

Always on My Mind (Think on These Things)—October 2020, Week 4

Today's Bible Story: Always on My Mind (Think on These Things) • Philippians 4:8

Today's Key Question: What do you tend to focus on?

Today's Bottom Line: Focus on what's true.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Anyone who lives without blame walks safely. But anyone who takes a crooked path will get caught.* Proverbs 10:9 (NIRV)

Monthly Life App: Integrity—Choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do

Basic Truth: I need to make the wise choice.

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 minutes)

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, take some time to go to God in prayer for your kids and the time they will spend with you today in group. Pray that they will learn what it means to focus on the good, to focus on the things that are true about them.

1. Just for Fun

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

What You Need: no supplies needed

What You Do:

- **Gather** kids in a circle.
- **Tell** kids to look down at the ground.
- **Say** "1-2-3- Focus."
 - When you say "Focus," **instruct** kids to immediately lift their eyes and focus their gazes on someone in the circle.
 - If two kids are looking at each other, they are out.
 - Kids who didn't make eye contact with anyone continue to "focus" on that spot until you **say** "Focus Down."
 - **Make sure** kids understand that they have to actually look at someone else, instead of simply looking off "into space" to avoid making eye contact.
- **Continue** until two or three kids are left in the circle.
- If time allows, **play** again.

2. Get Your Head in the Game

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- **Read** one of the categories below to the group.
- **Choose** a kid to go first.
- **Tell** kids they have 10 seconds to name five things related to that category.

- **Say** “GO” and **begin** counting down from 10 out loud.
- **Encourage** the group to keep track of the things on their fingers.
- **Discourage** kids from shouting out answers.
- **Play** multiple rounds, switching up the category with each round.
- Categories could include:
 - Things in the sky
 - TV shows
 - Words starting with the letter “T”
 - People in the Bible
 - People who wear masks
 - Costumes
 - Desserts
 - Things in a backpack
- *Optional:* After you have played a couple of rounds, **create** your own category or **allow** kids to come up with a category.

What You Say:

“It would have been a lot easier to focus on the category if you weren’t being timed wouldn’t it?”

[Transition] Let’s hear about what you should focus on, even if it is hard.”

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place (25 minutes)

1. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates concrete application through role-play an reenactment

What You Need: Butcher paper, markers, tape, “Scenario Cards” (Activity Page), “Thought Bubble Cards” (Activity Page)

What You Do:

- **Pair** kids up.
- **Tape** a piece of butcher paper to the wall.
- On the paper, **draw** one stick person for each “Scenario Card.”
- **Read** a “Scenario Card” as you **tape** the card below a stick figure; one card per stick figure.
- **Give** kids several “Thought Bubble Cards” and markers.
- **Challenge** kids to fill in the “Thought Bubble Cards” with a thought that someone might have for each scenario.
- **Encourage** kids to think of both positive and negative thoughts for the scenarios.
- **Be prepared** to give an example, if needed. For example:
 - The scenario is: Your sister got the last piece of cake. Potential thoughts could be: *she always gets the last bit of cake, there are other things I could eat, she ate my piece of cake so I’m going to eat some of her holiday candy.*
Note: You may not get to all the scenarios so choose scenarios that will resonate with your particular group. As time allows, encourage kids to think of a scenario of their own for the group to discuss.

- **Select** one scenario for further discussion:
 - **Encourage** kids to work together to group the “Thought Bubble Cards” into two piles: one pile of things that would be helpful to focus on and the other pile of things that would be unhelpful to focus on.
 - **Ask** them to talk about why they grouped the thoughts like they did.
 - **Select** a “Thought Bubble Card” from each pile.
 - **Ask:** What could be the consequences of focusing on each of these thoughts?

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Beach balls, masking tape, markers, Bibles

What You Do:

- **Gather** kids in a circle.
- **Look up** Philippians 4:8 and **read** it out loud as a group.
 - As a group, **write** on pieces of masking tape the kinds of things we should focus on, according to Philippians 4:8
 - One example per piece of masking tape (*true, noble, right, pure, lovely, worthy of respect, excellent, worthy of praise*).
- **Tape** several examples onto a couple of beach balls.
 - Gently **toss** the ball to a kid while saying one of the words on the ball from Philippians 4:8.
 - **Ask** the kid to toss the ball to someone else.
 - As kids toss the ball, **instruct** them to say one of the words from Philippians 4:8.
 - **Challenge** the group to establish a consistent pattern of tossing the ball so the order of who gets the ball stays the same, AND everyone in the circle touches the ball once before it returns to you.
 - **Tell** kids they cannot toss the ball to the kid next to them.
 - If the ball drops, **start** over with the order of passing.
 - Once kids can successfully pass the ball around the group, **repeat** the game but, once the ball has passed through a few hands, **toss** a second ball into the mix.
 - Now, two balls are going around the circle.
 - Depending on time and interest of the group, **keep adding** balls and **challenging** kids to see how long they can successfully pass the balls around the group simultaneously.
- **Revisit** the scenarios from the “Take a Snapshot” Activity.
- **Ask** kids to identify the “Thought Bubble Cards” that are in line with Philippians 4:8
- For further discussion, **ask:**
 - Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians. What do all the things Paul lists in Philippians 4:8 have in common?
 - Why do you think Philippians 4:8 is important to us? Why is what we focus on important? (*Because what we focus on, what we spend time thinking about determines how we act and react in certain situations.*)
 - What are some things you can do to help train yourself to focus what is true? (*Talk about how not every thought that pops into our head is going to be happy and positive. We*

can't always control the thoughts that pop into our head but we can work on redirecting our thoughts toward good things instead.)

3. Discussion Questions

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share and collaborate with others while growing their understanding

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask:

- When you're daydreaming or just thinking your thoughts, what do you usually think about?
- Why we do often focus on the negative instead of the positive?
- Does choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do, mean that it's okay to say something that could be hurtful as long as it is true? Why?
- What are some ways we can train ourselves to focus on what is true?
- What can we do when we find ourselves thinking about or worrying about something negative? Or when we start to worry? For example: You have a big test coming up and you are worried you will fail it. What can you do to focus on what is true?

4. Verse to Take with You

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

What You Need: "Memory Verse Cards" (Activity Page), "Philippians Verse Cards" (Activity Page), costume masks from previous weeks

What You Do:

- **Direct** kids to stand in a line.
- **Place** the "Memory Verse Cards" in the correct order in front of the kids.
- **Instruct** kids to turn around so their backs are facing the cards.
- Using one of the costume masks, **cover** one verse card.
- **Instruct** kids to turn around and to sit down as soon as they figure out what words are hidden.
- **Ask** the first kid who sits down to correctly identify the hidden word by guessing what the word is.
 - If they're correct, **award** a point.
 - If they're incorrect, the second kid who sat down gets a chance to identify the hidden word.
- **Play** several rounds.
- **Remind** kids to keep track of their points and encourage them to use integrity as they award themselves points.
- **Start** by only covering one card until kids get the hang of how to play.
 - As you play more rounds, **cover** more than one card.
 - **Declare** the kid with the most points the winner.
- **Repeat** the game with the "Philippians Verse Cards."
- **Ask:**

- What do Proverbs 10:9 and Philippians 4:8 have in common?
- How can these verses remind us to choose to be truthful in everything we say and do?
- What are things we can do to help focus on what is true?
 - **[Make it Personal] (Be prepared to share with the group what you do when you need to redirect your focus to what is true.)** Maybe you go for a walk or pray. Maybe you have a “go to” verse that helps you focus on what Jesus did for you.

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal processing and application

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- **Gather** kids in a circle.
- **Lead** kids in a prayer exercise that involves deep breathing.
- **Ask** kids to take a deep breath and let it go slowly.
- **Explain** that sometimes redirecting what we are focusing on can start with a deep breath.
- **Review** the things we should focus on from Philippians 4:8, e.g. true, noble, right, pure, excellent, worthy of praise, lovely, worthy of respect.
- **Ask** kids to silently choose a word from Philippians 4:8.
- **Encourage** kids to close their eyes.
- **Tell** them to focus on their breathing, taking a deep breath in and letting it go.
- After a couple rounds of breath, **encourage** them as they breathe in to silently say in their head, “Jesus.”
- After a couple rounds of breath, **encourage** them as they exhale to silently say in their head, “You are . . . (kids fill in the blank with their word from Philippians 4:8).”
- After a couple rounds of breath, **say**, “When you find yourself struggling with choosing to live with integrity, stop and take a few deep breaths to redirect your focus to what is true.”
- **Close** in prayer.

“God, You are worthy of our praise! You are always right and pure. Your ways are excellent and trustworthy. God, when we struggle with showing integrity, help us to remember to turn to You. We know when we focus on You, when we study Your Word, when we talk to You, we are choosing to train ourselves to be truthful in whatever we say and do. We pray this in Your name! Amen!”

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Hand out this week’s GodTime devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Studio252.tv** and the **Parent Cue app**.