



I Wonder...

LESSON 2: INTERMEDIATE SMALL GROUP

Does God exist and how can I know him?

MAIN IDEA

Even though we can't see him, God is everywhere. When we trust Jesus as our Savior, God comes to live inside us by his Holy Spirit. Because God loves us, he allows us to make choices about whether to follow him or not. Because we often choose poorly, there are many problems in the world.

BIBLE PASSAGES

- Romans 8:38-39
- Psalm 139:7
- John 14:6-7
- John 16:33

BIBLE VERSE

The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.

Psalm 19:1-2, NLT



Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.



Connect with the kids, and help them feel heard and cared for. (15 minutes)



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus. (20 - 25 minutes)



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel. (5 - 10 minutes)

Prepare



Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.

QUESTIONS:

- How can you be praying for the students this week?
- Are there any specific students or requests you can pray for?
- Are there any adaptations that you can make to the lesson this week to better serve the kids in your small group or make your small group more effective?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Television remote control
- Printout 1, 1 per small group
- Sheets of paper, 1 per child
- Pens or pencils, 1 per child
- Box of toothpicks, 1 per small group
- Bag of marshmallows, 1 per small group
- Bible Verse Cards, one per child

Connect



Connect with the kids, and help them feel heard and cared for.
(15 minutes)

Small Group Session 1

ICEBREAKER

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following icebreaker activities to do together while children eat their snack:

- Option 1: Ask the children to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).
- Option 2: Ask the children to take turns sharing how they're feeling today using the "How Are You Feeling?" chart (from the CKC Games Bag).

PRAY TOGETHER

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group, or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

WHY DOESN'T GOD FIX THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS?

Ask, **What are some of the problems you see in the world? How about in your school? In your family?**

Pick one or two Minute to Win It games. Offer tickets or another prize as incentive to play, but instead of giving a ticket or prize to the winner, give prizes to anyone other than the winner.

After playing each game and giving out the prizes, follow up your games with some questions.

- How did you feel when you won the game?
- How did it make you feel when you won but didn't get the prize?
- Why are there times when you do what is right and follow the rules but don't get rewarded?
- Or have you ever experienced a time when someone wronged you (maybe hit you or stole something from you), but they were not punished for it?

MINUTE TO WIN IT GAMES

State of Fun—Have players write down as many state capitals as they can before the timer goes off.

Good Sports—Pick a sports league (i.e., the NFL) and have players or teams write down as many cities and/or teams as they can (i.e., the Atlanta Falcons). Whoever gets the most in one minute wins.

Tower of Terror—See which player can build the tallest marshmallow tower in the group in one minute. Tower can only be built using toothpicks and marshmallows.

Toothpick Words—Give each player a large pile of toothpicks, and instruct them to spell out three-letter words without breaking or bending any of the toothpicks. Whoever has the most words when the timer goes off wins.

There are so many problems and bad things that happen every day all around us. If God is everywhere, and if he is as powerful as we talked about last week, then why do you think he doesn't just fix all these problems?

Allow students to answer. Let them know that this is a common question many people ask.

Say, **It's an important question to know the answer to. That is why we will be discussing it today.**

Heart



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus.
(20 – 25 minutes)

Small Group Session 2

LIFE APPLICATION

(Optional) Review the large-group lesson, and share how you personally came to know Jesus and how he has changed (and is changing) your life.

OBJECT LESSON: A TELEVISION REMOTE CONTROL

Show the students a TV remote control, and ask them what it is and what it does.

Say, **The person who is holding this remote control is the person who controls what channel the TV is on, how loud it is, and much more, right? Sometimes the person holding this remote control might choose not to use it. Why do you think they might do that?** (They are letting another person in the room watch what they want.)

God does not like all the bad things that happen. They make him very sad and very mad. God has the power to stop them. He is holding the remote control, but because he loves us he chooses to give us free will. He allows us to choose how we will live our lives.

BAD THINGS HAPPEN BECAUSE OF SIN:

Sadly, everyday people choose to live in ways that harm themselves, people around them, and God's creation. When they do this, God allows there to be consequences for their actions. Sin leads to three things: suffering, isolation and nastiness.

Show kids the graphic representation of S-I-N (printout 1) and explain each of these three results from sin.

Say something like: **We often suffer when we choose to do things that are against God's will. Sin separates us from God because he is perfect and sin makes us imperfect. This makes us isolated. Sin also leads to nastiness and mess in our lives because it means we are not following God's plan for us.**

(Optional) Using some balloons from the earlier activity, try to have the kids play volleyball with an un-inflated balloon. They will not be able to do so very easily. Then have them try to play balloon volleyball with a full balloon.

Explain, **As people, we work best when we are functioning as God designed — full of his Holy Spirit. Working against God's plan does not work well and leads to suffering, isolation, and nastiness** (as shown in the graphic).

Say, God does not push the buttons on the remote control of our lives because he wants us to choose to follow him and choose not to sin—to invite him into our lives because we love him and want to follow him, not because we are forced to. But because God gives us this choice and because many people reject God, there are many problems in the world.

- **What would be different in the world if tomorrow everyone chose to live God's way?**
- **Do you think that people who have accepted Jesus as their Savior still experience problems?**

Hands



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel.
(5 – 10 minutes)

Small Group Session 2

WRAP IT UP: HOPE IN A BROKEN WORLD

Show the children John 16:33. Read the verse aloud, and explain that Jesus' followers do have trouble just like everyone else, but we can have peace because we know that God is with us and in us.

Read and discuss Romans 8:38–39. Explain how these verses give you, personally, hope and comfort.

(optional) Consider having students look up and read the passages in small group. This may take some time teaching students how to find books, chapters, and verses.

Explain, **All of us are sinners, and our sin separates us from God. Jesus came to deliver us from sin and connect us to God. Then he sends us out to bring hope and healing to the broken world. He changes us from the inside out just as the balloon was changed when the air went into it. But he doesn't force us with a remote control. We have to invite him into our lives.**

RESPONSE & REFLECTION

Ask if any of the students want to invite Jesus to be their Savior, and then pray with them to receive him as their Savior.

Ask the students for any additional prayer requests and pray with them. If time permits, review the Bible verse with the students.