

...walk with me...



# Preparation 101

...walk with me...

# TRAINING MANUAL

A Step-by-Step Guide



# Preparation 101

## A Step-by-Step Guide

### Focus

To maximize the user-friendly characteristics of *Walk With Me* for teachers by breaking down the preparation process into small steps.

### Time

50-60 minutes

### Audience

Teachers (especially those new to WWM)

### Room Setup

Provide round tables with chairs and a microphone if your group is large. Add flowers or candle centerpieces, handouts printed on bright paper, and play some upbeat music softly in the background as people are arriving. And never underestimate the welcoming power of food! Providing refreshments on a table with tablecloth, colorful cups, and napkins will help to establish a friendly, welcoming atmosphere.

### Preparation

- Invite participants at least two weeks in advance (either mail an invitation with the *Walk With Me* logo on it or use e-mail). Ask for a reply; then call participants who have not yet responded a few days before the event. On the invitation, let teachers know it's important for both new and experienced teachers to participate because they will be learning together how to make preparation easier and their teaching times even better.
- Ask a volunteer to provide and set up some light refreshments for the event. Suggest that he or she find another person to help.
- Gather all of the supplies you will need for the gift-wrapping demonstration at the beginning and end of the teacher's workshop (you can find some items around your house or church; you may need to shop for the "nice" items).
- Photocopy the handouts on bright-colored paper and organize them in the order in which you will use them.
- Supply pens and paper for participants to take notes as desired.
- Set up a Powerpoint presentation or create overheads from PP slides (available for download at [www.WalkWithMeOnline.org](http://www.WalkWithMeOnline.org)). As participants enter the room, project PP1: "Preparation 101" on your screen.

### Session Planner

**Hello** *Introduce faith as a precious gift that we pass on to our children..*

- Presenting a Special Gift (Part 1) 10 minutes

**Know** *Gain an overview of a Walk With Me session and analyze two routes for preparation.*

- Overview and Routes 10-15 minutes

**Grow** *Practice preparing a session and discover how the routes to preparation affect lesson preparation.*

- Planning a Session 15-20 minutes

**Show** *Recognize that teachers are the heart of each session and encourage them to make preparation a priority.*

- Presenting a Special Gift (Part 2): 10 minutes

# 1

# HELLO

## Presenting a Special Gift

### Time

10 minutes

### Goal

Introduce faith as a precious gift that we pass on to children.

### Materials

- expensive-looking piece of jewelry (necklace, ring, earrings)
- empty Altoids box or another small throw-away box
- several squares of bathroom tissue
- old newspaper
- used lunch bag or small grocery bag
- large Post-it note
- crayon or pencil
- piece of yarn or string



Before you begin, put PP slide 1 on your screen and distribute the items for wrapping to various participants in the workshop.

Welcome teachers to your workshop, recognizing that their presence is an indication that they care deeply about their role as teacher of children, and they want to learn how to “be the best that they can be.”

Then say something like this:

As teachers of God’s Story, we have the privilege of presenting a precious GIFT to our children every week. To help us put this idea into perspective, I’ve brought this piece of jewelry that is very precious and valuable. Let’s say I want to give this to someone I love on her birthday, which is coming up this Sunday. I’ve had this gift in my possession for more than a week now, thinking I’d have plenty of time to come up with just the right idea for presenting my gift in just the right way. I even got a book with suggestions about presenting gifts in ways that will be meaningful to a person this age.

Wouldn’t you know it, though, this has turned out to be such a busy week for me! I didn’t get around to looking through the idea book, and I didn’t think about the best way to present my gift. Finally on Saturday evening I glanced through the book. They had some creative suggestions, but by this time it was too late to shop for the materials required, so I just couldn’t implement those ideas. I had no choice but to take the simple route and find items in my house to use for this gift presentation.

I’ve distributed to you some of the wrapping items that I found. Maybe you can help me as I try to piece this presentation together:

As you gather the items you distributed earlier, wrap the jewelry while participants watch.

- A little box would be nice—anyone have something useable? (*Altoids or other box*)
- How about some satin lining for the box—any other options here? (*bathroom tissue*)
- I’ll need a gift bag—what could I use? (*brown lunch bag*)
- Colored tissue paper in the bag would help—any substitutes? (*newspaper*)
- A gift card would be appropriate—I need something to write on. (*Post-it note*)
- Now a pen for writing on the card—none of my pens seem to be working. (*use crayon or pencil to scribble the recipient’s name on post-it note*)
- A ribbon would certainly be attractive—anything I could use around here? (*piece of yarn or string—tie it around the opening of the lunch bag and stick on the Post-it note crooked*)

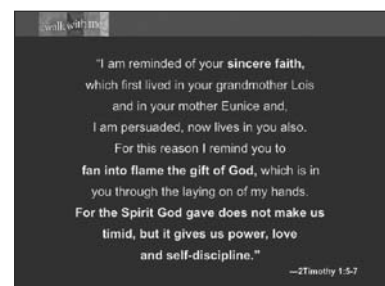
There! So I show up at the birthday celebration with this precious gift that's tucked inside plain ordinary scraps . . . but I present it with my wonderful personality and great smile. And I just hope that the recipient will stay interested long enough to discover the beautiful piece of jewelry that's stuck way inside this poor excuse for a gift bag.

Sometimes our lessons are like that. We have this precious story from God's Word. We know all week long that we'll be presenting it on Sunday morning, but we often wait until Saturday night to look at the session guide. There are some great ideas in there, but it's too late to run to the store, photocopy the patterns, or adequately prepare anything even close to creative. So we rely on our relationship with the children to carry us through, and we pray that they'll stick with us long enough to understand the story, reflect on it, and respond to it in a way that makes a difference in their lives.

## Biblical Reflection

We're going to start today by drawing some precious encouragement for our journey from God's Word—this is from Paul's letter to his apprentice Timothy. (PP slide 6)

I am reminded of your **sincere faith**, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to **fan into flame the gift of God**, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. **For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but it gives us power, love and self-discipline.** (2 Tim. 1:5-7, TNIV)



Phrases to review and highlight:

- **sincere faith**—the Greek translation is literally *unhypocritical* faith. Timothy's faith is a byproduct of the intentional nurturing and teaching from his grandmother and mother. What a beautiful picture of how faith is passed on! We are privileged to be part of this process in the life of every child we teach.
- **fan into flame the gift of God**—this gift is faith. Like Timothy, we are called to light the fire of faith in the next generation. We are wrapping up and presenting to them a precious gift from God.
- **the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid**—we tend to be timid when we're not prepared, and kids sense that! When we respect the gift of faith, we will prepare to the best of our ability so that we can confidently and sincerely present the message.
- **God's Spirit gives us power, love and self-discipline**—that power includes self-confidence, which grows the more we are trained and equipped and prepared. Love is the root of all we do as teachers of children. Have you ever thought of self-discipline as a gift of the Spirit? When you just don't feel like preparing a lesson, ask God to give you the desire and to make room in your schedule for this important responsibility.

## 2 KNOW

### Overview and Routes

#### Time

10 minutes

#### Goal

Gain an overview of a session in the leader's guide and analyze two routes for personal preparation.

#### Materials

- *Coordinators' Handbook*, page 9 (for workshop leader to use as reference)
- Handout 1: Outline of Workshop
- Handout 2: A Look at the Session Plan
- Handout 3: Sample Session
- Handout 4: Two Routes to Preparation
- Pens and highlighters
- Newsprint or board, marker or chalk

## Brief Overview of *Walk With Me*

Distribute Handouts 1 (Outline) so participants can follow along as you proceed through the workshop. Also hand out copies of Handouts 2 (Session Plan) and 3 (Sample Session). You may also wish to refer to the *Walk With Me Coordinators' Handbook*, page 9, for your own preparation.

Say something along these lines:

As a first step in planning and preparing a teaching session, we may need a refresher on how each session of *Walk With Me* is organized. I've distributed to each of you an overview of a session plan and an actual sample session from the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade level that we can use as an outline.

This is how each session in a unit is organized (note that a unit includes four sessions on one biblical theme). We're going to do an abbreviated version, but you also have a more detailed guide to a session plan in Handout 2.

Please follow along with me on Handout 3, the sample session: (use PP slides 3-12)

- First page—you'll find the Scripture, Memory Challenge, and Session Focus.



- Session Planner—At a glance, you can see how the session is broken down by steps and the estimated length of time required for each.



- WordSearch—this section helps you prepare personally and gives background theological information that will help you understand the story fully before teaching it.

- Four steps—Think of the last three as the head (knowledge), heart (growing—internalizing and experiencing the story in a personal way), and hands (showing—responding to God's story in a tangible way):



*Hello* Fun, personal ways to introduce the session and your time together.



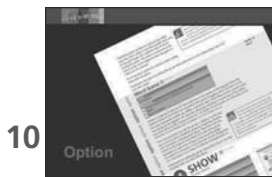
*Know* Here's where the story, the "know-ledge" is presented.



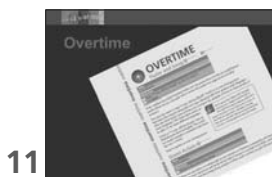
*Grow* Various activities to help children internalize and personalize the story and grow in their faith.



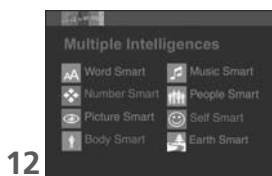
*Show* This is where the rubber hits the road. What difference will this story make in the child's life?



- Options—Every session includes two options that you can substitute for another step to customize your session for your particular group and time frame.



- Overtime—Every session includes ideas for expanding your session.



- Multiple Intelligences—Every step includes symbols that describe each of eight learning styles. (You may want to briefly list the multiple intelligences; see *Coordinators' Handbook*, Appendix A, or the front section of any leader's guide.)

Ask, Does anyone have any questions about the way *Walk With Me* is organized?

## Routes for Preparation

Then say something like this:

As a *Walk With Me* teacher, you're asking children to walk with you as you lead them on a journey through Scripture. But do you know where you're going? Have you taken all of the steps necessary to plan your trip?

Distribute Handout 4: Two Routes to Preparation. Go over the two routes for preparation as outlined below using PP slides 13 and 14; then use newsprint or a board to list the advantages and disadvantages of each route as participants respond to the discussion questions (printed below each route).



### Route 1 (Scenic Route)

1. One week before presenting each session (suggest Sunday afternoon/evening): Read through the session, especially the WordSearch, and spend time in prayer for the Holy Spirit's leading.
2. Midweek (designate a specific day): Select teaching options and make supply list.
3. Midweek: Either gather/purchase supplies yourself or turn in supply list to designated person by agreed-upon deadline.
4. Day before: Read through lesson again so you are familiar enough to lead without following along in the leader's guide.

#### Discussion Questions

- What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of this route?
- What is needed to make this work, and what could mess it up?



Some teachers find it helpful to broaden the scenic route to include an overview of the entire unit before it begins. Depending on your teaching team, you may want to include these steps as one of the scenic route options:

1. One week prior to beginning of unit: Spend approximately one hour planning your entire unit, session by session (selecting options for each session and making a list of supplies needed). This planning can be done with another teacher of the same age level, your class helper (if applicable), or a "room parent" who takes care of getting supplies for you.
2. Each week: Select a day to reread through your lesson, pray, and make sure you have all necessary supplies. You should be familiar enough to lead the session without following along in the leader's guide.



## Route 2 (Rush-Hour Route)

1. Day before: Read through lesson, pray, select options, make supply list, gather/purchase supplies (or make emergency call to supply person).
2. Morning of: Review lesson so you are familiar enough to lead without following along in the leader's guide.

### Discussion Questions

- What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of this route?
- What is needed to make it this work, and what could mess it up?

*Note:* Obviously, this is not a recommended route—the goal is that participants will see its glaring glitches.

If there's time you may also want to share the following sidebar with your group.

### Spiritual Preparation

Have you ever gone car-shopping and found a car that you especially like, and then discovered during the next week that there seem to be hundreds of that same model on the roads in your community?

Have you ever heard your pastor preach a sermon about a particular sin—for example, gossip—and then during the next week caught yourself and others talking negatively or needlessly about someone else?

In both cases, your level of awareness increased and you noticed things that didn't really catch your attention before.

Think about how this principle might apply to your spiritual preparation for teaching a *Walk With Me* session. If you take an hour on a Sunday afternoon or evening to read the lesson that you'll be teaching the following Sunday, your awareness level about that topic will almost certainly increase during the week preceding your teaching session.

By reading the lesson a week in advance, you will also give the Holy Spirit more “wobble room” to work in your heart and deepen your own faith. We've heard testimonies of teachers who say they read, for example, a lesson about prayer, and during the following week they had some new or deepened experiences in their prayer life, or they were able to recall instances in which God answered prayers in unusual ways.

Advance planning also gives you time to talk with others about their experiences with this topic; that may result in an encounter with someone who has something special to share with your group.

Try it, and see what the Spirit will do to prepare you for teaching God's truths.

# 3

# GROW

## Planning a Session

### Time

15-20 minutes

### Goal

Practice preparing a session and discover how the routes to preparation affect lesson presentation.

### Materials

- Handout 3: Sample Session
- Handout 5: Session Planning Guide
- Pens

Begin by saying something like this:

Here's the information we have to work with so far:

- We know what the *Walk With Me* curriculum offers—which is usually far more than we can use unless we're doing a marathon session.
- We know the importance of planning ahead, based on the routes we just analyzed.

Now we're going to apply what we know to some practical planning exercises. The goal in this activity is that you will find it easier to maneuver your way through a myriad of options and possibilities to find the right plan for you and your class.

Distribute Handout 5, the Session Planning Guide, and ask participants to take out Handout 3, the Sample Session. Divide the group into three teams of 3-4 people and assign each team one of the three scenarios described on PP slide 15.

Then say, **Before we begin our exercise, here are a few tips on how you begin to choose the right options for your teaching session:**

- Consider the specific children in your group. (You don't always know in advance who will be there, but as the season progresses you will be able to gauge this better.)
- Include a variety of the multiple intelligences. (It's easy to select ones that match our own learning styles—for example, if you're word smart you tend to choose more of these options). Make sure you stretch yourself and choose a variety of options so that the needs of the most children are met.
- Factor in time allotments for your setting. If the time for your session varies, make sure you have an overtime option ready to go (it's always better to over-plan than to under-plan).
- Be careful to make sure all four steps (Hello, Know, Grow, Show) are covered when substituting steps with options. For example, don't substitute a Show option for a Grow step.
- Be intentional about allowing enough time for each step (Hello, Know, Grow, Show). If you spend most of your time on the Know option, we're regressing to the old knowledge-based model and neglecting the child's personal faith response and opportunity for practical application.
- Remember that your session plan is a guide, not a recipe. Feel free to come up with your own ideas about how to reinforce a particular point of the lesson. For example, there may be someone from your congregation who has a personal experience related to this theme. Live into the session and see how God leads you.

Keeping that in mind, here is your assignment: Within your team, walk through planning the sample session provided, using the session planning guide as an outline. Imagine you are using the scenic route as you plan. You have 10 minutes for this exercise. Put PP slide 15 on your screen and ask teams to read through the assignments together.



### Team 1

Plan for a 40-minute session with seven children who are dismissed from the adult service following the opening praise/worship time.

### Team 2

Plan for a 60-minute session with twelve children following a 20-minute free play and activity time.

### Team 3

Plan for a 50-minute session with nine children following an opening worship time. Remember that your group should plan as though you are planning the lesson the day before you teach it. Are there things you will need to eliminate or change?

After 10 minutes, call the teams back together into one group. Starting with Team 3 (followed by Teams 2 and 1), have each team share their results by asking the following questions:

1. What does your session plan look like (name the options you selected)?
2. How many of the multiple intelligences did you use in this session plan?
3. Was your assignment easy or difficult? Why?
4. How do you feel about your end results?
5. What would change about your lesson if you were to use the rush-hour-route rather than the scenic route?

After all three teams have reported, ask,

Does anyone have a comment about something they learned in this exercise, or a question that came up while you were planning a session?

Based on the results of this assignment, which route will you choose for your preparation?

You may want to share the following sidebar, “A Planning Challenge,” with participants.

#### A Planning Challenge

Let’s face it. We all know HOW to plan. We all plan our days and our life to some extent. The ability to plan is one of the distinguishing features of human beings. Certainly planning a *Walk With Me* session is something that many people have the ability to accomplish.

For many of us, the most difficult part of planning and preparing for a *Walk With Me* session is finding and taking the time to plan.

So the challenge is how to prioritize our time—particularly, how to make session planning a priority. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Identify your obstacles to preparation.** What prevents you from sitting down with your leader’s guide on a Sunday or Monday evening early in the week? Are you afraid you’ll forget what you read? Do you feel more comfortable working under pressure or in last-minute situations? Do you think the kids won’t notice the difference anyway? Do you have too much else to do, and this will just have to wait? Try to figure out the biggest hindrance to planning early in the week.
- **Visualize best- and worst-case scenarios.** Have you ever led a class session that didn’t turn out well: the kids were out of control, or they sat there with blank looks on their faces, or you didn’t have enough material planned to fill the allotted time? How did you feel about that session? Now think about a time when your session went really well: you sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit, you felt God using you to bring home a biblical point, you prepared enough material to fill the time, you knew that you’d really made a difference. Which would you prefer to lead? What can you do to set yourself up for success?
- **Ask yourself some difficult questions about your priorities.** Imagine that you were required to lead a *Walk With Me* session for a group of your peers, a group of adult strangers, or your pastor. Where would you find that extra hour in the week to adequately prepare to lead adults? What is the real difference when leading children? Could you give up one television show? One chapter of a book?

One hour of a sports event or social time with friends? Can you bring your leader's guide with you to read during a lunch break or some other free time?

The point is that we can usually find a way to squeeze in time for a lunch with friends, or do a search on the computer, or watch a television show or sports event. Today's challenge is to find just one hour in your week to spend preparing to teach children from the Word of God. Try it, and you may discover that God has something to teach you too!



# SHOW

## Presenting a Special Gift, Part 2

### Time

10 minutes

### Goal

Recognize that teachers are the heart of each session and encourage them to make preparation a priority.

### Materials

- Handout 6 "Tips for Connecting with Children"
- Piece of jewelry from Step 1
- Jewelry gift box
- Piece of satin
- Small gift bag
- Colorful tissue paper
- Gift card with recipient's name written neatly on the envelope with a good pen
- Matching ribbon
- Other gift decorations that would add to the beauty of your presentation

### Handout 6: Connecting with Children

Here's the reality about planning, preparing, and presenting a session for children. Ultimately it's not about how good you are, what a great curriculum you're using, or how experienced you are as a teacher. The heart of a lesson is YOU.

We can teach you how to plan and prepare, but the best-prepared teacher can be ineffective if he or she doesn't share him- or herself with the children.

God has called YOU to teach this material; God has gifted YOU for this assignment; God has chosen YOU to nurture this particular group of children at this time in their lives. That's why it's important that you include the most important ingredient in your session planning: your heart, your story, your love . . . yourself.

The bottom line is that children are not going to remember all the specifics of what you teach them. They're going to remember YOU, how you treated them, how they felt in your presence, and whether or not they saw God shining in you. Our goal is that teaching *Walk With Me* may also be a growing experience for you. As you prepare spiritually for each session, allowing plenty of time for the Holy Spirit to impress the lesson on your heart, our prayer is that you will grow closer in your walk with God. Kids will notice your passion when you speak about your relationship with God, your prayer life, your experiences and life lessons as a Christian.

We believe that taking the extra time to prepare will make a lasting difference in your life and in the lives of the kids you teach. They are a gift to you, and you have a gift to present to them—your faith.

Distribute copies of Handout 6. Go around the tables and have participants each read one tip. Conclude by asking if anyone has other tips to share with the group.

Our time together has come to a close. But before we leave, I want to take you back to our opening gift-wrapping session. Remember that precious gift that we wrapped in shabby household items? (Hold up the “gift bag” from step 1.)

As grace would have it, I’ve been given a second chance to present that special gift to my loved one. Allow me to dig it out of its lowlife environment and dress it up the way it deserves. (Take the gift out of the brown lunch bag wrapping.)

Describe each step as you rewrap the gift, then hold up the beautifully wrapped gift in front of the group:

- Place the precious jewelry in a nice gift box.
- Line the gift box with satin.
- Wrap the gift box in colorful tissue paper.
- Place it in a beautiful gift bag.
- Decoratively stuff more tissue paper in the opening.
- Attach a gift card (having written the recipient’s name neatly with a good pen).
- Add some curly ribbon or other package dressings.

If I bring this gift to the birthday celebration on Sunday along with my winning smile, I believe that the recipient will feel even more blessed because I took the time to make this presentation worthy of the precious gift inside.

My prayer is that every Sunday will be a special occasion for you and the children you have the opportunity to bless.

Close your time together with prayer.

# Outline

**1. Hello:** Introduce faith as a precious gift that we pass on to children.

Presenting a Special Gift (Part 1) (5 minutes)

Biblical Reflection (5 minutes)

**2. Know:** Gain an overview of a *Walk With Me* session and analyze two routes for preparation.

Brief Overview of *Walk With Me* (5 minutes)

Two Routes for Preparation (5-10 minutes)

**3. Grow:** Practice preparing a session and discover how the routes to preparation affect the lesson presentation.

Planning a Session (15-20 minutes)

**4. Show:** Recognize that teachers are the heart of each session and encourage them to make preparation a priority.

The Heart of a Lesson (5 minutes)

Presenting a Special Gift (Part 2) (5 minutes)

# A Look at the Session Plan

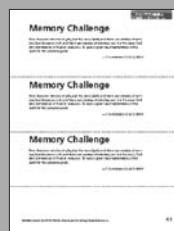
## A Look at the Session Plan

*Walk With Me* curriculum supplies leaders with a step-by-step guide for each session. These two pages will help you know what to look for and how to use a typical *Walk With Me* session:

- 1 The Bible passages your session will focus on are clearly listed on the first page of each session. You'll want to allow time for reading the passages as you prepare to teach.
- 2 Each unit includes a Memory Challenge—a Scripture passage (or alternate question and answer) that everyone may learn over the four-session period. Although we believe memory work is an important tool for helping young people keep God's words in their hearts, we recognize that not all teachers will have time to include memory work in their sessions. So suggestions for helping kids learn these passages are usually optional.
- 3 Here you'll find the key teaching or theme of the session.
- 4 This session planner outlines the session for you, both main steps and options. By checking the boxes before the steps you plan to use, you can create a session plan that fits the needs of your group.

### Reproducible Pages

Sometimes you'll need scripts, word cards, puzzles, or other resources to enhance your session. You'll find these at the back of each leader's guide. You'll also find a letter to families that you can photocopy and send home with kids after the first session.



## 1 Decisions, Decisions!

**1 Scripture**  
1 Kings 3:5-12; Psalm 119:103; Proverbs 2:1-5; 12:15; Philippians 4:6; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**2 Memory Challenge**  
Colossians 3:23-24

**3 Focus**  
When faced with a difficult decision, we can be guided by God's Word, by prayer, and by the advice of other Christians.

**5 WORDSearch**  
**Think About It**  
Decisions, decisions!  
We're constantly facing new ones. Most of the decisions we make don't take much thought. But others are so difficult that they keep us awake at night. Tough choices are an unavoidable part of life.

**Pray About It**  
Oh, you've made a decision to teach this class. Maybe that was a big decision for you. Maybe not. But one thing is sure—you'll need a lot of wisdom to teach your students about making decisions. Look again at Solomon's prayer (1 Kings 3:5-9). Then humble yourself before God in prayer and ask for whatever wisdom and insight you'll need to teach this unit on making tough choices.

apostle Paul explain breathe and is using, correcting and ness." This doesn't r proof text that mag over to every proble Bibles, we enter into with God about out to reflect widdly on for life. It makes us tions. It transforms Christ and his kinge rely on God's prom

**4 Session Planner**

<b>Helps</b> Recognize that life is full of decisions we need to make.	5-7 minutes
<b>Know</b> Identify situations in our lives that call for tough decisions.	10-15 minutes
<b>Grow</b> Recognize that God provides help when we need to make tough decisions (and even some not-so-tough ones).	20-25 minutes
<b>God's Help</b> Keys for Tough Decisions	10-15 minutes
<b>Option: Slogans</b>	
<b>Show</b> Apply guidelines to a decision we're facing or might soon face.	10 minutes
<b>Option: Trying It Out</b>	20 minutes
<b>Option: Scenarios Revisited</b>	
<b>Overtime</b>	
<b>Memory Challenge and Prayer</b>	5 minutes
<b>The Rusty Robot</b>	10 minutes
<b>Free Advice!</b>	10-15 minutes

**12 Scenarios Revisited** People Connect

**Time**  
20 minutes

**Materials**  
Student handout 3: "Checklist for Making Tough Decisions"  
Pens or pencils

Instead of using the notecard activity in step 4, you can use scenarios they created—and liked—in step 1. Distribute the notecards to each group to discuss the scenario using the question handout. Ask the groups to decide what the person in the scenario should do. Then have each group give its response to the entire group.

For younger kids who may not be as familiar with the scenarios, you can close by inviting your middle schoolers to think about a scenario they may be facing soon. Invite brief sharing, then lead in to the next activity.

**14 + OVERTIME**  
**The Rusty Robot** Free Advice!



**Time**  
10 minutes

**Materials**  
Student handout 4: "The Rusty Robot"

You can add this short parable to your session plan (during step 2 or 4) to help your group understand the guiding role that God's Word—and especially God's law—plays in decision making. Read the story to the group and discuss the two questions that follow the story:

- How are God's commandments good for us?
- What does this story remind us to do—and not to do—when we make tough decisions?

Emphasize that our choices need to be made within the bounds of God's Word and God's law—not just because "God says so" but because God knows that we hurt ourselves and others when we violate God's rules for living. So when we talk about making decisions, we always need to ask what God's Word has to say about the choices we're facing.

**6** **1 HELLO**   **10**  
Your Choice!

**7** **Goal**  
Recognize that life is full of decisions we need to make.

**8** **Time**  
5-7 minutes

**9** **Materials**  

- Several sheets of newsprint, prepared as described below
- Markers in assorted colors
- Masking tape to hang newsprint on wall (if desired)





Before you begin this session, prepare several sheets of newsprint with questions that ask kids to make a choice. Some sample questions (one per sheet, leaving room for responses) follow:

- If you had to watch the same TV show every night for a month, what show would it be?
- If you had an extra hour each day, how would you spend it?
- If you could avoid eating one kind of food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
- If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be?
- If you could live anywhere you wanted to in the world, where would you live?
- If you could be doing anything right now, what would you like to do?

**tip** **13** Feel free to add or subtract your own questions. Maybe you know of something going on at school or in your community that involves a choice that would be especially interesting to your group. In this unit on choices, try to give your group choices whenever you can.

**15** **Time Saver** If your time is quite limited, use only two or three of the questions.

Tape the question sheets to the classroom walls or lay them on a table or on the floor. As kids arrive, hand each one a marker and invite everyone to write or draw answers to any of the questions on the sheets.

**11** **2 KNOW**      
Create a Scenario


**Goal**  
Identify situations in our lives that call for tough decisions.

**Time**  
10-15 minutes

**Materials**  

- Newsprint
- Markers
- Masking tape

Prepare a "Scenario" (see page 9), one to each student.



**5** This section is for you, the leader. It's meant to help you

- understand the background of the Scripture you're teaching (Think About It).
- look for new ways to grow spiritually (Pray About It).
- think about ways that this Scripture connects with the lives of the children you teach (Tell About It).

**6** Each session is divided into four steps. The Hello step gives you suggestions for fun, interactive things to do as the children arrive, activities that will hook their attention and make them want to learn more.

**7** Each step includes a goal that will focus your teaching on what the children should learn and do.

**8** Each step or option includes an estimate of how much time it will take.


**9** You'll find a list of materials needed for each step and each optional activity in the session.

**10** These symbols will tell you which kinds of learners will benefit most from an activity (see descriptions on p. 5).

**11** The Know, Grow, and Show steps will help you plan your session and measure whether you've succeeded in leading and teaching the children successfully.

- The *Know* step usually involves presenting the story or Scripture to the children.
  - The *Grow* step usually includes activities that help the children recognize what the Bible story or passage means for their own faith and life.
  - Learning is more than listening and understanding. We want to encourage everyone to respond in tangible ways to what they've learned. The *Show* step includes activities that provide ways for children to act and serve.
- 12** Not all kids or groups are alike. The options in these sessions help you customize your lesson to fit the distinct needs and abilities of the children you teach.
- 13** Throughout the session plan you'll find tips that will make it easier to meet the particular needs of your situation and your group.
- 14** Do you have more than 45 minutes? Overtime ideas will help you expand your session to 60 minutes or longer.
- 15** Less than 45 minutes? You'll want to look for the clock symbols in most sessions that will help you decide which learning activities you can cut or shorten.

# Sample Session



## Tower of Babel

**Scripture**  
Genesis 11:1-9

**Memory Challenge**  
Psalm 24:1-4a

**Focus**  
The sin of pride separates us from God and from each other.

**WORDSEARCH**

**Think About It**  
The Babel story delightfully sets the stage for the other remarkable language story in the Bible—when the disciples at Pentecost are enabled “to speak in other tongues” (Acts 2:4). What God took away at Babel—a common language—was restored when the Holy Spirit was poured out. At Babel, God confused and scattered the people. Why? Because otherwise “nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them” (Gen. 11:6). At Pentecost, the Spirit gave the church such power and guidance that nothing they planned to do proved impossible for them (Matt. 17:20). The key difference between these two events is one of spirit. At Babel, a proud human spirit planned to build a city and tower and “make a name.” At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit moved believers to form a church that would humbly serve and glorify God.

Your children are probably too young to catch this contrast. But they can learn much from this story about human pride and ambition and about how and why God stops and limits it. Have fun showing how God so effortlessly trumps the Babel builders’ futile attempt to save themselves through their own efforts.

**Session Planner**

**Hello** *Get a sense of the frustration people experienced at Babel.*

- Babel 5 minutes

**Know** *Tell why God scattered the people.*

- The High-Fivers Are Not So High 10 minutes

**Grow** *See how pride separates us from God.*

- Game: Escape the Z! 15 minutes
- Option: Word Game 10 minutes

**Show** *Humbly worship our great God.*

- Praise Work 20-30 minutes
- Option: Clay Tiles 15 minutes

**Pray About It**  
Hmmm. Might the sin of pride lurk not only in the hearts of Babel builders and classroom babblers? Can you make your class understand the language of faith solely through your own efforts and gift- edness as a teacher? Or will you need help from a greater Interpreter? Whom will you ask? Who will get the credit?

The people have settled down in a valley in Mesopotamia. Here they plan to build a huge tower, one of the ziggurats (temple towers) for which Mesopotamia was famous. These were square at the base with sloping, stepped sides, leading up to a shrine on the top. To the people of those days, accustomed as they were to one-story houses, these towers must have seemed enormous, reaching “to the heavens.”

The story doesn’t suggest that the building project itself was wrong or that it displeased God. The problem was the motive and purpose of the builders. They wanted to establish themselves as a

**Tell About It**  
Talking with kids about pride is tough. That’s because we rightly encourage them to take pride in their appearance, in their work, and in who they are. We praise them for their smallest accomplishments at school or at home. But we need to warn them that overconfidence, showing off, and bragging make us self-centered. And it makes other people not like us. Worse, pride eventually makes us think that we can do without God. Pride blinds us to our limits and to our dependence on God and on each other. So be sure to help children see where a good thing starts to go bad.

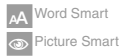
people and gain a mighty reputation by their own efforts. Their pride reflects the same spirit that moved Adam and Eve to eat of the tree in the garden. They wanted to be like God. They wanted to serve and enhance themselves, not to serve and worship God.

By creating this babble at Babel, God frustrates their pride and ambition and scatters them over the earth. Now at least some of them will be able to recognize that their true identity and security rests in God, not in their own efforts. The apostle Paul takes us right to the bottom line, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31).



# HELLO

Babel



Word Smart

Picture Smart

## Goal

Get a sense of the frustration people experienced at Babel.

## Time

5 minutes

## Materials

- Song: "The Lord Is Great" (p. 45; CD, track 4; optional)
- CD player (optional)
- Nonsense directions, written on newsprint or board (see below)
- Sheets of paper
- Pens, markers

Prior to class, on a sheet of newsprint or on your board, write some nonsensical directions like these: **Please use the paper provided to draw a blither with at least five etads in the first three zoms. You have three minutes.**

When kids arrive, hand out the paper and pens and ask them to follow the instructions you've written on the board or on newsprint. If they ask you what in the world they're supposed to do, tell them it's perfectly clear to you but they should interpret it as best they can. Insist (pleasantly!) that they draw *something* they think reflects the direction.

Share results (briefly). Explain that in today's Bible story, the people experienced something similar to what the kids just went through. They tried to communicate with each other but failed to make any sense! If the children are familiar with the Bible, let them guess what Bible story you're describing. If not, tell them the story is about the tower of Babel and what happened to the people who tried to build it.



If you're writing the schedule of the morning activities on the board or on newsprint, use these titles or create fun titles of your own:

- Babel
- The High-Fivers Are Not So High
- Game: Escape the Z!
- Praise Work



# KNOW

The High-Fivers Are Not So High

Word Smart

## Goal

Tell why God scattered the people.

## Time

10 minutes

## Materials

- Bible
- Poster, session 4 (children's resources)



Open your Bible to the story of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9. Then point to the poster of the ziggurat (zig-u-rat) on side 2 of the poster. Explain that in Genesis 11:1-9 we read of a time after the flood when the people built a tower with the hope that it would unite them and make them famous. Ask if they know the name of this tower. (If they don't, tell them.)

Distribute a poster to each person and ask them to turn to the skit on side 1, "The High-Fivers and the

Tower of Babel." Explain that we are going to take a trip back to the land of Shinar to explore what might have happened at the tower of Babel. Allow kids to choose a part from the list on the poster (Narrator, Almo, Eba, Iklah, Obah, Uzal, Member of the chorus).

Read and enjoy the skit!

**tip** Depending upon the size of your group and their preference for different roles, you may have some characters change places midway or allow some students to double up on a character.



### 3 GROW

Game: Escape the Z!

AA Word Smart  
People Smart

<b>Goal</b>
See how our pride separates us from God.
<b>Time</b>
15 minutes
<b>Materials</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Game markers (colored bits of construction paper or buttons or assorted wrapped candies)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Poster, session 4 (children's resources), one for every 3-5 children</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Game cards: "Escape the Z!" (photocopy and cut apart one set per child; secure with paper clip; see reproducible pp. 55-59)</li> </ul>



Call attention to the game "Escape the Z!" on side 2 of the poster and read aloud the game rules. Divide kids into groups of three to five each; give each group a set of cards that you've photocopied and cut apart. Though you may be using only two or three sets of game cards in class today, run off a set (before cutting them apart!) for each person to take home. That will allow them to play the game at home, if they wish. We've included some blank cards for kids to add their own situations, if time allows and if they wish to do so.

Distribute game markers to each group, make sure they have a place to lay their gameboard, and let the play begin. Set a definite time limit for ending the game. The person or persons at the lowest point on the ziggurat when the game is called are the winners.



Keep an eye on the clock during this step. Save enough time in the session (at least 15 minutes) to do the craft project suggested in the Show step (or, if kids are enjoying the game, extend it and have an abbreviated worship time to close your session).

If you've used candies for markers, enjoy eating them after the game.

Summarize the game by asking the group what pride does to our relationship with God and with others.

option option option option option

### Word Game AA Word Smart

Option to step 3

<b>Time</b>
10 minutes
<b>Materials</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Poster, session 4, side 2 (children's resources)
<input type="checkbox"/> Bibles
<input type="checkbox"/> Pens or pencils

Instead of playing Escape the Z!, draw attention to the poster of the ziggurat. Have the students think of words that are associated with pride (bragging, show-off, know-it-all, wise guy, ungrateful, puffed-up, selfish, conceited, vain). Write these words on every other step going up the ziggurat. You may also ask group members to read some of the following verses about pride: Deuteronomy 8:11-14; Psalm 10:4; Proverbs 16:5; Proverbs 16:18; Proverbs 13:10a; Daniel 4:28-32; James 3:14-15; 1 John 2:16-17.

Once you reach the top, ask the group to think of words that are a cure for pride (thankful, generous, forgiving, humble, self-controlled, compassionate, kind). This time write the words on the steps you left blank. You may want group members to read some of these verses about humility: Proverbs 8:13; Proverbs 11:2b; Proverbs 29:23b; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 5:5; Micah 6:8; Zephaniah 2:3.

Summarize by asking the group what pride does to our relationship with God and with others.



The word game option will take less time than Escape the Z! If some children have difficulty finding passages in the Bible, mark the verses with a bookmark prior to class or provide page numbers. You or an assistant can also help individuals locate the passages.

## 4 SHOW Picture Smart

### Praise Work

<b>Goal</b>
Humbly worship our great God.
<b>Time</b>
20-30 minutes
<b>Materials</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Items for the torn paper project: scissors, glue, markers, torn paper napkins, scraps of construction paper, white posterboard
<input type="checkbox"/> Poster: "Praising God with the Things We Make" (leader's resources)



Introduce this activity by saying something like this: **The people of Shinar missed a great opportunity by not worshiping God through the great work that they did on the tower.**

What if they had recognized that all they had in Shinar came from God? And what if they had worked to honor God rather than to honor themselves?

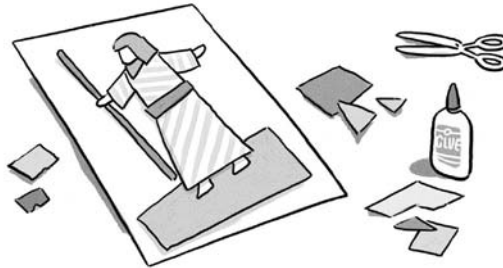
In this next activity, we're going to use our hands in a way that praises and honors God. We'll be making a torn paper project. I'd like us to follow the steps listed on the poster I'm going to put on display. (Display the instruction poster from the leader's resources).

Read the instructions aloud, making sure kids have a good idea of what they are to do.

#### Praising God with the Things We Make

1. Gather your materials.
2. Thank God for what you have.
3. Think about something you've learned about God (a song or a Bible verse might come to mind). Or think about something you want to praise God for. Or think of a Bible story that's especially meaningful to you.
4. Express your idea by making a torn paper poster. Use the materials provided by your leader.
5. Share what you've made with others. Explain what it means.
6. Offer or dedicate your work to God.
7. Ask yourself: Did I worship and honor God by what I made?

Using the pieces of torn paper napkins, scraps of construction paper for tearing, scissors, glue, and large sheets of poster paper, have everyone create a poster. Be available to provide help as needed.



Be sure to allow time for sharing the posters the kids create. Step 6 in the process—dedicating the work to God and thanking God—could be used to close the session, if done with the entire group during a time of silent prayer.



Should some of your group find it difficult to use an art form to express something abstract about God or to express praise to God, walk with them through step 3 of the instructions. Feel free to direct the process as much as you think is needed. For example, you could read a verse about straight paths from Proverbs 3:6: "And he will make your paths straight," and Luke 3:5: "The crooked roads shall become straight." Follow with the thought that God's ways are straight, and God wants to lead us from our crooked ways to his straight paths. Scissor cuts can be made for straight paths and tearing for crooked. Using these verses, one fourth-grade artist in the author's class created a poster of various torn objects with a straight line cross glued over the top. Encourage children to add captions to the finished posters.

option option option option option option option option option option option

## Clay Tiles Picture Smart

<b>Time</b>
15 minutes
<b>Materials</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Flour clay in plastic bags (see recipe below)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 4" x 4" (10 cm x 10 cm) cardboard squares</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wax paper</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Blunt knives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 6" (15 cm) ribbons or rings from drink cans (for hanging the tile)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "Praising God with the Things We Make" poster (leader's resources)</li> </ul>

**Option to step 4**

**time saver** If you have a short class session, you may want to use this option to step 4.

**tip** To make your own clay, you'll need

- 2 cups of salt
- 2 cups of flour
- 2 heaping teaspoons of powdered alum
- 1 cup of water

Add water gradually to the rest of the ingredients and work until a clay-like material is reached. Take about one-fifth of the clay and set aside. Add tempera or food coloring to the larger lump to make it a sand-like color. Then divide it into about eight pieces. Divide the smaller lump into about five pieces and color with blue, green, red, yellow, and a mixed color (it's a good idea to wear rubber gloves while doing this!). Put each piece in a small sealed plastic bag. To make the tile, each student needs a lump of the sand-colored clay; the class can share the other colors. (If your class is larger than eight, double the recipe or prepare according to the number of students).

Give each student a piece of clay on a sheet of wax paper.

Invite the children to respond to the seven steps described on the "Praising God with the Things We Make" poster by making clay tiles rather than torn-paper posters. Have children stretch out the sand-colored clay with their fingertips and flatten with the heel of their hand until it is the size of a 4" x 4" (10 cm x 10 cm) square. They can use a square of cardboard as a pattern for making the edges straight. Trim with a knife. Leftover clay can be rolled into a rope and used as a border around the tile. Next, using the colored clay, form a design or objects to complete the picture on the tile.

**tip** What kind of design can kids make, following the seven-step process? One fourth-grade boy in the author's class made a palm tree with a snake in it. He liked palm trees, he said, and he remembered the story of the snake tricking Adam and Eve. A fourth-grade girl made an open Bible on her tile. She'd been praying for a new Bible for her birthday, a Bible that would be easier to read than her "King Jimmy" one. You may want to share these examples with the group to help them think of their own ideas.

When the tiles are finished, kids can poke a hole in the top, if they wish. Later, when the tile is dry, they can loop a ribbon through the hole and hang the tile. Another option is to provide a ring from the top of a drink can to attach on the back of the wet clay.

Send the tiles home on a sheet of wax paper. The front will dry in about 6-8 hours. Explain that they must turn it over and let the back dry. It should be ready to hang the next day.





# OVERTIME

Psalm and Song  Music Smart  Body Smart

## Time

5-10 minutes

## Materials

- Song: "Come, All You People" (p. 46; CD, track 6)
- CD player

If the children have been learning Psalm 24:1-4a, praise them for this accomplishment and let them choose a favorite way to review the psalm (see suggestions in earlier sessions).

You may also want to sing "Come, All You People" (track 6) as your closing prayer. Introduce the song by saying that ever since Babel, people have spoken many languages. After the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, God gave the message of Jesus to many people of many languages. The Holy Spirit unites us in spite of our many different languages.

Listen to "Come, All You People," first in Zimbabwean, then in English. The words are simple enough to remember after hearing once or twice.

Sing it together as your closing prayer.



Don't stand still! Sway with the beat, moving your weight from the left to the right foot every measure, but don't jump or bounce. If your kids love to move, invite them to raise arms overhead, moving their arms with bent elbows toward the body in a slow, inviting gesture every downbeat.

## Guest Artists Picture Smart

### Time

10-30 minutes

### Materials

- Whatever the artist brings along!

If there are any artists or craftspeople in your church or Christian community, ask them to come into your classroom and speak about what it means to worship God while creating something. Be sure they bring along samples of their craft or, better yet, give the group a demonstration.

# Two Routes to Preparation

Route 1: Scenic Route					
Sunday: Read through Session 1 and pray.		Midweek: Select options, list & gather materials for Session 1.		Saturday: Reread session, pray, make sure everything is ready.	
Unit Begins: Present Session 1 PM-Read through Session 2, pray.		Midweek: Select options, list & gather materials for Session 2.		Saturday: Reread session, pray, make sure everything is ready.	
Present Session 2 PM-Read through Session 3, pray.		Midweek: Select options, list & gather materials for Session 3.		Saturday: Reread session, pray, make sure everything is ready.	
Present Session 3 PM-Read through Session 4, pray.		Midweek: Select options, list & gather materials for Session 4.		Saturday: Reread session, pray, make sure everything is ready.	
Present Session 4					

Route 2: Road Under Construction; Detours Ahead					
				Saturday: Read Session 1, pray, select options, list and gather all	
Unit Begins: Present Session 1				Saturday: Read Session 2, pray, select options, list and gather all	
Present Session 2				Saturday: Read Session 3, pray, select options, list and gather all	
Present Session 3				Saturday: Read Session 4, pray, select options, list and gather all	
Present Session 4					



# Session Planning Guide

Total time of session: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated size of group: \_\_\_\_\_

Other considerations: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 Hello

Option Selected: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials Needed:

## 2 Know

Option Selected: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials Needed:

## 3 Show

Option Selected: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials Needed:

## 4 Grow

Option Selected: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials Needed:

## Overtime

Option Selected: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials Needed:

Total time: \_\_\_\_\_

## Multiple Intelligences Tally

Word Smart \_\_\_\_\_ Picture Smart \_\_\_\_\_ Number Smart \_\_\_\_\_ Music Smart \_\_\_\_\_

Body Smart \_\_\_\_\_ Self Smart \_\_\_\_\_ People Smart \_\_\_\_\_ Earth Smart \_\_\_\_\_







### Connecting with Children

What makes a *Walk With Me* teacher special? We believe it's the nurturing relationship you build with the children in your small group as you invite them to "walk with you" through God's Word each week.

Time after time when we ask adults to share something they remember about their Sunday school experiences growing up, they remember a particular teacher who demonstrated love and concern for them and made them feel valuable.

What follows are some ways you can foster a faith-nurturing relationship and create a caring connection with the children in your small group.

- **Make eye contact.** Look kids in the eyes when you talk with them and they with you.
- **Smile.** Children look for nonverbal approval as confirmation of the words you speak. Show them that you love them.
- **Get to know kids personally.** Never skip over the Hello step or closing prayer time. Teaching each step is another opportunity for you to get to know the children better. Come early and stay after class to have informal conversation with them.
- **Share personal stories.** Kids love to hear about your own life and your own walk with God. They like to see you laugh, to discover more about who you are away from church. They will learn from you as you share your doubts and questions, your answers to prayer, your joys and your life journey.
- **Make group times interactive.** You will be blessed by the children's reflections and insights. The Holy Spirit will work through them to teach you truths.
- **Allow time for wondering.** Go beyond fact-seeking questions and try to "live into" the story—ask kids what they think it would have been like to be Noah or Mary or Judas. Listen to them wonder; it may be a window into their souls.
- **Contact kids during the week.** Write a note to the children periodically—send them a birthday card or a Christmas card. Send them a note to say you missed them at your group session. Call their home if you hear that they're sick or their grandma died.
- **Throw a party.** With the permission of their parents and the partnership of another adult, take the children on a field trip or invite them to your home for a barbecue or game night.

Open your heart and life to children in a way that goes beyond teaching the facts and following a plan. You will be blessed beyond belief, and the children will reflect on their relationship with you when they are asked about their early church years.





