

date: \_\_1/7/18

# REMEMBER & CELEBRATE

## Remembering and Celebrating God as Trustworthy

### Inspire

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

It's only a few days before my wedding and I can't think of a time when more remembering and celebrating has been happening in my life. We've been remembering everything that we've been through as a couple and celebrating where we are now. We've done all of this in the context of family and friends—celebrating with food, laughter, tears, and love.

Before all of this could happen, my fiancé and I went through some hard times. We took a break from our relationship for a year and a half after college. It was a stretching, confusing, and very painful time for me—a time when God was my lifeline. During the flood of emotions while my fiancé proposed, I was struck with a memory of how heartbroken I had been when we took that break. The sweetness of the moment of the proposal was intensified by the fact that there had once been loss in my heart.

It's good to be reminded that we celebrate not only because of the good things, but also because things have been hard and God has been faithful to bring us through them. When we remember this, we can trust that God will be there in the future.

*Tori Funkhouser*  
TruStory Team

### Equip

*Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

#### **Feast of First Fruits: A Festival Celebrating God as Trustworthy**

The Festival of First Fruits celebrates the trustworthiness of God. First fruits represent the joyous occasion of the first grain harvest of the spring. One sheaf of grain was taken to the temple as an offering. These offerings were made on the day following the Sabbath, or Sunday, and marked the beginning of the two-month spring harvest. In the New Testament, Jesus resurrected as the “first fruits” offering on Sunday, the day after the Passover Sabbath.

## Support

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

God is our provider. He gives us all that we need for today. Sometimes we don't recognize His provision because it comes packaged in a way we didn't expect. Part of the discipline of thankfulness is to thank God even before we know how He will provide. Rest in the fact that He is great enough to do whatever is necessary to provide for us and believe that, in His goodness, He knows what we need better than we do.

As children of the Most High God, we're told not to worry about anything but with prayer, petition, and thanksgiving to make our requests known to God. And the peace that surpasses all understanding will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6–7). Thanksgiving positions our heart to respond to the character of God (James 1:1–17), not to the circumstances of our lives. As you spend time in thanksgiving and confession this week, remember it's God's character, not our perceptions or our circumstances, that brings celebration and joy to our lives.

## SMALL GROUP SECTION

## EXPLORE// 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

*Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's biblical feast or festival.*

## Sharing Time: How did your family celebrate the Birth of Jesus?

## LARGE GROUP SECTION

## REMEMBER// 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

*Through a sequence of traditions and play, children are given the opportunity to pause and remember who God is.*

## Traditions and Remember Verse

### SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image (see Resources)
- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gumballs, etc.)

### RELATE

After everyone gathers as a large group, open with Traditions. During Traditions, you're helping the children

work toward a common goal and giving them mementos to celebrate accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse, inviting friends to church, or bringing their Bibles. Once children receive their mementos, have them put the objects in the designated container. Once kids fill the container, hold a celebration.

If your kids fill a clear container or build a structure as part of a Tradition, give out simple foods (e.g., pretzels or animal crackers) if you eat together on Remember & Celebrate weekends. Save the more extensive party for when they complete their goal.

Recall the Remember Verse from the previous weeks.

### REMEMBER VERSE

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6**

## First Fruits

### RELATE

**During the Festival of First Fruits, God's people gave the first part of their harvest to the Lord. The Israelites would bring a sheaf, or bundle, of the first of their grain to the temple and offer it to God. It was a reminder that they could trust God to provide the rest of the harvest for them. From that day on, they counted down to the next big holiday, the Feast of Harvest, when all of the crops were brought in. The Festival of First Fruits was a time for the Israelites to put their faith in God as they remembered how He is trustworthy to provide for all of their needs.**

### QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD, THE DELIVERER

- What does the word *trustworthy* mean?
- How did God show Himself as trustworthy to His people in The Big God Story?
- How has God been trustworthy in your life?

## Remember and Play

### SUPPLIES

- Images: [ZONK! Questions](#), [ZONK! Answers](#) (see Resources)

Note: See the How It Works document for more information.

## ZONK!

### Questions and Answers

- 1) What does "set apart" mean?
  - a. Special
  - b. Chosen by God
  - c. God's treasured possession
  - d. Different from the rest of the world
  - e. All of the above

**ANSWER:** E. All of the above. Set apart means special, chosen by God, God's treasured possession, and different from the rest of the world!

- 2) What did Isaiah prophesy about the Messiah?
- He would win many wars for Israel
  - He would be born of a virgin and His name would be *Immanuel*
  - He would bring wealth and riches to Israel
  - All of the above

**ANSWER:** B. God told the prophet Isaiah that the future Messiah would be born of a virgin and would be called *Immanuel*, which means "God with us."

- 3) What did the prophets do?
- Play musical instruments
  - Collect money for the temple
  - Share God's message
  - Fight battles against Israel's enemies

**ANSWER:** C. God used prophets to share His message with His people.

- 4) Why was Mary called "highly favored"?
- She was chosen by God to be Jesus' mother
  - She was beautiful
  - She was a woman
  - She obeyed her parents

**ANSWER:** A. The angel who told Mary she would give birth to Jesus called her "highly favored" because God had chosen her to carry the Messiah.

- 5) What did God promise David?
- Lots of money
  - His kingdom would be established forever
  - The Messiah would come from His family
  - B and C

**ANSWER:** D. God promised David that his kingdom would be established forever. This promise was fulfilled through the birth of Jesus, who was part of David's family line.

- 6) Who appeared to Joseph in a dream?
- Jesus
  - Mary
  - An angel of the Lord
  - Noah

**ANSWER:** C. An angel of the Lord.

- 7) In what city was Jesus born?
- Jerusalem
  - Nazareth

- c. Bethlehem
- d. Egypt

**ANSWER:** C. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet Micah said He would be.

8) True or False: The angels first announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds.

**ANSWER:** True.

- 9) Why did the magi bring gifts and worship Jesus?
- a. They brought gifts to all children
  - b. They knew His parents
  - c. They were following orders from King Herod
  - d. They recognized that He was a king

**ANSWER:** D. The wise men traveled a long way to worship Jesus and bring Him gifts because they recognized that He was a King and worthy of their worship.

- 10) How did God provide for His people when they were in the desert?
- a. Gave them water to drink from a rock and manna and quail for them to eat
  - b. Knitted them clothes
  - c. Built them a castle to live in
  - d. He did not provide for them

**ANSWER:** A. God provided food and water for the Israelites while they were traveling in the desert.

**SMALL GROUP**  
SECTION**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**

- Bible

**RELATE**

As you bless your kids, tell them they have the opportunity to also be a blessing to others. Encourage them to freely share the joy and love they have received from God.

Open a Bible and read Psalm 62:8:

**Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.**

Have the children pair up and bless each other with the following words: “(Child’s name), may you trust that God is in control of your life. He will take care of you at (home, school, etc.) this week.” Invite the kids to pray before offering the blessings, asking God if they should encourage their partners in any specific areas of life.

Finally, end your time together by blessing the entire group:

**May our trustworthy God bring you peace, comfort, and joy this week! He loves you and can always be trusted with all of your needs.**