



JANUARY THEME

**OPERATING
SYSTEM**

Update the Way You React

BIBLE STORY

Proverbs 25:28

Busted Stuff | City with Broken Walls

BOTTOM LINE

Doing what you should can keep you safe

MEMORY VERSE

“God’s power has given us everything we need to lead a godly life.”

2 Peter 1:3a, NIV

LIFE APP

Self-Control | Choosing to do what you should even when you don’t want to

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what

FOR LEADERS ONLY

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

THIS WEEK—Key Question: When do you lose control? The best way to discover how you should respond with self-control in a situation is to imagine the moments when you most feel like losing control. We pray that families not only start to identify the areas of their life where they have a tendency to struggle, but also create a plan for how to rely on God to help them.

We start with a word picture Solomon writes in **Proverbs 25:28**. Solomon uses the idea of giant city walls keeping people safe as a way to show the importance of living with self-control. Families will discover that, like walls can protect a city, choosing to exercise self-control can keep them safe in a wide variety of circumstances that they encounter in their everyday lives.

Bottom Line: Doing what you should can keep you safe. When you choose to do what you should, instead of doing what you want, you keep yourself out of danger. We hope families discover the value of relying on God for self-control even when it’s difficult.

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 group member by name. Ask God to help kids understand that their choices have consequences. Pray that they have courage to make good choices that can help to keep them safe.

•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

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

What You Need: Copy paper, markers

What You Do:

- Talk to kids about the three little pigs story: —Specifically, talk about how one built his house out of straw, one built his house out of sticks, and one built his house out of bricks. —Then the Big Bad Wolf blew them all down except the one made out of bricks.
- Ask kids what they think all the pigs should have built their house out of so the Big Bad Wolf couldn’t blow it down.
- Talk to kids about what they would build their house out of if they could build a house.
- Pass out paper and markers and invite kids to draw what their house would look like if they could have any house.



•• **A SAFE PLACE**

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:

- Invite kids to crawl under your small group table and sit in a circle.
- Go around the circle and let each kid name something that keeps them safe.
- You might want to start them off with some ideas such as fences, crosswalks, seatbelts, car seats, stop signs, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, etc.

What You Say: “There are a lot of dangerous things in this world, but thankfully there are also a lot of things designed to help keep us safe if we use them correctly and follow instructions. [Transition] **“Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we’ll hear/we heard about something that is supposed to keep us safe, but it can’t if it’s broken.”**”

[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.

•• **SNOWBALL FIGHT** [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: Copy paper

What You Do:

- Divide kids into two teams, and have them gather on opposite sides of the small group table.
- Give each team half of the pieces of copy paper, and tell them to crumple them up into balls.
- Tell kids they will be having a pretend snowball fight.
- Show them how they can protect themselves from being hit with a snowball by holding their arms in front of their faces.
- On your “Ready?” kids should protect their faces with their arms.
- On your “Go,” they can start throwing snowballs toward the opposing team.
- After 30 seconds or so, tell kids they have to hold one arm behind their back.
- Encourage them to continue to throw snowballs at the other team.
- Play as long as interest holds. Then, engage them in the following conversation...

What You Say: “Wow, that was fun! But it was also frustrating at times, wasn’t it? When were you frustrated? *(Pause for responses.)* Yes, it was frustrating when you got hit with a snowball when you moved one of your arms to throw a snowball at the other team. It was even more frustrating when you had to keep one arm behind your back. Then, when you tried to throw a snowball, you didn’t have any way to protect yourself. When we used our arms to block our faces, they were like a wall or fence that provided protection. When we moved them to throw a snowball or because we had to put one behind our back, we weren’t as well protected anymore. Back in Bible times, cities had walls all the way around them in order to protect the cities from people who might want to fight or hurt them. If those walls got broken down, the city wasn’t safe any more. They needed to be strong and tall in order to protect the people in the city. When we have self-control, it protects us like a wall protects a city. It helps keep us safe from doing or saying things that could hurt



us or other people. It helps us to do the things we should instead of the things we shouldn't. **[Bottom Line] Doing what you should can keep you safe.**"

What You Do:

- Challenge the sides to race to see who can pick up the most snowballs. Continue until your space is all picked up.

•• CHOOSE WISELY [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: "Choice Cards" activity cards, "Choice Cards" answer key, copy paper, pen

What You Do:

- Place the cards face down on the table and mix them up a bit.
 - Record each kid's score on a piece of paper as you play.
 - Choose one kid to go first and let him or her take a turn choosing a card from the table.
 - The kid reads the scenario and the point value on the card.
 - If it was a Good Choice Card, they receive the points listed on the card.
 - If it was a Bad Choice Card, they lose 15 points. Kids can earn five points back by coming up with an idea for making a good choice in the given scenario.
 - If it is a Questionable Choice Card, the kid decides if it was a good choice or bad choice.
- ...Then read the answer from the answer key and let the kid come up with a good choice for the scenario.
...Kids can earn ten points for a good choice idea on a Questionable Choice Card.
- After each kid, mix up the cards before the next kid takes a turn so everyone has an equal chance of getting a good/bad/questionable card.
 - A few turns in, some of the cards will start to get repeated. Challenge kids to think of choices/answers that others haven't thought of. Only allow them to earn points for original ideas.
 - Continue playing as time and interest allow, making sure kids each get an equal number of turns.

What You Say: "You guys had a lot of examples of good and bad choices in that game. Ultimately, you found that the good choices paid off in a big way, but the bad choices? Not so much. This is the way it can be in real life too—good choices lead to good things, but even one bad choice can have some pretty unpleasant consequences. That's why we should always make sure to remember that **[Bottom Line] doing what you should can keep you safe.** Sometimes, it can be hard to tell what is a good choice and what is a bad choice. That's why we need the Bible and our teachers and family and friends to help us figure out what we should do."

•• LOOK FOR THE SIGNS [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: Bible, Markers, copy paper

What You Do:

- Look up this month's memory verse (2 Peter 1:3a) as a group and read it aloud together.

Finding verses with 2nd + 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 2 Peter in the list under "New Testament." When the kids find 2 Peter, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find 2 Peter. Help the kids find the page. When they find 2 Peter, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 1. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 3 in chapter 1.

