

SAMPLE BIBLE STUDIES



“Signs of Life”

You will need:

- A plastic, wide mouth jar
 - One or more balloons
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TELL the kids:

Pick up the jar using the balloon only. You cannot touch the jar with your hands. Don't let them try now but let them think about it as you go through the following lesson.

ASK the questions:

1. What are the signs that someone *is physically* alive?
Breathing, moving, response, heartbeat, active, etc.
2. What are the signs that someone *is not physically* alive (dead)?
Not breathing, not moving or responding, no heartbeat not active, etc.
3. What are the signs that someone *is spiritually* alive?
Read Galatians 5:22-24 (the “signs” of spiritual life). The “signs” of spiritual life (fruit of the Spirit) give evidence to the absence of spiritual death!
4. What are the signs that someone *is not spiritually* alive (dead)?
Read Galatians 5:19-21 (the “signs” of spiritual death). The “signs” of someone being spiritually dead are the “acts of the sinful nature.”

Back to the balloon and jar. Ask if anyone has figured out how to lift the jar with the balloon without using his hands. Most of the kids will say the best way is to place the uninflated balloon in the jar using your mouth and then inflate the balloon, clamp the balloon with your teeth, and lift the jar. This is correct.

The Lesson:

- The uninflated balloon shows no “signs of life.” It is limp and sagging and not useful for lifting the jar and cannot accomplish the task.
- The inflated balloon shows “signs of life.” When filled with “breath” it is useful for lifting the jar and is useful for accomplishing the task.

Read Proverbs 8:32-36 and Ephesians 5:18. God wants us to listen to Him, to follow Him, to put into action His teaching. If we do this we will be “filled” with God and the things of God and we will be useful to Him to accomplish the tasks He has given to us. The result is LIFE!

The opposite is also true. If we ignore God and do not allow Him to fill our lives we will not be useful to Him and we will not be able to accomplish the tasks He has given to us. The result is DEATH!

LIFE is found in a relationship with Jesus Christ! Read John 3:16; John 14:6; 1 John 3:14; and 1 John 5:11,12.

Modified from teachings in “Fun Science That Teaches God’s Word” —Cook Communications Ministries



One Thing I Would Ask God For

You will need:

- Flashlight
 - A room that can be darkened, if appropriate
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Darken the room and read Psalm 27 only with the flashlight. Ask, “If you were to ask just one thing of God, what would it be?” Talk about the answers you get from the kids and then go into the lesson below and compare their answers with David’s.

The Lord is:

1. My Light

“Light” is the trusting in the sovereignty of God (He is all-powerful/in control). It is also the Word of God . . . Jesus Christ who we can know and receive by “turning on” or getting to know Him through Scripture.

Question: *Is light the absence of darkness, or is darkness the absence of light?* When you go into a room filled with darkness do you turn off the “dark switch” to light the room or do you turn on the “light switch”? When you leave a room filled with light do you turn on the “dark switch” or turn off the “light switch”?

“Darkness” is the anxiety and distrust in our lives. The darkness will remain in our lives if we do not “turn on” the light by asking Christ into your life, pray, reading and studying His Word (the Bible), and sharing with others what is going on in your life.

Darkness flees from the light! If you want the light in your life, you must turn on the “light switch” in your life. In order for darkness to then overcome the light in your life, you must turn off the light. It is your choice.

2. My Salvation

“Salvation” is literally being saved. It is the defeat of all of the things in your life that are against you!

3. My Stronghold

A “Stronghold” is a fortress that cannot be broken down and assures us that with God we will be victorious!

David asked for “one thing” . . . “that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” v. 4. David’s life had:

- Direction—He wanted the “light” of God in his life
- Dependence—He recognized the sovereignty of God in his life. God was in control.

Questions to ask yourself:

- What is my direction? Am I moving toward God?
- Am I relying on God or on myself?
- Do I thirst for God in my life now, as much as I would thirst for water in a hot desert?
- If you were in a desert with no water in sight and someone offered you a drink from the only water-well that would quench your thirst would you take it and drink? Read John 4:13,14.



Overcoming Sin

You will need:

- Bible

Every person can overcome the sin in his life by *choosing* every day to put into practice just three scriptural principles. Read John 4:4-14. The Samaritan woman had a *choice* to make:

- Drink only from the well water that would satisfy her thirst only for a short time, or
- Drink also from the “living water” that Jesus offered.

The well water represents the temporary riches that the world has to offer. The “living water” that Jesus offers are the spiritual riches of an eternity with God.

Principle #1: Allow the Spirit of God to live in you.

Read Romans 8:7-11. With the Spirit of God living in you, sin *cannot* control you!

Principle #2: Serve one another.

Read Galatians 5:13-15. By focusing on serving others you will reduce the desire to be selfish (sinful or focusing on yourself rather than others).

Principle #3: Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Read Hebrews 12:1-11. As we struggle in this life with the hardships and temptations we are faced with, and if we focus on the extreme hardships that Jesus went through for us, we will not give in to sin easily! God allows hardship in our lives, not to destroy us but to strengthen us. Jesus was not destroyed by the sin that nailed him to the cross . . . he defeated it and rose to eternal life. Through him we can do the same.



Jesus Will Return!

You will need:

- Bible
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Read John 14:1-3.

- Do not be troubled.
- Trust in God.
- There is room for you in God's house!
- Jesus is preparing a room for you.
- Jesus promises to return and take you to be with him.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

- The Lord will return with a loud command.
- The dead in Christ will rise first.
- Those who are alive when Christ returns will be "caught up" to be with him. (The word "rapture" is Latin and comes from this phrase. In the Greek it means "to snatch away quickly from danger.")
- Forever.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-58.

- We will be "changed" from mortal to immortal.
- It will happen very quickly, "in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye."

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.

- The return of Christ will come "like a thief in the night." Suddenly and unexpected! (Read Luke 12:40 and Matthew 24:36-39.)
- Be ready, be alert, be self-controlled. (Read Luke 12:35-40 and Matthew 24:40-44).

How to live while waiting for Jesus to return:

1. If you have not asked Jesus to save you do it now. Ask him in prayer.
2. Then . . . Follow Him! (Luke 9:23)
3. Follow Jesus' teachings in Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7 and chapter 22:37-40.
4. Follow the teachings in Matthew 25:1-46 and Luke 19:11-26.
5. A good relationship with anybody takes time. A good relationship with Jesus should include: daily prayer and Bible study; talking with other people about your faith; meeting regularly with others who also have received Christ.

It is by faith that we believe in God, but it is by action that we carry out that commitment.



R.I.P.A.C.

You will need:

- Bible
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Read John 14:6. Five things you can do with Jesus after you hear that He is Lord:

1. **Reject Him** (see Matthew 10:32,33; 13:53-58 2)
2. **Ignore Him** (see Matthew 11 :20-24)
3. **Postpone Him** (see Matthew 8:21-22; 19:16-22)
4. **Accept Him** (see Matthew 7:21-27)
Note: God does not want you to simply “accept” that Jesus existed. You must believe more than that! He wants you to . . .
5. **Commit yourself to Him** (see Matthew 22:37-40; 28:19-20 and Romans 10:9)

It is your choice! Choosing the first four options will not lead you into a relationship with God. Choosing the fifth option will. Read John 6:35-40 and Revelation 22:12-19.

Be a winner! Let Jesus make a difference in your life!



A Worthy Example

You will need:

- Bible
- Chalkboard or large sheet of paper
- Copy of "What Would You Do?" for each youth

Before you get to the meeting, write on the board or paper *1 Timothy 4:12; Ephesians 4:1,29; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 John 3:16-18*. Write it large enough for the kids to read.

TELL the kids:

"God is looking for young people who will be bold examples of what it means to live out their faith in Jesus in today's world." Discuss why this is hard for not only teens, but also adults (embarrassment, etc.).

ASK the kids:

- If I could travel anywhere I would go to . . .
- If I could be anyone in the world I would be . . .
- If I could be any animal I would be . . .
- If I could spend an hour face to face with God I would . . .
- Why do your actions tell others more than what you say?

SPEECH (*Ephesians 4:29*)

- How do our words affect our example?
- How do our words affect those around us?

LIFE (*Ephesians 4:1*)

- What does a "life worthy of the calling" mean to you?

LOVE (*1 John 4:7-12*)

- What are some of the words that describe God's love for us?
- What keeps us from loving others with that same type of love?
- How would a lifestyle of love from us impact those around us?

FAITH (*2 Timothy 4:7*)

- Why can faith sometimes be a fight?
- What are some of the fights you have in keeping your faith?

PURITY (*1 Corinthians 6:18-20*)

- What are some of the influences that challenge the purity of today's teen?
- How can we honor God with our bodies?
- How should knowing that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit affect your thoughts on staying pure?

What Would You Do?

1. You see a group of your friends at lunch and decide to sit down and eat with them. During the conversation, it turns from stuff about school and friends into a slam session about one of your close friends who isn't there. As people continue to rip on this friend, one of them looks at you and asks, "What do you think?"
2. You are at a party with some of your friends where you are watching TV and eating pizza. You are all having a great time when suddenly one of the kids decides it would be fun to raid the parents' liquor cabinet and drink some of their alcohol. You really don't want to but . . .

Being a Good Friend

You will need:

- Bible
- "I'll Meet That Need" sheets
- Chalkboard or large piece of paper
- Pens or pencils

In bold letters on the top of the chalkboard, write down the following headings:

Friend Good Characteristics Bad Characteristics Recognizing Friend's Need

- How would you describe a friend?
- What are the characteristics of a good friend?
- What is the most important characteristic of a friend that makes him a really good friend?
- What is the worst thing a friend could do to you?

NEED WATCHERS

One of the most important characteristics of being a good friend is being able to recognize peoples' needs and trying to meet those needs. How can we recognize others' needs (listen, look for clues, get to know them better, ask)?

Tell your kids that you are going to give them a chance to practice spotting needs. Read them the stories under Guess My Needs below and give them the assignment of figuring out the character's needs. The stories are arranged in sections. The first section doesn't reveal much about the real need, though there are hints. The second section begins to reveal the need a little more clearly, and the third section almost comes right out and says it. This simulates the levels of closeness of friendship. Some kids never get past a superficial friendship level with their friends, which makes it difficult to spot needs. After reading each section, stop and give the kids the opportunity to offer their opinions.

GUESS MY NEEDS

Jenny

- A. You've been hanging around with Jenny for a few weeks at school. She is fun to be with but occasionally gets moody. When she gets this way, she is hard to be around. What might be Jenny's need?
- B. Yesterday, you went over to Jenny's house for the first time. She was in one of those moods. You noticed something you had not noticed before, Jenny was wearing the same outfit she wore the day before. What might be Jenny's needs?
- C. Now that you are in Jenny's house and aware of this situation, you notice that Jenny's closet is almost empty and you remember that last week when it was cold she had no coat to wear. What might be Jenny's need? What could you do to meet her need?



Charles

- A. You met Charles about a month ago when the two of you were assigned as partners for a project at school. You were happy about the assignment as Charles is smart and seems to have it all together. He has some friends, but not very many. What might be Charles' need?
 - B. In the process of doing your science project, you and Charles hit it off and become friends. The only strange thing you have noticed is that he sometimes makes comments like, "You sure have a lot of friends, how come you spend time with me?" What might be Charles' need?
 - C. One day after school, Charles opens up to you that he is afraid you will end the friendship as soon as the science project is over. You are flabbergasted as he has become an important friend in your life. What might be Charles' need? What could you do to meet his need?
- How difficult was it to know what was wrong with Jenny or Charles at first? Why? (Because you didn't know either very well)
 - What made it easier to know what was really going on in these friends' lives? (Getting to know them better and paying attention to what was happening in their lives)

Read Luke 5:18-26.

- How extreme were the actions of his friends?
- What do you think gave the friends the courage to take such radical action?
- What was the reason Jesus gave for why He would heal the guy? (The faith of the friends! This is an important point. The text does not say anything about the faith of the crippled man. The faith of the friends healed the man.)

Pass out "I'll Meet That Need" sheets and ask the kids to think of a friend who has a need and write the friend's first name only on the sheet. Fill in the rest of the sheet and make a pledge to fulfill this commitment this week.



I'll Meet That Need

Write the name of a friend who has a need you know about.

What is this friend's need?

How will you try to meet his or her need this week?

I'll Meet That Need

Write the name of a friend who has a need you know about.

What is this friend's need?

How will you try to meet his or her need this week?



Difficult Things God Asks Us to Do

You will need:

- Chalkboard or large piece of paper
- Bible

Begin by asking the students if they have to do difficult things very often. Once a week, twice a week, every day? Read the statements below and have the kids tell you what they think is the more difficult of the two items.

- Would it be more difficult for you to give a 10-minute speech on a subject you know nothing about or make a fancy dinner for some important people?
- Would it be more difficult for you to run a marathon or camp by yourself in the woods for three days?
- Would it be more difficult for you to put your hand in a bucket of spiders or drink a big glass of raw eggs?
- Would it be more difficult for you to walk through the mall in your underwear or sing the national anthem at a major league baseball game?
- Would it be more difficult for you to defend the Bible to non-believers or defend a kid no one seems to like very well when she is being picked on?
- Would it be more difficult for you to tell the truth when you know you will get in trouble or help someone with his homework when everyone else is going to a movie you wanted to see?

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BOILS DOWN TO TWO COMMANDS: LOVE GOD AND LOVE OTHERS. (Read Matthew 22:37-39) BUT SOMETIMES IN ORDER TO DO THOSE TWO THINGS WELL, WE HAVE TO STEP OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONES. WE HAVE TO GET UNCOMFORTABLE. GOD OCCASIONALLY ASKS US TO DO THINGS THAT ARE DIFFICULT FOR US.

Ask the kids to list some things that might make them uncomfortable about being a Christian. List them on the chalkboard and discuss them as they say them (e.g., tell the truth, help others, have a good attitude, take care of their bodies, honor their parents and other adults).

Where does our strength come from to do difficult things? (family, friends, our own desires, God) List them on the chalkboard.



There are lots of stories in the Bible where God asks people to do frightening things.
Story based on Daniel 3:1-28

SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO AND THE FURNACE

King Nebuchadnezzar had a pretty high opinion of himself. He wanted everyone to bow before him and also before a ninety-foot-high gold god. Because Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego believed there is only one true God, they refused to bow down. This made the king furious. King Nebuchadnezzar summoned them to him and told them if they did not bow to his god, they would be thrown into a blazing furnace. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "We do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." So these men, wearing their robes, trousers and turbans were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king's furnace was so hot that the flames killed the soldiers who threw the men into it. As the king watched, he leaped to his feet in amazement, asking "Weren't there three men thrown into the fire?" They replied "Certainly, o king." The king said, "Look, I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." He then asked them to come out of the flames. When they came out, all the others saw that the fire had not harmed them. King Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who has sent an angel to rescue his servants." And then believed in the God of Israel.

- Do you think you would be brave enough to do such a thing?
- Why do you think they did it? (Trust in God)

The most amazing part of it is that they were willing to die in the fire if that were God's plan.

- Is the Christian life easy or hard? (Both. If they say hard, ask if anyone believes it is easy and see if you can get a discussion going. Then discuss how it is both.
- What are some of the benefits of doing difficult things for God? (It makes us stronger and makes our faith stronger. God promises us great joy when we follow Him. Discuss some of the joys of following God.)



Gettting Below the Surface

You will need:

- Small stuffed animal
-

RULES OF THE GAME

- Truth or pass
- Respect for each other
- No cussing
- Safe zone

The person holding the stuffed animal has the floor, you will be quiet when he/she is speaking. Toss the stuffed animal to one of the kids, and ask one of the questions. He/she has the right to answer or pass. When finished, he/she will pass the animal to someone else and ask a question.

QUESTIONS

- Who was your favorite teacher? Why?
- Who is your favorite superhero? Who is your real life hero?
- When I have a tough decision to make I do what?
- What is your favorite subject in school? Why?
- What is your life goal?
- Who is someone you would like to sit and talk to for twenty minutes? What would you ask?
- What is one thing you would like to change next year? (like a resolution) How do you think this would help your life?
- What is one thing you like about being your age? Why? What is one thing you do not like? Why?
- What is one thing you like about yourself? What is one thing you would change? Why?



God Is Bigger

You will need:

- Snacks
- Small candies (such as M&Ms or hard candies)
- Chalkboard or large sheet of paper
- Marker
- Balloons
- Bible

Set up the snacks on a table, gather the kids around the snack table and say, "Today we are going to discuss how some people use food, drugs, alcohol and other crutches when faced with difficult problems." Have the kids call out difficult problems they are dealing with or have dealt with and write them on the chalkboard. Continue, "One at a time, I would like you to approach the table and call out one of the problems you are faced with. After you call out the problem, you may take one snack (one potato chip, one grape) and eat it. But only after you call out a problem." Let them call out 2 or 3 problems, allowing them to have a snack to eat after each one.

- How is the way you ate something every time you thought about a problem like the way people sometimes deal with problems in life?
- Do you think it is healthy to use food or drugs to cover up your problems?
- What happens when you do that?

Tell them that today we are going to discover how God helps us to cope with our problems in a much healthier way. Read Romans 8:31-39, John 16:31-33, and Psalm 145:14-21.

ASK the following:

- How does God help us in difficult times?
- How is God's help different than attempting to escape through food, drugs, or alcohol?
- What are ways we can trust God to help us during tough times?

Have the small candies in a bowl or dish. Give the kids a chance to "earn" a candy by doing something for you. They may only have a candy after they have completed their task.

- How did it make you feel when you were required to do something for your candy?
- How is the way the person with the candy controlled you the same as drugs or alcohol controlling people?
- Why do people drink, take drugs?
- Many times people drink or take drugs because they want to escape a painful or difficult situation. Does this help? Temporarily or in the long run?

Hand out the balloons. Have them think about a problem they have been struggling with. Write a one or two word description on the balloon. Have them inflate their balloon to the size of their problem. (They do not have to tie them off.) Tell them, "Romans 8:37 says that in all things we have full victory through God's love." Have them release the balloons and tell them, "God is bigger than your problems." Have them think about releasing their problem to God and allow Him to help them with it.

Hidden Heart

You will need:

- Small pieces of paper
 - Pens or pencils
 - Permanent colored markers
 - Ribbon for each person
 - One small and one large balloon for each person (not inflated)
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Say the following to the kids: “The things we keep hidden inside are our hurts, emotional pain, scars, and anger. Some people work extra hard to hide these feelings.

- Do you keep your emotions inside?
- Do you think it is good to keep emotions inside?
- Do you think that if you deal with your hurts and pain that it might help you to heal?

What does the Bible say about pain and sorrow?

Read 2 Corinthians 7:8-11. Sorrow can lead a person to a deeper faith in God; or it can cause a person to live with regret, centered on the experience that caused the sorrow. Jesus gave believers words of hope to overcome all of the pain, hurt and anger that they hold inside of them. Have them write down their hurts and anger on the pieces of paper and to then put the papers into the balloon and tie the balloon with the ribbon. *Do not inflate the balloon.*

Give a person one of the larger balloons and ask him to place the smaller balloon inside the larger balloon. Instruct him to blow up the large balloon and tie it shut. Have him write on the outside of the balloon how he presents himself to others to try to hide his hurt or anger. Some people use humor to hide pain, others act confident even though they feel insecure. Some get aggressive to hide their own hurts. Some are just silent and don't allow anyone to become involved in their lives. Have the group discuss the words written on the outsides of their balloons. Discuss the positive side of sharing their pain with someone they know they can trust. After the discussion, allow them to pop their balloons as a symbolic way of getting rid of all the devices they use to hide their pain.

After the balloons are popped, the balloons with the ribbons tied around them will remain (their hearts). Challenge the people in the group to find someone in a week's time they trust to share their hearts with. They should allow that person to untie the ribbon and discuss what is inside.



Liar

You will need:

- Copies of “Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire” for each student
 - Pens or pencils
 - Chalkboard or large piece of paper
-

Pass out “Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire” to the students while asking them if they have ever seen tabloid papers that have unbelievable stories in them. Then tell them that on the sheet of paper they have headlines from a tabloid called *The Weekly World News*. In each grouping there are four headlines, three of them are real headlines from the tabloid and one of them is a fake. Their job is to decide on the fakes. Have them mark the one they believe to be a fake (answers are in bold). Give them a few minutes to make their decisions.

Bride stood up in 1934 still waiting on the church steps
Baby born with mechanical heart
New York landlord evicts tenant for keeping flock of 50 chickens in his apartment
World War II bomber plane found on the moon

Leading biologist crosses peacock and rhino—offspring looks like a flying Chihuahua
Sweet-toothed teen steals \$80,000. worth of candy
Gorilla-lady captured
250 year-old man found alive in coal mine

Cake in the face restored a man's sight
Boy eats angel-food cake and flies
Girl burst into flames in shower! “All we found were wet ashes around the drain,” say puzzled police
Frisky feline claws through wall after owner leaves town

“Elvis songs make cows give more milk,” says farmer
Surgeon cuts out his own appendix in a traffic jam
Ten people die in new improved Pepsi tasting test
Bad haircut cost barber \$1,000,000 in lawsuit

Man finds seven-foot boa constrictor around his toilet
Man gives birth to triplets in the back of a taxicab
Hero kid knocks out crook with water balloon
Chimp with human brain talks in German

Ask the kids the following:

- What they think the motives for lying in these tabloids were? (money, sell more magazines)
- What difference does it make to us if they lie and what are some of the consequences? (the people being lied about are sometimes hurt, the people reading them are mislead, lawsuits, etc.)
- Was it difficult to tell the real stories from the fakes?



Will the Real Story Still Step Forward?

Tell the students that you are going to read them two short versions of the same story that is taken from the Bible. Ask them to pay close attention and decide which is the real version of the biblical story.

Andy and Sophie Drop Dead

Andy and Sophie were part of the first church. And a cool thing was happening: wealthier people in the church were selling land and giving the money to the church to help the poor. Andy and Sophie sold a piece of land and gave part of the money to the church. The church leaders asked if it was all of the money and Andy lied saying it was. As soon as the words were out of his mouth, he fell to the ground and died. Five minutes later, Sophie came in to the room, not knowing what had happened to Andy. The church leaders asked her the same question, and she lied too. She immediately fell dead to the floor.

Andy and Sophie Lose Their Good Seats for the Christmas Pageant

Andy and Sophie were part of the first church. And a cool thing was happening: the church was having its first Christmas pageant. They were going to act out the birth of Jesus, using real sheep and goats. Tickets were being sold to try to raise money for the poor. Andy and Sophie wanted good seats but did not want to pay that much money. So they bribed the salesperson with a goat and got the best seats in the house, right in the front row. On the night of the performance, the ticket salesperson felt guilty and confessed to some of the church leaders. The church leaders stopped the pageant and asked Andy and Sophie to leave. It was humiliating and they never returned to the church.

Have the students vote on which of the stories they think is the real story. Then read Acts 4:32-5:11.

ASK the following:

- What was the problem with Andy and Sophie's gift? (It was not the gift, it was the lie.)
- Why do you think the consequences were so severe? (We don't know for sure, but it shows us how much God hates lies.)

When they are finished, ask them some of the things teens lie about. As they are listing them, write them down on the chalkboard. Then ask these questions:

- Why do people lie?
- Do kids lie more than adults? Why do you think that is?
- Do you remember your last lie? Was it a big one or just a little white lie?
- Is lying ever ok? What would make a lie ok?
- What do you think God thinks about lying? (The story we read is just one incident in the Bible where God tells us how much he dislikes lies.)
- When we lie, do you think it has any effect on our relationship with God?
- Are there any consequences to lying? What are some? (broken relationships, hurting others, people will not trust you, lies usually catch up with us)



Life Is Not Fair

You will need:

- Bibles
 - Poster boards or large pieces of paper
 - Pens or pencils
-

Perspective: Ask the kids if they know what perspective is.

Help them to understand perspective with this demonstration:

Ask one person to stand in the middle of the room. Have two other people hold the poster boards on either side of the student's head. Make sure most of the poster board is out in front of the person's head, creating a narrow tunnel where the peripheral vision is completely gone. Make certain that the volunteer cannot hear you explaining to the others what he will be doing. Have one person pretend to row a boat walking back and forth in front of the volunteer. Two other volunteers will be on the sides where the volunteer cannot see them. When the canoer comes their way, they will pretend to tip the canoe over while the person in the canoe acts out tipping it over. The actors should be completely silent. After they are finished, ask the volunteer who observed to describe what she or he saw.

Now, remove the poster boards and have them repeat the sketch again exactly the way they did the first time, showing what she missed. Explain that the limited perspective the first time came because she could not see the whole story. Explain that the same is true in our lives all the time. God, who has an eternal perspective, can see everything. When things happen that seem unfair to us, God sees it from a different perspective than we do. He understands what we don't understand.

Take one of the poster boards and draw a line across it. Say, "This is my life: I was born in (year you were born)." Write that at the beginning of the line. Then say, "I am now (age) years old," and put that somewhere near the middle of the line. Then toward the end of the line, say, "My death?" (Put a question mark.)

Now draw a line on either side of this line, showing that God knew when you were going to be born and knows when you will die. Holding your hand above the line, show that God is somewhere up here and sees the beginning and the end of our lives. Then draw lines at diagonals to the straight line telling them He knows what decisions we will make. What roads we will take. Some good and some bad. He will give us tools to make right decisions like teachers, the Bible, parents, etc. But in the end, we make the decision how we will live our lives. If we had the same perspective as God, we would make all the right decisions because we could see how each decision affects our lives.



The Story of Job

Read Job 38:1-41. Job was a happy man. He had lots of sheep, cows, camels, land, and a nice family. He had it all. But Job had a bad day. All his sheep died, his cows died, and his camels died. His land burned and his kids died. Job's friends tried to convince him that it was his own fault. That he must have done something to make God mad at him. Job's wife tried to get him to curse God. But Job knew that God must have allowed all this bad stuff for a reason. He trusted God. Eventually Job started demanding that God tell him the reason.

ASK the following:

- What was God trying to say to Job?
- Why did God ask him all these questions?
- What was different about God's perspective?
- How would you have responded if you were Job?
- What can we learn about how we should respond when life isn't fair?

There are a lot of ways to talk to God. One way is to write it on paper—it makes you think about your words. What is something unfair—something you have experienced in your life? Pass out a piece of paper to each person and have him/her write about it to God. Tell the kids to ask God to help them get through the problem and to understand why it is happening. Also to show them how to respond to this unfairness and how to make it into a positive.

Then have the kids write a prayer to God about an unfairness in their life and ask Him to help them understand. Think about a way to make this unfairness into a positive.



Persistence

You will need:

- Bucket of ice and cold water
 - Marbles
 - Prize (candy bar)
 - Movie “Rudy”
 - Bible
-

Have a bucket full of ice and water, and in the bottom of the bucket are several marbles. The contest is to have volunteers take shoes and socks off and pick up as many marbles as possible in 30 seconds. Winner gets the prize. After everyone has had a turn, get them into a small group.

ASK the following:

- Was this game hard?
- What made the game hard for you?
- What causes you pain?
- What is one life goal that you have?
- What might be something that could prevent you from reaching this goal?
- What is one thing you can do today that would help you reach this goal?

DISCUSS the following:

How digging down through the cold water and ice is like digging through unpleasant circumstances to get what you want. Even though you weren't necessarily interested in the marbles, they were what you needed to get what you wanted (the prize).

SHOW the following:

Show the following film clip from the movie “Rudy.” Tell the kids that the movie is all about perseverance. Rudy is a guy who wanted to play football for the university of Notre Dame, more than anything. The scene I will be showing takes place after he has been practicing for two years as a scout squad player. He never even dressed out for a game. He has taken an amazing beating from some guys twice his size for the whole two years he has practiced. Most people would be ready to give up, but Rudy's heart is still set on the honor and glory of playing for the team. This scene is late in the last game of the year. Rudy has gotten the chance to suit up because the rest of the team wanted to honor his courage and perseverance. *Show the clip.*

READ Hebrews 12:1-3. Tell the kids the following: “In this passage, there is a whole crowd cheering you on. They are the ones wanting to see you grow strong, to win this battle called LIFE. They are calling your name. Don't give up, don't give in, be every bit the person that God created you to be. He created you to be a WINNER!”



Respecting Others

You will need:

- Balloons for each child
 - Markers
 - Pin
 - Cassette or CD of a song about respect. If you can't find a Christian one, "RESPECT" by Aretha Franklin will work.
 - Chalkboard or large piece of paper
 - Bible
 - Sheets of paper
 - Pens or pencils
-

Start off by playing the song about respect.

ASK the kids the following:

- What is respect?
- Why is respect important for relationships?
- Is it easy or hard to show respect for others?
- What is the opposite of respect? (disrespect)

Hand out the balloons and markers. Have kids inflate and tie off their balloons. Ask them to draw a face on the balloon. Have them call out disrespectful things to the balloons. Rules: no actual names, no bad language. After a few seconds, walk around and pop the balloons with the pin. Pop as many as you can before the kids try to prevent it.

ASK:

- If the balloon were an actual person, how do you think it would feel?
- If you were the balloon, how would you feel?
- How is what happened to the balloon like what happens when we show disrespect to people? (They become angry and blow up)

On your chalkboard write RESPECT across the top. Read Romans 12:10 and 1 Peter 3:8-12. Ask the kids to list definitions of the word respect (to feel high regard for, to honor, being polite to, showing attention, speaking kindly, etc.). Write these on the chalkboard. Below this, write RESPECTING PARENTS. Then read Ephesians 6:1-3 and Proverbs 13:1, and list what the Bible says, doing the same with each of the following: RESPECTING PEERS, Matthew 20:25-28, 1 John 4:19-21; RESPECTING AUTHORITY FIGURES, Leviticus 19:3, Hebrews 13:17.

- What do these passages teach you about respect?
- Why is it important to show respect for one another?
- Why do you think this is not practiced very often in our society? (selfish attitudes, too busy, etc.)
- Do you need to always agree with someone to show them respect?



Hand out the sheets of paper and pencils. Have the kids think of someone they have been disrespectful to (this could be staff, friend, parent, even God) and ask them to write a note, asking for forgiveness. If they choose to really speak to the person and ask for forgiveness, all the better—suggest it. If the letter is to God, suggest they spend time in prayer this week.

If you have more time, you can turn on the respect song and play an affirmation game. Have the kids go around the room and tell the person next to him/her what it is they respect about that person, starting the statement with, “One thing I really respect about you is _____.”



Self-Control

You will need:

- Chalkboard
 - Markers
 - Bible
-

If we all used self-control when we got angry, there would probably be fewer fights and more chances to solve problems instead of making them worse. Wouldn't that be a good thing? One of the important things to know when we are angry is that we can still make choices. Discuss making choices. Now, discuss what it means to have self-control.

Ask the kids to give you examples of times when someone else did not use self-control when dealing with them. List these on the board. How did they feel about these times? Did they feel it was fair? Then ask them times when they did not use self-control with others. List these on the board. (Break the instances into small groupings.)

Now discuss alternative ways these issues may have been handled and list them next to the other list. Ask them what choice has to do with self-control.

What does the Bible say about self-control?

Discuss each of the following passages out of the Bible:

- **Proverbs 25:28**—Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.
- **2 Timothy 3:1-3**—(Regarding Godlessness in the last days) But mark this: there will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.
- **2 Timothy 1:7**—For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-control.
- **Galations 5:22**—But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.



The Unmoving Lighthouse

You will need:

- Pictures of lighthouses
 - 3 x 5 cards
 - Pens or pencils
 - Bible
 - “Yours for Life” booklet from Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, Inc., www.yoursforlife.net, or 1-888-NEED HIM.
-

Start off by showing the kids pictures of lighthouses. Discuss the pictures—about how everything else will change around the lighthouse: the clouds will move, the sun will shine some days or it will rain, high tide/low tide. While everything around the lighthouse is changing, the lighthouse remains the same.

Hand out four 3 x 5 cards to the kids along with pens or pencils. Ask them to write the four most important things in their lives on those four cards, one on each card. When they have finished, tell them, “A disaster has just come into your life and you will lose one of the most important things in your life. Choose which one you will lose and drop the card to the floor.”

After each has dropped one card, repeat that request another time. When they have only two cards left in their hands, say, “You can keep one, but only one. You’re going to lose everything but the most important thing in your life. Drop one more card.”

When everyone is down to one card say, “You are holding a card that represents that most important thing in your life. There’s one question I want you to answer about it, is it something you can lose?” Have those who are willing share what their card says and discuss how it can or cannot be lost. Continue the discussion on how life can take our most precious possessions and relationships away from us. They may have already lost some of the “cards” that mattered most in their lives; therefore, they realize how much we all need something *that can’t be lost or separate from us*, something that will stand up to all the unpredictable situations in our lives in a world that is becoming more and more unpredictable.

The lighthouse that never moves is described in the Bible in Hebrews 13:8. Have one of the kids read it from the Bible: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Discuss how relationships come and go, as jobs and houses and possessions come and go, our health changes, our feelings change, our families change. Then discuss how Jesus Christ remains the same if we allow Him to become a part of our lives.

Go to the Bible again and read the second part of Hebrews 13:5 where God promises, “Never will I leave you; and never will I forsake you.” Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” He is a Savior, a friend you can totally trust, and you will never, ever lose Him. Jesus secured this relationship when He died on the cross to pay that death penalty for our sins. This inseparable relationship becomes yours when you trust Him in your life.

After your discussion is complete, pass out the “Yours For Life” booklets and tell the kids that if they are not certain they belong to Jesus to read the booklet. Then offer to discuss any questions or to pray with them.



Rain

You will need:

- Video of “Rain” available at YFC
- Bibles

Show the video and discuss it. The main idea is that God often allows us to go through trials so we can grow stronger.

Ask the following: Do you know who Moses is? Do you remember when he helped the Hebrews leave Egypt and God opened the sea for them to pass? Where was Moses taking the people? How long did it take? Why did it take so long? Say: The following is a passage from the Bible where God speaks to the Hebrews about the “real” way to satisfy your deepest longings. Many people think that money or things will make them happy, and though these things meet some of our needs, what really fills the void in our lives is a true relationship with the God who made us. He allows us to go through “stuff” to enable us to understand. Read the passage or have one of the kids do so.

You can either pass out the following passages to read or have the kids look them up in their own Bibles: Deuteronomy 8:1-5—Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the Lord promised on oath to your forefathers. Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you.

Psalms 23—Almost everyone, whether they are religious or not, has heard Psalm 23 because it is quoted so frequently. The psalms are used in music, poetry, and at funeral services and weddings. They inspire us, comfort us, correct us and lead us. Read the passage from Psalm 23:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.

He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Discuss this passage with the kids. Ask: Can you understand what God is telling you? Talk about how God is our shepherd, guiding us through life and if we allow Him to, he will help us through trouble.



Not stop trouble, but help us through it. And if we do walk with Him, we will have less trouble in our lives.

Talk to the kids about death. Say the following: Most people are frightened of death. It is something we will all go through; no one has ever escaped it. Only one person can walk with us through the process of death and make certain we attain everlasting life on the other side of death. Ask: What does it mean to anoint your head with oil? Seems strange! In ancient Eastern culture, it was customary to anoint a person with fragrant oil as a lotion. Hosts were also expected to protect their guests from danger. God, the perfect shepherd and host, promises to guide and protect us through life to bring us into His house forever.

Tell the kids that Jesus taught in parables. Ask who can explain what a parable is?

Read John 15:1-5—"I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the fruit you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Can you explain what God is saying in this passage? What about pruning, what does that mean? The grapevine symbolizes God, Jesus, and His people. Christ is the vine and God is the gardener who cares for the branches to make them fruitful. The branches are all those who claim to be followers of Christ. Pruning is the process of cutting back the branch to make it produce more fruit. How do you think God prunes us? If you really don't have a relationship with God, how do you think this pruning process will affect you? How will it affect you if you do have a relationship with him?



Flame

You will need:

- Video of “Flame” available at YFC
 - Bibles
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Show the video and discuss the following:

An example of what God envisions love between a man and woman is found in the Song of Songs. God has made us with a desire for lasting relationships with people of the opposite sex. He has designed marriage as the ultimate goal of a relationship. The relationships you have now will affect the kind of relationships you’ll have in the future. Ask God for His direction in your relationships and be willing to follow His design, and you’ll experience something far greater than you thought possible.

Who designed marriage?

Genesis 2:18-24

The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.” For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

What do you think God’s design is for marriage?

Matthew 19:6

“So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

Ephesians 5:25-31

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”



Hebrews 13

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

Discuss the following Scriptures:

Job 31:1

"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl."

Proverbs 5:18-19

May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.

Proverbs 6:27-29

Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?

Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?

So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished.

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

If Jesus Were Walking the Earth Among Us Right Now

You will need:

- Bible
-

1. Who would Jesus be hanging around with? Who would He be mostly concerned about? (Read 1 Cor. 15:33, 34, Mark 2:13-17, James 1:26,27)

Notice that Jesus, in his interaction with “sinners,” led them away from sin. He said, “follow me.” He did not get involved with the sin although He did get involved with sinners.

Remember this: Our godly impact in the world is in direct proportion to our personal involvement in people's lives.

Jesus' characteristics portrayed in these passages: leadership, caring, focus, perseverance, and dedication, even in the face of opposition.

2. What would He do with His time? (Read Mark 1:29-39). Prayer and teaching others about God and their place in His plan. Note: This can be done “full-time,” no matter who we are, where we work, our station in life, our financial status, etc.

Jesus' characteristics portrayed in this passage: love, compassion for the sick, power to defeat evil, worship, dedication to His calling

3. What kind of music would He listen to, books He'd read, TV shows and movies He'd watch? What would He eat? drink? (Read 1 Cor. 10:31-33, Rom. 12:2, Gal. 6:4, 1 Thess. 5:21, 2 Cor. 13:5)

Jesus' characteristics portrayed in these passages: obedience to His Father, and a passion to do His will.

When considering your choices in any situation, ask yourself the following:

- Is it beneficial? Will it control me? (Read 1 Cor. 6:12)
- Will it help me and others grow spiritually? (Read Rom. 14:13-23)
- Will it build me and others up or tear us down? (Read 1 Cor. 10:23,24)

When you look in the mirror of your heart, what do you see? A desire to reflect Jesus or a desire to reflect the things of the world?



What Are You Tuned in to?

You will need:

- Bible
- “Prophet” (CD that contains the song “Corner Store” by Koos van der Merwe and Theo Geyser)

1. What do you watch? What do you read? What are your favorite activities? Who do you associate with? Who do you listen to?

2. If God were to speak to you, would you be tuned in to Him so that you could hear him?
1 Samuel 3:1-10—“Speak, for your servant is listening.”

3. If God were to ask you to do something, would you be able to hear Him?
Isaiah 6:1-9—“Here am I. Send me!”

4. How do you listen to God? One way is to develop a lifestyle of “godly habits”:

- Devotional habit—Read the Scriptures and pray daily
- Intake habit—Regularly read, watch, listen, and do things that bring you closer to God.
- Relational habit—Regularly meet and associate with people who will help you know God better.
- Ministry habit—Regularly reach out to others to help them with their needs.

5. Listen to the song “Corner Store” on the CD entitled “Prophet.”

- The *lie* of the world is that you have plenty of time (see Luke 12:16-21 and Hebrews 9:27).
- Now is the time to decide. If you need wisdom, ask God, and He will give it to you (see James 1:5). Confess, believe, receive (see Romans 10:9-11).
- Jesus already bought you with his life (see Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23). All you need to do is make God first in your life, accept this, and commit your life to him through confession, repentance, and belief (see Luke 9:23-26).

Words to “Corner Store”

Everybody's sellin' something
Some are sellin' something more
Everybody's sellin' something
Life is like a corner store

Some are sellin' shoes
Some are sellin' booze
Some are sellin' honey
Others are sellin' money

Some are sellin' Bibles
Some are sellin' revivals
Or animals for slaughter
Some even sell us water
Some prophets are sellin' us tomorrow
Newspapers war and glamour and sorrow

Some are sellin' trends
Others are sellin' their friends
Some are sellin' candy
Others even sell their family
Somebody's sellin' us a lie
He's sellin' us tears and kills us when we cry

Somewhere lived a man of class
But oh the pain, the pain, alas
He could not reach life's final goal
He was the salesman of his own soul



Who Am I?

You will need:

- Bibles
- Pen
- TV or video player
- Video of movie kids are probably unfamiliar with
- Mystery item hidden in a box
- Index cards with mysterious clues
- Prize(s) according how you choose to reward winners
- Copies of the Match Game

1. Begin the session with a “random scene” of the movie you have chosen. Show a 15-second clip. Forward the tape and show another 15-second clip. Do the same thing until you come to the end of the movie. When you are finished, ask the kids to try to make sense of what they saw. Ask them to describe certain characters. After they have spent a few minutes trying to reconstruct the movie, reveal what actually happened in the movie. Point out that just as they did not have enough information to draw an accurate conclusion of what the movie was really about, many people don’t have enough information to draw an accurate conclusion of what God is like.
2. Show the students the box with the mystery item in it. Announce that if your students were to correctly guess the mystery item within a certain time limit (10 minutes), they would win a prize. Then explain that you have clue cards to help identify the mystery item. For example, if the item was a tennis ball, the clues could be as follows: fuzzy, branded, returnable, sporty, canned, high-speed, bouncy.
3. If the students are unsuccessful in guessing correctly, ask, “What prevented you from seeing what was inside the box? If they are successful, ask, “What helped you figure out what the item was?” What clues do we have to figure out the big picture of who God is and what He is like? Point out that the more information we have about who God really is, the more we will be able to see who He really is.

The Big Picture

Read (or have someone read) Revelation 6:8-9, 16 and then ask the following question:

- If all you knew about God was what you read in these four chapters, what words would you use to describe Him?

Read John 3:16, Romans 5:8, and 1 John 4:7-12. Ask the following:

- What are some other misconceptions people have about God?
- Where do you think these misconceptions come from?
- How do you think misconceptions effect how we see God?

Discuss how some think of Him as a kind, grandfather type while others see Him as angry and judgmental. Our concept of who He is affects how we respond to Him. Point out that God is not only loving and kind, but He is also holy and requires justice. That just like a parent here on earth, He must be *both* to be effective.



Match Game

Pass out the match game sheets and pens to the students. Have them work in pairs or threesomes and complete the following questions after discussing God's attributes:

- What attribute of God is the most meaningful to you right now and why?
- Which one is hardest for you to understand or accept?

Discuss the fact that we can't fully understand the perfection of God's attributes, but the more we know about who He is, the better we can understand His love for us.



The Big Picture: Match Game

Match the attribute with the definition.

Attributes

- _____ 1. Eternal
- _____ 2. Holy
- _____ 3. Omnipresent
- _____ 4. Just
- _____ 5. Loving
- _____ 6. Omnipotent
- _____ 7. Omniscient
- _____ 8. Sovereign
- _____ 9. Transcendent
- _____ 10. Immutable

Definitions

- a. God is right here with us—always present, always near.
- b. There's never been a time when God didn't exist, and there will never be a time when he doesn't exist.
- c. God is perfectly consistent—there's no room for improvement and no chance of decline in him.
- d. God can do anything that is within his nature.
- e. Everything about God is good and right and perfect—he exists apart from sin.
- f. God is the ultimate authority—he answers to no one and is influenced by no one.
- g. God isn't contained by the universe or anything in it. He's not subject to the laws of physics or any other constraints in our world.
- h. God knows everything that's happened in the past, everything happening in the present, and everything happening in the future—nothing is beyond his understanding.
- i. God desires a personal relationship with us and seeks only the ultimate best for our lives.
- j. God can't allow wrongdoing to go unpunished—a penalty or punishment must be paid for sin. (Jesus did this for us!)

