

God Tests Abraham

Session 1

Genesis 22:1-18

Worship Theme:



Our obedience honors God.

Easy Prep for Leaders

None is necessary.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo sing while the children play the "Doing All God Asks of Me" game.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



Tammy's Favorite Teddy Bear

Gather the children in a circle.

Say Tammy was a little girl about the age of some of you. Tammy had a favorite teddy bear that she took everywhere.

Ask • Does anyone here have a favorite toy?

Say One day Tammy's mother said, "Tammy, I have a surprise for you. Your best friend, Michelle, is coming to spend the night with you. Her parents have to go away overnight, so she is going to come here to play with you."

Ask • Have any of you ever had a friend spend the night at your house?

Say Tammy couldn't wait for Michelle to come. The girls ate dinner together. They played games together. They even listened to stories together—just as you are doing right now.

Ask • What do you think they did next?

Say After storytime, it was bedtime. Tammy and Michelle climbed into Tammy's great big bed and snuggled down to go to sleep. But Michelle couldn't sleep.

Ask • Do you know why Michelle couldn't sleep?

Say Michelle couldn't sleep because she forgot her favorite teddy bear. You see, Michelle had a favorite teddy bear, too. When Michelle missed

her bear, she began to cry. Tammy ran to get her mom.

Ask • How do you think Tammy's mom tried to help?

Say Tammy's mom asked Tammy if she would

let Michelle sleep with her favorite teddy bear just this once. "I know you love your bear," said Tammy's mom. "But Michelle is away from home. Let's help her feel happier in our home."

Ask • What would you do if you were Tammy?

Say Tammy didn't want to give up her favorite teddy bear, even for one night. But she wanted to help her friend. She handed the teddy bear to Michelle.

Ask • How would giving up your favorite toy make you feel?

Say Michelle knew that Tammy was sad. She said, "Let's share your bear tonight. He can sleep between us in your great big bed!"

Preschool Leader Tip

Consider passing out teddy bears to all of the children for this activity. Holding a teddy bear will help the children relate even more closely to the feelings of the child in the story.

Preschool Possessions

Say When Tammy's mom asked her to let Michelle borrow her bear, it was like the time God asked Abraham to give up his son Isaac. God told Abraham to take Isaac up on a mountain and give him to God there. Because God asked, Abraham obeyed even though he loved Isaac very, very much. When God saw that Abraham had chosen to obey, God gave Isaac back to Abraham.

Ask • How do you think Abraham felt when God asked him to do this?

Say Tammy's story had a happy ending—just as Abraham's did. God was only testing Abraham to see if Abraham would do as he was told. Abraham loved his son, Isaac, very much. He loved God even more. He was willing to do as God asked. When God saw that Abraham was willing to obey no matter what, he let Abraham keep his son.

Tammy's favorite teddy bear was special to her just as Isaac was special to Abraham.

Ask • What is something very special to you?

Say When you see your favorite things, remember Tammy, who obeyed her mom, and Abraham, who obeyed God. Remember, too, that your obedience honors God. It shows God that you love him!

Give the children paper and crayons.

Say When we try to imagine how someone else feels, we say we are putting ourselves in that person's shoes. Abraham was ready to offer his only son to God—a son he loved very much.

Tammy was ready to offer her favorite teddy bear to her friend Michelle. Put yourself in their shoes; draw a picture of something you love very much.

Give the children time to draw. After they've finished, ask the following questions.

Ask • How would you feel if you had to give up something you loved very much?

• How would you feel later when you learned you'd get to keep it?

Say Now you know how Abraham and Tammy felt. Abraham was probably overjoyed when God said he could take Isaac home. Tammy was happy when Michelle offered to share the teddy bear. But both Abraham and Tammy had been willing to obey even when they thought they would lose what they loved. When we are willing to obey God *no matter what*, we give him honor as Abraham did.

Preschool Leader Tip

During The Offering, the children will be putting their pictures into the offering plate along with paper shoe shapes the elementary children will prepare. To help the preschoolers feel they are participating in the same activity, you may choose to cut paper into shoe shapes for the preschoolers, too, and let them draw their pictures on the shoe shapes.

Preschoolers may also want their pictures back after the offering. Be sure to have someone write children's names on their pictures just in case they do want them back.

Doing All God Asks of Me

Have the children sit in a circle on the floor. Give a beanbag to one child. While the children pass the beanbag around the circle, sing the following song to the tune of "Frosty the Snowman":

I will obey God,
I will do what he tells me.
I will pray each day.
I will say, "No way,"
To the things that might hurt me.

I will obey God,
Doing all that he tells me.
I will praise the Lord,
Following his Word,
Doing all God asks of me.

At the end of the song, have the child holding the beanbag tell a way to obey and honor God. Play a few more times so that other children can give answers, too.

Worship Session 1

Nutter Butter Cookies or Obedience?

Bible Story: God Tests Abraham
(Genesis 22:1-18)

Worship Theme: Our obedience honors God.

PREPARATION: None

Theo: *(Breathlessly)* I'm here! Don't start church without me! Hello!

Leader: Well, hello to you, too, Theo. You're running a little late today, aren't you?

Theo: I know! I didn't mean to be late, but the neatest thing happened when I stopped at the corner store on my way to church.

Leader: Theo, why did you stop at the store?

Theo: *(Looking guilty)* Well, they had just gotten in a new shipment of Nutter Butter cookies, and you know how I love Nutter Butter cookies. I figured I'd just take a quick look and then come to church.

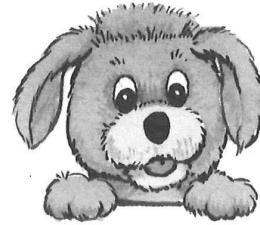
Leader: So what happened to make you late?

Theo: Well, I was looking at the cookies, and then Becky walked in—you know, my friend Becky Beagle.

Leader: Oh, so you found a friend to talk to and that made you late?

Theo: Yeah, but the exciting part is what we talked about! Becky asked me if I was gonna buy some cookies—she knows they're my favorite! I said I couldn't 'cause I didn't have any money. Then Becky looked at my paw and saw the 50 cents I was holding. She thought I was lying, but I told her that good puppies don't lie!

Leader: That's right, Theo! But why did you tell her you didn't have any money if you had 50 cents?



Theo: It's 'cause my mom gave me the 50 cents for offering money. I told Becky that I was coming to church and I was bringing a gift for God. But she said I was silly not to buy the cookies and that God wouldn't mind if he didn't get my 50 cents.

Leader: It sounds like she was pushing you to disobey your mom. What did you do?

Theo: I told Becky that I *wanted* to give my money to God. I told her that it was a good thing to obey my mom and that I wanted to honor God by doing what he wanted me to do.

Leader: Oh, Theo, I'm so very proud of you. What did Becky do when you said that?

Theo: She was surprised! You know, Becky doesn't *really* believe in God. Sometimes I think that she thinks I'm silly because I do believe in God. But when I told her I wanted to honor God more than I wanted to buy the cookies, she knew that God is important to me. After all, she knows how much I like Nutter Butter cookies—that's what she gave me for my birthday last year!

Leader: Theo, do you know what you did today?

Theo: *(Hesitantly, as if afraid he's done something wrong)* No, what did I do?

Leader: Theo, today you honored God by choosing to obey. You also honored God by telling Becky that you want to do what God wants more than you want to do what you want. You helped Becky understand how wonderful God is.

Theo: Wow! I did that! Just by talking to Becky and not buying cookies?

Leader: Yeah, you did! Maybe you'll help Becky decide to believe in God one day.

Theo: I sure hope so! Then she could come to church with me, and we could sing about God together, and we could pray—it'd be great!

Leader: I think so, too.

Isaac Marries Rebekah

Genesis 24

Worship Theme:



God is pleased when we seek his direction.

Easy Prep for Leaders

A-maze-ing Direction—Make a copy of the “Isaac’s Wife” handout (at the end of this session) per child.

Paths of Righteousness—Prepare a simple course from your room to another room. Place five or six brightly colored paper flags along the way. Set the flags far enough apart to require some seeking but close enough together to be visible from one flag to the next. At the last flag, place snacks or treats.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo go with the children in the “Paths of Righteousness” activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.



Mirror, Mirror

Say We’re going to play a game today called Mirror, Mirror. OK, let’s play.

Pause, allowing a moment for confusion and questions.

Ask • What else do you need to know in order to play the game?

Say We need rules, or directions, to know how to play a game. Unless we know what we are supposed to do, we can’t enjoy the game. In the same way, unless we know how God wants us to live our lives, we won’t be able to figure out what we are supposed to do. Let’s see how much more fun it is when we know the directions.

Form pairs. In each pair, have the children choose one child to be the mirror.

Say The person who is not the mirror will choose a movement or a face to make. The mirror must make the same movement or face so that it looks as if the person is doing it in front of a mirror. OK, let’s try it for a few minutes, and then we’ll trade places.

Allow a few minutes for children to practice. Call a stop, and then ask partners to switch roles. Play again.

Say Isn’t it much more fun when we know the rules?

Ask • How did you get the rules you needed?

Say I told you the rules. Without those directions, it’s impossible to make any sense out of the game. Without God’s directions for our lives, we can’t make any sense out of how we are supposed to live. Just as you asked for the directions to the game, we can ask God to direct us when we need to know what to do.

A-maze-ing Direction

Give each child a pencil or crayon and a copy of the “Isaac’s Wife” handout. Have children mark the path on the handout as you tell the story.

Say Abraham wanted to be sure Isaac’s wife would be someone who knew and worshipped God just as they did. So Abraham sent a servant to Nahor, in the country where Abraham’s family lived, to bring a wife back for Isaac. We’re going to show Abraham’s servant the direction God is leading him as he travels.

Abraham’s servant began his journey through the sandy desert. He traveled all day until he came to a place where he could pitch his tents.

Ask children to draw a line from the servant to the tents.

Say The next morning, the servant began his trip again. As he walked, he thought about his important job. He wondered how he would be able to choose wisely. Which woman would be the right wife for Isaac?

Ask • How do you think the servant could find the right wife?

A-maze-ing Direction (continued)

Say The servant thought while he continued his journey. After a few days, he needed to get water for himself and for his camels.

Have children draw a line from the tents to nearby water.

Say The servant watered the camels and filled his water containers. Then he began walking again. He walked until he came to a village.

Have children draw a line from the water to the first village.

Say This village wasn't Nahor. No one here worshipped God. The servant knew he would not make his choice in this village. So he walked away. The servant knew Nahor would be the next village he would come to. The well would be his first stop so he could get water for his thirsty camels.

Have children draw a line from the village to the well at Nahor.

Say The servant knew that he needed God to direct him so that he would choose Isaac's wife wisely. So this thirsty servant asked God to help him find a wife for Isaac. He asked God to help him find someone who was one of Abraham's relatives and was kind and helpful, too. He prayed that the woman who would offer him a

drink when he asked and would offer water for his camels would be the one God had chosen for Isaac.

When the servant saw Rebekah, he asked her for a drink of water. Rebekah gave him a drink and offered to give his camels some water, too!

Ask • Which one of the women near the well is pouring water in a trough for the camels to drink?

Say When Rebekah invited him to stay with her family, the servant found out that they were part of the same tribe as Abraham's family! Rebekah was kind, helpful, and a member of Abraham's tribe—everything the servant had been searching for. God had answered his prayer.

Ask • What do you think could have happened if the servant hadn't asked for God's direction?

Say The servant needed direction. He had been given an important job. He asked God to direct him to the woman God wanted for Isaac. God directed the servant to Rebekah. God is pleased when we look for his direction just as the servant did.

* Paths of Righteousness

Gather children at the beginning of your flag course.

Say A path has been marked from where we are now to a special place. We will find our way by looking for brightly colored flags like this one. Hold up a sample flag.

We will look for these to make sure we are staying on the right path. When you find a flag, walk to it with walking feet only. Let's look for a flag!

Guide the children along the course until they reach the destination. Have children sit in a circle, and then distribute the snacks or treats.

Ask • How were we able to find our way to this special treat?
• What did you have to do?

Say We had to look for, or seek, the flags to find our way to this treat. Because we looked for the flags, we could follow the path that was set out for us. We also must look for God's direction to find out where we are to go next.

Ask • What kinds of directions does God give us?
• How do we know what God wants us to do?
• Where do we learn about God's directions?

Say We get to know God by studying the Bible and praying and talking with God.

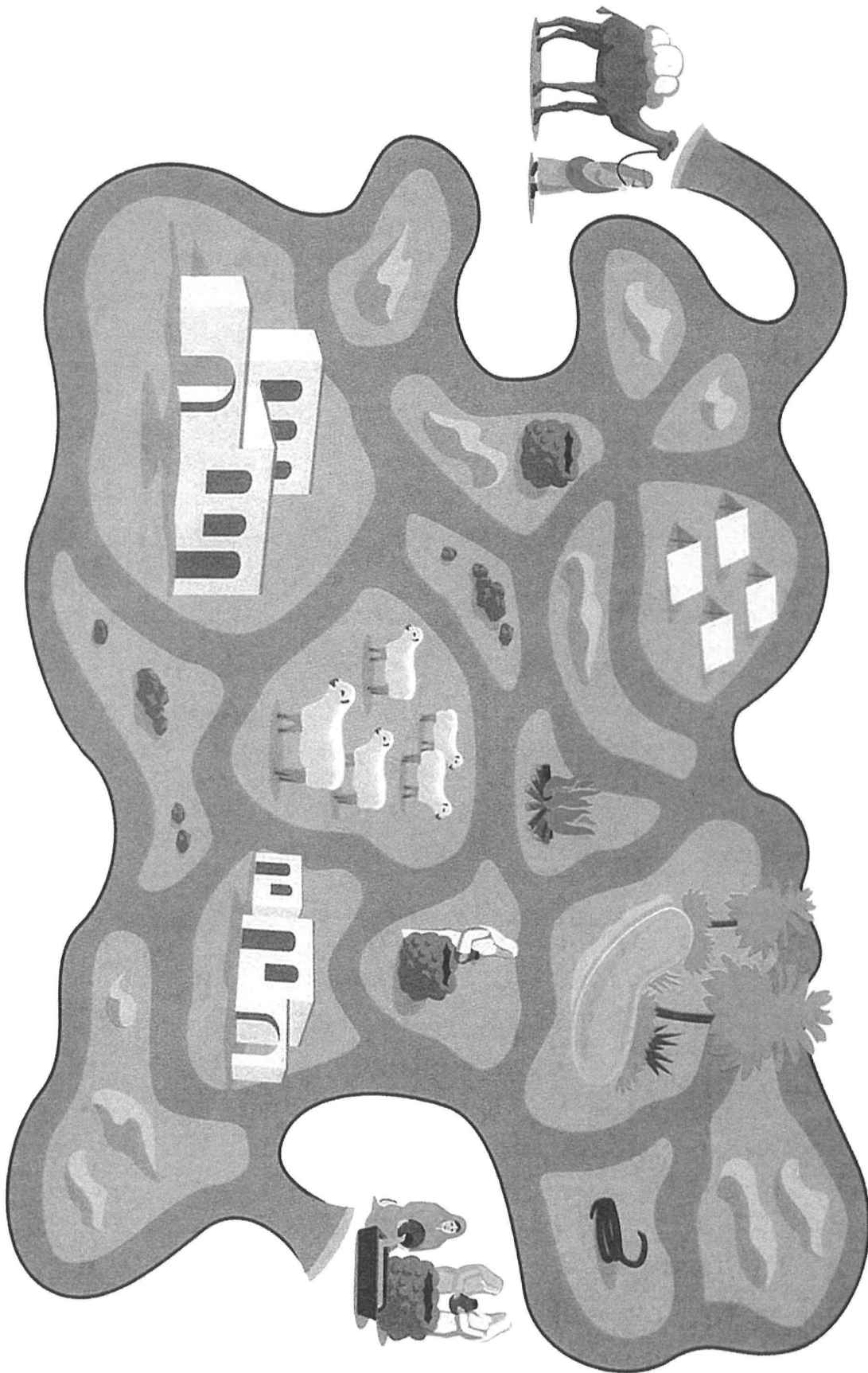
The Bible tells us how God wants us to behave. When we have difficult choices to make, we can always ask God in prayer to help us make wise decisions. That's what the servant who was searching for a wife for Isaac did. God himself is honored when we ask him to guide us, because it shows that we trust him to lead us along the right path.

ALLERGY ALERT



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

Isaac's Wife



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Worship Session 2

A Sense of Direction

Bible Story: Isaac Marries Rebekah
(Genesis 24)

Worship Theme: God is pleased when we seek his direction.

PREPARATION: Tape pieces of a balsa-wood airplane kit to Theo's paws. Put the paper instructions next to Theo.

Leader: Theo! I'm glad you're here today. What did you bring with you?

Theo: It's an airplane.

Leader: An airplane?

Theo: Well, it will be as soon as I put it together.

Leader: Great. Can I help?

Theo: Sure. I'll explain what to do. Let's see...hmm... You just put this piece here...no, what about over there? Maybe if you...*(frustrated)* Oh, I don't know!!

Leader: Where are the directions, Theo? They would help you.

Theo: Directions?

Leader: Didn't your plane come with directions that tell you how to put it together?

Theo: You mean that piece of paper that was in the box?

Leader: Yeah. That was probably it.

Theo: I didn't think any piece of paper would be part of my airplane. I...well, I...just tossed it right over there. *(Nods toward instruction sheet.)*

Leader: Directions are important, Theo. Without directions, we wouldn't know how to play a game or get from one place to another or...

Theo: Build an airplane?

Leader: Or build an airplane. God knows how much we need directions so he gave us a whole book of directions to tell us how we should live.

Theo: Wow! I wouldn't want to throw those directions away. Where is that book?

Leader: That book is the Bible. God gave us the Bible so we would know how to live the lives God gives us. Here, let me pick up the directions for building your airplane.

Theo: Can we work together?

Leader: Sure. Let's just follow the directions. *(Assembles the plane while reading the directions aloud.)*

Theo: Let's try it!

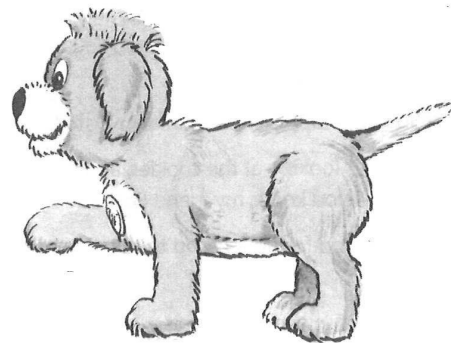
(Leader sends the airplane away from the audience as Theo watches.)

Theo: Wow! Following the directions sure did make a difference!

Leader: Following God's directions makes a difference in our lives, too.

Theo: I'm going to go get my airplane and then go home and read my Bible to learn about God's directions.

Leader: That sounds like a good idea.



Jacob Deceives Esau and Isaac

Session 3

Genesis 25:27-34; 27:1-40

Worship Theme:



God is always truthful.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Truth or Lie—Draw a large happy face on one sheet of newsprint and a sad face on another. Tape the sheets of newsprint to walls on opposite sides of the room.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo read the true and false statements in the "Truth or Lie" activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



* Ice Cream and Cake

Gather the children. Choose two girls to stand with you—one on your right and one on your left. Help the other children form two groups. Tell children in one group they are "ice cream." Tell the others they are "cake." Have all the children ("ice cream" and "cake") sit in front of the girl on your right, who is "Maggie." The girl on your left, "Millie," will stand by herself. Tell the following story:

Say Maggie and Millie were sisters.

Point to Maggie and Millie.

Say Maggie just celebrated her seventh birthday.

Ask • How do you celebrate your birthday?

Say Maggie had a party on her birthday with friends, games, and—most important of all—ice cream and cake!

On the day after Maggie's party, there was *one* scoop of ice cream and *one* slice of cake left.

Point to the "ice cream" and "cake" groups.

Say Maggie's mom said that Maggie could have the ice cream and cake since she was the birthday girl. Maggie was going to eat the ice cream after school. She was saving the cake for dessert after dinner.

Maggie hurried home from school to eat her ice cream. Just as she walked in the door, though, she found her sister, Millie, playing with a new beanbag toy. "Where did you get that?" Maggie asked.

"Mommy took me out to lunch," said Millie. "This came with my food."

Maggie wanted the toy. She wanted it so badly that she traded with her sister.

Ask • What do you think Maggie traded for the toy?

Say Maggie traded her last scoop of ice cream for the toy.

Have the ice cream group move to Millie's side of the room.

Say Maggie missed her ice cream, but she knew she could still eat her cake after dinner.

That evening, Maggie asked her mom if she could eat her special snack. Mom said, "I thought you already did. You called from the kitchen and asked me if you could have it a few minutes ago."

Maggie ran to the kitchen and found her sister, Millie, eating the very last bite of cake.

Have the cake group move to Millie's side of the room.

Ask • How do you think Maggie felt after that?

Say Millie and Maggie are a lot like Jacob and Esau.

Let the girls who played Maggie and Millie join either the ice cream or cake group. Choose two boys to stand where Maggie and Millie were. Explain that the boy on the right is Esau. The other is Jacob. Have both groups move to your right, next to Esau.

Say Ice cream group, you are now "the birthright." Cake group, your new name is "blessing."

One day, Esau was very hungry. His brother, Jacob, wanted his birthright—a special gift given to the family's oldest son. Jacob traded Esau some stew for the birthright—the way Maggie traded her ice cream for the toy.

* Ice Cream and Cake (continued)

Have the birthright group move to Jacob's side of the room.

Say Later, Jacob dressed like Esau and tricked his father, who couldn't see, into giving him Esau's blessing, too. This means Jacob's father asked God to give him many wonderful things. By the time he was finished, there was nothing left for Esau.

Have the blessing group move to Jacob's side of the room.

Ask • How would you feel if someone took everything special from you?

Say Jacob and Millie weren't nice. They used tricks and lies to take things. Sometimes people tell lies and trick other people. But God is always truthful.

Truth or Lie

Gather the children in the center of the room. Point out the happy face and sad face drawings.

Say I am going to read some sentences to you. If you think the sentence is true, go to the happy face. If you think it's not true, go to the sad face. Are you ready?

Read the following statements one at a time, giving children time to move. If the children don't agree, talk with children on each side about why they think the statement is the truth or a lie.

- The sun is purple.
- Some rabbits can hop to the moon.
- Children grow up to be kitty cats.
- God always tells the truth.
- Apples are a healthy food.
- Falling down the stairs can hurt you.
- Zebras can fly.
- God loves everyone in this room.

After playing the game, gather the children in a circle.

Say I am so glad you know the difference between the truth and a lie! Tricky people like Jacob and Millie will have trouble tricking you. This game was all in fun. I would never really try to trick you. I care about each of you, and I will always tell you the truth.

God cares about each of you, too. He doesn't tell lies or trick people. You can count on him to always do what he says he will do. God is always truthful.

Ask • How do we learn what God says he will do?

Show children your Bible.

Say God's Word, the Bible, tells us what he has promised to do. The Bible tells us God loves us. It tells us he watches over us. It tells us he cares about all we say and do.

Ask • How do we know we can believe God's Word?

Say We know God is always truthful, so we know his Word, the Bible, is true!

God Says

Say I want to teach you a clapping rhyme. Listen to the words, and watch my hands.

Demonstrate the first two lines of the clapping rhyme. Slap your knees on the first accented syllable, and clap your hands on the next accented syllable. Continue the rhythm throughout the rhyme. (Imagine saying the words to a quarter-time beat.)

God says he loves me, and I know it's true—

Our God is always truth-ful.

Say This time, I'll say the first line, and you will say the second. We'll all clap together for both lines.

Slowly say the first line as you lead the children in clapping. Help the children say the second line.

Say Now I'll add some more lines to the rhyme. Every time I finish a line, you will say, "Our God is always truthful." Are you ready?

Do the clapping rhyme:

God says he loves me, and I know it's true—

Our God is always truth-ful.

God says he cares, and I know he does—

Our God is always truth-ful.

God says I'll meet him, and I know I will—

Our God is always truth-ful.

If God has said it, then it's true be-cause

Our God is always truth-ful.

Preschool Leader Tip

Don't expect children to master clapping and speaking at the same time. They will have fun trying and watching you, but they may choose to do one instead of both. Commend their efforts without expecting perfection.

Worship Session 3

Theo's Day at the Mall

Bible Story: Jacob Deceives Esau and Isaac
(Genesis 25:27-34; 27:1-40)

Worship Theme: God is always truthful.

PREPARATION: None

Theo: Hello! Hello to you!

Leader: And hello to you, too, Theo. How are you today?

Theo: I'm happy because I had a super-fantastic-wildly-adventurous-unbelievably-fun-you-should-be-sorry-you-missed-it-day yesterday!

Leader: Wow! I *am* sorry I missed it. What did you do that was so super-fantastic-wildly-adventurous, Theo?

Theo: I went to the mall.

Leader: You went to the mall? That's it? I've been to the mall dozens of times. Something exciting must have happened, right? What was it?

Theo: Exciting? The fair was there! I can't believe you missed it!

Leader: The fair was in town? I didn't hear about the fair coming to town. They usually tell people they're coming. How did you hear about it, Theo?

Theo: Well...uh. They didn't tell people they were coming because they wanted to surprise me. And they did! I went to buy a present for my uncle's birthday and found the fair in the *middle* of the mall!

Leader: In the middle of the mall! How did it fit? The rides are too tall!

Theo: That was the best part! They cut a hole in the roof! It was incredible! I rode the Ferris wheel right to the top and looked out over the mall. Did you know they park helicopters up there?



Leader: All right, Theo. That's enough. They don't really park helicopters on top of the mall, do they?

Theo: (*Looking guilty*) No—but they could if they wanted to!

Leader: Theo, I don't think you went to the mall this weekend.

Theo: Actually, that's the only part of my story that's true.

Leader: Well, I'm glad you're finally telling the truth. Theo, did you know that God is always truthful? And God doesn't like lies. Proverbs 12:22 says, "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful."

Theo: I'm not too crazy about lies myself.

Leader: Why's that, Theo?

Theo: Because once you tell one, you have to tell a whole bunch more just to keep your story straight. How did a trip to the mall turn into watching helicopters land on the roof, anyway?

Leader: It's a mystery to me, Theo. We'll just tell the truth from now on, OK?

Theo: Good idea. It's much easier. See ya soon.

Leader: Where are you going?

Theo: I've got to tell my uncle the real reason he didn't get a birthday present. He thinks the clowns at the fair tied me up. (*Theo exits.*)

(*Leader shrugs and sighs.*)

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

Session 4

Genesis 29:15-30

Worship Theme:



God works in all situations.

Easy Prep for Leaders

No More Tricks—You'll need a bag of cookies with at least one cookie for each child and a can of peas or another vegetable. Place the food in a grocery bag near you but out of the children's sight.

In All Situations—Find four magazine pictures of children in different situations, such as with a pet or having dinner with the family. Think of a brief story to tell about each picture. For example, if you have a picture of a boy and a dog, you might make up a story about the dog being lost.

Worries—You'll need six 4-inch squares of colored tissue paper for each child, glue, a sheet of construction paper, and a green marker.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo participate in the "Worries" activity by sharing some of his worries.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit created to tie in to this week's worship session.



No More Tricks

Ask • Have you ever tried to trick someone, or has someone tricked you? Tell us about it.

Say Today we're going to hear a Bible story about a man who was tricked and what God did about it. Jacob was a young man who loved a beautiful girl named Rachel. Jacob loved Rachel so much that he asked her father if he could marry her. But Rachel's dad didn't just say yes or no. Rachel's dad said Jacob could only marry Rachel if he worked for him for seven years!

Seven years! That's a long time. Can you count to seven with me?

Good job! But Jacob loved Rachel. He was willing to work seven years for her. After seven years of work, he said, "I'm ready to marry Rachel."

But Rachel's father tricked Jacob! He said Jacob would have to work another seven years if he wanted Rachel!

Show children the cookies. (Keep the can of peas in the sack.)

Ask • How would you feel if I told you that you could have a cookie if you cleaned up the room and then I gave you this instead?

Show children the peas, and give them time to respond.

Say That wouldn't be fair, would it? Jacob felt tricked and cheated. He probably worried about how things would turn out.

Ask • Have you ever wondered how something bad or sad in your life would turn out? For example, maybe you lost your favorite blanket or someone broke your special toy. Tell us what happened.

Give children time to respond.

Say God always wants to turn bad things in our life into something good. Let's find out about what happened to Jacob and Rachel. Jacob married Rachel and then had to work another seven years. God blessed Jacob with lots and lots of sons—12 in all! And the children had children who had children, and so on. God used all of Jacob's children to build a great big nation—they became the nation of Israel! That would be like your family having so many kids,

ALLERGY ALERT



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

No More Tricks (continued)

grandkids, great-grandkids, and so on that you formed your own country! Jacob learned that God works in all situations.

God gave good things to Jacob, and he gives good things to you and me, like these cookies! As we eat them, let's remember that God always brings good out of bad.

* In All Situations

Gather children around you, and show them one of the pictures. Have them act out something shown in the picture before you tell them the story you've thought of. For example, if the picture is of a boy and his dog, have children pretend to pet and take care of a dog. Then tell them the story. For example, you might say, "This boy loved his dog. But one day the dog got lost. The boy was very worried, but God helped him. How do you think God helped the boy?"

Lead children to say things such as, "The boy prayed for his dog, and the dog came home," or "Someone found the dog and returned him to the boy."

Repeat this process with each picture.

Say **God is so good to us! Whenever something bad or sad or scary happens to us, God promises to make it better. God works in all situations!**

Worries

Set out the supplies you prepared before the session.

Say **Sometimes we worry about things. To worry means to be afraid that something bad might happen. For example, you might worry about your pet being safe if it sleeps outside at night, or you might worry about going to sleep in your bedroom when it's dark. Sometimes I worry about [name something you worry about]. But I've learned that God wants me to give my worries to him to take care of. He works in all situations.**

Ask • **What are some things you worry about?**

Give children time to share their worries. Then give each child several squares of colored tissue paper.

Hold up one of the pieces of tissue, and crumple it into a ball.

Say **Sometimes this is how we feel when we worry, all crumpled and messed up. Crumple each of your papers one at a time, and show me how you feel when you worry.**

Give children time to crumple their tissue-paper squares.

Say **God promises to work in all situations. Listen to what he says in the Bible: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). That means that God will make everything turn out well in the end. Let's give him our worries.**

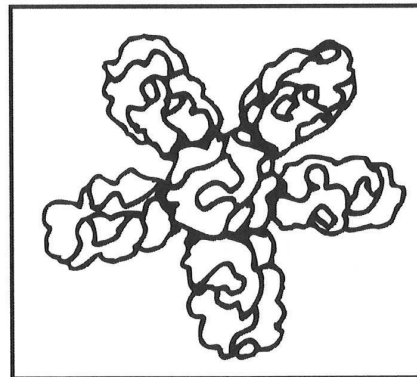
Spread glue in the shape of a flower on the construction paper. Show children how to put their crumpled papers close together on the glue to create a pretty flower.

When all the tissue paper has been glued to the construction paper, draw a stem and leaves with a green marker, and then show the flower to the children.

Say **See? God takes everything in our lives, even our worries, and makes something good out of them. God works in all situations!**

Preschool Leader Tip

Be careful not to focus too much on worry. Instead talk about the good that God brings to each situation.



Worship Session 4

Down but Not Out

Bible Story: Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel (Genesis 29:15-30)

Worship Theme: God works in all situations.

PREPARATION: Give Theo a “cast” by wrapping white first-aid tape around his arm. You’ll need enough tape that the children can use markers to draw small designs on the cast.

Leader: Theo! What happened to you?

Theo: (*Looking dejected*) I broke my leg playing Frisbee with my cousin Phil. (*Cries.*) Now I can’t run anymore! I can’t play Frisbee or fetch or chase cars. My life is over! (*Sobs loudly.*)

Leader: Oh, Theo, it’s not all that bad. Besides, you’re not supposed to chase cars anyway. It’s dangerous for you!

Theo: I don’t really chase cars—they scare me. Just don’t tell my cousin. I don’t want him to think I’m a scaredy-cat or anything. But what about all the other fun stuff? The doctor told my mom I have to sit still and keep my leg elephanted.

Leader: Elephanted? You mean elevated?

Theo: Yeah, that’s it! I have to keep my leg tilted up. Which means being quiet. Which means only one thing—*boring!*

Leader: That is tough, Theo. But we’ve been learning something that might help.

Theo: What’s that? I need all the help I can get. And I hope it’s not boring.

Leader: It’s not boring at all! We’ve been learning that God works in all situations, even in the bad ones. You hurt yourself, but God can make something good come out of it.

Theo: He can? Are you sure? (*Pauses.*) I don’t know. It really hurts right now.

Leader: Theo, I have an idea. How about if the children and I draw some pretty designs and pictures on your cast? That way, whenever you get sad or bored, you can look at them and remember that we love you!

Theo: That’s a great idea! I love pretty pictures!

(*Leader passes out markers; children draw designs on Theo’s cast.*)

Leader: Theo, you’re looking pretty cheery right now!

Theo: Yeah! That’s ‘cause I see a way God has already brought something good into my life!

Leader: What’s that?

Theo: Before I came here with my cast, I was hanging out at home by myself. Now I’m here, and all my friends are drawing pretty pictures. And the pictures can stay with me when I go home so I can remember all of you!

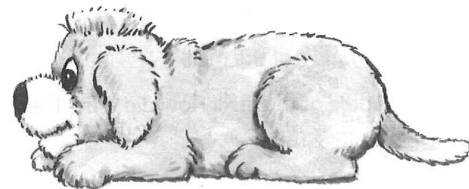
Leader: We have something else for you, Theo.

Theo: Oh, boy! What is it?

Leader: A whole bunch of hugs—and your own markers to take home so you can have other friends color on your cast!

(*Children each hug Theo.*)

Theo: Boy, God does work in all situations! I may be down, but I’m not out! ‘Bye!



Joseph Dreams Disturbing Dreams

Session 5

Genesis 37:1-11

Worship Theme:



God's love is perfect.

Easy Prep for Leaders

The Color of Love—On a large sheet of butcher paper, draw Joseph and his 11 brothers. Keep the drawing very simple. Display the paper at children's eye-level. Set out a new box of crayons.

Perfectly Inseparable—Fill a clear glass one-third full of water dyed with red food coloring. Fill a second clear glass one-third full of water dyed blue.

Love Lights—Set scissors, glue sticks, magazines, construction paper in a variety of colors, a large flashlight, white paper, and a prism on a table. Be prepared to darken the room for the activity.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo grab children's arms in his mouth to try to pry their hugs loose in the "Perfectly Inseparable" activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



The Color of Love

Say Welcome! Today we're going to learn about God's perfect love. We're going to start with our Bible lesson about a man named Jacob who had 12 sons. Point to the picture of the 12 men.

God loved Jacob very much. These crayons will be like God's love. Open the crayon box, and show the crayons to everyone. Aren't they perfect? Every single one has a nice sharp point. All of their wrappers are clean, and there isn't a single nick on any of them. God's love is like that—there's nothing wrong with it anywhere.

One of Jacob's sons was named Joseph. He was the next-to-the youngest of 12 boys. He was helping his brothers watch the sheep one day. When he came home, he tattled on his brothers by telling his father bad things about them. Let's have two children come up and quickly color two of the people in this picture to represent the brothers Joseph tattled on. Call on two children, and give each a crayon. Have them color two of the people.

Jacob loved all of his sons, but he loved Joseph more than the others. He gave Joseph a beautiful coat, but he didn't give any of the other boys a special present. That made the other brothers very angry. Let's have two more children come up and quickly color two more

people on our picture to represent Joseph and one of his brothers. Call the children forward, and give them two new crayons.

Joseph's other brothers never said anything nice to Joseph or about him. Let's have two more children color two more people to represent these brothers. Call two children forward, and give them two more crayons.

One night Joseph had a dream, and he told his brothers all about it. He told them that in his dream they were all tying wheat into bundles. His bundle stood up straight in the field while his brothers' bundles all bowed down to his bundle. His brothers became even angrier when they heard Joseph's dream. They thought he was bragging and telling them he was better than they were and that they should bow down to him. Let's have two more children color two more brothers. Repeat the process.

Joseph had another dream. He told his brothers that he dreamed that the sun and the moon and 11 stars bowed down to him. The brothers were even more angry. Let's have two more children quickly color two more brothers. Repeat the process.

Joseph told his father, Jacob, about his dream of the sun and moon and 11 stars. Jacob wondered what Joseph's dream was really all about. Let's have two more children come and quickly color the last two people in our picture. When the children have finished, collect the crayons.

The Color of Love (continued)

Ask • How do the crayons look now—do they look different from before we started coloring our picture?

Say There's no way that we can use colors without messing them up. In the same way, we can't love people without messing things up. All of us make mistakes when we love others.

Ask • What mistakes did Joseph and his father and brothers make in the way they treated one another?

Say We all make mistakes of some kind. We say words we shouldn't say. Sometimes we treat people unkindly. Only God can give love that is always perfect. People make mistakes.

* Perfectly Inseparable

Say We're going to do a special experiment today. This red water is like God's love. The blue water is like people—you and me. God says he pours his love out on you and me. He fills us up with his love. He calls us his children and loves us as a perfect loving parent. Pour the red water into the blue water, and stir it.

Ask • What happened to the water?

Ask two volunteers to separate the red water from the purple water. Allow a little time for them to experiment.

Ask • Is it possible to separate the red water from the purple water?

Say God's love is like that. Nothing can make God's love leave us. Nothing can do anything to get God's love out of us. Just as we can't separate the purple into red and blue again, we can't separate God's love from our lives. Let's all hug ourselves very tightly. Imagine God's love is glue that holds your arms in a hug. I'm going to come around and try to stop your arms from hugging you.

Attempt (without success) to stop the children from hugging themselves.

Say I wasn't able to separate a single person from a hug! God's love can't be taken from us by anyone or anything.

Love Lights

Darken the room just enough so you can see the effect of the prism.

Say Let's look at what happens to the light when we shine it through this special object called a prism.

Shine the light through the prism onto a large piece of white paper so the spectrum is easily seen. Make sure every child can see the rainbow.

Ask • What do you see?

Say A rainbow is an example of a ray of light that is broken into its separate parts. Each color is a part of the rainbow. There are many parts of love, too.

When your parents try to protect you from things that can hurt you or when they are patient with you, they are showing you parts of their love for you.

When you trust your parents to protect and care for you or when you treat someone with

kindness, you are showing parts of love.

When you hope other people experience good things in their lives, that's a part of love. When you are happy with others when they receive good things, that's a part of love.

Only God can love perfectly, with all the parts of love all the time. But we can show parts of love to others.

Each of you will get a chance to shine the light through the prism. Look at the different colors, and then choose a color of paper, maybe red, orange, or blue. Take your color to the table, and look in the magazines for pictures of people treating each other with love. Cut those pictures out, and glue the pictures to the paper.

Let each child shine the light through the prism to see the colors break apart. Then help children begin work on their collages. Allow each child to tell why he or she selected the pictures and how each picture shows a part of love.

Worship Session 5

A Perfect Song

Bible Story: Joseph Dreams Disturbing Dreams (Genesis 37:1-11)

Worship Theme: God's love is perfect.

PREPARATION: Tape sheet music to Theo's paws.

Theo: *(Clears his throat and sings.)* Mi, mi, mi, mi!

Leader: Theo! I'm glad to see you today. Are you going to sing for us?

Theo: I have been practicing and practicing and *practicing* so I can sing "Jesus Loves Me" perfectly.

Leader: Perfectly? Without a single missed word or missed note?

Theo: With no mistakes at all.

Leader: That's really hard to do, Theo.

Theo: Well, here goes...*(After quite a bit of throat clearing and setting pitch)*...Jesus loves me, this I glow, for the Bible tells me show. Little ones to him be song, they are meek but he is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me glow! *(Bows triumphantly.)*

Leader: Well, um, Theo, that was very nice...

Theo: Perfect, huh.

Leader: Not quite.

Theo: What was wrong?

Leader: You missed a few words.

Theo: No! Really? But I've practiced and practiced and practiced so it would be *perfect*.

Leader: What you're singing *about* is perfect.

Theo: What do you mean?

Leader: Jesus loves us with a perfect love.

Theo: With no mistakes?



Leader: With no mistakes. He knows everything about us, and he loves us just the way we are. Nothing we do can ever change the way he loves us. Jesus' love is perfect because *he* is perfect.

Theo: Wow. I wish I could sing about it perfectly.

Leader: How about if we all sing the song together. We'll help you with the words.

Theo: *(Speaking to the audience)* Would you? *(Pauses for response.)* OK.

(Theo sings the song with his audience.)

Theo: Thank you! I'm going to go home and practice singing it correctly. I'm glad Jesus loves us perfectly—even if I can't sing perfectly. 'Bye!

Joseph's Brothers Sell Him Into Slavery

Session 6

Genesis 37:12-36

Worship Theme:



Our actions show that we truly worship God.

Easy Prep for Leaders

A Worship Mirror

- You'll need an inexpensive hand mirror large enough for two children to see themselves in at the same time.
- Leave several things in disarray around the room. Children will be picking them up or straightening them during this activity.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:



- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo kiss the back of each child's hand as you place a bandage on it in "They Did What?"
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.

* Who Are You Watching?

Have children form a circle and stand facing the center.

Say One of the ways we show God we love him is by acting more like him. As we get to know God more, we act more like him. This game works like that. Don't say anything. Just do whatever I do.

Without speaking, lead the group in these motions:

- Stretch your arms above your head and clasp your hands.
- Lower your arms to each side so that your hands are resting on the shoulders of the people on each side of you.
- Point your right foot toward the middle of the circle.
- Bring your right foot back to place.
- Point your left foot toward the middle of the circle.
- Bring your left foot back to place.
- Lower your hands to your sides.
- Turn to your right.
- Put your hands on the shoulders of the person who is now in front of you.

- Take a small step.
- Take another small step.
- Lower your hands to your side.
- Turn back toward the middle of the circle.

Say Good job!

Ask • How did you know what to do in this game?

• How did I know whether you were paying attention or not?

Say I was the leader in this game, but God is our leader in life. If we pay attention to him, he shows us what to do. When we pay attention to God, we become like him. Our actions begin to reflect the one we are paying attention to.

Preschool Leader Tip

If you have time, let some older children take turns being the leader in this game.

They Did What?

Tell children the Bible story by reading the paraphrase below.

Say Joseph's family had a problem. Joseph's brothers were jealous of him. Sometimes they wished he wasn't even around.

Ask • Did Joseph's brothers have a choice about how they felt?

Say One day Joseph went to find his brothers. When he was still a little way from his brothers, they saw him coming. They were not glad to see him. They started talking about how they could hurt him or even get rid of him.

Ask • Did Joseph's brothers have a choice about how they would treat him when he reached them?

Say When Joseph arrived, they ripped off his coat and threw him in a well. Then, when some travelers came by, Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave.

Ask • Did Joseph's brothers make a good choice or a bad choice?

Say Joseph's brothers had to make the same choice that we have to make every day: Will we obey God or not? That day they didn't make very good choices, did they? We can make better choices than they did, though. We can show God respect by the way we live.

Ask • What kinds of things can we do to obey God and show him respect?

Show children the bandages.

Ask • What do we use these for?

Say We put them on our "owies" when we're hurt. I bet Joseph wished he had some bandages after his brothers were so mean to him. We're going to each wear a bandage for the rest of the day to remind us of Joseph and his brothers. When we look at our bandages, let's remember that how we act toward others tells God how we feel about him. We can help others or hurt others. But whatever we do, we are telling God whether he is important to us.

Put a small Band-Aid on the back of each child's hand.

* A Worship Mirror

After telling children the Bible story, show them the hand mirror.

Say This mirror shows us our reflections.

Walk around the circle, letting the children see themselves in the mirror.

Say Our actions are like a mirror. When we look into this mirror, we see a reflection of our faces. When God looks at our actions, he sees a reflection of our worship. This mirror shows us what we look like. Our actions show God how we truly worship him.

Let's take a few minutes to worship God with our actions. Do that first by finding a partner and being kind to him or her. You can help your partner stand up. You can hold hands or pat your partner on the shoulder or give your partner a hug.

Give children a few minutes to show kindness to their partners.

Say Now take a look around our room. See all of the things that need to be put away and straightened? With your partner, help me straighten up the room. Let's do these things because God has told us to be helpers and to be kind to each other. Being helpful and kind shows God that he is important to us. As you're helping to tidy the room, I will show you the mirror. When I do, look at your reflection and remember that God sees your kind, helpful actions and knows he is important to you.

As children are working, walk around with the mirror. Give every set of partners at least one chance to look at their reflections.

Gather the children to return to the large group.

Ask • How do we show God that he is important to us?

Say Every day we show God that he's important to us by how we act. Let's tell God we'll worship him by loving others. Say with the children, "God, we'll worship you by loving others."

Worship Session 6

Worshipping Inside Out

Bible Story: Joseph's Brothers Sell Him Into Slavery (Genesis 37:12-36)

Worship Theme: Our actions show that we truly worship God.

PREPARATION: None

Theo: *(Enters slowly with head down, speaking glumly.)* Hello, everyone.

Leader: Theo, what's wrong? You seem glum.

Theo: *(Looking up)* I do? How can you tell?

Leader: Well, you're looking down and talking slowly and just acting like you've got the blues.

Theo: I guess I am sad. Jordan just left for a trip for two weeks, and I'm lonely and...Hey, I think that's weird how you can tell what's going on inside me. Does that always work?

Leader: Oh, no. You can't always tell if someone is happy or sad or lonely. But many times what people see us do shows how we feel inside.

Theo: Like how?

Leader: Well, since we're in a worship session, let's talk about worship. What we *do* shows how we feel about God. Do we obey him? Do we spend time praying to God? Do we love other people the way he wants us to? When we love God, we *do* what he wants us to do.

Theo: Wow. So there's really no faking it when we worship God. Our hearts and our actions need to match.

Leader: That's right, Theo. What are some other ways that what we do can show how we love God?

Theo: Don't ask me, *they're* your students!



Leader: OK, everybody, how do we show that we love God? *(Allow children to respond.)* All those are good ideas.

There is always a connection between how we worship God and how we act. Our actions are like mirrors that show us how important God really is to us.

Theo: Hmmm, a connection between our feelings and our actions. It's like there's a string tied between how I act and how I feel. When I worship God, I worship him by what I feel and what I do. Cool. I get it. *(Looks at children.)* Do you get it?

Pharaoh Puts Joseph in Charge

Session 7

Genesis 39:20–41:49

Worship Theme:



God is worthy of our service.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Whole Hearts—Cut heart shapes out of red paper. Cut about half as many hearts as you will have children in your group. On each heart draw a smiley face. Then cut each heart into two pieces. Cut hearts straight up the middle so that any half will match any other half. You'll also need a bell for this activity.

Blue Ribbons—Before class cut blue ribbons or blue construction paper into 2x5-inch strips. You will also need two-sided tape and craft supplies.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo announce each child's name as you give children blue ribbons in the "Blue Ribbons" activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



* Whole Hearts

Say One of the ways we serve God is to give our *whole* heart to what we are doing. That means if we are singing, we give it everything we've got.

Ask • If being wholehearted means giving our best, what do you think it means to be halfhearted?

Say Those are good ideas. When we say we are halfhearted, we mean that we aren't trying very hard. We don't care a lot about what we are doing. God asks us not to be halfhearted. He says to do whatever we do with our whole hearts.

We're going to play a game to help us remember to give our whole hearts to everything we do.

Give each child half of a paper heart.

Say I've given each of you half a heart. Show children one half of a paper heart.

Someone else has the other half of your heart. Hold up a matching half, and put the two together. Explain that when the two sides match, children should see a smiley face. Try to match your half with someone who has the same side of a paper heart. Show children that the two don't match, and then let children help you find a match.

Let's see if you can find someone who has the other half of your heart. When I ring this bell, start looking for someone who can match his or her heart to yours. When you find that person,

match your hearts together, and stand very still. When I ring the bell again, stop, and we'll see who we need to help.

Redistribute the hearts, and then repeat the process several times, helping children who are having trouble finding a match.

After everyone has become "wholehearted" several times, collect the hearts, and have everyone sit down.

Ask • If we are wholehearted when we do our chores at home, how will we do them?

• If we are wholehearted when we serve God, how will we serve him?

• If we worship in a wholehearted way, how will we worship?

• **Let's review: Does God want us to be halfhearted (hold up half of a paper heart) or wholehearted?** Hold up the other half, and put the two together.

Say God is pleased when we do things to serve him. And God is most pleased when we serve him lovingly with our whole hearts. Let's learn about a man in the Bible who served God with his whole heart.

Preschool Leader Tip

If you have a small group, you may want to cut each heart in a different way so that there is only one match for each half.

* A Wholehearted Man

Say Joseph was a wholehearted man. Joseph served God with his whole heart no matter where he was or what he was doing.

A bad thing happened to Joseph. He was put into jail even though he didn't do anything wrong!

Ask • What does it mean to go to jail?

• How would you feel if you went to jail but hadn't done anything wrong?

Say Even though Joseph could have been angry that he was in jail, he remembered that he wanted to be a part of God's work. So while he was in jail, he did everything he could to help others. He helped the other prisoners. He even helped the men who guarded the prisoners. Joseph didn't do these things halfheartedly. The Bible says that the guards trusted Joseph so much that, if he was in charge of something, they didn't even worry about it. They would say, "If Joseph is taking care of it, you know it will be OK." That was just the kind of person he was. He was wholehearted about doing what was right and serving God.

Once he got out of jail, he was the same way. He once helped the king by explaining a dream to him. God helped Joseph understand what the dream meant. The king was so impressed with

Joseph's wisdom that he put Joseph in charge of the *whole* country. Wow! Isn't it amazing that a person could go from being in jail to being almost as important as the king?

These things happened to Joseph because he knew something important. He knew he needed to live his life for God whether he was in jail or sitting in front of a king. Joseph knew that he wanted to serve God no matter where he was. He knew that God deserved that.

Let's say a prayer together by saying, "God, please help us to be as wholehearted as Joseph was." Lead the children in saying the prayer together.

Ask • What can we do to serve God?

• How do you think God will feel when we do these things for him?

Say God is pleased when we serve him. God is worthy of our service. When we serve God, we're telling him that we think he's important and that we love him. Let's do something special for God right now.

Blue Ribbons

Say Sometimes when people do something with their whole heart, they win prizes for doing a good job. In the Olympics, people win medals.

Ask • What other kinds of awards do people get?

Say Sometimes the winner of a contest gets a blue ribbon. When someone wins a blue ribbon, you might hear people say, "I'm glad she won. She really deserved it."

Ask • What does it mean to deserve something?

Say Saying people deserve something means it is rightfully theirs. They *should* get it. They've *earned* it. If anybody should have it, *they* should.

God deserves a lot of things. One of the things he deserves is our service. So God really deserves a blue ribbon, doesn't he?

Give each child a blue ribbon. Set out craft supplies, and have the children decorate the blue ribbons to make awards for God. This is a great time to get out bits of leftover art supplies, such as glitter, foil, and confetti. While the children are creating their awards, talk about why God is worthy of service.

Then use two-sided tape to fasten the ribbons to children's shirts.

Say Wear these blue ribbons to remind you that God deserves your service. You can also let these blue ribbons remind you to tell your family what you learned today.

Ask • If your family says to you, "What's the blue ribbon for?" what will you say?

Say Great ideas! You can tell your family all about how Joseph served God with his whole heart and about how God is worthy of our service.

Worship Session 7

Heroes and Garbage

Bible Story: Pharaoh Puts Joseph in Charge
(Genesis 39:20–41:49)

Worship Theme: God is worthy of our service.

PREPARATION: Tape crumpled paper to Theo's paw.

Theo: (*Rushes in, out of breath and excited, carrying crumpled paper.*) You're never going to believe it! You're just never going to believe it! You're just never going to believe who I saw!

Leader: Tell us, Theo! Who did you see?

Theo: I saw...are you ready? I saw...maybe you should sit down...I saw...Super Pup, my hero of all heroes!

Leader: Uh, Theo? Since Super Pup is really just a cartoon, do you think you saw the *real* Super Pup?

Theo: Well, he might not have been real like you're real, or even like I'm real, but he was as real as he gets! He was life-sized—bigger than me! His arm moved with a little motor in it and kept waving back and forth. The sign at the bottom said, "Super Pup says: Keep Your Neighborhood Clean."

Leader: Oh, so you saw a life-sized cardboard cutout of Super Pup! I get it.

Theo: Hey, cardboard's pretty good for a guy who's usually only paw-sized in a comic book. And if Super Pup says, "Keep Your Neighborhood Clean," you'd better believe I'm going to keep it clean.

Leader: Well, Theo, I am so happy you stopped by today because you have just shown us something about our theme for the day.

Theo: Huh? I'm not talking about worship. I'm talking about Super Pup.

Leader: Yes, you are. But the way you feel about Super Pup can remind us of why we worship God. You admire Super Pup. You think he's great and he deserves to be listened to and obeyed. If Super Pup is worthy of you picking up trash for him, then God Almighty is certainly worthy of our service.

Theo: Oh, I get it. God is so great that he deserves for us to serve him.

Leader: After all, Theo, Super Pup may be a great cartoon hero, but God is the almighty God of the universe. He is worthy of our service no matter what he tells us to do.

Theo: I'm glad I could help out. This garbage is getting a little heavy. I better go find a trash can...



Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Session 8

Genesis 42–45

Worship Theme:



We can honor God by forgiving others.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Circle of Forgiveness Game—Use masking tape to outline a circle big enough for all the children to stand in at one time.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo help you explain the “Gift-Wrapped Forgiveness” activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.



Gift-Wrapped Forgiveness

Say When we forgive someone who has done something that hurt our feelings or made us angry, we are honoring God. Forgiving someone else is like giving God a present. We do it just for him.

Let’s make a little reminder for ourselves. Give each child a tissue.

Gather the corners together so there is a little pouch. Hold the pouch inside your fist. Then put some forgiveness into the pouch. Say, “I forgive you,” into your hand, and squeeze tight.

Ask • Why do you think God feels honored or happy when we forgive?

Have helpers tie ribbons around the “forgiveness” the children hold in their hands. If a child has let go of the tissue, have the child gather it again and say, “I forgive you,” into it. Then tie it with a ribbon. When everyone’s tissue is tied, have children sit down.

Say We can’t really hold all our forgiveness in a tissue. We have more forgiveness than we could ever wrap up. But this little forgiveness present reminds us that when we forgive someone, we are doing something for God. We are honoring him.

Have children put their “presents” in a safe place.

Joseph Forgives

If possible, have children sit in a circle for the Bible story and have a helper directly across from you. Have at least eight cans of food behind you as you tell the story.

Say The Bible tells us about Joseph. When Joseph was young, his mean brothers sold him as a slave and he was taken to Egypt.

Because Joseph honored God in whatever he did, he eventually got promoted from a slave to an employee of a government official who was sort of like the vice president.

God told Joseph that a famine would come. A famine happens when farmers can't grow food and people don't have enough to eat. Joseph helped the people get ready for the famine.

Before the famine, when people had plenty of food, he told the people to bring all their extra food to him so he could save it for the famine.

Pass the cans of food, one at a time, to the children on both sides of you. Have children pass the cans on until the helper on the other side of the circle has them all. Have the helper stack the cans in a pyramid.

Because of Joseph's plan, the people of Egypt had plenty of food when the famine came, but the people outside of Egypt didn't. Guess who came to Egypt to get some food one day? Joseph's brothers! The same mean brothers who sold Joseph as a slave!

Joseph was in charge of giving out the food, but his brothers didn't even recognize him. Joseph could get even with his brothers if he wanted to. He could say, "See that pile of food? Don't give them any."

But Joseph didn't want to hurt his brothers. Joseph wanted to honor God. Honoring God meant forgiving his brothers.

Joseph said, "I'm your brother Joseph. I'm the one you sold as a slave. I forgive you."

Joseph sent food home with his brothers. Have the helper pass the food back around the circle.

Joseph honored God by forgiving his brothers. We want to honor God by forgiving other people, too.

Circle of Forgiveness Game

Have everyone spread out around the edges of the room. Stand in the circle.



Say We're going to play "You're Forgiven!" The circle I'm standing in is the circle of forgiveness. At some time, we all do something that we are sorry for. When we do, we are outside the circle of forgiveness. But God said that if we'll tell him what we've done, he'll forgive us. He also tells us we can forgive each other.

Choose a song from your worship music to play during this game.

Say As long as you hear the music, stay very still. When the music stops, take two steps—and only two steps—toward the circle of forgiveness. When you get close enough to the circle that I can touch your hand and say, "You're forgiven," you can come into the circle with me. Then you can start "forgiving" others, too.

Repeat this process until everyone is in the circle.

- Ask**
- How did it feel to be forgiven and get in the circle?
 - How did it feel to forgive someone and bring that person into the circle?

Say In real life forgiving doesn't always feel so good. Sometimes it's hard. But we don't do it because it's easy or hard or because it feels good. We do it because we honor God when we forgive. He deserves that honor!

Leader Skillbuilder

Games are a wonderful forum for reviewing and clarifying concepts. Let loose and have fun with the children while you play a game with them, but keep your heart's eyes and ears open for opportunities that God will bring your way to clarify the point of the lesson. Keep the theme in mind as you play together, and discover those teachable moments.

Worship Session 8

Left Behind Retriever

Bible Story: Joseph Forgives His Brothers
(Genesis 42–45)

Worship Theme: We can honor God by forgiving others.

PREPARATION: None

Theo: (*Stomping in*) I am so angry. You might as well not try to talk to me today because I'm just angry, angry, angry.

Leader: (*Looks at children, then at Theo.*) Are you sure you don't want to talk about it?

Theo: Yes, so just go on with what you were saying.

Leader: OK. (*To children*) Well, kids, since Theo is not in the mood to talk, let's...

Theo: It just wasn't fair!

Leader: (*Looking at Theo cautiously*) OK. Um, Theo, what wasn't fair?

Theo: I thought I told you I didn't want to talk about it! Now you just teach your lesson, and I'll just sit right here.

Leader: (*Looking even more cautiously at Theo and then at the children*) Well...if you're absolutely sure you don't want to talk about it. (*Pauses, and then speaks to children.*) OK, then, let's...

Theo: And it wasn't my fault either!

Leader: Theo, listen. If you don't want to talk about what's bothering you, that's fine, but I'm thinking you might really *want* to talk about it, after all. Let's try. Just tell us what happened, please, (*pausing*) please. (*Gently directs Theo's face toward the group.*) Look at the kids. They want to hear what's wrong, don't you, kids?

Theo: My cousin Phil made me mad. He took my other cousins into town, and he left me behind. (*Theo cries softly.*) I'll just never forgive him for that.

Leader: (*Petting and comforting Theo*) Oh, Theo, it never feels good to be left behind. I'm sorry. But I bet you'll forgive him before too long.

Theo: Why should I? It won't make me feel any better, and he doesn't care.

Leader: Theo, I know your feelings are hurt right now, but I still need to remind you we don't forgive people just so we'll feel better.

Theo: We don't? Then why? So they'll feel better?

Leader: That might happen, but that's not why we forgive. We forgive people because God tells us to. When we forgive somebody, we honor God. That's really more important than any of the other reasons.

Theo: I guess I never thought about it that way before. But my feelings still hurt.

Leader: I know, Theo. And God knows. It will take awhile to feel better, but God will help you. We'll help you, too, by smiling and reminding you that even if someone let you down, there are still plenty of people who love you.

Theo: Thanks. And if I forgive my cousin Phil, I'll be honoring God, right?

Leader: Right. God teaches us to forgive other people the way he forgives us. And he *always* forgives us.



God Protects Moses

Session 9

Exodus 1:1–2:10

Worship Theme:



God watches over us.

Easy Prep for Leaders

None is necessary.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo ask the children to help him solve a riddle. The riddle is "Who watches over you and sees all that you do?" (God.)
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



A Baby in a Basket

Say Our Bible story today tells about a baby in a basket. Open your Bible to Exodus 1:1–2:10.

A long time ago, the Pharaoh was the ruler of a country called Egypt. God's people lived in Egypt as slaves. God's people were called the Israelites. Pharaoh was mean. He didn't like the Israelites. So Pharaoh decided to hurt all of the baby boys born to the Israelites. This worried the Israelites because they loved their babies very much.

There was one little Israelite baby named Moses. His mother loved him very much and wanted to protect him from the evil Pharaoh. She watched over Moses and hid him until it was not safe to hide him anymore. So she made a basket.

Maybe it was a basket like this. Hold up a basket.

She covered it with tar so that it wouldn't leak. Allow children to pretend to paint tar on the basket.

Next, she put Moses in the basket. Let's wrap up the baby in this blanket and put it in the

basket. Allow the children to help you. **Then, she put the basket in the river to send Moses away from danger. She trusted God to watch over him.** Ask a child to pretend to be the mother and to put the basket down as if putting it in the river. **Miriam, Moses' sister, watched over him as he floated along. Move the basket along the floor.** Ask another child to pretend to be Moses' sister and follow it.

Ask • Who knows what happened to Moses?

Say God watched over Moses. A princess found him and took him out of the basket. Ask one of the children to pick up the basket.

Ask • What do you think Moses' mother and sister thought when the princess found Moses?

Say The princess asked Moses' mother to take care of him until he was older. Ask the child pretending to be Moses' sister to take the baby to his "mother." **When Moses was older, the princess took him home and raised him.** Ask the "mother" to return the basket to "the princess."

Even though things looked bad for Moses for a while, God watched over him and turned a bad thing into a good thing. Remember that God is watching over you just as he was watching over Moses.

God Is Always Watching Over You!

Say If you think that God watches over you on your way to church, pretend to drive a car around the room. (Pause.)

If you think God watches over you while you're at church, say Amen and clap your hands three times. (Pause.)

If you think God watches over you after church when you go outside to play, skip over here. (Pause.)

If you think God watches over you while you are playing with your friends, pretend to play ball. (Pause.)

If you think God watches over you when you go to bed at night, crawl over to this side of the room. (Pause.)

If you think God watches over you while you sleep, snore loudly. (Pause.)

God watches over us no matter where we go or what we do. He even watched over us just then when we were snoring! He watches over us when we go to church, when we play, when

we sleep, or when we do anything! Not only that, but God watches over everyone at the same time!

Let's see if we can do that, too. Arrange the children in groups of three. Position one person between the other two. Ask the child in the middle to watch the other two and tell you when each one blinks.

You missed some blinks because you can only watch one person at a time. But God can watch everyone all the time.

Ask • How do you think God does that?

Say If everyone in the world blinked at the same time, God would see it. WOW!

Preschool Leader Tip

If you have a child who is unable to perform these activities, ask the children to nod their heads or wiggle their noses.

Sheep Heap

Say The Bible says, "The Lord is my shepherd." A shepherd watches over sheep to take care of them. God watches over us the way a shepherd watches over sheep. Let's see how God, our shepherd, watches over us. I will be the shepherd, and you will be the sheep.

Have the children stand in a circle around you.

Say Everyone get down on your hands and knees. Say "ba-aa-aa." (Pause.) Sheep, it's starting to snow. Let's shiver and say "brrrrr." (Pause.)

If the sheep were cold, what would a good shepherd do? Right! The shepherd would get them warm because a shepherd watches over the sheep.

Ask • Who watches over us to take care of us?

Say Sheep, hurry over here and huddle together next to me. We'll make a sheep heap. Everyone say, "Sheep heap!" (Pause.)

If we all huddle together, we will be warmer. Just as God watches over us, the shepherd watches over the sheep to help them.

Sheep, it's time to eat! A shepherd watches out for a good place to eat. Look, the grass is much better over there. Sheep, let's go over there to

eat. Let's pretend to eat the grass. (Pause.)

Sheep, sit down on the floor. We'll have a real snack and talk about God, our shepherd. Distribute a snack.

Ask • What would happen if the shepherd didn't watch out for the sheep and let them freeze?

• What would happen if the shepherd didn't watch out for good places for the sheep to eat?

• What would happen if the shepherd decided to take a nap and stop watching the sheep?

• Does God ever stop watching over us?

• How does God watch over you every day?

Say Let's thank God for watching over us like a shepherd watches sheep. Let's pray this together: Thank you, God, for watching over us always. In Jesus' name, amen.

ALLERGY ALERT

Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

Worship Session 9

God Watches Over Me!

Bible Story: God Protects Moses (Exodus 1:1–2:10)

Worship Theme: God watches over us.

PREPARATION: You'll need a small ball.

Theo: (*Sings "God Is Good All the Time."*) Except when Bully Bulldog down the street picks on me.

Leader: (*Tosses a ball and catches it.*) Hi, Theo. What are you talking about? God is always good.

Theo: Oh, yeah? If he's always good, how come Bully Bulldog took my favorite ball? Huh, huh, huh, huh? What's so good about that?

Leader: Well, that's not so good. But God is. And he watches over us.

Theo: Well, he didn't seem to be watching when Bully took my ball. He must have had his eyes closed or something!

Leader: No, he didn't have his eyes closed. Just because bad things sometimes happen doesn't mean he isn't watching over us. I'll bet God would even help you with Bully Bulldog.

Theo: Yeah, maybe. But what am I going to play with until then?

Leader: Well, it just so happens that I have a ball here you can play with. Here!

Theo: (*Picks up the ball with his mouth.*) Mmm mm mm.

(*Leader takes the ball out of Theo's mouth.*)

Theo: Thanks. But what am I gonna do if Bully takes this ball, too?

Leader: Well, you know now that no matter what, God is watching over both you and Bully.



Theo: Yeah. That's nice and all, but do you think God would send a big bolt of lightning down and ZAP Bully right between the eyes?

Leader: No, Theo, I don't think God wants to do that!

Theo: No? How about right between the teeth! They could use a good cleaning!

Leader: No, Theo. Not between anything. Why don't you thank God for watching over you and pray for Bully Bulldog and see what happens.

Theo: OK, but I still think a little well-placed lightning can be a good thing!

Leader: Theo!

Theo: (*Pauses.*) OK, OK, you're right. I'll let you know what happens next time I see you! 'Bye! (*Exits singing, "God Is Good All the Time."*)

Moses Meets God at the Burning Bush

Session 10

Exodus 2:11-3:20

Worship Theme:



God is an awesome God.

Easy Prep for Leaders

None is necessary.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo act like a sheep during the "God's Power" activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



God's Power

Say I need your help to tell the Bible story today. I need some sheep, a bush, God's voice, and Moses. Choose volunteers to play the part of the burning bush, God's voice, and Moses. Assign the remainder of the children to be the sheep. Gather the "sheep" in a circle around you. Place "the bush" and "God's voice" across from you in the circle, and place "Moses" to your right.

When Moses grew up, he became a shepherd. One day Moses was taking care of the sheep. Ask the "sheep" to say *baa*. **Then, he saw a burning bush. The bush was on fire but did not burn up.** Ask "the bush" to make flame gestures. **Moses went over to see why the bush did not burn up.** Ask "Moses" to go to "the bush."

Then God called to him from inside the bush. Ask "God" to say "Moses, Moses!" **Then, God said, "I am God. Take off your shoes because this is**

holy ground." Ask "Moses" to take off his shoes. **Then, God said, "I want to help my people who are slaves of Pharaoh." God told Moses to go tell Pharaoh to let God's people go.**

Moses didn't think Pharaoh would listen. God said, "You go and tell him. I will be with you. I will make Pharaoh let my people go." So Moses said he would go. Ask "Moses" to say "I will go!" while "sheep" say "Yea!"

Thanks for helping me tell that story. We can do what God wants us to do when we trust him to help us. Moses didn't have to get God's people out of Egypt alone. God helped him every step of the way. God is an awesome God!

Ask • **What does awesome mean?** Suggest meanings such as "wonderful," "great," "strong," or "amazing."

Say **When we say that God has power, we mean he is strong and mighty, able to do anything. God cares for us and provides for us. He is awesome!**

Let My People Go!

Say Let's play a game called "Let My People Go!" God's power was so awesome that Pharaoh just had to let God's people go.

The Hebrews were slaves. That means they weren't free to come and go. They weren't free to live where they wanted to live. They weren't free to worship God.

Have several children join hands and form a circle. They will be the "captors." Have the other children stand inside the circle. They will be the "slaves."

Say The people in the circle are like the Hebrew slaves. They have to stay in the circle until Pharaoh lets them go.

Have the children act out the following "skit."

Captors: (Circle to the right.)

Slaves: Let us go! Let us go!

Captors: (Circle to the left.) No, no! You can't go!

Slaves: (Shouting) GOD SAYS, "LET MY PEOPLE GO!"

Captors: (Drop hands immediately, and fall to the floor.)

Slaves: God is awesome! Here we go! (Slaves run out of the circle.)

Play the game several times.

Say God is so awesome that he had the power to set the slaves free. God is so awesome he makes us free, too! Because God is so awesome, we are free to worship him! Because God is so awesome, we want to worship him.

Starry, Starry Sky

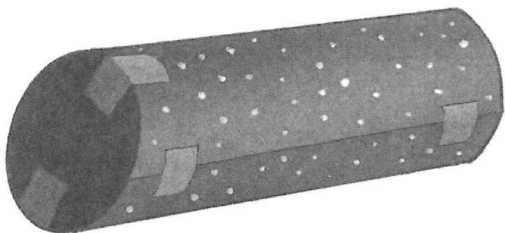
Say Everything around us reminds us to worship God because of his awesome goodness. We can see how awesome God is just by looking around us. The things God made are awesome! I'm going to mention things that God has made. After I say each one, you say "awesome!"

The whole earth is filled with things that show us how awesome God is. God made GIANT mountains and tiny little ladybugs. (Awesome!) He made the sun to light the day and the stars to light the night. (Awesome!) God made people in all different shapes, sizes, and colors. (Awesome!)

Ask • How many stars are in the sky?

Say There are so many stars in the sky, you can't count them all. Your mom can't even count them all. NOBODY can count them all! Wow, that is awesome! Let's make some awesome stars in this room.

Place one piece of black construction paper on a pad of notebook paper. Allow each child to make holes in the paper with a pen or pencil. The holes can be as close as one-quarter of an inch apart. The entire paper needs to be covered with holes. Fashion the paper into a cylinder like this:



- Curl the two short edges so they connect.
- Tape the edges together.
- Cut a circle the size of the cylinder opening from the other piece of construction paper.
- Tape the circle to the end of the cylinder.

Ask • Does our paper look like a starry sky yet?

Say Not yet. That's because we're missing something. We're missing light. God is so awesome that he created stars to give us light at night. Turn on a flashlight, turn off the room lights, and close the window shades. Position the flashlight inside the cylinder. The light will project stars around the room. Rotating the cone will make the stars appear to twinkle.

Preschool Leader Tip

If you have time, have each child make his or her own starry sky craft.

Everything about God is awesome! Everything about what he made is awesome! We worship God because he is an awesome God.

Worship Session 10

You Want Me to Do What?

Bible Story: Moses Meets God at the Burning Bush (Exodus 2:11–3:20)

Worship Theme: God is an awesome God.

PREPARATION: You'll need one small, very beaten and worn pingpong ball or soft rubber ball. Tape the ball to Theo's paw.

Theo: God is awesome! What an awesome God! Wow! Awesome! God is *AWESOME!*

Leader: Well, hello, Theo! You're sure in a good mood. What happened?

Theo: Oh, hi, everybody. God is awesome!

Leader: Yes, I think I heard that somewhere. What happened?

Theo: Well, you remember Bully Bulldog? You said I should pray for him, and I did—all week. Somebody that mean needs more than one shot of prayer!

Leader: So, what happened?

Theo: Well, I was playing ball with my other friend and the ball went in Bully's yard again. I prayed real hard that Bully wouldn't see it, but old Eagle-Eye saw it, of course! He started running toward it, growling and barking, snarling and snapping, slobbering and drooling, and... well, you get the idea.

Leader: So you just left the ball there, right? You can always get another one.

Theo: Well, I thought about that, but then I felt like God wanted me to go get the ball. So, I trusted in my awesome God and decided to go—just like Moses.

Leader: Wow, that took courage. Then what happened?

Theo: I took one step and prayed hard. I took another step and prayed harder. By the time I got to his yard, I was praying, "Awesome God, help me with this!" And you know what? He did. Bully heard me praying and stopped and stared. I thought he was trying to figure out which part of me to eat first!

Leader: So, what happened next?

Theo: While he was standing there staring at me, I decided to ask him if he wanted to play. I was scared, but I took a deep breath and asked.

Leader: You did? That's amazing!

Theo: It sure was! He said nobody had ever asked him to play before. So, I played ball with Bully Bulldog and told him about my awesome God. I just have to teach him how to catch the ball without ripping it to shreds! (*Holds up ripped up ball.*) Oh, well, nobody's perfect. See ya later. (*Exits.*)

Leader: Wow! God really is awesome!



The Israelites Receive Cruel Treatment

Session 11

Exodus 5:1–6:1

Worship Theme:



God is our hope.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Treat or Trick?—You'll need a grocery sack filled with small treats, such as sheets of stickers, packs of gum, small boxes of raisins, bouncy balls, or miniature candy bars. Make sure you have at least one treat for each child.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo tell the children about things he hopes for during the "Treat or Trick?" activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



Hope in God

Encourage children to play this game of trust. Stand a small distance behind the first child—about a foot. Hold your arms directly behind the child. Encourage the child to fall backward without bending his or her knees or moving his or her feet. Be ready to catch the child as soon as he or she starts tipping backward. Assure children that you will catch them and will not let them fall. Give each child a chance to try the game.

- Ask** • How did you feel when it was your turn to fall backward?
- Was it easy or hard to trust me?

Say You had to trust me to play this game. It's like that with God. He wants you to trust him with

your life. He loves you and wants to give you good things. God is our hope. Let's sing a song now to tell God that we hope in him.

Teach children to sing the following words to the tune of "God Is So Good."

**I hope in God;
I hope in God;
I hope in God.
He's so good to me.**

Repeat the song, using "I trust in God" and "God loves me so."

* *Treat or Trick?*

Hold up the grocery bag you prepared before the session.

Say Today we're learning about hope. This bag is filled with something. It might have sticks and stones, it might have treats for everyone, or it might even have dirty laundry!

Ask • What do you hope is in the bag?

Say Each of you will get a turn to reach inside the bag and pull something out of it without looking. I hope you'll get something good!

Give each child a chance to pull a treat out of the bag. Remind children not to peek as they reach into the bag. When everyone has gotten a treat, continue.

Ask • What kinds of things were in the bag?

• Did only a few people get something good?

• How did you feel when you got your treat?

Say You hoped for something good, and that's what

you got! There was no dirty laundry, and there were no sticks or stones in the bag! It's just like that with God—he has something good for everyone. God is our hope. He never gives bad gifts, and he never leaves anyone out. Let's pray and thank God for being our hope.

Pray Thank you, God, for being our hope. You are always good to us. Thank you for always giving us good things. In Jesus' name, amen.

ALLERGY ALERT



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

God Is Our Hope

Gather the children around you.

Say A long time ago, God's people, the Israelites, were held captive by a wicked man called Pharaoh. He was very, very mean to them. They had to make bricks out of mud and straw for his buildings. Each day he got meaner and meaner.

The people were afraid of Pharaoh. So Moses talked to God about it. He told God how upset and scared the people were. God promised Moses that he would take care of his people and would set them free from Pharaoh.

So Moses and the people put their hope in God. They waited for his help. And he did it! He helped them escape from Pharaoh. That's how God is—he does what he says he'll do!

Listen to this verse from Isaiah 40:31: "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will

run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." The Israelites learned this by putting their hope in God.

Let's pretend we're sad and tired Israelites. Stand up and show me how you look when you're sad and tired. Good job! As I read each part of the verse again, act it out to show how God helped the Israelites.

Read the verse phrase by phrase as children act out being strong, soaring like eagles, running and not getting tired, walking and not fainting. Then have children sit down.

Ask • Why is it hard to have hope sometimes?
• Why do you think God wants us to have hope?
• Why is it good to hope in God?

Say God is our hope. He'll take care of our needs. Let's act out our verse one more time.

Have children say each section of the verse with you as they act it out. Remind them that God will take care of them just as he took care of the Israelites.

Worship Session 11

Theo's Grandma Hurts Her Paw

Bible Story: The Israelites Receive Cruel Treatment (Exodus 5:1–6:1)

Worship Theme: God is our hope.

PREPARATION: Tape a tissue to Theo's paw. Have markers and paper available.

(Theo cries softly to himself.)

Leader: Theo, you're sad! What's wrong?

Theo: My grandma hurt her paw. Mom took her to the hospital. She said to be good and pray for Grandma.

Leader: Praying is a good idea, Theo. Do you know what happened to your grandma?

Theo: *(Sniffing)* Her paw got stuck in a doggie door! A neighbor man helped her and called my mom. I hope she'll be OK.

Leader: That's scary, isn't it, Theo? But your grandma is in the best place to be right now. They'll bandage her paw and help her get better.

Theo: They will?

Leader: I'm sure of it. You know, Theo, the children and I are learning that God wants us to trust him when things like this happen. God is our hope.

Theo: What does that mean?

Leader: Children, let's explain to Theo what it means that God is our hope.

(Leader prompts children to explain to Theo that he can trust God to take care of his grandma and that God will take care of the situation.)

Leader: Theo, God is our hope in every situation. Your mom had a good idea about praying. That's one thing you can do.



Theo: I'll do that. And I want to tell my grandma that God is our hope.

Leader: What a good idea! I'm sure she'd like that. Why don't we all make a card for your grandma and you can tell her that Jesus will take care of her.

Theo: Yeah! Let's tell her God is our hope!

(Leader uses a marker to write "God is our hope" on a sheet of paper. Sets markers in the center of the group. Children help Theo decorate the card.)

Theo: Thanks for helping me, everybody! Grandma will love this! You're the best friends a dog could have!

God Sends Plagues on Egypt

Session 12

Exodus 7:8–10:29

Worship Theme:



Nothing matches God's power.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Power Towers—You'll need a Bible and about 15 building blocks of uniform size and shape. Use large cardboard ones if possible.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo assign word pairs to children in the "Strongest of All" activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



Strongest of All

Help children form pairs and sit on the floor around you.

Ask • What are some things that are very strong?

Say Those are strong things! Let's act out some words and decide which are strong and which are not so strong.

Have the pairs stand up one at a time. Name two things for the two children to act out. Include things the children mentioned, as well as such things as a lion and a cat, a grown-up and a baby, a lawn mower and grass, a big truck and a bike, a

horse and an ant, and an airplane and a kite. After each pair acts out two words, have children decide which of the two things is stronger. Continue until everyone has had a chance to act out a pair of words.

Say You've shown us some really strong things today! But God is stronger than the strongest person in the whole world! And he's smarter and faster than anyone or anything. There is nothing that matches God's power! Let's play another game about the most awesome power of all!

Awesome God

Have everyone stand up.

Say Show me a big jump. That's awesome! Now jump higher! Now give the biggest jump you've ever jumped! Great jumping, everyone! Let's do some other awesome things.

Continue to give children directions such as, "Show me a strong muscle...now a stronger one...now the strongest one you have." "Run in place fast...faster...fastest!" "Twirl in a circle, now faster, now as fast as you can."

Say Show me a small voice...now smaller...now as small as you can make it. Now sit still...even more still...as still as you possibly can. Whew! I know I'm not the strongest person—I'm tired from all that jumping and running! Close your eyes tight for a minute. Think of the biggest thing you can imagine. (Pause.) God is bigger than that!

Now think of the strongest thing you can imagine. Get a picture of it in your mind. (Pause.) God is stronger and more powerful than that! Nothing matches God's power!

* Power Towers

Gather the children around you on the floor, and have the blocks you gathered before the session nearby. Open the Bible to Exodus 7, and show the open Bible to the children.

Say We're learning that nothing matches God's power. Our Bible story comes from the book of Exodus. When the Israelites were slaves to the wicked Pharaoh, God sent Moses to set them free. Through Moses, God did some miracles to prove that he is the one true God. Miracles can only be done through God's power.

But instead of believing God, Pharaoh tried to match God's power. He told his magicians to copy what God did. I'm going to tell you some of the things God did and some of the things Pharaoh did. Let's use these blocks to build a tower for each of them. Every time God does something amazing, we'll add a block to God's tower. Every time Pharaoh does something amazing, we'll add a block to Pharaoh's tower. Then we'll see whose tower is the highest.

Ask • Who thinks Pharaoh will do something amazing?

• Who thinks God will do something amazing?

Say Let's find out now!

Read each of the following statements, and then have children decide who did something amazing—God or Pharaoh. Then call on a child to add a brick to the appropriate tower.

- **Moses threw a stick down, and it turned into a snake!** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.
- **Pharaoh's magicians turned sticks into snakes.** Pause as a child adds a block to Pharaoh's tower.
- **Moses' snake ate Pharaoh's snakes.** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.

- **Moses turned water into blood.** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.
- **Pharaoh's magicians turned water into blood.** Pause as a child adds a block to Pharaoh's tower.
- **God made frogs come jumping and hopping everywhere.** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.
- **The magicians made frogs come, too.** Pause as a child adds a block to Pharaoh's tower.
- **God made the frogs all go away.** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.
- **God turned dust into bugs.** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.
- **The magicians tried to turn dust into bugs, but they could not. They told Pharaoh to give up.** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.
- **God made sores appear on everyone except his people.** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.
- **The magicians couldn't do anything because they had so many sores on themselves.** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.
- **God made darkness for three days—no sun, moon, or stars.** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.
- **The magicians didn't even try to do anything—they couldn't see! They quit trying to be like God.** Pause as a child adds a block to God's tower.

Whose tower is higher? God's is higher! He's more powerful than anyone! Let's clap for God. He's the biggest, the strongest, and the best! Yea, God! Nothing matches God's power.

Worship Session 12

Theo's Terrific Trick

Bible Story: God Sends Plagues on Egypt
(Exodus 7:8–10:29)

Worship Theme: Nothing matches God's power.

PREPARATION: You'll need a small ball.

Theo: Hi, everybody! Guess what I can do!

Leader: Can you whistle "Jesus Loves Me" while you stand on your head?

Theo: (*Frustrated*) No—that's not it! Guess again.

Leader: Can you run in circles and catch your tail?

Theo: (*Proudly*) Well, I can, but that's not what I'm talking about today.

Leader: Well, you'll have to just tell us 'cause we'll never guess.

Theo: I can do the coolest trick. I can make a ball disappear!

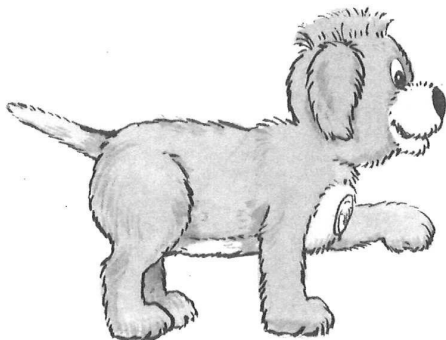
Leader: You can? We'd like to see that.

Theo: Great! First, take this ball, and put it under my chin.

(*Leader puts ball under Theo's chin.*)

Theo: Now, here I go. Now you see it! (*Turns around, drops the ball, and turns back to the front quickly.*) Now you don't! Ta-da!

Leader: Theo, we all saw what you did. You just turned around and dropped the ball. I think you need to work on that trick a little more!



Theo: You really did see me? I thought if I could just do it fast enough, you'd think I could really make the ball disappear.

Leader: Don't feel bad, Theo. It takes a long time to learn how to do tricks well. Professionals practice and practice to learn how to do their tricks.

Theo: They do?

Leader: Yeah, they do! Did you know that the Bible tells about some magicians who thought they were so good they could do the same things God does?

Theo: Really? I don't think any magician could be that good!

Leader: Theo, that's exactly right. This story happened a long time ago when God's people were slaves in Egypt. God was ready to free his people, and he decided to bring plagues—bad things—on Egypt to convince the Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.

Theo: What happened next?

Leader: Well, first God caused the water to turn to blood. But the Egyptian magicians did the same thing with a trick.

Theo: Wow! What happened next?

Leader: Then God caused millions and millions of frogs to cover the land. But the Egyptian magicians did that with a trick, too.

Theo: How'd they do that?

Leader: I'm not sure how they did it, Theo, but I do know that it was just a trick—the magicians don't really have the same kind of power that God does. Listen to what happened next. The Bible says the next plague was bugs. There were creepy crawly bugs all over the place. The Egyptian magicians tried to make bugs cover the land, but they couldn't do it. God brought seven more plagues on Egypt, but the magicians couldn't copy any of them.

Theo: I guess those magicians weren't as powerful as God is.

Leader: Theo, you're sure on the ball today. That's exactly right. Nothing and nobody can match God's power!

Theo: Wowzer!

Leader: You said it!

The Israelites Escape From Egypt

Session 13

Exodus 11:1–12:36

Worship Theme:



God's freedom lasts forever.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Freed From Egypt

- Use tape to mark a circle on the floor adjacent to a wall. Make the circle large enough for kids to sit on the floor in distinct groups of three or four.
- You'll need a walking stick and a bathrobe for Moses' costume.
- Draw a doorway on newsprint, and tape it to the wall next to the circle.

Disappearing Problems

- Mix 1/8 teaspoon laundry bluing with one cup of water, and pour the mixture into a shallow bowl or pie tin. Bluing can be found in the laundry section of most grocery stores.
- You'll also need small paintbrushes or cotton-tipped swabs (one per child) and white paper.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo join a family in "Freed From Egypt."
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



* Freed From Egypt

Help children form groups of three or four, and have them sit on the floor.

Say Let's pretend your group is an Israelite family. Can you count how many people are in your family? (Pause.) Good job! That's a nice size family.

Remember, the Israelites were prisoners of the wicked Pharaoh for a long, long time. Everybody get inside the circle now and pretend you're in Egypt

Choose someone to be Moses, and have him or her stand outside the circle holding the walking stick and wearing the robe.

Say The Israelites had to work very, very hard making bricks for Pharaoh's buildings in Egypt. It was hard work. They were very tired and very sad. They needed help!

The people prayed that God would set them free. Have children kneel and pretend to pray. So God told Moses to tell Pharaoh to let his people go. Have Moses say to you, "Let my people go!" But Pharaoh wouldn't listen. So God did some miracles to try to change Pharaoh's mind.

He sent bad things, called plagues, to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. But God kept the Israelites free from the plagues.

God sent little flying bugs and flies to bother the people of Egypt. Have children pretend to swat flies. He sent flying grasshoppers to eat their food. Have children pretend to brush away bugs near them.

God sent a bad storm that rained hail on the people. Have children cover their heads. And God even made it nighttime during the day.

Turn off the lights for a moment and then turn them back on.

But Pharaoh would not believe. So God sent one last plague on Egypt. God told his people that if they would put a red mark on the doorway of their house, then no one inside would be hurt.

* *Freed From Egypt (continued)*

Give one child in each "family" a red crayon. Have the "family" walk to the newsprint doorway, and have the child with the crayon put a mark on it.

Say Pharaoh and the Egyptians could choose to be protected, too, but they didn't believe Moses.

When the last plague came, God protected all the Israelite people because they put a mark on their doors. Then Pharaoh finally let them go.

Instruct Moses to leave and to lead the children around the room, winding around tables and chairs, then back to the masking-tape circle.

Say You've been on a long journey! Let's sit down and take a rest.

- Ask**
- How did God set the Israelites free?
 - Why do you think God set them free?
 - How does God set us free?

Say God set his people free by sending Moses to tell Pharaoh to let them go. He did it because he loved the people so much. God sets us free, too. He wants to take care of our worries and fears and help us do right things. God's freedom lasts forever!

Free to Be

Have children form a straight line and link arms with one another.

Say Wow! You look like one long human chain! Keep your arms linked now. Listen to my directions, and then do what I say without letting go of each other's arms. Remember: Don't let go!

Instruct children to walk to the other end of the room. On their way across the room, have them stop and turn around without letting go of one another's arms. Have them do this several times.

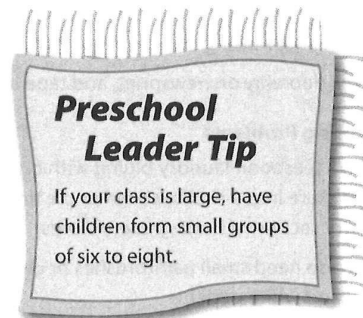
Say Good job trying, everyone! Now let go of one another's arms. This time walk by yourself to the other side of the room, and then come back.

Wait while children follow your instructions. Then have them sit down around you.

- Ask**
- How did it feel to do something while you were chained to the others?
 - How did it feel when you could move all by yourself?
 - How do you feel when you do bad things?

Say Sometimes we feel sad or mad when we do bad things. Sometimes we feel scared and we worry. We get all tied up on the inside, the way we were when we were chained together, arm-in-arm. Then it's hard to do what we're supposed to do.

- Ask**
- What are some things you worry about?
 - What are some things you're afraid of?



Say When you worry or are afraid, it makes things harder, just like it was harder to move when you were linked to everyone else. You could move better and faster when you were free to move by yourself. God doesn't want you to worry or be afraid. If you ask God to help you, he'll come and be with you so you won't be afraid or worried. And when you do bad things, he'll forgive you. That's so exciting it makes me want to jump up and down! Let's do that together. When we jump up and down, let's shout, "God's freedom lasts forever!"

Encourage children to shout, "God's freedom lasts forever," as they jump up and down.

* *Disappearing Problems*

Say We just told one another about things that we worry about and that scare us. Those things are "problems." When Jesus helps us, he makes our problems disappear. I have some special paint today that will help us remember this. It disappears when it dries, and Jesus makes our problems disappear when we trust him!

While we paint designs on our papers, let's take turns thanking God for taking care of our troubles. He forgives us when we do wrong, and he helps us when we're afraid or worried. We can thank him for his freedom that lasts forever.

As children paint with the laundry bluing, encourage each child to say a simple prayer to thank God for his help and freedom.

Lay the paintings aside. Have the children take them home.

Worship Session 13

All Tangled Up

Bible Story: The Israelites Escape From Egypt (Exodus 11:1–12:36)

Worship Theme: God's freedom lasts forever.

PREPARATION: Wrap a jump-rope around Theo so he looks tangled up.

Theo: Help! HELP!

Leader: (*Trying not to laugh*) What's wrong, Theo?

Theo: I'm all tangled up! The harder I try to get out of this mess, the more tangled up I get! Help!

Leader: Calm down, Theo. I'll help you. (*Untangles Theo.*)

Theo: Whew! Thanks! I don't know how that happened. I was watching some kids jump rope, and it looked so easy. But when I tried it, I got all tangled up in the rope! You can't do anything when you're all tangled up!

Leader: That's very true, Theo. That reminds me of what we're learning today.

Theo: Huh?

Leader: Sometimes things in our lives make us feel all tangled up.

Theo: How do you mean?

Leader: Well, how do you feel when you do something bad?

Theo: I feel awful. Sometimes I feel mad, and then I feel sad that I did the bad thing. Like when I hit my cousin Phil and I called him a bad name 'cause I was mad at him.

Leader: Did you tell him you were sorry?

Theo: I wanted to, but I didn't. I ran away from him. I didn't think he'd like me anymore. I still think about it.

Leader: Do you worry that he'll still be mad at you?

Theo: Yeah, I'm afraid we won't be friends anymore.

Leader: Sometimes, when we do something wrong, the wrong thing makes it hard to do the right thing, doesn't it? Then we get afraid, and we can't stop worrying about it. It's kind of like being trapped with the rope. It's hard to get out.

Theo: That's for sure!

Leader: Those feelings can make you feel all tangled up inside. Jesus wants to help you with that, Theo. He sets us free by forgiving us and by taking care of our worries and fears.

Theo: Well, I guess I need to call Phil and tell him I'm sorry, don't I?

Leader: That's the right thing to do, Theo. Then Jesus can set you free.

Theo: Just like you freed me from my jump-rope!

Leader: But God's freedom lasts forever.

Theo: Maybe God will help me learn to jump rope better, too!

Leader: We can help you with that, Theo! Children, let's help Theo practice jumping rope.

(*Children and Theo jump rope. Theo might hold one end of the rope or children might take turns holding Theo while they jump.*)



