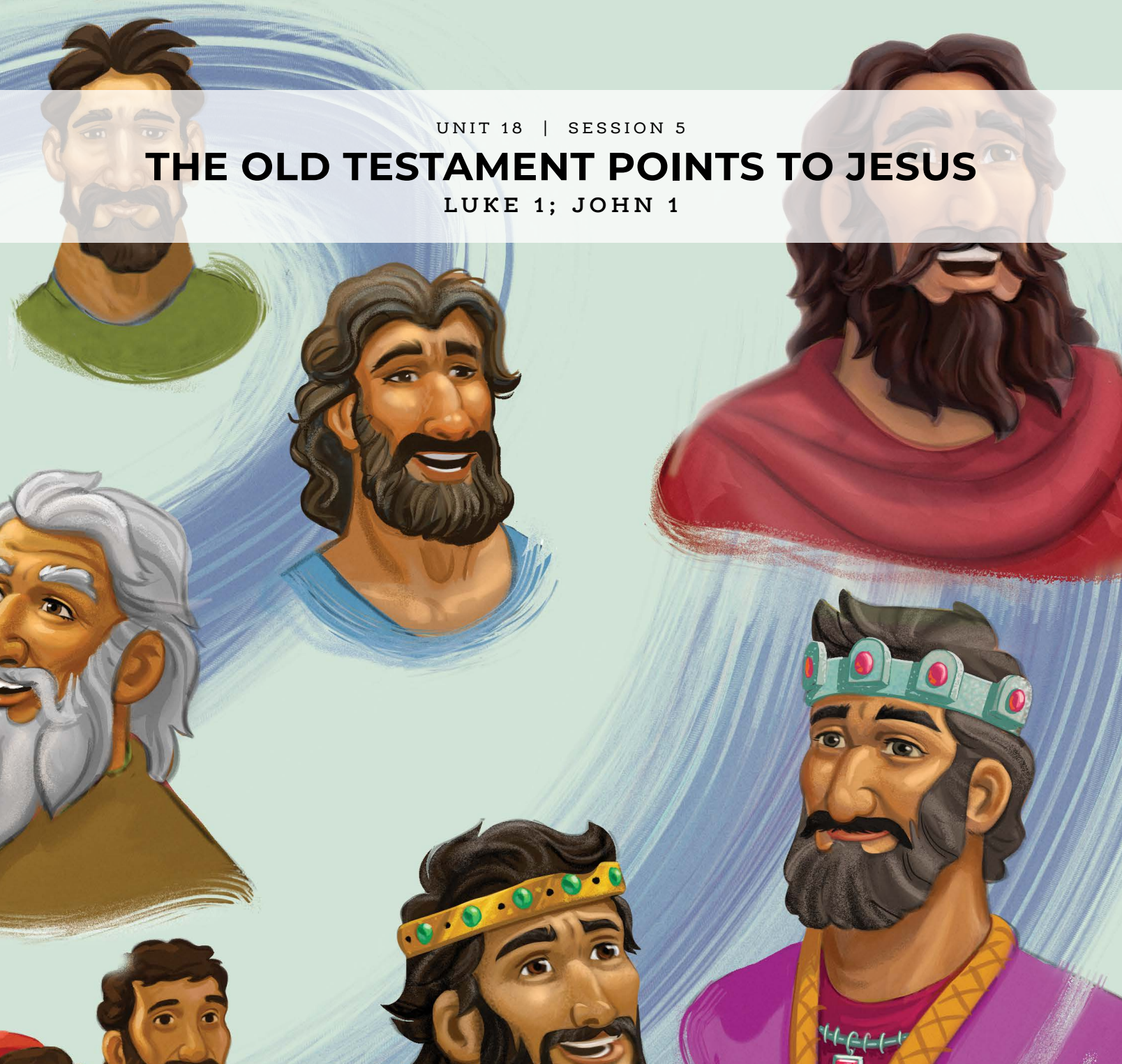


THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TO JESUS

LUKE 1; JOHN 1



CHRIST CONNECTION: John told people to get ready for Jesus, the Savior coming to be our Rescuer and King forever.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God's plan to save people through Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah.
John 20:31

STORY POINT: John told the people that Jesus was coming.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

As we turn the page in the Bible from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we remember that the Bible tells one grand story, and at the center of that story is Jesus. From Genesis to Malachi, the Old Testament weaves a story of God’s love and compassion for His people and of their inability to be faithful to Him. The Old Testament leads to the moment when God sent His Son to fulfill His plan to save people from their sin.

The first verse of John echoes the first verse of Genesis, reminding us of the cohesiveness of the Old Testament and the New Testament. This echo also reveals that Jesus is not merely a prophet or a teacher—He is God Himself, who became human. The Word of God, who spoke creation into existence, humbled Himself, taking the form of man, and dwelt among sinners so that those who believed in Him would become children of God (John 1:11-14).

In another Gospel account, Luke 1 introduces us to another person vital to God’s plan. An angel appeared to a priest named Zechariah. Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, like many couples in the Old Testament, had not been able to have children. The angel told Zechariah not only would they have a child, but their child would have the power of Elijah and would be the forerunner to God’s Messiah. John’s birth and ministry was the fulfillment of prophecies taught by Isaiah and Malachi, where God promised to send a messenger to prepare the way for the Messiah. John’s ministry can be viewed as a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Reflect on the foreshadowing of Christ seen all throughout the Old Testament and help kids see how it revealed what was to come in the New Testament. The sacrifices of the law point toward the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. To David, God promised an everlasting kingdom—a promise that finds its fulfillment in Christ’s everlasting reign. Jesus is the Prophet, Priest, and King that Israel longed for throughout their history. The Savior God promised in the garden of Eden—the One who would crush the serpent’s head—had finally come. Jesus would defeat evil and sin and make the way for people to be saved. But this victory would come at a great cost—His own life.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

30–40 MINUTES

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60–65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.

WELCOME

Build a church with blocks and people

- Big Picture Question Poster
- toy people figures



LEARN

Feel for items

- large gift bag
- baby care items

Tell the Bible story

- "The Old Testament Points to Jesus" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Play with a dollhouse

- dollhouse
- toy people figures

Paint with watercolors

- art smocks
- heavyweight paper, 1 per child
- white crayon
- foam plates, 1 per child
- washable paint
- paintbrushes, 1 per child



LIVE

Arrange key passage cards

- "Key Passage Cards" printable, 1 per child

Snack and transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- "Find What's Different" activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Rescue the people

- small toy people figures
- muffin tin
- painter's tape

Create a mural with stickers

- painter's tape
- permanent marker
- assorted stickers
- large piece of paper



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the room. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

BUILD A CHURCH WITH BLOCKS AND PEOPLE

Print or display a picture of a church. Place a table just inside the door and display the Big Picture Question Poster nearby. Place blocks and people figures onto the table. As children arrive, invite them into the room and encourage the children to work together to build a church using the blocks. When they are finished building, prompt the children to arrange the people figures either in or around their church structures.

SAY “ I am so glad to see you today. Thank you so much for building a church with the blocks. We go to church to worship God with others. Before Jesus, God’s people went to a place called a temple to worship God. In our Bible story today, a man named Zechariah hears very good news while he is serving God and worshiping Him at a temple. This good news was that Zechariah’s wife was going to have a son, named John. **JOHN TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT JESUS WAS COMING.** Our big picture question poster says, **What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God’s plan to save people through Jesus.** ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





LEARN the Bible Story

1 FEEL FOR BABY ITEMS

Before the session, place baby items into a gift bag. Hold the gift bag and invite the preschoolers to be seated for group time. Guide each child to reach into the bag, feel for an item, guess what the toy is, and pull the toy from the bag to see if he guessed correctly. Continue playing until each child has had a turn. Set the items aside for the Bible story time.

SAY “What kinds of toys are these? [Allow responses.] Yes, they are baby toys. In today’s Bible story, an angel of the Lord appears to a man named Zechariah and tells him about a special baby boy. Listen carefully to learn about this special baby.”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Luke 1 and John 1. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TO JESUS

SAY “Malachi the prophet told God’s people that God was going to send a special messenger to get people ready for Jesus. Four hundred years went by. Finally, God was ready to keep His promise.

At this time, a man named Zechariah, and his wife Elizabeth were old and did not have any children. One day, Zechariah went into God’s temple to give a gift to God.

Suddenly, an angel named Gabriel appeared! Zechariah was surprised and scared. The angel said, “Do not be afraid! God heard your prayer. Elizabeth will have a baby, and you should name him John. John will help people get ready for Jesus.”

Zechariah asked, “Is this really true?” The angel said, “Yes, it is true. Because you did not believe me right away, you will not be able to talk until the baby is born.”

When Zechariah went outside, he could not speak. Zechariah finished his work and went home.

When Elizabeth’s baby was born, they needed to name him. Zechariah wrote on a board: His name is John. Suddenly, Zechariah could talk again! He thanked God and said, “God is sending Jesus, and John will help people get ready.”

John grew up loving God. He lived in the wild until it was time to tell everyone that Jesus was coming.”

Christ Connection: John told people to get ready for Jesus, the Savior who came to be our Rescuer and King forever.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Display the Bible Story Picture Poster within sight of preschoolers. While making note of specifics from the story within the picture, retell the story as children fill in missing portions. Use the following story details: Malachi told God’s people that God was going to send a (special messenger). A man named (Zechariah) and his wife (Elizabeth) did not have any children. An angel appeared to Zechariah and said (Elizabeth will have a baby). You are to name your baby (John). Zechariah did not believe the angel, so the angel said Zechariah wouldn’t be able to (speak) until the baby was born. When the baby was born, Zechariah wrote that the baby’s name would be (John). John lived in the (wilderness) until it was time to tell everyone that (Jesus) is coming.

SAY “ An angel appeared to Zechariah and told him that he and Elizabeth were going to have a baby. The angel told Zechariah to name the baby John, and that John would be very special. John grew up loving God. Then, **JOHN TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT JESUS WAS COMING**, the Savior who is our Rescuer and king. ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “God Is So Good”:

God’s plan is Jesus.
God’s plan is Jesus.
God’s plan is Jesus,
The Bible tells us so.

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 20:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Guide children to form pretend megaphones with their hands. Say the key passage phrase word by word and guide preschoolers to repeat each word into their pretend megaphones.

SAY “ Our key passage phrase tells us that the Bible is about how God sent Jesus as the Messiah, which means Savior. **What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God’s plan to save people through Jesus.** We heard how the angel told Zechariah that he and Elizabeth would have a baby, named John. **JOHN TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT JESUS WAS COMING.** ”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for His plan to rescue people from sin by sending Jesus.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 GO ON A LETTER HUNT

Write the following capital letters on paper, one letter per sheet: M, J, Z, E, A, H. Hide the letters around the room in plain sight. Invite the children to go on a hunt around the room, finding the letter papers, and bringing them to you. When all the letter papers are found, review each letter. Remind the children that each letter reminds us important details from today's Bible story.

SAY “ M stands for Malachi. Malachi told people that God would send a special messenger. Z stands for Zechariah. A is for angel. An angel appeared to Zechariah and said that his wife would have a baby. E is for Elizabeth. Elizabeth was Zechariah's wife. J is for John. When Elizabeth's baby was born, he was named John. **JOHN TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT JESUS WAS COMING.** ”

2 PLAY WITH A DOLLHOUSE

Set up the dollhouse and place its accessories nearby. Invite a child to play with the dollhouse. Show the child the people figures. Encourage her to play with the figures and to arrange the furniture in the house. As children play, encourage them to play out the Bible story.

SAY “ In today's Bible story, a man named Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were old and did not have any children. When Zechariah was serving in God's temple, an angel appeared to him. The angel told Zechariah that he and his wife Elizabeth were going to have a baby. The angel also told Zechariah to name the baby John. **JOHN TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT JESUS WAS COMING.** ”

3 PAINT WITH WATERCOLORS

Assist preschoolers in putting on art smocks. Write JESUS in large letters in white crayon on heavyweight paper, one per child. Distribute painting supplies. Encourage preschoolers to paint their pictures to reveal a special message. Remind them to paint the entire sheet of paper to see the message.

SAY “ As you painted your pictures, a special name appeared—Jesus. God sent messengers to help tell people that Jesus was coming. Old Testament prophets told about the Messiah God promised to send. Many years later, **JOHN TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT JESUS WAS COMING.** Jesus is God's Son, and He came to rescue us from sin. The entire Bible teaches us about God's plan to save people through Jesus. **What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God's plan to save people through Jesus.** ”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 ARRANGE KEY PASSAGE CARDS

Before the session, print one copy of the “Key Passage Cards” printable for each child. Cut the page along dashed lines creating four cards. Distribute cards, a sheet of paper, and a glue stick to each child. Show children how to line up the cards on their papers by matching the pictures at the corners. Then help the children to glue them onto their papers. Review the key passage phrase as children work.

SAY “ Our key passage phrase reminds us that the Bible is about God’s plan to save people through Jesus. The angel told Zechariah that Elizabeth was going to have a baby. They were to name him John. John grew up loving God. **JOHN TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT JESUS WAS COMING.** Jesus is the Messiah who came to be our Rescuer and King forever. ”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Lead preschoolers to stand in a circle and take turns tossing a beanbag to one another. When a child tosses it to someone, he should say something kind about the person. It can be something good about the person’s character or a kind thing the person has done. Be sure each preschooler has an opportunity to participate.

SAY “ You all had kind things to say about each other. Valley Life Church is working to show kindness to people from Taiwan who moved to Phoenix. A Taiwanese company is building a large factory in Phoenix, Arizona. The company is bringing many workers from Taiwan to Phoenix. Valley Life Church members are helping Taiwanese people learn English. Many of the people moving to Phoenix do not know much about Jesus. Church members hope that Taiwanese people who believe in Jesus will tell other people about Jesus when they move back to Taiwan. [Lead a prayer.] ”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “ John told people to get ready for Jesus, the Savior who came to be our Rescuer and King forever. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 ROCK A BABY DOLL



Hold a baby doll and sit in the group time area. Invite preschoolers to help you care for the doll. Give the doll to a child and prompt that child to rock it. After a time, give the doll to another child to rock. Continue until each child has taken a turn. As children rock the doll, guide them to tell you what they know about babies.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Luke 1 and John 1. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TO JESUS

- Malachi told people that God would send a special messenger to get people ready for Jesus. After 400 years, God was ready to keep His promise.
- Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were old and did not have children. Zechariah went to God's temple, and an angel named Gabriel appeared.
- The angel told Zechariah that Elizabeth would have a baby named John, and John would help people get ready for Jesus.
- Zechariah doubted, so the angel said he would not be able to talk until the baby was born.
- When the baby was born, Zechariah wrote: His name is John. Then Zechariah could speak again. Zechariah thanked God, and John grew up to tell everyone to get ready for Jesus.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of "God Is So Good":

God's plan is Jesus.
God's plan is Jesus.
God's plan is Jesus,
The Bible tells us so.

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 20:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage phrase aloud. Lead children to say the key passage in a slow voice. Repeat the key passage several times, saying the passage a bit quicker each time.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for the Bible that teaches us God's good plan in sending us Jesus.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 PLAY A MIMING GAME



Invite children to play a silent game. Tell them that you are going to play out a motion without saying any words, and they should guess what you are doing. Mime a simple action, such as eating. Prompt the children to guess what you are doing. Once children have guessed correctly, select a child to be the next person to mime an action. The child can either come up with her own action or you can help by whispering simple actions into her ear.

SAY “ This was a hard game because we couldn’t talk to one another. In today’s story, an angel told Zechariah that he would not be able to talk until Elizabeth’s baby is born because he didn’t believe the angel right away. It wasn’t until after John’s birth that Zechariah could speak again. John grew up loving God. He lived in the wild until it was time to tell everyone that Jesus was coming. ”

7 RESCUE THE PEOPLE

Place a people figure into each cup of a muffin tin. Place a strip of painter’s tape over each figure, securely them into the tin. Give a child the muffin tin and invite him to rescue the people by ripping the tape and removing the figures. When the child has finished, re-tape the figures into the muffin tin and play again.

SAY “ Did you enjoy rescuing the people in our funny game? When the angel appeared to Zechariah in the temple, the angel told him that Elizabeth would have a baby. They were to name him John. The angel also told Zechariah that John will help people get ready for Jesus. John grew up loving God. Then at the right time, **JOHN TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT JESUS WAS COMING**. Jesus is the Savior who came to be our Rescuer and King forever. ”

8 CREATE A MURAL WITH STICKERS

In large letters, write JOHN with a permanent marker onto a large sheet of paper. Tape the paper to the wall at a preschool level using painter’s tape. Distribute stickers and demonstrate how to place the stickers on the lines of the word. As the children place stickers, point out each letter in the word.

SAY “ J-O-H-N spells John. The angel told Zechariah that Elizabeth was going to have a baby and that they were to name the baby John. When Elizabeth’s baby was born, they needed to name him. Zechariah wrote on a board: His name is John. Zechariah thanked God and told the people that God is sending Jesus and John will help people get ready for Jesus. ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.