

# WEEK 1

## LESSON GUIDE

ANIMATED

### BIG IDEA

Because of God, I can feel secure.

### BIBLE

**Jeremiah at the Potter's House:**  
Jeremiah 18:1-11; Psalm 139:1-14

## LARGE GROUP TIME

Welcome to our new series, *Animated!* **Let me ask you, what are some of your favorite animated movies or TV shows?** When something is animated, it is brought to life, like how cartoon drawings can move! During the next few weeks, we'll meet a group of people called prophets. Their job was to animate God's words and let people know the truth. But people didn't always want to hear it. That's why the prophets' lives weren't very easy and sometimes, they felt some very big feelings! We can learn a lot from the prophets about how to follow God through our own animated moments.

### WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

#### MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)*
  - "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" (Lifetree Kids)
  - "Falling Into You" (Hillsong Young & Free)
  - "Trading My Sorrows" (Capitol Kids!)
  - "Anchored to You" (Elevation Youth)
- ✳ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Consider adding these songs to your preteen playlist: "Known" (Tauren Wells), "Hills and Valleys" (Tauren Wells), and "Rain" (Kings Kaleidoscope).*

#### ACTIVITY | Animation Station

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give each kid some Play-Doh and ask them to make a simple person with a head, torso, legs, and arms. Then, have them animate their Play-Doh person to stand on its own. This should be difficult. After a while of trying, give the kids toothpicks and instruct them to use the toothpicks to help prop up their Play-Doh people.*
- **How did you feel when you were able to use the toothpicks?**

- **Did you feel more secure about letting your Play-Doh person stand on its own?**
- Just like the toothpicks helped make your Play-Doh person more secure, there is someone in our lives who helps us feel secure and strong enough to stand up tall!

### ACTIVITY | Blind Emotion

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to explore big emotions together. Prepare a list of emotions (like happy, sad, angry, confused, excited) to say aloud or to show on a screen. Give each kid a sheet of paper, something to draw with, and a blindfold. Say or project an emotion and kids have to try to draw an emoji depicting that emotion on their paper while wearing a blindfold.
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Use or make available a feelings or emotions [wheel](#) to help preteens talk about the different things they feel and when.
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Have some washable paint available for friends who may be unable to hold crayons. They can utilize paint on fingers to express.
- There are so many different kinds of emotions. It can be comforting to know that while we all have unique experiences and ways of responding, other people feel the same ways we do from time to time.

### QUESTION | What makes you feel secure?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to discuss the following question.
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Some preteens may need time to process their emotions or may not want to share aloud. Provide a journal page for kids to draw or write down their responses.
- Feeling secure is the opposite of feeling in danger or scared.
- **Is there something like a favorite stuffed animal or maybe a pet that helps you feel secure? Or do you have a place, like your grandparents' home or your room, where you feel the most secure?** Maybe you feel the most secure right before you drift off to sleep.
- **What's one thing in your life that makes you feel, or has made you feel, secure?**

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

### SCRIPTURE | Jeremiah 18:1–11 (Jeremiah at the Potter's House)

- **Do you like movies?** I do! Some of my favorite movies are animated. We can learn so much from these movies. Today, we're going to watch a short clip from a neat animated movie.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** To prepare for today's Bible story, have [this clip](#) from "Raya and the Last Dragon" ready. Download one or two images of a potter working at their wheel. You can use [this site](#) as inspiration. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- In this movie, *Raya and the Last Dragon*, Raya has just made a big mistake in revealing the location of the dragon gem to someone she thought she could trust. As a result, her village was destroyed and her father was turned into stone.
- **What kind of feelings do you think Raya experienced in this clip? What about her father, Chief Benja?**
- Animated can mean a type of movie like we just saw, but it can also be used to describe people. When someone is "animated," they show their emotions in a big way. We were able to see the big emotions Raya and her father were feeling in the scene we just saw.
- In today's Bible story, we're going to talk about a guy named Jeremiah. Jeremiah was no stranger to having all the feels.
  - Jeremiah was overwhelmed with emotion. He was so big in his emotions, his nickname was "the weeping prophet."

- Jeremiah wrote the book of the Bible we're going to read some of today, as well as a book called Lamentations. Lamentation is a big word that basically means to show some serious sadness.
- Prophets were people that shared God's truth. And the truth that God gave to Jeremiah to share made Jeremiah really, really sad. Kind of like what Mufasa told Simba in *The Lion King* movie, God's message to Jeremiah was about how God's people had messed up. Not only had they done wrong, but they kept doing the wrong things for a long time. And now, God told Jeremiah, there would be consequences for their wrongdoing.
- The story we're about to read was written from Jeremiah's point of view.
- [Read Jeremiah 18:1–4.]
  - **Does anyone know what a potter does?** [Show one or two images of a potter working at their wheel.]
- [Read Jeremiah 18:5–11.]
  - God compared the clay in the potter's hands to God's people in God's hands. God wanted to remind Jeremiah that, even though there would be consequences, God's people were still in God's hands. God was shaping and molding them like a potter does with clay. God wants the very best for us, much like how Mufasa wanted for Simba.
- It was okay for Jeremiah to feel sad about what God was showing him. But, because of this picture of us being like clay in God's caring hands, Jeremiah could also feel another big feeling — Jeremiah could feel secure.

### BIG IDEA | Because of God, I can feel secure.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Go to [app.animaker.com](http://app.animaker.com) — a simple application you can use to make your own short, animated videos — and create one to reveal the Big Idea. It's super easy! For bonus fun, find a character that looks like you! Here's an [example](#). For a non-tech option, create two speech balloons with poster board and write "Because of God" on one and "I can feel secure" on the other. Invite two volunteers to hold up each speech balloon and freeze in a funny, cartoon pose. Have the volunteers unfreeze and say what's in their respective balloons when the kids yell, "Animate!"
- Let's all say the Big Idea together: **Because of God, I can feel secure.**

### VIDEO | Animated, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

### STORY | Always Shaping Us

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Briefly share about a time in your life when you couldn't figure out what God was doing and how you felt, as a result. Describe the moment you realized God was using the experience to shape you in some way, and you felt secure knowing you were always in God's hands. As you tell your story, mix together ingredients to make homemade dough using a recipe like [this](#) one. You can also use this dough for the activity in the secondary scripture module.
- It's easy to start feeling insecure and unsure of how things will go. But thankfully, we don't have to stay feeling that way. **Because of God, I can feel secure.**

### ACTIVITY | Sketchy Characters

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Divide your group into equal teams with no more than eight kids per team. Each team will get one dry erase board and one dry erase marker (or a poster board and regular marker). Have the teams line up an equal distance away from their dry erase boards. Show both teams one of the pictures, either printed or on a large screen. When you say, "Go!" the first kids in line will run to the dry erase board and begin drawing for ten seconds.

When their time is up, they'll run back to the next person in line, hand off the marker, and that person will continue the drawing where the previous kid left off. Once every kid has had a chance to add to the drawing, the game will be finished. Whichever team completes more of the drawing or whichever team's drawing looks the best wins!

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Print out the images from the printable and cut them into several pieces and allow the teams to connect them together to make one complete photo.

- **What were some ways you felt secure while playing this game?**
- **When did you feel less secure?**
- We often feel the most secure when we think someone has our back – that they will support us and help us through tough spots. We all have someone we can lean on in this way, but the greatest of them all is God.
- **Because of God, I can feel secure.**

### SCRIPTURE | Psalm 139:1–14

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid some play dough to hold as you talk about the Bible passage.
- [Read Psalm 139:13–14.]
  - God created each of us. God has been involved in our lives since the very beginning, and God thinks we're awesome. Not only did God make us, God knows us better than anyone.
- [Read Psalm 139:1–6.]
  - God is always, and will always, be shaping you. Even right now, God is forming you perfectly – just like you're forming the Play-Doh in your hands. No matter what situation you find yourself in, you're right there with God.
- [Read Psalm 139:7–12.]
  - Think about the dough you're holding in your hands. **What would it be like to carry it with you all the time?** You would be very close to this Play-Doh if you had to hold it every moment of every day?
  - In the same way, God is close to you and chooses to be! In fact, God chose to be so close that Jesus, God's own kid, came to Earth as a human just like us, and spent time with people. That shows just how much God is looking out for us and loves us.
- Whenever you're not sure of yourself or feel like you're not enough, remember God made you and loves you exactly the way you were made. Tell yourself each day, "**Because of God, I can feel secure.**"

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

### REFLECTION | Before You Were Born

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to reflect on their feelings using an emoji chart like one from [this site](#).
- Just like a potter's hands are on every part of their creation, God knows every part of our lives. Even when things feel crazy, God is always molding and shaping us.
- Before you were born, you didn't even have the ability to move or make sense of what was happening around you. Even then, God was forming you.
- **How do you feel knowing God was thinking about you before you could even think?** [Invite kids to point to the emoji that best describes how they feel and ask them why they picked that emotion.]

### ACTIVITY | Feelings Bingo

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before the kids arrive, print two sets of the Feelings Bingo cards. Lay them on the floor to create two, life-sized four-by-four Bingo cards (be sure to arrange each set differently so teams don't get bingo at the same time). Divide your group into two teams and have the kids stand in a line. Call out one of the emotions at random (happy, sad, sleepy, grumpy, surprised, excited, angry, bored, scared, embarrassed, laughing, in love, confused, silly, thinking, secretive) and the first kid in line will go stand on it. The first team to get four in a row wins! Play again if time allows – be sure every kid has a chance to participate.
- We can feel so many different things. But no matter what we might be feeling, **because of God, we can feel secure.**

### MEMORY VERSE | Romans 15:13a (NIV)

- **"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him."**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Project the memory verse graphic on the screen and give some of the kids a chance to recite it in the voice of their favorite movie or TV character. You may need to go first by saying the verse like Mickey Mouse (It's easy – just talk really high and add an "oh boy!" at the end). Other characters could include Peppa Pig, Batman, Yoda, The Chipmunks, etc. (**Don't forget to also check out the memory verse signs – a combination of SEE and ASL – available in your Programming folder or at [growcurriculum.org/Romans15-13a](http://growcurriculum.org/Romans15-13a).)**

### PRAYER

- Dear God, we thank you for always caring about us and being with us. Thank you for reminding us through your prophet Jeremiah that we're always in your hands. Remind us that you're forming us all the time, in really hard times and in really good times. Help us to remember that no matter what comes in life, we can feel secure in you. Amen.

## SMALL GROUP TIME

### DISCUSSION

- **Why was Jeremiah called the "weeping prophet?"**
- **Where did God tell Jeremiah to go?**
- **What did God want Jeremiah to remember?**
- **Read Psalm 139:7–12. The writer of Psalm 139 used creative ways, like word pictures, to describe God's care. Can you remember one? Which stuck out to you most and why?**
- **When might be a time you don't feel secure?**
- **How might today's Bible story about the life of Jeremiah change the way you look at sad situations in your life?**
- **Who are some people God put in your life to help you feel secure? How do they do that?**

### ACTIVITY | Stop Motion Series

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ahead of time, download the app, Stop Motion Studio. Divide kids into groups of four or five, provide letter cutouts (or have kids make their own), and encourage them to work together to make a creative display of the Big Idea. Check out a video like this for inspiration. Alternatively, divide the kids into groups and have them create their own actions to the Big Idea. Remind them to make the motions big and fast. You can film them in slow-mo with your phone and show it back to them.
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Pair friends with a buddy to help guide them while using the technology.
- What an animated reminder of the Big Idea! **Because of God, I can feel secure.**