

January 29

Small Group Lesson | Preschool

Quick Draw

Dinner with Sinners

BIG IDEA: Jesus wants me to love everyone.

BIBLE BASIS: Matthew 9:9-13

KEY VERSE: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” Mark 12:31 (NirV)

SCHEDULE

PLAY TIME
ACTIVITIES

10:10-10:30

LARGE GROUP
LESSON

10:30-10:50

SMALL GROUP
ACTIVITIES

10:50-11:15

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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

SMALL GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Helping Quiet Kids to Open Up

Cricket. Cricket. Cricket. This is the sound that emanates from a group filled with quiet kids. Fortunately, it's not often that you'll have a group made up entirely of kids who are "vocally challenged." Quiet kids are often deep thinkers with quiet spirits. That's not a bad thing at all! Nevertheless, it's important that you create a safe environment where (with a little bit of encouragement) they'll be willing to share their thoughts and feelings with others. This gives them the opportunity to voice their struggles, challenges, fears, hopes, and dreams. You never want to force a kid to share, so here are a few tips that will help encourage them to share.

Engage them outside of group. Some kids need to know and trust you before they're willing to open up in a group. Take some time during drop-off or pick-up time to talk one-on-one with your quiet kids. As they become more comfortable with you, they'll be more likely to share during group time.

Seat the kids in a circle. When kids are seated in a clump rather than a circle, it's easy for kids with less inclination for sharing to hide or get lost in the back of the cluster.

Call on quiet kids directly. Sometimes quiet kids need to feel invited into a conversation. When you call on a kid directly, it communicates that you want them to be a part of the group and that you're interested in what they have to say.

Be okay with silence. It might take some kids a moment to put words to their thoughts. That's okay! Don't feel the need to "rescue" them too quickly. If they can't or don't want to join the conversation just yet, that's okay too. But don't let that be the last time you call on them.

Affirm them after sharing. For some kids, sharing aloud in a group is a huge emotional and social risk. If you affirm them after sharing, it *greatly* increases the chance they'll share again. A simple, "Wow! I love the way you think!" or "Great answer—thanks for sharing!" will often do the trick.

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☆ PLAY TIME ACTIVITY

Along with your other play time activities, present the following activity to children as they first arrive in the preschool room. Choose a leader to facilitate the activity. The activity is designed to introduce kids to the Bible story and Big Idea for the day.

PLAY DOUGH DINNER PARTY

Supplies: Play dough, popsicle or craft sticks (4–5), dinner play set (1)

Directions: Invite some children to have a play dough dinner party with you. Give each child a piece of play dough and tell them to create their favorite food. When finished creating the food, have a pretend dinner party. Encourage the children to cut off pieces of their play dough food and share it with the others.

Say: In today's true Bible story, Jesus throws a dinner party, but not everyone is happy about it. We'll find out why in a little bit. We'll also learn that **Jesus wants us to love everyone!**

Question: If you had a dinner party, who would you invite? What would you eat?

ENGAGE ACTIVITIES

Check the cubbies for manipulatives for kids to play during this time, if you need to fill the time.

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.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

Slide: Show “Quick Draw” title graphic
Music: Story Music

WELCOME AND MUSIC

As children enter the story time area, give them a high-energy welcome—smile, wave, give high fives, and tell them you’re glad to see them. For added energy during the transition, play a fun song that the children are familiar with. When the children have all arrived, play one or two upbeat worship songs of your choosing and lead the kids in singing.

Music: Thankful

After the songs, tell the children:

"We're going to learn a new way to sit on the carpet together. Listen and watch me, then we'll do it together. Here's our new rhyme:"

Topher the Gopher 1, 2, 3. (*Clap on each number.*)
Digs a hole right under me. (*Make a motion as if digging with a shovel.*)
Slowly I start sinking down. (*Twist your body back and forth, lower and lower to the ground.*)
Until I'm sitting on the ground. (*Sit down on ground or chair.*)

BIG IDEA AND BIBLE VERSE

Large Group Leader: Hello, everybody! I'm so happy you're here today! Do you like drawing pictures? (*Children respond.*) Me too! In just a little bit, I'm going to draw some pictures and you're going to guess what I'm drawing. The pictures will help us learn today's Bible story.

Today's true Bible story is going to teach us that **Jesus wants me to love everyone**. That's our Big Idea for the day. Let's say it together. (*Repeat Big Idea with children.*) **Jesus wants me to love everyone**. It's true! **Jesus wants me to love everyone**. In fact, that's what our memory verse says. Let me teach it to you.

"Love (*hug yourself*) your neighbor (*point toward children*) as you love (*hug yourself*) yourself (*point to self*)." Mark 12:31 (*extend hands like you're holding a book*).

Let's do that together. (*Repeat Memory Verse with children two or three times.*)

STORY TIME RULES

Wow—nice job! I think you are ready for the Bible story. Before we get started, though, I think we should go over our three story time rules.

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Video: Play “Topher the Gopher Story Time Rules” video

(Note: Play the “Topher the Gopher Story Time Rules” video)

QUICK DRAW INTRO

Maybe you can help me out with something. I want to have a pretend dinner party. I even have the table all set up and ready to go. *(Stand by dinner play set.)* There’s just one problem. I don’t know if I should invite Lambie. *(Hold up stuffed animal from previous two lessons.)* He’s had a rough few weeks. Two weeks ago he got lost in our room, last week he bumped his head, and this week he got into a little bit of trouble. You see, he was running inside of his house and accidentally broke his mom’s favorite picture frame. When his mom asked if he broke it, he didn’t tell the truth. He said, “No, I didn’t break it.” Now I don’t know if I should invite him to my pretend dinner party. What do you think? Should I invite him even though he made a bad choice? *(Children will most likely say, “Yes.”)* I think you’re right—I *should* invite him! *(Set stuffed animal on the table with the dinner set.)*

You know what—that reminds me of today’s true Bible story. In today’s story, Jesus has a dinner party with some people who made some bad choices. Do you want to hear about it? If so, wiggle your fingers in the air. *(Children wiggle fingers.)* Great! Let’s get started!

Slide: Show the “Dinner with Sinners” slide

BIG BIBLE STORY—DINNER WITH SINNERS

It’s time to play our picture guessing game. See if you can guess what I’m drawing.

(Draw some paper money and coins. Encourage the children to guess what it is. If necessary, give clues.)

That’s right—it’s money. In the Bible, in the Book of Matthew, there was a tax collector named Matthew. A tax collector is someone who collected money from people. But a lot of tax collectors were not nice. They took more money than they were supposed to. On the count of three, let’s shout, “That’s stealing!” *(Count to three and shout.)*

(Draw a house. Encourage the children to guess what it is.)

You got it—it’s a house. One day, as Jesus was walking along, he saw Matthew, the tax collector, sitting down. Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” So Matthew got up and followed Jesus to His house. Let’s stand up and pretend to walk with Jesus to His house. *(March in place while chanting the following lines.)* Say this with me: “We’re walking, we’re walking, we’re walking with Jesus. We’re walking, we’re walking, we’re walking with Jesus. We’re walking, we’re walking, we’re walking with Jesus. And stop! *(Have children sit down.)*

(Draw a dinner plate with fork and knife. Encourage the children to guess what it is.)

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Great job—it's a dinner plate. When they arrived at the house, Jesus invited Matthew inside to have dinner with him. While they were eating, a bunch of other people joined the dinner party too. The people who came were sinners. That means they had made some bad choices. What kind of bad choices do you think they might have made? *(Take answers.)* Great answers! Maybe they told a lie. Maybe they said something mean. Maybe they stole something like Matthew had done.

(Draw a mad face with slanted eyebrows. Encourage the children to guess what it is.)

Way to go—it's a mad face. Can you show me your best mad face? *(Children make mad face.)* There was a group of people called the Pharisees who didn't like Jesus. When the Pharisees saw that Jesus was having dinner with a tax collector and other sinners, they were mad. They didn't think Jesus should be eating with people who make bad choices and do bad things.

(Draw a stethoscope. Encourage the children to guess what it is.)

You're right—it's a stethoscope. That's what a doctor uses. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "People who are feeling *good* don't need a doctor. People who are *sick* need a doctor." What Jesus was saying is that He's kind of like a doctor, but instead of making your sickness go away, He makes your sins go away. He forgives you for the bad choices you make. He forgives you *(point to child)*, and you *(continue pointing to different children)*, and you, and you, and you, and me too! Jesus forgives everyone who loves and follows Him.

MUSIC AND CLOSING

(Encourage the children to stand up. Lead them in a worship song of your choice. Following the song, use the rhyme from earlier to help the children sit down again.)

Music: You Forgive Me!

In today's true Bible story, Jesus had dinner with Matthew and the other sinners. Even though they made bad choices, Jesus still loved them and wanted to spend time with them.

Do you think Jesus still loves *us* when *we* make bad choices? *(Children respond.)* Yes, He does! Does He love us when we lie? *(Children respond.)* Yes, He does! Does He love us when we say mean words? *(Children respond.)* Yes, He does! Does He love us when we push our friend? *(Children respond.)* Yes, He does! Jesus doesn't want us to make bad choices, but He still loves us when we do. Do you think Jesus still wants *us* to love *other* people who make bad choices? *(Children respond.)* Yes, He does! **Jesus wants me to love everyone!**

TOPHER'S BIG IDEA

Hey—that's our Big Idea for today! I think we should tell it to our parents when we see them. Maybe we should practice first. *(Appear to be thinking.)* Hmm...who could we practice telling? I know! We could tell our friend, Topher the Gopher. Let's see if we can find him.

(Play "Topher's Big Idea Video 1")

Video: Play "Topher's Big Idea Video 1"

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(Whisper.) Uh-oh. It looks like Topher is asleep. I think we should wake him up. When he wakes up, we can all tell him that **Jesus wants me to love everyone**. On the count of three, let's all yell, "Topher the Gopher, wake up, wake up!" *(Count to three and yell with kids. Then play "Topher's Big Idea Video 2".)*

Video: Play "Topher's Big Idea Video 2"

Topher: Hey, what's the Big Idea?

Children and Large Group Leader: **Jesus wants me to love everyone.** *(Repeat the Big Idea several times. When finished, play "Topher's Big Idea Video 3".)*

Video: Play "Topher's Big Idea Video 3"

Topher: Wow! That is a Big Idea! Thanks for telling me! Goodbye, kids. *(Encourage kids to wave goodbye to Topher as he disappears back into his hole.)*

Large Group Leader: Let's say a prayer together and ask Jesus to help us love everyone, even people who make bad choices. *(Encourage kids to repeat the following prayer after you.)*

Dear Jesus,
Thank You for loving me
When I make bad choices.
Help me to love other people
When they make bad choices too.
Amen.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

After the Large Group story time is over, help the children transition into the small group activity time. There are multiple activity options designed to help kids remember the Bible story and Big Idea, discover personal application, and to respond to God through art, prayer, and Bible reading. Offer as many activities as your time and space allows.

DISAPPEARING SIN

Supplies: Disappearing paper (1 small piece per child), pen or pencil (1 per child), bowl or small bucket of water (1 per group)

Say: In today's true Bible story, we learned that Jesus is like a doctor, but instead of making our sickness disappear, he makes our sins disappear. We're going to do an activity that helps you see what I mean.

Directions: Give each child a small piece of disappearing (dissolving) paper and a pen or pencil. Tell the children to draw a picture of a sad face on the paper. While they're drawing, ask the children to share about a time they made a bad choice. Tell them that those bad choices are called "sin" in the Bible, and sin makes God sad. Next, say a short prayer asking God to forgive you and the children for your sins. When finished, have the children drop their slips of paper into the water one at a time. Tell them this is what happens to your sins when you ask God to forgive you—Jesus makes them disappear.

DINNER WITH SINNERS (Application Activity)

Supplies: Paper plate (1 per child), baking sheet (1 per group), play food, dice (1 per group)

Directions: Give each child a paper plate and have them sit in a circle. In the middle of the circle, place a baking sheet. Spread a layer of play food on the backing sheet. Tell the children that for every correct answer the group gives, one child will get to roll the dice. (The answer to the question is always "yes.") After answering each question, choose a child to roll the dice one time for the entire group, then allow the children to take that many play food items from the baking sheet and place them on their plate. Tell the children not to pretend eat their play food before you tell them to.

Questions: Does Jesus want you to love someone who...

- Says a mean word?
- Takes something that doesn't belong to them?
- Pushes their sister down?
- Tells a lie to the teacher?
- Hits another kid?
- Yells at their mom?

Say: The truth is, we've all made bad choices like these before, but Jesus still wants us to love each other and spend time with each other. In fact, I think we should have a dinner party with our play food right now. (Allow the children to pretend eat their play food.)

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BLUBBERING BALLOON (Bible Memorization Activity)

Supplies: Balloon (1 per group)

Today's Bible verse:

"Love (*hug yourself*) your neighbor (*point toward children*) as you love (*hug yourself*) yourself (*point to self*)." Mark 12:31 (*extend hands like you're holding a book*).

Directions: Practice the above verse with the children a few times. When ready, blow up a balloon. Pinch it closed, but do not tie it off. Count to three, then release the balloon so that it flutters and flies through the air. Challenge the children to recite the entire verse before the balloon runs out of air and falls to the ground. Repeat multiple times. If the children struggle to finish the verse before the balloon runs out of air, give them a head start before releasing the balloon.

QUICK DRAW (Bible Story Review Activity)

Supplies: Blank piece of paper (1 per child), markers or crayons

Directions: Give each child a sheet of paper and some markers or crayons. Tell them to draw the pictures below one at a time. (Each of the pictures were previously drawn as a part of the Bible storytelling time.) As the children are drawing the pictures, ask them to recount the part of the story that goes along with that picture. They should be able to remember, but if necessary, you can use the short description to give them hints or remind them. Continue until the entire story has been recounted.

Pictures:

- **Paper money and coins**— Matthew was a tax collector who stole money from people.
- **House**—Jesus invited Matthew to follow Him to the house.
- **Dinner plate with fork and knife**—Jesus had dinner with Matthew and other sinners.
- **Mad face**—The Pharisees were mad that Jesus was eating with a tax collector and sinners.
- **Stethoscope**—Jesus said He was like a doctor who heals people of their sins.

FORGIVE ME (Response to God Activity)

Supplies: GO! Home Guide (printed on back of coloring sheet, 1 per child), crayons.

Directions: Give each child a GO! Home Guide and some crayons or markers. The sheet will have a space for children to draw. Tell the children to draw a picture of a cross. While they're drawing, ask the children to tell about a time they made a bad choice.

Say: Jesus loves us so much that He died on the cross for us. When we tell Jesus about our bad choices and ask Him to forgive us, He makes those sins go away. Let's say a prayer to God. We can tell Him about our bad choices and ask Him to forgive us.

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Prayer: Begin by asking if any of the children would like to pray. Allow any children who want to pray the opportunity to do so. When they're finished, pray that God would forgive you and the children for the bad choices you've made and tell Jesus thank you for dying on the cross for us.

COLORING SHEET (GO! Deeper Activity)

Supplies: Bible story coloring sheet (printed on back of GO! Home Guide, 1 per child), markers or crayons

Directions: Give each child a Bible story coloring sheet and some crayons or markers. While the children are coloring, ask the following questions to help them go deeper into the story:

Question: What was your favorite part of this story? Why did you like that part?

Question: A lot of people didn't like Matthew because he was a tax collector. Why do you think Jesus still wanted to eat dinner with Matthew?