

WEEK 4 ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE



THE BIG IDEA

I can be wise by choosing God.

THE BIBLE

Wisdom and Faith: Proverbs 3:1-8;
James 5:13-16

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "True North" (Rend Co. Kids)
 - "Make Right Choices" (LifeKids)
 - "Wise Up" (Kidspring)
 - "My Lighthouse" (Rend Collective)

ACTIVITY | Cannonball Blaster

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid one black balloon and a three-foot piece of string. Tie the balloon around each kid's ankle. Be sure the balloon hangs away from their leg. The kids will try to go around and pop other kids' balloons by stepping on their balloons while protecting theirs from being popped. No hands allowed!
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Make sure you provide noise-cancelling headphones or a separate space with sensory toys for kids who might feel anxiety about the balloons popping. You might also want to use a timer for this activity so that kids don't get overstimulated and can know when it's time to transition to the next activity.

- One thing pirates are always worried about. . .cannonballs! If their cannonballs explode, their ship will sink!
- Let's have a BLAST with this game . . . choose your step wisely!

ACTIVITY | Get the Gold!

- Hey, mateys! We've been talking a lot about pirates and choices, and one thing a pirate will always choose is gold!
- In this game, let's race to see who can get the most gold!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a [pirate hook](#) for their hand. Divide the kids into two teams and instruct each team to stand in a single-file line. Give each team a bag of [chocolate gold coins](#) (keep the coins in the mesh bag). The kids in each line will use their pirate hooks to pick up the bag and pass it as fast as they can to the back of the line. Have a small treasure chest (or box that is spray painted gold) for each team to race to fill up with the bags of gold coins.
- We've talked a lot about choosing wisely on this adventure we're on! Today, we're going to talk about the most important thing you could ever choose!

QUESTION | Where does faith go?

- The Bible tells us that faith is complete trust or confidence in someone or something, especially when we can't see the proof that that person or thing is there.
- **What are some things you have faith in?**
- We can have faith in our families, our friends, a teacher, or even the chair you're sitting in!
- Today, we're going to talk about the absolute best place we can put our faith. Just like we've been talking about this entire month, where we put our faith is an important choice we have to make on our adventure.

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

BIBLE STORY | Wisdom and Faith

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up the two planks from the previous weeks to share today's Bible story from Proverbs 3:1-8. Have Captain Solly come out and read the passage dramatically from a printout you have rolled up inside a bottle. You can also have some pensive music playing.
- Captain Solly, that was a beautiful letter with incredibly wise advice! Did you write that?
 - **Captain Solly:** Me wishes. I found it floating by me ship as we dropped the anchor this mornin'.
- Ah, I thought it sounded familiar. Solly, that's from the Bible, found in the book of Proverbs.
 - **Captain Solly:** Blimey. No wonder it touched me soul. But I don't know what it means. Ye will explain it, right? *[Sits down with the kids.]*
- Yes, of course! So, these verses you just read are all about who you should trust when the choice is between you or God.
- **Who do you think you should trust?**

- That was an easy question! Of course, we should trust God more. But let me tell you, it's easier said than done!
- **When are some times when choosing to trust God is harder to do than just doing whatever you want?**
- Even though we know God is the best choice, in the moment, we might be afraid or even too lazy to choose the right thing to do.
- That's why this Bible passage keeps telling us to remember what we've been taught and to rely not on our own instincts and knowledge, but to always go back to what God says in the Bible for direction.
- Okay, it's time to choose our wise adventure by walking one of these two planks:
 1. The Wise Plank: Seek God's instruction first for everything in your life.
 2. The Unwise Plank: Trust yourself. You're smart!
- **Which plank should we walk across based on what we talked about today?**

BIG IDEA | I can be wise by choosing God.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the pirate ship mast from last week and add today's Big Idea to the sail. Ask the same volunteer to play the part of Captain Solly to reveal the Big Idea.
- Yo-ho-ho, mateys! How lucky me finds that bottle today? It's going to help me as I ready meself and me crew to sail into the sunset on me sea rover! Me crew needs to swab the deck and set sail smartly with all the doubloons we've found on this adventure.
- Before I weigh anchor though, **which deckhand will come to help me set sail today?** [Choose a volunteer to come help reveal the Big Idea on the sail.]
- Our Big Idea today is: **I can be wise by choosing God.**

VIDEO | Choose Your Own Adventure, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of Grow TV.

STORY | Act of Faith

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Think of a time you have faced a scary challenge or had to make a difficult decision. Remember what it felt like to be unsure of what you should do and how you had to exercise faith and trust God with a situation. Share your story with the kids, then lead them in a time of discussion. Be sure to keep it kid-friendly and relatable.
- We all face times when we need a lot of faith. We can't see into the future, and some decisions are really hard to make. When you don't have the answer, remind yourself: **I can be wise by choosing God!**

OBJECT LESSON | Sunken Treasure

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Fill one clear container halfway with water and another clear container halfway with vinegar. Prepare two small bags of baking soda. Dump one whole bag of baking soda into the water. It will do nothing but settle at the bottom. Dump a little bit of the other bag of baking soda in the vinegar, and there will be a bubbly reaction. Watch this [video](#) for reference.

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Have a couple of your preteens dress up as scientists to help you with this part of the lesson. If you can get them white “lab coats” or even just safety goggles and long rubber gloves, that will add to the fun. If possible, do this with them before group time or at least make sure they know what to do and when so the timing and the teaching line up.*

- Let’s pretend this baking soda is like our faith, and this first container represents us. When we put our faith in ourselves, not much happens. *[Pour some baking soda into the container with water.]* See? It sort of just sinks to the bottom and makes the liquid cloudy.
- This second container represents God, though, and when we put our faith in God, the reaction is very different. Let’s check it out. *[Pour some baking soda into the container with vinegar.]*
- **What was different that time?**
- Yes! Instead of the baking soda sinking to the bottom, it rose to the top and created bubbles. It’s like finding all this sunken treasure suddenly floating to the surface and overflowing!
- It’s good to believe in yourself and trust yourself, too. But unless our faith in God is greater and comes first, we can’t expect to get very far on our own!
- When we choose to put our faith in God on our adventure, God can unlock all sorts of wonderful things for us . . . things we didn’t even know were possibilities!
- You are a treasure, but the greatest treasure is found by putting our faith in God. Isn’t it a wonderful comfort to know that **I can be wise by choosing God?**

BIBLE | James 5:13-16

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the passage or select volunteers to read.*
- This Bible passage tells us what we can do in various situations we might face in our lives.
 - Verse thirteen says if we’re in trouble, we should pray to God! When things are going well, praise God!
 - Verses fourteen and fifteen tell us what we should do when we are sick. Pray! We can also ask our church leaders to pray with us!
 - Verse sixteen is about sharing with each other things we might be struggling with so we can help each other stay on track.
- One of the best things about being on an adventure with God is that we don’t have to do it alone.
- When Jesus was on Earth, so many people came to Jesus to be healed or helped in other ways. And Jesus was never too busy to pray to God for them, and every last one of them got their prayers answered.
- No matter what we are going through, God wants to be a part of it all! Whether you are living your best life or you are going through some serious lows — or anywhere in between — you can choose wisdom by choosing God.

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

RESPONSE | I Choose God

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Encourage the kids to reflect on times throughout their week when they can choose God over anything else, especially themselves. Afterward, instruct them to write, "I Choose God," on a blank sticker and have them wear it to remind themselves to choose God intentionally this week.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Either print out a blank one-week calendar or have preteens draw one on a piece of paper. Then have them fill in that schedule quickly with some of their big ticket items like school, homework, and sleep, and also discretionary time like hobbies, video games, and screen time. Ask them to cross things off or modify their schedule to show where they can spend more time with God.*
- We decide who we trust, what we believe, and where our faith is through big and small choices we make all week long.
- **How can you choose God more often?**
 - Read your Bible more, even if it means less video game time.
 - Ask another person who loves God to give you advice when you have to make a difficult choice.
 - Have a conversation with God when you are stuck on how to handle a problem instead of trying to fix it all on your own.
- Let's wear our "I Choose God" stickers to remind ourselves to choose God every single time instead of ourselves and others. Because when we choose God, God will give us the wisdom to make better choices for ourselves and others!

ACTIVITY | Shipwrecked List

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Divide the group into small groups of three or four kids. Give each of the groups a poster and markers. Have each group draw a large boat, and inside it, write or draw a list of at least ten things they would want with them if they knew they would be out at sea for one month.*
- I don't know how your boats are staying afloat with all those things you've managed to bring on your month-long sea voyage.
- But oh wait, a mean, old seagull flew by and snatched something from your stash! What did it take? *[Have the kids cross out one item from their list.]*
- Well, it's a good thing you brought lots of supplies. What's that? Cannon fire! One side of your ship got hit and you lost two things this time! *[Have the kids cross off two more items.]*
- That was awful, but thank goodness you were able to save the more important things. Ah! Pirates have come on board to pillage and plunder, and they got away with three of your things! *[Have the kids cross off three things.]*
- You brave voyagers are not having a good day because . . . guess what? Now, your ship is going down and you're shipwrecked on a deserted island! **You managed to save only one thing from your ship. What is it?** *[Have the kids cross out everything but one thing.]*
- **Why did you choose this item to be the last remaining item?**

- The things that are most important to us are what we cherish, protect, and hold on to at all costs. We need to remember to choose God in the same way!

MEMORY VERSE | Buried Treasure

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Divide the kids into two groups. Have a large box made to look like a treasure chest for each team. Fill the box with sand, small “treasure” toys, and the torn pieces from the printable. Instruct the kids to race to the box one at a time, dig through to find one (and only one) slip of paper, and bring it back. Then, the next kid will do the same, and so on. As each kid gets their paper back to their line, have the kids piece the verse together on a table. The first team to complete the verse wins.*

PRAYER

- Dear God, we are so glad you want to be a part of our adventure, even when, sometimes, we forget to include you. Give us faith to choose you over everything else. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **According to Proverbs 3, what are some things that will happen when we follow what God says?**
- **What does it mean to write something on the “tablet of your heart?”**
- **What does the Bible say we should do instead of leaning on our own understanding?**
- **Read James 5:16. What type of person’s prayer is effective?**
- **What is one thing you can pray to God for help about?**
- **What is one thing you can praise God for?**
- **What might choosing God look like for you this week?**

ACTIVITY | Pirate Puppet

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Print the Pirate Puppet printable for each kid. Tell the kids to color their puppet and cut it out. They can also glue on any of the accessories on the sheet. Watch this [video](#) to see how they can “walk” their pirate. If you have time, encourage the kids to come up with a skit for their new puppets!*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Preteens may not be excited about making puppets. Definitely encourage them to create a fun skit to go along with this craft and arrange a time when they could perform it for the younger kids in your ministry.*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *For craft activities like these, make sure you have kids buddy up so that they can get help from their peers should they need it. You should also pre-cut the printable for them (either fully or using a hand perforator to make cutting guides) or provide [adaptive scissors](#).*
- Today’s Bible story told us when we trust in God, God will make our paths straight. Let’s practice walking our puppets in a straight line!

- Our lives may not be perfect and we might experience some curvy, bumpy, and even circular paths. That is why we need to lean on God all the more to guide us.
- Now, say today's Big Idea with me in your best pirate voice: **I can be wise by choosing God!**

MEMORY VERSE | Ephesians 5:15 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/Ephesians5-15.
- Let's practice this month's memory verse together!
- **"Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise."**