

I CAN FOLLOW JESUS



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MONTHLY PREPARATION GUIDE

YEAR 3, UNIT 03 - PREK

This month our theme is, *I Can Follow Jesus*. We are going to discover that a disciple of Jesus learns from Him and then tells others about Him. Reading God's Word, fasting, and praying are just a few things that help us grow to be more like Christ. The most exciting part is that you don't have to wait until you are grown up to be Christ's disciple. Children are some of the very best followers of Jesus!

WEEK 1

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class) | *Attributes of God* Activity Page (one set for every 2-3 children) | White Cardstock (1 per child) | Pencils | Scissors | Scrapbook Paper (1 per child) | Glue | Hole Punch | Pipe Cleaners (1 per child) | Tape | Markers |

WEEK 2

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class) | *Search and Find* Activity Page (1 per class) | A Seed | A Small Plant | *Yellow* Activity Page (1 per child) | *Green* Activity Page (1 per child) | Yellow and Green Cardstock | Scissors | Blue Construction Paper (1 per child) | Glue | Sunflower Seeds (25 per child) | Fine Tip Markers | Small Beanbag or Ball |

WEEK 3

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class) | Tray of Various Items (5-10 items) | Clear Plastic Cup | Play-Doh | Juice | Construction Paper | *Light of the World* Activity Page (1 sheet per child) | Scissors | Markers | Glue Sticks | Balloons (optional) |

WEEK 4

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class) | Dress-Up Clothes (1 set per team) | Large Stones (1 per child) | Paint | Paintbrushes (1 per child) | Paper Plates | Painting Smocks (1 per child) |

BECOMING A DISCIPLE

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 22:34-38 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

I can follow Jesus

FOCUS VERSE

“He said, ‘I am the light of the world. The person who follows me will never live in darkness. He will have the light that gives life.’” John 8:12 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | *Attributes of God* Activity Page | White Cardstock | Pencils | Scissors | Scrapbook Paper | Glue | Hole Punch | Pipe Cleaners | Tape | Markers |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What do you like to do with your friends?
- Who is your favorite grown-up? Why?



MANY CHILDREN STRUGGLE TO MAKE AND KEEP FRIENDS. BE SENSITIVE TO THAT WHEN YOU ASK TODAY'S FIRST CONNECTION QUESTION. IF A CHILD SAYS SHE HAS NO FRIENDS, PAUSE, LOOK HER IN THE EYES, AND TELL HER YOU ARE SORRY. LET HER KNOW YOU WILL BE PRAYING FOR HER TO FIND A GODLY FRIEND. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP CONNECT THAT CHILD WITH OTHERS.

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, “Let’s get ready to worship! When we worship God, we show Him how much we love Him. What are some ways you can show God your love? [Leave time for responses.] Those are great ideas! Sometimes we think worship is only singing, but worship is much more than that. Anytime we love, honor, and glorify God, we worship Him. But now, we will worship with music, so let’s sing to Him.”

We recommend using the song, “My Lighthouse” by Wonder Worship Kids for this unit’s theme. “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” by Group Publishing and “I Thank God” by CJ and Friends also complement this month’s focus.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Gather the children for prayer.

Say, "Jesus hears us when we talk to Him. We can pray anywhere and anytime. We can pray out loud or silently. Let's stand, bow our heads, and talk to Jesus."

SAMPLE PRAYER: "Jesus, we love You. Thank You for always listening. Help us to become more like You. In Jesus' name. Amen."



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

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |



REMINDE THE CHILDREN THAT THE PUZZLE PIECES ILLUSTRATE HOW GOD'S STORIES FIT TOGETHER.

BACKGROUND: Say, "This month, we are starting a new group of lessons that focus on becoming a disciple of Jesus. Let's put up our puzzle piece for this week and get started!"



BE PREPARED WITH A WAY TO PICK THE CHILD WHO WILL POST THE WEEKLY PUZZLE PIECE. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU COULD WRITE THE NAME OF EACH CHILD IN ATTENDANCE ON A PIECE OF PAPER OR A POPSICLE STICK. IF THE CHILD WHO IS CHOSEN IS TOO SHY TO DO IT, LET THEM PICK THE PERSON WHO PUTS UP THE PUZZLE PIECE.

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Today we're going to play *I Spy*. You will have to listen closely to what others are saying to win. Are you ready to pay attention? Great!"

GAME GOAL: To correctly identify the chosen item in the room.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Have everyone sit down as a group.
2. Designate a person to go first. That child will secretly choose an item in the room. Then, they will say, "I spy with my little eye, something..." and describe one feature about the item, such as its color, texture, size, etc.
3. Have each child take turns trying to guess the item.
4. The first person who guesses correctly wins the round and gets to choose the next object.

TRANSITION: Say, "You did an excellent job paying attention during our game! Did you know that listening and paying attention also help us follow Jesus? Well, it does, and in our Bible reading we're going to learn a little more about that and about being Christ's disciple."

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Attributes of God* Activity Page (one set for every 2-3 children) |



SOMETIMES DURING A LESSON, KIDS NEED AN ACTIVITY BREAK. USE THE *ATTRIBUTES OF GOD* ACTIVITY PAGE TO CREATE A MATCHING GAME FOR YOUR KIDS. ALLOWING THE KIDS TO MATCH THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD WE FIND IN SCRIPTURE HELPS THEM CONNECT HIS ATTRIBUTES TO OUR LESSON. BE SURE TO PRINT 2 COPIES, CUT AND LAMINATE THE CARDS TO USE WEEK AFTER WEEK.

Say, “Our lesson today is about learning how to become a disciple of Jesus, and the best place to find out about that is in God’s Word. When you hear the word ‘disciple,’ what do you think of? The first thing some people think of is that Jesus had twelve disciples. Do you know any of their names? [Allow for responses. The disciples’ names are Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Thaddeus, Simon, and Judas.] That’s great! Did you know there have been many more disciples than that?

“If a disciple is someone who loves, follows, and obeys Jesus, who else is a disciple? [Give the children time to respond.] Did you know you can be a disciple too? Let’s read from our Bible to learn more about becoming one of Jesus’ disciples.” Read Matthew 22:34-38 (ICB).

³⁴ “The Pharisees (religious leaders) learned that the Sadducees (another group of religious leaders) could not argue with Jesus’ answers to them. So, the Pharisees met together. ³⁵ One Pharisee was an expert in the law of Moses. That Pharisee asked Jesus a question to test him. ³⁶ The Pharisee asked, ‘Teacher, which command in the law is the most important?’ ³⁷ Jesus answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind. ³⁸ This is the first and most important command.’”



REMEMBER, TELLING THE BIBLE LESSON IN YOUR OWN WORDS IS SOMETIMES MORE EFFECTIVE. AS A TEACHER, BE OPEN TO THE CHILDREN’S QUESTIONS AND THEIR NEED FOR MORE EXPLANATION.

Say, “Jesus often gathered with the people and taught them. [He is still teaching us today when we read the Bible.] In this passage, He was teaching us what it means to be His disciple: we are to ‘love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind.’ In other words, we are to love Him totally - with our whole selves, and when we love Him, we will spend time with Him, worship Him, and obey Him. We will also become more and more like Him. Eventually, we will even go out and teach others about Him. That’s what a disciple does. He learns from his teacher and then shares what he has learned to others.

“What are ways we can learn from Jesus? [Allow time for responses.] Those are great answers! [You may need to provide some guidance with this question, but allow them to be creative too.]

“In Matthew 9:9, Jesus says, ‘Follow Me.’ As His disciple, we follow Jesus by obeying Him and trusting Him. One way we obey Him is by telling others the Good News of Jesus loving us enough to die for us.

You don't have to wait until you are grown up to be His disciples. You can learn from Jesus and tell others about Him now!

"If you are a disciple of Jesus, you will want to be like Him and obey His commands, and this brings joy and glory to Him. Isn't it exciting to know that we can be a disciple of Jesus?"

Ask, "Would you like to be Jesus' disciple? Great!"

TRANSITION: Say, "Isn't Jesus awesome? He loves us so much!"



THIS MONTH'S LESSONS FOCUS ON HELPING CHILDREN FOLLOW JESUS. THIS INCLUDES INTRODUCING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES THAT JESUS TAUGHT. HOWEVER, WE MUST ENSURE THE KIDS KNOW WE DO NOT PRACTICE DISCIPLINES TO EARN GOD'S APPROVAL. THEY ARE NOT A "SPIRITUAL CHECKLIST." INSTEAD, SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES ARE WAYS WE GET TO KNOW JESUS BETTER, EXPERIENCE HIS LOVE IN MORE SIGNIFICANT WAYS, AND LOVE HIM BACK. THEY ARE ALSO ACTS OF OBEDIENCE. EACH WEEK, WE WILL EMPHASIZE KNOWING, LOVING, AND MODELING JESUS. SPEND TIME IN PRAYER AS YOU PREPARE TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN HOW TO BE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

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

1. What is a disciple?

Response: Someone who loves, follows, and obeys Jesus.

2. What does Jesus teach the Pharisees?

Response: He said the Greatest Commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

3. What does this verse mean?

Response: We are to love God totally, with our whole selves. There is no part of our lives that does not fall under God's authority, guidance, and care.

4. How can we follow Jesus and be His disciple?

Response: There are many ways we can practice being Jesus' disciple. For example, we can pray, read the Bible, attend church, listen to our pastor and teachers, obey God's commands, love others, and tell others the Good News.

5. Why is the fact that Jesus loved us enough to die for us Good News?

Response: We all sin. The cost of our sin is death. Since Jesus loved us so much that He died for us, it means that we don't have to die, but we can live with Him forever in Heaven. That is surely Good News.

6. What does this lesson teach us about God?

Response: Jesus teaches us how to be His disciple. Jesus wants us to follow Him with our whole selves. Jesus loves us enough to die for us. We should love Him enough to be His disciple and tell others the Good News, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job listening and answering the questions! Jesus loves us so much and wants us to be His disciples. Let's do an activity to help us remember our lesson."

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | White Cardstock (1 per child) | Pencils | Scissors | Scrapbook Paper (1 per child) | Glue | Hole Punch | Pipe Cleaners (1 per child) | Tape | Markers |

Say, "Jesus said, 'Follow Me.' Because He loves us so much, He wants us to follow Him and become His disciples. We follow Jesus when we spend time with Him, obey Him, and live our lives for Him. We could call that 'Walking with Jesus!' We're going to make a sandal to remind us to do just that."

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have the children use a pencil to trace one of their shoes on a piece of cardstock. You may need to have adults walking around and holding their shoes in place while they trace.
2. Help the kids cut out the shoe shape and glue it to a piece of scrapbook paper. Now, cut the scrapbook paper around the cardstock shoe shape.
3. Next, punch a hole near where the big toe would go. Then, punch two holes across from one another a little less than halfway down the shoe. (This is where the pipe cleaners be inserted to create the sandal strap.)
4. Fold a pipe cleaner in half and thread the center through the top hole. Twist the pipe cleaner on the back of the shoe and then fold it down.
5. Thread the two remaining ends of the pipe cleaner into the other two holes. Turn the flip flop over and again, twist the ends and then fold them down, so they stay secure. You may want to use a little tape on the back to hold the ends. (See image.)
6. Use markers to write "Walk with Jesus!" on the sandal.



TRANSITION: Say, "You did a super job making your 'Follow Me Sandal.' You can use your sandal as a reminder that Jesus wants you to be His disciple. Now, let's practice this month's memory verse."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Explain that the children will be learning a memory verse to help them remember that if we follow Jesus, we never have to fear. He is our light. First, say the verse by yourself and demonstrate the actions. Then, have the children practice it with you. Finally, ask if anyone would like to say it by themselves.

"He said, (point to heaven) 'I am the light. (close your fist and open it) of the world. (use both hands to create a giant circle) The person who follows me (march in place) will never (wag your finger back and forth) live in darkness (cover your eyes). He will have the light (close your fist and open it) that gives life (throw your arms open)."

John 8:12 (ICB) *(hold hands open like a book)*

CHALLENGE: Discuss the memory verse with the following object lesson. Have the children spread out in the room. Then, dim the lights and have the children close their eyes tightly. Next, give the kids a series of instructions: 1) Hug your neighbor. 2) Give your neighbor a high five. 3) Gently pat your neighbor's head. 4) Find two neighbors and stand in a circle. Use this activity to illustrate how hard it is to follow someone when you do not have light. Say: "Jesus is the light of the world! He is our light! When we follow Him, He is always with us and will show us the way to go."

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

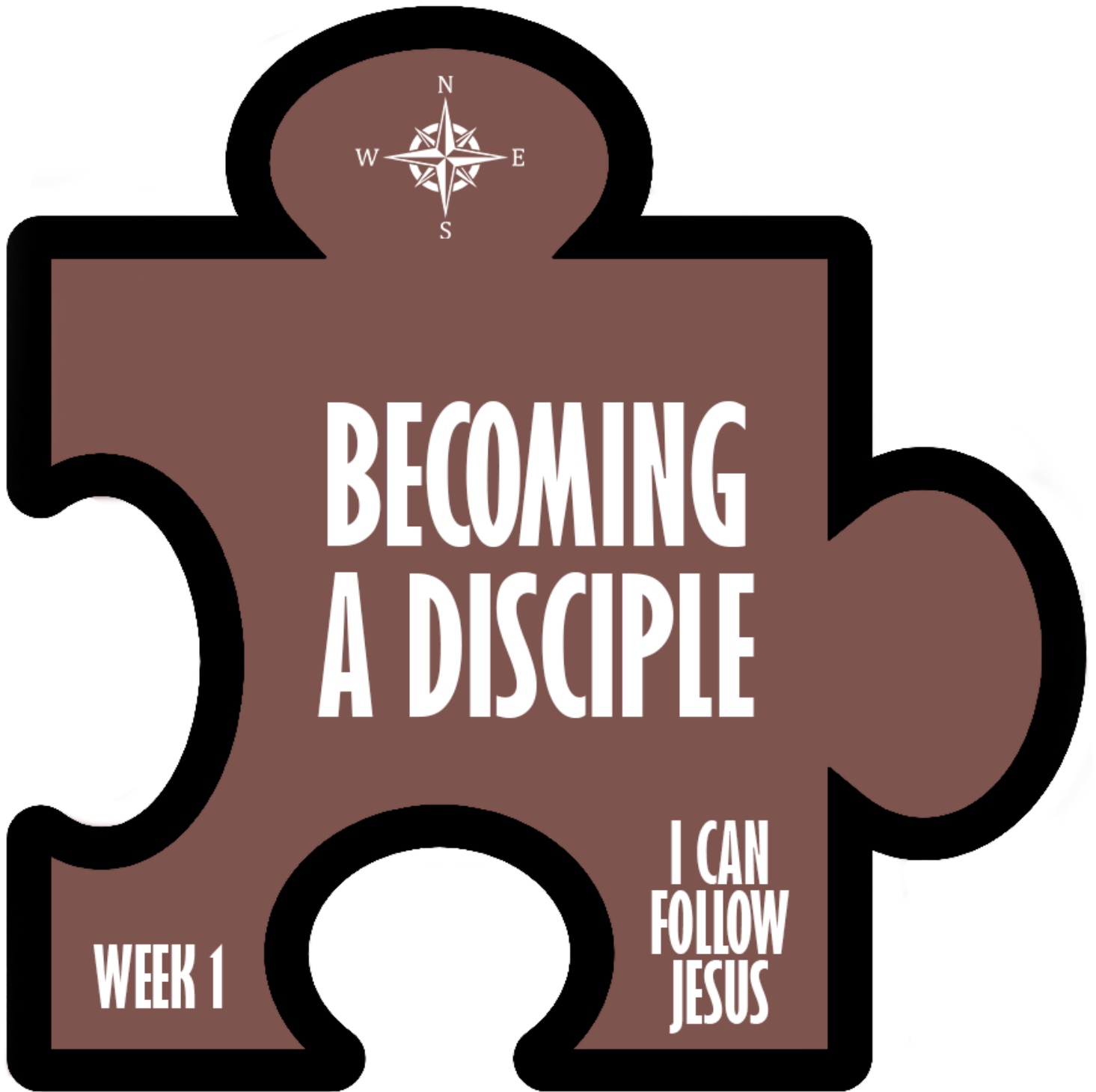
Say, "We have a lot to thank God for today. He loves us so much, and we want to love Him back. Let's ask Him to help us be His disciples and share His love with others. Does anyone have anything else they'd like us to pray about together?" (Give the children an opportunity to share their needs.)

Form a circle with the children and pray together.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us and for being the Light of the World. We want to be Your disciples. Please help us to follow You. In Jesus' name. Amen."*

RELEASE —

If there is extra time, the children can play "I Spy" again or finish the "Follow Me Sandal" craft. When parents arrive, please give them a copy of the monthly Parent Guide (downloadable). Be sure to share one thing you enjoyed about their child today.





JUST



ALL-KNOWING



ETERNAL



HOLY



ALL-POWERFUL



LOVE



UNCHANGING



EVERYWHERE



TRUTH



GRACIOUS



TRUSTWORTHY



CREATOR



FAITHFUL



SOVEREIGN



GOOD

I CAN FOLLOW JESUS



GROWING IN GOD'S WORD

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 2:52 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

I can follow Jesus

FOCUS VERSE

"He said, 'I am the light of the world. The person who follows me will never live in darkness. He will have the light that gives life.'" John 8:12 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | *Search and Find* Activity Page | A Seed | A Small Plant | *Yellow* Activity Page | *Green* Activity Page | Yellow and Green Cardstock | Scissors | Blue Construction Paper | Glue | Sunflower Seeds | Fine Tip Markers | Small Beanbag or Ball |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Have you ever planted a seed and watched it grow? Tell me about it.
- If you could have a garden, would you plant vegetables or flowers? Why?
- What do you need to grow something? (soil, sunlight, water, etc.)

Greet each child by name and ask if they are ready to worship as you invite them into the classroom.

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, "When we worship, we show God our love for Him. Did you know we worship Him anytime we put Him above all other things? For example, we worship Him by praying when we are worried because we are showing Him that we trust Him with all our needs. We also worship Him when we work hard in school. We don't just want to get good grades, but we want to give God our best and honor Him. Right now, though, we are going to worship with our singing! Let's stand and sing to God, telling Him how much we love Him."

This unit's theme song is "My Lighthouse" by Wonder Worship Kids. "To God Be the Glory" by Yancy and "O How I Love You" by Hillsong Kids complement this week's lesson.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Let's gather for prayer."

SAMPLE PRAYER: "Jesus, we love You and want to learn how to be more like You. Help us to listen and hear from Your Word. Thank You for all the ways You bless us every day. In Jesus' name. Amen."

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

BACKGROUND: Say, “Last week, we learned about becoming a disciple of Jesus. Does anyone remember what this means? [Wait for responses.] Yes! A disciple of Jesus gets to know Him, learns from Him, and then teaches others to follow Him. What are some ways we can learn from Jesus? [Wait for responses.] Yes, we can pray, attend church, read and listen to God’s Word, and obey His commands. You don’t have to wait until you are grown up to be Christ’s disciple. Children are some of the very best followers of Jesus! Today, we will learn how God’s Word helps us grow. Let’s put up our second puzzle piece for this month!”

TRANSITION: Say, “Now, let’s play a game!”**ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES****MATERIALS:** | *Search and Find* Activity Page (1 per class) |

BEFORE CLASS, PRINT AND CUT THE *SEARCH AND FIND* ACTIVITY PAGE. YOU WILL NEED AT LEAST ONE SET OF CARDS FOR EVERY TEN CHILDREN. LAMINATE THE CARDS IF POSSIBLE. BEFORE THE KIDS ARRIVE. HIDE THE CARDS IN VARIOUS PLACES AROUND THE ROOM.

Say, “Who is good at finding things? Great! I have hidden lots of cards that look like this [show the children a sample card] around the room. Let’s see how quickly you can work together to find them all!”

GAME GOAL: To find all the hidden cards.**HOW TO PLAY:**

1. When you say “Go,” have the children search for the cards.
2. Each time they find one, they must bring it to you immediately. (You will need to count them as they are returned, so you know when they have found all the cards.)
3. When all the cards have been found, celebrate together.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job finding all the cards. Who can tell me what is similar about the pictures on the cards? Right! They all have to do with plants! And what do plants do? They grow! Today, we’ll learn how YOU can grow in God’s Word as you learn to be more like Jesus.”

LEARN — 15 MINUTES**MATERIALS:** | A Seed | A Small Plant |

This lesson is about how God’s Word helps us grow. Teaching disciplines that get your children into Scripture is vital for their spiritual development and maturity. It has been said that when you put the Bible in your head, God puts it in your heart. That’s what we want for these children. Spend time in prayer

asking God for wisdom to teach the children how to put His Word in their hearts. Use a seed and a small plant for a visual aid as you share the following verses with the children.

Say, "Luke 2:52 says: 'Jesus continued to learn more and to grow physically. People liked him, and he pleased God.' Jesus was a child once, just like you, and He grew until He became a man. You are growing physically every day, but we want to grow in other ways, too, to become more like Jesus. Let's talk about some of these ways.

"Like a seed needs soil, sunlight, and water to grow, we need the Bible, God's Word. Reading the Bible and Bible storybooks helps us grow because we put God's Word in our heads and hearts.

"In Luke 4:16, we find that '...On the Sabbath day he [Jesus] went to the synagogue as he always did...' Spending time with other Christians encourages us, and learning about God by listening to our teachers, our pastor, and other Christians helps us. We were made to go to church and be friends with other believers.

"We can also grow in God's Word at home. Ask your family to read to you about Jesus. Listen closely and ask questions when you don't understand. God speaks to us through the Bible, and it helps us love Him more and obey Him. We can also memorize Bible verses [like we do here at church], and you might be surprised at how God reminds you of those words when you need them. Isaiah 46:4 says, '... I made you and will take care of you....' Why do you think that might be a good verse to know in your heart? (Wait for responses.)

"2 Peter 3:18 says, 'But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ...' That's what Jesus wants us to do. He wants us to keep growing to become more like Him. In what ways would you like to be more like Jesus? [Share some ways you would also like to become more like Jesus. Use specific examples like, 'I want to be kind to people, even when they make me angry,' or 'I want to get to know my neighbors who don't know Jesus.']

Say, "When we read God's Word, He shows us how to love Him and others just as He did. It's God's way of talking to us and teaching us."

Ask, "What can help you grow to become more like Jesus?"

TRANSITION: Say, "Aren't you thankful God loves us enough to give us His Word?"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's discuss what we have learned today."

1. How does planting a seed and watching it grow remind you of growing to become more like Jesus?

Response: A seed needs soil, sunlight, and water to grow into a strong, healthy plant, and we need God's Word to help us grow and become mature Christians.

2. What kinds of things help us grow?

Response: Reading our Bible (or Bible storybooks), going to church, talking about God's Word with our family or friends, memorizing Scripture, etc.

3. How does memorizing scripture help us?

Response: It can encourage us when we are sad, give us courage when we are afraid, help us make good decisions, avoid temptations, etc.

4. What are some things you do that are helping you grow?

Response: Answers will vary.

5. What did you learn about God from our story today?

Response: God gave us His Word to help us become like Jesus. God wants us to grow. God will speak to us through His Word, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "You have been good listeners! Let's make something that will help us remember how we can grow to become more like Jesus - let's make a sunflower!"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Yellow* Activity Page (1 per child) | *Green* Activity Page (1 per child) | Yellow and Green Cardstock | Scissors | Blue Construction Paper (1 per child) | Glue | Sunflower Seeds (25 per child) | Fine Tip Markers |



BEFORE CLASS, PRINT ONE *YELLOW* ACTIVITY PAGE ON YELLOW CARDSTOCK FOR EACH CHILD AND ONE *GREEN* ACTIVITY PAGE ON GREEN CARDSTOCK FOR EACH CHILD.

Say, "Today, we have a craft that will help us remember what we have learned. Let's get ready to make it!"

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child a *Yellow* Activity Page and a *Green* Activity Page. Instruct them to cut out the petals, center, stem and leaves. (Younger children may need help cutting.)
2. Help the children arrange and glue the sunflower pieces on the blue construction paper.
3. Then, they should glue the seeds in the center.
4. Finally, have the children write "God helps me grow." on their craft page.



TRANSITION: Say, "Your sunflowers are beautiful! Maybe you can put your picture in your room or on the refrigerator to remind you that God's Word helps you grow as a disciple. Now, let's practice this month's memory verse!"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Small Beanbag or Ball |

Say, "Because God gave us His Word, we know how much He loves us, and we can also learn how to become more like His Son, Jesus. This month's verse reminds us that when we follow God, He will always lead us in the right way. He is the 'light of the world.' Let's practice memorizing our verse now."

"He said, (point to heaven) 'I am the light. (close your fist and open it) of the world. (use both hands to create a giant circle) The person who follows me (march in place) will never (wag your finger back and forth) live in darkness (cover your eyes). He will have the light (close your fist and open it) that gives life (throw your arms open).'"
John 8:12 (ICB) (hold hands open like a book)



CHILDREN CAN GET BORED MEMORIZING VERSES THE SAME WAY EACH WEEK, AND WHEN THEY GET BORED, THEY MAY BECOME DISRUPTIVE. TO KEEP THEM ENGAGED, USE A VARIETY OF INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES TO HELP THEM LEARN THE BIBLE PASSAGES.

Say, "Today, we are going to play a game to help us learn our memory verse." Have the children form a circle. You (the teacher) will hold a beanbag, ball, or other small object and begin by saying the first word of the verse. Then, you will pass the object to the child on your right. That child will say the next word and continue passing the object around the circle. The game is complete when the entire verse and Scripture reference has been quoted.

CHALLENGE: Continue to play and pass the object over and over, getting faster and faster each round.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES



GOD ALWAYS TELLS THE TRUTH, AND BECAUSE THE BIBLE CONTAINS ONLY WORDS INSPIRED BY GOD, WE CAN BELIEVE EVERYTHING IT SAYS. (SEE TIMOTHY 3:16.) HOWEVER, THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING IN THE BIBLE, SO IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE YOUR CLASSROOM A SAFE PLACE FOR CHILDREN TO SHARE THINGS THAT CAUSE THEM TO WONDER. INCORPORATE MOMENTS IN YOUR TEACHING FOR THESE "WONDERING QUESTIONS." IF A CHILD ASKS A QUESTION YOU CANNOT ANSWER, TELL THEM YOU WILL FIND OUT AND GIVE THEM AN ANSWER NEXT WEEK (AND THEN COME PREPARED TO FOLLOW UP WHEN YOU SEE THEM AGAIN).

Say, "We have so many reasons to thank God! [Give the children time to name things they are thankful for.] Now, let's thank God for sending His Son and giving us the Bible."

SAMPLE PRAYER: "Dear God, thank You for giving us Jesus and Your Word. Help us to follow You and let You be our light. Amen."

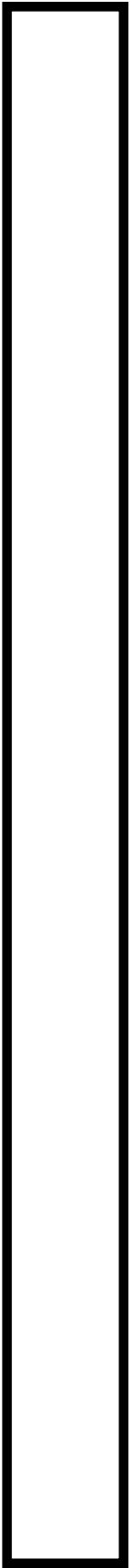
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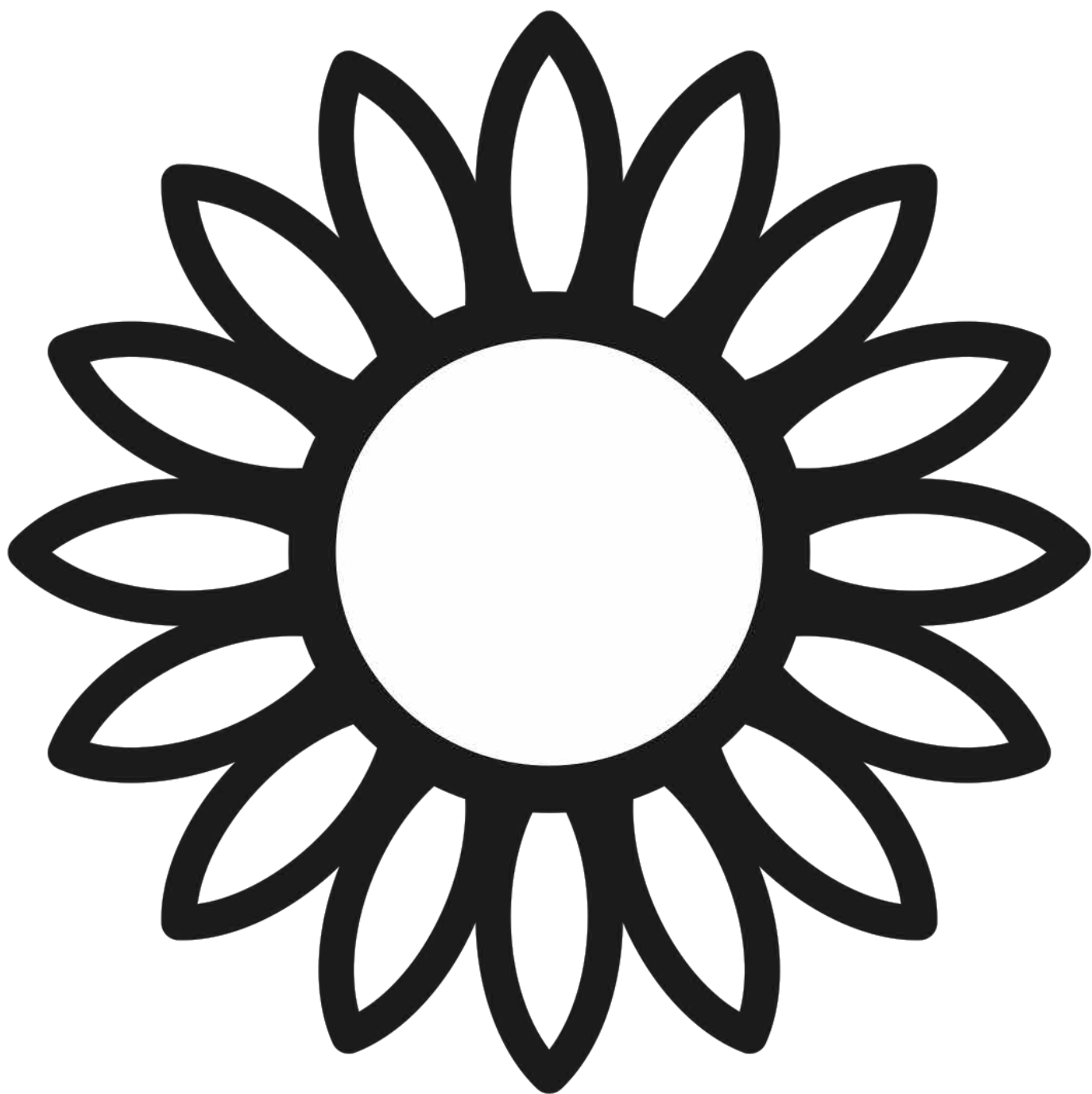
If there is extra time before the parents arrive, the children can finish the sunflower craft or play a game of their choice.

Greet each parent or guardian cheerfully and tell them how happy you are to have their child in your class. Be sure the child hears your words because all children and adults like to know they are appreciated.









I CAN FOLLOW JESUS



FASTING

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 4:2-4 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

I Can Follow Jesus

FOCUS VERSE

“He said, ‘I am the light of the world. The person who follows me will never live in darkness. He will have the light that gives life.’” John 8:12 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Tray of Various Items | Clear Plastic Cup | Play-Doh | Juice |
Construction Paper | *Light of the World* Activity Page | Scissors | Markers | Glue Sticks |
Balloons (optional) |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is your favorite thing to eat for breakfast?
- Do you like chocolate or vanilla better?

Enthusiastically welcome each child by name as they arrive.

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, “God loves our worship! So, let’s begin our time today by naming things about God that we are especially grateful for. Who wants to start? [Allow time for responses.] Wow! You thought of some incredible things! Isn’t God amazing? I’m so glad that the God who made the universe loves you and me. Let’s sing together!”



WE CAN REMIND THE KIDS OF THE THINGS THAT MAKE GOD UNIQUE BY TAKING TIME TO PRAISE HIM FOR WHO HE IS – HIS CHARACTER. THIS PRACTICE IS CALLED ADORATION. FOR EXAMPLE, WE WORSHIP GOD BECAUSE HE ALONE IS ALL-POWERFUL, GOOD, HOLY, PERFECTLY GRACIOUS, AND JUST.

This unit’s theme song is “My Lighthouse” by Wonder Worship Kids. Take today to review other new worship songs you’ve sung in the past few weeks. Kids will participate more fully if they are familiar with the music.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Ask the children if they have special requests to include in your prayer.

Say, “Did you know that how we position our body can help us pray? Sometimes we may bow our heads or put our hands together in prayer. We do that to show God honor and respect. It’s a way of telling Him that you know He is the most important and powerful being in all the universe! Kneeling is another way we do that. Let’s practice kneeling as we pray.”

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“Jesus, thank You for loving us and watching over us every day. Thank You, too, for giving us Your Word and teaching us how to be Your disciple. [Take a moment to mention the needs the children shared.] In Jesus’ name. Amen.”*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “This month, we are learning to be Jesus’ disciples. Our lesson last week taught us that God’s Word helps us grow. Reading the Bible, going to church, and memorizing verses are all things that help us become more like Jesus. Today, we will learn about another practice Jesus taught his disciples. It’s called fasting. First, let’s post our next puzzle piece! Who would like to do that for us now?”

TRANSITION: Say, “Now, let’s play a game to help us focus on God’s blessings.”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Tray of Various Items (5-10 items) |

Say, “Today, we will play a game requiring you to pay close attention to details. Are you ready to see how well you can focus?”

GAME GOAL: To help the kids realize that when they focus on only one thing, they may miss out on seeing God’s many blessings.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Have one of the adult helpers walk around the room with the tray of various objects. Tell the children to “remember what they see” and to “notice as many details as possible.”
2. After a few minutes, the helper should leave the room with the tray.
3. After she exists, ask questions about her appearance, such as: What color were her shoes? Was she wearing earrings? If so, what color were they? Was she wearing a watch? Was she wearing socks? How was her hair fixed? Did her shirt have a picture on it? If so, describe the picture.
4. Call the assistant back into the room to reveal the answers to your questions.
5. Finally, discuss your directions: “Remember what you see” and “notice as many details as possible.” The children will realize they only focused on the tray. Because of that, they missed what was right in front of them.

TRANSITION: Say, "What kinds of things take up much of your attention? [Allow the children to name good things like family, friends, sports, schoolwork, technology, etc., as well as things that are not healthy like jealousy, worry, bitterness, etc.] 1 Chronicles 22:19 instructs us to 'devote your heart and soul to seeing the Lord your God.' What do you think that means? [Allow for responses.] We can get so focused on other things [some of them good] that we miss seeing God at work. Today, we'll learn about fasting, a practice that can help us notice God."

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Clear Plastic Cup | Play-Doh | Juice |



ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SPEAK THROUGH YOU AS YOU PRESENT THIS LESSON. BE SENSITIVE TO QUESTIONS THE CHILDREN MAY HAVE ABOUT FASTING. EVEN THOUGH FASTING FROM FOOD IS A PRACTICE THAT MAY BE BEST LEFT TO TEENS AND ADULTS (OR AT LEAST TO THE DISCRETION OF PARENTS), WE CAN STILL LAY A FOUNDATION WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN IN AGE-APPROPRIATE WAYS.

Say, "Last week, we learned that reading and listening to God's Word can help us become more like Jesus. Today, we are going to learn how to focus better on God. Let's read together from Matthew 4:2-4 (ICB)."

² Jesus ate nothing for 40 days and nights. After this, he was very hungry. ³ The devil came to Jesus to tempt him. The devil said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these rocks to become bread." ⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written in the Scriptures, 'A person does not live only by eating bread. But a person lives by everything the Lord says.'"

Say, "Jesus was fasting [praying, spending time with His Father, and not eating food] in the desert when the devil came to Him. The devil wanted Jesus to stop focusing on God, so he tried to distract Him. Jesus responded that yes, we need food to live, but our very life comes from God, so we must spend time with Him by praying, reading the Bible, and thinking about God.

"When we fast, we give up something that usually takes a lot of our attention to spend extra time with God. For example, some people sacrifice sweets, soda, or video games in exchange for prayer or serving others."

Object Lesson: Show the children the clear, empty cup. Tell them that the cup represents each of us. Then, show the children the Play-Doh and explain that it stands for everything we like to do with our time. Pinch off pieces of the Play-Doh and use them to begin filling up the cup. As you add the Play-Doh, talk about the things that fill our lives: friends, video games, toys, sports, etc. Once the cup is full, show the kids the juice and say it represents God. Talk about how we want Him to fill our lives as you prepare to pour it into the cup. Stop suddenly and say, "Oh no! Our cup is so full that we don't have room for God." Begin removing the Play-Doh pieces until your cup is empty again. Tell the children that sometimes it is important to take a break from all the other things we do so we have special time for God. (Pour the juice into the cup.) Say, "When we are full of God, we will become more like His Son, Jesus, and we will know better how to follow Him and love Him."

Say, "Some churches also practice something called Lent. Have you ever heard of that? It is a special time before Easter when many Christians give up something special to help them think about and pray to Jesus. However, you don't have to wait until Lent to fast. If you feel God is asking you to focus more on Him, talk with your parents [or guardians] or pastor about how you could practice fasting."

TRANSITION: Say, "It is important to focus on God and His great love for us. We have a God who always listens when we talk to Him!"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk about what you learned today."

1. What was Jesus doing for forty days and nights in the wilderness?

Response: He was fasting.

2. What is fasting, and why do we do it?

Response: When someone fasts, they give something up for a while to focus more on God.

3. What are some ways you can fast?

Response: Answers will vary.

4. What is Lent?

Response: A time before Easter when some Christians fast to help them grow closer to God.

5. Tell us something you learned from our lesson today.

Response: Answers will vary.

6. What did you learn about God from today's lesson?

Response: God wants to help me become more like Jesus. God helps us know how to be His disciple. God gives us good gifts but wants us to focus on Him above all other things, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "That was a good discussion! Now, let's make something you can take home!"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Construction Paper | *Light of the World* Activity Page (1 sheet per child) | Scissors | Markers | Glue Sticks |

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child a piece of construction paper and a *Light of the World* Activity Page.
2. Have the children color the candle pieces and then cut out each one. (Younger children will need help cutting.)
3. Help the kids correctly construct and glue the candle pieces onto their construction paper.

TRANSITION: Say, "Good job making your "candles." You can use this craft to help you remember that Jesus is our "light." When we spend time with Him and follow Him, He will show us the way. Now, let's practice this month's memory verse that tells us this exact thing!"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Inflated Balloons (optional) |

Say, “What are some things you do for your family or friends to show them you love them? That’s awesome! In the Bible, God describes some practices (or actions) we can do to love Him. What do you think some of those things might be? Great! We can read our Bibles, come to church, pray, serve others, be kind, and even do what we learned about today: fast! One more thing we can do is memorize Scripture so that we will always have little truths from God’s Word in our hearts. Now, let’s take a few moments and practice our memory verse for this month:

“He said, (point to heaven) ‘I am the light. (close your fist and open it) of the world. (use both hands to create a giant circle) The person who follows me (march in place) will never (wag your finger back and forth) live in darkness (cover your eyes). He will have the light (close your first and open it) that gives life (throw your arms open).”
John 8:12 (ICB) *(hold hands open like a book)*

CHALLENGE: If you’d like to add some movement to your memory practice, choose a volunteer to be your “juggler.” Explain that as soon as you start saying the verse, you will toss two balloons into the area around the juggler. The children will keep their recitation going as long as the juggler keeps the balloons in the air. However, if a balloon hits the ground, everyone will stop the verse, and a new volunteer will take a turn. To make the activity more challenging, add additional balloons or say the verse very slowly.

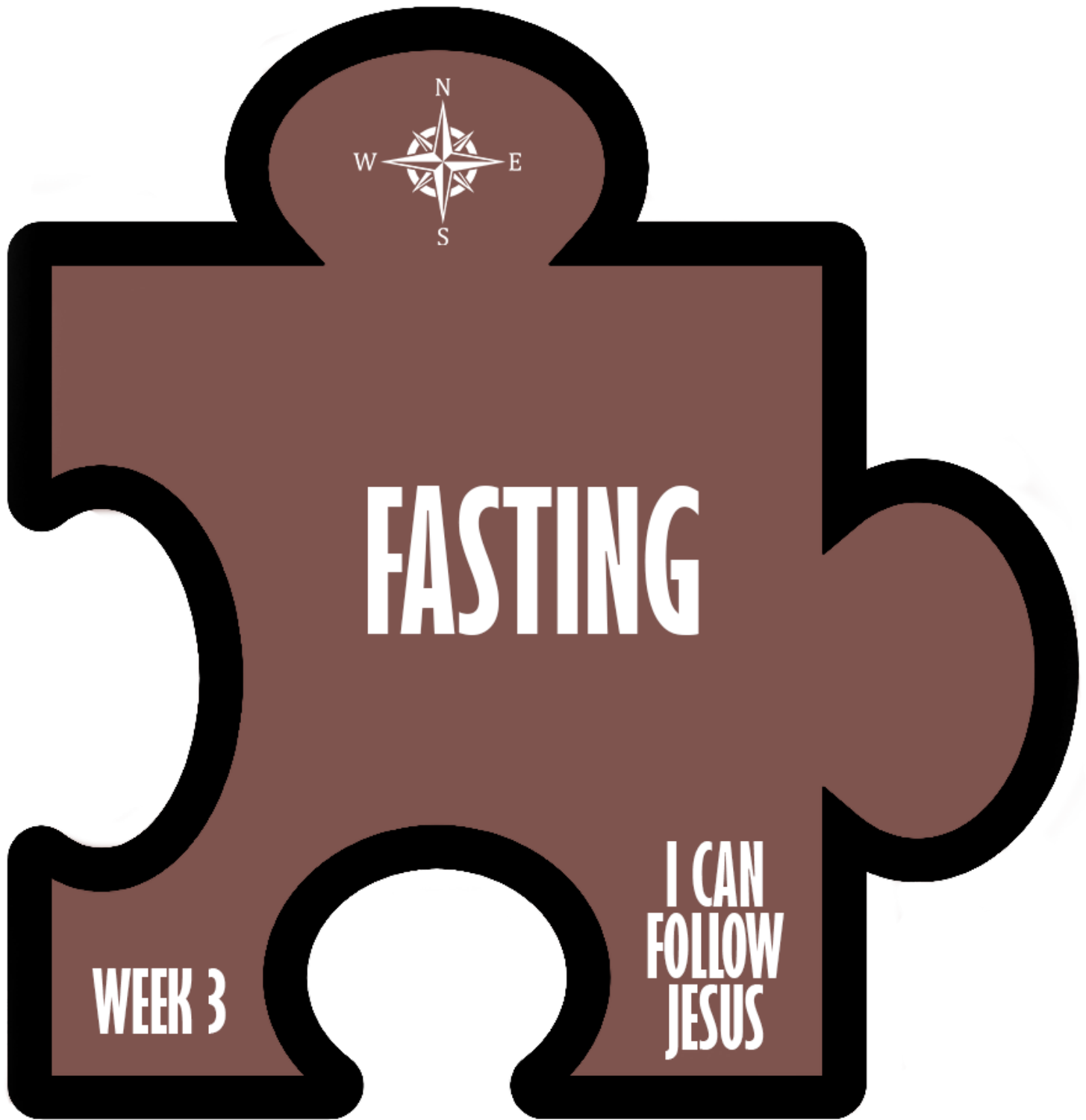
REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, “Jesus loves us so much, and we want to love Him back. Let’s spend a few minutes talking with Jesus, sharing our worries and needs with Him.” If possible, give the children a few minutes of silent time to talk with Jesus on their own. (You can play some quiet instrumental music in the background.) After a minute or two, pray aloud to signal the ending of the prayer time.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“Jesus, You are always with us. You listen when we talk to You, and we know You care about everything that concerns us. Thank You for loving us. Now, please help us know how much You love us and fill us with Your Spirit so we can love and follow You with all our hearts, souls, and minds. Amen.”*

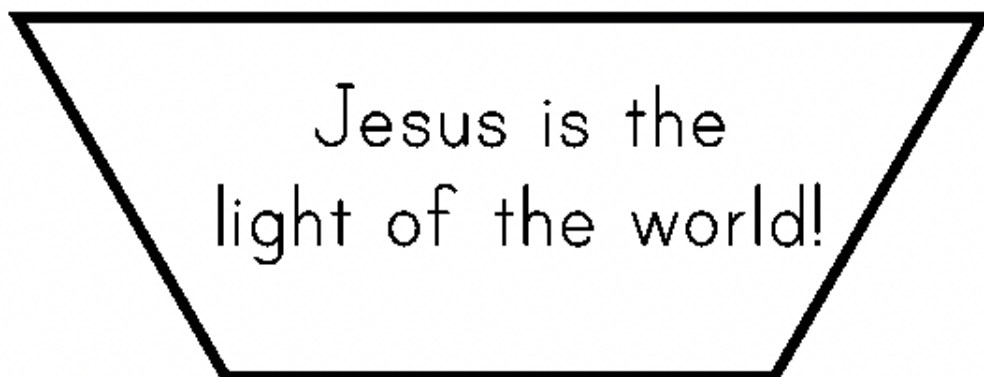
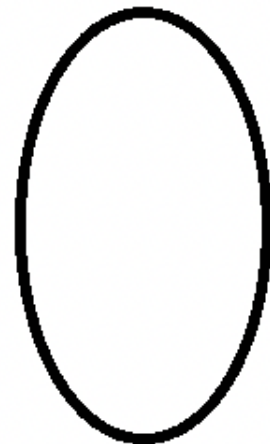
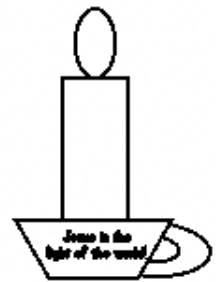
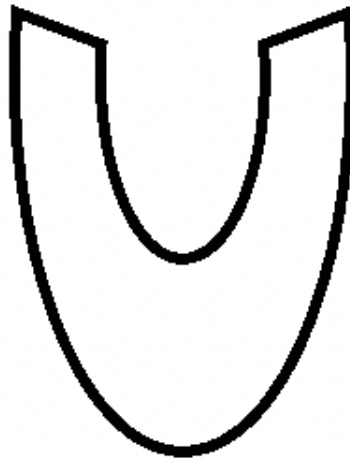
RELEASE —

If you have extra time, replay the memory verse game or sing some of your favorite worship songs.



Jesus is the Light of the World

Cut and Paste



I CAN FOLLOW JESUS



PRAYER

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 5:16 and Mark 1:35 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

I can follow Jesus

FOCUS VERSE

“He said, ‘I am the light of the world. The person who follows me will never live in darkness. He will have the light that gives life.’” John 8:12 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Dress-Up Clothes | Large Stones | Paint | Paintbrushes |
Paper Plates | Painting Smocks |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is your favorite holiday and why?
- What gift do you hope to get on your next birthday?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, “I like hearing your answers to my questions! Now, let’s think about our worship time. Did you know we can worship Jesus by reading our Bible, listening to our pastor and teachers at church, praying, and singing? When we worship, we focus on God. As we sing today, let’s think about how great our God is and how thankful we are that He sees us, hears us, and loves us! Let’s start with this month’s theme song!

This unit’s theme song is “My Lighthouse” by Wonder Worship Kids. For today’s lesson, “Hey, I Can Pray” by Journey Kids and “Good, Good Father” by Chapelhill Kids are great bonus choices.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

For prayer today, lead the children in the Lord’s Prayer.



REGULARLY INCORPORATE THE LORD’S PRAYER INTO YOUR LESSONS. PAUSE TO REMIND THE CHILDREN HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT WE CAN CALL GOD “OUR FATHER.” AND HE ISN’T JUST ANY KIND OF FATHER, HE IS OUR GOOD AND PERFECT FATHER WHO LONGS TO KNOW US AND CARE FOR US.

Say, “One day Jesus had been praying in a certain place, and one of His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. Jesus answered by saying ‘Pray in this way.’ This prayer is called ‘The Lord’s Prayer.’ This prayer can be found in Matthew 6:9-13 (ICB). Let’s pray as Jesus taught His disciples.”

⁹...Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

¹⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, "This is the final week of our unit on becoming a disciple of Jesus. In the first week, we learned what a disciple is. Does anyone remember? [Wait for responses.] Yes, a disciple learns from someone else and then does what they have learned. If you are a Christian, you can be a disciple of Jesus and learn from Him. In the second lesson, we discussed growing to become more like Jesus. Some things that help us are reading the Bible, going to church, and listening to God's Word. Last week, we discovered what it means to fast - giving up something to spend time with God. This week we will talk about prayer. First, let's put up the last puzzle piece for this month! Who would like to help me do that?"



CHOOSE A VOLUNTEER WHO HAS NEVER POSTED THE PUZZLE PIECE TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE ENCOURAGING ALL KIDS TO PARTICIPATE IN SOME WAY.

TRANSITION: Say, "Now, let's play a fun game to get ready for our lesson!"

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Dress-Up Clothes (1 set per team) |

Say, "Today, we will play a relay game where you will dress up in crazy clothes. Are you ready?"

GAME GOAL: To be the first team to complete the relay.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Assemble a set of dress-up clothes for each relay team with no more than eight children on each team. Sets should be similar in style and ease of taking on and off.
2. Designate each team's start and finish line before the game begins. Place a set of clothes in a box at each finish line.
3. On your signal, the first player will run to their dress-up box, put on the dress-up items over their clothes, and then run back to their team.
4. When they arrive, they will take off the dress-up items and give them to the next player. This player should put them on and race the playing area length. When they return, they pass the clothes on to the next player.
5. Play continues until all team members have raced in the dress-up clothes one time.

TRANSITION: Say, "You all did an excellent job with the relay, and you were running fast, weren't you?"

Did you know that when we pray, it's like we're running to God to tell Him what we need? Today, we'll talk about prayer, so let's get ready to hear from God's Word!"

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

In this lesson, we want to help children begin talking to God and see how important prayer is to their relationship with Him. Reinforce the truth that God hears their prayers and loves to be with them.

Say, "Last week, we learned that when we fast, we give up something [sweets, screen time, etc.] to spend more time with God. Today, we will talk about another thing we can do to be with God. Today's lesson is on prayer.

"Let's read together from Luke 5:16 and Mark 1:35 (ICB)."

¹⁶ But Jesus often slipped away to other places to be alone so that he could pray.

³⁵ Early the next morning, Jesus woke and left the house while it was still dark. He went to a place to be alone and pray.

Say, "This month we have been talking about how Jesus teaches us to be His disciple. He wants us to follow His example and do what He does. One of the things Jesus did a lot was to find a quiet space to be alone so He could pray. We might say it this way: He would 'gather' with His Heavenly Father for prayer. Then He would 'scatter' - go out among the people. You can do that, too. You can find a place to talk to God - 'gathering' with Jesus. Then you can 'scatter' - rejoin your family and friends. And do you know what? When we spend time with Jesus, we get better at loving people. Isn't that amazing?"

"Jesus loves our prayers, and He is always listening. He even understands what we mean when we are unsure how to pray. And you can tell Jesus anything. If you are sick, scared, or have a special need, He wants to help. If you have done something wrong, you can ask Him to forgive you, and He will do it - every time.

"He also listens to us when we pray for others. We can talk to Jesus, tell Him whatever is on our minds, and thank Him for His many blessings. He loves us so much! Our prayers should be like having a conversation with God. You can talk to Him just like you would your mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, or close friend. Also, it is something we get to do every day. You can talk to Jesus anytime and anywhere, of course, but it is also good to find a special time and place to be alone with Him. Can you think of places at your house where you could 'gather' with Jesus to pray?"

TRANSITION: Say, "Remember God is always listening and loves to hear from you! Now, let's talk about what you have learned from our story."

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Isn't it awesome that Jesus wants us to spend time talking to Him!"

1. What did you learn about how Jesus prayed?

Response: He often found a quiet place to talk with His Heavenly Father.

2. How do we talk to God?

Response: We talk to Him like we are having a conversation with Him. We can tell Him anything.

3. How often should we pray?

Response: It's great to pray anytime we think about it! Whenever you are worried about something, say a prayer in your head right then. God loves you, and He wants to hear from you about everything.

4. What do we do if we are not good at praying?

Response: But you are good at praying! You do not have to have particular words or know much about the Bible to pray. Just start talking to God; that's all He wants. When you do that, you are good at praying!

5. What did you learn about God from today's Bible reading?

Response: God hears me. God wants me to pray about everything. God is kind and patient with me. God will help me love others, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job! We know that Jesus is always listening when we pray! Now, let us make something you can take home to help you remember to talk with God about everything!"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Large Stones (1 per child) | Paint | Paintbrushes (1 per child)| Paper Plates | Painting Smocks (1 per child) |

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child a large stone.
2. Have the children wear their painting smocks to protect their clothing.
3. Provide the children with paint (on the plates) and paintbrushes.
4. Have the children decorate their stones with paints.

Say, "I hope you will take your rock home and place it near your pillow. When you go to bed each night, let your stone remind you to end your day talking with God. Keep your stone in a place where it is also the first thing you see in the morning. This will remind you to pray again. Praying first thing in the morning and right before you fall asleep is a great habit to start right now at your age!"



ACRYLIC PAINTS WORK BEST ON ROCKS. HOWEVER, PURCHASING AN "ALL-IN-ONE" ROCK PAINTING KIT FROM A CRAFT STORE MAY BE MORE CONVENIENT. ALSO, ALTHOUGH PAINTING SMOCKS ARE AN INITIAL EXPENSE, THEY ARE A FANTASTIC ITEM TO KEEP IN YOUR CLASSROOM AND CAN BE USED REPEATEDLY.

TRANSITION: Say, "You did an outstanding job decorating your rocks! How can this project help you pray? Right! It can remind you to talk with God in the morning and at night. He loves us SO much and wants to spend time with us! Isn't that incredible? The God who made the whole world wants to hear from you! Now, let's practice our memory verse!"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "This is the last week to practice this month's memory verse. Does anyone remember it? Great! Let's see if you can do it without my help!"

"He said, (point to heaven) 'I am the light. (close your fist and open it) of the world. (use both hands to create a giant circle) The person who follows me (march in place) will never (wag your finger back and forth) live in darkness (cover your eyes). He will have the light (close your fist and open it) that gives life (throw your arms open).'"
John 8:12 (ICB) *(hold hands open like a book)*

CHALLENGE: Spend a few minutes discussing what it means that Jesus is the "light of the world."

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "God is so good! Let's take a few minutes to pray and thank God for loving us and teaching us to be His disciples."

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, we love You because You first loved us. We want to be Your disciples and do what You taught us. Help us want to pray and spend time with You. Help us trust You and share with You everything that matters to us. In Jesus' name. Amen."*

RELEASE —

If there is extra time, let the children decorate additional rocks, play a favorite classroom game, or sing this month's theme song.

