

UNIT 1 | SESSION 1

GOD CREATED THE WORLD

GENESIS 1-2



CHRIST CONNECTION: By faith, we believe that God created the whole world by His word. (Hebrews 11:3) Jesus, the Word of God, is Lord over all of creation. Everything was created by Him and for Him. The Son has always existed, and He holds everything together. (Colossians 1:16-17)

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is God? God is our Creator and the King of everything.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 104:24

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: Rest



PREPARE

FOR THE SESSION

PLAN the Session

- Pray, asking God to prepare your heart to teach and the hearts of kids to receive His Word.
- Read the *Leader Bible Study* and review the session plan.
- Decide which *Welcome* activities to prepare for the session.
- Familiarize yourself with the *Learn* section enough to teach naturally.
- Organize discipleship groups, including a plan for new kids.
- Print a copy of the *Live* for each discipleship group leader.

LEADER Bible Study

Rest: to cease activity with the goal of growing both in love for God and the desire to continue serving Him.

This week we begin to talk about a spiritual discipline that many desire, yet few would say they experience enough: rest. Unlike some of the other disciplines we'll be covering, kids are familiar with the concept of rest, but most have probably not thought about it in spiritual terms. But in this week's Bible story, we see that rest was not only established by God at creation, He partook in it as well.

Our Bible focus for Midweek this week is the same passage as the kids studied during Bible study, Genesis 1–2. The first 34 verses of the Bible cover seven days, and God set the entirety of one of those days aside to rest. He spent just over 14% of the creation account resting. And the crazy part is, God doesn't need rest! He is unchanging, constant, steady, and does not grow weary. So why did He devote so much time to resting? Because He knew that we were going to need it. He knew that as humans, we would grow tired and weary, and that exhaustion would drive us further away from Him.

He created rest as a gift to humanity. But how often do we see rest as a gift? Our society is much more likely to brag about a full schedule, how few hours of sleep we're running off, or how many cups of coffee we've consumed. If we saw rest as a gift, we would instead boast in the goodness of God in providing empty weekends at home, the peace of God in nights unmarked by the stress of our job, or the call of God to live a countercultural life as we say no to overcommitting ourselves or our kids.

Over the next few weeks, we'll lead kids to see that the spiritual discipline of rest is more than just taking a nap, sleeping in late, or playing video games. They'll see that it is a way to take a break from our normal routine to seek a deeper connection with God. As you prepare to lead this week, pray that you would choose to see rest as a gift from God and that you would seek opportunities to draw closer to Him through quiet, still moments.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach



WELCOME

5-10 MINUTES

Welcome kids to the session



LEARN

15-20 MINUTES

Learn how to practice spiritual disciplines



LOVE

10-15 MINUTES

Love God by practicing a spiritual discipline



LIVE

20-30 MINUTES

Live for God through discipleship



PREPARE

FOR 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

Option 1: Roll a brain break

- dry erase board
- dry erase marker
- dice, 2 in different colors

Option 2: Really restful

- "Really Restful" printable

Option 3: Key passage creatures

- Key passage poster



LEARN

No supplies needed.



LOVE

Option 1: Watercolor creation

- white construction paper, 1 piece per kid
- paint brushes
- small cups of water
- watercolors

Option 2: Sensory bags

- gallon ziplock bags, 1 per kid
- hair gel, 1 cup per kid
- food color
- glitter or sequins (optional)
- duct tape
- "Key Passage Sensory Bag" printable, 1 per kid



LIVE

Get everyone talking

- toy microphone or item to represent a microphone (optional)
- inflatable beach ball (optional)
- permanent marker (optional)

Discuss Learn time

- poster board or large sheet of paper (optional)
- blindfold (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Choose one or all of these activities to engage kids as they arrive. You may choose to prepare all activities to repeat throughout the unit or prepare a different activity to use each week.

OPTION 1: ROLL A BRAIN BREAK

Prior to the activity, write the following numbers and actions on a dry erase board: 1–jumping jacks, 2–toe touches, 3–lie on the ground and count to 10, 4–spin around, 5–give someone a high-five, 6–hop on one foot. Lead kids to form a circle. Give one kid the two different color dice to roll, one color will determine the action and the other will determine how many times kids will complete the action. Continue playing, giving different kids turns to roll the dice.

OPTION 2: REALLY RESTFUL

Prior to the session, print and cut apart the “Really Restful” printable. Give each kid one of the cards and challenge the group to line themselves up according to which activities they consider least restful to most restful. Play additional rounds with added challenges such as no one can talk, the cards are taped to the kids’ backs so they don’t know what activity they have, or they must act out the activity on the card.

OPTION 3: KEY PASSAGE CREATURES

Show the key passage poster and read it as a group several times. Call out an animal and then challenge the kids to say the key passage as that animal would, for example a sloth would say the verse very slowly. Some other animal ideas include elephant, cat, parrot, frog, fish, snake, and bumblebee.



LEARN

LEARN about rest (15–20 minutes)

1 REVIEW SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

SAY ““ During this time each week we come together to learn about and practice spiritual disciplines. ””

What is a spiritual discipline? [Allow responses.]

SAY ““ A spiritual discipline is a practice, or a repeated action, that we do to help us grow in love for God and godliness. Some examples of spiritual disciplines are worship, prayer, celebration, fasting, Bible study, service, rest, and generosity. Let’s get started with a game! ””

2 GROUP GAME: CEASE!

Invite kids to spread out around the game area. Explain that you will give a command, which they will do until you call out “Cease!” When they hear the word “Cease!” they will quickly lie down on the ground until they hear the next command. Continue play as time allows, offering kids turns to call out the commands.

SAY ““ We don’t use the word ‘cease’ very often, but based on the game we just played what do you think the word ‘cease’ means? [Allow responses.] That’s right! It means to stop, to halt, or to put an end to something. That’s why when I called out ‘Cease,’ you stopped whatever action you were doing. ””

3 INTRODUCE THE DISCIPLINE OF REST

SAY ““ Today we are beginning to focus on the spiritual discipline of rest. The word rest is probably familiar to you, but you may not have thought about how it connects to our walk with God. ””

What do you think of when you hear the word “rest”? [Allow responses.]

SAY ““ Those are all great thoughts. Most of us thought of actions like sleep, quiet time, a nap, or maybe lounging on the couch and watching TV or playing a video game. Those activities can be restful, but we’re going to talk about a more specific type of rest: the spiritual discipline of rest. ””

Let’s think back to the game we just played. What do you think the word ‘cease’ has to do with the discipline of rest? [Allow responses.]

SAY ““ Over the next five weeks, we are going to define rest as ceasing activity with the goal of growing in love for God and the desire to continue serving Him. So, while activities like sleep, reading, playing video games, or watching TV can be part of the spiritual discipline of rest, that’s not all there is to it. That’s because the spiritual discipline of rest involves ceasing, or stopping, our normal schedule or tasks and slowing down, with the goal of growing closer to God. ””



LEARN

4 READ THE BIBLE

In Bible study this week, we learned about creation. What did we see God create?
[Allow responses.]

SAY “ That’s right, God made the heavens and the earth. Then He made light, sky, land, and oceans. He made the moon, the sun, and the stars to help us separate days and months. God created so many wonderful plants, trees, fruits, and vegetables! And He used His creativity to make animals and fish and birds. And then He created Adam and Eve. ”

Read Genesis 1:31.

In how many days did all of this creating happen? [Allow responses.]

SAY “ Yes, God created the entire world and everything in it in six days. God saw that His creation was good. Let’s read Genesis 2:1-3 to see what He does next. ”

Wow! Did you notice it? What did God do on the seventh day? [Allow responses.]

SAY “ After He completed His work during the first six days, God rested. And not only that, He said that the seventh day would be special, or holy. ”

Do you think God was tired? [Allow responses.]

SAY “ No, God never becomes tired. We call that inexhaustible. The Bible tells us this in Isaiah 40:28, which says ‘Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the whole earth. He never becomes faint or weary; there is no limit to his understanding.’ ”

So if God never grows faint, weary, or tired, then why did He choose to rest?
[Allow responses.]

SAY “ God knew that we, as humans, would need to rest. He knew that our bodies, minds, and souls would need to take a break from our normal routine and focus on Him. So He gave us an example right at the start of creation! Think back to our game, if I had just kept calling out different actions without saying ‘Cease!’ do you think you could have kept going on and on? The break helped revive you and give you energy for the next movement. We follow God’s example when we practice the spiritual discipline of rest. ”

5 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ Jesus has always existed. Even though we don’t read His name during the story of creation in Genesis, we can see that He is present when we read Genesis 1:26 which says ‘Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.’” God uses the word ‘us’ because God the Spirit and God the Son, or Jesus, were both there as well. From the very beginning of the Bible, we see God’s plan to send a Savior take form. ”



LEARN

6 GROUP ACTIVITY: SLOW MOTION

Lead the kids to spread out around the play space. Explain that you will give them a movement to do, but they must do it in slow motion. Movement ideas include shooting a basketball, dancing ballet, jogging, swinging a baseball bat, playing a violin, skipping, jumping rope, or playing hopscotch.

SAY “ It probably felt weird to do those actions in slow motion, and when you saw other people around the room moving so slowly it probably looked silly. Those are activities that are normally done quickly, so it is noticeable when we slow them down. This can be how it feels when we first begin to practice the spiritual discipline of rest. We are not used to slowing down our schedules or our lives, so it feels weird or different when we first do so. But God asks us to rest, and He even gave us an example! So it is worth it to feel a little unusual at first, because as we continue to practice rest, we will become more and more used to it and appreciative of those times of slowing down. ”

7 FOLLOW UP ON LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE

| **SAY** “ Last week, our challenge was to share three reasons you can worship God with your family. ”

How did the challenge go? What were some of your reasons to worship God?

[Allow responses.]

8 INTRODUCE THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

| **SAY** “ This week, our challenge is to draw your favorite part of creation and then pray and thank God for giving us the perfect example of what it means to work and rest well. ”

9 CLOSE IN PRAYER

Use the scripted prayer below or pray in your own words.

| **SAY** “ God, thank You for all that You have created and thank You for finishing Your time of creation with a day of rest. Help us to follow Your example and choose to rest. Amen. ”



LOVE God by practicing rest (10–15 minutes)

Choose one of these two options as a way to lead children to practice the spiritual discipline of rest.

OPTION 1: WATERCOLOR CREATION

Distribute pieces of white construction paper, watercolors, paint brushes, and small cups of water. Read Genesis 1–2:3 aloud and encourage the kids to paint what is being described. They can either paint the entire story of creation or focus on one aspect that especially stands out to them. Afterward, encourage kids to show their creations to the rest of the group and describe what they chose to paint and why.

OPTION 2: SENSORY BAGS

Give each kid a gallon ziplock bag. Help them put about a cup of hair gel and a few drops of food color into the bag. They can also add glitter or sequins, if available. Press the excess air out of the bags and seal them, then completely cover the seal with a strip of duct tape. You may also want to reinforce the other three sides of the bag using duct tape. After the sensory bags have been made, distribute the “Key Passage Sensory Bag” printable to each kid. Show kids how to place the printable under the sensory bag and then trace the letters through the bag using their fingers. Depending on your group size, you may prefer to make the sensory bags prior to the session.



LIVE for God through discipleship (20–30 minutes)

Form discipleship groups to provide a safe environment for kids to share with one another. Limit groups to ideally no more than five children and one adult leader. Prioritize forming groups according to gender first, then age. Adult leaders should never be alone with children.

1 EMPHASIZE GOSPEL SAFETY

Explain that discipleship time is a special time because we share the deep things in our hearts with one another. All must work together to create a safe place. Consider these three rules:

1. Listen when someone is talking.
2. Only comment when the person sharing invites you to do so.
3. In general, what is shared in the group should stay in the group. The only exception is talking with a trusted adult if it would help either you or the person who shared.

Note: Be sure to follow local laws and ministry policies concerning any report or suspicion of abuse or neglect.

2 GET EVERYONE TALKING

Choose one of the options below to encourage children to engage with one another.

OPTION 1: SHARE HIGHS AND LOWS

Sit in a circle. Share a high point and a low point of your week. Model honesty and vulnerability in an age-appropriate way. Then go around the circle, inviting each child to share his or her high and low for the week.

OPTION 2: PASS THE MIC

Use a toy microphone or another item to represent a microphone. Ask a question, such as “What is your favorite color and why?” “What is something you do most Saturdays?” or “If you could be an animal, which one would you choose?” Ask and answer the question yourself and then pass the microphone to a child to answer. After answering, that child will pass the microphone to another child and so forth.

OPTION 3: TOSS A BEACH BALL

Inflate a beach ball before the session. Use a permanent marker to write a question in each section of the ball. Toss the ball to a child. Invite her to answer the question in the section that her left thumb touches. Continue tossing the ball until each child has a turn.



3 DISCUSS LEARN TIME

Choose an option below to engage kids with the following questions.

1. What is something you learned today?
2. What does it mean to practice the spiritual discipline of rest?
3. How do you think God is calling you to respond to what you learned?

OPTION 1: PICK A CARD

Write each question on an index card. Fan the cards in your hand where kids cannot see the questions. Invite a kid to pick a card and answer the question.

OPTION 2: DRAW A QUESTION

Write each question on a slip of paper. Fold the papers and place them in a basket or bin. Invite children to take turns drawing a question and answering it.

OPTION 3: PIN THE FINGER ON THE QUESTION

Write the questions on poster board and display them on a wall. Invite a child to wear a blindfold or close his eyes. Spin him around three times and guide him to touch the poster board. Remove the blindfold. Lead him to answer the question closest to his finger.

4 WALK IN THE LIGHT

Read 1 John 1:7. Explain that this is a time for honesty with one another as we answer the questions: How has it been hard for you to obey God this week? Where are you struggling? Guide children not to offer advice or try to fix the problem but simply to pray.

Answer the question or confess sin in an age-appropriate way to model confession. Ask a volunteer to pray for you. Choose one of the following ways to lead children to walk in the light. Do not force a child to share or pray.

- Form a circle. Go around the circle, giving each child an opportunity to share her struggles. Ask a volunteer to pray for her.
- Form pairs. Take turns sharing and praying for each other.
- Give each child a sheet of paper. Allow children to write or draw their answer to the question. Mix up the papers and distribute one to each child to pray for silently.