

2.1 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



Copy That, Copycat

The Two Very Brave Spies

BIG IDEA: God helps me be brave.

BIBLE BASIS: Numbers 13:1–14:10

KEY VERSE: “Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid...I will be with you everywhere you go.” Joshua 1:9 (NIRV)

SCHEDULE

PLAY TIME ACTIVITIES

10:30-11:00

LARGE GROUP LESSON

11:00-11:30

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

11:30-12:00

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

A few years back, I had an opportunity to go paragliding in Interlaken, Switzerland. This is one of those things that most of my friends would call “stupid.” I prefer “adventurous.” Basically, the way it works is you get strapped to a parachute, go running off the side of a mountain, hope the wind catches you, and glide down to the bottom.

Now, the whole idea of paragliding would be absolutely terrifying...if I was alone. But I wasn't. I had a guide strapped to the parachute with me. This guy had taken hundreds of people down this mountain. He knew the terrain. He knew how to pilot the parachute. He was with me. Sometimes the ride was slow and steady. Other times, he'd dip the parachute suddenly and my stomach would drop. A few times he spiraled us downward so fast I was certain the cables would snap and I'd go plummeting to my death. But the truth is that I was safe with him. Life with God is kind of like that. It would be absolutely terrifying if you were alone. But you're not alone. You can follow God wherever He leads because He knows the terrain. He made the terrain! He knows how to pilot your life in order to get you safely to the ground. He is with you and you are safe.

With a God like that, courageous is the only way to live.

Casey Jordan
GO! Contributor



LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Gestures: Get Your Hands in the Game

For some people, using their hands while talking comes quite naturally. In fact, we probably all know someone who talks so much with their hands you might wonder if they've made up their own version of sign language. For others, not so much. Their hands hang like dead weights as if they were anchors keeping them from floating into space. Regardless of where you fall on the spectrum, harnessing the communication power of your hands is very important. If you use them well, they'll grab the interest of your audience and reinforce your message. On the other hand (pun intended), if you don't have command of your hands, they can betray your message. Here are a few tips to help put your hands to work:

Recognize the communication power of your hands: Wrap your brain around this: your hands are *a/ways* communicating. It is impossible not to say something with your hands (or any of your body, for that matter). The sooner you grasp this, the sooner you can begin making them say what you want.

Avoid distracting gestures: There are certain gestures that can distract the audience and betray your message. Hands hanging low, hands in pockets, hands on hips, and arms crossed can communicate disinterest or nervousness.

Make your hands match your mouth: If you're telling kids how exciting God's Word is, but you have your hands in your pockets, your hands are betraying your message. Your mouth is saying "exciting," but your hands are saying "boring." Choose gestures that match and strengthen your message.

Be spontaneous: For a lot of people, their hands naturally reflect their inner thoughts and emotions. The more comfortable you are with your audience, the more your hands will "speak." So, relax and let them go to work!

Be intentional: Spontaneity is great, but sometimes you need to be intentional about the gestures you make. Look through your next lesson. Choose one or two places to use an intentional gesture. During an intense moment of battle, you might clench your fists. When you're telling the kids about God's enormous love for them, you might spread your hands far apart. Decide what you want to do and practice ahead of time.

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UNIT DESCRIPTION

When it comes to telling Bible stories, the copycat is where it's at! During "Copy That, Copycat," preschool kids will be introduced to Otis the cat. Otis is a hand puppet that copies what the children do. As the children act out the Bible story, so does Otis! As the stories unfold, Otis and the preschoolers will learn that God helps them be brave and make good choices.

SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

- Place the "Otis the cat" hand puppet in the storytelling area. This puppet will be used for all 4 weeks of the unit. Inexpensive cat hand puppets can be found on Amazon as well as other online and local stores.
- Print the "Scary Things" pictures on 8½ x 11 cardstock and place in the storytelling area.
- Create a "Super Duper Bible Box" and place your storytelling Bible inside. This box will be used every week. See the Resource Folder for details on how to make the "Super Duper Bible Box."
- If using the non-video options for the Topher segments of the lesson, print the Topher's Storytime Rules signs and Topher's Big Idea signs on 8½ x 11 cardstock paper and place in the story time area. See "Getting Started" in the Resource Folder for the printable signs and for more instructions on how to perform the non-video options.
- Note: Any media repeated throughout the unit, such as the Topher videos and the title slide, is located in the Lesson 1 Resource Folder only.

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★ LARGE GROUP LESSON

WELCOME AND MUSIC

As children enter the story time area, give them a high-energy welcome — smile, wave, give high fives, and tell them you're glad to see them. For added energy during the transition, play a fun song that the children are familiar with. When the children have all arrived, play one or two upbeat worship songs of your choosing and lead the kids in singing.

Music: Play one or two upbeat worship songs

BIG IDEA AND BIBLE VERSE

Large Group Leader: Hello my little friends — it's so good to see you at church today! In just a little bit, I'm going to introduce you to a new friend. His name is Otis the cat. Otis is going to help us tell today's Bible story.

Say: Today's true Bible story is going to teach us that **God helps me be brave**. That's our Big Idea for the day. Let's say it together. *(Repeat Big Idea with children.)* **God helps me be brave.** It's true! **God helps me be brave.** In fact, that's what today's memory verse is all about. Let me teach it to you.

*"Be strong (flex muscles)
and brave (power pose with fists on hips).
Do not be afraid (shake head and wag finger "no")...
I will be with you (hug yourself)
everywhere you go (march in place).
Joshua 1:9 (extend hands like you're holding a book)."*

Say: Let's do that together. *(Repeat Memory Verse with children 2 or 3 times.)*

STORY TIME RULES

Say: Wow — nice job! I think you kids are ready for the Bible story. Before we get started, though, I think we should go over our three story time rules.

Video: Play "Topher the Gopher Story Time Rules" video

(Note: Play the "Topher the Gopher Story Time Rules" video or use the Story Time Rules script found in the Resource Folder.)

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COPY THAT, COPYCAT INTRO

Say: I think it's time for you to meet our new friend, Otis the cat. Otis is a little bit shy. Maybe if we call to him in a friendly voice, he'll come out. Let's say, "Meow-meow, Otis, meow-meow." *(Say with children. Secretly slip your hand into the cat puppet and make Otis peek out from behind your other arm.)* It's working! Otis is peeking out. Let's say it again and maybe he'll come all the way out. *(Say with children again. Make Otis come all the way out.)* You did it! Can you wave to Otis and say, "hello"? *(Children wave and say "hello." Make Otis wave back.)*

Say: There's something else you need to know about Otis. He's not just a regular cat — he's a copycat. Otis loves to copy what kids do. Let me show you what I mean. When I point to you, clap your hands 3 times. *(Point to children. Children clap.)* Now let's say, "Copy that, copycat!" *(Say with children, then make Otis copy what the children did.)* Did you see that? Otis clapped 3 times just like you. That gives me an idea. During the Bible story, we can act the story out, then Otis can copy us. That way, we can all learn the story together.

Say: If you're ready to hear the true Bible story, meow like a kitty cat. *(Children meow.)* Great! First, let's get our Bible out of the Super Duper Bible Box. *(Move to the Super Duper Bible Box.)* I need your help getting the Bible out, though. We need to say our special Bible words together. Repeat these special words after me: It's true, it's true, the Bible is true!

Slide: Show "The Two Very Brave Spies" slide

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BIG BIBLE STORY — THE TWO VERY BRAVE SPIES

Say: In the Bible, in the Book of Numbers, God told Moses, “I want you and your people to move to the land of Canaan. Send 12 men to check it out.” So that’s what Moses did. He sent 12 spies to spy on the land of Canaan. **Let’s stand up and tippy toe like we’re the 12 spies sneaking into Canaan.** (*Pretend with children.*) Now let’s say, “Copy that, copycat!” (*Say with children, then make Otis copy what the children did.*)

Say: For many days and many nights, the 12 spies spied on Canaan. When they came back, they had lots of fruit with them. The fruit was SO BIG that it took two spies to carry just one bunch of grapes. **Let’s pretend like we’re lifting a heavy bunch of grapes.** (*Pretend with children.*) Now let’s say, “Copy that, copycat!” (*Say with children, then make Otis copy what the children did.*)

Say: Some of the spies told Moses, “The fruit isn’t the only BIG thing in Canaan. They have BIG walls surrounding their BIG cities with BIG people inside. We can’t defeat them — we’re like tiny little grasshoppers compared to them.” When the people of Israel heard what the spies said, they were scared and shook with fear. **Let’s pretend to shake with fear like the people of Israel.** (*Pretend with children.*) Now let’s say, “Copy that, copycat!” (*Say with children, then make Otis copy what the children did.*)

Say: But not all of the spies were scaredy-cats. There were two brave spies named Joshua and Caleb. They said to Moses and the people, “Do not be afraid. God is with us, so nothing can stop us. We will swallow those big people up!” **Let’s be brave and flex our muscles like Joshua and Caleb.** (*Pretend with children.*) Now let’s say, “Copy that, copycat!” (*Say with children, then make Otis copy what the children did.*)

Say: Because of their bravery, God blessed Joshua and Caleb. And one day, God would make Joshua and Caleb the leaders who took His people into the new land.

Say: Wow — you and Otis did such a great job telling the Bible story! Otis has to leave now. **Let’s wave to him and say, “Goodbye!”** (*As children wave goodbye, make Otis wave back, then discreetly slip him off of your hand and put him away.*)

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MUSIC AND CLOSING

(Encourage the children to stand up. Lead them in a worship song of your choice. Following the song, use the rhyme from earlier to help the children sit down again.)

Music: Play one worship song

Say: In today's true Bible story, some of the spies were VERY afraid of the big people in Canaan, but there were two brave spies who said, "Don't be afraid (*shake head and wag finger "no"*). God is with us (*hug yourself*). When something scary happens, we can say that too.

Say: Let's practice. (*Hold up the picture of a big dog. Ask the children if they're ever afraid of big dogs. Next, lead them in saying the following with hand motions.*) When we see a big dog, we can say, "Don't be afraid. God is with us." (*Repeat this pattern for each of the pictures listed.*)

- Big dogs
- Big storms
- Dark rooms
- Going to the dentist
- Going to a new preschool

Say: Sometimes scary things seem big, but our God is BIGGER! God is strong. God is powerful. And best of all, God is with you, so you don't need to be afraid. Just like God helped the two spies be brave, **God helps you be brave too!**

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TOPHER'S BIG IDEA

Say: Hey — that's our Big Idea for today! I think we should tell it to our parents when we see them. Maybe we should practice first. (*Appear to be thinking.*) Hmm...who could we practice telling? I know! We could tell our friend, Topher the Gopher. Let's see if we can find him.

Video: Play "Topher's Big Idea Video"

(Whisper.) Uh-oh. It looks like Topher is asleep. I think we should wake him up. When he wakes up, we can all tell him that **God helps me be brave**. On the count of 3, let's all yell, "Topher the Gopher, wake up, wake up!" (*Count to 3 and yell with kids. Then play "Topher's Big Idea Video 2" or hold up card #2.*)

Topher: Hey, what's the Big Idea?

Children and Large Group Leader: **God helps me be brave.** (*Repeat the Big Idea several times. When finished, play "Topher's Big Idea Video 3" or hold up card #3.*)

Topher: Wow! That is a Big Idea! Thanks for telling me! Goodbye kids. (*Encourage kids to wave goodbye to Topher as he disappears back into his hole.*)

Large Group Leader: Let's say a prayer together and ask God to help us be brave when something scary happens. (*Encourage kids to repeat the following prayer after you.*)

**Dear God,
You are bigger...
Than all of the things that scare me.
Please help me to be brave
When something scary happens.
Amen.**