

date: 4/23/17**Bible Passage: Mark 1; Luke 4**
(Jesus' Ministry)

The Father Has Big Plans for Jesus

REMEMBER VERSE

Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

John 5:24a

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

A few years ago, the board of elders in the church where I was working saw ministry demands beginning to wear on the staff. They made the generous decision to give a month-long sabbatical to those involved with a ministry. First I met with a counselor. She asked about my quiet time with the Lord. I began to boast about reading my yearly Bible, journaling my prayer requests, and reading a daily devotional. She smiled and gave me one verse to meditate on for the next week.

My next step was a weekend retreat. I realized this was the most time I'd been alone in quite awhile. A wave of panic swept over me. How was I going to spend the next 48 hours with only one verse of Scripture ... and a journal? I spent a couple of hours taking in the beauty surrounding me and began to let my mind settle. I pulled out the scrap of paper with the singular Scripture written on it and read it again. Then I read it out loud. Different words were highlighted to me each time.

I began to journal and was taken aback by how difficult it was to talk to God without all the "systems" I was used to. The next few days were life changing. I didn't just talk to God; I began to talk *with* God. In that quiet place away from other people, I was unable to blame my schedule, my peers, or my family for my frustrations or failures. I was able to hear God lovingly point them out to me and lead me on the path to restoration. God often chooses to speak to us in a still, small voice that's frequently drowned out in our everyday activity. It's in solitude that His voice may be heard most clearly.

Debbie Guinn
TruWonder Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

In Luke 4, we find a mission statement from Jesus in the first message He preached in Nazareth when He said:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:18–19).

Before beginning His public ministry, Jesus was “taken by the Spirit” into the desert to be prepared for all His Father had planned for Him to do. During His time of prayer and fasting, He was tempted by the Devil, but He came out of this time fully empowered to do the ministry that lay before Him. Later in Scripture we often see Jesus going off to secluded places to be alone with His Father. Jesus was one who knew better than any other the importance of solitude.

In Mark's gospel, Jesus heals not only through the words He speaks, but also through the touch He shares. After teaching in the synagogue, He heals the sick all through the night. Coming from serving, touching, giving, teaching, and healing, He makes the time to slip away to a secluded spot to pray and receive instructions concerning the day that is before Him.

Jesus cared about following His Father's will. In John 5:19, Jesus affirms: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.”

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

God the Father entrusted ministry to Jesus, His Son. Jesus in turn entrusted the ministry to the 12 leaders He chose. Now, the ministry is entrusted to each of us.

Jesus is fully God and fully human. He knew the limitations of being human. Because of this He made it a priority to spend time with His Father. How much more, then, do we need to spend time alone with God, our Father? We need time with God to ensure we stay on the path He has set before us and remain connected to Him. In preparation to minister to your children this week, find some time to draw away and listen to God. Take this passage and meditate on it: “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’” (Isaiah 30:21). Ask God if there's something He is specifically inviting you to do based on this Scripture.

EXPLORE::: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Which Path Will You Take?

Children will have the opportunity to take different paths depending on where they want to go. Later in The Big God

Story, children will hear how God had a specific path for Jesus to follow as He began His ministry.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Destination images](#) (see [Resources](#))
- Painter's tape, rope, or sidewalk chalk
- Optional: cones

PREPARE AHEAD

Print the Destination images.

SET UP

Create paths on the floor using painter's tape or rope. If it's nice outside, you could use sidewalk chalk on the sidewalk. Each image will need its own path, but you'll also create paths connecting a few of the images. Tape each image at the end of its path. Make a starting line using cones or painter's tape.

RELATE

Invite children to join you by the paths. Start discussion by asking questions based on the paths the kids and their families take each day. **How do we get where we need to go? We have to follow a path, don't we? Today we're going to play a game. In a minute I'm going to tell you something I'm doing. You'll need to listen carefully and decide which path is the best one to get to the place I'm thinking of. Here's an example: I'm sliding down a slide. Where am I? The park, yes!** (Select a child), **can you come show us what path you would follow to get to where I am?** Praise the child for listening and following the path to the park.

Divide children into two lines and begin playing the game, allowing the first child from each line to choose a path as you give a description from the following list:

- I need to buy more cereal.
- I'm brushing my teeth.
- The Storyteller is telling The Big God Story.
- My teacher told me to get out my pencil.

If more time is available, allow children to assume the leader role and give descriptions to the other children.

DISCOVER:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point

The Father Has Big Plans for Jesus

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. *Tech: Cue preschool program theme song.* Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Remember Verse image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Mail Time envelope art \(see Resources\)](#)
- Envelope (large)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image. Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with children.

Lead children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

**Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and
believes him who sent me has eternal life.**

John 5:24a

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

Eternal: Lasting forever and ever

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

Very truly I tell you: Nod head in affirmation, cup hands around mouth.

whoever hears my word: cup hands around ears.

and believes him who sent me: Point index fingers to the sky.

has eternal life: Point right index finger outward and make a circular motion.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- **What's/it:** Ear (see optional image in Resources)
- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

What's/it: Ear

An ear can remind us of the importance of getting away and spending time in solitude so we can hear God speak to us about His plan for our lives. We're told of numerous occasions when Jesus went away to pray and listen to God. Sometimes we need to be away from the noise and hustle and bustle of everyday life in order to hear God speak to us.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder intro clip and image*. Invite a child volunteer to "spy" on the What's/it by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect*. Have him whisper the identity of the What's/it in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What's/it. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What's/it from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

What's this we've found in the wardrobe today? Children answer. **Hmmm ... I wonder. Why would an ear be in the wardrobe?** Interact with responses. **What do we do with our ears? You're right. We listen with our ears. Today we're going to hear in The Big God Story how Jesus listened to God the Father and then did exactly what His Father told Him to do. God had a plan for His Son Jesus' life, just like He does for each of us! Do you know what time it is? Yes! It's time for The Big God Story!**

The Big God Story

Mark 1; Luke 4

Storyteller

Storytelling Technique: Response and Motion

SUPPLIES

- **The Big God Story intro clip and image** (see Resources)

PREPARE AHEAD

During The Big God Story, children will have the opportunity to participate by reciting the phrase, “big plans” and giving the thumbs up each time the phrase is mentioned in storytelling. You might choose to explain this portion of The Big God Story to any adults or youth in the room, so they can help lead children.

SET UP

If you choose to use the optional activity preparation items, set them within easy reach of the Storyteller.

RELATE

Tech: Cue The Big God Story intro clip and image. **Hello, friends! I’m so happy you’re here! Before we go any further, let’s invite God to teach us.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Have you ever had to prepare, or get ready, before you did something? Has your mom or dad ever asked you to take a nap or rest when you have a big day ahead of you? How about going on vacation? What are some ways you prepare or get ready to go on vacation? Pause for responses. **That’s right. You pack a suitcase or backpack with all the things you need. What are some ways you prepare to go to church?** Children answer. **Yes, you need to have your shoes on and brush your hair. Don’t forget your Bible. Sometimes, if it’s cold outside, you need to prepare by bringing a jacket or sweater, right?** Show children other sets of preparation items if you’re doing this option.

Today we’re going to talk about the big plans God the Father had for His Son Jesus, and I’m going to need your help! Every time I say the phrase, “big plans,” I need you to shout out, “BIG PLANS” and wave your hands in the air. Let’s practice ... Are you ready? Today we’re going to talk about the *big plans* (allow time for kids to recite their phrase, “BIG PLANS”) God the Father had for His Son Jesus. Great job; it sounds like you’re ready to begin our storytelling! Make sure you’re listening carefully for when I say ... “big plans” (allow children to answer, “BIG PLANS”)!

God the Father had *big plans* (allow time for response) for His Son while He was here on earth. Jesus would be a great teacher and perform many miracles. He would heal the sick, make the blind see, and even bring the dead back to life. Jesus would do all these things because He wanted to do everything His Father asked Him to do. The Bible tells us that while Jesus was on earth, He had a body like you and I do. His body got hungry and tired, and He even felt pain. Jesus was sometimes tempted to make bad choices, just like we do. But He never sinned. He never made a bad choice—not even once.

When Jesus grew up, He knew it was time to prepare for the *big plans* (children respond) His Father had for Him to teach and perform miracles. So the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert. He spent 40 days in the desert! Forty days is a long, long time! Can you hold up all 10 of your fingers? Now open and close your hands four times ... that’s how many days Jesus spent getting ready to do all the *big plans* (children respond) God the Father had for Him.

When Jesus came back from being in the desert, He was ready to start His Father’s *big plans* (children respond) for Him. First He chose 12 men to be His disciples. What’s a disciple? Children answer. **A disciple is a follower of Jesus. One day, Jesus went into the synagogue. Can you say that word with me? Syn-a-gogue! A synagogue is a place of worship, like a church. Jesus went into the synagogue and began teaching. The people were amazed! They knew something was different about Jesus. What made Jesus unlike anyone else who ever lived, or ever will live? Pause for responses. Jesus is God, that’s right!**

God the Father's **big plans** (children respond) for Jesus didn't stop there! There were many days when Jesus taught people what is true about God and healed people who were sick. The Bible tells us there were days when people would come to Jesus for healing all day and into the night. Jesus must have become tired, but He stayed up all night healing people because He knew that was part of the **big plans** (children respond) God had for Him.

Jesus knew He would have many busy days talking with, caring for, and healing people. The Bible tells us that sometimes while it was still night, Jesus would go out to be alone and pray. He knew that being alone with God was the best way He could get ready for all the **big plans** (children respond) God had for Him. Jesus wanted to be sure He only did what God the Father wanted Him to do.

Did you know God has **big plans** (children respond) for each one of us, too? He already knows what you'll be when you grow up. God knows where you'll live. He has **big plans** (children respond) for you to tell others about Him and how much He loves all of us. We can get ready for God's **big plans** (children respond) for our lives by talking with God (touch your lips) and listening to God (touch your ears). We can listen to God when we pray and when we read our Bibles. God has also given us moms and dads to help us learn about Him. They can help us get ready for all the things God has planned for our lives. How can we get ready? By talking with God and listening to God! Encourage children to touch their lips and ears. Just like Jesus, we can hear and follow the **big plans** (children respond) God has for our lives. God is always with us, and He will help us!

RESPOND:: 20 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

RELATE

From today's part of The Big God Story, we learned how important it was for Jesus to take time away to prepare for His Father's plans for Him. He would go out to be alone and pray. God has big plans for each one of us too.

I wonder ... How can I listen to God?

I wonder ... Why does God want us to hear His voice?

I wonder ... What plans might God have for me?

BLESS:: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)

RELATE

Today as you bless your children, remind them of the many opportunities they have to listen to God. Explain that one way we can listen to God is by being still. Encourage them to sit on the floor and hold their hands in front of them, palms up as if cupping them together to hold water. Share that they can be still, or they can quietly repeat after you (in a whisper), **“Thank You, God, for the plans you have for me”** several times. Allow a few moments of silence.

Before the final portion of today’s blessing, invite children to form a circle and hold hands as you speak the blessing over them:

May you always listen to God, so He may continue to show you the best path.