

Alley SG—July 10th-12th, 2021

Today's Bible Story: One Step at a Time (Peter Walks on Water) • Matthew 14:22-33

Today's Key Question: What distracts you from focusing on Jesus?

Today's Bottom Line: Stay focused on Jesus.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.* Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

1. Just for Fun

What You Need: "One Word Lyrics" Cards (1 set of cards per Group), Paper, Pen

What You Do:

- Form two teams.
- Ask each team to write the names of five songs they are sure the other team will be familiar with.
- Instruct them to do this quietly to keep the list hidden from the opposing team.
- Song choices can include familiar church songs, pop music, simple preschool songs, patriotic songs—anything the group knows well enough to sing.
- Take a quick look at each team's playlist to make sure they are good/appropriate choices. Make changes or suggestions as needed.
- Collect each team's playlist then come together.
- Place the "One Word Lyrics" cards from the Activity Page face down in front of the teams.
- Begin the game by asking one team to choose a card from the pile and show it to their team.
- Point to one of the song titles on their list.
- Explain that as a team, they must sing the song you selected replacing all of the original lyrics with the ONE word on the card they drew.
- They must sing their song straight-faced, without laughing or smiling.
- Teams will start the game with 25 points but lose a point for each kid who gets distracted and laughs before the opposing team guesses the song being sung.
- Switch and repeat by letting teams take turns drawing a card and singing a song from their playlist.
- Determine the winning team based on the highest number of remaining points.

2. Take a Snapshot

What You Need: Foam Dice (1 per group), "Music Score" Page (1 per kid), pens

What You Do:

- Give each kid a pen and a copy of the "Music Score" Activity Page.
- Instruct kids to write on the line beside each staff something that takes up their time during a typical day.
 - They don't need to include hours that they sleep.
 - Examples might be homework, after-school activities, sports, reading, practicing an instrument, school, hanging out with friends, watching TV, playing video games, eating, etc.

- Ask kids to draw musical notes on the lines or spaces of each staff to indicate how much time they give to each of the areas they labeled on the left. (Point out the “key” at the bottom, indicating how much time each music note represents.)
- Take turns rolling the die.
- Based on the number rolled, ask kids to discuss (together as a group) their answers to the following questions. (If they roll a 3, they will discuss the third staff line on their music score. If they roll a six, they will discuss the sixth line, etc.)
 - How might this activity potentially distract you from God or make it hard to stay focused on Him?
 - How can you keep your focus on God during this activity?
- Continue until you’ve discussed a variety of activities.
- Set aside the “Music Scores” for use later in “Make it Personal with Prayer.”

3. Discussion Questions

Ask:

- What does it mean to stay focused on Jesus?
- How can you tell if you are staying focused on Jesus?
- Why is it important for followers of Jesus to stay focused on Him?
- Do you think it’s possible to stay focused on Jesus ALL of the time? Why or why not?

4. Verses to Take with You

What You Need: Bibles, wide craft sticks (40 per service), permanent markers (8 per group)

What You Do:

- Set up four verse stations with the following supplies. (Enlist kids’ help with setup.)
 - Bible
 - 10 wide craft sticks
 - Permanent markers
- Ask kids to choose a station or form teams and assign each to a station.
- Assign one of the verses below to each team.
 - Colossians 3:2
 - Hebrews 10:23
 - Psalm 119:2
 - Jeremiah 17:7
- Instruct kids to look up and read their verse then work together to write it on nine of the WIDE craft sticks.
 - They can divide up the words and phrases in whatever way they choose.
 - Use the tenth wide craft stick to write the reference that goes with their verse.
- Direct teams to mix up the order of the craft sticks then place them face up on the ground.
- Ask teams to move to a different station.
- Explain that they should work together to figure out the correct arrangement of the craft sticks.
- When they think they have all the craft sticks in order, they can look up the verse to make sure.
- Remind kids to close the Bible when they finish and mix up the craft sticks for the next team to arrange before moving on.
- Continue rotating until teams are back at their original station.

- Come together and let each team give a short summary or paraphrase of their verse. They can look it up and read it aloud if needed.
- Ask:
 - When you find yourself forgetting to include God in your choices, how does this verse help you know how to bring God back into your focus?
 - Why is it important to have friends who don't pull you away from God?
 - Who do you know that can help you keep your focus on God?
 - What would you say is the first or most important step when it comes to focusing on Jesus?

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: "Music Score" from "Take a Snapshot"

What You Do:

- Give each kid their "Music Score" from "Take a Snapshot."
- Encourage kids to look over the activities they wrote on their "Music Scores" then pray and ask for God's help to stay focused on Jesus as they participate in those activities this week.
- Invite those who are willing to pray out loud for one another.

What You Say:

"Dear God, it's so easy for us to turn our focus off of You and make other things bigger or more important than our relationship with You. Help us to not focus on our fears and problems this week but keep our eyes on You. Remind us to invite You into our day-to-day activities and choices by remembering that You are with us wherever we go. Amen."