

5 min

Preteen Opening Activity

What You Need

 Offering Container	1
 Muffin Tin	1
 Ping-Pong Balls	Several
 Circle stickers in three different colors	Several

What You Do:

- Welcome the kids with a high-five or fist bump.
- Invite kids who have brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Place one sticker in the bottom of each muffin cup.
- Set the muffin tin in the center of your activity area.
- Explain that each color represents a different category: red = Books of the Bible, blue = Ways to Live for God, and green = Random Things.
- Kids take turns trying to bounce a ping-pong ball into one of the muffin cups.
- When a ball lands in a cup, instruct the kid to name something that fits that category. For example, if it lands in "Books of the Bible," they could say "Luke." If it lands in "Ways to Live for God," they could say "being honest." If it lands in "Random Things," they can say anything, like "pizza."

What You Say:

"That was tougher than it looks! It's easy to name random things, but it takes more thought to focus on the things that really matter. It's kind of like that in life. It's easy to just go along with whatever, but choosing to live for God takes a plan. **[Transition] In our true story from the Bible today, a guy named Matthew made a big choice about how he was going to live his life. Let's go check it out."**

5 min

Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Imagine

What You Need

 Slips of paper with different scenarios written on them Several

What You Do:

- Divide the group into pairs or trios.
- Give each group a scenario. Here are some examples:
 - *You see the new kid sitting by himself on the playground at recess.*
 - *You see a person trip and drop all their books in the hallway between classes.*
 - *Your friends start making fun of someone you know.*
 - *You know the answer in class, but you also know the kid next to you is struggling to understand.*
- Tell the groups their challenge is to come up with two different ways to respond to the scenario: one that shows what living for God looks like, and one that doesn't.
- Give them a few minutes to plan a very short, simple skit for both responses.
- Invite each group to perform their two skits for the rest of the group.
- After each one, discuss: Which response showed what it means to live for God? Why?

EveryChild Tips:

- *Allow groups to simply talk through their two responses or draw pictures instead of creating a full skit.*

What You Say:

"Great job with those skits. It's pretty clear which choices honor God, right? The Pharisees in our story were focused on who was 'good enough' to be around. But Jesus had a totally different view of things. He came for everyone—especially the people who knew they needed help. Matthew got that. That's why he immediately hosted a banquet to introduce his friends—other 'sinners'—to Jesus. He knew they needed Jesus too. That's a key way we **[Bottom Line] practice living for God:** by introducing people to Jesus."

5 min

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Explore

What You Need

- 👤 Scrabble® tiles (or letters written on small squares of paper) Several
- 👤 Bag to hold the Scrabble® tiles (or squares of paper) 1

What You Do:

- Encourage the kids to sit with you in a circle.
- Pass the bag of letters around and instruct each kid to draw 7-8 letters without looking.
- Explain that the challenge is to work together, using all the letters in the circle, to spell out words that describe what it looks like to live for God.
- They can trade letters and move around the circle to work with others.
- Encourage them to spell out words like: KIND, LOVE, HELP, SHARE, OBEY, TRUTH, PRAY, GIVE, HONEST, FORGIVE.
- As they spell words, talk about what those words mean and how they connect to living for God.

What You Say:

"Look at all these words we spelled! This is like a game plan for our faith. Living for God isn't some big, mysterious secret. It's about these simple, everyday choices to be loving, kind, honest, and helpful. When we do these things, we're putting our faith into practice. Every day is a chance to **[Bottom Line] practice living for God.**"

5 min

Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Play

What You Need

 Bibles

Several

What You Do:

- Give every two kids a Bible.
- Invite them to work together to look up 1 Timothy 4:8 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

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

- **Repeat the verse together several times.**
- **Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.**
 - Share that "being godly" means getting to know God and following His good ways!
- Instruct the group to set their Bibles aside and stand in a circle.
- Explain the game "SPARKLE."
- The first person says the first word of the Memory Verse. The next kid says the second word, and so on around the circle.
- When the verse is finished, after the reference is said, the next kid in the circle says "SPARKLE!" and the kid after them is out and sits down.
- The game continues with the remaining kids until only one person is left standing.
- Play a few times to help the kids really learn the verse.

What You Say:

"That was fun! And you're getting really good at that verse. It's a great reminder that having a 'game plan' for godliness—for living for God—is what has real, lasting value. So let's keep working to **[Bottom Line] practice living for God.**"

EveryChild Tips:

- *Provide a recordable button with the verse recorded so non-verbal kids can participate.*

5 min

Preteen Discussion Questions

What You Need

No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Why do you think Jesus chose someone like Matthew, who wasn't very popular, to follow Him?
- What do you think it means to "live for God" instead of living just for yourself?
- What are some ways you can show love for God and others in your everyday life—at school, home, or with friends?
- Romans 12:1 says to offer your whole self to God. What might that look like for you?
- Matthew's life changed when he met Jesus. What's one change you could make this week to live more like Jesus?

5 min

Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect

What You Need

No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Encourage the kids to sit quietly for a moment.
- Challenge them to think about their unique gifts, talents, and personalities. What has God given *them* specifically? (e.g., Are they funny? A good listener? Athletic? Artistic? A leader?)
- After a moment of quiet thought, go around the circle and ask each person to “name it”—to name one way they can use their specific, God-given talents to live for God this week.
 - *Example: “I can use my sense of humor to cheer up my friend who is sad.”*
 - *Example: “I can use my artistic skill to make a card for my teacher.”*
 - *Example: “I can use my encouraging words on the soccer field with my teammates.”*
- If a kid is stuck, let the group help by pointing out a strength they see in that kid.
- **[Make It Personal] Share one of your gifts and how you plan to use it this week.**

What You Say:

“It’s awesome to hear all the unique ways God has equipped each of you. God didn’t make any mistakes. He gave you your personality and your talents for a reason. Let’s pray and ask Him to help us use them for Him this week.”

“God, thank You for making each of us unique. Thank You for the talents and gifts You’ve given us. Help us to see the opportunities You give us this week to use those gifts to show people what You are like. Help us to be brave like Matthew and follow You. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”