

date: 1/7/17

# 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*  
ROCKHARBOR Church

### Equip

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

#### **Festival of First Fruits: 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 sheath 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 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 (Philippians 4:6–7). Thanksgiving positions our hearts to respond to the character of God (James 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::: 15 min.

#### Small Group Leaders

*Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's biblical feast or festival as well as what they've learned about God in the past several weeks.*

### Tru Clues!

Tru Clues is a fun and interactive game where children will engage in a scavenger hunt. They'll look for clues and answer basic questions to help them prepare for more remembrance and celebration with their faith community.

#### Leader Tip

To create diversity between age groups, consider changing Tru Clues for your kindergarteners. Instead of precut shapes to glue to their notebooks, have children draw the picture inside as each clue is found.

#### SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Tru Clues notepad cover (see Resources)
- Tru Clues images: Grain, Big Wrapped Present, "Jesus" Name Plaque, Baby Doll, Star (see Resources)
- Tru Clues envelope art (see Resources)
- Leader Discussion clue card (see Resources)
- Notepads (1 per child)
- Crayons
- Envelopes (5)
- Glue sticks (1 per child) or glue dots (strip of 5 per child)
- Painter's tape
- Optional: paper, scissors, fasteners (brads, tape, lace, or staples), laminator

#### PREPARE AHEAD

To create notepads, consider using five three- by five-inch pieces of paper and binding the pages together. Print or copy the Leader Discussion clue card and one Tru Clues notepad cover per child and glue the covers onto the notepads.

Note: Print envelope art directly onto envelopes, or attach to outside of an envelope. Consider laminating the envelopes and cutting openings to make them durable and reusable. Print or copy enough Tru Clues images to have one per child, and put all of each Tru Clues image in its corresponding envelope (so all the Grain images are in one envelope and so on).

**SET UP**

Place Tru Clues envelopes (filled with the “mystery” pictures) around the room in various spots, using the painter’s tape to secure them in place. Gather all the notepads you’ve put together, along with glue dots (or glue sticks) and crayons. Have them ready to hand out as you start your scavenger hunt.

Fours through fives will need one notepad and one strip of glue dots or glue stick per child. Kindergarteners will need one notepad and one crayon per child.

**RELATE**

Invite children to join you. Everyone will line up to head out on a scavenger hunt for clues. Give each child a notepad and a glue stick or crayon. Tell kids that each piece of paper in the notepad is for them to draw a picture of the clue, or to attach the clue to, as they’re found. Children will use each picture to answer the questions.

Begin the scavenger hunt around the classroom, looking for the clues together as you go. When you see a clue, stop as a group. Have a child volunteer retrieve the clue envelope and look inside; then have a volunteer hold it up for everyone to see. Depending on the age of your group, give kids a minute or so to attach the picture of the clue or draw a picture of the item in their notepad. Hold the clue up for children to copy as they draw, and then return it to its place.

Repeat until all five clues have been found and drawn or attached. For younger children, you may want to find all the clues at once and then return to tables to discuss them and put them in the notepads. Gather children together and sit in a circle to investigate the clues.

**ASK**

As you pull out each clue, have the children refer to their notepads. Then ask the corresponding questions.

- Grain: **How do people use stalks of grain? People eat the grain, that’s right! How do we use grain? To make food. Good thinking. How was the grain a clue to this part of The Big God Story?**
- Big Wrapped Present: Talk about presents. **When do we get presents? Where in The Big God Story did we see a present or a gift? Was the present a what, or a who? Who was the best present ever?**
- “Jesus” Name Plaque: **What name is written here? What does the name “Jesus” mean? Who gave Jesus His very special name?**
- Baby Doll: **Why would we have a baby doll as a clue? Who was this most important baby in The Big God Story?**
- Star: **Where do we find stars? Why do we have stars? Why would we have a star as a clue? What does it remind us of?**

Ask children: **I wonder, where have we seen all these things before?** Allow children to answer. **They were all What’sIts from the Wardrobe of Wonder. They can remind us to celebrate all the good things God has done! They helped us to learn and know what is true about God. When we know God, we can be part of His big story!**

## Chloe’s Rules

**SUPPLIES**

- [Chloe’s Rules Remember & Celebrate video or script \(see Resources\)](#)
- Chloe (puppet or person)
- Preschool program theme song

**RELATE**

Play the Chloe's Rules Remember & Celebrate video (or use the puppet and script), then *cue the preschool program theme song*. As the song begins to play, the Worship Leader and Host will come to the stage, greeting kids throughout the song as they make their way up front. As the theme song ends, the Host will transition into introducing herself and the Worship Leader to the children. There should be friendly banter between them regarding their excitement about being there today. **We have so much to share and celebrate together!**

Worship Leader: **I'm so excited! I've been looking forward to our time together *all week long!***

Host: **You have? So have I! Why are you so excited?**

Worship Leader: **Today we're going to stop everything we normally do each week so we can spend some time remembering who God is and celebrating Him. We're going to celebrate Him by saying thank You for always being so very trustworthy!**

Host: **Trust-wor-thy. That's a really big word. Friends** (addressing children), **do you know what the word *trustworthy* means?** Interact with children's answers.

Worship Leader: **Those are really good ideas.**

Host: **They sure are. *Trustworthy* means that someone can be trusted. Each and every time someone does what they say they'll do, they earn your trust—and become trustworthy. You can rely on that person to be honest and do what they say they'll do. God is trustworthy because He always does what He promises He will do. He always keeps His word.**

Worship Leader: **That's right! We've seen all throughout The Big God Story the many ways God has been trustworthy. Do you know what? When we read The Big God Story, we see how God's people would stop everything they normally did to remember and celebrate God!**

Host: **They did?**

Worship Leader: **Yes! They would gather together to have a festival in honor of God. One of the festivals God's people would celebrate was the Festival of First Fruits. The people would gather together just like we are today and celebrate God for being so trustworthy. The people thanked God for all the ways He did exactly what He said He would do, and for the many ways He cared for them!**

Host: **You know what? We can celebrate those things too! God takes care of us every day. We can trust Him for all things. He has given us so much to be thankful for!**

Worship Leader: **Let's not wait any longer. Let's get our festival started! Friends, will you pray with me and invite God into our time together?** Open in prayer.

# Remember and Play

Host/Storyteller

## Remember Boxes

Today as you lead this time of remembering and celebrating God, you'll be using numbered boxes to remember back to previous lessons and facilitate the festivities.

### SUPPLIES

- Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect (see Resources)
- Numbers 1–5 master (see Resources)
- Props: Grain, Big Wrapped Present, “Jesus” name plaque, Baby Doll, Star (see optional images in Resources)
- Boxes (5; may vary in size; large enough to hold items listed above)
- Upbeat worship song (suggestion: “Celebrate,” TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

### PREPARE AHEAD

Print the Numbers 1–6 master and the images for each What'sIt, unless you prefer to use actual objects to recall the What'sIts. (Files suitable for projecting the images have also been provided.) Place the numbers on the front of each box and the items inside the corresponding Remember Box.

#### Remember Boxes Storytelling

Consider having child volunteers help you reveal the item in each box. Choose a different child for each box and include him in the reveal and discussion. If you'd like, you may refer to the Tru Clue as you're discussing the Remember Box. Typically, the Tru Clue and box item are identical, and each will prompt the children to recall a part of The Big God Story. Use them to lead the children to the Ponder Point and what this helps us remember about God.

### RELATE

**Earlier you played a fun game called Tru Clues. What did you discover in Tru Clues?** Wait for children's responses, then dialogue with them about the pictures they found and what they represented. **Wow! Good remembering! All of those things help us to remember who God is. Look what I found waiting for us. These are Remember Boxes. Each box has something special inside it to help us remember some of the things we learned about God. After we remember, what do we do together?** Wait for children. **We celebrate! That's right! Let's take a look inside our first box and remember.**

Box #1: Grain (Ruth). **What do we get from grain like this?** Talk about how grain is used—for food. **What part of The Big God Story had grain? The story of Ruth and Naomi, that's right. How did God bless these women?** Interact with children's responses. **Yes, God provided for their needs. What are some ways God blesses you?** Pause for responses. **What do we know about God from this part of The Big God Story?** Children answer. **God blesses.**

Box #2: Big Wrapped Present (Mary). **Who likes getting presents? Me too! Friends, who gave us the best present ever?** Children respond. **That's right! God did! God sent an angel to a girl named Mary to tell her that she would be the mother of Jesus, The Promise! What does this part of The Big God Story tell us about God?** Children answer. **God gave The Promise.**

Box #3: “Jesus” Name Plaque (Joseph). **What does this name plaque remind you of?** Pause for responses. **When an angel appeared to tell Joseph to marry his fiancée, Mary, he said that the baby Mary was going to have would be God's Son. What was Joseph supposed to name the baby?** Children respond. **Yes! Jesus. Jesus is a very special name, because it means “Savior.” Who did Jesus come here to save?** Children answer. **God gave**

**The Promise.**

Box #4: Baby Doll (Christ's Birth). **What part of The Big God Story had a special baby?** Children respond. **That's right! God sent angels to tell the world that Jesus, The Promise, was born. Do you remember whom God sent the angels to?** Pause for answers. **After they heard the good news, the shepherds went to where baby Jesus was. They praised God and worshipped Him. We can worship Him too. What does this part of The Big God Story tell us about Jesus?** Children answer. **Jesus Is The Promise.**

Box #5: Star (Magi). **Do you remember a time in The Big God Story when there was an important star? Who followed a very bright star in the sky?** Children answer. **God put the star in the sky to lead the wise men somewhere. Where did God lead the wise men?** Pause for responses. **Yes! God used the star to lead the wise men to the house where His Son, Jesus, was. When the wise men met Jesus, they worshipped Him by giving Him gifts and bowing before Him. What do we know is true about God?** Children answer. **God Leads.**

## **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)**RELATE**

Today, leaders, parents, and children will have the opportunity to take what they've been given to be a blessing to others. Invite the group to stand in a circle as you read Psalm 31:14 over them:

**But I trust in you, LORD; I say, "You are my God."**

Have children repeat to the child on each side of them: **God is trustworthy!**

While children are still in a circle, and before they head out for the week, invite parents and leaders to stand behind them for this final blessing. Invite them to place a hand on their child's shoulder.

**May you trust that God is good and that He loves you. He will always take care of you.**