



What a Mess

Jesus Spends Time with the Children

BIG IDEA: Jesus wants to spend time with me.

BIBLE BASIS: Matthew 19:13–15; Luke 18:15–16

KEY VERSE: “Give thanks to the LORD, because He is good. His faithful love continues forever.” Psalm 107:1 (NirV)

SCHEDULE

2S & 3S CLASSES

ARRIVAL & PLAYTIME

10:30-10:55

2S & 3S LARGE GROUP

10:55-11:10

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

11:10-12:00

PRE-K & K CLASSES

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

10:30-11:15

PRE-K & KINDER LARGE GROUP

11:15-11:40

REVIEW ACTIVITIES

11:40-12:00

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

My phone rings, and I see it's my friend that lives many miles away. We've been friends for a very long time, and if you met her, you would understand why. She's kind, thoughtful, and full of life. I wish so much that I could see her more often or even talk more often on the phone for greater lengths of time, but we both have kids, and life is busy, so we take what we can get. We talk for 10 minutes between soccer drop off and volleyball pickup. We text back and forth for two minutes here and two minutes there. We leave 30-second voicemails. It's surprising how connected I feel with her even though our communication is so brief.

I sometimes think I should give myself permission to do the same with God. I want so badly to spend hours with Him in quiet prayer and reflection. And when I can't (or don't) find the time to do that, I feel guilty and I do nothing instead. But then I was reminded how much life and joy I receive from the brief interactions with my friend.

God wants us to spend time with Him, whether it's 60 uninterrupted minutes or five. I think we should all strive to spend more time with our Savior, but I think we should also take advantage of the brief moments that life allows us throughout the day — 10 minutes in the Word, or two minutes of journaling, or 30 seconds of prayer. It's surprising how connected you can feel with God when you reach out to Him in little bits and in little ways throughout the day.

Mindy Rausch
GO! Team Member

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LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Telling Personal Stories

There are few communication tools as engaging and powerful as a well-told personal story. At times the GO! curriculum will prompt you to tell a personal story, but feel free to add one anywhere you think it's appropriate. Consider these few things when telling a personal story:

Be sure it's age appropriate. For some of us, our lives before Christ may have been rated PG-13 (or, dare I say, R). Be mindful that the content and details of your story are appropriate for General audiences.

Be sure it's relevant. Your recent conversation with a co-worker about the rumors of a corporate takeover may be the perfect metaphor for sin's infiltration of the world, but your preschool kids can't even begin to grasp that concept. Be sure your story takes place in a world that is familiar to a young audience. Consider telling a story about something that took place when you were a kid. The kids in your ministry will eat that up!

Be sure that it fits. Sometimes we have a story that is so great we can't wait to tell it, even if it doesn't fit. Don't force a story to fit the lesson or vice versa. The perfect story is one that you can tell and the kids will understand the connection with little explanation. If you have to explain the connection too much, you might just want to save it for another time.

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UNIT DESCRIPTION

During “What a Mess,” preschoolers will meet Messy Mabel — a playful pig who just can’t stay out of the mud! Mabel has made a mess all over our Bible story pictures, and it’s up to the kids to help wipe away the mud and reveal what’s underneath. As they clean up Mabel’s mess, kids will learn that no mess is too big for Jesus to wipe away.

SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

- Put a pig puppet or plush toy in the storytelling area. Alternatively, you can print the “Messy Mabel” pig picture on one 8½” x 11” cardstock paper. (See Resource Folder.)
- Print the “Bible Story Pictures and Mud Covers” on 8½” x 11” cardstock. (See Resource Folder.) Place one Mud Cover over the top of each Story Picture. Using Scotch tape, tape the Picture Cover and Story Picture together along the left side as if you are binding a book. Cut along the dotted lines on each of the Mud Covers. (Do NOT cut the Story Picture below it.) When finished, you should be able to fold each of the four strips of the Mud Cover back, thus revealing the Story Picture a little bit at a time. There are 4 story pictures in all:
 - Heart
 - Little boy and girl
 - Stop sign
 - Happy kid
- 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 Story Time 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

Music: Play one or two upbeat worship songs

BIG IDEA AND BIBLE VERSE

Large Group Leader: Hello, everybody! I'm so glad to see you. Look who joined us again. It's Messy Mabel! She's a messy little pig who loves playing in the mud. Mabel is going to help us learn a Bible story.

Say: Today's true Bible story is going to teach us that **Jesus wants to spend time with me.** That's our Big Idea for the day. Let's say it together. *(Repeat Big Idea with children.)* **Jesus wants to spend time with me.** It's true! **Jesus wants to spend time with me.** In fact, that's what our memory verse from the Bible tells us. Let me teach it to you.

*“Give thanks (put hands in prayer position)
to the LORD (point up),
because He is good (two thumbs up).
His faithful Love (put hands over heart)
Continues forever.” (Spread hands out)
Psalm 107:1 (extend hands like you're holding a book).*

Say: Let's do that together. *(Repeat memory verse with children two or three times.)*

2s & 3s - 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.)

Pre-K & K - Bible Trivia

- Who Wrote the book of Matthew? (Matthew)
- Who wrote the book of Mark? (Mark)
- Who wrote the book of Luke? (Luke)
- Who wrote the book of John? (John)
- Who wrote the book of Acts? (Luke)
- Who wrote the book of Romans? (Paul)
- The Bible is split into two parts. What are they called? (The Old & New Testament)
- What is the difference? (Jesus was born in the New Testament)

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WHAT A MESS INTRO

Say: I have an idea — let’s play a game called “Red Light, Green Light.” When I say “green light,” let’s pretend like we’re running to Jesus. When I say, “red light,” let’s stop and freeze in place. *(Play several rounds. Vary the length between red light and green light. Have fun with it.)* Whew — I feel tired now! Let’s sit down. *(Direct children to take a seat.)*

Say: In our true Bible story for today, there are some little kids like you who run to Jesus when they see Him, but then someone gives them the red light — they tell the kids to stop, and they say, “You’re too little to be with Jesus!”

Say: If you’re ready to hear that story, wiggle your fingers in the air. *(Children wiggle fingers in the air.)* 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 “Jesus Spends Time with the Children” slide

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BIG BIBLE STORY — JESUS SPENDS TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

(During the story, when indicated, hold up the appropriate mystery picture. Each picture will be covered by four strips of paper. Each strip has part of a mud splatter on it. To start, fold one of the strips back to reveal a portion of the picture. Allow the children to guess what the picture is. After a moment, fold back another strip and let them guess again. Continue folding back the strips in random order until the children can guess the picture correctly.)

Say: Let's look at our first Bible story picture to see what happened first. *(Hold up picture #1 with mud splatter cover on it.)* Oh no! It looks like Messy Mabel splashed mud on our pictures again. That's okay! We can wipe the mud off a little bit at a time. **(Video 1 – Heart)**

Say: In the Bible, many people loved Jesus and wanted to spend time with Him. Wherever Jesus went, lots and lots of people followed Him. Let's clean the mud off another picture to see what happened next. **(Video 2 – Boy & Girl)**

Say: One time, some of the people brought their little children to Jesus. They wanted Jesus to put His hands on their children and bless them with nice words. Let's clean up another picture to see what happened next. **(Video 3 – Stop Sign)**

Say: But when the disciples saw all of the children around Jesus, they weren't happy. They came to the little children and said, "Stop! You're too little!" Let's clean the mud off one more picture to see what Jesus said. **(Video 4 – Happy Kid)**

Say: When Jesus saw what the disciples were doing, He said, "No! Let the little children come to me. Don't tell them to go away. God's kingdom belongs to little children too!" When the little children heard this, they were so happy! Jesus took the children into his arms. He hugged them and blessed them with nice words.

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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
Video: (Optional) Play “Extra Time with Topher” *(requires Premium subscription)*

Say: In our true Bible story for today, the disciples told the children they were too little to spend time with Jesus, but Jesus said, “No! Let the little children come to me.” You see, Jesus isn’t just for grown-ups. He loves spending time with kids too! Little kids like you *(point to child)*, and you *(point to another child)*, and you *(point to another child)*, and *all of you (point to all children.)*

Say: Even though we can’t see Jesus, we can still spend time with Him. Do you know how? *(Fold hands in prayer position.)* That’s right — we can spend time with Jesus by praying to Him. Prayer is talking to Jesus. When I say, “What is prayer?” I want you to say, “Talking to Jesus.” Let’s give it a try. What is prayer? *(Point to children. Children say, “Talking to Jesus.” Repeat numerous times at various volumes and using various fun voices.)* Great job!

Say: We can talk to Jesus anytime, anywhere, and about anything. Let’s think of some things we can talk to Jesus about. I’ll make a face, then you tell me what face you think I’m making.

- *(Make a sad face.)* We can pray to Jesus when we feel sad. What would you say to Jesus when you’re sad?
- *(Make a happy face.)* We can pray to Jesus when we feel happy. What would you say to Jesus when you’re happy?
- *(Make a scared face.)* We can pray to Jesus when we feel scared. What would you say to Jesus when you’re scared?
- *(Make a mad face.)* We can pray to Jesus when we feel mad. What would you say to Jesus when you’re mad?

Say: Great job! Jesus LOVES when you pray to Him, because **Jesus wants to spend time with you.**

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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 **Jesus wants to spend time with me**. On the count of three, let's all yell, "Topher the Gopher, wake up, wake up!"

Topher: Hey, what's the Big Idea?

Children and Large Group Leader: **Jesus wants to spend time with me.** (*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 thank Jesus for spending time with us. (*Encourage kids to repeat the following prayer after you.*)

Dear Jesus,
Thanks for spending time with me.
That makes me so happy.
I love that I can pray to You...
Anytime...
Anywhere...
And about anything.
Amen.