

3.1 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



Uh Oh Topher

The Temple is Built

BIG IDEA: I can praise God with music.

BIBLE BASIS: 2 Chronicles 5

KEY VERSE: “With people, this is impossible. But with God, all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26

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

We live with what psychologists call the “illusion of control.” We think that with enough planning and enough preparation, we can determine the exact outcome of any situation.

It’s the athlete who always wears (and never washes) his lucky pair of socks, convinced that if he fails to do so, his team is doomed to failure. It’s the gambler who thinks he has a particular gift for choosing lottery tickets and is certain that one day his ability will pay off big. As a kid, my brothers and I would do what we called the “Midnight Dance” (really more like the 8:00 p.m. Dance), believing that if we danced our little hearts out, a snow day would inevitably follow. We all have things we think give us control in situations over which we have none.

Only God is exempt from the illusion of control, for it is no illusion. He is, to use a fancy Bible word, *sovereign* over His universe. There is nothing out of His reach. There is no person so far gone that He cannot get to them. There is no situation so hopeless that He cannot act. He not only wants the best for us, but can also do something about it.

The appropriate response to God’s sovereignty is praise. We praise Him not only with music and voice, but also with our lives. We give Him not only glory but also trust. We worship Him not only for what He has done, but also simply for who He is.

Casey Jordan
GO! Contributor



LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Using Kid-friendly Language

It may be true that we've been washed in the blood of Jesus for the atonement of our sins and the redemption of our souls, but you might want to pause before telling that to a kid. The Christian faith is rich with imagery and vocabulary! To a kid, though, some of it might be confusing, overwhelming, and even frightening at times. If you don't want your kids to look at you like you're speaking Klingon, consider the following advice:

Be mindful of your language. The biggest part of solving a problem is recognizing that it exists. For some of us, we don't even realize that the words we're using with kids are a little advanced.

Develop a kid-thesaurus. No — that's not a dinosaur! Begin developing kid-friendly language to replace some of the bigger words you might use. For example, instead of saying "redeemed," you might say "set free." Instead of saying, "washed in the blood," you might say "forgiven of our sins."

Be intentional with new words. Not only is it okay to introduce new words to kids, it's instrumental. Part of developing kids into functioning members of the church is helping them understand the language, but be purposeful with your new words instead of just using them haphazardly.

Don't introduce too many new words too quickly. It can take kids a little bit of time to understand and absorb new words and concepts. If you throw too many new words at them too quickly, they may not remember any of them.

Use the word, define the word, use the word. When you introduce kids to a new word, first use it in its right context. Next, define the word using simple and clear language. Finally, use the word multiple times so kids can really digest it. You may even want to have the kids repeat the word after you so they can really familiarize themselves with it.

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UNIT DESCRIPTION

That mischievous little gopher has done it again! Topher the Gopher has burrowed his way into our room while we weren't looking. He got his paws on the story pictures from the true Bible story and hid them around the room. But the story must go on! It's up to the kids to find the hidden pictures so the story can be told. During the silly search, kids will learn that God is always with them and that He hears them when they talk to Him.

SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

- Print the "Uh Oh Topher" story illustrations on 8½ x 11 cardstock paper. Hide the pictures around the room in locations that are at least partially visible from where the children will be seated. You can make some of the pictures a little harder to find than others.
- 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 everybody, I'm so glad you're here today because I REALLY need your help. Our Bible story pictures are missing and I think I know who took them. I'll give you a hint: he's a furry little rascal with two big front teeth! (*Children respond.*) That's right — it's Topher the Gopher! In just a little bit, we'll search for the missing pictures and tell our Bible story.

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

“With people (*point to self with thumbs*),
this is impossible (*make big “X” with arms*).
But with God (*point up*),
all things are possible (*two thumbs up*).”
Matthew 19:26 (*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 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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UH OH TOPHER INTRO

Say: Maybe we should get started by finding Topher the Gopher. I know that silly little gopher is hiding around here somewhere. Stay seated, but look around the room. If you see where he's hiding, point to him and say, "Uh oh, Topher!" *(Allow children time to look for Topher. If they have trouble finding him, give clues. Once Topher is found, remove him from his hiding spot.)*

Say: This is Topher the Gopher. He's a silly little gopher who does silly little things. This morning, he did something super silly. He took the story pictures from our Bible story and hid them around the room. If we don't find those pictures, we're going to have trouble telling the story. So what do you think — should we look for the story pictures together? *(Children respond.)*

Say: If you're ready to find the missing pictures and hear the true Bible story, clap your hands 3 times. *(Children clap.)* 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 "The Temple is Built" slide

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BIG BIBLE STORY — THE TEMPLE IS BUILT

(Note: Ahead of time, hide the story pictures around the room in locations that are at least partially visible from where the children will be seated. You can make some of the pictures a little harder to find than others.)

Say: I think it's time to find our first missing picture. Does anyone see the picture of a **building**? It kind of looks like a castle. *(Allow children time to look for the picture. Give clues if needed. Once found, remove the picture from its hiding place and hold it up for children to see.)* In the Bible, in the Book of 2nd Chronicles, King Solomon gave orders to build a temple. A temple is like a beautiful house for God.

Say: Let's see if we can find the next picture. Does anyone see the picture of **some worker men**? *(Children look for picture. Hold it up once it's found.)* King Solomon chose some workers to help build the temple. There were more than 150,000 workers — that's a LOT of workers. The workers carried things. Let's pretend like we're carrying something heavy. *(Pretend with children.)* The workers hammered things. Let's pretend like we're hammering. *(Pretend with children.)* The workers sawed things. Let's pretend like we're sawing. *(Pretend with children.)* Great job!

Say: Let's see if we can find the next picture. Does anyone see the picture of some **gold coins**? *(Children look for picture. Hold it up once it's found.)* When the temple was put together, King Solomon covered the inside with gold. The walls were covered in gold, the ceiling was covered in gold, the doors were covered in gold, and there were jewels decorating everything. It was the most amazing temple, built for the most amazing God!

Say: Let's see if we can find the next picture. Does anyone see the picture of a **gold box with angels on top**? *(Children look for picture. Hold it up once it's found.)* When the temple was decorated, Solomon had a special box put inside. The box was called the Ark of the Covenant. Can you say "Ark of the Covenant" with me? *(Repeat with children.)* The Ark of the Covenant is where God's most special belongings were kept.

Say: Let's see if we can find the next picture. Does anyone see the picture of a **trumpet**? *(Children look for picture. Hold it up once it's found.)* When everything was finished, the people of Israel gathered for a BIG celebration. The people played instruments for God. They praised Him with trumpets, and cymbals, and harps. Then they sang out to God, "The Lord is good. His faithful love continues forever." I have an idea — let's sing to God just like the people of Israel did.

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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, the people of Israel built a beautiful house for God. When they were finished, they praised God with musical instruments and sang, "The Lord is good. His faithful love continues forever."

Say: Hey — I've got an idea! We can praise God with musical instruments too! In fact, our hands are like musical instruments. Let's clap for God 3 times. *(Clap 3 times with children.)* Now repeat after me, "The Lord is good." *(Point to children. Children repeat.)* "His faithful love continues forever." *(Point to children. Children repeat.)* Great job! Let's do it again. This time, let's clap for God 5 times. *(Clap 5 times with children, then do repeat after me. Continue doing this 3 or 4 more times with different numbers of claps.)*

Say: God is so, so good. His love for us never ends. And because of that, **we can praise God with music.**

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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.

(*Play "Topher's Big Idea Video 1" or, for a non-video option, print out the "Topher's Big Idea Cards" ahead of time and hold up card #1. See the "Topher's Big Idea" document in the Resource Folder for more suggestions on how to perform the non-video option.*)

Video: Play "Topher's Big Idea Video 1"

Say: (*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 **I can praise God with music**. 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: **I can praise God with music.** (*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 praise God for loving us so much. (*Encourage kids to repeat the following prayer after you.*)

**Dear God,
There is no one like you!
You are so, so good.
Your love for me never stops.
And I praise you for that.
Amen.**