

3.4 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



Uh Oh Topher

Elisha and the Sick Boy

BIG IDEA: God can do miracles.

BIBLE BASIS: 2 Kings 4:8–37

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

I grew up going to the beach every summer with my family. One year, our beach was close to the path of a hurricane. While we didn't have to evacuate, the area was going to be pummeled by strong storms. My dad pulled me aside and asked if I wanted to go walk on the beach with him — right as the storm was rolling in. Though I was slightly nervous, I was also thrilled that he singled me out!

So, we headed out. As we walked down the boardwalk, we were the only people walking towards the beach. Everyone else was frantically trying to leave the area. I started to get second thoughts! But, I was with my dad. I trusted him completely and knew that if he was with me, I was safe.

We walked the beach as the storm came in over the ocean. It was beautiful and magnificent and terrifying all at once! My dad's enthusiasm was infectious and it wasn't long until I was enjoying the adventure even more than he was. I was so glad that I had the courage to go with him.

I'm sure you know where I'm going with this. God invites us to go on adventures with Him, and they are more terrifying and magnificent than walking on a beach when a storm is rolling in. Just like a child feels safe in the presence of a parent, as God's children we can feel safe in the presence of our Heavenly Father. As Deuteronomy 31:6 says,

“Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid of them. Don't be terrified because of them. The Lord your God will go with you. He will never leave you. He'll never desert you.”

God singles us out to go on adventures designed specifically for us. As you prepare to lead the children this week in the story of Elisha, dare to ask God what adventure He has in store for you. May we always have the courage to go on them!

Rebecca Crews
GO! Team Member



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.

3.4 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



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.

3.4 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 kids! I'm so, so happy to see you today. Did you bring your looking eyes with you? (*Cup hands around eyes like binoculars.*) I hope so, because we're going to do a lot of looking today. We need to look for some missing pictures so we can tell the Bible story.

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

3.4 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



UH OH TOPHER INTRO

(Note: Ahead of time, hide the picture of Topher the Gopher somewhere in the room that is at least partially visible from the seating area.)

Say: Let's get started by looking for Topher the Gopher. If you see Topher hiding somewhere in the room, point to him and say "Achoo! Achoo!" *(Once the Topher picture is found, remove him from his hiding spot.)*

Say: Oh no — Topher doesn't look so well. Do you know what this is in his mouth? *(Children respond.)* That's right — it's a thermometer. It takes your temperature when you're feeling sick. What do you think Topher could do to get better? *(Take answers.)* Those are some great ideas! I know something else Topher could do — he could pray and ask God to help him get better. God has the power to help us when we're sick.

Say: You know what — that reminds me of today's true Bible story. It's about a little boy who was oh-so-very sick, but God helped him get better. Unfortunately, this silly little gopher took our Bible story pictures and hid them all around the room. If we're going to hear the story, we have to find the missing pictures first. If you're ready to find the missing pictures, clap your hands 3 times. *(Children clap hands.)* 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 "Elisha and the Sick Boy" slide

3.4 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



BIG BIBLE STORY — ELISHA AND THE SICK BOY

(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 bed? *(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 Kings, there was a prophet named Elisha who loved God very much. One day, Elisha was traveling through town when a very nice woman invited him to stay at her house. She and her husband prepared a special room where Elisha could sleep whenever he was in town.

Say: Let's see if we can find the next picture. Does anyone see the picture of a baby? *(Children look for picture. Hold it up once it's found.)* Elisha wanted to show the woman how thankful he was for her kindness. Elisha knew she wanted a baby, but she couldn't have one. So he told the woman, "Next year, you will have a baby boy of your own." She couldn't believe it, but it was true. With the help of God, the woman became pregnant and had a baby boy just like Elisha said. The woman was so, so happy!

Say: Let's see if we can find the next picture. Does anyone see the picture of a sick face? *(Children look for picture. Hold it up once it's found.)* One day, when the boy was older, he went outside to help his dad. Suddenly, the boy cried out, "My head hurts! My head hurts!" The boy became very sick and later that day, he died. Now the woman was so, so sad! Can you show me your sad face? *(Children make sad face.)*

Say: Let's see if we can find the next picture. Does anyone see the picture of a donkey? *(Children look for picture. Hold it up once it's found.)* The woman got on a donkey and traveled as fast as she could to find Elisha. When she found him, she fell at his feet and cried. "My son has died," she told him. Then she begged Elisha to come back to her house.

Say: Let's see if we can find the next picture. Does anyone see the picture of the woman hugging her son? *(Children look for picture. Hold it up once it's found.)* When Elisha arrived at her house, he prayed to God to help the boy. Then, while the boy was still dead, Elisha laid on top of him. Slowly, the little boy's body grew warm again. Elisha got up, then laid on the boy a second time. This time the boy sneezed seven times. Let's say "achoo" together seven times. *(Say "achoo" with children while counting with your fingers.)* Finally, the boy opened his eyes. It was a miracle — God made him come alive again. His mom picked him up and hugged him. She was so, so happy!

3.4 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 our story for today, God did a miracle. Can you say the word “miracle” with me? *(Repeat with children.)* A miracle is something amazing that only God can do. God made a dead boy come back to life.

Say: Do you think you could do that? *(Children answer.)* No! Do you think I could do that? *(Children answer.)* No! Do you think your parents could do that? *(Children answer.)* No! Do you think the best doctor in the world could do that? *(Children answer.)* No! Who is the only one that could make a dead boy come back to life? *(Children answer.)* That’s right! It was a miracle — only God can do it.

Say: But that’s not the only time God made a dead person come back to life. The greatest miracle God ever did was to raise Jesus from the dead. If you believe that and if you love and follow Jesus, you can live with Him forever in Heaven. You can trust that God raised Jesus from the dead because **God can do miracles.**

3.4 Large Group Lesson | Preschool



TOPHER'S BIG IDEA

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 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 **God can do miracles**. 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 can do miracles.** (*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 being so powerful. (*Encourage kids to repeat the following prayer after you.*)

Dear God,
You are so, so powerful.
You can do miracles.
You made Jesus come back to life.
I love Jesus so much.
Amen