

## WEEK 4 ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

## PAGE-TURNER

### THE BIG IDEA

God celebrates us.

### THE BIBLE

**Parable of the Lost Son:** Luke 15:11b-32;  
II Corinthians 5:17-19

## LARGE GROUP TIME

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

### MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
  - "When the Fight Calls" (Hillsong Young and Free)
  - "One in a Million" (Elevation Kidz)
  - "You Awaken Me" (Central Live)
  - "I Belong" (Shout Praises Kids)

### ACTIVITY | The Monarch's New Dance

- It's our final week of Page-Turner! For the past few weeks, we have been traveling to different worlds in our imagination. It's been like jumping straight into the pages of a book!
- So, now let's imagine we are in a far off kingdom where I am actually not your leader. I'm the queen (or king) of a land called Celebratia.
- Celebratia is a land that formed because of the people's great ability to throw a party! But something terrible has taken place. I, the reigning monarch, have forgotten how to dance!
- So, you and your team are going to take some of your very best dance moves and create a cool dance routine.

- You'll present your routines once time is up, and I, the Most Royal Ruler of Celebratia, will choose the very best one to help me get my groove back.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Divide the kids into two to four groups and encourage them to choreograph a quick dance routine to the chorus of an upbeat song of your choosing (maybe one you sang together during praise). You might want to write the lyrics on a board or project them on a screen.*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *As a group, create a TikTok Dance and call it #themonarchdancechallenge. Include a time cap (we recommend sixty seconds) so it doesn't run too long.*
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Instead of having them come up with choreography, put together some simple motions kids can follow along with.*
- Well done, citizens of Celebratia! Thanks to your awesome dancing, I can dance again! *[Do a silly dance or mimic the winning routine.]* What a day of celebrating this will be!

### ACTIVITY | Birthday Every Day

- Imagine we live in a land where every single day is your birthday. **By a show of hands, how many of you would like that?**
- But the thing is, every single day is everyone's birthday! That complicates things a bit, right?
- Well, since it's everyone's birthday, everyone should get a birthday card. I want you to use this piece of paper to create a birthday card for the person next to you on your left.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pass out a printable, colored cardstock paper, scissors, and glue, and have kids make a pop-up birthday card.*
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Cut and fold the printable in the necessary places beforehand so kids only need to glue and decorate.*
- **How do you make sure someone feels special and celebrated and unique on their birthday? What about when it's not their birthday?**

### QUESTION | Surprise Party

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have a volunteer leave the room for a minute. While they're gone, turn off the lights in the room and have kids hide somewhere in the room or simply crouch behind their chairs. When you have the volunteer reenter, turn on the lights and have everyone yell, "Surprise!"*
- **Have you ever been to a surprise party, or maybe you've seen one on a television show or read about one in a book?**
- **What do you remember most about the person's reaction who was being surprised?**

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

### BIBLE STORY | The Parable of the Lost Son

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read aloud or paraphrase Luke 15:11b-32 to the kids.*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *This is a great opportunity to get your preteens into the story! Provide costumes (authentic or ridiculous) for each of the characters. Assign parts and let the preteens run with their interpretation of the story as you read it.*

- This is a story you might have heard before, but since we are in the land of many stories, I feel like we can try thinking about this story in a different way.
- Close your eyes and try to imagine along with me!
- There was once a great Viking chief. He was noble and kind. He possessed a magical ax that could harness the power of the trees, the sun, the sky, and other things found in nature.
- The Viking chief had two daughters.
  - The older had unparalleled wisdom that she would use to help her father lead the people.
  - The younger had limitless creativity that she would use to help her father as well.
  - Even though they each had great power, they were still learning how to use their gifts from their father. Their father was teaching them how to use their powers to do good deeds.
- One day, the younger daughter lost interest in learning from her father and longed to leave.
  - The Viking chief was very sad. He could have raised his ax to summon the wind to keep her from leaving, but he didn't. He let her fly away.
  - He even gave her a fair share of his riches so that she would be able to take care of herself.
- She journeyed to a far-off land and without her father around to tell her how to use her powers, she used her creativity to create dance festivals and parties every day. She used all her riches to put together elaborate banquets and feasts.
  - She soon realized that she hadn't used her power to help anyone. Sure, people enjoyed the festivities at first, but it got old after a while. They started getting bored and one by one, they all left her. The younger daughter was all alone, without any more gold in a strange land.
  - Back at home, the older daughter worked diligently next to her father. She knew now that her sister had gone, she would have to lead the people alone someday.
- One day, as the Viking chief and his older daughter worked together, they saw a person approaching in the distance. They couldn't tell who it was but a voice sang out over the hills . . . "Daddy! Daddy!"
  - The Viking chief raised his ax in the air.
  - The older daughter, who also heard the voice, thought he would surely conjure a storm to push her sister away. How dare she show her face after she had abandoned them?
- But instead, he summoned all the people, the creatures, the dancing wind, the soaring clouds, the singing trees, and all of nature to come and celebrate his daughter's return.
  - The older daughter was so mad! "You've never done anything like that for me," she said.
  - "My daughter," he said. "I love you both. My heart is split evenly for you. But today, it's your sister who has returned from far away. Will you join me in celebrating her?"
  - And the whole clan celebrated the younger daughter's return, who from then on used her power to help others.
- You see, there might come a time when you might be far away from God. And God will treat you just like the fathers did in the stories you heard today. God will always celebrate your return!

**BIG IDEA | God celebrates us.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use a dry erase board or an easel with a large piece of paper. Either divide the space in half or use two separate spaces. At the top of one board or piece of paper, write “WHAT MAKES ME SMILE.” At the top of the other, write “WHAT MAKES GOD SMILE.” Offer the kids ample opportunities for input. Try to do this activity near the Big Idea storybook for a quick pivot.
- **What is something that makes you smile?**
- **What is something that makes God smile?**
- Sometimes, we can be fooled into thinking that God is always serious and not much fun. You may never have even thought about God smiling!
- But guess what? God does smile! A lot! And you know what makes God smile more than anything else in the whole wide world? You! Yes, you!
- Now, let’s have a look at our book of Big Ideas and we’ll say this week’s together: **God celebrates us!**

**VIDEO | Page-Turner, Episode 4**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week’s episode of [Grow TV](#).

**OBJECT LESSON | Lost and Found**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask a volunteer to hide a key somewhere around the room. They can help you “find” it after you’ve looked around dramatically for it.
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Have each preteen give you something they brought with them that they value (like their phones). Put them in a safe place but pretend just for a moment that you forgot where you put them. Talk with kids about how it felt in that moment when they thought their prized possessions were lost.
- Now, let’s imagine we are in a very ancient castle. It’s a beautiful castle, with suits of armor and giant, golden mirrors all over the place.
- We step out of the huge, creaking back door made of thick wood. We run down the carved stone steps toward a garden.
- There’s an ornate iron gate between us and the garden, but – boo! – it’s locked! Oh, the garden looks really good! There’s a big swing in there, tons of flowers, and it looks like maybe there’s a little fountain where we could splash around!
- I just need to open the . . . Hey, wait a minute! Where is my key? *[Look in your pockets, hair, and shoes dramatically.]* No, seriously, I had the key right here and now I can’t find it.
- *[The volunteer will get the key from the hiding place and give it to you.]* That’s it! Thank you so much! This key is my most prized possession! I am so happy and relieved! Now, we can get into the beautiful garden!
- **Do you know what God’s most prized possession is?** It’s us! We get lost sometimes when we make wrong choices, whether on purpose or by accident, and we have to ask for God’s forgiveness.
- And when we find our way back to God, **God celebrates us!**

### ACTIVITY | Otherworldly Party Hats

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pass out construction paper, scissors, glue or tape, and decorating utensils.*
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Provide supplies to color and decorate the hats or stickers for kids who struggle with pencil control.*
- We are going to be making party hats! But these are not any ol' party hats. These are party hats from different worlds!
- I want you to get creative. You can choose to make a magical hat that you could wear to a party in an enchanted forest! You can make an alien hat that you could wear to a shindig on Mars!
- Make the perfect hat for your otherworldly celebration!

### BIBLE | II Corinthians 5:17-19

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the Bible passage aloud.*
- This is one of those passages from the Bible that has a lot of big words, isn't it? But let's see if we can break it down a little bit.
- **Who knows what the word "reconciliation" means?** Reconciliation means to restore or fix or bring back a friendship or relationship!
- **Have you ever had a fight with a friend and it's awful and awkward because you're not talking to each other?** It feels so bad, right? But then you finally talk and make things right again. And that first time you play together again is so, so, so fun, isn't it? That is reconciliation!
- God is all about reconciliation. God wants us to live in perfect peace with each other and with God. That's why we see so many stories in the Bible about it.
- God wants us to create our own stories of reconciliation — true stories, not fairytales!
- **Is there someone you can think of that you need to restore a relationship or friendship with?**

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

### ACTIVITY | Flip 'N Restore

- We are going to make a flipbook of either a celebration or something being restored or made new.
- The trick to making a flipbook is drawing something simple and having it change just a little in every picture. For example, you could draw two stick figures giving each other a high five. You could draw a tree being blown over by wind and another planted in its place.
- Draw at least ten drawings, though you're welcome to draw more! Be creative and share your creations with those around you when you're done.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pass out sticky notes and writing utensils to the kids. Have an example of a flipbook ready for the kids to see before making their own.*
- We are not perfect, but when we pay attention to the things God teaches us and we work on putting those things in our lives, we change a little by little, every day. And each time we make a change in our lives for God, you best believe **God celebrates us!**

### REFLECTION | Is There Something?

- **Does anyone remember what “reconciliation” means?**
- Yep! Reconciliation means to restore or fix or bring back a friendship or relationship.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a personal story about a time when you reconciled with someone. Make sure to detail the steps you took to repair your relationship with that person.*
- **Is there a relationship you have with someone that is in need of reconciliation? What can you do to make that happen?**
- We often think too much about how hard it will be to fix a relationship or friendship with someone and not enough about how great it will feel once everything is fixed.
- Restoration and celebration go together. God says so!
- **So, what can you restore in your life so that you can party like God does when God celebrates you?**

### MEMORY VERSE | Celebratory Memory Verse

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pick an instrumental version of a celebratory song to sing the memory verse to. Some suggestions are the happy birthday song, a popular Christmas carol, or the fight song from your favorite college football team.*
- **Have you ever listened to a song you haven’t heard in a while and been surprised that you still knew all the words? What song was it?**
- Music has a cool way of helping us remember things. So today, we’re going to sing our memory verse to this catchy tune so we’ll always remember it!

### PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for showing us how to love and forgive others by being the perfect example for us. Thank you for celebrating us whenever we come back to you after we lose our way. Amen.

## SMALL GROUP TIME

### DISCUSSION

- **What did the younger son ask for?**
- **How do you think the father felt while the younger son was gone? What about the older brother?**
- **What happened when the son came back?**
- **Read II Corinthians 5:17-19. How did reconciliation happen between God and us?**
- **Describe a way we might lose our way and wander from God. What can we do if this ever happens to us?**
- **What can we do to reconcile with someone?**
- **How can we celebrate others as God celebrates us?**

### ACTIVITY | Our Giant Book

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *The kids are going to personalize your Big Idea storybook by writing or drawing a thought or reflection about each Big Idea on a sticky note and sticking them onto the appropriate page in the book. Have small group leaders collect the notes and stick them on the Big Idea book or have small groups come together to do this.*
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Use this time to review each of the four Big Ideas from this month. Print out the Big Idea graphics and give a set of Big Idea to each kid. Hole-punch them and stick them in paper [3-ring folders](#) to create a Big Idea book. Have them decorate the cover like a book cover.*
- We created this big, beautiful book with this whole group in mind and we're going to make sure all of us contribute.
- I want you to take your sticky notes and write or draw a thought, idea, or feeling you have about each of the Big Ideas and stick them on the right pages.

### MEMORY VERSE | II Thessalonians 3:3 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided in your Programming folder or at [growcurriculum.org/IIThessalonians3-3](http://growcurriculum.org/IIThessalonians3-3).*
- Let's practice this month's memory verse together!
- **"But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one."**