Marty Machowski



Proverbs for the Classroom

Includes 12-Week Children's Curriculum and Walking with the Wise Music Album





With Wise

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Walking with Wise Pre-K & K

Introduction

Walking with the Wise: Proverbs for the Classroom is a twelve-week curriculum for four- to thirteen-year-old children that connects the book of Proverbs to God's larger story of salvation. Instead of teaching moralism as is so often the case when Proverbs is communicated to children, each lesson connects the moral truths of Proverbs to Jesus from whom true wisdom comes.

The Walking with the Wise Curriculum provides twelve lessons for three different age groups: Pre-K & K, Elementary, and Middle School.

Since children's ministry programs differ in length, you will need to decide how many of the offered components to include in your program.

Lesson Components

Pre-K & K students are an exciting age to teach, as they can begin to repeat back what they are learning. Still, they will not fully comprehend every aspect of the lesson. Repetition is key to help them remember the concepts that they are learning. Each week, the lesson will focus on one key word that characterizes the theme of the lesson. The basic goal is to help the children learn the meaning of that word and how it connects to the Bible verses from Proverbs that we cover.

Make sure you give your helpers some tips on how to keep the children engaged in the lesson. When you ask a question and the children are stumped, they can help give the children clues, like pointing back to the word of the day or pointing to a part of their body that could signal the correct answer. Welcome Time – Each week, start class with ten minutes of free play to allow for late arrivers. Once all the children arrive, open the lesson with prayer. From there, you can introduce the word of the day. Each week has a new "word of the day" with an associated footprint page to be printed out and displayed in the classroom. At the end of the twelve weeks there will be a row of twelve footprints walking the path of wisdom. Each week have a review time during which you review the words of the day and memory verses from past weeks.

If you have a class library, each week you might want to add a couple books that have to do with the word of the day. Be sure to read through your lesson in advance and practice presenting the material with enthusiasm.

As part of the preparation for Lesson 9 on giving, collect an offering each week to be given to a missionary or local charity.

Circle Time – Give each child a spot to sit in a circle for the presentation of the opening object lesson. It can be helpful to arrange your chairs or carpet squares in a circle so the children know where to go. You can also place a circle of masking tape X's on the floor to indicate where the children should sit. Your helpers can serve you well by getting the children in position.

Wise Guy Puppet Skit – Every week, we provide an optional puppet skit for you to use with your children. While the skit is optional, don't just skip over this part of the lesson because you don't think you can "do" puppets. You don't have to be a professional puppeteer or have expensive puppets with a fancy stage; even simple sock puppets will capture the kids' attention. Each week's skit is short and scripted so that you can simply read through as you go. Children don't mind seeing the script if you don't have a puppet theater.

It is a whole lot easier to do the skits with a helper-one person plays the role of the teacher, while the other plays the role of the puppet and manipulates the puppet. Teens love to get involved with puppets. Draw a few teen helpers in to be your "puppet team." With a little practice during the week, you'll have a top-notch puppet performance for your classroom.

After each Wise Guy puppet skit, there are a few questions for drawing out the children. The goal is to help them to think through what they just saw to answer the questions. If they get stuck, it is fine to actually give them the answer. Feel free to add questions that you think would help draw out your children.

Snack – Use this time to prepare as necessary for the Learning Activities (Memory Verse, Song, and an additional game or object lesson).

Learning Activities

Memory Verse – One of the most important things we can do for young children is help them hide God's Word in their hearts. People carry Scripture verses learned when they were four and five years old with them for the rest of their lives. Use the creative introduction to the verse to help the children memorize it. You will be surprised at how easily children can learn a verse through some creative repetition.

Song – The song suggestions in this curriculum are from the Sovereign Grace Music album *Walking with the Wise* (http://www.sovereigngracemusic.org/Albums/Walking_

with_the_Wise). Each month we introduce a new song (three songs for the 12-week curriculum). Run through any suggested hand motions so that you've learned them yourself and can present them from memory to your children.

If you would like to sing a different song each week, or want to add a song that may be more closely connected to your theme, we've suggested an additional song also.

Object Lesson or Game – Each week there is an option for another learning exercise in keeping with the theme.

Art Activity – Each week there is a hands-on activity, e.g., a coloring sheet or craft. Take the opportunity to connect the craft or coloring sheet to the lesson by asking the children simple questions that connect what they are doing with what they have just learned.

Closing Prayer – Ask one of the more mature children to pray, but be prepared to help them if they get stuck.

Wrap-Up – As class time draws to a close, use the discussion questions provided to review the lesson one final time.

"Walking with the Wise" Board Game (2–5 players) – The "Walking with the Wise" board game can provide some fun for several children at the end of class. The game follows the themes of Proverbs and is a simple game for young kids to play.

This downloadable game can be printed out onto 11-in. x 17-in. cardstock or paper. The game board can also be reproduced in a 18-in. x 24-in. format from a professional printer. Playing the game also requires one die and a game piece/pawn for each player (not included). See the game board for complete rules.

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Walking with the Wise

PRE-K & K



Trust in the Lord Scripture: Proverbs 3:5–6

Lesson 1 Snapshot

Lesson Aim: Children will start to understand what it means to trust in the Lord with their whole heart.

Welcome Time (10 minutes)

Week 1 footprint "TRUST"

Circle Time (15 minutes) Chair; whiteboard and dry-erase markers

Puppet Skit (optional) (15 minutes)

Optional: See Week 1 script for props

Snack (10 minutes) Snack food/water

Learning Activities

1. Memory Verse (10 minutes)

Photocopy memory verse (one copy for each child); cut words apart and place into a plastic bag for each child

- 2. Song (10 minutes) "Trust in the Lord"
- **3. Capital letter cutouts** (10 minutes) Capital letter cutouts (T, R, U, and S)–enough letters so that each child can spell the word TRUST; whiteboard and dry-erase markers

Art Activity (20 minutes)

Copies of the TRUST coloring page (Preschool Lesson 1) (one for each student); art materials, e.g., crayons/ markers, scraps of colorful paper, stickers, glue sticks

Closing Prayer & Wrap-Up (5–10 minutes)

Total minutes (approximate) 90-110

Irust in the Lord With all your heart. Proverbs 3:5a





WELCOME TIME (10 minutes)

Teacher note: As part of the preparation for Lesson 9 on giving, collect an offering each week for a missionary or local charity. Explain to the students who the money is being collected for. You might want to send a note home with the children reminding parents to send some change in with the children each week.

Each week has a new "word of the day." Today, print out the "Trust" footprint (p. 14) and display it prominently in the classroom. The Trust footprint will be the first of twelve footprints, each with its own word. Each week add the new word of the day to the right side of the word from the previous week. At the end of the twelve weeks, there will be a row of twelve footprints walking the path of wisdom. Each week have a review time during which you review the words of the day and memory verses from past weeks.

Start class with ten minutes of free play. The word of the day is TRUST. Tailor the play stations to the theme of the day. Add a book or two on trust to the library.

CIRCLE TIME (15 minutes)

Give each child a spot to sit: a chair, a carpet square, tile, taped X, or other shape on the floor.

Supplies:

🗆 chair

□ whiteboard and dry-erase markers

You will need a chair for this demonstration. Use this object lesson to help the children understand the word "trust" by realizing that we trust a chair every time we sit in it.

Make sure you are standing up. Show an empty chair to the children and ask them to tell you what it is and what it is used for. Obviously, it is something we use when we want to sit. (Everyone may already be sitting on chairs, demonstrating that they trust their chairs will hold them.)

Look at the empty chair. Point out that everyone else is trusting their chairs, and you trust yours also. While you talk, walk around the chair, eyeing it carefully. Examine every part of the chair as you talk about how great the chair is-how reliable the manufacturer is; how fine the materials are; how sturdy it seems. Move to sit on the chair. Don't actually put all your weight on the chair, however. Talk about how much you trust it, but then just hover over the chair, making it quite obvious that you are not resting your entire weight on it.

Ask: Am I showing that I trust the chair? I can talk all I want about how I trust the chair, but if I refuse to let the chair support my weight, then I

may not really trust the chair at all.

Trusting the chair is about resting your weight on the chair. Trusting God with all your heart is about putting yourself totally in his care.

Say: Today we are going to start learning about the book of Proverbs. (Show the class where Proverbs is in your Bible.) King Solomon, who was the wisest king of all, was very interested in writing down proverbs.

Say: A proverb is a wise saying that teaches a lesson. Here is an example of a proverb:

The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe. (Proverbs 18:10)

In this proverb, Solomon is saying that God is a strong tower (make a motion indicating the outline of a huge tower in a nearby location with your hands) and the person who does what is right runs to that tower and is safe. (Run in a small circle with a worried expression and then smile at rest when you get inside the tower you had previously outlined.)

Say: Today we are going to learn about the most important lesson of **Proverbs-to trust in the Lord. Let me read today's special verse to you.** (Open up your Bible and read Proverbs 3:5–6.)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Another way to say this is:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (NLT)

Write the word "trust" on the whiteboard. Spell the word "trust" together.

Continue by saying:

Life is full of choices. Some are wise choices, and some are unwise choices. The trouble is that it is not always easy to tell which is the wisest choice. In today's proverb, Solomon gives us some good advice. Don't depend on yourself. Trust God, and he will help you make a wise choice.

This doesn't mean life is easy if you trust God; sometimes God allows us to experience hard things to help us grow. It also doesn't mean we won't sometimes walk the wrong way. But it does mean we can trust God to be with us and to guide us every step of the way.

Can you think of other things that you trust? You're trusting your chair right now. What about when you ride on a swing? Or when you jump into your mom's or dad's arms? These are times when you can't just trust a little bit-or even halfway. When you swing, you trust the swing completely. When you jump into your parents' arms, you trust them completely-that they will catch you and not let you fall. This is the same way we are to trust God. Not just a little bit, but completely, with our whole hearts. Proverbs does not tell us to trust in the Lord with all our words. It is easy to say, "I believe in God," or "I love Jesus," but not really mean it deep down inside. That is why we are told to trust the Lord with all our hearts. Your heart is the deep place inside you that holds what you want, love, and believe. If we trust God with everything we want and love and believe, then we are trusting God with all of our hearts. We'll learn more about the heart in next week's lesson.

OPTIONAL PUPPET SKIT (15 minutes)

Skit 1: "Wise Guy Learns to Trust in the Lord" (see Puppet Skits)

SNACK (10 minutes)

Trust

Play quiet music while the children eat. Use this time to prepare as necessary for the Learning Activities.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Memory Verse (10 minutes) **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart." Proverbs 3:5a**

To prepare for memorizing the day's verse, photocopy the memory verse (p. 15) onto cardstock and cut the words apart. Make a set for each child in the class. Put each set of words into a bag for easy distribution to the children. In class, children can put the words into the correct sequence. Make sure the verse is also posted somewhere so that the kids can reference it.

Another memorization technique involves creating hand motions for the verse. For example, say, **We're learning Proverbs 3:5a today. Let's say it together: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart."**

Hold up one hand and say: Let's pretend this is God's hand,

Hold up your other hand and say: and this is your hand.

Put your two hands together like a handshake and say: I trust God when I put my hand in his hand.

Now say the Bible verse:

"Trust (two hands together like a handshake) **in the Lord** (point up) **with all** (arms out wide) **your heart** (cross arms over heart)." Proverbs 3:5a

2. Song (10 minutes) "Trust in the Lord"

If this song is unfamiliar, take several weeks to learn it well. Week 1, learn the Chorus. Week 2, learn Verse 1. Week 3, learn Verse 2. Week 4, review the whole song.

Play the song for the children. Go over the lyrics by having them repeat after you, and see if they can memorize the chorus. Play the song several times with you singing the verses, and the class trying to sing the chorus. Teach them the following motions for the chorus:

► Trust in the Lord-Praying hands

► Heart-Make a heart shape with their two hands by curling their index fingers against each other to form the top of the heart and their thumbs touching to form the bottom point.

- ▶ Understanding-Point a finger to their heads
- ► Acknowledge Him-Point up to the sky
- ▶ Make straight all your paths-Point straight ahead

VERSE 1

My father said, "Don't forget my teaching But hold on tight to my commands For long life and peace they will add to you Don't let love and kindness leave you Write them down upon your heart And God and people will smile on you"

CHORUS 1

Trust in the Lord with all your heart (Praying hands) And do not lean on your own understanding (Point a finger to their head) In all your ways acknowledge him (Point up to the sky) And he'll make straight all your paths (Pointing straight ahead) Trust in the Lord (Praying hands)

VERSE 2

My father said, "Don't be wise in your eyes But fear the Lord and turn from sin And God will heal you and give you strength" Look to Jesus to be your treasure He's worth more than jewels and gold For he's more precious than anything

BRIDGE

Jesus, you're my confidence, Jesus, you're my hope You will keep my feet from stumbling Jesus, you're my confidence, Jesus, you're my hope You will keep my feet from stumbling

CHORUS 2

I'll trust in the Lord with all my heart And will not lean on my own understanding In all my ways I'll acknowledge him And he'll make straight all my paths Trust in the Lord

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3. T Is for Trust (10 minutes)

Supplies:

□ capital letter cutouts (T, R, U, and S)–enough letters so that each child can spell the word TRUST (p. 16)

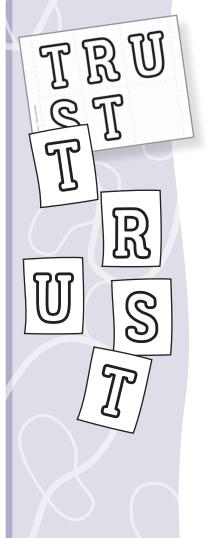
□ whiteboard and dry-erase markers

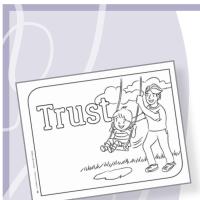
Children will find the hidden letters to learn about trusting the Lord with all their hearts.

Cut out one set of letters for each child and hide them around the room. Note: Cut out twice as many T's as the other letters, since you will be spelling out the word TRUST.

Review today's memory verse: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart" (Proverbs 3:5a). Explain to the children that God deserves all our trust. Write the word TRUST in big letters on the whiteboard. Spell the word out loud for the children and ask them to spell it with you.

Tell them to look for the hidden letters that spell TRUST. Give them specific directions about how many letters to search for–2 T's, 1 S, 1 R, and 1 U. Have each child return to the table or sit down on the floor and spell out the word TRUST with their letters.





ART ACTIVITY (20 minutes)

Trust Collage

Supplies

□ one copy of the TRUST coloring page for each student (p. 17), and art materials, e.g., crayons/markers, scraps of colorful paper, stickers, glue sticks.

Ask the children to read the word and then see if anyone can tell you how the picture shows the idea of TRUST. Then have children color and decorate the page.

Pray together, asking God to teach you how to trust him with your whole heart.

WRAP-UP

While waiting for the children to be picked up, reassemble in the Circle Time area and review the day's lesson using the following questions:

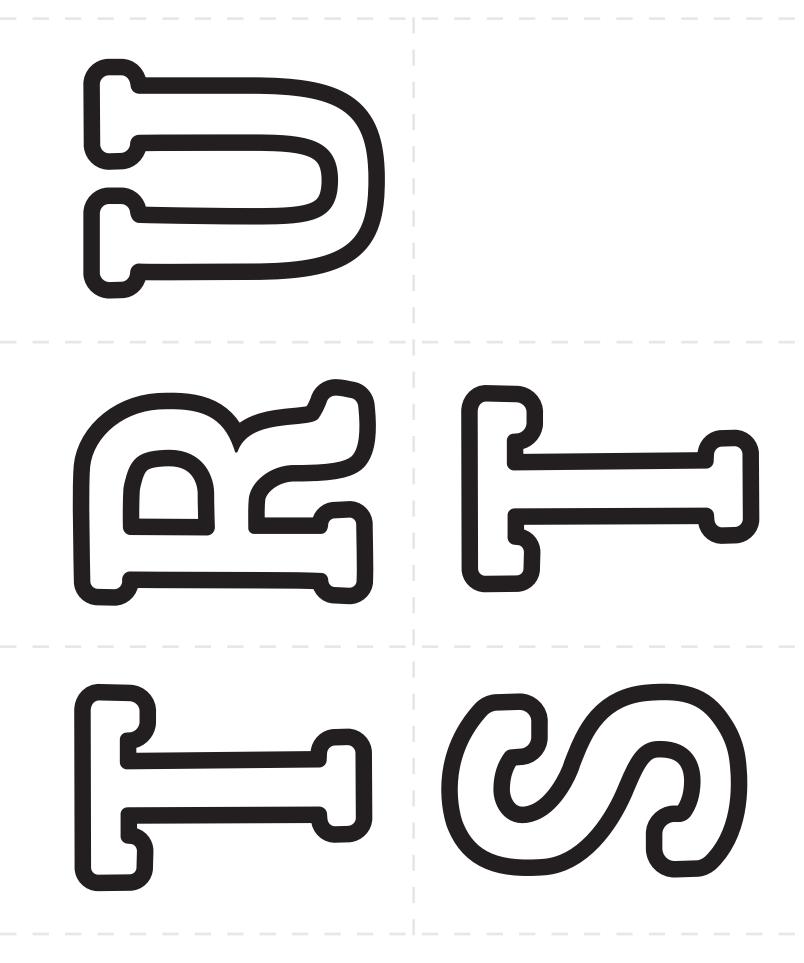
Does anyone remember what a proverb is? (A wise saying that teaches us an important lesson.)

- ▶ What is the word of the day? (Trust. Spell it together.)
- What was our song about today? (Trusting the Lord with all of your heart.)
- ▶ What Bible verse did we learn? (Review it with the motions. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart" [Proverbs 3:5a].)

Several children can play the "Walking with the Wise" board game. Note: See the game board for details/rules.



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With Wise

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Walking with Wise

Elementary

Introduction

Walking with the Wise: Proverbs for the Classroom is a twelve-week curriculum for four- to thirteen-year-old children that connects the book of Proverbs to God's larger story of salvation. Instead of teaching moralism as is so often the case when Proverbs is communicated to children, each lesson connects the moral truths of Proverbs to Jesus from whom true wisdom comes.

The Walking with the Wise Curriculum provides twelve lessons for three different age groups: Pre-K & K, Elementary, and Middle School.

Since children's ministry programs differ in length, you will need to decide how many of the offered components to include in your program.

Lesson Components

The elementary years represent a huge transition for children. By the time they finish first grade, most children are able to read from their very own Bible. Yet most begin the year not able to find a Bible passage because they cannot read the names of the books. Your instruction can vary widely, depending on whether or not you are teaching a first grade, fourth grade, or a class with mixed ages.

If you are teaching first grade alone, you may want to start the year using part or all of the Pre-K & K lessons. Remember, you can mix and match the curriculum to fit the needs and learning levels of your classroom. Read through a lesson in both the Pre-K & K and Elementary levels to get a feel for the differences and help you to know which one to choose for your first graders.

The components of the elementary lessons are geared to younger elementary

children. While some of the components, like the lesson teaching time, are the same for both the elementary and middle school lessons, the object lessons, activities, and crafts are all designed with elementary grades in mind. Read through a lesson in both the elementary and middle school levels and you will come away with a better understanding of how the two different levels address the same material.

Opening – Take time at the beginning of class to warmly welcome the students to your classroom. Open with a sincere prayer, asking God to pour out his Holy Spirit upon the children to help them hear the Word of God and that God would open their ears to the gospel message.

Scripture Reading – Have children bring their Bibles to class and help them look up the Scripture passage you are going to read. By the end of the twelve weeks they will become familiar with where Proverbs is located in their Bible. Consider keeping a stack of Bibles on hand for children to use in class.

The Lesson – The lesson is written out, but be sure to set aside adequate time to prepare and practice it. That way you won't be so tied to the notes. Also, some of the lessons have built-in object lessons that will require assembling some materials. Always feel free to tailor the material to your particular audience. The material provided is a suggestion, not a mandate.

Puppet Skit – Every week, we provide an optional puppet skit for you to use with your children. While the skit is optional, don't just skip over this part of the lesson because you don't think you can "do" puppets. You don't have to be a professional puppeteer or have expensive puppets with a fancy stage; even simple sock puppets will capture the kids' attention. Each week's skit is short and scripted so that you can simply read through as you go. Children don't mind seeing the script if you don't have a puppet theater.

It is a whole lot easier to do the skits with a helper-one person plays the role of the teacher, while the other plays the role of the puppet and manipulates the puppet. Teens love to get involved with puppets. Draw a few teen helpers in to be your "puppet team." With a little practice during the week, you'll have a top notch puppet performance for your classroom.

After each puppet skit, there are a few questions for drawing out the children. The goal is to help them to think through what they just saw to answer the questions. If they get stuck, it is fine to actually give them the answer. Feel free to add questions that you think would help draw out your children.

Application Exercises – Each week there are various object lessons and activities sprinkled throughout the lesson. These will require some measure of preparation, so you may want to enlist the service of a few adult helpers. Think "team" teaching and use those folks assigned to your classroom to help you with the children to teach an object lesson, activity, or other component of the lesson.

While we've located object lessons and activities in the lesson, you can move them around or eliminate them altogether. You do not need to do everything in the lesson. The Walking with the Wise elementary lessons have been designed to fill a wide variety of church formats. We wanted there to be enough material for churches who have elementary students for an hour and a half or longer. So, if your class is an hour or less, you won't have time to use everything; in that case, you will need to decide which components to skip. Simply pick and choose what is best for your class.

Bible Memory – One of the most important things we can do for children is help them hide God's Word in their hearts. You will be surprised at how easily children can learn a verse through some creative repetition.

Song – Elementary children love to sing. Each week we will suggest a song from the *Walking with the Wise* album (http:www.sovereigngracemusic.org/Albums/Walking_ with_the_Wise). If you would like more consistency and repetition, repeat songs from previous weeks. Elementary students do well singing several songs, particularly if accompanied by a guitar or piano. Children's worship is a great place to deploy a few teen volunteers to help you lead or teach hand motions.

Art Activity – Every week we've provided a different art/craft activity. While the children work, talk with them about how the project connects to the lesson.

If you don't have time for a formal lesson Wrap-Up, this might be a good time to review what you learned in class today.

Small Group Wrap-Up and Prayer – When children reach elementary age they can begin to apply the material they are learning through discussion. Asking them questions about the lesson in a small group gives more children an opportunity to answer a question or share a thought. The larger the class, the more important splitting up into smaller groups becomes. Groups of five to eight children work best, provided there is an adequate number of leaders and helpers.

We have provided a few general questions to get you started, but feel free to add more specific questions based on your knowledge of the group.

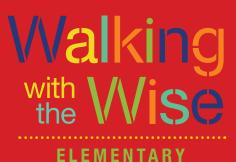
Stay in small groups to share prayer requests. Encourage the students to think of specific things related to the day's topic. Spend some time praying for these things.

"Walking with the Wise" Board Game (2–5 players) – The "Walking with the Wise" board game can provide some fun for several children at the end of class. The game follows the themes of Proverbs and is a simple game for young kids to play.

This downloadable game can be printed out onto 11-in. x 17-in. cardstock or paper. The game board can also be printed out in a 18-in. x 24-in. format from a professional printer. Playing the game also requires one die and a game piece/pawn for each player (not included). See the game board for complete rules.

Elementary Contents

Lesson 1
Trust in the Lord
Lesson 2
Watch Your Heart
Lesson 3
Two Calls, One Choice
Lesson 4
Two Ways to Go
Lesson 5.
God's Word Is Our Greatest Treasure
Lesson 6
Listen to Your Parents
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We All Make Mistakes: Welcoming Correction
Lesson 8
Working Hard
Lesson 9
Learning to Give
Lesson 10
Becoming a True Friend
Lesson 11
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Lesson 12
Learning to Forgive 138



LESSON 1

Trust in the Lord

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-8

Lesson 1 Snapshot

Lesson Aim: Children will learn about what it means to trust in the Lord with their whole heart.

Opening (10 minutes)

Scripture Reading (5 minutes)

The Lesson (15 minutes)

Puppet Skit (optional) (15 minutes) Optional: See Week 1 script for props

Application Exercises

1. What Does Trust Mean? (10 minutes)

Pictures of a bridge, airplane, parachute, and cross

2. Treasure Hunt (10 minutes) Verses printed out on paper or cards (see activity description for references)

3. Sin and Temptation Tag (10 minutes)

Bible Memory (10 minutes)

Song (10 minutes) "Trust in the Lord"

Art Activity (20 minutes)

Copies of the Elementary Lesson 1 Proverbs 3:5–6 Bookmark (one for each student); crayons/markers; clear heavy-duty packing tape; scissors

Small Group Wrap-Up and Closing Prayer (5–10 minutes)

Total minutes (approximate) 105-120

OPENING (10 minutes)

Introduce what it means to trust with the following exercise. Have a student stand in front of the class facing one of the side walls. Ask her to cross her arms over her chest and explain that she is going to fall backward, and you are going to catch her before she hits the floor. (Make sure to not pick a student who is too large for you to catch and support his weight, or instead bring in a strong assistant to help you with this object lesson.)

Interview the volunteer before having her fall backward, using the following questions:

- ► Are you afraid? Why or why not?
- ► Are you sure that you can trust me not to drop you?

► Have you ever done anything like this where someone dropped you? (Add, "You've nothing to worry about, I've only dropped a few students through the years. Just kidding.")

When ready, ask the student to close his eyes and fall back. Use this object lesson to teach what "completely trusting" means. Tell the class that today you are going to be talking about trusting the Lord with all of your heart or "completely trusting" in God.

SCRIPTURE READING (5 minutes)

Read aloud Proverbs 3:5-8:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

THE LESSON (15 minutes)

In preparing to teach, become familiar with the following material. Don't just read it word for word. Learn it well enough to communicate the points to your class clearly and naturally.

1. The book of Proverbs

The book of Proverbs was written by King Solomon, who was the son of King David, and also by other wise people. The story of Solomon and the gift of wisdom God gave him is told in 2 Chronicles 1:7–12:

That night God appeared to Solomon and said, "What do you want?

Ask, and I will give it to you!" Solomon replied to God, "You showed great and faithful love to David, my father, and now you have made me king in his place. O LORD God, please continue to keep your promise to David my father, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth! Give me the wisdom and knowledge to lead them properly, for who could possibly govern this great people of yours?"

God said to Solomon, "Because your greatest desire is to help your people, and you did not ask for wealth, riches, fame, or even the death of your enemies or a long life, but rather you asked for wisdom and knowledge to properly govern my people–I will certainly give you the wisdom and knowledge you requested. But I will also give you wealth, riches, and fame such as no other king has had before you or will ever have in the future!" (NLT)

A proverb is a short saying designed to make the reader think about it and gain wisdom. Some proverbs are easy to understand, such as, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). Other proverbs are harder to understand, such as "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10). Obviously God is not really a strong tower, so you have to figure out what that means.

2. The theme of Proverbs

The theme of Proverbs is summed up in Proverbs 3:5–6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Proverbs shows us how important it is to trust God rather than yourself. Proverbs does not just teach us how to be well behaved. It is designed to help us think about what we really love and what we really want. Proverbs shows us that God rules over all things; he alone can help us to live lives that please him. God is able to make our paths straight because he is Lord over all. That is why we can trust him even when we want to go our own way.

3. God directed those who wrote Proverbs

The Holy Spirit helped Solomon and others write the book of Proverbs. Even though they did the writing, the Holy Spirit was guiding them to write truth. Proverbs is very different from other parts of the Bible–the Ten Commandments, for example. The Ten Commandments give laws that govern behavior every minute of the day. We must love God all the time, we must never steal or lie, and we are required to obey our parents in everything. The proverbs are not like that. They give guidelines to help us make wise choices, but they are not laws. So when we read in Proverbs 6: "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man" (Proverbs 6:10–11), it is not saying that if we take a nap we will be poor. Instead, it is trying to help us understand

that we can't earn money while we are sleeping and if we sleep too much then we won't have money to buy what we need to live. It is a warning to not be lazy.

4. Trust in the God of Proverbs

While the book of Proverbs is full of wise advice, the fact is, we are all sinners. Solomon himself was not able to change his sinful heart. Just like everyone else, Solomon needed a Savior. This is why following the good advice in Proverbs will not save us. It's not being good that saves us; it's trusting in Jesus.

A lawyer once asked Jesus how he could have eternal life. Jesus asked him what the Bible says is the way. The man answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27). Jesus told the man that his answer was correct–correct, but impossible to do. How can we love the Lord more than anything else? Our sinful hearts make us think about ourselves first of all. This is why Jesus had to die for us. This is why our only hope is to trust in him.

OPTIONAL PUPPET SKIT (15 minutes)

Skit 1: "Wise Guy Learns to Trust in the Lord" (see Puppet Skits)

APPLICATION EXERCISES

Choose one or more of these exercises to reinforce today's lesson:

1. What Does Trust Mean? (10 minutes)

Supplies:

D pictures of a bridge, airplane, parachute, and cross (pp. 14–17)

Ask the children to tell you what it means to place your trust in something. (When you trust something, you depend on it to do what it is supposed to do. Sometimes that means trusting it with your life.)

Show the children the picture of a bridge. Ask them what it is and what it means to place your trust in the bridge. (They should say that every time you travel over the bridge you trust that it will support you.)

Show the children the airplane and the parachute and ask the same questions. Point out that in each of these cases you could die if the object in which you are trusting fails. People can say they are trusting in an airplane, but when they fly in it they demonstrate that they really are trusting in that airplane.

Now tell the children you have a tough one for them. Show them the cross

and ask, "What does it mean to place your trust in God?" (Trusting God means that we place our life in his hands. That means we are willing to do what he wants instead of what we want.)

2. Treasure Hunt (10 minutes)

Supplies:

□ print out and cut apart verses on p. 19

Before class, hide the verses around the room. During class, choose a few students to search for the verses. Once the verses are found, talk about how they relate to the theme of trusting God with all of our hearts.

3. Sin and Temptation Tag (10 minutes)

Note: This game is best played outside. If you can't go outside, play a miniversion of the game in your classroom. In the mini version, pick one child to be "sin/temptation," and three others to be sin's targets. The other children can stand along the edge of the room and watch.

Take the class outside. Choose two volunteers to play the parts of "sin" and "temptation." Choose an object on one side of the play area to be the "prison"; choose another object on the opposite side of the area to be the "tower."

The object of the game is for sin and temptation to tag the other children, who then must go to prison. At any point the children can touch the strong tower. As long as they are touching the strong tower, they are safe and cannot be captured.

The children can free their captured friends from prison by tagging them.

Play this game for a few minutes, and then stop and talk about how the game is like Proverbs 18:10: "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe."

BIBLE MEMORY (10 minutes)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)



Every lesson has a suggested song. Don't worry about trying to teach a new song every week. Pick as many as you wish to teach your class during this

"Trust in the Lord"

walking-with-the-wise/.

VERSE 1

My father said, "Don't forget my teaching But hold on tight to my commands For long life and peace they will add to you Don't let love and kindness leave you Write them down upon your heart And God and people will smile on you"

12-week curriculum. "Trust in the Lord" is a good theme song for the whole curriculum. Find the music in http://sovereigngracemusic.org/music/albums/

CHORUS 1

Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding In all your ways acknowledge him And he'll make straight all your paths Trust in the Lord

VERSE 2

My father said, "Don't be wise in your eyes But fear the Lord and turn from sin And God will heal you and give you strength" Look to Jesus to be your treasure He's worth more than jewels and gold For he's more precious than anything

BRIDGE

Jesus, you're my confidence, Jesus, you're my hope You will keep my feet from stumbling Jesus, you're my confidence, Jesus, you're my hope You will keep my feet from stumbling

CHORUS 2

I'll trust in the Lord with all my heart And will not lean on my own understanding In all my ways I'll acknowledge him And he'll make straight all my paths Trust in the Lord

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ART ACTIVITY (20 minutes)

Proverbs 3:5–6 Bookmark

Supplies:

- □ copies of Proverbs 3:5–6 bookmark on p. 19 (one for each student)
- □ crayons/markers
- □ clear heavy-duty packing tape
- □ scissors

Pass out the Proverbs 3:5–6 bookmarks and coloring supplies. Give the children time to color their bookmarks, then cut a piece of packing tape to laminate each side of the bookmark. Trim any excess tape.

If you don't have time for a formal lesson Wrap-Up, this might be a good time to review what you learned in class today.

SMALL GROUP WRAP-UP AND PRAYER (10 minutes)

If your class has more than ten students, break up into small groups according to the number of leaders and helpers available. A small group gives more children an opportunity to answer a question or share a thought. Here are a few questions to use for small group discussion or final review:

▶ What part of the lesson today did you most enjoy?

► If your mom or dad asked you what you learned today, what would you tell them?

► How does the gospel story of Jesus fit into today's lesson?

Feel free to add more specific questions based on your knowledge of the group.

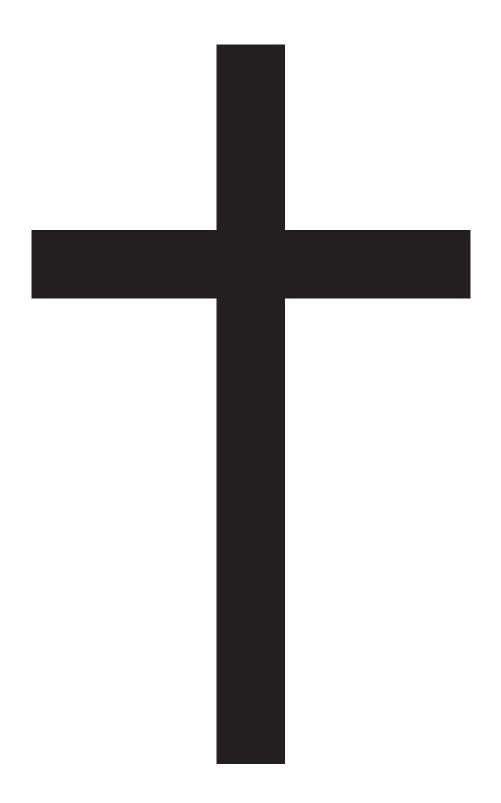
Stay in small groups to share prayer requests. Encourage the students to think of specific things related to the day's topic. Spend some time praying for these things.

If time remains at the end of class, you may want to have available for the enjoyment of your students the "Walking with the Wise" game-the downloadable board game included with this curriculum. The game can be played with or without the included cards. See the game board for details/ rules.







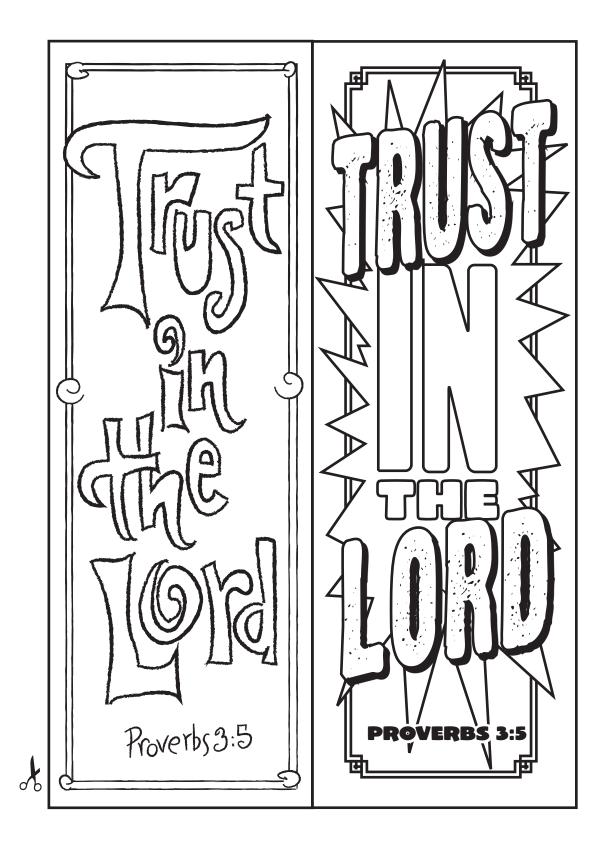


"The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him." (Psalm 28:7)

"The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe." (Proverbs 29:25)

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Proverbs 1:7) "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you." (Isaiah 26:3)

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe." (Proverbs 18:10)







With Wise

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Waking with Wise Middle School

Introduction

Walking with the Wise: Proverbs for the Classroom is a twelve-week curriculum for four- to thirteen-year-old children that connects the book of Proverbs to God's larger story of salvation. Instead of teaching moralism as is so often the case when Proverbs is communicated to children, each lesson connects the moral truths of Proverbs to Jesus from whom true wisdom comes.

The Walking with the Wise Curriculum provides twelve lessons for three different age groups: Pre-K & K, Elementary, and Middle School.

Since children's ministry programs differ in length, you will need to decide how many of the offered components to include in your program.

Lesson Components

Middle school students (5th-8th graders) do well with small group discussion, projects, skits, and debate.

In preparing, take time to read through the lesson, look up all the Scriptures, gather your supplies, and practice running through the object lessons and other teaching components. While a thorough preparation takes time, you will enter your time with the students less tied to reading every word of the lesson.

You'll notice that many of the core components of the lesson are the same as those for the elementary level. The primary differences lie in the way the core material is presented and how the students interact with that material.

This curriculum consists of substantial small group discussion. Dividing into small groups applies to classes of more than 8–10 students. Middle school students will

comprehend what you are teaching and be able to talk it through and apply it to their lives. Breaking into small groups ensures that everyone has the chance to contribute.

Opening – Take time at the beginning of class to warmly welcome the students to your classroom. Open with a sincere prayer, asking God to pour out his Holy Spirit upon the students to help them hear the Word of God and that God would open their ears to the gospel message.

Scripture reading – Have students bring their Bibles to class and help them look up the Scripture passage you are going to read. By the end of the twelve weeks they will become familiar with where Proverbs is located in their Bible. Consider keeping a stack of Bibles on hand for students to use in class.

The Lesson – The lesson is written out, but be sure to set aside adequate time to prepare and practice it. That way you won't be so tied to the notes. Also, some of the lessons have built-in object lessons that will require assembling some materials. Always feel free to tailor the material to your particular audience. The material provided is a suggestion, not a mandate.

Wise-Up Players Drama Scripts (optional) – In each three-act drama, two temptations tempt a person to walk the wrong path. The acts can be presented back-to-back; however, the dramas work better if they are divided into acts so that questions can be discussed in between acts. While having the lines memorized is always a plus, dramas can be presented with scripts in hand. The dramas can even be presented by the middle-school students themselves during class time.

These dramas provide a good opportunity to involve teens or college students in your church's children's ministry. Invite a group of teens to take up the challenge of performing the skits for the middle schoolers. You can perform all of the skits with minimal props, right in the classroom.

Apart from the last three skits, which build on each another, the skits stand alone– any or all of them can be performed.

Application Exercises – Each week there are various object lessons and activities sprinkled throughout the lesson. These will require some measure of preparation, so you may want to enlist the service of a few adult helpers. Think "team" teaching and use those folks assigned to your classroom to help you with the students to teach an object lesson, activity, or other component of the lesson.

The object lessons in the middle school level are different from those in the younger grades. If your class is on the younger side, feel free to pull an easier object lesson up from the elementary material.

While we've located object lessons and activities in the lesson, you can move them around or eliminate them altogether. You do not need to do everything in the lesson.

Bible Memory – One of the most important things we can do for students is help them hide God's Word in their hearts.

Song Lyrics Review – Each week we suggest a song from the *Walking with the Wise* album (http:www.sovereigngracemusic.org/Albums/Walking_with_the_Wise). Occasionally, a lyrics review is included to give students the opportunity to critically evaluate the words to the songs from the *Walking with the Wise* album. The doctrinal truths found in song lyrics can often go unnoticed.

Small Group Wrap-Up and Prayer –Small discussion groups are an effective means of helping middle-school-aged students express their own thoughts and ideas. The larger the class, the more important splitting up into smaller groups becomes. Groups of five to eight students work best.

We have provided a few general questions to get you started, but feel free to add more specific questions based on your knowledge of the group.

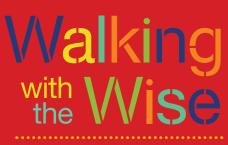
Stay in small groups to share prayer requests. Encourage the students to think of specific things related to the day's topic. Spend some time praying for these things.

If time remains at the end of class and your students are younger middle schoolers, you may want to have available the "Walking with the Wise" game–the downloadable board game for 2–5 players included with this curriculum.

The game can be printed out onto 11-in. x 17-in. cardstock or paper. The game board can also be reproduced in a 18-in. x 24-in. format from a professional printer. Playing the game also requires included cards to be printed out; and one die and a game piece/pawn for each player (not included). See the game board for complete rules.

Middle School Contents

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

Trust in the Lord

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-8

Lesson 1 Snapshot

Lesson Aim: To teach the students that their only hope is to trust in Jesus.

Opening (10 minutes)

Scripture Reading (5 minutes)

The Lesson (15 minutes)

Wise-Up Players Drama (optional)

(20 minutes) Optional: See Week 1 Wise-Up Players drama script

Application Exercises

1. Proverbs Treasure Hunt

(10 minutes) Prize; Bibles for the class; whiteboard and dry-erase markers

2. Small Group Discussion (10 minutes)

3. What Do We Trust? (10 minutes) TV remote; battery; car key; dollar bill; wedding ring

Bible Memory (10 minutes)

Song (10 minutes) "Trust in the Lord"

Small Group Wrap-Up and Prayer (10 minutes)

LESSON 1

Total minutes (approximate) 110

OPENING (10 minutes)

Introduce what it means to trust with the following exercise. Have a volunteer stand in front of the class facing one of the side walls. Position yourself behind him. Ask the student to cross his arms over his chest, make his body stiff, and fall backward. Tell him that you will catch him. (Stand fairly close, so the volunteer doesn't have to fall too far before being caught. Also, make sure not to pick a student who is too large for you to catch. Bring in a strong assistant to do the catching in this exercise if need be.)

Before the exercise, interview the volunteer using the following questions:

- ► Are you afraid? Why or why not?
- ► Are you sure that you can trust me not to drop you?
- Have you ever done anything like this where someone dropped you? (Add, "You've nothing to worry about, I've only dropped a few students through the years. Just kidding.")

Use this object lesson to teach what "completely trusting" means. Tell the class that today you are going to be talking about trusting the Lord with all your heart or "completely trusting" in God.

SCRIPTURE READING (5 minutes)

Read aloud Proverbs 3:5-8:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

THE LESSON (15 minutes)

In preparing to teach, become familiar with the following material. Don't just read it word for word. Learn it well enough to communicate the points to your class clearly and naturally.

1. The book of Proverbs

The book of Proverbs was written by King Solomon, who was the son of King David, and also by other wise people. The story of Solomon and the gift of wisdom God gave him is told in 2 Chronicles 1:7–12:

That night God appeared to Solomon and said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!" Solomon replied to God, "You showed great and faithful love to David, my father, and now you have made me king in his place. O LORD God, please continue to keep your promise to David my father, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth! Give me the wisdom and knowledge to lead them properly, for who could possibly govern this great people of yours?"

God said to Solomon, "Because your greatest desire is to help your people, and you did not ask for wealth, riches, fame, or even the death of your enemies or a long life, but rather you asked for wisdom and knowledge to properly govern my people–I will certainly give you the wisdom and knowledge you requested. But I will also give you wealth, riches, and fame such as no other king has had before you or will ever have in the future!" (NLT)

A proverb is a short saying designed to make the reader think about it and gain wisdom. Some proverbs are easy to understand, such as, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). Other proverbs are harder to understand, such as "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10). Obviously God is not really a strong tower, so you have to figure out what that means.

2. The theme of Proverbs

The theme of Proverbs is summed up in Proverbs 3:5–6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Proverbs shows us how important it is to trust God rather than yourself. Proverbs does not just teach us how to be well behaved. It is designed to help us think about what we really love and what we really want. Proverbs shows us that God rules over all things; he alone can help us to live lives that please him. God is able to make our paths straight because he is Lord over all. That is why we can trust him even when we want to go our own way.

3. God directed those who wrote Proverbs

The Holy Spirit helped Solomon and others write the book of Proverbs. Even though they did the writing, the Holy Spirit was guiding them to write truth. Proverbs is very different from other parts of the Bible–the Ten Commandments, for example. The Ten Commandments give laws that govern behavior every minute of the day. We must love God all the time, we must never steal or lie, and we are required to obey our parents in everything. The proverbs are not like that. They give guidelines to help us make wise choices but they are not laws. So when we read in Proverbs 6: "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man" (Proverbs 6:10–11), it is not saying that if we take a nap we will be poor. Instead, it is trying to help us understand that we can't earn money while we are sleeping and if we sleep too much then we won't have money to buy what we need to live. It is a warning to not be lazy.

4. Trust in the God of Proverbs

While the book of Proverbs is full of wise advice, the fact is, we are all sinners. Solomon, himself, was not able to change his sinful heart. Just like everyone else, Solomon needed a Savior. This is why following the good advice in Proverbs will not save us. It's not being good that saves us; it's trusting in Jesus.

A lawyer once asked Jesus how he could have eternal life. Jesus asked him what the Bible says is the way. The man answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27). Jesus told the man that his answer was correct–correct, but impossible to do. How can we love the Lord more than anything else? Our sinful hearts make us think about ourselves first of all. This is why Jesus had to die for us. This is why our only hope is to trust in him.

OPTIONAL WISE-UP PLAYERS DRAMA (20 minutes)

Week 1: "Whenever I Want to Do Good" (see Wise-Up Players drama scripts)

Choose one or more of these exercises to reinforce today's lesson.

1. Proverbs Treasure Hunt (10 minutes)

Supplies:

- □ Bibles for the class
- □ prize for the winner
- □ whiteboard and dry-erase markers

Write the theme verse on the whiteboard and tell the students to find another verse in Proverbs that teaches something similar to today's theme verse. Tell them they can look anywhere in the book of Proverbs. As soon as they think they have a verse, they should raise their hand. The first person to find a verse is the winner.

Give the class the signal to go, and be ready to identify the first three hands up. (The first person with their hand up may not have an acceptable Scripture with the same theme. In that case, you will need to go to the second or third hand up for the winner.) After determining the winner, talk about the verses the students looked up. Discuss how they connect to the idea of trusting in the Lord with all of your heart.

2. Small Group Discussion (10 minutes)

Break into groups of four to five students. Assign each group a Scripture passage:

- ▶ Proverbs 1:1-7
- ▶ Proverbs 14:26-27
- ▶ Proverbs 15:33
- ▶ Proverbs 18:10
- ▶ Proverbs 21:19, 21

Have the groups do several things:

- ▶ Figure out how their passage connects with the idea of trusting God;
- ▶ Think of an everyday situation where this passage could be applied; and
- Pick a spokesperson to report back to the class. (Go around the room and help the groups as needed.)

Give an opportunity for each group's spokesperson to read their Scripture passage and report their findings.

3. What Do We Trust? (10 minutes)

Supplies:

- □ TV remote
- □ battery
- □ car key
- 🛛 dollar bill
- □ wedding ring

Tell the class that you are going to show them an object and ask them to tell you how we place our trust in it. See the list below for the answers you are looking to draw out of the students.

TV remote. We buy TV sets that need a remote to turn them on and change channels. We trust that when we push the button, the TV is going to respond. If we didn't trust remotes, we would need to have all the same buttons on the TV so that we could manually turn it on. (You might remember the days before TV remotes. If so, tell the students about turning the knob of a TV to change the channel.)

Battery. In things that run on batteries, e.g., flashlights and cell phones, we trust that the batteries will operate the item. But, batteries are not always trustworthy because they run out. God is always trustworthy because he never runs out of power.



Car key. We trust that a car key will start our car. But what happens if we pick up the wrong car key? Then the car will not start.

Dollar bill. The value of a dollar bill is determined by the government. We trust that it is worth one dollar–much more than the paper it is printed on. (A gold coin on the other hand has value because it is made not from paper, but from something of value.) We use paper money by trust alone.

Wedding ring. A wedding ring represents a promise that we will honor our marriage for the rest of our lives. When you accept a ring in marriage, you are agreeing to be faithful to that person for the rest of your life.

BIBLE MEMORY (10 minutes)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. (Proverbs 3:5-8)

SONG (10 minutes)

Every lesson has a suggested song. Don't worry about trying to teach a new song every week. Pick as many as you wish to teach your class during this 12-week curriculum. "Trust in the Lord" is a good theme song for the whole curriculum. Find the music in *Walking with the Wise*, http://sovereigngracemusic. org/music/albums/walking-with-the-wise/.

"Trust in the Lord"

VERSE 1

My father said, "Don't forget my teaching But hold on tight to my commands For long life and peace they will add to you Don't let love and kindness leave you Write them down upon your heart And God and people will smile on you"

CHORUS 1

Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding In all your ways acknowledge him And he'll make straight all your paths Trust in the Lord

VERSE 2

My father said, "Don't be wise in your eyes But fear the Lord and turn from sin And God will heal you and give you strength" Look to Jesus to be your treasure He's worth more than jewels and gold For he's more precious than anything

BRIDGE

Jesus, you're my confidence, Jesus, you're my hope You will keep my feet from stumbling Jesus, you're my confidence, Jesus, you're my hope You will keep my feet from stumbling

CHORUS 2

I'll trust in the Lord with all my heart And will not lean on my own understanding In all my ways I'll acknowledge him And he'll make straight all my paths Trust in the Lord

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SMALL GROUP WRAP-UP AND PRAYER (10 minutes)

If your class has more than ten students, break up into small groups according to the number of leaders and helpers available. Talk about the lesson–what they learned and what they enjoyed.

Stay in small groups to share prayer requests. Encourage the students to think of specific things related to the day's topic. Spend some time praying for these things.



Pre-K & K thru Elementary WISE GUY PUPPET SKITS

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WISE GUY PUPPET SKIT Wise Guy Learns to Trust in the Lord

WISE GUY (Talking to himself) I can do it. I can do it. I can do it.

TEACHER Hi, Wise Guy. What are you talking about?

WISE GUY Tomorrow is my first day going to school, and I'm getting myself ready. I can do it. I can do it. I can do it.

TEACHER Why do you keep saying, "I can do it"?

- **WISE GUY** Well, because I need to learn to trust myself—that I can do it. I figure that if I trust myself with all of my heart, and lean on my own understanding, I'll make it through my day. After all, every puppet has to go to school. I can do it. I can do it. I can do it.
- **TEACHER** (*To class*) I think we can help Wise Guy here. Do any of you remember what we learned in class today? (*Have a helper feed the answer, "Trust the Lord" to the class so they can answer if they don't remember.*) That's right. (*Turning to WISE GUY*) That's the answer, Wise Guy. The Bible tells us that if we trust in the Lord with all of our hearts, and do not lean on our own understanding, he will make our paths straight.
- **WISE GUY** What do straight paths have to do with school? I'm not going on a hike!

- **TEACHER** (Shaking a finger) Don't be a wise guy. When the Bible says that God will make our paths straight, that means he will help us on our ways whether we are going on a hike or our first day of school.
- **WISE GUY** Wow, you mean if I trust the Lord with all of my heart, instead of myself, God will make my paths straight?
- **TEACHER** That's what the Bible says.
- **WISE GUY** You know, that's exactly what I'm going to do. Trust the Lord, trust the Lord, trust the Lord. I'm feeling better already; after all, God's in control of everything! He can make all things work out for my good if I trust in him!
- **TEACHER** Now you are being a Wise Guy. Well done.
- **WISE GUY** Thanks, class! See you around. I'm going to tell all of my friends about trusting in the Lord. Trust the Lord. Trust the Lord. Trust the Lord.

Something to talk about:

- What was Wise Guy doing wrong? (He was trusting in himself, not in the Lord.)
- What did Wise Guy learn? (He learned how to trust the Lord with all his heart.)
- Trusting in God makes our paths straight. What does that mean? (When we trust God, he helps us wherever we walk.)



Middle School WISE-UP PLAYERS DRAMA SCRIPTS

Each week the two temptations, dressed in black-and-white striped prison outfits, arrive on the scene to tempt a person to walk on the wrong path.

The dramas all have three acts. The acts can be presented back-to-back; however, the dramas work better if they are divided into acts so that questions can be discussed in between acts. While having the lines memorized is always a plus, dramas can be presented with scripts in hand. Dramas can even be presented by middleschool students during class time.

These dramas provide a wonderful opportunity to involve teens or college students in your church's children's ministry. Invite a group of teens to take up the challenge of performing the skits for the children. You can perform all of the skits with minimal props, right in the classroom.

Apart from the last three skits, which build on each another, the skits stand alone. Therefore, any or all of them can be performed.

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WISE-UP PLAYERS DRAMA SCRIPTS Whenever I Want To Do Good

Characters

Tess—a high-school-age girl Ralph—a high-school-age boy Vito—a Temptation Vinny—a Temptation

Week One, Act One

(TESS enters the school library and before sitting, she slams a thick book down on the table.)

TESS (Opens the book and talks to herself angrily) How am I supposed to memorize all of this stuff? (*Turns pages randomly, while mumbling* facts from the book) This is crazy; why do I have to learn all of this stuff anyway?

(RALPH enters, carrying his own history book. He looks around and then approaches TESS.)

RALPH (Whispering) Hey Tess, what's going down?

TESS My history grade, that's what's going down.

RALPH History test, huh? I have the same test during first period tomorrow.

- **TESS** (Holding up the book) We've got to know this by the end of the day, and there's a game tonight. (She slams his book down hard in frustration on the table)
- **RALPH** (Whispering) What are you doing? Do you want to get us kicked out of the library? You're lucky Mrs. Ketchum is in the copy room where she can't hear you. You slam your book down like that, and she'll book you for sure.

TESS Book me?

RALPH Yeah, you'll get the double whammy-kicked out of the library by day, and stuck here by night until you finish an assigned research paper. (Glances up and then quickly opens his book and pretends to read while he whispers) Don't look now. Mrs. Ketchum is heading this way.

(TESS and RALPH both pretend to read. Then VINNY and VITO enter loudly singing their theme song to the melody "My Girl." They trade off some lines while singing others together.)

VINNY and VITO (Trading off lines as they sing together)

I'm temptation on a cloudy day. When there's truth around I'll help you find another way. Well, I'll help you know Strong by yourself you can grow Myself (myself, myself) Talkin' 'bout myself (myself).

VITO Hey Vinny, did you hear that?

VINNY Hear what, Vito?

VITO Don't you ever listen to what's going on around you?

VINNY I was just singing, Vito. (*Resumes singing*) I'm temptation on a cloudy day . . .

(VITO smacks VINNY and points to TESS.)

VITO Tess has a big test tomorrow, but she wants to go to the game. Sounds like a good setup for a little . . . (*Pauses*)

VITO and VINNY (In unison) Temptation!

(VITO and VINNY joke around a bit, then move in around TESS like vultures to a kill.)

- **VITO** (*T*o TESS) You really want to go to the game tonight. Ralph is taking the same test in the morning before you. He could give you the answers.
- **TESS** (*T*o RALPH) Do you think you could do me a favor? What if you let me know how hard the test is tomorrow after you take it. Before I do?
- **VITO** (*T*o TESS) Good opener.
- **RALPH** Are you asking me to cheat?
- **VITO** (*T*o VINNY) Get over there and work that guy. He's messing up the plan.
- **VINNY** (Moving over to RALPH) Oh great, what kind of friend are you? If you were a good friend you'd help her out.
- **VITO** (*T*o TESS) Yeah, you just need a little help.

TESS No, no, not cheat. Just let me know what to study so I can review what I need to in the few minutes before I have to take it. Just a little help. Please?

(The bell rings and TESS and RALPH get up to leave.)

- **RALPH** I guess that would be OK. (*Pauses*) Then again, I don't want to get into trouble. What if someone hears me talking to you? (*Pauses*) I don't know, Tess. Look, I've got to think about this. The bell rang, and we've got to get to class. (*Leaves*)
- **VITO** (*T*o VINNY) Saved by the bell. (*T*o TESS) If you can't convince Ralph to help you tomorrow, you're gonna have to study instead of go to the game.

(VITO and VINNY laugh.)

VINNY (To VITO) Good one, Coach!

VITO Let's get out of here. That Ketchum lady scares me.

(VITO and VINNY saunter off, singing their song.)

TESS (To herself as she leaves) It's not cheating? Is it?

Week One, Act One discussion questions

- Would it be cheating for Ralph to give Tess information about the test? (Yes, it would be cheating.)
- ▶ Who are the two guys that came in? (They represent temptation.)
- Can anyone tell me what temptation is? (Temptation is a thought or feeling that tries to get you to sin.)

What two choices does Tess have? (Tess could study and then trust the Lord for her test, or she could trust herself and do things her own way by cheating.)

Week One, Act Two

(Later that day, TESS enters from one direction followed by VITO, and RALPH enters from the other direction followed by VINNY.)

TESS (*Pleading*) Ralph, what did you decide? You've just got to help me. If I have to study tonight, I'll miss the game!

VITO That's the way, Tess. Give him the puppy dog eyes.

(TESS gives RALPH a sad look.)

- **VINNY** Look Ralph, now is not the time for splitting hairs. She only wants to know if the test is going to be hard. You're taking it first. You could help her out by giving her a few clues.
- **RALPH** (*Thinking*) Well, I was going to help you, but then I spoke to Josh.
- **VITO** (*T*o VINNY) Josh! When did that guy come into the picture?
- **RALPH** We ran into each other just before last period. He said that helping you after I took the test, but before you did, was crossing a line. I just can't do it.

(VINNY and VITO show frustration.)

VINNY (*T*o VITO) We're losing this one.

RALPH Look, Tess, Josh explained to me that we have a choice between two paths every day. Will we trust what we want to do, or will we trust what God wants us to do? He said we need to trust the Lord, Tess. (*Pauses*) Besides, I don't want to get into trouble.

VINNY (To VITO) Oh no, let's get out of here.

- VITO (Grabbing VINNY by the shirt and pulling him back) Not so fast. Watch this. (To RALPH) C'mon man, she's gonna think you're from Mars. Nobody believes that God stuff anymore. She's gonna think you come from another planet.
- **TESS** Ralph, I thought you were my friend.
- **RALPH** (To himself) Think, think, what can I do? (Pauses, thinking) I've got it!

(VINNY and VITO high five.)

TESS So, you'll help me?

RALPH Yes, I'll help you study. (*Pauses*) I'll come over to your house tonight and help you study. I'm so glad you thought of me helping you instead of cheating.

(RALPH leaves quickly. VINNY and VITO are shocked and start to argue about who is to blame for Ralph's decision. While they argue, TESS says her last line and slips away.)

TESS (To herself) When did I come up with that idea? It's not the same as being able to go to the game, but having Ralph come over to study is a whole lot better than spending the evening studying by myself. (Leaves)

VINNY Quick, she's getting away. After that girl!

(They leave quickly.)

Week One, Act Two discussion questions

- Ralph and Tess had two paths to choose from; what were they? (They could cheat, or they could study for the test.)
- Who helped Ralph make the right choice? (God used Josh to help Ralph make the right choice.)
- Can anyone think of a time when they were tempted to do the wrong thing? (Draw out the class.)

Week One, Act Three

(The next day, VINNY and VITO enter slowly, looking defeated.)

- **VITO** Look, we've got to coordinate our temptations more effectively to achieve the desired result.
- **VINNY** I just think we need to do a better job.
- **VITO** (*Smacks* VINNY) That's what I just said. Now look, you've got to be quicker on the draw.
- **VINNY** How was I supposed to know that Ralph guy was gonna take the right path and follow the way of truth? I thought you had her, Vito. You had some great lines. I was watching the whole time. When you said, "Give him the puppy dog eyes," I thought he was gonna cave.

- VITO (Feeling better) Yeah, that usually takes these guys down. How were we supposed to know Ralph was so strong? I mean his name is R-A-L-P-H-Ralph! Does that sound to you like the name of a guy that's trusting God? I would expect a guy named Christian or Joshua to be tough, but a Ralph?
- **VINNY** Who would have guessed that they would both ace the test?! They're probably bragging about it right now.
- **VITO** That's it: our next opportunity! Let's go find those two and make them proud of themselves. You know what they say: if you can't beat them, wait till they win and then . . .

VINNY and VITO (In unison) Get them boasting! (Leave together, singing their theme song)
I'm temptation on a cloudy day.
When there's truth around I'll help you find another way.
Well, I'll help you know
Strong by yourself you can grow
Myself (myself, myself)
Talkin' 'bout myself (myself).

Week One, Act Three discussion questions

- ► What happened in the skit? (Tess and Ralph didn't cheat. They obeyed God, studied hard, and did well on the test.)
- What were the two paths they could have gone down? (They could have disobeyed God by cheating on the test, or trusted God by studying and leaving the results to him.)
- What did Tess have to give up? (She had to give up cheating and give up going to the game. Tell the children that sometimes choosing the right path means deciding what's most important.)