

Note from the Authors

We are SO grateful for you! Small group leaders are truly the backbone of a great camp. Without great leaders, we could never do this. Thank you.

Life is full of noise and motion. Sometimes it's so full we can forget what stillness looks like. Even when we slow down, we still think of what we will do next. God reminds His creation to be still. When we are still, we are reminded that in Jesus we find our being. It is **In the Stillness** we can reconnect with Jesus' command to remain in Him.

Some of the kids in your small group will have been in a church their entire lives. They will know all the "right" answers and know all the stories. Others may be hearing these things for the first time. Just because they have *heard* the message does not mean they have *listened*. We will explore the truth of God's Word, explain how these truths affect everyday life, and equip kids to apply them during the week of camp and throughout their lives.

Use your Bible.

You will notice that very few of the passages in this study are printed. That is intentional. We want you to use your Bible, guide kids to use their own Bibles, and model for them how important it is to encounter God's Word for themselves. The method is the message.

Less Lecture, More Discussion

These small group sessions have been designed to draw kids into God's Word and into discussion with each other. We hope that you'll spend more time in Bible reading and discussion than in a lecture-style teaching.

The Main Idea

There are three essential truths that we want to repeat until our kids have them memorized. Once memorized, they will be able to understand them more deeply. You will have *multiple* opportunities to recount these points. If our kids leave knowing only these things, we will have succeeded.

1. The Father sent Jesus to live, die, and come back to life so we can know God personally. Jesus made the way to know God in a real way. Before, we were unable to be fully connected.
2. Yielding our lives to God is the only meaningful way to live. Denying ourselves and making God our boss proves difficult. But this fight to give Him control is worth the struggle. Jesus models this for us in the garden of Gethsemane.
3. The Holy Spirit empowers and equips us in the silence to live our lives out loud for Jesus. Our mission as Jesus followers is to tell all those in our world that they can know Jesus personally too. This task isn't easy, but is made possible by the Spirit of God in us.

- Explorer's Camp Team

Session 1 - Jesus & His Disciples' Last Supper - John 15.1-17

Objectives:

- Kids will imagine what it was like to be in the room with Jesus at the last supper.
- Kids will grapple with the basic truths of the Gospel.
- Kids will identify the differences in life with and without a relationship with Jesus.

Focal Verse: James 4:8 NLT

Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

[Study It: Lesson Preparation Study](#)

Overview:

This session will explore the basic tenants of the Gospel. We were created to have a relationship with God. Our sins separate us from God. Nothing we can do in our own power can restore that relationship. Jesus died for our sins to reconcile us to God. This session will focus on the first of the three points we will instill in our kids this week: ***The Father sent Jesus to live, die, and come back to life so we can know God personally.***

Knowing about God and knowing God is the difference between knowing stats and facts about our favorite celebrity or professional athlete and actually having a real relationship with our favorite celebrity or professional athlete. Knowing information about God is not the same as having a relationship with Him.

This session will help us explore the difference between knowing ABOUT Jesus and having a relationship with Him that lasts forever. Ultimately, kids will have the opportunity to determine whether they actually know Jesus or just know about Him

Make these points:

I. Our sin separated us from God. - Romans 3.23

The bottom line is that humans have the disease of sin and we cannot heal that disease on our own. God cannot have a relationship with sinful people. We were made to have a meaningful relationship with Him and cannot any longer.

II. Jesus made a way to restore our relationship with God. - 2 Corinthians 5.17-18

Jesus lived, died, and rose again to restore that relationship. Only by believing He is who He says He is and He will do what He said He will do, can we be right with God.

III. We are now able to be in contact with God in the way He intended from the beginning - Hebrews 4.15-16

Jesus' death and resurrection gives us the relationship with God that Adam and Eve had in the beginning. There is no shame, no fear, no condemnation. However, we will have to grow over time to trust God that this is true.

Teaching Plan:

1. Read the passage found in John 15.1-17 and help your kids imagine themselves in the room with Jesus as He shares this passage.
2. Explore the three points above and help them understand the basics of the Gospel.
3. Make a list of what life is like without Jesus and another list of what life is like having a relationship with Jesus.

Session 2 - Jesus in the Garden - Matthew 26.36-46

Objectives:

- Kids will enter the scene of Jesus in the garden by imagining how He felt.
- Kids will identify ways they can strengthen their obedience to God.
- Kids will develop a decision-making process to reference in tough decisions.

Focal Verse: Luke 9:23-24 NLT

Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it."

[Study It: Lesson Preparation Study](#)

Overview:

Obedience is not in our human nature. Actually, we are naturally rebellious to authority. Understanding this will help us process how to make decisions based on Jesus' Lordship. This session will focus on the second of the three points we will instill in our kids this week: ***Yielding our lives to God is the only meaningful way to live.***

The passage of Jesus in the garden might be the most human depiction of the Lord that we have in Scripture. Jesus was praying to the Father asking to be released from Jesus' fate of death on a cross. He asked the Father to do it in some other way. The defining moment was when Jesus declared that He wanted to do what the Father wanted Him to do.

Surrender is a dirty word in our world. We are trained to stand our ground and not compromise. However, when we give our lives to Jesus we cannot hold back anything. Our entire selves—our will, our actions, our hopes—all become subject to His will. Helping kids decipher between His will and their own is one thing. Equipping them to act on that is another.

Make these points:

I. Obeying God is not always easy. - Romans 7.14-25

God's Word is usually crystal clear about how He wants us to live. We even have an innate sense from birth about what is right and wrong. However, *knowing* what is right and *doing* what is right is very different.

II. If we practice obedience in small things, obeying God in with the difficult things is more natural. - Luke 12.47-48

When given the choice to do the right thing in moments that have little impact on our lives and the lives of others, for example taking out the trash when your parents tell you to, will develop the discipline to do the right thing when there is much more at stake.

III. True obedience leads to a more meaningful life. - Romans 12.1-2

While we cannot do anything to sever our relationship with God once we have made Jesus our Lord and Savior, we can place distance between us and God by disobeying Him. When we practice obedience God is able to use us in ways He cannot when we are distant from Him.

Teaching Plan:

1. Read out loud together Matthew 26.36-46 and explore Jesus' mental and spiritual state.
2. Share the three points and discuss how obedience sets us up for making a difference in this world.
3. Guide kids to develop a decision-making process that they can turn to when they need it.

Session 3 - The Day of Pentecost - Acts 2.1-6; 40-41

Objectives:

- Kids will imagine what it would be like for God to move in a mighty way in their school.
- Kids will explore the truths of the Gospel and their role in sharing it.
- Kids will practice having spiritual conversations with each other.

Focal Verse: Acts 1:8 NLT

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

[Study It: Lesson Preparation Study](#)

Overview:

Knowing God personally is not just about possessing the correct knowledge so we can be safe from Hell. We are saved and are immediately enlisted into a group of people who are reaching others to be saved as well. This session will focus on the final of the three points we will instill in our kids this week: ***The Holy Spirit empowers and equips us in the silence to live our lives out loud for Jesus.***

We are responsible for telling others what we know. We are *not* responsible for convincing them or making them believe. We are simply witnesses telling others what we experienced. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to share. We simply must position our lives to reach those who are far from Him and make a real effort to have spiritual conversations.

The Gospel can be summed up in six sentences. God created us to be with Him. Our sins separate us from Him. Sins cannot be removed by good deeds. Paying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again. Everyone who trusts in Jesus alone will be saved. Life with Jesus starts now and lasts forever. God Our Sins Paying Everyone Life. G.O.S.P.E.L.

Make these points:

I. We continue the ministry of Jesus connecting Himself with those who are far from Him. - 2 Corinthians 5.19-21

Jesus began the work of reconciliation and then handed it off to His disciples. We are a continuation of that ministry today. It is not for *someone else* to do or *professional evangelists* to do. We are His disciples and we are commanded to share the Gospel.

II. The power of the Gospel is in Jesus not in us. - Romans 1.16-17

The Gospel isn't *how* we share it. The method is not the only aspect of the Gospel. The power of the Gospel begins and ends with Jesus. It is simply our job to unashamedly share with others what we have experienced through Jesus.

III. Faithfully sharing the Gospel requires both action and words. - Colossians 3.16-17

Sharing the Gospel begins with living life as well as we can, but it requires us to have spiritual conversations with those around us. If we do not know where they stand with Jesus we cannot share. If we do not ask, how can we know? The practice of spiritual conversations set up by a life of obedience to God is the sweet spot of sharing the Gospel.

Teaching Plan:

1. Read out loud together Acts 2.1-6; 40-41 and help kids imagine what this would look like today if thousands came to know Jesus at once.
2. Share the three points and explore the truths of the passages.
3. Help kids verbalize the basic truths of the Gospel and practice sharing them with each other.

Day 2 Quiet Time

Tips for a great time with God:

- Get alone in a place where you can focus on God.
- Start with prayer. Take some time to quiet your mind and listen to God.
- Don't rush. You've got plenty of time.
- Write down your thoughts and read them later.

1. Read it: Open your Bible to ***Philippians 3.3-11*** and read it slowly and carefully.
2. Explore it: Ask these questions as you read the passage. Write your answers below.
 - What does this passage say about God?

 - What does this passage say about you?
3. Apply it: Take a moment to listen to God's instruction to you through this passage.
 - What is God telling you to do or change because of this passage?
4. Pray it: Write out a prayer to God based on what you've ready today. Then pray it to Him.

Day 3 Quiet Time

Tips for a great time with God:

- Get alone in a place where you can focus on God.
- Start with prayer. Take some time to quiet your mind and listen to God.
- Don't rush. You've got plenty of time.
- Write down your thoughts and read them later.

1. Read it: Open your Bible to ***Philippians 3.12-14*** and read it slowly and carefully.
2. Explore it: Ask these questions as you read the passage. Write your answers below.
 - What does this passage say about God?

 - What does this passage say about you?
3. Apply it: Take a moment to listen to God's instruction to you through this passage.
 - What is God telling you to do or change because of this passage?
4. Pray it: Write out a prayer to God based on what you've ready today. Then pray it to Him.

