

**WEEK 4**  
LESSON GUIDE

**FULL BLOOM**

**BIG IDEA**

Jesus connects us to God.

**BIBLE**

**Jesus Appears to His Disciples:**  
John 20:19–31; John 15:1–13

**ABOUT THIS WEEK**

Inside a garden, all the flowers, plants, bugs, and animals are connected in a special way. This week, we'll hear about how Jesus showed his scars to his disciples and taught them about how the Holy Spirit would keep them connected. We can have a whole new life that's close to God because **Jesus connects us to God.**

**LARGE GROUP TIME**

Wow, it's our last week at *Full Bloom!* I hope you've had a blast exploring all these fantastic gardens—from the very first Garden of Eden to that fantastic forever garden we'll walk in with God someday!

Throughout our time together, we've learned a lot about Jesus—why we celebrate Easter and how he's the one God sent to be with us, to get us, and to make everything awesome again. And guess what? Because of Jesus, we can stay connected to God.

So, let's take one final stroll through our larger-than-life garden and soak in all these wonderful stories before we wrap up our fantastic adventure!

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

**ACTIVITY | Flower, Worm, Hummingbird**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll play a version of "Rock, Paper, Scissors." Worm beats flower, flower beats hummingbird, and hummingbird beats worm. To play, have each kid find a partner. The leader will say, "One, two, three, Go!" each kid must become a worm, a flower, or a hummingbird. The winner of each round will find a new partner and continue to play until only two players are left. To play without eliminations, have kids keep playing and keep a personal tally of how many rounds they've won.*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Instead of pairing up to play, have preteens split into two teams. Each team decides on a pose for that round. Then, the teams face each other and do the pose on the count of three. Whichever team wins gets a chance to tag the other team before they get to a designated safe zone. Whoever is tagged joins the winning team.*
- In this game, you have to choose one of three things that live in the garden:
  - Worm: **Put both hands up and wiggle your body.**
  - Flower: **Open your hands and place them near your cheeks.**
  - Hummingbird: **Jump in place and rapidly flap your hands.**

- Whether you love to wiggle like a worm, bloom like a flower, or flap your wings like a hummingbird, each move is connected. For example, worms are a food source for hummingbirds, while hummingbirds need flowers as much as flowers need hummingbirds to spread their pollen!
- Everything is connected inside our garden, and every plant, flower, or insect serves a unique purpose!

### ACTIVITY | Tube Gardening

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you will need six pool noodles, two buckets, and a bag of Skittles for each team. Split the items evenly between each team. The goal of the activity is to “plant” as many “seeds” (Skittles) into their buckets before time runs out. Kids must drop the “seed” at one end of the pool noodle chain and hold their pool noodles end to end so that the seed can travel all the way to the bucket. Invite eight kids, two teams of four, to play the game. Have each round last about two to three minutes before swapping out with new players.

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Instead of pool noodles, provide preteens with empty paper towel tubes that have been cut in half lengthwise to form u-shaped tracks. You can also cut them crosswise to form tracks of different lengths. Have teams work together like [this](#), to get their “seed” from the starting line to their buckets.

- When your pool noodles stayed together at each end, everything was easier. You were able to quickly move your seeds from one end of your tubes to the other. If we put a gap in the pool noodles, your seed would fall out and end up away from where it was supposed to go.
- It wasn't just your pool noodles that needed to be connected. You needed to work as a team to reach your goal!
- It's a natural part of life for things and people to be connected together. Today we'll learn about how Jesus connects us in a much bigger and more important way!

### QUESTION | What do you think of when you hear “spring?”

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask kids what comes to mind when you say “spring.” Invite them to think about all the different definitions of the word. On a whiteboard or piece of butcher paper, write “spring” in the center and write each associated word around the outside, connecting it back to “spring” with a line.
- **What do you think of when you hear “spring?”**
- Some of these words are connected to spring because it can be a season or time of year. Some of these are connected because a spring is a bouncy object or a word for “jump.” Today's Bible story is about how each of us is connected not just to each other but to someone so much bigger.

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

### SCRIPTURE | John 20:19–31 (Jesus Appears to His Disciples)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to sit on the ground on top of picnic (or regular) blankets as you share today's Bible story.
- Have you been enjoying our garden tour? We went from the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve used to walk with God, but because of their disobedience, they could not stay in the garden anymore. They lost their connection to God.
- But God cared about Adam and Eve and all humans. God had a plan. God sent Jesus—God's own son—to earth to become human himself. Even as Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, asking if he really had to follow through with God's plan, he chose to bear all the pain and suffering for the world.
- Jesus died a horrific death on the cross but three days later rose again! He showed God's power and love once and for all, especially to make all the broken things new. Now there was a way to be connected back to God!

- In today's Bible story, Jesus wanted to make sure his friends really understood why he did what he did.
- **Let's take a look at John 20:19–23.**
  - After Jesus died, the disciples were scared. They hid away in a room and wondered if they were in trouble for following Jesus. But after Jesus came back to life, he showed up to the disciples. They were probably even more scared, but Jesus talked with them and calmed them.
  - Then, he told them about this great gift God was leaving with them— the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would be an important helper for what the disciples did next.
  - But not all of the disciples were in the room when Jesus appeared. Thomas was missing. So when the other disciples told them what they had seen, he couldn't believe it. He wanted to see for himself.
- **Let's see what happens next in John 20:24–31.**
  - Jesus showed up so Thomas could be a part of this experience. He helped Thomas feel connected and a part of the new world Jesus was forming. When Thomas saw Jesus, he immediately believed what was happening, and Thomas had a new connection with God.
  - My favorite part of this story is how because of Jesus, we're connected to this story, too. We weren't in the room with the disciples that day, but Jesus showed up in our lives to help us get connected back to God.
- Once we believe in Jesus, we get to join in the story and step into God's garden, where only the best things are in *full bloom!*

### BIG IDEA | Jesus connects us to God.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Cut out the flowers in the [printable](#) provided. Gently fold the edges of each flower toward the center. Take a large bowl filled with water and place each flower into the bowl. As they absorb water, the flowers will slowly begin to unfold and "bloom." Pass the bowl around for kids to see. Consider creating more than one bowl for large groups. Hang the Big Idea flowers to dry using clothespins on a line. Check out [this tutorial](#) to see how this works.*
- Alright, friends, are you ready to watch our final Big Idea bloom? Let's see what happens!
- Let's say the Big Idea together: **Jesus connects us to God.**

### ACTIVITY | Family Tree

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, cut out a large piece of brown bulletin paper, butcher paper, or tape construction paper together to create a trunk. Give each kid a strip of construction paper to use as a branch. These branches do not have to be perfectly even (you could even tear them). On this branch, help each kid write their name. Then, on separate strips of paper, help them write the names of their family and friends and attach these new strips to their branch. Once a kid has finished their branch, they can attach it to the tree trunk.*
- When we choose to follow Jesus, we become part of God's family! God add us to this long line of people who are all connected through Jesus and to God.
- This tree represents the connections of people just in this room. Now, imagine just how *big* the tree would need to be to connect *everyone* in God's family. That would be such a huge tree!
- Even though this is just a small number of people who are a part of God's family, it can remind us of just how connected we are all around the world. We're connected to thousands and thousands of other followers of Jesus, and all of us are connected to God! So whenever you see a tree standing tall over you, remember **Jesus connects us to God.**

### OBJECT LESSON | Lines On A Leaf

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, bring in a large plant leaf or show a picture of a plant leaf like [this one](#) where kids can see the individual veins of the leaf.*

✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Encourage the kids to run one of their fingers along the veins of the leaf for a kinesthetic-tactile connection.

- **Do you have a favorite leaf?**
- Some of us may like the giant palm leaves from palm trees or the crunchy leaves we can step on in the fall. There's so much more to plant leaves than size and color, though!
- When we look at plant leaves, we can see they have these tiny little lines that help the plants. These are called veins, and they help transport everything a plant needs to all the different parts of the leaf.
- Even though they're small, these veins help connect the plant back to the main stem and then down into the roots of the plant. Nutrients and water can move from the roots all the way to the very tip of each leaf. These veins help leaves bloom and grow strong, keeping them connected to the plant.
- Jesus does something similar for us, too! He keeps us connected to God so we can grow strong in our faith. Jesus helps us grow and teaches us what it looks like to follow God.
- **Jesus connects us to God.**

### SCRIPTURE | John 15:1–13

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read or paraphrase this Scripture for kids. Optional: Hold up a cluster of grapes while you talk through this passage of Scripture.
- Jesus knew how important it was for his disciples to be connected to God. He talked to them about it and used an idea they would know well—grapes!
- **Let's read John 15:1–5.**
  - Jesus told his disciples that he was like a vine and that they were like branches. When they stayed attached to Jesus, they could grow fruit like these grapes! These were once attached to a vine, but a farmer cut them off of the vine so we could eat them.
  - They had everything they needed to grow when they were attached to the vine. The vine helped connect them to other grapes and gave them a safe place to grow together. That's what Jesus does for us!
- **Let's keep reading John 15:6–13.**
  - Jesus tells us if we want to grow in our faith, we'll need to stay close to him. The closer we stay to Jesus, the bigger our faith can grow! We just need to follow the things Jesus told us to and love each other like he loved us.
  - We can grow in our faith because **Jesus connects us to God.**

### VIDEO | *Full Bloom*, Episode 4

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

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

### REFLECTION | Garden Time With God

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use this time to have kids calm down and think about what they learned today. You can do this as a large group or sort kids into small groups with a leader in each group. You may choose to use an oil diffuser with fragrances like lavender, lemon, or orange during this time.
  - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Help nonverbal kids feel more connected with the activities by allowing them to share their responses by drawing pictures, making things with play dough, or using motions.
- Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Imagine you are in a garden where everything is larger than you are. You hear the sprinklers go off in the distance, and you just know that it's going to feel like a rainstorm!

- **Name some of the things you see around you in this larger-than-life garden.**
- As you think about being in this garden, turn your thoughts to God. God created everything in the garden and helped it to grow ... including us. Let's talk about some ways we can grow today.
- **Who are some people you feel the most connected to? What makes you feel connected to them?**
- **What is something you can do to connect with people you might not be that close to?**
- **How do you know God wants to connect with you?**
- **Would you like to be more connected to God? How might you start?**
- God helps us all stay connected together through Jesus. Because Jesus died, was buried, and raised again, we can have a whole new life close to God.
- **Jesus connects us to God.**

## RESPONSE | Garden Webs

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Take a paper plate and cut out several notches along the outer edge. Pass out the plates to each kid along with a length of yarn. While they think about and respond to the prompts given, have them string a web around their plate by crossing the yarn over the front and back of the plate, and resting the yarn in the notches. Once all the notches have been filled with the yarn web, tape the yarn to the back of the plate. Pass out plastic spiders or have them make their own out of black paper to stick [in their web](#).*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Go deeper with preteens and have them share their favorite way(s) to connect with God. Take note of their answers and provide support and check-ins throughout the rest of the year as a way to help them continue to bloom in their faith.*
  - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Have kids interact with a flower garden-building kit like [this](#). They can work on connecting the flowers, stems, and leaves while talking about the Big Idea and how they can connect with God.*
- Gardens are full of more than just plants. They're full of bugs, too! So many gardens have spiders that build these fun little webs. Each web is made of string that a spider spins around and around in a pattern. The web isn't just several pieces of string, though—it's one connected piece!
- But the spider knows exactly what to do when one piece breaks or disconnects. If a person walks through the web or the wind blows it apart, the spider hurries to spin a new section to put the web together again!
- **What is one way you'd like to connect with God this week?**
- As you build your own spider web, think about how you could connect with Jesus. You might need to make a new decision, practice kindness, or let go of a bad habit. No matter what you choose, it's all a part of growing closer to Jesus and to God.
- Remember, Jesus connects us to God.

## MEMORY VERSE | 2 Peter 3:18a (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Learn the memory verse together using any combination of the resources provided: [memory verse coloring page](#), [sign language motions](#), or choose from [this list](#) of our favorite memorization techniques!*
- **"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."**

## PRAYER

- God, thank you for including us in your family. You sent Jesus to connect us to you so that one day we can join you in your perfect garden. Thank you for doing something larger-than-life for us. Amen.

## SMALL GROUP TIME

## DISCUSSION

## ● SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS

- **Why were all the disciples locked in a room?** *They were scared and worried.*
- **Why do you think Jesus appeared a second time to his friends?** *To reassure them that he really was alive and to include Thomas!*
- **Read John 20:29. Who are the people “who have not seen and yet have believed?”** *Us!*
- **Read John 15:5. What type of fruit do you think Jesus is talking about here?**

## ● APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- **When are times you feel disconnected from God or find it hard to talk to God?**
- **Who can you talk to, or what can you do to reconnect to God?**
- **How can you encourage a friend who feels disconnected from God?**

## ACTIVITY | Spring Suncatchers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you will need paper plates, [clear adhesive shelf liner](#), flower petals, small leaves, and yarn or pipe cleaners. Prep your craft by cutting out the center circle of each paper plate. Help kids place some shelf liner on the back of their paper plates. Then, have kids arrange some petals and leaves in the center of their plate on the sticky side of the shelf liner. Once they have finished, place more shelf liner over the petals and leaves, sealing them between the two layers of liner. Punch two holes at the top of the plate and tie off some yarn or pipe cleaners in the holes to finish the [sun catcher](#).*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Invite preteens to make Easter cards using grease pencils to create the design, then paint over them, like [this](#).*
  - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *If possible, give kids more control by having them go outside to pick their flower petals and leaves.*
- Beautiful things can happen when we remain in God. These sun catchers can help remind us of the ways we can remain connected to God's light. Whenever we do, we get to see God's light reflected in the world around us.
- We can grow closer to God because **Jesus connects us to God.**