



## The Big Dipper

**Bible Story:** The Big Dipper (Jesus' baptism & John calls Jesus Lamb of God) • *John 1:19-42 (Supporting: Matthew 3, Mark 1:1-11, Luke 3:1-22)*

**Bottom Line:** Discovering what God says helps you follow Jesus.

**Memory Verse:** "Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me." *Psalms 119:105 (NirV)*

**Life App:** Knowledge—learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do.

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

### **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. Pray that as kids learn more about Jesus, they'll be drawn to a relationship with Him and have a desire to follow Him. Ask God to guide you as you encourage your few in their relationships with Jesus. Pray that you would be able to model this for them in a real, authentic way.*

#### **1. Early Arriver Idea**

**What You Need:** Offering container

**What You Do:**

- Greet kids as they arrive and encourage them to place their offering in the container.
- Ask them how their knowledge is growing this month—are they learning new things and discovering what God says?
- Guide any who are willing to share about that.
- Then, play a "following" game, such as "follow the leader" or "chief" until the majority of your kids have arrived.

#### **2. Mirror, Mirror**

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Divide the group into pairs. Let them designate one as "the actor" and the other as "the mirror".
- Call out feelings "the actor" has to portray, and which "the mirror" must imitate as closely as possible.
- After a while, let kids switch roles within the pairs.
- If you have time, pair kids up differently and play again.
- Feel free to vary the scenarios the kids must act out to make them more dramatic, depending on your group's age.

**What You Say:** "You all did a good job following in this game, but everyone needs a little help now and again. **[Transition] Let's go see if we can learn a way to be better followers.**"

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. Cup and String Orders (*application activity / review the Bible story*)**

**What You Need:** Prepared cup/string “telephone”

##### **What You Do:**

- Cluster the group at one end of your small group area, and stand at the other end with the “telephone.”
- Instruct one kid to hold the one of the cups, put his ear up to it, you and listen to your instructions through the “telephone.” (Make sure the string is pulled tight as you talk so the kid can hear what you say.)
- Then that kid should tell the group what to do.
- Once the group has done what you’ve said, call another kid to pick up the “phone,” hear different instructions, and repeat the action to the rest of the group.
- Some ideas for “orders” – all stand on one foot, all sit down, all pat their heads and rub their stomachs, all bark like dogs, all try to lick their elbows, all jump up and down three times, all sit down and spin in a circle, etc.
- Vary the orders so that kids are doing a variety of movements.
- Set aside the “telephone” for another activity, and then circle up for discussion.

##### **What You Say:**

“Only one of you heard me each time, and yet you all followed my directions. I used a pretty simple way of communicating, too! We didn’t need a lot of technology or batteries. When John got the message from God that Jesus was the Messiah, he was able to tell a lot of people how to follow Him. The message wasn’t complicated, either; it was a sign at Jesus’ baptism so everyone watching would know that Jesus was God’s rescue plan come to earth.”

**[Bottom Line]** “**Discovering what God says will help you follow Jesus.** When we discover that God says Jesus is the truth, we know we can follow what Jesus says; when God says Jesus is the way, we know we can follow what Jesus does. Do you know what kind of things Jesus said and did? (*Allow for answers, prompting them with questions on how Jesus treated people and what He said about loving God and others.*) That’s right, following Jesus means you should love God and love others.”

#### **\* 2. Human Rubik’s Cube (*application activity*)**

**What You Need:** Construction paper, four sheets each of red, blue, and green, masking tape, “Human Rubik’s Cube Scenarios” Activity Page; one set for each small group

##### **What You Do:**

- Divide the group into three teams and have each team tape a color of construction paper to their chests.
- Make a masking tape square on your floor, large enough for all the kids to stand in, and guide them to stand within the square, in shoulder-to-shoulder lines.
- When you call, “Scramble”, all the kids should run within the square and line up next to someone who has a different color.
- Then, call on a specific color to answer a question from the Human Rubik’s Cube Scenario. If their answer shows a way to follow Jesus, one of them can move next to the same color.
- Then, ask a kid with another color a question, and so on.

*Note: If you have older kids, you can let them give more complex answers and even some that are sort of “gray” areas. Many scenarios can have more than one right or good answer. Let kids “make a case” for and support their answers, especially if others don’t agree!*

- Periodically yell, “scramble” to keep the game going if kids are “solving the cube” too soon.
- The game is over when all the colors are in straight lines next to each other, like a solved Rubik’s cube.

#### **What You Say:**

“You had to line up all the pieces to win the game, and you did it! Your answers showed that **[Bottom Line] discovering what God says helps you follow Jesus.** Following Jesus is the most important thing you’ll ever learn how to do and God has made sure you have all the knowledge you need to get better and better at it, your whole life long. **[Make It Personal] (Share a time when you learned something new about following Jesus by studying the Bible or learning from a faith-filled friend—a change in your prayer life or how you treated others. Or this could be when you took a step such as baptism, [or confirmation depending on your faith tradition], to follow Jesus more closely.)”**

### **3. Lamp for the Way (memory verse activity)**

**What You Need:** Construction paper, scissors, tape or staplers, markers, “Lamp for the Way” Activity Page; one for each small group, Bible

#### **What You Do:**

- Open your Bible and read Psalm 119:105 out loud with the group to remind them of the verse.
- Then, give each kid construction paper. Set out the scissors, tape or staplers and markers where everyone has access to them.
- Help kids follow the Lamp for the Way template to make their paper lanterns.
- For younger kids, pre-draw the cutting lines and be prepared to help with the tape/ staplers.
- For older kids, let them experiment with different shaped cutting lines. They could also use a contrasting color of construction paper and make an inner liner for the lantern.
- Let kids write the verse reference on the handle of the lantern (Psalm 119:105). Encourage older kids to help the younger ones with this.
- After the lanterns are completed, direct kids to hold them high while you all say the verse together.

#### **What You Say:**

“God’s word shines a light on the path that we walk when we’re following Jesus. The Bible tells us how to keep going when we’re working on being nice to our grumpy neighbor next door. And it tells us how to be patient with our teammate who is having a hard time keeping up on the skill drills at basketball practice. Both these things—perseverance and patience—show that we’re following Jesus and we found them in the Bible! We grow in knowledge when we remember **[Bottom Line] discovering what God says helps you follow Jesus.”**

#### *Discussion questions:*

- We’ve mostly looked at how God’s word helps us do actions that show we follow Jesus. Is there any other way that **[Bottom Line] discovering what God says helps you follow Jesus?** Can anyone think of a time when they saw someone following Jesus? What did that person do?

- What does God say about following Jesus when it's hard to do—when you get tired or feel like making the wise choice is just too much work? Look up Philippians 4:13. What does God's word say about who gives you the strength to follow Jesus?

## **Pray and Dismiss**

**What You Need:** The cups and string “phone” from Activity #1, Bible

### **What You Do:**

- If possible, set the Bible on a stool or table so it's not on the floor for this activity. Open it to Psalm 119:105. Set the cups-and-string “telephone” near it.
- Gather the group in a circle and encourage them to be quiet and reverent.
- Tell them they are going to pray while using some props to help them focus on what they're saying.
- One at a time, let each kid go to the Bible, set one of the cups on the verse and hold the other to their ear and pray, “Dear God, help me hear what You say and follow Jesus.”
- After all the kids have done this, close in prayer.

*Note: This could be a fun time to get pictures of the kids individually praying if your church allows that or you think parents would appreciate it. If you post pictures, make sure you have all the photo releases necessary.*

### **What You Say:**

“Dear God, thank You for telling us so much about how to follow Jesus. Please help us to follow Him more and more every day. Amen.”

Remind kids as they leave that **[Bottom Line] discovering what God says helps you follow Jesus**. Challenge them to find one new way to follow Jesus by looking in their Bibles with their families this week.

As adults arrive to pick up, tell them about your special challenge to kids. Let parents know that you're happy to provide help with this if they need some ideas about how to get started!