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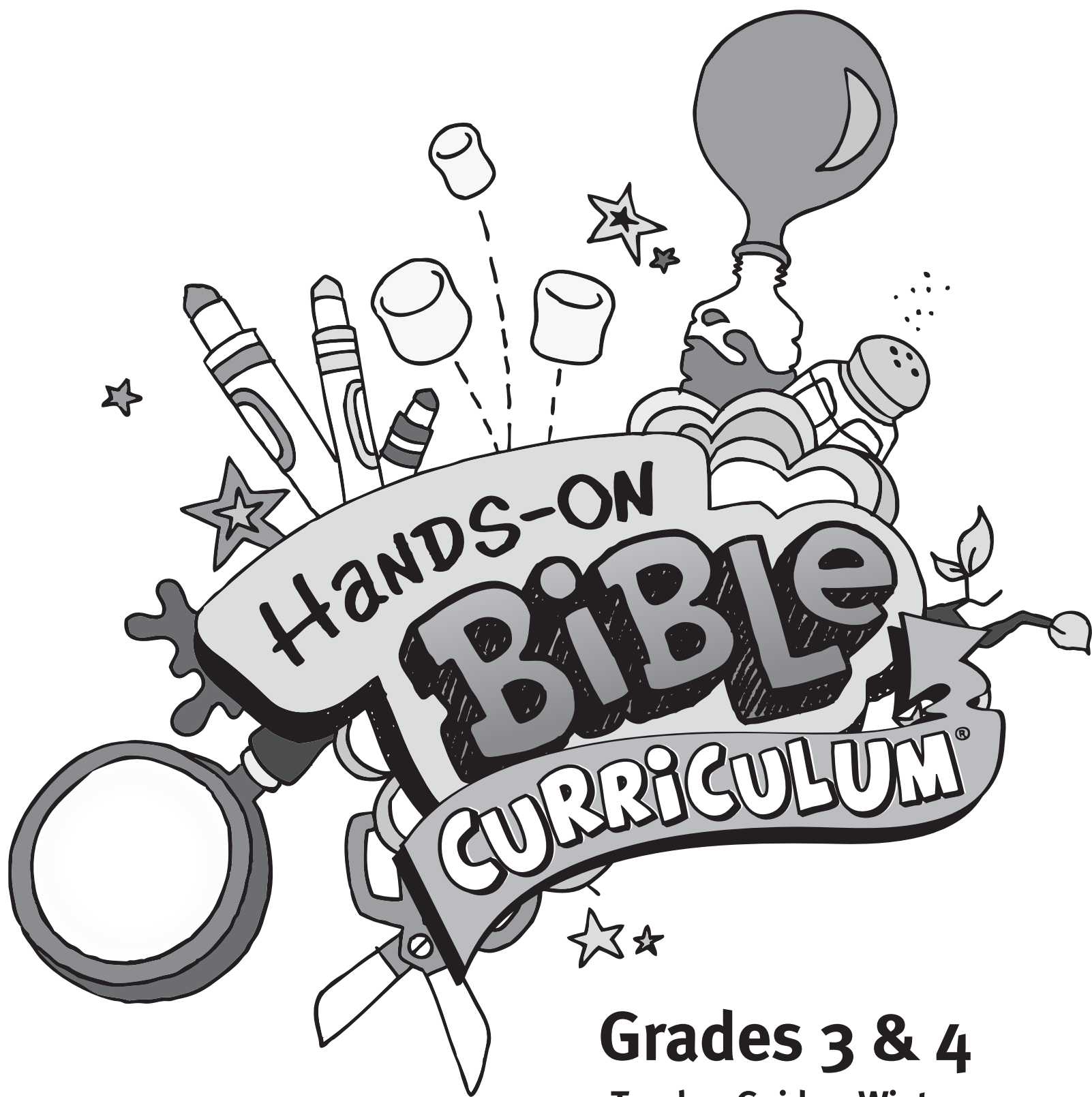
Teacher Guide

GRADES 3 & 4

Winter



Teach as
Jesus Taught!®



Grades 3 & 4

Teacher Guide • Winter

group.com/sunday-school

Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's



Relational

Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable

The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based

Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

We know you care about kids...

We do, too!

That's why we attempt to ensure that all crafts, toys, and gizmos meet or exceed national safety standards—and are produced by manufacturers that don't use child labor or abuse their labor force. You can order Group resources knowing that in addition to caring for *your* kids, you're also caring for children elsewhere.

Let's keep kids safe!

We strive to provide products that are mechanically reliable and hold together during normal, intended usage. Items are also checked for flammability, and both paint and surface coatings are checked for heavy metals—including lead.

You can help your children stay safe by seeing that toys and gizmos are used as designed, for the purposes designed, and that any broken pieces are disposed of promptly and properly. We value your feedback. If you become aware of a problem affecting the safety of any of our products, please inform us immediately.



Group

Hands-On Bible Curriculum®, Grades 3 & 4, Winter

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* Due to the way Christmas falls, we recommend moving the lessons as needed to line up Lesson 3 with the week of Christmas.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR THIRD- AND FOURTH-GRADERS

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Most:

- Work quickly and with good fine-motor coordination.
- Want frequent repetition of activities they've enjoyed.
- Are interested in active games and organized activities.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Most:

- Have feelings that may be hurt easily.
- Are sensitive to praise and criticism from adults.
- Are developing the ability to empathize with others.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

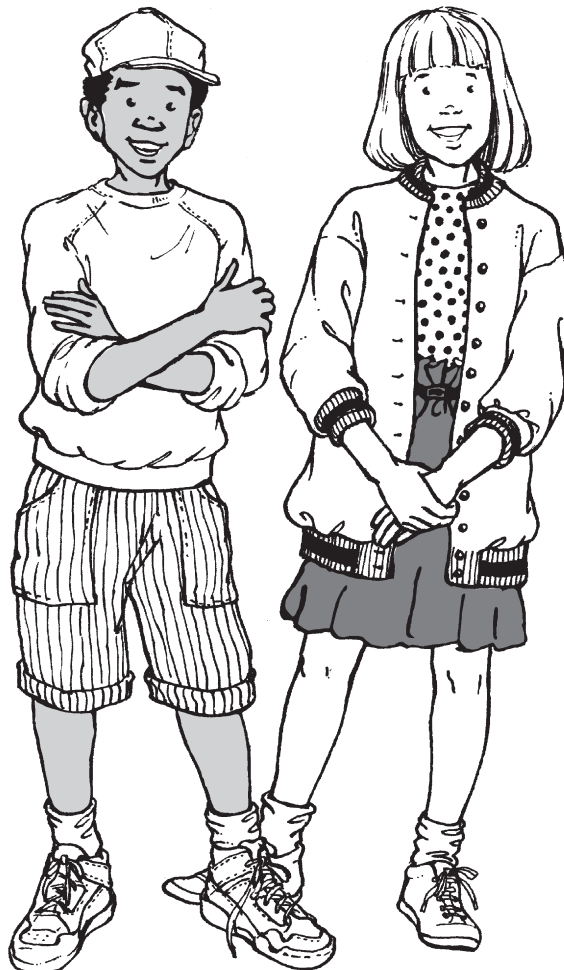
Most:

- Want to be part of a group.
- Enjoy extended group projects.
- Are able to accept limited constructive criticism.
- Naturally avoid interaction with the opposite sex.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Most:

- Can read well.
- Like to be challenged but don't like to fail.
- Need to feel independent; don't always want help from teachers.
- Understand cause and effect; like to arrange and organize information.



SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Most:

- Are able to accept that there are some things about God we don't understand.
- Are ready to relate individual Bible events to the scope of Bible history.
- Recognize the difference between right and wrong; able to make deliberate choices about actions.

Welcome to the Adventure!

Third- and fourth-graders are a ton of fun. They are discovering that their minds work in amazing ways. They are uncovering mountains of new concepts in school in math, science, literature, and relationships. They are determining their filters for the way they view the activities and people in the world around them. You have a most important role in helping them grow in the most important area of their lives—their relationship with Jesus Christ.

These children want to have fun while they are uncovering truths about God and his world. Using these active, hands-on, and participatory activities that involve you and them, learning can become an exciting adventure. Our master teacher, Jesus, used active learning 2,000 years ago, and it still works today!

Third- and fourth-graders learn quickly and don't want to sit still. They enjoy figuring things out and making choices, so we can give them situations to do just that. They want to use all of their senses, interact with others, and work together in pairs or small groups, so engage them in all forms of active learning and object lessons. They want to do it themselves, so allow for trial and error. These children want to belong, so involve everyone. Make sure no one is left out. Most of all just enjoy them. They will want to be with you if you want to be with them.

Here are a few helpful do's and don'ts to make experiential learning work best for your kids:

- **Do think outside the learning-space box!** Move tables so students can move around freely and work in groups. Scope out other areas, such as a foyer, a parking lot, or a fellowship hall, that could be used for activities.
- **Don't turn down the volume!** Recognize the difference between good “learning noise” and a situation needing your attention. Active-learning activities often are fast-paced and noisy.
- **Do take advantage of teachable moments.** An activity that bombs may provide a wonderful opportunity for learning if you ask questions such as “Why didn't this work?” “How is this like what happens in real life?” or “What can we learn from this experience?”
- **Don't show children the contents of the Learning Lab® before they are used in the lessons.** Keep them guessing what's coming next!
- **Do get to know your children.** Be aware of the attitudes they bring with them. They may be dealing with family, school, or relationship issues. Encourage students to share their feelings as they participate in activities.
- **Don't forget—experiential learning is fun and captivating!** Enjoy it! A positive experience learning about God within the safe boundaries of your classroom will lead to more positive experiences with God outside the classroom. What a great way to encourage your students to discover the joy of the Lord firsthand and to grow in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ!

Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies your kids may have. Also, be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.



Making the Most of Your Hands-On Bible Curriculum®

WARNING: **CHOKING HAZARD—**

Learning Lab may contain small parts. Not for children under 3 years.

Module Introductions Within each quarter of Hands-On Bible Curriculum, there are three modules. Each module has a theme that runs throughout the lessons. The introduction to each module includes an overview of the lessons and a chart listing the Bible Point and Scripture used in each lesson.

Bible Point There's one point that you want your children to take home at the end of your lesson. That's the Bible Point. You'll see it referenced in the margin as well as italicized and underlined in the lesson. We've designed for it to be repeated numerous times during the lesson so no one will miss it.

Bible Verse These words, straight from God's Word, show the biblical basis for the lesson. The Bible verse appears in boldface in the lesson.

Teacher Enrichment This part of the lesson is just for you. If you can, read it early in the week. It includes an explanation of the Bible passage and some suggested ways to pray during the week so you'll be prepared, heart and mind, for your important hour with your children.

This Lesson at a Glance This valuable chart shows you the big picture for your lesson. You can quickly see what supplies you'll need and what needs to be done before you begin. A minute on this page will save you 10 during your lesson!

The Jesus Connection To us, this is the most important thing—making the connection between the story and Jesus, the reason for the story. You'll find a Jesus Connection in every lesson, set apart in a box. We want children to find Jesus every week in your class, so don't miss this part of the lesson.

Hands-On Bible® Connection We want all kids to use their Bibles every week. The *Hands-On Bible* is, in our estimation, the best way to get kids into this important book. It's the Bible that kids not only read but also do! In every lesson, you'll find a quick, fun way to get your kids involved in using their Bibles. The tip is in a box that you can't miss.

Teacher Tips You'll find these in the margin throughout the lesson. They're just to give you additional ideas to enhance what you're doing. They vary from alternative ideas for activities to age-level insights.

"Hands-On Fun at Home" Papers These photocopiable pages suggest family activities that will reinforce what your students learned in class.



The pages in this teacher guide are perforated for your convenience. Tear out "Hands-On Fun at Home" and other handouts for easy photocopying, or tear out an entire lesson, and take it to class.

“There is only one thing worth being concerned about.”

—Luke 10:42

What is this one thing? It’s the whole reason for this curriculum—

it’s the whole reason for Sunday school. It’s what we (and you) want your kids to know! Check out what Thom and Joani Schultz (Group’s chairman and chief creative officer) have to say about the one thing and what it means in your life.

In Luke chapter 10, Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha. As Martha worries about preparing dinner and being a busy servant, she gets upset because Mary isn’t helping. But Jesus tells her, “There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Martha was doing good work. In fact, she was serving the Lord. But Jesus made his priority for us clear. He wants to have a loving relationship with us even more than he wants us to serve him.

Many might say Jesus is the one thing. But no, it’s a **growing relationship with Jesus**. Martha would have identified serving Jesus as the one thing. But Mary better understood the *real* one thing.

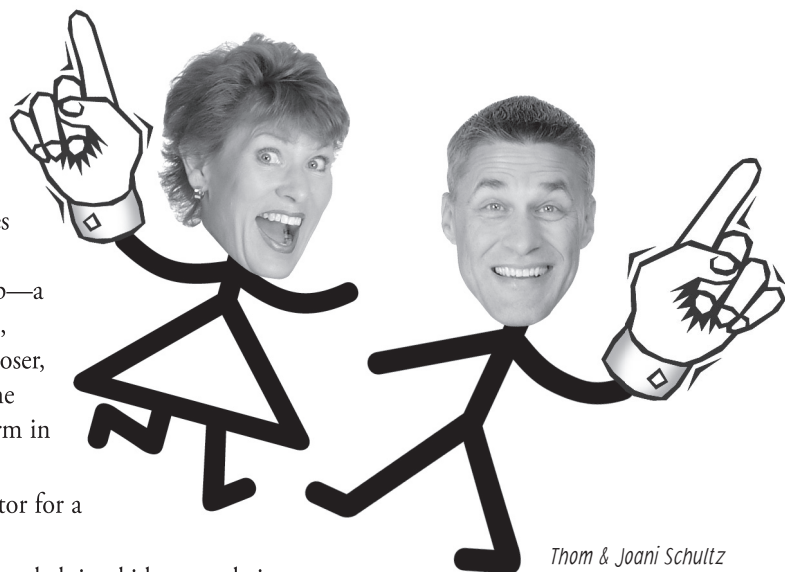
We believe that the church, like Martha, is often distracted by many things. It tends to deprioritize the one thing. Many other well-intentioned things get in the way. Churches and Christians can get sidetracked with an emphasis on rules, political positions, appearances, social action, secondary goals, theological disputes, solemnity, rituals, and more. To the spiritually hungry, churches often seem more preoccupied with these distractions than the one thing.

If the church wishes to pursue a growing relationship with Jesus, it will need to rethink and reprioritize its ministry. A one-thing ministry emphasizes relationship. And we believe a relationship with Jesus resembles in many ways a human-to-human relationship—a friendship. The process of attraction, getting acquainted, enjoying one another’s company, having fun, growing closer, and forming a bond of love and devotion is a natural one that lends clues to how a one-thing relationship may form in the context of church ministry.

How can we build a church that becomes an incubator for a one-thing relationship, for *real* friendship with Jesus?

That’s what Hands-On Bible Curriculum is all about—helping kids grow their friendships with Jesus. As they experience the Scriptures and do the activities, they’re building that relationship in a real and relevant way.

What’s the most important thing your church can do for kids? Help them choose the one thing. And use tools like Hands-On Bible Curriculum to make it a reality.



Thom & Joani Schultz

Jesus' Birth

People love the story of Jesus' birth. Even kids who have never been to Sunday school may know something about Mary and Joseph. Some versions of this well-loved story blend the scriptural accounts with ideas found in television specials, popular Christmas songs, and local Nativity scenes. An innkeeper is never mentioned in the Bible. Neither is a donkey, though we hope that Mary did have something to help her make the 75-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Third- and fourth-graders have heard the Christmas story many times. But with all of the activity and excitement competing for their attention during the Christmas season, they may not grasp the Christmas story's importance. The birth of Jesus marked the beginning of a new relationship between God and people. Use these lessons to help your students realize that Jesus' birth can touch their lives just as it touched the lives of Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds.

Five Lessons on Jesus' Birth

Lesson	Bible Point	Page	Bible Basis
1	All things are possible with God.	11	Luke 1:5-25, 57-66
2	God uses ordinary people.	21	Luke 1:26-45
3	Jesus is God's Son.	33	Luke 2:1-20
4	God rewards those who trust him.	45	Luke 2:21-38
5	God wants us to learn and grow.	55	Luke 2:41-52

The Signal



During the lessons on Jesus' birth, bring kids together by ringing the *clanging bell* found in the Learning Lab. In response to this signal, kids should immediately stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you for their next instructions.

Tell kids about this signal—and practice it—before each lesson begins. Explain that it's important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible. During the lessons, you'll be prompted when to use the signal.

The Time Stuffer

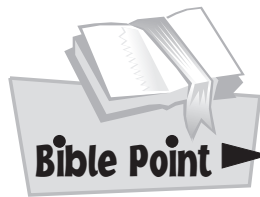
This module's Time Stuffer will encourage kids to make cards and ornaments they'll use to share the joy of Christmas with others. Set up a learning center with construction paper, crayons, scissors, glue, and markers for kids to use during their free time. If you'd like to bring in additional supplies, kids would enjoy craft items such as glitter glue, sequins, and confetti.

Display a list of people or groups who might like to receive a Christmas card from your class. Encourage kids to add to the list. When students have free time during the lessons, they can make Christmas cards for the people on the list. Collect any unfinished cards at the end of each class session and then bring unfinished cards back for kids to work on the following week. Tape a "clothesline" of yarn or string on the wall near the learning center to display the cards. Have kids clip their cards to the string or hang them over the string if the cards are folded. Just before Christmas, let kids deliver or mail their cards.

Digging Into the Bible



Every lesson in each four- or five-week module focuses on a key Bible verse that ties in to the Bible Point of the lesson. In addition, each lesson points to a related activity in the *Hands-On Bible* to enhance your Bible teaching with fun and action. Since kids tend to remember only 10 percent of what they hear but recall 90 percent of what they do, including a *Hands-On Bible* experience with each lesson is a great way to help them remember what they've learned long after class has ended.



Bible Point ▶

All things are possible with God.

Bible Verse

“For nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Students will ■ learn that with God all things are possible,
■ imagine “impossible” things God might help them do, and
■ think of ways to rely on God in difficult situations.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ **John the Baptist is born.**



The story of the birth of John the Baptist has several parallels to the birth of Jesus. It was a miraculous birth (Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and barren), it was announced by an angel, John's name was given by God in advance as was Jesus' name, and both of the boys were the fulfillment of prophecy, destined to fulfill certain purposes before God.

Think about the penalty Zechariah paid for his lack of faith: He was unable to tell anyone the exciting news that the angel had announced to him. Any soon-to-be father would be proud to announce the great things his son would do, but Zechariah couldn't speak. And on top of that, he probably had a rough time explaining why he couldn't speak!

God performed miracles in the two births we're looking at this month. He made Zechariah unable to speak, and then made him able to speak again. He sent angels with announcements to Zechariah and to Mary and Joseph. Our God is a miracle-working God, and anything is possible with him. Use this lesson to help your students begin to understand and trust in God's power.

Other Scriptures used in this lesson are Matthew 18:19-20 and Luke 18:27.




Prayer

- Read Matthew 3:1-3. How does this description of John's actions compare to the angel's prophecy about him in today's passage?
- What “impossible” thing would you like to have God do for you right now?
- Pray: God, use me to teach your children to trust in your power when they...

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your students.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Students Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Attention Grabber	Picture This! —Tell teammates good news without speaking.	Index cards, markers, paper	
Bible Exploration & Application	What Will the Neighbors Say? —Read the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth from Luke 1:5-23, 57-66, and describe what happened from neighbors’ points of view.	Bibles, “The Neighbors Are Talking” handout (p. 19), scissors, paper, pencils	
	Crazy Clown Toss —Attempt an impossible feat; read Luke 1:13-14, 18, and 37; and listen to the Key Verse song.	Bibles, 2 cups, masking tape, CD player	
	Mission Impossible —Create a strategy to help them face difficult situations, and read Matthew 18:19-20 and Luke 18:27.	Bibles, newsprint, markers, CD player	
Closing	It’s Possible! —Write on shapes the “impossible” things God might help them do.	White poster board, utility knife (for teacher use only) or scissors, list from “Mission Impossible” activity, markers, white crayons, CD player	

Welcome



Explain to the kids that whenever you ring the *clanging bell*, they are to stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you. Explain that it's important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible. Practice the signal two or three times.

teacher tips

It's important to say the Bible Point just as it's written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.

Attention Grabber

Picture This!

SUPPLIES: index cards, markers, paper

Form groups of no more than four. Give each group four index cards, markers, and paper.

Say: **You'll have three minutes to think of some really exciting news you'd like to tell someone right away. It might be something that happened at school or something you got in the mail. Write one example on each of your group's index cards.**

After three minutes, ring the *clanging bell* and wait for kids to respond. Then have one person from each group collect the cards and exchange them for another group's cards.

Say: **Take turns choosing one of the cards your group received, but don't show that card to anyone else. Each of you will take turns giving clues to your teammates so they can guess the good news that's written on your card. There's only one catch: You can't say or write a word. Use your markers and paper to draw pictures of your good news, or act out the good news without talking. You have five minutes to see how many good news messages your group can guess.**

After five minutes, ring the *clanging bell* and wait for kids to respond. Then ask any groups who guessed all their good news to stand and take a bow as everyone applauds.

Ask: • **What was it like when you had something important to say but you weren't able to talk or use words?** (It was silly; I was upset; I felt smart, because I found a way to tell my team without talking.)

Say: **Today we're going to read about a man named Zechariah who lost his voice after an angel told him his wife Elizabeth was going to have a baby. For nine months—a whole school year—Zechariah couldn't talk.**

Ask: • **How was this activity like what happened to Zechariah?** (He had great news to tell, but he couldn't talk; he probably had to draw or act things out to get his messages across.)

Say: **Telling something important without being able to talk may have seemed impossible at first. But even without your voices, you were able to communicate your good news to your friends. We should think twice before we say something can't happen. Even when things seem impossible to us, ► all things are possible with God.**

teacher tips

Get to know the students in your class. When you meet your students for the first time, call them by name. Find out about their lives away from church. Learn and recognize their strengths. Make affirmation a regular part of your class. Be sure to compliment your students when you see them practicing what they've learned.

teacher tips

Circulate among groups and offer ideas. Encourage kids to speak quietly so other groups don't overhear their discussions.

As groups exchange cards, be sure each person will have a new card to draw. You may need to take an extra card from one group and give it to another.

◀ BIBLE POINT



Bible Exploration & Application

■ What Will the Neighbors Say?

SUPPLIES: Bibles, “The Neighbors Are Talking” handout (p. 19), scissors, pencils, paper

Before class, photocopy “The Neighbors Are Talking” handout. Cut apart the neighborhood assignments. Say: **Let’s find out more about what happened to Zechariah and Elizabeth.** Distribute Bibles, and ask several volunteers to read aloud **Luke 1:5-20.** Assign each volunteer three to five verses. Have other kids follow along in their Bibles.

Say: **Imagine you’re one of Zechariah and Elizabeth’s neighbors. One day everything seems normal, and the next day this older couple down the street is going to have a baby! You see this whole story taking place, and you have lots to say about it! After you receive your assignment, you’ll have five minutes to read your passage, discuss it, and practice telling your section of the story from the neighbors’ points of view.**

Form four “neighborhoods,” and give each neighborhood paper, a pencil, and an assignment from the handout. Tell each group to choose a Reader to read its Bible passage to the group, a Recorder to write responses to the questions, an Encourager to urge everyone to participate in the discussion, and a Reporter to share the neighborhood’s comments with the class.

As students work, be ready to offer help to any groups that may need guidance to complete the assignment.

After five minutes, ring the *clanging bell*, and gather the neighborhood groups in a circle to tell the story. Beginning with Neighborhood A, have the Reader read the verses that describe the events his or her neighborhood witnessed. Then have the Reporter share the neighbors’ reactions. Other group members may help if the Reporter omits details. Continue with Neighborhoods B, C, and D. When all the groups have reported, ask:

- **Why do you think people were so interested in Zechariah and Elizabeth’s baby?** (Because Zechariah and Elizabeth were too old to have a baby, but they had one anyway; because Zechariah lost his voice.)
- **What do you think people must have thought about God after seeing these things happen?** (That God can do anything; that you never know what God might do; that God is powerful.)



Say: **God did something very special when he gave Zechariah and Elizabeth a baby boy named John. If people hadn’t seen this happen, they might have thought it was impossible. But God was making preparations for another amazing birth, the birth of Jesus. If we didn’t know about Elizabeth’s baby, we might think it was impossible for Mary to have a baby. But now we know that all things are possible with God. And because of that we can look forward to the miraculous birth of Jesus.**

teacher tips

If you have groups of three or fewer students, have students fill more than one role. If you have groups of five or more students, assign more than one student to be an Encourager.



■ Crazy Clown Toss

SUPPLIES: Bibles, 2 cups, masking tape, CD player



Make a line on the floor with masking tape, and set the two cups six feet away from the line. Gather kids together.

Say: **The angel's message must have surprised Zechariah. Let's look at that part of the story again.** Ask volunteers to read the angel's message in **Luke 1:13-14** and Zechariah's response in **Luke 1:18** as other kids follow along in their Bibles.

Say: **The idea of Elizabeth having a baby seemed impossible to Zechariah. His first words to the angel show that he didn't understand how this could happen. I wonder what you'd say if you were asked to do something you thought was impossible.**

Form two teams, and have each team form a line behind the masking tape. Give each team five *stacking clowns*. Say: **When I say "go," the first person on each team should try to toss the stacking clowns into the cup. See if you can get all five clowns into the cup in 15 seconds. When I ring the clanging bell and say "change," you must immediately gather the stacking clowns and give them to the next person in your line. Oh...and you'll need to keep your eyes closed while you're throwing. No peaking!**

Begin the activity, and ring the *clanging bell* and say "change" every 15 seconds. Give kids each several turns, if you have time. Then collect the *stacking clowns*, and place them out of sight.

Have kids stand in a circle. Say: **Raise your hands when you think of an answer to each question I ask. I'd like to hear lots of different, interesting answers. When someone gives an answer you've thought of and you don't have anything more to add, you may sit down. When everyone is seated, I'll ask you to stand again for the next question.**

Ask: • **What was your reaction when I told you the rules of the activity?** (I thought it sounded impossible; a little excited; I didn't think I'd do very well.)

• **Did you think there was any way you could get all the clowns in the cup? Why or why not?** (No way, it was too challenging; no, not even with my eyes open; maybe I'd get one or two.)

• **How is the way you felt about the clown toss like the way Zechariah may have felt when he heard that Elizabeth would have a baby?** (He thought it was impossible; he didn't understand how that could happen.)

• **What are some ways we could get all the clowns in the cups if we tried again?** (Not have our eyes closed; stand a little closer; give each person more time.)

Say: **Sometimes things seem impossible to us, like our clown toss challenge. We don't always see how things might work out. We can understand how Zechariah might have felt. But let's take a look at how God sees these things.**

Have children turn in their Bibles to **Luke 1:37**, and ask for a volunteer to read the verse aloud: ► **"For nothing is impossible with God."**

Say: **Even when things seem impossible to us, ► all things are possible with God. Let's listen to a song to help us remember that.** Play "Nothing Is Impossible" (Luke 1:37) (track 2) on the CD. If you have time, play the song a second time as you lead kids in singing along. Lyrics are in the back of this teacher guide.

teacher tips

As you teach third- and fourth-graders, keep in mind the following aspects of their mental development:

- They can read well.
- They like to be challenged but don't like to fail.
- They need to feel independent and don't always want help from teachers.
- They understand cause and effect and like to arrange and organize information.

◀ BIBLE VERSE

◀ BIBLE POINT



Bible Insight

Luke alternated the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist as a literary device to link these stories to the prophecies of the Old Testament. In so doing, Luke clearly identified John as a continuance of the prophetic line and Jesus as the promised Messiah.

HANDS-ON BIBLE

Give each student two glasses of water and a cork. It would be wise to have towels on hand as well! Make sure kids have their *Hands-On Bibles*.



Have students turn to Luke 1 in their Bibles and complete the “Is That Possible?” activity found there. When kids are finished, ask:

- **Did you think it would be possible to make the cork float in the middle of the glass? Why or why not?** (No, because it kept bumping against the sides; yes, I knew there had to be some way.)
- **How can this experiment help you remember that nothing is impossible for God?** (I can remember that even when things seem impossible, God can still find a way; I can remember that I don’t always know how things can work out, but God does know; God can make anything work out; nothing is too hard for God.)



Mission Impossible

SUPPLIES: Bibles, newsprint, markers, CD player



Form a large circle. Write the heading “Impossible Missions” on the newsprint, and choose a volunteer to list ideas as kids mention them.

Say: **Have you ever said, “That’s impossible”? We may think lots of things are so difficult they could never happen. Let’s make a list of difficult or impossible situations you might face each day. For example, spending an entire day without arguing with your brother or sister may seem impossible to you. What other impossible situations can you think of?**

Allow time for kids to think of impossible situations and for the volunteer to list them. Then say: **Just because something’s impossible for people doesn’t mean it’s really impossible. I’ll show you what I mean.** Distribute Bibles, and ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 18:27**. Have other students follow along in their Bibles.

Ask: • **Why do you think God can do things that are impossible for people?** (Because he’s God; God is more powerful than people; God knows everything.)

• **What are some ways God can help you do things that seem impossible?** (God can change my heart so I won’t get angry at my little sister; God can give me patience when I have to wait for something.)

Form no more than four teams. Say: **Look over our list of impossible situations, and pick the three you think would be hardest. You’ll have about two minutes to decide.**

Play “Mission Impossible” (track 3) on the CD as teams work. When the music stops, call for kids’ attention by ringing the *clanging bell*. Wait for kids to respond, and then have a representative from each group put an X next to the situations on the newsprint that his or her group decided were most difficult. Count the number of X’s next to each situation, and then announce the four most impossible situations. Assign each team one of the four situations. Say: **You’ve just been assigned to a Mission Impossible team. Your assignment is to develop a plan to help us rely on God when we face the situation you’ve been assigned.**

Distribute markers and newsprint. Have each team choose a Recorder who will listen to the team's suggestions and write its plan and a Reporter who'll share the plan with the class. Encourage students to choose roles different from those they had in the previous activity.

Say: **You'll have about four minutes to create your plan. Go!**

You might play "Mission Impossible" (track 3) or "Nothing Is Impossible" (Luke 1:37) (track 2) on the CD again while students are working. After three or four minutes, ring the *clanging bell* and wait for kids to respond. Then form a large circle. Have each team's Reporter share the team's plan with the class. Then ask:

• **Was it easy or difficult to think of a plan for handling these impossible situations? Explain.** (Easy, there are lots of ways to learn to trust God; difficult, we don't like to face difficult things.)

• **How can God help us handle these impossible situations?** (God will help us know what to say and do; God can make things turn out for the best.)

Say: **Believing that God can do anything can have amazing results in our lives. Listen to what Jesus says about the power of faith.** Have a volunteer read aloud **Matthew 18:19-20** as other kids follow along in their Bibles. Then ask:

• **What does this passage say about asking God for help?** (If two believers agree on what they ask God, he will do it; Jesus promises to be with us whenever two or three of us gather together.)

Say: **Whenever we face a situation that seems impossible to us, we need to remember that we're not alone. ► All things are possible with God, and we can pray and ask God to help us. Find a partner, and take a moment to pray for the impossible situations you talked about with your teams.**

Give kids a minute or two to pray for the situations. Then close by saying "amen!"



If students seem stumped, ask questions such as, "What's the hardest thing about making friends?" "What's hard about getting along with people?" "When is it tough to do what your parents say to do?" By asking such questions, you'll help kids think of their own examples.

To enhance this activity, you might want to play the role of a secret agent, complete with trench coat, sunglasses, and briefcase. When you hand teams their newsprint, you could take it out of a file labeled "Top Secret."



Closing

■ It's Possible!

SUPPLIES: white poster board, utility knife (for teacher use only) or scissors, list from "Mission Impossible" activity, markers, white crayons, CD player



tracks 2, 4

Before class, use the utility knife to cut the poster board into 5-inch shapes, such as circles and squares. Make sure your shapes are "plump" enough for kids to draw pictures inside; stars and triangles are not recommended. You'll need one shape for each student.

Say: **Whenever we face a situation that seems impossible to us, we might feel like we don't know what to do. But God can help us see what to do, because ► all things are possible with God. Let's make something to remind us of this wonderful truth.**

I want you to look at our list of impossible situations again. This time, think about one of the situations that may be true in your life. Maybe you're going through one of these situations that make you feel like you don't know what to do, and you just need God to help you see the way through it.

As kids consider impossible situations, give each one a poster-board shape.



Say: **The next thing you're going to do is make a picture that shows your impossible situation. This can be an actual drawing of your impossible situation. Or you could draw a symbol that shows how you feel in that situation. For example, you could have dark colors swirling together into a big glob.**

Provide markers, and give kids time to decorate their shapes with pictures or symbols that remind them of impossible situations. Instruct kids to leave a small border around the shape to write on later.

As kids draw, distribute white crayons so that students can write "all things are possible with God" around the border. Then have them color over the words with a marker, revealing what they wrote. Play "Christmas Music Medley" (track 4) and "Nothing Is Impossible" (Luke 1:37) (track 2) on the CD in the background as children work.

When everyone has had a chance to draw and write, say:

When you feel like you can't see what to do with an impossible situation, you can always turn to God. He'll help you see what to do. You used white crayon to write on your crafts and saw the words appear when you colored over them. Every time you look at your drawing, you'll be reminded that God can help you see what to do, because all things are possible with God.

Find a partner, and take a moment to pray for the impossible situations you drew. Ask God to help you see what to do as you face these situations.

Give kids a minute to pray, and then close by thanking God for his awesome power.



BIBLE POINT ►



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.


Photocopy the "Hands-On Fun at Home" handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week's topic.

The Neighbors Are Talking



Neighborhood A

Read **Luke 1:21-23**. You are the people standing outside the Temple when Zechariah came out.

- How did you know something had happened to Zechariah?
 - What did you think when Zechariah couldn't talk?
- 



Neighborhood B

Read **Luke 1:57-58**. You are the neighbors who rejoiced.

- What did you say to each other when Elizabeth's baby was born?
- Why were you so happy?



Neighborhood C


Read **Luke 1:59-63**. You are the people who were at the scene as the baby was being named.

- What was surprising about the baby's name?
- What did you say when Elizabeth chose the name John?



Neighborhood D

Read **Luke 1:64-66**. You were there when Zechariah began to talk again.

- What kinds of things did you hear him say?
 - What did you think when Zechariah began to talk again?
- 

Hands-On Fun at Home

LESSON 1



All things are possible with God.

Bible Basis: John the Baptist is born.



Bible Verse: "For nothing is impossible with God"
(Luke 1:37).

Possibilities

Practice seeing new possibilities by playing this game. Choose three or four common objects in your house, such as a spoon, a box, a sock, and an envelope. Let everyone take turns suggesting a different way to use each object. Name as many new possibilities for each object as you can. Then go on to the next object. Finish by taking turns naming something you think each of your family members might do well someday.

Faith Walk

"Adopt" someone who's alone in your community this Christmas season.

Check with your church or community agencies for names of people who don't have families living nearby. Talk about ways your family could show God's love to those people. Plan to do something for or with that person once a week during the Christmas season.

Way to Pray

Give family members each a sheet of white paper, and have them fold and cut the paper into a paper snowflake. When everyone has finished cutting a snowflake, have each person in your family name a difficult situation

he or she might face this week and write it on a snowflake. For example, maybe someone is working on a hard project at work or school, or someone might need to apologize for something he or she has done wrong. Hang the snowflakes on your Christmas tree to remind you to pray for one another.

Notables

Ask each person in your family to fill out a list like the one below. One night after dinner, share your lists as a family. Then celebrate God's faithfulness by having an ice cream "praise party"!

God + Me = Possibility!

What possibilities do you think God might have in mind for you?





Teacher Guide

GRADES 3 & 4

Winter

Teach as Jesus Taught!®

JESUS USED EVERYDAY OBJECTS—a mustard seed, a fig tree, a lost coin—to teach his disciples the truths that would change the world. With Hands-On Bible Curriculum, you can teach as Jesus taught, using fun surprises that children can touch, see, and smell to relate eternal truths they won't forget.

This quarter your 3rd- and 4th-graders will learn these important Bible lessons:

JESUS' BIRTH

Luke 1:5-25, 57-66

Luke 1:26-45

*Luke 2:1-20

Luke 2:21-38

Luke 2:41-52

All things are possible with God.

God uses ordinary people.

Jesus is God's Son.

God rewards those who trust him.

God wants us to learn and grow.

JESUS' MIRACLES

John 2:1-11

Luke 5:17-26

Luke 9:28-36

John 11:1-44

Jesus performed miracles so people would believe in God.

Jesus is able to take care of our hurts.

Jesus' power comes from God.

Jesus has power over death.

JESUS, OUR FRIEND

Luke 19:1-10

Mark 6:45-51

John 15:12-17

Luke 22:54-62; John 21:15-17

Real friends stick up for each other.

Real friends comfort each other when they're sad or afraid.

Real friends don't ask you to do things that are wrong.

Real friends still love you, even if you disappoint them.

*Due to the way Christmas falls, we recommend moving the lessons as needed to line up Lesson 3 with the week of Christmas.

Also available:

AWARD-WINNING HANDS-ON BIBLE®

God's Word comes alive with hundreds of fun, interactive activities. It also coordinates with Hands-On Bible Curriculum!



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