



Toddlers - 6th grade



seen

7th - 12th grade

STUDENT CURRICULUM SAMPLER



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WELCOME

New curriculum is here!

It is our desire to supply you with curriculum that helps children and youth come to know, love, and follow Jesus. As followers of Christ, we want to pursue Him faithfully each day—and we know that you do the same as you lead students. That’s why we offer the various One Accord Resources products you’ve trusted for years.

On the following pages, you will get a deeper look at our HeartShaper Children’s Curriculum and SEEN Student Curriculum. You will learn the philosophies behind them, begin to understand their structure, and see how using the material will impact students.

From the age of 1 to the age of 18, students will continue to learn that Jesus sees them, knows them, and loves them infinitely. We pray that you are blessed and highly favored as you teach students about God’s great love for us and how we can choose to follow Him each day.



HeartShaper Children's Curriculum

For Ages 1-12

Help your kids discover God through His Word.

HeartShaper Children's Curriculum takes kids on a journey like no other through the Bible. By the time kids reach 6th grade, they've gone through the Bible 5 times.

HeartShaper even includes Special Needs Friendly activities that will work well with all kids—each approved by special needs experts. This helps ensure all kids can learn about God together.

No matter where your students go or what they do, the lessons you've taught them in Sunday school will be with them for a lifetime. Come along on the journey—shape hearts and change lives!

AGES

Toddlers - Preteen

FORMAT

Age-graded classroom setting

MAXIMUM LESSON TIME

2+ hours (early childhood)

1 hour (elementary)

Discover more and download a complete sample lesson at

OneAccordResources.org



AGE LEVELS

This fully resourced, age-appropriate curriculum helps kids in every part of their walk with God.

Toddlers & 2s	Preschool
Children ages 1 & 2 explore one Bible story or concept every month as they smile, laugh, and wonder.	Children ages 3 & 4 learn basic Bible stories through multisensory experiences as they begin to ask questions about God.
Pre-K & K	Early Elementary
Children ages 5 & 6 build on their Bible story knowledge from preschool as they interact with God's Word and one another.	Kids in grades 1 & 2 take an age-appropriate trip through the Bible as they discover why God's Word is important to them.
Middle Elementary	Preteen
Kids in grades 3 & 4 take 2 chronological journeys through the Bible as they learn how they fit into God's plan.	Kids in grades 5 & 6 use their Bible knowledge and skills to explore tween issues as they move beyond right and wrong answers.

Toddlers & 2s lessons are organized in 3 sections:

ACTIVITY TIME introduces Toddlers and 2s to the day's lesson focus with engaging activity options. Children will sing, play, and talk—giving them time to smile, laugh, and wonder. Do these activities with individual children or with a few children at a time.

BIBLE TIME uses different methods and types of activities to teach the Bible story. Children will explore the Bible theme and learn the Bible words as they repeat them during the lesson. Choose between a longer and a shorter version of the Bible story to accommodate attention spans.

DISCOVERY TIME allows children to continue exploring the Bible theme. Continue the fun, yet meaningful, activities with children until it's time for them to go home.

Preschool, Pre-K & K lessons are organized in 3 sections:

GETTING STARTED introduces children to the Bible story or the day's lesson focus. Choose which of the learning centers to offer, or if time allows, you can do all 3!

BIBLE DISCOVERY allows children to sing and pray to God. They move and have fun as they learn a Bible Memory verse and a Bible story about God, Jesus, or the church. The Bible Review engages children in retelling the story. And during Bible Memory, children learn motions that help them hide Bible verses in their hearts!

GROW AND GO helps children understand and apply the Bible lesson to their lives.

With these 2 HeartShaper age levels, a complete extra hour of learning fun is provided for each lesson. Discover more in the sample lessons available at OneAccordResources.org.

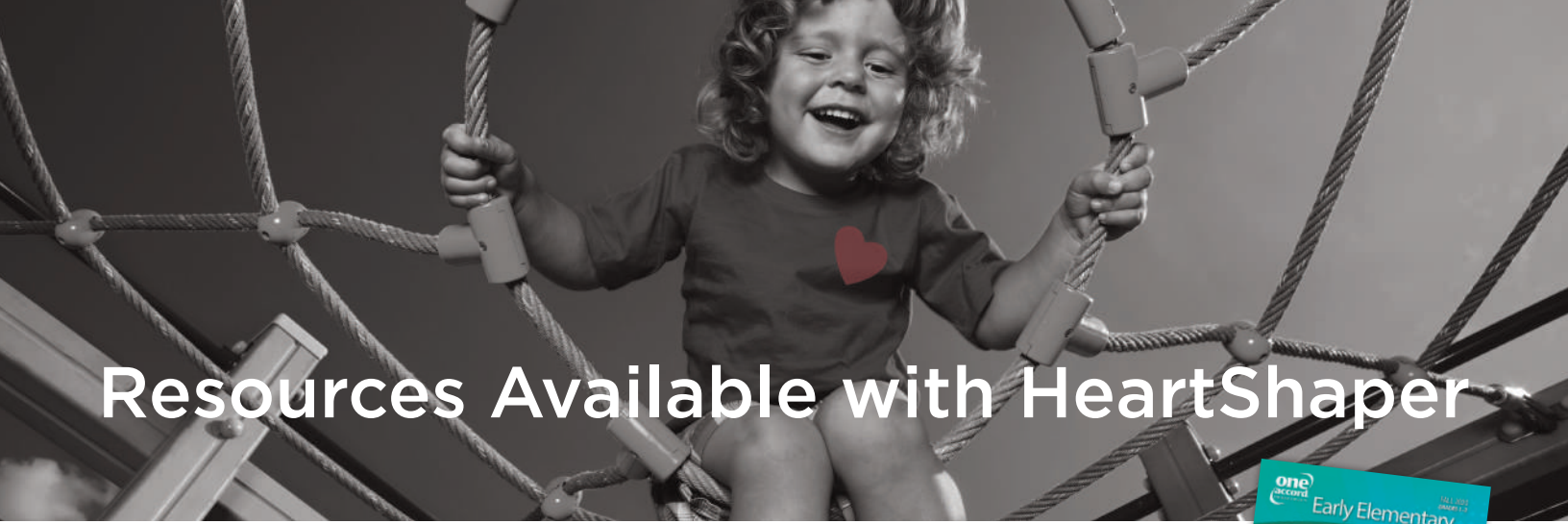
Elementary lessons are organized in 4 sections:

FOCUS IN introduces kids to the focus of the lesson. Choose an activity option. Or if you have time, do both of the fun activities!

BIBLE EXPLORATION helps kids know and love God as they learn His story. Kids don't just listen—they interact with the Scripture passage. Bible Memory and the optional Bible Skill Builder give you activities to help kids further develop their Bible skills.

MAKE IT REAL helps kids discover how the Scripture applies to their lives. Kids will dig into questions to discover the answers for themselves.

LIVE IT OUT encourages kids to practice the biblical principles they've learned. Kids are challenged to respond to God's Word and live out their faith. Prayer is an important part of Live It Out.



Resources Available with HeartShaper

Teacher's Convenience Kits

Includes the teacher guide, a resources pack, 1 set of student activity pages, and 1 set of take-homes. Also includes teaching pictures for certain age levels.

Teacher Guides

Bible lessons are easy to prepare and include Quick Steps™ and lots of options. Quick Step activities are easy to prepare and teach—they require no materials other than the curriculum and common classroom supplies.

Student Activity Pages

Make Bible study fun! Activities are specifically designed for each age level, helping kids dig into the Word and make relevant connections to their lives.

Take-Homes

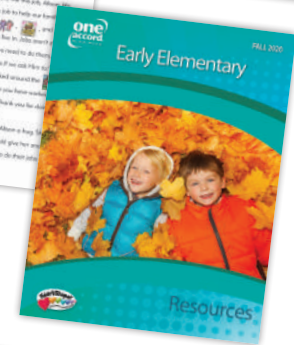
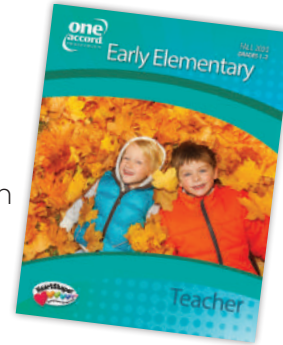
Fun activities to reinforce the lesson at home.

Resource Packs

Includes interactive visuals, plus digital downloads (audio tracks and printable files with Bible Memory, Bible skills activities, teacher helps, and more)! Music included for early childhood levels. You can use the multisensory teaching tools provided with HeartShaper to engage children and encourage learning.

Teaching Pictures—In English and Spanish

Help the lessons come alive with these colorful, age-appropriate pictures for preschool through early elementary classrooms. In English and Spanish with activity options



The main thought kids will learn and remember.



God Helps David Do His Jobs

Lesson 1

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:11, 18-21; 17:34-37

Bible Memory: Psalm 124:8

Focus: ♥ We can trust God to help us do our jobs.

Heart to Heart Teacher Devotion




David was a shepherd; he took care of sheep. It doesn't sound like a very glamorous job or one that came with many perks. But God was with David and helped David be the best shepherd he could be. God has given you a shepherding job to do too. The little "lambs" that you teach and guide are very important to God. God will be with you just as He was with David. Allow Him to help you do your job and become the best shepherd you can be.

Children interact with and learn from God's Word.

Lesson 1 at a Glance

Personally connect with each lesson you prepare.

1 FOCUS IN
Use one of these activities to help children explore jobs they do.

-  **Quick Step**
Jobs Kids Do
-  **Option**
Jobs in a Bag
-  **Bible Memory**
Introduce the Bible Memory verse.

HeartShaper Materials

- Activities p. 3

Other Materials

- pencils
- large gift bag, items kids might use to do a job (see activity)
- Bible

2 EXPLORE HIS WORD
Use all of these activities to help children tell how God helped David do his jobs.

-  **Bible Exploration**
1 Samuel 16:11, 18-21; 17:34-37
-  **Bible Review Activity**
-  **Bible Memory**
Psalm 124:8
-  **Optional Bible Skill Builder**

- Resources sheet 1 David's Jobs Chart and add-ons 1a-1d, Teaching Picture 1

- Activities p. 4, Resources lesson 1 Review Questions printable file

- Resources sheet 2 Unit 1 Bible Memory Poster

- whiteboard, dry-erase marker, Bibles, reusable adhesive

- pencils

- Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase marker, reusable adhesive

3 MAKE IT REAL
Use one of these activities to help children name ways God helps them do their jobs.

-  **Quick Step**
With God's Help
-  **Option**
How Does God Help?
-  **Option**
Story from *Weekly Bible Reader*

- Activities p. 3

- none



- *Weekly Bible Reader* issue 1

- (optional: pencils)

- adult guest who will share about his or her job

- none

4 LIVE IT OUT
Use one of these activities to help children ask God for His help and do a job.

-  **Quick Step**
Plan, Pray, Do
-  **Option**
My Jobs Chart
- Saying Good-bye**

- none

- copies of the My Jobs Chart reproducible page

- *Weekly Bible Reader* issue 1, Activities p. 2 and stickers

- whiteboard, dry-erase marker

- markers, scissors, hole punch, yarn

- none

Kids discover how the Scripture applies to their lives.

Children begin to practice what they've learned.

Introduces the lesson theme or topic.

Focus In (10–15 minutes)

- 1 Use one of these activities to help children **explore jobs they do**. Use the Bible Memory activity to introduce the memory verse.

Focus

♥ We can trust God to help us do our jobs.

Welcome

- Welcome each child by name.
- Engage early arrivers by offering one or more of the activities described on the Additional Activities for Unit 1 page.

Quick Step™ activities are quick and easy to prepare.

Quick Step Jobs Kids Do

Have the children gather at tables. Distribute the activity page and pencils. Talk about the pictures and the jobs kids are doing. Read the list of jobs and let kids check ones that they do.

ASK: **What are some other jobs you do?** Encourage responses.
Who are you helping when you do these jobs? (family members, friends)
Who helps you learn to do new jobs? (parents, teachers)

SAY: **Kids can do and learn to do a lot of jobs. Today we're going to learn that ♥ we can trust God to help us do our jobs.**

Option Jobs in a Bag



Have kids gather in a circle. SAY: **Let's think about the different jobs kids do.** Show the bag you have prepared and have a child reach into the bag and pull out one item. Ask the child to tell what kind of job a kid might do using that item. Continue, having other kids pull items from the bag.

ASK: **What are other jobs kids do?** (vacuum, water plants, pull weeds, rake leaves, make bed, pick up toys)
What happens when kids don't do their jobs well?
Have you ever had someone help you do a job? Who helped you?
What did you do together?

SAY: **It's important for kids to do their jobs well. Today we're going to learn that ♥ we can trust God to help us do our jobs.**

Bible Memory Psalm 124:8

SAY: **Raise your hand if you sometimes need help cleaning your room.** Ask a few kids with their hands raised to tell who helps them clean their rooms. **Raise your hand if you sometimes need help with schoolwork.** Ask a few kids to tell who helps them with schoolwork. Read aloud Psalm 124:8. **According to this Bible verse, who helps us?** (the Lord)
We're going to learn that ♥ we can trust God to help us do our jobs.

Activity options are included in every step of the lesson.

Look for the Special Needs Friendly symbol to find activities that work well with all kids.

Materials

Activities p. 3, pencils



Something More!

Let kids take turns acting out jobs kids do. The rest of the class can guess what the jobs are.

Use these icons to quickly identify activities by type.

Materials

large gift bag, items kids might use to do jobs (dusting spray, dish towel, dishcloth, dinner plate, pet brush or treat, pencil, car wax, garbage bag)



Before Class

Gather and place in the gift bag items that kids might use to do jobs.

Materials

Bible



Transition to Explore His Word

See the *Resources* Transition Tips printable file. As children gather, make sure you have all the materials you need.

Focus

♥ We can trust God to help us do our jobs.

Explore His Word (20 minutes)

2 Use all of these activities to help children **tell how God helped David do his jobs.**

Prepare Your Mind—Bible Background

As was common for the youngest son in a family, David's primary job growing up was watching the sheep that belonged to his family. The duties of a shepherd included, when necessary, rescuing sheep from predators, such as lions and bears. A shepherd's chief weapons were his wooden club and a sling.

The rugged life of a shepherd required both mental and physical strength, which would be of value later in David's jobs as an armor-bearer and warrior. David's talent of playing a lyre allowed him to regularly play for King Saul and introduced David to palace life and government.

Get insight into the Bible story.

Prepare Your Heart—Drawing Near to God

SAY: David learned to worship as he talked with God and played psalms of praise on his harp during his long days in the fields. Lead the children in a worship song using the *Resources* printable files. Pray with them, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself through the lesson.

Spirit-Led Insight

Pray that the Word of God will take root in each child's heart and the Spirit will help each one to trust in God.

Materials

whiteboard, dry-erase marker, Bibles, *Resources* sheet 1 David's Jobs Chart and add-ons 1a-1d, reusable adhesive, *Teaching Picture 1*



Use the Spirit-Led Insight to pause and pray for your class.



Use visuals that capture students' attention.

Before Class

Display the David's Jobs chart on a wall near your story area. Place the add-on cards in your Bible.

Bible Exploration 1 Samuel 16:11, 18-21; 17:34-37

SAY: Our Bible story comes from the book of 1 Samuel. First Samuel is in the Old Testament. Write "1 Samuel 16:11" on the board. Help children find 1 Samuel 16:11 in their Bibles. Ask a volunteer to read the verse.

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 16. **SAY:** Samuel had anointed David to be the next king of Israel, but David didn't become the king of Israel right away. David was still young. God knew David wasn't ready to be king yet, but God was going to help and prepare David for the job he would do later.

While living with his family, David had one main job. He was a shepherd. Show *Teaching Picture 1*. Attach add-on 1a to the jobs chart. **David took care of the sheep that belonged to his father, Jesse. David made sure the sheep had grass to eat and water to drink. He led them to pastures where they could rest.**

David also kept the sheep safe. Attach add-on 1b to chart. **If a bear or a lion came and carried off a sheep, David would go after the wild animal, strike it, and rescue the sheep from its mouth. If the lion or bear turned on David, David would seize the animal by its hair, strike it, and kill it. David knew he didn't have the strength to do this by himself. God was helping David do his job.**

Later David had other jobs. Attach add-on 1c to chart. **David played a lyre, which is a handheld harp. King Saul heard about David's skills and sent messengers to David's father, Jesse, requesting that David be sent to the king. While serving the king, one of David's jobs was to play music on the lyre whenever the king was not feeling well.**

King Saul was pleased with David's service. Soon David was given another job. He became one of the king's armor-bearers. This job would help prepare David for leading armies in the future. Attach add-on 1d to chart.

Bible stories engage kids and are easy to teach.

David trusted God, and God helped David do his jobs. God gave David strength and courage to do his job as a shepherd. And God helped David as he served King Saul.

Bible Review Activity

ASK: **How did God help David do his job?** (God helped David be brave. God helped David care for his sheep by helping David kill a lion and a bear.)

How did David serve his family? (took care of the family's sheep)

How did David serve the king? (played music for the king; carried the king's armor)

Distribute the activity pages and pencils. Read the directions aloud and do the puzzle together. For additional questions, use the *Resources* lesson 1 Review Questions printable file. SAY: **David trusted God, and God helped David do his jobs. ♥ We can trust God to help us do our jobs too!**

Bible Memory Psalm 124:8

"Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth."

Write "Psalm 124:8" on the board. SAY: **The book of Psalms is in the Old Testament.** Have children look in the table of contents in the front of their Bibles. Help them find the Old Testament section, and tell them to run their fingers down the list until they see the book of Psalms. Help children find the memory verse, and ask a volunteer to read the verse.

Display the Bible Memory poster. Read the words while pointing to them. Pause when you come to an empty space and ask who knows what word is missing. When a child says the correct word, let him attach it to the poster with reusable adhesive. When all the spaces have been filled, lead the kids in saying the Bible verse together. SAY: **David knew that God helped him do his job as a shepherd. ♥ We can trust God to help us do our jobs too!**

Printed Scriptures taken from the NIV. Some KJV materials are included in the Resources.

Reinforce the lesson using fun Bible review activities.

Materials

Activities p. 4, pencils,
Resources lesson 1

Review Questions printable file



Materials

Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase marker, *Resources* sheet 2 Unit 1 Bible Memory Poster, reusable adhesive



Before Class

Separate the word cards from the Bible Memory poster.

Optional Bible Skill Builder

Print and use the first page of the *Resources* unit 1 Optional Bible Skills printable file. The activity will help children understand the basic differences between the Old and New Testaments.



Help kids develop skills for navigating God's Word.

Help kids discover why this lesson is important to them.

Focus

♥ We can trust God to help us do our jobs.

Make It Real (10–15 minutes)

- 3** Use one of these activities to help children **name ways God helps them do their jobs.**

Student pages involve children in learning.

Materials

Activities p. 3 (optional: pencils)



Note

If you did not do the “Jobs Kids Do” activity during Focus In, allow kids to complete the activity at this time.

Materials

adult guest who will share about his or her job



Note

If you will not be able to have a guest visit your classroom, share your own story about how God helps you do your job.



Providing a picture of your guest will help the child with special needs remember the name of and information about this new friend.

Materials

Weekly Bible Reader issue 1



Pastoring Tip

Your example of faithfulness will teach the children more about that spiritual quality than your words.

Quick Step With God's Help

SAY: **God helped David do his jobs. Let's name ways God helps us do our jobs.** Have the children look again at the activities page. Name one of the jobs pictured or listed on the page. Ask kids to raise their hands if it is a job they do. Choose two children who have raised their hands and ask them to act out doing that job.

ASK: **What kind of help might you need to do this job? How might God provide that help for you?**
Would you need to be brave to do this job? How could God help you be brave?
How would you learn to do this job better? Who might God provide to teach you about the job?

Continue in this manner for other jobs listed on the page. Ask similar questions after each situation is acted out. SAY: **Some jobs are hard to do. I'm glad that ♥ we can trust God to help us do our jobs.**

Option How Does God Help?

SAY: **God helped David do his job as a shepherd. Let's learn how God helps people today do their jobs.** Ask a guest to share about a job he does on a regular basis. The person might want to include how he learned to do the job and name qualities that are important to the job (organizational skills, courage, patience, etc.).

ASK your guest: **What jobs did you do growing up that helped prepare you for the job you have now?**
How does God help you do your job?

SAY: **The jobs we do now can prepare us for jobs we will do in the future. Some jobs are hard or dangerous to do. Some jobs require patience or organizational skills. I'm glad that ♥ we can trust God to help us do our jobs.**

Option Story from Weekly Bible Reader

SAY: **God helped David do his job as a shepherd. Let's read a story and talk about ways God helps us do our jobs.** Read the rebus story “Alison Works Hard.” Pause whenever you come to a picture, and let the children say the pictured word.

ASK: **What are some ways God helps us do our jobs?** (keeps us safe, helps us be brave, helps us do the best we can do, gives us the strength we need)

SAY: **I'm glad that ♥ we can trust God to help us do our jobs.**

Tips for easy lesson preparation.

Live It Out (10 minutes)

- 4 Use one of these activities to help children **ask God for His help and do a job.**

Quick Step Plan, Pray, Do

SAY: **We've learned that ♥ God helps us do our jobs. Let's make a list of jobs we can do in our classroom. We'll ask God to give us the strength and knowledge we need, and then we'll do the jobs!** Have the children help you make a list of jobs that need to be done in your classroom.

After the list is made, model how tasks are to be done, and then pair kids carefully so that everyone will experience success. Lead in a time of prayer. Pray about the specific jobs the children will do. Then have the kids do their jobs. When jobs have been completed, gather in a circle.

ASK: **How did God help you learn how to do your job?**

What help did God provide for doing your job? (strength, someone to do it with me, knowledge to do the job correctly)

SAY: **The jobs we did today may not seem very important, but doing these jobs can help us prepare for other jobs in the future. ♥ We can trust God to help us do our jobs.**

Option My Jobs Chart

SAY: **We've learned that ♥ we can trust God to help us do our jobs. Let's make job charts and then ask God for His help in doing our jobs.** Before class, make copies of the reproducible page. Distribute the pages and markers. Read the directions aloud and encourage kids to draw or write about jobs they do. Help children as needed to cut out the charts, punch holes, and string with yarn.

When all the children are finished, have them bring their job charts to a closing prayer circle. Invite the children to show what they have drawn or talk about one or two jobs they do. SAY: **We're going to pray and ask God to help us do our jobs.** Ask kids to pray silently and ask for God's help in doing their specific jobs. After a short time of silent prayer, close the prayer time. PRAY: **Dear God, thank You for our jobs. Help us as we do our jobs, just as You helped David do his jobs. In Jesus' name, amen.** Encourage children to hang their charts at home and remember to trust God to help them as they do their jobs.

Saying Good-bye

- Make sure children have projects and activity pages they have done and the *Activities* (p. 2) Unit 1 Bible Memory Poster and stickers. Stickers are in the middle of *Early Elementary Activities*. Encourage kids to complete their posters at home.

Evaluate


1. Can the children describe how God helps us do our jobs?
2. Do they understand that the jobs they have now can prepare them for later tasks in life?
3. Are they motivated to help their families at home?

Focus

♥ We can trust God to help us do our jobs.

Help kids put the lesson into practice.

Materials

whiteboard, dry-erase marker (optional); supplies needed for jobs to be done, such as cleaning cloths, spray bottles filled with water, etc.) 


Job Suggestions

Sort crayons or markers
Empty trash cans
Clean a whiteboard
Prepare a snack
Pick up toys

Reminder

Remind students to read the story and do the activities in the *Early Elementary Student Guide* at home this week.

Materials

copies of the My Jobs Chart reproducible page, markers, scissors, hole punch, yarn (or ribbon) (optional: card stock) 

Note


See the teacher contents page for the location of reproducible pages. The My Jobs Chart reproducible is also provided in the *Resources* lesson 1 printable files.

Teaching Tip

Copying the chart onto card stock will make it sturdier for hanging.

Weekly Bible Reader

Give each student a *Weekly Bible Reader* to take home.

Be sure parents know about the *Faith & Family* pages available online to print and use with their children at home. Go to www.oneaccord.net. 

12

Choose the activity that works best for your class.

Find more resources online!

God Helps David Do His Jobs, Lesson 1

Weekly Bible Reader sends the lesson home.

Jobs Kids Do

Name _____

What jobs are these kids doing?

Use the student activity pages to help kids dig into God's Word.



God Helps David

Fill in the puzzle with the correct words.

Word Box
armor bear lion lyre sheep

How did God help David do his jobs?
How did David serve his family?
How did David serve the king?



What other jobs do you do?

- rake leaves
- feed pet
- make bed
- pick up toys

SEEN STUDENT CURRICULUM

**Help students feel seen, known,
and loved by God.**

Seen curriculum helps you provide a safe and nurturing environment for students to discover the truth and wisdom of God—all while processing what they see in the world.

SEEN equips leaders to connect with young people about difficult and important issues as they help them build a biblical worldview. Sessions have practical tips and training to help leaders (from new volunteers to seasoned veterans) be sensitive to the particular needs of teens who are experiencing the effects of stress, trauma, and conflict in their lives.

Every student should feel seen and known in their church, their family, and their community. Walk alongside them as they build confidence that God sees, knows, and loves them too.

AGES

Teens

FORMAT

Classroom, small group, or large group setting

MAXIMUM LESSON TIME

1+ hours

seen

MORE ABOUT SEEN

Students discover relationship with Jesus.

Seen was designed for teens—middle school and high school—to either learn together or separately.

In the first year of Seen, students are steeped in the foundational beliefs of Christianity as they learn about

- who God is,
- why we trust His Word,
- who Jesus is, and
- how the Holy Spirit guides us.

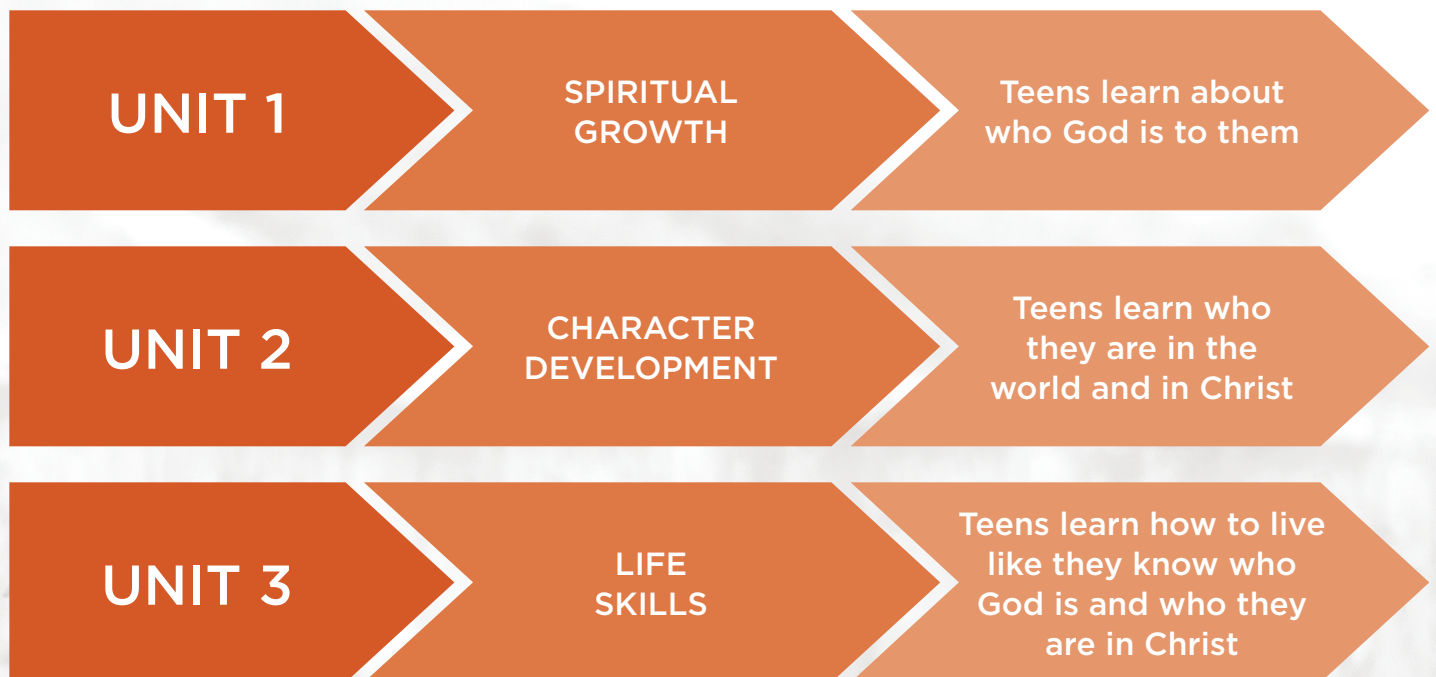
As students grow in their spiritual knowledge, they'll be challenged to use this knowledge to develop solid Christian character qualities such as

- respecting authority,
- gaining wisdom,
- practicing forgiveness, and
- persevering through difficulties.

Students will have the opportunity to put God's Word into practice as they exercise valuable life skills such as

- using words well,
- thinking critically,
- managing anger, and
- choosing purity.

Each unit is made up of 4 sessions in which essential principles are wrestled with and discussed through a biblical worldview.





Resources Available with Seen

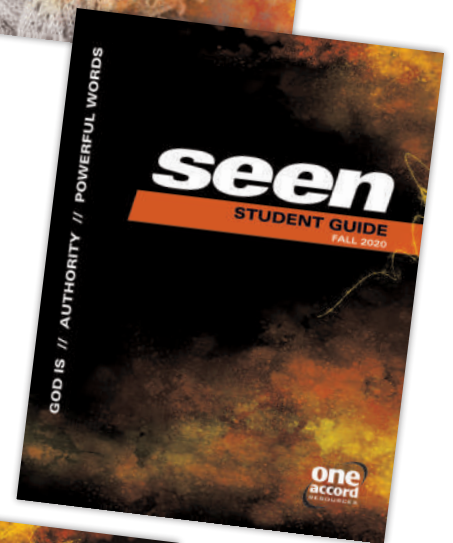
Leader Guide features include:

- 12 lessons
- Bible commentary and Bible culture clues
- Expert resource articles (topics include helping teens in crisis and understanding trauma)
- In-lesson teacher tips to help deal with sticky situations
- Bonus material to help with hard questions



Student Guide features include:

- Journal space
- Scripture excerpts and Remember Bible verses
- Discussion questions
- Weekly challenges for further study



Digital Resources features include:

- Video resources for each lesson
- 12 customizable Leader Guide lesson outlines
- 12 reproducible student group discussion cards
- PowerPoint visuals for each lesson
- Remember verse Scripture visuals for each lesson
- Weekly parent connection materials: text and email messages, social media promotional materials
- Weekly student connection materials: text messages, social media promotional materials
- Youth curriculum logo graphics



Spiritual Growth
God Is ...
Our Father

This is the main learning objective for the lesson.

Quarter 1 Unit 1 Lesson 1
Luke 15:11-24

Easily see all the materials you need for the lesson.

SUPPLIES

- Bibles
- timer
- Digital Resources*
- Student Guides*
- paper
- pencils or pens
- whiteboard, dry-erase markers
- (optional: mural paper, tape)

CONNECTION

God is your Father, and He loves you.

REMEMBER

The Remember verse will help students as they recall the lesson theme.

“For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.”

1 Corinthians 8:6

PREP

Personally connect with the lesson as you prepare.

God is often described in the Bible as “the Father,” especially in the New Testament. It is a term that acknowledges His love, His concern for us, His authority, and His closeness to us.

As you prepare to lead students to understand God’s role as a father, it may help to focus your mind on the God you know from Scripture, the God you know from your own relationship with Him, and the God you pray to, worship, and follow. The main point of this lesson is to help students grasp not only the power of God, but the personal love He has for them.

The truth is, for you and your students, there can be negative or positive associations with the word *father*, most often influenced by your experiences with the dad in your life. As you lead students,

LEADER TIP

A graphic of the Remember verse is provided in *Digital Resources* for every session, along with other resources, including a PowerPoint template for you to customize to help lead the session time.

Practical tips and training to help leaders. Look for these throughout the *Leader Guide*.

be aware of what their experiences and reactions may be, and guide them to see the biblical God who is a loving, good, kind, and protective Father. God's role is everything a father *should* be, and we can look to Him to know what a perfect father is truly like.

LEADER'S BIBLE NOTES

Get ready for the topic and understand the biblical context of that day's lesson.

This story of the lost (or prodigal) son is the third in a trilogy of stories of the lost. They each tell us something, not only about God's purposes, but about God's relationship with His people. The audience Jesus spoke to here was made up of Jews—those who were set apart long ago in the time of Abraham as the treasured people of God.

These stories about finding lost things are meant to paint a picture in people's minds. It's familiar imagery—God coming for them, finding them, rescuing them, and restoring them. But there are some differences too. These stories are being told while Pharisees, Jewish religious leaders, look on in disapproval—noting that Jesus is willing to welcome sinners and even eat with them. But Jesus goes on talking—welcoming anyone to hear what He says about the Father God who will not give up on them, who will search for them, and who rejoices when any sinner (not just a Jewish one) is restored to the kingdom. This is the Father we want our students to meet and know and love. There are a few things to remember when studying this Scripture passage: 1) this is a parable (a story that makes a point); and 2) examine the context. If you do nothing else with your students, teach them that the Bible is more than a collection of verses—it is a greater story of God's relationship with His people that is still unfolding today. If you pluck a verse out, you may get some good from it, but you will miss much.

OVERVIEW

Preview: Give a glimpse of today's Connection point.

Connect: Analyze what the Bible says.

Explore: Hear what students have to say.

Act: Give students something to do.

A quick glimpse at the lesson outline.

PREVIEW

PREVIEW is meant to give a glimpse of the day's topic in an interactive way.

Before class, write this statement on the whiteboard (or on mural paper taped to a wall): "My dad _____."

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Use the U1L1 Intro video as students arrive to spark discussion or attract attention. Welcome students as they enter, and invite them to fill in the blank on the wall with the provided markers.

When everyone has arrived and had a chance to add a response, take some time to discuss some of the answers. Don't press anyone for details, and be sensitive to the fact that for some teens, the idea of "my dad" is hurtful. Be careful not to assume that anything written on the board is meant as a joke.

We all have different experiences with our dads. Some of us have really great memories, and some of us might have gone through hard times with our dads, or maybe we don't have any memories of our dads at all. The Bible often talks about God as our Father. Jesus even called Him "Abba," which was a common term used between sons and fathers, much like we might call our fathers "Dad" today. Let's take some time to look at a parable Jesus told to help us better see God as a loving Father.

CONNECT is the main teaching portion.

LEADER TIP

Encourage students to bring their Bibles or to use Bible apps on their phones. Excerpts of the Scripture with each lesson are also provided in the *Student Guides*.

CONNECT

Jesus told many parables when He taught. A parable is a story that helps listeners understand a deeper spiritual lesson. Many teachers during Jesus' time used parables to help their listeners understand specific points because listeners could connect to the more-relatable ideas.

One of Jesus' most famous parables is about the prodigal son. As we read through it and discuss it today, let's think about what kind of father this story talks about and how Jesus wanted it to influence the way we see God.

Ask the students to turn to Luke 15 in their Bibles, and let someone read aloud verses 11, 12.

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them."

In Bible times, sons received their inheritance (money and property) from their fathers when the fathers died. In this parable, the younger son asks for his inheritance while his father is still alive, which would have been a huge insult. He's basically saying that he doesn't want to have anything to do with his father, and he wants his money now, even though his father would have still provided for him.

Ask the following questions and allow a few students to respond:

Why do you think the son wanted his inheritance early? What does this show you about the son?

How do you think the father felt when he heard his son's request?

Why do you think the father decided to give his son his inheritance early?

What would you do if your dad gave you a big sum of money?

ZOOM QUESTIONS

Imagine living in a society that is built on the concepts of honor and shame. What kind of result would the younger son's actions have brought on his family? On his father? On his older brother? Why would that be significant?

ZOOM
Questions aim to take students a little deeper, for those who are ready for that.

Ask someone to read Luke 15:13-16 aloud.

"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything."

The son took what his dad gave him and left his family home. During Jesus' time, people often stayed in their father's households their whole lives. They wouldn't necessarily all live in the same house, but they would have a connected home where all the extended family would live and work together. It was the father's responsibility to care for his family and provide for them. The son in Jesus' parable is breaking all the traditions by asking for his inheritance early and then moving far away from his family. He's turning his back on his dad.

Why do you think the son acted the way he did?

Have you ever wanted to do something like that? Why or why not?

The son ends up in a tough situation. He wastes all his money and finds himself in a famine. He ends up having to take a job feeding pigs. Keep in mind that this man is Jewish, and pigs were considered unclean animals according to God's law. The only people who would have had pigs were Gentiles—non-Jews. So, this son has no money, ends up being a servant to a Gentile, and is defiling himself by being around pigs every day. His situation could not be much worse.

At this point in Jesus' story, we don't know much about the father, except that he gave his son what he asked for. All we know is that the son seemed to want to live life his own way, and it ended up not turning out as he expected.

Invite students to find groups of two or three others and discuss the following questions:

Share a time you felt frustrated with how things were going at home.

How did you respond in that situation? How did your parents respond?

ZOOM QUESTIONS

Consider the idea that the parable may be representing God's attitude toward the Israelite people, the Jews, who would have made up the audience for Jesus' teachings here. Who would the father in the story represent? Who would the younger son represent? Why would Jesus paint such a bad picture of the son's behavior and situation? What do you think His point would be in doing so?

Ask someone to read Luke 15:17-20 aloud.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."

The son comes to his senses and realizes how he has sinned—not just against his dad, but against God as well. He did not honor his father as God's Word talks about. Once the son realized the way he had sinned, he was eager to get back to his dad to apologize.

The son hopes to go back to his dad and, at best, be his servant. Again, keeping in mind the culture during this time, the son had rejected his father. It would have been unthinkable for his father to take him back and accept him as a son again. It is likely that the father would have been seen as weak in the community if he did this.

*Ask a student to read verse 20 aloud again. Invite the students to think about the father's response.

During Jesus' time, older men didn't run. It wouldn't have been a respectable thing to do. But this dad sees his lost son coming home, and he runs to him, filled with compassion!

Here's an option to have students take over the teaching for part of the lesson.

LEADER TIP

*Instead of continuing to teach the lesson yourself, pause before the marked paragraph and allow students to lead the rest of the teaching in small groups. Students can use the *Student Guide* View pages or the *Your View* cards as provided in *Digital Resources*. If you use this option, skip down to the starred (**) paragraph on the next page after the small group time concludes.

Check out the *Digital Resources* for extra materials you can use during and after the lesson.

Why do you think the father responded the way he did?

Ask someone to read Luke 15:21-24 aloud.

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."

The dad not only allows his son to come home, but he throws him a huge party. When everyone would have expected the father to reject the son, he instead welcomes him back into the family with joy. He restores him fully and shows him great mercy and love.

****Remember that this story is a parable Jesus is telling. It is teaching us something about God as Father and the way He views a sinner who comes to Him asking for forgiveness.**

ZOOM QUESTIONS

What is the story teaching us about God and His attitude toward us?

We all have different experiences with our dads. Some good, some bad. But in this parable, Jesus shows us what our heavenly Father is like. Even when we turn away from Him, He's always waiting to welcome us home. He throws a party and rejoices when we come back to Him! He is a Father who is loving and forgiving and full of compassion.

EXPLORE

Erase the whiteboard or put up a new piece of butcher paper on the wall (or lay one down on the floor). Write this sentence: "My heavenly Father always _____." Let students finish the sentence and write down their thoughts in words or images on the board or paper.

Students can also use their guide pages to jot down their thoughts, impressions, and doodles.

Let's look at a few more Bible verses about God the Father. As we read them, jot down any words that jump out at you or any thoughts or images that come to

EXPLORE is where students take the concepts they've been talking about and have time to respond to them, whether that be through worship or prayer, or reading more of the Bible, or talking and writing about related ideas in their *Student Guides*.

mind. What qualities of God do you hear described? What do these verses mean to you?

*"A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling."
Psalm 68:5*

*"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"
Matthew 6:26*

*"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."
James 1:17*

*"My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."
Proverbs 3:11, 12*

Consider inviting students to write a letter to God, confessing a time they rebelled against Him. Now encourage them to write a response from God based on what they learned in the parable today. (Students who don't want to write could record videos on their phones instead.)

After a few minutes, invite everyone back together.

God has great love for you. He is the perfect example of a father who cares, forgives, loves, and shows concern. He also disciplines sometimes—only because He wants us to live in the way that He knows is the very best. You can always trust God and come to Him with any sin you've committed. He will forgive you and restore you, just like we read about today.

ACT

Sometimes God feels so big and distant, you may think that you can't really know Him and that He doesn't really know you. But that's not what we see happening in the Bible. Like the father in the story of the lost son, God wants to wrap His arms around us and make us part of His family. But, for some of us, it can be hard to receive God's love—especially if we've done some foolish things like the younger son. Here are some thoughts you might have as you go through your week, along with some truth from the Bible.

How could I ever know God? I don't even know what's happening in my next class!

Remember, not every student comes from a good situation. Find tips like this throughout the *Leader Guide*.

LEADER TIP

If you have students who come from difficult family situations, pay special attention to them today. If they need to talk or process their feelings, let them know you're available.

ACT gives teens something to act on: a spiritual discipline to exercise, a question to answer, a prayer to pray, a new idea to think on—something they can take with them out of their group time and use in their week.

Ask a student to read 1 John 4:7 aloud.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

If you know how to love others, then you know something about God. Quick! Tell me some ways to love others! (Call on students who have answers, and repeat those answers or write them on the board.) **All right! So, you've got some good ideas about how to love others—you can trust that you can know God the Father too.**

God loves us and forgives us. No matter what sin you've committed, God is ready and willing to forgive you. The parable Jesus shared is one that reminds us that God is merciful and truly loves each one of us.

Here's another thought some of you might have:

I don't think I'm good enough to be in God's family. How do I know He really wants me?

Listen to these words from Ephesians 1:4-6, from *The Message* version of the Bible:

Long before [God] laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.

Did you catch that? God not only accepts us—even when our lives stink—but He decided He wanted us long, long ago. Before we were even born!

This is the Father we have. This is the Father you get to keep getting to know! Don't forget to continue learning about Him this week.

And one more thing. If your earthly dad is a good influence in your life, consider this:

What can I do to talk with my dad more this week?

If your earthly dad has not been such a good influence in your life, consider this:

Do I have another godly man in my family I can rely on? What do I need to do to talk with someone like that?

If you don't have someone in mind, come talk to me.

Use the Spirit-Led Insight to pause and pray for your students.

LEADER TIP

Consider sharing a time you struggled with knowing or accepting God's love. What helped remind you of God's love in your life?

Spirit-Led Insight

In John 16, Jesus comforts His disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit who will guide them to all truth, leading them to the Father. Ask the Spirit to lead students to the Father today.

Pastoring Tip

Make a personal connection with the parents/guardians of your students, letting them know who you are and your excitement in teaching their children this quarter.

Make connections with the parents of your students. Tools provided in *Digital Resources* will help you to do just that.

LEADER TIP

An important part of deepening your relationships with your students is ending your class time by praying over them. We've provided biblically based statements you can use as prayers, or you may want to create your own to remind teens of who God is, what He wants for them, and how to connect with Him.

Lastly, if you see people struggling this week because of something going on with their dads, ask them this, and then tell them the story about the one perfect Father:

I heard this story about this guy who took his dad's money and ran off. Can you guess how he turned out?

Before you go out this week, let me pray for you: *May you accept God the Father's gift of loving grace, freely given through His Son Jesus, and join in rejoicing with those who once were lost but now are found. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Reminders for you: In the *Student Guide* are suggestions for verses for further study of God our Father. Remind students that they can contact you during the week if questions come up about anything they heard today. If students express interest in making a commitment to follow Christ, see the Salvation Path section at the back of this book for help in guiding them through this decision concerning repentance and baptism.

In *Digital Resources* you'll find Family Connection tools and Student Connection helps for reaching out to your students during the week as well. Remember to let students know that you (or other leaders) are available to speak to them or to their family members if they need more information or would like you to pray with or for them.

Reminder

Remind students to complete the activities in the *SEEN Student Guide* and to work through the information about each lesson in the *SEEN PowerZone Student Booklet*.

Encourage your students to use their *Student Guides* to respond to God and work through the lesson concepts.

EVALUATE

1. Do students understand why we call God our Father?
2. Can students identify the differences between God the Father and the person they call father in their life?
3. Will students choose to ask for forgiveness from the Father who loves them when they sin against Him?

Evaluate how your students are growing in their knowledge and faith of God.

Quick reminders for you each lesson!

Our Father // Quarter 1 Unit 1 Lesson 1

God Is ...

Our Father

Quarter 1 Unit 1 Lesson 1
Luke 15:11-24

CONNECTION God is your Father, and He loves you.

REMEMBER 1 Corinthians 8:6

"For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live."

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Our Father // Quarter 1 Unit 1 Lesson 1

YOUR TAKE

What is your takeaway from the Bible concept, stories, or things you discussed with your group?

the Remember verse (shown on the first page of this lesson):

and for whom we what?

and through whom we what?

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God Is ... // Quarter 1 Unit 1 Lesson 1

VIEW

Today we talked about how God is the Father and that He loves you. We all have different experiences with our dads—some good and some bad. But we know from the Bible that God is a Father who is compassionate, loving, just, and good—all the time!

Read the following passage from **Luke 15:20-24**. As you read, think about how you would feel as the son, who had rejected his father, lost everything, and then decided to return.

"So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."

The father could have been very angry with his son. But when his son returned, the father greeted him with forgiveness, love, and a party!

- Why do you think the father responded this way?

God loves you so much. He wants you to turn to Him, to repent and follow Him. When you come back to Him, He is waiting to greet you with open arms.

- How have I experienced my relationship with my own dad?
- How do I experience God as my Father?
- Do I trust that God loves me? Why or why not?

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YOUR STORY

What new things did you learn about God? How will you relate to Him differently? What did you learn about what it means that God is your Father?

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God Is ... // Quarter 1 Unit 1 Lesson 1

SEARCH

Look up these verses about God being our Father, and think about how the words make you feel. What could you do to get closer to the Father God this week?

OWN IT

Circle any words below, or draw any responses, that shine additional light on the idea of God as your Father.

- **1 John 3:1a** "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"
- **Psalm 68:5, 6** "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing."
- **Romans 8:15** "The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"
- **John 15:9** "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love."

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