



## Let's Face It

### Dinner with Sinners

**BIG IDEA:** Jesus heals us from our sins, so we can follow Him even though we're sinners.

**BIBLE BASIS:** Matthew 9:9-13

**KEY VERSE:** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."  
Romans 3:23 (NIV)

## LEADER DEVOTIONAL

As a child, I was fully convinced that the toy store was a modern day Eden. It had all that I could ever hope for—Nerf guns and Legos, coloring books and trading cards, bouncy balls and candy. It was paradise.

But like the biblical Eden, this, too, had one restriction: "With every toy in the toy store thou may play, but thou art not to stray from my side; for in the day that thou strayeth, thou shalt surely be delivered into the hands of kidnappers." I'm sure my mom didn't speak like King James, but that's how I remember it.

On one particularly memorable trip to the toy store, I decided to rebel. I wandered off from my mom while she tried to stop my two-year-old brother from taking a plastic baseball bat to the Barbie display. After a few minutes, I realized that my little moment of independence had, in fact, resulted in what felt like an irreconcilable separation between me and my mom. I had expected freedom, but I experienced fear. Within a few minutes (though it seemed like hours), I could hear my mom calling my name. She was looking for me. She was seeking the rebellious little girl that had strayed from the safety of her side.

Like a mother searching for her rebellious child, Jesus comes seeking sinners. He doesn't leave them to wander aimlessly. He does not abandon them. He does not condemn them. Instead, He searches after His precious children and invites them to come back to Him.

As the writer of Hebrews said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Instead, come back to the safety of His side.

*Casey Jordan*  
GO! Contributor





## LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING

### *Defeating the Villains of Large Group Interaction*

Too much of a talking head can be terribly boring for most kids. That's why GO! is filled with opportunities for kids to be part of the action. Inviting kids to interact during the Large Group is a great way to foster active learning, and it gives them ownership of the lesson, but it's not without its perils. Even the best of kids can have villainous tendencies that jeopardize a lesson. If you want to become an "Inter-Action Hero," here are a few alter egos to be on the lookout for, as well as some ways to counteract them:

**The Joker:** He's just out for a good laugh! And there's nothing wrong with that as long as it doesn't detract from the lesson. Inviting a kid to respond or participate requires trust, though. If the Joker's antics become disrespectful or distracting, talk to him privately to let him know he'll only be called on to participate if he can be trusted.

**I Forgot Bot:** Her hand knows the answer, but it forgot to tell her mouth. If a kid raises her hand, but then suddenly goes silent, give her a short moment to remember, but then let her off the hook by saying something like, "You keep thinking about it and let me know if you remember." Then go on to the next kid.

**Captain Random:** He has an answer to the question, it's just not *your* question. If a kid begins telling you a random story that has nothing to do with your question or the lesson at hand, politely interrupt him and tell him you'd love to hear his story later. Keep your word, though, and follow up with him afterwards.

**The Silent Stare-Masters:** They'll meet your question with a silent stare and then unleash a flurry of crickets on you. Sometimes the best way to get great responses from your kids is to ASK, GIVE, and CALL. ASK your question, GIVE your own answer or example, and then CALL on the kids for theirs. This does two things: It gives them a moment to think, and it points them in the right direction.





## UNIT DESCRIPTION

When people say, “Let’s face it,” what they mean is, “Let’s be painfully honest.” During the “Let’s Face It” series, we’re going to be “painfully honest” about how sin affects us, but we’ll also be honest about the power that Jesus has to forgive us and change our lives. And here’s the really fun part—during “Let’s Face It,” we’ll be taking the expression a bit more literally. Kids will get to use their artistic talents to create and wear fun masks for the telling of the Big Bible Story.

## LARGE GROUP LESSON

**Sound:** **Avalanche Ranch**

**Note:** During the small group connect time, kids will work together to create different “masks” on paper grocery bags for the telling of the Big Bible Story. Before you begin the lesson, collect the masks and place them in the teaching area. For more info, see the “Set-up Instructions” above or the Small Group Connect section of the small group lesson.

### LET’S FACE IT INTRO

**Large Group Leader:** Hello, everybody! Are you ready for another week of “Let’s Face It”? (*Kids respond.*) Let’s face it—that was a pretty weak response. You can do way better! Let’s try it again. (*Say with more energy.*) Are you ready for another week of “Let’s Face It”? (*Kids respond.*) That’s more like it!

Does anyone remember what the expression “let’s face it” means? (*Take answer.*) You got it! When someone says, “Let’s face it,” what they mean is, “Let’s be painfully honest.” For example, I might say, “Let’s face it—I’m really bad at (*insert something you’re really bad at.*)” How about you? How would you finish the expression, “Let’s face it”? (*Call on kids to use the expression.*) Nice job—that was painfully honest!

### HOW LONG COULD YOU GO?

Today, we’re going to be painfully honest about our sin, but we’ll also be honest about the power that Jesus has to forgive and change lives. Before we get to that, though, I want to ask you some questions.

- (*Take a drink of water. Make a refreshing “Ahh” sound and look at bottle or glass.*) How long do you think you could go without water? (*Take answers.*) Most people could only go for about three days without water.
- (*Take a bite of food.- **Stacie to bring food bite to eat***) Mmm...this is delicious. (*Look at food.*) How long do you think you could go without eating? (*Take answers.*) Some people can go for as long as 40 days or more without food, but you wouldn’t want to try it!
- (*Take a deep breath, hold it for about three to four seconds, and then let it out.*) How long do you think you could go without breathing? (*Take answers.*) Most people can only hold their breath for about two or three minutes, but the world record is 22 minutes and 22 seconds. Can you believe that?
- One last question—how long do you think you could go without sinning? A day? A week? A month? Forever? (*Take answers.*)

# January 15 Large Group Lesson | Elementary



Today we're going to hear a story about some people who thought they could go the rest of their lives without messing up or sinning. Do you think that's possible? (*Kids respond.*) Let's see what Jesus had to say about it.

Invite four kids to the teaching area (or more if you created additional masks). Line them up side by side facing the audience. Place the four paper grocery bag "masks" over their heads so the faces are facing away from the audience. Place the masks in this order: Jesus, Matthew, Sinner (happy person), Pharisee (angry man). At the appropriate time, turn the masks around so the audience can see them. For added fun, before turning each mask, count down from three and have the kids yell, "Let's Face It."

## THE BIG BIBLE STORY—DINNER WITH SINNERS

(*Turn the "Jesus" mask toward audience.*) Last week we heard how Jesus forgave a paralyzed man and helped him to walk again. Shortly afterwards, Jesus saw a man named Matthew. (*Turn the "Matthew" mask toward audience.*) Matthew was a tax collector. Let me hear you all say, "Yuck—a tax collector!" (*Kids repeat.*) That's what most Jewish people would have said when they saw a tax collector. Most people didn't like them, because they collected money from them for the Roman government. Worse than that, though, a lot of times the tax collectors would tell people they owed more money than they really did. If someone owed \$5 (*hold up \$5*), the tax collector would tell them they owed \$6 (*hold up an additional dollar*) and then they would keep one dollar for themselves (*tape the additional dollar to the "Matthew" mask*). Does this sound like the kind of person Jesus would want to hang out with? (*Take answers.*) You might not think so, but when Jesus saw Matthew the tax collector, He said, "Follow Me." (*Prompt "Jesus" to repeat.*) And that's exactly what Matthew did. (*Prompt "Matthew" to nod his head and give a thumbs up.*)

Later on, Jesus and his disciples were having a huge dinner party at Matthew's house. (*Ask "Jesus" and "Matthew" to give you their best dance moves.*) Not only was Matthew there, but a bunch of his tax collecting buddies were there along with all kinds of other sinners. (*Turn the "Sinner" mask toward the audience.*)

As they were eating (*prompt them pretend to eat*), a group of Pharisees walked by. (*Turn the "Pharisee" mask toward the audience. Have the "Pharisee" walk in place.*) Every time I say the word "Pharisees," I want you to shudder like this... (*Make a shuddering noise for kids*). The Pharisees (*shudder with kids*) believed they could follow God's commandments without ever messing up or sinning. The Pharisees (*shudder with kids*) didn't just try to follow God's rules, they made up a bunch of their own rules too. The Pharisees (*shudder with kids*) thought they were so good that they refused to even be near sinners or sick people. (*Lead the "Pharisee" away from the "Sinner" and have him hold his head high.*)

When the Pharisees (*shudder with kids*) saw that Jesus was eating dinner with tax collectors and sinners, they were shocked! (*Prompt "Pharisee" to act shocked.*) They went to one of the disciples and asked him, (*say in disgusted voice*) "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (*Have "Pharisee" repeat.*)

Jesus overheard what the Pharisees (*shudder with kids*) were saying. So He stood up and approached them. (*Prompt "Jesus" to step forward, turn towards "Pharisee," and act like he is talking.*) Listen to what He said. (*Open your Bible to Matthew 9:12-13.*) "Those who are healthy don't need a doctor. Sick people do. Go and learn what this means, 'I want mercy and not sacrifice.' I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me." (Matthew 9:12-13) (*Thank volunteers and dismiss to the audience.*)





### BIG BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS

#### K-1 Questions:

- What was your favorite part of this story?
- Why do you think Jesus wanted to be with people who sinned?

#### G2-5 Questions:

- What does this story teach you about Jesus?
- Jesus said, "Those who are healthy don't need a doctor. Sick people do." What do you think He meant by that?

### ACUTE CASE OF PUDDING FACE

Have you ever woken up in the morning and felt *really* sick? I want you to imagine something with me, and I need some help. (*Choose a kid to join you in the teaching area.*) Imagine that you woke up one morning and dragged yourself out of bed. Show everyone what you look like when you first get out of bed. (*Kid gives tired/disheveled look.*) When you stumble your way into the bathroom and look into the mirror, you notice that you have some terrible looking spots on your face. (*Put some stars on child's face. Hold up a hand mirror so the kid can see their face.*) Show everyone what kind of face you would make if this is what you saw in the mirror. (*Kid makes face.*) You're clearly sick with some sort of hideous (and somewhat silly) disease. So, who do you go to for help when you're sick? (*Allow kid to answer.*) That's right—sick people go to the doctor!

When the doctor looks at the spots, she says, "You've got an acute case of star face!" She gives you some pills that taste suspiciously like candy. (*Ask kid to pretend to eat pills.*) And after you take them, the spots clear right up. (*Remove star stickers from face.*)

Now let's imagine something a little bit different. Imagine that the spots on your face aren't from some sort of silly, hideous disease. Imagine that they're from sin. (*Direct question toward audience.*) What kinds of sins might kids like you commit? (*Take answers. After each answer, place a star on the kid's face.*) Sin is kind of like a sickness—it leaves a stain on our life. So, who do we go to for help when we've sinned? (*Take answer.*) That's right—we go to Jesus. If sin is like a sickness, Jesus is like the doctor who heals us. When we ask Jesus for forgiveness, He wipes our sins away. (*Remove the stars from the kid's face. Thank kid and dismiss them back to audience.*)

### EVERYONE HAS SINNED

In our story for today, the Pharisees couldn't believe that Jesus was hanging out with sinners. They thought they were perfect—better than everyone else. Do you think that was true? (*Kids respond.*) No way! The Pharisees were just as sinful as anyone else. As hard as they might have tried to follow God's commandments, they couldn't be perfect—no one can. In fact, that's exactly what our Bible verse for today tells us. Let's take a look at it together. (*Open your Bible to Romans 3:23 and read aloud.*)

(*Sit down or kneel close to kids.*) Let's face it—we're just like the people at the dinner party. As much as we try to follow God and obey His commandments, we all mess up sometimes. Each one of us has a sickness called sin. It's a sickness that eventually causes a spiritual death—forever separation from God. But here's the great news: Jesus is like a doctor who heals us from our sins.

# January 15

Large Group Lesson | Elementary



If you've ever felt like you couldn't pray to Jesus or be with Him because of your sin—DON'T! There is no sin big enough or ugly enough to scare Jesus away. Even though we're sinners, Jesus wants to be with us—just like the sinners at Matthew's party.

Close the Large Group time by praying for the kids in whatever way the Holy Spirit prompts you

**Music:** **Avalanche Ranch**

