

Believing God

Theme: Eye on the Sky

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Join us on our Facebook group. Interact with editors and Sunday school teachers. Post pictures of your class. Brag on what God is doing in your class. You teach with us; now interact with us. Check out our group, "Word Aflame Toddler Curriculum Teachers."



Toddler Teacher's Manual

Manufactured in U.S.A., March 2019 1031911
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36 Research Park Court, Weldon Spring, MO 63304

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THEME DEVELOPMENT

Eye on the Sky

Consider the amount of faith required to get on a space shuttle and head into the uncharted vastness of space. Now consider the amount of faith the early church exhibited as they headed into the uncharted vastness of the unsaved world. Just as astronauts boldly go into the unknown spaces of the universe, the early church (as well as the church today) committed to boldly go with a strange but powerful message so all the world could hear about Jesus.

Explaining Our Acronyms and Symbols

(TRP) = Teacher's Resource Packet

(AP) = Activity Paper

MW = Memory Work

📄 = Digital resource using download code on TRP instruction sheet

This quarter, all of our children's levels (Toddler, Kindergarten, Beginner, Primary, and Preteen) will be studying how the early church believed God as seen in Acts 21–28 and Paul's epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians,

Colossians, and Philemon. With the help of some well-chosen Bible narratives, your toddlers will hear how people learned what God wanted them to do and how He helped them do His work. It is all part of believing God.

Of course, most toddlers are unacquainted with the vastness of the universe as seen in the dark of night. Even our imaginations must go into overtime as we stare at the sky, trying to remember what we learned in our science classes about the planets and stars. For this quarter, breathe easy. Your room will focus on large foil stars, small foil star stickers, and fun rocket shapes flying through the stars. No need to explain the planets or galaxies or exploding stars to your toddlers.

Use our ideas as a starting guide. Visit Pinterest and other websites for décor ideas (keeping choking hazards in mind), searching for "star classroom décor" for additional ideas. Make use of the reproducible theme art 📄 when decorating. Post your pictures on our Facebook page so others can see your awesome room.

THE WALLS

Let your toddlers enjoy a room that is decorated at their eye level, with decorations they can touch and explore. Anything higher than four feet causes them to have to look up, and with the added disadvantage of being out of reach, the focus will be lost on them. Use toddler-friendly materials that can be wiped off or easily recreated if something gets destroyed. Make an exciting room for your toddlers—not for adults.

Wall 1: Teaching Time

This teaching wall includes the writing board. Create a story-time area with a small table and chair for the teacher. Add the attendance charts (AP) 📄 and memory charts (AP) 📄 at children's height for easy access each week.

Wall 2: He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Cover this wall with light blue paper. Create a large sun from a Hula-Hoop covered in bright yellow paper, or use a large yellow paper lantern. Hang it about five feet from the ground in the left corner. Using theme art 📄, create a large world held in God's hands and place in the center of the wall. If you like to label your walls, label it: He's Got the Whole World in His Hands. Consider singing the Sunday school song by the same name each week at this wall.

Print each Bible art picture 📄 via the downloadable resources link, saving the nicer enamel prints for the lesson and review. Mount the printed versions (whether on paper or cardstock) to the wall each week as they are used.

Looking Ahead

Check all your lesson title pages now to see what supplies need to be gathered. Designate what activities require multiple copies, cutouts, or unusual supplies. For example, lesson 10 calls for the armor of God to be printed and cut out for each child. Recruit teenagers or seniors to help with drawing, copying, or cutting, or do a few each week until all are done and bagged. Avoid waiting until the week of lesson 10 and developing hand cramps from all the cutting.

- Always create a **sample** of every craft activity.
- Always **practice** object lessons well before class to make sure your methods provide the desired result.

Before the quarter begins, tear apart the activity papers and sort the papers by lesson for easier distribution each week. Set apart the title page to send home with toddlers at the beginning of the quarter. This provides families with a copy of the unit memory posters for at-home study. Order one activity paper per student with a few extras for visitors and for growth.

Stars are a major part of this theme. Purchase star stickers of various sizes and colors to use as prizes or awards on their activity papers.

Avoid a Panic Attack!

If you occasionally loan out your teacher's manual or accidentally leave it at church, don't panic. Before the quarter begins, follow the process on page 2 to download the entire manual to your electronic device. You can check supplies, study, and focus your prayers with a few simple clicks on your device.

NOTE: Some smartphones will not open zip files but will open PDFs. Save the zip files to your computer and then send the PDF to your phone.

Let this be an interactive wall for the memory work. Not all learning needs to occur at the teaching wall. Travel with the children to this wall each week to study the unit memory work posters (TRP) that are posted at their level. They cannot read, but they enjoy pretending to read as you point to each word.

Wall 3: We Are God's Stars

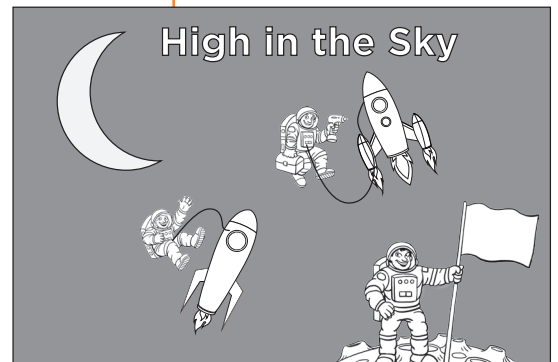
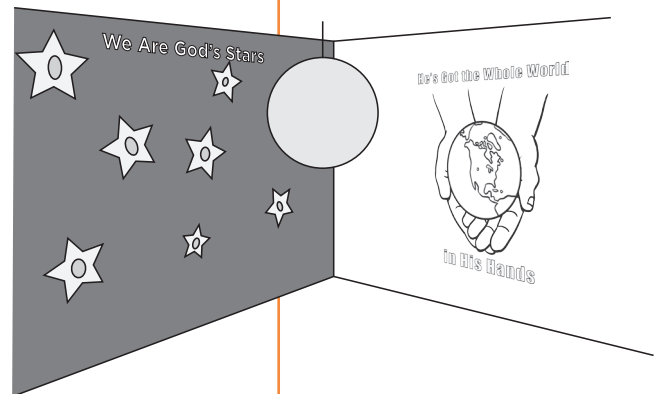
Cover this wall with dark blue paper to represent the night sky. Use metallic foil posterboard (available at craft and teacher supply stores) to make large stars. Take photos of your toddlers and teachers, and place their pictures on the stars, one picture per star. Leave some blank stars.

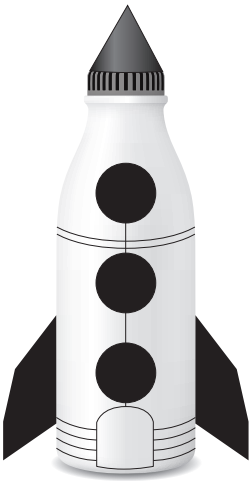
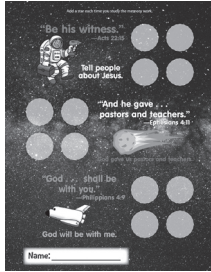
Make this an interactive attendance wall. Purchase a roll of 1-inch or larger stars and let children add a star to the wall each week they attend.

Wall 4: High in the Sky

Cover this wall with dark blue paper. Create a large white crescent moon from the theme art ④ and mount it about five feet above the ground. Use the theme art to create two or three rockets and an astronaut for each rocket. Use colorful posterboard for the rocket; use red or orange tissue paper for the flames. Make them 3-D by adding colorful posterboard wings.

Create bright and colorful astronauts with suits to match their rocket colors. After cutting out the astronauts, use bright rope to connect each one to his rocket. Hang paper lanterns of assorted sizes and colors from the ceiling (out of reach of toddlers) to give a 3-D galaxy effect.





Bulletin Boards

If you cannot decorate entire walls, each of these wall ideas can be reproduced on a small scale to fit a bulletin board.

ATTENDANCE AND MEMORY WORK CHARTS

The unit memory posters are printed on the backside of the AP cover. Send this cover page home with parents the first week so families can study the unit memory posters throughout the quarter.

Attendance: Tear out the charts from the activity paper sets. As part of the Eye on the Sky theme, let children add a star sticker (TRP) ⚡ each week they attend.

Memory Work: Your toddlers will be learning three unit Bible verses or Bible words, depending on which you choose to teach. Each week after memory work, whether you teach the Bible Words or the Bible Verse, toddlers add a star sticker (TRP) ⚡ to the appropriate memory work area.

Did You Know?

After accounting for all maintenance and supply expenses, it costs a church more to make boring gray-scale copies of the activity paper than it does to buy a full-color activity paper for each student. Churches may think they are saving money by buying one activity paper and making copies, but in reality it is costing them more, not to mention that copying the activity paper violates copyright laws. Permission is only granted to make copies for visitors. Avoid the need to copy. Order extras to allow for class growth and a few visitors.

Offering

Collect offering as soon as toddlers arrive so they don't play with it or lose it. Search Pinterest for "paper rocket ship" or "paper rocket ship craft." Create a rocket ship bank to collect the offering.

A simple idea is to use silver spray paint to cover a wide-mouth plastic bottle. Cut bright color wings from heavy craft paper and secure at the base of the rocket. Paint the screw-on lid the same color as the wings. Cut a small paper cone from a bright color heavy craft paper and secure it to the lid. Keep the lid free so you can remove it to retrieve the offering. Near the top of the rocket, cut a 1/4" x 1 1/2" slit to accept children's coins. Add portholes and lines to the bottle to complete the rocket.

Allergy Alert

Hopefully you are using the Child Information Form ⚡ and asking all parents or guardians to fill one out before they leave a child in your care. Be especially aware of any food allergies. This quarter features a lot of sweet snacks, so be prepared to provide alternatives to those students who have allergies to ingredients such as honey, gluten, dye, and nuts.

GOD WORKS THROUGH US



EXCITE AND ENGAGE

Welcome: Attendance charts (AP) ⬇️, attendance star stickers (TRP) ⬇️, offering container

Optional: 1-inch or larger purchased star stickers for God's Stars wall

Activity Paper: Activity papers (page 1), crayons, star stickers

Worship: "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"

Prayer: 3-inch red circles and green circles (1 of each color per child), trash can

RELATE AND RECEIVE

Memory Work: To make Jesus sticks, attach the Jesus blocks (TRP) ⬇️ to craft sticks (1 per child).

Unit 1 MW poster (TRP), memory charts (AP) ⬇️, memory star stickers (TRP) ⬇️

Bible Lesson: Bible, biblical costumes (Paul, nephew, 3 people), Bible art: Paul's Nephew (TRP) ⬇️

APPLY AND ACT

Activity Paper: Activity papers (page 2), crayons

Snack Break: Gummy bears, water

Role-Play: Biblical costumes (Paul, nephew, 3 people, captain, soldiers), *optional:* 1 costume per child

Book/Games: Books (see page 13), doll

Blocks/Sensory: As many red and green blocks as possible

Art/Writing: On construction paper, print and cutout one megaphone (TRP) ⬇️ per child.

Crayons, excess stickers, tape, sample megaphone

Music/Movement: Masking or painter's tape, red and green circles for children from Prayer activity, a set of circles for the leader

Home Connection: Copies of the unit 1 Home Connection calendar (TRP) ⬇️ and lesson 1 devotion ⬇️ (1 per child), covers of activity papers (1 per child), child information form ⬇️ (1 per child)

Unit 1

Paul's Testimony

Unit Aim

Children will talk about Jesus.

Unit Bible Verse

"Be his witness" (Acts 22:15).

Unit Bible Words

Tell people about Jesus.

Scripture Text

Acts 23:11–24

Bible Point

God uses us to complete His plan.

Life Application

I will do what God wants me to do.

Teacher Devotional

Read Acts 23:11–24. Prayerfully consider what this passage says:

About God

Throughout Scripture, does God only use spiritual superheroes like Elijah, Peter, and Paul? Consider the unnamed little servant girl who directed Naaman to the prophet Elisha. How about the unnamed boy who brought the loaves and fishes? When God has a plan, He uses anyone who is willing, be they superhero or civilian.

To You as a Teacher

It is easy to assume the biblical men and women active in God’s work fell into their greatness, yet nearly every story proves otherwise. Joseph was given a dream, but he had to work to fulfill it. Paul had to earn his learning before God could put it to even greater use. Abraham’s story seems full of only highlights until you realize there are years of faithfulness in between most chapters. People are not preordained; rather, they choose to do God’s work.

To Your Students

Even toddlers growing up in the most loving of homes are concerned about things that matter less to adults. Adult conversations and tasks often take priority over the musings and small concerns of the toddler’s life. Paul’s nephew was not a toddler when he shared the warning he had overheard, but he still had to get someone’s attention. Emphasize how God always has time to listen to us, and He will use us to fulfill His plans. We can do what God wants us to do.

Avoid a Panic Attack!

If you occasionally loan out your teacher’s manual or accidentally leave it at church, don’t panic. Before the quarter begins, follow the process on page 2 to download the entire manual to your electronic device. You can check supplies, study, and focus your prayers with a few simple clicks on your device.

NOTE: Some smartphones will not open zip files but will open PDFs. Save the zip files to your computer and then send the PDF to your phone.



EXCITE AND ENGAGE

Welcome

After you collect their offering, let children explore their new room. Tell them God made the stars to shine in the dark sky at night. Help them add an attendance star sticker (TRP) to their attendance charts (AP) and a star sticker (purchased) to the “We Are God’s Stars” wall (page 5). **I can do what God wants me to do. He wants me to tell you Jesus loves you.**

Activity Paper

The activity on the front page is located at the beginning of the lesson as a way to greet students and get them focused on the lesson objective. This also gives glue time to dry before sending projects home.

A collection of life-application activities is included in the Apply and Act section at the end of each lesson (see page 13).

You can do what God wants you to do. Can you help keep God’s house clean? Can you be nice to God’s people? Can you help other people?

Distribute activity papers. Encourage children to explain each picture, and then let them color. **We work for Jesus with our grandpa, our friends, and even when we sing to Jesus. Say it with me: I will do what God wants me to do.**

Distribute star stickers for children to put on their papers.

Worship

Gather children at the “He’s Got the Whole World” wall (see page 4). **Jesus has the whole world in His hands.** He takes good care of us so we can work for Him. Sing the song with these motions.

He's got the whole world in His hands (starting at face level, take hands in wide circular motion to form a circle, ending at the bottom of circle with hands cupped as though holding world)

He's got you and me, brother (point to boy and then to self) **in His hands** (hold out hands)

He's got you and me, sister (point to girl and then to self) **in His hands** (hold out hands)

He's got everybody here (point to class with broad sweeping motion) **in His hands** (hold out hands)

Prayer

Distribute a red and green three-inch circle to each child.

Hold up your red circle. The red circle means "no."

Hold up your green circle. The green circle means "yes."

Jesus wants you to work for Him. Will you tell Jesus "no"? Encourage children to shout "no" as they hold up their red circles.

Will you tell Jesus "yes"? Encourage children to shout "yes" as they hold up their green circles.

I don't want to say "no" to Jesus. Let's throw our red circles away. Have children throw the red circles away (and quietly collect them for Music/Movement). **I want to tell Jesus "yes." Let's hold up our green circles while we pray.** Lead in a simple echo prayer.

**Dear Jesus,
We want to work for You.
Help us, God,
To do what You say.
We will say "yes" to You.
In Jesus' name, amen.**

Collect the green circles.

RELATE AND RECEIVE

Memory Work

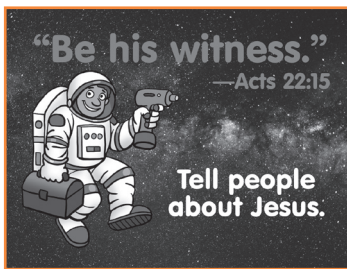
Teachers are given the option of teaching either *Bible Words* or a *Bible Verse* in each unit.

The *Bible Words* are a simple paraphrase of a Bible verse—something a two-year-old can remember. The *Bible Verse* directly quotes the KJV, containing concepts a late toddler can comprehend.

Is your class composed of younger or older toddlers? Choose the level of memory work accordingly.

At the completion of either method, allow participating children to place a memory star sticker (TRP) 🌟 on their memory charts (AP) 🌟.

Red and green circles will be used again in Music/Movement.



Bible Words: Tell people about Jesus.

Gather at the memory poster wall. Point to each word as you read it on the unit 1 MW poster (TRP). **Tell people about Jesus.** Repeat in two phrases, encouraging children to echo you.

Give each child a prepared Jesus stick (TRP). **Hold up your Jesus stick. Who can you tell about Jesus? Can you tell your mommy? Can you tell Grandma? Can you tell your friend?**

Help children form pairs. Encourage them to hold up their Jesus sticks as they say the Bible Words to each other. Let children travel to one another as they hold up their sticks and say the words.

Collect the sticks and send children to the Bible story chairs.

Bible Verse: “Be his witness” (Acts 22:15).

Gather at the wall that displays the unit 1 MW poster (TRP). Point to each word as you read it on the poster. **Jesus wants you to be His witness. That means you will tell other people about Jesus.**

Give each child a prepared Jesus stick (TRP). **Hold up your Jesus stick. Can you be His witness?** Help children say the Bible Verse as they hold up their sticks. **We can be His witness by doing what Jesus wants us to do. Jesus wants us to tell people about Him.**

You can be His witness to Mommy and Daddy, to Grandma and Grandpa, and to your friends. Can you tell them about Jesus? Can you do what Jesus wants you to do?

Help children form pairs. Encourage them to hold up their Jesus sticks as they say the Bible Verse to each other. Let children travel to one another as they hold up their sticks and say the words.

Collect the sticks and send children to the Bible story chairs.

Bible Lesson: Paul’s Nephew (Acts 23:11–24)

Our Bible story is from Acts 23. Point to it in the Bible.

Paul was a preacher. Dress a volunteer in the Paul costume. **Paul did what God wanted him to do. He liked to tell people about Jesus.**

Run to the unit 1 MW poster (TRP) and help children say the Bible Words. **Tell people about Jesus.** Run back to the story area.

Some people didn’t like Paul talking about Jesus. They put Paul in jail. He could not get out. Place Paul behind chairs or an inverted table. **He could not do what God wanted him to do while he was in jail.**

Dress three children in biblical costumes and place the children in a group. **Some men talked about hurting Paul.**

Dress a child as Paul’s nephew, encouraging him to listen in as the men talk. **Paul’s nephew heard the men talking. He went to tell Uncle Paul what the men said.** Direct him to stand outside Paul’s jail.

Uncle Paul told a soldier to take the young man to tell the captain about the men who wanted to hurt his uncle Paul. The captain did not want Paul to get hurt. The soldiers protected Paul. Have the rest of the children circle around Paul, guarding him.

Paul’s nephew did what God wanted him to do, and God did not let anyone hurt Paul.

I can do what God wants me to do. Hold up Bible. **I can tell you about Jesus.** Have Paul and nephew stand by you. **You can do what God wants you to do when you help me tell the story.** Remove costumes from volunteers and thank them for helping you.

What are some things God wants us to do? Lead your class in a discussion, prompting replies such as picking up trash, sweeping the floor, and telling others about Jesus.

Application Questions

- **Why was Paul thrown into prison?** For talking about Jesus
- **What did Paul's nephew hear some men were trying to do?** They were trying to kill Paul.
- **What did Paul's nephew do about what he heard?** He told Paul and the soldiers.
- **What did the soldiers do when they heard the men wanted to hurt Paul?** They protected Paul.

APPLY AND ACT

This life-application section offers a collection of lesson-related activity options. Select the ones that best fit with your group and setting to drive home the lesson. Using these methods, students will think they are playing while they are really learning.

Activity Paper

Direct students to the back of the activity papers. Ask children to describe what they see. As they color, discuss how Paul's nephew did what God wanted him to do.

Snack Break

Serve gummy bears and water. **Before you eat, pretend your gummy bears are telling each other about Jesus. You can tell others about Jesus too.** Pray before the children eat.

Role-Play

Help children retell the Bible story using different volunteers to wear the costumes. If practical, provide a costume for each child. Choose volunteers for Paul, his nephew, three men plotting against him, the captain, and let the rest of your class be soldiers.

Books/Games

From an age-appropriate children's Bible, read the story of Paul's nephew. Also read books about working for God.

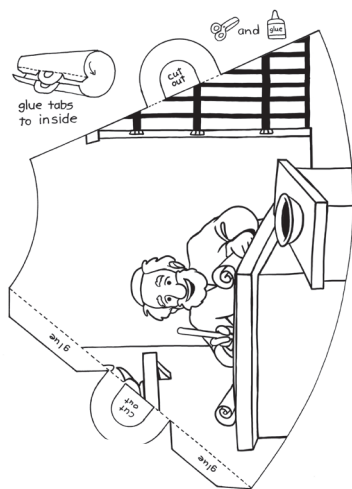
- *The Whole World in His Hands* (sound book) by Holli Conger
- *My First Pictures of Jesus* by Maite Roche

Seat children in a circle. Give one child a doll and help the child tell the doll, "I can tell others about Jesus." The child passes the doll to the next child, and the scenario continues until each child has played.

Blocks/Sensory

As you place the red and green blocks in the center of the table, tell children they will each be building a tower according to your instructions. When you call out "go," they should put a green block on the table to begin the tower. When you call out "no," they should use a red one. **We are following instructions. We can do what God tells us.** Continue giving instructions for children to build towers.





Art/Writing

Demonstrate how to use the megaphone by saying into it, “Tell people about Jesus.” Let children color their megaphones (TRP) Ⓡ and add any extra stickers you have in stock. Write the child’s name on the paper before taping it into a megaphone.

Encourage children to echo you and say the Memory Work (Bible Words or Bible Verse), Bible Point, and Life Application into their megaphones.

Music/Movement

Mark a finish line on the floor, which you will stand by. Have children stand against the wall with their red and green circles from the Prayer activity.

Tell them when you say “yes” and hold up the green circle, they should run toward the finish line holding up their green circles. However, when you say “no” and hold up the red circle, they must stop where they are and hold up their red circles. **We can do what God tells us. We can follow His instructions.**

Home Connection

- For each student, send home a copy of the unit 1 Home Connection calendar (TRP) Ⓡ and lesson 1 devotion Ⓡ, or point out the URL on page 2 of the activity paper to parents so they can download it themselves.
- Send home the cover of the activity paper, showing parents it contains the memory work for the entire quarter.
- Use the child information forms Ⓡ to get contact information for parents. This will be used to establish a home connection throughout the quarter.