truFire story™

Remember & Celebrate Lessons

HOW IT WORKS

Schedule

Explore
Small Group
10 minutes

Remember
Large Group
30 minutes

Celebrate
Small Group
15 minutes

Bless
Small Group
5 minutes

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Remember & Celebrate Lessons//

Children pause and look back at what they've discovered about God during the past several weeks in The Big God Story. They celebrate who God is and what He has done, participate in storytelling, and connect through fun and engaging worship.

The Vision for REMEMBER & CELEBRATE Lessons

Every 6th and 13th lesson

How often do we really take time to contemplate the things God has done and praise Him for them? How often do we make prayer requests but fail to follow up on how God answered them? So many of us live our lives full speed ahead with little time for looking back. But looking back is biblical—and Tru Fire tries to build that kind of rhythm into the lives of children with REMEMBER & CELEBRATE lessons every 6th and 13th lesson.

The goal of a REMEMBER & CELEBRATE lesson is to remember God's faithfulness as we look back at what He has showed us about Himself from The Big God Story. REMEMBER & CELEBRATE lessons invite children to remember all they've discovered about God and the ways they've experienced Him in the past weeks. Each of these lessons focuses on a celebration from the Israelites' calendar:

Passover: *Celebrating God as Deliverer*
Feast of Unleavened Bread: *Celebrating God as Redeemer*
Feast of First Fruits: *Celebrating God as Trustworthy*
Feast of Pentecost: *Celebrating God as Lord of the Harvest*
Feast of Trumpets: *Celebrating God's Faithfulness*
The Day of Atonement: *Honoring God's Righteousness*
Feast of Tabernacles: *Celebrating God's Abundant Blessings*
Festival of Jubilee: *Celebrating God's Gift of Freedom*

Each holiday's origin is explored and we also consider what the holiday still shows us about God today. This provides a biblical context for the importance of remembering and celebrating God's goodness to us as His people. Take this time to remember the awesomeness of our God and celebrate who He is!

Kids and leaders will have opportunities throughout the gathering to share stories about what God has done in—and through—their lives. Through the fun game ZONK! in each REMEMBER & CELEBRATE lesson, kids look back at what they've been learning about God in the past several weeks. In this spirit of reflecting and celebrating, children will participate in traditions by connecting with one another and with God through music, dance, singing, eating, and art as they worship together.

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SMALL GROUP SECTION

Explore //

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's biblical feast or festival.

The Vision for EXPLORE

Small Group Leaders

The celebration begins with a brief introduction to the feast or festival being highlighted that week, along with an activity to build excitement. Younger and Older activity options are given in the lesson. Set up both options and allow the kids to go where it works best for their interests. Supplies will vary by activity.

LARGE GROUP SECTION

Remember //

Through a sequence of traditions and play, children are given the opportunity to pause and remember who God is.

The Vision for REMEMBER

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

A REMEMBER & CELEBRATE weekend is a fun time of reviewing the previous weeks' Ponder Points and what the kids have learned about God. After everyone gathers as a large group, open with **Traditions and Remember Verse**, learning about the **Feast or Festival**, and then **Remember and Play.** At the Jewish feasts and festivals, the people would eat special foods, see special people, and engage in special dances and ceremonies. The feasts and festivals were both fun and meaningful. God's people reveled in how good it was to be together as they remembered what God had done in their lives.

During this time, we will seek to remember in a spirit of fun and celebration—making the experience exciting and interesting as well as meaningful, community building, and spiritually forming. Playing the ZONK! Game during Remember and Play is a lively and engaging way for the whole community to be involved in the fun. (Note: See the Appendix pages for detailed instructions on how to build a ZONK! wheel and how to play ZONK!)

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SMALL GROUP SECTION

Celebrate //

Through interactive games and activities, children will share how God is working in their lives.

The Vision for CELEBRATE

Host/Storyteller

My Experience with God

CELEBRATE begins with a purposeful time of review and reflection. From the Worship Response and Respond pieces, choose several that you might want to discuss and have them available. Talk and pray about this with your team, and choose the pieces that most impacted your group. Place the Worship Response and Respond pieces around the room in lesson order. Invite children to look back at how they've experienced God during the past several lessons.

Optional: Discuss the Worship Response and Respond pieces and encourage kids to share memories of those response experiences or activities. Questions are provided from each lesson to help with reviewing.

Storytelling

This is a time to build tradition into your community celebration through a time of sharing and storytelling. Storytelling allows members of the community to tell about what God has been doing in their hearts—at church and at home. Set up your storytelling time like an experience of telling stories around a campfire. Have kids sit in a circle and invite sharing through the use of an open mic, gathering stories ahead of time by asking parents through e-mail, or inviting someone up and chatting interview style. Be creative with ways to create the cozy feel of being around a campfire by using sound effects of a crackling fire or crickets, onscreen pictures of a fire, real wood, etc. (For an image of a campfire and sound effects, see the Resources.) Note: If you plan to video or photograph your kids, make sure their parents first sign a release form. Whether you choose to experience storytelling with high energy or in a more restful way, remember to continue in a spirit of celebration for what God has done in the lives of your kids, leaders, church, and families.

Storytelling Ideas

- Set up open mics around the room and allow kids to tell their stories
  - How God answered their prayers
  - How God used the Remember Verse in their lives
  - What God did in their hearts during the last few weeks (such as what they learned about God and how that changed them)
  - How they saw God with their families or outside of church
- Gather stories from the community
  - Ask parents for stories about their experiences with God at home with their children
  - Ask parents to email pictures of spiritual experiences with their children (such as a baptism)
  - Take pictures of family church experiences
  - Show a video or picture collage gathered during the last few weeks
- Interview someone about what he experienced, discovered, or learned about God
  - Someone who has recently come home from a mission trip
  - A parent who had a God experience with his child, or a child who experienced God with her family
  - Someone who recently accepted Christ

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Celebrating Together

Breaking Bread

Continue the celebration by feasting together as a community. Ask parents ahead of time to bring food, drinks, and supplies. Explain that eating together is one of the ways people celebrate today and one of the ways the Israelites celebrated together during their festivals. You can break bread many ways. Suggest food related to the feast or festival, or to the particular season you're in. Options include having parents bring food and eating with the kids, assembling the food as a group, or having a potluck after church. This is all about community.

Music

What's a celebration without music? Play upbeat worship songs and encourage the kids to sing along and dance. Music is suggested in the lesson, or invite kids and parents to contribute their favorite worship tunes. There may also be an activity idea offered.

Celebration Station

Rocks are a symbol of remembrance in Scripture (for example, Samuel setting up an Ebenezer stone). At this station (used only during REMEMBER & CELEBRATE weekends), kids and parents write a word or phrase they want to celebrate (for example, "new job," "God is faithful," "God has a plan for my life," etc.) on the rocks. You can find an image and instructions for building your own Celebration Station in the Appendix. You may also offer an activity related to the lesson's feast or festival.

SMALL GROUP SECTION

Bless//

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

The Vision for BLESS

Small Group Leaders

Similar to a regular lesson, the time of remembering and celebrating comes to a close with an opportunity for the leaders to assist the children in blessing each other, and reminding them they can freely give away the joy, love, truth, and grace they've received from God. Be sure to include parents and make them feel welcome to participate in this special time with their kids. Encourage them to bless their children throughout the week.

If you find it hard to make time for BLESS, try doing it earlier in your Remember & Celebrate lesson. This is an amazing time that you don't want to miss!

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Remember & Celebrate:
Feasts and Festivals //

The Significance of the Feasts and Festivals

Old Testament Significance

Several times a year, the Israelites gathered for a festival. In Leviticus 23, the Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed festivals … which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.'" The seven annual festivals are Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of First Fruits, the Feast of Pentecost (or Harvest), the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths). In addition, the Israelites celebrated the Festival of Jubilee on the fiftieth year, the year following seven cycles of seven Sabbatical years. They also gathered weekly to celebrate the Sabbath. During these celebrations, the Israelites took time to remember what God had done for His people and to celebrate His goodness. The entire faith community gathered without the burden of work to simply worship and celebrate. The Day of Atonement is a solemn day of fasting, prayer, and sacrifice. But for the remaining festivals, the people ate, danced, sang, and played instruments as well as praying and offering sacrifices to God.

New Testament Significance

The Feast of Passover was fulfilled by the death of the Messiah, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was fulfilled by His sinless sacrifice, and the Feast of First Fruits was fulfilled by His resurrection. The Feast of Pentecost (or Harvest) began with a great harvest of 3,000 souls as the promised Holy Spirit first arrived; this harvest of souls continues today. The Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles have yet to occur, so only God fully understands how they will be fulfilled.

The Seven Annual Feasts and Festivals

Passover: *Celebrating God as Deliverer*

During Passover, the Israelites celebrated their deliverance from the Egyptians as well as God as their deliverer. Each portion of the Passover feast symbolizes a part of the narrative of the Israelites' escape from Egypt. The meal includes lamb to symbolize the slain lamb whose blood marked the Hebrews' doorposts on the night of the 10th plague so that death would "pass over" those homes. In the New Testament, Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb of Passover to offer deliverance from sin for people from every age.

Feast of Unleavened Bread: *Celebrating God as Redeemer*

The Feast of Unleavened Bread celebrates God's miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt and, ultimately, His deliverance of our bondage to sin. Beginning with the day after Passover, the Israelites were to take seven days to eat bread without yeast and to cease working on the first and seventh days. The unleavened bread represents a fresh start without the leaven (or yeast) of sin present. In the New Testament, Jesus speaks symbolically of yeast (or leaven) as sin. Jesus broke unleavened bread with His disciples and said, "This is My body." Jesus was without sin as His body was "broken" during His crucifixion.

Feast of First Fruits: *Celebrating God as Trustworthy*

The Feast of First Fruits celebrates the trustworthiness of God. First fruits represent the joyous occasion of the first grain harvest of the spring. One sheaf of grain was taken to the temple as an offering. These offerings were made on the day following the Sabbath, or Sunday, and marked the beginning of the two-month barley harvest. In the New Testament, Jesus, the "first fruits" of the resurrection, rose to life on Sunday, the day when First Fruits was celebrated.

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Remember & Celebrate Feasts and Festivals //

Feast of Pentecost: *Celebrating God as Lord of the Harvest*

This feast, also known as the Feast of Harvest or Weeks, corresponded with Israel's harvest season and occurred 50 days after Passover. In the New Testament, this feast took on significance because the fiftieth day, the Day of Pentecost, marked the arrival of the Holy Spirit who came to fill believers and give them power to witness "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." On this Day of Pentecost, believers were first baptized in the Holy Spirit with the initial physical evidence of speaking in unknown languages given to them by the Holy Spirit.

Feast of Trumpets: *Celebrating God's Faithfulness*

This is the first of the fall festivals. The Jewish people call this feast *Rosh Hashanah*, which literally means "head of the year," as it's observed as the start of the civil year on the Jewish calendar (in contrast with the religious year, which starts with Passover). This celebration focused on the faithfulness of God. It consisted of a day of rest, a food offering to God, and the blowing of trumpets. This day marked the approach of the most holy day of the Jewish year, the Day of Atonement, ten days later. It was and is a reminder to put your life in order so you are ready when God judges. God is faithful to warn His people to be ready for His judgment.

The Day of Atonement: *Honoring God's Righteousness*

This reflective and solemn day consisted of fasting, prayer, and repentance. The Day of Atonement celebrated God's righteousness and lasted 25 hours, from sunset one day until nightfall the following day. (Jewish days begin at sunset, not sunrise.) Today it's known as *Yom Kippur*. On this day, the Israelites solemnly considered their sins and their need for God's forgiveness. As long as the tabernacle or temple existed, this was the one day of the year, when the high priest passed through the veil of the Holy of Holies with sacrificial blood to make atonement for the sins of the people. The New Testament significance lies in Christ, our High Priest, who shed His blood once and for all to make atonement for our sins before God.

Feast of Tabernacles: *Celebrating God's Abundant Blessings*

God's people celebrated this feast with thanksgiving to remember God's many blessings. For seven days they lived in tents or temporary shelters as a reminder of the years they spent wandering in the wilderness before they entered the Promised Land. The New Testament significance of this feast is that it reminds us that this life is temporary, and that all of our lifelong dreams, hopes, and aspirations will one day be fulfilled in our future home and inheritance with Jesus.

The Year of Jubilee

Celebrating God's Gift of Freedom

The year of Jubilee occurred on the fiftieth year following the seven cycles of seven Sabbatical years. This festival celebrated God's gift of freedom. It was a consecrated year set aside to proclaim liberty and restoration for all of the inhabitants of the land. By God's law (Deuteronomy 15:1) debts were to be forgiven and slaves were to be freed the year before the Jubilee. Then at the beginning of the year of Jubilee, the land was to be returned to the Israelite families to whom the land had been given by God (Leviticus 25:10,14–17). God's people were to take the year off from farming and enjoy the food that God provided (Leviticus 25:11–12). Through this festival, God reminded His people that He would always provide for them and that He "held the deeds" to everything they held as possessions.

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Remember & Celebrate:

Remember & Play//

ZONK! Game—Building a Wheel

Each Remember & Celebrate lesson features a game of ZONK! to help kids review the lessons they have studied in the previous lessons.

Supplies

- Plywood round (24" across, ¾"–1" thick)
- Tape measure
- Nails (3")
- Pencil
- String
- Protractor
- Yardstick or straight edge
- Hammer
- Paint (5 colors; 4 bright plus black)
- Paintbrushes (5)
- Wood or plywood sheet
- Saw
- Lazy Susan hardware
- Drill
- Screws (2½"–3")
- Zip tie (large, brightly colored)
- Optional: black electrical tape

Instructions

1. Take the plywood round and measure to find the center. Secure a nail to the center (this nail is temporary).
2. Tie one end of the string around the nail and the other end of the string around the pencil.
3. Pull the pencil toward the edge of the plywood round, so the string is pulled tight, and the pencil is about one inch from the edge. Draw a circle with the pencil.
4. Remove the center nail and set aside.
5. Using a yardstick, draw a line across the circle, passing across the center nail hole.
6. Place the protractor on top of the line and make pencil marks at 45, 90, and 135. Place the protractor on the bottom of the line and again make pencil marks at 45, 90, and 135.
7. Use the pencil marks to draw lines that divide the circle into eight equal spaces.
8. Secure one nail at the intersection of each straight line and the circle you drew an inch from the edge. Make sure the nails stick out at least 2 inches from the plywood. Optional: Secure additional nails, spacing them evenly, to create more friction when the wheel is spun.
9. Screw the Lazy Susan hardware to the center back of the wheel.

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10. Paint the front of the wheel using the four bright colors as shown. Let the paint dry.
    Optional: Use black paint or black electrical tape to draw distinct lines between the wedges.
11. Label the sections. Assign one color to be "Sword Drills" and paint the word "DRILL" in those two sections. Select another color to be "Remember Verse," and paint "VERSE" or "RV" in those sections. Select another color to be "History," and paint "HISTORY" in those sections. The last two sections will be "Leader Trivia," so paint "LEADER" in them.
12. Set the wheel aside to dry.
13. Create the stand. Cut wood or plywood into a 42" by 18" rectangle. Cut out a second rectangle 24" by 25" and cut it in half diagonally to create two triangles. Cut a 12" square from one of the two triangles. Cut the square in half diagonally to create two identical small triangles.
    Optional: Paint the rectangle, the large triangle, and the two small triangles to fit the color scheme of your wheel.
14. Secure the large triangle to the center bottom back of the rectangle at a right angle as shown. Attach the two smaller triangles at right angles to the larger triangle, lining up the tops of the smaller triangles with the top edge of the larger triangle.
15. Attach the wheel to the stand by screwing the Lazy Susan into the stand, centered, so that the top of the wheel is about three inches from the top of the stand.
16. Attach a dowel rod, nail, or screw to the stand near the wheel (either above or below). Attach a zip tie securely around the dowel, nail, or screw, so that the excess zip tie extends in front of the wheel as the marker for the wheel.

For pictures and other construction methods, consult the following sites:

wikihow.com/Make-a-Prize-Wheel

wikihow.com/Build-a-Wheel-of-Fortune-Wheel

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ZONK! Game—Preparation and Rules

Engage the children by playing the game of ZONK! to help them remember what they've discovered during the past several weeks. Each Remember & Celebrate lesson provides questions to review the lessons.

When playing ZONK!, keep in mind the main purpose is spiritual formation rather than memorization. Help kids focus on the Big God Story and their place in that story. Also help them remember what God did in their hearts during the past few weeks and what they learned about who God is.

Supplies

- Index cards (30)
- Marker
- Bag, basket, or bowl (big enough to fit 30 index cards)
- Paper (1 sheet)
- Pen
- ZONK! Question and Answer slides (see Resources)
- Optional: ZONK! Wheel and additional index cards (at least 3)

Prepare Ahead

- Write point values (such as "1,000" or "200") on 10 index cards. Write "ZONK!" on 10 index cards.
- Use the remaining 10 index cards to make 10 "Challenge Cards," each with a challenge and its point value. (See the Challenge Card Ideas listed on the following page for some examples.)
- Ask one leader to share a random fact about himself (such as his birthplace or his favorite food). Write "Leader Trivia" on one side of an index card, and on the other side of the card, write the leader's fact and a question that corresponds with this fact (such as "Where was Miss Susie born?). Set this card aside to be used if a child gets the "Leader Trivia" category on the wheel.

Set Up

Put all 30 index cards in the bag or basket. Choose someone to keep score, and give her the paper and pen. Optional: Set out the ZONK! Wheel. Write "The Wheel" on one index card and put them in the bag or basket.

Game Instructions

To play, divide the children into two teams (for example, girls versus boys). Ask one team a question (while showing the corresponding slide) and have the kids from that team raise their hands to answer. If a child answers correctly, have him pull a card (or cards) from the bag. He can grab as many cards as he (and his team) wants, and the point values will be added to the team's score. But if the player pulls a "ZONK!" card, his team loses all of its points!

If the child draws a "Challenge Card" the whole team must act out the challenge to get the amount of points written on the card. Everyone on the team must participate in the challenge or the team loses the amount of points written on the card.

Optional: If the child draws "The Wheel" card, she gets the chance to spin the ZONK! Wheel. The wheel will stop spinning at one of the following four categories: "Remember Verse" (recite the current Remember Verse perfectly from memory), "Leader Trivia" (answer a question about a leader in the room), "History" (answer an old ZONK! question), or "Sword Drill" (locate a specific passage in the Bible in 30 seconds or less). After successfully answering the question or completing the challenge, the player's team will either double its points or earn a very large number of points (such as 15,000). *The ZONK! Wheel can only be used once per game.*

After you've asked all of the questions, the team with the most points wins!

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Challenge Card Ideas

EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM must clap their hands 30 times as quickly as possible.

EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM must act like Spiderman crawling up a wall of butter.

EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM must high-five 10 other members of your team as quickly as possible.

EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM must act like a Tyrannosaurus rex that's dancing in a ballet.

EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM must copy every movement of the person who drew this card.

THE PERSON WHO DREW THIS CARD must dance for one minute.

EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM must sing, "What Does the Fox Say?" If a person doesn't know the song, she must act like a fox.

EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM must do the wave, going from the front of the room to the back of the room, three times

EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM must be completely silent for 30 seconds while making the funniest faces possible

THE PERSON WHO DREW THIS CARD must tell a joke, and EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM must laugh at it like it's the funniest thing ever.

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Remember & Celebrate:

Celebrating Together //

Celebration Station

In Scripture, rocks are a symbol of remembrance—think of Samuel setting up an Ebenezer stone. Rocks are integral to the Celebration Station, a worship as response station only used during REMEMBER & CELEBRATE lessons.

At this station, each person uses a permanent marker to write a word or phrase on a rock. That word of phrase can celebrate a specific blessing from God or simply affirm who He is. For example, "New job," "Faithful," or "Redeemer." The rocks can then be placed together at the station.

Follow the instructions below to build your own Celebration Station.

Supplies

- OSB or plywood
- Saw
- 1" x 2" wood trim
- Wood screws
- Casters (4)
- Metal hooks (4)
- Metal baskets (2, medium size)
- Permanent markers (at least 4)
- Rocks (medium size)

Instructions

1. Use the OSB or plywood to build a 3-feet-high by 18-inch-wide box (with all sides enclosed).
2. On the bottom of the box, attach four casters to make the box mobile.
3. On the top of the box, use the trim pieces of wood to create a border/frame that will hold in the rocks and prevent them from falling off the box.
4. Mount two hooks on each "long side" of the box and hang a basket from each pair of hooks. Put the rocks in the baskets.
5. Put two permanent markers in each basket.

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