



Jesus Is Our High Priest

Jesus intercedes perfectly on our behalf.

Lesson Focus

Jesus replaced the old covenant with a new and better covenant, sealed by his own blood. He is better than any human priest because he never sinned. Only Jesus could make a way for sinners to come to God for forgiveness. Heroes of faith from Old Testament times showed their faith in God's promises by their actions, looking forward in faith to God's promise of a Savior. Today, we look back in faith to that Savior, Jesus, who died and rose again.

Key Passages

Hebrews 4:14–15, 11:1–2

Memory Verse

Philippians 3:20–21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

The writer of Hebrews wrote to encourage Christians in a time of trial and persecution. The book focuses on the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. Jesus is better. In contrast to the imperfect system that the people could never perfectly fulfill, Jesus ushered in a new covenant, a new order of priesthood that was better in every way. Because of this incredible salvation, the writer of Hebrews encouraged and exhorted the believers to live in faith, imitating the example given to us by Christ and those whose faith is recorded in the Old Testament.

The writer began the letter by emphasizing the supremacy and deity of Christ. Although God had spoken in various ways throughout the ages, he had now spoken through his Son (Hebrews 1:1–2). Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:14) and the more complete revelation of God. Jesus is the very manifestation of God's glory and the exact imprint of his nature (Hebrews 1:3). Through him the universe was created and is sustained. He made purification for sin, and God exalted him and gave him the name above all names (Hebrews 1:3–4).

Jesus is superior to the angels (Hebrews 1) and greater than Moses (Hebrews 3). Moses, like much of the Old Testament, was a shadow of what was to come. Jesus came as the fulfillment and completion of these shadows. In particular, the writer of Hebrews focused on the parallel between the Levitical system and the new covenant established through the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. Jesus is our high priest in this new covenant. He, like the Levitical high priest, is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but unlike the Levitical priests, he

was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Just as the high priest was appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, Jesus was appointed to this role in a more perfect sense. The Levitical priest had to offer sacrifices for his own sin just as he offered them for the sins of the people. But Christ was sinless and did not require a sin offering for himself. Rather, he offered himself as the sin offering for the people, becoming the source of salvation to all who obey him (Hebrews 5:9).

Although his priesthood paralleled the Levitical priesthood, Jesus was a priest of a different order. He was not appointed as high priest through the Aaronic lineage. In fact, he wasn't even from the priestly tribe of Levi. But Jesus was appointed as high priest in the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:20). Melchizedek was the king of Salem to whom Abraham gave a tenth of his spoils (Genesis 14:18–20). He is recorded without lineage or genealogy, and his death is not recorded. In this way, the writer of Hebrews pointed to him as a type of Christ. Unlike the Levitical priests who were appointed because of their lineage and were prohibited by death from continuing in their office, Jesus was high priest not because of lineage but because of his righteous life, and he is priest forever because he will not succumb to death. In this way, his priesthood is in the order of Melchizedek rather than Aaron (Hebrews 7:1–10).

Because of these differences, Jesus is a better high priest of a better covenant. The law could make nothing perfect, but Jesus can save to the uttermost and lives forever to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25). For this reason, we can imitate the faith of those who were looking forward to God's promises (Hebrews 11) and run our race with endurance (Hebrews 12:1–2).

Historical/Apologetics Background

The letter to the Hebrews is a truly anonymous letter. The writer did not identify himself or address his letter to a clear audience. Due to early tradition and the content of the letter, most scholars agree that the letter was written to Jewish Christians. Scholars disagree, however, on authorship. They have suggested Paul, Apollos, Luke, Barnabas, Silas, Philip, Priscilla, Aquila, and Clement of Rome as possible authors. However, the vocabulary, style, and literary characteristics are not sufficient to support any one

claim. Many have denied Pauline authorship since the author seemed to have included himself as a secondhand witness to the gospel (Hebrews 2:3). The author was very familiar with Jewish history, though he tended to quote from the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew text. Even the early church expressed varying opinions regarding authorship. It seems this is a puzzle that will not be solved, so the book remains anonymous.

Due to the present tense used in referring to the Levitical priesthood, it seems that the system was still active at the time the book was penned. This would place it before AD 70, when the temple was destroyed by Titus. Additionally, the writer of Hebrews acknowledged that Timothy had just been released from prison (Hebrews 13:23) and alludes to severe persecutions (Hebrews 10:32–39). This suggests that the book was written in the late 60s.

Most difficulties in interpreting Hebrews are resolved when the text is read in light of the historical context of the Old Testament. The Levitical system is a shadow of Christ's new priestly system, and Melchizedek is a type of Christ's priesthood. A

type is an Old Testament element that prefigures a New Testament element. Melchizedek was just a man, but his record survived without allusion to lineage or death. In this way, he represented a priest who was appointed based on merit and was never eliminated from office by death.

Understanding the Old Testament is key to understanding the redemptive purposes of God. What the Levitical system could never accomplish has been accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus. If the New Testament writers pointed to the Old Testament to explain the principles of the new covenant, we should never ignore or dismiss the Old Testament in our study of Scripture.

Better Than Game

Materials

- ☐ Better Than Statements (see below)

Instructions

Before class, review the list below and write your own ideas for #22–24.

Explain that you'll be reading different "better than" statements. Designate one wall of the classroom as the agree side and the opposite wall as the disagree side. As you read each statement, have students run to the wall to show their answers then return to the middle of the room. You may choose to skip or adjust the statements below or add your own statements based on the interests of your students.

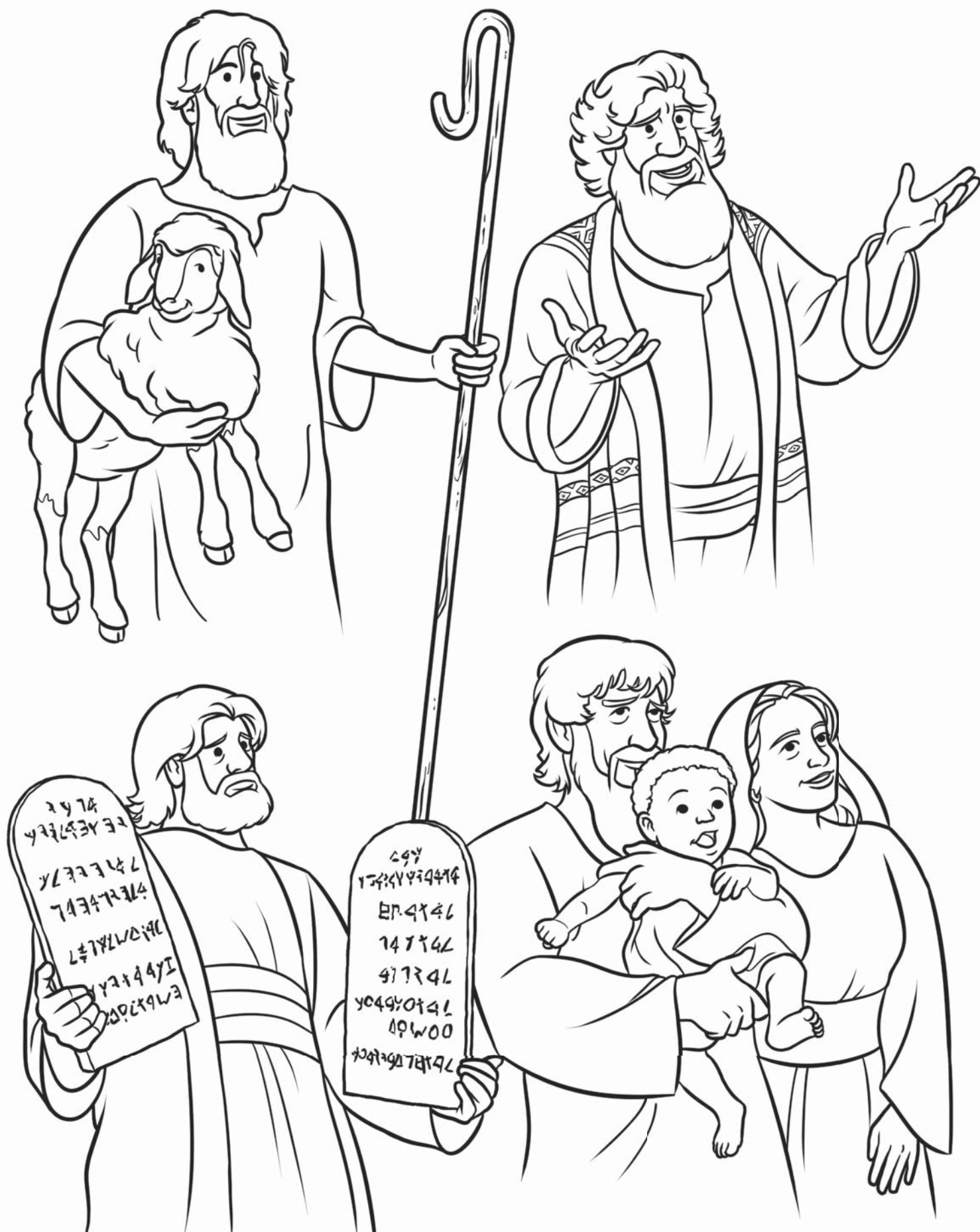
Better Than Statements

1. Cheese pizza is better than cheeseburgers.
2. Cats are better than dogs.
3. Popsicles are better than ice cream.
4. Traveling by car is better than by airplane.
5. Hamburgers are better than hot dogs.
6. Bikes are better than scooters.
7. Movies are better than TV shows.
8. Chocolate is better than fruity candy.
9. Football is better than baseball.
10. Tag is better than hide-and-seek.
11. Summer is better than winter.
12. Swimming is better than hiking.
13. One best friend is better than knowing lots of people.
14. Broccoli is better than carrots.
15. Apple juice is better than orange juice.
16. Grapes are better than bananas.
17. Video games are better than board games.
18. The beach is better than the mountains.
19. Pancakes are better than cereal.
20. Chocolate milk is better than white milk.
21. Compare rival sports teams from your area.
_____ is better than _____.
22. Compare two restaurants from your area.
_____ is better than _____.
23. Compare specific games or toys your students like. _____ is better than _____.
24. Compare two superheroes. _____ is better than _____.

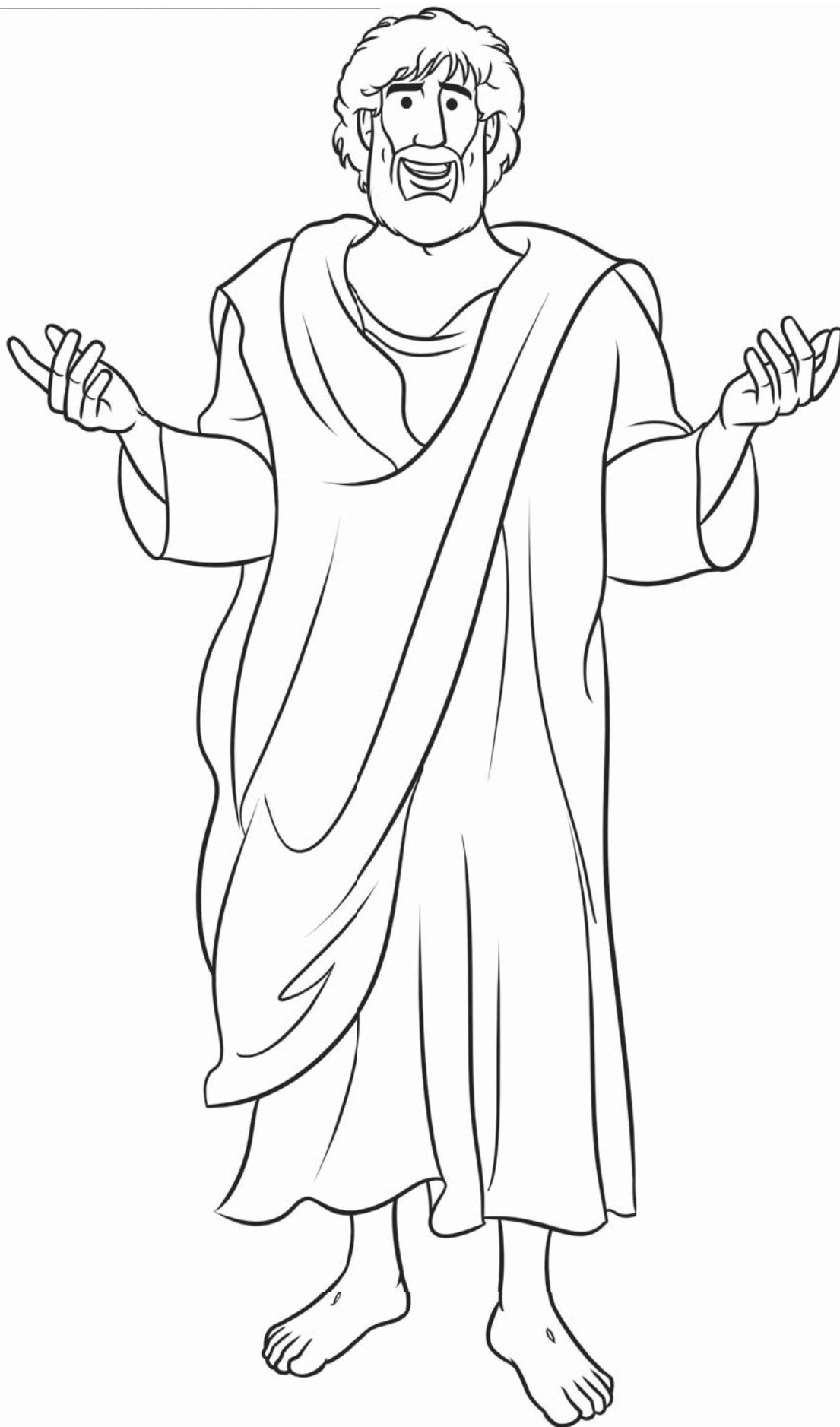
Name _____



Name _____



Name _____



Memory Verse Games

Allow students to refer to the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page during the games.

You may want to cover it up after a few weeks for more of a challenge.

Echo! Echo!

Do what I do—say what I say! Groups will echo each other as they recite the memory verse together.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page

Instructions

Divide the class into two groups. You will say a word or phrase of the memory verse while doing some sort of action—sit down, stand up, spin in a circle, touch your toes, etc. The groups will take turns “echoing” what you say and do as you recite the verse. Repeat several times. You can whisper, shout, squeak, etc. Switch around and let older students take turns leading.

Egg Hunt

Hunt for all the parts of the memory verse hidden in the eggs! This game can be played all year round. The plastic eggs just happen to be great little containers that can be hidden easily.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Strips of paper
- ☐ Plastic Easter eggs

Instructions

Write the memory verse on strips of paper with one or two words on each strip. Put one strip inside of each plastic Easter egg. Hide all the eggs around the room.

Have the students search for the eggs and bring them back to the table. They will open the eggs and work together to put the verse in the proper order.

For a larger class, prepare more than one set of eggs (sorted by colors for different teams). Students can work in teams to collect and construct the verse.

Follow the Leader

Follow the leader around the room. Say the verse and do the motion before moving on.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Follow the Leader Cards
- ☐ Tape

Instructions

Print and cut out the Follow the Leader Cards. Tape each one to a chair or table and randomly place them around the room. You will lead the students around the room and stop at each card. Read the card and lead the children to do what the card says while reciting the memory verse. Then move around to the next one. You may want to repeat this activity or have students take turns leading.

Freeze!

Stomp like a dinosaur or spin in circles, but when it's time to freeze, get ready to say the memory verse.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page

Instructions

Students will move around the room in a specified action you give, such as crawling, skipping, turning in circles, galloping, walking in giant steps, etc. Then when you say, "Freeze!" the students will stop and freeze in position. Recite the memory verse, then begin again with a different action. You may need to show them how to freeze and hold a position.

Funny Voices

Recite the memory verse together using different voices. Be squeaky like a mouse or whisper as quietly as you can. How many voices can you do?

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Funny Voice Strips
- ☐ Container

Instructions

Print and cut out one set of the Funny Voice Strips and put them into a container. Choose a student to draw out a strip and lead the whole class in reciting the memory verse using that kind of voice. Have fun with it and repeat several times choosing a new voice each time!

Sneaky Stickies

Students will try to be sneaky as they cover up the words and pictures of the memory verse!

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Sticky notes

Instructions

Open the Flip Chart to the Memory Verse Page. Recite the verse together then choose a student to place a sticky note over one word, phrase, or picture on the Flip Chart. Recite the verse again, including the part that is covered up. Continue to choose students to place stickies, one at a time, reciting the whole verse between each turn—including the words/pictures that are covered. When all of the words/pictures are covered up, try to say the whole verse together!

Lesson Review Games

These games are written for team play, however, they can easily be adapted for smaller classes.

Allow students to refer to the Flip Chart during the games.

Basket Toss

Students give the correct answer and toss the beanbags. Each basket has greater points.

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ One beanbag for each team
- ☐ Three laundry baskets or boxes
- ☐ Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a tossing line. Bring in three baskets or boxes. Set the baskets in a line, with each one a little

farther from the tossing line. Label the baskets with 5, 10, and 25 points so the farther away it is the higher the score.

Divide the class into two or more teams depending on size. Have the teams line up at the tossing line. Take turns asking the first students in line from each team a review question. When a student answers correctly, he will have a chance to toss a beanbag into a basket then go to the end of the line. If the beanbag misses, there are no points scored. If someone does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Keep track of the scores on the board. Continue until all the questions have been answered. Repeat questions if necessary.

Board Game

Teams will answer questions and make their way to the Finish on the Game Board.

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)
- ☐ Dice, numbered cards, or spinner
- ☐ Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into teams. Team members will take turns answering the review questions. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice, spin, or draw a numbered card and move that number of spaces on the Game Board. Follow the directions on the spaces to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team. If someone does not know or does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Alternate between teams as long as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. The first team to make it all the way to the end wins.

Bowling

What do you do with extra water bottles and softballs? Go bowling, of course. Students will answer questions then bowl for points.

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Six to ten empty water bottles
- ☐ Softball or other small playground ball
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Dried corn or beans (optional)

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Pour a small amount of dried corn or beans into the bottom of each

water bottle and tighten the lid. Set out the water bottles on one end of the room. Use masking tape to form a "lane."

Divide students into teams. Have students line up. Ask the first student a review question. If he answers correctly, let him roll the ball toward the bottles. Each bottle that is knocked down is worth 1 point. A strike (knocking down all the bottles) is worth 20 points. Take turns asking questions of each team. If a student gives an incorrect answer or does not know the answer, he can ask his teammates for help. Keep track of the scores.

Football Frenzy

Who can score the most touchdowns?

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Football Cutouts, one per team
- ☐ Tape or poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Print and cut one Football Cutout for each team. Color them different colors for each team, or have teams choose and write a name on their football. On the board draw 6 vertical lines and label them 50, 40, 30, 20, 10, and End Zone to represent yard lines on a football field. Make the lines long enough so there is room for the footballs to be placed along them with room in between. Divide the class into teams. Place

each team's football at the 50-yard line using tape or poster putty on the back.

Alternate asking review questions to each team. If the answer is correct, move the team's football to the next yard line toward the End Zone. If the answer is incorrect, the team's football stays where it is. If a student is unsure of the answer, he may "pass" the question to a teammate to answer. Only one pass per question is allowed, and this does not affect the order of the questions being asked on the team.

When a team's football reaches the End Zone, they have scored a touchdown worth 6 points, and the team's football is placed back at the 50-yard line on the next turn. Keep track of scores on the board.

Continue asking questions and moving the teams' footballs until all the questions are asked or for a set time. You may repeat questions as necessary. At the end, the team with the most points wins.

Musical Questions

When the music stops, who will answer the question?

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Chairs
- ☐ Worship music
- ☐ Different color/style chair, masking tape, colored paper, etc.

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Set up chairs either in a circle or in two rows back to back so students have room

to walk around them. Mark one chair as the "question" chair (use a different color/style chair or mark it with tape, a paper question mark, etc.)

Instruct students to walk in front of the chairs when you play the music. When the music stops, they will race to find a seat. The student in the question chair answers a review question. Continue playing music and having students change seats until all the review questions are answered.

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first?

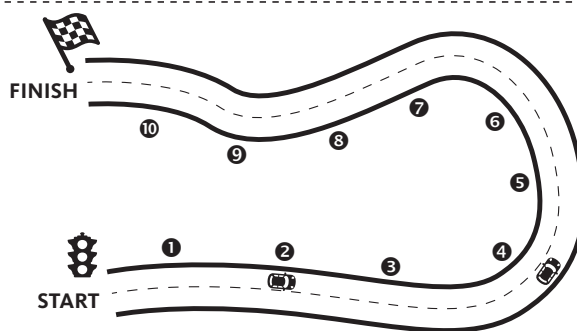
Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ White board or chalk-board
- ☐ Markers/chalk
- ☐ Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.), tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1-10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each



team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!