

I Can Only Imagine

Bible Story: I Can Only Imagine (Heaven/All Things New) • *Revelation 21:3-5a*

Bottom Line: Following Jesus will turn out greater than you can imagine.

Memory Verse: *God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. Ephesians 2:8 (NIRV)*

Life App: Faith—Trusting in what you can't see because of what you can see

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (Small Groups, 15 minutes)

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

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Ask God to guide you as you talk about a very abstract and hard-to-grasp concept with your few today. Thank God for the opportunity to plant seeds about heaven in the hearts of your few. Pray that these concepts will begin to take root as your kids' faith grows and that today's conversations will serve as a jumping-off point for future growth.

1. Early Arriver

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Offering container, index cards, and pencils

What You Do:

- Greet the kids as they arrive and encourage anyone who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Give each kid an index card and a pencil.
- Instruct the kids to think about their favorite place then write down three words or phrases that describe that place.
- Make sure the kids know not to write down the name of the place on the card.
- Collect the cards, read the statements on the cards out loud, and see if the group can name the place described.

2. Super Colossally Awesome Abode

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: Graph paper, pencils, markers, pipe cleaners, construction paper, scissors, and tape

What You Do:

- Pass out the graph paper and set the remaining supplies in the center of your small group area.
- Encourage the kids to create their own “Super Colossally Awesome Abode” or their own perfect world on the graph paper using the supplies provided. Ask them to think about the coolest place they could imagine living.
 - What would be there?
 - What would they do for fun?
 - What would they eat?

What You Say:

“Whoa! Awesome job, everybody! These are some seriously, Super Colossally Awesome Abodes! **[Transition] In Large Group today, we’re going to hear about a place that’s more awesome and more amazing and even more incredible than any place you could possibly imagine. AND God has made a way for everyone to get there. I can’t wait for you to hear all about it!**”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (Small Groups, 25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

*1. Watercolor Scripture

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: Plastic tablecloth, cups or small bottles of water, watercolor paints, art paper, “Scripture Strips” (Activity Page), and glue sticks

What You Do:

- Lay the plastic tablecloth on the floor or on the table in your Small Group area.
- Give each kid a piece of paper and a “Scripture Strip.”
- Encourage the kids to read the scripture about heaven then use their watercolor paints to illustrate that verse any way they choose.
- Kids can use the glue sticks to glue their “Scripture Strip” to the page.
- Instruct kids to write their names on their paintings.
- Set the pages aside to dry until pick up.

What You Say:

“Your paintings are beautiful. Jesus gave John a vision of heaven and he wrote down what he saw. God will make ALL things right in the end. We can be with Him forever in a place that’s more wonderful, more amazing, more mind-blowingly awesome than we can imagine! And while we may not know

everything there is to know about heaven, we can know for sure that **[Bottom Line] following Jesus will turn out greater than you can imagine.**”

[Make it Personal] (Select your favorite scripture from the “Scripture Strips” the kids illustrated. Tell kids why this promise is your favorite. Remind them, that while there are things we don’t know about heaven, God has made it very clear that the way to heaven is by trusting Jesus and that [Bottom Line] following Jesus will turn out greater than you can imagine.)

2. Follow the Leader

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: Timer

What You Do:

- Select a volunteer to lead your group around the room.
- Explain to the group that they must follow the leader and do exactly as the leader does.
- Set the timer for 30 to 45 seconds.
- When time is up, call out, “FREEZE!” Then, select another kid to lead as the rest of the group follows for another 30 seconds.
- Repeat until most of the kids have had a chance to lead.
- If possible, let them all do the activity.
- Gather the kids back to sit in a circle in your Small Group area.
- Ask the kids to share some ways we follow Jesus’ example. *(telling the truth, helping others, being kind, listening, praying for our enemies, forgiving)*

What You Say:

“Great following, everyone! And you gave some great examples of ways we can follow Jesus. Sometimes when we choose to follow Jesus, things turn out the way we hope they will. Sometimes the person we’re nice to says, ‘Thank you!’ But sometimes, things don’t turn out the way we’d hoped. Sometimes when we tell the truth, the other person doesn’t believe us. Sometimes when we’re kind, the other person isn’t kind back.

“Following Jesus is a bit like our ‘Follow the Leader’ game. We don’t always know where following will take us but we can know that one day, everything will be right and perfect. When you trust Jesus as your Savior, following Him means that you will live forever with Him in a perfect place, a place even more awesome than you can imagine. And that promise that **[Bottom Line] following Jesus will turn out greater than you can imagine** tells us just how much God loves us.”

3. Memory Verse Slices

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Review]

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

What You Need: Pool noodle pieces, hula hoops, “Verse Word Labels” (Activity Page), and Bibles

What You Do:

- Split your group into two teams.
- Give each team a set of “Verse Word Labels” and 24 pool noodle slices.
- Instruct each team to stick one label on each pool noodle slice and set them in a pile on one side of your area.
- As the teams are working, set one hula hoop across from each team on the opposite side of your area.
- Look up Ephesians 2:8 and review it with your group.
- Line up the kids near their hula hoop.
- When you say, “Go!” the first kid from each team will run to grab one of the pool noodle slices then run back to place it in the center of their team’s hula hoop and tag the next person in line.
- Once all of the pool noodle slices have made it to the hula hoop, teams must work together to quickly stick the slices onto the hula hoop in verse order.
- To signal that their team is finished, every team member must sit down and raise their hands.
- Read the verse aloud and declare a winner.

What You Say:

“That was some fast racing, friends! We’ve been learning this month that faith is trusting in what you can’t see because of what you can see. Jesus left heaven to come to Earth. He walked and talked, healed and helped, died and rose again so that we could be saved. What Jesus did for us allows us to have a relationship with God, forever. It’s not based on what we do or don’t do. Jesus made a way for us to have a relationship with God! **[Bottom Line] Following Jesus will turn out greater than you can imagine.**”

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: Paintings from “Watercolor Scripture”

What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to hold their watercolor paintings as they pray silently, thanking God for the promise that **[Bottom Line] following Jesus will turn out greater than you can imagine.**
- After a few minutes, close out your time with a prayer.

What You Say:

“Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus so that we can know You. We want to follow Jesus, always. Thank You for the promise that one day, You will make all things right and perfect. And help us to follow You, every day knowing that **[Bottom Line] following Jesus will turn out greater than you can imagine.**”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to share their watercolor verses as they talk about how **[Bottom Line] following Jesus will turn out greater than you can imagine.**