

LARGE GROUP: Story (25 minutes) • Worship (10 minutes)

Engage kids' hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

Today's Bible Story: Searchin' (The Wise Men Visit Jesus) • *Matthew 2:1-12*

Today's Bottom Line: Never stop searching for what's true.

Monthly Memory Verse: *The LORD gives wisdom. Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth.* Proverbs 2:6 (NIRV)

Monthly Virtue: Knowledge—Learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do

Basic Truth: I need to make the wise choice.

Video (Media Package): Countdown

Video (Media Package): Theme

OPENER

LEADER: "Hellooooo, [your environment's name], and welcome to 2023! I just know we'll have a great year together, and we're kicking it off with a fun new month of some of my favorite game shows.

"We're calling this month 'Think Tank,' because this is your chance to put your knowledge to the test!

Video (Media Package): Theme Transition to Virtue

"Knowledge is learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do.

Video (Media Package): Virtue Transition to Theme

"God MADE us to learn and gain knowledge. All knowledge and wisdom come from God in the first place! With knowledge, we can grow and get better at all kinds of things in life. That's even true about our relationship with God. We can grow closer to God when we know more ABOUT God.

"Let's put some of our knowledge to the test today with our first game! You may know it as 'Wheel of Fortune™.' But to be honest, I don't have a whole lot of fortune to share with you today. So we'll call it 'Wheel of Fake Money!' (*Hold up the stack of fake money.*)

Video: Virtual game show wheel (online spinner) Play from Computer (Switch Input)

Either show the wheel on screen by using an online spinner website or reveal the physical wheel for the game.

"The object of the game is to guess what it says on this board.

Reference the dry erase board with the blanks for the puzzle.

"But before we can start guessing this word puzzle, we have to divide into two teams.

Divide everyone into two teams. Have the kids sit in row(s), if possible, so it's easy to call them up in order.

“When it’s your team’s turn, I’ll call on someone on your team to be the contestant. You’ll spin the wheel, and we’ll see what fake money you might earn if you can guess a letter in the puzzle. Of course, you also might lose all your money if you land on ‘Bankrupt,’ or you could simply miss a turn.

“If your letter is in the puzzle, I’ll reveal it, and it’ll stay your team’s turn. But I’ll call on a different contestant from your team to spin and guess next. If your letter ISN’T in the puzzle, it will become the other team’s turn. Got it? Good! Let’s play Wheel . . . of . . . Fake Money!

“To see which team goes first, let’s get one player from each team up to spin the wheel. The player who spins the highest number will get to play first.

Let the kids spin to see which team goes first. Then begin game play.

As players guess letters in the puzzle, fill the letters in on the letter blanks on the puzzle board. If they guess a letter that’s not in the puzzle, it becomes the other team’s turn.

Keep track of their points on the other dry erase board, which will be the scoreboard. (For example, a kid spins and lands on \$100 then the kid guesses “N,” and there are three N’s. The kid’s team gets \$300 on the scoreboard, and their team gets to go again.) Use a calculator on your phone if needed.

Keep it simple and don’t worry about “buying a vowel.” Just let them guess any letter—whether it’s a vowel or consonant.

As the letters fill in, allow players the chance to guess the answer to the puzzle. (Do this after they’ve successfully guessed a letter by asking, “Would you like to solve the puzzle?”) Make sure the other kids don’t shout out answers. They have to wait until it’s their turn, AFTER they’ve successfully revealed a letter.

The answer to the puzzle will be the memory verse, Proverbs 2:6. When the puzzle is solved, say the verse with the kids. Celebrate the winning team and their fake fortune.

“Way to go, everyone! I wish I had real money to give you, but you’ll have to settle for the KNOWLEDGE that you won! Now everyone on your feet, because it’s time for us to sing and dance and worship God!”

WORSHIP

LEADER: “We say in here all the time that *[Basic Truth]* **I need to make the wise choice.** Sometimes it can feel overwhelming to know WHAT the wise choice actually is. But it helps to remember that you’re not alone! God is with you, and you can trust that God will make the right path clear to you. You can trust God over and over again. Let’s worship and thank God for that!

FIRST SONG TOGETHER: -- Video: “Over and Over” *Play from Apple TV (Switch Input)*

Video (Media Package): Theme

“Before we continue worshipping, let’s watch this video.

Live Loud Video from Get Reel

Video (Media Package): Theme

“In the game we just played, the answer to the puzzle was our memory verse, Proverbs 2:6. Let’s say it again.

SLIDE: Memory Verse

“The LORD gives wisdom. Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth. (Proverbs 2:6, NIV)”

“It’s true. God gives us everything we need to grow so that we can become better at everything we do. ALL wisdom and knowledge come from God. Let’s sing this new song and celebrate God together. Here we go!

Video (Media Package): “A Better Me” Dance Moves Music Video

Video (Media Package): Theme

“What a fun and hopeful song! I love worshipping God with you! You can have a seat.”

BIBLE STORY

SETTING UP THE STORY

LEADER: “What holiday did we just celebrate last week? *(Let them respond.)* Yes, Christmas! What do we celebrate at Christmas? *(Let them respond.)* Right, that Jesus was born. And who is Jesus? *(Let them respond.)* God’s Son.

If you’re using a Bible timeline on the wall, you can reference it here as you recap.

“Over the past few months, we’ve been making our way through God’s Big Story. (*Hold up Bible.*) We saw how God made the world. But when people turned away from God, the world was broken. Still, God had a plan to make things right. At the right time, God sent Jesus as a tiny baby born in Bethlehem.”

FOLLOWING THE STAR

LEADER: “Jesus’ birth was the most amazing thing to happen on this planet since, well, the planet was created! To begin with, only a handful of shepherds and people in the town of Bethlehem knew what had happened. But far away to the east lived a group of wise scholars. Who would like to volunteer to play our Wise Men today?”

“We’re not sure exactly how many Wise Men there were, but let’s go with three. These Wise Men saw a new star rising in the west.

“We don’t really know how the Wise Men discovered what this star meant. It’s possible that they knew about Daniel—as in ‘Daniel and the lions’ den.’ As you may remember, Daniel had been taken as a captive from Jerusalem to Babylon, hundreds of years before. Daniel had been an adviser to the king . . . and it’s likely he would have shared the Jewish scriptures and promises from God with his fellow advisers.

“Maybe Daniel shared these words from the book of Numbers.

Open the Bible to Numbers 24:17 (NirV) and read.

“A star will come from among the people of Jacob. A king will rise up out of Israel. (Numbers 24:17b, NirV)

“Maybe the Wise Men in our story eventually heard that Scripture, too. Maybe that’s why they knew that a new star in the sky could have been a sign from God. But whether the Wise Men figured out what the star meant from ancient writings or God spoke to them directly, they didn’t waste time in doing something with their new-found knowledge. **The Wise Men packed up supplies and gifts and set out on what would have been an epic road trip across the desert.**

Let’s stop here to watch the Bible Video Story to see what happens next.

SLIDE: Bible Story

Video (Media Package): Theme

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

LEADER: “At last, the Wise Men left Jesus to begin their long journey home. They planned to return to King Herod like he had asked them to do. But God spoke to the Wise Men in a dream and warned them

NOT to go back to Herod. So the Wise Men chose a different road for their trip home.

“It’s no surprise that these Wise Men were some of the first to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. They had dedicated their lives to understanding and learning new things. They never stopped searching for what was true.

“You and I don’t have to be (*air quotes*) ‘wise men’ or ‘wise women’ to do the same. We should keep learning new things all the time—especially when it comes to the truth about Jesus!

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] “Never stop searching for what’s true.

“Let’s ask God to help us in our search for the truth.”

Video (Media Package): Theme

LEADER: “We can search for what’s true, just like the Wise Men did. We can learn more about God anytime! We can read God’s Word, the Bible. We can read a devotional that helps us understand what we read in the Bible and what it means for our lives.

“We can look at what God created and learn about the world and everything in it. From the smallest atom to the tallest mountain, there’s so much we can learn about God from the things God created!

“We can also learn from other people. After all, we are all made in God’s image, and we can show what God is like in our own unique way. One of my favorite ways to search for what’s true is . . . (*share from your personal experience*).

PRAY AS A GROUP – ASK FOR ANY PRAYER CONCERNS

OFFERING....

GETTING READY

Here’s everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

STORY: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (25 minutes)

WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God (10 minutes)

What You Need:

- Either buy or borrow a game show wheel or project a virtual spinner from a royalty-free website (such as: <https://wheeldecide.com/wheels/games/wheel-fortune-spinner/>). If you use a physical wheel, write in dollar values in the spaces as well as words and phrases like “Bankrupt” and “Lose a Turn.”