

Zookeeper

Bible Story: Zookeeper (Noah) • *Genesis 6–8*

Bottom Line: I should trust and obey even when others don't.

Memory Verse: "Obey your leaders. Put yourselves under their authority. They keep watch over you. They know they are accountable to God for everything they do. Obey them so that their work will be a joy. If you make their work a heavy load, it won't do you any good." *Hebrews 13:17*

Life App: Obedience—trusting those who lead you by doing what you are asked to do.

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **OBEDIENCE** and
God's character, as shown through God's big story

From the very beginning, God set up leaders on earth. We see in *Genesis 1* that God instructed Adam to rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, and the livestock that moves on the ground. Much later in the Old Testament, God called out prophets, judges, kings, and priests to lead His people. All of these leaders, although different in many ways, had one main thing in common. Their job was to follow God. An interesting pattern is revealed through their lives—when they trusted and obeyed God, the people under their leadership prospered.

Obedience is trusting those who lead you by doing what you're asked to do. God asks us to trust Him by giving us specific things to do to accomplish His work around us. He may even ask us to do something that seems too hard or too uncomfortable. But we can choose to trust that He'll work out the details and take care of our needs. Then it's easier for us to choose to obey and act on what we know, because we trust our ultimate leader.

Often it's hardest to obey when God asks us to trust another person that He has chosen to lead us. Sometimes we may wonder if they know what they're doing or if we can trust what they say. We may even think that we have a better plan. That's when we need to remember that our leaders are accountable to God (not us) for the decisions they make. Our job is to obey our leaders and, as long as their instructions line up with God's commands, do what they ask of us.

This month, let's think about how:

- (1) God desires a relationship with us. Being obedient to Him demonstrates trust and builds that relationship.
- (2) The Bible challenges us to respond to God in obedience even when life doesn't make sense.
- (3) As we trust God and obey, we become more like Jesus.

This week, we're discovering:

In this week's Bible story, God chose Noah to make an ark to save his family and the animals from the impending flood (*Genesis 6–8*). Noah, the only righteous man left on earth, had a history of trusting God, and he continued to obey God to the smallest detail while building the ark. Even when everyone else disobeyed, Noah followed God.

Our Bottom Line is: **I should trust and obey even when others don't.** It can be difficult to stand out in the crowd and feel like we're alone in our obedience. But developing a pattern of obedience might prepare us for trusting God in a moment when the stakes might be even higher.

The monthly memory verse is: **"Obey your leaders. Put yourselves under their authority. They keep watch over you. They know they are accountable to God for everything they do. Obey them so that their work will be a joy. If you make their work a heavy load, it won't do you any good." *Hebrews 13:17***

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

MC: “But despite what everyone might have been saying to Noah, the rains came down HARD.

“God kept Noah and his family safe inside the ark while it rained for 40 days! And then the rain stopped.

“Many days later, when Noah’s family and those animals stepped out of the ark, it was a brand new world. Noah and his family worshipped God right there, and God placed a rainbow in the sky as a promise to never flood the earth like that again.

“You know what amazes me about Noah? Noah did EXACTLY what God asked him to do. He obeyed God even when everyone around him didn’t. It amazes me because I remember times in my life when it was so hard to obey because no one else was! It’s not easy being the only one still working when the teacher steps out of the room or the only one clearing the table when your favorite TV show is on. But the story of Noah tells me **[Impress] I should trust and obey even when others don’t.** Can you guys say that with me?”

MC and STORYTELLER: “I should trust and obey even when others don’t.”

“The truth is, just because ‘everybody else is doing it,’ that doesn’t make it okay to disobey. You may be the only one not copying someone else’s homework. You may be the only one who doesn’t use words you know you shouldn’t. But being the only one ain’t a bad thing. Just ask Noah.”

Connecting (25-30 minutes)

Make the connection of how today’s Bible story applies to real life experiences through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. Noah, a Stand-Up Guy! (*application activity / review the Bible story*)

What You Need: “Noah’s Story” (Activity Page), paper, markers

What You Do:

Hand each child a piece of paper and put crayons or markers within easy reach so they can share. Explain that you will be reading them a story about Noah, and they will be doing things while you read. There will be some instructions about what they should say and do. Also, every time you say, “Noah,” kids should jump to their feet and say, “Noah, a stand-up guy!” and then sit back down. Practice this a few times before you start reading “Noah’s Story.”

Read the story. At the end of the story, ask kids to show each other their pictures and talk about how well they obeyed what was asked of them.

What You Say:

“Were you tempted not to obey and draw something different than what I was asking? (*Pause.*) God had a plan for Noah, and God has a plan for us too. Because of that **[impress] I should trust and obey even when others don’t.** **[Apply] I will practice saying yes to God’s way, even when it’s hard.”**

2. Trust and Obey All the Way! (*application activity*)

What You Need: A deck of cards**What You Do:**

Guide the kids to sit in a circle. Place a deck of cards in the middle. Instruct kids to take turns flipping cards over. Tell them that all of the cards are “Trust” cards except for the face cards. The jacks, queens, and kings are “Trust and Obey All the Way” cards. Tell kids that the “Trust” cards represent everyday situations when it is easy for everybody to trust God. The “Trust and Obey All the Way” face cards represent the times when it is really hard for you and others to trust and to obey. When a Trust card is drawn, the kid says, “Trust,” and says something that is easy to trust and obey, and then puts the card in the discard pile. When a face card is drawn, the kid who drew it shares about a time when it is hard to trust and obey, and then says, “But I can trust and obey all the way,” and passes the card to the person sitting to his right and that person repeats and says, “Trust and obey all the way.” The card is passed around the circle with each kid repeating, “Trust and obey all the way.” When the card gets back to the kid that drew it, it’s placed in the discard pile and the next kid takes a turn. When all of the cards have been played, all kids should stand up as fast as they can, link arms, yell, “Trust and obey all the way,” and then high-five each other.

What You Say:

“This game points out that there are plenty of times that it’s easy to trust and obey God and there are other times when it is really hard. **[Apply] The more we trust God, the easier it is to obey. Even when others are having a rough time, I need to remember [Impress] I should trust and obey even when others don’t.**”

What You Do:

Ask kids to sit with their pictures in front of them.

What You Say:

“The pictures you made today are a reminder that it pays off to obey even when others don’t. Noah obeyed and God saved him. Sometimes it is scary to obey when others don’t, because we don’t want to stand out from everybody else. It happens to all of us. **[Personalize] (Share an age-appropriate time when you chose to obey and stand out even when others didn’t.)** Can you think of a time when it is hard to stand out and obey when others don’t? *(Taking cuts in line, acting up with a substitute teacher, teasing others at lunch, etc.)*

“When I pray, you will have a chance to talk to God in a silent prayer about that situation. Let’s pray. Dear God, sometimes it is really hard to stand out and obey anyway. God, listen to the prayers of these kids now. *(Wait about 20-30 seconds.)* God, help us to obey You like Noah did. Thanks that **[Impress] I should trust and obey even when others don’t. [Apply] Help me to remember Noah and to follow his example. Amen.**”

Give each child a GodTime card and sucker as adults arrive for pick-up.