



5 min

# Large Group Opener

5 min

## Opening Game

### What You Need

No supplies needed

**HOST:** "Hi, friends! I'm so glad you're here for the start of our new series called Game Plan. A game plan tells a team what to do so they can win. It helps the team move from something they want to happen to some actual things they can do to make that happen. We're going to follow a game plan this month so we can be stronger in our friendship with God!

"Today's first part of our game plan is this: **[Bottom Line] Practice talking about God.** Say it with me."

**KIDS:** "Practice talking about God."

**HOST:** "Amazing! Now who wants to play a game? We're going to play a game called 'Find Me!'"

*SLIDE: "Find Me!"*

"Here's how to play 'Find Me!' One friend will be our seeker and will step outside with two leaders. While they're out, I'll choose one person to wear a paper on their back that says, 'Find me!'"

"We'll instruct the seeker to come back, and we'll give the seeker 30 seconds to spot the friend with the 'Find me!' paper on their back."

"Everyone else, listen carefully to the Game Plan. You're a part of this game too! When I say 'stand,' stand up right where you're sitting and move around. You can form groups of people, but you have to stay in this room. When I say, 'freeze,' you can't move. No switching places. Hands to yourself."

"Seeker, you walk around to find the one person you need to find—the person with the 'Find me!' sign on their backs."

"Let's play! Raise your hand if you want to be our first seeker!"

*Choose a volunteer from the kids whose hands are raised.*

"Okay, we have our seeker! Leaders, will you step outside with our seeker?"

"Great! Now, quietly, who wants to wear the 'Find me!' page? I'm going to quietly come to you, and tape this paper on your back."

*Quietly choose a willing kid, tape the paper midway on their back on their clothing.*

"Okay, everyone, stand up and move around for a bit. *(Allow the kids to move around for a few seconds.)*"

6 min

## Worship Option 1 (Amazing Music)

### Worship Opener

#### What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

### At the Top of My Lungs | Worship Song

#### What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

### This is Living | Worship Song

"Now, freeze! Let me bring the seeker back in.

*Cue the two leaders outside to bring the seeker back in.*

"Okay seeker, you have 30 seconds to find the kid with the sign taped on their back. Everyone else, stay frozen! Are you ready, seeker? Go!

*AUDIO: Upbeat music*

*Start the timer. After 30 seconds, end the round. Or if the seeker finds the kid with the sign on their back, celebrate!*

**HOST:** "Nice job following the Game Plan by staying frozen in your spots, everybody."

*Play another round if time and interest allow.*

**HOST:** "In our true story from the Bible that we're looking at today, Mary and Joseph were searching in a big crowd too. They found Jesus in His Father's house, talking about God. That's also what we're talking about today—**[Bottom Line] practice talking about God.**"

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Hey, everyone! You guys did an awesome job jumping in during that game — I love that energy! And that's perfect, because now it's time to use that same excitement to worship God together.

**WORSHIP LEADER:** When we worship, we're telling God how amazing He is and how much we love Him. Sometimes we worship quietly... and sometimes we worship loud! Our first song today is all about praising God *at the top of our lungs* — because He deserves all the praise we've got.

So let's stand up, get ready, and sing *At the Top of My Lungs* together!"

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "That was awesome! You sounded amazing — I love seeing you worship God with so much joy and confidence.

## What You Need

No supplies needed

38 min

# Bible Story (Live)

3 min

## Introduction

### What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

## GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

### What You Need

No supplies needed

You know, following Jesus isn't boring or ordinary. When we trust Him and choose to follow Him, we discover what real life is all about. Life with Jesus is full of purpose, joy, and adventure.

Our next song reminds us that *this* — living for God, walking with Jesus, trusting Him every day — *this is living*. Let's take a deep breath, focus our hearts, and worship together with *This Is Living*."

### WORSHIP LEADER:

"Great job, everyone! Thank you for worshiping God with your whole hearts today.

Go ahead and take a seat, and let's get ready to hear our true story from the Bible."

Make sure the table is set on stage so the Storyteller can place their Bible on it and read from it.

**STORYTELLER:** "Welcome, everybody! Happy New Year! I'm so glad you're here today!

"This month we're talking all about God's Game Plan for us! It's a Game Plan we can follow to help us get to know God better! This week we're going to look at one part of that Game Plan—talking about God! Our true story from the Bible is all about that!

"But before we dive into that true story from the Bible, let me tell you something amazing we've been doing this year. We're going through the key stories of the Bible! By the end of the school year, we'll have looked at the key stories of the Bible from cover to cover!

"Why are we going through the key stories of the Bible? Well, part of the reason God gave us the Bible is so we could know Him! He wants to be our close, close friend. So as we go through the Bible this year, our intention is to learn more about God!

**STORYTELLER:** "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)

*SLIDE: God's Big Story*

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

5 min

## SETTING UP THE STORY

### What You Need

No supplies needed

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. 'Help us!' they cried out to God. God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

"Some time after God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they asked for a king like the other nations around them. God gave them a king, and then many more kings (and one queen) followed. Sadly, after a long time of turning away from Him, God allowed His nation to be split in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. Oh no! After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

"And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised! While Jesus was on earth, He showed us who God is because He is God!

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!

**STORYTELLER:** "We're picking up in our journey through the Bible a few years after Jesus was born. It's a story in the Bible when Jesus was not much older than you!

"To tell our true story from the Bible today, we're going to have six volunteers up on stage to play a live game of 'Telephone.'

"Who is familiar with the game telephone? (*Acknowledge the kids who raise their hands.*)

"Great! Let me tell those who don't know about it! The game 'Telephone' is pretty simple—you whisper a sentence to the person beside you, and then they whisper to the person beside them, and you keep going until the very end. And at the end, the last person says what they heard aloud, and you see if it's the same sentence that was said at the very beginning.

"We'll play a game of 'Telephone' as we go throughout our Bible Story. Every once in a while, I'll give a sentence that's important to the Bible Story to the kids who are playing and see what the result is!

5 min

## SEARCHING FOR JESUS

### What You Need

No supplies needed

"Can I get six volunteers to come up here and play 'Telephone' in front of everyone? You guys will play the first few rounds of the game. If you'd like to play, raise your hand.

*Choose six kids from the volunteers who are raising their hands. Encourage them to come up on stage. Arrange them, seated, shoulder-to-shoulder in the middle of the stage, so the rest of the kids can see the group. (Girls wearing dresses might not be a good choice to sit in front of everyone.)*

"Just as a reminder, here are the rules. I'll whisper a short message to the first helper. They whisper it one time to the next person. No repeats. Hands to yourself. When the last person hears it, they'll say what they heard out loud for everyone."

"Let's do a practice round, okay? I'll whisper something to the first kid in line, and we'll see what they say!

*Whisper to the first kid: "Jesus is God's Son." Give a thumbs-up for them to know to pass it along. When the final kid says it aloud, celebrate with the room.*

"The original message was 'Jesus is God's Son.'

"Great job. That was a short, true message—you guys both spoke it and heard it! In our story, Jesus was doing the same thing. He was in His Father's house listening, asking questions, and talking about God. Let's learn more about what happened as we play our game!

*Walk over to the table with the Bible on it.*

### STORYTELLER:

*Open the Bible to Luke 2:41-42 (NirV) and read.*

*Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. When Jesus was 12 years old, they went up the feast as usual.*

"After the festival was over, the big group started home. Mary and Joseph thought Jesus was with the big group, but when they looked, He wasn't there. They hurried back to Jerusalem and searched. They searched for one day ... two days ... three days ... Three days is a long time to look!

"Alright, now it's time to play 'Telephone' again! Let me whisper the phrase to the group.

*Play the telephone game again. Whisper to the first kid: "Where is Jesus?" When the final kid says what they heard aloud, celebrate with the room.*

"The original message was 'Where is Jesus?'

5 min

## IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE

### What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

## I CAN KEEP GROWING

"Let's pretend like we are searching for Jesus. (*Hold your hand above your eyes to demonstrate.*) Look left. Look right. Now smile. They found Jesus in God's house, the temple, with the teachers, listening and asking great questions.

"Okay, kids who've played 'Telephone' so far, you've done a great job! You all can return to your seats. (*Pause as the kids return to their seats.*) Let's get six more volunteers who want to play 'Telephone' for a couple more rounds up here on stage. If you'd like to play, raise your hand!

*Choose six kids from the volunteers who are raising their hands. Encourage them to come up on stage. Arrange them, seated, shoulder-to-shoulder in the middle of the stage, so the rest of the kids can see the group. (Girls wearing dresses might not be a good choice to sit in front of everyone.)*

"Great! Now that we've got our volunteers ready, I'll pick up where we left off in our Bible Story. This is what the Bible says happened:

*Open the Bible to Luke 2:46-47 (NIRV) and read.*

*[Jesus] was sitting with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at how much he understood. They also were amazed at his answers.*

**STORYTELLER:** "Imagine a twelve-year-old having big conversations about God with grown-up teachers. When Mary and Joseph saw Him, they were surprised and so relieved. Jesus helped them understand that He needed to be in His Father's house, doing His Father's work. He wasn't being disrespectful. He wanted to be in God's house!

"Okay, time for another round of 'Telephone'!

*Whisper: 'I want to be in God's house' to the first kid in your telephone line. Have kids whisper it to the kid next to them, one by one, until they reach the end of the line. The last person will say what they heard aloud.*

"The original message was: 'I want to be in God's house.'

"Great job! That sounds a lot like what Jesus said to His parents:

*Open the Bible to Luke 2:49 (NIRV) and read.*

*"Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"*

"Jesus wanted to be in His Father's house talking and learning about God!

**STORYTELLER:** "Let me continue our story in the Bible.

*Open the Bible to Luke 2:51-52 (NIRV) and read.*

## What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

## WRAPPING UP THE STORY

### What You Need

No supplies needed

*Then he went back to Nazareth with them, and he obeyed them. But his mother kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. Jesus became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.*

"Jesus honored His Father in heaven and His parents on earth at the same time.

"Let's act out that verse. The Bible says that, '*Jesus became wiser and stronger.*' Tap your head for wisdom, and show your strong arms for strength. (*Demonstrate as you say, 'Jesus became wiser and stronger.'*)

"The Bible says that, '*He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.*' Pretend to hand over your heart for God's favor, and give a friendly wave for favor with people. (*Demonstrate as you say, 'He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.'*)

"Now for our last round of 'Telephone'!

*Whisper: 'I can keep growing' to the first kid in your telephone line. Have kids whisper it to the kid next to them, one by one, until they reach the end of the line. The last person will say what they heard aloud.*

"The original message was '*I can keep growing.*' Jesus kept growing, and we can too!

"Okay, volunteers, thank you so much for helping! You can return to your seats! (*Lead a round of applause as the kids return to their seats.*) You guys did a great job talking about God!

**STORYTELLER:** "Jesus showed us one way to grow. He loved being in God's house. He listened, He asked questions, and He talked about God with people who knew Him.

"There are people in your life who are also God's friends. Ask them about God! Ask them your questions about Him. Talking to them about God can help you get to know Him better!"

"Practicing is doing something over and over. When we practice talking about God, it becomes easier and easier. Jesus set the example for us on talking about God, even when He was young, and we can follow Him today.

"That reminds me of our Bottom Line for today!"

*SLIDE: Bottom Line*

**[Bottom Line] "Practice talking about God. Say that with me."**

Host enters and joins in.

**KIDS, STORYTELLER, AND HOST: [Bottom Line] "Practice talking about God."**

5 min

## GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

### What You Need

No supplies needed

8 min

## Closing

5 min

## WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

### What You Need

No supplies needed

**HOST:** "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!"

*SLIDE: God's Big Story*

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story—the picture that says, 'Jesus' Life.' In our story, Jesus hadn't grown up yet, but He is still teaching us!"

"God worked for years and years to send us Jesus. And part of the reason God sent us Jesus is so Jesus would show us who God is. Jesus is God's Son, but He is also God Himself. So how He lived is how God would live. When someone wasn't living the best way, He taught them the best way. When someone was sick, He healed them. Jesus went around our broken world and said, 'This isn't the way it is in God's Kingdom, I'm going to fix it.' And there was something else that was super-important! As Jesus lived through our broken world, He never, ever sinned. He lived a perfect life. As we saw this week, even as a 12-year-old Boy, Jesus honored God and His parents. Later in His life, Jesus would give up that perfect life, paying for our sin, and breaking that awful curse we were under. Jesus' perfect life continued God's plan to rescue us all!"

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!"

*SLIDE: Week 1 Timeline Image*

*If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's timeline image on the clothesline.*

"This week we talked about Jesus at the temple when He was just a Boy!"

**HOST:** "Wow. Today we saw something amazing. Jesus was only 12 years old, but He amazed everyone with how He talked about God."

"Jesus showed us what to do. We can start small and start now."

"He could have been playing or running around, but He chose to be in His Father's house. He chose to practice talking about God. He chose to find people who knew about God and talk to them and ask them questions to learn about God. You can do the same thing too!"

"The people in your life who know God can help you get to know Him better. So ask them questions about God. Ask them to show you in the Bible where to go for answers."

"Think about someone you know who knows Jesus. Maybe it's your Small Group leader. Maybe it's another friend. If you don't know many

3 min

## PRAYER

### What You Need

No supplies needed

people who know Jesus, ask God to put more people in your life who can help you know Him better. Practice talking about Him like Jesus did to other people. Make getting to know God an important part of your life, so ask people about Him!

**STORYTELLER or HOST:** "Let's talk to the God who wants you to get to know Him better. Bow your heads and close your eyes.

"God, thank You for Jesus. Thank You that even as a Kid, Jesus showed us how important it is to talk about You. Help us to practice this week. Help us to find the people in our lives who know You so we can learn more about You. We want to know You more. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Dismiss kids to their small groups.