



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."

Psalm 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: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Encourage kids to talk about questions they might ask:
 - their mom
 - their dad
 - a teacher
 - a coach
 - a doctor
 - a zookeeper

•• 20 QUESTIONS

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Play a game of 20 Questions with your group. Tell your group that you are thinking about one of the kids in your group. They can ask up to 20 "yes/no" questions to guess who you are thinking about.



- Some good questions to ask include: Is the person a girl? Is the person wearing red?, etc.
- Play several rounds using kids in the group as your object.
- If they really get a hang of the game, you can play some more using a category like animals, foods, TV shows/movies, etc.
- Let kids be the one to choose an item and answer the questions if they want.

What You Say: “You guys are smart thinkers! You asked some really good questions! **[Transition]** Today in Large Group Worship/WOW Family Worship we’ll hear/we heard about someone who had a very important question for Jesus.”

[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.

•• WHO IS JESUS? *(application activity / review the Bible story)*

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- One at a time, invite volunteers to stand beside you. Whisper one of the following statements in their ears and lead them to pantomime what you tell them.
 - The blind can now see.
 - The deaf can now hear.
 - Those who couldn’t walk can now walk.
 - Those with skin diseases are healed.
 - People tell the good news about Jesus.
- Encourage the group to guess what the kids pantomime. Provide hints as necessary.

What You Say: “What question did John ask 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? *(the blind see, the deaf hear, those with leprosy are healed, the lame walk, people are hearing the good news)* When Jesus said those things, he was telling John, ‘Yes, I am the Savior!’

“John the Baptist had plenty of reasons to know who Jesus was. But when tough times came, he started to have questions. Instead of keeping them in, he chose to ask Jesus. Was Jesus upset or angry that John questioned who he was? *(Pause.)* No. He was happy to answer John’s question.

“Jesus is happy to answer your questions, too. You probably won’t hear a voice from heaven, but Jesus can help you find your answer in the Bible or by asking people who love him. So remember: **[Bottom Line]** When you don’t know what God says, ask.”

•• NAILED IT! *(memory verse activity)*

What You Need: “Your Word Puzzle Pieces” activity pages, “Puzzle Board” activity pages

What You Do:

- Set the “Puzzle Board” cards (activity page) on your small group table. Be sure they’re in correct order.
- Choose a child to go first. Ask him to close his eyes and give him a “Your Word Puzzle Piece” card.
 - The goal: To place the puzzle piece right side up on the correct board.



- The bonus: He can ask his teammates questions to help him.
- The catch: The other kids may only help him if he asks a question.
- Continue until the kids place all the cards correctly.
- Read the verse aloud with the kids, pointing to each word as you read.

What You Say: “How is God’s Word like a light or a lamp? *(Pause.)* Lamps or lights help us find things in the dark, and God’s Word helps us find the answers to our questions when we’re confused or don’t know what to do. So **[Bottom Line] when you don’t know what God says, ask.** Pray and ask God for wisdom. Ask me! Or ask an older family member or a sibling’s friend who follows God. And read your Bible or have someone read to you! There are lots of ways to find out what God says.”

•• **ASK GOD** *(application activity)*

What You Need: Paper, crayons

What You Do:

- As a group, brainstorm some questions kids their age could or would ask. It could be a question about the Bible, a question about Jesus, or a question about something in their life that seems hard or confusing.
- Give each child a piece of paper and invite the kids to draw or write a question they have for God. Some will copy an exact idea from the brainstorming session, and some will come up with their own question. Either way is fine, as long as they participate in some way.

What You Say: “It’s ALWAYS okay to ask God questions. God loves you and wants to help you! There’s a verse in the book of James that says it this way: If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. God will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone and doesn’t find fault *(James 1:5 NIV)*. What that verse means is that if you’re confused or don’t understand something, ask God. God is happy to help you find the answer.

[Make It Personal] *(Tell kids about a time you asked God to help you understand something, and God answered you through God’s Word or through someone who loves and knows God.)*

“So remember: **[Bottom Line] When you don’t know what God says, ask.**”

PRAY AND SEND

What You Need: Kids’ papers from “Ask God”

What You Do:

- Guide the kids to gather around you and hold their “Ask God” papers.
- Lead the kids in prayer using the prayer below as a guide.

What You Say: “Dear God, thank you that it’s ALWAYS okay to ask you questions. Thank you that you’re glad to help us when we’re confused or don’t understand something. Lord, please help us understand the questions we have. Please help us know your answer. Thank you, God, that you WILL help us because your Word says that you will. We love you very much, God. Amen.”

[Apply] Give each parent a Faith Five Family Tools as they come to pick up their child and remind them to use it as a family devotional tool this week.

Guide kids to tell their parents the Bottom Line: **[Bottom Line] When you don’t know what God says, ask.** Encourage kids to tell their parents/guardians about their “Ask God” papers.