

WEEK

ONE

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: True or False Flip
2. Application Activity: Built to Stand
3. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

✦ Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd grade guide.



THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

1 Kings 18:16-45

Bottom Line

God can do the impossible.

Memory Verse

Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.

Isaiah 40:31 (NirV)



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro tips.

SOCIAL

Opening Activity

What You Need



Inclusive Pro Tips

Let kids choose which challenges to try. Relieve any pressure by saying, "Try it if you want to!" This helps kids with physical or social anxieties feel safe.

To adjust the mobility to meet the needs of your groups, offer other fun challenges like:

- "Can you blink really fast?"
- "Can you say your name in a silly voice?"

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time! Thank God that you have built your confidence on Him and not on yourself or others. Recall an age-appropriate story about a time when you trusted God even when things looked impossible. Thank God for always showing up! Ask God to help every kid learn how to live knowing He is with them, so they enter every situation with confidence in Him. Pray that even if a kid feels like the only one following God (like Elijah), they would know they're not alone, because the Holy Spirit is with them.

1. Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
2. Lead the kids to try the following nearly impossible tasks:
 - Lick your elbow
 - Wiggle your ears
 - Raise your eyebrows—left, then right
 - Wiggle your nose
 - Snap your fingers
 - Hold a pencil between your nose and upper lip
 - Hold a pencil between your bottom lip and chin
 - Balance a pencil on your ear, nose, shoulder, or knee
 - Say the following tongue twisters five times in a row.
 - "Toy boat"
 - "Red leather, yellow leather"
 - "Fruit float"
 - "Bubble bobble"
 - "Selfish shellfish"

Questions you could ask:

- Is this impossible for you?
- Could you or someone else do it?
- Could God do it?

3. What You Say

- Gather the group to discuss.

"Some of these challenges were REALLY hard! Maybe you can say 'toy boat' five times fast, but you can't wiggle your ears. There are limits to what we can do because some things are just impossible for us.

"But today in our true story from the Bible, we're going to see that NOTHING is impossible or too hard for God. Let's go!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

GROUPS 1/4

True or False Flip

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

- ☐ "True or False" Activity Page
- ☐ Paper plates
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Large craft sticks
- ☐ Scotch or masking tape

Inclusive Supplies

- ☐ Pre-made face plates



Inclusive Pro Tips

Pre-make a few face plates for kids who may feel overwhelmed or need assistance with the drawing step.

Lay both faces on a table or tray and allow children to point to each face.

① What You Do

1. Give every kid a paper plate and a marker.
2. Invite the kids to draw:
 - A happy face on one side of the paper plate.
 - A sad face on the opposite side of the paper plate.
3. Assist the kids with taping a large craft stick to the back of their plates.
4. Say, "I'm going to read several true or false statements from today's Bible Story. If you think the statement is true, hold the smiley face side of your paper plate high! If you think the statement is false, hold the sad face side of your paper plate high!"
5. One by one, read the statements from the "True or False" Activity Page aloud, pausing for the kids to show their responses.
6. If the statement is false, lead the kids to tell you the true answer.
7. Continue until all the true or false statements have been answered.

② What You Say

Why do you think Elijah told Ahab to bring 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah to pray and cry out to their false gods? **(PAUSE.)** We know that the 450 prophets of Baal came. Imagine being Elijah, the ONLY one standing up against all of those prophets! But Elijah knew that God could do the impossible.

"God is the One who held back the rain for all those years to try to get King Ahab's attention. He's the One who sent fire down from heaven to completely obliterate the sacrifice, the altar, even the stones. And God is the One who sent heavy rain after three long years of NO rain. There isn't anything God cannot do! But the best news yet? That same strong God goes with us in every situation we face.

"When we put our trust in Jesus, God's very Spirit, the Holy Spirit, comes to live inside of us. He can help us remember that the strong God faces everything with us, and since God is the strongest, we can be confident no matter what we're up against. Elijah was confident because he trusted and believed that God is strong. He was facing hundreds of prophets! We can be confident no matter what we are facing too, because God is with us and God can do the impossible."

Make It Personal → Tell your group about an age-appropriate time when you needed help and trusted God to do the impossible. Maybe you decided to make a big job change, and it was scary. Or maybe you decided to invite a friend to church, but you were nervous. How did trusting God give you the confidence to do something that felt impossible?

GROUPS 2/4

Built to Stand

Application Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Trust Test" Activity Page
- ☐ Soft item (pillow or folded blanket)
- ☐ Firm item (cardboard or a sturdy book)
- ☐ Blocks



① What You Do

1. Set the two "foundations" down—the soft item and the firm item.
2. Instruct the kids to form a circle around your two "foundations."
3. Keep the blocks nearby.

Explore Together:

1. Point to the soft item and ask: "What do you think will happen if we try to build a tall tower on this?"
→ Most will say it will fall. Agree!
2. Point to the firm item and ask: "What do you think will happen if we try to build a tall tower on this?"
→ Most will say it'll stand strong. Agree!
3. Let the kids help you build two towers simultaneously, one on the soft foundation and one on the firm foundation, as you read the "Trust Test" Activity Page challenges.
4. Say, "Each of the Trust Test Challenges describes a tough situation, something that might shake our confidence. As we build a tower on each base, we'll see how trusting in ourselves can feel shaky, but when we trust in God, we're built to stand!"
5. Let the tower built on the soft foundation fall and wobble. Celebrate the tower with the firm foundation holding steady!
6. Keep adding blocks until you've read all the challenges.

Talk Together:

1. Is it easy or hard to have confidence in God in these circumstances?
2. What would happen if we only trusted ourselves?
3. How does trusting God make a difference, even when it's hard?

Make It Personal → Share an age-appropriate example of a time you felt like something was impossible, but you chose to put your confidence in God. Did it change how you responded to the situation? Did God give you the courage to try something new?

Continued on the next page. →

Inclusive Pro Tips



If the sound of blocks falling or stacking is too much, set the blocks aside and review the "Trust Test" challenges verbally instead.

GROUPS 2/4

Built to Stand

Application Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Trust Test" Activity Page
- ☐ Soft item (pillow or folded blanket)
- ☐ Firm item (cardboard or a sturdy book)
- ☐ Blocks

Inclusive Pro Tips



If the sound of blocks falling or stacking is too much, set the blocks aside and review the "Trust Test" challenges verbally instead.

② What You Say

"Elijah stood on the mountain in front of everyone, prayed to God, and said:

"LORD, you are the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. Today let everyone know that you are God in Israel. ... Let them know I've done all these things because you commanded me. Answer me. LORD, answer me. Then these people will know that you are the one and only God. They'll know that you are turning their hearts back to you again." —1 Kings 18:36-37 (NIRV)

"Elijah trusted God, even when he was the only one! He didn't put his confidence in himself, or in being popular, or in being the loudest. He put His confidence in God—he knew God is strong, and God is powerful—and he faced all of those other prophets, trusting that God was going to do something amazing.

"We can have the same confidence in every situation we face. God is the strongest. There is nothing more powerful than Him. And when we choose to follow Jesus, He comes to live inside of us. We go through everything in our lives with the strongest!

"That tower we tried to make with the soft foundation is kind of like putting our confidence in things that aren't steady. They fall, and they let us down. But trusting God? That is building your life on the firmest foundation, EVER!

"When you chose to follow Jesus, God sent the Holy Spirit to live in you, and you can ask Him to give you confidence to stand strong—even when something feels scary or impossible—because God is strong. In the moment, you can pray, 'God, help me remember that You are strong, and You are with me. Help me be confident in You right now.' God faces everything with you! So you can put your confidence in God because God can do the impossible."

GROUPS 4/4

Pray and Dismiss

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

☐ Blocks

Inclusive Supplies

☐ Index cards

☐ Pencils


Inclusive Pro Tips

Give options for the kids to say, draw, or think quietly about their impossible situation.

① What You Do

1. Gather the kids in a circle.
2. Set the pile of blocks in the middle of the circle.
3. Invite every kid to take one block and think about something in their life that feels hard, scary, or impossible.
 - Maybe your family is going through a big change.
 - Maybe you really want to pray out loud, but you feel nervous.
 - Maybe you want to tell a friend about Jesus, but you're not sure how.
4. Remind them that Elijah had confidence because he trusted in God, not in himself. God is the strongest, and He goes with you in everything!
5. Say: "As we pray, hold your block and imagine giving that thing you're worried about to Jesus. Once we're done, you can stack your block in the center of the circle as a reminder to build your life on Him."
6. Close in prayer.

② Prayer

"God, thank You so much for all of my friends here today! Thank You for showing us that You can do the impossible through the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Teach us how to live knowing and believing You are with us, and You are the strongest!"

"God, if there are any friends here who are curious to know more about putting their faith in Your Son, Jesus, help them know how much You love them! Thank You for sending Jesus to save us and make a way for us to be close friends with You! Help us all take a step closer to You today, whether we're just starting or we've known You for a long time. We love You, God, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Transition → As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to show off the Memory Verse motions to Isaiah 40:31. Challenge them to teach the verse and motions to their family or a friend this week!

Gettin Ready

Social

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

Home

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app** and **ParentCue.org**

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ No Supplies Needed

Groups

1. True or False Flip*

- ☐ Print "True or False" Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group Leader
- ☐ Paper plates, one for every kid
- ☐ Markers, one for every kid
- ☐ Large craft sticks, one for every kid
- ☐ Scotch or masking tape, one roll for each Small Group

2. Built to Stand

- ☐ Print "Trust Test" Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group Leader
- ☐ Soft item (pillow or folded blanket), one for each Small Group
- ☐ Firm item (cardboard or a sturdy book), one for each Small Group
- ☐ Blocks, at least 20 for each Small Group

4. Pray and Dismiss

- No Supplies Needed

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Index cards, one for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid

* If you don't have time to do all, be sure to do the starred activity.

WEEK

TWO

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Which Way Will I Go?
2. Application Activity: Jump If You ...
3. Memory Verse Activity: Memory at Sea
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

✦ Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd grade guide.



THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Jonah

Jonah 1-3

Bottom Line

God knows what's best.

Memory Verse

Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.

Isaiah 40:31 (NirV)



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro tips.

SOCIAL

Opening Activity



What You Need

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God for never giving up on you, even when you've tried to run or hide. Recall an age-appropriate story about a time when you felt like you were far from God, but He kept reaching for you! Ask God to remind each kid that His love isn't based on our performance. Pray that kids would be confident that He is with them at school, at home, on hard days, and on good days. Pray they would feel God's love chasing after them, even when they make bad choices.

1. Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
2. Give each kid one index card and a pencil.
3. Say, "Think of a place you love to go to or something fun you love to do! You're going to write or draw it on your card. Just one idea per card!"
 - Provide examples to get them started, like "The beach," "a cousin's house," "playing on the playground," or "reading a book."
4. Collect all the cards, place them in a pile, and mix them up.

Imagine Together

1. Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
2. Mix up the index cards face down, and put them in a pile in the middle of the circle.
3. Explain how to play:
 - One kid will draw a card.
 - Without speaking, they'll act out what they think is on the card.
 - Everyone else will try to guess what they're doing or where they are!
4. Continue until everyone who wants to act has had a turn, or as time allows.

Continued on the next page. →

Inclusive Pro Tips



Instead of writing, invite kids to quietly tell a leader their idea to write or draw it for them.

Give kids the option to pair up and act out the cards together.

SOCIAL

Opening Activity

**What You Need**

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils

② What You Say

"It's fun to imagine all the places we can go and things we can do. Was it tricky acting out something that wasn't your idea? Some of the things we acted out might have felt easy, or even tricky! Especially when you're acting out something someone else came up with. Some of you had to guess, get creative, or just give it your best shot.

"Today, in our true story from the Bible, we'll learn about a guy named Jonah who didn't want to do what God asked him to do. He had his own idea of what was best. But guess what? God always knows what's best! Not just for Jonah, but for the people around him—and for us too! Let's go find out more!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Inclusive Pro Tips

Instead of writing, invite kids to quietly tell a leader their idea to write or draw it for them.

Give kids the option to pair up and act out the cards together.

GROUPS 1/4

Which Way Will I Go?

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Pick a Door" Activity Page
- ☐ "God's Way Q&A" Activity Page
- ☐ Floor tape



① What You Do

Before you begin:

1. Use floor tape to mark a start line.
2. A few feet from the start line, tape down Set 1 of the "Pick a Door" Activity Page cards side by side like doorways. (There will be three doors, and all will be numbered 1 for Set 1. Mix the door with the correct answer randomly in the arrangement.)
3. Repeat this for Sets 2-7, placing each set a few feet away from the last to form a straight line.
4. Mark a finish line at the end of all seven sets of three doors.

Play Together:

1. Gather the kids behind the start line.
2. Say, "This game is called Pick a Door! At each set of doors, I will ask a question about Jonah's story, and you have to decide which door he chose in the Bible Story to move forward."
3. As the kids get to each set of three doors, first read the question, and then read the three door choices from the "God's Way Q&A" Activity Page. Be sure to follow the order of the door choices that you placed the doors on the floor so the correct answer is included randomly.
4. Invite the kids to point to the door of their choice.
5. Once the kids agree on the correct door, invite everyone to step over that set of doors and move to the next set.
→ NOTE: Encourage discussion by asking, "Why do you think that's the right door?"
6. Once you reach the finish line, celebrate the kids and gather them to discuss!

Continued on the next page. →

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, perform this activity seated and have kids point to their door choice instead of walking.

GROUPS 1/4

Which Way Will I Go?

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Pick a Door" Activity Page
- ☐ "God's Way Q&A" Activity Page
- ☐ Floor tape



② What You Say

"What an adventure! Jonah's journey to Nineveh was one wild ride. God gave Jonah a mission to go to the city of Nineveh and tell them to turn from their sins, but Jonah went the opposite way. LITERALLY! He jumped on a boat, and God brought a giant storm. When Jonah was thrown into the sea by the people on the boat, God sent a big fish to rescue him! And after three days, Jonah finally listened to God. He traveled to Nineveh and shared God's message. And the people of Nineveh actually listened and changed!"

"Why did Jonah not want to tell the Ninevites to turn from their sins? Well, the Bible tells us. Jonah said this to God:

"I knew that you are gracious. You are tender and kind. You are slow to get angry. You are full of love. You are a God who takes pity on people."
(JONAH 4:2 NIRV)

"Jonah knew that God is kind. He knew that God would forgive the Ninevites if they turned from their sins. And that's exactly what happened!"

"Do you know what Jonah's journey tells us about God? Well, God knows what's best! We should always follow God's direction. God wanted to give an entire group of people the chance to live better if they just turned from their ways! And God wanted to give Jonah a chance to share that message with them.

"But even when Jonah decided he himself didn't want to follow God's ways, God didn't give up on him—and God won't give up on you either! Even when Jonah wasn't listening, God was still patient and kind in saving him and redirecting him.

"Even when things feel confusing or you feel like you don't understand what God is asking you to do, you can always be confident that God knows what's best! You might not see the full picture, but you can take a deep breath and trust God. He is good. His ways are good. He is always working for your good. So even if you don't understand, you can always hold His hand and trust His heart. He is doing something good, that is the only thing He can do! Remember: God knows what's best. Always!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, perform this activity seated and have kids point to their door choice instead of walking.

GROUPS 2/4

Jump If You ...

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No Supplies Needed



① What You Do

1. Invite the kids to stand in a big circle.
2. Explain how to play:
 - Say, "I'm going to say a sentence that starts with, 'Jump in the middle if you ...' If the sentence is true for you, take a big jump into the middle of the circle, then jump back to your spot."
3. Demonstrate by reading the first statement.
4. Read the statements slowly, one by one, and give the kids time to respond.
5. After the final statement, invite the kids to sit down, and discuss.

Jump in the Middle If You ...

- Have brown eyes
- Like broccoli
- Have a brother
- Like chocolate ice cream
- Like roller coasters
- Love to read
- Like to eat tacos
- Don't like sour candy
- Have a younger sister
- Love math the most
- Are wearing red
- Are at church today

Continued on the next page. →

Inclusive Pro Tips



To adjust to the mobility of your group, instead of instructing the kids to "jump," lead them to raise their hand, nod their head, or spin in place.

GROUPS 2/4

Jump If You ...

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No Supplies Needed



② What You Say

"Some of these things—like what you're wearing or what ice cream you like—are things people can see or hear about you. But other things about you are more personal, like how you feel when you're nervous, or who you pray for at night.

"We have to ask each other to find out those things about each other. BUT God knows it all! He knows every little thing about you—even the number of hairs on your head! (LUKE 12:7)

"God knows every little thing about you! And there's something else God knows about you—He knows every little thing that is going on in your life!

"He knows if there is a mean kid whom you are trying to be kind to. He knows that you're nervous about your spelling test. He knows that you're trying to do your math work instead of playing video games. God knows when you're happy or sad, when you need help, or when you're trying really hard to make a good choice.

"God is your closest, closest friend. He knows everything about you, and He loves you so much! And He goes through every bit of life with you. So talk to Him about everything!

"In everything you are facing in your life, He wants to guide you to goodness. God is good and His ways are good.

"That means He's the best One to lead us. When you're not sure what to do, or when things feel too big or confusing, you can stop and pray to your friend who is right with you, 'God, I trust You. Show me what's best.' God is with you, so take a deep breath and follow Him wherever He leads you! Do whatever He tells you to do. Because God is always guiding you to goodness. God knows what's best."

Inclusive Pro Tips



To adjust to the mobility of your group, instead of instructing the kids to "jump," lead them to raise their hand, nod their head, or spin in place.

GROUPS 3/4

Memory at Sea



Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bibles marked at Isaiah 40:31
- ☐ "Memory at Sea" Activity Page
- ☐ Plastic cups
- ☐ Blue plastic tablecloth
- ☐ Floor tape
- ☐ *Optional: Timer*
- ☐ *Optional: Swedish Fish®*



Inclusive Pro Tips

For a seated option with less movement:

- Set up the activity on a table.
- Let the kids take turns selecting a cup and assembling the verse from their seats.

① What You Do

1. Lay the blue tablecloth flat on a table or the floor.
2. Place each "Memory at Sea" Activity Page card in a cup. Place each cup upside down, on the tablecloth.
3. Place several empty cups upside down on the tablecloth.
→ *Optional: Hide a few Swedish Fish® under random cups for added ocean fun!*
4. Mark a starting line with floor tape a few feet away from the tablecloth.

Move Together:

1. Divide the kids into two teams.
2. Give each team a Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31.
3. Before you begin the game, instruct the kids to read the verse together several times.
4. Pick a team to go first.
5. Instruct that team to stand behind the starting line.
6. Explain how to play:
 - At your signal, one kid from the team runs to the "ocean," lifts a cup, and returns it to their team.
 - If a cup has a verse card, they keep the verse card. (The can leave the Swedish Fish® there too!) If it's empty, they leave it and try again next turn.
 - Once all the cards with the pieces of the verse are collected, instruct the team that went to work together to assemble the verse in the correct order.
7. Reset the cards and cups (and the Swedish Fish®) randomly, and repeat with the second team.
8. *Optional: Set a timer and let the groups race to see who gets the best time!*
9. *Optional: Collect the Swedish Fish® that were used during the game and dispose of them. Hand out an individual package of Swedish Fish® for kids to take home!*

Talk Together:

1. What does Isaiah 40:31 tell us about God?
 - Possible answers: God gives us new strength! When we trust God, He lifts us up like an eagle and He helps us run and not get tired.
2. What do you know about eagles?
 - Possible answers: Eagles fly over 100 miles a day without flapping their wings. Eagles can fly above storms!
3. Why do you think God compares trusting Him to flying like an eagle?
 - Possible answers: God's strength helps us to have confidence no matter what's going on around us!
4. How do you think God gives us strength today?
 - Possible answers: Through the Holy Spirit, through people who help us, through prayer, and through God's Word.

Continued on the next page. →

GROUPS 3/4

Memory at Sea



Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bibles marked at Isaiah 40:31
- ☐ "Memory at Sea" Activity Page
- ☐ Plastic cups
- ☐ Blue plastic tablecloth
- ☐ Floor tape
- ☐ Optional: Timer
- ☐ Optional: Swedish Fish®



Inclusive Pro Tips

For a seated option with less movement:

- Set up the activity on a table.
- Let the kids take turns selecting a cup and assembling the verse from their seats.

② What You Say

"Our verse comes from the book of Isaiah. God's people were feeling tired, confused, and unsure of what would happen next. But God gave them **(AND US!)** a BIG promise: when we trust Him, He gives us new strength.

Read, from the NIV:

*But those who trust in the LORD
will receive new strength.*

They will fly as high as eagles. —Isaiah 40:31a

Read, from the NIV:

*But those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.*

They will soar on wings like eagles. —Isaiah 40:31a

"Did you know eagles can fly over 100 miles in one day without flapping their wings? They soar super-high in the sky by catching wind currents and letting the wind do the work! They go way above storms instead of flying through them! How incredible is that?

"God wants to lift us up and give us confidence, no matter what we face. Jonah had a hard time trusting that God knew best. In fact, he ran in the exact opposite direction that God told him to go! Pray and ask God to give you confidence through the Holy Spirit to always follow His way. Isaiah 40:31 reminds us to TRUST God no matter what. God knows what's best, and He'll help you soar just like an eagle!"

GROUPS 4/4

Pray and Dismiss

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Markers or pencils
- ☐ Large bowl or basket
- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Bible marked at John 14:6



① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together in a circle.
2. Give each kid:
 - One index card
 - A marker or pencil
3. Place the large bowl or basket in the center of the circle.

Reflect Together:

1. Say, "Jonah had a tough time trusting that God knew best. Sometimes we do too but God invites us to trust Him anyway! God promises to give us strength even when it's hard."
2. Invite kids to write or draw one thing that's been hard to trust God with lately.
 - Maybe they are feeling anxious about schoolwork or a decision they have to make. Or maybe they're struggling to feel confident around their friends.
3. Take a moment to discuss what it means to make a decision to follow Jesus! If you need help with what to say, ask your ministry leader or use the talking points below.

"Did you know the biggest way we can trust God is by choosing to follow Jesus? (Read John 14:6 from the Bible.) Jesus came to make a way for us to be close friends with God, FOREVER! We don't have to earn it, we just have to believe that God's Son, Jesus, gave His life for us! If you've never made the decision to follow Jesus and you want to, you can write that on your card too. If you do, I'd love to talk with you and help you know what that means."

4. Once everyone is finished, direct the kids to fold their paper once and drop it in the bowl.
5. As they drop it in the bowl, encourage them to say, "God, I trust You. You know what's best!"
6. Close in prayer.

② Prayer

"God, we are so thankful that You know what's best even when we don't understand. Help each of us to trust You and follow Your ways no matter what. Thank You for sending Jesus so we can be close to You forever! Fill us with confidence through the Holy Spirit so that we can soar like eagles this week! We love You so much, God, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen!"

Transition → As adults arrive to pick up, invite them to show their grown-ups their compasses and encourage them to share no matter where He leads us, or what He asks us to do, God's way is the best way!

Getting Ready

Social

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

Home

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app** and **ParentCue.org**

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Index cards, one for every kid
- ☐ Pens, one for every kid

Groups

1. Which Way Will I Go?

- ☐ Print "Pick a Door" Activity Pages on cardstock and cut apart, one set for each Small Group
- ☐ Print "God's Way Q&A" Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group Leader
- ☐ Floor tape, one roll for each Small Group

2. Jump If You

→ No Supplies Needed

3. Memory at Sea

- ☐ Bibles marked at Isaiah 40:31, two for each Small Group
- ☐ Print "Memory at Sea" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, one set for each Small Group
- ☐ Plastic cups, twelve (one for each section of the verse) and a few empty ones
- ☐ Blue plastic tablecloth ("the ocean"), one for each Small Group
- ☐ Floor tape, one roll for each Small Group
- ☐ Optional: Timer
- ☐ Optional: Package of small bags of Swedish Fish®, a few fish to use during the game, one individual bag for each kid

4. Pray and Dismiss

- ☐ Markers or pencils, one for every kid
- ☐ Large bowl or basket, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Index cards, one for every kid
- ☐ Bible marked at John 14:6, one for each Small Group

*If you don't have time to do all, be sure to do the starred activity.

WEEK

THREE

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Act it Out!
2. Application Activity: God is my Shield
3. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

✦ Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd grade guide.



THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Daniel and the Lions' Den

Daniel 6

Bottom Line

God is always with you.

Memory Verse

Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.

Isaiah 40:31 (NirV)



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro tips.

SOCIAL

Opening Activity



What You Need

- ☐ "Lions" Activity Pages
- ☐ Floor tape
- ☐ Device for playing upbeat music

Inclusive Supplies

- ☐ Small stuffed animal



Inclusive Pro Tips

Create a seated version of the activity with less movement by instructing the kids to form a circle and placing the "Lion" pictures in a circle around the group. Give a child in the circle the stuffed animal, and instruct the kids to pass the stuffed animal around the circle quietly and sneakily so as not to wake the "lions."

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God that He is with you at all times. Think about an age-appropriate time when you faced something more confidently because you know God was with you in it. Ask God to help the kids see that He is always with them, and to teach them how to live confidently because God goes through every single moment of life with them.

1. Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
2. Before you begin, place the "Lions" Activity Pages in a pathway.
3. Use floor tape to mark a start and finish line.
5. Say: "We're going to take turns tiptoeing through the lion's den. Let's pretend not to wake the lions!"
6. Play music and let the kids tiptoe, hop, crawl, or sneak from one end of the path to the other.
7. If a kid accidentally touches or wakes a lion, no worries! Everyone cheers them on.
8. Let everyone have a turn, then gather them to sit in a circle.

② What You Say

"Way to go, friends! You were very careful not to wake the lions!"

"Can you imagine if you were really in a den filled with lions? It would be so scary, wouldn't it? Well, that actually happened to someone long ago. His name was Daniel!"

"In today's true story from the Bible, we'll discover that even though things looked scary, Daniel did what he always did—he put all his trust in God. And do you know what? God was right there with him the whole time. Let's go find out what happened!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

GROUPS 1/4

Act It Out!

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Story Images" Activity Pages



① What You Do

1. Divide the kids into three teams.
2. Give every team a set of six "Firm Foundation" Activity Page blocks.

Imagine Together:

3. Divide the kids into groups of 2-3.
4. Give each group a card with an image from the "Story Images" Activity Pages.
→ Make sure all of the cards from the "Story Images" Activity Page are given to groups. It's okay if certain groups have more than one card!
5. Say: "We're going to review the story of Daniel together! I'll pause and invite different groups to act out certain parts of the story based on your image."
6. Give the groups a few minutes to observe the image on their card(s) and come up with a skit.
7. After you read each Bible Story point, invite the assigned group to act out their part.
8. Encourage the kids to have fun with their expressions and actions!
9. Continue until all the images have been reviewed.

Bible Story Points:

1. Daniel becomes a leader in the kingdom.
→ Call on the group with the image of Babylon.
2. Jealous advisors trick the king into making a new law.
→ Call on the group with the image of the scroll.
3. Daniel keeps praying, even when it's dangerous.
→ Call on the group with the image of Daniel praying.
4. Daniel is thrown into the lions' den.
→ Call on the group with the image of the lions' den.
5. God sends an angel to shut the mouths of the lions.
→ Call on the group with the image of an angel.
6. King Darius sees Daniel is safe and praises God!
→ Call on the group with the image of King Darius praising God.

② What You Say

"Great acting, friends! Daniel didn't wait until he was in trouble to start trusting God. He talked to God every single day, he trusted God every single day, so Daniel was able to trust God when he faced the lions. And God was right there in the lions' den with Daniel! He NEVER left Daniel, and He won't leave you.

"No matter what you face—big feelings, tough decisions—God is always with you! God goes with you every single step of your life! Everything you face, you face with Him.

"Remind yourself God is always with you by making a habit of talking to God throughout the day. He is with you every minute!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, allow the kids to discuss the Bible Story points and what took place in their story image from a seated position with their groups.

GROUPS 2/4

God Is My Shield



Application Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Shield" Activity Page
- ☐ "God Is My Shield" Activity Page
- ☐ Coloring supplies
- ☐ Foil
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue sticks
- ☐ Prepared shield example

Inclusive Pro Tips



Allow the kids to decorate their shields in pairs.

Provide adaptive scissors.

① What You Do

1. Give every kid a "Shield" Activity Page.
2. Set out the coloring supplies, foil, glue sticks, and scissors.
3. Show the kids the shield example and remind them: God is always with you!
4. Invite the kids to decorate their shield however they'd like.
5. Encourage the kids to use symbols, colors, or drawings that remind them that God is always with them.
 - NOTE: Kids could draw a time when they needed to trust God, just like Daniel.
6. Set out the "God Is My Shield" Activity Page stickers.
7. Let the kids choose and place their stickers on their shield.

Explore Together:

1. Say: "This paper shield is something you can take home, but do you think it can really protect you like a real shield? (Pause for answers.)"
2. Say: "That's right! It can't—it's just a reminder. But God really is your shield, friends. He surrounds you, protects you, and is always with you."

Make It Personal → Share an age-appropriate time when you were nervous or afraid, but you remembered God was with you. How did trusting God help you stay strong?

Continued on the next page. →

GROUPS 2/4

God Is My Shield



Application Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Shield" Activity Page
- ☐ "God Is My Shield" Activity Page
- ☐ Coloring supplies
- ☐ Foil
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue sticks
- ☐ Prepared shield example

Inclusive Pro Tips



Allow the kids to decorate their shields in pairs.

Provide adaptive scissors.

② What You Say

"Awesome job creating your shields! These shields are cool to look at, but they also remind us of something really important: we don't have to face anything alone. God wants to protect us—like a real shield!"

"Daniel trusted God even when things were scary. He didn't stop praying, and he didn't stop believing that God would be with him even in the lions' den!"

"Daniel was God's friend. He talked to God. He asked God for help. And when Daniel was in the lions' den, God answered. God was like, 'My friend asked Me for help. I will help him!'"

"Here's the best news: That same God is with YOU too! But how? When you choose to believe in Jesus, you are saying, 'God, I trust You. I believe Jesus died for my sins and came back to life so I can be close to You forever.'"

"And when you do that, God gives you His Holy Spirit to live inside you! It is God's very Spirit! God moves in closer than close to you! He is God with you, He goes with you everywhere you go, and He is your shield. He will help you when you ask."

"So if you've never made the decision to follow Jesus, maybe today's the day! You can talk to me, a grown-up, or another leader, and we'll help you understand what it means to say, 'Yes, Jesus, I want You to be my Savior! I want to be Your friend forever!'"

GROUPS 4/4

Pray and Dismiss

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No Supplies Needed



Inclusive Pro Tips

Allow the kids to pray silently if that works best for your group.

① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together in a circle.
2. Say, "Talking to God is one of the most powerful things you can do. You are talking to the King of the universe who is your friend. Prayer doesn't need to be fancy or perfect. It's just you being open and honest with God, because He already knows you and loves you!"
3. Say, "You don't have to be a grown-up or know everything to talk to God. You can pray out loud or quietly. However, you pray, trust that God is listening—and God is always with you!"
4. Invite a kid to pray aloud for the group with confidence, as they remember God is always with them!
5. Close in prayer.

② Prayer

"God, You are an awesome, loving, powerful God. There is no one greater than You! Teach us how to live knowing that You are always with us. Help us remember how You've helped us in the past, and how You shut the mouths of lions for Your friend Daniel. Help us to keep trusting You, and put all our confidence in You. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Transition → As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to show off their shadow puppet skills and share that every time they see their shadow, they can remember: God is always with you.

Getting Ready

Social

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

Home

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app** and **ParentCue.org**

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Device for playing music, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Floor tape, one roll for each Small Group

Groups

1. Act It Out!

- ☐ Print "Story Images" Activity Page on cardstock, one set for each Small Group

2. God Is My Shield*

- ☐ Print "Shield" Activity Page on cardstock and cut out, one for every kid
- ☐ Print "God Is My Shield" Activity Page on vinyl sticker paper (like this: bit.ly/4hIUOfT), 3-4 stickers for every kid
- ☐ Coloring supplies, enough for each Small Group to share
- ☐ Foil, one roll for each Small Group
- ☐ Scissors, one pair for every kid
- ☐ Before group time:
 - Use the supplies to create a shield example to show the kids.

4. Pray and Dismiss

- No Supplies Needed

*If you don't have time to do all, be sure to do the starred activity.

WEEK

FOUR

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Build It Story Review
2. Application Activity: What If?
3. Memory Verse Activity: Isaiah 40:31 Crowns
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

✦ Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd grade guide.



THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Esther

Esther 1-10

Bottom Line

God can help you stand up for others.

Memory Verse

Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.

Isaiah 40:31 (NirV)



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro tips.

SOCIAL

Opening Activity

What You Need

- ☐ Butcher paper
- ☐ Markers

MADE TO
↓
Create

Inclusive Pro Tips



Have verbal prompts ready for kids who may need help imagining their kingdom.

- What kinds of buildings would your kingdom have?
- What would people do for fun there?
- What's one rule everyone in your kingdom would follow?

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God that He places people in the right place at the right time for His purpose. Recall an age-appropriate story about a time when God gave you courage to speak up for someone else or do what was right to help them. Ask God to help each kid realize that their voice matters and that He can use them, even now! Ask God to help the kids learn how to hear and listen to His voice as He leads them through the places He's put them for such a time as this!

1. Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
2. Ask the kids about their week to build connection!
3. Lay the butcher paper out and gather the group around it.
4. Set out the markers.
5. Ask: "If you were the king or queen of your own kingdom, what would you name it?"
6. Give the kids a few minutes to come up with a kingdom name.
7. Write the name of the kingdoms in large block letters in the center of the butcher paper.
8. Around the name they chose for their kingdom, encourage the kids to draw what would be in their kingdom: castles, ice cream shops, pet parks, unicorns—anything goes!
9. Gather the kids to discuss.

② What You Say

"Wow! You all are so creative. I'd love to visit the Kingdom of (INSERT NAME)!"

"In today's true story from the Bible, we'll hear about a real Persian king named Xerxes—and one brave queen named Esther. She didn't become queen just to live in a palace; God had a bigger plan. God knew what was coming, and He chose Esther to help! Let's head to Large Group and find out what happened!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

GROUPS 1/4

Build It Story Review



Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Prepared cardstock squares and triangles
- ☐ "Story Image Cards" Activity Page

① What You Do

1. Divide the kids into pairs.
2. Give each pair 15 cardstock pieces.
3. Say, "Today we're going to build parts of the Bible Story using these shapes! Make your shapes into pictures as you hear each part of the story. I will show you a picture of what to make!"
4. Read each Story Prompt slowly and clearly (they're listed below), while displaying the card from the "Story Image Cards" Activity Page that matches.
5. Give the kids time to arrange their shapes after each Story Prompt.

Bible Story Points:

- "King Xerxes was a powerful king. When his queen didn't listen, he decided to find a new one!" (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF THE CROWN. INVITE KIDS TO BUILD A CROWN.)
- "A girl named Esther lived with her cousin Mordecai. She was kind and beautiful—and the king chose her to be queen!" (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF THE HOUSE. INVITE KIDS TO BUILD A HOUSE.)
- "Haman was an evil man who worked for the king. He got really mad at Mordecai for not bowing to him and made a plan to get rid of all the Jewish people." (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF THE LETTER "H." INVITE KIDS TO BUILD AN "H.")
- "Mordecai asked Esther for help. She was scared but brave! She said yes, and planned a way to help her people." (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF A CHECKMARK. INVITE KIDS TO BUILD A CHECKMARK.)
- "Esther had two feasts with the king and Haman, and at the second one, she told them everything. She asked the king, 'Please save my people!' (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF THE BANQUET TABLE. INVITE KIDS TO BUILD A TABLE.)
- "The king made a new law that the Jewish people could stay safe! Haman was punished, and Esther saved her people!" (HOLD UP THE STORY IMAGE OF THE TRUMPET. INVITE KIDS TO BUILD A TRUMPET.)

Continued on the next page. →

Inclusive Pro Tips



Allow the kids to work in groups or independently.

Allow the kids to participate seated in a chair or another position.

GROUPS 1/4

Build It Story Review



Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Prepared cardstock squares and triangles
- ☐ "Story Image Cards" Activity Page

Inclusive Pro Tips



Allow the kids to work in groups or independently.

Allow the kids to participate seated in a chair or another position.

② What You Say

"Amazing job building, friends! God made Esther queen, and He made her queen at the exact right time. Her people needed help! So Queen Esther trusted that God had a plan and stood up for her people!"

"You know what? God has put you in the exact time and place to help people too! You're in your class for that reason. You're on your team for a reason. You're in your family for a reason. You're in your church for a reason! There are people you will see in your life who need you to stick up for them."

"Just like Esther, God has put you exactly where you are to help! When you go on the playground, and you see someone being picked on, and you say something to stop it, that's standing up for someone! And God put you right there to help!"

"When you go to lunch and you see someone forgot theirs that day, and you share yours, you're helping someone! And God put you right there to help!"

"You probably won't have to go before a powerful king ... but there are going to be times when God wants you to help, to stand up for others. When it feels scary, ask God to help you. He loves to! God can help you stand up for others!"

GROUPS 1/4

What if?

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No supplies needed



① What You Do

1. Divide the kids into groups of 2-3.
2. Say, "Today you'll help me tell Esther's story, but with a twist!"
3. One by one, read a real moment from Esther's story—they are listed below—then pause and ask the "What if?" question that corresponds to the real moment.
4. After reading a "What If?" question, invite the groups to act it out.
5. For each round, select a group to share their skit, acting out the "What If" question.
6. Before going through Esther's story, discuss the questions below.

Talk Together:

1. Ask: What gave Esther the confidence to stand up for her people even when it was hard?
→ Esther trusted and believed God put her there at that time for a reason! (Esther 4:14b)
2. Ask: Why can we have confidence in God?
→ Because He is good and He is always working for good.

"What If?" Scenarios:

1. Real: Haman made a plan to hurt God's people.
→ What if: Mordecai had just stayed quiet and not told Esther anything about Haman's awful plan?
2. Real: Esther was afraid, but chose to go to the king.
→ What if: Esther had stayed quiet and done nothing to help?
3. Real: Esther prepared two banquets to build up courage and timing.
→ What if: Esther had rushed in without a plan?
4. Real: Esther trusted that God had put her where she was for that time, and stood up for her people.
→ What if: Esther only looked out for herself and ignored people in danger?

Continued on the next page. →

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, have the kids share answers to the "what if" statements from a seated position.

GROUPS 1/4

What if?

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No supplies needed



② What You Say

"Wow—so many 'what if' moments! Esther had a choice, just like we do! Think about it: she could've backed away or stayed quiet. But she put aside her own fears and trusted that God had a plan and chose to do the right thing. How incredible is it that God puts us all in the right places for a purpose to carry out His plans!

"We are just like Esther! Just like her, God has put us in this exact time and this exact place. You are to go through your life, with God's guidance, and help people see and feel God's love and goodness.

"God is fair and just. So when you're fair, when you stand up for someone who is being picked on, you're not only being like God, you're showing the world who God is! God is kind, so when you sit with a kid who is alone, you're not only being like God, you're showing the world who God is! God loves people who don't seem to fit in, so when you show kindness to someone who is different than you, you're not only being like God, you're showing the world who God is!

"And God has put you just where you are to show your world what He is like!

"As you go throughout your days showing who God is, God goes with you every step of the way, and He will help you. God can help you stand up for others!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, have the kids share answers to the "what if" statements from a seated position.

GROUPS 3/4

Isaiah 40:31 Crowns

MADE TO
↓
Create

Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31
- ☐ "Isaiah 40:31 Paper Crowns" Activity Page
- ☐ Safety scissors
- ☐ Clear tape
- ☐ Jewel stickers
- ☐ Markers

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Prepared paper crown pieces



Inclusive Pro Tips

Use prepared, pre-cut crown pieces for kids who may need extra support with scissors or fine motor skills.

① What You Do

1. Open the Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31.
2. Read the verse aloud to the group.
3. Demonstrate the following motions to the kids and repeat the verse together several times.

These are the motions for the NIV:

- Those who trust (HOLD PALMS OPEN AND UP TO THE SKY.)
- in the LORD (POINT BOTH HANDS UP TOWARD HEAVEN.)
- will receive (PULL YOUR HANDS IN TOWARD YOUR CHEST LIKE YOU'RE REELING SOMETHING IN.)
- new strength. (SHOW YOUR MUSCLES—FLEX BOTH ARMS WITH A STRONG FACE.)
- They will fly as high as eagles. (FLAP YOUR ARMS SLOWLY AND GRACEFULLY LIKE WINGS.)
- They will run (RUN IN PLACE.)
- and not get tired. (CROSS YOUR ARMS IN FRONT OF YOU IN AN "X.")
- They will walk (TAKE SLOW, STEADY WALKING STEPS IN PLACE.)
- and not grow weak. (CROSS YOUR ARMS AGAIN IN AN "X.")
- Isaiah 40:31 (OPEN PALMS TOGETHER LIKE A BIBLE.)

These are the motions for the NIV:

- Those who hope (HOLD PALMS OPEN AND UP TO THE SKY.)
- in the LORD (POINT BOTH HANDS UP TOWARD HEAVEN.)
- will renew their strength. (SHOW YOUR MUSCLES—FLEX BOTH ARMS WITH A STRONG FACE.)
- They will soar on wings like eagles; (FLAP YOUR ARMS SLOWLY AND GRACEFULLY LIKE WINGS.)
- they will run (RUN IN PLACE.)
- and not grow weary, (CROSS YOUR ARMS IN FRONT OF YOU IN AN "X.")
- they will walk (TAKE SLOW, STEADY WALKING STEPS IN PLACE.)
- and not be faint. (CROSS YOUR ARMS AGAIN IN AN "X.")
- Isaiah 40:31 (OPEN PALMS TOGETHER LIKE A BIBLE.)

Create Together:

1. Give every kid an "Isaiah 40:31 Paper Crown" Activity Page and a pair of scissors.
2. Set out the markers and jewel stickers for the group to share.
3. Point out the words from the verse printed on the crown.
4. Direct them to:
 - Cut out the crown pieces.
 - Use coloring supplies and jewel stickers to decorate it.
 - Tape the pieces together so the crowns fit.
5. Help the kids write their names on their crown.

Continued on the next page. →

GROUPS 3/4

Isaiah 40:31 Crowns



Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31
- ☐ "Isaiah 40:31 Paper Crowns" Activity Page
- ☐ Safety scissors
- ☐ Clear tape
- ☐ Jewel stickers
- ☐ Markers

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Prepared paper crown pieces

② What You Say

"Isaiah 40:31 reminds us that everything we need comes from God. When we trust in God, He gives us strength just like Isaiah 40:31 says. He helps us keep going, even when it's hard.

"Esther wore a real crown because she was queen, but you're like a royal too because God has appointed you to live in this exact time and in this exact place just like her!

"Just like Esther was chosen to be queen, God calls YOU chosen too! He made you on purpose for a purpose. God will give you the strength you need to stand up for the people in your life! So whenever you wear this crown, remember: God can help you stand up for others."

Inclusive Pro Tips



Use prepared, pre-cut crown pieces for kids who may need extra support with scissors or fine motor skills.

GROUPS 4/4

Pray and Dismiss

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No Supplies Needed

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Coloring supplies

Inclusive Pro Tips



Offer index cards and coloring supplies for kids who may prefer to draw or write their prayers to God instead of praying silently! This gives visual and kinesthetic learners a hands-on way to reflect and connect with God.



① What You Do

1. Invite the kids to sit together with you in a circle.
2. Instruct the kids to hold up their left hand in an "L" shape (pointer finger and thumb).
3. Encourage kids to turn and look at the friend sitting on their left. This is the friend they will pray for today!
4. Invite the kids to pray silently or repeat after you as you guide them in praying to God:
 - "God, please help [kid's name] have confidence in You this week. Help them to stand up for others even when it's hard. In Jesus' name, amen!"
5. After a moment of silent or guided prayer, invite all the kids to stand, link arms, or place arms on shoulders.
6. Close in prayer.

② Prayer

"God, thank You for the story of Esther. We want to stand up for others too! Help us treat others the way we want to be treated. When we feel nervous or unsure, remind us that we can come to You for help. Thank You for giving each of us a special purpose. Show us how to help the people in our lives. We want to show the world how good You are! We love You, God, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Make It Personal → Share a short story of a time when you prayed for someone else, or someone prayed for you, and how that made a difference.

Transition → As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to show off their paper crowns as they remember that God can help you stand up for others.

Getting Ready

Social

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

Home

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app** and **ParentCue.org**

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Butcher paper, one large sheet for each Small Group
- ☐ Markers, enough for each Small Group to share

Groups

1. Build It Story Review

- ☐ Print "Story Image Cards" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, one set for each Small Group
- ☐ Cardstock, 5-10 sheets for each Small Group
- ☐ Before group time: Cut the cardstock into squares and triangles.

2. What If?

→ No Supplies Needed

3. Isaiah 40:31 Crowns*

- ☐ Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31
- ☐ Print "Isaiah 40:31 Paper Crowns" Activity Page on cardstock, one for every kid
- ☐ Safety scissors, one pair for every kid
- ☐ Clear tape, one roll for every Small Group
- ☐ Jewel stickers, 5-6 for every kid
- ☐ Markers, enough for each Small Group to share

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Cut "Isaiah 40:31 Paper Crowns" Activity Page, one set for every kid

4. Pray and Dismiss

→ No Supplies Needed

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Coloring supplies

*If you don't have time to do all, be sure to do the starred activity.

WEEK

FIVE

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Build to Last
2. Application Activity: Blueprint
3. Memory Verse Activity: Up in the Air Verse
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

✦ Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd grade guide.



THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Nehemiah

Nehemiah 1-4; 6:1-15

Bottom Line

God can help you do big things.

Memory Verse

Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.

Isaiah 40:31 (NirV)



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro tips.

SOCIAL

Opening Activity



What You Need

- ☐ Magna tiles, Jenga® blocks, or LEGO® bricks
- ☐ Optional: Timer

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Plastic cups

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God that He goes with you through everything and helps you do even bigger things than you could do on your own. Recall an age-appropriate story about when you asked God for help, and He helped you do something bigger than you'd ever thought you'd be able to accomplish. Pray that kids understand that being obedient in the little things over time is a big thing. Ask God to help the kids learn how to go through all of life with Him so they will do all things together with Him!

1. Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
2. Divide the group into two teams and give each team a set of building blocks.
3. Challenge them to build the tallest wall or tower.
4. Optional: Set a timer if it helps with motivation.
5. Encourage rebuilding if their structure falls.
6. Once finished, invite both teams to observe and celebrate each other's work.
7. Gather the group to discuss.

② What You Say

"Way to go, builders! I love how you worked together to build something awesome."

"In today's true story from the Bible, we'll discover how God helped a man lead a whole town full of people to build something BIG! Let's go!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Consider using plastic cups instead of blocks if your group is sensitive to noise.

GROUPS 1/4

Built to Last

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Prepared cups of mini marshmallows (or clay) and toothpicks
- ☐ Bible marked at Nehemiah 2:17-19 and 4:14
- ☐ Timer
- ☐ *Optional: handheld fan or paper fan*



Inclusive Pro Tips

If your group would work best in pairs for this activity, let them start in pairs from the beginning!

You can swap mini marshmallows for clay or playdough.

① What You Do

1. Gather the kids around a table or another flat surface.
2. Give every kid a prepared cup of mini marshmallows (or clay) and toothpicks.

Explore Together:

1. Say, "Nehemiah trusted God with a BIG job—rebuilding Jerusalem's walls! But Nehemiah didn't do it alone, and he didn't let distractions stop him."
2. Demonstrate and explain how the kids will have 3 minutes to build a mini wall using only what's in their cup.
3. Set the timer and encourage them to begin.
4. Once the timer is up, say, "Let's see how strong your walls are!"
5. Test each kid's wall by gently blowing on it or fanning it.
→ Optional: Use the handheld fan or paper fan.
6. Then, invite the kids to form groups of 2-3 and bring their walls.
7. Give the groups three more minutes to rebuild a stronger wall together.

Talk Together:

1. Call on several kids to help you read from the marked Bible, Nehemiah 2:17-18 and 4:14.
2. Ask: "Who did Nehemiah know was helping him?"
→ God! He told the leaders and people of Jerusalem all about God's help!
3. Ask, "What do we discover about who God is in Nehemiah's story?"
→ God helps us when we ask.
→ God is great and powerful.
→ We can do big things with Him.

Continued on the next page. →

GROUPS 1/4

Built to Last

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Prepared cups of mini marshmallows (or clay) and toothpicks
- ☐ Bible marked at Nehemiah 2:17-18, and 4:14
- ☐ Timer
- ☐ *Optional: handheld fan or paper fan*

MADE TO
Explore

BUDGET FRIENDLY SUPPLIES

Inclusive Pro Tips



If your group would work best in pairs for this activity, let them start in pairs from the beginning!

You can swap mini marshmallows for clay or playdough.

② What You Say

"Amazing building skills! Nehemiah wasn't a builder, and he lived nearly hundreds and hundreds of miles from his homeland. But God gave him a picture in his heart of what to do, and he trusted God to give him everything he needed to take action on it! He spent time pouring his heart out to God, made a plan, and God provided him with all the understanding and resources he needed to do this epic job.

"The whole task of rebuilding the wall was something Nehemiah did with God. Before Nehemiah went to the king to ask for building supplies, he prayed and asked his friend, God, to help. Whenever Nehemiah needed help throughout rebuilding the walls—and it was often, because it was a big job—he prayed. He asked God for what he needed, and God gave it to him.

"Nehemiah knew it was God who was helping him. In Nehemiah 2:8 (NIRV) he said: *God was kind to me and helped me.*

"The two of them did the big task of rebuilding the walls together.

"You might not be building a wall around a city, but you do face big things too. God might want you to help a younger kid, or start something new like a club that helps others feel seen and loved. Or God might want you to use your creativity (**LIKE YOUR IDEAS, OR YOUR ART**) to tell His story in a way only you can!

"When we face big things like this, the same God who went with Nehemiah through every step goes with us. We can trust God to give us the confidence and everything we need—we just have to talk to Him and ask Him for it! So face every big thing in your life together with God. Tell Him how you feel and ask Him to give you courage, understanding, patience, endurance, physical supplies—everything you need at every step—for what needs to be done.

"God wants you to build everything in your life with Him. God can help you do big things!"

GROUPS 2/4

The Blueprint

Application Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Blueprint Stickers" Activity Page
- ☐ 11 × 8 ½" blueprint paper (like this: bit.ly/4nywy3i)
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Coloring supplies
- ☐ Rulers



① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together around a flat surface.
2. Give every kid a piece of blueprint paper.
3. Set out the pencils, coloring supplies, and rulers.
4. Say, "Today, you're going to design a confidence blueprint! Nehemiah didn't know how to build walls, but God gave him what he needed. Let's imagine what big things God might help you to do!"
5. Say, "What's something big in your life that you want to do—but you know you'll need God's help with? It could be something that feels hard, scary, or way bigger than you."
 - Share examples like forgiving someone, making new friends, or talking about Jesus at school.
6. Encourage the kids to quietly think or whisper a prayer to God about it.
7. Invite the kids to use the supplies to sketch what they're asking for God's help with.
 - They can draw symbols, words, or various scenes.
8. Invite the kids to write a simple faith declaration on their blueprint.
 - "God is my strength."
 - "God can help me do big things."
 - "I can do this with God's help!"

Make It Personal → Share an age-appropriate time when you had to trust God with something big. How did God help you through it? What did you ask Him for at each step?

② What You Say

"I love each of your blueprints! Nehemiah didn't know how to build walls. BUT he spent time pouring his heart out to God and asking for help—and God gave him what he needed. That's what confidence in God looks like. It's not about knowing how everything will work. It's about trusting that God is with you, that He is bigger than anything you are facing, and He will help you do what He's put on your heart to do.

"But here's something even more amazing: When you choose to follow Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit to live in you! That means you never have to face anything alone. You and God's very Spirit face whatever your life brings together every day. And He will help You! God can help you do big things.

"If you've already chosen to follow Jesus, that means God is already building something great in your life. And if you haven't made that decision yet but you're curious or have questions, you can always talk to a trusted adult or me. Saying yes to Jesus is the biggest, most important decision you'll ever make!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



Complete this activity in pairs if it works better for your group.

GROUPS 3/4

Up in the Air Verse

MADE TO
Move

Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31
- ☐ Beach ball

Inclusive Pro Tips



To adjust the movement to this activity, invite the kids to stay seated and pass the beach ball around the circle as they recite the verse. You can do this on the floor or around a table.

① What You Do

1. Open the Bible and read Isaiah 40:31.
 - NOTE: You can call on an older kid in your group to read the verse too.
2. Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
3. Teach and review the motions with the group:
4. These are the motions for the NIV:
 - Those who trust (HOLD PALMS OPEN AND UP TO THE SKY.)
 - in the LORD (POINT BOTH HANDS UP TOWARD HEAVEN.)
 - will receive (PULL YOUR HANDS IN TOWARD YOUR CHEST LIKE YOU'RE REELING SOMETHING IN.)
 - new strength. (SHOW YOUR MUSCLES—FLEX BOTH ARMS WITH A STRONG FACE.)
 - They will fly as high as eagles. (FLAP YOUR ARMS SLOWLY AND GRACEFULLY LIKE WINGS.)
 - They will run (RUN IN PLACE.)
 - and not get tired. (CROSS YOUR ARMS IN FRONT OF YOU IN AN "X.")
 - They will walk (TAKE SLOW, STEADY WALKING STEPS IN PLACE.)
 - and not grow weak. (CROSS YOUR ARMS AGAIN IN AN "X.")
 - Isaiah 40:31 (OPEN PALMS TOGETHER LIKE A BIBLE.)
5. These are the motions for the NIV:
 - Those who hope (HOLD PALMS OPEN AND UP TO THE SKY.)
 - in the LORD (POINT BOTH HANDS UP TOWARD HEAVEN.)
 - will renew their strength. (SHOW YOUR MUSCLES—FLEX BOTH ARMS WITH A STRONG FACE.)
 - They will soar on wings like eagles; (FLAP YOUR ARMS SLOWLY AND GRACEFULLY LIKE WINGS.)
 - they will run (RUN IN PLACE.)
 - and not grow weary, (CROSS YOUR ARMS IN FRONT OF YOU IN AN "X.")
 - they will walk (TAKE SLOW, STEADY WALKING STEPS IN PLACE.)
 - and not be faint. (CROSS YOUR ARMS AGAIN IN AN "X.")
 - Isaiah 40:31 (OPEN PALMS TOGETHER LIKE A BIBLE.)

Move Together:

1. Instruct the kids to stand in a circle.
2. Explain that they will gently throw the beach ball to another kid in the circle while reciting the next word of Isaiah 40:31.
3. Assist the kids with the words as you play.
4. Repeat if time allows. Challenge the kids to not let the beach ball touch the ground for the entire verse.

Continued on the next page. →

GROUPS 3/4

Up in the Air Verse



Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31
- ☐ Beach ball

② What You Say

"Wow! Way to remember Isaiah 40:31 this month, friends!"

"Keeping the beach ball up was big job, and you helped each other to keep going. God helps us to keep going too! When we trust God, He gives us the strength we need, just like Isaiah 40:31 says. We're not meant to do hard things on our own. When something feels too big or too difficult, we can talk to God, just like Nehemiah did.

"God is strong. God is kind. Good is GOOD! God never gets tired or gives up. And because of who He is, we can live with confidence and keep going, even when things feel tough. Remember, God can help you do big things!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



To adjust the movement to this activity, invite the kids to stay seated and pass the beach ball around the circle as they recite the verse. You can do this on the floor or around a table.

GROUPS 4/4

Pray and Dismiss

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No Supplies Needed



① What You Do

1. Invite kids to sit in a circle.
2. Say, "God loves when we talk to Him, and He's always listening! Let's pray together and thank Him for helping us when we have something big in front of us. After each thing I say, you'll say, 'God can help me do big things!'"
3. After each phrase you read aloud, prompt the kids to respond by saying: "God can help me do big things!"
4. Encourage the kids to say it boldly and with confidence.
5. Then, close in prayer.

Call and Response:

"When I need courage to try something new ..."

(KIDS RESPOND) "God can help me do big things!"

"When I feel too small to make a difference ..."

(KIDS RESPOND) "God can help me do big things!"

"When I want to do what's right even if it's hard ..."

(KIDS RESPOND) "God can help me do big things!"

"When I see someone who needs help ..."

(KIDS RESPOND) "God can help me do big things!"

"When I want to tell others about Jesus ..."

(KIDS RESPOND) "God can help me do big things!"

② Prayer

"God, thank You for always being with us! You never leave us, and You never run out of strength, because You are a Mighty, all-powerful God! When we don't feel brave or strong enough, remind us that we can trust You. Thank You for helping Nehemiah do a big thing, and thank You for helping us too. We want to live every day knowing that You go with us through everything. Teach us to ask You for everything we need. We want to go through life with You! We love You, God, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen!"

Transition → As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to share the story of Nehemiah's challenge to rebuild the walls and gates around Jerusalem. Remind them to share the truth that just like God helped Nehemiah: **[BOTTOM LINE]** God can help you do big things.

Getting Ready

Social

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

Home

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app** and **ParentCue.org**

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Large LEGO® bricks or blocks, enough for each Small Group to share
- ☐ Timer, one for each Small Group

Groups

1. Built to Last

- ☐ Bible marked at Nehemiah 2:17-18, and 4:14; one for each Small Group
- ☐ Small cups, one for every kid
- ☐ Mini marshmallows or pieces of clay, 10 for every kid
- ☐ Toothpicks, 10 for every kid
- ☐ Timer, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Optional: Handheld fan or paper fan, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Before group time:
 - Fill each small cup with 10 mini marshmallows or pieces of clay and 10 toothpicks.
 - Prepare one cup for every kid

2. The Blueprint*

- ☐ Print "Blueprint Stickers" Activity Page on Avery 94506 Labels or equivalent, one sticker for every kid
- ☐ 11 × 8 ½" blueprint paper (like this: bit.ly/4nywy3i), one page for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid
- ☐ Coloring supplies, enough for each Small Group to share
- ☐ Rulers, one for every kid

3. Up in the Air Verse

- ☐ Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Beach ball, one for each Small Group

4. Pray and Dismiss

- ☐ No Supplies Needed