

**THE BIG
PICTURE**

**KEEP
HOPE
ALIVE**



PRETEEN

APRIL 2025

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HOPE AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

Life can be complicated. In fact, Jesus told His disciples that we would have trouble in this world (John 16:33b). Sometimes, we may not understand why something happens the way it does. Yet, in spite of the things that go wrong or the things we don't understand, we can have hope that God knows what's best and is working for our good. Because of that, we can trust God no matter what as we begin to explore why the story of Jesus is good news for everyone.

CORE INSIGHT: The theological foundation for HOPE

Faith in God's Son

I believe in Jesus and will continue to trust Him even when life doesn't make sense.

We can't always understand why some things happen. But we can believe in a God who keeps promises. We can have hope—even in the toughest times—because we know God can make something good out of something bad.

HOPE is believing that something good can come out of something bad.

HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT HOPE WITH KIDS

This month, as you talk about hope with the kids, please be aware that some kids may be experiencing something difficult or traumatic in their lives where it's harder for them to find or choose hope. Don't try to discredit the way someone feels about something or determine how long it should take them to get over it. Instead, acknowledge that how they may be feeling is valid and that you're there to listen. Don't try to fix their problems, but let them know that you are there for them and that they are not alone! Always be sure to bring the correct people into any conversation that involves the safety of a child.



FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

WEEK 1

Key Question: When is it hard to focus on Jesus? Life is full of distractions: sports, school, friends, family, and church events, just to name a few. There are so many things vying for a preteen's attention that sometimes it gets hard to know where to look. We hope this question prompts preteens to think about the things that grab their attention and how to handle the distractions.

We start the month in **Hebrews 12:1-3** where the author is encouraging a group of Christians to keep following Jesus. Whether in the face of persecution and hard times, or whether we get distracted because of sin, we are reminded that Jesus is worth following.

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, keep looking to Jesus. No matter the season that life brings with its highs and lows, we are not alone. Not only is Jesus with us, but we have access to others who follow Jesus as we encourage and help one another to keep the focus on Him. When we fix our eyes on Jesus, we can remember that there is hope, and we can keep going, no matter how hard or easy the journey may be.

WEEK 2

Key Question: What are you hoping for? Maybe you have an upcoming birthday party, you're getting ready to go on a fun vacation, or you're even waiting for someone you know who is sick to get better. Whatever it is, we're all waiting and hoping for something big or small. We hope this question guides preteens to think about the things that matter most to them and how they can find hope in everything.

In week 2, we head to **John 12:12-16** Jesus has just arrived in Jerusalem for Palm Sunday, which fulfilled a prophecy the prophet Zechariah wrote about many years beforehand. Even though Jesus wasn't the King the people were expecting, He was the King they needed.

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God is still working. Have you ever expected something to go one way, but it turned out differently than you imagined? Sometimes, in those moments we may not know what to do next or what to think, but just like God had a plan to send Jesus, God has a plan for each of us and is still at work in our lives.



FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

WEEK 3

Key Question: **Why does Easter give us hope?** It can be easy to think of all the things we do and love about Easter, such as egg hunts, bunnies, candy, or dyeing eggs, that we forget what the focus of Easter truly is. We hope this question helps preteens re-shift their focus to the heart of Easter and the joy that Jesus brings.

In week 3, we head to **John 18-20:18 and 1 Peter 1:3**, as we celebrate Jesus, our risen Savior! When all hope seemed lost, Jesus defeated even death itself, proving that He is bigger than anything we could ever imagine and that we can trust Him no matter what.

Bottom Line: **Whatever happens, remember Jesus is alive.** What's the best news you've ever heard, and what made that news so exciting? It's probably because that news made a difference in your life for the better. The news of Jesus does exactly that! Through the good and bad, Jesus is alive, and that is GOOD news full of hope.

WEEK 4

Key Question: **What questions do you have for God?** From random silly questions to deeper questions, kids ask a LOT of questions. The questions may seem easy to answer or may even seem daunting, but questions help us grow. We hope this question helps preteens know that no question is too big or too small for God.

For week 4 we head to **John 20:19-29** after Jesus' resurrection. When Thomas heard Jesus was alive, he couldn't believe it. Jesus showed up for Thomas, showing Thomas that there was no question He couldn't handle.

Bottom Line: **Whatever happens, remember God is bigger than your questions.** Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the things you don't know or don't have answers to? Sometimes we may never know the answer, but we can trust that God will be with us even in the midst of our questions. Sometimes it's not about the answers but about growing closer to Jesus because of it.