



## God Prepares Our Heart

Matthew 3

### God Statement: God is With Us

KEY VERSE:

**“You will pass through deep waters. But I will be with you.”**

**Isaiah 43:2a**

## CHECK-IN

*Purpose: To build relationships with families and help parents feel comfortable leaving their child.*

As parents check-in their child at your classroom, try to welcome them by name to help them feel secure in leaving their child in your care. Once you’ve completed each of the check-in procedures, welcome the child into your classroom and encourage him/her to play with the classroom toys and activities. If you have LITs in your classroom, this is a great time for them to help engage with the kids while you continue checking in the kids.

If a child is upset or reluctant to enter the room, encourage him or her by offering toys, books or other fun items. If a child is still upset, let the parents know that we will text them if their child continues to be upset. Then, offer to carry the child into the classroom and try to calm the child with toys or other activities.

Use the “Connect” reminder (listed below) to help kids feel comfortable and safe in your class!

## CONNECT WITH KIDS

*Purpose: To build relationships & prioritize safety for our youngest children.*

Our goal, first and foremost, when serving babies and young toddlers is to prioritize building trusting relationships and the feeling of safety. We build trust with our littlest kids by meeting needs and helping them learn that church is a secure place where they are loved, known and safe.

**The 4 S’s are a simple way to keep our hearts and minds focused on this:**

When a child feels...(most of the time)

**SAFE:** physically and emotionally

**SEEN:** known and understood

**SOOTHED:** calmed and supported

They can become **SECURE.**

## WORSHIP TIME

*Purpose: Engage our youngest children through the power of music!*

Use the Little Kids music videos on Plex to sing some simple songs with your class. To access these videos, go to **Plex > Videos > EC > Babies folder**.

- Thank you Lord
- Jesus Loves Me

## READ THE BIBLE STORY

*Purpose: Engage our youngest children in a meaningful way by teaching God's word!*

This week, read about a Bible story from Matthew 3.

Read the Bible story below. Try to engage the child(ren) as you share the story by showing pictures and repeating key words and phrases. It's ok if you don't read every word of the story! Kids have very short attention spans (1 minute for each year of age) so try to keep your interactions short and don't get discouraged if a child loses focus!

### **THIS WEEK'S LESSON: The Story of John the Baptist**

(Summarized from Matthew 3)

#### **BIBLE STORY:**

Bring Hamilton (the hedgehog puppet) out and allow the kids to interact with him before you begin the story (they can feel his soft fur, give him high fives, give him a hug, etc.). Use Hamilton to help keep the kids engaged while you share the story (he can do the hand motions, ask the kids questions, etc.).

***Invite Hamilton to come out and see the class. Hamilton is holding soap (put a small squirt of soap on a paper towel).***

**SAY:** Hi Hamilton, what do you have there? ***Hamilton shows us.*** Oh, soap! What does soap do Hamilton? ***Hamilton whispers in your ear.*** Yes, soap keeps us nice and clean, just like when we made the toys nice and clean with soap and water! Today, we'll hear a story about Jesus and how He keeps us clean...without soap! Let's listen to this true Bible story. ***Hamilton nods.***

***Share the story of John the Baptist using the story cards in your folder.***

#### **SAY:**

- John the Baptist's job was to talk about Jesus.
- John told the people they should be baptized.
- The people went into a river and John dipped them into the water.
- Getting dipped into the water was a way to show everyone that the people wanted to stop sinning and do the right things.
- When we sin, we're doing the wrong thing.
- It's like we're going the wrong way.

- When you do the wrong thing, stop, walk away, then do the right thing.
  - Can you say that with me? Stop (**hold up your hands**), walk away (**demonstrate walking away with your fingers**), and do the right thing (**point to your mouth and smile big**).
  - Let's do that again! (*repeat the saying and the motions*)
- Getting baptized in the water was a way to show that the people's sins were washed away by Jesus!
  - Hamilton, remember the soap you brought today? **Hamilton nods**. Jesus died on the cross to wash away our sins, just like soap washes away dirt. But did Jesus stay dead, Hamilton? **Hamilton shakes his head no**. No! He rose from the dead and washed away our sins!
- God got the people ready for Jesus to come by showing the people how their sins would be washed away.
- God prepared the people for Jesus using John the Baptist.
- God prepares our hearts, too.
- He gets us ready for the things that will happen to us in our lives.
- He helps us stop sinning (**hold up hands**), walk away (**demonstrate walking away with your fingers**), and do the right thing (**point to your mouth and smile big**).
- God is good at taking care of us.
- God Prepares Our Hearts!

### **BLESSING (1 minute)**

*Read the verse and blessing over the kids before closing Large Group. Encourage the kids to stand and open their hands to receive the blessing as a truth that they can take with them this week and hide in their hearts.*

**SAY:** Friends, may you always remember that God takes good care of you and prepares your heart for the rest of your life.

## RESPOND ACTIVITY

(10 minutes)

If you have extra time at the end of your lesson and small group time, the kids can participate in this activity.

### PLAY: Walking in the Right Direction

**Supplies:** none

**Directions:**

- Let's make a line. Would you follow me?
- *Start walking, encouraging everyone to follow. Very good.*
- OK, we're walking the wrong way.
- Stop! Let's turn the other way.
- *Start walking the opposite way, encouraging everyone to follow.*

**SAY:** When we sin, we're doing the wrong thing. It's like we're going in the wrong direction. When you do the wrong thing, stop, walk away, then do the right thing.

Repeat as desired.

## PLAY!

*Purpose: Engage our youngest children by playing games and having fun!*

While your class can participate in free play for most of the remaining classroom time, please try to lead at least one structured activity. This is a great opportunity to introduce kids to classroom games and encourage interaction and participation with others.

### Suggestions of activities for Babies & Younger 1 Year Old's:

- Play Peek-A-Boo
- Read a board book
- Build a tower and let kids knock it down
- Play with a ball
- Roll a large car back and forth
- Take turns putting toys in a bin or bucket

### Suggestions of activities for Older 1 Year Old's:

- Hide an object and let kids find it
- Name and count parts of the body
- Discuss colors & numbers
- Turn on music and play freeze dance
- Have kids follow simple instructions (hop, sit down, clap, etc.)

## CHECK-OUT

### (end of service)

As parents arrive for check-out, the kids can continue participating in free play. Follow the check-out procedures for your classroom, making sure to send all of the child's belongings (diaper bag, bottle/sippy cup, pacifier, blanket, etc.) with the parent. Give the parent encouragement about how the child did in your class and say "Bye (child's name)!"