

Teachers Dig In**Dig In to the Bible**

- Read: John 14:1-14
- In This Passage: Jesus is getting ready to leave his disciples, but he promises he's preparing a place for them in heaven and that they know the way there. When Thomas is confused, Jesus says *he* is the way. Jesus' message is full of hope and comfort.
- Bible Point: Jesus brings hope...
- Application: ...so we're hopeful.
- Summary Verse: "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *Jesus brings hope*. Kids these days are facing *big* challenges and worries. There's so much pressure and stress on them that hope might feel like a pipe dream. Help them see that because of their faith in Jesus, they can have hope that one day they'll be with Jesus in the special place he's preparing for them. No matter how hopeless life seems, Jesus brings hope.
- Think About: What makes you feel hopeless? Ask Jesus to bring hope.

Dig In to Prayer

- Think of specific issues you know kids in your group are facing, and pray for Jesus' hope to rise up in these situations.

Quick Tip

- Jesus let his disciples know what was coming next. Follow his lead! For example, you could say something like "After you finish your craft, we'll play a fun game!" Doing this will help kids enjoy what they're currently doing while looking forward to what's next.

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids design a room, follow a path, and bat a balloon.

Supplies

- Bible
- paper
- markers
- painter's tape
- "The Way Grid" handout (1 per child, plus 1 for you) (download [here](#))
- pencils
- uninflated balloon

Easy Prep

- For every 5 kids, tape a 4x4-foot grid of squares on the floor. Each square in the grid should measure about 1 foot.
- On 1 of the handouts, draw a path such as this across the grid:



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids share stories and pray.

Supplies

- index cards
- pens



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids transport bubbles.

Supplies

- large mixing bowls (1 for every 3 kids, plus 3 extras)
- bubble bath soap
- electric hand mixer (check your church kitchen or ask to borrow one if you don't have one)
- trash bags (1 for every 3 kids, plus 1 extra)
- timer
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- Fill all but 3 of the mixing bowls about $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water.
- In the middle of the room, set an empty mixing bowl on top of a trash bag.
- Set the full mixing bowls on trash bags around the edges of the room, each near enough to an electrical outlet that the mixer will reach the bowl.



CRAFT

Kids make boxes in which the word hope appears and disappears.

Supplies

- "Hope Box" handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- scissors
- clear packing tape
- several sheets of adhesive craft foam
- bag of sand
- clear transparency sheets (1 for every 2 kids)

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.

- permanent markers



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids play a version of Blindman's Bluff.



OBJECT LESSON

Kids make ping-pong balls float and sink in water.

Supplies

- ping-pong balls (1 for every 4 kids)
- tall, clear vases or clear bowls (1 for every 4 kids)
- clear plastic cups (1 for every 4 kids)
- thumbtack
- permanent marker
- water

Easy Prep

- Use a thumbtack to poke a small hole in the bottom of each clear plastic cup. Circle the hole with a permanent marker so it's visible to kids.



DEEPER BIBLE

Kids do a maze to find the "dead ends" people think may lead to heaven.

Supplies

- Bibles
- "Maze" handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- pencils

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids thumb wrestle with a friend.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids sing “Happy Birthday” with their lips tucked over their teeth.
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’re going to learn that Jesus brings hope, so we’re hopeful. One hopeful thing Jesus said is that he’s preparing a special place for people who love him.**

Share

- Tell kids about a special place *you’ve* been.
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to share about special places *they’ve* been.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to share with the whole group.

Summarize

Open a Bible to John 14, and say: **There’s something really hopeful about knowing you get to go to a special place! Jesus brings hope because he’s with us now *and* he’s preparing a special place for us. Let’s see what else he said about that in the Bible. The Bible is a really special book, unlike any other book. It’s full of hopeful messages! Plus God is here right now, ready to talk to you. Let’s praise him.**

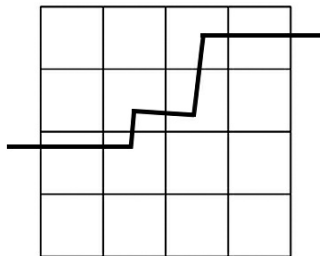
Pray, praising Jesus for bringing hope.

**Supplies**

- Bible
- paper
- markers
- painter's tape
- "The Way Grid" handout (1 per child, plus 1 for you) (download [here](#))
- pencils
- uninflated balloon

Easy Prep

- For every 5 kids, tape a 4x4-foot grid of squares on the floor. Each square in the grid should measure about 1 foot.
- On 1 of the handouts, draw a path such as this across the grid:

**Design Rooms**

Ask: • **Tell about a time a friend moved away or you moved away from your friends.** Share your own story first. Then have kids share with a few others around them.

- **How did you feel when you and your friends were separated?**

Say: **Today's Bible story takes place just before Jesus was about to die on the cross. He'd spent about three years with his friends, the disciples, and he knew he was about to leave them. That could have felt like a hopeless time to the disciples—they'd left everything to follow him! What would they do without him?**

But Jesus didn't want to leave them without hope, because Jesus brings hope. So he said a bunch of things that would help bring them hope. What he told them can bring *us* hope, too! Let's hear what he said.

Read John 14:1-3.

Distribute paper and markers. Then say: **Imagine Jesus is preparing a place for you. Imagine the best room, designed to be perfect for you. Draw that on your paper.**

Allow time. Have kids share about their drawings and then tape the papers adjacent to each other on the wall to design a house of all their rooms.

Say: **When Jesus said there's plenty of room in his Father's house, he was saying there's plenty of room in heaven. There's room for all of us there, and Jesus is preparing that place just for us. It'll be better than we can imagine! That brings so much hope!**

Find the Way

Give each child a "The Way Grid" handout and a pencil. Show kids the matching grid on the floor. Have a child stand at one end of the grid.

Hold up your example grid with a path drawn on it. Explain that there is one right way to get through the grid, and your handout is like a map. Have the child demonstrate how to follow the map to get through the grid.

Say: **Now you're each going to make a map. Yours won't match mine...you'll each make your own map. Then we'll take turns going through the grid and trying to get through the right way.**

Allow about a minute for kids to make their maps. Then have kids split into groups of five, and have

each group choose a grid. Kids in each group will take turns being the Traveler, who will listen for instructions to go through the grid. Have the Traveler close his or her eyes while you silently choose another child to be the Instructor. Then have the Traveler open his or her eyes and listen for instructions to get through the grid. Everyone will be giving instructions at once based on their own maps, and the Traveler will have to determine who the correct Instructor is and follow that way. You can chime in and tell the Traveler when he or she is wrong, based on what the Instructor says.

After everyone has had a turn, lead kids in this discussion.

Ask: • **How did you feel as you tried to figure out the way through the grid?**

Say: **In our story, one of the disciples, named Thomas, felt confused about the way to the place Jesus was preparing.**

Read John 14:4-7.

Ask: • **What does it mean that Jesus is the way?**

Say: **In our game, a lot of people told you different ways to go, but only one Instructor had the true way. But unlike in our game, our true Instructor, Jesus, doesn't change for each person. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life for everyone! The way to heaven is by loving and following him. That's a really amazing message of hope. We don't have to work really hard or live a perfect life to get to heaven. If we did, no one would get there! But Jesus brings hope because *he* made a way for us to get to heaven when he died on the cross for us.**

And that hope isn't just for heaven. Loving and following Jesus gives us a more hopeful life here on earth! When we believe in Jesus, we can find hope even in the hopeless times. Jesus even left us the Holy Spirit, so we know God is with us right now.

Bat a Balloon

Say: **You've probably played the game where you bat a balloon around and try to keep it in the air. But have you ever played it with a deflated balloon?** Hold up the balloon.

Say: **Deflated balloons can remind us of hopelessness. As we bat this balloon around, whenever you touch it, think of something in your life that feels hopeless. If you're comfortable, say that thing aloud. For example, maybe you just lost a friend or you don't feel you're good at something you wish you were good at. Maybe your parents keep fighting or the things you hear about in the news make you feel hopeless.**

Allow a minute for kids to bat the balloon around.

Say: **Jesus brings hope, so we're hopeful. He fills us with his hope for now and for the future!** Inflate the balloon. Then have kids bat it around, cheering. After a minute, set the balloon aside.

Ask: • **Describe how it felt playing with a deflated balloon.**

• **How does an inflated balloon remind you of Jesus' hope?**

Say: **When things feel hopeless, turn to Jesus for hope. He's happy to give us hope for today, plus a hope of eternal life in heaven! Jesus brings hope!**



Supplies

- index cards
- pens

Tip

- If you have a larger group, this prayer could take a while. Consider breaking into smaller groups based on how many adult or teen helpers you have and assigning a leader to each group.

Share Stories and Pray

Say: **Jesus brings hope, so we're hopeful even when life feels hopeless. We're going to share things that make us feel hopeless, and then I'll pray for you.**

- Distribute index cards.
- Have each child write a word or draw a picture on his or her index card that signifies a part of life that feels hopeless. It might be school, family, friends, or something else.
- After kids write and draw, invite each child to hold up his or her index card one at a time.
- Kids who want to share more about what they wrote can explain what feels hopeless.
- After each child shares or holds up a card, pray for Jesus' hope to fill that child's life.

Wrap Up

Pray: **Jesus, thank you for bringing us hope! Help us feel hopeful no matter what happens. In your name, amen.**

Collect kids' cards so you can pray for their requests during the week.

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Bubbling Over With Hope

Supplies

- large mixing bowls (1 for every 3 kids, plus 3 extras)
- bubble bath soap
- electric hand mixer (check your church kitchen or ask to borrow one if you don't have one)
- trash bags (1 for every 3 kids, plus 1 extra)
- timer
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- Fill all but 3 of the mixing bowls about $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water.
- In the middle of the room, set an empty mixing bowl on top of a trash bag.
- Set the full mixing bowls on trash bags around the edges of the room, each near enough to an electrical outlet that the mixer will reach the bowl.

Tips

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).
- If you can't round up an electric hand mixer, you could also use a large whisk or a strainer to create bubbles—though it'll go more quickly and easily with an electric mixer.

Transfer Bubble Foam From One Bowl to Another

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus brings hope. Hope is joyfully expecting good things.**

Ask: • **Who here has ever hoped for something so big your excitement was bubbling over? What were you hoping for?**

Say: **Hope like that is awesome, and it's the kind of hope we can have with Jesus! Let's celebrate that hope with a game of bubbling-over bubbles.**

- Have kids spread out around the room.
- Just before you start the game, have an adult or teen helper begin adding bubble bath soap to each bowl of water, using the electric mixer to whip up bubble foam.
- When you start the game, kids will run around scooping handfuls of bubble foam and racing to fill the empty bowl in the middle. All kids can play at once and will work together to fill the bowl. (You don't have to wait until all the bowls are ready to start the game; your helper can be creating more bubbles as the game is played.)
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.
- Time kids to see how quickly they can fill the bowl. Challenge them to beat their time each round.
- For each new round, set out a new empty bowl. Your helper can also redistribute the bubbles among the other bowls.

Talk About It

Ask: • **How do the bubbling-over bubbles in the game remind you of what it's like to feel full of hope?**

Say: **We're usually pretty excited when something fills us with hope, and it's hard to hold it in. We want to share the hope and excitement with others!**

Ask: • **When have you been so full of hope you *had* to tell your friends or family about it? Share an example of your own, such as sharing a story or video on social media that gave you hope or getting the job you've been working toward for a long time.**

Say: **Hope that's so good we just can't keep it all to ourselves is the kind of hope Jesus brings. It's exciting, it's joyful, and it's awesome to let the hope we have in Jesus bubble over. Jesus brings hope, so we're hopeful!**

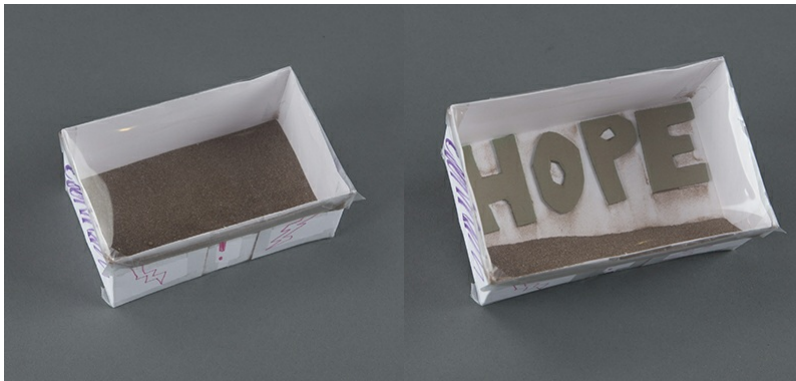


Supplies

- “Hope Box” handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- scissors
- clear packing tape
- several sheets of adhesive craft foam
- bag of sand
- clear transparency sheets (1 for every 2 kids)
- permanent markers

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Make Hope Boxes

Show kids the sample craft you made, first with the box flat so the sand covers the word, then turning it upright to reveal the word “HOPE.” Give each child a “Hope Box” handout. Set out the remaining supplies to share, and have kids follow these directions to make hope boxes.

- Cut out the box template on your handout, and fold along the gray lines. Tape it together really well, making sure there are no holes or cracks without tape!
- Draw bubble letters for the word “HOPE” on adhesive craft foam. Make sure the word can fit inside your box.
- Cut out your letters, peel off the backs, and stick them in the bottom of your box, near the upper fold.
- Pour just enough sand inside the box to cover the word “HOPE.”
- Set the box on the clear transparency sheet and trace around it. Cut out the rectangle, and tape it securely on top of your box, again making sure there are no holes or cracks.
- If time allows, decorate the outside of your box.

Talk About It

Have kids set their boxes on the table so that the sand covers the word “HOPE.”

Ask: • **What are things that keep us from seeing that there’s hope?** Examples might include our worries or sadness.

Have kids turn the boxes upright so that the sand falls down and the word “HOPE” is revealed.

Ask: • **Tell about a time Jesus brought you hope.** Share your own story first.

Say: **Jesus brings hope, so we’re hopeful. That doesn’t mean we’ll never have worries and life will always go just the way we want; it means that no matter what’s happening in our lives, whether it’s good or bad, we can find hope in Jesus. When your life feels hopeless** (have kids lay their boxes flat), **Jesus brings hope** (have kids turn their boxes upright)!

Have kids take their hope boxes home and show their friends and families that Jesus brings hope.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Hope Is All Around

Play a Version of Blindman's Bluff

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus brings hope. That's *always* true, but sometimes the circumstances of our lives might blind us to the hope Jesus brings all around us. Let's play a game to help us dig in to this more!**

- Invite a willing person to be the first "Blind Person" who'll tightly close and cover his or her eyes.
- Have everyone else circle around the Blind Person.
- Everyone will clap once for each word while calling out "Jesus brings hope!" Have everyone try to clap and call out in unison while moving around the Blind Person.
- While "blinded," the Blind Person will listen to locate and tag other players.
- Anyone who's tagged by the Blind Person will be out for the round.
- The first person tagged will be the new Blind Person in the next round, and a round ends when four or five people have been tagged.
- Mix things up and play a couple of rounds starting with two Blind People trying to tag others.
- Play as many rounds as time allows.

Talk About It

Ask: • **How would this game be different if you could see?**

Say: **When you couldn't see what was around you, it made the game harder. Sometimes the bad things in our lives blind us to seeing the hope that's all around us. During hard times, it's easy to focus on the hard stuff and be blinded to the hope Jesus brings around us.**

Ask: • **What do you normally focus on during hard times?** Share an example of your own, such as trying to figure out ways to get out of a hard situation or thinking there's no way things will ever get better.

Ask: • **How can you change your perspective to see the hope around you in hard times?**

Say: **In those hard times, focus on Jesus to see the truth that Jesus brings hope. Hope is all around us even in our hardest times!**



OBJECT LESSON

Hope Floats

[10 min]

Supplies

- ping-pong balls (1 for every 4 kids)
- tall, clear vases or clear bowls (1 for every 4 kids)
- clear plastic cups (1 for every 4 kids)
- thumbtack
- permanent marker
- water

Easy Prep

- Use a thumbtack to poke a small hole in the bottom of each clear plastic cup. Circle the hole with a permanent marker so it's visible to kids.

Tip

- We tried this experience with both a clear bowl and a tall vase. Both worked great! Just make sure that your cups are small enough to fit down inside the clear container.

Add Water and a Ping-Pong Ball

Show kids a ping-pong ball that's floating in water.

Say: **Let's imagine this ping-pong ball represents our hopes—things we want to happen in our lives.**

Hold the ping-pong ball ball, and share one thing you hope will happen in your life.

- Form groups of four. Give each group a ping-pong ball.
- Have a group member hold the ping-pong ball and say one thing he or she hopes will happen, then pass the ball to the other group members who'll also share a hope.
- Give each group a clear vase or bowl and a clear plastic cup.
- Have kids fill their vase or bowl half full of water.
- Have one group member place the ping-pong ball into the water. It'll float on top.

Cover Hole and Lower Cup

Say: **Sometimes what we hope for doesn't come true. We might get hurt, we might have to move away, or we might find we don't have enough money or the opportunity to support our hopes. When that happens, it feels like our hopes sink. Did you know that there is a way to make this ping-pong ball sink? Watch this!**

- Show kids the hole at the bottom of the clear cups.
- Have a child cover the hole with a thumb while lowering the cup over the ping-pong ball and down into the water.
- Have kids take turns lowering the cup over the ping-pong ball with the hole covered.



Uncover the Hole

Say: **When we're friends with Jesus, he brings hope that lasts, no matter what happens in our lives. Through Jesus, hopes rise again because we know that God is with us and he loves us no matter what.**

- With the cup lowered over the ball, show kids how to lift a thumb away from the hole while keeping the cup in place. The release of air will make the cup start to fill with water, and the ball will rise and float at the top of the cup.
- Slowly pull the cup out of the water. The water and ping-pong ball rise, too! Lift until the ball pops out of the cup and floats on the surface of the water again.
- Have each group member try sinking the ping-pong ball, then lifting his or her thumb off the hole to let hopes rise again!
- Kids can also experiment with covering or uncovering the hole at different times.



Talk About It

Ask: • **Tell about a time you felt like you were sunk and without hope. How did Jesus bring hope to that situation?** Share an example from your own life to begin.

Say: **We may hope for a lot of things to happen, but Jesus bring hope that's different. Hope from Jesus floats, even during down times in life!**



Supplies

- Bibles
- “Maze” handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- pencils

Introduce

Say: **In today’s Bible story, Jesus said something interesting.** Read John 14:6, emphasizing each “the” before way, truth, and life.

Say: **Jesus said he is *the* way to heaven and to a relationship with God. Not a way. But is that really true? Is Jesus really the *only* way to heaven? Let’s dig in to that.**

Complete a Maze

Distribute a “Maze” handout and a pencil to each child.

Allow time for kids to complete the maze. Periodically have kids pause and look up one of the dead-end verses (Ephesians 2:9 and Isaiah 45:20-22), and read the verse aloud to kids. When kids finish, have a child read the verse at the end, Acts 4:12.

Ask: • **Some people try to get to heaven by being really good. Why is that a dead end?**

• **Some people think there are other gods that can get you to heaven. Why is that a dead end?**

• **What are other dead-end ways people try to get to heaven?**

Say: **Our maze was really hard. You may have struggled to complete it, and maybe you got tripped up by some dead ends. But you kept working at it and found the one right way to get through it.**

Jesus is the one right way to God and to heaven. But unlike our maze, it’s not hard to find the right way. God made it easy for us!

Have a child read John 3:16.

Ask: • **How easy or hard does it sound to find the right way to God?**

Say: **All we have to do to find our way to God is believe in Jesus. God even made it easy—he sent Jesus to earth to die for us! It’s as easy as finding your way across the room.**

Clear any obstacles, and have kids walk in a straight line across the room.

Say: **Jesus said he’s the way, the truth, and the *life*. He’s not a dead end! He’s the only way to have a relationship with God right now...a relationship that will last forever in heaven! Jesus brings hope because he gives us a clear path to be friends with God.**