

# Introduction *Witness Workshop*

- What is a Witness Workshop? It is a time for arts and crafts and much more. Its purpose goes beyond the project being made. Witness Workshop has the goal of equipping God's children to share His good news while they celebrate Jesus!
- Each week in Witness Workshop you will be given a choice of two creative activities. Choose the one that works better for your situation. Each week, either in your classroom or in an Arts and Crafts room, the kids will make a tool that gives them a focus for telling others about Jesus. When they have something in their hand, they have something specific to talk about, they have something to concentrate on (other than any nervousness they may feel), and they can use it to catch the attention of others. Kids are more likely to be motivated to talk about something they made themselves (and they are more likely to understand it better, too).
- After you teach them how to make the tool, also teach them how to use it. Don't assume the kids understand the meaning of the tool just because you talked about it. Let them talk about it—let them practice verbalizing the message. Have partners explain it to each other, use the tool in roleplay situations, use the tool with puppets (again to take the person's focus off of themselves). "Rehearse" it in ways that are comfortable and fun. If the kids have the chance to verbalize the meaning and use of the tool, they are more likely to be ready to use it.
- Your role can be very much like a cheerleader—encouraging abilities and energizing interest. Lead discussions that are more like conversations, talking about real life and real feelings. Reassure the kids that they are never alone—God is always with them. The projects are tools, but the real power is from God, in His Word. Read these words from the Bible: Jesus said, "The Holy Spirit . . . will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26). The apostle Paul said, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith" (1 Timothy 4:12). Peter said, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15). Peter and John said, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).
- For children the starting place is usually with their very own families and others with whom they have close relationships. When we witness to other believers we encourage, remind, and reassure them of Jesus' love. Once talking about Jesus with those closest to them becomes natural and spontaneous, the kids are more likely to speak of Him in other places, too, such as in the neighborhood, at school, or with those on their ball team.
- Telling kids "go tell about Jesus" can sound like a demand with a Law rather than Gospel perspective. It sounds like a work requirement instead of a joy-filled response, especially if it brings feelings of guilt or failure. So let's make sure that, instead of an obligation, witnessing is a celebration. Let's equip the kids, give them specifics, give them tools, prepare them, and rehearse possibilities. Let's help them know how to say what to whom!
- Sometimes the thought of witnessing sounds complicated and theological. But some of the most effective witnessing is simple and spontaneous. Be a model for "Christian one-liners." Sprinkle your conversation with remarks about your faith and God's goodness in your everyday life. The more you do it, the more natural and contagious it becomes for the people around you.
- Help the kids understand that witnessing does not mean public speaking or preaching. That can be a part of it, but there are many other ways to witness. You can witness in songs you sing, in pictures you create, in words you write, and most certainly in actions of kindness. Witnessing is sharing what you know: tell what you know about Jesus, tell what you know about what He has done for you, share the loving-kindness He has given to you.
- Help the kids to be aware of possibilities and opportunities for talking about Jesus. Trust the power of God to open up situations, as He says in Revelation 3:8, "See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut." Pray together with the kids about this important privilege.

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# 1

## Witness Workshop

# God Creates a Paradise (Genesis 2)

### Point to Remember

Although sin destroyed perfection in God's world, He continues to love all people; sending Jesus to be our Savior proves the extent of His great love.

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### Witness Tool

**Materials** Fabric paints (or permanent markers), fabric glue, 12-inch squares of light-colored fabric, cotton or polyester filling; optional: fringed or lace trim

**Procedure** Make creation pillows. Cover work space to protect tabletops. Have the kids use fabric paints, drawing lines to make six equal sections on 12-inch fabric squares. Paint pictures of the six days of creation in the sections. On another fabric square, paint the word *REST* in large letters. After the paint has dried, use fabric glue to adhere the two squares together to make the front and back of the pillow, but leave a 4-inch opening on one side. Stuff the cotton or polyester filling into the pillow and then glue the opening shut. You may want to glue trim around the edge of the pillow to decorate it.

### Witness (Tell)

This project reviews the days of creation, but focuses on day 7, when God created *rest*. This is a message the kids can share with their families: God the Father, in His wisdom, models for us the value of setting busyness aside and saving one day for rest, worship, renewal. **We tend to load up our weekends. So talk to your family about slowing down and following the Lord's example. Pray for His help in setting aside time.** Your day of rest does not mean you do nothing all day; whatever you are doing, do things you enjoy that serve others and honor God. Consider the uniqueness of Sunday, our chosen day of rest. God the Son rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, and the power of God the Holy Spirit poured down on His church on Pentecost Sunday. **With prayer pillow reminders and prayers for God's help, may Sunday be a truly blessed day for you and your family!**

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### Witness Tool

**Materials** Long rolls of paper, rulers, pencils, marking pens

**Procedure** Have each person make a timeline of events in his or her own life. Give each person a 6-foot length of white shelf paper (which is about 1-foot wide). Kids would probably like to work on the floor where they can have plenty of room to spread out. (Put down newspapers to protect the floor.) Suggest that they make a long line down the center of the paper and divide that into sections to indicate each year of their lives. (For example, a 12-year-old would mark a line and number every 6 inches.) Then, above the line, have them write about some key things that happened in their lives each year (such as learned to walk, joined a T-ball team). Pictures can be drawn and magazine illustrations can be glued in place. Centered below the timeline, in large letters, print "My Life: I have had God's help to this very day. (Acts 26:22)"

### Witness (Tell)

Suggest that the kids have family members add more things to the timeline. Ask, **What does a personal timeline have to do with today's story about creation?** (We are part of God's creation; God continues to care for us and provide for us and all the creatures of the world; God cares about the world so much, He sent Jesus to die on the cross for it—for you and me.)

# 2

## Witness Workshop

### Babel

(Genesis 11:1–9)

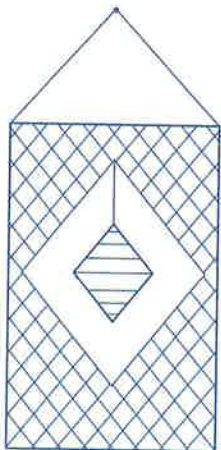
#### Point to Remember

Although barriers exist between people as a result of human sin, God continues to love all people.

#### Witness Tool

**Materials** Pastel construction paper, scissors, pencils, tape, string

**Procedure** Make diamante (diamond-shaped poem) mobiles. Position a sheet of paper vertically. Fold it across the center. Cut out a large triangle shape (which will open to make a diamond shape). Cut off  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to an inch around the edges of the diamond. Draw a line across the center of the diamond; then draw three evenly spaced lines above and three below the center line. (You will be writing a poem on these lines.) Use tape to attach a short length of string from the top of the diamond to the top of the diamond-shaped opening of the sheet. Also attach string at the top of the sheet so that the sections can hang and move freely.



Work together to make a poem about today's Bible story, writing the words on the lines on the diamond shape. Use the following pattern. Line 1, a one-word subject; line 2, two adjectives; line 3, three verbs; line 4, four nouns; line 5, three verbs; line 6, two adjectives; line 7, a one-word synonym for the first line. (For example: tower; tall, massive; planned, worked, talked; men, women, language, God; spoke, confused, wander; upset, unfinished; spire.) Provide additional supplies so the kids can create their own poems about Jesus as a subject and perhaps one about their families.

#### Witness (Tell)

Point out that we can honor God in all that we do—even in mobile-making or poem-writing. Note that in writing a poem you need a message to say and someone to say it to. Suggest that they share their poems with their family members. Then hang the poems up at home.

#### Witness Tool

**Materials** White construction (or watercolor) paper, watercolors and paintbrushes (or marking pens), yellow paper, scissors, tape

**Procedure** Have the kids paint (or write) the following words to create an interesting design. Use a variety of letter styles, sizes, angles, and heights; overlap, blend, and repeat. Explain that all of these words mean "peace": *paz* (Spanish); *shalom* (Hebrew); *siochain* (Irish); *paix* (French); *amani* (Swahili); *spokoj* (Polish); *maluhia* (Hawaiian); *friede* (German).

#### Witness (Tell)

Say, **The confusion of words on your pictures reminds me of the confusion of people at the tower of Babel. Confusion is still a major problem in our world today. People not only don't understand other languages, they don't understand other cultures. Only God is above all that. Only God's peace can help. He calls us together to be one family through Jesus Christ.** Cut out a large yellow cross and use tape rolls to tape it to the center of the picture. On the cross write the words of Philippians 4:7.

To be certain the kids understand how to verbalize the purpose of their projects, have them team up with one or two partners and explain the project's message.

# 3

## Witness Workshop

### Isaac

(Genesis 21-24)

#### Point to Remember

God will always provide for His people. He gives us our family and friends and Jesus, who lived and died and rose again for us.

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#### Witness Tool

**Materials** Large sheets of construction paper, magazines, scissors, glue, marking pens, clear adhesive paper, colorful yarn

**Procedure** Have the kids make place mats for family members (including themselves). Remember that family can mean many different things, but usually it means who you live with (even if you live with them only on weekends). Give a large sheet of paper (about 11" × 17") and have the kids make a collage on the paper that tells about the person who will use the place mat. Pictures and words can be cut from magazines. The kids can either draw pictures on the place mat or draw on another piece of paper and cut out and apply their drawings. Suggest that they fill up the sheet with pictures and words that overlap and angle in varying directions. On each one, include the person's name and also a cross. Cover the completed place mats with clear adhesive paper or laminate them so they can easily be wiped off. A nice finishing touch is to add fringed edges of various colors of yarn. (*Hint:* An easy way to do this is to punch holes on each side—don't overdo it! Then thread yarn strips through the holes and tie them in place.)

#### Witness (Tell)

Encourage the kids to give the place mats to family members, telling them how much they appreciate them and how much they thank God for blessing their family. Remind family members of the special blessing that all believers are part of the family of God through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

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#### Witness Tool

**Materials** Construction paper, magazines, scissors, glue, marking pens, clear adhesive paper, upright facial tissue boxes

**Procedure** Make decorative tissue box covers. Each person will need an empty facial tissue box that stands upright. Cut off the bottom of the box. (If the box is not empty, put unused tissues in a plastic bag.) Have the kids cover the box with a collage of pictures and words that are either cut from magazines or drawn on colored paper. Glue the pictures at various heights and angles, overlapping them to fill all the space (top, too). Pictures and words should tell about their family, what they like to do together in work and play, descriptions of individuals, unique family events or travels. Place a cross somewhere on each panel. On the top print "Jesus loves you" on one half, and "I do, too" on the other half of the top. Cover with clear adhesive paper.

#### Witness (Tell)

Suggest that the kids take the projects home and place them as a cover over another upright box of facial tissue. **There are lots of families in this world. At supper tomorrow talk with your family about what makes your family unique—different than many other families. Then pray together, thanking God for your family and thanking Him that you are part of His family, too.** Every time a family member grabs a tissue they will see this reminder of God's blessing in our families.