

Note: This leader guide is designed for a small group including one or more children with a disability who attends group with his/her peers but may struggle with some components of the activities as written in the standard Small Group plan. We suggest providing this version to the Small Group Leader. More here: <http://bit.ly/OrangeKidsSpecialNeeds>

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES:

1. MEMORY VERSE WITH MOTIONS

Made to Move: An activity that uses a preschooler's natural desire to move to help them learn

2. THIS IS JESUS

Made to Create: An activity that allows preschoolers to review the Bible story, bottom line, or memory verse by creating a craft

3. MEMORY MATCH

Made to Play: An activity that encourages preschoolers to follow guidelines while having fun and learning new concepts

4. WHAT'S IN THE BAG?

Made to Explore: An activity that channels a preschooler's innate curiosity into a discussion of the week's crucial concepts

5. JOURNAL AND PRAYER

Made to Reflect: An activity that encourages personal application and prayer

MADE TO MOVE

an activity that uses a preschooler's natural desire to move to help them learn

**1. MEMORY VERSE WITH MOTIONS**

WHAT YOU NEED: No supplies needed.

WHAT YOU DO:

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY: Say the Memory Verse and do the following motions in front of the children.

**TODAY'S
BIBLE STORY**

Who is Jesus?
THE GOSPELS

"Love each other (*hug yourself*)
as I (*point up*)
have loved you." (*point thumbs to chest*)
John 15:12 (*open hands like a book*)

DURING THE ACTIVITY: Say the verse again with the motions and invite the children to do it with you. Repeat several times.

MEMORY VERSE

"Love each other as
I have loved you."
JOHN 15:12, NIV

WHAT YOU SAY:

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY: "Let's learn our Memory Verse for this week! Everyone, watch me!" (*Say the verse with the motions.*)

DURING THE ACTIVITY: "Now, let's do it all together. Are you ready? (*Repeat the verse and motions with the children as many times as desired.*)

AFTER THE ACTIVITY: "Our Memory Verse tells us that we can love others because Jesus loves us! **Who loves you? [Bottom Line] Jesus loves me."**

KEY QUESTION

Who loves you?

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus loves me.

BASIC TRUTH

Jesus wants to be
my friend forever.

MADE TO CREATE

an activity that allows preschoolers to review the Bible story, bottom line, or memory verse by creating a craft to take home



2. THIS IS JESUS

WHAT YOU NEED: "Miracles of Jesus" Activity Page, "Jesus in the Story" Activity Page, cardstock, yarn, book rings, scissors, hole punch, marker
Optional: crayons (If using black and white copies of the Activity Pages.)

NOTE: "My Friend Jesus" will be used again during the Day 2 story review.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Who is Jesus?
THE GOSPELS

WHAT YOU DO:

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY: Copy "Miracles of Jesus" on cardstock and cut on dotted lines, one per child. Stack and punch a hole where indicated. Copy "Jesus in the Story" on cardstock and cut on dotted lines. Punch a hole where indicated on each picture of Jesus. Cut an 8" length of yarn for each child. Knot one end of the yarn through the hole on the picture of Jesus for each child.

MEMORY VERSE

"Love each other as
I have loved you."
JOHN 15:12, NIV

DURING THE ACTIVITY: Encourage the children to add the "Miracles of Jesus" to the book ring in the order of the story. Help them close the book ring. Assist them in knotting the loose end of the yarn to the book ring so that "Jesus in the Story" hangs from the book ring. Show children the completed example. Demonstrate holding "Jesus in the Story" up to each picture with one hand, while turning each page of the flipbook with the other hand, as you retell the story.

KEY QUESTION

Who loves you?

Option: Allow the children to color the pictures. (If you are using the black and white copies of the activity pages.)

WHAT YOU SAY:

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY: "Who wants to make a book about Jesus? (Pause.) Great! Come sit with me!" (Give each child a set of "Miracles of Jesus" pictures and a book ring.)

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus loves me.

DURING THE ACTIVITY: "First, look at your pictures and find a boat during a storm. When you find it, hold it up. Do you remember how Jesus did amazing things to show people that He is God's Son? One of those amazing things was telling a storm to stop – and it did! Put your Jesus calming the storm picture on your ring.

BASIC TRUTH

Jesus wants to be
my friend forever.

"Great! Okay, now look for a picture of Jesus' friends, the disciples, holding baskets of fish and bread. When you find it, hold it up. Jesus took a boy's small lunch and did something only He can do. He fed over five thousand people and had food left over! Put your fish and bread picture on your ring.

(THIS IS JESUS, CONTINUED)

"Now look for a picture of a man on a mat by a road. When you find it, hold it up. Remember how the man on the mat could not walk, and Jesus did something amazing that only He can do? Jesus made the man's legs all better and he could walk again! Put the man on the mat picture on your ring.

"Look at the picture you have left. Everyone should have a heart picture. Find your heart picture and hold it up. The heart reminds us that out of all the amazing things Jesus did, the most amazing is that Jesus is alive, He loves us, and He wants to be our friend forever. Now you can finish your book by putting your heart picture on your ring.

"Okay, we're almost done. Now I am going to help you tie a picture of Jesus to your ring.

(Assist in knotting "Jesus in the Story" to each child's ring.)

"There! Now you can walk your Jesus picture through your book (*Demonstrate.*) and tell your friends and family who Jesus is and how much He loves you! **Who loves you? [Bottom Line] Jesus loves me!**"

AFTER THE ACTIVITY: "Would anyone like to use their Jesus picture and book to tell me who Jesus is? (*Pause.*) Great! **Who loves you? [Bottom Line] Jesus loves me!**"

(Allow the children to take turns retelling the stories about who Jesus is.)

MADE TO PLAY

an activity that encourages preschoolers to follow guidelines while having fun and learning new concepts

**TODAY'S
BIBLE STORY**

Who is Jesus?
THE GOSPELS

MEMORY VERSE

"Love each other as
I have loved you."
JOHN 15:12, NIV

KEY QUESTION

Who loves you?

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus loves me.

BASIC TRUTH

Jesus wants to be
my friend forever.

**3. MEMORY MATCH**

WHAT YOU NEED: "Memory Match Cards Day 1" Activity Page, cardstock, scissors

WHAT YOU DO:

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY: Make two copies of the "Memory Match Cards Day 1" onto cardstock and cut on dotted lines. You will have two of each card.

DURING THE ACTIVITY: Place each card face down on the table. Ask one child to go first by choosing two cards and turning them over. If they match, remove both cards and set them aside. If they do not match, turn both of the cards back over in the same place. In both cases, allow another child to have a turn. Repeat until all of the matches have been made and every child has had a turn. If all matches are made before everyone has had a turn, shuffle the cards and lay them out again.

Alternate Idea: Set out one set of each card face up. Ask one child to go first by handing them a card from the second set. Ask them to find the match from the cards face up and hand both of them to you. Shuffle and repeat as needed. If using this version, adjust the wording in the What You Say section below, accordingly.

WHAT YOU SAY:

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY: "Let's work together to make matches. (*Point to the cards.*) I think you'll remember these pictures from our Bible story today!"

DURING THE ACTIVITY: (*Choose a child to be first.*) "Turn over any two cards that you like." (*Do activity.*) Great job! Do you see a match?" (*Continue and finish activity, making sure every child gets a turn.*)

AFTER THE ACTIVITY: "Great job! We found all of the matches. Do you remember each of these stories? Jesus fed a huge crowd with one small lunch, (*point*) calmed a crazy storm, (*point*), healed a man who couldn't walk (*point*), and the best thing of all—**[Bottom Line] Jesus LOVES you!** (*point to heart*) **Who loves you? [Bottom Line] Jesus loves me.**"

MADE TO EXPLORE

an activity that channels a preschooler's innate curiosity into a discussion of the week's crucial concepts

**4. WHAT'S IN THE BAG?**

WHAT YOU NEED: an opaque bag, a toy boat, play fish/loaves, a fabric bandage, a hand mirror

WHAT YOU DO:

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY: Place all items in the opaque bag.

DURING THE ACTIVITY: Gather the children to sit in a circle on the floor of your activity area. Pull out the items from the bag one at a time or walk around the circle and allow the children to pull something from the bag. Talk about each item from the Bible story.

AFTER THE ACTIVITY: Gather all items back in the bag for clean-up.

WHAT YOU SAY:

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY: "God sent Jesus to do amazing things! We heard about just a few of those things in our Bible story today. I have some items here in this bag that you might remember from our Bible story."

DURING THE ACTIVITY: "Let's see what's in our bag."

(The toy boat) "Do you remember this part of the story? There was a huge storm and Jesus' friends were scared. What did Jesus do? *(Pause.)* Yes! He told the storm to "STOP!" and it stopped!"

(Fish and loaves) "Do you remember this part of the story? There was HUGE crowd of people who came to hear Jesus. But it was dinner time and they were SO hungry. Jesus had only one small lunch of two fish and five loaves. He fed that HUGE crowd with one small lunch."

(The Band-Aid) "Do you remember this part of the story? There was man who couldn't walk. What did Jesus do? *(Pause.)* Jesus healed him!"

(The hand mirror) "When you hold up this mirror, who do you see? YOU! Jesus knows you and He LOVES you!"

AFTER THE ACTIVITY: "I'm so glad God sent Jesus to be our friend forever! He can do amazing things like feed a huge crowd, tell a storm to stop, and heal a man who couldn't walk. He knows everything about you and He LOVES you so much. Tell me, **who loves you? [Bottom Line] Jesus loves me.**"

**TODAY'S
BIBLE STORY**

Who is Jesus?
THE GOSPELS

MEMORY VERSE

"Love each other as
I have loved you."
JOHN 15:12, NIV

KEY QUESTION

Who loves you?

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus loves me.

BASIC TRUTH

Jesus wants to be
my friend forever.

MADE TO REFLECT

an activity that encourages personal application and prayer

**TODAY'S
BIBLE STORY**

Who is Jesus?
THE GOSPELS

MEMORY VERSE

"Love each other as
I have loved you."
JOHN 15:12, NIV

KEY QUESTION

Who loves you?

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus loves me.

BASIC TRUTH

Jesus wants to be
my friend forever.

**5. JOURNAL AND PRAYER**

WHAT YOU NEED: paperclip "Memory Verse Card" in your Bible at John 15:12. Provide a journal and a fun-shaped pen for each Small Group. Copy of the MV_Handmotions.pdf with pictures cut out.

SMALL GROUP LEADER (SGL): "It's small group time!

Today, we're going to try and skip to our small group spot. Just do your best and follow me!

(Skip as you lead the children to your Small Group spot, or have your group do this movement while seated by moving their arms back and forth before beginning the activity.)

SGL: "Here we are! That was some pretty great skipping. Let's sit down now and talk about today's Bible story. One, two, three, sit down with me!

(Open the Bible and lay it in front of the children.)

SGL: "I think the man Jesus made all better so he could walk again felt like skipping everywhere! Jesus did SO many amazing things so we can believe that He is God's Son. Jesus stopped a storm, made people all better, and fed over 5,000 people with just five loaves of bread and two fish! Totally amazing!

"But I think the MOST amazing thing about Jesus is that He wants to be our friend forever. Jesus loves you and **[Bottom Line] Jesus loves me** THAT much! And that's why, when I ask you **who loves you**, I want you to say, **[Bottom Line] Jesus loves me**. Get ready! Who loves you?

CHILDREN AND SGL: **[Bottom Line] "Jesus loves me!"**

SGL: "Yes! **[Bottom Line] Jesus loves me**, and Jesus loves you!

"The Bible verse we are learning this week says . . .

(Turn the pages of your Bible to the Memory Verse Card.)

SGL: "'Love each other as I have loved you.' John 15:12.

(Close Bible and lay it down. Set out the memory verse hand motions pictures.)

SGL: "That is Jesus talking in that verse. Jesus is telling us that He wants us to love each other the same way He loves us. And if Jesus said it, I think we should remember it! I have some fun motions we can do while we remember the verse.

(Offer children the option to hold up each square of the memory verse as the group repeats the verse.)

CHILDREN AND SGL: "Love each other (*hug yourself*) as I (*point up*) have loved you." (*point thumbs to chest*)
John 15:12 (*open hands like a book*)

(Repeat the verse with the motions a few times.)

SGL: (*Clap and cheer*) "You sound and look SO good! Way to go!"

Give two thumbs up.

SGL: "Now, let's write in our prayer journal and talk to God."

(Hold journal and fun-shaped pen. Re-use the Memory Match Cards. Hold them up as you review the Bible stories.)

SGL: "Today is all about knowing who Jesus is. So far, we know that Jesus is God's Son. We know Jesus did amazing things so we can know He is God's Son. And we know the most amazing thing about Jesus is that He wants to be (*name of child*)'s friend forever and (*name of child*)'s friend forever and . . . (*say this with each child's name*). That's why I want each of us to write our names in our prayer journal today. Jesus knows our names. He knows everything about us. And Jesus loves us, very much. So, when I say your name, I want you to write your name in our prayer journal."

(Say each child's name and let them write their name in the prayer journal. Encourage them to write whatever they can, even if it's just the first letter of their name. Provide hand-over-hand help, if needed.)

SGL: "Wow! Thank you for doing that. Your names look fantastic! I am going to use your names when we talk to God. Would anyone like to pray before I pray?"

(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)

PRAYER:

SGL: "Dear God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to be our friend forever. Thank You for VBS, where we can learn about who Jesus is. Thank You that Jesus is the kind of friend who knows our name and everything about us and still loves us so, so much. Jesus loves (*child's name*). Jesus loves (*name of child*). Jesus loves . . . (*say this with each child's name*.) I hope we never, ever, EVER forget how much Jesus loves us. We love You, God. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

TIPS FOR LEADING A PRAYER WITH NONVERBAL OR MINIMALLY VERBAL CHILDREN:

- Model what you'd like them to do (eyes closed, hands folded, etc.). Pray out loud so they can hear what prayer sounds like.
- Use the language they do have in the prayer. Work words that they can say into the prayer.
- Pause at the end. Wait for the 'amen;' set the expectation to participate.
- Encourage any vocalization in prayer. Treat their attempts with respect.

GETTING READY

HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. MEMORY VERSE W/ MOTIONS

Made to Move: An activity that uses a preschooler's natural desire to move to help them learn

WHAT YOU NEED:

- No supplies needed

2. THIS IS JESUS

Made to Create: An activity that allows preschoolers to review the Bible story, Bottom Line, or Memory Verse by creating a craft

WHAT YOU NEED:

- "Miracles of Jesus" Activity Page
- "Jesus in the Story" Activity Page
- Cardstock
- Yarn
- Book rings—one per child
- Scissors
- Hole punch

WHAT YOU DO:

- Copy "Miracles of Jesus" Activity Page on cardstock and cut. One set per child.
- Stack each set of "Miracles of Jesus" and punch hole where indicated.
 - Consider laminating and cutting out each image for further protection.
- Copy "Jesus in the Story" Activity Page on cardstock and cut. One per child.
 - Consider laminating and cutting out each image for further protection.
- Punch hole where indicated for each "Jesus in the Story."
- Cut an 8" length of yarn for each child.
- Knot one end of yarn to each "Jesus in the Story."
- Create a finished version as an example.

3. MEMORY MATCH

Made to Play: An activity that encourages preschoolers to follow guidelines while having fun and learning new concepts

WHAT YOU NEED:

- 2 copies of "Memory Match Cards" Activity Page copied on cardstock and cut on dotted lines
 - Consider laminating the cards after cutting them out for extra protection.

4. WHAT'S IN THE BAG?

Made to Explore: An activity that channels a preschooler's innate curiosity into a discussion of the week's crucial concepts

WHAT YOU NEED:

- An opaque bag
- A toy boat
- Plastic fish and bread
- A fabric bandage
- A hand mirror

WHAT YOU DO:

- Place all gathered items in the bag

5. JOURNAL AND PRAYER

Made to Reflect: An activity that encourages personal application and prayer

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Paperclip
- "Memory Verse Card"
- Additional copy of the MV_Handmotions.pdf with pictures cut out.
- Memory Match Cards
- Bible
- Journal
- Fun-shaped pen

Visit our [Pinterest](#) page to see samples of and suggested supplies for Small Group activities.