Group

Teacher Guide

GRADES 5 & 6

Winter

Teach as Jesus Taught!®

Grades 5&6

Teacher Guide • Winter

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Group
Real. Bold. Love.

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.

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Hands-On Bible Curriculum®, Grades 5 & 6, 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.

Welcome to the Adventure!

Whether you're a veteran or a novice teacher, fifth- and sixth-graders are full of surprises! You just can't predict whether they're going to be in their child mode or their adult mode. They've been exposed to more temptations and choices than we were at that age, and they're pretty savvy about the world! You have a major role at this significant development stage for these boys and girls as you help them grow in the most important relationship in their lives—their relationship with Jesus Christ.

These preteens need to discover the "why" behind what they are learning and to develop their emerging high-level thinking skills while still having fun. Using these active, hands-on, and participatory activities that involve you and them, learning can become an adventure. Our master teacher, Jesus, used active learning 2,000 years ago, and it still works today!

Preteens crave action, so we can get them on their feet and moving. They enjoy problem solving, so we can encourage them to think, to ponder, and to imagine. And they love to talk, an opportunity we can offer as we allow them to discuss and work together in pairs or small groups. Preteens want to be engaged in all forms of active learning: simulation games, service projects, experiments, construction projects, purposeful games, field trips, and, of course, the most powerful form of active learning of all—real-life experiences.

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

• **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 students 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 students.** 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 let the planned curriculum hinder ministry opportunities.** Listen to your students, encourage them, and address their questions.

• **Don't forget—experiential learning is fun and captivating!** 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 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—.
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.

"Takin' It Home" Papers These photocopiable pages suggest family activities that will reinforce what your students learned in 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.

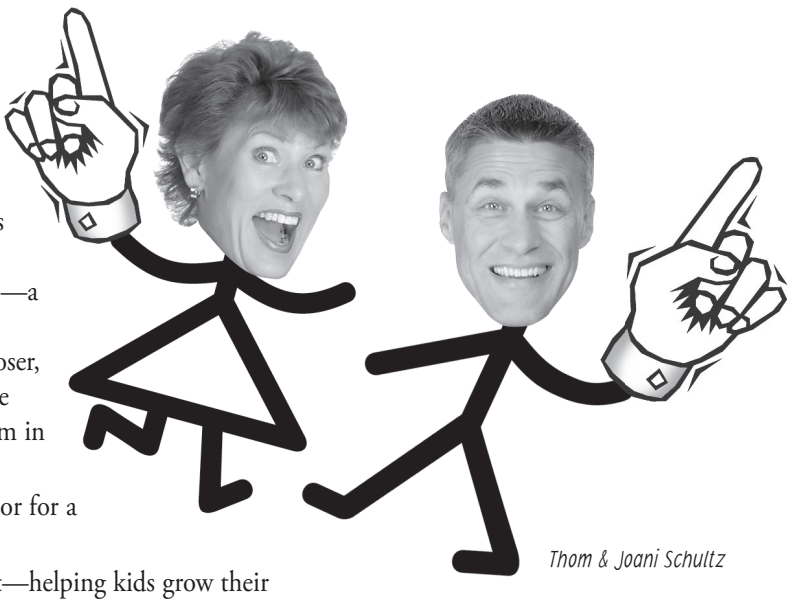
In Luke chapter 10, Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha. As Martha worries about preparing dinner and being a busy servant, she gets upset because Mary isn't helping. But Jesus tells her, "There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away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



Thom & Joani Schultz

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.

Understanding Your Fifth- and Sixth-Graders

Mental Development

- Have well-developed critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Are beginning to question authority figures; prefer to reason things through for themselves.
- Are interested in how past and present world events affect their lives.

Social Development

- Spend a lot of time with one best friend.
- Usually prefer to stick to same-sex friendships but may also begin to explore boyfriend-girlfriend relationships.
- Thrive on organized games and group activities.

Emotional Development

- Frequently get mixed messages about being children or being mature and ready to accept responsibility for choices and actions.
- Are subject to strong fears about losing parents, being abandoned, being rejected by friends, being victims of violence, or becoming ill.
- Are strongly influenced by heroes and role models.

Physical Development

- Have high energy levels and demand a lot of physical activity.
- Girls tend to be taller and more physically developed than boys.
- Boys often find this intimidating and tend to avoid physical contact with girls.

Spiritual Development

- Want everything to be fair.
- Want to test what they've been taught about God against their own experiences.
- Are able to make choices about finding God's will and following it.

When Jesus Came

The birth of Jesus Christ is one of the Bible's most loved stories.

Usually, children learn the story at a very young age. And by the time kids reach elementary age, they not only spout the proper words, but they often do so with little emotion. In other words, one of God's greatest miracles is often reduced to mere "Sunday school answers."

But the story of Jesus' birth is more than a collection of words for the season of Christmas. On the contrary, the Incarnation is foundational to Christianity. God becoming man. Divinity taking on flesh and blood. Faith in Christ's birth is but the beginning of understanding the entire gospel message.

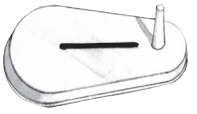
Developing an active faith must become a high priority for young people today, especially preteens. These four lessons will do more than just retell a familiar story to preteens; they'll also reveal the importance of faithfulness and obedience in the lives of God's people.

O come, all ye faithful…O come, let us adore him!

Four Lessons on When Jesus Came

Lesson	Bible Point	Page	Bible Basis
1	People who truly love God obey him faithfully.	11	Luke 1:26-38
2	We can prepare for Jesus' coming.	23	Luke 3:2b-4
3	Jesus' birth is something to celebrate!	35	Luke 2:1-20
4	Becoming like Jesus means caring about others.	45	Philippians 2:1-11

The Signal



During these lessons, your signal to get kids back together during activities will be to sound the *noisemaker* found in the Learning Lab. In response to sounding the *noisemaker*, kids should stop what they're doing and focus on you for their next instructions.

Tell students about this signal before the lesson begins. Explain that it's important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.

The Time Stuffer

This module's Time Stuffer will encourage kids to focus on sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others during this holiday time of the year. Set out notecards, markers, scissors, small pieces of yarn, Christmas wrapping paper, tape, and candy canes for the students to use.

During their free moments, have students look up some of this module's key Bible verses or other verses that tell about Jesus and why he came. Some good examples are **Isaiah 9:6**; **John 3:16**; **John 13:35**; **John 14:6**; and **Romans 6:23**. Instruct them to write the words of the verse they select on a notecard. Then they can wrap the card with festive Christmas wrap or tie the card to a candy cane with yarn.

Direct your students to give away their Christmas notecards each week to someone who is not in the class, such as a friend or family member. Encourage them to use the opportunity to share their thoughts with the person they give the notecard to about when Jesus came, why he came, and the meaning of Christmas.

Remembering the Bible

Every lesson in each four- to 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 further illustrate 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, working in a *Hands-On Bible* experience with each lesson is another great way to get them to remember what they've learned long after class has ended.

Bible Point People who truly love God obey him faithfully.

Bible Verse

"If you love me, obey my commandments" (John 14:15).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Students will
- discover that obeying God means taking risks in faith,
- learn that God faithfully rewards obedience, and
- encourage one another's obedience to God.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ Ready and Waiting

Because the Gospel writer Luke was a physician and most likely intimately aware of the process of birth and life, the event of Jesus' birth may have held great signficance for him. Though it is possible to translate the word virgin in Luke 1:27 simply as "young woman," it seems clear in the context and from other statements that virgin is what Luke intended. He was no doubt seeking to confirm in people's minds that this was a miraculous, supernatural birth.

Zeroing in on this supernatural theme, Luke begins by describing the visit of an angel. The angel's announcement that Mary was favored by God no doubt caused her some confusion. She was an obscure person in an obscure family in Israel. In her culture, not unlike ours today, it was assumed that those in high positions were the ones favored by God.

The angel's description of her child must have confused Mary even more. How could any human—much less a lowly young virgin—give birth to the Son of God? However, Mary's response shows us her heart. As confusing and frightening as the angel's message must have been, Mary wanted what God wanted for her.

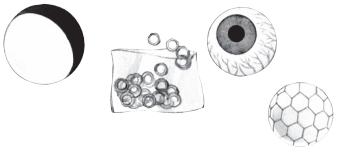
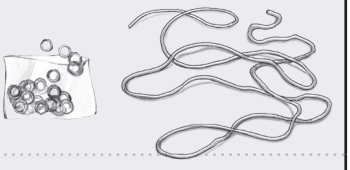
Prayer

- Read John 14:15-16.
- What is God asking you to do for his sake today?
- Pray: Lord, I love you. Help me to teach my students how they can show their love to you, too, by obeying you in…

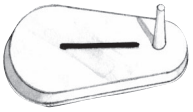
Before the Lesson

- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart.
- Make photocopies of the "Takin' It 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	**The Waiting Game—**Listen and wait for their names to be called.		
Bible Exploration & Application	**Love Worth Taking Risks For—**Explore Luke 1:26-38, and determine what risks they'd take for people they love.	Bibles, slips of paper, pencils, "Way to Obey!" handouts (p. 20)	
	Friends to Help Me Obey— Using neon rings, recall the good things God gives when they obey him, and discuss Luke 1:39-45.	Bible	
	Propelling Obedience—Blow to propel cotton balls, and then work in pairs to encourage each other even when they're weary.	Cotton balls, masking tape	
	Obedience Song—Read Mary's song in Luke 1:46-49 before writing lyrics praising God for times they're obedient to him.	Bibles, paper, pencils or pens	
Closing	**Sticking Together—**Commit to helping each other obey God.		

Welcome



As kids arrive, teach them the signal for the quarter. Tell kids that whenever you sound the *noisemaker*, they're to stop what they're doing and look at you without talking. Explain that when you have everyone's attention, you'll continue the lesson.

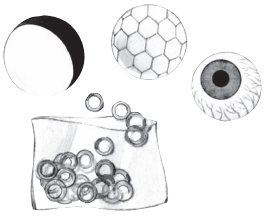
teacher tips

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

■ *The Waiting Game*

SUPPLIES: *none*



Have kids stand in a circle, facing outward. Stand in the center of the circle, balancing the *two-tone superball, sticky sports ball, inflatable eyeball*, and *bag of neon rings* from the Learning Lab. Say: **When your name is called, quickly turn around and catch the item I'll be throwing to you. Don't turn around unless your name is called.**

Call a student's name, and throw the *two-tone superball* to him or her. When the student catches the ball (or retrieves it if it gets away), have him or her call another student's name from across the circle and toss the ball to that person. Then throw the *sticky sports ball*, the *inflatable eyeball*, and the *bag of neon rings* in the same manner. Encourage the students to continue tossing items to one another, keeping the volley in play for as long as possible and until each student's name has been called. Don't worry if items get dropped.

Collect the *two-tone superball, sticky sports ball, inflatable eyeball*, and *bag of neon rings* for use in later activities.

Have kids turn around and sit down.

Say: **Who likes to wait? It doesn't come easily to most people. As you waited for your name to be called and someone to throw something to you, you may have even become a little nervous or anxious.**

Ask: • **What went through your mind as all the different items were being tossed back and forth?** (That it was getting confusing; that I'd drop something.)

• **How did you react when your name was called?** (I jumped; I dropped the ball; I was startled.)

Say: **Perhaps you even got a little confused with all the different items being tossed at once. Life can get like that, when it seems like everyone is telling us what to do all at once.**

Ask: • **How is the confusion you just felt like the confusion you sometimes feel when it seems as if everyone is asking something at once?** (It's the same; having everyone boss you around is even worse.)

• **How is that like the way you might feel if you suddenly realize that God is asking you to do something?** (Sometimes I'm not sure if I'm hearing God correctly; it could be a little scary.)

• **What was it like to catch or drop the object being tossed to you?** (It was hard; easy; not that big of a deal.)

• **How is that like the way you feel when you obey or disobey God?** (It's hard to obey God; it's easy to obey God; I don't care either way.)

Say: **It can get confusing sometimes to know for sure if God is asking you to do something, and it's not always easy to be ready to obey God when we do. When we don't obey, it's easy to think that we've gotten confused and "dropped the ball" and let God down. God loves us anyway, but we should keep trying to do our best and listen for him closely, because ►*people who truly love God obey him faithfully.***

BIBLE VERSE►

Today's Bible verse, John 14:15, gives us Jesus' actual words on that subject ►"If you love me, obey my commandments." One way we can show God how much we love him is to be ready to hear and obey what he wants us to do, when he wants us to do it!

Bible Exploration & Application

■ *Love Worth Taking Risks For*

SUPPLIES: *Bibles, slips of paper, pencils, "Way to Obey!" handouts (p. 20)*

Have kids form groups of four. Make sure each student has a Bible, a "Way to Obey!" handout, and a pencil. Have each group appoint a Reader to read the Bible passages and ask the questions, a Scribe to write down the group's answers, an Encourager to make sure everyone participates, and a Reporter to tell the class about the group's discoveries. Tell kids you'll briefly sound the *noisemaker* every two minutes to let them know they should move along to the next question.

When groups have finished discussing the questions on their handouts, ask Reporters to share their groups' answers with the whole class. Say: **When Mary decided to obey God, it meant she would have a baby when she wasn't married. Other people may have gossiped about her or laughed at her, but she obeyed God anyway.**

Ask: • **Why did Mary obey God even though it was hard?** (Because she loved God; because she knew God was giving her an honor.)

• **What makes it easy or hard for you to obey someone?** (Easy when I trust them; hard when they yell at me a lot, the way my dad does.)

• **How do people's reactions affect your willingness to obey God?** (Sometimes I hold back from obeying; I don't care what other people think, I need to do what God says.)

• **What reaction from others makes it most difficult for you to obey God?** (When they laugh at me; when they call me stupid for following God.)

Say: **Mary took a big risk to obey God, but she did it out of love for God. How much would you be willing to risk for someone you love? Let's find out.**

Hand out slips of paper. Have kids each write down the names of three or four people they love. These people could be family members, friends, teachers, someone from church, or another important person. Say: **Imagine one of the people you listed is in one of the following situations. Jump to your feet and shout, "I will!" if you would be willing to take the risk. If you wouldn't, then remain seated, cross your arms, and say, "No way!"**

If you have any groups with fewer than four kids, combine some of the roles within the group. For example, the Scribe can also be the Reporter. If you have groups larger than four, have kids in these groups rotate roles for each question.

Bible Insight

Mary did not respond to the angel's message with disbelief, but simply with puzzlement. "But how can I have a baby?" she asked the angel. When the angel explained, she humbly accepted her role in God's unfolding plan for the Messiah. She must have known, though, that she would face embarrassment and suspicion because of her situation.

Read the following situations:

• As you're walking to school, you see the person you love in a car that's stalled on the train tracks. The latch on the seat belt is stuck, and the person can't get out. You can hear a train in the distance. Will you risk your life to try to save the person?

• You're just feeling accepted into a group of popular kids at your school. One morning, you're walking down the hall with them and you see your best friend trip and scatter books all over the place. Your new friends insult your best friend with cruel words. Will you risk embarrassment and rejection from the group by going to help your best friend?

• One of your friends has started a friendship with a new kid who is kind of wild. One day, you see this kid give drugs to your friend. Will you risk your friendship by talking to your friend or reporting what you saw to a teacher?

• You are hanging out with some of your classmates, and someone starts saying some negative things about Christianity and people who follow Christ. Will you risk ridicule by speaking up about your faith in Jesus Christ?

After kids have responded to each situation, ask:

• What was easy or hard about making your decisions? (The hard part was knowing I could get hurt myself; the easy part was because I would want to help my friend.)

• How does the decision change when it's for someone you love? (It's easier to help someone you love; it's still hard, but you have to do the right thing to help your friend.)

• How much do you love Jesus Christ? Do you love him enough to be made fun of by your peers? Explain. (Yes, I'd be willing to defend my faith; I think I'd say something, but it wouldn't be easy.)

Say: **You may never be required to risk your life for a loved one, but you may have to stand up to your friends and peers someday about your faith in Jesus Christ. But don't forget, Jesus was willing to stand up for you and even take your sins upon himself so that you could share eternal life with God. Now that's a true friend!**

Have kids turn to a partner in their group and name one risk they would consider taking for their relationship with Jesus Christ. It could be sharing with a classmate how they pray, or approaching a parent about an unresolved issue for which they need Jesus' help.

Say: **We learned that taking risks for those we love can cost us something. Mary took big risks to do what she did. We learn from her story that even when it's hard, ►*people who truly love God obey him faithfully.* Maybe someday we will have to risk something big for Jesus. Let's look at how we, too, can be encouraged to obey God.**

teacher tips

Fifth- and sixth-graders are used to rules, and they often see them as impositions and barriers. But we know that as Christians we can choose to obey God because we want to, not because we have to. Because of the new covenant with God that Jesus brings, we can express our love for God and our desire to grow closer to him by following his guidelines.

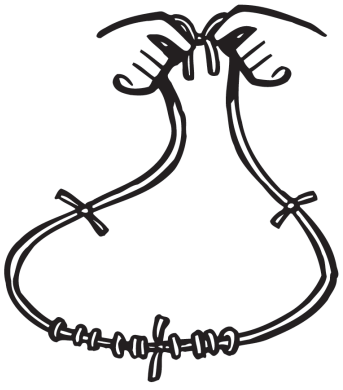
◄BIBLE POINT

Encourage active participation in the discussion by following up kids' answers with questions such as "What did you mean by that?" and "Can you tell me more?"

■ Friends to Help Me Obey

SUPPLIES: *Bible*

You'll need to prepare for this activity before class. Count out a quantity of *neon rings* equal to about three times the number of students in your class, and string them on the *rainbow string* (there are about 150 rings in the bag). Tie the two ends of the *rainbow string* together, forming a large loop holding the *neon rings*.



Hold up the *rainbow string* loop and say: **This loop represents how friends have helped us be faithful to God.**

Share one example of how a friend encouraged you to be faithful, and then slip your little finger inside one of the *neon rings* (or simply grab one of the rings if your finger won't fit). Say: **Think about a time a friend has encouraged you to be faithful to God. When you have one example, come up to the loop and tell about the experience. You don't have to go into detail if you don't want to. Then place your finger in one of the *neon rings*, and pull the loop taut.**

We will space ourselves around the loop so everyone can fit around it. Also, it will be easier for everyone to fit if you don't pick a ring on the loop that is right next to the one your neighbor is holding. I suggest that you leave at least two empty rings between your finger and your neighbor's.

After everyone has joined the loop, say: **There are extra rings in our loop. Think up another one or two situations where friends have helped you be faithful. For each situation you remember, place another finger in another *neon ring*. There should be enough rings for each person to have three rings.**

Give kids a few minutes to recall examples and to put on the rings. Then ask:

• **How are we being held together in this circle?** (By the *neon rings*; by the *rainbow string*.)

• **What would happen if some of us let go?** (The loop would fall; we would drop the string.)

• **How is the way the *rainbow string* holds us all together like how your friends encourage you to hold on to your faith?** (We need our friends for encouragement; my friends build me up in my faith when they pray for me.)

• **How does it make you feel to remember something a friend did to encourage you?** (Good; glad we're friends.)

• **How did your friend's encouragement help to strengthen your faith?** (Becky gave me a psalm to read when I was sad, and it made me feel better; Jacob prayed with me, and I got excited when God answered the prayer.)

Read **Luke 1:39-45** aloud.

Ask: • **How do you think Elizabeth's encouragement helped Mary to be faithful?** (They were cousins, so Mary probably trusted Elizabeth; Elizabeth was pregnant, too, and her baby was telling her something about Mary's baby.)

• **How can your friends' encouragement help you obey God faithfully?** (My friends can challenge me to be obedient; when they do the right thing, I want to follow their example.)

Say: **We hold each other up in faith by encouraging each other to obey God. Just as Elizabeth encouraged Mary's obedience, we can encourage one another. ►*People who truly love God obey him faithfully.* Let's look at the blessings of that obedience.**

Return the *neon rings* and *rainbow string* to the Learning Lab. Remember to untie the *rainbow string* loop before the next lesson.

HANDS-ON BIBLE

Set out some corks and drinking glasses filled almost to the top with water. Say: **Mary was told by the angel Gabriel that she would be the mother of God's Son. That seemed impossible to Mary, but she believed anyway and chose to obey God. Turn to Luke 1 in your *Hands-On Bible,* and do the activity called "Is That Possible?" using the supplies I've provided.**

When students finish floating the corks, ask:

• **Think of a time when you felt that God asked you to do something that seemed impossible, but you did it anyway. How did you show your obedience and love for God through your actions? What happened?** (I talked about Jesus to some people I didn't know, and they were nice to me; I prayed for a sick lady in our church, and she got better.)

• **Is there an area in your life today in which God is calling you to obey? What will you do?** (I think maybe I should sing in the choir; I think maybe I could help my youth group at the next fund-raiser.)

■ *Propelling Obedience*

SUPPLIES: *cotton balls, masking tape*

Have students form two relay teams. Create start and finish lines at either end of the room using the masking tape, and line up teams at one end. Give each student a cotton ball.

Say: **Our Bible verse for today, John 14:15, is a direct quote from Jesus: ►"If you love me, obey my commandments." It sounds pretty straightforward, but how easy is it to do? Sometimes we face some pretty big challenges in life, and we can get weary. Let's see what that's like.**

◄BIBLE VERSE

At the word "go," have the first people in each line drop to their knees, place their cotton balls in front of them, and blow to propel the cotton balls forward. They may not touch the cotton balls but they must keep moving them across the room until they reach the finish line. Then they should stand up, run back, slap the hand of the next person in line, and go to the end of the line. The next person in line should then blow his or her cotton ball forward. Continue the relay until all the students have had a turn.

Ask: • **How are you feeling right now?** (Tired; out of breath; a little dizzy.)

• **What are some other times when you might feel this winded, that is, out of breath?** (After I've run a track meet; after a soccer match.)

• **How is the tired way you feel right now like the way you sometimes feel obeying God when you're tired or worn out?** (I'm tired and don't feel like doing anything; I'd rather do something easier.)

Have students turn to a partner and discuss some times in their lives when they felt too worn out or tired to obey God. Then have them brainstorm some things they could do to overcome their weariness and remain faithful.

There may be more students than Learning Lab items. If that's the case, have students share items or use other common classroom items such as pens, pencils, and books for the "Obedience Song." Anything that can be used to create a sound will work.

You may want to get the students started with song ideas. Keep it simple and suggest that they create their lyrics around popular nursery rhyme songs, such as "Mary Had a Little Lamb" or "Three Blind Mice," or Christmas songs such as "Jingle Bells" or "Joy to the World."

⚠ WARNING!

This activity uses magnets. Swallowed magnets can attract each other through opposing intestine walls, causing serious infection or even death. Seek immediate medical attention if magnets are swallowed or inhaled.

Arrange for the students to perform their songs in front of another class, if they are willing. They may also want to bring in background music to accompany them, or musical instruments such as bells, kazoos, or drums.

Ask: • **What are some times when you felt too tired to obey God?** (When I was sick with the flu and didn't feel like praying; when I was too tired to read my Bible.)

• **What are some things we can do to help us obey God when we're tired?** (We can encourage one another to keep going; we can pray more; we can get enough sleep so we won't be so tired.)

• **How does our continued obedience to God, even when we're weary, show that we love Jesus?** (Because it's kind of a sacrifice to keep going even when you don't feel like it; for Jesus' sake, we don't give up.)

Have the students line up once more in two teams, but this time, they are to work together with their discussion partner to blow a cotton ball across the floor, with both of them blowing on the same cotton ball at the same time. After everyone has had a turn, ask:

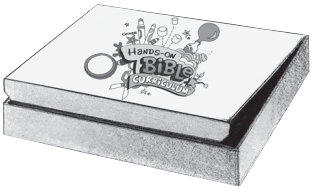
• **What difference did it make when you worked together with a partner to propel the cotton ball forward?** (The cotton ball moved much quicker; I didn't get as tired.)

• **How is that like the way we encourage one another to obey God even when we are tired and don't feel like it?** (Things are easier when you have help; when someone is encouraging you, you don't want to give up.)

Say: **Jesus says that we are to obey his commandments because we love him. Sometimes that's hard to do because we're human and we can get tired and want to quit. But ►*people who truly love God obey him faithfully.* And we can trust God to help us keep going, with a little encouragement and assistance from our friends.**

■ *Obedience Song*

SUPPLIES: *Bibles, paper, pencils or pens*



Give each student a Bible, paper, and a pencil or pen. Place the box of Learning Lab items (but not the *dissolving paper*, *disappearing ink*, or the *balloons*) in the center of the room. Have a volunteer read **Luke 1:46-49** while the others follow along. Then say: **Mary obeyed God with such joy in her heart that she praised God with a song. Think about a time your obedience to God brought you joy. Then create two or three verses for a song that praises God for helping you to be obedient. Be sure to include how you were blessed for your obedience. Refer to Mary's song in Luke 1:46-49 if needed.**

You may use any of the Learning Lab items as accompaniment for your song. The items that make noise, such as the *noisemakers* or the *groan tube*, are obvious choices, but you may want to be more inventive, such as tapping two *prism scopes* or *bottle rings* together to keep rhythm.

Give kids about five minutes to create their songs. After five minutes, ask:

• **What was it like writing a song praising God?** (It was hard; silly; easy.)

Ask for volunteers to read their song lyrics and, if they are willing, to perform their songs for the class using Learning Lab items as accompaniment. Then ask:

• **How could this activity help you obey God more faithfully?** (It keeps me focused on God; I get excited to praise God so then I want to obey him.)

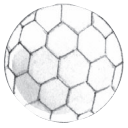
Say: **Praising God is one way that we build our faith and love God more, and ►*people who truly love God obey him faithfully.* Let's keep praising God and encouraging each other to obey the Lord now.**

◄BIBLE POINT

Closing

■ *Sticking Together*

SUPPLIES: *none*



Form a circle. Say: **Today's Bible verse, John 14:15, is a direct quote from Jesus: ►"If you love me, obey my commandments." One of Jesus' commandments to us is that we love one another, and one way we do that is when we help one another to obey God.**

Ask: • **What can you do to help one another obey God?** (Study the Bible together; pray for each other; listen to one another.)

Show kids the *sticky sports ball*. Hold the ball in your palm, and give the student next to you a "sticky" high five. Think of one way you can encourage him or her to obey God, such as saying, "I'll pray for you" or "I'll help you understand a Bible passage." Then say: **I'll stick by you by praying for you.** (Or: **I'll stick by you by helping you understand something in the Bible.**)

Then have that student think up a way to encourage the next person in the circle and say to him or her, "I'll stick by you by…" and give him or her a sticky high five with the *sticky sports ball*. Continue around the circle until everyone has been encouraged and you have the *sticky sports ball* again. Hold the ball up and say: **We've encouraged each other to stick together to help us ►*truly love God and obey him faithfully.***

Return the *sticky sports ball* to your Learning Lab for use in later lessons.

Live It!

◄BIBLE VERSE

◄BIBLE POINT

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Takin' It 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.

Way to Obey!

In your group, read **Luke 1:26-38**, and discuss these questions:

Question 1:

What risks did Mary take when she obeyed God?
Was obeying God worth the risks? Why or why not?

Question 2:

Why did Mary obey God? Why do you obey God?

Question 3:

If Mary hadn't loved God, would she have obeyed him? Why or why not? Is it easier to obey someone you love? Why or why not?

Question 4:

What risks do you have to take to obey God?
Is obeying God worth the risks? Why or why not?

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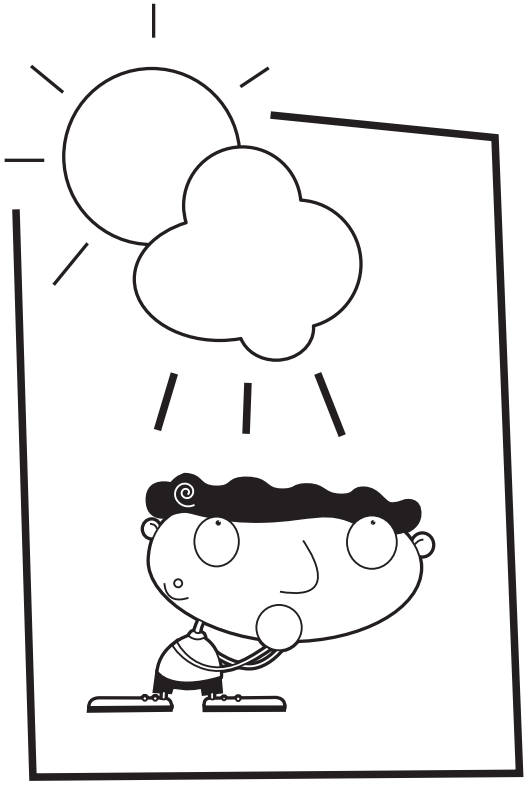
Ready and Waiting, Week 1



Something to Think About

On plantations across America during slave-trading times, slaves were often awakened at 4 a.m. The last man or woman out of the quarters was whipped. The slaves, even the children, would work 16 to 18 hours a day, seven days a week.

Slavery happened during one of the darkest times in American history. Men, women, and children were forced to obey their masters out of fear of punishment, torture, and death. The slaves usually obeyed—with a deep hatred and resentment for and fear of their masters.

How fortunate we are that the obedience God wants from us is nothing like the obedience the slave owners forced. The obedience God desires is based on our thankfulness and God's genuine love. Even if we choose to disobey, God continues to love us. Sometimes we face the consequences of bad choices. Sometimes God disciplines us like a loving parent. But God doesn't force us to obey. When we obey God, we find peace. That is exactly what God wants for us, but he doesn't *make* us choose it.

"If you love me, obey my commandments"
(John 14:15).

Discussion Starters

- *Why do you obey God?*
- *Talk about a time you were obedient to God when you didn't want to be or when you were afraid to be. Why did you choose to obey?*
- *What is the best motivation for obeying God?*

Family Building

***FOR KIDS ONLY:** Ask God to show you areas in your life where you are being disobedient. Then ask God to forgive you and to help you change your behavior.

***FOR PARENTS ONLY:** Ask the Holy Spirit to show you your sin, including any unintentional sins. Be sensitive to sins of omission—the things you don't do that you should—as well. Seek forgiveness for your sins, and ask God for the grace to help you to make right choices in every circumstance.

***FOR THE FAMILY:** Make a list that demonstrates why you would want to obey God. Start with looking at who God is. For example, you may want to obey God because he is kind. Expand your list by adding the benefits that come from obedience. For example, if we obey God, we won't hurt those we love.

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Teacher Guide

GRADES 5 & 6

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 5th- and 6th-graders will learn these important Bible lessons:

WHEN JESUS CAME

Luke 1:26-38	People who truly love God obey him faithfully.
Luke 3:2b-4	We can prepare for Jesus' coming.
Luke 2:1-20	Jesus' birth is something to celebrate!
Philippians 2:1-11	Becoming like Jesus means caring about others.

RELATIONSHIPS

Matthew 5:38-42	God shows us how to handle conflict.
Matthew 18:21-35	God wants us to forgive others as he's forgiven us.
Ephesians 5:1-10	God helps guys and girls develop good friendships.
Numbers 14:20-24	God will honor us for standing strong.
1 Thessalonians 5:4-11	God wants us to build people up.

MONEY AND TIME

Mark 10:17-31	If we focus our lives on Jesus, possessions become less important.
Matthew 25:14-29	God wants us to use our resources wisely.
Galatians 6:7-10	We can serve God by doing good things for others.
Daniel 6:6-10	God wants us to set aside time to spend with him.

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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