



## LEADER DEVOTIONAL

This time of year I am always side-swiped by all of the glittery bows, to-do lists, decorating, baking, and buying that bombards my brain. No matter how good my intentions are at simplifying and remembering the true reason for the season, I get lost in the hustle. At my son's preschool Christmas concert a few years ago, they sang a song called "The Best Gift." I still remember the words and recite them often in my head. It is a simple song for young kids, but the truth in it is profound. I hope as you read the lyrics below, you can slow down and remember the best gift given to you.

*The Best Gift*  
*By Mary Rice Hopkins*

*Wrapped up in a manger, a long, long time ago  
God sent his only son, so his love we'd know.  
Jesus gave his life, so we could be set free  
Find true forgiveness, God's gift to you and me.*

*The best gift to me, the best gift to me,  
His name is Jesus, thank you God for Jesus.  
The best gift to me.*

*Thank you God for all the gifts you give us every day.  
The sun and moon and stars so bright and friends along the way.  
Most of all I thank you for the precious son who came  
So I could know and love like him, I'll sing about his name.*

*The best gift to me, the best gift to me,  
His name is Jesus, thank you God for Jesus.  
The best gift to me.*

*Mindy Rausch*  
GO! Team Member



### LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING

#### *Establishing Rules and Consequences for Large Group*

“Houston...we have a problem!” If you’ve been teaching kids for any length of time, you’ve probably wanted to say something like this. Unfortunately, most of us are flying solo and don’t have a ground control to call into. Kids are great and well-behaved most of the time, but problems still occur. Here are some things you can do to help prevent or address problems:

**Establish rules.** If you haven’t already, work with your leaders to come up with a short list of rules for the room. GO! gives you Topher the Gopher’s 3 Story Time Rules to help you with that. The 3 rules are: Be Kind (listen quietly and treat others with respect), Be Safe (keep your hands to yourself and follow instructions carefully), and Have Fun.

**Communicate the rules to your kids.** Kids can’t abide by your expectations if they don’t know what they are. For preschool kids, it’s helpful to go over the rules weekly.

**Have consequences.** What good are rules if there aren’t any consequences for breaking them? An example of consequences might be something like “3 strikes.” Strike 1 is a warning. Strike 2 is a time-out on the wall. Strike 3 involves calling the parents out of service to pick up their kid.

**Don’t be afraid to enforce the rules.** Inevitably, there will be kids who test the boundaries. When you enforce the rules, most kids will see that you mean business and quickly comply.

**Call out the best in kids.** Whenever you apply consequences to a kid, it’s a good idea to have a follow-up conversation with them. Make sure they understand what behavior led to their consequences. Be sure to do it with grace, though. Always end by calling out the best in that kid. Tell them you know they can do better and that you look forward to seeing them again.