

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.

•• JUST FOR FUN

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

What You Need: Copy paper, pens

What You Do:

- Gather kids in a circle, and distribute copy paper and pens.
- Ask kids to create a list of things that help keep us safe.
- Encourage them to write down as many things as they can. You can give them a time limit (*one or two minutes*).
- Allow kids to take turns reading one thing from their lists. Similar to the game Scattergories®, if there are any duplicates, kids should mark those off of their lists.
- The person with the most original items remaining on his or her list is the winner!

•• GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME

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.

What You Say: “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. **[Transition]** Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we’ll hear/we heard about something else that can keep us 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.

[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.

•• TAKE A SNAPSHOT [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: Index cards, pens

What You Do:

- Give each kid two index cards and a pen.
- Ask kids to write on each index card one of the following:
 - A situation when it is hard to have self-control
 - An example of when you should do something but you don’t really want to do it
- As a group, review the examples. Potential discussion questions could be:
 - What do the examples have in common?
 - What emotions or feelings make it harder to have self-control?
 - What situations could make it harder to have self-control?

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

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

What You Need: Bibles, index cards from the “Take a Snapshot” activity



What You Do:

- Read Proverbs 25:28.
- Discuss the verse.
 - Why would walls be important to a city? How do walls protect a city?
 - Why is a lack of self-control compared to a city that has its walls destroyed?
 - What does self-control protect? How does self-control protect you?
- Shuffle the index cards you created in the “Take a Snapshot” activity. Randomly hand out two cards to each person in your group.
- Encourage kids to work in pairs to create a plan to help them have self-control in the situation on the index cards they were given.
 - Is there something they can plan to do now to help remind them to have self-control?
 - What can they plan to do in the moment to have self-control?
- Give kids time to discuss their plans with the group.

•• 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 some of the following questions...
 - Why is self-control important? Why can't we just do whatever we want?
 - When is it hard to have self-control?
 - What are some consequences of losing control?
 - What are some benefits of having self-control?
- [Make it personal] ***Share an age-appropriate example of a time you lost control and what the consequences were. Encourage kids to share a time they lost control. What were the consequences of losing control?***

•• VERSE TO TAKE WITH YOU [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:

- Ask for a volunteer to look up this month's memory verse (2 Peter 1:3a) and read it to the group.
- Name a few signs that help keep us safe (e.g. stop signs, warning signs, highway signs, caution signs, direction signs, etc.).
- Let kids give some examples of signs you haven't named yet.
- Pass out copy paper and markers.
- Instruct kids to make a sign that warns people of something (like “cliff ahead” or “icy bridge”).
- They can make up their own sign or create a version of one that was named earlier.
- When they have made their sign, tell them to flip it over and write the memory verse on the back of the sign.

What You Say: “The Bible can be a little like a warning sign because it tells us lots of ways we should be careful. God gave us these words of wisdom and caution because God knows what's best for us and doesn't want us to get hurt, just like signs warn us of things that might hurt us. The Bible isn't meant to be a list of rules that prevent us from having fun. Instead, it's a book filled with instructions from God so that we can have the best life possible. We should follow these instructions because **[Bottom Line] doing what you should can keep you safe.**”



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SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE