

DAY 1 LESSON GUIDE

i wonder...

THE BIG IDEA

I wonder what makes my story unique?

THE BIBLE

Created and Saved by God:
Ephesians 2:4-10

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

VIDEO | Countdown to Wonder

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play today's intro video to pump kids up before your program begins!*

MUSIC | Worship in Wonder

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Lead kids into wonder-filled worship with our I Wonder theme songs! Consider also adding the following to your praise-list: "[God of Science](#)," "[We're Alive \(Ephesians 2:4-5\)](#)," and "[We Are His Workmanship \(Ephesians 2:10\)](#)."*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Add these songs to the pre-service mix or use them during worship: "[God of Wonders](#)," "[Countless Wonders](#)," or "[Wonder](#)."*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Use simple, repetitive actions. Provide space for them to jump or move the way they need to move, and make sure to include kids in wheelchairs. Have noise-canceling headphones available.*

ACTIVITY | Straw-ry Rockets

- Welcome to Day 1 of *I Wonder!* Today we are going to wonder about the unique story God is telling with each of our lives and how our story might connect with God's big story of salvation through Jesus.

- Let's start by creating something that tells a little bit of our stories—our very own “straw-ry” rockets!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Print and distribute one rocket cut-out to each kid. Have them draw a picture of themselves inside the window, write or draw a few clues about themselves anywhere on the rocket, and then color and decorate it. Afterward, have them attach the bulb of a plastic pipette to the back of their rocket, so the open part of the pipette bulb is facing down. When everyone is ready, have each kid insert their straw into the bulb and blow into their straw to launch their rocket. You could have them compete to see whose rockets go the farthest or highest, or use this as an icebreaker, where kids try to figure out who the nearest rocket belongs to based on the design. Check out [this site](#) for more detailed instructions.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *In addition to or in place of this activity, have preteens write their name down along the vertical edge of a piece of paper and write one unique characteristic, ability, or fact about themselves that starts with each letter of their name.*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Partner kids with peers or leaders to help with cutting and writing, or have a few rockets pre-made. Different-sized straws may be needed.*

ACTIVITY | STEM Self-Portraits

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Take the glass or acrylic pane out of each 4x6 picture frame and replace it with a sturdy piece of cardboard inside the frame. Using a variety of different small objects, kids will create their [own self-portrait](#) inside a picture frame.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Have preteens try to create their self-portraits using their fingerprints and thumbprints!*
- God created each one of us special and unique. No two people are exactly the same—even twins! God did that on purpose!
- Not only are we physically unique but each of our lives and stories are different, too.
- I wonder how God made you unique. Turn to a buddy and tell them something that makes you one-of-a-kind!
- **What unique qualities or features has God given you?**
- **How can those qualities or features be used to tell your unique story?**

QUESTION | Have you ever wondered?

- Science is all about asking questions to find out how and why things work the way they do. Discovering the temperature at which water boils or how infections spread all began with asking the right questions!
- **Have you ever wondered about how or why something happens?** Let's share as many as we can think of. Your questions can be serious, like, *How do dreams work?* Or something silly, like, *Do penguins sneeze?*
- Those are some good questions! There are endless questions we can ask about our universe, but **have you ever stopped to wonder about how and why God loves you so much?**
- Today our Bible story is going to tell us that God created and saved us through Jesus. And while that's true for everyone, each of us were created and saved for a specific purpose. Because of Jesus, we each have a unique story to tell!

- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Give preteens three to five minutes to write out as many questions of wonder as they can on sticky notes. When time is up, have them stick their notes on a large poster with a question mark drawn on it, completely covering the question mark with sticky notes.

BIG IDEA | I wonder what makes my story unique?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Distribute the Big Idea printables and have kids color and decorate the airplane template. Then fold the paper airplane together step-by-step. The completed airplane should show the day's Big Idea. Have kids shout the Big Idea together as they throw their airplanes into the air!
- Today's Big Idea is: **I wonder what makes my story unique?**

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SKIT | Adventures in Wonder Lab

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Perform or play a pre-recorded video of today's theme skit.

BIBLE STORY | Created and Saved by God

- Hi everyone! Today you are all researchers in our Bible lab! As such, we are going to work together to find evidence that helps us answer the question of the day. Once we collect all our data, we can draw a conclusion about our initial question. Let's get started!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Put on a lab coat, goggles, and nitrile gloves for each week's Bible teaching. Place or project an image of a chalkboard behind you with the following words on it: Question, Data, Conclusion. Ask for an adult or kid volunteer to put on a [robot helmet](#) (or make one) to become "Bible Bot" and read Ephesians 2:4–10 in a robotic voice when prompted.
 - ✂ **PRESCHOOL HACK:** Busy hands = focused minds! Preschoolers can build [a sticker robot](#) while you tell the Bible story.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Utilize [story-sequencing pages](#) to help kids focus and have an easier outline to follow. Have the initial question, two to three key points, and Big Idea pre-printed. They can be glued, taped, or adhered to poster board or foam core with [Velcro dots](#).
- Step one. Today's Big Idea is: **I wonder what makes my story unique?** [Write the Big Idea on the board next to "Question."]
 - Now that is an intriguing question! By "story", of course, we mean what we can tell others about our lives—especially the parts about being a part of God's family.
 - The word "unique" tells us that our stories are somehow all different from each other's. That means no two stories—like no two people—are exactly the same.
- Step two. Let's collect some data! For that, we turn to the Bible. [Write Ephesians 2:4–10 next to "Data."]
 - **Bible Bot, what does it say in Ephesians 2:4–7?** Paul is telling the Ephesians (and us!) to remember that God loves every person on earth so much that God sent Jesus

to die for the sins of the world. Jesus was perfect and without sin, but by dying and coming back to life, all people have a chance of knowing God.

- God didn't have to do this, so Paul reminded the Ephesians that they were saved by grace. **Do you know what grace is?** It's a word we use to describe what happens when we get something we don't deserve. For example, we might expect to get a gift when it's our birthday or if we follow directions. But what about when we're not doing anything special or what about when we misbehave? Would you think you deserve a gift then? No, right? But that's what grace is.
- **Ok, Bible Bot, how about Ephesians 2:8–10?** Humans don't deserve God's grace, because of sin. Sin is anything that goes against what God wants us to do. The sin in our lives means we deserve to be separated from God forever. But God gave us grace and saved us from sin. We do not deserve it, but God *gives* it to us anyway. That's right! God gives it to us! For free!
- Nothing we do can do will earn us this grace. No matter how smart, kind, or good we are . . . no one can say that they got saved on their own. It's God's gift to us.
- Step three. What can we conclude about our question: **I wonder what makes my story unique?** *[Write the word "Purpose" next to "Conclusion."]*
 - Before God saved us, God created us. Each of us are created with a special purpose. We are God's handiwork and masterpiece. God created each one of us to do a special job. When we share our story, we are telling others about God.
 - Your story is made unique by God creating and saving you for a reason—a purpose designed especially and only for you!

ACTIVITY | Moving Stories

- As you think about your unique story, think about ways you can share it with others. Storytelling isn't just words. It's motion, too! When you tell a story, you use your mouth, yes, but also your arms, legs, and heads.
- Let's practice being storytellers by playing this fun game!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask for a few volunteers to come to the front and line up on one side of the room. Give each volunteer one of the scenarios below and have them walk across the front of the room like they're in that story. Use the following or make up your own:*
 - You are walking through a foot of snow.
 - You are walking across a scorching hot desert.
 - You are walking barefoot through a lake filled with JELLO.
 - You are walking home from school after you had a very bad day.
 - You've injured your right leg and it's in a cast.
 - You're sneaking past a pack of sleeping wolves.
 - ✂ **PRESCHOOL HACK:** *Simplify the scenarios for preschoolers, or use picture cards of emotions (like these) or images of animals as prompts for them to participate in this activity.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Turn this into a type of Charades by having the audience guess what scenario you gave the volunteers. You can also have preteens suggest their own scenarios.*

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Provide slides, posters, or cards with the story on it so they can see as well as hear the scenario.*

- **What made each of these stories unique? How did you show that in how you walked across the room?**
- In order to make your story believable, you had to “walk the walk” and convince us of what was happening. We have to do the same with our walk with Jesus. We can show our stories through our actions and how we live our lives!

OBJECT LESSON | Created for Good Works

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Lay out a bunch of everyday items that are typically found in a specific room in the home (e.g., a framed painting, broom, hanger, plunger, frying pan, hair dryer, remote control).*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Have kids stand in the front and hold the items or set up a playhouse in the corner so they can actually put the items in different spaces of the house.*
- **In what area of the home would each of these items be used to the fullest?**
 - It’s true that some of these things could be used in more than one place. But it wouldn’t really be living up to its fullest potential or original purpose.
 - You *could* put a painting in the closet, but what good would it do there? The painting would be much better hung up on the wall where it could be seen and enjoyed.
- Each of these things has a specific purpose and even if it could be used in other places, it shines when it’s being used the way it was intended.
 - The same is true for you. We are God’s masterpiece and we shine when we live out the purpose God has given to us.
- God designed you thoughtfully and intentionally. You were each created with specific gifts, talents, abilities, and personalities. You were put in a specific place, too, not to be hidden away. God wants you to use everything you have, including your experiences, to share your unique story.
- **Have you ever wondered what makes your story unique?**

PRAYER

- God, as we wonder what makes our story unique, you show us that you created and saved us for a purpose. Help us to be brave as we share our stories, so more people can come to know your story. Amen.

ACTIVITY | Play Stations

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *See the “Play Stations” section for some ideas for this free play segment. You can set up the same stations every day or change them up for each session. Let kids float around between stations freely, but designate leaders to supervise. Some ways to monitor the flow is to tell the kids that each station cannot exceed a certain number of kids (e.g., 5-6), so if they see a station that is full, they can go to another one. If you feel there is a station that is more popular, set a timer for how long kids are allowed to stay, or ensure them that the station will be back the next day.*

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

VIDEO | Countdown to More Wonder

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play today's teaching video to give kids a little bit of a break before continuing on with the program.*

SNACK | STEM Appétit!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Follow [these instructions](#) to help kids create their own butterfly lifecycle snack.*
- **Do you know the lifecycle of a butterfly?**
- The process a caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly is called metamorphosis. A butterfly egg takes about a month to develop. That might not seem like a lot of time to us, but it's pretty much a lifetime for a butterfly.
- Our unique stories will develop all throughout our lifetime as well. Be on the lookout for God working in major ways and be ready to share that with others.

REFLECTION | What Makes My Story Unique

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give each kid a [plastic test tube](#) and a small slip of paper (quarter-page). Have them write "My story is unique because . . ." and complete the sentence with factoids about themselves or something they learned today (e.g., "God saved me and gave me a purpose"). Then have them roll up the paper and put it inside the test tube. Allow kids to take their test tubes home to help them remember the Big Idea.*
 - ✂ **PRESCHOOL HACK:** *Let preschoolers glue a photo of themselves (polaroid or printed) on a paper that says, "I wonder what makes my story unique?" Upon pick-up, or in your communication with families and caregivers, instruct them to write in things that make their child's story unique.*
- You might not feel like you have a special purpose yet. Maybe you think you're too young, too shy, or not important enough. But God created you exactly as you are, saved you, and prepared a purpose for you that only you can fulfill.
- Maybe it won't happen anytime soon, but know that God has something unique planned just for you. So take pride in the special story God is writing through your life.
- Keep this in mind the next time you think to yourself, **I wonder what makes my story unique?**

RESPONSE | God's Laboratory

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids fill up their printable with words, phrases, or pictures that make them unique, or describe a time they were able to do something special for God. If possible to hang items from your ceiling, punch a hole in the top of each one, thread it with yarn, and hang it. Otherwise, you can attached the completed printables to the wall.*
- We weren't created by God in a lab through a series of experiments. God designed each of us and created us exactly the way we are. But our story is not just about how we were made. It's about what we were made for.

- Today's Big Idea is **I wonder what makes my story unique?**
- In Ephesians 2:4–10, we talked about being saved through God's grace and not by anything we did to earn or deserve it. Even though we didn't do anything to have God save us, we can do something now that we know God saved us!
- The things that make each of our stories unique are the special things God chooses to do through us. Maybe your story is unique because of . . .
 - A special ability you have.
 - How you came to believe in God.
 - Where you were born.
 - The language you speak.
 - The number of people in your family.
- Whatever it is, take a moment and thank God for allowing it to be a part of your story.

MEMORY VERSE | STEM-ory Stack

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Split kids into teams and give each team a stack of 20 to 30 plastic cups. First have the kids write one word of the memory verse on each cup. Then each team should try to build the tallest tower possible, placing the cups in the order of the memory verse. The catch is they need to use a device other than their hands to complete this task (e.g., [grabbers](#), tongs, clamps, or clothespins).
 - ✂ **PRESCHOOL HACK:** Create a robot-themed sensory bin (or bins) [like this](#). Write the memory verse word by word on a repeating item like a certain shape from [these foam shapes](#). Tell your preschoolers to find all the pieces. When they are done help them put the pieces in the correct order and read the verse with them.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Have the memory verse pre-printed on parts of robots and have the kids glue the robot onto paper or stick magnet robots to cookie sheets.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- What has God done for us even though we make mistakes?
- How have we been saved?
- Why did God create us?
- Read Ephesians 2:8–9. Why do you think God saved us by grace through faith instead of through our own works?
- What do you think it means to be “God's handiwork”?
- What is something that happened in your life that shows that God was a part of that story?
- Who are some people you can share your story with?

ACTIVITY | God's Handiwork

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a copy of the printable. Have kids color or paint the parts then stamp their handprint in the middle to create a rocket.

- Our memory verse, Psalm 40:5a, says “Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us.”
- One of the wonders God has done was creating you! We read in Ephesians 2:10 that we are God’s handiwork. This means that we’ve been made by God’s own hands. How cool is that?
- When we begin to wonder what God can do in and through our unique stories, our lives have the chance to—like rockets—launch into things that are out-of-this-world amazing!

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Instead of a rocket, have a printable for preteens that is a silhouette or outline of a body, and have them draw in body parts: eyes, lips, mouth, fingers, feet, toes. Using facts from [this site](#), have preteens write the corresponding unique trait with each line on the picture.*

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 40:5a (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Practice the memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we’ve provided.*