

WEEK 3 ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE



THE BIG IDEA

I can be wise by choosing to do good.

THE BIBLE

Wisdom and Actions: Psalm 1;
James 3:13-18

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "True North" (Rend Co. Kids)
 - "Make Right Choices" (LifeKids)
 - "Wise Up" (Kidspring)
 - "My Lighthouse" (Rend Collective)

ACTIVITY | Eye Patch Plank Walk

- This game is going to require some real focus and help! Walking the plank might not have been as common for pirates as we think it was, but today, we're going to pretend and play a game where we walk the plank!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Select two teams of six kids. Give five kids on each team two eye patches to cover both of their eyes. Set up two, four-inch-wide planks somewhere in your room. Each team will race to get their five eye-patched-pirates across their plank. The sixth member of each team will be responsible for guiding their teammates one at a time to where they need to go. They cannot touch their teammates until they are on the plank, then they can help them balance to get across. The first team to get everyone across their plank wins. Have the kids who are not playing cheer loudly for their teams!

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** To include kids in wheelchairs, mark the space using tape on the floor instead of setting up wood planks.

- Did you notice how you had to pay close attention to what your guide was saying to make it to the other side of the plank? I wonder what that has to do with our story today? Let's find out!

ACTIVITY | Captain's Orders

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have Captain Solly (the Big Idea character) lead this activity. Designate one section of the room with painter's tape to be the brig. Have the captain demonstrate each of the commands below. Then, start the game. The captain will call out any one of the commands at a time and the last person to join in the action must go to the brig (have other leaders help spot them). Have Captain Solly make fun comments while the kids are carrying out the commands.

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Make sure to model the commands as you call them out so it's easier for kids to recall each of the motions. You could also simplify this activity and play it like you would a game of "Simon Says."

- Oy, me hearties! Well, you done it. This ship is nowhere near ready to sail! But don't worry, Cap'n Solly is here. Just follow me orders and you'll be fine. Each time I say one of the special pirate commands, ye must do what I show you.
 - **Roll call:** Form a single file line, salute, and say, "Aye-aye, captain!" The crew may not lower their salute until the captain salutes back and says, "At ease."
 - **Crow's nest:** Pretend to look through a spyglass.
 - **Swab the deck:** Pretend to mop.
 - **Shark attack:** Dance and sing the song, "Baby Shark."
 - **Break time:** Go tag someone in the brig.
 - **Sailor overboard:** Pretend to swim around.
 - **Drop anchor:** Lie on their backs with legs up and act like an anchor.
 - **Row to shore:** Pretend to row a boat while singing, "Row, row, row your boat."
- Well done, lassies and laddies! Ye all are in ship-shape now!

POLL | Pirate Choices

- **What would be a good thing to do in each of the following situations?**
 - A fellow pirate fell down and skinned their knee, but the galley crew just told you dinner is ready, and if you're late, the captain will be angry!
 - You accidentally dropped the first mate's sword into the ocean. The first mate thinks it was one of your shipmates, so it looks like you're off the hook.
 - A new matey just joined your ship's crew and is doing everything wrong.
- Today, we are going to talk about how wise choices and the right choices are almost always the same things.

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

BIBLE STORY | Wisdom and Actions

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up the two planks from last week to share today's Bible story from Psalm 19. Read the Bible passage or ask one or more volunteers to help you.
- **Let's read Psalm 1:1.**
 - **What do you think "blessed" means?**
 - A lot of times, people think of blessings as only the good things that we have in our life, such as health, family, food, and other comforts. But we can be blessed even when we don't have everything we want.
 - In some translations of the Bible, they use the word "happy" for "blessed." Now, it might not always feel that way, but living the way God wants us to is how we can be truly happy, because only God knows what the absolute best is for us!
- **Read Psalm 1:2. What does a blessed person delight in?**
 - Exactly! God's Law. For us, we could say that means pretty much anything that God says in the Bible.
 - Not only do they obey God's instructions, but they also love having the chance to listen to God!
- Let's keep going. **What does Psalm 1:3 say?**
 - Someone who delights in what God says and follows what God says to do is like a strong tree. But not just any tree — a tree that is planted by a stream. That means the tree gets plenty of water and nutrients and is less likely to wither away.
 - In pirate terms, we will be a ship that can't be sunk!
- **But check out Psalm 1:4-6. What happens if we choose not to live by God's word?**
 - Someone who disobeys God and doesn't love what God has to say is like a plant with no root that can easily be blown away. Again, in pirate speak, a ship that strays off course.
- Psalm 1 shows us the difference between people who try to make wise decisions and those who don't. The people who make wise choices obey God because they truly love God and believe God knows what's best for them.
- Okay, now it's time to choose our wise adventure by walking one of these two planks:
 - The Wise Plank: Spend more time with God and learn what the Bible says.
 - The Unwise Plank: Ignore what the Bible says and do whatever feels right to us at the moment.
- **Which plank should we walk across based on what we talked about today?**

BIG IDEA | I can be wise by choosing to do good.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the pirate ship mast from last week and add today's Big Idea to the sail. Ask the same volunteer to play the part of Captain Solly to reveal the Big Idea.
- Avast, ye! It's Captain Solly again with another Big Idea this week! Cap'n Solly spends most days on me ship, lookin' at the briny deep from the crow's nest, and searching for doubloons.

Well, yesterday us buccaneers mapped a treasure out and, shiver me timbers! The loot was huge! Now, me has to choose what to do with my doubloons. What's a pirate to do: Use the doubloons to buy me a shiny ship, or help me other mateys out? Let's see our new Big Idea!

- **Which deckhand will come to help me set sail today?** *[Choose a volunteer to come help reveal the Big Idea on the sail.]*
- Our Big Idea today is: **I can be wise by choosing to do good.**

VIDEO | Choose Your Own Adventure, Episode 3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

VIDEO | Driving Down the Right Path

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show this [video](#) or a similar one about Psalm 1 or making wise choices.*
- *We always have choices to make in our lives. We can choose the right path or the wrong path, just like we read in Psalm 1.*
- *There are no paths out in the big, blue ocean, but the same would apply to you aspiring pirates — one wrong turn at sea would have you headed in the wrong direction for miles!*
- *God watches over us and helps us to stay on the right path, but we don't have to guess which path is wrong or right because the Bible will give us the wisdom to make the right choice!*

OBJECT LESSON | Candlering Choices

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Cut the bottom of a candle off so the wick is exposed on both ends. Use a nail to put a hole through the very center of the candle. Poke a toothpick through the hole so it is sticking out on both sides. Use the toothpick to balance the candle on two glasses. Light both ends of the candle. The candle will "seesaw" back and forth, up and down. Watch this [video](#) (from 3:27-4:27) for step-by-step instructions.*
- Making the right choice is not as easy as it sounds. Even when the right choice is obvious, there are always things that block us from automatically obeying God.
 - For example, let's say someone is saying something mean to your friend. Of course, you want to defend your friend, but it's not that simple. That person might pick on you instead. Your friend might get mad at you and say, "I can stick up for myself!" You might not know what to say and people might laugh.
 - There are tons of examples of this kind of back-and-forth inner thinking! So, we teeter-totter back and forth between doing good and not doing anything.
- *[Blow out one end of the candle and place the candle standing upright in a candlestick holder.]*
 - But instead of listening to and worrying about what everyone else has to say, we can choose to only care about one thing: What God has to say.
- When we focus only on what the Bible tells us to do, it becomes easier to make a wise choice. It's amazing that **I can be wise by choosing to do good!**

BIBLE | James 3:13-18

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the Bible passage or select volunteers to read.*

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACKS:** *You might want to provide visual aids to help explain each of the key words in this Bible passage. Pick either symbols or pictures of people that might be displaying some of these characteristics.*

- This Bible passage tells us that there are two kinds of wisdom.
- One kind of wisdom is true and from God. Some of the words James used to describe wisdom that comes from God are pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, merciful, impartial, and sincere. **Do we all know what these words mean?**
 - “Pure” means we do the right thing because we honestly believe it to be good.
 - “Peace-loving” means we don’t want to cause arguments or fights.
 - “Considerate” means that we care about the other person’s feelings.
 - “Submissive” means we are willing to listen to what someone else has to say.
 - “Merciful” means we are quick to forgive.
 - “Impartial” means we treat everyone fairly.
 - “Sincere” means that we mean the things we say and do.
- But get this: The other kind of wisdom is when we make a correct choice, but for the wrong reason.
 - James mentions “selfish ambition” and “envy.” That means that some people might choose to do good because they just want positive attention. Wanting to be noticed is not a bad thing, but if that’s the only reason you are doing something good, it kind of turns your good thing into a not good thing!
- While both kinds of wisdom might lead to the same results, they won’t both be considered good to God. God cares about the “why” in our choices.
- That’s why **I can be wise by choosing to do good** and making sure the reason behind what I do is good, too.

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

REFLECTION | Wise On The Inside

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Divide the kids into groups of three or four and discuss a good deed someone might do. Then, encourage them to talk about all the reasons – both good and bad –that a person might do that good deed. Have them share their discussion with the large group.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Name a good deed that people do and write it on a board or large piece of paper. Then hand out two different colored sticky notes to each kid and a pen. Have them write out one good reason people might do this deed, and a less noble reason. Have them put their responses on the board then discuss as a group. Do this a few more times with a different good deed.*
- In Matthew 19, there’s a story about a very rich man who asked Jesus what good thing he needed to do to go to heaven.
 - He told Jesus that he obeyed all the commandments, so he must be a good person! But then Jesus told him to go and sell all his things and give them to the poor, and that answer made the man sad.

- It's not that Jesus didn't like rich people, Jesus just knew the man's heart. The rich man was obeying the commandments, but only with action and not his whole heart.
- It's important to understand what motivates us to do good. Sometimes, it's because it makes us feel good. Or maybe we want a reward or a compliment. Or it might even be that we don't want to get in trouble.
- But the main reason we should make a wise choice is that it's what God wants us to do. And we can't go wrong when we're obeying God because God knows what's best!

ACTIVITY | Cannonball Bounce

- Earlier in the book of James, it says to "get wisdom." In this game, we're going to race to see who can get these words that describe God's wisdom: pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, merciful, impartial, and sincere.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Choose two kids to play this game. Have two sets of seven plastic cups lined up on a table. Write the six characteristics of godly wisdom on the cups. Use black ping-pong balls to bounce into each cup. The first person to get a "cannonball" in each cup wins. Pro tip: Fill each cup half full with water so the ping-pong balls do not bounce out. (Use this [video](#) for reference.) Let more kids try if you have time.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Use this activity as a movement break, and focus more on the game aspect so that kids don't get anxious about not getting the right answer. You could even use large buckets and jelly balls to make this easier.
- It's not going to be easy to be peace-loving, considerate, impartial, and any of the other words to describe God's wisdom. Sometimes, we will mess up and miss the mark. But the thing about choosing to do good is that we keep trying . . . that is what makes us wise!
- When we have a choice of where we're going, let's remember our Big Idea: **I can be wise by choosing to do good.**

MEMORY VERSE | Verse Voyage

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write each word of Ephesians 5:15 on a blue sticky note (make two sets). Lay each set of sticky notes on a tarp with the sticky side up in a random arrangement. Get two volunteers to roll across their tarp to pick up all the notes. Have the rest of the team help them pick the notes off and put them in the correct order on a wall or board. The first team to complete the challenge wins.

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for reminding us that there are many things we can listen to, but listening to you and what the Bible says is the wisest choice. Help us to do what is right, not just because we're supposed to, but because we want to. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- What does “blessed” mean?
- What does a blessed person delight in?
- What does Psalm 1 compare a “righteous” person to? How about a “wicked” person?
- Read James 3:17. What are some words to describe the wisdom that comes from God?
- Why do we need God’s wisdom to do good?
- What might be an example of the wrong kind of wisdom?
- What is something good you can do this week?

ACTIVITY | Wisdom Watcher

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have supplies for each kid to make a telescope ([like this](#)). Start with an empty paper towel roll. Cover the roll with black construction paper. Fasten the paper to the roll with tape or hot glue. Use gold duct tape for the ends and a couple of stripes in the middle. Be sure not to cover the ends so the kids can see through them. Use a silver permanent marker or a white paint pen to write “Wisdom Watcher” on the side.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Make this an opportunity to form prayer partners and foster accountability within the group. Have kids write one way they will choose to do good this week, roll up the paper, and put it in an empty water bottle. Have them swap bottles with someone in the group. Encourage preteens to pray for that person throughout the week and become their “wisdom watcher”, then check back in with them the following week.*
- One way that helps us choose to live wisely and do good is when we have friends who are looking out for us and encouraging us to do so!
- Use these “wisdom watchers” to look out for each other and look for ways to do good!

MEMORY VERSE | Ephesians 5:15 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Practice this month’s memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/Ephesians5-15.*
- Let’s practice this month’s memory verse together!
- **“Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise.”**