

love

faith

joy

hope

peace

life

Search  
**God's word**  
& **DISCOVER**  
**God is my ...**

forgiveness

courage

God



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IS MY HOPE  
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## LETTER TO THE TEACHERS

This term our focus is **God is my God**. The idea is that we want our children to learn more about who God is and the qualities/ characteristics He displays. These qualities are ones that God then gives to us to overcome difficulties in life e.g. His courage helps us to overcome fear, His forgiveness helps us overcome sin and so on.



Please emphasise each week what God gives to us. These qualities are given by Him to us for us to overcome. But then also emphasise that God desires for us to show others such qualities. Show the world God's love, forgiveness and joy.

To teach these lessons properly you will need to prepare properly and I do encourage you to allow these truths to first become a revelation for you so that you can teach them better. I pray that you find as much life and encouragement in these lessons as the children will.

Thank you for your servant-heartedness and the love and passion that you show our children.

**We have spoken to a few children who love the theme of the terms and who love the memory verse being made a big focus.**

Have a lot of fun dressing up as an explorer who will each week reveal another item out from his/her backpack. These objects have been included somewhere in the week's lesson to help you teach the children the important attributes about God that they can rely on daily.

Summary of items in the backpack each week:

My God is my God	God's fingerprint card and magnifying glass
My God is my love	Measuring cup, measuring tape, watch
My God is my faith	Binoculars
My God is my courage	Piece of paper
My God is my joy	"JOY" Christmas decoration
My God is my forgiveness	Mirror
My God is my hope	Karabiner
My God is my peace	Balloon
My God is my life	Seeds

Each week the children will receive a card with an "item" and Bible verse to collect in their backpacks that they make the first week.

## LETTER TO THE PARENTS

The world is facing some really difficult and challenging times. As economies around the globe struggle, corruption by leaders becoming more exposed, and crime and sickness increasing (and the list continues), so people are becoming more fearful, losing hope and joy, and therefore they desperately search for any source of life. If this is happening in the world, then our children too are greatly affected.

Our children are facing fear, depression, and uncertainty for tomorrow and the bombardment of the world's opinion leaves our children in a desperate need of God's truth. With this in mind, we have chosen to focus this term on **God is my God**. We want to remind our children who God is by looking at some of His qualities, and explore how God can provide us with such qualities for our life.

So, when our children are afraid, we teach that God is my courage. God is a courageous God and He gives us His courage for when fear tries to cripple us. When we are depressed, God gives us joy. Similarly God gives us hope, love, forgiveness, faith, peace and ultimately God gives us life. In all of our circumstances we are to remember who God is, our all-powerful, victorious God in whom all things are possible, and in this knowledge we find that we can overcome and give God glory in our living life freely.

We trust that you (parents) too would find encouragement in these truths that we teach your children. Please constantly discuss them with your children and see them being believed but also lived out. There is victorious living to be had in God. Knowing that God is my God and knowing who He is, we can truly live. The exciting part we also aim to emphasise is that we want our children to display these Godly qualities to others too. Show peace, joy and forgiveness to others. Help others find courage, love and hope.

Wow, we are excited for the potential this term holds. We trust while partnering with you in this and always being led by God's grace, we will see lives changed both in your children and those in their contact.

The curriculum will be made available soon online. Please keep in contact with the teachers to see how the term unfolds.

-The Children's Church Team

# Lesson One: My God is my God

## Main focus for the lesson:

- Explain how many people create different types of gods for themselves.
- Explain how these false gods cannot help us.
- Explain how God of the Bible is the only true God and we need Him in our life.

## 1) Memory Verse

- **Isaiah 46 v 9:**

The Lord says, "I am God, there is no other; I am God there is none like me."

## 2) Hands on

Leaders arrive dressed as explorers. They can all be carrying backpacks, magnifying glasses and a "God's fingerprint" card. As the children arrive, the leaders can pretend to be searching for the person matching the fingerprint. Using the magnifying glass they examine and compare fingerprints.

Take this opportunity to introduce the theme "Searching God's word to discover who God is" before continuing with the object lesson.

### 2.2) Object lesson:

Preparation needed:

- Print the fingerprint page titled 'God's fingerprint'. Print one page per group of 5.
- Print the page with the four different fingerprints. Print one page per group of 5.

### Instructions:

*(Explain the following to the children)*

We as people feel that we need to live for something/someone, or to follow something to help us feel like we have purpose in life or belong in life. So people try to find God but a lot of the time, instead of wanting to follow the only true God, they choose to follow something else which they call God. They choose to serve this false god: they might pray to it and they might let it lead them when making big decisions.

*(Ask the children for some ideas of false gods)*

*(Try to get the following objects to use as false gods)*

-Some people serve MONEY as a god. *(Show and explain)*

-Some people treat CELEBRITIES as gods *(You can use a poster, a movie, cd to show celebrities. This can also be presidents or good people we admire in life).*

-Some people treat OBJECTS as a god. *(A car, a business, a statue or precious item.)*

But the Bible tells us that there is only **ONE TRUE God** and it tells us about Him. In a way it shows us His fingerprint. Now we all have different fingerprints. No two people can have the same fingerprint. In the same way there can only be one God and this morning we have created an idea of His fingerprint. The true God is **Holy** (perfect), He is **powerful**, He is the **creator** of all things, and He is **eternal** (forever existing).

*(Show God's fingerprint)*

**BE CAREFUL NOT TO USE BIG WORDS OR IDEAS THE CHILDREN WON'T UNDERSTAND.**

Give each group a copy of the fingerprint and a copy of the fingerprints of gods people may have created.

Ask them in the group to work out which fingerprint belongs to the one true God.

**Explanation at the end:**

Explain to the kids how although the fingerprints looked similar, there was only one that perfectly matched the true God. Money comes and goes so is not eternal and loses its power in many ways. Celebrities will die one day so are not eternal. They also were created and cannot create things out of nothing. They also make mistakes so are not Holy. Objects are created so cannot be creators. They only have the amount of power we give them.

But the fingerprint for the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit matches perfectly. They are creators of all things, they are Holy, they are powerful and they are eternal. This is the one true God and the God we should worship and follow.



**3) Bible Story + Lesson**

Who remembers what a prophet is? A prophet is someone who hears from God and speaks what God tells them to say. In the Bible there are many prophets and they revealed messages from God. A really big prophecy they made was a promise from God that a King, a Saviour, would come from God to save the people. But this saviour would not be just anyone. It would be one specific person. God gave some clues whom this person would be, almost like showing us his fingerprint. No one could be this Saviour unless he matched the clues, the prophecies, the fingerprint.

**Some of the prophecies/clues were:**

- 1.He would be born in Bethlehem
- 2.He would live in Egypt for a while
- 3.He would be a part of King David's family



4. He would be crucified
5. He would rise from the dead
6. He would be betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver
7. He would enter Jerusalem riding a donkey

And many more. *(Read some of the scriptures as time allows and what is suitable for the age group.)*

#### Prophecy made

1. Mic 5v2
2. Hos 11v1
3. Is 9v7
4. Is 53v5
5. Ps 16v10
6. Zech 11v12
7. Zech 9v9

#### Prophecy done

- Lk 2v4-7
- Matt 2v14-15
- Lk 1v32-33
- Mk 15v27-28
- Mk 16v6-7
- Matt 26v15
- Mk 11v7-11

**Interesting Note:** There are close to 50 prophecies made about the coming Saviour. The chances of fulfilling every one of them is mathematically impossible. Here is a picture to explain how impossible it is:

Imagine you put silver coins, half a metre deep, all across half of South Africa and somewhere in all of these coins is one gold coin. Imagine you blindfold someone and ask them to find the gold coin. The chance of someone finding that coin is the same chance of someone fulfilling only 8 prophecies. This was a very special fingerprint that no one but the true Saviour could match.

Do you know of anyone who matches these prophecies to be the King of Heaven and Earth? Do you match it? Does your mom/dad? Does any celebrity?

**No!** Only one person throughout history **perfectly** matches every one of the prophecies and matched the fingerprint: That is Jesus. By fulfilling the clues, He is our Saviour, our King and our God. Don't let anything else act like our God. They don't meet the requirements. Only Jesus does.

***(Look back at the prophecies mentioned and explain how Jesus did fulfil them.)***

#### 4) Learning outcomes

##### How does this apply to me?

- The children must understand how easily we may treat something like a god, but the truth is that they are not a god at all.
- Teach the true identity of God, as the Bible teaches, and not made up ideas we make.
- Children should realise that Jesus is the promised Saviour, the Son of God, and therefore He is our true God because he matches the identity given.

#### 5) Craft

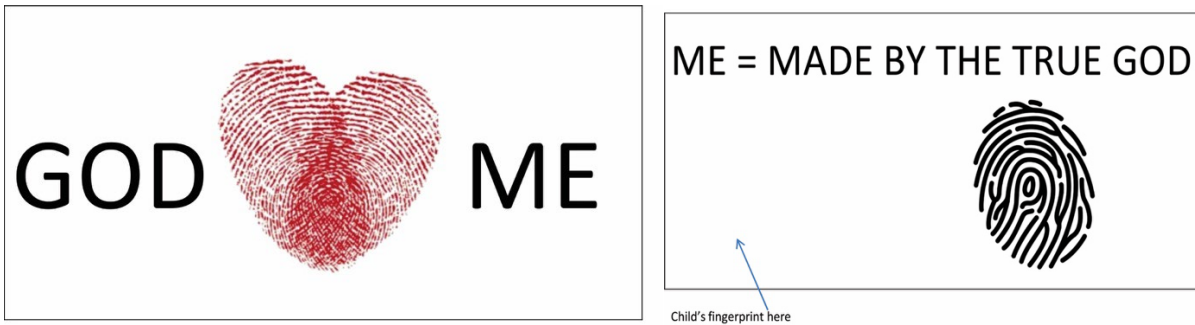
There are a few options using fingerprints that will be fun to make.

##### Option 1: Made in God's image name tag

- Get the children to put their fingerprint on a small piece of paper to place in the tag. On the paper you can write "Made by God" or "In God's image".
- Use string for the necklace part.



**Option 2:** Children put their own finger prints onto the handout to see how unique each one is.



**Option 3:** Backpack to keep Bible verses in for the rest of the term

Teachers can decide to make these for the children and hand them out with the first Bible verse that week or get the children to make and decorate their own. (template provided on next page)





## Lesson Two: My God is my love

### Main focus for the lesson:

- God wants me to understand that He is love.
- God wants me to understand what the Bible means when it says God loves me.
- God wants me to understand how much He loves me
- God wants to teach me that I need to love others

### 1) Memory Verse

- **Ephesians 3:18**

And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep is the love of God.

- **1 John 4:8**

God is love

### Idea to teach the memory verse

GIANT HEART ART! Teacher can use creativity on how to make the BIGGEST HEART that the children have ever seen! This could be done by using an entire wall and forming a ROOM SIZE heart with red tape, or the teacher could use 2 or 3 pieces of red poster board to cut out the biggest red heart that has ever been seen by the children! As children come in to their classroom, discussion can be about how long and deep and wide God's LOVE is and that GOD's love is from everlasting to everlasting! Children could then take turns drawing hearts all over the GIANT heart, or using heart stickers to decorate their BIG heart!

### 2) Hands on

#### 2.1) During the free time in the morning:

Have some tape measures or measuring cups, timers... out for the children to play with. For smaller children get them to measure sand, flour, the length of the passage or the height of the jungle gym...



#### For older children:

OBJECTS TO MEASURE RELAY: Divide the children into teams. Each team will be given a ruler and a list of 5 things to measure. As soon as the team has all 5 items measured, they will return to their team line and sit, so that the teacher knows that they are done. Object to measure can be a table, a light switch, a Bible, a pencil and a window or door. The first team who returns to their team line first with the CORRECT answers will be the winner. All team answers must be checked before they can be declared a winning team

## 2.2) Multiple choice quiz.

**Q1: Who knows what the highest mountain is?**

- a) Kilimanjaro
- b) **Everest**
- c) Andes
- d) Rocky's



**Q2: How many metres is the highest mountain?**

- a) **8,850 meters**
- b) 10,900 meters
- c) 7,600 meters
- d) 12,750 meters

**Q3: Which is the deepest sea?**

- a) Puerto Rico trench
- b) **Mariana trench**
- c) South sandwich trench
- d) Java trench



**Q4: How deep is the deepest part of the sea?**

- a) 5000 Km
- b) 1050 km
- c) 2762 km
- d) **2550 km**

**Q5: What is the longest river?**

- a) Amazon River
- b) Chang Jiang River
- c) Mississippi River
- d) **Nile River**



**Q6: How long is the Nile River**

- a) 4000 km
- b) 1 000 km
- c) **6 693 km**
- d) 5 555 km

**Q7: What is the widest canyon?**

- a) Fish River Canyon in Namibia
- b) **Grand Canyon in America**
- c) Indus George in Pakistan
- d) Bicaz in Romania



**Q8: How great is the love God has for you?**

- a) Ps 108:4  
Higher than the heavens
- b) Ps 103:7 from everlasting to everlasting
- c) Eph 2:4-5  
Great enough to save us
- d) **All of the above**

### 2.3) Skit:

Have someone come in dressed as an explorer, carrying a backpack filled with measuring cups, a tape measure and a watch. He should have leaves in his hair and dirt all over their face and maybe even a plastic spider or bug stuck on his back. Try have the person put on a Scottish or Australian accent. Have him come rushing into the room with a loud noise and big commotion. The teacher will need a Bible to directly read the verses from.

<b>The Explorer</b>	Agh I finally made it? Hello Children
<b>Teacher</b>	Hello how are you? Are you lost?
<b>The Explorer</b>	No I'm not lost. I was told to come here. This is Cornerstone Children's church isn't it?
<b>Teacher</b>	Yes it is, how can we help you?
<b>The Explorer</b>	<p>Wow I can't believe I finally made it here. It is so wonderful to meet you all. My name is Roger Mac Dougal and I have been wondering all around the world trying to find out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- what is the highest thing?</li><li>- what is the deepest thing?</li><li>- what is the widest thing?</li><li>- and what is the longest thing?</li></ul> <p>I have gone in my submarine to the deepest sea, I have climbed heights of Mt Everest, I have measured the width of the Grand Canyon and I have walked down the length of the Nile river to find out how long it is?</p>
<b>Teacher</b>	And so what have you found?
<b>The Explorer</b>	Well I was told to come here as you and the children would be able to help me. I am trying to measure the love of God.
<b>Teacher</b>	<p>Well if you are trying to measure the love of God then you have come to the right place. We are searching God's word this term and today we are also going to explore the love of God.</p> <p>I wonder if we could really measure the love of God. Hmmm do you have anything in your backpack that could help us measure God's love?</p>
<b>The Explorer</b>	Well I love baking and when I bake I like to use measuring cups to make sure that I put in the right amount of flour, butter and milk. I want to make sure that my baking is delicious and that it turns out just right. <i>(pull out the measuring cups from the backpack)</i>
<b>Teacher</b>	<p><b><i>Psalm 23 says "the Lord is my shepherd I shall not want, his love makes my cup run over."</i></b></p> <p>Children do you think that we could use a measuring cup to measure God's love?</p>
<b>The Explorer</b>	No, that won't be big enough. Wait! If we were building something we would use a measuring tape to measure the length, width or height of different things. I think I have one here. <i>(pull out a measuring tape.)</i>

<b>Teacher</b>	<p>Yes a measuring tape can measure really big things, maybe that will work ...</p> <p>Nope the Bible says in <i><b>Psalm 108:4 that the love of God is higher than the heavens.</b></i></p> <p>Imagine how many tape measures we would need to measure all the way to the moon...</p> <p>What else do you have in your back pack?</p>
<b>The Explorer</b>	<i>(Now pull out a watch.)</i> I have a watch. Will that work?
<b>Teacher</b>	<p>Children what do we use a watch for? <i>(To tell the time)</i></p> <p>Well the Bible tells us in <i><b>Psalms 103:7 that God's love is from Everlasting to everlasting.</b></i></p> <p>That means that God's love is <b>forever!</b></p>
<b>The Explorer</b>	I don't think we will be able to use my watch to measure God's love. I don't think the battery will last that long!
<b>Teacher</b>	Well I think we have proven something for sure today - <b>God loves us so much that we can't even measure His love.</b>
<b>The Explorer</b>	So if we can't measure God's love with a measuring cup, or a measuring tape or even a watch – How do we know how much God's love us?
<b>Teacher</b>	<p>The answer is that we <b>need to experience it!</b> We need to know and understand God's love by reading the bible and spending time with God.</p> <p>The bible tells us in <i><b>John 3:16 that "for God so loved the world that He gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."</b></i></p> <p>Just imagine how great God's love is if He sent his only son to save us!</p>
<b>The Explorer</b>	Well I just want to thank you teachers and children for telling me about all those amazing verses in the Bible about God's love FOR ME! <b>I had no idea that God loved me that much!</b>

### 3) Bible Story + Lesson (Jonah 1-4)

*(optional: Have leaders act out the story in silence as "God" narrates the story from a place where he cannot be seen)*

Today I am going to tell you a story from the Bible, but I am going to tell you this story from a completely different angle. I am going to tell you the story about Jonah and the Big Fish but today I am going to tell you the story from how God saw the story take place.

#### **(Jonah 1 – 4)**

I love creating people, and so today I am going to tell you about one person that I made. His name is Jonah. Now with Jonah, like with all people that I create, I sit and plan what that person will look like and I plan carefully what they will do and where they will go. I love each and every person that I create. My creations are the apples of my eye.

So Jonah grew up in a town called Zebulun in Northern Israel. I love Jonah so much and I know that He loves me because he prayed to me and he read his Bible. It was my heart's desire for him to go to Nineveh. The people in Nineveh had been doing very naughty and wicked things and I wanted Jonah to go there and to share my love with the people and to tell them to turn away from their wicked ways.

Do you know what Jonah did? He didn't listen to me. He decided to get onto a boat at the sea port called Joppa and he decided to head in the opposite direction to Tarshish in Spain. Maybe he thought the fish would be tastier there. But in essence he ran away from me. He didn't want to follow me and follow the call I had for Him. There is a scripture in **Romans 8:37** which says **nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love**. Even though he was running away from me I loved him exactly the same. I made him and I knew the plans that I had for him.

So while Jonah was on this boat heading in the opposite direction a huge storm started and it was blowing the boat from side to side. The sailors were feeling very sea sick and they were so worried that the boat was going to capsize. The sailors started throwing some of the crates and their belongings overboard. Eventually Jonah realised that he was being disobedient to what I had asked him to do. He thought that he might be causing the storm. So the sailors threw him overboard. He was feeling very scared. He thought he was going to die. But once again I loved him and I had a special plan for him to do.

I knew that he wouldn't be able to swim to shore: Jonah didn't like the water and he wasn't a very good swimmer. I caused a big fish to swallow Jonah up. Imagine how Jonah must have been feeling. Inside that fish is was dark and wet and very stinky. In **Romans 5:8** it says **God loved us even in our darkest hour**. Even though Jonah had been disobedient and he was now dirty and stinky I still loved him exactly the same.

In 1 Corinthians 13 my love is explained as **"it is patient and kind."** Jonah realised that he had made a big mistake by not listening to me. In the belly of that fish he asked me to forgive him and because my love is so patient and kind I forgave him. The next day the fish came onto the shore and Jonah was able to climb out of his mouth.

This time Jonah listened to me. He knew that I loved him. He knew that even though he had made a mistake that my love for him would never change. He knew that he had a message to tell. My love is so contagious and Jonah went to Nineveh to share my love with other people.

#### 4) Learning outcomes

##### How does this apply to me?

God's love is higher, wider, deeper and stronger than anything else. He loves us fiercely. His love for us never changes, he fights for us. Nothing in the whole world can separate us from His love.

God's love is like having measles: it is contagious. So if we are full with the love of Jesus then we need to share God's love with others.

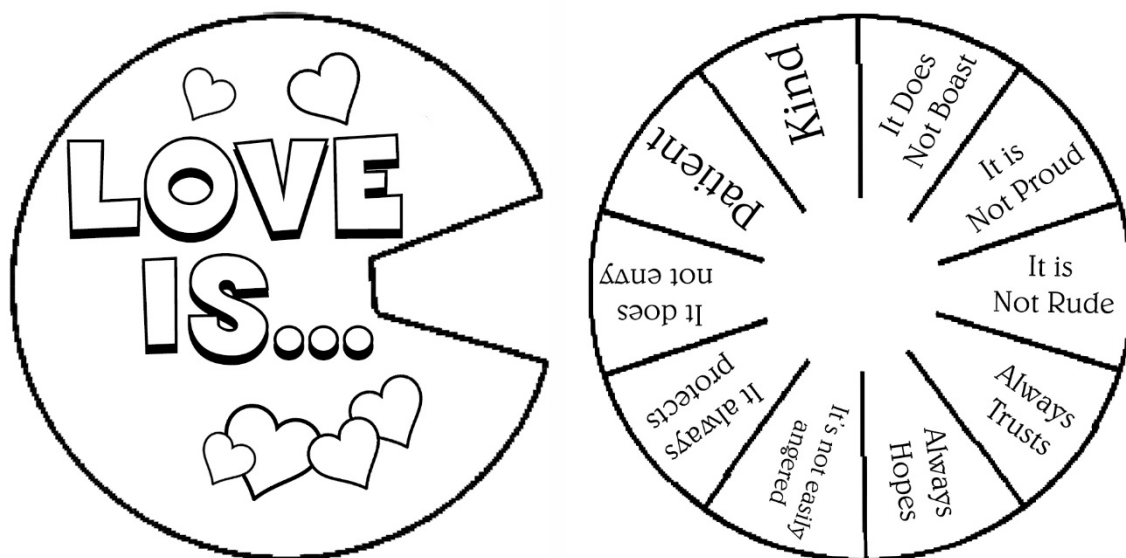
Cover the children with dots. They must go and give those dots away as they share the love of Jesus.



#### 5) Craft

These are crafts that the older and younger children can do because it helps us to understand the love of God.

##### Option 1: Love Spinner Game.



Use a split pin to join the two circles and have the children spin and find out what the Bible says about love



## Lesson Three: My God is my faith

### Main focus for the lesson:

- When I see who God is and what He has done, how can I not have faith in Him
- Reading the Bible builds my faith
- Keep your eyes on Jesus, He is the perfecter of our faith

### 1) Memory Verse

- *Hebrews 12:2* **Keep your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.**

### Idea to teach the memory verse

Set up a line on the floor (can be tape, rope, chalk drawn etc.). At the end of the line have a poster that says: "JESUS" as well as the verse "*keep your eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith*"

Along the line set up little "distractions" like cool toys, jar of money, friends calling you, people taunting you to change your path etc.

An explorer enters and greets the kids and says: I wonder what we have in our backpack this week? (*pull out a pair of binoculars*)  
It's a pair of binoculars!

(*He acts as if he doesn't know how they work by shaking, blowing or holding them wrong.*)

*Explorer asks:* Does anyone know how these things work? (*get them to explain until the explorer gets it right.*)

Explorer says: Wait! I can see a poster at the other end of this line.  
It says "JESUS" but wait there is a verse under it ... **Hebrews 12:2 Keep your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith."**

WOW! That is so true. Children can you say that verse with me?

**(Remember: Adding actions and lots of repetition makes learning the verse a lot easier)**

Explorer continues: Yes Jesus is the author and perfecter of my faith. I want to get close to Jesus. Hey that reminds me of a fun game.

Get a leader to explain to the children that the aim is for the explorer to get from the beginning of the line to "JESUS" at the end of the line. Mention the different "distractions" along the way and explain that there are things that might distract us from having faith in Jesus – like putting our faith in ourselves, people putting doubt in our minds, relying on money and things to buy what we want rather than having faith in Jesus to provide etc.

Tell them that every time the explorer takes his eyes off of Jesus and steps off of the line they must say the memory verse to remind him to keep his eyes on Jesus as He started and perfects our faith. Make it fun by using the binoculars and getting them to repeat it a few times as the explorer wonders off the path.

## 2) Hands on

**Perform the following game/s:**

### 2.1) Skit:

**Decorate the entrance, hall, play area and everywhere you can with a variety of Bible verses – especially those we will be learning this term.**

What did you all see when you arrived at Cornerstone Kids today?

Can anyone tell me what some of the signs said? Yes all the signs were about God, His promises and what He has done for us. Today we are going to learn that God is my faith.

The Bible says - Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of God. When we read Bible verses about who God is and what he has done it builds our faith.

So to help explain what this means: imagine your photo was going to be on the front cover of a popular magazine. You'd want to look your best right? You'd probably buy yourself some new clothes and want to get your hair done. So now these two people arrive and you've never met them before.

You have to choose who is going to cut your hair. Who do you want to cut your hair?

*(Let them call out)*

Remember you will want it to be just right so you need to choose the person who you have faith in that will cut your hair just right.

Who do you have faith in that will cut your hair just right?

Well it's a really important decision don't you think. You should first find out a bit more about these two people before you have faith in them to cut you hair?

So let's have a look at their resumé (can have it come up on the screen so they can see the pictures).

Person one: works at a dog parlour. He colours, cuts and shaves all sorts of dogs. He has never cut a person's hair before but is really excited that you will be the first. And is sure to leave your tail wagging.

Person two: has been working as a hairdresser for 20 years. She went to hairdresser school and got the top marks in her class. She has done hairstyles of many famous people and all of them were very happy with what she did. All of them highly recommend her.

So before you knew something about these two people you would have just guessed which one to pick. Now that you know more about these two people who would you choose? Why?

It is the same when it comes to God. The more you learn about Him the easier it is to have faith in Him.

Discuss some great things that the Bible tells us about God that makes having faith in Him easier. Let the children give their testimonies why they have faith in God. (His creation, healing, fruit of the Spirit, keeps His promises, powerful, mighty, love, measures the universe by the span of his hand, forgives, gracious, protector etc.)

*Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.*

In the Bible we learn about a lot of different people. Most of them had a time before they believed in Jesus. No one can be born a Christian. You can be born into a family of Christians but there is no way that you can become a Christian without making the choice yourself. To become a Christian we need something called faith. We need faith in God that He sent His son Jesus. We need faith to believe that because of Jesus our sins are forgiven and can come to God our Father in Heaven.

By reading the Bible we learn so much about God and how great and powerful He is. There are also so many Bible verses that teach us about faith.

Hebrews 11:1; Hebrews 11:6; 1 Peter 1:8-9; James 1:3; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Mark 10:52; Romans 10:10; Hebrews 11:11; Galatians 3: 26-27; Romans 10:17

### **3) Bible Story + Lesson**

The more I get to know who God is by reading His word, spending time with Him in prayer and learning about Him the easier it is to have faith in Him. God always keeps His promises and He can be relied on 100% so it becomes easy to have faith in Him.

God is my faith. What He says in the Bible, what God has done and what God is doing is all helping to build my faith.

Can anyone remember what the explorer had in his backpack today? Yes, it was a pair of binoculars. Can you remember the Bible verse he taught us? (*repeat the verse with them – very young children can just say “Keep your eyes on Jesus”*)

Well that reminds me of a story so today I’m going to tell you about a man in the Bible named Peter.

People in those times knew that God had promised them a person that would come and save them and everyone started saying John the Baptist was that person. But we know it wasn’t John that God sent to save us but it was ... Jesus. John was trying to tell them not to put faith in him but rather put faith in Jesus.

*If I had been there that day I would have said: “Keep your eyes on Jesus the perfecter of faith!”*

This is what John the Baptist said: (John 1:34) “I have seen and I testify that this is God’s chosen one.” He was saying that Jesus was the one who would save them. When John saw Jesus the next day he said “Look, the Lamb of God.”

Peter's brother, Andrew, heard John say Jesus was the one who would save them. He quickly went and fetched his brother Peter to come and meet Jesus too.

*If I had of been there that day I would have said to Peter: **"Keep your eyes on Jesus the perfecter of faith!"***

People started to follow Jesus and wanted to find out if He was really going to save them. In Luke 5:1-11 we read that Jesus had been sitting in Peter's boat talking to the crowds of people and afterwards He told Peter to push the boat out to deeper water and let down his nets and catch some fish.

Peter than said (Luke 5:5) **"Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything."**

*Tut tut let's remind Peter - If I had of been there that day I would have said to Peter: **"Keep your eyes on Jesus the perfecter of faith!"***

But wait what did Peter say next ... **"but because you say so, I will let down the nets."**

Peter had known Jesus for such a little time but already had faith that maybe He was who John had said He was. Well done Peter for having faith in Jesus! (*everyone clap*) And what happened next ... Peter's nets were so full with fish that they even started to break. WOW that's a lot of fish. After seeing that miracle it must have been much easier for Peter to have faith that Jesus really was God's son sent to save them.

Peter followed Jesus and became one of His disciples. (Matthew 14: 22-33) One day Jesus had just finished talking to the crowds and went up the mountain to pray. He sent the rest of the disciples in the boat to go across the sea. When He had finished praying it was dark and the disciples were already a long way from the land. Jesus came to them **walking on the sea**. At first they thought it was a ghost and they were terrified. But Jesus spoke to them and said **"Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid."**

Peter said to Jesus **"Lord, if it is You, command me to come to you on the water."**

Let's just pause the story there for a moment. Can Jesus walk on water? Can a person walk on water? So why does Peter think he can walk on the water, He's not Jesus? (*allow for answers*)

Peter had faith that Jesus was God's son and that He would make Peter be able to walk on the water. Peter had faith in Jesus.

If I had of been there that day I would have said? **"Keep your eyes on Jesus the perfecter of faith!"** Do you think Peter is going to be able to take even one step on the water? Yes!

Jesus tells Peter to come and Peter steps out of the boat and starts to walk on the water to Jesus.

Now Peter is walking on the water. WOW he is actually walking on water! But then he starts to notice the waves and the wind and he starts to become frightened. So if **you** had of been there on that day what would **you** have said? ***“Keep your eyes on Jesus the perfecter of faith!”***

Yes, Peter should have had faith in Jesus but instead he starts to doubt and so he starts to **sink!**

And if **you** had of been there on that day, while he was sinking, what would **you** have said? ***“Keep your eyes on Jesus the perfecter of faith!”***

But Peter cries out (Matthew 14:30-33) *“Lord, save me!”* <sup>31</sup> *Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”* <sup>32</sup> *When they got into the boat, the wind stopped.* <sup>33</sup> *And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, “You are certainly God’s Son!”*

Why did the disciples now say they were certain Jesus was God’s Son? Because they had seen what Jesus could do that no one else could.

The more time Peter spent with Jesus, watching Him do miracles like this and many others such as healing sick people etc., so did his faith in Jesus grow. By watching Jesus his faith was perfected. Jesus was the perfecter of his faith.

So I **am** here today and I **am** going to say ***“Keep your eyes on Jesus the perfecter of faith!”***

What do you think are some ways we can “keep our eyes on Jesus”?

- **Read the Bible.**  
The Bible tells us all about who God is. By reading and reminding ourselves how great God is we build our faith. Follow Jesus’ perfect example and ask the Holy Spirit to help build your faith.
- **Listen to testimonies.**
- **See what God is doing.**
- **Trusting God by putting into practice what His word says.**
- **Pray.**

#### **4) Learning outcomes**

**How does this apply to me?**

- God wants us to have faith in Him and in Him alone. (Psalm 62)
- By keeping my eyes on Jesus my faith can be perfected (Hebrews 12:2)
- The word of God builds our faith (Romans 10:17)

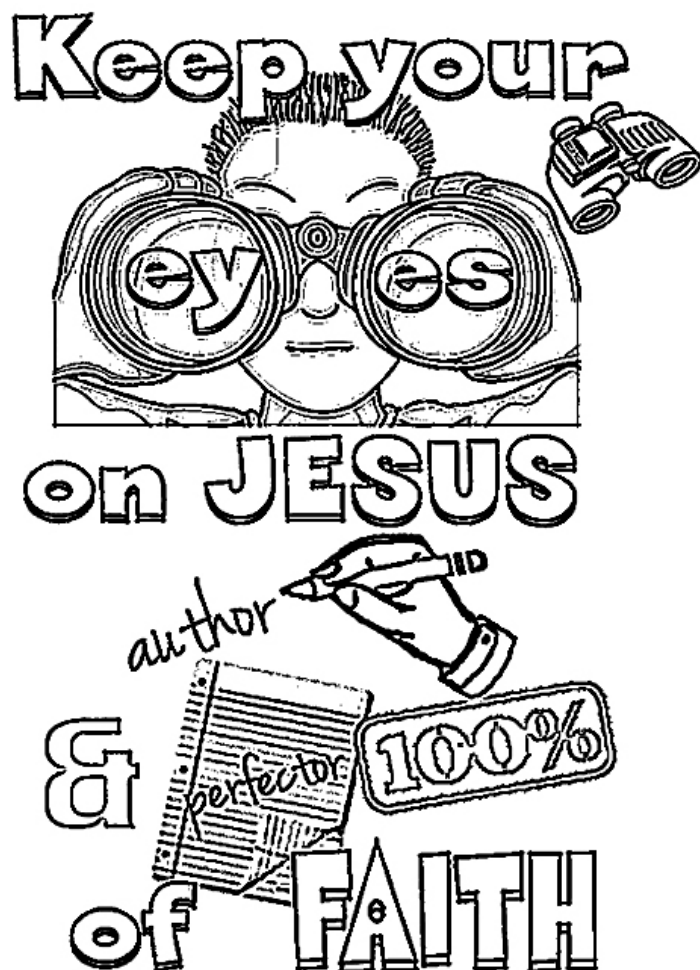
## 5) Craft

### Option 1: Keep your eyes on Jesus binoculars

Use two toilet rolls or cups to make a pair of binoculars. Get the children to decorate the template below and wrap it around the toilet rolls to hold them together and attach a string



### Option 2:





## Lesson Four: My God is my courage

### Main focus for the lesson:

- Faith in God gives us courage
- Courage is doing the right actions despite fear
- God strengthens us







### 1) Memory Verse

- 1.1) Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

*God's word has numerous examples of why we should have courage. Reading them can help the children to be less fearful.*

- 1.2) Isaiah 41:10 "Do not fear, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."
- 1.3) Isaiah 41:13 "For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."
- 1.4) Hebrews 13:6 We can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

### 2. Idea to teach the memory verse

 <p>Be strong</p>	 <p>and courageous.</p>	 <p>Do not be afraid, or discouraged.</p>
 <p>For the Lord your God</p>	 <p>will be with you</p>	 <p>wherever you go. JOSHUA 1:9</p>

Divide the children into smaller groups and give them a set of the memory verse cards. Ask the children if they think God is with them where they are sitting. Then get them to put them in the correct order and say the verse to see if they are correct. Repeat by shuffling the cards and moving to another location. Again ask them if God is still with them and get them to arrange the cards and say the memory verse again to know the answer. Choose a variety of locations (under the desk, on the slide, in the sand pit, in the tree etc.) making sure they build and repeat the verse each time.

### 3. Hands on

**Perform the following game/s:**

**2.1) Object lesson:** God strengthens me

Things you will need:

2 x “pillars” – (e.g. 2 large hot chocolate containers)

1 x smaller container labelled “fears” – (e.g. small hot chocolate container)

1 x piece of paper (*from the explorer’s back pack*)

- **Explain the event using this dialogue:**

The explorer enters frantic and scared as he has just found out he has to go and tell a big crowd of people everything that he has learnt so far (*choose one of the lessons previously taught e.g. how big is God’s love*)

Leader then tries to calm him down and tells him not to worry as today we are learning “God is my courage.”

The explorer then asks the children ... “What is courage?” (*allow them to answer*)

*Leader then explains to him:*

**Courage is doing something despite fear.**

For example: I’m really scared of snakes so it would take a lot of courage for me to hold a snake (*bring out a toy snake*) unless it’s a toy one of course. It is a toy one isn’t it?

*The explorer says:* Oh I really want to have courage. I even looked in my back pack hoping there was something in there that could teach me about being **strong and courageous** but all I could find was this flimsy piece of paper and it’s definitely not strong! It kinda reminds me of me – weak and flimsy.

*Leader all excitedly says it reminds them of an important lesson about courage and then uses the piece of paper to teach the object lesson:*

*Leader says:* There are many things in our lives that cause us to fear. What are some of the things that make you feel scared? (*write the children’s replies on the “fears” container e.g. getting sick, safety, making mistakes, failing at school, being alone, the dark, thunder, telling others about Jesus, others laughing at me, or having to talk in front of a huge group of people*)

(*show them the “fears” container and say*) So these are some of the fears and worries that each one of us will experience in our lives and we will need to have courage to overcome them. But it’s not always easy to have courage. In fact it takes a lot of strength to have courage.

Let's pretend this piece of paper is us (*you can draw a person on it if you want*) (*lay the paper on top of the "pillars"*) say: On our own do you think we have the strength and courage to withstand our fears?

(*place the "fears" container on the paper and it will collapse*) Oh dear sometimes we are not strong enough to have courage to face our fears and we give up. Instead of having courage to tell our friend about Jesus we change the subject to something else. Instead of having courage that we'll be fine in the lightning storm we call our mom. (*each time you explain an example on the containers let it collapse the paper*)



The best news ever is that GOD IS OUR COURAGE! God helps us to be strong and courageous. How are some ways God can help us be strong and courageous? (*with each answer fold the paper back and forth like you are making a fan*)



Pray and ask for strength and courage  
Read the Bible and see all the promises that God has made  
Have faith in God and in that He is stronger than anything  
Fellowship with other believers  
Holy Spirit

God told Joshua in Joshua 1:9

*<sup>9</sup> This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*

In the same way God wants us to be strong and courageous. He wants us to remember to have faith that He is always with us and so we have nothing to fear.

When we acknowledge God is our courage, He can make us strong and courageous and we are able to withstand and overcome any fears we may have. (*place container on the paper and it won't fall through*)



*Excited about the lesson he has learnt the explorer says:*

Wow what an amazing lesson. I can't believe a flimsy piece of paper can be so strong and hold up that heavy container! Knowing that I'm **not** doing things on my own makes me feel **strong and courageous**. Thank you God for being my courage! I'm ready to go and teach that huge crowd of people what I've discovered so far (*e.g. all about God's love*)

#### 4. Bible Story + Lesson

There are many stories in the Bible that we read about people having courage. Today I am going to tell you about some of them and I want to see if you can work out what they all have in common that gave them the courage to do the great things that they did.

- **Joshua (& Caleb)** (Numbers; Joshua)

When the Israelites were on the edge of the Promised Land in Numbers 13, God commanded Moses to send out twelve people to spy out the land, one from each of the

tribes of Israel. Upon their return, ten reported that the land, while bounteous as the Lord had promised, was occupied by strong and fierce warriors dwelling in large, fortified cities. Furthermore, the Nephilim (giants from the Israelites' perspective) were in the land.

However, Joshua and Caleb were the only two who urged the people to take the land (Numbers 14:7-10) This must have taken a lot of courage, first of all to be the only two against ten others and secondly to be prepared to go to war.

Here we see one thing that sets Joshua (and Caleb) apart from the rest of the Israelites—they believed in the promises of God. Their **FAITH in God was rock-solid**.

They were not intimidated by the size of the warriors or the strength of the cities. Rather, they knew their God and remembered how He had dealt with Egypt, the most powerful nation on the earth at that time. If God could take care of the mighty Egyptian army, He could certainly take care of the various Canaanite tribes. God rewarded Joshua's and Caleb's faith by sparing them from the entire generation of Israelites that would perish in the wilderness.

Later when Moses dies, God chooses Joshua to take over in leading the Israelite people to the Promise land and God gives Joshua a specific instruction. Read Joshua 1:9

This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

We learnt last term that God gave Joshua a specific strategy to follow in order to win against the city of Jericho. It didn't include any weapons or normal ways one would think you would win a war but as we read in Joshua 5:13-6:27 we see Joshua's reaction was not to question God at all but instead he just told the armies what they must do. That must have taken a lot of courage to march around a powerful city with not even one weapon. Where did his courage come from? Joshua knew God was with him. He had **FAITH in God** that God was going to help them win the war and they didn't have to do it on their own.

#### - **David (1 Samuel 17)**

Goliath was a huge Philistine warrior who was over 2m tall and who had been training to fight since he was a small boy. The Bible goes on to tell us that Goliath wore a strong bronze helmet on his head and a very heavy and strong body armour covered his body and even his legs. We also read that he had a huge strong weapon made with a strong heavy iron point. Every morning and night Goliath would come out and shout to the Israelites to send someone to come and fight him and if they won the Philistines would be their slaves but if they lost the Israelites would become slaves of the Philistines. This went on for **40 days**.

Let's read what the Bible says the people of Israel thought about Goliath:

*(1 Samuel 17:14) On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.*

*(1 Samuel 17:24) Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear.*

David on the other hand was a small young boy. He had never trained as a fighter and was not even part of the army that had been chosen to fight against the Philistines but instead

had been left at home to look after his dad's sheep. When he hears Goliath and sees no one else will stand against him, he tells Saul that he will fight Goliath.

Saul replies (1 Sam 17:33)

<sup>33</sup> "Don't be ridiculous!" Saul replied. "There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth."

David explains to Saul that just like God helped him kill lions and bears when he was watching the sheep so will God help him against Goliath.

Saul tries to get David to wear his armour as some means of protection from Goliath but David chooses to rather face Goliath with just his tunic, a sling and 5 smooth stones.

Not one of the Israelites were brave enough to stand up against Goliath, but David the smallest, least trained of them all, had courage to fight Goliath. Where do you think he got his courage from? *(show a picture to visually show the size difference or even draw an outline on the wall which the children can stand against and see if they would have had courage to go up against a man so big and well trained.)*

David got his courage from having **FAITH that God was with him. God had helped him before and David had faith that God would help him again.**

David was right to have faith in God and be courageous as God was with him and David managed to defeat Goliath. Thank you God for courage.

- **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** (Daniel 3)

King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and told everyone (Read Daniel 3:5-6):

<sup>5</sup> When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue.

<sup>6</sup> Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

Three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, did not bow down to the statue each time the music played and this made the King very angry when he heard this. The King ordered for the three men to be brought before him and gave them one more chance to obey him by kneeling to the statue and if they didn't he would throw them into a fiery furnace. The three men knew it was against God and so refused to bow down to the statue. They knew this would mean they would be thrown into the fire and so must have had great courage to say no. Where did their courage come from?

Read Daniel 3:17

<sup>17</sup> If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. <sup>18</sup> But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."



Their courage came from having **FAITH that God** would look after them and save them from the fire and if He didn't it would be because God chose not to and not because God couldn't.

Were the three men right to have courage and not obey the King? YES! God sent an angel to protect them from the fire. When the King saw what God had done let's read what he said. (Daniel 3:28-29)

<sup>28</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. <sup>29</sup> Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

### **Conclusion:**

All of these people had something to fear whether it be a giant, an army or a fiery furnace but yet all of them had courage. Where did their courage come from? From having **FAITH that God would be with them.**

When we are in awe of God (we fear Him and are amazed of who He is) we fear nothing else. When you recognise and accept the power and mightiness of God then we can have courage to achieve anything.

The next time you face fear, have FAITH in God who is always with you and He will give you the courage to overcome your fears.

## **5. Learning outcomes**

### **How does this apply to me?**

- God wants you to be strong and courageous.
- God wants you to spend time getting to know Him as when you have a revelation of who He is, it becomes easier to have faith in Him and be courageous.
- Know that God is always with you.

## **6. Craft**



David's little sack of stones. Write on each of the stones "Be strong and courageous"  
Joshua 1:9



## Lesson Five: My God is my joy

### Main focus for the lesson:

- My joy comes from God
- No matter what happens no one can take your joy
- Our joy lasts for eternity

### 1) Memory Verse

- *Luke 10:20b* **Rejoice because your names are written in Heaven**
- *Philippians 4: 4* **Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice**

### Idea to teach the memory verse

*The explorer arrives with his backpack and greets the children*

*Have the teacher greet the explorer as he arrives and say: Wow we have been learning so many amazing things about God this term – Children can you remember what they all are? As the explorer pulls the items out of his backpack remind the children of the Bible verses and lessons learnt so far.*

*Say: I can't wait to see what you have in your backpack this week!*

*The explorer pulls out a Christmas decoration that says "JOY" on it. Act a little confused – reminding the explorer that it isn't even close to Christmas why would he have a Christmas decoration.*

*Then the explorer explains: Paul teaches us in Philippians that we must REJOICE in the Lord. That means **we must rejoice that Jesus was born** and that **God gave us Jesus as a gift**. We rejoice because we get to spend **forever and ever with Jesus** in Heaven one day. But Paul doesn't say only rejoice at Christmas time.*

*Paul doesn't say rejoice once in a while, not twice a week but ALWAYS! **REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS**. And just to make sure we heard what he said he said it again! **AGAIN I SAY REJOICE!** No matter what happens good or bad, we must always rejoice.*

*Repetition is key to learning a verse so give the children multiple scenarios and ask them if we should rejoice. Leaders and children then reply with the memory verse: "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice."*

*E.g. Do you think we should rejoice when we are at school ... (reply) **Rejoice in Lord...**  
And if we get chosen to play in the soccer team ... (reply) **Rejoice in Lord...**  
But what if we lose our soccer match ... (reply) **Rejoice in Lord...**  
And if it rains ... (reply) **Rejoice in Lord...***

### 2) Hands on

#### 2.1) Object Lesson: You can't take my JOY!

*Cut out the shape of a heart and stick on a thick cardboard piece that says "JOY" on it before laminating them together. In this way you will not be able to separate the "JOY" card from the heart.*

Tell the children that JOY is given to us from God. You either accept it or you don't. You cannot fake it. When we accept Joy from God **NO ONE CAN TAKE IT AWAY**. *Demonstrate by trying to remove the "JOY" card and getting a few volunteers to do the same.*

The Bible teaches us that JOY is found in the forgiveness of our sin, obeying God's Word, being in God's presence, as a fruit of the Spirit and in knowing that we will be with Him in Heaven someday. All these things are possible because of what Jesus did for us.

Romans 5:10-11 (NLT)

<sup>10</sup> For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. <sup>11</sup> So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

*Now take smaller cards with the word "HAPPY" written on it.*

Say: The world teaches us that happiness is found in having lots of money or possessions, in being well liked by others, in doing fun and exciting things, and enjoying good food and entertainment.

*Get the children to help you name the things that make them happy as you prestick them onto the laminated heart.*

When we read the Bible we see that Jesus didn't come to earth to make us happy. In fact He tells us that we will suffer. There will be pain and sadness **BUT** we must rejoice in our suffering because it increases our faith (James 1: 2-4). Also when we suffer people are watching our reactions and when they see us react with Joy we are showing them Jesus. (1 Peter 4:13)

Our happiness can be taken away. We can lose our money, our things can be broken, people can let us down. *Name the specific things that children said made them happy and how they can be taken away. Remove a "happy" card each time.*

The Bible teaches us that a belief in God changes the way we look at everyday situations, because it helps us understand what is truly important in life. And even though all my happiness can be taken away – **NO ONE CAN EVER TAKE AWAY MY JOY BECAUSE GOD IS MY JOY!** (*Demonstrate not being able to remove "JOY"*)

*Turn the heart over so they can't see the word joy.* Sometimes even though we know that God is my Joy we don't always show it. We are not always joyful. Pray to God and ask Him to help you to be joyful. Ask Him to help you show others your joy so that people can say: "Wow look at Nic, everything is going wrong in her life but still she is singing praises to God. I wanna know more about that Jesus she talks about giving her so much joy."

So remember happiness might come and go but **GOD IS MY JOY**. Even when I am unhappy my sins are still forgiven, I'm still loved by God and He comforts me, I'm still filled with the Spirit who gives me joy and most importantly I will get to spend eternity in Heaven with God someday. When I keep that as my focus – **NO ONE CAN TAKE AWAY MY JOY!**

## **2.2) Skit: You can't take my JOY!**

Use the "JOY" heart and "happy" cards from the previous object lesson (2.1 You can't take away my joy) as part of the skit.

Draw a line on the ground. On the left have a sign ***“I do not believe in Jesus”*** and on the right a sign that says ***“I believe in Jesus”***

Sarah	<i>(wipes away tears and sighs to herself)</i> I really hate bullies they say and do such mean things. It really makes me feel so unhappy! <i>(in walks James)</i> Hey James. You look really happy today!
James	<i>(James walks in with heart around his neck with “happy” cards attached while carrying a phone, birthday card, and singing praises to Jesus)</i> Hi Sarah. I am super happy! I mean I have the latest iphone 6, I’m getting such great marks at school and I just got an invite to Bekka’s party. Oh I love parties. I just feel so happy!
Sarah	Wow that’s wonderful James
James	The best thing of all is that at Children’s church last week I made a decision to love Jesus and now I’m not only filled with happiness but with Joy too! <i>(point to “joy” card laminated into heart)</i>
Sarah	Filled with “Joy” what do you mean?
James	<i>(refer to the heart as you explain)</i> Well we learnt that your heart has a choice --- to believe in Jesus or not to believe in Jesus. There is no in between. And well I choose to believe in Jesus. <i>(step into the “believe in Jesus” section)</i> Did you know that Jesus loves us, He forgives us and because of Jesus we get to spend forever and ever in Heaven one day with God?
Sarah	Wow I choose Jesus too! That makes me feel really happy. <i>(place heart over her neck with “joy card” laminated in card)</i>
James	That isn’t happiness you’re feeling. That is JOY! And no matter what no one can take away your joy.
Sarah	No one can take away my joy?
James	Nope...
Bekka	Sorry to interrupt but ... uh James it seems teacher gave you an invite to my party but it was actually for the other James you know James Taylor – oh he’s so dreamy. Sorry James I’m sure you understand. <i>(take invite back and happy card that says friends” and leave)</i>
Sarah	Oh Sorry James I know how much that party meant to you.
James	Well it does make me sad that I’m not invited but Jesus still loves me, forgives me and I get to go to Heaven one day forever and ever. They can’t take my joy!
Teacher	James. I just marked your maths paper and well you FAILED it! What’s gotten into you, you normally do so well. You’ll have to come and see me at the end of the day. <i>(take “happy” card away)</i>
James	Oh dear I can’t believe I failed it. I never fail. But I might feel bad but Jesus loves me, forgives me and I get to go to Heaven because of Jesus! They can’t take my joy. <i>(James trips and drops his phone – smash)</i>
Sarah	Oh no James your new phone. It’s smashed to pieces!
James	<i>(wipes away his tears and removes happy card)</i> I am going to be in such trouble but no matter what happens no one can take my JOY!
Sarah	That’s amazing James. You’ve really taught me an important lesson about JOY today! No matter what NO ONE, not those bullies, nope NO ONE can take away my JOY! <i>(both walk away singing praises to Jesus)</i>

Take a receipt roll of paper and use it to make a timeline.

For each stage in Paul's life unroll the paper a bit more and add another picture to the strip. (see pictures 1-10 provided)

At the end of the story when you talk about Paul's "happily ever after with Jesus, unroll the strip all around and around the classroom and then even out the door, so they can't see it end. This will help them put in perspective what Paul meant when he had joy through all his suffering as he knew it was such a small time in comparison to the eternal joy we would have with God in Heaven.



Say: Have you ever read a fairy tale and it ends ... "**and they all lived happily ever after**"?

(hold up picture 1 "happily ever after" for them to say it with you)

The prince's kiss woke up the princess ... and they all lived happily ever after.

The hero saved the poor from the evil king ... and they all lived happily ever after.

They were married ... and they all lived happily ever after.

(Name any other age appropriate examples)

Well I'm going to tell you about a man named Paul. Now this is not a fairy tale but rather a true story from the Bible and I am going to tell you how he lived "*happily ever after*"

(add Picture 2,3 then 4 to timeline)

Paul was born a Jew and as he got older he studied all the laws that the Jewish church should follow. When he heard about people saying that Jesus was God's son he was NOT very happy – in fact it made him very angry. He wanted everyone to follow the laws he had studied and so he did everything he could to try and stop people believing in Jesus.

**Acts 8:3 (NLT) <sup>3</sup> But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.**

(You may want to explain the name change: It was common in these times for people to have 2 names. Saul was his Hebrew name and Paul was his Roman name. Jesus did not change his name. Saul started to use his Roman name Paul as he started travelling farther and farther into the Gentile world)

(add Picture 5 to timeline)

One day Paul was on his way to a place called Damascus. He was going to look for more Christians so that he could throw them in prison but instead Jesus came to him in a blinding light and asked Paul **Acts 9:4 "why are you persecuting me?"**

Well if Jesus met you face to face and asked you to stop doing things against Him do you think you would listen?

(add Picture 6 to timeline)

Well Paul did. Paul now not only believed in Jesus but now he loved Jesus so much that he decided he would do everything he could to tell others about Jesus. He knew this is what Jesus wanted him to do and he would let nothing get in the way. Paul made a decision to live a life that was like-minded to Christ. He would love others like Christ did. He would tell others about God like Christ did. He would try and teach everyone the importance of believing Jesus was God's son. Just like Christ did.

(pretend to add picture 1 "happily ever after")

Paul is no longer a bad guy. He loves Jesus. Let's all shout "hooray" and jump up and down.

Well it's this part in the Disney fairy tale that we hear our line ... **"and they all lived happily ever after."**

But that's not what happened. The Bible goes on to tell us all the difficulties Paul went on to face.

2 Corinthians 11: 24-28

<sup>24</sup> Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. <sup>26</sup> I have travelled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. <sup>27</sup> I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. <sup>28</sup> Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches.

(add picture 7 to timeline)

People were not happy that Paul was teaching everyone to love Jesus and so they said mean things about him, they hurt and whipped him, they killed his friends that were also teaching others about Jesus. They even put him in prison more than once! This is how he lived the rest of his life.

Does that sound like a ... **"and they all lived happily ever after."**

I think we can all agree if we were whipped, stoned and put in prison we'd feel very UNHAPPILY ever after. Wait till you hear what Paul's reaction was when he was in prison.

Acts 16:25 "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them."

WOW! Paul was filled with joy and was praising God even while he was in prison.

(add picture 8 to timeline)

Paul loved Jesus so much and nothing was going to take his joy away. He kept on telling people about Jesus no matter how many people beat him or put him in prison.

Have you ever seen in the movies where the person gets taken to prison and then they tell them they have one phone call they can make? If you were sent to prison and you had one call what do you think you would say? (*help, get me out, it's not fair, I'll do anything just tell me what to do to get out*)

(add picture 9 to timeline)

In Paul's day they didn't have telephones and so they used to write letters. While Paul was in prison he wrote letters to different churches and some of these letters are recorded in the Bible.

Let's read what Paul said:

Philippians 1:12-19

### **Paul's Joy That Christ Is Preached**

<sup>12</sup> And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. <sup>13</sup> For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear.

<sup>15</sup> It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. <sup>16</sup> They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News. <sup>17</sup> Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. <sup>18</sup> But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, **the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice.** <sup>19</sup> **For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance.**

Paul was still teaching them – even from prison. And he was teaching them about JOY. In fact again and again in the letter we read how Paul teaches the Philippians to rejoice and how he himself is filled with joy.

Philippians 4: **“Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice.”**

So where did Paul's joy come from:

He didn't get his joy from people around him being nice to him

He didn't get his joy from the beautiful things he had, for he had nothing.

**His joy came from God!**

His joy came from obeying God's word and telling others about Jesus no matter the cost. His joy came from being filled with the Holy spirit. His joy came from knowing that one day he will be in Heaven with God and live in joy for eternity.

**God was his joy!**

(add picture 10 to timeline)

He was joyful for his suffering because it meant more people were learning about Jesus.

And he was joyful because he knew that this small bit of suffering was for a **happily ever ever ever ever ever after with Jesus in Heaven.**

Remember God is your joy and He is your happily ever after!



<p>Picture 1- happily ever after</p> <p>... AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER</p>	<p>Picture 2: Paul was born a Jew</p> 	
<p>Picture 3: Paul studied Jewish Law</p> 	<p>Picture 4: Paul is angry and destroys churches</p> 	<p>Picture 5: Jesus talks to Paul</p> 
<p>Picture 6: Paul loves Jesus and tell others</p> 	<p>Picture 7: Paul Suffers (but still rejoices)</p> 	<p>Picture 8: No matter what, Paul loves Jesus</p> 
<p>Picture 9: Paul writes letters about JOY</p> 	<p>Picture 10</p> <p>... AND HE LIVED HAPPILY EVER EVER EVER AFTER WITH JESUS</p>	

### 3) Learning outcomes

**How does this apply to me?**

**When I search God's word I discover – God is my JOY**

- Whether I am feeling happy or sad – God is always my JOY
- The Bible teaches me that JOY can be found in:
  - Knowing my sins are forgiven (1 Peter 1:3-7)
  - Obeying God's word (John 15:9-11)
  - As a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22)
  - Knowing that I will be in Heaven with God someday. (Romans 14:17) (Luke 6:22-23)
- I rejoice because my name is written in Heaven.

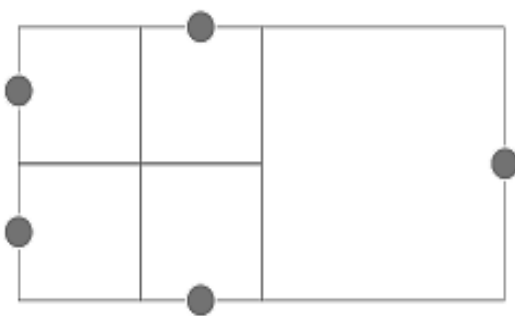
### 4) Craft

**Option 1: You can't take my joy**

Give each child a laminated heart with the word "Joy" as described in the object lesson ( 2.1 You can't take my joy) Let them make little "happy" cards of the things that make them happy so they can prestick them on.

Give them the opportunity to practice the object lesson so they can teach the lesson to their friends and family.

**Option 2: My Joy comes from God (shadow box)**



Take a shoe box and using old cereal boxes create divisions in the box as shown in the diagram. For each circle cut a peephole in the box so they can look what is inside. In each of the smaller sections put things where the children could be looking for joy in the wrong places, like money, toys, food, friends. In largest section place the word "Jesus" or baby in a manger; cross; Bible verse – something that will remind them that our joy comes from God.

When your shadow box is complete, secure the lid on the top and write the memory verse on the top. Let the children take turns peeking in the holes "looking for joy." Make a game of looking in the "wrong" places and finally finding joy when you look to Jesus. Phrases you could use to reinforce the lesson include, "Money might make me happy, but true joy is found in Jesus;" "Toys might make me happy for a while, but lasting joy is found in Jesus;" "Food might bring happiness for a few minutes, but Jesus makes me joyful all day, every day."

You can get the children to decorate their own toilet paper tube as their own spy glass and go looking for joy around the classroom. Let them then use their spy glass to look up verses on joy in the Bible or come back to shadow box as a reminder that our JOY comes from God.

**Option 3: Joy Christmas decorations**

We celebrate at Christmas time the birth of Jesus and remember the day God sent His son to save us. Let us rejoice in what Jesus did for us so that we may spend eternity in Heaven with Him. Remind the children what Jesus did for them as they make "JOY" Christmas decorations from salt dough.

Place the ornaments on a paper plate that has the memory verse written on it.



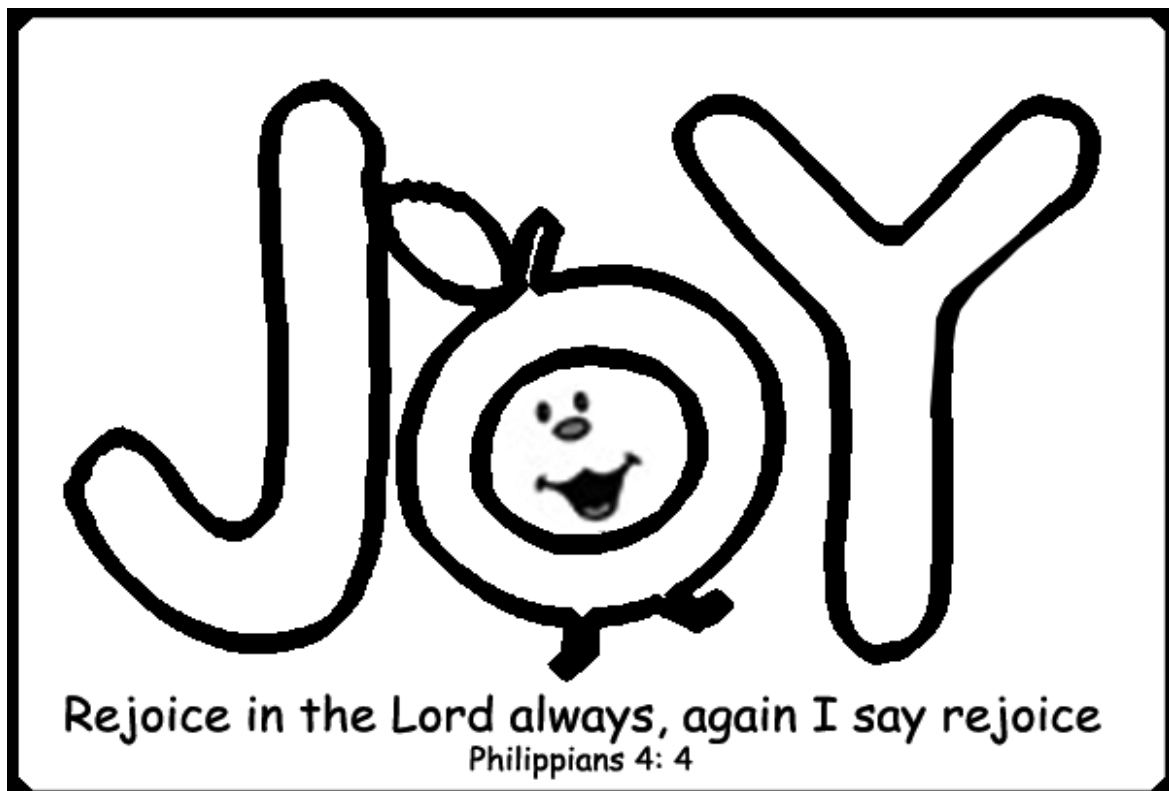
Add string while it is still wet so they can be hung.

Salt dough recipe: ½ cup salt; ½ water; 1 cup flour. Glitter optional Knead together. Bake or leave in the sun

#### Option 4:



Use fruit loops and icing to decorate the memory verse.



## Lesson Six: My God is my forgiveness

### Main focus for the lesson:

- God is my forgiveness
- God forgave me when He died on the cross for my sins
- God wants me to learn to forgive others quickly as He forgave me.

### 1) Memory Verse

- 1 John 1:9

***But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.***

### Idea to teach the memory verse

#### For the younger kids:

Add some cool actions to the memory verse.

For the word CONFESS let the children put their hands to their mouths

For SIN have the children pull a really disgusted or ugly face.

For HE point to Jesus.

For CLEANSE pretend you have a cloth that you are rubbing out something dirty

#### For the older kids:

Play the eye exam game – write the memory verse about 6 or 7 times on a poster or large piece of paper. However, each time you write gradually make the words smaller. The words on your last card should be as small as you can possibly write them. Show the children the largest sized memory verse. Each time go to the smaller and smaller font as they read it. Be amazed at how good the children's sight is.

### 2) Hands on

#### 2.1) Object lesson:

Explorer arrives crawling in, dirty and exhausted, clutching a mirror in his hand. Gasping, he tells his story of how he was stranded in the middle of nowhere and how he used his mirror to reflect the sun and get the attention of the emergency helicopter. Throughout the story he talks about how he was "saved".

Leader then explains how his mirror reminds her of another time he was "saved" – the time Jesus saved you from your sins. Go on to teach the object lesson about forgiveness.

#### ***Practise at home first***

Get a large mirror. Get a child up front to be an example. Pointing the mirror at them ask the child what they see. (*their answer should be themselves*).

Explain that what they see in the mirror is not a true reflection of what they look like to God. You see we are all filled with sin, so the clean image that they see is not what God sees.

Take a black **permanent** marker and fill the mirror with lots of Xs as you describe some sin the kids might commit. Explain to the class that sin is ugly, and with sin in our lives we are

no longer the creation God has made us to be. Get the child to look in the mirror again. (*the child should say that they see themselves but there are a lot of marks all over them*).

Explain to the children that some of us try to make ourselves better by doing good things like helping old ladies or being nice or giving money to the poor... give the child a cloth and ask them to rub out the Xs on the mirror. (*it won't come off*)

Try give them some water to rub off the X (*emphasise that the water is them creating their own beliefs of their own thoughts about how they can feel like they can get rid of their sins, so every good action can cancel out a bad action*) **emphasise that there is nothing that we can do to take away our sins.**

Then take a red **white board marker** (*it must be red*). But then Jesus came and he said that he would take away our sins. As this is being discussed draw the red pen exactly over the black marker. Mention how when Jesus died for us he covered all our sins and took them away for us. Then using a different cloth wipe off the pen. Then God seeing Jesus who had died for our sins sees us as being clean.

Like we learned in the Lord's prayer we need to ask God to forgive us of our sins. The amazing thing is that HE does so, so quickly and He forgets about our sins. We can experience forgiveness because Jesus forgave us. The challenge is that we need to also forgive others when they hurt or offend us.

### 3) Bible Story + Lesson: The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)

Who remembers from last term how many times does the Bible say we should forgive?

In the parable of the unforgiving servant that we learnt about from Matthew 18:21-35 Jesus tells Peter we must forgive as many times and 77 times 7. This means that we must forgive, and when we think we have forgiven enough we must forgive some more.

Today we are going to learn about another parable Jesus taught. Let's see if the father in this story knows how to forgive.

#### Option 1: Video clip

**God's story: two sons and a father** **Vimeo** (<https://vimeo.com/35595649>) or [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G\\_s-TlewcM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G_s-TlewcM)

This video explains the story in a lovely way, HOWEVER IT TALKS ABOUT HOW THE FATHER LOVED THE SON AND WELCOMED HIM BACK, and not how the FATHER FORGAVE THE SON.

WHEN YOU ARE RECAPPING THE STORY YOU WILL NEED TO TALK ABOUT HOW THE FATHER ACTUALLY FORGAVE THE SON.

#### Option 2: Table of items

Ask the children to listen carefully as you read through this story while referring to the items on the tables. Play the game explained at the end of this section to revise the story. Always emphasize that even though the brother had gone off and spent all of his money, the father

forgave him and welcomed him back. Jesus does that with us all of the time. He forgives us of our sins even though sometimes we turn our back on him and do ugly things.

This story is also called the prodigal son. Prodigal means to spend a lot of money on things you don't need and being very wasteful with what you have. You will see that is exactly what this son does.

**This is the parable that Jesus told:**

There once was a father that had two sons. One day the younger son said to his father, "Father, could you give me my inheritance?" (*Inheritance is money the father would give his children after he had died.*) Although the father wouldn't want his son to leave, he agreed to give his son the money he would have once received, his inheritance.

Very soon after the younger son received the money, he decided that since he had so much money he would move to a different country and have some fun with it. When he left, he left for good. He took every last thing he had and didn't plan on returning. He wanted to be grown up and spend all of his money how he wanted with no one to tell him what to do.

So he just left. He left a big farm with many hired men with everything he needed. He left his family, and more importantly he left his father who trusted him enough to give him the money. This probably made his father very sad and I'm sure he missed him very much.

While the son was gone he spent all the money he had right away. He didn't think to save any of it. He ate out for every meal every day, he wasted money on so-called friends, he threw wild parties and spent money on many other things that God wouldn't be happy with.

After he had spent all of his money, the country he was living in became very poor and they hardly had enough food for everyone. It was even worse for people who had no money because food became even more expensive, so it was very hard for poor people to get any food.

The son was in trouble! He had no money, he had no place to live, he had nothing to eat and so he had to get a job. The only job he could find was feeding pigs. He was so hungry he tried to eat the food that the pigs were eating but his boss caught him and told him if he ever saw him doing that again he would lose his job.

That night the son was so upset about his situation. From having wealth, having parties, spend money however he wanted, he now had nothing. All of his precious inheritance was gone because he lived foolishly.

The son went to bed hungry and when he woke up he realised something. When he lived with his father even the hired men had more food than they needed, and now he was starving to death. At that moment he made a plan. He would go back to his father's house and say to him, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I don't deserve to be called your son, so hire me and I will work for you as a servant.'

He knew that if he became like a hired man on his father's farm he would still be better off than he was right now. He would always have a warm place to stay and food to eat. So he headed for home.



It took the son a long time to get home. He was just hoping that his dad would let him work at the farm and let him be a hired man. The son was walking up to the farm but while he was still a long way off he could see someone in the distance who started running towards him. He was sure that they must have been expecting someone else. No one would be excited to see him.

As the person got closer he realised it was his father and he was yelling, "My son! My son! You are finally home!" He couldn't believe it. His father threw his arms around him and kissed him. But the son quickly said, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I don't deserve to be called your son..."

The son wanted to continue but the father said "I forgive you". He then said to one of his servants, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the biggest calf and kill it. Let's have a party and celebrate because my son was lost and now is found!"

A little while later, the older son was working in the field and heard music and dancing. So he called to one of the servants and asked what was going on. "Your brother has come home and your father is having a party for his return."

This upset the older brother and he refused to go and join the party. The father heard that he was upset, so he went to talk to him and invited him to join the party. But the son refused saying, "Look! I have been working for you all these years and I've never disobeyed you. Yet you never had a big party for me to celebrate with my friends. But now my younger brother has come home, spent all the money you gave him, and you kill the biggest calf for him!"

"But, my son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was lost and now he is found."

*At the end, give each child a turn to come up to the table of items. The first child must pick the first item in the story and retell that part. The next child must find the second item and continue the story. Keep going until all items are selected and the whole story is told.*



(Find items used in the story and display them on a table for the kids to see. Try to have enough items to give as many children a chance to tell the story.)

The father gives the son the bag of money.

The son spends it on drink and fancy food. Choose the balloons to show that the son partied and had lots of fun.

Pick up the pigs that the son then had to go and look after the pigs.

Pick up the packet with oats, or oaties...that is the food that the pigs ate and the son had to eat that.

When he decided to go back home, HIS FATHER FORGAVE HIM and put a ring on his finger and gave him a new coat, sandals and a ring.

The father then prepared a feast for him, and that is when you will use the plastic foods).

#### **4) Learning outcomes**



### How does this apply to me?

- Jesus made a way for me to be forgiven
- I need to forgive others as I have been forgiven

## 5) Craft

### Option 1: Forgive and Forgiven Hearts

On a giant heart get the children to give examples of where they were forgiven by God and where they have forgiven others or where they feel challenged to forgive people and are encouraged to do so in the week.

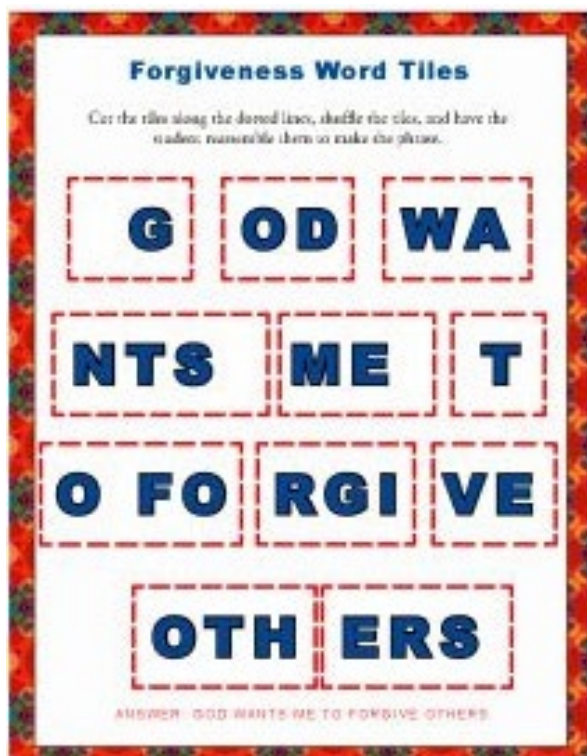


### Option 2: Edible Crosses



If the children makes an edible craft like this then a good idea is to get them to explain what it is about to their parents before they eat it. Even encourage them to give some of their Smarties to their family as an act as God has forgiven us so we need to forgive others.

### Other Options:



## Lesson Seven: My God is my hope

### Main focus for the lesson:

- Put your hope in God and nothing else
- It is easy for us to put our hope in God in ALL circumstances because of who God is and how He keeps His promises.
- Look at examples from the Bible of people with/without hope in God.

### 1) Memory Verse

- **Hebrews 6:19**

*We have this hope as an anchor of the soul*

Throughout the Bible we read of many promises that God made: Promises that He will protect us, promises that He will give us strength, His promise that He will send Jesus to save us.

Hebrews 6:14 reminds us about the promise that God made to Abraham in Genesis: "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." Abraham had to wait patiently but more importantly GOD KEPT HIS PROMISE AND OATH!

Hebrews 6:18 tells us that God always keeps His promise and that it is impossible for God to lie.

Knowing that God ALWAYS KEEPS HIS PROMISE AND CANNOT LIE makes it easy for us to put our **HOPE** in him.

So when tough times happen and we are suffering we are able to stand firm because the HOPE we have in God keeping his promises is like **an anchor of the soul**.

### Idea to teach the memory verse

First explain the meaning of the verse to the children as above. Have an obstacle course set up with a rope running from the start to the finish.

At each obstacle peg onto the rope a poster of the different verses of some of God's promises to us.

- Jeremiah 29:11

I have good plans for you. Plans to give you a future and a hope

- Matthew 11:28-29

Come to me, I will give you rest

- Isaiah 40:29-31

God gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

- Romans 8:39

Nothing can separate us from the love of God

- Romans 10:9

Confess and believe Jesus was raised from the dead and you will be saved



The explorer arrives excited that he is just back from climbing a mountain and how happy he was to have his strong karabiner with him as it anchored him to the rock so he didn't fall.

Excitedly the leader then uses the karabiner to demonstrate and say:

Phew sometimes things in life can be tough and it can almost feel like an obstacle course. But when we put our hope in God He is an anchor for our souls.

Today the explorer has on his backpack a karabiner. Rock climbers use karabiners to attach themselves to a rope so that it anchors them to the rock and makes sure that they don't fall. The Bible teaches us that hope in God is an anchor to our souls. (Attach the karabiner to the rope)



I am so glad that I have learnt today that God always keeps His promises and cannot tell a lie.

**"I have this hope as an anchor of my soul"**

Get the children to respond with the verse every time you say God cannot tell a lie.

As you come to each obstacle start to give up or say it is too hard. Then unpeg and read the promise God has made to us and say God cannot tell a lie ... **"I have this hope as an anchor of my soul"**

Continue to the end of the obstacle course, discovering all the promises God has made to us and getting the children to say the verse each time, hopefully learning it as they go along.

If time allows let the children each have a turn.

## 2) Hands on

**Perform the following game/s:**




### 2.1) Puppet Script:

Cindy	Hi Bobo
Bobo	(comes up all frantic and panicked) Hi Auntie Cindy. Have you seen it? Have you seen it?
Cindy	Seen what Bobo?
Bobo	It must be here somewhere! Maybe under my bed? (go down)
Cindy	Bobo, what's under your bed?
Bobo	Nope, it's not there. Where could it be!!!
Cindy	Bobo, what are you looking for?
Bobo	I'm looking for my hope! But I can't find it anywhere!
Cindy	You're looking for what?
Bobo	My hope. I heard on the NEWS today that things are getting so bad that people are losing HOPE. Oh Auntie Cindy I don't want to lose my HOPE!
Cindy	Oh Bobo, do you know what hope is?
Bobo	Um ( <i>sheepishly</i> ) well not really, Auntie Cindy but it doesn't sound good if you lose it!
Cindy	Hope is wanting something to happen that hasn't happened yet.



Bobo	Oh like I hope Jane comes to my party? And I hope she buys me a really cool present.
Cindy	Yes, you want those things to happen but they haven't happened yet.
Bobo	So how do people lose their hope?
Cindy	Well do you know for sure that Jane is going to come to your party and bring you a big present?
Bobo	Well no. And she wasn't well at school yesterday so maybe she won't come. And I never got her a big present so maybe she won't get me one. Oh no! I am starting to lose hope.
Cindy	People often start to lose hope when bad things start to happen in their lives. People can lose hope when they don't have enough money or they can lose hope when friends or family get sick.
Bobo	But Auntie Cindy the people on the News looked so sad. I don't want to be like them. I want to make sure I don't lose my hope – even when things are really bad!
Cindy	So who do you think you should put your hope in?
Bobo	Well I don't think we should put our hope in people because they could easily let us down. And I don't think we should put our hope in things, like money or cool toys, because we could easily lose that. Children who do you think we should put our hope in? (God)  Yes!! God will never let me down!
Cindy	We need to put our hope in God. God always keeps His promise and when we put our hope in Him we know for sure everything will work out just fine.  So Bobo ... Do you have hope that Jesus will protect you?
Bobo	Yes, I know for certain God will protect me – it says so in the Bible and God always keeps His promise!
Cindy	And ... Do you have hope that Jesus has a plan for your life?
Bobo	Yes, I know for certain God has a plan for my life – it says so in the Bible and God always keeps His promise!
Cindy	And ... Do you have hope that one day you will go to Heaven and live with Jesus?
Bobo	Yes, I know Jesus has made a way for me to go to Heaven – it says so in the Bible and God always keeps His promise!
Cindy	You see Bobo ... When you put your hope in Jesus you will never lose your hope because you know <b>for sure</b> He will never break His promises and you know for sure He is always faithful. We can always trust God!
Bobo	That's wonderful news! I'm going to tell everyone that as long as we trust Jesus our hope will never be lost!




### 3) Bible Story + Lesson

- For the older children: Divide them into groups. Give each group the following scriptures listed in the table below. Let them read about the Bible character and see if they can understand why the person had hope in God. Get one person per team to present to the group.
- For little ones: Get the children to dress up as the characters and share with the children the following:

Name of the person	Their story	Their hope.	Application to us.
<b>Abraham (Genesis 12:1)</b> 	<b>Abraham's story:</b> Abraham was asked by God to pack up his family and all that he had and move to a strange country.	<b>His hope</b> was that God commanded him to go into a land that he didn't know. He knew that God would show Him the right place and that God would be with him every step of the way	<b>Our hope</b> is that When God tells us something, He will show us what to do and He will be with us each step and that we will be able to be a blessing to others
<b>Sarah (Genesis 18:1; Genesis 21)</b> 	<b>Sarah's story</b> was that she was barren, which means that she could not have children. In her old age it was prophesied that she would have a child. This was impossible because she was so old already and old ladies can't have children. She even laughed when she heard that she would have a child because she knew that she was so old.	<b>Her hope</b> was that God would give her a child even though she was super old.	<b>Our Hope</b> is when God gives us a promise, even though we think it might sound strange or impossible we can have hope because God is mighty and He can do great things.
<b>Gideon (Judges 6:11; Judges 7:1)</b> 	<b>Gideon's story</b> was that he and the Israelites had to fight against the Midianites. God said to Gideon that there were too many Israelites. God wanted the victory against the Midianites to be His victory and not because there were so many Israelites. Out of an army of 32 000 men only 300 actually fought against the Midianites and won. The victory was God's victory.	<b>His hope</b> was that he would have the victory because God was on his side, even though the task at hand seemed impossible.	<b>Our hope</b> is that we are victorious in God because He is on our side.
<b>Daniel (Daniel 6)</b> 	<b>Daniel's story</b> was that he was thrown into the Lion's den because he refused to bow down to other gods. He loved the one true God.	<b>His hope</b> was that God would protect him against all odds and that he would come out victorious	<b>Our hope</b> is that God protects us and when we walk in His ways we are victorious.



<p><b>Mordecai:</b> (Esther 2:5-7 , Esther 2:21-23, Esther 3:6, Esther4:1)</p> 	<p><b>Mordecai</b> was a Jewish man who had a cousin named Esther. He worked outside the palace gate and he heard of a plot to assassinate the king. Haman wanted to kill all the Jews. Mordecai pleaded with the princess, Esther, to warn the King about Haman's plans to kill the Jews. Esther put her life at great danger by going in front of the King without having been invited. However, because of her actions and God's favour, the Jewish nation was saved.</p>	<p><b>His hope</b> was that if he left his problems to God, God would deal with his enemies</p>	<p><b>Our hope</b> is that if we ask God to help us in our times of trouble that He will</p>
<p><b>Hannah</b> (1 Samuel 1:1- 20)</p> 	<p><b>Hannah</b> longed for a baby. People had written her off as being able to have a baby and they made fun of her as she continued praying for a baby. After many years of trusting God and crying out to Him He answered her prayer and gave her Samuel.</p>	<p><b>Her hope</b> was that if she prayed to God she knew that God would step in and that He would answer her prayers</p>	<p><b>Our hope</b> is that even when things seem impossible if we continue praying to God and trusting for His will to be done then He will step in and help us.</p>
<p><b>David</b> (1 Samuel 19:1-24)</p> 	<p>Saul wanted to kill <b>David</b> and so he told his son Jonathan and all his servants. But Jonathan loved David and told him of Saul's plans. Jonathan was able to help save David's life.</p>	<p><b>David's hope</b> was that God's favour was on him and that He would always protect him.</p>	<p><b>Our hope</b> is that God loves us and He will protect us.</p>
<p><b>Nehemiah</b> (Nehemiah 2)</p> 	<p><b>Nehemiah</b> was tasked with building the wall</p>	<p><b>Nehemiah's hope</b> was that even though he was given a great task, with very little workers to help him and many people mocking him, with God anything can be done</p>	<p><b>Our hope</b> is with God all things are possible.</p>

<p><b>Job (Job 42:1- 6)</b></p> 	<p><b>Job</b> was a man in the Bible that went through many trials which could have made him turn away from God</p>	<p><b>Job's hope</b> was that even though he went through the trials that God was in control. This made Job's faith stronger</p>	<p><b>Our hope</b> is that even though we go through trials of many kinds our faith is made stronger.</p>
<p><b>The Disciples (Mark 1:16-20)</b></p> 	<p><b>The disciples</b> called by Jesus were not very learned people, they weren't wealthy, they didn't have university degrees.</p>	<p><b>Their hope</b> was that even though they didn't have a lot of money and hadn't studied at university that God would use them to do great things</p>	<p><b>Our hope</b> is that if we follow God He will use us.</p>
<p><b>Paul (Acts 8:1-3; Acts 9)</b></p> 	<p><b>Paul</b> was previously known as Saul and he used to kill Christians until he met with God one day on the road to Damascus.</p>	<p><b>Paul's hope</b> was that even though he had done such horrible things to Christians that God would still use him to tell others all over the world about God.</p>	<p><b>Our hope</b> is that no matter what we have done God will forgive us and use us.</p>

#### 4) Learning outcomes

##### How does this apply to me?

- God wants us to put our hope in HIM!
- When our hope is in God we can achieve the impossible and get through all circumstances.
- My hope is in God for ....

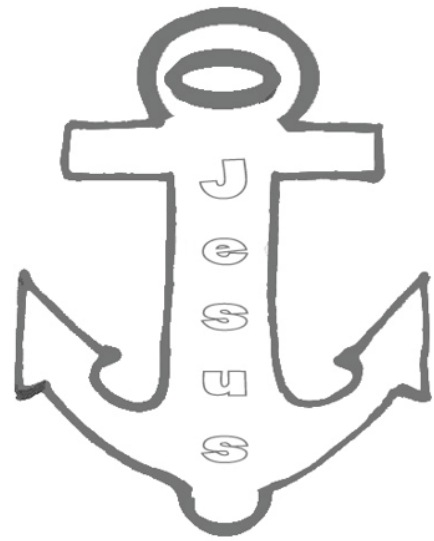


## 5) Craft

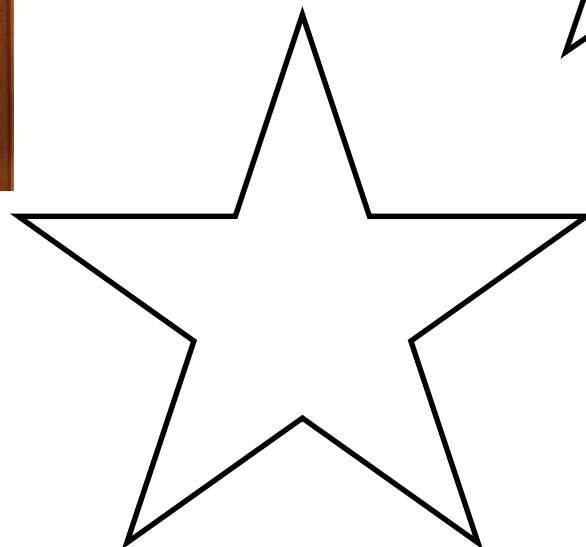
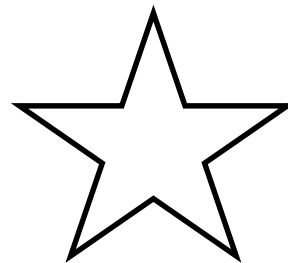
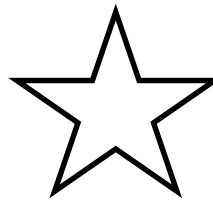
### Option 1:



God will give me rest Matthew 11:28-29
God has good plans for me Jeremiah 29:11
God gives power to the weak Isaiah 40:29-31
Nothing can separate me from the love of God Romans 8:39
When I believe I am saved Romans 10:9
We have this hope as an anchor of the soul. Hebrews 6:19



### Option 2:



On each star, link or chain in the above craft get the kids to write down the promises God has made to them.

## Lesson Eight: My God is my peace

### Main focus for the lesson:

- God is my peace
- The opposite of anxiety and fear is peace.
- Peace is a result of prayer

### 1) Memory Verse

#### • **John 14:27**

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let

not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid’.

- (Younger children)

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you”

### Idea to teach the memory verse

Get the children into a big circle. Give them the picture below of a dove which is used all over the world as a peace symbol. Explain that this scripture is Jesus speaking to the crowd before He ascended to Heaven. He is telling us that He is not leaving us alone, that He is sending the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us peace. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit and so when we are feeling troubled, anxious or afraid we need to ask the Holy Spirit for His peace. The children need to pass around the picture of the Dove representing the Holy Spirit. As the child gives the picture they need to say – my peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.



### 2) Hands on

#### 2.1) Object lesson: Don't fill yourself with worry

(You will need 4 balloons)

*The explorer arrives carrying a balloon. At first he arrives so excited about all the amazing things we have discovered about God this term and tells the children that they are going to throw a party to celebrate how great God is. Pulling a balloon out of his backpack the explorer goes on to tell the children all the things he has to do to get ready for the party. Blow up balloons, make a cake, buy serviettes, invitations, etc. For each thing he lists he blows another puff into his balloon and becomes more worried, stressed and eventually frantic about everything he still has to do for the party. He keeps blowing and stressing until eventually the balloon pops.*

*The teacher and children then remind the explorer about the verse they have learnt today “**my peace I leave you, my peace I give you**” Then the leader uses 3 more balloons from the explorers back pack to teach the object lesson below: “God is my peace”.*

Begin with the deflated balloon in your hand. Tell the group you're going to use it to help them understand peace. Inflate the balloon about half full. Sometimes troubles come into life and the tension builds as we give over a portion of our time, energy, and thought to

deal with the situation. One way to deal with tense situations is to pray and trust God to work things out.

Trusting God frees us for other things and we are back at peace again. But when we spend all our time and energy concentrating on difficulties, things can get more and more tense. Inflate the balloon fully and hold it in front of you. When we concentrate on the difficulties, our lives become more and more crowded and tense, until we finally burst (pop the balloon). Ask the kids for examples of things people become worried about.

Next, take a second balloon and inflate it less than half full. Hold it out in front of you and poke it with your finger, allowing the surface of the balloon to contract and expand. Explain that when we trust God we're more flexible and less sensitive to other pressures. Inflate the balloon fully and tell the kids that a life filled with pointless worry makes us less able to deal with other pressures that come our way, and can cause even small problems to explode emotionally.

(For added emphasis, make sure you take your time inflating the balloon and popping it.) Some of the kids will slightly dread the pop, exhibiting a form of worry. Ask the kids for examples of times when they or someone they know overreacted to some small irritation or pressure because they were already worried about something.

Finally, take a third balloon and tell the kids that some things happen in life that cause us a great deal of concern such as someone who is leaving for a long time, the death of a friend, or a divorce in the family. Explain that often during such times people are full of fear or anger or confusion. Inflate the balloon and ask the kids what they can do in a situation like that. Tell them that God has something to say about that situation, and about all the times when they're tempted to worry.

### Application

Read John 16:33 "I have told you these things so that you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world". Isn't this just such a wonderful assurance that God will help them deal with their worries and concerns and will give them his peace. Let the balloon go so that it flies round the room until it's deflated.

### 3) Bible Story + Lesson (Mark 4:35-41)

#### Jesus calms the storm

What you will need:

A big blue blanket, a large cardboard box which is decorated like a boat.

Have a white sheet to wrap around Jesus and towels to put of the heads of the other disciples. Have a spray bottle of water and a pillow.

Have 10 of more children holding the sides of the blanket and making it toss and turn like a storm. Get the kids to blow at the boat and make howling wind sounds. Get someone to spray Jesus and the disciples with water. Have a crowd of children on one side where the story starts.



Jesus	It's evening. Come with me. Let's go across to the other side.  (LET JESUS CLIMB INTO THE BOAT AND LIE DOWN ON A PILLOW AND GO TO SLEEP)
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Narrator	Jesus and the disciples get into the boat and start sailing on the lake.  All of a sudden a great storm arose and the waves were breaking over the side of the boat.  (HAVE THE CHILDREN HOWL, AND MAKE WAVES WITH THE BLANKET AND SPRAY JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES WITH WATER.)
One of the disciples	(STANDS UP AND WITH A VERY FEARFUL VOICE SHOUT OUT.)  Teacher do you not care, we are about to die.
Jesus	(JESUS WAKES UP AND WITH A CALM VOICE)  Peace! Be Still
Narrator	The wind stopped and there was a great calm
Jesus	Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?
Narrator	And they were filled with great fear and said to one another.
disciple	Who then is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?

Have any of you been caught in a really bad storm when the wind is blowing so hard that the trees are bending over? Or there is so much hail that your windows break? Imagine being in a boat on the middle of a lake! The Bible says the waves were so high water was even coming into the boat.

Sometimes we have events in our lives which feel like a storm. Maybe getting ready to write exams, you have maybe studied but you are so stressed about whether or not you will do well.

Maybe it's even harder than that. Maybe you are troubled because you know someone that is really sick.

These are real storms which we all face. When the disciples were facing their storm. They called out to Jesus.

In Isaiah 9:6 the Bible refers to Jesus as the **Prince of Peace**. Jesus is the one who calms our storms. When we are feeling troubled or scared, it is Jesus who brings peace.

Philippians 4:6 says **"do not be anxious about anything, but with prayer and thanksgiving present your requests and the God of peace will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus."**

When we are feeling like we are in a storm we need to come before God and pray. Let God know your problems, thank Him that he is the Prince of Peace. He is in control. You will find that God will fill your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

God wants to know that when we are feeling fearful of anxious that we can come to him and pray. In prayer we give God our fears and anxiety and He will fill our mind and our heart with peace. In a world where people are so fearful and troubled we can show them the Peace of God.

If we are in a situation where others are feeling troubled or fearful we can show them peace. If you are confronted by someone at school who wants to fight with you, you can be peaceful. You don't have to fight back or say ugly words. If we asked Jesus into our hearts

and are filled with the Holy Spirit then we can have this peace that surpasses understanding.

#### 4) Learning outcomes

##### How does this apply to me?

- God wants us to come to Him when we are troubled.
- Pray to God to give you His peace
- God wants our actions to be peaceful
- A fruit of the Holy Spirit is peace

#### 5) Craft

##### Option 1:



Children make a stick puppet of Jesus and the disciples in the boat that can slip into the scene of the storm.

##### Option 2: Other ideas



## Lesson Nine: My God is my life

### Main focus for the lesson:

- For children to understand that in Jesus we have received new, eternal life.
- That on Earth we must live with God daily.
- That God wants to impact every area of our lives.
- God wants us to display His character in the way we live.

### 1) Memory Verse

- **1 Corinthians 10v31**

Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, do all to the glory of God.

### Idea to teach the memory verse

To teach the memory verse, ask four children to come up. The first child must drink some water and then thank God for it. The second child must eat a biscuit and then thank God for it. The third and fourth child can bounce a ball/ read/ skip or anything different and then thank God. Practise the verse then. Whether we eat, drink or whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God.

### 2) Hands on

Have the explorer arrive telling the children how much he loves the great outdoors and how wonderful God is for making such a beautiful world... the birds, animals, rain, and especially the trees. He can tell the children how important it is to save our world and that maybe there is something in his backpack that can teach us how to save the world. As he explores his backpack let him be disappointed with the packet of tiny seeds. He can say things like they are so small, what can he do with it, how is one little packet of seeds going to make a big difference to the world. He can even check his backpack again for something else. The leader can then teach the object lesson on how God created a seed to be much more than a seed – just like us. With God we can bear fruit that can save the world

#### 2.1) Object Lesson: Tree metaphor

Preparation:

- Have an A3 piece of paper stuck up to show the children
- Have a seed to stick onto the paper
- Cut out some roots (*all pictures can be your own design*)
- Cut out some rain drops
- Cut a sun out
- Cut out a trunk and some branches
- Cut out some leaves
- Cut out some fruit pictures
- Put prestick on all pictures

#### Instructions

Give the cut out pictures to the children. Make sure all children have at least one picture.

Show the children the seed and stick it low on to the paper.



Is a seed created to just be a seed? No it's supposed to grow into a flower or tree. But a seed needs help to grow and become the big, beautiful tree it is created to be.

A seed needs water. *(Ask the children with the drops to stick the drops on the top and side of the paper)*

Once it receives water, it starts to grow roots. *(Ask the children with roots to stick the roots below the seed)* The roots give the seed strength to not be uprooted or blown away.

The seed also needs sunlight to give it energy and life to grow. *(Stick the sun down on the top of the page)*

The seed grows a trunk and starts to become stronger and taller. *(Stick the trunk down above the seed)*

As the tree starts to grow receiving more water and sunlight, it gets stronger and takes on its real identity and purpose. *(Stick the branches and leaves onto the trunk of the tree)*

Once the tree has grown and still receives the water and light, it doesn't just exist but starts to bear fruit. It gives to others and in that fruit is seed that can see more life grow. *(Stick the fruit onto the tree)*

The tree is big, beautiful and has become the very thing it was created to be, growing from the small seed it was.

### **Explanation:**

We are just like the seed. On our own we cannot be everything God has created us to be. So we need water. Our water to grow is the Holy Spirit. We need Him to fill us and help us grow. Our roots are knowing God and digging deeper to knowing Him. The sunlight is constantly receiving God's Word. The Bible gives us knowledge how to grow and know God and live right. From this, we grow stronger like growing a trunk and branches and leaves. Once we are living with Jesus in our life we begin to bear fruit. This is us showing love, and kindness, showing Jesus to the world. We need to grow as people in Jesus the same way a seed grows into a tree.





### 3) Bible Story + Lesson

Have you done anything naughty before? If you are honest then yes you have, many times. When we do something bad that is disobeying God and when we don't listen to God that is called sin. Now sin is a very serious problem because sin pushes us far away from God, and that is not how God created us to be.

Sadly, as we just admitted, we have all sinned and therefore all of us have pushed ourselves away from God. The problem doesn't end there. There is nothing we can do to fix it. We cannot do more good things to replace the bad things we have done. We cannot act like we did nothing wrong and try to start being good from today. There is a punishment for your sin and God says that you have to face the consequences for your sin.

But here is the most amazing news. Jesus saw your sin and because He loves you so much, He said He would take the punishment for you. Jesus said He would take the blame for all of the wrong things you did and will do. To allow Him to do this though, we need to ask Him to come into our lives to be our Lord and Saviour. That means we choose to follow his instructions and that we choose to live in a relationship with Him. He wants us to speak to Him like praying and He wants to show the world His ways, like loving other people.

When you choose Jesus to be your King, He can take all of your sins. God can then forgive you and your relationship with God is healed, forever. Even if you do something else wrong, because of Jesus in your life, God will forgive you.

With Jesus we become free of sin and guilt and truly feel alive. Without Jesus we don't truly live. We have no freedom and life becomes very hard.

If you want Jesus in your life, ask Him to forgive you for your sins (the wrong things you have done, not listening to God) and ask Jesus to be in your life but to be your King, to lead you. If you ask Him this and truly believe this then you have fixed your relationship with God and are now a son/daughter of God.

#### **Live this out**

If you believe in Jesus as your Saviour, start to follow His ways. Let the world see that you know Jesus. Love people, forgive people, show joy and kindness, pray for people and importantly, tell the world about Jesus. That is being alive in Jesus and showing the world that you live in Jesus.

**(Pray with children who would like to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Make it honest and real. The number of those who respond is not as important as the honesty of response. If a child honestly responds to accepting Jesus, make sure to tell their parents to continue the journey.)**

### 4) Learning outcomes

#### **How does this apply to me?**

- The Gospel message must be shared (But not forced)
- The understanding that we have true life in Jesus that will last forever in Him.
- We must display this life to others so that they can see and hopefully want it too.

## 5) Craft

### Option 1:

We want to teach the idea that if you constantly water seeds, they will continue to grow.

Give each child a container with soil and seeds in and instruct them to water it at home to see the grass grow. To make it personal, they can stick a photo onto the container and this can remind them how they need to keep growing. **The main point is that just like seeds need water to grow, so we need God in our lives to grow. Be watered by God every day.**

Options:

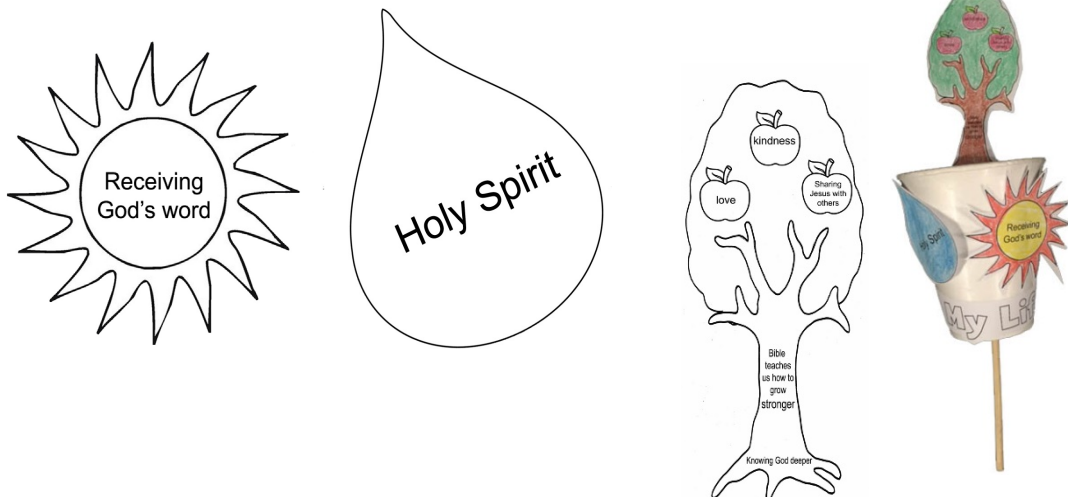
See-through containers are better but any container should work. They can draw a picture of themselves instead of using a photo.

Give them the text "My Water is God's Word" to stick on the container to remind them what helps them grow (or similar).



### Option 2:

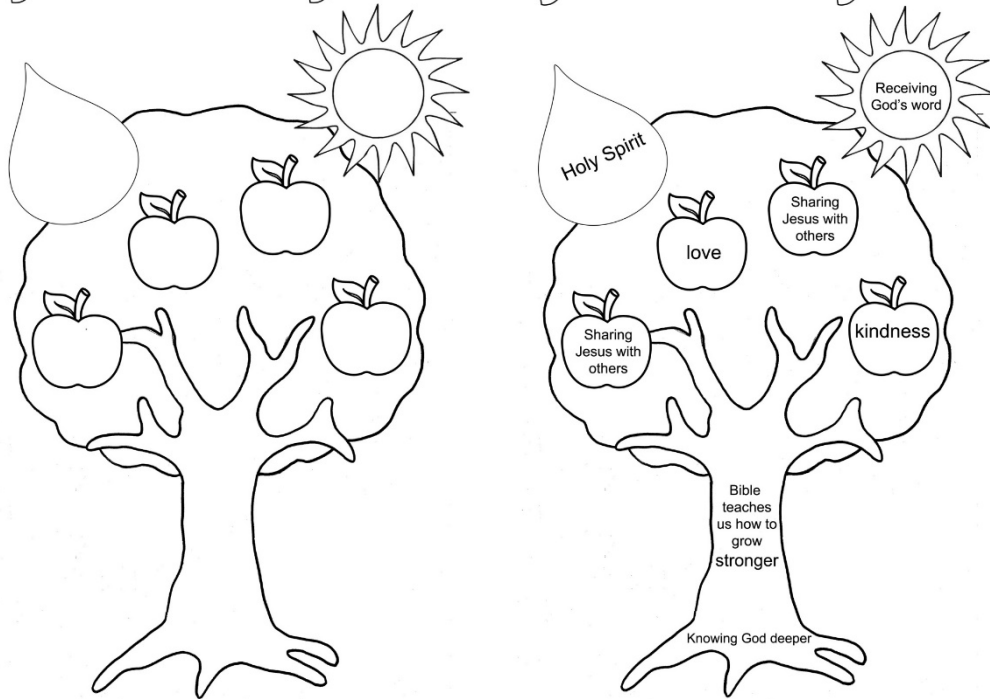
You can get the children to make their own tree picture. Try to get them each a seed. They can colour in, fill in what the seed, water, sun, roots and fruit represents or build their own tree. They could also use a foam cup to make their own growing tree as below.



# My God is My Life

Option 3: Colour page

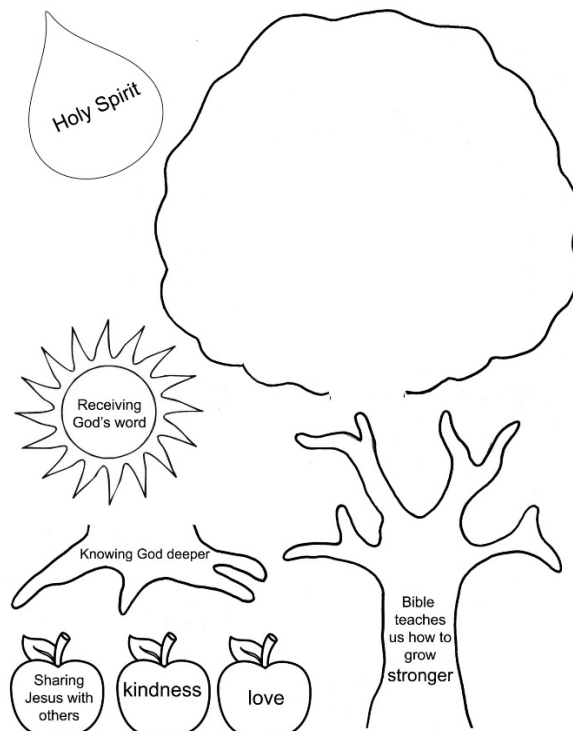
# My God is My Life My God is My Life



**Option 4: Build the tree**

Can be done as you teach the lesson.

# My God is My Life



## Lesson Ten: Recap and games

Set up stations and games which remind the children the important lessons about God we have discovered this term as well as help them recap the memory verses taught. Here are some ideas to get you started.

### Station 1: Hope Obstacle course

Set up the Obstacle course with God's promises as taught in the hands on section of "God is my Hope"

### Station 2: Stress balloons

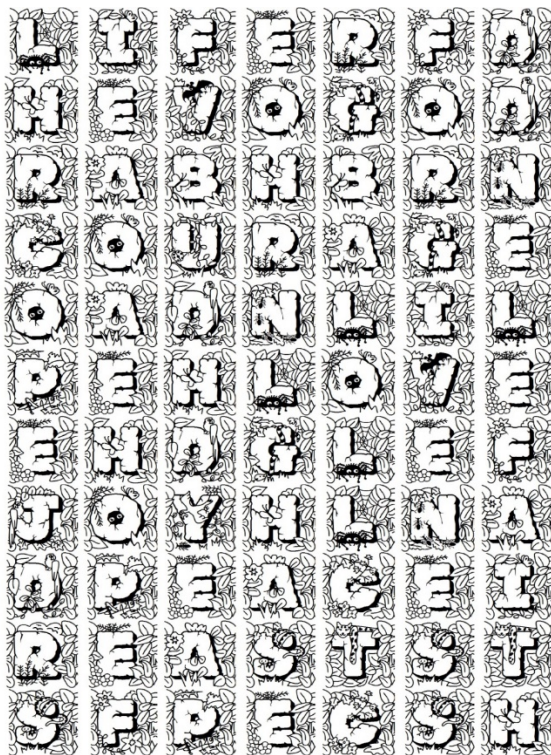
Remind the children about the lesson on "God is my peace" as you make stress balloons with them.



### Station 3: Measuring fun

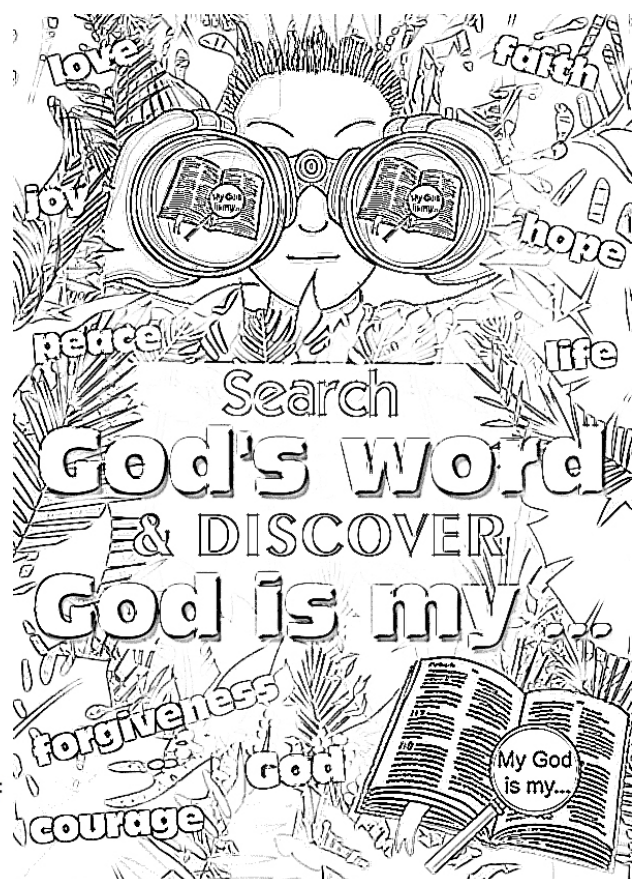
Set out things to measure and compare as you remind the lesson on "God is my Love"

### Station 4: Wordsearch & Colour Page (God is my...)



Search and colour in the words below to discover who God is:  
God is my ...

PEACE	JOY	HOPE	FAITH	FORGIVENESS
GOD	LIFE	LOVE	COURAGE	



**Station 5: Scavenger hunt**

Hide the items (or pictures of the items) from the back pack all over the venue. Have them labelled appropriately e.g. binoculars "God is my faith". Children get given the list of items they have to find and then next to each item write in what that object helped them discover about God.

For younger children have the small pictures of each item hidden which they have to find and together with the teachers help stick them to their "scavenger hunt chart" below.

<b>My God is my God</b>	
<b>My God is my love</b>	
<b>My God is my faith</b>	
<b>My God is my courage</b>	
<b>My God is my joy</b>	
<b>My God is my forgiveness</b>	
<b>My God is my hope</b>	
<b>My God is my peace</b>	
<b>My God is my life</b>	