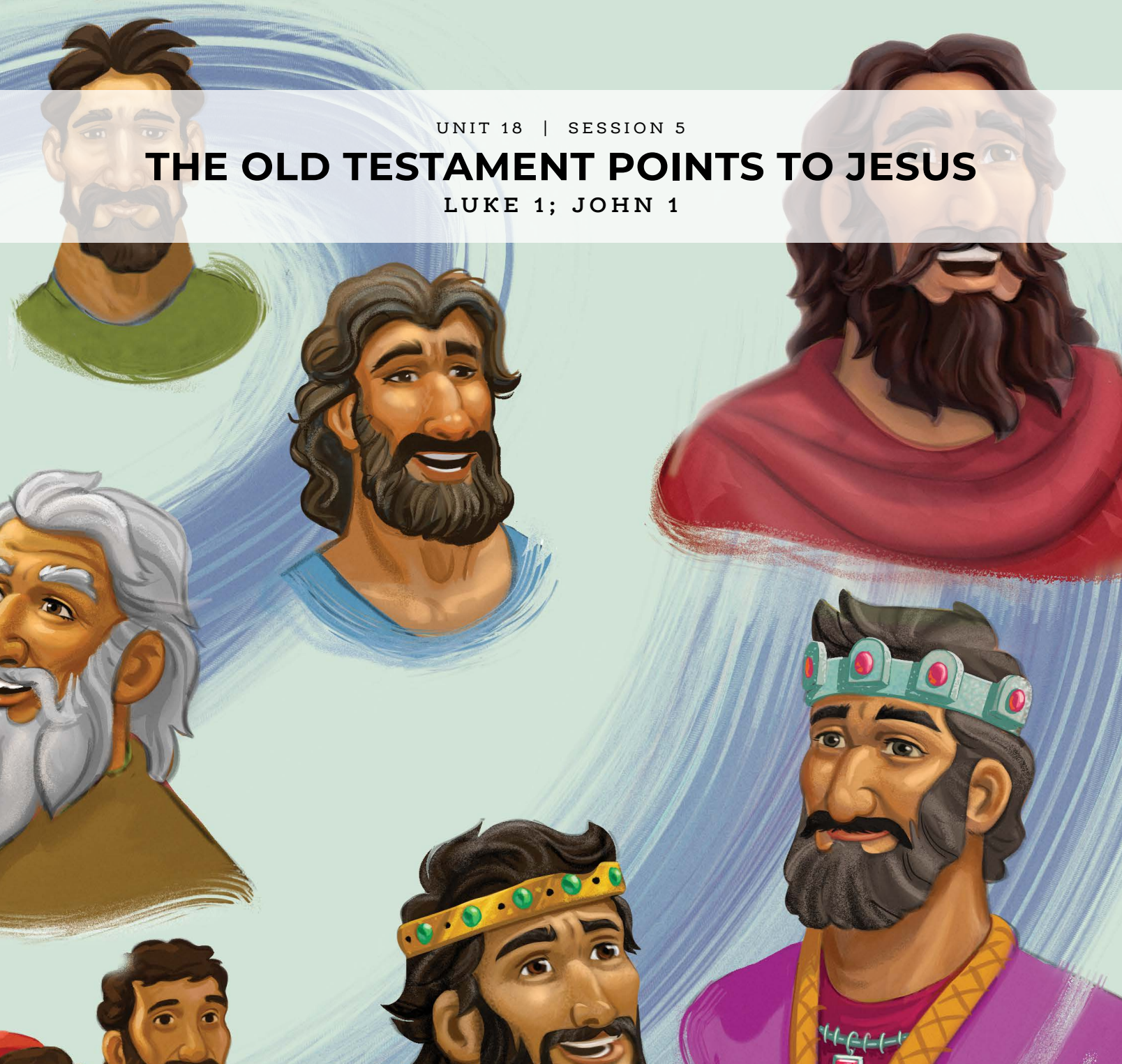


THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TO JESUS

LUKE 1; JOHN 1



KEY PASSAGE: John 20:31

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

CHRIST CONNECTION: God spoke through His prophets in the Old Testament, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.

STORY POINT: John was sent by God as a witness to the coming Messiah.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

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

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

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

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



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ “The A-Maze-ing Truth” activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ inflated balloons, 30–50
- ☐ trash bags, 1 per team

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ timer



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ painter’s tape

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ “Old Testament Board Game” printable, 1 per pair
- ☐ pennies, 1 per pair
- ☐ small items for game pieces, 1 per kid
- ☐ Giant Timeline, Small Group Timeline, or past Bible Story Picture Posters (optional)

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ “Who’s Who?” activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ “The Old Testament Points to Jesus” video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ “Unit 18, Session 5” Questions from Kids video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ “Life in His Name (John 20:31)” song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ sticky notes in two colors



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ When was a time you heard something hard to believe? Why was it hard to believe? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “The A-Maze-ing Truth” activity page.

| **SAY** “ All of the Old Testament points to Jesus! Today, we’ll see how **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH.** ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: CLEAR THE WAY



Before this activity, cover the floor with 30–50 inflated balloons. Form kids into teams of two and provide each team with a trash bag. When you say “Go,” challenge the teams to work together to pick up as many balloons as they can and place them in their trash bag without popping the balloons. Continue playing until all the balloons have been picked up from the floor. The team with the most balloons at the end of the activity wins.

| **SAY** “ By picking up the balloons, you cleared the way so people can walk on the floor without stepping on a balloon. Throughout the Old Testament, God told His people about the coming Messiah—the One who would rescue people from sin. Today, we’ll see how a man named John was sent to clear the way for the Messiah, Jesus. John prepared the people to repent of their sins and receive Him by faith. ”

☐ OPTION 2: I SAW THAT!



Choose one kid to be a witness and lead him to close his eyes. Choose two kids to perform a specific action, such as “rubbing their belly.” Tell the remaining kids to perform any random action they choose except “rubbing their belly.” Lead kids to spread about the room. Challenge the witness to look for two kids who perform the exact same action. Direct the kids to perform their action for 15 seconds. When he spots them, he will shout, “I saw that!” Play additional rounds, choosing new kids for each role.

| **SAY** “ Do you know what a witness is? [Allow responses.] A witness is someone who tells others what is true about what they have seen, heard, or experienced. Today, we’ll see that **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH.** God chose John to tell others what He had seen, heard, and experienced about Jesus. John would point others to Jesus because God had revealed to John that Jesus is the Messiah who had come to save people from sin. ”

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





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m so glad you’re here to learn an incredible story from God’s Word. If you brought a Bible, can you hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] We will be in the New Testament books of Luke and John.

Today, we make our way from the Old Testament to the New Testament as we see how the Old Testament points to Jesus. God spoke through prophets like Isaiah and Malachi and shared His plan to send the Savior—Jesus—into the world. Today, we will see how God used a man named John to prepare the way for Jesus’ ministry on earth. We’ll learn that **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH**. [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray together: ‘Dear God, thank You for Your plan to send Jesus into the world. Give us ears to hear and eyes to see Your truth today. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Let’s review our big picture question: **What is the Bible about?** What is the answer? [Allow responses.] **The Bible is the story of God’s plan to save people through Jesus.** Let’s say the answer one more time: **The Bible is the story of God’s plan to save people through Jesus.**

The whole Bible points to Jesus. Throughout all the stories, God kept reminding His people of His promise to send the Messiah who would provide the only way to be saved from sin and made right with God. We’ve heard stories from Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, 1 Kings, Jonah, Jeremiah, and so many more that kept pointing us to Jesus. God kept reminding His people over and over again that He would one day send the Savior into the world. Even in our story today, we’ll learn how Zechariah praised God for keeping His promise to save people from sin. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ God spoke to His people through the prophets—men like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi. We saw that Malachi was the last prophet of the Old Testament. Malachi warned the people of their sin and encouraged them to remember the promised Messiah. Then God was silent for four hundred years. Today, we will learn how the time had finally come for God to raise up another prophet to speak to His people again. We’ll see that a man named **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH**. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 1; John 1. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Old Testament Points to Jesus.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TO JESUS

“A priest named Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth lived rightly before God. They were both old and had no children because Elizabeth was not able to have a baby.

One day, an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah in the sanctuary of the Lord, and he was afraid! But the angel said, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because God has heard your prayer. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you will name him John. He will have the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and make the people ready for the Lord.” This was spoken to fulfill what the prophet Malachi said would happen.

Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I know this will happen? After all, my wife and I are very old.”

The angel answered, “You will become silent and unable to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words.” When Zechariah came out of the sanctuary, he couldn’t speak.

Elizabeth became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When it came time to name the baby boy, Zechariah wrote, “His name is John.” Immediately after writing these words, Zechariah could speak again.

Then Zechariah praised God, saying, “Blessed is the Lord because he has provided salvation for his people. You, my son, will be called a prophet of the Most High, and you will go before the Lord and prepare his ways.” God had kept the promise He made to Abraham and his descendants.

When John grew up, God sent him to be a witness for Jesus in the wilderness of Judea so people might believe in Jesus. John said, “I am a voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord—just as Isaiah the prophet said.”

Christ Connection: God spoke through His prophets in the Old Testament, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Write it: On a dry erase board, write down the names of the people in the story as you share them.

Active listening: Invite kids to shout “John” when Zechariah can finally speak.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Before Jesus was born, God chose a couple named Zechariah and Elizabeth to be the parents of John, who we also know as John the Baptist. An angel appeared to Zechariah and announced that even though he and Elizabeth were old, they would have a son who would have a special role in God’s plan. What did the angel tell Zechariah that his son, John, would do for the Lord? Look at Luke 1:16-17. **[Ask a volunteer to read Luke 1:16-17 aloud.]** The angel told Zechariah that John would prepare the people’s hearts for the arrival of Jesus. He would be like the prophets of the Old Testament, declaring an important message from God to the people. **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH.**

Yet, Zechariah didn’t believe the angel’s words, and he was unable to speak. Sometimes God’s plans and words are extraordinary, but God never lies! We can always trust His words and place our hope in them.

Finally, the time came for John to be born. As soon as Zechariah wrote that the boy’s name would be John, he could speak again. What did Zechariah say? Look at Luke 1:68-70. **[Ask a volunteer to read Luke 1:68-70 aloud.]** Zechariah prophesied that God was sending the Messiah, Jesus, into the world. Zechariah remembered the words God spoke through His prophets about the coming Messiah, who would come from the family of David. John would be the one to prepare the way for the Messiah—Jesus. John would call people to repent of their sin, helping them to see their need for a Savior. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ God spoke through His prophets in the Old Testament, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 18, Session 5” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How did people, who died before Jesus died on the cross, get into heaven?
2. Can you think of an Old Testament story that points to Jesus? Which one?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Remind kids that Brian Bowman and Valley Life Church desire to start more churches in Phoenix, Arizona. Discuss how starting new churches not only involves training leaders to lead the churches but also includes sharing the gospel so new people can become part of the church plants.

Invite kids to think about how they might share the gospel with people. Direct kids to think about ways they might invite people to come to church. Form kids into groups of three or



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

four and guide them to write down their responses. Prompt kids to think about church events that other kids might like to participate in.

SAY “ We don’t need to have all the answers to questions people may ask about God or the gospel, but we can be willing to share Jesus and invite others to church. Like Valley Life Church, we can share the hope of Jesus with others so they can be saved from their sin. ”

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before this activity, write the words of the key passage on sticky notes and hide them around the room. Create two sets, each on a different color of sticky note. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading John 20:31 aloud together.

SAY “ You have worked so hard to learn your key passage. Let’s see how quickly you can find the key passage words and put them in the right order. ”

Form kids into two teams. Challenge kids to race to collect all their teams’ sticky notes and arrange them in the correct order the fastest.

Lead kids to sing “Life in His Name (John 20:31).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Lord, thank You for sending Jesus into the world to save us from sin. Thank You that when we trust in Jesus, we will be saved. Help us share this good news with others. Amen. ”

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





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to John 1. Explain that the book of Luke is part of the Gospel books in the New Testament. Share how the Gospels tell us the stories of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Share how the exact birthplace of John is not named in the Bible; instead the Bible says he was born in the hill country of Judah. Consider pointing out the area between Beer-sheba (K3) and Bethlehem (I4) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud John 1:23 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ When a group of religious leaders named the Pharisees asked who John was, John told them that he was the one the prophet Isaiah had said would come to prepare the way for the Messiah. John was not the Messiah, but he was sent as a witness, to point others to what is true: Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

Like John, we can be a witness for Jesus. We can tell others what we know is true about Jesus and how He came to save people from their sins. All Christ followers are called to be Jesus' witnesses, sharing the gospel so others can be saved. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ How did John's birth fulfill God's words in the Old Testament? ”

Tell kids that both Isaiah and Malachi prophesied about the messenger who would prepare the way for the Messiah. Share how this happened hundreds of years apart, but both prophets received the same true words from God. Emphasize how God's words can always be trusted. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Peter 1:20-21.)

SAY “ How does the Old Testament point to Jesus? ”

Remind kids that all the stories in the Bible tell one big story about God's plan to save people through Jesus. Point out past Bible stories kids have learned, highlighting the Christ Connections to help kids see how those stories pointed to Jesus. Remind kids that Jesus is on every page of the Bible. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Luke 24:27.)

SAY “ What are some specific ways you can be a witness for Jesus? ”

Tell kids that before they can be a witness for Jesus, they first have to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Jesus calls all His followers to be witnesses for Him by sharing the gospel and telling others about how Jesus saved them. Help kids understand that God empowers Christians through the Holy Spirit to share the good news of Jesus so others can be saved. Invite kids to share ways they have been a witness for Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Acts 1:8.)

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: BE A WITNESS RELAY



Before this activity, use tape to create a starting line on one side of the room. Form kids into two teams and direct them to line up behind the starting line. Direct the first kids from each team to run to you and receive an action to perform for their team, such as “making a sandwich” “eating an ice cream cone” “walking a dog” etc. Once kids receive the action, they will run back to their team and act it out. When their team guesses correctly, the next kid runs to the leader to receive the next action. Continue playing until each kid has had a turn. The first team to complete the relay wins.

SAY “ Today, we learned that **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH**. Believers are sent by God to be a witness to others, sharing about the hope we have in Jesus. Just as you ran to your team to share the action, believers should have an urgency to share the good news about Jesus with others. ”

☐ OPTION 2: OLD TESTAMENT BOARD GAME

Form kids into pairs and distribute an “Old Testament Board Game” printable, a penny, small items for game pieces, and a Bible to each pair. Display the Giant Timeline, Small Group Timeline, or past Bible Story Picture Posters. Direct pairs to take turns flipping a penny to move on the board. If kids flip heads, they move one space. If kids flip tails, they move two spaces. As kids land on each space, they must first find the book in their Bible. Then they must recall a particular story from that book. Kids can refer to the timelines or Bible story posters for help. Play until one kid is the first to make it to the end of the board.

SAY “ From Genesis to Malachi, God shared His plan to send the Messiah to save people from sin. Even when God’s people disobeyed, God remained faithful to His promise. Today, we learned how God prepared John to be a witness for Jesus because God’s promise to bring the Messiah into the world came true. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for sending Jesus as our Savior and asking Him to help us share the good news of the gospel with others. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Who’s Who?” on the activity page.



THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR US

The gospel is the good news—the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use these prompts to share the gospel with your kids.



Ask: “Who is in charge at home?” Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



Ask: “Have you ever done something wrong?” Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



Ask: “What is the best gift you’ve ever received?” Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: “Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus.” Read Romans 10:9-10.

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

The Gospel Project is designed to help your kids **LEARN** the gospel story of Scripture, **LOVE** the Author and Subject of that gospel story, and then **LIVE** out their part in this ongoing gospel story.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

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