



Kids Club

Leader Guide

May
Week 1

May 5, 2024

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

A jigsaw puzzle
Notecards/half-sheets of paper
Talking stick or other object for the "speaker" to hold
Optional: Items to create an obstacle course (hula hoop, chair, cones, tape, etc)
Construction paper, markers/crayons/colored pencils

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE:

5 minutes - Pick up kids/kids arrive - bathroom, wash hands, water break
20 minutes - Snack, Games, Prayer/Devotion, Quality Time, Clean-up
30-40 minutes - RBKids Lesson & Prayer
10-15 minutes - Free time, Clean-up and Dismissal

TODAY'S FOCUS:

God is always in control.

WEEKLY VERSE:

"My thoughts are not like your thoughts. And your ways are not like my ways,"
announces the Lord." Isaiah 55:8 (NirV)

KEY PASSAGE:

Genesis 22:1-18, Abraham and Isaac

ROCK BRIDGE MISSION:

We are Kingdom-Seekers, like Abraham we want to seek God and be obedient
to *whatever* God is asking us to do because we trust His ways.

PRAYER:

Dear God, give us the faith to believe you are always in control! In Jesus' name,
Amen

INTRODUCTION:

ASK THIS AS KIDS ARRIVE: If you had a mystery to solve, what famous detective or detectives would you want to investigate? Imagine you're the famous detective investigating a mystery in the Bible. What clues would you look for to solve it?"

OBJECT LESSON - DO THIS: Invite kids to assemble a jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces and no picture. Let them be frustrated as you give vague answers to their questions if they ask you for help completing the puzzle.

Solving a crime is like putting together a puzzle without knowing what the picture is supposed to be. Clues are scattered everywhere: some at the scene, some far away, and some from witnesses. Detectives work hard to find as many pieces as they can to figure out who did it and why.

SAY THIS: God often works in ways we do not understand. Rather than laying things out nice and easy, like I could have done with this puzzle, He allows us to have difficult times. He challenges us. He helps us depend on Him. He builds our trust and faith. No matter how hard it may be to understand, we need to remember God is in control. He will work things out for the good of those who love Him. When we have faith, we will see that everything always works out for the best - even if it doesn't feel great in the process.

God won't always give us the answers, but we can still have faith, knowing He is in control and He gives us everything we need.

LG LESSON ABBREVIATED INTRO - SAY THIS: Have you ever played the board game Clue? (Invite a kid to explain the game if they're familiar with it. If not, share that it's a classic game where you try to solve a mystery. You gather clues to figure out who did the crime, where, and with what weapon.) It's fun, but real detective work isn't always so straightforward.

In real life, solving a crime is way trickier than in a game. There could be tons of suspects and clues! You want have little arrows pointing out a perfect path to say, "This way to the solution." And it's the same for us when we have challenges in our life.

Sometimes trying to understand God can seem even more difficult than solving a crime. We know God loves us, and we know He is all powerful, but sometimes, life throws us tests that are hard to understand. We'll turn to God for answers, but it might be frustrating or confusing because He doesn't show us everything we need to fully understand. Today's Bible story will remind us that even when things are confusing, God is in control.

READ: Genesis 22:1-18

TALK ABOUT THIS: Abraham was an old man. God had promised to give Abraham a son, and that son would become the father of a mighty nation. God fulfilled that promise when he gave Abraham his son Isaac, but then God stunned Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his only son!

Abraham had to be feeling a lot of things. Confusion. Hurt. Maybe even anger. But Abraham loved and trusted God. As messed up as this situation felt, Abraham was willing to obey God. It turned out to be a test of faith, and God stopped Abraham from taking his son's life. Abraham's faith was rewarded. His son lived, and God's promises came to be. Isaac was the father of Jacob, whom God renamed Israel. Israel did become a mighty nation, and many years later, God would send His own Son to become a sacrifice for all of Israel and all the world. We may not understand what God is doing, but we can always have faith that God's plan is best and He is in control!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

ASK THIS:

1. How were Abraham and Isaac related?
2. What did God tell Abraham to do?
3. Why did God tell Abraham to sacrifice his son?
4. Why was Abraham so obedient to God's command?
5. How did God stop Abraham from killing Isaac?
6. How do we know God is in control, even when things seem out of control?
7. What should we do when it feels like life is out of control?
8. Who wants to share a time when you felt like your life was out of control or when something hard happened and you really didn't understand God's plan?

LEADER TIP: *How do YOU feel when you read this story? What does it make you wonder about God? This story evokes a lot of questions and emotions about God for a lot of people. Don't shy away from letting your kids be curious about God's character! Let them ask the questions aloud. It is a mystery to us why God chose this way for Abraham to walk in faith. But we can easily see the parallel in scripture to God sending His Son as a sacrifice. Help them to make that connection and remind them that wondering about God is a beautiful thing as they grow in their relationship with Him!*

SAY THIS: Unlike many stories we've explored in our Mysteries series, there's no great unexplained miracle in this one! God spoke His command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. God sent an angel to stop Abraham's hand from hurting his son. God caused a ram to become stuck in the bushes nearby as an alternate sacrifice. The big question with this story isn't how God did it. It's why.

Why did God test Abraham in a way that seems so cruel? Why would he promise him a son and then ask him to kill his son? We know it was a test of faith. We know God just wanted to see if Abraham really and truly trusted Him. But why would God test Abraham in such an extreme way?

God doesn't always tell us why. He doesn't reveal why one person is healed of cancer while another passes away. He doesn't explain why good people lose their jobs and their families go through hard times. He doesn't tell us why He allows us to be tested by people and circumstances.

When hard times come, we can drive ourselves nuts asking the question why. What we need to ask ourselves is, do we still believe? Do we still believe God loves us? Do we still believe He is in control? Do we believe He has a plan?

God didn't take away Abraham's son. He had a plan for him. God was in control on even the most confusing and chaotic day of Abraham and Isaac's lives. We may never know the reasons for our own trials and tests, but when we have faith, we can trust and expect God to move in mysterious ways.

ACTIVITY:

SAY THIS: God made us and He knows us. He knows what we love and value, so when we have challenges, it won't always be the same as someone else. He challenges us in unique ways. Just like how God tested Abraham in a unique way, we're going to celebrate what makes each of us special. Each of you will write down something unusual or cool about yourself on a notecard/half sheet of paper. Then, you're going to play detective as you try to guess who said what!

DO THIS: Have all the kids write down something unusual about themselves and collect them. Read each one off, and see if the kids can guess who you are describing on each card.

*For younger kids - have one kid say something cool they have done, and then turn around away from the other kids. Have the other kids raise their hands if they have also done the same thing. Then, have the kid turn back around and see if they can guess which friends have also done the same thing.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:

DO THIS: Sharing Stories of Faith:

1. Sit in a circle and pass around a "talking stick" or other object.
2. Invite each child to share a story from their own life where they had to trust in God's plan, even when it was difficult.
3. Encourage active listening and supportive responses from the group.
4. After everyone has shared, reflect on common themes and lessons learned about faith and trust.

ADD A CRAFT! Have each child trace their foot onto a piece of construction paper. On the footprint, encourage the kids to write or draw things that represent moments when they've had to trust in God's plan, even when they didn't understand it. Once they've decorated their footprints, have them share their stories with the group if they feel comfortable.

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

“My thoughts are not like your thoughts. And your ways are not like my ways,” announces the Lord.” Isaiah 55:8 (NIV)

DO THIS: Go around the group in a circle and have each kid read one word of the verse until the whole verse has been read. Do it two or three times, see how fast you can go. Divide the room in half. Pick one side to start and have them all shout the first word, and then the other side shouts the second word, and so on until they finish the verse.

WHY WE MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE - SAY THIS: We memorize scripture to hide God's Word in our hearts, helping us remember His teachings and promises when we need it. Scripture memorization strengthens our faith because it lets us think about the truth of who God is.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:

DO THIS: Faith Walk: Trusting Without Knowing

Create an obstacle course in the room. Blindfold each child and give them a partner to guide them through the course one by one. While blindfolded, they must trust their guide to lead them safely.

SAY THIS: “Now that we've all experienced what it's like to trust someone without being able to see, let's think about how this relates to trusting in God. Just like how you had to trust your guide to lead you safely through the obstacle course, we sometimes have to trust in God's guidance even when we can't see the path ahead. Just as your guide had your best interests at heart, we can trust that God's plans for us are good, even when we don't understand them. This activity reminds us that trusting in God requires faith and patience, knowing that He is leading us towards something better, even if we can't see it right now.”

VARIATION - TRY THIS: As an alternate game, pick a few kids to lead Simon Says. Explain that it is in our best interest to trust and obey God knowing He is always in control.