



Copy That, Copycat

Eli's Two Boys

BIG IDEA: God helps me make good choices.

BIBLE BASIS: 1 Samuel 2:12–26

KEY VERSE: “If you love me, obey my commands.” John 14:15 (NIRV)

SCHEDULE

PLAY TIME ACTIVITIES

15–20 minutes

LARGE GROUP LESSON

20–25 minutes

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

25–35 minutes

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

In *Alice in Wonderland*, the 1951 Disney classic, Alice is lost in the woods when she encounters the Cheshire Cat, a mischievous but surprisingly astute character. “I just wanted to ask you which way I ought to go,” Alice says. “Well,” the Cheshire Cat retorts, “that depends on where you want to get to.” Alice, unsure, replies “Oh, it really doesn’t matter, as long as I....” Interrupting, the Cheshire Cat points out, “Then, it really doesn’t matter which way you go!”

Do you know where you’re going? Have you ever thought about it? If you don’t, then it really doesn’t matter which way you go, does it?

What if you *could* know? What if God had a glorious destination in mind for you? What if He had a full, vibrant, deeply satisfying life ahead? What if He told you how to get there?

He does and He has. His Word leads us and guides us. Follow it. Follow *Him*.

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.

2.3 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



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.
- Place a box of Goldfish crackers 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.

2.3 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



★ 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 boys and girls! Today is such a happy day! Do you know why? *(Children respond.)* Today is a happy day because we're at church together! God loves when we come to church and learn about His Bible. In just a little bit, we're going to learn about the Bible with the help of Otis the cat.

Say: Today's true Bible story is going to teach us that **God helps me make good choices.** That's our Big Idea for the day. Let's say it together. *(Repeat Big Idea with children.)* **God helps me make good choices.** It's true! **God helps me make good choices.** 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.)

2.3 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



COPY THAT, COPYCAT INTRO

Say: I think we're ready for Otis to join us. Otis is a little bit shy, though. 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, Otis comes all the way out and sees the box of goldfish crackers. Make Otis try to eat the crackers.*)

Say: Oh no, Otis is trying to eat the goldfish crackers. He knows he's not supposed to eat people food. Maybe Otis needs to hear our Big Idea for the day. On the count of 3, let's tell Otis, **"God helps me make good choices."** (*Count to 3 and repeat with children. Pull Otis away from the box of Goldfish crackers.*) I think it worked — God helped Otis make a good choice!

Say: You know — that reminds me of today's Bible story. In our true story, God helps a boy named Samuel make good choices. If you're ready to hear that 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 "Eli's Two Boys" slide

2.3 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



BIG BIBLE STORY — ELI'S TWO BOYS

Say: In the Bible, in the Book of 1 Samuel, God's people brought gifts and offerings of food to give to God. **Let's pretend like we're God's people walking with arms full of food.** (*Pretend with children.*) Now let's see if Otis will copy us. Let's say, "Copy that, copycat!" (*Say with children, then make Otis copy what the children did.*)

Say: There was a man named Eli who had two sons. The two sons made some bad choices. They were supposed to collect the food for God, but they stole the food instead. While the food was still cooking, the two boys would stick a big fork into the pot. Whatever food was stuck to the fork, the two boys would keep for themselves. **Let's pretend like we're sticking a fork in the pot and pulling out food.** (*Pretend with children.*) Now let's see if Otis will copy us. Let's say, "Copy that, copycat!" (*Say with children, then make Otis copy what the children did.*)

Say: The two boys had a servant. Sometimes the boys would send their servant to the people who were bringing food to God. Their servant would say, "Give me the food NOW!" If the person said, "Please let me cook it first," the servant would be mean. He would say, "NO! Give it to me right now or I'll take it away from you!" This made God very sad. **Let's shake our head and make a very sad face.** (*Pretend with children.*) Now let's see if Otis will copy us. Let's say, "Copy that, copycat!" (*Say with children, then make Otis copy what the children did.*)

Say: But there was another boy named Samuel who loved God very much. As little Samuel grew up, God was with him and helped him make good choices. Unlike the two boys, little Samuel listened to God and did what He said. **Let's clap 3 times for Samuel.** (*Clap with children.*) Now let's say, "Copy that, copycat!" (*Say with children, then make Otis copy the children.*)

Say: When Eli heard what his two sons were doing, he said to them, "Everyone is talking about the bad things you're doing. Why are you doing these things?" Eli told his sons to stop stealing food from God, but the two boys wouldn't listen and they kept on stealing food anyway. **Let's pretend like we're covering our ears and not listening.** (*Pretend with children.*) Now let's say, "Copy that, copycat!" (*Say with children, then make Otis copy what the children did.*)

Say: Not Samuel, though. He continued to grow strong and wise. The people who knew Samuel were very pleased with him and so was God. **Let's give ourselves a big hug.** (*Pretend with children.*) Now let's say, "Copy that, copycat!" (*Say with children, then make Otis copy the children.*)

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.*)

2.3 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



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, Eli's two sons did a very bad thing. They stole food from God. But did little Samuel steal food too? *(Children respond.)* No way! Samuel showed love to God by obeying His commands. God helped Samuel make good choices and He helps us make good choices too!

Say: I have an idea — let's practice saying "no" to bad choices. When I point to you, let's all shout, "No! I will obey God's commands." Let's give it a try. *(After saying each line below, point to the children and say, "No! I will obey God's commands." After each one, ask the children what good choice they could make instead.)*

- When you feel like telling your mom a lie, you can say...
- When your brother pushes you and you want to push him back, you can say...
- When you see a toy you like and want to steal it, you can say...

Say: When we obey God's commands and make good choices, we show Him that we love Him. But making good choices can be hard sometimes. Fortunately, God helps us. When we struggle to obey God's commands, we can pray to Him and ask for help. **God helps us make good choices.**

2.3 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



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 make good choices**. 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 make good choices.** *(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 make good choices. *(Encourage kids to repeat the following prayer after you.)*

**Dear God,
Sometimes I want to do bad things.
Please help me say "no."
And help me make a good choice.
I love you so much, God.
Amen.**