

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God gives us second chances.

BIBLE

The Parable of the Fig Tree:
Luke 13:6–9; 2 Peter 3:8–9

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Few actors can complete a scene in the first take, so the director gives them plenty of chances to get it just right. This week, we'll hear Jesus share a story about giving a fig tree another chance to produce fruit. We don't need to worry when our actions feel like they should be on a blooper reel because **God gives us second chances.**

LARGE GROUP TIME

Welcome back to Week 4! It's time for another *Big Picture*. Do you know that sometimes movies get second chances? They make sequels or remakes to make things even better. Well, guess what? Today's story is all about second chances—kind of like hitting the reset button.

Just like in movies, we get second chances from God. It's like getting another shot to do better or starting again when things don't go as planned. So, get ready for this awesome story about second chances. Time to roll the film and see what happens. *Roll film!*

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Reusable Props

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, have an assortment of "props" out for kids to use. This is the time to get everything out of your storage closet. The wackier and sillier the items, the better. (Think pool noodles, beach balls, pillows, empty plastic bottles, egg cartons, mops, fly swatters, etc.) Assign each pair of kids a prop and have them come up with a way to use the item that's not its original purpose (like, a fly swatter can be a badminton racket, a broom, an auction paddle, or a frying pan). You can have two pairs up at the front at a time or pass out props to the whole group to do together. Have pairs take turns acting out how they might use the prop until they run out of ideas.*
- A major part of movies that we might not think about is all the props you see in the movie. Those are objects that the actors might use or hold in a scene—things like phones, instruments, food, or lightsabers.
- Sometimes, prop masters recreate ordinary items into a believable prop for the movie. Great job giving these old movie props a second chance!

ACTIVITY | Hydration Flip

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, create teams and give each one a small plastic bottle filled about a third*

of the way with water. Screw the caps on tightly and secure with duct tape. Have team members take turns flipping the bottle vertically in the air and trying to get them to land upright. Each team member gets at least two attempts—you can determine the limit based on the time you have and the size of your groups. Once everyone has had their turns, tally up which team landed the bottle the most.

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Make this more challenging by giving preteens a raised target, like a stack of books or a box, to flip their water bottle onto. You can also have them stand on a chair and make the bottle land on the ground, or challenge them to land the bottle on the cap instead.

✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Instead of flipping bottles, have kids toss rings onto different-sized bottles.

- When you're working all day on a movie set, you need to stay hydrated and energized. We have our water bottles here that will make sure we stay hydrated.
- **How many of you got it on the first try? How many on the second? How many needed more tries?**
- Sometimes, we need second chances. Today's Bible story is all about how God gives us more than one chance to get it right.

QUESTION | When did you need a second chance?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids shout out answers to this question. Answers may include learning to play an instrument, riding a bike, skateboarding, or finishing a level on a video game.
- **When was a time you needed to learn something by making mistakes over and over again?**
- **What if you only had one chance to get these right? What if you played a video game that had only one life, and if you lost it, the game was over?**
- It would be terrible if we never got a second chance. It's great that in most things, we are given multiple chances to learn and grow, and the same is true in our relationship with God.

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

SCRIPTURE | Luke 13:6–9 (The Parable Of The Fig Tree)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up your space like a movie set, with a director's chair, megaphone, and [clapper board](#) (or [make your own](#)). You will be a movie director every week and invite kids up to pantomime as you tell the story. Don't worry about it being sloppy or awkward—the whole point is for the director to tell the kids what to do during the storytelling. Feel free to ad-lib and make it funny. Use the clapper board to signal the "acting" sequence. Invite all the kids (or as many as you'd like) to form a tree this week. Invite two more kids to be the caretaker and the owner.
- What a blast I'm having making all these mini-movies with you from the parables of Jesus. These parables helped people understand more about God.
- Today, our whole crew will be a part of the acting process. One person will be the caretaker, and the other will be the vineyard owner. The rest of you form a circle in the middle of the room. Put one hand in toward the center (like you're playing Hokey Pokey), and your outer arm will be a tree branch. Voila, you are a tree!
- Listen and act along with me. The Parable of the Fig Tree, take one. Action!
- **Let's read Luke 13:6.**
 - The owner carefully walks around the tree, investigating every single branch. He scratches his head. This is a fig tree, but there are no figs. He's not happy.
 - The tree branches sway side to side as if to say they're sorry.
- **Moving on to Luke 13:7.**
 - The vineyard owner talks to the caretaker using big emotions and actions. He holds up the number three on his fingers to say that this tree has shown zero fruit for three years. Cut it down!

- The tree is now sulking. Its branches are pointing downward and if trees had faces, this one would look particularly sad.
- **But wait, there's still Luke 13:8–9.**
 - The caretaker of the vineyard pleads with the owner. He's rubbing his hands together. He holds up one finger as if to say, "Let's give the tree one more chance." After one year, if there is still no fruit, we can cut it down.
 - The owner seems okay with this deal. He shrugs his shoulders and walks away.
 - The tree breathes a sigh of relief, and its branches are up and dancing in the breeze!
- This parable is all about second chances. The fig tree's entire purpose was to produce figs, but it hadn't been done for a long time. The owner saw that there was no use for a tree that wouldn't bear fruit, but the caretaker invited the owner to give it one more year to grow.
- This is like God, who is patient with us. God still loves us even when we make mistakes and give in to sin. God gives us more chances to learn from our wrongdoings and grow the way God wants us to.
- *End scene!*

BIG IDEA | God gives us second chances.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use [the video provided](#) for this week to reveal this week's Big Idea, like you're announcing the winner of a movie award.
- The nominees for this week's Big Idea are:
 - We can give back to God
 - God helps us know what's true.
 - God sends us helpers.
 - We belong in God's family.
 - God gives us second chances.
- And the Big Idea is...**God gives us second chances!**

VIDEO | A Clip Of Bloopers From "Frozen 2"

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show [this clip](#) of outtakes from "Frozen 2: Behind the Scenes." We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context! For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Show [this clip](#) of bloopers from "Sonic the Hedgehog" instead.
- Actors and crew sometimes make mistakes as they film movies. I'm sure it can be disappointing to think that you messed up, but sometimes when you compile all those mistakes together and make a blooper reel, they become moments we can look back on and laugh.
- **Could you imagine what would happen if because one actor made a mistake on a movie set, they just stopped production and trashed everything?** We wouldn't have any movies ever.
- No one always does everything perfectly, including some of the best actors. We all make mistakes from time to time, but that doesn't mean we're doomed and we should give up. Our mistakes should teach us what not to do next time. We can ask God to forgive us for our wrongdoings and help us go in the right direction.
- It's a good thing **God gives us second chances.**

ACTIVITY | Take Two!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, have volunteers come up and act out the scene given (see below) that involves some poor choices. Then ask the group if they were able to rewind the scene and were given a second chance, what would they change? Or you can use the suggestions below under "Take two." Then have the volunteers act out the scene again with the suggested changes.
- Okay, movie crew, let's once again practice our acting skills. Let's take turns acting out different scenes of

something that could happen to us. For the first take, we'll try acting out a poor choice and for the second take, we'll do it again with a better choice.

- **Someone you don't really get along with sits at your lunch table.**
 - **Take one:** Obviously, you get up and have all your friends get up and leave the table.
 - **Take two:** You strike up a conversation with this person and try to make friends with them.
- **A friend at recess slipped on a banana peel and fell.**
 - **Take one:** Everyone starts laughing, and you join in.
 - **Take two:** You help them up and ask everyone to stop laughing.
- **Your teacher asks if anyone could stay a few minutes after class to help organize the classroom.**
 - **Take one:** You bolt out of the class as soon as the bell rings without looking back.
 - **Take two:** You raise your hand, volunteer, and ask your friends to join you. The more, the merrier.
- **Your parent comes super late to pick you up after school.**
 - **Take one:** You get super angry and refuse to talk to them the whole way home.
 - **Take two:** You ask what happened and gently let them know that waiting was very challenging.
- Great acting, everyone. I think those second takes were much better. Movie scenes are rarely filmed in just one, or even two takes. **Do you know what the record is for most takes of a scene in a movie?** 148 takes!
- Sometimes we might not get it right the first time. We might allow our anger and frustration to take control, and maybe we might even say some things we don't really mean. But we can always apologize and ask for forgiveness—from God and from others. And then, we can do better next time!
- Remember, **God gives us second chances!**

SCRIPTURE | 2 Peter 3:8–9

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the passage aloud or invite a volunteer to read.*
- **How long do you think it takes to make a movie?**
- It takes years to make a movie, sometimes 5-10 years! Sometimes even longer. It all starts with an idea, then a script, then raising the money to make it and hiring all the people—and even when you're done with the filming part, you still have to edit it all together in "post," where you cut scenes, add in visual and sound effects, and lay down some music.
- Fruit also takes a long time to grow. Some trees also take years to bear fruit. Just like how it takes patience to see things bear fruit, God is patient with us.
- God is so patient that time doesn't matter to God. Sometimes we might grow impatient with God, but we can learn to trust God's perfect timing. Because God sees time differently than we do, we have more chances to grow and bear the kind of fruit God wants us to grow, like being more loving, joyful, peaceful, kind, gentle, faithful, and helpful to others ... and patient, like God!
- Just like the caretaker of the fig tree wanted to help the tree bear fruit, God patiently cares for us and helps us grow to be more like Jesus. **God gives us second chances.**

VIDEO | *Big Picture*, Episode 4

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

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

REFLECTION | *Big Picture* Storyboard

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need a corkboard, black foam board, or any board, really. Provide large index cards and writing utensils for kids to use. Have kids write or draw according to the prompt, and then stick it on the board using pins or tape. Try grouping similar responses in the same area. Prepare multiple*

boards if you have a large group.

- ✘ **PRETEEN HACK:** Reflection time is a great opportunity to dive deeper into Scripture and its application with preteens. Give yourself—and the group—permission to stray off-topic if necessary to explore questions kids are curious about and to gauge where they are in their faith journeys.
- ✘ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Let the families of kids with disabilities know ahead of time what kinds of questions you'll be discussing this week. Give them time to prepare their kids for the questions they might be asked so that they can participate fully.
- A storyboard is created before a movie goes into production so everyone can see the big picture. This ensures everyone is on the same page and knows what this movie is all about! Let's pause and storyboard what we learned today!
- Think back on the Parable of the Fig Tree and write or draw one thing about the story that stuck out to you most. Afterward, put it up on the storyboard, and those of you who are willing can share with us why that part was most memorable for you.
- Okay, now that we have our big picture storyboard up and running, let's talk a little more about what this parable teaches us about God and our life with God.
 - **Why do you think God gives us second (and third and fourth and more) chances?**
 - **Describe a time when you needed someone to give you a second chance.**
 - **How about a time when you needed to give someone else another chance?**
 - **What should we do with the extra chances God gives us?**
- If we don't learn from a second chance and just do things the same way again, what's the point of a second chance? **God gives us second chances** so that we can learn from whatever we didn't do with our first chance!

RESPONSE | Make It Reel

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out a copy of the [printable](#) provided to each kid where kids will write or draw one action step for the week in the space provided. Feel free to send the printables home or hold on to them so that by the end of Week 5, kids can make "reels" by taping or gluing their weekly film strips together.
- It's time to add to your life movie reel! What happens next? What can we do about what we learned today?
- **What do you need to grow closer to God? Write or draw one way you can grow with God this week.**
- In Jesus' parable, the caretaker of the fig tree asked the owner to wait for the tree to bear fruit, even though it hadn't shown any results for three years. Three years is a long time, right? It goes to show that God is super patient with us as we grow, too.
- We might still have a long way to go, and it may take some time, but because **God gives us second chances**, we can keep learning and growing closer to God!

MEMORY VERSE | Jeremiah 33:3 (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!
- **"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."**

PRAYER

- God, thank you for giving us second chances. You are so patient with us. We want to grow fruit and become more loving, kind, and helpful to others. Help us grow to be the kind of people you want us to be. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME**DISCUSSION****● SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**

- **Who were the two characters in today's parable from Jesus?** *The landowner and the caretaker.*
- **Why did the landowner want to cut down the fig tree?** *It produced no fruit for the last three years.*
- **How did the caregiver convince the landowner not to cut it down?** *He promised to dig around it and fertilize it for another year.*
- **Read 2 Peter 3:9. Why is God being patient with us?** *God loves us and wants us to turn away from sin.*

● APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- **Why are second chances important?**
- **Have you ever been given a second chance, like on a test? How do you feel when you are given a second chance?**
- **Is there anyone you know who needs a second chance? What can you do for them?**

ACTIVITY | My Fig Tree

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, give each kid a brown paper bag, green and purple construction paper, and scissors. Have kids cut the top of the paper bag into strips about halfway down its length. Then, have them open the bag so it stands, pinch it in the middle, and twist it ([like this](#)) to make a tree trunk. Then have them cut leaves and figs out of the construction paper and tape or glue them onto the branches. Older kids can write ways they want to grow on the figs! See a worked example [here](#).*
 - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Have precut bags, figs, and leaves for kids experiencing challenges with fine motor skills.*
- The parable Jesus told about the fig tree perfectly described how God waits for us while we grow. Just like the caretaker promised to take care of the fig tree, God gives us everything we need to grow, including opportunities for us to learn from our mistakes.
- Place your tree somewhere where you can see it every day to remind you that **God gives us second chances.**