



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.

**•• JUST FOR FUN**

**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:**

- Kids sit around the small group table.
- One kid, the speaker, covers his mouth tightly with the palm of his hand. It is important the speaker puts his hand flat across his mouth to muffle his speech.
- Ask the speaker a question.
- While keeping his mouth covered, he answers the question as clearly as he can.
- The rest of the group guesses what his answer is.
- The kid who guesses correctly gets to be the next speaker.
- Remind kids they will have to listen very carefully to hear what the speaker is saying.



- Kids can propose questions to ask or choose from the list below:
  - What is your favorite color?
  - If you had a pet giraffe, what would you name it?
  - If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
  - What is your favorite song?
  - If you could go anywhere in the world on vacation, where would you pick?

### •• GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME

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

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Randomly (*and secretly*) assign an animal to the kids in your group, making sure two kids have the same animal. If your group has an uneven number of kids, one animal should have three people assigned to it.
  - Make sure the animals make very different sounds.
  - For example, a duck, a horse, a cow and a dog.
- Without talking, kids spread out in the room.
- Ask kids to close their eyes.
- Kids should walk slowly around the room and, on your signal, they start making the sound of the animal they were assigned.
- The goal is to find the other kid (*or kids*) making the same animal sounds you are.
- Kids link arms as they find their “animal” friends.

**Wrap Up and Say:** “To play this game you really had to listen to find your partner(s). Just as importantly, you had to figure out when to listen and hear your friends and when to make sounds so they could hear you. **[Transition] Today in Sunday CM Worship/WOW Family Worship, we’ll learn/we learned how sometimes you really have to practice to be able to hear what you need to hear.”**

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

### •• TAKE A SNAPSHOT [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

**What You Need:** Copy paper, markers

**What You Do:**

- Ask:
  - What are some ways we communicate with each other?
  - What makes it hard to hear someone?
- Write “GOD” at the top of a piece of copy paper in color 1. Write “ME” at the bottom of the piece of paper in color 2.
- Draw an arrow in color 1 from “GOD” to “ME.”
- Ask: What are some ways God communicates with us?
- Write the kids’ answers near the arrow. Examples could be:



- Through creation
- Through the Bible
- By the Holy Spirit
- Through our community (*ask for examples of people in their community or at your church*)

**•• BIBLE STORY EXTENSION** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

***Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment***

**What You Need:** Bible, paper from previous activity, markers, four dice, craft sticks

**What You Do:**

- Using the four dice, instruct kids to build a tower on the table.
- Ask: Could you easily build a taller tower using the dice? Did you find it challenging to build the tower?
- Give each kid a craft stick to hold in his/her mouth.  
—*If you want to make sure craft sticks don't get shared, kids can write their names on their craft sticks.*
- Challenge kids to take turns creating the same tower using the four dice on the end of their craft sticks while they hold the craft sticks in their mouths.
- Ask: Was this more challenging than building the tower on the table? Why or why not?
- Read Matthew 7:24-27.
- Discuss the story while comparing it to the tower building activity:  
—Just like the wise man in the story who built his house on the rocks, when we used the table as our foundation for our towers, what were our towers like? (*strong, tall, easy to build*)  
—Just like the foolish man in the story who built his house on sand, when we used the craft sticks as our foundations for our towers, what were our towers like? (*wobbly, unstable, easy to fall, hard to build*)
- Revisit the copy paper from the "Take a Snapshot" activity and draw a color 2 arrow from "ME" to "GOD."
- Ask:  
—We listed several ways God is communicating with us (*Review the ideas in previous activity*), but how do we develop a solid foundation to accurately hear God AND to practice doing what God says?  
—How do we build a foundation that is strong and solid to help us to hear God's truths?
- Write their answers near the color 2 arrow using the color 2 marker (*again from the "Take a Snapshot" activity*).  
—If they get stuck or you aren't getting many responses, there's an example list below.
- Examples could be:
  - Memorize God's Word
  - Read the Bible
  - Pray
  - Talk to others about God
  - Worship
  - Practice doing what God says
  - Do devotionals or use our GodTime Cards regularly
- Ask: What makes it hard for us to hear God?

**•• DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** [Live for God | Application Activity]

***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:**

- Ask:  
—What if you aren't sure it is God talking to you?  
—What if you are not sure you are hearing God correctly? What can you do?  
—Do you think God communicates with everyone the same way? Why or why not?  
—**[Make it Personal] (Give an example of a time when you heard God clearly):**
  - Maybe it was when you were hiking and surrounded by nature or simply enjoying hanging with friends.
  - Maybe it was a time you had to make a choice and you heard the prompting of the Holy Spirit.



—Maybe you heard God while studying a verse in the Bible and you thought, “Oh, this verse is for me right now.”

•• **VERSES TO TAKE WITH YOU** [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 4th and 5th 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:** “Commitment Calendar” activity page, pens

**What You Do:**

- Review the kids’ list of ways we can build a solid foundation to hear God. (*Refer to the list in the color #2 marker from the “Bible Story Extension” activity*)
- Challenge kids to select one of the actions from the list and commit to practice it.
- Give each kid a “Commitment Calendar.”
- Instruct kids to write on the calendar one way they will practice hearing God and doing what God says.
- Encourage them to use the calendar to record the days they practice hearing God.
- Challenge them to see how many days in a row they can practice hearing God.
- Close with prayer..

“Dear God, your Word is truth. We want to build a solid foundation to hear what it is you are saying to us. Help us stay committed to listening to you, through your Word, through worship, through your teachings, through our community of fellow Jesus followers. We love you! Amen.”

Give each child a **GodTime** card. Encourage the kids to show their commitment calendar to their adults and talk about what it means.