

# WEEK 1

## LESSON GUIDE



### BIG IDEA

We can worship by putting our hope in God.

### BIBLE

**Wait in Hope:**

Psalm 33:12-22; Hebrews 11:1-3

## LARGE GROUP TIME

Hi, friends! I hope you're ready for some adventure because this big, beautiful world is full of them. You might even say all of creation is *Wonder-Full!* From the Northern Lights (which we just saw on our screens) to the Great Barrier Reef, our world is full of so many wonders!

[Play [this](#) video as kids enter your environment. Feel free to mute the sound and play your usual welcome music, if you'd like! For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)

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

#### MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs 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!](#)
  - "So Many Wonders" (Grow Kids)
  - "Wonderfully Made" (JumpStart3)
  - "Remind Me" (Gateway Kids Worship)
  - "Living Color" (Elevation Church Kids)

#### ACTIVITY | In the Bag

- Hello, adventurers! All month long, we're going to be taking a closer look at some of the most amazing wonders in the natural world. God created a *wonder-full* world for us to explore and enjoy together – and some exploring requires special gear. Let's see if you can guess what gear I have in my hiking pack!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** This activity is a play on Jimmy Fallon's "Can You Feel It?" game. Fill a backpack or hiking pack with an assortment of various camping and outdoor supplies. We recommend things like tent pegs, a pack of matches, a strand of paracord, bandages, a headlamp, binoculars, a map, compass, bird whistle, camera, lantern, marshmallows, and graham crackers. Invite kids one at a time to close their eyes and reach into the pack. Encourage them to guess what items they feel.

### ACTIVITY | Glow of Hope

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In this activity, kids will create glowstick lanterns. Give each kid four to five glowsticks and after cracking them, have kids carefully cut the tips of the glowsticks (or have a leader do this part). Instruct the kids to dump the contents of the glowsticks into the container to create a splatter pattern. Then, add glitter and shake. Watch how it's done [here](#) (1:35-2:02) and get more detailed instructions [here](#). Afterward, string the lanterns in your space to add to the decorations!*
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Make sure you have a leader pre-cut the glowsticks for the kids. Also, consider providing gloves for kids who might have texture aversion or might be sensitive about getting things on their hands.*
- Today, we're going to begin exploring our wonder-full world by looking at the Northern Lights, one of the natural wonders of the world.
- Just like the Northern Lights shine brightly in the darkness, we're going to create some lights of our own to brighten up our space.

### QUESTION | What does "worship" mean to you?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before the kids arrive, create a printout with about ten short Bible passages that mention the word "worship." For older kids, assign each kid or a pair of kids one passage and have them highlight "worship" on the page. For younger kids, project the verses on a screen, read them together, and have kids call out the word when it appears.*
- What kind of things do you get excited about? Maybe hanging out with friends or getting your favorite kind of ice cream! **How do you express how much you love those things?**
- Worship is kind of like what happens when we express how much we love and adore something. You may have heard the word "worship" in a song, in a cartoon, or in a movie before, but **what does "worship" mean to you?**
- Let's go on an adventure in our Bibles to see what worship means.

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

### SCRIPTURE | Psalm 33:12–22 (Wait in Hope)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Choose a volunteer to be today's storyteller, a goofy explorer named Juda. This volunteer can appear each week, or you can choose different volunteers to play the part of the storyteller. This person will share tales of their misadventures while exploring the natural wonders of the world and what they learned along the way. Set an inflatable [globe](#) on the stage. Before your time together, prepare the Bible Juda will read from by sliding glow sticks between the pages and packing the Bible full of sticky notes. The idea is for kids to get the impression Juda is constantly exploring the Bible looking for more wonder. Juda will enter the stage clumsily in full [explorer gear](#) (backpack, neckerchief, binoculars, vest with lots of pockets, etc.). Give each kid a glow stick and invite them to hold it in the air whenever they hear the word "hope" – especially during the Bible reading.*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Give preteens the opportunity to be involved in the Bible storytelling by having them read the Scripture passages or splitting up the parts of Juda and having preteens act it out with you.*
- Oh, hi! I'm Juda, and I'm an explorer! Adventure is out there and it's calling my name. Listen, can you hear it? [Whisper into the mic, "JUUUUUUDDDDAAAAAAA."] See? I told you it's calling my name!
- **So, who enjoys adventures?** I absolutely love adventure. Recently, I went to Norway. Do you know where Norway is? It's right here on this globe! [Spin globe frantically before locating Norway.]

- The reason I went to Norway was to see the Northern Lights. The Northern Lights, an astronomical phenomenon, cause the night sky to look like all kinds of colors, like bright greens and deep purples. They're wonderful — and they can only be seen in places way up north, like Norway!
- It took me almost an entire day to get there. I found a place to camp out and prepared to see the light show. I waited one hour, then two. Then eight hours went by, and I saw only darkness. *[Sit down on the stage looking sad.]*
- All good explorers know to travel with two things. **What are they?** That's right! Snacks and books! So, I decided to wait a little longer while munching on my favorite snack, *[insert name of snack]*, and my best guidebook, the Bible. *[Take Bible out of the backpack and stand up.]*
  - I decided to read from the book of Psalms. Did you know the book of Psalms is full of prayers and praise to God?
  - And you know what? As I read Psalm 33, I became full of hope! Let's read it together now. I want to see you raise your glow stick in the air whenever you hear the word "hope!"
- *[Read Psalm 33:12.]*
  - God is so great and so wonderful! We see this being played out long ago with the people of Israel. Though they weren't always popular with the people around them, they experienced the blessing, or happiness, that comes with letting God lead the way.
- *[Read Psalm 33:13–15.]*
  - Wow! God sees every single person. God is so big and mighty. God created our hearts and is aware of everything we do — the good stuff and the not-so-good stuff. Yet God loves us no matter what!
- *[Read Psalm 33:16–17.]*
  - Even rulers of great kingdoms can't depend on only themselves. They need God, too.
- *[Read Psalm 33:18–19.]*
  - Now, this isn't the same kind of fear as being afraid of the dark. Fearing God simply means honoring God and showing God respect. God is able to do anything and is so wonderful! And God promises to watch over us.
- *[Read Psalm 33:20–22.]*
  - God's people, the Israelites, waited with hope a lot. They knew God's promises and trusted God to follow through with those promises.
- That's what I did, too. I waited in hope. Even though my adventure wasn't going exactly as planned, I wasn't sad anymore. I was just happy to be in a beautiful, new place, remembering God was with me no matter what.
- Later, I learned from some traveling scientists that even though the Northern Lights weren't always visible to me, they were still there! Sometimes, clouds block them or the time of day makes them hard to see, but no matter what, the Northern Lights are always there, even if I can barely see them.
- You know what? That's just like God! We can't see God, but God is always there! That's why we can always put our hope in God.

### **BIG IDEA | We can worship by putting our hope in God.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write or form the Big Idea with [string lights](#) like [this](#). Display it on the ceiling or in a high place on the wall, as though the lights are stars. If this takes up too much space, consider doing just the keyword from the Big Idea — hope. You can also use a [marquee](#) or [glow-in-the-dark paint](#) to paint the Big Idea on poster board. Use a telescope as a fun prop during the Big Idea reveal. Be sure to dim the lights in your room.
- Wow! I love looking at the beautiful night sky. Oh! What do I see there? Let's read it together:
- **We can worship by putting our hope in God.**

## VIDEO | Wonder-Full, Episode 1

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

## IMAGE | Now You See It, Now You Don't

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print or display on screens images of the Northern Lights in times of low visibility and high visibility. You can find a variety of photos [here](#).
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Before your group meets, hide a bunch of glow-in-the-dark decals in the room. During this time, have kids go around the room and try to spot all of them and let kids take the stickers off the wall and collect them, and put them on a water bottle or backpack. This leads into the discussion about knowing God is there with them even though they don't see God!
- The Northern Lights are always there, even though we can't always see them. I like knowing God is always with me. It's kind of like knowing that someone who loves us very much will be picking us up after school. You can't see them during the day, but they show up when you need them.
- God is kind of like this, but even better because God is always available, no matter what time it is or where we are. Even though we can't see God all of the time, God is always there.
- Hope is knowing for sure that God's promises are true. They are real and they work!
- Do you notice God helping you throughout the day in big and small ways? Me, too!
- When we really start to notice how much God is with us and how far God's love reaches, it's hard not to feel grateful. It's easy to feel amazed at how wonderful God is — and when that happens, worship happens!
- **We can worship by putting our hope in God.**

## STORY | Hope in All Circumstances

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Share about a time you had hope during a hard or hopeless situation. How did worshipping God change how you felt or change the situation? If applicable, share how spending time with others helped you during this time.
- Hope isn't a wishful feeling like dreaming about ice cream for dinner is. Hope is more like a peaceful place, where you know everything is going to be okay because God is near and because there's nothing that can keep us away from God's love.
- When we put our hope in God, we get stronger in every kind of situation that might come along.
- **What kind of situations do you think can make having hope hard?**
- Hope in God reminds us that no matter how dark or scary things may seem, God's light still shines. God will always love us and be with us!

## SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 11:1–3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use a [handheld fan](#) to illustrate the effect wind has even though we can't see it. Read Hebrews 11:1–3 out loud while the kids close their eyes.
- We just read in Hebrews that faith is being sure of what we hope for, and being sure of what we don't see. Not being able to see me didn't change that I was reading to you.
- [Pick up and turn on a handheld fan. Walk by the kids and let them feel the air blowing on them.]
  - **Even with your eyes open, could you see the wind from this fan?** Not at all, right?
  - **But did you feel the wind?** Of course! Even though we can't see the wind, we can see and experience the effects of the wind, like how it blew back your hair or cooled you off.
  - Just like we're sure wind is real because we can see its effects and feel it, we can be sure Jesus is real, too.
- Knowing Jesus is real matters because Jesus was a great example of how we can remain full of hope by simply worshipping God.

- When Jesus was on Earth, Jesus faced many temptations and uncomfortable situations that required God's help. And just like God helped Jesus in those situations and gave Jesus peace, God can do the same for us, too.
- Life doesn't always look the way you think it will. Sometimes, it doesn't even look the way you hope it will. But because we know God is always there for us, **we can worship by putting our hope in God!**

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

### REFLECTION | Reach for the Stars

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite kids to journal about a time when hope was hard to find. When they're finished, pass out vinyl decals for them to decorate their journal entry and to remind them God's light shines in dark times.*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Consider passing out water bottles that preteens could use throughout this series. Distribute [vinyl decals](#) that they could put on their bottles each time they share or participate in another activity.*
- Sometimes, life can be tough and we can feel like there is no hope.
- Maybe you've experienced this feeling when:
  - You didn't make the team.
  - Your family had an argument.
  - You got a grade you weren't expecting.
  - A friend was unkind.
  - You were unkind.
  - You made a not-so-great choice.
  - A really good friend moved away.
  - You had to move away.
  - You felt like no one understood you.
- Write about a time when you've experienced something like that or something else that made you feel hopeless. Isn't it amazing how we all have our own unique stories, but we also have things in common? Because of this, we can encourage each other to worship God even in tough times.
- Put these stickers on your paper to remind you that the same God who made the stars made you and loves you so much!
- When we are sad or feel like we have no hope, worshiping God is the best thing we can do! **We can worship by putting our hope in God.**

### RESPONSE | Songs of Hope

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids make their own worship song by completing the prompt: "I put my hope in God even when . . ." Use the melody of a popular kids' song your group knows or go completely original. Have kids work in groups of two or three, possibly partnering younger kids with older ones.*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Listening to music provides hope. Challenge preteens to create a playlist of songs they can listen to when they need encouragement.*
- Singing to God is one way we worship, and putting our hope in God is one reason why we worship. Today, we're all going to write a song of hope and praise to God. It starts with the lyrics, "I put my hope in God even when . . ." and then you'll fill in the blank!
- I'll go first! [*Sing to the melody of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star."*]
  - I will put my hope in God
  - Even when it's hard to do

- When things do not go my way
- I can trust in what God says
- I will put my hope in God
- Even when it's hard to do
- You can use "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" as your melody like I did, or you can sing your own melody. Let's sing!

### MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 139:14 (NIV)

- "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write the memory verse on [glow-in-the-dark stars](#), writing one word on one star until the entire verse is written. We recommend using a [permanent marker](#). Hang the stars on the ceiling or all around the room. If you don't want to stick things to your wall or hang things up, you can place them on a poster board. Have kids point out the stars in the sky, or verse on the ceiling, as you call out the words in order. **(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/Psalm139-14](http://growcurriculum.org/Psalm139-14).)**
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Have preteens write each of the words of the verse on glow-in-the-dark star stickers, then stick them on dark-colored paper. Have them connect the words in order using metallic or chalk pens to create their own memory verse constellation.

### PRAYER

- Dear God, even though we can't see you and may not always know what you have planned for us, we know you are good and you love us – nothing changes that. We can see the amazing wonders you have created and they remind us of your great love for us! Teach us to worship you in every season so our hope in you may grow. Amen.

## SMALL GROUP TIME

- Read Psalm 33:18. Where are God's eyes?
- Read Psalm 33:20. What does it mean to "wait in hope for the Lord?"
- Why do you think we need both a "help" and a "shield?"
- Read Hebrews 11:1–3. Can you name other things you trust even though you can't see them?
- Think about a time you've sat outside with your family or a friend and looked around at all the things God has made – including you! How might seeing all this fill you with hope?
- When is a time you might find it difficult to worship? What is a way you can worship even then?
- How can you worship God every day this week?

### ACTIVITY | CD Art

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Help kids create the natural wonder, Aurora Borealis, on their CD using [these](#) instructions. Have kids write the word "hope" somewhere in the landscape.
- God made the beautiful Northern Lights, and all the lights in the sky, for that matter. Lights help us see when it's dark, just like how God gives us hope when hope feels lost. We can be reminded of that every time we see these Northern Lights we just made and when we look at everything God made. **We can worship by putting our hope in God!**