



# HOW IT WORKS

Components of the Tru Fire Wonder  
Large Group/Small Group Program



# Tru Fire Wonder

- Awakens kids curiosity to the wonder of who God is!
- Helps leaders, children, and their families connect to God, find their place in His Big God Story, and respond to Him through the power of the Holy Spirit. Every Tru Fire lesson, resource, and product is created for this purpose.
- Focuses on this truth: The Holy Spirit is God's chosen teacher.

The Holy Spirit makes spiritual growth and formation happen when and as He chooses.

Our role, as ministry leaders, volunteers, and parents, is to create space for the Holy Spirit to meet with our children.

Tru Fire lessons provide information about the role of the Holy Spirit—how He moved in the lives of Bible people and how He wants to move in the lives of believers today.

The Tru Fire team has taken care to emphasize the importance and benefits of being filled with the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4.

## Lesson Overview

| Sample Service Timing | Minutes | Experience/Lesson Section  |
|-----------------------|---------|--|
| 9:00–9:10             | 10      | <b>EXPLORE::</b><br><b>Welcome</b> (Check-in)<br>• Explore Activities  |
| 9:10–9:35             | 25      | <b>DISCOVER::</b><br><b>Large Group</b><br>• Chloe's Rules<br>• Mail Time<br>• Wardrobe of Wonder<br>• The Big God Story<br>• Worship Response |
| 9:35–9:55             | 20      | <b>RESPOND::</b><br><b>Small Group</b><br>• Reinforcement Activities<br>• Wonder Questions Coloring Pages<br>• Small Group Enhancements        |
| 9:55–10:00            | 5       | <b>BLESS::</b><br><b>Small Group</b><br>• Blessing/Remember Verse<br>• <i>At Home Weekly</i>   |

This sample outline is based on a 60-minute service. You can vary time frames based on the lesson content and the dynamics of your group. You may also find it helpful to prepare the Explore Options before the start of the hour as an early check-in option. This will allow children to get the full experience if you find it necessary to add additional time at the end of your service for parents to pick up their children.





## Building a Tru Fire Team

Tru Fire Wonder is designed to be used by a team of volunteers working together to minister to kids. Choose the roles best suited to each of your volunteers. Here are the roles we suggest:

**Host:** The Host offers the same spirit of hospitality, generosity, and inclusiveness to the children that the host of a party would offer to the guests in her home or gathering. They may set up the time, frame the expectations, and dismiss children.

**Small Group Leader:** The Small Group Leader shepherds the children through questions about the story and biblical Truth, engages them in community-building activities, helps them create a remembrance of their experience, and blesses them before they leave. Ideally Small Group Leaders work week after week with the same group of kids, giving them the opportunity to develop lasting relationships with each child.

**Worship Leader:** The Worship Leader facilitates individual and corporate worship by listening to the direction of the Holy Spirit and inviting others into the worship experience.

**Storyteller:** After active involvement with the Scriptures and the lesson, the Storyteller recounts the Bible passage for the kids in an engaging way. He leads out of an overflow of his own life, telling personal stories as prompted, and guiding the children into a time of natural worship response.

**AV Technician:** This person facilitates the “behind-the-scenes” aspects of programming, including music, lighting, drama, sound, PowerPoint, etc. The AV Tech makes sure things run smoothly and is willing to help with anything—including stepping into any of the other leader roles. There will be cues for this person indicated in the lesson in italics.

## Leader Prep

Each week you'll find three encouraging articles that help leaders prepare their hearts to present the lesson. See the Inspire, Equip, and Support information below.

### Inspire

The Inspire section of the lesson is where the Tru Fire Team shares personal stories of how God has worked in our lives. The Inspire for that week will help illustrate the Ponder Point, or truth statement about God and our relationship with Him. We hope you find these to be inspiring and encouraging as you begin to prepare for each week's lesson.

### Equip

Flowing out of Inspire, the Equip section is designed to give you more insight into the segment of The Big God Story you'll be exploring with the children that week. In addition, it offers fresh perspective and shares context on the Bible passage. The philosophy behind this is to equip you with the biblical framework of the lesson and enhance the learning experience.

### Support

The Support section is intended to provide personal reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and personal spiritual transformation in God's Word. The role of the Spirit is primary here as we look to Him for wisdom, comfort, and guidance to prepare your heart to present each week's lesson, and seek the spiritual formation of both you and the children.



# Explore:: 10 min.

## Small Group Leaders

*Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.*

### The Vision for Explore

As children come into the classroom, they're invited into a place where they will explore the mysteries of God within the faith community. What could be better than welcoming them into this atmosphere with an experience to pique their interest and immediately draw them in? This is what EXPLORE for preschool/kindergarten is designed to do. The activities offered during this time will not necessarily be overtly connected to the Bible narrative because we want to spark curiosity and engage the children before revealing the whole story.

Have fun with this time and be sure to connect personally with the children. Remember to model the activities for the kids so they know what to do, but then let them venture out on their own. Ask open-ended questions as you go. This time is a great opportunity to welcome kids into a safe atmosphere where people care, where there are interesting things to do, and where there is space for them to be intrigued by God.

**Explore Activities:** During this time of check-in and welcoming, children will engage in exploration activities. Each lesson suggests two activities. If you only have time or resources for one activity, be sure to set it up before the start of your service. If an activity clicks with your children, feel free to bring it back for an additional week of exploration.

The options offer an activity for small groups that subtly introduces concepts related to the Ponder Point or the upcoming portion of The Big God Story. Parents are invited to stay long enough to lead their children into worship at an activity. By initiating participation, parents will lead by modeling as they engage in worship together with their children. Small Group Leaders will also be involved in this time of exploration, partnering with the parents to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Small Group Leaders should participate with the children in activities, exploring the materials and engaging in open-ended questions about their observations. This will encourage them to explore and form questions on their own throughout the lesson. As the Small Group Leader, be sure to sit at the table (or on the floor) with the children as you facilitate this time. Kids will follow your lead. You'll be better able to engage the children by participating in each aspect of the small group experience with them as you guide this time.

**Small Group Size:** For an optimal small group experience, each small group should be no larger than eight to twelve children plus the leader. Classroom and age-group size will vary from church to church. Adjust the size of small groups according to the number of children and leaders you have in each age group, and how comfortably things work within your individual groups.

**Open-ended Questions:** Asking open-ended questions about their activity encourages children to describe what they're doing, thinking, or processing through. There are no right or wrong answers. Asking questions in this format allows us to be a part of the process and helps us to see the internal journey through the thoughts and feelings expressed by the children.

Examples of open-ended questions:

- Tell me about the colors you're using. Why did you select them?
- What else can you do with the water, a straw, and wind?
- What do you think would happen to the pepper if we blew lots of bubbles in the water?
- How could we do this differently?





- What does this remind you of?
- What does this tell us about God?

**Signals:** A fun way to cue children that it's time to move to the next activity is to use a signal. Signals create predictability and channel energy as you transition from one experience into the next. Signal ideas:

- Energetic music or audio clip.
- DVD with countdown and music, or a clip from a fun movie. Replace the audio from the movie with energetic music of your choice.
- Verbal rhyme and lights "off" and "on." (For example, flip lights off and say, "One, two, three ... everyone look at me." Turn lights back on and give directions.)

### Straight Talk

Separating from Mom and Dad can be tough for a little one. To help lessen the stress a child may feel, invite parents to stay long enough to lead their child into worship at an activity. Small Group Leaders will also be involved, engaging in the activity alongside the child and parent. As parents say good-bye, acknowledge their departure while remaining focused on the activity with the child for the smoothest transition possible.

### ALLERGY ALERTS

Throughout the lessons you'll see items marked with yellow caution signs in the supply lists. These are items we're flagging as potential allergens. Before using these items in activities or even exposing children to them in your room, be sure to check with parents as they drop off their children. You may want to post a sign noting the items that will be served or used in activities for that week's lesson.





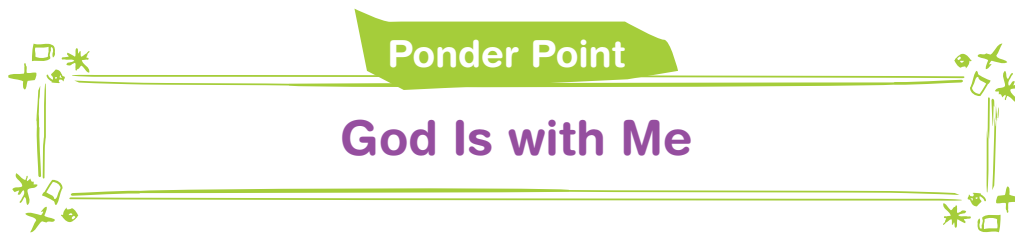
# Discover:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

*Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship response.*

## The Vision for Discover

After transitioning from small groups, DISCOVER is a time for the children to meet as a large community to connect, pray, participate in traditions, and learn from The Big God Story together. In preschool/kindergarten, the children get to know the rules of their classroom with Chloe, find and learn their Remember Verse during Mail Time, and discover the What's!t in the Wardrobe of Wonder. Then they transition into The Big God Story. This is the time when a storyteller retells a passage of Scripture—always keeping the smaller part of the story in the chronological context of God's grand narrative.



## Ponder Point

Each Big God Story lesson begins with and is centered around a Ponder Point, or statement, about God. An example is, "God Is with Me." As you prepare and teach, keep this focus in mind. Help children discover who God is, how He was at work in the Bible, and how He is at work today. Help them discover that the God they read about in the Bible is the same God today.

## Chloe's Rules

Clear guidelines are foundational to respectful and loving relationship. In order for preschoolers and kindergartners to fully engage in relationship within community, clear expectations must be established and shared with them. Each week children will begin their large group DISCOVER time with the "rules" of the program. Chloe's Rules is made up of a few simple reminders about how we can all be part of a loving community through the words we speak, sitting with our small group, and sharing during the program. (Note: You may already have established rules for your program. You can customize this time to fit your individual expectations for kids using Chloe for added variety.)

**Who is Chloe?:** Chloe is a puppet (or person) who is the "mascot," so to speak, for the rules and traditions of your preschool large group program. She shares the rules and traditions with the children each week—either "live" or by video (see Resources for videos or scripts). If you choose to run Chloe live, you can use any puppet and name it whatever works for your style and program theme. The name and look of the puppet are simply suggestions.

**Introducing Chloe:** Introduce Chloe to the children the first time she appears in large group DISCOVER. If you're going live with Chloe, share who she is and why she visits each week. Encourage the leader to interact directly with the children and the Host and/or Worship Leader on Chloe's behalf. You may choose to customize time with Chloe for your large group experience (e.g., having her reappear throughout DISCOVER in times of transitions between segments or during the final dismissal to small groups).





## TIP

Transitions can be a great tool to eliminate awkward empty “space” and help give context for what is to come. Set up your Mail Time with some simple interactions between the Host and the Worship Leader. For example: “Megan, did you know God gave us letters that tell us about Him?” “I sure did, Joey! And, I’m so excited to see what part of His letter is in our mailbox today. It’s a letter from the Bible, God’s true story. Let’s check it out!”



## Mail Time

### Host and/or Worship Leader

Each week children will receive mail in the mailbox you’ve created. Written on the mail is the month’s Remember Verse from the Bible. It’s important for children to associate the message written on the “mail” as words from the Bible. Be sure to have a Bible visible for reference.

### How Mail Time Works

- Invite two children to come up front and help with Mail Time. Choosing visitors is a fun way to welcome them into community.
- The “Hider” will retrieve the mail from the mailbox and hide it somewhere in the room while the “Seeker” will close her eyes. Meanwhile, the other children should pay close attention to the hiding place.
- After the Hider has hidden the mail and returned to his seat, the Seeker will attempt to find it using the “hot” and “cold” game. All the children will help the Seeker find the hidden mail by calling out “hot” and “cold” as clues.
- Once the Seeker has found the mail, the Host will invite her to see what’s inside.
- The Host will then read the enclosed Remember Verse with the Seeker.
- You can talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with kids and other leaders onstage with you. This will give context and meaning to the children as they prepare to memorize the Scripture.
- The Host will lead the large group in reciting the Remember Verse several times using a variety of fun methods. (Using hand motions and/or different voices and characters is a great way to engage kids and help imprint the Scripture to memory. It may be fun to include the Hider and Seeker in this time as helpers for the hand motions to the Remember verse.)

## Creating Your Mailbox

**Here are a few suggestions to help you create your own mailbox for Mail Time.**

- Purchase a mailbox from a hardware store. Mount it to a square wood beam measuring three feet in height. Create a base for the mailbox by filling a container with cement and placing the wood beam in the center. Once the cement is dry, paint the wood beam and base as you choose.
- Purchase a simple wall-mounted mailbox. Secure it to a visible wall on your stage.
- Create a mailbag and have your mail delivered each day by a “mail carrier.”
- The envelope art provided fits best on an 8 ½” x 11” envelope. Laminate the envelope and you’ll be able to use it week after week.

## Remember Verses

Scripture memorization is a spiritual discipline, so we’ve carefully selected verses we feel disciples of Christ, even children, should understand and memorize as they contribute to our spiritual maturity. Year after year, kids, parents, and leaders will build a foundation of Scripture that will help define their faith, memorizing one verse per month in order to effectually know core verses, rather than not mastering dozens. Remember Verses are selected to highlight character traits of God.



Be sure your children understand the words in the verse. Age-appropriate definitions are provided for any unfamiliar words. Don't feel like you need to present them all in one week, but rather take time to go over unfamiliar words with the children in a meaningful way. Have fun by playing memorization games. Try call-and-response with sections of the verse. Start the verse and let them finish it. Recite it incorrectly and see if they catch you. Sing it to them. Sit in a circle, rolling a ball back and forth with each person saying a word to the verse. Make simple bookmarks and assist your readers in locating the verse in their Bibles. There are so many fun and engaging ways to help kids own the verse for themselves!

It's important to help plant biblical truth, in the form of the Remember Verses, in the lives of children. The verses are promises from God that the children can draw upon as they build a relationship with God they will carry with them throughout their lives. (*Remember Verse* cards will be available in the Resources for you to print and send home with parents along with the *At Home Weekly*.)



## Wardrobe of Wonder

### Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

The Wardrobe of Wonder is a fun and interactive entrance point into The Big God Story. Each week a new object called a What'sIt, which is connected to and appears within the story, is hidden within the wardrobe. Together as a community, children will discover the identity of this object as they begin to ask questions from their observations and experiences.

### How It Works

- Invite a child volunteer up front to help find the What'sIt.
- Along with the child, choose special "thinking hats" out of the hat box before looking into the wardrobe. After putting on your silly thinking hats, lead all of the children in putting on their imaginary thinking hats and making their special thinking-hat sound. (This sound can be an audio clip that you play on cue that is a fun, whimsical sound effect, or it can be a sound you establish ahead of time that the kids make each time they put on their thinking hats. This step is completely optional.)
- Invite your child volunteer to spy on the What'sIt by peeking into the wardrobe. As the child opens the door, have your AV Tech cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* sound effect provided with the Resources (a creaking door). Have her whisper the identity of the What'sIt in your ear to ensure she knows what it is. Together close the wardrobe and sit at the edge of the stage (or teaching area) or on two small stools.
- Lead the children in a form of the game Twenty Questions. (You may want to limit this time to four or five questions.) Children guess what the object is by asking yes or no questions of your assistant (child). If the questioners or the questionee have trouble, ask some specific questions about color and shape to help guide them. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What'sIt from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Then direct her to put away her thinking hat and return to her seat.
- The Worship Leader or Host will then help make the connection between the What'sIt and the Bible passage of the day from The Big God Story—without giving the story away. Asking simple questions about possible reasons this particular object is in the wardrobe will help the kids to wonder for themselves, and engage them in the story from the very beginning. The What'sIt usually makes an appearance again in The Big God Story, so remind the children to be watching for it while they listen.
- Put the What'sIt in a visible location where it can be easily accessed throughout the story. Use this spot consistently week after week.
- You may choose to play the *The Big God Story* intro clip after announcing it's time for The Big God Story. As the intro plays, the Storyteller enters and joins the Worship Leader up front.

## Creating Your Wardrobe

Here are a few suggestions to help you as you create your own Wardrobe of Wonder.

- IKEA has a children's wardrobe for around \$120.00 (check their website at [www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com)).







- Find an old armoire from a second-hand store, garage sale, or thrift store. Paint it a fun, bright, and colorful way that reflects the personality of your program.
- Build or purchase a large wooden box. Make sure the box has a lid with hinges (suggested box dimensions: 2 ½' tall x 3' wide).
- Refinish an old wooden toy chest.
- Add brightly colored doors to the front of a book shelf.

## SUGGESTION

The Worship Leader/Host/Storyteller should take a couple of minutes to set up the storytelling within The Big God Story using the What's It as an object of anticipation. Ask the children questions about the What's It to engage them in the story, even before it has begun.

Example: **Today's part of The Big God Story, has to do with a rainbow. Now, when I think of the word "rainbow," I realize there are two words inside one word: rain and bow. The first word, rain, makes me think that maybe this story has to do with ... Can you guess?** Children respond. **Rain! What is a rainbow, really? I think that's what we're going to find out today as we learn from The Big God Story!**

# The Big God Story

## Storyteller

This time during the large group gathering is when the Storyteller vividly relates a passage of Scripture—always keeping the smaller story in the chronological context of God's grand narrative. This portion of DISCOVER is the perfect time for your team to pull out all the stops in utilizing engaging storytelling techniques and creating an amazing atmosphere for children to really step into the story. Whether it's dimming lights, incorporating sound effects, grabbing props, flashing photos on a screen, using movie clips, or just being a lively storyteller, children can be affected by God's Word in an exciting way. Storytellers should make the story their own and be intentional about preparing and teaching from an overflow of what God is doing in their own lives. Every person is uniquely gifted to storytell. What a great opportunity to impact the next generation with God's transforming words!

The Big God Story is the core of the children's time together, showing them God loves them and wants to know them. It's in this time that the Ponder Point is further explained through a portion of God's big story from the Bible. Teach from a Bible so the children understand what they're hearing is from God's Word and is true. Using the chronological Scope and Sequence, preschoolers and kindergartners will learn from early in the Bible, through the creation story, on through time in a clearly linked, sequential way, that God has been working throughout history. And the great news for them is that He is still working today! The lessons are written in an interactive and engaging manner to explain concepts on the children's level.

As you first dive into Tru Fire Wonder lessons, you may be uncertain how your children will handle the occasionally longer storyline, or the framing of Biblical content in a unique way. Give your children a chance to interact with the storylines and resist the urge to rework the lessons. A longer lesson about David the shepherd that includes his anointing prior to defeating the giant lends a new perspective—David defeated the giant with the power of the Holy Spirit in him. Give your kids the opportunity to hear and grasp this wonderful truth from Scripture!

When storytelling from Tru Fire take the time to familiarize yourself with the lesson so you'll be able to share it with confidence. The text provided is meant as a guide for what to share with your children and will be much more engaging for them if the storyteller is freed from reading it to them. Invest in preparation so you can share naturally and with enthusiasm. Feel free to adapt your storytelling to the needs of your program. Add props, adjust lighting, and move around to keep children engaged with your sharing. Encourage all your leaders to model an interest in what is being shared; the kids will pick up on an atmosphere of excitement. After all, this is God's big story!



## Storytelling Videos

Optional storytelling videos are available for three lessons per quarter. You may access these videos with your lesson resources.

## Worship Response

### The Vision for Large Group Respond

The Worship Response is all about letting children interact with God and flows naturally and immediately after learning an amazing truth about Him. Whether it's in silence, prayerfully putting a shape on the Response Wall, singing and dancing with instruments, or speaking Scripture out loud, this is their time to respond to God in a personalized but communal way. *Our response is our answer back to God. We acknowledge who He is.*

And this is when the Holy Spirit really gets to transform His kids. As children think about how the story they've heard has impacted them, the Spirit has space to move and touch each child. The way the children reach out and respond to God allows them to truly meet with Him. It's about the encounter—not just the information.

The worship response time in large group varies from week to week. Some weeks children will respond in worship through music, while other weeks are designed for more specific interactive expressions of response. This time is intended for children to freely express their worship as God's Spirit leads them.

As your team plans for Large Group and Small Group Respond, try to create an atmosphere of space. This may mean pausing for what feels like an uncomfortably long time after you ask your preschoolers a Wonder Question. It may mean spontaneously prolonging a time of singing or carrying on a discussion that seemingly has little to do with your curriculum notes. Be flexible and sensitive to how the Holy Spirit is moving in your group. You will most likely be blown away by what He does with and through your children—even these little ones!

**Response Walls:** One of the suggested means for response is through Response Walls. Children are encouraged to spend a few moments in thought and prayer. Then they pick a shape (often provided as a resource) and a magnet from a bucket and place them on the wall. They might linger for a moment in prayer, hand on the shape. Play music as an alternative for those who prefer to remain worshipping silently at their seat. Give verbal cues and reminders to the children to help guide their interaction with the Response Wall when they're ready. As children finish at the wall, they return to their seats and continue worshipping. These verbal cues can be made throughout the song within the flow of the music.

As a leader, your role is to help the children understand the freedom they have to choose how they're going to respond—whether that's encouraging, modeling, or leading them into participation. Be sure your tone remains the same as it is when singing and praying, and doesn't transition to that of a directive voice. (Note: There are many ways to do response activities, some as simple as string tacked up with nails or tied between chairs. One way is detailed in the Response Walls construction notes and photos found on the following page.)



## Response Walls

You will find instructions for building walls below. Consider using magnetic dry erase boards, bulletin boards, or paint sections of walls with magnetic or chalkboard paint to create your response space.

### MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED (per wall)

- 3' x 6' sheet of thin metal
- 3' x 6' sheet of 1/2" oriented strand board (OSB)
- (2) 3 1/2'-strips of 2" x 1/2" (approx.) wood (for frame on face of magnetic side)
- (2) 6 1/2'-strips of 2" x 1/2" (approx.) wood (for frame on face of magnetic side)
- (2) 4'-long, 2" x 4" boards
- (2) 2'-long, 2" x 4" boards
- 2 large pentagons measuring 1/2' from the base to the highest point; cut out of 1/2" OSB
- 2 small triangles measuring 7" from the base to the highest point; cut out of 1/2" OSB
- wood screws
- 4 industrial casters (Note: Casters should be able to rotate 360°.)
- industrial glue (to adhere metal to wood)

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR BUILDING

Note: Many home improvement warehouses will cut your OSB and sheet metal to size if you ask before you purchase the necessary sheets.

1. Cut all of the pieces to specified measurements.
2. Secure each 4'-long, 2" x 4" board to the backside edges of the 3' x 6' sheet of OSB using wood screws. (These will be the vertical posts.)
3. Glue the sheet of metal to the face of the sheet of OSB.
4. Use the 4 strips of 2" x 1/2" wood to create the wood frame for the face of the magnetic board and attach to the face of the OSB sheet with wood screws.
5. Attach the 2'-long, 2" x 4" boards to the bottom of the 4' boards using wood screws. (These will form the base for each post.)
6. Secure the large OSB pentagons to the outside of each post base using wood screws.
7. Secure the small OSB triangles to the inside of each post base using wood screws.
8. Secure all four casters to the bottom of the base using the hardware provided with the casters.
9. Smooth any sharp or rough edges with sandpaper.
10. Paint and seal wood as desired.





# Respond:: 20 min.

## Small Group Leaders

***Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.***

### The Vision for Small Group Respond

Here, children can share openly their personal thoughts and experiences in a relational setting. Some children will be more responsive when they're engaged in something creative or artistic. Others will be more open once their bodies get moving. Whatever their personal preference, space is created for them to discuss ideas while playing games or creating a meaningful piece of art, each a part of their response to God.

### Activity Options

Some options allow time for children and leaders to connect with each other in large-motor-skills activities. Other options allow children to create a piece of art as a reminder of The Big God Story. These hands-on experiences provide a meaningful reminder or physical expression of what God is doing within them. These may be individual pieces, but often are projects completed as a small group to further enhance community. Projects can be displayed during the Remember & Celebrate weekends as a physical reminder of time spent responding to God.

### Wonder Questions

Discuss the provided questions with the children. They're meant to prompt further conversation about what they just experienced in large group DISCOVER, as well as invite them to ponder the truth and dwell with the wonder of God. Be sure to pause long enough after each question to allow the children time to wonder and encourage them to share their unique perspectives. Although the questions may seem challenging on the surface, given time and space to ponder them you may be surprised at the depth at which the children are processing (even at a young age!).

Included as a resource with the Wonder Questions are *Wonder Questions Coloring Pages*. These fun kid-friendly coloring pages are based on the What'sIts from earlier in the lessons and also contain the lesson's Ponder Point and Scripture passage. These coloring pages serve several functions. Oftentimes children will open up to discussion more if they're engaged in another activity. The coloring pages also allow the children to take home and share what that day's part of The Big God Story was all about! You'll find this resource along with all the others. Print one for each child and provide crayons.

### When talking with and listening to young children:

- Connect at eye level; kneel or sit at a table to join them.
- Ask open-ended questions with no particular answer in mind. Respond to what they've contributed. If you don't understand what they said, ask a follow-up question to clarify. Try to restate what you think the child means. Allow her to expand on her thought or simply let it go. Oftentimes a child will revisit a conversation or question a few moments later once she has time to process on her own.
- Engage in activities with the child, encouraging and affirming his participation in all aspects—the colors he is using, a story he told, how well he is sharing. Be specific in your affirmation rather than making value judgements. "I like the green you used there," rather than, "That's a great picture."
- Allow children to answer questions first; avoid answering for them. (Watch for verbal cues and suggestions.)
- Allow children time to process before moving on.





## Small Group Enhancements

Corresponding to each week's lesson, you'll find a quarterly Tru Fire Wonder Timeline and images of people from The Big God Story in the Resources. These additional images are provided along with discussion questions that will assist you as your small group goes a little deeper in its exploration of how God was working in that part of The Big God Story. As you place the weekly people squares on the timeline (or use the larger 8 x 10" versions on your wall), invite children to help you storytell. The provided questions will prompt further conversation about what children have been experiencing. They'll enjoy watching as the timeline fills week to week and their knowledge and perspective of God's big story grows.

### ADDITIONAL TOOLS

#### Creating your "Box of Tricks"

You may want to consider building a box of tricks for each of your classrooms. These activities are for the days when you need an additional way to engage the children. We encourage you to complete Wonder Questions, and Bless before using any additional games and activities.

**Suggestions for the box:** Play dough, sensory dough, books, and index cards with quick games for preschoolers and kindergartners printed on the front.



# Bless::: 5 min.



## Small Group Leaders

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

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### The Vision for Bless

Every lesson ends with a blessing. This is a time for parents and leaders to speak truth over children's lives. The children have just had the beautiful experience of encountering God and His Word; the idea of the blessing is to transition the child from being blessed to being a blessing. This is the time to remind children they can freely give away the joy, love, truth, and grace they've received from God.

The blessing can be done in many ways, but the more intentional you are about it, the more powerful it will be. Encourage the children to hold out their hands, palms up, as a symbolic posture of receiving—expecting to hear and receive from God. If parents are able to join in at this time, suggest they put their hands on their child's head ... or kneel and look him in the eye as they bless him. Leaders, be sure to model how you envision the blessing working in your church so your volunteers and parents feel comfortable with it. Parents should be encouraged to continue to bless their children throughout the week.

This time of blessing provides another great opportunity to integrate your use of the Bible into the worship experience, reinforcing to the children that these words come straight from the Word, God's Word.



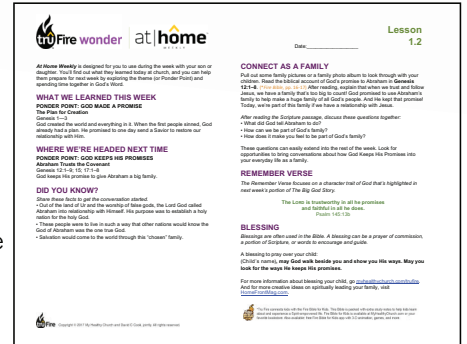


# Parent Resources

## At Home Weekly

*At Home Weekly* is a parent resource with each week's lesson, providing life-changing ways for your parents to intentionally create space for God to meet with their families. *At Home Weekly* can be emailed out to parents or printed and distributed. This resource is designed to help your parents intentionally spend time in God's Word with their children before they come to church each week. The best part: Parents are first to introduce their kids to the Bible content they'll hear at church. In this way, the church is supporting parents as they spiritually nurture their child.

Each *At Home Weekly* includes: The lesson focus for the current week and the following week. Did You Know? is a brief summary of The Big God Story. It provides the vision for the Scripture story as well as some background. Connect as a Family is an activity for the family to do together, providing a practical setting where they can dive into God's Word with their kids. Engaging questions provide a process through God's Word together as a family; see where the Holy Spirit leads you! And finally, time is concluded with a short blessing.



## Fire Bible for Kids

(available for purchase)

This Bible makes reading God's Word fun. Fun illustrations and kid-friendly notes and illustrations make this Bible a perfect fit for families with children. For more information go to [myhealthychurch.com/trufire](http://myhealthychurch.com/trufire).



## Homefront Magazine

(available by subscription)

This monthly resource equips families with practical ideas for creating fun, spiritually forming times in their homes, setting aside a sacred space for family in the midst of their active, everyday lives. Each issue features articles and activities focusing on everything from marriage and family to recipes, crafts, and a blessing. This isn't about doing more; it's about framing the things parents naturally do while creating space for God to work.

As the new issue becomes available each month, you may choose to print them for families or encourage them to visit [www.HomeFrontMag.com](http://www.HomeFrontMag.com) to subscribe for a print or digital copy.

