

WEEK 3

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

PAGE-TURNER

THE BIG IDEA

God is patient while we grow.

THE BIBLE

Parable of the Fig Tree: Luke 13:6-9,
I Corinthians 10:12-13

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!](#)*
 - "When the Fight Calls" (Hillsong Young and Free)
 - "One in a Million" (Elevation Kidz)
 - "You Awaken Me" (Central Live)
 - "I Belong" (Shout Praises Kids)

ACTIVITY | Planet Green Light

- It's a new day in Page-Turner world! So, for the past few weeks, we've been taking off to different worlds in our imagination. It's been like jumping into the pages of our favorite books!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This is a simple imagine-and-draw activity, but the kids may need some individual help getting their imaginations going. You could scaffold this activity by assigning kids a different aspect of daily life for them to reimagine (i.e., school, home, going out, shopping, etc.). Pass out paper and art supplies.*

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Imagination, pretend play, and abstract thinking is very difficult for some kids with special needs. Work together to create this imaginary world together instead of having them complete it independently. What shape is the planet? What is on the planet? Incorporate all the responses you get and have fun!*

- This week, let's imagine that we all traveled together to Planet Green Light. On Planet Green Light, there is absolutely no waiting . . . for anything!
- I want you to draw a picture of what you think life might look like on Planet Green Light. Show the thing that you would most enjoy not having to wait for!

ACTIVITY | Special Seeds

- There are many stories where a hero comes across a magical plant seed that contains special properties.
- Can you imagine if you were that hero? **What would you want your seed to grow into?** A tree with chocolate bark. A trampoline. A waterslide. A gummy bear bush. Whatever!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *The kids will be "planting" seeds in a plastic sandwich bag with a damp paper towel in it (look up seed germinating tutorials if you'd like to learn more). As you show them how it's done, make sure to be super enthusiastic while demonstrating. The kids can take the seeds home for sprouting at the end of the day or you can tape them to the window in your space – they will have sprouted by the following week.*
- We're going to choose a seed and put it in our plastic bag to grow! We'll pretend it will grow into whatever we imagined just now.
 - I personally would like a seed that grows a plant that marches into my house every night and does the dishes because I don't love doing the dishes. So here it goes! Dishwasher plant, coming right up! *[Place the seed in a bag.]*
- Okay, I'm ready! Hurry up and grow! Let's go! Let's do this thing! Come on, plant!
- **Hey . . . how come my dishwasher plant didn't grow yet?**
- Oh, do I have to be patient? Ugh, waiting is no fun! But sometimes, really good things are worth waiting for.
- Let's all plant our seeds! Just so you know, it's possible that I mixed up the pizza tree seeds with sunflower *[or other]* seeds, so don't be too disappointed if that's what comes out.

QUESTION | Have you ever felt like giving up on something or someone?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell kids you have something to tell them then wait a full minute and sit silently during that time. Let kids get antsy and ask you when you'll begin.*
- Sorry I made you wait. And I forgot what I was going to say!
- Waiting is so hard, right? Raise your hand if you don't like waiting. I totally get it!
- **Have you ever felt like giving up on something or someone that you've had to be patient with? What was that like?**

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

BIBLE STORY | Parable of the Fig Tree

- **It's time to jump into the pages of the most epic book ever** – the Bible! Let's read today's Bible story together. Then, we're going to reimagine it to understand it better.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Luke 13:6-9 aloud to the kids.*
- Now, let's reimagine this story in a different way.
 - There once was a girl with a very special and unique ability. She could talk to trees. Because of this ability, she was wonderful at managing vineyards and orchards because she could actually talk the trees into producing the biggest, most delicious fruits and figs.
 - A girl was hired by a man to manage his vineyard, and there was one particular tree that was her favorite. It was a fig tree that the girl just knew could produce the most wonderful figs that anyone had ever tasted.
 - But there was a problem, though. The tree had never produced a single one. No matter what she said to the tree, it just wouldn't produce any figs.
 - One day, the man who owned the vineyard said to the girl, "Cut down that fig tree. It's wasting my soil."
 - But the girl patiently replied, "Sir, it just needs more time. I'll give it extra special care for another year and if it doesn't produce fruit, then I will cut it down, as you say."
 - The man agreed and the girl went out to talk to her favorite fig tree again.
- Now, imagine that this fig tree could feel. **How do you think it would feel about the girl knowing how patient she is with the tree?**
- The story Jesus told – and the one we just reimaged together just now – reminds us that sometimes, we are like the fig tree.
- Even though all of us are able to grow, learn, and do things the way God wants us to, sometimes we don't. Sometimes it takes us a while to catch on to what Jesus taught us. It takes us a while to be kind. We forget to share.
- But just like the girl was patient with the tree, Jesus is patient with us. He gives us many chances to learn and to do the things we learn in the Bible.

BIG IDEA | God is patient while we grow.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Present the Big Idea by turning to the next page in your Big Idea storybook from the previous weeks.*
- In our favorite stories, the authors can fast forward right through the time it takes for a young hero to hone their skills, make mistakes, and learn from their mistakes before they reach their potential – that is, everything they will be able to do one day. All they need to do is say, "Five years later," and boom! Our heroes are grown up and are suddenly wiser and stronger than just a few pages ago!
- In lots of stories, we don't even meet our heroes until they're fully grown and already know how to do all their cool stuff. But life isn't like that.

- Once a hero becomes great, we usually love them for their ability to act fast, not take their time. That's why we hardly think of patience as a superpower. But it is!
- Of all God's superpowers, this might be the greatest. God is willing to wait for as long as it takes to see us reach our potential. And since God gave us that potential, there's no question that it's there!
- Let's turn the page and find out what our Big Idea is for the day. Read it with me: **God is patient while we grow!**

VIDEO | Page-Turner, Episode 3

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

ACTIVITY | That Doesn't Grow On Trees!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give every kid the printable of a tree with bare branches along with coloring utensils.*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *On a piece of cardstock paper, have kids glue popsicle sticks as branches and green tissue paper as leaves. As they do this, discuss with them what kinds of things they might want to grow on this tree.*
- **Have you ever heard a grownup say that something or other doesn't grow on trees?** Maybe you've heard them say, "Money doesn't grow on trees." But what if it did?
- Fill this tree with the craziest thing you can imagine. Something that would never grow on a tree, but you wish it would!
- When God sees us, God never sees bare branches. God always sees the potential of us blooming into something special.
- We might not feel like fully grown trees right now (well, it's because we are not trees, but you know what I mean), but we will get there one day.
- And the best part is, **God is patient while we grow.**

OBJECT LESSON | How To Hatch A Dragon

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Put an egg under a cloth. Unveil it with a flourish.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Hand each kid a [dinosaur egg](#) and let them guess the best way to hatch them. Follow the instructions on the package to hatch the eggs!*
- Check out this egg. It might look like a regular egg, but what if I told you this was a dragon egg? You might not believe me. I guess there's no way to know except to wait for it to hatch.
- Though dragons are almost invincible, their eggs are actually very fragile.
- **So, what are some ideas you have about how we can prepare for this dragon egg to hatch? How could we keep it safe?**
- **Could we expect the dragon egg to hatch right away?** No, we'd probably have to be patient, wouldn't we?
- God thinks we are just as cool as dragons – cooler, actually – so God is not only patient with us, but God protects us and God prepares us to grow.

BIBLE | I Corinthians 10:12-13

- We all struggle with patience. I know I do. It's really hard to wait.
- But God is amazing at being patient! Being patient as we grow doesn't only mean watching and waiting. It means making sure we have room to grow!
- And that's what these Bible verses are about.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the Bible passage.*
- Imagine going through an incredibly difficult, life-sized maze. We may stumble and struggle to find our way. We don't know where to go next, we have to backtrack, and it takes longer to get through it than we meant for it to.
- Growing and facing new things can sometimes feel like that. And that's okay! When we come to the place where the struggle and confusion just get to be too much, God will always be there.
- God doesn't give up on us when we mess up and it takes us a long time to find our way because **God is patient while we grow!**

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

REFLECTION | Hands In The Dirt

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Fill a planter about halfway with potting soil and put another half pot full into a bowl or bucket so the kids can grab a pinch and sprinkle it. If you have a very large group, you might do a few separate pots or one big planter with a few bulbs.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Using this [video tutorial](#), give preteens time to illustrate their own fig. Talk about the process of drawing from start to finish, how it requires patience and how we can't skip steps.*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Using small plastic flower pots, like [these](#), sprinkle some dirt in to each pot. Allow kids to spend some time feeling the dirt, sifting it through their hands. Consider choosing a soft song to play in the background during this time.*
- We planted some seeds in our own little bag earlier, but now we're going to plant this big bulb and see if it grows into something beautiful.
- **What do you think a big bulb like this needs to grow?** That's right! To grow, plants need water, sunlight, and good soil.
- So I'm going to tuck this bulb right down here and we're all going to take a tiny pinch of dirt and sprinkle it over the top. If we all do it together, we'll have plenty of healthy, good soil for it to grow in.
- Just like this good soil will help the plant grow, God gives us community to help us grow! It might take some time for this bulb to make a flower, but that's okay! We can be patient as it grows just like **God is patient while we grow!**

RESPONSE | Waiting . . . and Waiting

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a personal story about how you had to wait for something and once you did, the outcome turned out far better than how you originally thought it would.*
- Think about some of your favorite stories. If every single story ended with the hero quickly getting to the ending, wouldn't the stories be so boring? Reading about their struggles and challenges is what makes the stories so good and what makes the endings more satisfying when they win!

- **God is patient while we grow**, so we need to learn to be patient with ourselves and with others, too.
- **What is one way you can be patient with yourself?**
- **How you can be more patient with your family and friends, or with complete strangers?**
- Having patience is one of the best ways we can show how thankful we are that God has so much patience with us.

MEMORY VERSE | Spell-bound

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Put up a large piece of butcher paper vertically to draw a large tree from the floor up. As kids spell the missing words in the memory verse, make your tree grow taller.*
- Let's imagine that we are in an enchanted forest and you came across a tiny seedling. You find out from the woodland creatures – who talk, of course – that the only way we can make it grow into a tree is through a spell. No, not that kind of spell. It's by spelling the right words from, oh what a coincidence, II Thessalonians 3:3!
- Let's see if we can help this seedling grow into an enchanted tree!
- *[Ask kids to spell words in italics.]*
- **"But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one."**

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for being patient with us. We are so grateful that, like a good gardener, you prepare and work the soil around us to make sure we can grow strong. Even when we make mistakes, you don't give up on us. Help us to be like you and grow in our patience with ourselves and with others. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **What kind of tree was the Bible story about?**
- **Why did the owner of the vineyard want to cut down the tree?**
- **What did the vineyard worker say to the owner?**
- **Read I Corinthians 10:12-13. What do you think it means when it says that God will not let you be tempted "beyond what you can bear?"**
- **How can we show how thankful we are for all God's patience with us?**
- **In response to God's patience, what are some things we can do to make sure we grow strong?**
- **What are some ways you can show patience to others this week?**

ACTIVITY | Book It!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pass out art supplies and encourage the kids to tell today's Bible story, the Parable of the Fig Tree, using only images. Or have them create their own story inspired by the Bible story.*

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Using instructions found [here](#), help preteens make their own pop-up books based on (or inspired by) today's story.*

- One of my favorite parts of books is the pictures! In a lot of books, the pictures are as important as the words!
- Imagine you are a famous book illustrator. You have been asked to illustrate our Bible story today. Can you tell the story using only pictures?
- How do these pictures show that **God is patient while we grow?**

MEMORY VERSE | II Thessalonians 3:3 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/IIThessalonians3-3.*
- Let's practice this month's memory verse together!
- **"But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one."**