

## Today's Suggested Schedule—January 2023, Week 3

**Today's Bible Story:** Ants Marching (Ant and Sluggard) • *Proverbs 6:6-8*

**Today's Bottom Line:** Work hard.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. Luke 16:10 (ESV)*

**Monthly Virtue:** Responsibility—Showing you can be trusted with what is expected of you

**Basic Truth:** I need to make the wise choice.

*Before kids arrive, pray that you would have an amazing time connecting with your kids and helping them process today's lesson about working hard. Ask God for specific insight into their hearts to know how to help them see the importance of working hard no matter what.*

Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

### **SMALL GROUP (15 minutes)**

#### **SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction**

Early Arriver  
Opening Activity

### **LARGE GROUP (35 minutes)**

#### **STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways**

#### **WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God**

Welcome/Opener  
Worship  
Bible Story  
Bottom Line  
Prayer  
Closer

### **SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)**

#### **GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect**

Bible Story Review: Work, Rest, & Repeat  
Application Activity: Work Hard  
Memory Verse Activity: About My Hard Work  
Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

#### **HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience**

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)  
Devotionals for Kids  
Parent Cue App

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

*Use this if kids have questions about following Jesus.*

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word gospel. Clarify that the word gospel means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

If a child has expressed interest in following Jesus, please let the parents know so they can be a part of the conversation that their child is having about faith.

### What Now?

If you put your trust in Jesus Christ and believe in Him as the One who forgives your sins and makes it possible for you to know God, we are so proud of you! There is no greater single decision that you could make.

We believe that baptism is an important next step for you. Baptism is your way of telling your friends and family, “Hey, I'm a follower of Jesus!” If you're interested in learning more or participating in baptism, talk to a staff member about the next steps you should take.

## 1. Just For Fun (if time)

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

**What You Need:** Offering container

### **What You Do:**

- Invite the kids to guess whether you're describing a dog or a cat.

Interesting pet facts:

1. This animal is the most popular in the United States with around 88 million kept as pets. *(cat)*
2. This pet has over 30 muscles that control their ears. *(cat)*
3. 45% of these pets sleep in their owner's bed. *(dog)*
4. 63% of this pet's owners give them Christmas gifts. *(dog)*
5. This pet sleeps 70% of their lives in very crazy positions. *(cat)*
6. This pet has three eyelids. *(cat)*
7. This pet has 1,700 taste buds. *(dog)*
8. This pet was Mayor of Talkeetna, Alaska for 15 years. *(cat)*
9. This pet has the same sleep and dream patterns as humans. *(dog)*
10. This pet can smell 100,000 times greater than a human. *(dog)*

For more cat facts: <https://bit.ly/3r4BK6g>

For more dog facts: <https://bit.ly/3sLKkYm>

## **GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)**

### **Story Exploration**

This passage uses the example of an ant to emphasize the importance of being diligent and responsible, even without someone supervising or directing. It encourages individuals to learn from the ant's work ethic and foresight in preparing for the future.

Discuss how Jesus also emphasized values like responsibility and hard work. In various parables and teachings, Jesus highlighted the significance of using one's talents wisely and being faithful stewards of the resources given to them. This aligns with the idea presented in Proverbs 6:6-8, encouraging individuals to take initiative and be responsible for their actions.

Read the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) and/or Parable of the Faithful Servant (Matthew 24:45-51) . Discuss how it relates to Proverbs 6:6-8.

Here are some themes of Proverbs 6:6-8

- **Initiative and Responsibility:**  
The ant takes initiative and is responsible for its own well-being. Similarly, following Jesus involves taking responsibility for one's spiritual journey and living a life aligned with Christ. It's about actively seeking a relationship with God and making choices that reflect you follow Jesus. (Galatians 6:5; Colossians 3:23-24; 1 Corinthians 10:31)
- **Self-Motivation and Discipline:**  
The ant is self-motivated to gather food and store provisions. In following Jesus, there's an emphasis on self-discipline and a motivated pursuit of spiritual growth. Discipleship involves personal commitment and discipline to follow the teachings of Jesus without being told. What are some ways you can do this? (2 Timothy 1:7)
- **Preparation for the Future:**  
Both Proverbs 6:6-8 and Jesus' teachings emphasize preparation for the future. The ant stores provisions in summer, while Jesus often spoke about being prepared for the coming of the kingdom of God. Following Jesus involves living with an eternal perspective and preparing for the future in both a spiritual and practical sense. What does it mean to have an eternal perspective? (Colossians 3:2; Matthew 6:19-21)
- **Stewardship:**  
Proverbs 6:6-8 indirectly touches on stewardship—managing resources wisely. Following Jesus often involves recognizing that all aspects of life, including time, talents, and possessions, are gifts from God. Stewardship is about using these gifts responsibly and for glorifying God, aligning with Jesus' teachings on loving and serving others.
- **Work Ethic and Diligence:**  
The ant's diligent work ethic resonates with the principles of hard work and diligence encouraged in the Bible. Following Jesus involves applying these principles in various aspects of life, including personal growth, relationships, and service to others. How can this help you follow Jesus better?

## \*1. Work, Rest, & Repeat

### [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:** Mobile device or music player and upbeat music

#### What You Do:

- Play upbeat music.
- Encourage the kids to dance around your Small Group area while the music plays.
- Play the music for a minute or two before stopping it.
- When the music stops, shout out, “Ants at rest.”
- Instruct the kids to lay down or sit down where they are.
- Choose one of the last kids down to answer a review question.
- If the kid needs help answering, encourage them to ask another kid for help.
- Once the answer has been given, shout, “Ants at work” and resume the music.
- Encourage the kids to get back up and dance until the music stops again.
- Repeat until all questions have been asked and answered.

#### Review questions:

1. King Solomon asked God for wisdom and wrote down many wise sayings known as what? (*proverbs*)
2. What example insect did King Solomon use in our story today? (*ants*)
3. Ants are great examples to show us how to what? (*work*)
4. Is there a commander showing ants what to do? (*No. They just work!*)
5. What seasons do ants work hard to store up their food? (*summer and fall*)
6. In what season do ants rest? (*winter*)
7. What can we learn from no one having to tell ants what to do? (*We shouldn't have to be told to work hard—we should just work hard.*)
8. What's one way God designed you that you can use to work hard?
9. Ants don't just work hard. They also know when it's time to what? (*rest*)
10. What's one way you can rest well?

#### What You Say:

“Just like you ANT-icipated me turning off the music, you can anticipate how to work hard this week. What are some responsibilities that you **[Bottom Line] work hard** at? (*Pause for responses—going to practice, school, chores around the house, etc.*)

“What I admire most about ants is that they know not only how to **[Bottom Line] work hard** but they also know how to rest. In order for us to give our best in all different areas of work, we need to be responsible by resting and taking care of ourselves, too. That way, we have more energy to give when it's time to work.

“What are some ways we can truly rest well? (*Invite responses.*) Resting well doesn't mean playing video games and watching TV. Think about things that will really help our minds and bodies relax—like being in nature, reading, or spending time with people we love. (*Allow time for kids to respond.*) Let's be sure to find time to rest so we can show up at our best when we do need to **[Bottom Line] work hard.**”

## 2. Work Hard

### [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

**What You Need:** Masking tape, brooms, paper scraps, baby dolls, grocery bags, basketballs, paper, and pens; *Optional: stopwatch*

### What You Do:

- Set up two identical obstacle courses as below. (NOTE: If limited on supplies, set up one course. Each team can go at different times while you use a stopwatch to see which team finishes faster.)
  - Tape a start line.
  - A few feet away from the start line, scatter paper scraps on the floor.
  - Follow the scattered scrap paper with a piece of paper and pen.
  - Next, place a grocery bag on the floor.
  - Next, place a basketball on the floor.
  - Last, place a baby doll on the floor.
- Divide your group into two teams.
- Direct each team to line up, single file.
- Give a broom to the first kid in line on each team.
- Instruct the first kid to sweep up the paper.
- Direct that kid to return to the line and tag the next kid.
- The next kid will run to the pen and paper and write their name five times.
- Instruct that kid to return to the line and tag the next kid.
- The next kid will run to the grocery bag, pick it up, and carry it back to tag the next kid.
- Direct the next kid on the team to run to the basketball and dribble it back to the team then tag the next kid.
- Instruct the next kid in line to run to the baby, pick it up, and rock it as they return to the team.
- The first team to get all of their work done and return to the start line, wins!

### What You Say:

“You had to work hard to get through that obstacle course! You knew what needed to be done, and you did it! When you’re at home or at school, you know what your parents and teachers expect of you, right? This week, I want to encourage you not to wait to be asked to **[Bottom Line] work hard**. Take responsibility and stick with it, even when it isn’t your favorite thing to do. If you see that your dad needs help carrying in the groceries, offer a hand. If you see that your sibling is upset, help by making him or her smile. Give it all you’ve got at practice and with your chores too! When you **[Bottom Line] work hard**, it’s actually a way to love others and honor God.”

“And you know what? Jesus worked hard, too. He taught people, He healed people, and He served people. Even more, Jesus knew what He had to do for us on the cross, and He did it. He loves us SO much that He took responsibility for our sins and died on the cross so we can live FOREVER with God.

“So when you see something that needs doing, make the wise choice—take responsibility and do it. Your hard work is a way to love others and honor God!”

**[Make It Personal] (Share about a time you worked hard and were able to show God and others love through your work.)**

### 3. About My Hard Work

#### [Hear From God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

**What You Need:** “About My Hard Work” Activity Page, markers, and Bibles

#### **What You Do:**

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up and read Luke 16:10 using the Bible navigation tips below.

***Finding verses with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders:*** Guide kids to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like. When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find “Luke” in the list under “New Testament.” When the kids find Luke, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Luke. Help the kids find the page. When they find Luke, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 16. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 10 in chapter 16.

- Give each kid an “About My Hard Work” Activity Page.
- Set out the markers.
- Instruct the kids to complete the “About My Hard Work” Activity Page.
- Give them time to fill in their responses and color or decorate the page.

#### **What You Say:**

“Yes, God made us to **[Bottom Line] work hard**, but God also gifted us uniquely and differently. God made each of us, just the way we are, for a purpose. Sometimes, I’ve wondered why certain things are harder to me than for my friends. I’ve learned that just because I don’t have the same gift of figuring out math problems like my friend, it doesn’t mean I’m not working hard.

*(Read Luke 16:10a to the kids.)* “Our verse reminds us just to take one step at a time. It’s not about being the best at everything or having the most stuff to give. It’s about being responsible with what we do have—gifts, belongings, time, and being faithful with those things. When you **[Bottom Line] work hard**, it may look different than others, but God sees your heart and your hard work.”



## 4. Pray and Dismiss

### [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

#### What You Say:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember?
- How do they help me trust and love God?

**What You Need:** Completed pages from "About My Hard Work" activity, sticky notes, and pens or markers

#### What You Do:

- Give each kid a sticky note and a marker.
- Encourage the kids to think of a goal for how they can show hard work this week.
  - If they need help, encourage the kids to look at their activity page and think through their hobbies, gifts, etc., to prompt them with an idea for how they can work hard!
- Direct them to write their goal on the sticky note.
- Invite the kids to place their sticky note on their "About My Hard Work" Activity Page.
- Close your group time in prayer.

#### What You Say:

"Dear God, thank You for the way You made us and the ability You've given us to **[Bottom Line] work hard**. As we go through our week, we know it will be easy to slack off and sink back into choosing not to give our best in everything we do. Remind us to **[Bottom Line] work hard** so we can love those around us and honor You. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, ask kids to read the goal on their sticky note of how they want to work hard this week! Encourage the adults to remind the kids of their goal and cheer them on all week long.



## GETTING READY

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

### Just For Fun

#### What You Need:

- No supplies

### **GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (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.

**(Choose as many of these activities as you like.)**

*\*If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #1.*

### Story Exploration (no supplies)

#### **\*1. Work, Rest, & Repeat**

##### **[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:**

- Mobile device or music player—one for each Small Group
- Upbeat music (Consider playing Orange Kids Music.)

#### **2. Work Hard**

##### **[Live for God | Application Activity]**

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

##### **What You Need:**

- Masking tape
- Small paper scraps—20 for each Small Group
- Brooms—two for each Small Group
- Basketballs—two for each Small Group
- Grocery bags—two for each Small Group
- Baby dolls —two for each Small Group
- Paper —at least two for each Small Group
- Pens —two for each Small Group
- *Optional: stopwatch*

NOTE: If limited on supplies, set up one course. (see activity) Each team can go at different times while you use a stopwatch to see which team finishes faster.

#### **3. About My Hard Work**

##### **[Hear From God | Memory Verse Activity]**

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

##### **What You Need:**

- Print “About My Hard Work” Activity Page on paper—one for each kid
- Markers
- Bibles

#### **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:**

- Sticky notes — one for each kid
- Pens or markers
- Completed pages from “About My Hard Work” activity

##### **HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience**

- Print on cardstock or email this week’s devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app**