then He became a baby and lived on Earth so people like you and me can know Him. Wow! Jesus wants you to know Him!"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Our lesson today is so powerful! Let's talk about it."

1. Who wants you to know Him?

Response: Jesus wants me to know Him!

2. What does Jesus want me to know about Him?

Response: He is God!

3. When was Jesus created?

Response: Jesus is the Creator God! He has always been alive. Like God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, Jesus has always existed.

4. Who saw Jesus when He was a person on earth?

Response: John, His disciples, His family, etc.

5. How can we know Jesus better?

Response: By learning from the Bible

6. What is one reason Jesus became a person?

Response: Jesus became a person because He loves us and He wants us to know Him.

7. What did we learn about God today?

Response: **Jesus wants us to know Him.** Jesus is God. Jesus has always existed. God loves us, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Thank you for all the great answers you shared! Now, let's work on a craft that will help us remember that **Jesus wants you to know Him!**"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Stained-Glass Window* Activity Page (one per child) | *Jesus* Activity Page (one *Jesus* figure per child) | Tissue Paper Pieces (variety of colors) | Crayons | Glue |



BEFORE CLASS, CUT OUT ENOUGH OF THE JESUS FIGURES FOR EACH CHILD TO HAVE ONE.

Say, "Some churches have special windows made with stained glass. [If your church doesn't have stained glass windows, find a picture to show the children.] These beautiful windows often show pictures to help people learn Bible stories and remind us of how wonderful God is! Today, we learned that Jesus is God, so let's make a stained-glass window to remind us that Jesus is our wonderful God!"

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each student a Stained-Glass Window Outline, tissue paper pieces, a glue stick, and one Jesus figure.
2. Have the students glue the tissue paper pieces on the "window" in any pattern or design they wish.
3. Let them color the Jesus figure and glue it to the center of the window.

TRANSITION: Say, "Wow! What beautiful masterpieces you made! You can take these home to remember our lesson today."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "This month, we are learning a verse about who Jesus is. I am going to read it first, and then we will say it together."

"Jesus answered, (touch the middle of each palm with your index finger) 'I am the way. (extend both arms out towards you a forward motion) And I am the truth (hold hands together like a book) and the life (bring your hands close to your heart). The only way to the Father is through me. (point to the sky) If you really knew me (touch your head with your index finger), then you would know my Father too (point to the sky).'" John 14:6-7 (ICB)



USE THIS GAME TO HIGHLIGHT SOME WAYS GOD IS DIFFERENT FROM US. EXPLAIN THAT YOU ARE GOING TO NAME AN ACTION. IF ONLY GOD CAN PERFORM THE ACTION, THE CHILDREN SHOULD STAND UP, BUT IF PEOPLE CAN DO IT TOO, THEN THEY SHOULD REMAIN SEATED. HERE ARE A FEW ACTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED: 1) CREATE THE UNIVERSE. 2) BE KIND. 3) LISTEN TO EVERYONE'S PRAYERS AT THE SAME TIME. 4) HEAL A SICK PERSON. 5) TELL THE TRUTH. 6) MAKE THE SUN SHINE. 7) SING. (ZEPH. 3:17)

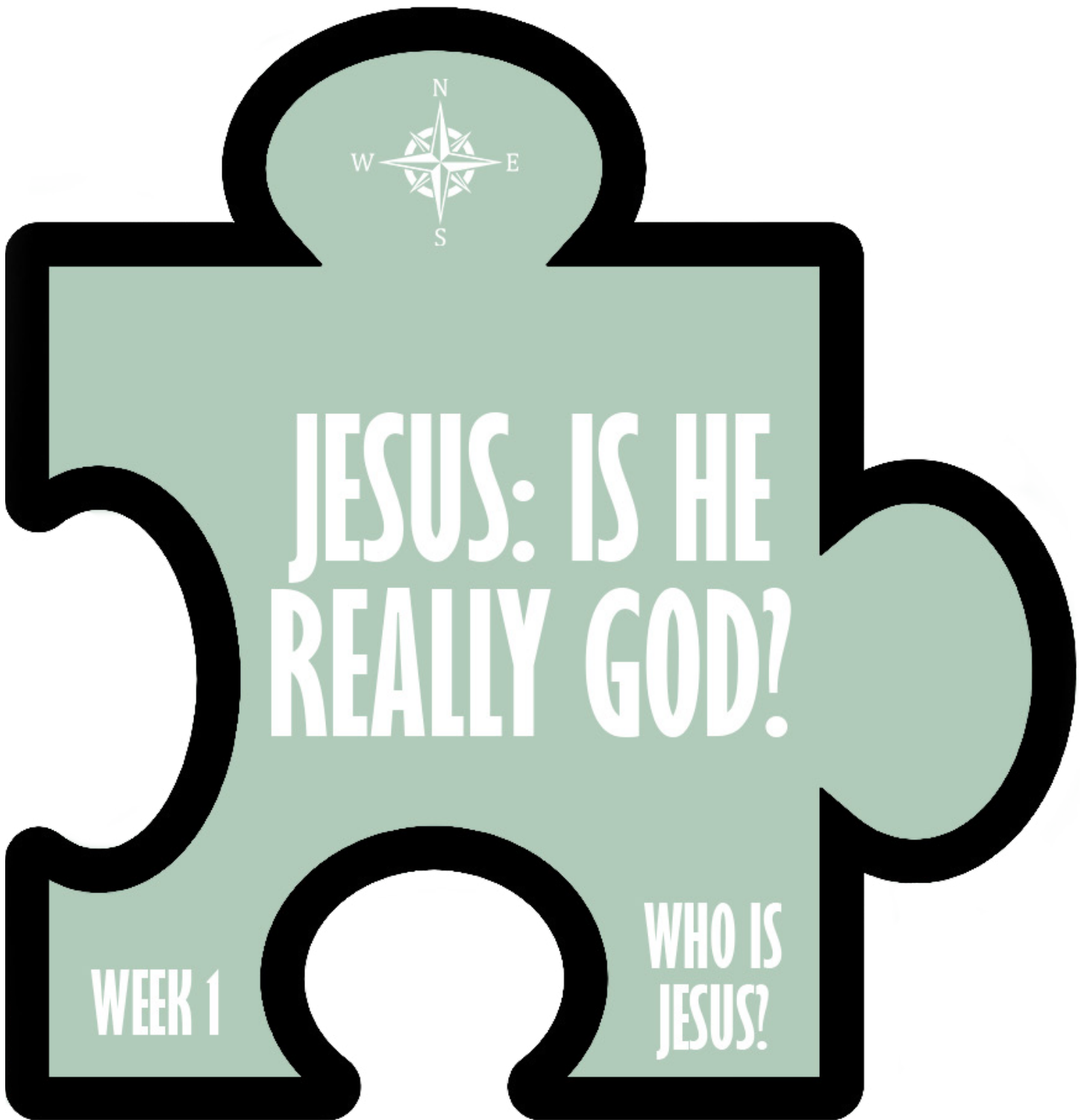
REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

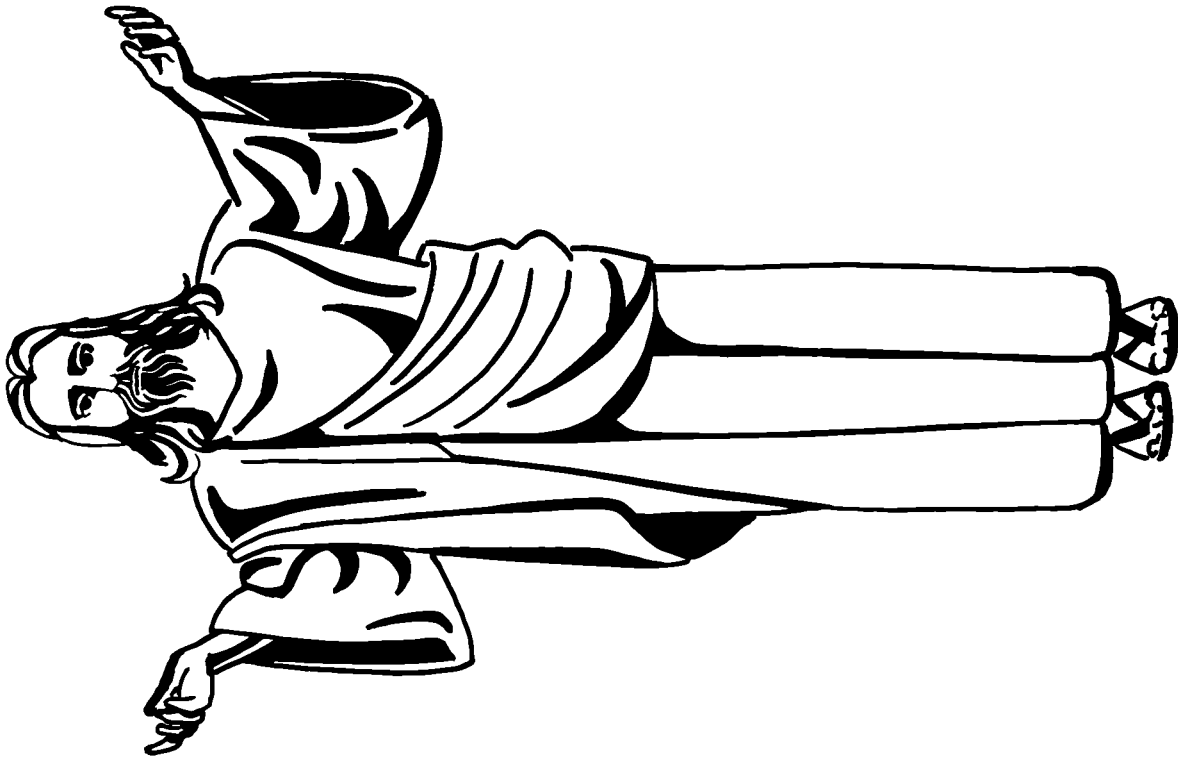
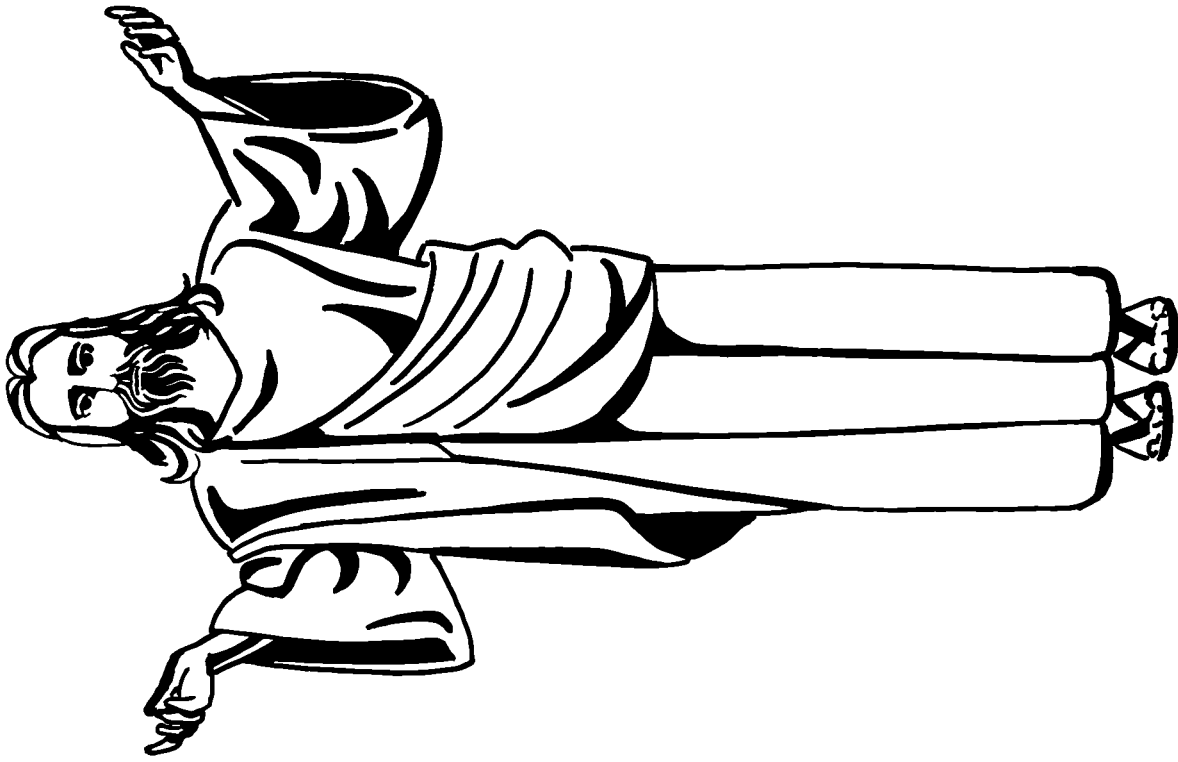
Say, "We learned something amazing about Jesus today! He was not just a human; Jesus is also God. And even though it's hard to understand how all that works, we will keep learning because **Jesus wants you to know Him!** And the more we read His Word the better we can do that!"

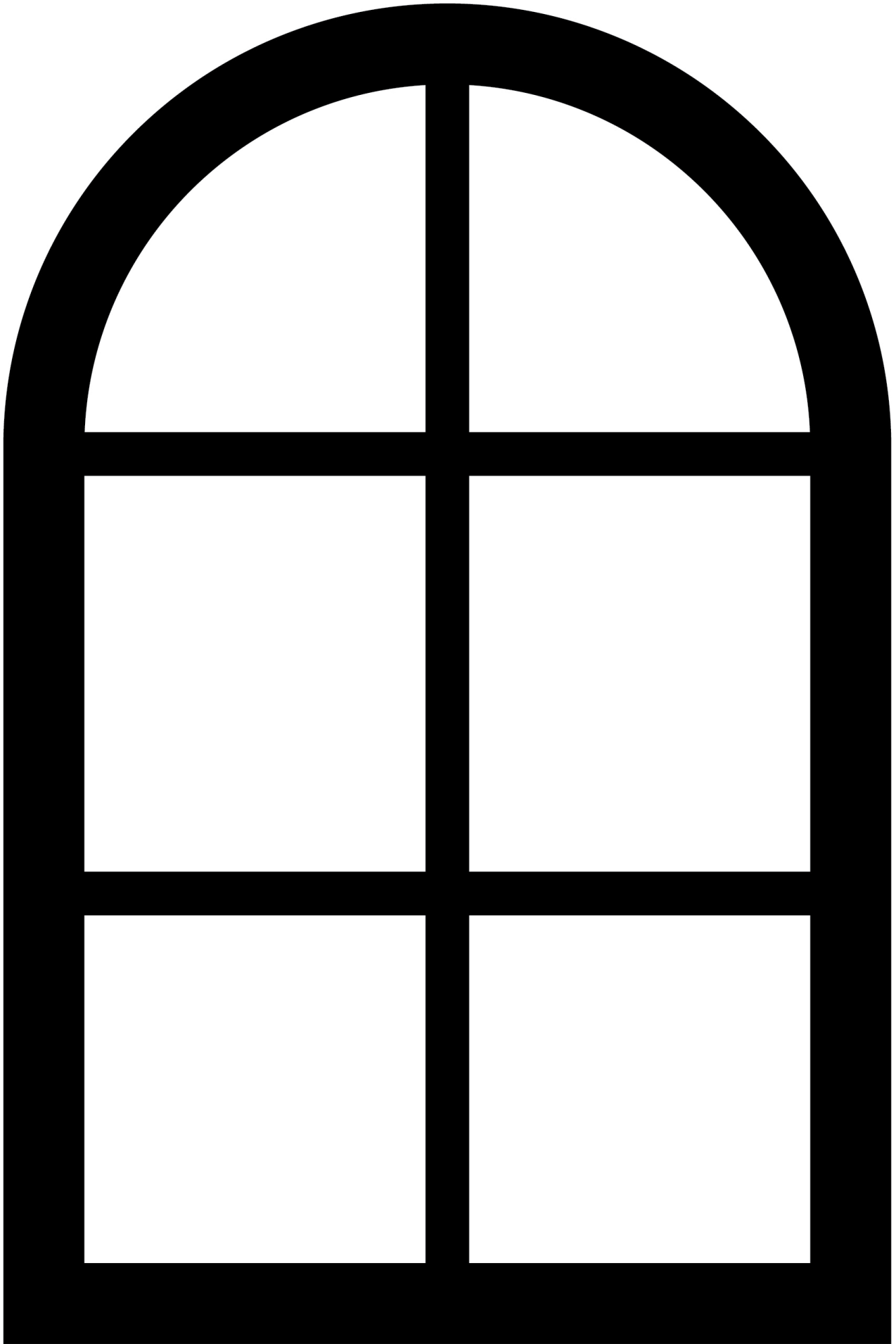
SAMPLE PRAYER: "Thank you, Jesus, for helping us know more about You. We are grateful that You are our Creator God who loves us. Amen!"

RELEASE —

If there is extra time, replay the game, finish the craft or practice the memory verse again. Also, be sure to give parents and guardians a copy of the monthly Parent Guide (downloadable) when they arrive.







WHO IS JESUS?



JESUS: WHY DO WE CALL HIM MESSIAH?

BIBLE PASSAGE

Isaiah 61:1-2a, Mark 8:27-29

BIG IDEA

Jesus wants you to know Him.

FOCUS VERSE

“Jesus answered, I am the way. And I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me. If you really knew me, then you would know my Father too.” John 14:6-7 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Mystery Items | Blindfolds | Container and Lid | Paper | Pencils | White Cardstock Squares | Glass Bowl | Olive Oil or Fractionated Coconut Oil | Scented Perfume or Essential Oil(s) | Cinnamon | Cotton Swabs |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What are some things you have to wait for? (Examples could include summer vacation, Christmas, a birthday, a playdate, screen time, etc.)
- How do you feel when you wait?”

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, “This month we are learning more about who Jesus is, and this week we will focus on Jesus as the Messiah--He is the one who forgives our sins! Worshiping through song is a great way for us to praise Jesus as our Messiah.” In addition to the recommended unit song, “My Best Friend,” we also suggest singing: “Jesus Messiah” by God’s Kids Worship Band and “The Way” by Worship for Kids.



BETWEEN SONGS REMIND THE CHILDREN THAT GOD IS A FORGIVING GOD, AND THAT HE NEVER GETS TIRED OF HIS CHILDREN HUMBLY CONFESSING OUR SINS. (1 JOHN 1:9) BECAUSE IT IS DIFFICULT FOR CHILDREN (AND ADULTS) TO FULLY BELIEVE THAT GOD DOES NOT STAY ANGRY WITH US, BUT FORGIVES US OVER AND OVER, THEY NEED TO HEAR US SAY IT REGULARLY.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

SAMPLE PRAYER: “Dear Jesus, thank You for being so good. You love us and help us every day. Teach us to know You better as we study Your Word! Amen.”

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

BACKGROUND: Say, “This month, we are learning more about Jesus. Last week we learned that Jesus is God! Today we will learn another amazing thing about Jesus. Long before Christ became human, God promised His people that He would send them a Messiah.

“In the Old Testament, special people like kings and priests were anointed with oil. That means the oil was poured on their head before they began their important work. The anointing announced that this person has a special job to do.

“Remember how I said that God was going to send His people a Messiah? Well, the word, ‘Messiah,’ means ‘anointed one.’ Jesus was and is the Messiah God had promised, and He had the most special job of all. Jesus was coming to rescue His people.

“In today’s lesson, we will be learning more about Jesus as the promised Messiah. **Jesus wants you to know Him!** Who wants to put up the puzzle piece for today’s lesson?”

TRANSITION: Say, “Let’s play a game together before we read our story!”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES**MATERIALS:** | Mystery Items (4-6 items) | Blindfolds (1-2) | Container and Lid | Paper | Pencils |**GAME GOAL:** Students will try to correctly guess the mystery items.

BEFORE CLASS BEGINS, SELECT SEVERAL MYSTERY ITEMS THAT WILL BE EASY FOR KIDS TO GUESS: I.E. A BASEBALL OR A MICROPHONE. PLACE THE ITEMS IN A COVERED CONTAINER THAT YOU ONLY BRING OUT ONCE THE CHILD(REN) IS BLINDFOLDED.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Select a student to play each round and place a blindfold on them.
2. Give the child two clues about the “mystery item.”
3. Allow the student 10 seconds to feel the item and guess what they think it is.

CHALLENGE: Have multiple students play each round. After each blindfolded student has felt the object, they should each draw their guesses on a piece of paper.

TRANSITION: Say, “You guys did a great job guessing these mystery items! Some were a little tricky, but you used the clues I gave you to figure out what they were, even when you couldn’t see them! Now, we’re going to learn how Jesus gave His people clues so they would understand He was God’s special Messiah.”

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

Say, "Today, we are learning about Jesus, our Messiah [review meaning of the word]. When Jesus started teaching people, He did some special things to help them understand He was the promised Messiah. He gave them clues that He really was God.

"Let's read some of the promises written about Jesus before He was ever born, and then we will listen to see if the people recognized Him as Messiah once He arrived. As you listen, remember that **Jesus wants you to know Him!**"

Read this Scripture from the Old Testament, Isaiah 61:1-2a (ICB).

⁶A child will be born to us. God will give a son to us. He will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be Wonderful Counselor, Powerful God, Father who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace. ⁷Power and peace will be in His Kingdom.

Now read how people responded to Jesus in this New Testament Scripture, Mark 8:27-29 (ICB).

²⁷Jesus and his followers went to the towns around Caesarea Phillipi, while they were traveling, Jesus asked them, "Who do people say I am?" ²⁸They answered, "Some people say you are John the Baptist. Others say you are Elijah. And others say that you are one of the prophets." ²⁹Then he asked them, "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ."

Say, "Do you think you would recognize Jesus if you met Him? How would you know it was Him?"

Say, "Jesus performed many miracles! For example, He made sick people well, He turned two fish and five loaves of bread into enough to feed 5000 people, and He even brought someone who was dead back to life! Can you believe that!?"

"Even after all those miracles, Jesus was not always recognized as the Messiah. When Jesus asked His disciples, 'Who do people say I am?' they answered that most people thought He was just a good teacher. Only a few people recognized Jesus as the Messiah who came to rescue us. But guess what! Jesus wanted them to know Him, and **Jesus wants you to know Him!**"

TRANSITION: Say, "It's so awesome to think about how Jesus is our Messiah. He was the promise God gave to the whole world—that includes you and me! When He was on Earth, Jesus wanted people to know Him as the Messiah who has come to save them from sin, and Jesus wants you to know Him!"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Today's lesson is amazing! Let's talk about it."

1. Who wants you to know Him?

Response: **Jesus wants me to know Him!**

2. What does Jesus want me to know about Him?

Response: He is the Messiah!

3. Who was waiting for the Messiah?

Response: God's people were waiting. The Jewish people.

4. Did everyone recognize Jesus as the Messiah?

Response: No, many people thought He was only a good teacher.

5. What did you learn about God in today's lesson?

Response: **Jesus wants me to know Him.** Jesus is the Promised Messiah. Jesus is kind. Jesus can do miracles. Jesus cares about people when they are sad. Jesus is God, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us! Now, let's work on a craft that will help us remember that!"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | White Cardstock Squares (1 per child) | Glass Bowl | Olive oil or Fractionated Coconut Oil (½ cup) | Scented Perfume or Essential Oil(s) (several drops) | Cinnamon (1 tsp) | Cotton Swabs (1 per student) |

BEFORE CLASS, CUT THE WHITE CARDSTOCK INTO 4"X4" SQUARES. YOU'LL NEED ONE SQUARE PER CHILD.



ALSO, BE SURE TO VERIFY THAT THERE ARE NO ALLERGIES TO COCONUT OR CINNAMON. IF SO, BE SURE TO USE OLIVE OIL OR ANOTHER SAFE OIL ALTERNATIVE AND SKIP THE CINNAMON. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A STUDENT INFORMATION FORM (WITH ALLERGY ALERTS) FOR YOUR STUDENTS, THIS IS A GREAT TIME TO COLLECT THOSE.

Say, "Today, we are learning that Jesus is our Messiah. Remember Messiah means 'Anointed One.' Who remembers what it means to anoint someone? Right! It means oil is poured on them as a sign that they are about to do special work. So now we will work together to make anointing oil like they used in the Bible. Then each one of you will get to take a sample home."

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. As a group, mix the oil, perfume or scented essential oil drops, and cinnamon together in a bowl. (Allow students to help with each step, including mixing the ingredients.)
2. Let the children make observations about what the oil looks and smells like. Give each student a paper square and cotton swab.
3. Allow each student to dip their cotton swab into the bowl of "anointing oil" and transfer a sample onto their paper.
4. Optional: If they desire, you can place a small amount on their forehead to allow them to experience being anointed with oil.



TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRAY OVER EACH OF YOUR CHILDREN WHEN YOU ANNOINT THEM WITH THE OIL. ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SPEAK AND PRAY THROUGH YOU. REMEMBER, JUST AS JESUS WAS ANNOINTED TO DO GREAT THINGS, IF WE BELIEVE IN HIM THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ANNOINT US TO DO EVEN GREATER THINGS (JOHN 14:12).

TRANSITION: Say, "Wow! Wasn't this a fun project to help us remember Jesus, our Messiah?"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "This month, we are learning a verse about who Jesus is. I am going to read it first, and then we will say it together."

"Jesus answered, (touch the middle of each palm with your index finger) 'I am the way. (extend both arms out towards you a forward motion) And I am the truth (hold hands together like a book) and the life (bring your hands close to your heart). The only way to the Father is through me. (point to the sky) If you really knew me (touch your head with your index finger), then you would know my Father too (point to the sky).'" John 14:6-7 (ICB)

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "We learned something extraordinary about Jesus today! He is our Messiah who came to save us from sin! We will keep learning even more things about Christ next week because **Jesus wants you to know Him!**"

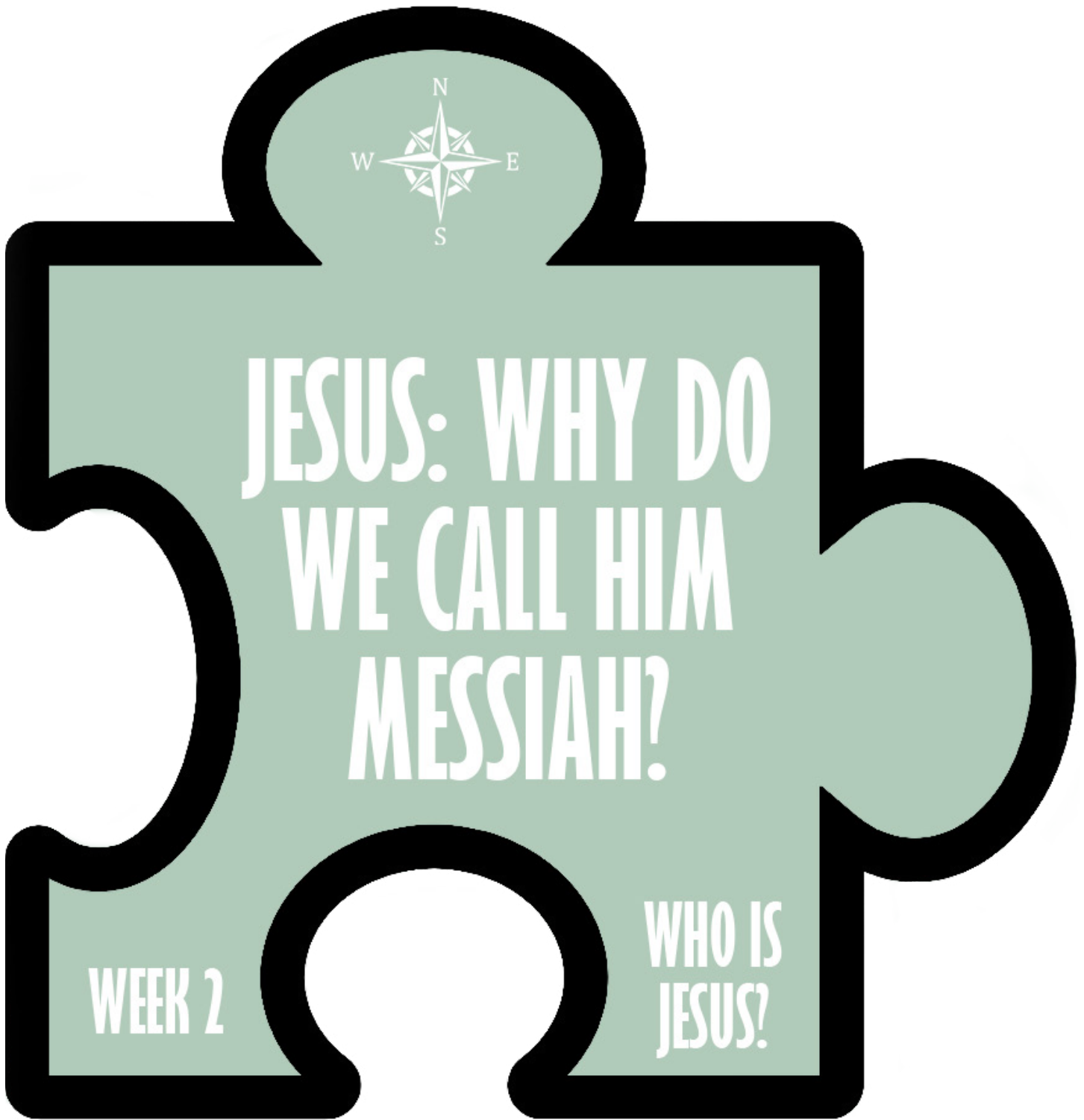


GOD IS FAITHFUL. LONG BEFORE CHRIST WAS BORN, GOD PROMISED HE WOULD SEND THE MESSIAH AND HE DID. EVEN THOUGH MANY PEOPLE NEVER LIVED TO SEE JESUS, IT DIDN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT GOD DID WHAT HE SAID HE WOULD DO. REMIND THE CHILDREN THAT GOD IS STILL FAITHFUL (HE DOES WHAT HE SAYS HE WILL DO). ASK THEM IF THEY ALWAYS DO WHAT THEY SAY THEY WILL DO (CLEAN THEIR ROOMS, TELL THE TRUTH, BE KIND, ETC.) OF COURSE NOT! ONLY GOD IS PERFECTLY FAITHFUL.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Thank You, Father, for always doing what You say You will do. We are so glad we can trust You. And thank You for sending us Your Son, Jesus, to be our Messiah. We love You! Amen!"*

RELEASE —

If there is extra time, replay the game or recite the memory verse again.



WHO IS JESUS?



JESUS: HOW CAN I BE FRIENDS WITH GOD?

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 19:1-6

BIG IDEA

Jesus wants you to know Him.

FOCUS VERSE

“Jesus answered, I am the way. And I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me. If you really knew me, then you would know my Father too.” John 14:6-7 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Colored Construction Paper | Washable Markers |
Additional Craft Supplies (Glue Sticks, Stickers, Pompoms, etc.) |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Who are some people you love?
- Tell me about one of your favorite friends.

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, “This month we are focusing on knowing Jesus. Today, we will learn that Jesus is our greatest friend! Worship time gives us a chance to reflect with thankfulness that Jesus makes it possible for us to have a friendship with God!” Choose songs that fit this month’s theme, including our recommended unit song “My Best Friend” by Hillsong Kids.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

SAMPLE PRAYER: “Dear Jesus, thank You for being our friend. What a wonderful gift this is to us. Help us to understand how much You love us! Amen.”

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “I love learning about Jesus! Don’t you? What do you know about Jesus? [Give the children a chance to share what they already know.] Those are great answers!”

“Well, this month we are learning some important things about Jesus. For example, one week we heard that Jesus is God! Isn’t that incredible? Then, last week we found out that Jesus is our Messiah. Today

we are going to discover another wonderful true thing about Jesus!

“When Jesus came to the world, He chose twelve people to be His best friends. They are called the disciples. He spent most of His time with them. Jesus also had other good friends, and sometimes the people He chose were surprising. Later today, we will read about one of Jesus’ surprising friends. However, for now, I want you to remember that **Jesus wants you to know Him!** Now, who wants to put up the puzzle piece for today’s lesson?”

TRANSITION: Say, “Let’s play a game together before we read our story!”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

Gather the children in a large area. Say, “Today, we are going to play *Red Rover*.”

GAME GOAL: Teams will work together to end the game with the most people on their team.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Divide the students into two teams. Teams will form two lines holding hands and facing each other. Team lines should be at least 30 feet apart.
2. The team chosen to go first calls for a runner from the other line, saying, “Red Rover, Red Rover, let (insert child’s name, i.e., “Jessica”) come over!” “Jessica” will run towards the opposing team and try to break through their line.
3. If the targeted players cannot maintain their grip and the runner breaks through, she chooses someone from that opposing team to take back with her to her team.
4. If she doesn’t break through, she stays with the opposing team.
5. The game ends when everyone is in one line.



THIS GAME CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR PRE-K CHILDREN BECAUSE THEY OFTEN STRUGGLE TO REMEMBER NAMES. LET THEM KNOW IT’S OK IF THEY FORGET SOMEONE’S NAME AND THAT THEY CAN IDENTIFY EACH OTHER IN VARIOUS WAYS IF NEEDED: SHIRT COLOR, HAIR COLOR, ETC.

TRANSITION: Say, “You guys did a great job playing *Red Rover*! Aren’t you glad we can play games with our friends? Having a good friend is so important! Can you tell me one reason you love your friends? That’s awesome! Today, we are talking about the best friend we can have – Jesus! And do you know what? Jesus always chooses you! He will always want to be your friend!”

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

Say, “Since we are learning about Jesus as our Friend, let’s read a story in the book of Luke about one of Jesus’ surprising friends.” Read Luke 19:1-6 (ICB).

¹ Jesus was going through the city of Jericho. ² In Jericho there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a wealthy, very important tax collector. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but he was too short to see above the crowd. ⁴ He ran ahead to a place where he knew Jesus would come. He climbed a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus. ⁵ When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and saw Zacchaeus in the tree. He said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down! I must stay at your house today." ⁶ Zacchaeus came down quickly. He was pleased to have Jesus in his house."

Say, "Wow! I really like this story. It reminds me that Jesus loves EVERYONE! He even loves people who might surprise you like sinners [those who do bad things], sick people, and people who are lonely and not liked by others. That's the kind of person Zacchaeus was. Zacchaeus didn't look like everyone else, for example, he was shorter than the other men in the town. But Zacchaeus' real problem was that he was kind of a bad person, and he worked for bad people. No one wanted to be his friend. No one except Jesus, that is. Jesus was kind to Zacchaeus and even though Jesus could have asked anyone in that town to have dinner with Him, He chose to be with Zacchaeus. Can you imagine how special that must have made Zacchaeus feel?"

Ask, "Can you think of a time when you were sad, and someone made you feel special? [Give the children time to respond.] I believe that Jesus sent that person to be your friend. I'm so glad we have Jesus. He is the best friend we could ever have, and I am so grateful that **Jesus wants you [and me] to know Him!**"

TRANSITION: Say, "It's amazing to think that we can be friends with Jesus! Last week we learned that Jesus was the Messiah. He came to save us from our sins. Before Jesus showed His love on the Cross though, He showed His love by being the very best friend. **Jesus wants you to know Him**—and He wants to be your friend too!"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Our lesson today was so good and yet so challenging. Let's talk about it."

1. Who wants you to know Him?

Response: **Jesus wants me to know Him!**

2. What does Jesus want you to know about Him?

Response: He is my Friend!

3. When Jesus lived on Earth, whom did He choose as friends?

Response: Answers will vary.

4. Did Jesus have lots of different friends?

Response: Yes!

5. Why was Jesus so kind to Zacchaeus?

Response: Jesus loved Zacchaeus. It didn't matter to Him that no one else liked Zacchaeus or that he had done bad things. Jesus still wanted to be his friend.

6. How can we be a friend like Jesus?

Response: Answers will vary.

7. What have you learned about God today?

Response: **Jesus wants us to know Him.** Jesus is my friend. Jesus is kind to everyone. Jesus loves everyone, etc.



ALTHOUGH THE BIBLE TEACHES US A LOT ABOUT PEOPLE (AND EVEN US), THE HERO AND MAIN CHARACTER OF SCRIPTURE IS ALWAYS GOD. BECAUSE OF THAT, A GREAT FIRST QUESTION TO ASK ANYTIME WE READ GOD'S WORD IS "WHAT DOES THIS TEACH ME ABOUT GOD?" YOU CAN GIVE THESE LITTLE ONES THAT SKILL EARLY IN THEIR LIVES BY INCORPORATING THIS CRUCIAL QUESTION INTO YOUR DISCUSSION EACH WEEK!

TRANSITION: Say, "Great discussion! Let's work on a craft that will help us remember that **Jesus wants you to know Him!**"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Colored Construction Paper | Washable Markers | Additional Craft Supplies (Glue Sticks, Stickers, Pompoms, etc.) |

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have the children select a piece of construction paper for their background.
2. Then, provide each group of kids with washable markers. Instruct them to draw and color a picture of themselves with one of their friends.
3. Allow the children to use the additional craft supplies to further decorate their drawings.

TRANSITION: Say, "Our pictures are so special! I hope they will remind you that God gives us wonderful friends and not only that, He sent His Son, Jesus, to be our very best friend!"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "This month, we are learning a verse about who Jesus is. I am going to read it first, and then we will say it together."

"Jesus answered, (touch the middle of each palm with your index finger) 'I am the way. (extend both arms out towards you a forward motion) And I am the truth (hold hands together like a book) and the life (bring your hands close to your heart). The only way to the Father is through me. (point to the sky) If you really knew me (touch your head with your index finger), then you would know my Father too (point to the sky).'" John 14:6-7 (ICB)

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

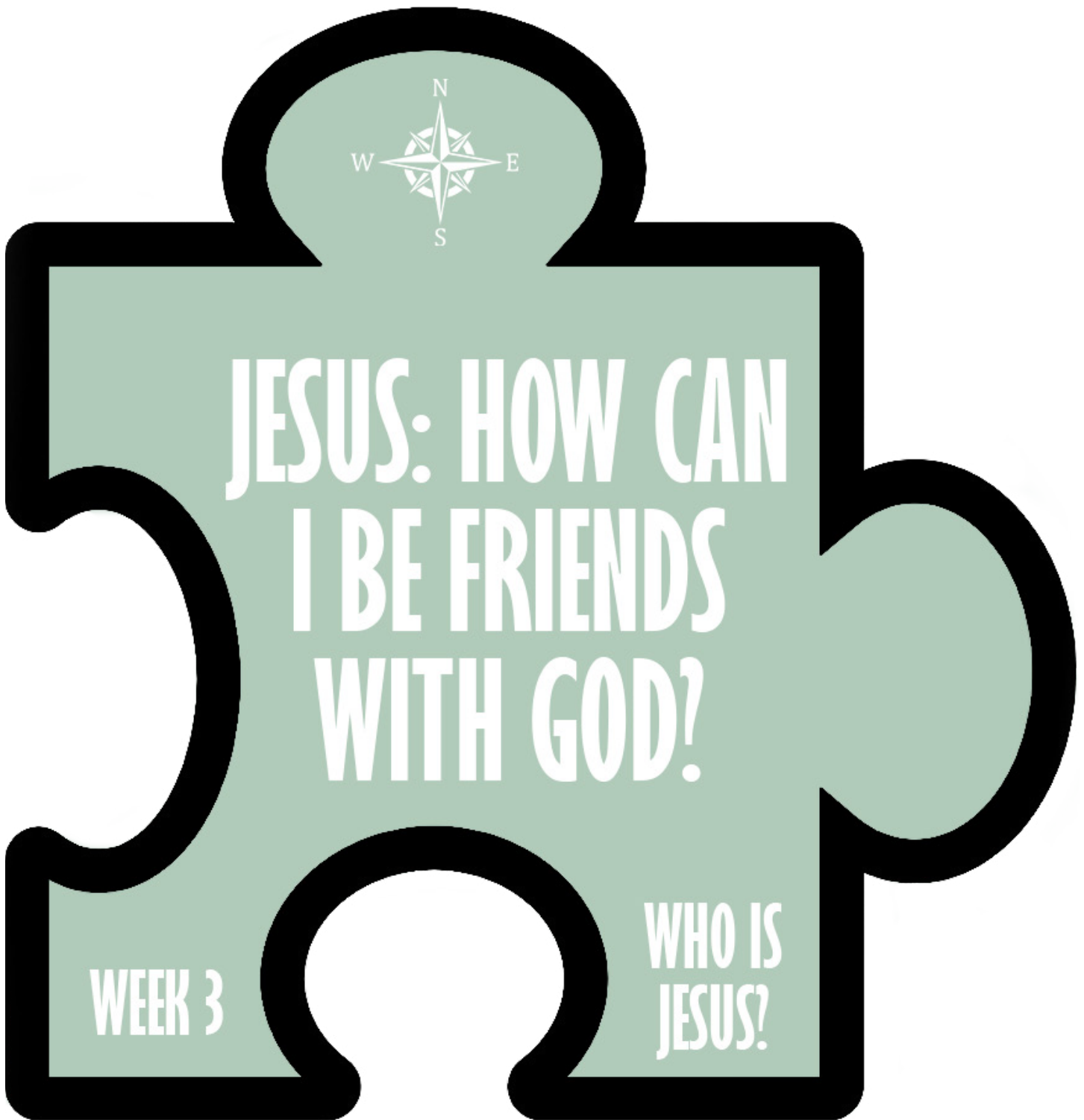
Say, "We have learned something incredible about Jesus today! He is our Friend who loves us, and **Jesus wants you to know Him.** Is there anything you would like to tell Jesus today?" (Take time for prayer requests.)

SAMPLE PRAYER: "Thank you, Jesus, for helping us know more about You. Thank you for being our friend."

Please live in our hearts and help us follow You every day. Help us to love others and show Your kindness to everyone we meet just as You did with Zacchaeus. Amen."

RELEASE —

If there is extra time, replay the game, finish the craft activity, or recite the memory verse again.



WHO IS JESUS?



JESUS: WHY DO I NEED A REDEEMER?

BIBLE PASSAGE

Romans 5:12,18; 6:23, Galatians 4:4-5, Titus 2:14

BIG IDEA

Jesus wants you to know Him.

FOCUS VERSE

“Jesus answered, I am the way. And I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me. If you really knew me, then you would know my Father too.” John 14:6-7 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Masking Tape | Beach Towel or Blanket | Hand-Sized Bouncy Balls | Small Bucket |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Have you ever lost something?
- How did that make you feel? Tell me about it.

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

This month we are getting to know Jesus better. In this lesson, we will learn that Jesus is our Redeemer! As you prepare, take time to reflect on how Jesus has redeemed your life. As you teach, include part of your testimony in the lesson. Share how Jesus has been your Redeemer. Never underestimate the impact your faith story can have on your students. Finally, during the worship time, incorporate songs that focus on Jesus, our Redeemer. Here are a few suggestions.

1. “This is Amazing Grace” by Capitol Kids!
2. “Amazing Love” by God’s Kids Worship Band
3. “There is a Redeemer” by Cedarmont Kids

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

SAMPLE PRAYER: “Dear Jesus, You are so wonderful. Thank You for being our God, our Messiah, our Friend, and our Redeemer. We are so grateful that You love us. Amen.”

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “This month, we are focusing on knowing Jesus. We have learned that He is God, He

is our Messiah, and He is even our friend! Today we will learn about Jesus, our Redeemer! A 'redeemer' is someone who finds something that has been lost and returns it to the person who had it first! I also want you to remember the important truth we've been talking about all month! **Jesus wants you to know Him!** Now, who wants to put up the puzzle piece for today's lesson?"



TODAY'S THEME MAY FEEL DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN TO CHILDREN, BUT DON'T SHY AWAY FROM IT. THE BIBLE (AND JESUS HIMSELF) CLEARLY TEACHES THAT ONLY CHRIST CAN SAVE US (REDEEM US), AND THIS TRUTH IS AT THE HEART OF OUR FAITH. (JOHN 14:6)

TRANSITION: Say, "Let's play a game together before we read our story!"

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

Gather the children in a large play area. Say, "Today, we're going to play a little game of *Hide and Seek*. Who's ready to play?"

GAME GOAL: Students will search for their classmates who are hiding in the play area.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Choose one student to count for 30 seconds while other classmates hide.
2. After 30 seconds of counting, the student will have 3 minutes to find as many classmates as possible.
3. Play a few rounds alternating who gets to be the "seeker."



SOME PREK CHILDREN ARE STILL LEARNING TO COUNT AND MAY NEED YOU TO SAY THE NUMBERS WITH THEM.

CHALLENGE: Play the game in reverse. One student hides while all other classmates count for 30 seconds. Every time a classmate finds the hiding one(s), they hide in the same place. When all students are hiding, the teacher goes to look for the group. You may need a bigger outdoor space for this challenge.



IT'S OKAY IF SOME CHILDREN AREN'T COMFORTABLE PLAYING. ALLOW THEM TO OBSERVE. THEY MAY BECOME MORE CONFIDENT OVER TIME, OR THEY MAY NOT. HOWEVER, WE WANT KIDS TO LOOK FORWARD TO COMING EACH WEEK, SO IT'S IMPORTANT TO GIVE CHILDREN THE OPTION TO WATCH BEFORE ENGAGING. IF YOU HAVE A CHILD WHO REFUSES TO PARTICIPATE ON A REGULAR BASIS, TRY HAVING AN OLDER CHILD COME ONE SUNDAY TO BE THEIR "BUDDY."

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job finding your classmates! This game reminds us that Jesus is always looking for His children. Let's learn more about this now!"

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Masking Tape | Beach Towel or Blanket |



BEFORE CLASS BEGINS, STRETCH THE BEACH TOWEL OUT ON THE GROUND. THEN, USE THE MASKING TAPE TO CREATE TWO, THREE-FOOT, PARALLEL LINES ON EACH END OF THE TOWEL. PUT THE TOWEL AWAY UNTIL IT IS TIME FOR THE ILLUSTRATION.

Say, "A few months ago, we learned that sin [the wrong things we do] began with Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God's command and ate the fruit He had told them not to eat. After they sinned, Adam and Eve suddenly realized they didn't have clothes. This made them embarrassed, so they hid from God and tried to cover their bodies with leaves. But the leaves did not make a good hiding place or clothes. In His kindness, God found Adam and Eve, and He gave them better clothes. Let's listen to God's Word to find out how else God showed kindness to His people." Read Romans 5:12,18 (ICB).

12 Sin came into the world because of what one man did. And with sin came death. And this is why all men must die—because all men sinned.

18 So, one sin of Adam brought the punishment of death to all people. But in the same way, one good act that Christ did makes all people right with God. And that brings true life for all.

Ask, "What is the 'one good act that Christ did?' [Allow kids to respond.] Yes, Jesus Christ died on the Cross for our sins. Let's read Romans 6:23 (ICB) and find why He had to do that."

23 The payment for sin is death. But God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord.



THIS IS A TOUGH PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN, AND EVEN THOUGH THEY WILL NOT UNDERSTAND IT LIKE YOU AND I DO, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THEM TO HEAR THE GOSPEL OVER AND OVER. TAKE A MOMENT TO RETELL THE STORY OF ADAM AND EVE. THEN, BRIEFLY EXPLAIN HOW THEIR SIN MADE EVERYONE BORN AFTER THEM A SINNER TOO. HIGHLIGHT THE WONDERFUL NEWS THAT WHEN JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS, HE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO BE FORGIVEN AND FRIENDS WITH GOD. WE DON'T EVER HAVE TO BE EMBARRASSED BEFORE GOD AGAIN.

Say, "Wow! I'm so glad that God gives us the free gift of life through His Son, Jesus. Aren't you? You see, just like Adam and Eve, we also disobey God [sin], and that should make Him angry with us. But the good news is that God loves us, so He sent his Son, Jesus, to be our Redeemer. Jesus can forgive us, take our sins and make us God's very own children [redeem us]. "

Ask, "Now, have you ever found something you thought you had lost? How did you feel when you found it? [Perhaps tell a story of a time when you found something special that you had lost.] A redeemer finds things that are lost and puts them back where they should be. That's what Jesus does for us because He is our Redeemer."

Illustration: Walk with the children over to the lines on the floor. Arrange the children behind one of the lines. Then, you move behind the other line. Ask the kids to pretend that between these lines is a very deep pit and that because we could never cross over that pit on our own there is no way for us to all be

together. Explain that this is what sin does; it separates us from God. Then, use the beach towel to make a bridge between the two lines. Say, "When Jesus died on the Cross, He took our sin Himself, and now we can be with God." Invite the children to walk across the towel to you. Tell them that when they reach you, they can give you a high five, a fist bump, or a hug (whatever makes them comfortable). Say, "Jesus finds us and helps us be right where we belong – with God."

Say, "Are you happy that Jesus loves us so much? Me too! **Jesus wants you to know Him** and be with Him—He is our wonderful Redeemer!"

TRANSITION: Say, "It's so incredible to know Jesus finds us and forgives us. When you ask Him to forgive your sins [the bad things you've done], He is always willing. He is your Redeemer!"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "We learned something amazing about Jesus today! Let's talk about it!"

1. Who wants you to know Him?

Response: **Jesus wants me to know Him!**

2. What is a Redeemer?

Response: A redeemer is someone who looks for something that is lost and returns it to its owner. (You may have to help them answer this one.)

3. Who is our Redeemer?

Response: Jesus!

4. What did Jesus (our Redeemer) do for us?

Response: Give the children an opportunity to try and explain the Gospel. You can help them along as they answer or let them use the bridge illustration in their response.

5. What did you learn about Jesus this week?

Response: **Jesus wants me to know Him!** Jesus is our Redeemer. Jesus loves me. Jesus died on the Cross for us, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "I love talking with you all about Jesus! Now, let's work on a craft that will help us remember that **Jesus wants you to know Him!**"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Hand-Sized Bouncy Balls (20) | Small Bucket |



BEFORE THE CHILDREN ARRIVE, HIDE ALL BUT ONE OF THE BOUNCY BALLS AROUND THE ROOM. (IF YOUR CHILDREN PLAY IN THE ROOM BEFORE THE LESSON BEGINS, YOU MAY TAKE THEM OUT OF THE ROOM FOR A BATHROOM BREAK, ETC., AND HAVE SOMEONE ELSE HIDE THE BALLS WHILE YOU ARE GONE.)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Show the children the one ball you did not hide and explain that there are nineteen other balls hiding in this room. Tell them you want them to work together to find the balls as quickly as possible and place

them in the bucket.

2. When you say, "Go!" the children should start searching for the hidden bouncy balls.
3. When they have found all nineteen, you can play again (by having the children close their eyes while you hide the balls).

CHALLENGE: Time the children and see if they can work together to get faster at finding the balls each round.

TRANSITION: Say, "Wow! Great job working together to find the bouncy balls! This activity reminds us that Christ will always help us find our way back to the place where we belong – with God, our Father. What a great Redeemer we have in Jesus."

MEMORIZE – 5 MINUTES

Say, "This month, we are learning a verse about who Jesus is. I am going to read it first, and then we will say it together."

"Jesus answered, (touch the middle of each palm with your index finger) 'I am the way. (extend both arms out towards you a forward motion) And I am the truth (hold hands together like a book) and the life (bring your hands close to your heart). The only way to the Father is through me. (point to the sky) If you really knew me (touch your head with your index finger), then you would know my Father too (point to the sky).'" John 14:6-7 (ICB)

REFLECT – 5 MINUTES

Say, "We have learned something extraordinary about Jesus today! He is our Redeemer who brings us back to God! And do you know what else? **Jesus wants you to know Him**, and He will be with you wherever you go!"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Thank You, Jesus, for helping us know more about You. We are grateful that You are our Redeemer—You died on the cross to bring us back to God. Thank You for Your love. Please help us share Your Good News with someone else we know who is lost. Amen."*

RELEASE –

If there is extra time, replay the game or sing this month's favorite worship songs.

