



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

What You Need: “The Three Little Pigs” activity page, “The Three Little Pigs” coloring page, crayons

What You Do:

- Read “The Three Little Pigs” aloud to your small group as they color.
- Encourage kids to respond in unison for the following lines:
 - “Little pig, little pig, let me come in”
 - “Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin”
 - “Then I’ll huff and I’ll puff, and I’ll blow your house in”
- You can even let some kids voice the wolf while others voice the pigs.
- After the story, ask:
 - Which pig made the wise choice? Why?
 - If you could build a house out of anything, what would it be? Why?



●● **FOOLISH OR WISE | SILLY OR SMART?**

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Say: “In today’s Bible story we’re going to learn about two people...one who was really wise, which means makes really smart choices, and one who is foolish, which means makes bad or silly choices. Let’s play a game about those two words. I’m going to ask you a question. If you think the answer is wise, then I want you to stand tall and put your thumbs up. If you think it’s a silly idea, then crouch down and put your thumbs down. K? Here we go...”

- NOTE: Keep interest high by varying your pace, timing, and voice.
- NOTE: You can also add fun by feigning naiveté. (*You wouldn’t use a porcupine for a pillow? Why not? I thought porcupines were cute and cuddly. They’re not?*)

What You Say:

“Would it be wise (*smart*) or foolish (*silly*) to...

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| —ride an alligator to the park? | —use a porcupine for a pillow? | —be lazy all day to grow strong muscles? |
| —ask a monkey to clean your room? | —use a skunk for a pillow? | —exercise to grow strong muscles? |
| —brush your teeth with a shoe? | —use a soft stuffed animal for a pillow? | —build a house on top of JELL-O®? |
| —brush your teeth with a hamster? | —drink sand if you’re thirsty? | —build a house on a volcano? |
| —brush your teeth with a toothbrush? | —drink water if you’re thirsty? | —build a house on an ice cream cone? |

What You Say: “You guys know how to make wise choices. [Transition] In our Bible story today we’ll hear/we heard about a person who made a wise choice and a person who made a foolish choice.”

[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.

●● **BUILT ON THE ROCK** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: “Built on the Rock” activity cards

What You Do:

- Read this month’s memory verse (*found on the left column of page 1 of this leader guide*) to your group. Work together to become familiar with the verse.
- Next, give everybody a set of “Built on the Rock” activity cards.
- Help them make a pyramid with the cards by placing the card with the first words of the verse (*Training the body*) on top, followed by the next two cards, followed by the next three cards, and ending with the last four cards.
- Then, encourage kids to point to the words as you read the verse aloud.
- Using the conversation guide below, briefly unpack what it means to train our bodies and what it means to be godly.

What You Say: “What does it mean to ‘train the body’? (*To do things that make our body stronger.*) What are some ways that we can train our bodies? (*Exercise, sports, running, jumping rope, etc.*)



“What do you think it means to be godly? (*Pause.*) Yes, to be godly means that we want to please God and become more like God. It means that we HEAR what God says and we DO what God says. We can say it this way: **[Bottom Line] Practice hearing and doing what God says.**”

“First Timothy 4:8 tells us that training our bodies is good, but training ourselves to be godly is WAY better. So how can we **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what God says?** (*I can read my Bible and do what God says; I can hear Bible stories and do what they teach me to do; I can learn Bible verses and do what they say.*) Great ideas!” **[Make It Personal] (Tell kids one way you will practice hearing and doing what God says.)** So this week, **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what God says.**”

●● **HOUSE ON THE ROCK** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

Made to Explore | An activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery

What You Need: Spark Story Bible

What You Do:

- Read “House on the Rock” from the Spark Story Bible (*p. 282-285*).
- Then, read the story again. Have kids act out being the house on the rock and the house on sand as you read.
- When kids are the house on the rock, they stand strong when you say “boom!”, “plop-plop-plop!”, and “Woooshhh.”
- When they are the house on sand, they should wiggle and shake when you say “boom!” and “plop-plop-plop!” and fall to the ground when you say “Woooshhh.”
- During the last paragraph they can “look surprised” at Jesus’ story.

What You Say: “Which is better: a house built on rock or a house built on sand? (*Pause.*) Why? (*A house built on sand isn’t strong. It doesn’t stand up well. But a house built on rock is stronger.*) Why do you think Jesus told the story of the two houses? (*This could be a tough question for the kids, so don’t be afraid to give them time to think. There’s a lot of brainwork happening in silence!*)”

“Jesus told us that a person who hears his words but doesn’t do what he says is like someone who built their house on the sand. When trouble comes, they’re not safe because the sand washes away. But people who hear AND do what Jesus says are like people who build their house on solid rock. When trouble comes, they stay safe. Jesus wants us to make the wise choice. He wants us to know what he says and DO what he says. So this week, remember: **[Bottom Line] Practice hearing and doing what God says.**”

●● **HEAR AND DO** [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Create | An activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: Copy paper, crayons

What You Do:

- Hand out copy paper and crayons.
- Call out directions like the ones below, guiding kids to listen carefully and draw what they hear.
- Be sure to challenge kids not to look at each other’s drawings as they create.
- Directions:
 - Draw three large circles.
 - Now draw two small circles.
 - Draw a square.
 - Draw a triangle.
 - Color in three of your shapes however you choose.
- Reassure kids that it’s okay if their drawing looks different than others.

What You Say: “You guys did a great job listening and following directions! You heard what I said AND you did it! Way to go! Today we learned that Jesus wants us to hear what he says and do what he says, too. Why is it important to hear what Jesus says AND do what



he says? (*He loves us; He wants us to be safe; He wants us to be more like him.*)

“What are some ways you can **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what God says?** (*I can read my Bible and do what God says; I can hear Bible stories and do what they teach me to do; I can learn Bible verses and do what they say.*)

[Make It Personal] (*Tell a child-appropriate story about a time when you heard what Jesus said but didn't do what he said. Tell the consequences of your choice. Also tell about a time when you heard what Jesus said and then did what he said. Tell how it benefitted both you and others.*)

“So remember: **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what Jesus says.**”

PRAY AND SEND [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Read each scenario below. Invite kids to respond with a thumbs up or a thumbs down, depending on if the person in the scenario heard and did what Jesus said...
 - Nassir heard that Jesus said, “Love your enemies.” So when someone said something mean to Nassir, instead of saying something mean back to them, Nassir said something kind.
 - Jon heard that Jesus said, “Be kind to others.” But when Jon’s brother asked to play with his video game, Jon pushed him and said, “No way!”
 - Sadie heard that Jesus said, “Don’t steal.” Later, Sadie went to her friend’s house. While she was there, she saw a toy that she really wanted. So Sadie snuck the toy into her pocket and took it home.
 - Lindsay heard that Jesus said, “Give to the poor.” So when Lindsay found out that a boy in her class didn’t have a coat, Lindsay used some of her Christmas money to buy one for him.
 - Miguel heard that Jesus said, “Forgive others.” So when Miguel’s friend did something that hurt his feelings, Miguel decided to forgive him.

What You Say: “First Timothy 4:8 tells us: ‘*Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way*’ (NIRV). One way we can be godly is by hearing AND doing what Jesus says. What is one way that you can **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what Jesus says this week?** (*Pause.*) Great ideas! So remember: **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what Jesus says.**”

Lead kids in prayer, asking God to help both you and the kids **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what Jesus says.**

Give each child a **GodTime** card. Encourage each child to tell their parent one way they will **[Bottom Line] practice hearing and doing what Jesus says** this week.