

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE

measure up

BIG IDEA

God makes us ready at the right time.

BIBLE

Jesus Begins His Ministry: Matthew 4:12-23; Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

LARGE GROUP TIME

Welcome back to *Measure Up*, where the ride has been more epic than a rollercoaster drop! We are learning about Jesus, who was once a kid like you! As Jesus grew up, he did what God called him to do, and once people learned who Jesus was, they began to follow him. Today, in week four, we'll see just that!

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!](#)
 - "One Me" (Grow Kids VBS)
 - "Hey Me (Now and Forever)" (Elevation Church Kids)
 - "Won't Stop Now" (Worship Together Kids)
 - "Wanna Be Like Jesus" (Yancy)
 - "Wise Up" (Kidspring Children's Ministry)

ACTIVITY | Rocket Blast

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Players will blast foam finger rockets through hanging hoops [like this](#). Give players three foam rockets. Award park prizes to players who successfully blast the rockets through the hoops!
- A nice way to unwind from all the twists, turns, and spins on theme park rides — especially right after a meal — is to try some of the arcade games.
- Let's warm up for our Bible story today by trying one of those together!

ACTIVITY | Carousel Chairs

- Still not ready to go on a thrill ride? Okay, how about we take it slow by going on the carousel?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This game is a lot like musical chairs with a fun, amusement park twist! Set up chairs in a circle, but sideways all facing the same clockwise or counterclockwise direction. When you pause the music, all players try to “mount” an empty carousel horse (chair). Players should sit backward in the chair, so the circle looks like a carousel. Person without a “horse” is out. Remove a chair, tighten the circle, and resume play until one person remains. If you have a larger group, divide the group into several circles — all playing at the same time to the same music. You can use carousel music ([like this](#)) during game play.*

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *For kids with limited mobility, swap out this game with a “Hot Potato” type of game where they pass around an item with a fun texture (like knobby balls or squishy toy) while the music plays.*

POLL | Ready On Time

- **Have you ever tried to leave the house to go somewhere, such as school or church, but something keeps you from leaving at the time you planned?**
- Just like on a rollercoaster before they snap a photo, strike a pose if you’ve left the house late for one of these reasons. Pretend to dodge the camera if not.
 - Finding your shoes.
 - Looking for your backpack.
 - Brushing your teeth.
 - Deciding what to wear.
 - Taking the dog on a walk.
 - Cleaning up a spill.
 - Finishing your breakfast.
 - Your ride arriving late to pick you up.
- Sometimes we struggle to be on time, and other times — like when we know we’re going to an amusement park — we get up super early and get ready really fast.
- We experience time very differently depending on the situation, but God’s timing is always perfect! We’ll learn more about that in today’s Bible story!

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

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 4:12–23 (Jesus Begins His Ministry)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play a video like this one without the sound as your backdrop as you begin to tell the Bible story from Matthew 4:12–23. Dress up as a ride operator (polo shirt with khaki pants or shorts and name badge). You will need kid volunteers to play Jesus, Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Zebedee. Have them act out the things you say in the story. Make sure you point to each character when you mention them in the story as their cue to act it out. Have volunteers wear nametags or small accessories that differentiate the characters so that the kids can tell who everyone is.*
- Hey friends! Welcome back to our live show experience at the *Measure Up* theme park. Today’s show is called “Jesus Begins His Ministry.” **Everyone say, “Ooh! Aah!”**
- Ooh and aah, indeed! As always, we here at the *Measure Up* theater love audience participation. Wave your hands if you’d like to be a part of the show! *[Select volunteers.]*
- Let’s begin!
- Our story starts out with a bit of sad news. John the Baptist was in jail. **Can you all shake your heads with me?**
- When Jesus heard, he went away from Nazareth and went to live in a town called Capernaum, which was by the lake. From there, he started teaching everyone to follow God.

- One day, Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee when he saw two brothers, Peter and his brother Andrew.
 - **Give me a thumbs up if you remember Andrew and his brother Peter.** Remember how he used to go by the name, "Simon?"
 - So last time, we heard the story of them meeting Jesus for the first time where they decided to follow Jesus and listen to his teachings.
 - But today's meeting is even more special than that.
- So Andrew and Peter were fishermen and they were casting a net into the lake.
 - Jesus pointed at the two of them and said, "Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people."
 - **What do you think they did?** That's right — at once, they left their nets and followed him.
- They had already been devoted followers of Jesus, but Andrew and Peter were now being called to become one of Jesus' main disciples. They left in a hurry and even just left their nets in the water without pulling them up. They didn't worry about what they had in their hands because they knew that Jesus had so much more for them!
- From there, Jesus saw James, his brother John, and their father, Zebedee. **Everyone wave at James, John, and Zebedee!**
 - They were in a boat preparing their nets.
 - Jesus called them, too, and they immediately left the boat and their father and followed him.
- You see, Jesus was always the son of God, but he didn't start preaching and doing miracles right away. He waited for the right moment and waited to be joined by the right people before he began God's work.
- **Please help me give a round of applause to our volunteers!**

BIG IDEA | God makes us ready at the right time.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write the Big Idea on one winning ticket. Hide the winning ticket inside a carnival punch-out game. Use one [like this](#) or make your own with cups and tissue paper, [like this](#). Volunteers take turns punching holes until the winning ticket is found! Once it is found, read the winning ticket aloud! After the Big Idea is revealed, give kids pins for their lanyards as a reminder. If you have access to a [button maker](#), you can create buttons that say each week's Big Idea (using the graphics provided in their Programming folder) or purchase an assortment of fun pins and encourage pin trading (like at [Disney](#)).
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Instead of giving out pins, consider giving out items that are more closely related to the Big Idea. This week, give out seed packets or grow-in-water toys to remind them that everything has its own right time.
- And the winning ticket says . . . **God makes us ready at the right time.**
- When you look at this pin, be reminded that God makes you ready at the right time — more ready than you are when you've waited in a line in the hot sun for over an hour to ride an epic water slide!

VIDEO | Measure Up, Episode 4

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

STORY | I'm Not Ready!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story about a time when you were a kid and you were told you needed to do something but you didn't feel like you were ready OR you tried to do something you weren't actually ready for (such as taking the training wheels off a bike, getting rid of a security blanket, getting a shot, baking a cake, or swimming in the deep end). Why did you feel like you were or weren't ready? Was it the right time? How do you know?

- There are many milestones in our lives that creep up on us before we think we're ready to face them. But no matter how we feel about them, there are many indicators from people around us, and sometimes from our own bodies, that tell us that it is or isn't time.
- **But do you know who knows us better than we even know ourselves?** God!
- God knows what you can and can't handle because **God makes us ready at the right time.** We can trust that when God calls us to do something, it's because we can!

ACTIVITY | Picture This!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write each of the scenes (Bible verse groupings from Matthew 4) on separate index cards: 1) Verses 13, 17; 2) Verse 18; 3) Verse 19; 4) Verse 20; 5) Verses 21-22; 6) Verse 23. Separate kids into six teams, and give each team a poster board. Assign each team a scene card and have them design and illustrate the scene according to their own interpretation. Have teams line up in order and describe what's happening in their poster as a fun way to recap the Bible story.
- Pictures help us understand a story more fully! Let's recap the story by designing posters of what happened.
- Now, imagine yourself in the story. You, too, have been called by Jesus to follow him like Peter, Andrew, James, and John!

SCRIPTURE | Ecclesiastes 3:1–11

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Draw a giant clock on a white board or poster paper large enough for the kids to see. Instead of numbers, draw boxes. As you read each verse, stop and allow kids to volunteer to come up and write the words they hear in a box.
- **Does it ever feel like time is moving so slow — like when you're going to a special place, your birthday is coming up, or you're waiting out the last couple of minutes before school is over?**
 - Which of the things from this Scripture passage would make time feel like it's moving slowly?
- **How about moving too fast — like when you're at an amusement park or are on vacation?**
 - Which of the things from this Scripture passage would make time feel like it's moving quickly?
- God has a time — and the right timing — for *everything*, including a time for us to do the thing we need to do most . . . follow Jesus! **God makes us ready at the right time** for that, too.

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

REFLECTION | Fast Pass

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the following questions for kids to think about and have them share with the person next to them or have a couple of kids volunteer to share for each question (whatever works best for your group.)
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HEACK:** Have preteens write this down on a notecard or sheet of paper with their name. Then collect them and find a way to return these to students in one year to see how accurate their predictions ended up being!
- At some theme parks, certain attractions have super long lines. Sometimes you can get a fast pass that allows you to get on the ride quicker.
- Let's pretend that you are given a fast pass for the future!
 - **How old will you be in a year?**
 - **How long do you think your hair will be?**
 - **How much taller do you think you will get?**
 - **How many more books will you have read?**

- How many more movies will you have seen?
- How many new friends will you have made?
- What bad habit will you have broken?
- What new skill will you have learned?
- What do you think God might want you to do on this day one year from now?

ACTIVITY | Bumper Cars

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Using [inflatable tubes](#), kids will play freeze tag as human bumper cars. Choose five to ten players to start by holding the tubes around their waists. The kids that aren't playing this round will stand in a circle around the players, forming a boundary. Choose one kid to be 'it.' When a kid is tagged (bumped) by the 'it' car, the tagged car, must spin in place until another car bumps them, unfreezing them. Allow two minutes a game, and then switch up to a new set of players so everyone has a chance to play. If you have a larger group, you can have multiple bumper car arenas going at once.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** The quick turnover in this activity might be difficult for some kids who might want to play longer. Make sure you use clear language of "your turn" and "your friend's turn" as reminders. You can also give a kid a timer to sit with when they are not playing so they know that once the timer goes off, it will be their turn again.
- You might not have been ready to leave the game when time was called, but you knew you had to so that other people could have a chance to play, too.
- When Jesus called the disciples, they were in the middle of something very important — their jobs. But they dropped everything and followed Jesus right away because somehow they knew that Jesus was the savior they couldn't wait to follow.
- They were ready. God prepared their hearts to meet and follow Jesus, just like how **God makes us ready at the right time** to do big things for God, too.

MEMORY VERSE | Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

- "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have a parade route go in a circle around the room. While the music plays, have them do the parade as a large group. When it stops everyone says the memory verse. We suggest performing with streamers, hula hoops, batons, pom poms, and clappers, while you play music. When the music stops, they need to stop and do their parade routine and say the memory verse together! (**Don't forget to also check out the memory verse signs — a combination of SEE and ASL — available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/Matthew6-33.**)

PRAYER

- Dear God, your timing in all things is perfect. Even when we feel unsure or unprepared, when you are the one calling us, we know it's always the right time. Help us to be brave and be willing to drop everything else to do what is right in your eyes. Keep making us ready to follow you more and more every day. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- What did Jesus say to Simon and Andrew?
- What did Simon and Andrew do when Jesus asked them to follow Him?
- What did Jesus do once he gathered disciples?

- Which phrase is repeated over and over again in Ecclesiastes 3:1–11? What does that tell you about God’s timing?
- Do you find it easy or difficult to wait for the right time for things? Why?
- What are some ways we might know that it’s the right time for something?
- Can you think of one way to prepare for anything God might call you to do?

ACTIVITY | Go Fish!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Provide decks of [playing cards](#) for each group to play [Go Fish](#) or purchase [Go Fish cards](#). You could even make up your own rules to make it more fun.
- **Have you ever waited in a long line for a ride?** It would be boring if you were standing all by yourself, but usually, you’re with family and friends who help you pass the time. Sometimes you might even play a game!
- **Who’s played Go Fish before?** This game is all about waiting for the right time to find the right card! As you play Go Fish with your group, be reminded that when it comes to following God, **God makes us ready at the right time.**