



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: “House” coloring pages, crayons

What You Do:

- Hand out “House” coloring pages and crayons.
- Give kids time to color their houses as you talk with them about what they did over Christmas vacation. What was the best part? Did they have family visit? Did they go somewhere or stay home?

•• GOOD FENCES

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

What You Need: “House” coloring sheet from Early Arriver Idea activity, craft sticks,



glue sticks

What You Do:

- Set out the craft sticks and glue sticks.
- Help kids glue craft sticks on both sides of their house to make a fence.

What You Say: “You did a great job coloring those houses and building those fences. A lot of houses have fences around their back yards, don’t they? Does your house have a fence in the backyard? Why do you think they have fences? How do fences help keep us safe? What about our pets? How do fences help us with our pets? (*Pause for responses.*) [Transition] **“Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we’ll hear/we heard about cities that have fences—or walls—around them.”**

[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, wasn’t it? 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.

•• **ACTS OF SAFETY** [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: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Ask kids to stand up and face you.
- Explain that you will be asking them about things we can do that will keep us safe.
- Explain that you will work together to come up with answers and then act them out.
- After they act out the answers, talk about why we should do those things—why those actions keep us safe.
- Questions:

—What should we do before crossing the street? (*pause for ideas*) That's right! We should hold someone's hand and look both ways. (*invite kids to act out doing that*) Why do you think we should do those things? (*pause for answers*) That's right! So we don't get hit by a car.

—Ok. What should we do before eating? (*pause for answers*) That's right! We should wash our hands. (*invite kids to act out washing their hands*) Why do you think it's important to wash our hands? How does that keep us safe? (*pause for answers*) That's right! We wash our hands to help kill germs so we don't get sick.

—Now, what should we do before opening the door when the doorbell rings? (*pause for ideas*) Maybe go get an adult? Why do you think? (*pause for ideas*) Good idea! So we don't let a stranger into your house. That's a great way to stay safe, isn't it?

—Now. Has anyone ever played baseball? What should you do before hitting a baseball? (*pause for ideas*) That's right! We should put on a helmet! Why is that a good idea? (*pause for ideas*) Right! We want to keep our heads safe from the ball!

—Now, thinking back to summer time. What should we do before getting into a swimming pool? (*pause*) Right! There are lots of things we should do. First, we should make sure an adult is with us. Then, they can help us put on our floaties. We can also look to see if there's a lifeguard. Why should we do all that? (*pause*) Right! All those things help keep us safe in the water, don't they?

—Ok. Thinking about winter time. What should we do before going outside into the snow? (*pause for ideas*) That's right! We should for sure put on a coat, hat, gloves, boots, snowpants, and all the other warm stuff we have. Why is it important to do that? (*pause for ideas*) Right! We need to make sure we're safe and protected from the cold, don't we? Otherwise we could get hurt or sick, right? And that's no fun, is it?

What You Say: "That's a lot of 'shoulds,' isn't it? We use the word 'should' because those are things that are very important things to do in order to make sure we stay safe. We COULD go out into the snow without a coat and gloves because we're just so excited to go out and play and it's kind of a pain to get all bundled up, isn't it? But SHOULD we? No. Because we could get really sick and hurt if we don't have self-control and wait to put on our winter gear. **[Bottom Line] Doing what you should can keep you safe."**

•• **MOVE IT** [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: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Read this month's memory verse, found below and in the left column of the first page of this week's leader guide, a few times to your group...

"God's power has given us everything we need to lead a godly life." —2 Peter 1:3a, NIV

What You Say: "Ok. Now that you've heard it a few times, repeat after me: God's power (*God's power*) has given us (*has given us*) everything we need (*everything we need*) to lead a godly life (*to lead a godly life*). 2 Peter 1:3a (*2 Peter 1:3a*)"

