



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE



BIG IDEA

Jesus is our hero.

THE BIBLE

Jesus is the Good Shepherd:

John 3:16-17; 10:1-18 (Deuteronomy 31:6; Psalm 23:4)

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- **ACTIVITY** | Super Strength Training
- **ACTIVITY** | Save the Mayor
- **ACTIVITY** | Superhero Gear
- **THE BIG IDEA** | Jesus is our hero.
- **QUESTION** | Who's your favorite superhero?
- **BIBLE STORY** | John 3:16-17; 10:1-18
- **ACTIVITY** | Sent to Earth
- **OBJECT LESSON** | Don't Get Wet!
- **IMAGE** | Superhero Traits
- **STORY** | Have you ever had to be protected from something?
- **ACTIVITY** | Protect the Flock
- **OBJECT LESSON** | Floating Ketchup Packet
- **SCRIPTURE** | Deuteronomy 31:6
- **REFLECTION** | Jesus Helps Us
- **MEMORY VERSES** | Hebrews 11:1; Isaiah 40:31

SMALL GROUP TIME

- **DISCUSSION**
 - Who is the superhero we learned about from the Bible?
 - What is one of the nicknames the Bible gives Jesus to describe what He does for us?
 - What does it mean that the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy?
 - How do you feel knowing Jesus chose to give up His life for you and forgive you?
 - How can we listen for the voice of Jesus?
- **SCRIPTURE** | Psalm 23:4
- **ACTIVITY** | Superpower Mix Up
- **MEMORY VERSES** | Hebrews 11:1; Isaiah 40:31



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

Jesus is our hero.

THE BIBLE

Jesus is the Good Shepherd:

John 3:16-17; 10:1-18 (Deuteronomy 31:6; Psalm 23:4)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Super Strength Training

- Today, we begin a new series called Heart of a Hero, where we'll learn what makes a true hero!
- One of the most well-known superheroes is Superman, who has super strength.
- Let's start with some superhero training and see how strong we can be!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have the kids stand at least an arm's length away from anyone else. When you say "Go," have everyone put their arms straight out to the sides and hold them out for as long as they can. The person who keeps their arms out the longest without letting them drop will win this round. The winner then gets to be the first hero in this next activity. You can also have a contest to see who can jump the highest.
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** For kids who have physical impairments, you can add physical support under their arms while they try the challenge or have them do an arm wrestling match instead of more physical activities.
- **FOR PRETEENS:** Give them harder challenges and make it a competition. See your weekly instructions for details.
- Having physical strength is good, but having strength from God is even better! We're going to learn about how we can get God's strength and power.

ACTIVITY | Save the Mayor

- In superhero movies, the hero or heroine often works with the mayor or another leader to protect a city. In this game, you'll have a chance to be a hero and save the mayor!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Get some soft foam balls the kids can safely throw at one another. You can let the kids take turns being the hero and designate another person to be the mayor, who can be you or any other non-playing leader. The mayor will stand in the middle of your room. The hero will stand next to or in front of the mayor. Four to eight players will take positions in a circle around the mayor, and they must keep their feet planted and not move from their spaces. These players will take turns throwing the ball, trying to hit the mayor. The hero's job is to block the ball and keep the mayor from getting hit. The mayor must stand still and not dodge or block the ball. That's the hero's job! If the mayor gets hit, the hero is out. Whoever threw the ball that hit the mayor becomes the new hero.
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** Assign their numbers to them ahead of time and assign a buddy to help them during the game. Depending on the ability and needs of the kids, some extra time can be given after each throw.
- A hero protects others from danger and saves them. Sometimes, heroes have to go through tough situations to help others.

ACTIVITY | Superhero Gear

- Today, we're learning about the ultimate hero. Let's make up our own superheroes!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print a Superhero Gear printable for everyone. Have them color the picture and turn the person into a superhero. Tell them to make up a superhero name and superpowers, and include all the gear for saving people in their picture.
- **What does it take to be a hero? Do heroes need special powers? Do they need high tech gadgets and gear instead of superpowers?**
- **How does your hero use their superpowers for good? Do they protect people? Rescue people? Fight off evil?**
- Now that we've all shared about our superheroes, let me tell you about someone who helps others like a hero, but who is unlike any other superheroes we know.
- One of His nicknames is the Good Shepherd. He doesn't wear a cape like Superman or have any cool gadgets like Batman. He doesn't have Iron Man's armor, or Black Panther's Vibranium suit.
- But the Good Shepherd is the ultimate hero. His name is Jesus, and we'll learn why we consider Him our ultimate superhero.

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

THE BIG IDEA | Jesus is our hero.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week, do a big reveal (and make it fun) when you announce the Big Idea, like:
 - Ask the kids to give you a drumroll by stomping their feet or patting their laps.
 - Shout the Big Idea, then point to the kids and have them shout it back (Change it up by using funny voices, different volumes, or inflections).
 - Have a character (either recurring or rotating) come out every week to reveal the Big Idea.
 - Write it on a piece of paper and hide it somewhere in the room. Have the kids go on a "hunt" for it. When it's found, ask someone to come up and read it.
- This week's Big Idea: **Jesus is our hero.**

QUESTION | Who's your favorite superhero?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the kids to share who their favorite fictional superhero is, and what they like about that person. Tell them about a superhero you like.
- **FOR PRETEENS:** Bring in some real Marvel comic books and let them look at the super hero stories. You can also show them the Action Bible, which is a super hero comic book style Bible.
- The hero we're learning about today is Jesus. Let's see how the Bible describes Him and what it says about His mission on Earth.

BIBLE STORY | John 3:16-17; 10:1-18

- **Did you know Superman came from another world, lived among human beings, and became a superhero on Earth?** That kind of reminds me of the true story of how Jesus came to us. He came to Earth to be born in a manger, lived among us as a human, and came to do something amazing to help us. Let's read from the Bible to find out more.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Look up the story in your Bible and encourage kids to do the same. Read it!
- **What did this passage tell us about why Jesus came to Earth?** Jesus was sent into this world by God not to punish us or make us feel bad, but to save us.
- The verses from John 10 use an illustration to help us understand the role and mission of Jesus here on Earth. It talked about shepherds and sheep.
- **What is the job of a shepherd?** Shepherding has been an important job for a long time. Here's why: people had groups of sheep, which is called a flock, and shepherds were people who were in charge of keeping the sheep all together and making sure they stayed safe. They would protect the flock and lead them. The shepherds knew their sheep and their sheep knew and trusted them. Who is like a shepherd in this Bible verse? Jesus is the shepherd.
- **What group of people do you think is like sheep?** That's us. We need to be protected, guided, and led by Jesus.
- **So you know how every good superhero story has a villain?** Well, there's a villain in this story, too. **Who do you think the "thieves and robbers" are in this story? What does it say the thief has come to do?** The thief is Satan, and He wants to keep us from having a relationship with Jesus. We don't need to be afraid, though. Jesus came to Earth to take on the punishment that we all deserved. He took our place so we can have a relationship with God, which would have been impossible with sin in the way.
- **What else does Jesus do for us?** He gives us His strength, helps us, leads us, and protects us, like a shepherd protects and leads a flock. He gives us power over the enemy so we don't have to worry. He came to rescue us from sin and the enemy, so we can live full lives here on Earth, and live with God in heaven forever. Jesus is the ultimate superhero! And He came to Earth because He loves us and wants to share His power with us.

ACTIVITY | Sent to Earth

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give the kids paper, pencils, a large blue paper plate or bowl to represent the Earth, and floor tape. Tell them to draw or write Jesus on their paper, then have them all make a paper airplane (or you can just do paper wads if your kids can't make airplanes). Set up the blue paper plate or a paper plate colored to look like Earth at the other end of the room. Tape a line on the floor about ten to fifteen feet away from the Earth plate. Have the kids take turns throwing their planes or paper

wads from the line and see who can land on (or closest to) the Earth plate.

- Some of you got your paper Jesus all the way to Earth! **Was it hard to get it to land where you wanted it to land?** The real Jesus didn't have trouble finding Earth. He came to Earth to rescue us, protect us, and care for us.

OBJECT LESSON | Don't Get Wet!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You can do this on stage with a couple kids, or as a large group with all your kids. Fill a squirt gun with water and tell them to try and stay dry while you spray it at them (lightly, unless your goal is to soak them! Then, proceed as you wish). They won't be able to protect themselves. Then give them a poncho or raincoat or an umbrella. If you're using the large group of kids, you can give them a tarp or sheet to protect themselves. Once they have their protective gear, spray again so they can see they are protected from the water.*
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** *See your weekly instructions for modifications and a simple object lesson to help them see how God protects us.*
- **Was it hard to protect yourself from the water without the protective gear? What are some things we might need to be protected from in real life that Jesus can help us with?** He can protect us from things we know we shouldn't do. He can protect us from fear. But just because He has the power to protect us doesn't mean everything in our lives will always go perfectly and we won't ever have pain or hard times. For instance, just because you wear a raincoat or carry an umbrella doesn't mean it will never rain. It just means you have something there to protect you from the rain. Even if we experience hard times, we will always have Jesus to give us strength.

IMAGE | Superhero Traits

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the kids a group photo of the Avengers or the Justice League.*
- **Who are some of the superheroes in this photo?**
- **What are their superpowers?**
- **If you could have any superhero on your side, who would you choose?**
- We can watch movies or read comic books about superheroes, but at the end of the day, they are all just pretend. Jesus is our only real life superhero.
- **What do you think about Jesus being a superhero? Have you ever thought about Him in that way before?**

STORY | Have you ever had to be protected from something?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask if anyone has a story about a time when someone protected him or her from something that could have harmed him or her. You can share a kid-appropriate time when you were protected from something or someone.*
- **Remember the sheep from the story?** They needed a shepherd. They would be in big trouble if they were out in the wilderness by themselves! They would get lost or go hungry or get attacked by other animals. But the shepherd protected them, led them, and guided them. That's what Jesus does for us.

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

ACTIVITY | Protect the Flock

- Being a shepherd was a tough job. Not only did they have to lead the flock of sheep to food and water, they had to keep them from wandering off and protect them from danger.
- The shepherd's staff had a hook on it to help pull straying sheep back into the flock. **Why do you think the sheep would stray from the flock? Do you think we ever wander off the path God has for us?**
- Shepherds also carried a rod, which is a big stick, for times when they needed to get tough. They would use it to keep wolves and other beasts away that wanted to try and eat the sheep.
- The Bible says that a shepherd boy named David fought off lions and bears with a slingshot. **Can you imagine? A boy, maybe 13 years old, fighting off wild animals—by himself—with a slingshot?** Sounds like a superpower to me!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Blow up four white balloons and write or draw sheep on them. On four pieces of cardstock or cardboard, write the words: lion, wolf, bear, and thief. Tape a square on the floor that will fit the four inflated balloons and will represent a sheep pen. Give one person a pool noodle to play the shepherd (the hero). Pick four kids to play the lion, wolf, bear, and thief. The shepherd will use the pool noodle to keep the sheep in the pen while the villains fan their cardstock to try to get the balloons out of the sheep pen. The villains must keep their feet planted in the same spot and cannot touch the shepherd. To include more kids in this game, make the square bigger and use more sheep balloons and more villains.*
- **Was it easy or hard to be the shepherd and protect all the sheep from the villains?** Sheep need a shepherd's help, and we need the help of Jesus. We can be thankful to have Jesus protecting us and helping us!

OBJECT LESSON | Floating Ketchup Packet

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Fill a tall straight plastic water bottle (like [this](#)) with water and peel the label off the bottle. Place a ketchup packet in the bottle of water and screw the lid back on. Hold the bottle in your hand and practice this trick ahead of time (you can use [this](#) video for reference) to make sure it works. When you squeeze the bottle, even slightly, the ketchup packet will sink to the bottom. If you release, it should float back to the top. You can even control how fast it sinks and floats back up, or if it stops in the middle. You can do an experiment with your kids and tell them the ketchup packet only listens to you and won't listen to anyone else. Let them watch as you point to the packet with one hand to make it go up and down while you secretly squeeze with the other hand (they won't know how you're doing the trick). Then, call up some kids and let them try to point at the ketchup packet to raise and lower it. Tell them to point their finger at the ketchup packet like you did and try to get it to move. Don't squeeze the bottle, and let them point to it and nothing will happen. Then, you do it again, and show them how it listens when you lead it. At the end, you can reveal the trick to them if you want, and tell them you were squeezing the bottle slightly to get it to move.*
- **FOR PRETEENS:** *Give them their own water bottles and ketchup packets and teach them how to do this experiment on their own. Let them take them home and demonstrate to others how important it is to recognize God's voice.*
- The ketchup packet only listened and moved when I led it, but not when others tried. **How is this**

like the sheep who know their shepherd's voice?

- How can you know the voice of Jesus when He is leading you or speaking to you? What things might get in the way of you hearing His voice?
- Why would the sheep need to know the voice of their shepherd?

SCRIPTURE | Deuteronomy 31:6

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Look up the verse and encourage the kids to look it up. Read it!
- **What does this verse tell us about God?** It tells us God will never leave us, and God goes before us. God is powerful.
- **What does this tell us about how we should respond when we're afraid?**
- **What are some things you might need God's strength and courage for?**

REFLECTION | Jesus Helps Us

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give the kids paper and markers, and have them draw something they want to give to God or something they need help with or protection from. It could be bullies at school, scary dreams, sin and temptation, family problems, or anything else they are facing. When they are finished writing, have them crumple up the pieces of paper. Place a garbage can in the middle of the room and have them stand around it in a circle and throw their papers in the trash.
- God sent Jesus to Earth so we wouldn't have to fight on our own and try to protect ourselves. He sent Jesus to help us and give us strength and power. You can be as strong as a superhero because you have Jesus with you.

MEMORY VERSES | Hebrews 11:1; Isaiah 40:31

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every kid memory verse magnets or stickers. Then, work on the memory verse together. For ideas on how to do this well, check out the Memory Verse Guide in your Programming folder and give them to your small group leaders, if you'd like.