



INITIATIVE | WEEK 1 | MAY 4, 2025

Elementary Lesson

Living Hope

Monthly Virtue: Initiative—seeing what needs to be done and doing it

Bible Story: Living Hope (God So Loved the World) • *John 3:16-17*

Key Question: How has God met your needs?

Basic Truth: I am loved by God no matter what so I can love God, love others, and love life.

Memory Verse: None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others. Philippians 2:4 (*NirV*)

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Getting started can sometimes seem like the hardest part of meeting a need. But it actually starts before then. First, we have to see the needs around us. Initiative isn't just some practical principle; it's really a spiritual principle that starts with God. God took initiative on our behalf by seeing that our relationship was broken and needed to be fixed. So, God sent Jesus to make it right. And because we are made in God's image, we are wired to be able to take initiative and get things done too.

Key Question: How has God met your needs? Sometimes it's easy to get so distracted by the things we want most in life, or that we don't have, that we forget about the things we already DO have. Whether we have a little or a lot, God has given us each the best gift we could ever receive. We hope this question invites preteens to reflect on how God has shown up for them throughout their lives.

We start the month in **John 3:16-17** where John writes about the greatest love of all. God loved us so much, that God sent Jesus to take our place because of our sin. God took the initiative by making a move to restore our broken relationship, allowing us to one day live with God forever.

Pre-Service Check List

- HUDDLE AS TEAM → You're in this together! Pray together and talk about the activities for the day.
- PLAY MUSIC
- PUT OUT TOYS → A welcoming environment is important! We want it to be obvious from the moment kids walk in that they belong HERE!
- PUT ASIDE DISTRACTIONS
- ENGAGE WITH KIDS

Morning Flow

Doors
Open
9:15/11:00

Large Group
Starts
9:35/11:20

Small Group
Starts
10:05/11:50

LARGE GROUP

COUNTDOWN AND WELCOME (3 Minutes)

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN, SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS)

LGL: “Welcome everyone! I’m so glad you are able to come hang out with us in KidCity today. My name is [INSERT NAME]. We are going to have a lot of fun today, but before we do let’s go over these announcements/KidCity Expectations.

(SLIDE: BAPTISM) *(Said on the fourth weekend of the month only)* “Today are baptisms at Hope. Baptism is a way of telling the world that you love God and have made the decision to follow Him with your life. It’s a big deal! Is there anyone here who is getting baptized today? *(Pause and if someone is, go ahead and give them a high five and get the kids to clap).* Awesome!”

(SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS) “Now, let’s quickly go over our KidCity Expectations (rules) so we can make sure that we make the most of our time today: *(Don’t dwell on these too long, but make sure you review them briefly so we can set everyone up for success.)*

1. Be Kind
2. Be Safe
3. Have Fun

LARGE GROUP GAME (5 Min)

JEDI TRAINING

((1) Pool Noodle, (20-30) Clothes Pins, (1) Blindfold)

Welcome back! We are starting a brand-new month which means we have a brand-new monthly virtue. Let’s take a look at our monthly virtue.

(SLIDE: VIRTUE) Initiative—seeing what needs to be done and doing it.

Initiative is a big word so let’s say it and the definition together on the count of 3. Ready? 1, 2, 3...

It can be easy to let others step up and take care of things. Think about it, you probably do that all the time! Your mom probably cooks dinner most nights. Your teacher probably cleans up the classroom at the end of the day. Your coach probably plans how each of your practices are going to run.

But initiative is seeing what needs to be done and doing it without being asked and with the right attitude! And it’s not just with tasks. It can also be with how we treat others. Check out our verse for the month.

(SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE) None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others. Philippians 2:4 *(N/rV)*

Take a minute to explain that 'Philippians' is a book in the New Testament, and that the first number means 'chapter' and the second one means 'verse'. 'NIV' is what translation the Bible is in. The Bible wasn't originally written in English! There are different translations.

You'll have more time to practice this month's verse, but for now let's play a game!

I don't know this or not but today is a pretty important holiday...it's May 4th – which is STAR WARS DAY! I can't think of a better way to celebrate other than to play a Star Wars themed game. I'm going to need a young Jedi who is eager to continue their training.

(SLIDE: GAME SLIDE with MUSIC)

HOW TO PLAY

- Choose a volunteer to be the young Jedi (Or 'Padawan' if you want to be super nerdy!). This game will work best if they also happen to be wearing looser clothes.
- Explain that in Star Wars, Luke Skywalker has to learn how to rely on the Force and not his own eyesight, so he has to wear a blindfold and defend against the training robot that shoots mini lasers at him. (see game slide for reference). They will have to do the same.... kind of.
- While the young padawan is blindfolded and armed with their light saber (pool noodle), they will have to keep the lasers (clothespins) from touching them.
- Choose 3 kids to come up to the stage. They will be working together, trying to sneak the lasers onto the clothes of the padawan without being hit by the lightsaber. They are NOT throwing the clothes pins. If they are hit, then they are 'stunned' for 5 seconds.
- On GO, begin the game. Allow each round to last about 30 seconds. At the end of 30 seconds, count up how many clothes pins were successfully clipped to the padawan.
- Swap out the players at time allows.

"That was so fun! Now everyone stand up and let's worship God!"

WORSHIP (6-7 Minutes)

(VIDEO: THAT'S WHO I PRAISE, WAVEWALKER)

BIBLE STORY (12 Minutes)

(No Supplies)

Just think in your own head about how you'd answer this question. Have you ever seen a problem and chosen to walk away from it rather than do something about it? I'll be honest, I know I have, especially when the problem looks difficult or messy or might take a long time and keep from what I want to do.

Of course, this might not be true of the problems we have personally. We'll often do whatever it takes to fix our own problems or the problems of people we love. Taking initiative then is a no-brainer. Like, we should see our messy room and choose to clean it up. We should notice that there are a lot of dirty dishes in the sink and take time to help our dad and wash them ourselves.



We should be aware of how our words impact others and choose to think before we speak to show others we care about them.

But other people, other problems? You might wonder, ‘Does it matter if we’re the ones that see the problem AND fix the problem?’ Like why should you be the one taking your time to notice problems that might not even have anything to do with you, not to mention taking the time and energy to work to solve those problems? It might seem like it’s just too much.

These are important thoughts to think through. Thankfully, we have the perfect example of when this has been done for us. We find it in the pages of this book (*hold up the Bible*)—The Bible! Remember, the Bible isn’t just ONE book, it’s a collection of books, like a library! And each of those books, in their own way, points to the amazing love of GOD who took initiative and stopped at nothing to have a forever relationship with us. Let’s check it out!

(VIDEO: BIBLE STORY 5 MIN)

You know, Nicodemus came to Jesus that night probably believing that he was right about a lot of things. And I’m guessing that conversation with Jesus turned his world upside down. But when we see how much God really loves us, and that this is not because of what WE have done but rather what GOD has done, it should change everything for us.

“God’s love for us is deeper than we can ever completely know or understand.

“God knew that our greatest need is to be restored back into relationship. So, God made a way! (*point to sign*) God gave Jesus. And when we choose (*point to sign*) to believe in Jesus, we can (*point to sign*) live forever with God.

“On top of that, we are made in God’s image, and as we grow in relationship with Jesus, we begin to reflect more of who God is to the world around us. God took initiative when it came to sending Jesus for us. And we can reflect God’s initiative with how we interact with people in our own lives.

Check out our Basic Truth for this week...

(SLIDE: BASIC TRUTH) I am loved by God no matter what so I can love God, love others, and love life.

Remember, initiative means ‘seeing what need to be done and doing it.’ That starts with keeping your eyes open to see what the people around you need . . . and then doing something about it. Loving others is a way that we can show our gratitude to God for seeing our greatest need and taking care of it.

As we head to Small Groups, we want you to consider this question:

(SLIDE: KEY QUESTION) ‘How has God met your needs?’

Have kids turn and talk to their shoulder partner for 60 seconds. Your KQ slide on Playlister will keep track of time for you. While kids are talking, walk around and

listen in to what they are saying and give prompts if needed. Don't try to resolve anything, kids will have a further discussion within their small group time.

“Ok friends, come back together in 3, 2, 1....

“I heard some great thoughts floating around. You are going to have more of a chance to talk about this in small group time, but for now let's pray.

Dear God, I pray that these kids come to have a growing, right relationship with you and learn to fix their eyes on you always! Amen.

DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS



SMALL GROUP

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TALK ABOUT IT (K-5th)

There are no right or wrong answers but try to challenge the kids to think deeper.

Key Question: How has God met your needs? What do you think is our greatest need?

(Answers will vary)

LOOK IT UP (K-5th)

Grab Bibles, look up, and read the following passage.

Look Up: John 3:16-17

Say: The book of John is one of the 'Gospels' - which is what we call the first four books of the New Testament that tell the story of Jesus.

PRACTICE IT (K-5th)

(Floor Tape - 1 per group, Velcro Floor Dots or Connect Time Manipulatives - 10 per group, Blindfolds-optional - 2 per group)

What You Do:

- Divide the kids into pairs
 - If there's an uneven number, leaders jump in and play!
- Use the floor tape and lay down two parallel lines with about 6 feet between them. Scatter Velcro dots or connect time manipulatives (blocks, Magnatiles, dry erase boards, etc.) in between the lines to create an obstacle course/minefield.
- Encourage the pairs to line up behind the starting line.
- Explain to the kids that one kid in each pair will close their eyes (or wear a blindfold) while the other kid guides them with only their voice through the obstacle course to avoid the land mines. No touching!
- Continue playing, allowing the kids to swap roles and repeat the process, going from the finish line to the starting line.

What You Say:

"Awesome teamwork, friends! While one partner had to take the initiative to lead, the other

partner had to believe that their teammate would guide them in the right direction! Today, we discovered that God made the first move by sending Jesus to rescue us.

- What evidence of God's love for the world do you find in John 3:16?
- What is sin, and why is it a problem?
- How did Jesus take care of our sin problem?
- What does it mean to trust Jesus?
- Why did God give us Jesus?

"God took care of our greatest need when God sent Jesus, and now we can look for ways to take initiative with the people around us. Now, of course, we won't be able to do everything. We aren't supposed to! Taking the initiative starts with keeping our eyes open, seeing a need, and doing something about it. A grown-up is carrying a handful of groceries? Help them before being asked! A friend is sitting alone at lunch? Sit with them and ask them about their day! We can look out for others because God took care of our greatest need."

GET STRONGER (K-5th)

(Memory Verse Poster, Bibles, and "Make the First Move" Activity Page - 1 per group)

What You Do:

- Divide the kids into four groups.
- Give each group Bible.
- Lead the kids to find Philippians 2:4.
- Encourage the groups to repeat the verse aloud together.
- Give each group one of the four cards from the "Make the First Move" Activity Page that outlines a part of the Memory Verse and motions to go along with it.
- Give the groups time to work together to practice and memorize their part of the Memory Verse.
- Once the time is up, gather your entire group together.
- Invite each group to teach their portion of the Memory Verse to the rest of the kids.
- Then, practice repeating the verse and motions together several times.

What You Say:

"Way to go, everyone! I'm so glad we have the Bible. We can learn so much truth from it that can help us love God and others. Memorizing the verses in the Bible is a great way to keep important truths handy when you need them most. God showed initiative by making the first move and making a way to restore our relationship with God through Jesus. Friends, God took care of our greatest need! When we remember this month's Memory Verse, it reminds us to keep our eyes open for the people around us and their needs too."

PRAYER

“Prayer is a conversation we get to have with God anytime, anywhere! This month, we will pray using the word “TACO”.

- **T = Thanks**
- A = Adoration
- C = Choices
- O = Others

Each letter reminds us of things to talk to God about. This week we will focus on giving thanks to God.”

“God, we have SO much to be thankful for! Thank you for loving us more than we could ever fully understand. Thank you for making us in your image and taking the first step to restore our relationship with you by sending Jesus. You took care of our greatest need, and we are SO grateful! Help us to believe and trust in Jesus. Help us share your love with others by seeing the needs of others and doing something about them. We love you, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”