



April 2024, Week 4

Today's Bible Story: I'm with You (Simeon Waits for the Messiah) • *Luke 2:25-35*

Today's Key Question: What are you waiting for right now?

Today's Bottom Line: God is with you while you wait.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!* Psalm 27:14 (ESV)

Monthly Virtue: Patience—Waiting until later for what you want now

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

After kids get picked up, please help clean your small group area.

SMALL GROUP CONNECT: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 minutes)

Before kids arrive, pray that you would be able to have meaningful conversation with your kids about waiting and how hard it can be. Pray that you would help them be able to process what it means to have a God whose Spirit is with them in the midst of their waiting.

1. Just for Fun

What You Need: Offering container, coins, phone timer

What You Do:

- Show kids where the offering container is located and invite them to place their offerings there.
- Give each kid a coin.
- Explain and demonstrate the following steps to prepare kids for a game of "Minute to Catch It."
 - Bend one arm at the elbow so that the forearm is horizontal to the floor and the hand is touching the shoulder.
 - With palm facing up, place the coin on top of the elbow so it is facing the ceiling.
 - Quickly snap the arm downward and try to catch the coin before it hits the ground.
- Give kids time to practice then set a timer for one minute and challenge them to see how many times they can catch the coin before time is up.
- For a greater challenge, give kids another coin and tell them to stack it on top of the first and play again. As they succeed, keep giving them more coins to see how many they can catch.
- As time allows or for additional options, play other coin challenges.

- Coin Spin: How long can kids spin coins on a flat surface such as an uncarpeted floor or table.
- Coin Stack: How many coins can kids stack on their foreheads while standing with heads tilted back?
- Coin Tower: How many coins can kids stack in one minute using only one hand?

2. Opening Activity

What You Need: Phone timer

What You Do:

- Challenge kids to a stare down to see who can stare at something the longest without blinking.
- Lead them to compete individually, with a partner, or as a group.
- Set a timer then begin.
- Continue with other challenges to see who can do them the longest.
 - Tongue Twister: say “Fried rice flies” as many times as you can.
 - Hold Up: hold outstretched arms out to the side.
 - Freeze Face: make a silly face and hold it without laughing.
 - Just a Minute: everyone remains seated then stands when they think it’s been EXACTLY 60 seconds.

What You Say:

“Did some of those challenges test your patience? Waiting can be hard! No one enjoys waiting, but with God’s help, we can learn to wait well. **[Transition] In Large Group, we’ll hear about a man who waited years and years for something. Talk about a patience workout! Even though it took a very long time, the wait was worth it.**”

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

1. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

What You Need: Bible

What You Do:

- Review the story by inviting kids who enjoy reading aloud to take turns reading parts of Luke 2:25-35 to the group:

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸ he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

²⁹ “Lord, now you are letting your servant^[a] depart in peace,
according to your word;
³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation
³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³ And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

- Ask: What do you remember from the story that may have been difficult to wait for? (*Israelites waiting for God’s Rescuer, Simeon waiting for God’s promise to see the Savior, Simeon might have doubted God’s promise since he had been waiting so long*)
- Ask: What impressed you the most about Simeon? (*He kept praying, he believed God’s promise, he was patient*)
- Ask: How did the people in the story show trust in God? (*Mary and Joseph followed God’s command to bring a sacrifice to the temple, Simeon continued to believe God’s promise and pray*)
- Ask: What were some joyful moments in the story that made the waiting worth it? (*Simeon got to meet and hold the Messiah, Mary and Joseph realized again that Jesus was special, God came through on the promise to send the Rescuer*)
- Close with a short discussion to remind kids that God understands how hard it can be for us to wait patiently.
 - How do we know that God is with us while we’re waiting? (*God speaks to us through the Bible, God uses friends and family to encourage us to be patient, God hears our prayers, the Holy Spirit gives us power to trust God*)
 - What are you waiting for right now?
 - How does it help to remember that God is with you?
- Remind kids that God understands it’s hard for us to wait and that God promises to be with us as we do.

2. Discussion Questions

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask:

- Describe a patient kid. Why is that kind of person more fun to be around than someone who is always impatient?
- What would you say is the secret sauce or the main thing to remember when it comes to waiting well?
- The next time you’re waiting for something longer than you’d like, think of yourself as a “waiter” in a restaurant. What can you do to help, encourage, or serve others as you wait?

- Why can we have hope while we wait?

3. Verses to Take with You [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

What You Need: Bibles; *Optional: chairs*

What You Do:

- Give each kid a Bible.
- Invite kids to look up Psalm 46:1 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

Finding verses with 4th-5th graders: Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Invite kids who would like to read the verse aloud.
- Then say it together several times.
- Ask:
 - What promise do you find in this verse?
 - In what ways does a test of your patience feel like a time of trouble?
 - How is God a refuge and strength when you're facing a situation that requires some patient waiting?
 - How can waiting teach us something or make us stronger?
 - How do we become stronger in our ability to wait well?
- Sit in a circle (if possible, in chairs).
- Ask one kid to stand in the middle of the circle and remain standing throughout the following game.
- Explain that two kids in the circle must always be standing along with the kid in the middle. (Decrease this to one kid if your group is small.)
 - Kids in the circle can sit down and stand up as often as they want but can't stand for more than 5 seconds at a time.
 - There is no particular order for when kids have to stand.
- Pause the game several times to give each kid a turn in the middle if they want it.
- After the game, lead kids in making some observations.
 - Staying focused was a crucial part of the game. How does Psalm 46:1 help you know what to focus on when you're waiting?
 - How can this game remind us that God is always with us?
 - When it's really hard to wait, who would you choose to have alongside you to encourage you to be patient?
 - What can you do to remember that God is with you as you wait?
- If time allows, practice saying Psalm 46:1 together by inviting kids to echo or repeat short portions of the verse from kid to kid until everyone has recited it.

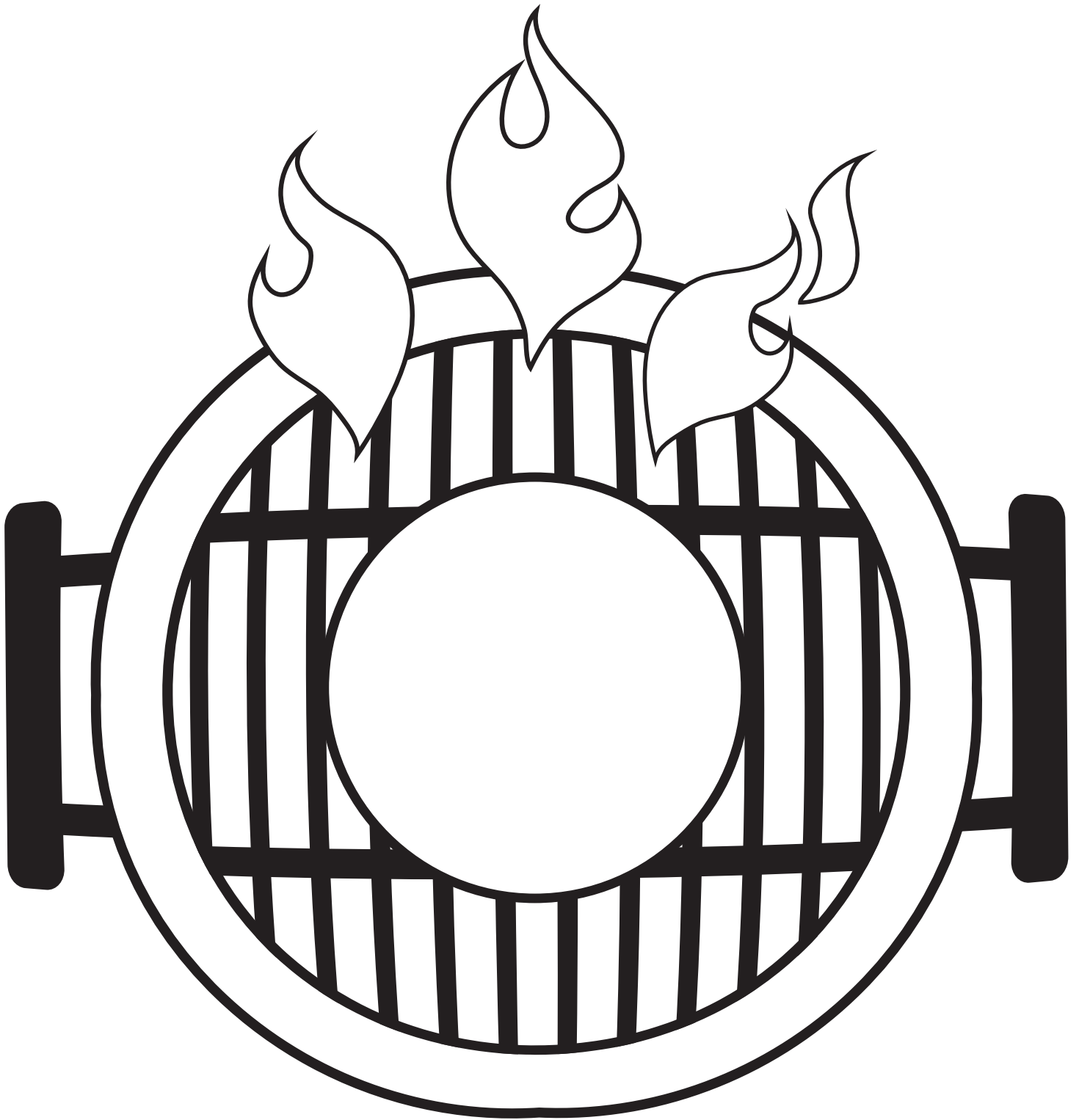
4. Make it Personal with Prayer **[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]**

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

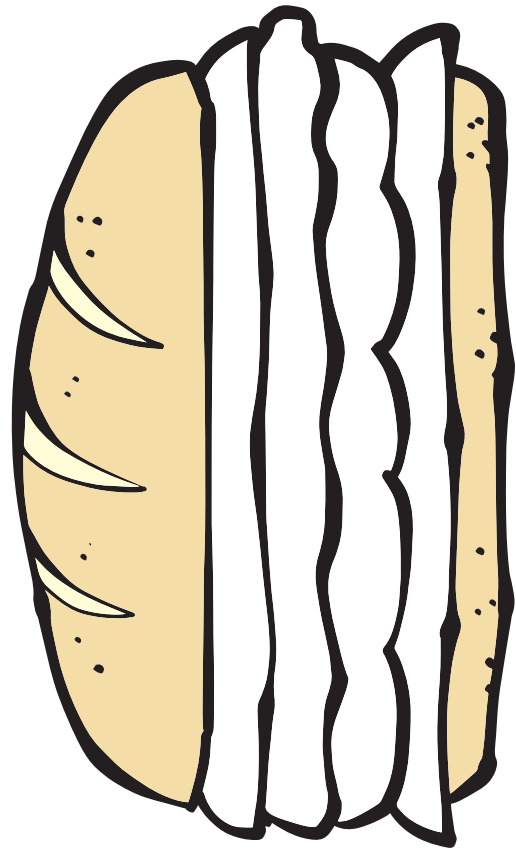
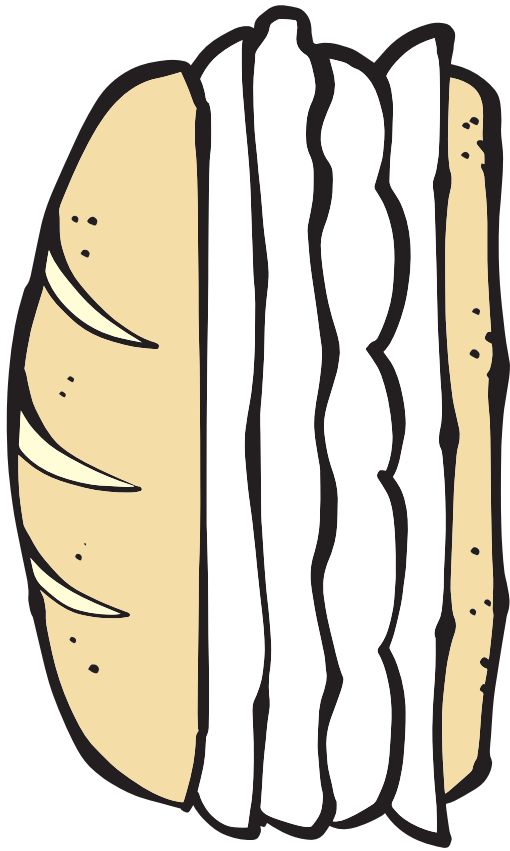
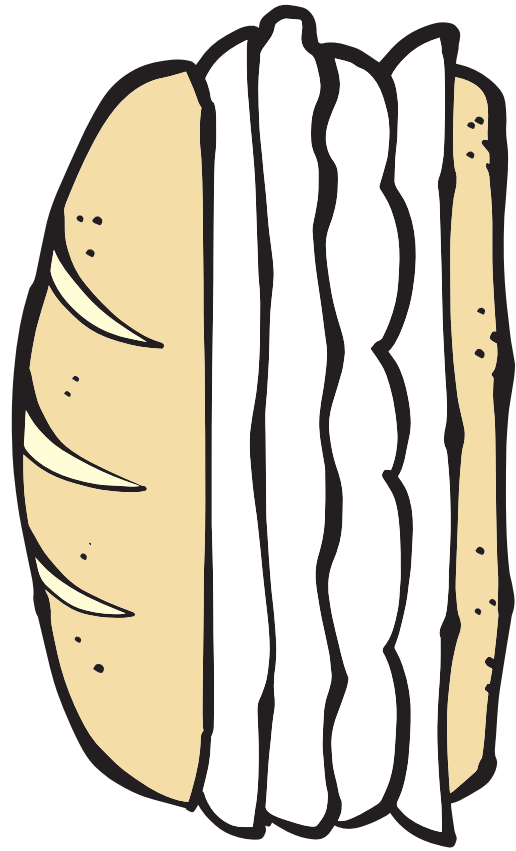
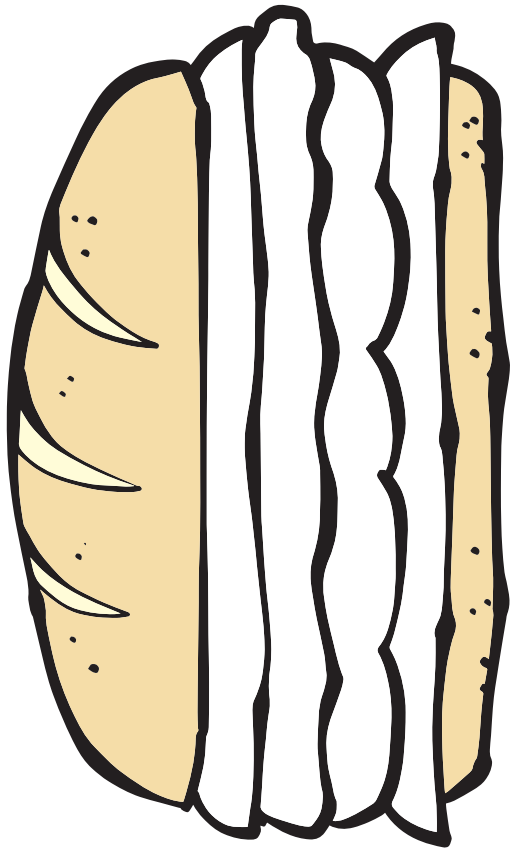
- Invite kids to share what they learned about patience this month in one sentence.
- Prompt them with some of the following ideas, if needed.
 - Waiting can make you wise. (Week 1)
 - When you think you can't wait, think twice. (Week 2)
 - When you have to wait, remember what's true. (Week 3)
 - God is with you while you wait. (Week 4)
- Invite kids to say a short prayer to thank God for helping them learn this month and for the kids sitting on both sides of them.
- Encourage those who would like to pray aloud to do so and the others to pray silently.
- When everyone has had time to pray, close with a final prayer.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING!



What to Do:
Print on cardstock, at least four for each Small Group.

"Toss it on the Grill" Activity Page
April 2024, Week 4, Preteen Small Group
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What to Do:
Print on cardstock and cut apart, one card for every kid.