Press Pause

**Bible Story:** Press Pause (Slow to anger) • Proverbs 16:32
**Bottom Line:** PAUSE before you lose your temper.
**Memory Verse:** “A person without self-control is like a city whose walls are broken through.” Proverbs 25:28, NIV
**Life App:** Self-control—choosing to do what you should do, not what you want to do.
**Basic Truth:** I need to make the wise choice.

**Plug-In: (Small Groups, 15 minutes)**
Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today’s story.

*Before kids arrive, pray for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Today’s topic is so applicable to elementary kids. Pray that kids would understand in their hearts that it’s not okay to lose your temper and do whatever you want when you’re angry. Pray that they would be convicted about times when they’ve hurt someone’s feelings out of anger. And pray that they would feel empowered to start practicing controlling their tempers.*

1. **Early Arriver Idea**
**What You Need:** Offering container

**What You Do:**
- Collect kids’ offerings as they arrive.
- Discuss things that happen in an instant versus things that happen slowly over time. Examples: text messages vs. a card in the mail. A present in a box to be unwrapped vs. a gift card in an email. Watching a movie on your phone vs. going to the video store or Redbox®, buying or renting the movie, bringing it home and watching it.

2. **The Slowest**
**What You Need:** “The Slowest Cards” Activity Page; 1 set for each Small Group

**What You Do:**
- Choose two of the cards at random and ask the kids which one they think is the slowest. There are some that will be obvious, but others that they might disagree on.
- Have them indicate which one they think is slowest in some physical way; you could have them stand for one and sit for the other or clap for one and stomp for the other. Choose any motions you like.
- Put down the one that was the slowest on one side and keep the other one. Then choose one more card to put up against the one you kept.
Continue doing this (testing each card against all the others) until you have sorted all the cards into a continuum from slowest to “least-slow.”

What You Say:
“We don’t usually want slow things, do we? We tend to think fast is always better. We want a faster bike, a faster Internet connection, and a faster computer. We even want ourselves to be faster, don’t we? We want to grow taller faster. We want to run faster. We want to be done with homework and school faster! Fast things are usually pretty great, but not always. \[Transition\]
Let’s go into Large Group and hear about something that we should be slow to do.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Connect Groups: (Small Groups, 25 minutes)
Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. Pause Button \(\textit{(application activity / review the Bible story)}\)
What You Need: “Pause Button Scenario Cards” Activity Page, prepared “Pause Pillow”

What You Do:
• Gather the group in a circle and place the Pause Pillow in the center.
• Draw a “Pause Button Scenario Card” and read the scenario aloud to the group.
• After the first sentence, any kid can reach to the center of the circle, press the Pause Pillow, and yell, “Pause!”, but they don’t have to.
• If they press the Pause Pillow, the kid has to describe how the scenario ends in a good way since she pressed pause.
• If no one presses pause before the scenario reaches its end, all the kids have to switch seats as quickly as they can to show the chaos that can happen when we lose our temper.

Note: The scenarios are supposed to be funny and over-the-top to show how ridiculous we sometimes look when we lose our temper, over both big and small things. The younger kids may need help understanding that they should let a couple of the scenarios play out just to see how the scenes end. Help them understand the goal is not to be the first to yell, “Pause” and they also need to wait until they’ve heard enough of the scenario to be able to come up with a good ending.

What You Say:
“It took a while to figure out how to pause the scenario in time before the temper was lost and chaos ensued. It takes practice to keep our temper in check over and over and over, but it’s worth it. Look at the craziness that happened each time someone lost their temper. Some of those were pretty silly situations, but we lose our temper over silly things sometimes—like the way our brother or sister is looking at us or humming or breathing or eating, like whether or not our parents let us wear our favorite sweatshirt three times a week even when it has ranch dressing stains from the chicken nugget incident all over it, or like the time our teacher assigned a reasonable book report on the most unreasonable time of year—the biggest football game weekend! Even when it’s something little that feels big, you need to press \[Bottom Line\]
PAUSE before you lose your temper.”

* 2. Control It! \(\textit{(application activity / review the Bible story / possible environment-wide activity)}\)
What You Need: “Control It!” Activity Pages posted around your space

What You Do:

- Invite kids to share about times when they may be tempted to lose their tempers. **[Make It Personal]** (Share about situations when you’re tempted to lose your temper.)
- Briefly introduce a few things kids can do when they need to PAUSE before they lose their tempers, doing a motion for each:
  - Pray (clasp hands in prayer)
  - Read their Bible (hold palms together with thumbs up, and then open hands as if opening a book)
  - Count to 10 (count to 10 aloud as you count with your fingers)
  - Hug a stuffed animal (hug yourself)
  - Run around (run in place)
- Practice the motions with the kids, cuing them by saying, “When you need to PAUSE before you lose your temper, you can: Pray! (Pause.) Read! (Pause.) Count! (Pause.) Hug! (Pause.) or Run!” (Pause.)
- Lead kids in a variation of “Bop It!” Successively call out the ways kids can PAUSE before they lose their temper. As you call out each action, kids run to the appropriate sign and quickly do the motion. Keep a quick pace to hold the kids’ attention. **Note:** If you have a wide variety of ages, you can let older kids take turns calling out the motions for the rest of the group.
- **Note:** If you have a smaller space, kids can stand in place as you call out the different PAUSE actions. Hold up the signs for each action instead of posting them on the wall.
- When interest is still high, guide kids to gather around you. Lead them to review the things they can do to PAUSE before they lose their tempers.

What You Say:

“Self-control is choosing to do what you should do, not what you want to do. Part of self-control is not losing your temper. What can you do before you lose your temper? That’s right. You can **[Bottom Line]** PAUSE before you lose your temper. You can pray, you can read your Bible, you can count to 10, you can hug and squeeze a stuffed animal, or you can run around. So remember: **[Bottom Line]** PAUSE before you lose your temper.”

3. Pause Memory (memory verse activity)

What You Need: “Memory Verse Cards” Activity Page; 2 sets (from week 1), 8 blank cards, Bibles

What You Do:

- Look up Proverbs 25:28 as a group and then read it out loud together a few times.
- Divide the kids into two teams.
- Give each team an equal number of blank cards and a stack of Memory Verse Cards.
- Allow each team to hide the blank cards anywhere they want in the deck of Memory Verse Cards. The only rule is they can’t put two blank cards back to back. At least one verse card has to be in between each blank card. **Note:** Let older kids lead the effort in hiding the blank cards. They can make sure younger kids understand the rules.
- Once the blank cards are hidden, have the teams switch their stacks of cards.
- Instruct kids to line up by team, standing shoulder to shoulder and facing each other.
- Place each team’s cards at the end of each line.
- Then the teams will race to pass the cards (one at a time) down their line.
- Each time a kid gets a card handed to him, he must say the word on the card. **Note:** Be ready to help younger kids read.
- When the first person in the line comes across a blank card, she has to shout “Pause!” to her team and together they have to count to 10.
Play until both teams have finished the entire verse.

What You Say:
“It was sometimes annoying to hit those blank cards and have to pause. You wanted to just keep going so your team could win the race. You never knew when a pause would come in this game, and in life you will never know when something will come along that will upset you. That is why you always need to be prepared to [Bottom Line] PAUSE before you lose your temper.”

Discussion questions:
- Read James 1:19-21 aloud together. Have you ever been angry and wanted to teach someone a lesson? Maybe you planned revenge or maybe you made sure that they got punished by their parents or by the school because they hurt you. Did that ever work out well? Did you feel better? Did they treat you better? Probably not. What is this verse saying about trying to use anger to “teach” other people to be nice?
- How does being “quick to listen” and “slow to anger” sound like pressing pause on your temper? Has anybody ever done this with you? What happened? How would things have gone differently if that person hadn’t been quick to listen and slow to anger?

Pray and Dismiss
What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:
- Have the kids practice balling up their fists as if they are angry. Then have them release their fists by extending one finger at a time as they count to ten.
- Suggest that when they get angry they take a pause by clenching their fists tightly, and then praying to God as they slowly release one finger at a time.
- After kids have practiced the technique a few times, pray aloud for the group. Ask God to help your kids remember to pause when they get angry and pray for His strength to react in the way He would want them to react.

What You Say:
“God knows all about our emotions, including anger. He isn’t upset when we get angry. But God does not want anger to be a reason or excuse for us to do things that hurt ourselves or others. Instead we need to pause and pray. [Bottom Line] PAUSE before you lose your temper.”

Give each child a GodTime card. Pass out Parent Cue cards as adults arrive to pick up. Have each kid tell his parents today’s Bottom Line, [Bottom Line] PAUSE before you lose your temper, and show them the fist clenching and release technique that you practiced during prayer time.