

I CAN FOLLOW JESUS



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YEAR 3, UNIT 4

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I CAN FOLLOW JESUS

MONTHLY PREPARATION GUIDE

YEAR 3, UNIT 03 - ELEMENTARY

This month our theme is, *I Can Follow Jesus*. This month you will teach the children four new spiritual disciplines. They will learn to worship, submit to God, serve others, and take a Sabbath rest. Spiritual disciplines are things we do, like praying and worshiping, that help us get to know God and follow Him. We practice spiritual disciplines to help us grow in our walk with Christ and learn to follow Him.

WEEK 1

LESSON MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece (1 per class) | Ping Pong Balls (18 per class) | Plastic Spoons (1 per child) | Disposable Bowls (6 per class) | *Focus Verse Box* Activity Page | Paper Plates (2 per child) | Popcorn | Stapler | Glue | Crayons or Markers |

WEEK 2

LESSON MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece (1 per class) | *Listening Ears* Activity Page (1 per child) | Scissors | Glue | Crayons or Markers |

WEEK 3

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class) | Chairs | *Love Your Neighbor* Activity Page (1 per child) | Glue | Scissors | Crayons or Markers | Printed Memory Verse (optional) | Jenga Game (optional) |

WEEK 4

LESSON MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece | *Vine and Branches* Activity Page (1 per child) | 9-Inch Balloons (1 per child) | Empty Small-Neck Water Bottles (5-6 per class) | Flour | Funnels (5-6 per class) | Permanent Markers | Yarn (optional) |

WORSHIP

BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 20:3-4, Psalm 95:1-6 (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 | Ping Pong Balls | Plastic Spoons | Disposable Bowls | *Focus Verse Box* Activity Page | Paper Plates | Popcorn | Stapler | Glue | Crayons or Markers |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Who is your favorite actor/actress/celebrity?
- Why are they your favorite?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

This month you will teach the children four new spiritual disciplines. They will learn to worship, submit to God, serve others, and take a Sabbath rest. Spiritual disciplines are practiced to help us grow in our walk with Christ and learn to follow Him. Today’s lesson is about worship, so choose songs that encourage the boys and girls to focus their minds and thoughts on who God is and to use their bodies to praise Christ. Remind the kids that the Bible commands us to worship God with all of our bodies and hearts!

We recommend that you continue using “Love the Lord” by CJ and Friends as your theme song. Hillsong Kids also has two other songs that work well with today’s lesson: “Every Move I Make” and “I Give You My Hallelujah.”

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“Dear Jesus, You are worthy of all our worship! Many things in this world are good and lovely, but you are the only One who is perfectly good and lovely. Only You deserve our praise. As we learn from Your Word today, help us to remember and choose only to worship You! Amen. ”*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say: “This month, we will continue studying spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines are practices or habits [things we do regularly] to help us follow Jesus and develop a relationship with Him. Last month we learned three important ways to get to know God: fasting, reading God’s Word, and becoming a disciple of Jesus. This month we will learn four new disciplines. First, though, who wants to put up the puzzle piece for this new series?”



THE PHRASE “SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES” MAY BE CHALLENGING FOR THIS AGE. IF NEEDED, EXPLAIN THAT SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES ARE “PRACTICES” WE DO REPEATEDLY (LIKE HABITS) TO HELP US GET TO KNOW AND FOLLOW JESUS. USE EXAMPLES LIKE THROWING A BALL OR LEARNING TO DANCE TO HELP THE CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THAT WE GET BETTER AT THINGS WHEN WE PRACTICE THEM. ADDITIONALLY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO PERIODICALLY REMIND CHILDREN WHY WE DO SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES; IT’S NOT TO EARN GOD’S LOVE. THEY ARE GIFTS (OPPORTUNITIES) GIVEN TO US BY GOD TO HELP US ENTER INTO THE JOY OF KNOWING HIM.

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

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Ping Pong Balls (18 count) | Plastic Spoons (1 per child) | Disposable Bowls (6 count)

GAME GOAL: To be the fastest team to move the ping pong balls from one bowl to another.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. On a table, create three identical stations. The stations will have one bowl holding six ping pong balls in it and one empty bowl. Provide an unused spoon for each player.
2. Divide your group into three teams, and assign each team a station.
3. Have each team choose a member to go first and to take their place at their station.
4. When you say “Go!” the players should put the end of the spoon in their mouths and begin moving the ping pong balls from one bowl to the other using only their spoon (in their mouths). Once they have transferred all six balls, they repeat the process by returning the balls to their original bowl. The first player to complete the task wins the round.
5. If a ball drops or a player accidentally uses their hands, have them return that ball to the bowl and start it again.
6. Keep track of each team’s score (1 win = 1 point).
7. Once everyone has completed a turn, congratulate the winning team.

TRANSITION: “You guys did a fantastic job moving those ping pong balls! It’s more complicated than it sounds! There’s a reason we played a game using our mouths. It’s because we’re going to talk about how we can use our mouths for a really important purpose. We can use them to honor God. Grab your Bibles, and let’s see what God wants to teach us today.”

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

Say, “Today, we will learn why we worship God. Perhaps you have watched other people [your parents, your pastor, your friends] worship God, but you wonder why and how you should worship Him. Well, first, let’s learn what worship is. Worship is a response to something or someone worthy of our love, respect, and reverence. Let’s read from God’s Word to discover why He is worthy of our worship. Follow along with me in Exodus 20:3-4 and Psalm 95:1-6 (ICB).”

Read Exodus 20:3-4 (ICB).

³ “You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴ “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

Read Psalm 95:1-6 (ICB).

¹ Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. ² Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. ³ For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. ⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. ⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. ⁶ Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;

Say, “Isn’t it amazing how God reveals Himself in the Bible? In Exodus 20, we see a rule [or command] from God. What was it? [Allow for responses.] In the second passage from Psalm, we are told what God is like [His character]. I’m going to read that passage again so you can tell me what we find out about God in those verses. [Reread Psalm 95:1-6.] What do we learn about God from that passage? [Allow for responses.] Great answers!”

Say, “Even though the Bible has many rules and commands, the Bible is not really a rule book. The Bible is the way God shows us who He is. Even God’s laws explain important things about Him. For example, in Exodus 20:3-4, God commands us not to make idols. We probably wouldn’t do that anyway, not how the Israelites made idols out of stone, wood, or metal. However, we are tempted to make idols out of other things. What do you think I mean? [Allow for responses.] Good! Anytime we make something more important than God and follow that thing rather than following Him, we are making an idol and putting another god ahead of the real God.

“As long as we live on this earth, we will be tempted to worship things God has made rather than God Himself. The goodness and beauty we see in God’s creation, and in the creativity God gives people are there to remind us that only God, the Creator, is to be praised! It is important that we practice worshipping God every day.”



CHILDREN NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD WE ARE INVITED TO SHARE AND THOSE RESERVED ONLY FOR GOD. IF YOU HAVE A WHITEBOARD, PAUSE FOR A FEW MOMENTS DURING THE LESSON AND CREATE TWO COLUMNS: 1) WAYS WE CAN BECOME LIKE GOD AND 2) WAYS GOD IS DIFFERENT FROM US. HAVE THE CHILDREN COME UP WITH WORDS TO PUT IN EACH COLUMN. FOR EXAMPLE, IN COLUMN ONE, YOU MAY INCLUDE WORDS LIKE PATIENT, KIND, LOVING, JUST, AND COMPASSIONATE. IN COLUMN TWO, APPROPRIATE WORDS INCLUDE ALL-POWERFUL, ALL-KNOWING, EVERYWHERE, AND PERFECT.

Say, "Finally, let's talk about how we worship God. Worship includes thanking God, singing songs, lifting our hands, or giving to God and others; we can also worship God in other ways. Did you know that we worship God when we obey Him? How can you worship God?" (Allow for responses.)

TRANSITION: Say, "God does not make us worship Him. He wants us to worship Him because we love Him. When you don't feel like worshipping God, ask the Holy Spirit to help you love Jesus with your whole heart."

JOINING TO JESUS

When Jesus became a person and lived on the earth, He worshiped God! As we learn to follow Jesus, we will worship God more too!

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

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

1. What is worship?

Response: It is our response to something or someone worthy of respect or reverence.

2. Who is the only One worthy of our worship?

Response: God

3. Why is God the only one worthy of our worship?

Response: He is our Creator and the Creator of everything in the world. (Allow children to add their answers.)

4. How do we worship God at church?

Response: Responses will vary.

5. How can we worship God in our daily lives?

Response: Responses will vary.

6. When we worship God, who are we following?

Response: Jesus!

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

God helps us follow Jesus. God is worthy of our worship. God teaches us how to worship in His Word. God commands us to worship. God helps us become more like Jesus, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great discussion! Now, let's start today's craft!"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Focus Verse Box* Activity Page | Paper Plates (2 per child) | Popcorn | Stapler | Glue | Crayons or Markers |



BEFORE CLASS, CUT OUT THE FOCUS VERSE BOX FROM THE *FOCUS VERSE BOX* ACTIVITY PAGE. (EACH CHILD NEEDS ONE FOCUS VERSE BOX.)

Say, "One way we can worship God is through music. Today, we're going to make tambourines that you can take home and use to worship God anytime. Let's get started."

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child a Focus Verse box and two plates. Have them color the boxes and the bottom of their plates.
2. For each child, staple two plates together $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way around (bottoms facing out), placing the staples close together.
3. Use a funnel to fill the plates with popcorn, and then finish stapling the plates together.
4. Finally, glue the Focus Verse boxes onto the children's tambourines.

TRANSITION: Say, "Wow! Do you see the Scripture verse you glued onto your tambourine? It's the one we read in our lesson. You can show it to your parents and discuss what you learned today. Now, let me hear you play your tambourines! Wow, your music sounds great!"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "One thing I love about our memory verse is that it reminds us how we can grow closer to God and follow Jesus! Now, I will read it, and then we will practice together."

"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)

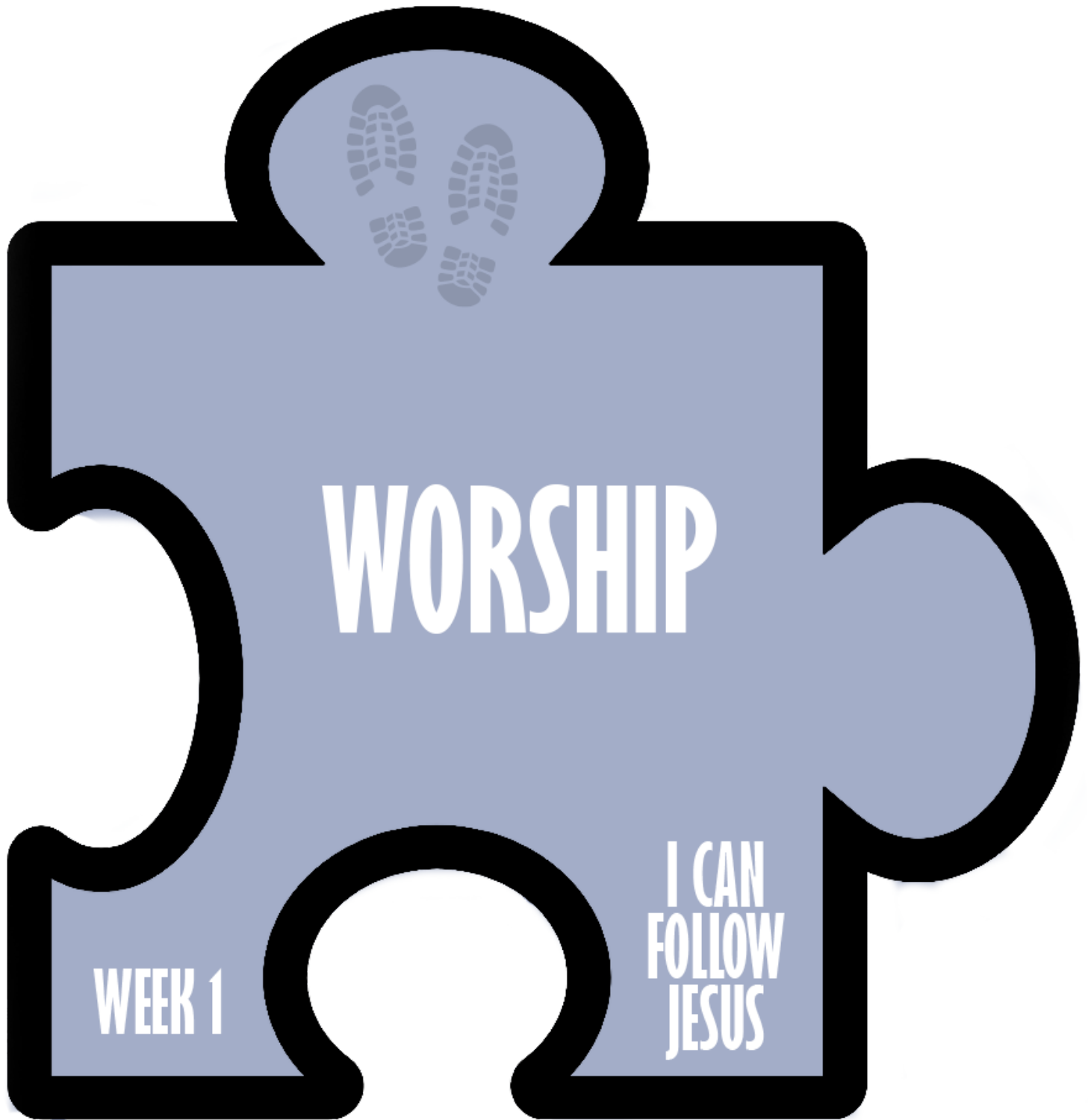
REFLECT — 5 MINUTES


Say, "We learned something important today. We learned that God is worthy of our worship and is the only One worthy of our worship! Reading God's Word teaches us many things about Him that help us understand who He is and why we should worship Him. In our next lessons, we will learn how we can worship Him in our daily lives."

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Thank You, God, for who You are! You are the only one worthy of our worship. Help us grow closer to You and become more like Jesus every day! Amen."*

RELEASE —

If there is extra time, replay the game, finish the craft or recite the memory verse again. Finally, give the parents (or guardians) their copy of this unit's downloadable Parent Guide.





**“Come, let’s sing for joy to the Lord.
Let’s shout praises to the Rock who saves us.
Let’s come to him with
thanksgiving.
Let’s sing songs to him. The Lord is the great
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He is the great King over all gods.”
Psalm 95:1-3**

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GODLY SUBMISSION

BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 3:1-7, Mark 4:10 (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 | *Listening Ears* Activity Page | Scissors | Glue | Crayons or Markers |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is a game someone had to teach you how to play?
- If you could choose one rule for everyone to follow, what would it be and why?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say: “This month, we are learning four new ways to follow Jesus. Today’s lesson is about submitting to God. Submitting to God means asking God to show us how to live and then obeying Him. Do you know what the wonderful thing about that is? God loves us more than we can imagine, so we can obey Him, knowing He only wants good things for us! Let’s sing to our loving God now.”

We recommend that you continue using “Love the Lord” by CJ and Friends as your theme song. The “Goodness of God” by NRC Kids also complements today’s lesson.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Gather your class for prayer.

SAMPLE PRAYER: “Thank You, God, for being faithful and good. When You ask us to do something, please help us follow You and obey, knowing we can trust You with our whole lives. Amen.”

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say: “Spiritual disciplines are practices or habits that we repeatedly do to help us become

more like Jesus and follow Him. Last week we learned that God is the only One worthy of our worship and that worshiping God helps us understand who God is and why He is worthy of our praise. Today, we will learn another way we can grow closer to God. Who wants to put up the next puzzle piece for this series?"

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

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

GAME GOAL: To follow instructions from the game leader

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Gather everyone for a game of "Simon Says." You are the game leader for the first round and will call out the commands/actions.
2. Everyone else must follow the leader and do the action, but only when the phrase "Simon Says" is used before the command.
3. Make things more complicated by speeding up the pace of directions. Play a few rounds so that several children can be the game leader.

TRANSITION: Say, "Everyone did a great job listening to the game leader's directions! You had to listen carefully and sometimes you had to do strange things! Today we will learn about listening to God's commands and why it is so important."

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

Say, "Last week, you learned that worship is not something we only do when we are at church. Worship is something we do every day, wherever we are. One of the ways we worship God is by submitting to Him. Submitting to God means asking God to show us how to live and obeying Him. Let's read from the Bible about why submitting to God is the best choice."



INVEST IN A SET OF CLASSROOM BIBLES SO THAT EACH CHILD HAS THEIR OWN TO USE DURING THE LESSON. WE WANT OUR CHILDREN TO BE COMFORTABLE USING AND FINDING THINGS IN GOD'S WORD. IF YOUR CHURCH DOESN'T HAVE THE BUDGET FOR THE BIBLES, ASK THE LORD TO PROVIDE THEM ANOTHER WAY. YOU MAY BE SURPRISED AT HOW HE ANSWERS YOUR PRAYER!

Read Genesis 3:1-7 (ICB).

¹ Now the snake was the most clever of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day the snake spoke to the woman. He said, "Did God really say that you must not eat fruit from any tree in the garden?" ² The woman answered the snake, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden. ³ But God told us, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. You must not even touch it, or you will die.'" ⁴ But the snake said to the woman, "You will not die. ⁵ God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree, you will learn about good and evil. Then you will be like God!" ⁶ The woman saw that the tree was beautiful. She saw that its fruit was good to eat and that it would make her wise. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of the fruit to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.

⁷ Then, it was as if the man's and the woman's eyes were opened. They realized they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made something to cover themselves."

Say, "Wow! There are many things to learn from God's Word today! Submitting to God has always been a challenge for people. Even Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, found it hard to obey God when the serpent suggested they eat the forbidden fruit. They began to wonder if God was really good and trustworthy and if they needed to follow Him.

"When Adam and Eve ate the fruit, they sinned [disobeyed God]. And that changed the world forever. We don't have a command about eating fruit from a tree, but we do have commands from God in His Word. Sometimes the commands feel easy, and we want to do them, but sometimes God tells us 'NO,' and we want to disobey. The word 'NO' doesn't sound or feel nice, but when God says it, we need to trust that it is good because God is always good.

"Adam and Eve show us what NOT to do when we want to follow God, and Jesus is our BEST and RIGHT model. Jesus always obeyed God, even when the choice was hard. Satan tempted Jesus to disobey God in a big way [Matthew 4] – he tried to keep Jesus from dying on the Cross. But Jesus knew that even when God asked Him to do something hard, it was the right thing." Read Mark 4:10 (ICB).

¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Get away from me, Satan! It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve.'"

Say, "Jesus trusted God and said 'YES' to everything His Father asked of Him. He understood that God is the only One we should serve, and we can always ask Jesus to help us obey God's commands, especially when they are difficult. He understands our temptations, and He will help us follow God."

TRANSITION: God's Word teaches us how we can submit to Him. Obedience to God's Word is always the best choice.

JOINING TO JESUS

Jesus was tempted by Satan in the desert, just as Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden. Jesus was given three chances to do the easy thing and avoid the Cross, but Jesus said NO to what was easy and YES to what God wanted. We will never be perfect like Jesus (until we reach Heaven). However, there is hope! Jesus has promised to help us become more like Him when we ask.

DISCUSS – 10 MINUTES

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

1. What does "submitting to God" mean?

Response: It means asking God to teach and show us how to live and then obeying Him.

2. Is submitting to God always easy?

Response: No, sometimes God will ask us to make a hard choice.

3. Is submitting to God always worth it?

Response: Yes, even when it is hard to obey, we can trust that God is good.

4. How can we know that we can trust God and submit to Him?

Response: The Bible teaches us that God is loving and good and always has our best in mind. We can trust the Bible because it is God's Word.

5. Who tempts us to disobey God?

Response: Satan

6. What have you learned about God today?

Response: God will help us follow Him. God loves us, and we can trust Him. God promises to help us obey Him even when it is hard. God is trustworthy. God will give us strength when we ask, etc.



YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED THAT WE END EACH DISCUSSION WITH THE SAME QUESTION: "WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT GOD TODAY?" WE DO THIS AS A REMINDER THAT THE BIBLE IS A BOOK ABOUT GOD – IT IS HIS STORY. YOU CAN HELP THE CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASS LEARN AN ESSENTIAL BIBLE STUDY SKILL BY MAKING THIS QUESTION A PRIORITY EVERY TIME THEY APPROACH GOD'S WORD.

TRANSITION: Say, "Awesome discussion! Let's work on a craft that will help us remember that **we can follow Jesus.**"

RESPOND – 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Listening Ears* Activity Page (1 per child) | Scissors | Glue | Crayons or Markers |

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child the *Listening Ears* Activity Page.
2. Have the kids color the ears and the headband parts.
3. Next, they should cut out the ears and headband.
4. Finally, have the children glue the front and back headband pieces together and the ear tabs to each side of the headband.

TRANSITION: Say, "Wow! You created something fantastic! These are our 'listening ears!' As we wear our listening ears, I hope they will remind you to listen to God's commands and submit to Him! If you'd like, you can wear your 'listening ears' as we review our memory verse."

MEMORIZE – 5 MINUTES

Say, "This month, we are learning an important verse to remind us how to grow closer to God and **follow Jesus.** I will read it, and then we will say it together."

“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: Play the following simple game to help the children remember the words of John 8:12. Write the verse on a whiteboard. Recite the verse together. Repeat the process, except each time you say the verse, erase a phrase so the children must fill in the words by memory. Continue until there are no words remaining on the board. (Adapt this game by asking a different volunteer to say it each time, knowing that the process will get more difficult each time.)

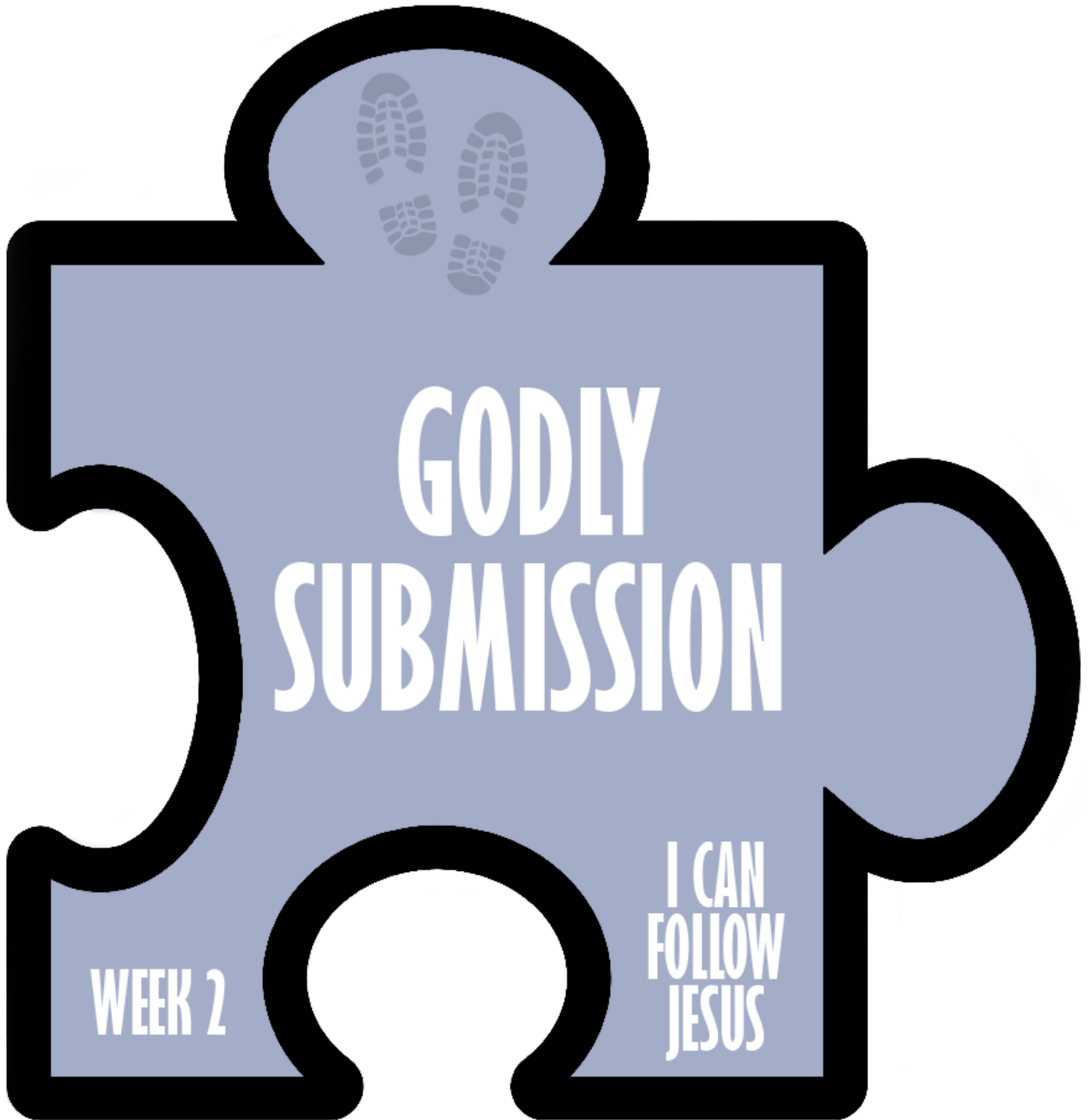
REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, “We learned an important truth today. God is good, and we can trust Him with anything. Sometimes it will be easy to follow Him, and sometimes it will be difficult. However, submitting to God is one crucial way we follow Jesus and grow to become more like Him.”

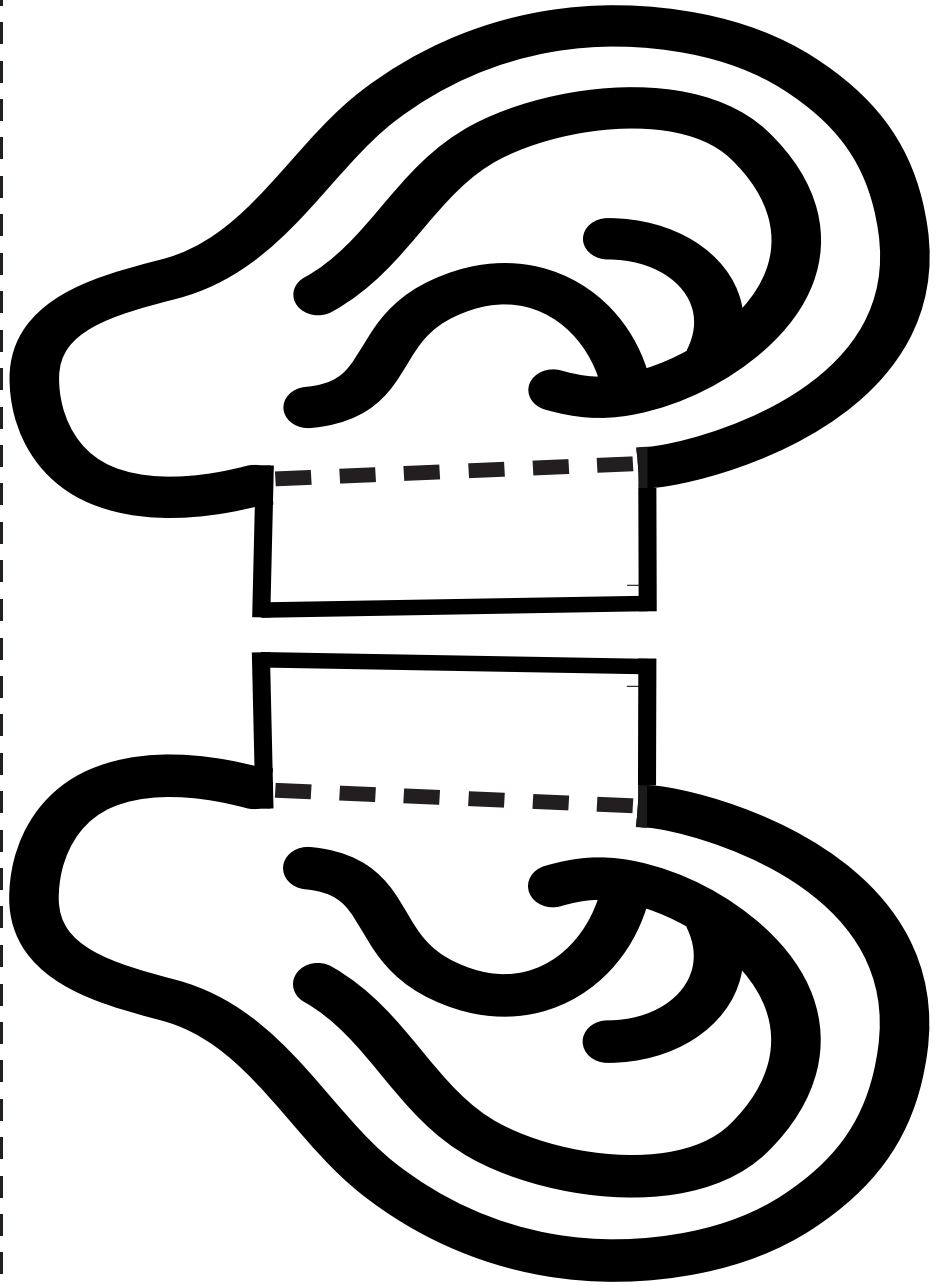
SAMPLE PRAYER: *“Thank You, God, for being so good. We can trust You enough to submit our lives to You. Help us, Jesus, when it is challenging to follow You. We know You never ask us to do anything You were not willing to do! We also know that You are always with us. We love You. Amen.”*

RELEASE —

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



Listening Ears Activity Page



Listening Ears

LISTENING EARS

I can listen and submit to God!

SERVING OTHERS

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 10:25-37 (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 | Chairs | *Love Your Neighbor* Activity Page | Glue | Scissors | Crayons or Markers | Printed Memory Verse (optional) | Jenga Game (optional) |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Where do servers/waiters work?
- What is your favorite restaurant?
- Do you think working as a server is difficult? Why or why not?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Today’s lesson is about serving others, and worshiping through song gives us time to think about how Jesus served, most importantly by dying on the Cross for us. As you prepare the songs for this worship time, read Philippians 2:3-7 and reflect on how God chose to humbly serve us. Then, when you worship together, remind the children how our great God humbled Himself to become a human and die on the Cross for our salvation.

We recommend that you continue using “Love the Lord” by CJ and Friends as your theme song. “Kind Like You” (by Kingdom Kids) also works well with today’s topic.



AS YOU TRANSITION FROM SINGING TO PRAYING, TAKE A MOMENT TO TEACH THE CHILDREN TO SPEAK ALOUD PRAISES TO GOD FOR WHO HE IS. YOU CAN MAKE THIS SIMPLE BY STARTING WITH “HEAVENLY FATHER, WE PRAISE YOU, FOR YOU ARE...” THEN, LIST SOME OF GOD’S ATTRIBUTES, SUCH AS “FORGIVING, KIND, AND POWERFUL.” FINALLY, HAVE THE CHILDREN STATE THINGS THEY KNOW TO BE TRUE ABOUT GOD.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Gather the children for prayer.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *Dear God, You are great and powerful! And yet, You are humble and kind. Thank You for loving us so much that You would die so we can be forgiven and have eternal life. Help us understand how much You love us and grow in a desire to follow You. Amen.*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say: “This month, we are continuing our study of spiritual disciplines. Who remembers what a spiritual disciple is? [Allow for responses.] Great answers! Spiritual disciplines are practices or habits we do to help us follow Jesus. What are some spiritual disciplines you have learned about so far? [Allow for responses.] Great! We’ll learn about another spiritual discipline today when we read from God’s Word, but first, let’s put our new puzzle piece on the wall. Who would like to do that for us?”

TRANSITION: Say, “Let’s play a game called *Love Your Neighbor* before we read our story!”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Chairs |

Say, “Today, our lesson is all about names, so we are going to play the *Name Game*! Let’s get started!”

GAME GOAL: To find common characteristics with the other children

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Position chairs in a circle. Make sure there is one less chair for the number of students.
2. One student will stand in the center of the circle while the other students stand in front of a chair.
3. The person standing in the center of the circle begins the game by saying, “I love my neighbor, especially my neighbor who...” followed by a true statement about themselves. Examples: loves pizza, has a pet, is an only child, etc.
4. As soon as the student in the center is finished with their statement, everyone to whom this statement applies, including the person in the center, moves to find a seat that is not right behind them or right next to them.
5. The person who cannot find a seat becomes the person in the middle and begins the next round of the game.
6. Continue several rounds as time allows.

TRANSITION: Say, “Wow! It is so great that you all have so much in common. Today’s game encouraged us to speak love [“I love my neighbor...”] to others like us. However, our lesson will push us to think about how to speak and love those who are NOT like us!”

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

Say, "For the past few weeks, we have been learning to follow Christ. For example, Jesus was excellent, perfect actually, at loving others, and I'd love for us to be better at that too! Let's read a story that Jesus told that will help us know how to love and serve others. Listen as I read from God's Word." Read Luke 10:25-37 (ICB).



THIS PARABLE WOULD BE A GREAT ONE TO HAVE THE CHILDREN ACT OUT AS THEY READ THE PASSAGE. GATHER SIMPLE PROPS AND COSTUMES FOR ADDED ENGAGEMENT. THIS IS A GREAT WAY TO ENGAGE AND KEEP STUDENTS ATTENTION.

²⁵ Then a teacher of the law stood up. He was trying to test Jesus. He said, "Teacher, what must I do to get life forever?" ²⁶ Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ The man answered, "Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind." Also, "You must love your neighbor as you love yourself." ²⁸ Jesus said to him, "Your answer is right. Do this and you will have life forever." ²⁹ But the man wanted to show that the way he was living was right. So he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ To answer this question, Jesus said, "A man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Some robbers attacked him. They tore off his clothes and beat him. Then they left him lying there, almost dead. ³¹ It happened that a Jewish priest was going down that road. When the priest saw the man, he walked by on the other side of the road. ³² Next, a Levite came there. He went over and looked at the man. Then he walked by on the other side of the road. ³³ Then a Samaritan traveling down the road came to where the hurt man was lying. He saw the man and felt very sorry for him. ³⁴ The Samaritan went to him and poured olive oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. He put the hurt man on his own donkey and took him to an inn. At the inn, the Samaritan took care of him. ³⁵ The next day, the Samaritan brought out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. The Samaritan said, 'Take care of this man. If you spend more money on him, I will pay it back to you when I come again.'" ³⁶ Then Jesus said, "Which one of these three men do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by the robbers?" ³⁷ The teacher of the law answered, "The one who helped him." Jesus said to him, "Then go and do the same thing he did!"

Say, "What a fantastic story! When we read it, we might think the Samaritan's actions seem normal. After all, if we saw someone hurting on the side of the road, we would want to help them. Why wouldn't the Samaritan do the same? Well, at that time, the Jews [the people listening to the story] and Samaritans [a different group of people] were enemies and had been for a very long time. The Jews did not like Samaritans at all. They didn't think God liked them either. These two groups would do almost anything to stay away from each other! The Jews couldn't believe Jesus would make a Samaritan [their enemy] the story's hero. However, Christ had a special lesson for His followers.

"Jesus knows it is easy to be kind to people we like, but He wanted to teach His people [including us] that when we love God's way, we love EVERYONE --- even people we don't like or understand. The Jewish teacher in this story had memorized the command to love God and to love his neighbor, but it was clear that this man didn't love his Samaritan neighbors. While we don't have people called Samaritans living

near us, we do have people who are not easy to love. Jesus is asking us, just as He was asking the Jews, to see others the way He sees them and to love all people.”

TRANSITION: Say, “God’s Word clearly shows how we can serve others. Today’s story challenges us to care for the people who aren’t easy to love, just as Jesus did. This is one more way the Holy Spirit can help us **follow Jesus!**”

JOINING TO JESUS

When Jesus lived on Earth, He constantly served people. One time, just before He died on the Cross, He taught His disciples a vital lesson about serving each other. He took a bowl of water and washed their dirty, smelly feet! Wow! What a powerful example to them and us. By serving others, we are also serving Christ. Jesus said NO to what was easy and YES to what God wanted. We will never be perfect like Jesus (until we reach Heaven). However, there is hope! Jesus has promised to help us become more like Him when we ask.

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, “Today’s lesson was amazing! Let’s talk about it together.”

1. What kind of people are easy for you to love and serve?

Response: (Answers will vary)

2. What kind of people are hard for you to love and serve?

Response: (Answers will vary)

3. How did Jesus love and serve us?

Response: He became a human baby who grew up to die on the Cross for us.

4. Who was unwilling to help the injured man in Jesus’ story?

Response: The priest and the Levite

5. Who was willing to help the injured man?

Response: The Samaritan

6. Why was this story so surprising for Jesus’ listeners?

Response: Jews and Samaritans were enemies.

7. What have you learned about God from today’s story?

Response: God wants us to follow Him. God loves everyone, even those who are different from us. God wants us to love the way He loves. God will help us love others when we ask, etc.

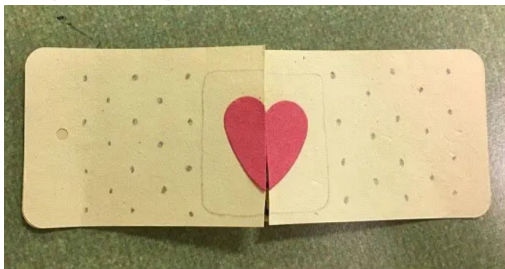
TRANSITION: Say, “This was a great discussion! Now let’s do a craft to help us remember that **we can follow Jesus!**”

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Love Your Neighbor* Activity Page (1 per child) | Glue | Scissors | Crayons or Markers |

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each student a *Love Your Neighbor Activity Page*.
2. Have everyone color the bandages and heart.
3. Cut out both bandage outlines and along the dotted line down the center of the top bandage.
4. Glue the top bandage to the bottom with the Scripture verse. (See example.)



TRANSITION: Say, "Wow! You did a fantastic job on today's craft! A band-aid can help bring healing to wounds. The hurting man in our story probably needed something like a band-aid! We can look at this craft and be reminded that God wants to show His love through the way we help and serve others."

MEMORIZE – 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Printed Memory Verse (optional) | Jenga Game (optional) |

Say, "This month, we are learning an important verse to remind us how to grow closer to God and follow Jesus. I will read it, and then we will say it together."

"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: Divide the children into groups of 2-3 and provide each team with a set of blocks. Then, have them put the blocks in order and read the verse back to you. Make the activity more challenging by writing shorter phrases on the blocks (2-3 words each).

REFLECT – 5 MINUTES

Say, "We have learned an important truth today. We love God when we serve and love others! It's important to memorize Scripture and pray, but it's also important to follow Jesus' example of helping others, even people who aren't easy to love."

SAMPLE PRAYER: *Thank You, God, for loving us so well and sending Jesus to serve and die for us on the Cross. Help us follow You by loving others sacrificially and serving everyone we meet with kindness! Amen.*

RELEASE –

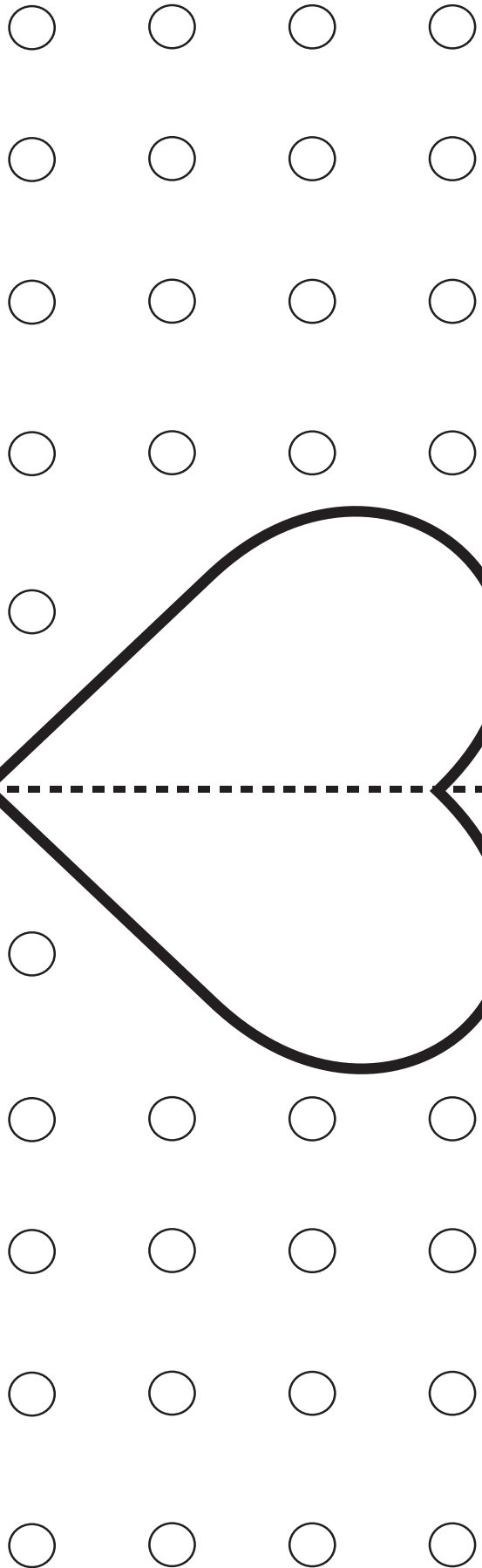
If there is extra time, replay the game, finish the craft, or practice the memory verse.



glue here!

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
Matthew 22:38

glue here!



SABBATH REST

BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 20:8-11, John 15:5 (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 | *Vine and Branches* Activity Page | 9-Inch Balloons | Empty Small-Neck Water Bottles | Flour | Funnels | Permanent Markers | Yarn (optional) |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Do you like to take naps? Why or why not?
- What helps you fall asleep?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

This month we are teaching the children four ways to **follow Jesus** and know Him better. Today’s lesson is about Sabbath rest. The Sabbath is a day each week when we slow down and stop our striving. Instead, we trust God with all we need to accomplish and remember Him as our ultimate Provider. We do this by setting work aside and spending time with God and others. The physical, emotional, and mental rest we receive on the Sabbath is a picture of what it means to rest in Christ spiritually. Choose songs that focus on trusting and resting in God for today’s worship time.

Sing this month’s theme song: “Love the Lord” by CJ and Friends. “Unto Him” by Kingdom Kids is also excellent for reminding children that they can rest in our great God.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

SAMPLE PRAYER: *Thank You, God, for inviting us to rest in You. Please help us learn how to do that more and more. Amen.*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say: “This month, we have been learning about spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines are things we do, like praying and worshiping, that help us get to know God and follow Him. What is your favorite thing to do with God? Do you like listening to Bible stories or praying or singing to Him? How about helping others? [Allow for responses.] That’s awesome! Today we’ll learn how resting in Jesus helps us follow Him better. First, though, who wants to put up the next puzzle piece?”

TRANSITION: Say, “Let’s play a new game together before we read our story! It’s called *Sleeping Lions*. Hmm... that sounds interesting. Who is ready to learn how to play?”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

GAME GOAL: Students will try to stay still (or “asleep”) without laughing or moving

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Choose one child to be the “hunter.”
2. Instruct the other children to lie on the floor in sleeping positions.
3. Once the children lie on the floor, they aren’t allowed to move.
4. The designated “hunter” should walk through the room and try to make the “sleeping lions” move by making them laugh, telling them jokes, making silly noises, etc. However, the “hunter” can never touch the lions.
5. Once a lion moves, they’re tapped by the hunter and will get up and help “hunt for other lions.”
6. The last sleeping lion is the winner.

TRANSITION: Say, “Wow! You did an excellent job pretending to sleep in our game today! It wasn’t easy with such funny hunters all around you. Today we will learn how rest is a way we can honor God!”

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Vine and Branches* Activity Page (1 per child) |

Say, “Today, we are learning about an important command God gave to show that He loves and cares about us. Let’s read from God’s Word in Exodus.” Read Exodus 20:8-11.

⁸ Remember to keep the Sabbath as a holy day. ⁹ You may work and get everything done during six days each week. ¹⁰ But the seventh day is a day of rest to honor the Lord your God. On that day no one may do any work: not you, your son or daughter, or your men or women slaves. Neither your animals nor the foreigners living in your cities may work.

¹¹ The reason is that in six days the Lord made everything. He made the sky, earth, sea, and everything in them. And on the seventh day, he rested. So the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Say, "Wow! What a fantastic lesson we are learning! Resting on the Sabbath is a command from God. Rest is a way we care for ourselves, and it helps us stop and recognize that we need God for everything. Now God did not rest because He was tired or weak. God never grows tired because He is God. He rested to show us how to live. God tells us to rest because our bodies need a break from working. When we take a Sabbath rest, we have time to go to church, worship God, and spend time with our family and friends. It might sound strange that one way we can obey God is by resting, but remember that God is good, and He is trustworthy. If He tells us to rest, we know it's an important way to **follow Jesus.**"

Read John 15:5.

⁵ I am the vine, and you are the branches. If a person remains in me and I remain in him, then he produces much fruit. But without me he can do nothing.

Ask, "The words I just read are things Jesus said to His friends. Do they sound strange to you? What do you think Christ meant when He said this?" (Allow for responses.) Give the children a *Vine and Branches* Activity Page to color.

Say, "Branches need to stay connected to their vine to stay healthy and alive, right? What happens to the branches if they fall off? Right, they die. Do you see how the children are hugging Jesus in this picture? Well, when Jesus said to His friends, 'I am the vine, and you are the branches,' He was telling them that we need to stay close to Him. Taking a Sabbath rest every week helps us follow Jesus by giving us time to worship Him, pay attention to Him, and stay close to Him.

"Satan wants us to believe that we must take care of ourselves, and to do that, we must stay busy. That sounds like a lot of pressure! That does not sound like rest. However, the Bible reminds us that to follow Jesus, we must stay close to Him and trust Him. Taking a Sabbath rest helps us trust Jesus with everything, and if He takes time to rest and commands us to rest, we know it is a very good thing!"

TRANSITION: Say, "God's Word gives us clear commands to rest, and it is God's way of taking care of us so that we can focus on our relationship with Jesus and learn to trust Him more."

JOINING TO JESUS

When Jesus became a person and lived on earth, He took time from His good work to rest with God. Jesus is our model for living, and we want to follow His example!

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

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

1. What is the Sabbath?

Response: It is one day out of each week (usually Sunday) when we stop working to worship God and enjoy Him and His creation.

2. When did God rest?

Response: God rested after He created the world.

3. Why should we rest?

Response: We rest because God commands us to take a Sabbath. He loves us and knows we need to rest.

4. What kinds of things can you do on the Sabbath?

Response: The Sabbath is a time to pause our work, worship, and enjoy God. However, that doesn't mean we only go to church and take a nap. We can spend time with family and friends, and we can play too.

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

Response: God teaches us how to follow Him. God loves us very much. God gives us commands (like honoring the Sabbath) to help us, etc.

TRANSITION: This was a great discussion! Now let's do a craft to help us remember to rest in Jesus every day!

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | 9 inch Balloons (1 per child) | Empty Small-Neck Water Bottles (5-6 per class) | Flour | Funnels (5-6 per class) | Permanent Markers | Yarn (optional) |



BEFORE CLASS, USE THE FUNNELS TO POUR FLOUR INTO THE WATER BOTTLES. (MAKE SURE YOUR WATER BOTTLES ARE COMPLETELY DRY.)

Say, "Do you ever feel stressed? When? [Allow for responses.] Most of us feel stressed sometimes. Did you know that one of the reasons we keep the Sabbath is to remember that we find rest in Jesus alone? It's not just physical rest He gives. The Sabbath gives us time to worship God and remember that God is with us and He takes care of us. Today, we're going to make stress balls to remind us that we can go to God anytime we feel stressed or worried."

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Provide each child with a balloon. Make the flour-filled water bottles and funnels available for the children to share.
2. Have each child carefully transfer the desired amount of flour from a water bottle to their balloon.
3. Next, instruct the children to slowly let excess air out of their balloons and tie a knot in their balloon.
4. Finally, decorate the balloons with a creative design or a funny face (adding yarn hair is optional).

TRANSITION: Say, "Whenever you feel worried, stressed, or sad, pick up this stress ball, squeeze it, and pray. Ask God to help you remember that He loves you, He is with you, and He is inviting you to rest in Him."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "This month, we are learning a verse that reminds us how to follow Jesus. I will read it, and then we will say it together."

“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)



JESUS DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS “THE LIGHT.” FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN WHO THINK CONCRETELY, METAPHORS LIKE THIS CAN BE CHALLENGING. SO, HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THE VERSE’S MEANING BY TAKING TIME TO DISCUSS THE VERSE. USE A VISUAL AID, SUCH AS A FLASHLIGHT, TO AID IN THE EXPLANATION, AND START WITH SIMPLE QUESTIONS LIKE “I WONDER WHAT JESUS MEANT WHEN HE SAID HE IS ‘THE LIGHT.’” THE MORE CHILDREN COME TO CORRECT CONCLUSIONS ON THEIR OWN, THE MORE THE IDEAS WILL MAKE SENSE AND STICK WITH THEM.

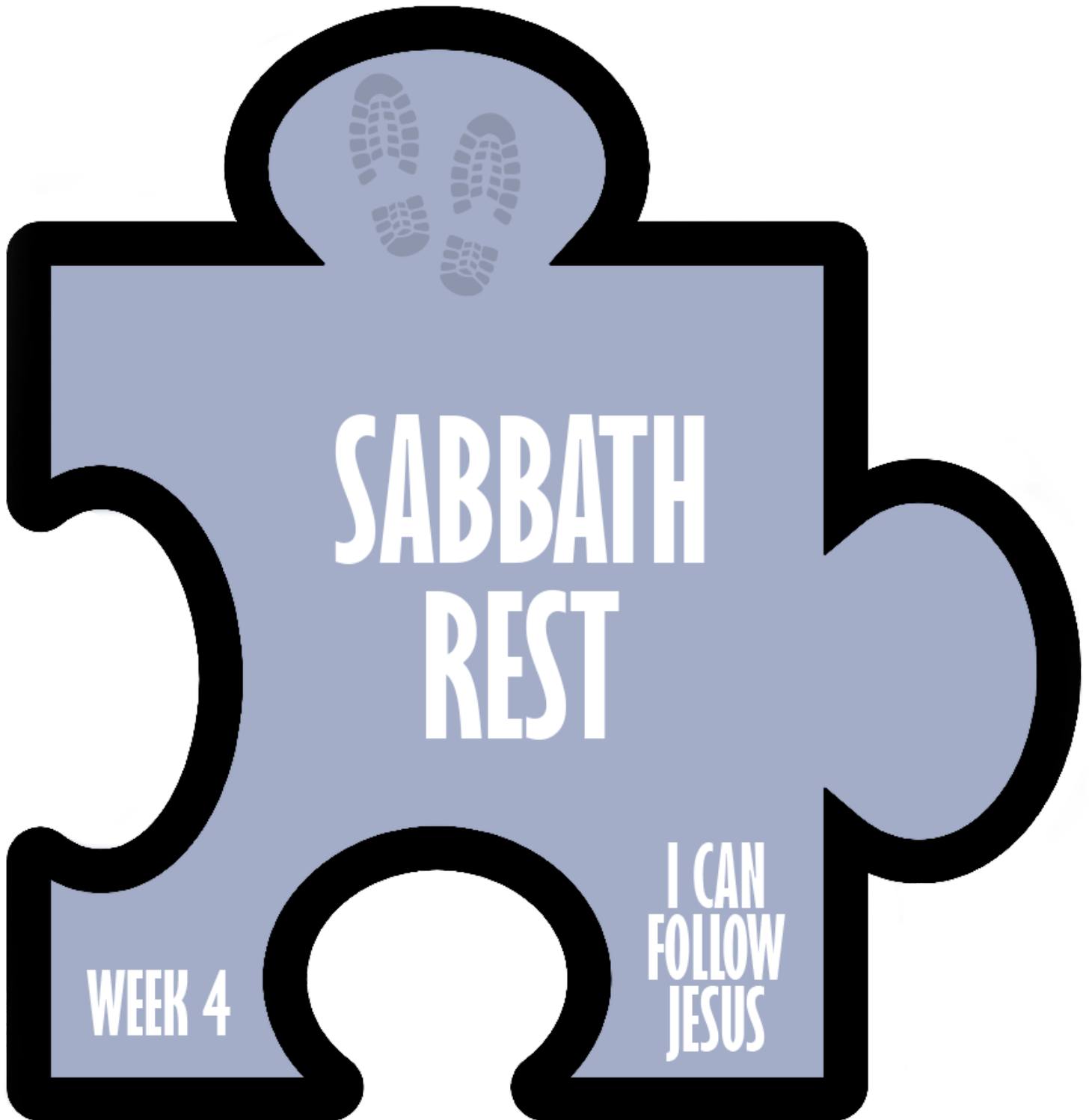
REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, “I’m so glad God loves us enough to give us commands, like taking a Sabbath rest, that show us that He loves us. Let’s thank Him for His love and goodness now.”

SAMPLE PRAYER: *Dear God, thank You for showing us that rest is important and that one of the ways You love us is by commanding us to take time each week for a Sabbath. I’m so grateful You love us so much. We love You too. Amen.*

RELEASE —

If there is extra time, replay the game or color the *Vines and Branches* Activity Page.



I AM THE VINE, & you are the branches.

If a person remains in me and I remain in him, then he produced much fruit. But without me he can do nothing.

John 15:5 (ICB)

