



JANUARY THEME

ILLUMINATE YOUR BRAIN

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 11:1-6 + James 1:5

Ask Away | John the Baptist in Prison

BOTTOM LINE

When you don't know what God says, ask

MEMORY VERSE

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

Psalms 119:105, NIV

LIFE APP

Knowledge | learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **KNOWLEDGE** and God's character, as shown through God's big story

This WEEK: We end our month on knowledge in **Matthew 11** where we find John the Baptist in prison. John wondered if Jesus was truly the Savior that God had promised and goes right to the Source to find out. Jesus responded with love and reassured John that all of God's promises are coming true.

Bottom Line: When you don't know what God says, ask. Even when you know God's Word, you may have questions about what God is doing in your life. We want kids to know that no question is too big for God. We pray that churches are creating environments where kids feel safe to ask hard questions about their faith. Let kids know that God will respond to their questions with love.

SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Pray that you would be an open source of wisdom and godly knowledge for your few to turn to when they face hard things. Ask God to continually prepare your heart to be open to your kids as they learn more about who God is and how to follow God.

•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

What You Need: Scrap paper (2 per person), pens, 2 prepared paper bags

What You Do:

- On a slip of paper, instruct kids to write "What if," finish the question, and put the paper in the "What if" bag.
- On another slip of paper, kids write "Then," finish the sentence, and put the paper in the "Then" bag.
- For example:
 - What if elephants could fly?
 - Then people would be afraid to go outside.
 - What if I had to eat an onion?
 - Then I would cry.
- Shake both bags.
- Let kids take turns picking one slip of paper from each of the bags.
- They should read the "What if" question first, and answer the question by reading the "Then" statement.
- Ask:



- Are the answers somewhat ridiculous?
- Aren't you glad that isn't how all our questions are answered?
- What are some ways we get answers to questions?

•• TWENTY QUESTIONS

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Think of a word (a noun) and tell the kids if your word is a person, place, or thing.
- Let kids ask you yes-or-no questions to try to identify your word.
- If they can guess the word correctly in 20 questions or less, they win.
- Play several times, letting kids take turns being the one who thinks of the word the group is guessing.

What You Say: "Excellent questions! When you asked the right questions, it didn't take you long to guess the word correctly. [Transition] **Today in Large Group Worship/WOW Family Worship we'll learn/we learned about a great time to ask questions."**

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Large Group Worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]

GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

•• WHAT'S HIS ANSWER? *(application activity / review the Bible story)*

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Review Bible story with the kids.
 - What was John's question for Jesus? (*Are you the one who is supposed to come? Or should we look for someone else? Matthew 11:3 NIV*)
 - What was Jesus' answer? (*"Blind people receive sight. Disabled people walk. Those who have skin diseases are made 'clean.' Deaf people hear. Those who are dead are raised to life. And the good news is preached to those who are poor," Matthew 11:4-5 NIV*)
- Tell the kids to yell out: "Are you the one who is supposed to come? Or should we look for someone else?"
- You reply with one of Jesus' answers to John's question.
- Kids must pantomime to demonstrate the answer to the question. They can use any props they have with them or that are in your leader bins or room. For example:
 - The blind see: A kid with glasses can remove them and then put them back on.
 - The deaf hear: Kids can put their hand behind their ear like they are straining to hear something.
 - The lame walk: Kids may crawl and then stand up and do a little dance.
 - Those with skin diseases are healed: Kids can draw dots on their hands with a marker and then cover them up.
 - The good news is preached: Kids can open a Bible move their lips like they are reading it to the group.
- You can pick your favorite pantomime for each round. Be sure to reward creativity!

What You Say: "What I love about this story is Jesus didn't get mad at John for asking questions. For me, especially when I am learning something new or stuff happens that I don't understand, I have a lot of questions. Wanting to know more isn't bad, and just because



I don't understand things that doesn't mean I don't trust Jesus. Just like John, it is all right to ask questions about Jesus and about God's Word. **[Bottom Line] When you don't know what God says, ask.** But who do you ask? There are times when you might ask your parents or someone you know who follows Jesus; or maybe you will read the Bible yourself to try to figure it out. And it is important to remember it is always okay to ask God about anything! Asking questions is a way to learn something new so you can be better at whatever you do. And learning about what God says is a great way make the wise choice to follow Jesus better."

•• **JUST ASK** (*application activity / review the Bible story*)

What You Need: "Just Ask" activity pages, pens

What You Do:

- Give kids a copy of the "Just Ask" activity page and a pen.
 - Challenge kids to answers all the questions on the page.
 - If kids don't know an answer, they can ask someone and put the initials of the person who helped them answer the question. If kids know the answer and don't need any help, they put their own initials next to the question.
 - Give kids about five minutes to mill around and fill out their page.
 - When time is up, review answers with the kids.
- Were there any questions no one answered?
—Did anybody know all the answers to the questions without getting help?
—How did you find out what James 1:5 said? Did anyone grab a Bible to look it up and get the answer?

What You Say: "You guys know a lot of stuff, but there will be times you won't know something and you will want to find the answer. You all knew $2+2=4$, but when it came to my favorite color, you had to ask me because you didn't know. The same thing is true with God; there are a lot of things you know. Think of what you have just learned this month. You know that discovering what God says helps you know about Jesus and what God's says helps you make the wise choice. But there will be times when you have a question about God and God's Word and it is important to remember: **[Bottom Line] When you don't know what God says, ask.**"

[Make It Personal] (*Share with the kids what you do when you don't know what God says. Do you start by asking God and searching God's Word? Maybe there is a mentor in your life who follows Jesus who helps you learn what God says, or perhaps there's a group of people you meet with regularly to talk about God's Word and the questions you have.*)

•• **WHAT GOD SAYS** (*memory verse activity*)

What You Need: "Lamp Verse Cards" activity page

What You Do:

- Shuffle the "Lamp Verse Cards."
 - Kids will draw one card and say the rest of the verse following the words on the card they selected. For example: If the card says, "lamp," kids respond with "for my feet, a light on my path. Psalm 119:105."
 - For an extra challenge, kids can say the word of the verse that comes right before the words on the card they selected.
- For example: If the card says, "on my path," kids respond with, "a light."
—You can tell them they are learning God's Word backwards and forwards!

What You Say: "You did a great job saying the memory verse! It helps that we have been studying Psalm 119:105 all month. Knowing God's Word may start with the memory verses you learn at church, but it shouldn't stop there. You should want to know as much as you can about what God has to say to you. You will have questions about things as you grow in your knowledge about God's Word and **[Bottom Line] when you don't know what God says, ask.** You can pray and ask God directly. You can read the Bible and discover what important thing God is saying. You can ask a friend or relative who is learning about God to help you and to pray for you to find the answer.

