

BEYOND BELIEF!

The Universe of God



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Daily Overview for *Beyond Belief!*

Daily Guide	Scripture	Title	Theological Summary	Campers Will
Day 1	Psalms 139	What If We Belong to God?	God created us so that God can love us and know us intimately. Nothing we can do can change God's intimate love for us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn that God already knows and loves them be assured that God knows the hopes and fears they bring to camp get to know each other as children of God experience welcome and hospitality
Day 2	Luke 1: 35-55	What If God Is Bigger?	God chooses each of us to make God's love bigger, and today is a day to invite campers to celebrate the ways God's love can be made bigger by each of them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn that God is bigger than what has been and what we imagine will be explore the vastness of God's creation discover amazing visions of God's people that have already come to pass wonder about what else they may still discover about God claim discovery about God as a journey with no end
Day 3	Mark 2:1-5	What If Hope Is Real?	Jesus affirms that trusting in and acting on behalf of hopeful instincts is a powerful way to embody faith.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn that hope is a necessary force in our faith lives learn that hope can always be found and is a sign of God's presence learn hope pushes us to innovate and create new solutions to the world's problems learn where our hopes align with God's hope and seek to align them further
Day 4	John 6: 1-14	What If There Is More than Enough?	When we wonder, "will there be enough?" Jesus shows us that we already have more than enough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> see that God provides us tools to be who we need to be experience that the more we trust God's presence in our lives, the more we find ourselves guided toward abundance and peace find that combining their gifts and passions with God and others is all that is needed to accomplish our hopes learn that even if we aren't satisfied with our own talents personally, God will find a place where we can contribute
Day 5	Mark 7:24-30	What If We Speak Up?	If even Jesus can have his mind opened by fearlessness in the face of injustice, just imagine how big God's grace must be!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discern God's way for the world find the courage to use their gifts as God's voice in the world reflect on where the world needs them most claim personal passion as it connects with God's vision for the world
Day 6	Matthew 5: 13-16	What If We Change the World?	Jesus encourages us to embrace the ways that God wants to use us to make the world a better place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn that responding to God's call can make a difference imagine the world as God intends learn that God's Spirit is alive in us find their community's support in changing the world
Day 7	Luke 10: 1-9	What If We Go Beyond?	As you send your campers out into the world, remind them that they do not go alone; there is nowhere they can go that God doesn't go with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> believe in God's power to work through them know they go into a world that is already bigger than it was a few days ago see beyond today go to proclaim God's vision for the future and invite others to participate

Images for Each Day

These images represent the themes of each day of *Beyond Belief!* They are simple to reproduce and they can be found in the Art folder.

Day 1



Day 1: What If We Belong to God? Psalm 139

Day 2: What If God Is Bigger? Luke 1: 35–55

Day 3: What If Hope Is Real? Mark 2:1–5

Day 4: What If There Is More than Enough? John 6: 1–14

Day 5: What If We Speak Up? Mark 7:24–30

Day 6: What If We Change the World? Matthew 5: 13–16

Day 7: What If We Go Beyond? Luke 10: 1–9

Day 2



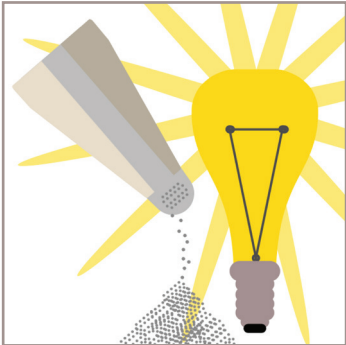
Day 5



Day 3



Day 6



Day 4



Day 7



Staff Devotions

Day 2: What If God Is Bigger?

Rodger Nishioka, Presbyterian Church, USA

It was the closing worship on the last evening of camp and Marty was in tears. I could see him off to the side of the gathering. At first, he was just sniffing; then, as the worship went on, I could see his shoulders shaking. This handsome, big, high school guy was sobbing. People around him were glancing his way. I moved over next to him, put my arm over his shoulder and whispered, "Marty, what's wrong?" And through his sobs, he choked out, "It's all coming to an end." I whispered back to him, "I know, Marty. But we can't stay here. We are supposed to go out to the world. That's what this whole week has been about." "But, don't you see?" he said sadly. "This is it. I will never feel this close to God again in my whole life." I remember looking at him and saying to him, "Oh no, Marty. Just wait. God has more in store for you. It'll get even better than this." He looked at me bewildered and said, "Are you sure?" "Yes," I told him unequivocally. "I am. God is too big and too great to leave you alone."

While I love that Marty felt the closest to God he had ever felt in his life, I knew the God of the universe had greater plans. Nearly fifty years ago, an Anglican priest named J.B. Phillips wrote a book that quickly became a classic, titled *Your God Is Too Small*. In a time when scientific knowledge was on the rise and people were questioning the very existence of God, Phillips wrote, "We can never have too big a conception of God, and the more scientific knowledge (in whatever field) advances, the greater must become our ideas of God's vast and incredible wisdom." God is bigger and more faithful than we can imagine. Trust that and live it!

Luke 1:46b–49

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name."

—*What if our understanding of God is limited? I wonder how much bigger God can get?*

—*What fears do we hold onto? How might facing our fears make God bigger?*

—*What experiences in your life have magnified God? I wonder if our own potential will grow with our understanding of God?*

Prayer: *Creator God, open our eyes to the enormity of your presence. Beyond our eyes, help us to perceive you working in our lives. May our imaginations take flight and our hearts soar as we explore the universe of God and find our full potential within it.*



Day 2: What If God Is Bigger?

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Story: Luke 1:35–55

Scripture Focus: Luke 1:46–47

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...”

Daily Prophet: Elizabeth

Theological Summary: God chooses each of us to make God’s love bigger, and today is a day to invite campers to celebrate the ways God’s love can be made bigger by each of them.

Today, campers will...

- learn that God is bigger than what has been and what we imagine will be
- explore the vastness of God’s creation
- discover amazing visions of God’s people that have already come to pass
- wonder about what else they may still discover about God
- claim discovery about God as a journey with no end

Daily Activities

- **Make Bread** #CREATE #LEARN #SERVE Baking bread
- **Cloud Watching** #LEARN Cloud observation and identification
- **Sun Print Nature Pillows** #CREATE Make a pillow with a cyanotype
- **Explore Walk** #LEARN Intentional learning walk through camp
- **“I Wonder” Game** #PLAY Camper-directed exploration game
- **Bubbles** #PLAY Making and testing bubbles
- **Service Partners** #SERVE #LEARN Service challenge activity
- **Big and Small Group Circles** #PLAY Group challenge game

Leader Notes: God is bigger than we can imagine, and children this age will connect to this as they learn that they themselves are bigger than they think they are. They are big enough to be really helpful, they are big enough to be responsible, and they are big enough to be a best friend. They are big enough to be still and listen and look for God. Take time today to point out something that each camper does that is beyond their age-level expectation. If they are more than expected, then God must be more too.

Worship Activities

Cabin Time

As you begin the day, gather the campers in a circle and have each say something that they are looking forward to doing or being a part of for the day. Give them an outline of the day's plans, and then express your excitement about encountering God as you walk through the day. Also express excitement about getting to know the campers better and discovering the things they can do and be. Close with a prayer for the day.

Song Ideas

- "You Are Mighty"
- "All God's Creatures Got a Place in the Choir"
- "See Ya Hahmba/ We Are Singing"
- "He Is Exalted"
- "No One Will Ever Be the Same"

Prayer:

Our souls glorify the Lord,

We rejoice in God our Savior.

God sees us as we are and loves us still. We are
God's servants.

Everyone will see what God's love for us is doing
in our lives.

The Almighty makes amazing things happen.

Holy is God's name!

God's Love Is Bigger: Paper Trick

#CENTERING

Why: Seeing what is possible is hard. This activity can help the campers see even a small sheet of paper change so it can do something no one ever thought it could, sparking the campers to consider just how much more God can do with the blank pages of their lives!

Supplies: One sheet paper 8.5x11 (for moisture and durability purposes, Tyvek paper works best; it can be recycled from postal envelopes), pen, scissors

How: Write on the paper: "God's Love." Explain that God's love is bigger than one could imagine.

Say: "Though some think of God's love as small... like this piece of paper... and they wonder just how God's love could envelop all of us if it is so small...But you can help them understand... Every time you sing or pray or engage in worship with your whole hearts, every time you serve God, God's love expands into the world in new ways..." Fold the paper in half, so that it is 8.5"x 5.5". Begin by cutting a ¼ inch strip from the open side to within a ¼ inch of the fold. Then turn the paper 90 degrees and cut ¼ inch in, turn it another 90 degrees, and cut back from the fold to the uncut side leaving a ¼ inch uncut. Do this back and forth until the whole paper is cut into ¼ inch strips that are all connected. Then skipping the first strip, cut along the fold all the way through to the last strip. Do not cut the last strip along the fold. This will give you a very long continuous ribbon of paper. Then challenge the group to enter into the love of God together by opening the strip and gathering the group inside the circle of paper. Remind them that God's love is much stronger than this fragile paper, that it will wrap and carry them through all of life, that it is so large it covers the world and wraps all God's children together.

BTW: Carefully cut, an 8.5x11 page will surround about 40 campers. If you have more, select a larger size.

God Is Good Litany

#CELEBRATE

Why: To proclaim God's action over time is confirmation that God continues to work in our lives now and in the future.

How: When campers arrive to worship, hand out the "God Is Good" litany page to campers who have loud voices and are willing to stand and read aloud. You can choose staff to do this as well. Then, teach the campers the call/response:

When the leader states, "God is good...", the campers respond, "All the Time!"

When the leader says, "All the time...", the campers respond, "God is good!"

Use litany on next page.

God Is Good Litany

Begin with the first call and response, then have item (a) below read, then finish the call/response. Begin the call again, have item (b) below read, and then finish the call/response, etc. (These do not need to be all in one section, they can be spread throughout worship if you choose.)

- a. God is good... All the time! Mary was surprised by an angel, Elizabeth's baby leapt for joy to be near. It was not what they thought would happen, but... All the time... God is good!
- b. God is good... All the time! Simon and Andrew were fishing, and Jesus invited them to leave their work and follow him. It was a surprise, but... All the time... God is good!
- c. God is good... All the time! Mary and Martha were in tears, for their brother Lazarus was dead. But, then Jesus came and everything changed. Their brother Lazarus was alive again! All the time... God is good!
- d. God is good... All the time! Those who loved Jesus gathered to whisper his name and to mourn the loss of their teacher and friend. He was dead...then, he was there...alive again and walking, talking, eating, and it was the very best gift. All the time... God is good!
- e. God is good... All the time! Today, God is here, speaking, healing, calling our names. It is, and will always be, a surprise, but... All the time... God is good!

BTW: If the community has well-known call stories, add them to the litany. It makes it personal and reinforces those stories as a part of the gospel.

Story Resources

“Mary Visits Her Cousin Elizabeth,” *The Family Story Bible*, by Ralph Milton, page 158

“Mary Visits Elizabeth,” *Spark Story Bible*, by Augsburg Fortress, page 202

Daily Activities

Make Bread #CREATE #LEARN #SERVE

Why: Bread rises. One of the things that children have an easy time understanding is that baked bread is more than the sum of the ingredients that they add to create the bread. This gives you a starting place for a conversation about how God makes love expand and grow in and through them.

Supplies: Ingredients for the bread recipe you select (possible recipes can be found at <http://www.yourjstory.com/jewish/lazy-cooks-challah-bag-easy-delicious/>), bowls, measuring cups and spoons, sealable plastic bags, paper towels, water, soap, pans for bread, oven, baskets, paper to line baskets, markers, sink, towels (If you select a bread recipe that needs to be kneaded, you will need clean paper or plastic to cover the tables you work on.)

How: In coordination with the camp food preparation staff, select a bread-in-a-bag recipe from the Internet. Simple is best. Lay out ingredients in bowls with the right size measuring cups and spoons in each as in an assembly line. Divide the campers into groups of two or three. Have them wash their hands and dry them. Have them mix the ingredients in the bags, knead in bags, and put them aside to rise. Have the campers write and draw on the paper that will line the baskets. Since the bread is being shared with the rest of camp, invite them to write “A gift for you” messages on the liner paper.

Come back several hours later to finish, by placing the dough in pans and baking. After the bread is cooled, place in baskets and deliver to the other camper groups to enjoy.

BTW: Making a mess is great fun and is permissible. However, keep in mind that others will be eating this bread, so hands should be kept as germ-free as possible. As ever, check for food allergies within your group (and the rest of camp).

Cloud Watching

#LEARN

Why: This activity has two purposes: first, for the campers to learn more about God’s world and how it works; second, to engage the campers’ imaginations. Imagination is one of the most powerful tools of understanding and courage they have. And, when the adults they admire and trust engage in imaginative play, the campers will notice and will engage longer. The link to the story is that without the willingness to imagine the possibilities, to be flexible in our thinking no matter how outrageous (a woman thought to be well-past her childbearing years and a virgin having babies at the call of God), we will often miss the action of God in our lives.

Supplies: If the ground is wet, you will need tarps or blankets or towels for the campers to sit or lie on.

How: Choose a quiet place in camp where the clouds can be seen and invite the campers to sit or lie on the ground and watch the clouds. Begin a conversation about the kinds of clouds that are in the sky and what they can do. Ask the children to remember different clouds they have seen or how they knew a storm was coming by the way the sky appeared. Then, invite them to look at the sky in a different way, to see the pictures that may appear there with the help of their imaginations. Engage with them about what stories these shapes and images might tell.

BTW: Some days are cloudless. If this is the case, try lying under trees and watching the shapes their leaves and branches make and how they change in the breeze—or, you might use a light at night and make shadow puppets or shapes with your hands.

Sun Print Nature Pillows

#CREATE

Why: Seeing nature in new and different ways is key. This activity allows campers to explore objects not for their color or beauty but for the shape and shadow the objects cast. It is a different

way to see, just as you are leading them to see each other and themselves in new and different ways. They may begin to understand that they are also responsible for the shadows they cast in the world.

Supplies: Cyanotype fabric cut into pillow squares (same size or smaller than the window panes), sewing machine, thread, cotton fabric for the backing, stuffing, water, glass window panes, boards cut an inch or two larger in area than the window panes, clothesline, clothespins, needles and thread (*Note:* cyanotype kits can be purchased to treat your own fabric; to cut costs, consider making ornament-sized pillows.)

How: Have campers gather natural objects they find at camp (but *only* things found already on the *ground*—they are not to pick anything) with interesting shapes: flowers, leaves, seeds, pinecones, etc. In a dimly lit room, lay out boards and, at the last moment, place a piece of cyanotype fabric on each board. Have campers arrange their items on the fabric in an interesting pattern. Cover the fabric and objects with glass then carefully walk them outside to lay in direct sunlight. Have the campers watch the fabric change color. When the color change is complete, carefully carry boards back in dimly lit room and remove the glass and the natural objects. Have campers wash their fabrics in water until the water runs clear and hang them on the clothesline to dry. When dry, have someone sew the cyanotype fabric around 3 and ½ sides, turn inside out, and let campers stuff, and then have someone sew the opening closed.

BTW: These pillows can be gifts. You can also use cut-out letters to put the camper’s name or initials on the fabric.

Explore Walk

#LEARN

Why: Nature is as complex as the campers are. Taking time to look, listen, and touch gives them time to think and act in ways that are loving and respectful of nature and each other.

Supplies: Stethoscope, magnifying glass, binoculars, paper and pencils for all campers

How: Do a nature walk, but look for tiny things. Ask the campers to help by asking them to find something smaller than a penny, or something

rougher than a hair brush. Stop and give them each a chance to listen to the water in a stream with the stethoscope. You might also have them try to find out whether trees have heart beats, have them do rubbings of tree bark, collect a bouquet of leaves off the ground...

BTW: You may wish to invite unexpected nature enthusiasts with you, or to schedule a “chance encounter” with the cook or the camp director or chaplain as you go so you can ask them questions too.

“I Wonder” Game

#PLAY

Why: When we are allowed to wonder aloud about small things, we are better at wondering aloud about large things. If you and your campers try this, by the end of the day you should be able to wonder aloud about God and test some ideas out.

Supplies: None

How: Begin by asking an “I wonder” question, such as, “I wonder how fast our group can get to the pool,” or “I wonder if the water in the pool is colder than the water in the faucet.” Then, test the question with the following questions: “Would it be safe for our group to find out? Would everyone get to be involved? Would it help or hurt the environment?” Then, if the “I wonder” question passes the “three question test,” then you can explore more. Allow the campers to ask “I wonder” questions and explore the answers. Other questions may be: “I wonder if our group can eat a meal and leave no wasted food on our plates.” “I wonder if we can find a place in camp that echoes back our voice.” “I wonder if we could find our camp director in 5 minutes or less.” “I wonder if we can find something in nature that is shaped like an A.”

BTW: This is a great way to get from one place to another in an interesting way. It also fills in the transition times when you are early for other scheduled events.

Bubbles

#PLAY

Why: Bubbles are a delightful way to get shy children to forget their shyness and to engage more fully in play. By this time in getting to know

your campers you will notice that some are more extroverted than others. This is an activity that can level the field.

Supplies: Bubble solution, bubble wands, giant bubble maker, roll of paper towels, bottle of clean water, bucket or large pan, baby pool, small hula-hoop, small step stool, and supplies for making giant bubble wands: two drinking straws per camper, yarn, scissors

Bubble solution recipe:

- 6 cups water (distilled is best but tap water is fine)
- 1/2 cup blue Dawn dish detergent
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1 Tbsp glycerin

Dissolve the cornstarch in the water, stirring well. Then gently stir in the remaining ingredients. Avoid creating a lot of froth. Allow your mixture to sit for at least an hour, stirring occasionally if you see the cornstarch settling to the bottom.

How: Ahead of time, make a giant bubble wand for each camper by cutting yarn six to eight times longer than one drinking straw. Thread through both straws, tie a knot. Repeat, until one exists for each camper. (To use, hold the straws, one in each hand, dip yarn and straws into bubble solution and pull out into air).

Enjoy making bubbles large and small. Using the giant bubble makers, see if the group can make larger and larger bubbles. Try making bubbles with campers in them. This is done by pouring bubble solution into the baby pool, placing the stool in the center of the pool and having a camper stand on the stool. Place the hula-hoop in the solution around the camper's feet. Quickly lift the hula-hoop above the campers head and twist; the bubble should form around the camper. The paper towels and clear water are in case campers get bubble solution in their eyes when the bubbles pop.

BTW: Allowing campers to mix their own solution and then making them wait a bit to use it can be a useful moment to talk about how it takes a

while to get to know other people and to get to know God. Relationships are not instantaneous. Sometimes, we have to wait for things to settle in and to begin to work well together. Tell them that is what the chemicals in the bubble solution are doing.

Service Partners

#SERVE #LEARN

Why: It is hard to remember to say thank you to those who do little things for us. This activity helps the campers recognize the kindness they receive and give all day.

Supplies: Two snack-size sealable plastic bags per camper, 10 pennies per each pair of campers, marker.

How: At the beginning of the day, pair campers and give each pair 10 pennies and two plastic bags; one that says "give", the other says "receive." Instruct the campers that they are to give away a penny when someone does something that serves them (the campers), and they can receive a penny when someone sees them serving others. At the end of the day, the goal is to have no pennies in the give bag, and a bunch of pennies in the receive bag. At the end of the day, talk about what kind of service was given to each other. Talk about who at camp gives graciously without people remembering to say thank you. Consider with the campers the possibility of giving all the pennies to that person/people with a note of thanks.

BTW: Watch for balance through the day. If one child is not being noticed, comment on their kindness. You may wish to have extra pennies on hand for campers to refill their give bags; it can keep the kindness going longer! The empty bags would be a good thing to add to the name sign done on day one.

Big and Small Group Circles

#PLAY

Why: This activity will give you a starting point for conversation about how God's loving presence can be enlarged by the work of people who love God and share that love widely. It is a group-building challenge and an experience that can be referred to as you study.

Supplies: Ball of yarn, butcher paper, ruler, marker

How: Try to get everyone's foot on a piece of paper and then measure the outside of the paper. The goal is to make the smallest area possible for the group's "footprint." Then change the goal and see how large a "footprint" your group can have by making a circle and measuring around the outside, from foot to foot to find the largest foot print. Keep working till you have the largest. Measure the smallest and largest with your ball of yarn. Keep track of your accomplishments with your yarn, and as the day continues see if more ideas arise to widen your circle or to make it even smaller.

BTW: The group can enlarge its circle by adding people. This is the work of evangelism. At the end of the day you could give each camper an equal portion of the yarn from the smallest circle measurement and the largest circle measurement to hang on the sign they made on day.



Day 2: What If God Is Bigger?

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Story: Luke 1:35–55

Scripture Focus: Luke 1:46–47

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,”

Daily Prophet: Elizabeth

Theological Summary: God chooses each of us to make God’s love bigger, and today is a day to invite campers to celebrate the ways God’s love can be made bigger by each of them.

Today, campers will...

- learn that God is bigger than what has been and what we imagine will be
- explore the vastness of God’s creation
- discover amazing visions of God’s people that have already come to pass
- wonder about what else they may still discover about God
- claim the discovery about God as a journey with no end

Daily Activities:

- **Measure It #PLAY #LEARN** Compare sizes of lots of things
- **Magnify It #PLAY** Discuss how to magnify God
- **Rejoice in It #CREATE** Make a chain of gratitude
- **Trust It #PRAY #LEARN** Read the Bible and reflect
- **Bounce It #PLAY** Notice how differences make us unique

Leader Notes: With the story of Mary and Elizabeth it is possible that questions around pregnancy and teen pregnancy could arise. Remember to keep discussions age appropriate, while referring specific questions to families or pastors.

Worship Activities

Cabin Time

Talk about what an interruption is. Have campers and families share about a time when an interruption turned out to be a good thing. Play a game where one person starts to tell a story, and the next person in the circle has to interrupt them and make it a different story. Clap your hands to indicate it is time for the next person to interrupt. At the end, discuss whether or not they enjoyed where other people “took” the story.

Song Ideas

- “Our God” (Chris Tomlin)
- “Our God Is an Awesome God” (Rich Mullins)
- “Our God Is a Great Big God”
- “Our God Is So Big”

Prayer: God, help us remember that when something feels like an interruption in our lives, you can use that for your glory. God, keep us from boxing ourselves into a small dream, but help us to see how big you are and how big you want us to dream.

Rejoice in It

#CENTERING

Why: As humans, we are created for community. It is important to rejoice in what God has done in our lives not only individually but in community.

Supplies: Paper chains created in small group or strips of paper, tape, markers

How: If your small groups did the “Rejoice in It” activity, use this time to rejoice together as a whole group in the blessings that everyone has listed. If the activity was not done earlier, take time to let campers draw or write on the paper strips things they are grateful for, blessings, places they have seen God. Attach all the paper strips into one long chain and use this to decorate the worship area this week. Let them hang as a reminder of all that God has done in our lives.

How Big Is It?

#CELEBRATE

Why: Think about the biggest thing on Earth. It can seem overwhelming to imagine how big God is, but when compared to things we have seen that God created, it begins to become more clear that God is bigger.

Supplies: A buzzer, service bell, or some small paper cups, list of questions and facts about how big things in the world are

How: Set up like a game show and have camper volunteers and/or staff volunteers come up for a chance to push the buzzer/bell/or smash the cup. Ask the participants a question about how big something is (example: how tall is the world’s tallest man? How big is camp? How tall is the Statue of Liberty?). Share the trivia answers. For the last question, ask “How big is God?” Lead into today’s scriptures.

Story Resources

“Mary Visits Her Cousin Elizabeth,” *The Family Story Bible*, by Ralph Milton, page 158

“Mary Visits Elizabeth,” *Spark Story Bible*, by Augsburg Fortress, page 202

Worship Video

“Big God” by Jim Zarbaugh on YouTube.

Daily Activities

Measure It

#PLAY #LEARN

Why: Campers will learn how things all around them can be measured. Some things will be bigger or smaller than others, but God is still bigger.

Supplies: Tape measure, rulers (enough for each camper)

How: Have campers begin by measuring small manageable objects: their shoes, their height, or surrounding objects (chairs, tables, or outside trees, rocks). Then ask campers how this compares to a larger object, such as the camp worship center or classroom. Have them measure this larger structure to see if their predictions were accurate. Then ask them to measure something beyond what they’re capable of measuring with their tools—something incredibly tiny such as a speck of dirt or something huge such as the distance to the closest star. Then discuss how God knows every small and large part of this world we live in and how God is bigger than all of these.

BTW: Expand this discussion by asking campers to list objects or ideas from God’s creation that seem so large as to be beyond our measuring. For example: imagine how many animals live on the earth, imagine how many stars are actually in the sky, imagine measuring the gallons of water in the ocean, or counting the leaves in all the trees in all the world. God knows each one and is greater than even all this.

Magnify It

#PLAY

Why: Campers will work to magnify God’s glory in all their actions. It is important to understand that our daily actions can serve to glorify God if we think before we act.

Supplies: None

How: First discuss with campers the concept of glorifying God through our actions. And ask some campers to share ideas or examples of how this might appear in our lives: showing compassion for someone who is sad, putting others before ourselves, or being forgiving when a friend hurts us (the possibilities are endless). If campers are having trouble coming up with ideas, ask them how God treats us—with love, with grace, with forgiveness—then have them translate these ideas into actions we can take in daily life. As a second part to this activity, have campers break into small groups. Within their small group, they will come up with a role-playing scenario in which they play out an action that can glorify God.

BTW: As an extension, it would be fun to present the role-playing scenarios to the entire group, like a show and tell. The groups can even come up with two scenarios: the first showing the action without glorifying God and the second showing an action that does glorify God.

Rejoice in It

#CREATE

Why: An important part of magnifying God’s glory is rejoicing in what God has given us. There are so many things, big and small, that we can be thankful for and that come from God’s love and grace.

Supplies: Pre-cut strips of paper (about 2" wide), pens, pencils, markers, glue stick

How: Within each small group discuss the idea of rejoicing in what God has given us. Ask campers to give examples of things they are thankful for. Ideas can be abstract or concrete: “I am thankful for my family,” or “I am thankful for butterflies because they’re pretty.” Then have each group come up with as many things as possible that they are glad to have in their lives. They will write or draw each item on a strip of paper. To end the project, have the entire small group glue the strips in interlocking rings to make one long chain.

BTW: An extension of this project is to see which small group can come up with the longest chain. You don't actually need to have a contest, but instead use it as an opportunity to encourage recognition of all the good things we have in our lives because of God. During large group worship time, have each small group bring up their chain and connect it to the other small group's chains. Then stretch the chain around the room to its fullest length to visually demonstrate the vastness of all the good things God has done for us.

Trust It

#PRAY #LEARN

Why: When we rejoice in God, we are trusting in the goodness and the purpose God has for us. Even when it's hard, we should trust that God is greater than what has already been and what will be in the future.

Supplies: Bibles, pen/pencil, and paper

How: Read selections or the entire story of Elizabeth and Zacharias (choose age appropriate portions when necessary) found in Luke 1:5–64. The focus of the reading should be Elizabeth's trust in God. She believed in God's path even before her desire to have a child was fulfilled. She knew that no matter what, God would be good to her. In the end, when her son was born, she honored God's blessings by following God's wish to call him John. It was harder for Zacharias to trust God in the beginning, but by the end he too saw the goodness in God's plan. Have campers think of something in their life that frightens or worries them. Have them write it on a piece of paper and then fold it. Sharing may not be appropriate, since the topics may be deeply personal. On the outside of the paper, have campers write "I will trust in God." Then have a quiet time of prayer individually or led by a group leader to ask God for strength to trust God no matter what.

BTW: As an extension, encourage campers to keep the folded piece of paper in a safe place throughout camp. Teach them that often we need to return to prayer when we are faced with things in life that frighten or worry us, and that we can pray for strength from God as much as we need to.

Bounce It

#PLAY

Why: Talking about love can be abstract for some ages, so giving them an opportunity to use objects to visualize abstract things can be helpful.

Supplies: Balls of different sizes that bounce, one large rubber ball that is the biggest

How: Talk with campers about love and how we all show love differently. Talk about the balls representing different persons' love and show how they bounce when passed on to others by passing them on to the campers. Then take the biggest ball and explain that God's love is the biggest love and that it is for all of us. Bounce that ball around to the campers, allowing them all a chance to have it.

BTW: If possible use a ball that is big enough for more than one person to hold so that the group might all be able to together hold it.



Week 2: What If God Is Bigger?

Scripture Story: Luke 1:35–55

Scripture Focus: Luke 1:46–47

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,”

Weekly Prophet: Elizabeth

Theological Summary: God chooses each of us to make God’s love bigger, and this week is a week to invite campers to celebrate the ways God’s love can be made bigger by each of them.

This week, campers will...

- learn that God is bigger than what has been and what we imagine will be
- explore the vastness of God’s creation
- discover amazing visions of God’s people that have already come to pass
- wonder about what else they may still discover about God
- claim the discovery about God as a journey with no end

Leader notes: With the story of Mary and Elizabeth it is possible that questions around pregnancy and teen pregnancy could arise. Remember to keep discussions age appropriate, while referring specific questions to families, or pastors.

PLAN YOUR WEEK

Use the grid below as an example to help you create a visual plan for your week. (**You will want to list your own schedule and write in your choices.**) Select activities from the various listings below; feel free to add others of your own creation, as well.

EVENT	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Welcome					
Bible Story					
Early Activity					
Quiet Time					
Late Activity					
Closing Devotions					
Weeklong Project					
Daily Song					

WELCOME

How Big Is It?

#CELEBRATE

Why: Think about the biggest thing on Earth. It can seem overwhelming to imagine how big God is, but when compared to things we have seen that God created, it begins to become more clear that God is bigger.

Supplies: A buzzer, service bell or some small paper cups, list of questions and facts about how big things in the world are

How: Set up like a game show and have camper volunteers and/or staff volunteers come up for a chance to push the buzzer/bell/or smash the cup. Ask the participants a question about how big something is (i.e., how tall is the world's tallest man? how big is camp? how tall is the Statue of Liberty?). Share the answers. For the last question ask "How big is God?" Lead into today's scriptures.

BTW: Rather than asking factual questions with quantifiable answers, you could ask questions that only the campers know, such as, "who is the tallest person in your family?" or "what is the biggest building you've ever been in?"

"I Wonder" Game"

#PLAY

Why: When we are allowed to wonder aloud about small things we are better at wondering aloud about large things. If you try this, by the end of the day you should be able to wonder aloud about God and test some ideas out.

Supplies: None

How: Begin by asking an "I Wonder" question, such as, "I wonder how fast our group can get to the pool." Or "I wonder if the water in the pool is colder than the water in the faucet." Then consider exploring the question by asking more questions: Would it be safe for our group to find out? Would everyone get to be involved? Would it help or hurt the environment? Then if it passes that "three question test," explore more. Allow the campers to ask "I wonder" questions and explore the answers. Other kinds of questions may be "I wonder if our group can eat a meal and leave no wasted food on our plates." "I wonder if we can find a place in camp that echoes back

our voice." "I wonder if we could find out camp director in five minutes or less." "I wonder if we can find something in nature that is shaped like an A."

BTW: This is a great way to get from one place to another in an interesting way. It also fills in the transition times when you are early for other scheduled events.

Big and Small Group Circles

#PLAY

Why: This activity will give you a starting point for conversation about how God's loving presence can be enlarged by the work of people who love God and share that love widely. It is a group-building challenge and an experience that can be referred to as you study.

Supplies: A ball of yarn.

How: The goal is to make the smallest circle (measured by the footprint or area where the group touches the ground) and the largest footprint or radius. With all the group members touching, see how tight a circle you can form. Measure the perimeter of the group with your ball of yarn. Now, see how wide you can stretch your circle while you're all still touching. Mark on the yarn your accomplishments and as the day continues see if more ideas arise to make your circle even wider.

BTW: The group can enlarge its circle by adding people. This is the work of evangelism. At the end of the day give each camper an equal portion of the yarn from the smallest circle measurement and the largest circle measurement to wear as a bracelet.

Go Tell It

#PLAY #CREATE

Why: Telling others about God can seem complicated at times. Practicing telling others can help make it more comfortable.

Supplies: Paper and pencil, pictures (some simple pictures and maybe some more complex ones), clipboards

How: Pair campers together. Have them sit back to back. Give one camper a picture and one camper a paper and pencil. The camper with the picture must describe the picture to the other camper so

that they can draw the picture. Give the campers a chance to switch.

BTW: Simple images will work best and then, if campers are ready, a more complicated image could add some more challenge.

Strength in Community #PLAY

Why: Campers will learn that we can accomplish hard tasks with the help of others.

Supplies: Paper cups, string, rubber band

How: Have a set of six cups for each group of five or six. Give each group a rubber band with six strings tied to it (space out the strings). The task for the group is to stack the cups in a pyramid without touching anything but the string they choose that is attached to the rubber band. It will take the group to stretch the rubber band to fit around the cup and move the cups into place.

BTW: If the group is struggling, you can have fewer cups or add more people and strings to the rubber band. The more people, the easier it will be to stretch the rubber band.

BIBLE STORY

Story:

“Mary Visits Her Cousin Elizabeth,” *The Family Story Bible*, by Ralph Milton page 158

“Mary Visits Elizabeth,” *Spark Story Bible*, by Augsburg Fortress Press, page 202

Trust It #PRAY #LEARN

Why: When we rejoice in God, we are trusting in the goodness and the purpose God has for us. Even when it’s hard, we should trust that God is greater than what has already been and what will be in the future.

Supplies: Bibles, pen/pencil and paper.

How: Read selections or the entire story of Elizabeth and Zacharias told in Luke 1:5–64 (choose age-appropriate portions when necessary). The focus of the reading should be Elizabeth’s trust in God. She believed in God’s path even before her desire to have a child was fulfilled. She knew that no matter what, God would

be good to her. In the end, when her son was born, she honored God’s blessings by following God’s wishes to call him John. It was harder for Zacharias to trust God in the beginning, but by the end he too saw the goodness in God’s plan. Have campers think of something in their life that frightens or worries them. Have them write it on a piece of paper and then fold it up. Sharing may not be appropriate, since the topics may be deeply personal. On the outside of the paper, have campers write “I will trust in God.” Then have a quiet time of prayer individually or led by a group leader to ask God for strength to trust God.

BTW: As an extension, encourage campers to keep the folded piece of paper in a safe place throughout camp. Teach them that often we need to return to prayer when we are faced with things in life that frighten or worry us; and that we can pray for strength in God as much as we need to.

Magnify It #PLAY

Why: Campers will work to magnify God’s glory in all of their actions. It is important to understand that our daily actions can serve to glorify God if we think before we act.

Supplies: None

How: First discuss with campers the concept of glorifying God through our actions. And ask campers to share ideas or examples of how this might appear in our lives: showing compassion for someone who is sad, putting others before ourselves, or being forgiving when a friend hurts us (the possibilities are endless). If campers are having trouble coming up with ideas, ask them how God treats us—with love, with grace, with forgiveness—then have them translate these ideas to actions we can take in daily life. As a second part to this activity, have campers break into small groups. Within their small group, they will come up with a role-playing scenario in which they play out an action that can glorify God.

BTW: As an extension, it would be fun to present the role-playing scenarios to the entire group, like in a show and tell. The groups can even come up with two scenarios: the first showing an action that does not glorify God and the second showing an action that does glorify God.

Prop Skits

#PLAY

Why: Acting out stories can help campers understand the depth that is within the elements of the story.

Supplies: Puppets, Bibles

How: Divide the campers into groups and give them some puppets and a Bible. Assign them the scripture story of the week and charge them with creating a skit to demonstrate the meaning of the story. Save time for them to share their skits with the larger group.

BTW: You could have those who would like to, or who had a strong skit, perform the skit for the large group at a closing devotional time.

Story Senses

#LEARN

Why: Understanding what the characters in the story may be feeling can help make the story more real.

Supplies: Bible

How: Read the Bible story aloud. Have campers try to hear places where the characters may have heard, seen, tasted, felt, or smelled something. Have them raise their hand when they think they have heard a place with a sense and have them share with the group what sense they think the characters are experiencing.

BTW: Before starting the story you may want to make sure your group understands the senses and share some examples.

EARLY ACTIVITY

Measure It

#PLAY #LEARN

Why: Campers will learn how things all around them can be measured. Some things will be bigger or smaller than others, but God is still bigger.

Supplies: Tape measure, rulers (enough for each camper)

How: Have campers begin by measuring small manageable objects: their shoes, their height, or surrounding objects (chairs, tables, rocks). Then ask campers how this compares to a larger object, such as the camp worship center or classroom.

Have them guess how wide or long that bigger object is. Then have them measure this larger object to see if their predictions were accurate. Then ask them to guess the measurement of something beyond what they're capable of measuring with their tools—like a speck of dirt or the distance to the closest star. Then discuss how God knows every small and large part of this world we live in and that God is bigger than all of these.

BTW: Expand this discussion by asking campers to list objects or ideas from God's creation that seem so large as to be beyond our measuring. For example: imagine how many animals live on Earth, imagine how many stars are actually in the sky, imagine measuring the gallons of water in the ocean or counting the leaves in all the trees in all the world. God knows each one and is greater than even all this.

Rejoice in It

#CREATE

Why: An important part of magnifying God's glory is rejoicing in what God has given us. There are so many things, big and small, that we can be thankful for and that come from God's love and grace.

Supplies: Pre-cut strips of paper (about 2" wide), pens, pencils, markers, glue stick

How: Within each small group discuss the idea of rejoicing in what God has given us. Ask campers to give examples of things they are thankful for. Ideas can be abstract or concrete: for example, "I am thankful for love," or "I am thankful for butterflies, because they're pretty." Then have each group come up with as many things as possible that they are glad to have in their lives. They will write or draw each item on a strip of paper. To end the project, have the entire small group glue the strips in interlocking rings to make one long chain.

BTW: An extension of this project is to see which small group can come up with the longest chain. You don't actually need to have a contest, but instead use it as an opportunity to encourage recognition of all the good things we have in our lives because of God. If you have a large group worship time, have each small group bring up their chain and connect it to the other small

groups' chains. Then stretch the chain around the room to its fullest length to visually demonstrate the vastness of all the good things God has given us.

Make Bread #CREATE #LEARN #SERVE

Why: Bread rises. One of the things that children have an easy time understanding is that baked bread is more than the sum of the ingredients that they added to create the bread. This gives you a starting place for a conversation about how God makes love expand and grow in and through them.

Supplies: Ingredients for the bread recipe you select, bowls, measuring cups and spoons, plastic sandwich bags, paper towels, water, soap, bread baskets, paper to line baskets, markers. (If you select a bread recipe that needs to be kneaded, you will need clean paper or plastic to cover the tables you work on.)

How: In coordination with the camp food preparation staff, select a bread-in-a-bag recipe. Several are available online. Simple is best. Lay out ingredients in bowls with the right size measuring cups and spoons in each as in an assembly line. Divide the campers into groups of two or three. Have them wash their hands and dry them. Mix the ingredients in the bags, knead in bag, put aside to rise. Have the campers write and draw on paper that will line the baskets. If the bread is being shared with the rest of camp, invite them to write "A gift for you" messages on the liner paper.

If you have baking facilities, come back several hours later to place dough in pans and bake. After the bread is cooled, place in baskets and deliver to the other camper groups to enjoy.

BTW: Making a mess is great fun and is permissible. But keep in mind that others will be eating this bread, so hands should be kept as germ free as possible. If you do not have baking facilities, create a bag of dough for each camper to take home.

Service Partners #SERVE #LEARN

Why: It is hard to remember to say thank you to those who do little things for us. This helps campers recognize the kindness they receive and give all day.

Supplies: Two snack size plastic bags per camper, ten pennies per camper, marker.

How: At the beginning of the day give each camper ten pennies and two plastic bags—one that says "give," one that says "receive." Instruct the campers that they are to give away a penny when someone does something that serves them, and they are to receive a penny when someone sees them serving others. The goal is to end the day with no pennies in the give bag and a stack of pennies in the receive bag. At the end of the day talk about what kind of service was given to each other. Talk about who at camp gives graciously without people remembering to say thank you. Consider giving all your pennies to them with a note of thanks.

BTW: Watch for balance through the day. If one child is not being noticed, comment on their kindness. You may wish to have extra pennies on hand for campers to refill their give bags. It can keep the kindness going longer.

Cloud Watching #LEARN

Why: This activity has two purposes. First is to learn more about God's world and how it works. Second is to engage the camper's imagination. It is one of the most powerful tools of understanding and courage they have. When adults children admire and trust engage in imaginative play they notice and will engage longer. The link to the story is that without the willingness to imagine the possibilities, to be flexible in our thinking no matter how outrageous something seems (an 80-year-old and a virgin having babies at the call of God) we will often miss the action of God in our lives.

Supplies: If the ground is wet, you will need tarps or blankets or towels for the campers to sit or lay on.

How: Choose a quiet place in camp where the clouds can be seen and invite the campers to sit or lie on the ground and watch the clouds. Begin a conversation about the kinds of clouds that are in the sky and what they can do. Ask the children to remember different clouds they have seen or how they knew a storm was coming by the way the sky appeared. The invite them to look at the sky in a different way, to see the pictures that may appear

there with the help of their imagination. Engage with them about what stories these shapes and images might tell.

BTW: Some days are cloudless. Try lying under trees and watching the shapes they make and how they change in the breeze... or go inside and use a light to make shadow puppets or shapes with your hands.

Bigger Bigger Bigger Pretzels

Why: The rising of the dough is a good analogy for how God makes love expand and grow in and through campers.

Supplies: Canned dough or a yeast dough mix, eggs, butter, salt

How: Have campers shape pretzels using canned pizza bread or a yeast dough mix. Allow dough to rise as you do some other activity. After about half an hour, coat the pretzels with egg or butter, and sprinkle salt on them. Talk about how the dough has risen. When you bake them, they will become bigger still.

BTW: If you do not have baking facilities, you could do this activity late in the day and have campers take their pretzels home to bake.

QUIET TIME

(often this is a snack time)

Bigger Bigger Bigger Pretzels

Enjoy the pretzels campers made early in the day and talk again about how God's love expands the more we share it.

Don't Be Afraid to Eat it!

It is surprising, but many flowers are edible! Chive blossoms, chamomile, cilantro, dianthus, pansy, marigolds, nasturtium, snapdragons, and violets—provided they are grown without chemicals—can be washed and safely eaten. Check to see what is available in your area. Provide with crackers and cheese, and find out which daring campers will try tasting these beautiful blossoms!

Explore and Examine Your Edibles

Give campers interesting fresh fruits and vegetables and encourage them to dissect and notice everything they can about them. Give them plastic knives, paper plates, and magnifying glasses to cut apart and dig deeper into their treats.

Rocket Berry Skewers

This snack will take some special cutting. You will need two marshmallows, one large strawberry cut into 3 pieces, one wooden skewer, and one piece of cantaloupe cut to look like a tail fin of a rocket. Place the cantaloupe on the bottom, then the bottom third of the strawberry, then a marshmallow, followed by the middle third of the strawberry, another marshmallow, and the top third of the strawberry as the finishing piece.

Campfire Cupcakes

Take a chocolate cupcake and top with a thin layer of chocolate frosting. Place brown m&ms on the top in a circle, then take a few pretzel sticks and cross them in the middle on the top with a squeeze of red or orange frosting.

LATE ACTIVITY

Bounce It

#PLAY

Why: Love is an abstract concept, so giving campers an opportunity to use objects to visualize abstract things can be helpful.

Supplies: Balls that bounce of different sizes, with one large rubber ball that is the biggest

How: Have campers form a circle. Talk with them about love and how we all show love differently. Talk about the balls representing different persons' love and show how they bounce differently by bouncing them to the campers. Then take the biggest ball and explain that God's love is the biggest love and that it is for all of us. Have campers bounce the God's love ball around the circle, allowing them all a chance to have it.

BTW: If possible, use a ball that is big enough for more than one person to hold so that the group might all be able to together hold it.

Bubbles

#PLAY

Why: Bubbles are a delightful way to get shy children to forget their shyness and to engage more fully in play. By this time in getting to know your campers you will notice that some are more extroverted than others. This is an activity that can level the field.

Supplies: Bubble solution, bubble wands, giant bubble maker, roll of paper towels, bottle of clean water, bucket or large pan, baby pool, small hula-hoop, a small step stool.

If you want, you can create the bubble wands and the bubble solution rather than buying them. The supplies for making giant bubble wands are two drinking straws per camper, yarn, and scissors.

Cut yarn six to eight times longer than one drinking straw. Thread through both straws, tie a knot. To use, hold the straws, one in each hand, dip yarn and straws into bubble solution and pull out into air.

Bubble solution recipe:

- 6 cups water (distilled is best, but tap water is fine)
- 1/2 cup blue Dawn dish detergent
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1 Tbsp glycerine

Dissolve the cornstarch in the water, stirring really well. Then gently stir in the remaining ingredients. Avoid creating a lot of froth. Allow your mixture to sit for at least an hour, stirring occasionally if you see the cornstarch settling to the bottom.

How: Enjoy making bubbles large and small. Using the giant bubble maker see if the group can make larger and larger bubbles. Try making bubbles with campers in them. This is done by pouring bubble solution into a baby pool, placing the stool in the center of the pool and having a camper stand on the stool. Place the hula-hoop in the solution around the camper's feet. Quickly lift the hula-hoop above the campers head and

twist... the bubble should form around the camper. The paper towels and clear water are in case a camper gets bubble solution in their eyes when the bubbles pop.

BTW: Allowing campers to mix their own solution and then to wait to use it can be a useful moment to talk about how it takes a while to get to know other people and to get to know God. Relationships are not instantaneous. Sometimes we have to wait for things to settle in to begin to work well together. That is what the chemicals in the bubble solution are doing.

Land Art Messages

#CREATE

Why: Community art is a gift to share with everyone!

Supplies: What you can gather from the camp grounds without disturbing any living things (i.e., do NOT pick flowers or pull blossoms or leaves from trees).

How: Invite your campers to design and build a community art installation using only what they can gather from the camp property. For example, you can gather a huge pile of sticks, choose a place along a pathway used by other groups and lay out the outline of a heart, a turtle, or other shape and then fill it with the sticks so that it is left as a message in artwork for the other groups that will walk that path. You might gather stones and stack them like a cairn, or you could gather bamboo cuttings or other flexible materials and build an archway or a wind chime to place on camp property. Have fun looking for art messages left for you by other groups and maybe move your artwork to a new place tomorrow or the next day.

BTW: You can name your art piece and leave a sign with a place for comments (plastic bag, paper, marker) and other groups can leave you comments on your art work.

What Do You See?

#CREATE

Why: God has created so much, but we often forget to look beyond what is in front of us.

Supplies: Toilet paper rolls (two per camper), yarn, construction paper, markers, glue, tape, hole punch, scissors

How: Create binoculars.

1. Have campers attach their toilet paper rolls by tying them or taping them together, side by side.
2. Punch a hole on the outside of each roll and attach a piece of yarn to hang them around the camper's neck
3. Have the camper decorate the construction paper and then cut it to fit and wrap it around the outside of the binoculars.
4. Talk about looking beyond what's in front of us and seeing how big God's creation is.

BTW: If toilet paper rolls are hard to come by, or you have a large number of campers, you could do it with one paper towel roll and make it more of a telescope.

Towel Ball

#PLAY

Why: We are created for community and will find joy and success in community.

Supplies: Beach towels, large/giant beach ball, volleyball net

How: Divide into teams of two to four campers and give each team a towel. Have three or four teams (towels) on each side of the volleyball net. Teams will hold the edges of the towels to catch and throw the volleyball. Play the normal rules of volleyball, but the towel teams must cooperate in order to catch the ball and send it back over the net.

BTW: This game can be played with more people by putting more teams on each side of the net.

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Rejoice in It

#CREATE

Why: As humans, we are created for community. It is important to rejoice in what God has done in our lives not only individually but in community.

Supplies: Paper chains created in small group or strips of paper, tape, markers

How: If your small groups did the Rejoice in It activity earlier, use this time to rejoice together as a whole group in the blessings that everyone

has listed. If the activity was not done earlier take time to let campers draw or write on paper strips things they are grateful for, blessings, places they have seen God. Attach all the paper strips into one long chain and use this to decorate the worship area this week. Let them hang as a reminder of all that God has done in our lives.

God's Love Is Bigger

Why: Seeing what is possible is hard. This can help the campers see even a small sheet of paper change so it can do something no one ever thought it could. Just how much more can God do with the blank pages of their lives!

Supplies: One sheet of 8.5" X 11" paper (for moisture and durability purposes Tyvek paper works best. It can be recycled from one of those postal envelopes), scissors, marker

How: Write on the paper "God's Love." Explain that God's love is bigger than anyone can imagine. Some think of God's love as small—like this piece of paper—and they wonder just how God's love could envelop all of us if it is so small. But explain that God's love is ever-expanding. Every time the group sings or prays or engages in worship with their whole hearts, every time they serve God and other people, God's love expands into the world in new ways. Then fold the paper in half, longways, so it is 4.25" x 11". Cut a ¼ inch strip from the open side to within a ¼ inch of the fold. Then turn the paper and cut back from the folded to the uncut side leaving a ¼ inch uncut. Do this back and forth until the whole paper is cut into ¼ inch strips that are all connected. Then, skipping the first strip, cut along the fold all the way through to the last strip. Do not cut the last strip along the fold. This will give you a very long continuous ribbon of paper. Then challenge the group to enter into the love of God together by opening the strip and gathering the group inside the circle of paper. Remind them that God's love is much stronger than this fragile paper, that it will wrap and carry them through all of life, that it is so large it covers the world and wraps all God's children together.

BTW: Carefully cut, an 8.5" X 11" page will surround about 40 campers. If you have more, select a larger size.

God Is Bigger Tent

#P R A Y #CREATE

Why: Our God is too big for a closed worship space, so this will make a colorful open space.

Supplies: Scrap fabric, scissors, rope, permanent markers, plastic sandwich bags, strips of paper to write on, yarn, hole punch, several carabiners

How: Choose a worship space at camp to enlarge with your work. Choose a tree to be the front of the area, and as far up the tree as possible tie a rope around the tree and place on it several carabiners. To these carabiners attach long strips of fabric or rope. Make sure the fabric strips or streamers will at least reach the ground. Divide campers into several small groups, and have each group claim a couple of these fabric strips to adorn. They can add to the length of the strip. Invite the groups to take strips of colored cloth in various lengths, write prayers of praise, supplication, lament, petition on them and then tie them to the central strip like bows on the tail of a kite. Invite them to take a handful of plastic sandwich bags and paper strips with them. During the day, whenever they see something God has made that is especially remarkable, if it is lying on the ground, they can pop it into the bag, punch a hole in it and with a bit of yarn add it to the streamer (for things that are not lying on the ground, they can write down what they see on a strip of paper to attach to streamer). As they work at decorating and embellishing the streamers have them stake them out farther and farther from the central tree. Through the week the worship space will get bigger and bigger, just as their vision of God will!

BTW: For added color you can add plastic bags with tissue paper in them or wax paper with melted crayon or other items you have made in honor of God.

Scripture Scramble

#LEARN

Why: Practice is important, but so is sharing. Sometimes when we teach something we learn it even better.

Supplies: Scripture words cut into pieces, strip of paper with the whole scripture verse

How: Have campers pair up. Have one camper with the whole verse try to explain the order of

the words without using any of the words so that their partner can put the individual pieces in order. Have the pair switch roles and teach each other the scripture.

BTW: This will be a harder activity for nonreaders and younger groups. Try cutting the individual pieces into specific shapes that create a pattern and get them to put them in the right order while you or counselors read the verses and give directions.

Puppet Performance

#P R A Y #CREATE

Why: Hearing and seeing the scripture can help in remembering and processing the meaning.

Supplies: Puppets and/or props from the Bible Story activity.

How: Have the camper groups who want to share their skit with the whole group. Leave time to summarize and wrap up after the performance or debrief in small groups so that the important elements can be discussed.

BTW: You may want to screen the skits to make sure they demonstrate the parts of the scripture lesson that are important.

WEEKLONG PROJECT

Sun Print Nature Pillows

#CREATE

Why: Seeing nature in new and different ways is key. This allows campers to examine objects not for their color or beauty but for the shape and shadow the object casts. It is a different way to see, just as you are leading them to see each other and themselves in new and different ways. They may begin to understand that they are also responsible for the shadow they cast in the world.

Supplies: Cyanotype fabric cut into pillow squares (smaller than the window panes), sewing machine, thread, cotton fabric for the backing, stuffing, water, glass window panes, boards cut an inch or two larger than the window panes, clothesline and clothespins, needles and thread.

How: Have campers gather natural objects they find at camp with interesting shapes: weeds, leaves, seeds, pinecones (but tell campers not to pick flowers or take leaves off of trees; leave

living things alone). In a dimly lit room lay out boards, and at the last moment place one piece of cyanotype fabric on each board. Have campers arrange their items on the fabric in an interesting pattern. Cover the fabric and objects with glass then carefully take them outside to lay in direct sunlight. Watch the fabric change color. When the color change is complete carefully carry boards back into dimly lit room and remove the glass and the natural objects. Wash the fabric in water until the water runs clear. Hang to dry. When dry, have someone sew the cyanotype fabric around three and half sides, turn inside out, and let campers stuff and then sew the opening closed.

BTW: These pillows can be gifts. You can also use cut-out letters to put their name or initials on the fabric.

SONG IDEAS

- “Our God” (Chris Tomlin)
- “Our God Is an Awesome God” (Rich Mullins)
- “Our God Is a Great Big God”
- “Our God Is so Big”
- “You Are Mighty”
- “All God’s Children Got a Place in the Choir”
- “See Ya Hahmba/ We Are Singing”
- “He Is Exalted”
- “No One Will Ever Be the Same”