

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

We can worship by
living for God.

BIBLE

Way to Live:

Psalm 112; Hebrews 13:1-3

LARGE GROUP TIME

It's our last week of *Wonder-Full*! We have taken so many wonderful adventures together this month. You just saw video footage of the Great Barrier Reef. Seeing and experiencing the natural wonders of our world makes me come to life. You know what else makes me feel alive? Worshiping God! It's been so incredible learning about worship this month with you.

[Play [this](#) video as kids enter your environment. Feel free to mute the sound and play your usual welcome music, if you'd like!]

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs 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](#)!
 - "So Many Wonders" (Grow Kids)
 - "Wonderfully Made" (JumpStart3)
 - "Remind Me" (Gateway Kids Worship)
 - "Living Color" (Elevation Church Kids)

ACTIVITY | First to Fin-ish

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up a start and finish line in your environment. Divide kids into teams, making as many teams as you have pairs of [flippers](#). The first member of the team should put on the flippers. When you say, "Go!" the kid wearing the flippers will race to the designated finish line, and then back to where they started. When they return to their team, the next kid will put on the flippers and complete the same course. The first team to have every team member "swim" back and forth wins!
 - ✳ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Take off the fins and have kids do this activity by walking in a silly way or like a sea animal (e.g., crab, penguin, sea lion, etc.).

- Today, we're taking a look at one of the most beautiful wonders of the natural world, the Great Barrier Reef. Have you ever been snorkeling? I would love to snorkel in the Great Barrier Reef. We might not get to go there today, but we do have a fun little game with some of my snorkeling gear.

ACTIVITY | The Living Reef

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Help kids create their own Great Barrier Reef. Kids can secure tissue paper squares over LED tealight candles with small rubber bands and use more tissue paper to create coral. Cut and fold the fish from the printable, then cut excess white paper around the fish before attaching each fish to a pipe cleaner. Put all of these things into an egg carton. Check out more detailed instructions [here](#). We recommend putting kids in groups of four to collaborate or cut egg cartons in half (or purchase smaller cartons) for individual projects. For a simpler version, have each kid place one candle and a fish in a small cup.
- The Great Barrier Reef is a coral reef off the coast of the continent of Australia. Let's try making our own versions of this beautiful ocean wonder.
- As you do, listen to these *wonder-full* facts about the Great Barrier Reef! If you think the following statements are true, give me a thumbs up. If you think it's false, give me a thumbs down.
 - The Great Barrier Reef is the largest living structure on Earth. *[True]*
 - The Great Barrier Reef is larger than the entire country of Italy put together. *[True]*
 - The Great Barrier Reef is invisible from space. *[False – Astronauts can see it from the moon!]*
 - The Great Barrier Reef is the size of about 15,000 football fields. *[False – It's about the size of 70 million football fields!]*
 - Of the 1,500 kinds of fish that live in the Great Barrier Reef, the smallest fish is called the stout infantfish which is only about a quarter-inch in length. *[True! Fun fact: The biggest is the whale shark which can grow up to 40 feet long – or the length of almost 2,000 stout infantfish combined!]*

POLL | I Live For This!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Indicate different parts of the room that kids can rush to in order to answer the poll questions.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Expand the list to include items that might stir up some fun debate, such as: PlayStation or Nintendo? Android or iPhone? Beef or chicken? Pizza with pineapples or without? Hiking or swimming? Marvel or DC?
- **Have you ever heard someone say the phrase, "I live for this?"** It's an extreme way of saying that whatever that something is, it makes their life exciting and worth living!
- We all have things we might say we live for. Let's find out about some! I'm going to give you two choices and you have to decide which of those two would make you say, "I live for this" most. Go to the side of the room I indicate that goes with your answer.
 - pizza or ice cream
 - video games or books
 - dogs or cats
 - science or math
 - sing or dance
 - chocolate or candy
 - winter or summer
 - movies or TV shows
- Did I miss anything? **What's something you live for?** *[Invite kids to respond.]*
- **When you hear the phrase "living for God," what kinds of things come to mind?** *[Invite kids to respond. Don't answer the question – just honor the conversation and how it transitions to the Bible Story.]*

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

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 112:1–10 (Way to Live)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Choose a new volunteer to be today's storyteller or the same volunteer from last week. This person will share tales of their misadventures while exploring the natural wonders of the world and what they learned along the way. Put an inflatable globe on the stage. The storyteller will enter the stage clumsily in full [explorer gear](#) (backpack, neckerchief, binoculars, vest with lots of pockets, etc.). Preload backpack with games, snacks, and a Bible filled with sticky notes.
- Hello, friends! I'm [insert name] the Adventurer! All month long, you've heard stories about some pretty big adventures (and misadventures), and today is no different.
- Let me tell you about my trip to the Great Barrier Reef. The Great Barrier Reef is the largest living structure on Earth and it's off the coast of Australia. **Do you know where that is?** That's right here on the globe. [Awkwardly fumble the globe before locating Australia.]
- Anyway, I had the most magnificent time! I went on a cruise to tour the reef and I even got to snorkel — which is kind of like diving — and swim alongside turtles and colorful fish!
- One of the coolest fish I got to see was called a surgeonfish.
 - Do you know what a surgeonfish is? I didn't either! They look like this. [Show [this image](#) or something similar.] And yes, Dory from Finding Nemo is a type of surgeonfish!
 - It turns out surgeonfish are little heroes of the Great Barrier Reef. They feed on algae, helping to balance the growth of algae and coral on the reef. Both corals and algae get their food from sunlight, so when a surgeonfish eats algae, it helps the sunlight get to more coral.
 - Who would want to eat algae? Yuck! But it's actually pretty kind and helpful of these fishy friends.
- Learning about the surgeonfish really made me wonder. Even little fish know what they're living for. So . . . what am I living for? I mean, I love going on adventures, but really, what is my purpose in life?
- That's when I found myself turning to Psalm 112 in my favorite adventure book — the Bible.
 - Psalm 112 is written like a certain type of poem called an acrostic. **Can you say that with me?** In an acrostic, each line starts with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
 - That's kind of like when we create poems for remembering important things — must be because the author really wanted these instructions to be easy to recall! And I can see why! Check this out.
- [Read Psalm 112:1–5.]
 - God has given us so many amazing promises! This Psalm is what we call a wisdom psalm because it gives instructions on how to live and how not to live.
- [Read Psalm 112:6–8.]
 - These verses remind me that I don't need stuff to feel secure. With God by my side, I have what I need. I can be confident God will take care of me even when I become distracted by other things . . . Oooh! Did I tell you the story about my — oops. [Shake head.] I got distracted again. Let's continue reading.
- [Read Psalm 112:9–10.]
 - Reading this Psalm, the concept of generosity kept jumping out at me. I can live just for myself or I can live a life that blesses the very heart of God.
 - Like I said, I love going on adventures because it shows me just how big and wonderful God is, but keeping all that to myself seems pretty shellfish. I mean, selfish!
- Just like how surgeonfish use their gift of eating algae to help and be a blessing to the Great Barrier Reef, Psalm 112 tells me that there are things I can do that can benefit others and not just myself. Doing the things that make God happy is a wonderful thing to live for!

BIG IDEA | We can worship by living for God.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write or form the Big Idea with [string lights](#) like [this](#). Display it on the ceiling or in a high place on the wall, as though the lights are stars. If this takes up too much space, consider doing just the keyword from the Big Idea — live. You can also use a [marquee](#) or [glow-in-the-dark paint](#) to paint the Big Idea on poster board. Use a telescope as a fun prop during the Big Idea reveal. Be sure to dim the lights in your room.
- Have you ever floated in the pool or in an ocean and looked at the night sky at the same time? I wonder what the stars look like while you're out in the middle of the big, blue sea? The Great Barrier Reef is huge and the sky is bigger than we can even imagine. Wow! God's creation is incredible...and look! Look over there! Let's read that together! **We can worship by living for God.**

VIDEO | Wonder-Full, Episode 4

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

ACTIVITY | Acrostic Ocean

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write or print the alphabet down the left side of a paper. (If you're pressed for time, use a single word like "psalm" or "worship" instead of the entire alphabet.) Give one paper to each kid, or have kids work in teams to list places where they can worship God (e.g., A – Airplanes, B – Buildings, C – Creation).
 - ✳ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Prepare worksheets in advance with the letters on one side and the words on the other side (consider using pictures in addition to words for developing readers). Have kids match the places to the provided letters.
- Did you know that over seventy percent of the earth's surface is water? That's how vast our oceans are. But do you know who's even more "everywhere" than that? God!
- That means we can worship God anywhere and everywhere! In your car, in your room, at school, at the dinner table . . . anywhere! **We can worship by living for God** and we can live for God everywhere we go.
- The passage we read today in Psalm 112 is an acrostic poem. That means each line begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Let's try our hand at our own acrostic poem. Starting with the letter A, let's name ways **we can worship by living for God**. These can be places, things we do, or even parts of worship songs you remember!

VIDEO | Live Out Loud

- There are many ways we can live for God and almost all of them have to do with something we can do for others!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show a video telling the story of a kid in your community, a member of your church, or a missionary family your church supports who is living for God. Alternatively, you can show a video like [this](#).

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 13:1–3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Hebrews 13:1–3 then discuss the scenarios provided below or feel free to come up with your own.
 - ✳ **PRETEEN HACK:** Create additional scenarios that are more preteen-friendly such as interactions with friends at school, helping out at home, competing in sports, and other ways they can be hospitable to people in their community.
- The passage we just read has this word, "hospitality." **Who knows what that means?** Showing hospitality or being hospitable means being friendly and generous toward others and making them feel welcome. This relates to our Big Idea for today because a big part of living for God means we should live with love and show kindness to those around us.

- Jesus was an expert at showing hospitality. Jesus welcomed everyone to the table — literally — even though most people excluded them. Jesus let everyone know they were loved and showed that by spending time with them.
- Let's explore this now with a little acting! I'm going to describe a scenario and call out two of you at a time to act it out. Here we go!
 - Your friend dropped all of their candy out of their bag. You still have your whole bag of candy in your hand. What do you do?
 - You see someone crying alone in the bathroom. When you ask why they're crying, they say, "I don't think I did so well on that test we just took in math class." What do you do?
 - You are walking down the street and someone in front of you accidentally dropped their wallet on the ground and didn't know it. What do you do?
 - You notice a new kid your age walk into church looking sort of afraid. What do you do?
 - You notice everyone at the lunch table is making fun of another kid who walked by because they think their clothes look funny. What do you do?
 - At school, you notice that when your class ran outside for recess, only one classmate stayed behind to help your teacher push in all the chairs. What do you do?
- In each of these scenarios, there were lots of different ways you could have reacted to what happened. But the best way is to choose the way of love and hospitality, just like we just read in Hebrews 13.
- Let's practice living for God so it becomes more natural — just like the creatures swimming so effortlessly in the sea, we can live for God naturally by following Jesus.

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

ACTIVITY | Wash It Away

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Using [this](#) science experiment as an illustration, invite kids to reflect on what attitudes, habits, or choices they might need to erode or be washed away to focus on a life lived for God. We recommend doing this activity in groups of two to four kids so everyone has the opportunity to get their hands a little dirty. Prior to the time together, fill a baking pan with play sand, creating a mound at the top for the water to run off. Line up rocks down the mound to simulate a riverbed. Each group will need a bottle of water to pour.
- Today, we talked about the Great Barrier Reef, but I want to introduce you to another wonder-full water scene called Victoria Falls. It's located in southern Africa.
- **Does anyone know what creates most waterfalls?** Many waterfalls are created by a process called erosion. That's what happens when natural forces, like water or wind, wear away the earth over time. The dirt that gets carried along in a stream is called sediment. When sediment wears away at rock, cliffs and ledges are formed. Over time, a beautiful waterfall is formed!
- *[Invite kids to take turns pouring water at top of the incline, allowing it to wash the sand away from the rocks.]* See how we can see the rocks better once the water washed the dirt away? That's erosion.
- When we follow Jesus, some of our negative attitudes or the choices we once made slowly fall away and wash off. Without these things in our life, we're more free to live like Jesus created us to.
- **What are some attitudes, habits, or choices we might need to allow to erode or be washed away so we can live for God?**

RESPONSE | A Kind Octopus

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to work in groups of four to five to create a [paper chain octopus](#). Prior to this activity, follow [these instructions](#) to prepare resources for each group to create their own octopus.

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Distribute a silicone wristband where kids can write the name of one person they can do this for. Check in next week to see if they followed through with their assignment.

- **We can worship by living for God** — and one of the greatest ways we can do this is by loving others in our regular, everyday life.
- Today, we're going to make paper chain octopuses. On each slip of paper, you'll write the names of people you can be generous, loving, or kind toward. It can be your siblings or your parents, your teachers or your neighbors. It can be anyone!
- When you're finished writing the names, loop the papers around like this *[demonstrate how to make a loop]* and use this double-sided tape to stick it together. Then, attach the next loop like this *[demonstrate again]*.

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 139:14 (NIV)

- "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write each word of the memory verse on a small [seashell](#). Hide the seashells in a large [bucket](#) or tub of ocean-colored [water beads](#). Have kids use their hands to retrieve the shells. Once all shells have been found, kids will work together to put the memory verse in order. Repeat as many times as time allows. (**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/Psalm139-14.**)

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** To make it more challenging, [blindfold](#) the kids who are retrieving the shells or you can have them remove the shells from the water beads with a small sand [shovel](#).

PRAYER

- Dear God, we want to worship you with our whole lives! Please help us to see ways to live your love out loud for all to see. Thank you for sending your son, Jesus, to show us what it looks like to fully love others. Let our lives of love be a wonder for all to see! Help us to love you and those around us every day. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- Read Psalm 112:1. What do you think it means to "fear" God? Does it mean to be scared of God?
- Read Psalm 112:4. What are some of the good things that Psalm 112 says will come to people who obey God?
- What are some examples of living for God that we see in this Psalm?
- Read Hebrews 13:2. How would you describe hospitality? What's an example of showing someone hospitality?
- Why can it sometimes be challenging for us to be kind and generous toward others?
- Is it possible to worship God without living for God? How come?
- What's one way you can live for God this week?

ACTIVITY | Kindness Toss

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite each kid to blow up their own beach ball or use a pump to blow them up for everyone. Instruct each kid to write their name on their ball. Kids will then toss their beach balls to someone else in the group. Each time someone catches a ball, they will practice loving others by writing something kind about the owner of the ball on their ball. Repeat this until each kid has lots of kind comments on their beach ball. You can also have the group say the kind words out loud instead of writing them down.
- **We can worship by living for God.** When we live for God, it shows in how we care for the people around us. It shows in how we put others before ourselves. It shows in how we love our family, friends, and neighbors.