

WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE



THE BIG IDEA

We can see God through
Jesus.

THE BIBLE

John the Baptist: John 1:1-18;
John 14:6-11

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "Echo" (Victory Kids Worship)
 - "O Taste and See" (Bethel Music Kids)
 - "Ask, Seek, Knock" (Hillsong Kids)
 - "You Change Me" (People of the Earth)
 - "You are My All in All" (Shout Praises Kids)

ACTIVITY | Field Trip

- Welcome to A Day at the Museum! **Who knows what a museum is? What kinds of things can you find at a museum?**
- Museums are fascinating places to experience and appreciate many different things like history, art, science, and animals!
- When you go to a museum, there are so many things to see, hear, smell, feel, and even taste that help you take in the whole experience. Did you know that we can use all of our senses to also experience God? We're going to explore what this means all month long!

- But before we get there, let's get a preview of what we can find at a museum because today you will be touring a natural history museum!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give kids a preview of a museum. If possible, visit a local natural history museum to grab video footage of one of your favorite exhibits or displays. Play it on the screen or find something online that could work, such as [this video](#) (suggested 4:28–5:00). Explain what you enjoy about the exhibit and what you experience through your senses! You could create [pretend tickets](#) to pass out before the activity!

ACTIVITY | Find the Artifacts

- When you go to a natural history museum, we often find things that people made a long time ago that tell us about what life might have looked like back then. We call those things artifacts.
- Let's see how quickly you can spot some artifacts around the room using only your eyes!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare five items that look like you might find them at a natural history museum (e.g., fake fossils, cool-looking rock, old book, archaeological tools, pottery, etc.). Show kids the items then have one kid leave the room. Get five volunteers to hide each of the items in plain sight. Once the kid returns from outside, see how quickly they can spot all five of the items. Repeat this activity with a different set of volunteers.
 - ✖ **PRETEEN HACK:** Have the volunteer wear a blindfold and locate all the objects by following verbal instructions from a peer or, to make it more challenging, the whole group shouting directions.
 - ✖ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Have kids find one object at a time instead of all five. Have the group say "hot" when the kid is close to an object, and "cold" if they are far from the object.

QUESTION | Favorite Museum

- **What is your all time favorite museum to visit? Or what's a museum you'd love to visit if given the chance?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Allow time for responses and be open-minded about the results. Feel free to pull up photos of local exhibits or pass around brochures. For instance, a zoo can be classified as an animal museum or an aquarium as an aquatic museum!
- **Why is that your favorite museum?**
- **What is your favorite activity to do there?**

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

BIBLE STORY | John the Baptist

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For today's story from John 1:1–18, write "God" largely on the paper, and post it up. Write "God" on a second paper, and "John" on an arrow-shaped paper, then set those aside. Have the flashlight zoomed in as a spotlight. Turn it on, and set it on a table so that it lights up the "Jesus" paper. Cover the flashlight with an upside-down box. If possible, dress up as a tour guide or museum docent and point out everything that the kids should be observing.

❖ **PRETEEN HACK:** Ask preteen volunteers to be the “audio guides” as you tell the Bible story. Assign each of them a section of the Bible passage to read, then station them a few feet apart. Walk up to each volunteer when it’s time for them to read their passage and “press” them on the arm and have them start reading.

- Hello, everyone! I hope you are all enjoying this day at the museum so far! Can you tell by my outfit that I am your trusty tour guide for the Bible story exhibit today? I’m so excited to tell you about it.
- The Bible story we are looking at today is about a guy that is known to be a little bit out of the ordinary. How out of the ordinary?
 - For one thing, he ate honey and insects called locusts. For clothing, he wore camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist.
 - **Close your eyes with me for just a moment. Can you imagine tasting the sweet honey, hearing the crunch of the locusts, and feeling the soft but kind of scratchy camel’s hair?**
 - His name was John, and was sometimes known as John the Baptist. As eccentric as he was, John was actually sent by God.
- [Read verses 1-5.]
 - The book of John (this is a different John, by the way) tells us that there was someone that was with God ever since the beginning. This someone gives life and is like a light that shines in the darkness.
 - This was describing . . . not John. This was Jesus! [Lift box to shine light on “Jesus” poster.]
- [Read verses 6-8.]
 - John’s job was to tell people about Jesus. And John did that. He told people that they needed to get ready for Jesus. He taught about how to receive forgiveness for sin that separated them from God. He helped people live for God. [Point to Jesus poster using John poster.]
- [Read verses 9-13.]
 - Now even though Jesus had been with God since the beginning, people did not recognize who Jesus was when he came to earth.
 - But for those who did choose to believe in Jesus, he made it possible for them to become children of God and have a super close relationship with God!
- [Read verse 14.]
 - In fact, because Jesus came to earth, all of us got to see God’s glory – glory is a word to describe God’s greatness and beauty!
- [Read verses 15-18.]
 - John helped people recognize Jesus as God’s son.
 - And Jesus helped people know who God is! [Place God poster on top of Jesus poster.]
- People got to see Jesus walk the earth and teach us about God. They saw Jesus show God’s love, kindness, and power. Jesus was the only way the people could see God!

BIG IDEA | We can see God through Jesus.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write the Big Idea with white crayon on butcher paper and place in an [art tube](#). Invite a volunteer to open the art tube and pull out the Big Idea butcher paper. Unroll and lay the paper on the floor. Let kids come up and paint the entire paper with watercolor paint to reveal the Big Idea. Since today's lesson emphasizes sight, try emphasizing the word "see" and the word "Jesus" as you say the Big Idea.
- Jesus is God, and Jesus showed us God's great love for us! Let's say the Big Idea together: **We can see God through Jesus.**

VIDEO | A Day at the Museum, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

VIDEO | "Night at the Museum"

- Hit the lights because we just entered a video exhibition at the museum!
- Larry works at a museum that comes to life at night. Let's see what happens!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play [this clip](#) from "Night at the Museum."
- With his very own eyes, Larry saw the exhibits walking and talking, and running and shouting! That was an awesome experience for him, in both a frightening way and a very cool way! He eventually got to know the characters and their personalities really well.
- Similar to this, people got to see Jesus walk and talk on the earth. They got to know God and experience God in a whole new way! When Jesus came as a baby, it showed God's humility. When Jesus healed people, it showed both God's power and compassion toward us. When Jesus died on the cross for us, it showed God's unending, great love for us.
- So don't forget, **we can see God through Jesus!**

ACTIVITY | A Clear Path

- John the Baptist's message to the people was to get right with God by asking God for forgiveness and choosing to follow God. This was so they would be ready to see Jesus when he came. In a way, John helped people make the path clear to Jesus so people could see God.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** On the butcher paper, write "John" on one side and "Jesus" on the other, then draw a line between them. Place the paper inside the bin, then cover the line with sand. Place the bin on top of a tarp or drop cloth for extra mess prevention. Have kids take turns brushing away a bit of sand with a paintbrush to reveal the path underneath.

❖ **PRETEEN HACK:** Separate preteens into two groups, and have them stand on opposite ends of the room. In the middle, place a bunch of obstacles piled on top of each other (e.g., chairs, cushions, books, boxes, etc.). Have each side remove one obstacle at a time, the objective being to clear out one connected path that they could walk through to the other side.

- John made a clear path to Jesus, and Jesus is the clear path to God! **We can see God through Jesus.**

BIBLE | John 14:6-11

- We saw how John the Baptist guided and prepared us to see Jesus. John wanted everyone to see Jesus because Jesus is the one who will help us see God!
- Let's read more about how **we can see God through Jesus**.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read John 14:6–11 aloud for the kids. Prepare a simple mirror to use as a visual aid.*
- In this passage, one of Jesus' disciples, Phillip asks Jesus to show them God. But Jesus says that if anyone knows Jesus, then they know God, too.
- *[Ask a volunteer to come to the front, and angle the mirror so that you can see their reflection in the mirror.]*
- So I am looking at [volunteer's name] in the mirror. But even as I'm looking at them, let's imagine I said, "Hey, [volunteer name], can you show me what you look like?" **What would you say to that?**
- You might point to the mirror and say, "Um, that's what I look like! You're looking at me!" When Jesus was telling his friends that they could see God through him, that's what he meant. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life – he is how we know who God is!
- Jesus is the way to God, but we can also be a reflection of God like Jesus was.
- **In what ways do you think you can reflect God?**

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?
OBJECT LESSON | Show Me How It's Done

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell kids to shout out instructions on how to do a simple task, like put on a sweater or tie your shoelaces. Pretend you've never done this task before, and follow their instructions literally. If they say something like, "Put the sweater over your head," hold the sweater over your head, or put it on top of your head. Then, invite a kid to actually show you how they put on a sweater.*
- The best way to teach someone something is to show them!
- Jesus did the best thing possible. Jesus didn't just tell people about God . . . Jesus showed them God because Jesus is God.
- **We can see God through Jesus**, so let's let others see God through us, too!

REFLECTION | Be the Guide

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Discuss as a large group or encourage kids to share in small groups of three or four.*
- ❖ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Collect images from a book or online of people performing any kind of action (e.g., reading, sweeping, playing, etc.). Talk with kids about how they could tell someone about God while doing any of these activities.*
- When you go to a museum for the first time, it's super helpful to have a guide show you what to do, tell you where to go, and help you learn more about what you see. Similarly, John became the guide so that people would be ready to see Jesus.

- Our job is to do the exact same thing! Because we know that **we can see God through Jesus**, we can help others see God by introducing them to Jesus!
- **What are some ways we can help others see God?**
 - It could mean inviting them to church, but it also might look like being kind!
 - You can be generous and share the things you have.
 - You can be joyful even when things don't go your way.
 - You can encourage others.
 - You can stand up for what is right.
 - You can give your siblings and friends a chance to be forgiven.
 - You can say you are sorry when you are wrong.
- These are the kinds of things that point to Jesus and help others experience God through you.

MEMORY VERSE | Verse Hunt

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read *Jeremiah 29:13* aloud for the kids. Give each kid a *Memory Verse* printable and a magnifying glass. For some extra movement, consider writing the verse on Post-it notes, one word per note, and hiding them around the room for kids to seek out.
- Using your magnifying glass, look for the words of the verse and circle them. Then, just like playing connect-the-dots, draw lines to connect the words of the verse in order.

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to earth so we can see more of you through Jesus. Guide us as we point others toward Jesus so they can experience your love through us, too. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- Name three things you remember about John the Baptist.
- What part did John play in the story of Jesus?
- Do you think John the Baptist's job was an easy one? Why or why not?
- In *John 14:6–7*, Jesus talks about being "the way." How is Jesus the way?
- What is one quality John had that you want to have yourself?
- What are some real ways we can be the guide to Jesus for our friends?
- If you could guide someone closer to Jesus, who would it be?

ACTIVITY | Postcard Souvenir

- You can't go to the museum without getting a souvenir at the gift shop! Souvenirs are a great way to remember your time at the museum.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a *Postcard* printable they can write on and decorate. The kids will fold their printable in half, then glue it together.
 - ❖ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Provide stickers or cutouts of museum exhibits that kids could use to decorate their postcard.

- Today, we get to design our own postcard. On the front, you can draw an exhibit from today's day at the museum, a scene you remember from the Bible story, or write out the Big Idea or the memory verse in big block letters!
- Then, on the other side, address your postcard to someone who you'd like to guide closer to God. Write an encouraging message that might help that person experience God through you.
- I think it would be awesome if you actually send out or give your postcard to that person! After all, **we can see God through Jesus**, and we can help people see God through our words and actions!

MEMORY VERSE | Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/Jeremiah29-13.
- Let's practice this month's memory verse together!
- **"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."**