



JANUARY THEME

WORK IT OUT

Stick to the Plan

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 7:24-27

Rock On | Sand and Rock
Spark Story Bible | pg. 282-285
House on the Rock

BOTTOM LINE

Practice hearing and doing what God says

MEMORY VERSE

“Training the body has some value.
But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come.”
1 Timothy 4:8, NIV

LIFE APP

Commitment | Making a plan and putting it into practice

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **COMMITMENT** and God’s character, as shown through God’s big story.

Key Question: How can you hear from God? When people learn they should learn to hear from God, they might have some questions. After all, when God doesn’t really speak audibly, how can I hear? We hope kids and their families wrestle with this idea and learn that through reading God’s Word they can hear from God and discover what God wants for their life.

We start our look at commitment in **Matthew 7:24-27** where we can read a parable Jesus told at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Two builders took two different approaches to building their homes. One was built on a solid foundation, the other on shifting sand. Our solid foundation is built on hearing and doing what Jesus says.

Bottom Line: Practice hearing and doing what God says. We can’t do what God says until we know what God says, and that begins with listening to God. We pray that families will learn the faith skill, HEAR, and discover how they can navigate and personalize God’s Word.

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 each kid in your group will learn how they can have a personal relationship with God through what they hear today. Pray that the kids will be able to grasp the concept of hearing from God. Ask God for the wisdom and knowledge to help explain this to your small group.

•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Welcome the kids as they arrive.
- Play a game called “If I Built a House.”
—Gather the kids in a circle. The first kid will say, “If I built a house, I’d build it on _____.” Encourage the kids to fill the blanks with the most outrageous surface they can think of. (*Remember, today’s story is about the ‘foundation’ the house was built on, not the materials the builder used.*)
—Then let the next kid give his answer.
—To make this activity more challenging, have the kids name the foundation materials that were listed before them, adding their own at the end. For example:



...Kid 1: "If I built a house, I'd build it on spaghetti."

...Kid 2: "If I built a house, I'd build it on spaghetti and lava."

...Kid 3: "If I built a house, I'd build it on spaghetti, lava and snowballs."

•• WHAT TIME IS IT?

Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Play a game called "What Time Is It, [Small Group Leader's name]?"
- Instruct the kids to sit in chairs around your small group table.
- The game starts when the kids ask, "What time is it, [Small Group Leader's name]?"
- Call back a time (*like 5 o'clock*).
- The kids will then move that many chairs to their right.
- Kids will continue to ask the time, and you answer.
- Every now and then, respond with, "Dinnertime!"
- Once "dinnertime" is yelled, kids must run around the table and sit back down in the last spot they were in. Choose a new person to be the time caller. Repeat.

What You Say: "To play this game, you had to follow directions by HEARING the number and then MOVING that number of spaces. Moving was the 'doing' part. **[Transition] In our Bible story today, we'll learn/we learned why hearing and doing go together.**"

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Children's Ministry 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.

•• SAND WALK [Talk about God | Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Ten pieces of copy paper, markers

What You Do:

- Divide your group into two teams. Ask them to come up with a group name and write it on 5 sheets of copy paper.
- Spread out the copy paper on the floor around your small group area.
- Leave at least two feet between each page on the floor.
- Instruct the kids to stand on one of their team's color pages. If you have more than 10 kids, some will need to double up and stand on the same piece of paper.
- Explain that the papers are rocks and the ground is sand.
- When you say, "Move!" kids must move from their current rock to a new rock with their team name on it.
—If a kid steps onto the opposite team's rock or falls and steps into the sand, he or she must answer a Bible story review question correctly to stay in the game.
- After the kids answer two or three questions below, remove one piece of paper for each team and send the kids on those rocks to new ones, but still on their team's name. Continue calling "MOVE" and removing rocks after each round until you are down to one rock



for each team.

• Review Questions...

1. In our Bible story today, who was teaching and telling stories? (*Jesus*)
2. True or False: Jesus was teaching about how to be a better fisherman. (*False*)
3. Jesus said that a wise man builds his house on what? (*The rock*)
4. Jesus said a foolish man builds his house on what? (*The sand*)
5. Why does rock make a better foundation for a house than sand? (*Because sand shifts over time; a rock is more solid*)
6. What would happen to a house built on the sand if a heavy rain came or the streams rose? (*It would crash*)
7. Jesus said, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and" what? (Puts them into practice is like a wise man.)
8. But a man who hears Jesus' words and doesn't put them into practice is what? (*Foolish*)
9. Why is it important to hear AND do what God says? (*God knows what's best for us. God gives us instructions on the best way to live and treat others*)
10. What will happen if you choose to listen and obey God? (*You'll grow in your faith; you'll become more like Jesus*)

NOTE: For the last 2 questions, be prepared to give kids a hint or an idea to get them started.

What You Say: "That game was crazy! You had to make sure you stepped carefully from rock to rock so you wouldn't fall into the sand pit. What if every time you made a bad choice, it was like stepping in sand? If that could happen, I'm sure we'd all be more careful to read God's Word and DO what it says. It's important to listen to God and hear what God has to say to us. We do that by reading our Bibles. But that's only part of the job. We also need to follow through and actually DO what God says. That takes practice for sure. Let's be like the wise builder who chose to build his house on the rock and **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what God says.**"

[Make It Personal] (*Tell the kids about a time when you knew what the wise choice was and you followed through. How did the situation turn out? Remember to keep your example age appropriate.*)

•• **LIKE A ROCK** [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: "Rock" activity cards, markers

What You Do:

- Pass out the "Rock" activity cards.
- Instruct the kids to use the markers to write the word "Hearing" on one side and "DOING" on the other.
- Read the following scenarios below. If the kids think this is a scenario that shows someone hearing God's words, they should hold up the "hearing" side. If they think the scenario shows someone doing what God says, hold up the "doing" side.
- Scenarios...
 - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind and with all your strength" —Mark 12:30 (NirV). (*hearing*)
 - Jason chose to let his friend go first in the lunch line, even though he was really hungry. (*doing*)
 - Sara invited her friend to go to church with her. (*doing*)
 - "A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes" —Proverbs 17:17 (NirV). (*hearing*)
 - Michael was nervous about basketball tryouts so he prayed that God would give him courage and help him perform his best. (*doing*)
 - "Turn all your worries to over to Him. He cares about you" —1 Peter 5:7 (NirV). (*hearing*)
 - "The LORD hates those whose lips tell lies. But he is pleased with people who tell the truth" —Proverbs 12:22 (NirV). (*hearing*)
 - You haven't finished your homework. When your Mom asks, you tell the truth, even though you know it means you'll have to stop playing with your friends and come inside to finish it. (*doing*)

What You Say: "Great job, everyone. Today we've been talking about how important it is to **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what God says.** I know you all want to be wise in the way you live. You want to make good choices that help you live the best kind of life—one that honors God. That's why both sides of your rocks are so important. You have to hear what God says so you can know how God wants you to live. But once you hear it, God wants you to DO something with that knowledge. You have to practice hearing AND



doing so in order to be wise. So remember, as you learn to hear from God through the bible, look for opportunities to DO what God says. To be wise, you have to **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what God says**. I want to challenge you to carry these rocks with you this week as a reminder to **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what God says**. You can put them in your pocket or your backpack so they're with you each day."

•• **WORK IT OUT VERSE** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move | An activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Bible

What You Do:

- Use the navigation tips below to help your group locate this month's memory verse. Read 1 Timothy 4:8 together.

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (*Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.*) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find 1 Timothy in the list under "New Testament." When the kids find 1 Timothy, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find 1 Timothy. Help the kids find the page. When they find 1 Timothy, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 4. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 8 in chapter 4.

- Help the kids stand and spread out as much as you can in your designated small group area.
- Explain that you will call out a series of exercises that the kids must complete as they repeat the verse.
- You can switch up the exercises as many times as you like.
- Possible exercises:
 - Jumping jacks
 - Squats
 - Jogging in place
 - Push-ups (*from your knees*)
 - Wall sits

What You Say: "Whew, that was a workout! Just like our verse says: Training your body has some value (*1 Timothy 4:8a NIV*). But choosing to follow God and do what God says—that's the 'being godly' part of the verse—has even more value. Because when you **[Bottom Line] practice hearing AND doing what God says**, you will live the best kind of life. It takes commitment, but you can do it!"

PRAY AND SEND [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Kids' rocks from the "Like a Rock" activity

What You Do:

- Encourage the kids to hold their rocks as you pray for them to practice hearing and doing what God says this week.

What You Say: "I want you to take these rocks home as a reminder to hear and DO what God says. Let's pray that God would help us **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what God says**..."

"Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us and for giving us your Word so that we can know you more. Help us to not only hear the Word but also be wise and DO what you've asked us to do. We trust that your way is the best way. Thanks for loving us and for sending Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

Give each child a **GodTime** card. Encourage the kids to show their rocks to their adults and talk about what they mean.