

Bible Story: *Jesus Chooses Matthew | Luke 5:27-32 (Supporting: Romans 12:1)*

Memory Verse: *Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:8 NIRV*

Series Overview: While choosing to follow Jesus is the most important decision a kid can make, it's only the first step! Learning to live and love like Jesus is a lifelong journey that can feel big and abstract for kids. That's why it's so important to provide handholds for kids (and grownups!) to grow in four specific areas of spiritual formation. We call these Faith Skills: Hear from God, Pray to God, Talk about God, and Live for God. This month, we'll walk through all four skills as displayed in the life of Jesus. Kids will discover the value of talking with others about God through the story of young Jesus in the Temple. They'll practice praying to God through The Lord's Prayer and hearing from God in the parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders. We end the month with the story of Jesus choosing Levi, also known as Matthew, to follow Him—and how Matthew left everything he knew to begin living for God. Just like learning a new instrument or skill, it takes commitment and a game plan to follow Jesus. But as kids learn to spend time daily practicing Faith Skills, even for a short time, they will become more and more like Jesus.

8:45 - 9:05 | 10:45 – 11:05 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Connection Centers

Connect: a time that invites kids to share with others and leaders

What You Need: Activity Bins + Coloring Sheets (find on your shelves in space)

What You Do:

- **PRE-CONNECTION TIME**
 - *Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Ask God to give kids a curiosity for what's in the Bible, that they would read it and interact with it. Pray that you would be able to be a source of help for kids when they don't understand Scripture and that they would come to you with their questions. Pray that what kids learn through the Bible would help them make wise choices.*
- **DURING CONNECTION TIME**
 - Greet each child by name and with a high five or fist bump!
 - **Make sure to grab second sticker from the child + place it on your sticker sheet**
 - Invite kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
 - Pull out your activity bins + set aside some coloring sheets for kids to partake in your small group space
 - Ask questions in order to connect with + get to know your few as you partake in activities alongside them...you can use these:
 - *What's one moment from January you'll probably remember?*
 - *If this month had a headline, what would it be? ("Best Month Ever," "Cold but Fun," etc.)*
 - *What's something you got better at this month?*
 - *Would you rather try something new every week OR get really good at one thing this year? Why?*
- **AFTER CONNECTION TIME**

- *Use this time to review over how to be successful in small group time as well as Flatirons Kids by using the SG Structure 101 sheet featured on your activity shelf*
 - Go over each rule to create a great small group experience
- Transition into the Opening Small Group Activity

9:05 - 9:20 | 11:05 – 11:20 | OPENING SMALL GROUP

OPENING ACTIVITY

What You Need: Tissues

What You Do:

- Welcome the kids with a high-five or fist bump.
- Invite kids who have brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Give each kid a new, single tissue.
- Show them how to place the tissue on their head.
- Explain that you are going to call out some ninja warrior moves, and they have to try to do them without the tissue falling off their head.
- Call out simple moves one at a time:
 - “Ninja warrior, walk in a circle!”
 - “Ninja warrior, touch your toes!”
 - “Ninja warrior, turn around!”
 - “Ninja warrior, hop on one foot!”
- If a kid’s tissue falls, invite them to just pick it up and keep playing.
- Celebrate everyone for trying their best.

What You Say:

“Great job, ninja warriors! It was tricky to follow the plan and keep that tissue on your head at the same time! *[Transition]* In our Bible Story today, we’re going to meet a man named Matthew who made a big move to follow Jesus’ plan for his life. Let’s go find out what he did!”

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

We wrap up the month with Jesus calling Levi, also known as Matthew, to follow Him. Levi was a tax collector, and no one liked tax collectors. They were seen as traitors to their people since they collected taxes for the Roman government... and skimmed plenty off the top for themselves. When Jesus showed up, Levi suddenly faced a huge decision: stay in his lane and live for comfort—or step out in faith and follow Jesus. As we know, Matthew made the leap. He even welcomed Jesus to his house for dinner and invited other tax collectors and outcasts to share this new freedom. From that point, Matthew spent his entire life following Jesus and sharing the story of Jesus. [BOTTOM LINE] Practice living for God.

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

MATTHEW MAZE

[Live for God | Application Activity]

What You Need: Bible; “Matthew Maze” Activity Page; Coloring Supplies

What You Do:

- Read through discussion questions as a group
- Open the Bible and read Luke 5:27-32.
- Give each kid a “Matthew Maze” Activity Page and a pencil.
- Review the story of Jesus choosing Matthew. Remind the kids that when Jesus said, “Follow me,” Matthew stopped what he was doing and followed Jesus right away. Then Matthew hosted a banquet to introduce all his friends to Jesus.

- Tell the kids that their job is to help Matthew and Jesus get to Matthew's house for the party.
- Instruct them to use their pencil to draw a line through the maze, starting with Jesus and Matthew and ending at the house.
 - Encourage kids to also color in the pictures on the page

What You Say:

“Great job helping Matthew and Jesus get to the party! Matthew made a wise choice to follow Jesus. He left his old life behind to start a new life living for God. When we choose to follow Jesus, we get to **[Bottom Line] practice living for God every day too.** “

RACE TO THE VERSE

[Hear From God | Memory Verse Activity]

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- Divide the kids into two teams.
- Give each kid a Bible.
- Explain that you're going to have a race to find a verse. This is sometimes called a “Sword Drill” because the Bible is also called the Sword of the Spirit.
- Say, “The verse we are looking for is 1 Timothy 4:8.”
- On “Go,” the teams will race to find the verse in their Bible.
- The first team to find it and stand up, wins that round.
- Instruct the kid who found the verse first to read the verse out loud. Help as needed.
- Play again, but this time have them race to find another verse about living for God, like Romans 12:1.

What You Say:

“Great job racing to find those verses! The Bible is our game plan for how to live. It teaches us that being godly—or living for God—is the most valuable thing we

can do. And we get better at it when we practice. Let's all **[Bottom Line] practice living for God.**"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Talk with the group about this discussion question:
 - **What does living for God look like?**
- Share that living for God is doing the things that Jesus would do and not doing the things that Jesus wouldn't do!
- Help them think of ideas:
 - "When your little brother takes your toy, what does living for God look like?" (*Being patient, sharing*)
 - "When your mom asks you to clean up your room, what does living for God look like?" (*Obedying with a happy heart*)
 - "When you see a new kid at school who is all alone, what does living for God look like?" (*Being a friend, being kind*)
 - "When your friend is sad, what does living for God look like?" (*Giving a hug, being generous with your time*)
- Close by getting in a circle & praying together.

What You Say:

"Look at this amazing circle! It connects all of us together. We can pray for each other and help each other live for God. Let's pray one more time."

"Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that You invite us to follow You, just like You invited Matthew. Help us to be brave and [Bottom Line] practice living for God every day by being kind, sharing, and helping others. We want to live like You would. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

