

On the Road Again, 4-K, April 15

Bible Story: On the Road Again (road to Emmaus) • *Luke 24:13-35, Romans 15:4*

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.

Memory Verse: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” *John 16:33b, NIV*

Virtue: Hope—believing that something good can come out of something bad.

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

1. Early Arriver Idea

What You Need: an offering container

What You Do:

Invite the kids to tell the group about a favorite trip they have taken.

2. We're Going on a Trip

What You Need: no supplies

What You Do:

Lead the kids on a pretend airplane trip. To begin, guide the kids to sit in rows of two. (The kids can sit on the floor or in chairs arranged airplane-style.) As you travel, pretend to see and hear a variety of things. Provide plenty of prompting in your conversation, but allow the kids to share what they imagine, too. A portion of a sample journey is included below. You could also ask the kids for suggestions on where you're headed and what they are seeing out the windows.

What You Say:

“Good morning! Welcome aboard (*name of church or children's ministry*) flight 252 with nonstop service from (*name of your town*) to (*name a faraway location*). At this time please make sure your seatbelts are securely fastened and that your seat backs and tray tables are in their full upright and locked positions. The weather today in (*name a faraway location*) is (*describe possible weather for the location*.) As we taxi down the runway, you can look to your left where you'll see (*describe a scene appropriate for the location you described*). (*Guide the kids to lean back while the plane takes off and gains altitude*.) We've now reached our cruising altitude of 25,000 feet. If you look to your right you can see that we're flying over (*name of the faraway place*) ... (*Continue the conversation for the remainder of the flight*.)

“Wow! That trip was fun. We pretended to see some pretty amazing things, didn't we?”

Today we'll hear about two men who went on a *real* trip. On their journey they saw—and heard—some truly amazing things!”

3. Play video and lead children in discussion.

4. Roll On (*memory verse activity / great for boys*)

What You Need: Bibles, ball

What You Do: Give each child a Bible and help them look up John 16:33. You can refer to the Bible navigation tips in week 1, if needed. When the kids find the verse, lead the kids to point to the words as you read the verse aloud. Guide the kids to say the verse with you. Emphasize the fact that the “I” in the verse is JESUS! He has overcome the world. He did this when He came back to life after dying on the cross.

After reading the verse, guide the kids to sit in a circle with their legs spread apart, their feet touching the feet of their neighbors. Give a child the ball and guide her to roll it to another child, saying the first word of the verse as she rolls. That child will then roll the ball to someone else, saying the second word of the verse as he rolls. Continue until the kids say the entire verse. Be sure to provide plenty of help as needed!

What You Say:

“Our Bottom Line this week is **‘whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.’** God’s big storybook is the Bible. It is full of God’s promises and stories of how God has been faithful to His people.

“I’m glad God is faithful, because in this world we will have trouble—little troubles and big troubles. **But when we have trouble, we can remember that Jesus has overcome the world. This means that no matter what bad things happen to us or to others, we can trust that in the end Jesus will work everything out for good.** So, *[Impress]* **whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.**”

*** 2. The Big Story (application activity / review the Bible story)**

(If you chose not to create “The Big Story” book during previous weeks, simply complete this week’s activity as a group mural.)

What You Need: prepared half sheet of poster board; 4x6 index cards or pieces of paper; markers or crayons; glue sticks; “The Big Story” pages the kids made the last two weeks; construction paper picture frames *(optional)*

What You Do:

Briefly review the pages the kids made in weeks 1 and 2. Show this week’s page and read it aloud as you point to the words. Emphasize the fact that each child is part of God’s big story.

Give every child an index card and encourage kids to draw pictures of themselves on the cards. When they finish, help them glue their portraits to picture frames (if provided) and then onto the poster board page for this week.

What You Say:

“In our Bible story today, Cleopas and Eli didn’t know what to think when Jesus died. They forgot that God had a bigger story in mind. They forgot that the Scriptures had hinted that a Savior would come to save the world. They didn’t realize that Jesus was the one they had been looking for a long time!

“Did you know that YOU are part of God’s big story, too? God’s story isn’t over—Jesus promised to stay with us, and *[Apply]* **until He comes back we can tell others about Him and how much He loves them.** So, *[Impress]* **whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.** And remember that YOU are part of God’s big story.”

3. The Rest of the Story (*application activity / review the Bible story*)

What You Need: “The Rest of the Story” (Activity Page), colored pencils or crayons

What You Do:

Give each child an Activity Page and guide kids to draw lines matching the pictures on the left to the pictures on the right that show the “rest of the story.” (The stories in the left-hand column, from top to bottom are: Joseph and his brothers, David and Goliath, Mary weeping outside the empty tomb. On the right-hand column, from top to bottom: Jesus outside the empty tomb, Joseph and his brothers, David next to a slain Goliath.)

Next, lead the kids to turn their papers over. Guide them to draw a time when they saw God take care of something big for them or for someone else; or, if they haven’t yet seen that happen—where something good came out of something bad—guide them to draw something that has happened that seems scary or hard to understand right now. Lead them to draw a question mark beside these pictures to remind them to trust that God sees the bigger picture and is in control. **Be sure to draw your own picture, too, and share it with the kids.**

Guide the kids to take their papers to the prayer time, next.

What You Say:

“All throughout the Bible we can read stories of real people who faced tough things. David faced Goliath, Joseph’s brothers sold him as a slave, and Jesus died on a cross and was buried in a tomb. But in every story we read, God was faithful. He was faithful to help David defeat Goliath. He was faithful to turn a bad situation for Joseph into something that was not only good for Joseph, but also good for his brothers, his family, and a whole country. And God was faithful to Jesus. Even though Jesus had never, ever done anything wrong, He was killed. But God brought Jesus back to life! And because Jesus is alive, we can have life forever with God.

“Maybe something is happening in your life right now that’s scary or that you don’t understand. Maybe something is happening with you, with your family, or with your friends, and you can’t see the bigger story. But when something bad or confusing happens, **[Apply] think about what you DO know about God. Think about God’s faithfulness to people like Joseph and David; and think about the fact that because Jesus died and came back to life, we can ALWAYS have hope. [Impress] Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.**”

Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

Guide the kids to gather around you. Give each child a Bible to hold during the prayer time. Encourage the kids to share prayer requests, including the situations they may have drawn on their Activity Pages that seem scary or confusing to them.

What You Say:

“The Bible is God’s storybook. Hold your hands on both sides of your Bible and feel how thick it is. It’s pretty thick, isn’t it? The Bible is FULL of God’s promises to us. That’s a lot of promises! And you know what? *Every* promise in the Bible is true.

“What’s going on in your life right now or someone else you know that’s scary or hard to understand? Maybe someone’s sick or you’re fighting with your best friend. Maybe something is happening with your family or at school, and you can’t see the bigger story. Yet. **But think about what you DO know about God. Remember what God has promised, and remember that God is stronger than anything!** Let’s pray.

“Heavenly Father, thank You so much for giving us hope. Thank You that ALL of Your promises are true and that **we can trust You no matter what!** Help us learn to trust You more and to remember that You always have a bigger story in mind for us. (*Pray for the kids’ requests here.*) Thank You for hearing our prayer, Lord, and thank You that *whatever* happens, we can remember that You love us and that You have a BIGGER story. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

On the Road Again, Gr. 1-2, April 15

Bible Story: On the Road Again (road to Emmaus) • *Luke 24:13-35, Romans 15:4*

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.

Memory Verse: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” *John 16:33b, NIV*

Virtue: Hope—believing that something good can come out of something bad.

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

1. Early Arriver Idea

What You Need: an offering container

What You Say:

As kids arrive and you take up the offering: “What is your favorite story (*could be a book, movie, poem, etc.*)? Why do you like it? Let’s get together as a group and make up a story one word at a time. Ready? I’ll start. (*Say just one word and point to the next person in the circle, then tell story as group.*) That was a pretty wild story! But guess what? Today, we are going to learn about an even *bigger*, wilder story in Large Group.”

2. Bad to Good

What You Need: “Bad to Good” (Activity Page)

What You Do:

Pair your students into groups of two (or three if necessary). Pass out one set of word pairs to each group. Instruct them to see if they can correctly match the seemingly bad thing to the good thing that comes from it. (Answers are below.) Once everyone has had a chance to match their words, come back together as a group and check the results! Can they think of any other examples?

Answers:

1. Piece of sand; pearl
2. Lump of coal; diamond
3. Lemons; lemonade
4. Caterpillar; butterfly
5. Sour milk; cheese

What You Say:

“Isn’t it cool how God has given us so many natural reminders that something good *can* come out of something bad? It’s like He has handed us these little reminders that no matter how much trouble this world gives you, He can still make something good come out of it. He is still in control. And He has a much bigger story that this all fits into. **In fact, today we’re learning about two men who got so hung up on the bad part that they couldn’t see the really great part of God’s big story.**”

*** 1. Tunnel Vision (review the Bible story / great for boys)**

What You Need: two lampshades or poster boards rolled to look like a lampshade, two sets of “Tunnel Vision” (Activity Page) statements, two chairs, masking tape

What You Do:

Divide your group up into two teams and line them up at a designated starting line for a relay race. Use masking tape to mark the start line. Place two chairs about 15 feet from the starting line facing the two lines. Set one stack of true/false statements on each chair. One person from each team will race to the chair and read the statement silently. If the statement is true, that person will place it on the floor to the right of the chair. If the statement is false, he has to crumple the paper up and put it to the left of the chair, then come back and tag the next person in line.

But here’s the catch: during their turn, kids have to hold their lampshade in front of their faces, looking through the hole while they move to the chair. If they remove it at any point, even accidentally, they have to come back to start and begin their turn all over again! Teams will get two points for every correctly answered true/false statement, plus an extra point if they can correct the false statements at the end of the game! Whichever team completes the race first, gets three bonus points, and the team with the most points wins!

ALTERNATIVE: JUST ASK THE KIDS IF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE TRUE OR FALSE.

Answers:

1. The two friends of Jesus were on their way to the town of Emmaus. (T)
2. Some people in Jerusalem thought the Romans had stolen Jesus’s body. (T)
3. The man that joined Jesus’s two friends was really Peter. (F)
4. The two men on the road to Emmaus were too stuck in the moment to see God’s bigger picture. (T)
5. The two men walking to Emmaus invited the stranger to go to church with them. (F)
6. When the stranger broke the bread at dinner, the two men saw that he was really Jesus! (T)
7. Right after the two men recognized Jesus, He vanished into thin air. (T)

What You Say:

“Have you ever seen a horse with blinders on? Or held a telescope up to your eye? It makes you focus on just one thing and forget all the rest! Kind of like just now when you were holding the lampshade up to your face. It was hard to see the whole picture, right? Well, that’s just what Cleopas and his friend were doing on the road to Emmaus. They were so focused on the fact that Jesus had died, they couldn’t see the much more important fact that Jesus had risen from the dead! And God had promised to send a Savior many years ago. **[Apply] Sometimes we can have tunnel vision or a narrow view in our own lives. Sometimes it’s easy to focus on just one piece of the puzzle. That’s why it’s so important to remember that [Impress] whatever happens, God has a bigger story.**”

2. Freeze Frame (application activity)

What You Need: “Freeze Frame” (Activity Page), crayons, markers

What You Do:

Pass out each puzzle cutout and put the crayons/markers in a central location. Ask kids to think about their favorite fictional story. It could be their favorite kids' movie, favorite fairy tale, favorite book, etc. Instruct the students to draw a picture that shows the height of the conflict in their favorite story—as if they froze the story in the middle of the character's lowest point. After they are done drawing, ask each child to quickly share a little about his or her picture. At the end of the activity, collect their puzzle pieces and hang them in the hallway or around the stage!

What You Say:

Before the activity: “**(Tell kids about your favorite well-known children's story.)** Every story has a problem, right? A problem? A conflict? That's what makes a story really good! What if Cinderella's stepmom was nice? What if Snow White never had to go live with the dwarves? What if Flat Stanley had never been flattened by a bulletin board? There wouldn't be a story to tell if there was no conflict!”

After the activity: “None of these stories would be as popular without conflict—conflict is what gets us hooked! They also wouldn't be very popular without some sort of resolution because we can hardly wait to find out what happens at the end! We know and love these stories because we know the *whole* story. *(Adapt the following based on the children's story you used before the activity.)* We know Rapunzel wouldn't have met the prince if she hadn't been locked in the castle. We know Flat Stanley wouldn't be able to go on extraordinary adventures if he were shaped like a regular kid. All of these stories are about hope—something good coming out of something bad. And just like we know these stories, God knows our stories. **Sometimes it seems like our life is frozen on the frame of the biggest conflict or problem you could imagine. But God sees the rest of the story. He knows how it's all going to turn out! Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.**”

3. Bible Bounce (memory verse activity)

What You Need: Bible, bouncy playground ball (or any ball that will bounce)

What You Do: Open your Bible to the book of John. Remind kids that John is one of the Gospel books, which tells all about Jesus' time on earth. Ask your group what they remember about our memory verse this month. (For example: chapter/verse, words, meaning, etc.) Wait for responses, then turn to John 16:33. Point the verse out to the group and ask them to read it aloud as a group without you. Close the Bible and see if they can recite the verse as a group. Set the Bible aside, pick up the bouncy ball, and have everyone stand in a circle. Holding the ball, say the memory verse aloud, and then gently bounce the ball to a student. That student must catch the ball and recite the verse. If he or she is having trouble, the ball is returned to you. You then say the verse again and bounce the ball back to the same student until he or she can recite the verse and bounce the ball to someone else. Once everyone has had a chance to recite the verse, have a seat.

What You Say: “I love the memory verse this month! God has overcome the world! Isn't that amazing news? Even though the world will give us trouble sometimes, God is bigger and stronger than anything in this world—He has already won! **[Apply] We bad things happen, we can take comfort knowing that God has conquered all, and He will conquer our problems, too. Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.**”

Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: no supplies necessary

What You Do:

Tell kids to sit in a circle, with you on the outside of the circle. Sit behind one child, back to back, and tell that child to lean back on you. Explain that the kids can trust that you won't stand up quickly or move away from them and let them fall back. They can lean back on you and trust you. Everyone should close his or her eyes and follow along as you pray for each student individually. Start by tapping the first student on the shoulder indicating he or she can safely lean back against you. While they are leaning back on you, say a quick prayer aloud (example below) that they will learn to completely trust in God's big story for their life. Lean the child back up to a sitting position and go to the next child, tapping him or her on the shoulder. Continue until you have had the chance to pray for every child in your group.

What You Say:

Before the activity: "Today we got a glimpse of just how big God's story really is! **We learned that even though we can only see one small part of the story, we can trust that God knows the bigger story and is in control. Trust is such an important part of hope. It's a lot easier to believe something good can come out of something bad if we learn how to trust God no matter what first.**

"Dear God, I thank You so much for *(child's name)*. Help him to know that he can trust You with any problem, big or small. When life gets tough, remind him that You know what the whole picture looks like, and You have a much bigger story. In Jesus's name, amen."

"Trusting God's bigger story is super important to having hope in bad times. Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story. I'm so glad you were here today to learn about just how big God's story really is!"

On the Road Again, Gr. 3-4, April 15

Bible Story: On the Road Again (road to Emmaus) • *Luke 24:13-35, Romans 15:4*

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.

Memory Verse: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” *John 16:33b, NIV*

Virtue: Hope—believing that something good can come out of something bad.

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

1. Early Arriver Idea

What You Need: an offering container

What You Do:

Greet students as they arrive and invite them to place their offerings in the offering container. Ask questions such as: Did anyone travel over Easter to visit family? What are some road trips you’ve taken with your friends or family? What do you like to take along to do in the car? What’s the best and worst part of a road trip?

2. Travel Games

What You Need: no supplies needed

What You Do:

Form groups of 2-4 kids. Ask each group to position themselves on the floor or in chairs as if they were seated in a car.

Ask kids to imagine they’re in the car on the way home from visiting their grandma or cousins over Easter. Let each “car” play a familiar traveling game. Choose one of the ideas below or one that you have played in the past (or let the kids make up their own).

- Someone in the car picks a theme (foods, animals, places, girl names, boy names, bands, songs, etc.). The person in the driver’s seat has 10 seconds to name something in that category that begins with the letter “A.” The next person in the passenger’s seat has 10 seconds to name something that begins with “B.” Continue to the back seat and around again until you complete the alphabet or someone can’t think of an answer.
- I Spy: Pretend you’re looking out the car window. Pick an object you “see” either in the car or along the road. Give the others in your car a clue such as, “I see something green.” Continue to give more clues until someone in your car guesses what it is.

What You Say:

“Road trips can be fun and exciting. You see new places, do new things, and sometimes you even meet new people. **Today we’re going to take a road trip with some people who knew Jesus. I wonder who they’ll meet along the way.**”

PLAY VIDEO AND LEAD CHILDREN IN DISCUSSION

1. The Big Picture (*application activity / review the Bible story*)

What You Need: Bibles, “Verse Pages” (Activity Pages), poster board with pre-cut holes, markers

What You Do:

Remind kids of today’s Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story. Let them share highlights they remember from the lesson. Ask kids why they think the disciples felt hopeless and confused. Then what happened that gave them a new sense of hope?

Let kids choose a partner, and then give each pair a Bible, markers, and one of the Activity Pages. Ask kids to look up and silently read the verses on their papers. Without others seeing what they create, have them work with their partners to draw a simple scene depicting that part of the Bible story.

When finished, let partners take a turn holding their picture tight against the back of the poster board so that only small portions of the drawing are revealed through the holes at one time. Ask the other kids to try to guess “the big picture” or part of the story. If more visual clues are needed, let the students move their drawings several times to show other areas of the picture.

What You Say:

“Like the pictures hidden behind the poster board, the disciples didn’t get to see God’s complete plan revealed all at once. Neither do we. Just like the disciples, we sometimes feel confused when discouraging things happen. We might even start to doubt what we believe about God. That’s when we need to stop and remind ourselves that God’s in control. There’s always more to the story than we know. You can trust God and believe that because He’s in charge, something good can come out of something bad. **If you feel like your life’s a mess right now, talk to Him about the stuff you don’t like or can’t figure out. He’ll give you the hope you need to get through a tough time.** *[Impress]* Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.”

2. Hit the Road (OPTIONAL) (*application activity / great for boys*)

What You Need: balloons, sticky notes, pens, Easter candy

What You Do:

Let each kid inflate and tie off a balloon and write his or her name on a sticky note. Explain that the tape on the floor is a “road,” and show kids which end is the beginning of the road. Invite kids to choose the exact spot on the road (more than just a few feet away) where they want their balloons to stop. Tell them they can decide how many hits (1-12) it will take to get their balloon to that spot, write that number on their sticky note, and stick it on their chosen spot on the road.

Offer a prize of Easter candy to the kids who come the closest to getting their balloons to their sticky notes in the correct amount of hits.

Repeat the game as time allows.

What You Say:

“You just proved that balloons don’t always go the way you think they should or the way you’d like. Neither does life! You don’t know and can’t predict the direction God will take you. All you get to see is the little piece of time you’re living in. **[Apply] This week, things may go along fine for you and then suddenly you find yourself facing something awful. Don’t lose hope.** GOD knows the whole story and that’s what counts. He’s got it all under control ... which is another reason to have hope no matter what you’re going through. **Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story.** God knows the past, the present, and the future. He’s the only one who can make something good come out of something bad.”

Optional 5th Grade Discussion Questions

If you lead fifth graders, consider asking these discussion questions:

- When something’s happening in your life that’s scary or that you don’t understand, what can you do to find hope?
- What does it look like in everyday life for a kid your age to trust God no matter what?
- Share a time when you trusted God through a difficult situation. What do you think was God’s bigger picture or plan for you through all of that? **(Share your story here as well.)**

3. Dot Map (memory verse activity)

What You Need: Bibles, maps, pens, paper

What You Do:

Recite John 16:33b as a group and then have kids quote it to a partner for practice.

Ask kids to give some examples of times when people might feel hopeless. Why are Jesus’ words in John 16:33b hopeful?

Invite kids to create a Dot Map. Pair up and give partners two copies of the map and a sheet of paper. Without letting other teams see what they’re doing, have partners work together to draw the outline of a simple shape or object on one of their maps (such as a heart shape or the outline of a hand). Make sure they draw only an outline. Next, on a blank sheet of paper, instruct them to make a list of all the towns the lines cross over or come near to on the map.

When everyone is done, everyone should fold their drawn-on maps and give their list to another team. On their clean copy of the map, teams will race to locate and put a dot on each of the towns on the list they were handed, connect the dots to reveal the shape, and then compare their pictures with the originals to see how close they were.

What You Say:

“Sometimes it’s easy to focus on the little, everyday things that go wrong in our lives, kind of like focusing on one of the dots on the Dot Map instead of seeing how each little dot connects and makes a whole picture. John 16:33b says, ‘In this world you will have trouble.’ That’s not a huge surprise to most of us, is it? We know about trouble. Aren’t you glad Jesus didn’t simply say, ‘Hey, life is going to get messy sometimes so grit your teeth, take heart, and try not to let it get you down’? That wouldn’t be much of an encouragement on days when your corner of the world goes crazy. Instead, Jesus says, ‘I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD!’ **Now there’s something to hang your hope on!**

Don't make God too small this week. After all, Jesus conquered DEATH. There's absolutely nothing that He can't overcome. Whatever happens, remember God has a bigger story."

Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: no supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask kids to stand in a circle with legs apart and feet touching the person next to them. Ask them to pray today's Bottom Line silently for the kid to their left: that **whatever happens**, [kid's name] would **remember God has a bigger story**. Have everyone turn and pray their memory verse (John 16:33b), this time for the person now on their right. Close with the following prayer.

What You Say:

"Jesus, we praise You for being the one in charge. Nothing takes You by surprise. You control the big picture as well as every tiny detail of our lives. Thank You for holding us in Your hand. **Help us learn to have hope in every circumstance this week by trusting You.** Amen."