



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

LEVEL UP

BIG IDEA

Jesus trusted God.

THE BIBLE

The Garden of Gethsemane: Matthew 26:36-46;
(Psalm 28:7a)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *One song we recommend is "[Little Life](#)" by Hillsong Kids. Spend some time in worship with your kids.*

ACTIVITY | Trust Circle

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Everyone can play this activity! In order to absolutely CRUSH this challenge, the kids have to trust each other. The object is to have the kids stand in a very tight circle with everyone facing the same direction. Next, the kids will place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. On the count of three, they'll all sit down on each others' laps. (See [this video](#) to see how it's done!).*
- **Did you think at any point you would fall over?** Trust is a very hard thing to do, especially when you're not sure what's going to happen next!
 - **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Challenge kids to form a circle as quickly as they can on the count of three. They have to trust one another to join the circle in sync!*
 - **PRETEEN HACK:** *For an added challenge, ask your older students to turn their circle by walking— while still seated—in a circle. Another option is to let your preteens watch the above video first and have them try to replicate it on their own. Afterward, they can demonstrate this for the younger students, and serve as coaches while the rest of the group tries.*



QUESTIONS | All About Trust

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask these questions and have kids respond and engage in discussion.
- **Who is someone you trust? (such as a teacher, a parent, a friend)**
- **Has that person ever given you directions you really didn't want to do? What was it? (such as be nice to someone at school, share with someone, help someone out)**
- Sometimes, it can be easy to trust others, but not always. Especially if they are asking us to do something we don't fully understand. Today, we are going to see what Jesus did when in a similar situation!

THE BIG IDEA | Jesus trusted God.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** After you tell the kids what today's Big Idea is, ask them to repeat it after you. Then, prompt them with questions they can yell the answer to: "Jesus trusted whom? Who trusted God? Jesus what God? Who trusted whom?"
- Today, we are going to talk about a time in history when Jesus trusted God. Jesus knew it was going to be the hardest thing ever to do. But Jesus trusted God. That is this week's Big Idea: Jesus trusted God!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

VIDEO | Level Up, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's [teaching video](#).

BIBLE STORY | Matthew 26:36-46

- **We are going to be reading and learning together about a very important moment when Jesus was being asked to do something really hard. Jesus was with friends, called the disciples. They walked to a place called Gethsemane to rest for the night. Let's read together what happened next.**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Matthew 26:36-46.
- Jesus knew what God was asking Jesus to do, and that some men were coming to arrest Jesus. These men were going to hurt Jesus and nail Jesus to a cross, and Jesus would die. This was going to be the hardest thing Jesus would have to do, but Jesus trusted God. Jesus knew when this happened, everyone could be forgiven of their sins and have a relationship with God forever.
- **Do you know what a sin is?** A sin is when we do something, anything, that God doesn't want us to do. We all sin from time to time and we all make mistakes.
- So, Jesus prayed to God. **Who knows what the word "pray" means?** It simply means to talk to God. Jesus asked God, "If there is any other way to do this, then let's do that instead. But if not, I will do what You ask." In other words, Jesus trusted God so much, Jesus was willing to do what God asked, even though it was hard. And it's a good thing Jesus did because that's what saved us!
 - **PRETEEN HACK:** Have preteens help create three cardboard signs for this part of the lesson. Each are two-sided. The first has "sin" on one side and the



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definition on the back. The second has “pray” on one side and the definition on the back. The third has “At Gethsemane, Jesus prayed...” on the front and “...three times!” on the back. Have these key words written in black. Then allow preteens to color and decorate the “back” sides of the posters.

QUESTION | Imagine How Jesus Felt

- **INSTRUCTION:** Ask the kids to close their eyes as they ponder this question.
- **How do you think Jesus felt knowing how hard this was going to be?**
- Jesus trusted God with everything. Even though this was going to be hard, Jesus knew God could be trusted. Sometimes, God will ask us to do something that is hard or even a little bit scary. But we can trust God will be with us and help us.

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 28:7a

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Psalm 28:7a together.
- This passage says God is both our strength and our shield. To remember this, let's try adding some motions: Strength (*flex your biceps with both arms*) and shield (*fold in fist ed arms in front of you so they are parallel to each other and cover you*).
- **What is strength?** It means power to help you overcome challenges.
- **What is a shield?** It is something that protects you and defends you from harm.
- In the story we heard today, Jesus prayed, asking if there was another way, but Jesus also prayed each time for God's will to be done. Jesus knew God would give Him strength. Jesus also knew God would be like a shield. Jesus trusted God and knew God would help Him face this difficult challenge.

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

ACTIVITY | Input Username

- **Instructions:** Hand out a half sheet of paper and pencil or pen to each kid. Display the modified version of Psalm 28:7a (below) either on a larger poster board or as a PowerPoint slide. Ask the kids to write out the verse and fill in the blank with their own name.
- You know how when you play a video game, you have to input a username for your character? Just like that, we have to personalize the part we play when it comes to trusting God. Let's try that with the verse we just read, except instead of "my" and "me," you're going to put in your name!
- **[Input username]: The Lord is ____'s strength and ____'s shield; ____'s heart trusts in God, and God helps ____.**
- You can trust God to always help you and be with you. Even when you are facing a really hard challenge, you don't have to be scared because God is right there with you.
 - **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** If this seems too challenging, write down some or all the words except for where the name should go. Many students know how to write their names, even if they cannot read or write other words.

REFLECTION | Pressed for a Purpose



- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the kids to pause and reflect on what they learned so far.
- Let's think back to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus was "pressed," meaning Jesus was pushed to the limit of how much He could handle. It was during this time that Jesus became more and more determined to carry out God's plan, even though it was going to cost Jesus everything.
- **What are some ways we are also "pressed"?** They can be anything, from having to practice an instrument or a sport over and over again, or finding a way to be kind to someone who annoys you or is mean to you. When you are in the middle of it, it's hard to see where you're headed – like when you had to walk with a blindfold. But when you trust God just like Jesus did, God will show you how to understand the challenging things. And we will find out we were pressed for a purpose.

RESPONSE | Trust

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Take out a large poster board or just use a sheet of computer paper. Write the word *TRUST* boldly in the center. With the help of the kids, write down some things God might challenge us to do.
- **Is God asking you to do something hard or out of your comfort zone?** Maybe to be friends with a new kid at school, share your video game with your little sister, or to learn your memory verse this week? What are some other things God may be asking you to do?
- There are a lot of things God asks each of us to do. These are just a few examples. But all of us have a chance to listen to and trust God. We can trust God just like Jesus did!
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MEMORY VERSE | Hebrews 12:2

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **With whom was Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane?**
- **What was Jesus praying for?**
- **How did Jesus show trust in God?**
- **Read Psalm 28:7a. What does this verse say about God?**
- **What are some things you know God wants you to do, but is difficult to do?**
- **How can you show you trust God in those kinds of situations?**
- **What are ways God can give you strength?**

ACTIVITY | Olive Jar

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the kids to think back to "Pressed for a Purpose" reflection time. Ask them to write down a few ways God is "pressing" them or challenging them to do something for God. You could prompt them with examples such as, spending less time playing games and more time reading the Bible, being kind to someone who isn't kind back, working harder on schoolwork, practicing an instrument or sport, etc.



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- No matter what the challenges, let's do our best and let God handle everything else. Remember, we can always trust God just like Jesus trusted God!