

WEEK 3 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

I can keep learning — God is with me!

BIBLE

The Writing on the Wall:
Daniel 5; 2 Timothy 3:14-17

LARGE GROUP TIME

Welcome back to our series, *Hear Me Roar!* I'm the zookeeper here at the Babylon Zoo, and you won't believe all the things that have happened since the last time you visited. I have so much to tell you on our zoo tour today!

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "Echo" (Elevation Worship)
 - "God Is Always With Us" (Lifetree Kids)
 - "I'm Trusting You" (Lifetree Kids)
 - "Not Afraid" (Rend Co. Kids)
 - "Journey of a Lifetime" (Kids on the Move)

ACTIVITY | Animal I.D.

- Have you ever wondered what happens when an animal gets loose? Let's play a game to find out how a lost animal finds their way back.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print a set of the Animal I.D. printable for your group and cut them out ahead of time. Without showing kids the animals on the cards before play begins, tape one I.D. card to the back of each kid's shirt. During game play, kids will walk around and ask each other yes or no questions to try to figure out what animal they are. Feel free to print out duplicates if you have a large group.
 - ✳ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Provide friends with a printout of yes or no questions to ask. Alternatively, flip the script and have other people provide hints to help them figure out what animal picture is on their back.

- You each have an animal name on your back. You need to go around the room and ask each other yes or no questions in order to learn which animal you are! When you think you've figured out who you are, find a zookeeper and they'll help you get back to your exhibit!

ACTIVITY | Devour or Decline

- One of my main jobs here at the zoo is to make sure the animals get fed! As you can imagine, there are some pretty wild food items in our cafeteria! Do you want to check it out? I need some volunteers who want to eat like the animals today!
 - **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Prepare for this game by placing food items specific to the animal that eats them in separate paper bags and labeling the bag with the name of the animal only (see below for ideas). Prepare enough bags for 3-4 volunteers to play up front or more for large groups who can play with a leader at each station. Show the first kid one of the bags you've prepared. Without opening it, they have to choose "devour" or "decline" based only on knowing which animal eats whatever is inside. If they decline, show them another bag and give them the choice again — but let them know that if they decline again, they will be stuck with the third bag you give them. Have them open the bag they end up with and show everyone what's inside. And of course, they don't have to devour it if they don't want to! Keep playing until all the bags are gone!*
 - Pandas: grapes and apples
 - Gorillas: broccoli and kale
 - Lions: hamburger
 - Meerkat: worms (give them gummy worms!)
 - Penguins: fish sticks
 - Hippos: lettuce and watermelon
 - Tiger: pulled pork
 - Owl: mouse (but make it chocolate mousse!)
 - Anteater: ants (raisins)
- ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Place the items in clear sandwich bags so kids will know exactly what foods they will be choosing. You might also want to have extras of the popular items so everyone ends up with the food item they want.*

POLL | Upvote Challenge

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ahead of time, prepare strips of poster board that can adhere to a board using Velcro or magnets (here's [an example](#)). On each strip, write a challenge a kid might relate to — you might even invite the kids to add some of their own, however you can check out the list below for ideas. Display the first challenge. Then display the second. Have the kids upvote or downvote each challenge by giving a thumbs-up or thumbs-down, based on the previous options. Have them keep voting, until they've collectively ranked the challenges from easiest to hardest.*
 - Learning to tie your shoes.
 - Learning to play the piano.
 - Learning to shoot a free throw in basketball.
 - Memorizing the names of all 50 states.
 - Memorizing the 66 books of the Bible.
 - Learning to ride a unicycle.
 - Teaching a wild monkey to juggle.
- What are some of the hardest things you've ever learned to do? I remember that learning how to solve math word problems was a challenge!

- Let's imagine some challenges as a group and try to rank them from what we think would be easiest to what we think would be the hardest. We will do that for each one. If you think the newest option is easier than the one before it, give me a thumbs up! If you think it's harder, and should be moved down the list, give me a thumbs down!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Daniel 5 (The Writing on the Wall)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Dressed as a zookeeper, tell the Bible story from the zookeeper's perspective. Today's story spans all of Daniel 5, but feel free to only read the parts out loud that work for your specific age group.
- Phew! Sometimes walking around the zoo can get exhausting because it's so big! How about we catch our breath with some more news about what's been happening around here in Babylon? You can also read about these stories in the Bible.
- **Do you remember hearing about our friend Daniel, and how King Nebuchadnezzar made life difficult for him and his friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?**
 - King Nebuchadnezzar wanted all the power for himself and because of that he did things like bring Israelites like Daniel and his friends from their home in Jerusalem all the way here to Babylon so they could work for him.
 - Then, he made a big statue and said, "Everyone must worship this idol. If they don't, I'll have them thrown into a furnace!" And he wasn't kidding. When he found out Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship his statue, he punished them by putting them in the fire. But God protected them and they survived without having even a single hair singed!
- And even though King Nebuchadnezzar knew then and there that God was real and was more powerful than anything, he sadly went back to being his mean old self. One day he finally drove himself mad and couldn't be the king anymore.
- So, his son is now in charge. His son's name is also a mouthful — Belshazzar. And this might be hard to believe, but Belshazzar is even meaner than his father! Check this out.
- [Read Daniel 5:1–17.]
 - People remembered how wise Daniel was so when all of Belshazzar's own assistants couldn't figure out the message on the wall, they reminded the new king about Daniel. They brought Daniel in right away!
 - Belshazzar offered Daniel gifts and the opportunity to be in power himself. Daniel didn't want any of those rewards though. God gave him the wisdom to understand the message. He explained that the message came directly from God. Let's find out what happened next!
- [Read Daniel 5:24–31.]
 - The message God sent said that Belshazzar's days of ruling Babylon were numbered. That meant since he didn't honor God — even though he should have known better — the kingdom would be taken away from him and that he would die.
 - Then later last night, the message came true! Babylon is under new management now because the Medes and the Persians, who come from a different kingdom altogether, have taken over. The new guy in charge is named Darius. I really hope he learns from the mistakes of ol' King Neb and King Bel!

BIG IDEA | I can keep learning — God is with me!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up your space with the coconut tree, flamingo, and lion decorations like last week. Insert papers with the Big Ideas into the coconuts and attach them to the tree. Play the song, "[The Lion Sleeps Tonight](#)," as you gather the kids. After the Big Idea reveal, play a [sound bite of a lion's roar](#). For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)

- Well, Ari, the lion is sleeping again! So, let's hang out with the flamingos and crack open today's Big Idea. *[Grab a coconut off the tree and open it to find the Big Idea.]*
- *[Take out a piece of paper containing the Big Idea and read it out loud.]* **I can keep learning — God is with me!** Like Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar was stuck in his ways for a long time, but then he became open to learning about God. Daniel kept learning every step of the way. With God's help, we can keep learning too!
- Let's wake up Ari by roaring this Big Idea! **I can keep learning — God is with me!** *[Play a [sound bite of a lion's roar](#) as a response to the roar of the kids!]*

VIDEO | Hear Me Roar, Episode 3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

VIDEO | Koko Learns Sign Language

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the video "[Remembering the human side of Koko the gorilla](#)". For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this](#)!*
- Animals are amazing creatures! Whether in captivity or in the world, animals are curious about their environments and learn to thrive in their different areas of the world!
- Koko learned sign language, formed meaningful human connections, learned to paint, and even expressed empathy and emotion. She didn't resist learning, or stop trying, just because something was out of her comfort zone. She lived with curiosity which led her to many unique experiences and beautiful friendships.
- We can keep learning too — because God is with us!

ACTIVITY | Crocodile Attack Game

- We have a major problem in the Zoo Pridelands. The crocodiles have surrounded a flock of hornbills, and we need to work together to rescue the birds! You're all going to be honorary lions because crocodiles will run away at the sound of a lion's roar.
- **Let me hear you roar!**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *[Show this video clip](#) (end clip at 0:44) as a segue into the game. (For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this](#)!) Print the "roar" and "attack" cards, fold them in half, and glue the open edge of each card shut with a glue stick, then hide them in a kiddie pool filled with packing peanuts or shredded paper.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Challenge preteens to do this activity with a blindfold on. When anyone finds a card, have them hold it out to a leader who tells them whether it's a "roar" or an "attack" card.*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Have kids buddy up so that they can share the tasks of getting the cards out of the pool and opening them up.*
- I think we need to learn to be even louder to send the crocodiles running!
- In this watering hole, there are six "attack" cards and six "roar" cards. Each of you will take a turn to dig through and find one card.
 - If you find a "roar" card, awesome! We are one step closer to chasing the crocodiles away from these poor, frightened hornbills.
 - If you find an "attack" card, oh no! The crocodiles are advancing and one "roar" card must be returned to the watering hole. If there are no "roar" cards yet, you don't have to do anything.
 - The goal is for our whole group to find all six "roar" cards before you draw out the six "attack" cards!
- Hopefully, you learned to feel for the cards in the watering hole that felt like they were already opened because those were probably the "roar" cards that were returned.
- When we play a game, we first learn the rules, then we develop strategies on how to get better at it, right? In the same way, in our lives, we might get ourselves into trouble sometimes but we can be patient with ourselves as we figure things out.

- That's why it's encouraging to know, **I can keep learning — God is with me!**

SCRIPTURE | 2 Timothy 3:14–17

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read 2 Timothy 3:14–17.

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Rather than reading out loud, help preteens relate to what it's like getting messages nowadays. You can connect your phone to a monitor and send text messages to another leader (rename them "Timothy" in your contacts for this) and copy/paste each verse from the Scripture into its own line of text message. Have the volunteer respond with emojis or a simple, "Thx bro" for added fun!*

- Last week, we read a part of Paul's letter to his friend, Timothy. Paul knew that this would be his last letter to Timothy, so he wanted to cheer Timothy on!
- But he didn't say that Timothy had to be perfect. Instead of trying to be perfect, we can turn to the Bible, which will help us learn and give us what we need every step of the way.
- Paul told Timothy to continue in the things he was learning — because that's one of the most important ways to continue growing as followers of Jesus.
 - When Jesus was on earth, he mentored his disciples. He didn't give them a list of instructions and then send them out to do mission impossible. No! He helped them learn by simply saying, "Follow me."
 - But even the guys who were Jesus' closest friends got mixed up sometimes. They misunderstood Jesus' words and had trouble doing the things Jesus taught them to do. But Jesus didn't give up on them. He was patient and continued to invite them to follow him.
- When we read the Bible, we can learn from Jesus as we read about his life, his teachings, and his love for others. Jesus doesn't expect us to "have it all together." He knows that growing in our faith will be something we do our whole lives. He simply invites us to keep learning and to follow Jesus one day at a time.
- What a gift it is to know that **I can keep learning — God is with me!**

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

ACTIVITY | Zookeeper Observation

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have a leader, pretending to be a zookeeper, tell the kids a narrative about the animals. Afterward, ask the kids follow-up questions to see what they remember. Be sure to have the zookeeper dress in a costume that involves flashy socks, zoo-related buttons, and a bandana. Show the following pictures of the lions as you share the story below: [Ari](#), [Nala](#), and [the three cubs](#).
- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Turn this into a challenge by adding buzzers and time limits for preteens' responses. Include a few general trivia questions also to make it more interesting.*
- The lions are my favorite creatures at the zoo, so I want to tell you some facts about our pride here. Listen closely and learn as much as you can about the lions.
 - Ari, our largest male lion, is the leader of the pride. Ari is eight years old and came to our zoo when he was two years old. Ari is the Hebrew word for lion, so that is how he got his name!
 - Nala is the oldest lioness in our pride. She weighs 313 pounds, and her birthday is March 7.
 - Ari and Nala have three cubs: Ada, Kojo, and Leon. They were born in the same litter and are three months old. The lions love to sleep. They sleep for about 20 hours a day!
- Did you catch all of that? Let's see how much you remember! *[Ask questions below and give kids a chance to respond.]*
 - **How old was Ari when he first came to the zoo?**

- How did Ari get his name?
- When is Nala's birthday?
- What were the names of Nala and Ari's cubs?
- How many hours a day do they sleep?
- What color were the zookeeper's socks?
- What color was the bandana in their pocket?
- What pins did they have on their shirt?
- On what wrist were they wearing their watch?
- What were they holding in their hands?
- I'm sure that you learned a lot about the lions, but you may not have realized much about the other details. That's okay! We can keep learning. Let's try again!
- *[Have the zookeeper come back and share the exact same information. Ask the kids the same questions again.]* Great job! You nailed it this time!
- God doesn't expect us to have everything figured out right away. God is patient and gives us many opportunities to grow and learn!
- **I can keep learning — God is with me!**

RESPONSE | The Search

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Using the word search graphic provided, project the image on a whiteboard for kids to work together as a group, or print it poster-size to work on in groups of three or four.*
- We read 2 Timothy 3:14–17 today. It's jam-packed full of awesome words that help us keep learning. Look for those words in the word search on the board. If you see one, raise your hand, and I'll invite you to come and circle it on the screen!
- **Which words stand out to you the most?**
- Say a short prayer using those words, asking God to help you keep searching for God's wisdom and guidance as you learn every day.

MEMORY VERSE | Nahum 1:7 (NIV)

- **"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him."**
- I've been thinking a lot about our memory verse. There have been so many changes and wild events happening here at Zoo Babylon. I'm thankful that God is **with me**. **Let's keep learning our memory verse together!**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Sign the Bible verse one word at a time, and have the kids repeat the motions and words after you. (Don't forget to check out the memory verse signs — a combination of SEE and ASL — available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/Nahum1-7.)*

PRAYER

- God, you are the Creator of the world, and you are always at work. I don't want to stay in my comfort zone when it comes to growing with you. I want to keep learning instead of thinking I already know everything. Thank you for being the most kind and patient teacher and for reminding me I don't have to be perfect. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- What happened to King Nebuchadnezzar?

- What did the handwriting on the wall say?
- What happened to King Belshazzar after he threw the big party?
- Read 2 Timothy 3:14–17. What are the things that the Bible does to help us learn?
- Who is the best teacher or coach you've ever had and why?
- What is God teaching you about right now?
- What are some things you can do to learn more about God this week?

ACTIVITY | Tiny Zoo

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Provide kids with resources to continue building their tiny zoo. Offer supplies to create a ticket booth and grand entrance. LEGO people and small figurines make fantastic visitors!*
- Let's keep building our zoo! Our zoo has grown quite a bit in the last few weeks, and it's going to keep expanding!
- People love to visit the zoo because they love to learn about the animals! So, today, we're going to add zoo guests, ticket booths, and a grand entrance to our zoo.
- **What are some things you have been learning in your life lately? How do you think God might use that in your life?**