
PREPARE: LEADER DEVO

Read - Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32

As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Mark 2:14,17

Reflect - How can you live differently this week after receiving a new start from God?

- A. By showing forgiveness and kindness to others
- B. By making better choices that reflect God's love and purpose for my life
- C. By sharing with others how God has given me a new start

Pray - God, thank You for giving me a new start. Please let Your love for me spill out in my life so I can show others how Your forgiveness can change their lives too.

Prepare - How can the fact that God gives us a new start encourage us to share the good news of Jesus with others?

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Called a Tax Collector
Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17;
Luke 5:27-32

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
he is a new creation; the old
has passed away, and see, the
new has come!**
2 Corinthians 5:17

BIG TRUTH

I AM FORGIVEN BECAUSE...
God gives me a new start.

1. WELCOME & CONNECTION

Guess My Favorite Food

WHAT YOU NEED: None

WHAT YOU DO:

- Split kids into groups of 8-10.
- Tell kids that they will be sharing three sentences about their favorite foods without saying what it is.
 - **Example-** If your favorite food is pizza, you could say, "This has cheese on it, comes in slices shaped like triangles, and can have many different toppings on it."
- Then kids will try to guess what the food is!
- If time allows and kids want a challenge, tell them to use 3 words instead of 3 sentences to describe their favorite food.

WHAT YOU SAY:

- You all like some delicious food! Were you surprised by anyone's favorite food? (Allow kids to answer.) Maybe you discovered that someone else likes the same food as you or that a friend likes different foods than you thought they did. We grow closer to each other when we learn more about each other.

2. WORSHIP & TEACHING

The following before and after lesson scripts will be Large Group led. They are included in this curriculum for Small Group leader reference!

BEFORE THE LESSON: We all sin, which is when we choose to do what we think is best rather than follow what God says is best. When we ask God to forgive our sins and trust in Jesus, we get a new start too. God forgives us for all our sins, and we get a new life in Him. Everyone, say, "God gives me a new start!" (God gives me a new start!)

When an egg gets cracked, it may seem like it is ruined. However, the truth is that we can do a lot of new things with a cracked egg, like making scrambled eggs, baking a cake, frying an egg, or baking cookies. Once the egg is cracked, it can be used in many ways. Cracking the egg gives the egg a new start. God uses broken things in totally new ways for His purpose. He gives us a new start! He forgives us completely and does not hold any of our sins against us.

(Open the Bible.) The Bible is 1 book made up of 66 different books. Our Bible story today is found in three books of the Bible: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. All three of these books are found in the New Testament, which is in the second part of the Bible. These three books tell us a lot about Jesus' life while He was on earth. We learn a lot about what Jesus taught, how He changes people's lives, and how He makes people totally new.

AFTER THE LESSON: Jesus completely changed Matthew's life when He told Matthew to follow Him. Matthew was a tax collector. During Bible times, tax collectors were not honest people. They sinned by taking too much money from people and keeping the money for themselves. Jesus called Matthew to follow Him, and Matthew left everything behind when he did. Sin is when we choose to do what we think is best rather than follow what God says is best. For example, God says honesty is best, but we may be tempted to think it is best to tell a lie to keep ourselves out of trouble.

When Matthew chose to follow Jesus, God forgave Matthew's sins and completely gave him a new start. It did not matter what Matthew had done in the past. God forgives all our sins and gives us a new start when we trust in Jesus too. Everyone, say, "God gives me a new start!" (God gives me a new start!)

3. SMALL GROUPS

1. **What does it feel like to start something new, like starting a new school year, playing a new sport, or opening a new book?**
2. **The Bible tells us that, just like Jesus gave Matthew a new start, we are forgiven and given a new start when we trust in Jesus. Let's open our Bibles to Mark 2:14 and 17 and read about it together.**
 - o Invite kids to open their Bibles. Read the verse aloud, or invite a kid who volunteers to read the verse aloud. Be sure to have Bibles available for kids who need one. Help kids find the verse so everyone can follow along together.
3. **What does Jesus mean when He says that He came to call sinners?**
 - o Allow kids to answer, and remind them we are all sinners. Jesus wants everyone to come to Him.
4. **The world became broken when sin entered it. Jesus died on the cross and came back to life so everyone who trusts in Him can be forgiven of their sins. Why do we need a new start? What does it mean for God to give us a new start?**
 - o We need a new start because we are sinful, and without a new start we will be separated from God forever. Point out that getting a new start means we have new life in Jesus, and this new life lasts forever.
5. **Sometimes we can feel trapped in the brokenness of this world—in our worries, in making the wrong choices, or in our sadness. How can trusting in Jesus make our lives different and give us a new start?**
 - o Allow kids to answer. Point out that we still live in a broken world with worry, sadness, and sin, but Jesus helps us follow Him with our lives and gives us peace and comfort.

PRAY TOGETHER: God, thank You for Your plan to give us a new start. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to take away our sins so we can be forgiven. Thank You for forgiving us when we trust in You. Help us remember there is nothing we can do that is too bad for You to forgive. Thank You for loving us and giving a new start in Jesus. Amen.

ACTIVITY

Up, Down, Stop, Go

WHAT YOU NEED: None

WHAT YOU DO:

- Tell kids that they will be playing a game of opposites! Explain these commands to them and have them practice them.
 - Up = Crouch down
 - Down = Stand up and lift your hands above your head
 - Stop = Run in place
 - Go = Freeze
- Once the kids know the commands, tell them that you will be listing commands (like stop, go, down, stop, up) and they will be completing them.
- If they miss one or get one wrong, they will sit down.
- The winner of each round is the last kid standing.
- Once you have narrowed it down to one winner, restart the game and have everyone stand up to be back in.

WHAT YOU SAY:

- That game was fun and tricky at some parts!
- Are you glad that the round would re-start and you would get a fresh start?
- We won't always get things right, and our sin makes it so that we make the wrong choice a lot! But God forgives us and gives us a new start, even when we mess up!

PREPARE: LEADER DEVO

Read - Jeremiah 11:1-10; 17:1-10; 31-33

The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?

"I the Lord search the heart
and examine the mind,
to reward each person according to their conduct,
according to what their deeds deserve."

Jeremiah 17:9-10

Reflect - How can we live this week knowing God has given us a new heart?

- A. Be more thankful for the things He has provided.
- B. Be more loving to my family.
- C. Be more diligent in prayer and studying the Bible.

Pray - God, thank You for giving me a new heart that allows me to love like You. Help me to be more patient and more kind this week in my interactions with my family. Let them see You through me!

Prepare - What is different in your life now that God has given you a new heart? Has it changed how you live and how you spend your time?

BIBLE STORY

Jeremiah Told of a New Promise
Jeremiah 11:1-10; 17:1-10; 31-33

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
he is a new creation; the old
has passed away, and see, the
new has come!**
2 Corinthians 5:17

BIG TRUTH

I AM FORGIVEN BECAUSE...
God gives me a new heart.

1. WELCOME & CONNECTION

Make It New

WHAT YOU NEED: Plastic cups (sets of 10)

WHAT YOU DO:

- Split kids into groups of 8-10.
- Give each group a stack of 10 cups. Tell them that they will be working together to make a pyramid of the 10 cups. Then, they will take it down and start over. They will then rebuild their pyramid. The goal is to be the team to make the most pyramids in 3 minutes.
- Make sure all the kids are able to contribute to the stacking and that not just one kid is doing all the stacking.
- You can play again as time allows.

WHAT YOU SAY:

- You were fast with your pyramids! What was it like to start over each time? (Allow kids to answer.) Thankfully, when God gives us a new heart, it only happens once. After that, He will always guide us, refresh us, and lead us in serving Him. When we trust in Jesus, we are right away and forever changed into something totally new.

2. WORSHIP & TEACHING

The following before and after lesson scripts will be Large Group led. They are included in this curriculum for Small Group leader reference!

BEFORE THE LESSON: When we live without God, we might feel like everything is OK for a little while, but eventually, everything will start to fall apart. When we ask God for forgiveness and put our trust in Jesus, God gives us a new heart that helps us know Him, love Him, follow Him, and live the way He created us to live forever! Everyone, say, "God gives me a new heart!"

(Open the Bible.) Our story today comes from the book of Jeremiah. That is in the Old Testament, the first part of the Bible. Even though the Bible is 1 big book, there are actually 66 smaller books inside it! Jeremiah was a prophet, a person who shared special messages from God. Today, we will look at some of the words from God that Jeremiah spoke to the people of Judah. We will see how Jeremiah gave the people a message about making them totally new.

AFTER THE LESSON: God made a covenant, or a special promise, with the people of Judah. God promised He would bless them if they obeyed Him. But the people of Judah did not obey Him—they chose to sin. Sin is when we choose to do what we think is best rather than follow what God says is best. For example, God says kindness is best, but sometimes, we choose to say mean things to our siblings or friends.

Sin caused a big problem for the people of Judah. They lost their land, their money, and their freedom. Jeremiah warned the people of Judah about the bad things to come because of their sins, but his message also gave them hope. He talked about a day when God would change people's hearts and write His name on their hearts. Now, did Jeremiah mean our physical hearts inside our bodies? (No!) Instead, Jeremiah used "hearts" to mean the things we think, feel, and want.

The day Jeremiah talked about came when Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the whole world and rose again. Jesus is the One who gives us new hearts, forgiveness for our sins, and makes us part of God's family. God sent Jesus, His only Son, to live a perfect life on earth and die on the cross for our sins. Unlike everyone else in the world, Jesus is the only person who can ever live a perfect life. When we trust in Jesus, He takes away all our sins and gives us a new heart. He writes His name on our hearts and makes us His forever. Another reason God changes our hearts when we trust in Jesus is so we can follow Him.

3. SMALL GROUPS

1. **When have you replaced something old with something new? What was it, and why did it need replacing?**
2. **In the Bible, Jeremiah told people God will give them a new heart. This promise is for us too when we trust in Jesus! Let's open our Bibles to Jeremiah 17:9-10 and read about it together.**
 - o Invite kids to open their Bibles. Read the passage aloud, or invite a kid who volunteers to read the passage aloud. Be sure to have Bibles available for kids who need one. Help kids find the passage so everyone can follow along together.
3. **This passage says our hearts are deceitful and incurable on our own. Only Jesus can help us. How can we get a new heart? How can our lives change when God gives us new hearts?**
 - o Allow kids to answer. Remind them God writes His teachings on our hearts to help us love and obey Him.
4. **The passage we just read teaches that our hearts will lie to us. However, God will always remind us of the truth when we turn to Him. How can we turn to God when we have thoughts and feelings that are not true or right?**
 - o Answers may include we can turn to God by praying and asking Him for help, reading the Bible, and so forth.
5. **The Bible tells us Jeremiah told people of a new promise—that He would give us new hearts. He kept this promise when He made the way for forgiveness and new life through Jesus. This new promise is for all of us, and it makes those who trust in Jesus totally new. What is something encouraging you will remember from today? Is there anything you have questions about?**

PRAY TOGETHER: Jesus, thank You for giving Your life for ours so we could have a part in the new promise Jeremiah spoke about. God, thank You for making us totally new, forgiving our sins, and giving us new hearts when we trust in Jesus. Remind us You are the only One who can make our hearts right and that You want everyone to trust in Jesus and get new hearts. Amen.

ACTIVITY

Stick Stacker

WHAT YOU NEED: Prepared popsicle sticks

WHAT YOU DO:

- Break your group into 2 teams. Or, if your group is small, pair up with another group to compete.
- Give each group a set of popsicle sticks with the memory verse written on it, one word per stick, mixed up.
- Teams will be racing to get the sticks in order. Whichever team completes this first wins.
- **Keep it Going-** Have the teams race to put the sticks in the reverse order.

WHAT YOU SAY:

- God makes us a new creation when we trust in Jesus! We become a new creation because God forgives all our sins. Everyone, say, "I am forgiven!" (I am forgiven!) Getting a new heart from God to love Him and serve Him is also part of being a new creation. This is an amazing truth to remember!

PREPARE: LEADER DEVO

Read - Luke 5:1-11

and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Luke 5:10-11

Reflect - How does having a new identity affect how we see ourselves and others the most in your life?

- A. I am more aware that everyone I encounter is valued and loved, regardless of the circumstances.
- B. I offer more grace and compassion to others quicker than before.
- C. I have become more empowered to share God's love, knowing my identity is secure in Him.

Pray - God, please help me to live each day remembering that my identity is in You. You have given me a new life in Jesus, and I thank You!

Prepare - How do people try to find identity? How is knowing our identity is found in Jesus different?

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Called Peter
Luke 5:1-11

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
he is a new creation; the old
has passed away, and see, the
new has come!**
2 Corinthians 5:17

BIG TRUTH

I AM FORGIVEN BECAUSE...
God gives me a new identity.

1. WELCOME & CONNECTION

Tag That Animal

WHAT YOU NEED: None

WHAT YOU DO:

- Pick 3 kids to be taggers.
- Assign the rest of the kids to be animals- frogs, rabbits, penguins and elephants.
- Have all the kids who are animals stand against one wall.
- Tell them that you will call out one kind of animal to cross the room walking like their animal. The taggers will be trying to tag kids as they cross.
- If kids get tagged, have them sit out of the way at the front of the room.
- Continue playing and calling out animals until there is only one kid left.

WHAT YOU SAY:

- How did you feel when you were an animal? Was it hard to move to the other side of the room without getting tagged? (Allow kids to answer.)
- Sometimes the taggers had to work together to tag the animals, and the animals cheered one another on as they moved across the room. Working together helps us remember that we are all part of the same team. We all belong here!

2. WORSHIP & TEACHING

The following before and after lesson scripts will be Large Group led. They are included in this curriculum for Small Group leader reference!

BEFORE THE LESSON: When we ask God for forgiveness, He gives us a completely new identity that will last forever. He takes away all our sins: all the times we choose to do what we think is best rather than follow what God says is best. When we ask God for forgiveness and believe in and follow Him, we become His children. He makes us totally new and gives us a new identity. Everyone, say, "God gives me a new identity!" (God gives me a new identity!) This identity will not change like your picture in a yearbook if you go to a new school. The identity God gives you, as His child, lasts forever!

(Open the Bible.) The Bible story we will hear is written in two books of the Bible—Matthew and Luke. Even though the Bible is 1 big book, it is filled with 66 individual books that all teach us about God. The books of Matthew and Luke are in the New Testament, which is the second part of the Bible.

Matthew and Luke's books both tell us about Jesus' life on earth and how He changes our lives. The story today tells us we are totally new when we trust in Jesus. Everyone, say, "Totally new!" (Totally new!)

AFTER THE LESSON: Peter's life changed in a major way when he met Jesus on the shore that day. One night Peter went out fishing as usual, and he ended up leaving his normal life behind to follow Jesus. Jesus' miracle showed Peter that Jesus is holy. That means Jesus is set apart and different than anyone else because He is God's Son. Peter also recognized he was a sinner who needed a new identity. God gave Peter a new identity as a child of God right away when Peter chose to follow Jesus. Just like Peter, God gives all of us a new identity when we trust in Jesus.

PRESENT THE GOSPEL:

- **Circle one-** When God created the world, the first people—Adam and Eve—had a perfect identity as God's children. Everything was perfect. People knew God, knew they were His, and spent time with Him.
- **Circle two-** Then, people chose to go their own way, and sin entered the world. Sin is when we choose to do what we think is best rather than follow what God says is best. God's original design was for people's identity to be God's child and be perfect, but sin broke that identity. People turned away from following God and living as His children. Even when we try really hard to do good things, we still make wrong and sinful choices. We need Someone to rescue us from sin and give us a new identity as children of God.
- **Circle three-** God knew all of this was going to happen before He even created the world. He had a plan to give those who trust in Him new identities and make us His people again. Jesus was that plan. God sent His Son, Jesus, to come to earth and live a perfect, sinless life. Even though Jesus did nothing wrong, He took on all our sin when He died on the cross.

Thankfully, the story does not stop there. Jesus came back to life on the third day after He died, giving everyone the chance to trust in Him and be forgiven of sin. Everyone, say, "I am forgiven!" (I am forgiven!)

Peter's life was instantly changed when he met Jesus, and Jesus instantly changes our lives too when we put our trust in Him. Jesus told Peter that from then on, his job would be to fish for people—to help other people know Jesus and believe Jesus is the Son of God. Peter gave up everything in his life to follow Jesus, even the job he relied on to provide money! God offers us that same identity when we trust and follow Jesus.

When we trust and follow Jesus, we can still enjoy many of the things we did before. If you are a soccer player, a middle child, a good singer, or a helpful friend, all of those are still true. But the most important part of your identity is that you are a follower of Jesus. Come talk to me or a Leader if you would like to learn more about the new identity God has for you in Jesus. We would love to talk to you!

3. SMALL GROUPS

1. **What could happen to make us feel like our identity changes?**
 - o Allow kids to answer. Some examples include switching to a new school, changes in the family, moving to a new town, and so forth.
2. **The Bible tells us God forgives us and gives us new identities when we trust in Jesus. Let's open our Bibles to Luke 5:10-11 and read about it together.**
 - o Invite kids to open their Bibles. Read the passage aloud, or invite a kid who volunteers to read the passage aloud. Be sure to have Bibles available for kids who need one. Help kids find the passage so everyone can follow along together.
3. **Peter and Andrew left their jobs—the only way they made money—when Jesus called them. Is it worth it to give up things to follow Jesus? If so, why?**
 - o Allow kids to answer. Point out that following Jesus means saying yes to what He wants, and His plan for us is always perfect.
4. **Peter recognized he was a sinner and Jesus was holy—set apart and different than anyone else. This made Peter realize he needed forgiveness and a new identity in God. Have you realized this? What does it look like when we have new identities in God?**
 - o Allow kids to answer. Point out that God gives us forgiveness and a new identity when we trust and follow Jesus. Jesus is more valuable than any possession or identity we could have anywhere else.
5. **What is the best way we can live our lives when God gives us a new identity?**
 - o Allow kids to answer, and remind kids that Jesus calls us to tell others about Him, like Peter did after he decided to follow Jesus. Being a follower of Jesus, a child of God, and fisher of men are all part of the new identities we have in Jesus.

PRAY TOGETHER: God, thank You for giving us a new identity when we trust and follow Jesus! Thank You for taking away all our sins, making us totally new, and making us Yours forever! Thank You that no one can take away the new identity You give us. Like Peter spent the rest of his life telling people about You, help us to share who You are and about Your love and forgiveness with people in our lives. Amen.

ACTIVITY

Hoops of Fish

WHAT YOU NEED: Hula hoops, ball pit balls or ping pong balls

WHAT YOU DO:

- Split your kids into 2 teams. Tell them that they will be fishing together, relay-style!
- Put the ball pit balls in the center of your groups. Tell kids that they will be taking turns going to the middle with their team's hula hoop, and they will get one ball in their team's hoop. They will drag it on the floor back to their team. Then the next kid on the team will go.
- The game is over when all the balls are gone. The team with more balls at the end of the game wins that round!

WHAT YOU SAY:

- You are all great at catching fish! Peter was a fisherman, but he left it all behind when Jesus called Peter to follow Him. God gave Peter a new identity, just like He gives to us when we trust and follow Jesus. Like Peter, we can tell others about Jesus.

PREPARE: LEADER DEVO

Read - Joel 1-3

You will have plenty to eat, until you are full,
and you will praise the name of the Lord your God,
who has worked wonders for you;
never again will my people be shamed.
Then you will know that I am in Israel,
that I am the Lord your God,
and that there is no other;
never again will my people be shamed.

And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved;
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
there will be deliverance,
as the Lord has said,
even among the survivors
whom the Lord calls.

Joel 2:26-27, 32

Reflect - How does knowing that God gives me hope change the way I live?

- A. I can face challenges with God's strength and not my own.
- B. I can share hope confidently with people who are struggling.
- C. I can trust in God when life feels uncertain or overwhelming.

Pray - God, thank You for giving me the hope that can only be found in Jesus and His forgiveness. I can live confidently knowing that Your grace and forgiveness cover my mistakes. Please help me share that hope with everyone that I meet this week.

Prepare - How can we share the hope of Jesus this week? Who is the one person in our lives that needs to find freedom in the hope Jesus provides?

BIBLE STORY

Joel, the Prophet to Judah
Joel 1–3

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
he is a new creation; the old
has passed away, and see, the
new has come!**
2 Corinthians 5:17

BIG TRUTH

I AM FORGIVEN BECAUSE...
God gives me a new hope.

1. WELCOME & CONNECTION

Paper Pumpkin Battle

WHAT YOU NEED: Orange paper, markers

WHAT YOU DO:

- Give each kid a half sheet of orange paper.
- Have kids write their name and their favorite candy on their paper.
- Then they will crumple their paper into a ball. This is their “pumpkin”.
- Split the kids into 2 teams down the middle of the room. Set a timer for 1 minute. Tell kids that they will be throwing their pumpkins to the other side of the room.
- The side of the room with less pumpkins on it at the end of the minute wins. Have kids pick up the paper pumpkins and open them. Call on some volunteers to read what candy is written on the paper they are holding.
- Have kids smooth out the papers and write on the blank side what their favorite thing is to do in the fall.
- Have them re-crumple their papers and set a minute timer again. Repeat throwing battle.

WHAT YOU SAY:

- Did you learn anything new about anyone? (Allow kids to answer.) It was so cool to hear all the great things about each of you! We all belong here. Learning new things about each other is just one way to bring us closer. God made us all unique!

2. WORSHIP & TEACHING

The following before and after lesson scripts will be Large Group led. They are included in this curriculum for Small Group leader reference!

BEFORE THE LESSON: Sin is when we choose to do what we think is best rather than follow what God says is best. For example, God says showing respect to teachers is best, but sometimes, we are disrespectful. When we believe in Jesus and follow Him, we have a new hope because God is always with us, and He always forgives us when we ask. When we believe in Jesus, we can have this new hope of life with God now and forever! This is great news because we can always look forward to His love and forgiveness. We know we can have hope in God, and we can trust Him to always be loving, faithful, and the God who keeps His promises. The hope we have in God is so much better than any hope we could have in this world.

(Open the Bible.) Today, we are going to talk about a man named Joel. He was a prophet, a person who shared special messages from God. Joel was given special messages from God to share with God's people. Our story comes from all three chapters in the book of Joel. Joel is one of many smaller books that make up the entire big book of the Bible. The book of Joel is in the Old Testament—the first part of the Bible. Let's see what Joel says about God making us totally new.

AFTER THE LESSON: God's people were doing what they wanted to do, and they deserved judgment and punishment for their sins. Sin is when we choose to do what we think is best rather than follow what God says is best. God's people deserved judgment and punishment for their sin, but God also offered them forgiveness. After Joel gave his special message from God to His people, they turned away from their sins and asked God to forgive them. When God forgives us instead of punishing us, this is called mercy. When God gives us love we do not deserve, this is called grace.

Before God even created people, He knew they would sin and follow their own desires. But God had a plan for us—Jesus, God's only Son, came to earth and lived a perfect life. Then, He died on the cross to take the judgment, or punishment, for our sins. Jesus rose again on the third day, ultimately conquering sin and death. God gives His grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love through Jesus. When we believe in and follow Him, we can be forgiven forever. We can have hope and look forward to life now and forever with God because of our forgiveness. Everyone, say, "I am forgiven!" (I am forgiven!) Because those in Christ are forgiven, we have a new life in God now and forever.

3. SMALL GROUPS

1. **When is it easy to forgive someone? When is it more difficult?**
2. **The Bible tells us God totally forgives us when we trust and follow Jesus. This offer is for everyone. He wants to give all of us a new hope. Let's open our Bibles to Joel 2:26-27 and 32 and read about it together.**
 - o Invite kids to open their Bibles. Read the passage aloud, or invite a kid who volunteers to read the passage aloud. Be sure to have Bibles available for kids who need one. Help kids find the passage so everyone can follow along together.
3. **The amazing promises from God in these verses are for all who call on the name of the Lord. This is true for all of us who trust and follow Jesus. How is the hope God gives us different than the hope the world gives us?**
 - o Allow kids to answer. Point out we can fully trust in God's hope because we know He is always faithful to His promises. Also, His hope will never end.
4. **Having hope is easy when good things are happening but hard when life is difficult. What can help us remember our new hope when life is difficult?**
 - o Allow kids to answer. We can pray or read our Bibles to remember the hope God gives us and to remember that God will always be with us..

5. **Not only does God give us a new hope when we trust and follow Jesus, but He also forgives all our sins. How can this hope of forgiveness help when we make wrong choices?**
 - o Allow kids to answer. Tell kids God does not count any of our sins against those who trust in Him. He takes our sins away so we can have life with Him forever.
6. **What can we do when we make wrong choices?**
 - o When we make wrong choices, we can turn to God for forgiveness. When we trust in Jesus and ask for forgiveness, God forgives—forever.

PRAY TOGETHER: God, thank You for the hope You give. Thank You that it will never go away or disappoint us. We can always count on You and hope in You because You are always faithful. Help us remember the hope You give us when life gets hard. Thank You for always being with us and for giving us life forever with You when we trust and follow Jesus. Amen.

ACTIVITY

Prophet's Traffic Light

WHAT YOU NEED: Traffic light printable, red, yellow and green circles, glue sticks and markers

WHAT YOU DO:

- Give each child a traffic light printable.
- Have them glue the top circle to be red, the middle to be yellow, and the bottom to be green.
 - o **SAY: Today, we heard the prophet Joel's message from God to the people in Judah. His message had a warning, a choice, and a promise!**
 - o **What was Joel's warning?** (The Day of the Lord is coming. The Lord will come to judge the nations.)
 - o **What was the choice?** (Turn your hearts back to God.)
 - o **What were God's promises?** (To give us a new hope and forgive all our sins when we trust in Him!)
- Have the kids write "WARNING" on the red circle, "CHOICE" on the yellow circle, and "PROMISE" on the green circle.
- This can help them to remember that Joel was sent by God to give the people of Israel a message to turn back to God.

WHAT YOU SAY:

- Take your traffic light home and hang it where it will remind you that God gives you warnings, choices, and promises. You can always choose to turn from wrongdoing and do what is right in God's eyes!