



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:**

- Lead kids in a conversation about what they would want to ask someone who knew everything. What would they want to know about the future? About the past? Are there any random subjects they think they would be curious about?

**•• WHO AM I?**

**What You Need:** Sticky notes, pens, tape

**What You Do:**

- Place the sticky notes in the middle of the group so they are accessible to everyone.
- Instruct kids to write the name of one famous person on each sticky note until you have at least double the number of names than you have kids.
- When the names are ready, attach a sticky note to each kid's back without them seeing what it is.
- When everyone has a name taped to their backs, begin the game.



- The object of the game is for kids to figure out who they are (*the person whose name is on their back*) by asking the other kids yes-or-no questions.
- Once a kid has figured out who he is, he can keep playing and helping others until all the kids have figured out who they are.
- If time allows, play another round with the leftover sticky notes.

**What You Say:** “It was pretty funny watching you guys try to figure out who you were in that game! [Transition] Today in Large Group Worship/WOW Family Worship, we are going to hear/we heard about a time when someone else needed help to figure out who someone was.

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

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## 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 NIRV.*) 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.**”

### •• LOOKS JUST LIKE IT (*application activity*)

**What You Need:** Paper, pens

#### **What You Do:**

- Give a piece of paper and pen to each person, including yourself.
- Without anyone being able to see what you are drawing, draw a quick picture on your piece of paper. (*It can be anything; a flower, a*



*tree, some clouds, a house, etc. Tell kids what you're doing but don't tell them what you're drawing!)*

- Then tell kids they are going to try to draw a picture that looks exactly like yours.
- Tell them they can ask as many questions as they want about the picture, but you aren't going to show them the picture until the end.
- Begin the game and answer any questions they have about the picture.
- When all the kids have finished their pictures, show them what yours looks like and see whose picture looks closest to the real thing.

**What You Say:** "Kind of like how you didn't know what my drawing looked like when you tried to draw it, no one knows everything about God or heaven or why things happen the way they do. But, like I gave you clues, the Bible gives us clues and direction toward answers to all the questions we have about those things. Another way we can find out the answers to our questions is by asking someone who has followed Jesus longer than we have, because they have probably gained knowledge and understanding through studying God. It's important that you remember: **[Bottom Line] When you don't know what God says, ask.** Who are the people in your life you could ask questions to about God? *(Pause for answers.)* Well, one of the people you can always ask is me! As your small group leader, I would love to help answer any questions you might have about God!"

**Note:** If this activity prompts kids to start asking questions, spend some time answering as many as you have time for. And remember: "I don't know" is a perfectly fine answer! It's good for kids to know their leaders don't have all the answers and are themselves still learning. If there's something you're unsure about how to answer, ask someone on the family ministry team. Be sure to follow up with the kids who asked those questions, though!

•• **SCRAMBLED VERSES** *(memory verse activity)*

**What You Need:** "Scrambled Verses" activity pages, scissors

**What You Do:**

- Divide kids into pairs or let them choose a partner.
- Give each pair a "Scrambled Verses" activity page and instruct kids to cut out the words, mix them up, and put them face up on the table.
- Guide one member of each pair to close his eyes.
- Tell kids that the partner with closed eyes is going to be picking out the correct words from the pile to make a full verse. The partner who can see should not touch the words at all; he can only give verbal directions to his partner.
- If you have a few kids who haven't attended this month or if your group doesn't know Psalm 119:105 by memory yet, work on learning it before you begin.
- When you say, "Go," the kids can begin.
- After about two minutes, have partners switch roles.
- Then they will continue building the verse out of the words on the table with the newly sighted person leading the eyes-closed one with their voice.
- When each pair has completed the verse, they should wait for everyone else to finish.

**What You Say:** "It's hard to do what you are supposed to do when you can't see anything. It is much easier to follow instructions and do the right thing when you can see. God tells us in this verse that God's Word is our light and it will guide us. God's Word will show us the way to go when we don't know. And, if we are confused about what we should do, we can always ask someone. **[Bottom Line] When you don't know what God says, ask!** There are people in our lives who are there to help us and guide us in God's Word."

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## PRAY AND SEND

