



WEEK THREE – JANUARY 2026 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *The Wise and Foolish Builders* | Matthew 7:24-27 (Supporting: John 10:27-28)

Conversation Starter: *How can you hear from God?*

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*

Bottom Line: *Practice hearing from God.*

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. Pray for those who have already discovered a relationship with Jesus and are following Him. Pray that the Spirit would change them, continuously renewing their hearts and minds so they can be more like Jesus. Pray for those who haven't yet taken a step of faith. Ask God to begin to draw them in and to use the time your group spends together to reach those who don't yet have a relationship with Jesus.**
- *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 something from this week that made you feel proud of yourself?*
 - *If your last week had a soundtrack, what song would be on it? Why?*
 - *What's something new you've tried recently or want to try this year?*

- *Would you rather have one extra free afternoon every week OR one full extra week off school?*
- *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: any type of building toy—Magnatiles, Legos, blocks, etc...

What You Do:

- Encourage kids to build together
- Challenge them by saying, “What can you build with these things?”
- Encourage them to work together or on their own to build anything they can imagine—a tower, a robot, a car, or a castle.
- Give them plenty of time to build and create.

What You Say:

“Wow, look at all the amazing things you built! You are all such great builders. Today in our true story from the Bible, we’re going to hear about two different builders. One was very wise, and one was ... not so wise. Let’s go find out what they built!”

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

We're staying in The Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus wraps up his teaching with the story of the Wise and Foolish Builders. Anyone who hears Jesus' words and actually DOES them is like a wise man who built his house on a solid foundation of rock. When a wild storm whipped up, that house stood strong. But people who hear Jesus' words and don't follow through are just like a foolish man who slaps together a home on the sand—one that collapses when the wind comes. Truly hearing from God means putting what you hear into action. Kids can be confident that God does speak to them because, as we read in John 10:27-28, Jesus is the good shepherd and we are His sheep. And a sheep KNOWS the shepherd's voice. [BOTTOM LINE] Practice hearing from God.

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

TAKE A SNAPSHOT

[Live for God | Application Activity]

What You Need: Large pile of random building supplies (e.g., flattened boxes, paper plates and bowls, cups, craft sticks, index cards, tape)

What You Do:

- Divide the kids into 2-3 teams.
- Explain the challenge: Each team needs to build the strongest house they can in five minutes.
- **The twist: Only one person from their team can be at the supply pile at a time. They can only grab ONE item and bring it back to their team's building zone. Then the next person can go.**
- Before you start, give the teams one minute to huddle with their team and make a “game plan.”
- Start the timer and let the building begin.
- After five minutes, “test” the houses. (*You could use a fan to simulate wind or gently shake the table to simulate an earthquake.*) See which house stands the strongest.
- Discuss: What was the key to building a strong house? Did having a plan help? Did you make wise choices with your supplies?

Inclusive Pro-Tips:

- *For kids who might find the race against time stressful, remove the timer and focus on the process of planning and building together.*
- *Assign specific roles within the team (like “Planner,” “Gatherer,” “Builder”) so every kid has a clear way to contribute.*

What You Say:

“You had to make a lot of decisions and work together. Building a strong faith is like that. It doesn’t just happen. We have to make wise decisions and have a game plan. Part of that plan is to intentionally **practice hearing from God** by reading the Bible, or listening to other people who love Jesus, or listening to the Holy Spirit as He guides us, and then making the wise choice to do what He says.”

[Make It Personal] (Share about how you’ve read or heard something in the Bible—like about being forgiving—and then later that day, you’re tested to live out what you read. Share how that’s a moment when you have to choose to be a wise builder or a foolish one. Share how it’s not always easy, but building on God’s Word is always the wise choice.)

BIBLE STORY EXTENSION

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

What You Need: Craft Sticks; Markers

What You Do:

- Give each kid 2-3 craft sticks and a marker.
- Challenge the kids to think of what it means to be a wise builder, and write each thing on a craft stick (go to church and do what you hear, read the Bible and live out what you read, listen to godly people and take their advice, listen to the Holy Spirit when He guides you throughout your day).
- Use all the sticks from the group to build the outline of a house.

What You Say:

“Look at the house we built together. What a strong house! Jesus’ point was clear. It’s not enough to hear what God says—we have to also put it into practice. We have to build our lives on a firm foundation. The main way we do that is to **[Bottom Line] practice hearing from God** by reading the Bible, by listening to people who love Jesus, by hearing the Holy Spirit as He guides us, and then actually doing what we hear.”

Make It Personal with Prayer **[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]**

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Invite the kids to pair up.
- Instruct the pairs to play one game of “Rock, Paper, Scissors.”
- Explain that in each pair, the person who WINS the game gets to pray for the person who lost.
- Give them a simple prayer prompt: “God, please help [kid’s name] to be a wise builder this week by listening to Your words and doing them. Amen.”
- After the first round, instruct the kids to find a new partner and play again.
- Continue for several rounds so the kids get to pray for a few different people.

What You Say:

“It’s awesome to be able to pray for each other. That’s one way we can help each other be wise builders. Let’s finish our time by praying together for our whole group.”

“God, thank You that You speak to us in so many ways—You want us to build our lives on a firm foundation. Help us not just to be hearers of what You say, but doers. Help us make the wise choice to listen and obey You this week. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

