



WEEK ONE – JANUARY 2025 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *Rainy Days + Mondays | John 11:1-45*

Key Question: *Who can you talk to when you're sad?*

Memory Verse: *“Be strong, all you who put your hope in the LORD. Never give up.” – Psalm 31:24 (NIRV)*

Basic Truth: *I can trust God no matter what*

Series Overview: With every season comes new and different challenges but also the chance to experience incredible joy. Just as seasons come and go, so do our emotions. And how we choose to handle those emotions can shape us and teach us a lot about how God cares for us. No matter what emotion we may be feeling or what we may face, because of Jesus, we can learn to trust that God knows how we feel. Jesus showed us how to face life with resilience, and because of it, we can trust God no matter what.

Bottom Line: **Who can you talk to when you're sad?** Sometimes, our problems can feel so big that it's difficult to talk about them with others because we think they don't understand. However, God has created us for relationships, and we don't have to do life alone. We hope this question not only invites preteens to find people in their lives they can trust, but also know that God is there for them no matter what.

9:00 - 9:15 | 11:00 – 11:15 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: “Weather Memory” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Invite kids to sit in a circle in your group space.
- Place the cards from the “Weather Memory” Activity Page face down in a grid on the floor in the center of the circle.
- Explain to the kids that they will take turns searching for matching cards.
- Select a kid to go first and invite them to pick two cards to turn over. Make sure everyone is able to see the two cards they turned over.
- If those two cards are exactly the same, invite that kid to share something they enjoy doing in the type of weather indicated on the matching cards.
- Allow that kid to keep the matching pair and turn over two more cards.
- If those two cards don’t match, have the kid place them face down again. The kid sitting on their left can take the next turn.
- Continue allowing kids to take turns until all the matches have been made. Each time, give kids a chance to share their weather-related activities.
- The kid with the most matches at the end is the winner!

What You Say:

“Great game, everyone! *You know*, one thing that’s true about weather is that it’s always changing. *[Transition]* **Just like the weather, our feelings can change depending on what’s happening around us. Come with me to discover how Jesus experienced emotions just like we do.**”

9:15 - 9:50 | 11:20 – 11:50 | LARGE GROUP

Large Group Overview: We start the month in John 11:1-45 with a peek into Jesus’ personal life. After the death of one of His friends, Jesus wept — even though He knew what would happen next. Jesus trusted that God would be with Him in His sadness and wept anyway, showing us He is there with us in our sadness too.

9:50 – 10:10 | 11:50 – 12:10 | SMALL GROUP

Discussion Questions

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- ASK:
 - Do you ever feel alone? If so, what makes you feel that way?
 - What makes you feel sad?
 - Who can you talk to when you’re sad?
 - What helps you trust someone else?
 - Does it take courage to talk about your feelings? Why or why not?

Make It Personal With Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: “Resilience Journal 1” Activity Pages, pens or pencils, coloring supplies, scissors, hole punch, yarn or string

What You Do:

- Invite kids to sit in a circle in your group space.
- Hand each kid a set of the “Resilience Journal 1” Activity Pages and a pen or pencil.
- Place the markers, scissors, hole punch, and yarn (or string) in the center of the circle.
- Explain to kids that they will be making a journal to help them organize their thoughts and prayers.
- Tell them that one way we can spend time praying is by writing to God about what we’re thinking and how we’re feeling.
- Be sure to have an example journal to show kids.
- Direct kids to cut out their pages and punch holes where indicated.
- Instruct them to cut a piece of yarn (or string) to thread through the holes and tie in a bow. This is how they will bind their pages together.
- Give kids time to use their coloring supplies (and optional stickers) to decorate their journals.
- During this time, assemble a few extra journals to keep on hand for kids that may come later in the month so they can have what they missed.
- Allow a few minutes of quiet time so that kids can write on the first page.
- Explain that the other page can be filled out another time. Each week of this month, they will have the chance to add more to their journal.
 - *Based on the dynamics of your group, choose whether it would work best for kids to leave their journals at church throughout the month, as they add more pages, or for them to take their journals home this week.*
- Say a prayer for the entire group.