

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God gives us second chances.

BIBLE

The Parable of the Fig Tree:
Luke 13:6–9

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.**

WELCOME TIME

ACTIVITY | Second Chance Musical Chairs

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, set up enough chairs for each kid minus one. Explain that kids will walk around the chairs while the music plays. When the music stops, kids have to quickly sit in a chair. If they can't find a chair, they are out. Remove one chair (this is the only time you'll remove a chair). Have kids play another round. This time when someone can't find a chair, they are out but will tag in the last kid who was out. Everyone is only out for one round. Then they get another chance to play. Play for as many rounds as time allows.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Toddlers are too wobbly to manage to get into a chair quickly. They might fall off and get hurt. Instead, play the game with masking tape circles on the floor to step on. The toddlers will just have fun moving with the music and stomping on the tape circles.
- Great job playing, everyone! Even when you were out, you got tagged back in and had another chance to play.
- I love getting another chance to play. Today's Bible story is all about second chances!

ACTIVITY | Where's The Leaf?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, set up three to four cups upside down on a table. Place one leaf or fig (or whatever you have) under one of the cups. Show the kids what cup it's under, and then move the cups around a lot. Ask for a volunteer to guess what cup the leaf (or fig) is under. If they get it wrong, have them guess again until they find the leaf. Celebrate when they find it. Play several times, giving as many kids as possible a chance to guess.
- Wow, you are all so good at guessing! Sometimes, we need more than one chance to get it right, but that's okay. Let's hear a story when God gives someone a second chance!

STORY TIME

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

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Teach this passage by reading from a preschool-friendly Bible translation, Bible storybook,

or using the talking points provided below. Set up the space like a movie theater, with kids seated in rows facing you. Play an old-fashioned movie countdown (similar to [this](#)) before you begin teaching. For today's story, wrap a microphone stand (or a [pool noodle with lengthwise cuts](#)) with brown butcher paper. Twist together a few lengths of paper and tape it to the trunk as branches. You don't have to spend too much time on it. It doesn't have to be perfect as long as it loosely resembles an [empty tree trunk](#).

- It's time for the *Big Picture*! **Who likes watching movies?** Me too! Movies are a fun way to tell a story. Jesus, God's son, sometimes told stories called "parables." Parables helped people learn true and important things about God.
- Today's *Big Picture* parable is about a fig tree. There once was an owner of the land who had a fig tree.
 - **What grows on a fig tree?**
 - That's right, figs!
- But this owner's fig tree had no figs! The gardener caring for the tree watched over it for three years. But still, there was no fruit.
 - **How do you think the owner felt about this?**
 - He was not happy, that's for sure!
- The owner did not know what to do with a fig tree that had zero figs. He told the gardener to cut it down.
 - **How do you chop down a tree?**
 - **Let's pretend to swing and ax!**
- But the gardener said, "Leave it alone for one more year. I'll water and feed it all year long. If it grows fruit next year, great! If not, then cut it down." The owner agreed. He gave the fig tree a second chance to grow figs!
- Jesus told this story about the fig tree to teach us about God. We are kind of like the tree.
 - Sometimes, we follow and love God well. That's like bearing fruit.
 - But other times, we might not follow and love God well. That's like bearing no fruit.
- But God waits for us to grow. God wants us to grow the right fruit. God wants us to have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and so much more.
- God cares for us and helps us grow to be more like Jesus. **Aren't you glad God gives us lots and lots of chances to learn and grow?**

BIG IDEA | God gives us second chances.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write one word of the Big Idea on separate sheets of yellow paper. Crumple up each of those papers along with blank sheets, and place them in a large popcorn bucket (like [this](#)). Invite kids to come to the front, one at a time, and pull out a "popcorn" from the bucket. For added fun, throw the "popcorn" in the air and have kids scramble to grab one. Give them a chance to smooth out the paper. If their paper contains a word, read it out loud for them. Once all the words are found, put them in order and have kids repeat after you while learning the motions below.
- Our poppin' new Big Idea for today is ...
 - **God** (Point up.)
 - **gives us** (Point to you.)
 - **second chances.** (Hold two fingers up and end with a cheer.)

VIDEO | *Big Picture*, Episode 4

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

ACTIVITY | Fig Tree Race

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, have kids play a traditional "Red Light, Green Light" game, where their goal is to get from one side of the room to the other. Stand on the wall opposite them and call out "Spring" for when

kids can move toward you and “Winter” for when they need to freeze with their arms bent upward like a tree. If anyone moves, tell them they moved but that’s okay, they get another chance. Keep going until everyone has made it to the wall where you are. Repeat this activity and change up how they move forward (hop like a frog, walk backward, waddle like a penguin).

✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Offer toddlers some plastic apples or other fruit to scrub and wash with brushes in less than an inch of water. Supervise all water play closely. As they play, talk about how apples grow on trees just like how figs grow on fig trees.

- Wow, you are all amazing fig trees, growing in spring and freezing in winter. Sometimes you didn’t do it perfectly, but you got another chance to try again.
- God is like that with us. We make mistakes and sometimes forget to follow God’s words. But we get another chance every time we ask God.
- **God gives us second chances!** And third chances! And fourth chances! And more!

PRAYER

- God, thank you for always giving us second chances. We want to grow fruit and become more loving, kind, and helpful to others. Help us grow to be the kind of kids you want us to be. Amen.

SHARING TIME

SNACK | Movie Popcorn

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For snacks this month, serve popcorn in popcorn bags or small brown paper bags with different mix-ins or flavors—M&Ms, goldfish crackers, raisins, marshmallows, cereal, cheese flavoring, cheese puffs, and more. You can provide a variety each week for kids to choose from or focus on one each week. As kids enjoy their movie snack, you may choose to show a fun clip like [these outtakes](#) from “Storks,” [this retelling](#) of today’s Bible story, or something similar.
- ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Popcorn is a choking hazard for toddlers. Offer toddlers some oat cereal as an alternative. You can serve them in boxes like [these](#) for fun.
- In movies, sometimes mistakes happen. An actor might forget what to say or say the wrong thing. Lots of funny things happen, and these mistakes are called outtakes or bloopers.
- **When we make a mistake, what can we do?** We can laugh. If we’ve done something to upset someone else, we can say we are sorry. We can ask God to forgive us. Then we can try again.
- We all make mistakes, but **God gives us second chances.**

ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids sit in a circle. Use a fruit to pass around the circle (or a small ball). Let kids know to listen for you to say “change.” When you say “change,” they have to pass the fruit in the opposite direction. Let kids play this a few times to get the hang of it. Then ask the following questions. Whoever has the fruit gets to answer the question first and change the fruit’s direction.
- **What kind of tree was in Jesus’ parable today?** A fig tree
- **Was the fig tree in today’s story growing any fruit?** No
- **What did the owner of the farm want to do to the fig tree?** Cut it down
- **Did he cut down the tree or give the tree a second chance?** He gave the tree a second chance because the gardener asked.
- **Does God give us a second chance when we make a mistake?** Yes, **God gives us second chances!**

ACTIVITY | Fig Tree Craft

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this craft, give each kid a jumbo popsicle stick and four green cupcake liners to make a tree like [this](#). Have kids color the popsicle stick brown with markers or washable paint to make the trunk. Fold each cupcake liner in half to make the leaves. Glue the ends of each leaf onto the stick trunk. Glue three or four purple pop-poms or dot stickers on the tree to represent figs.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Assemble the tree beforehand and give toddlers dot stickers or dot markers to add on the "fruit." You can also prepare tree handouts ([like these](#)) that they can decorate freely.
- Popsicle sticks were originally meant for holding up popsicles, but they have a second chance as a craft material.
- These green leaves were originally meant as cupcake paper. They've been given a second chance as part of this tree.
- Second chances are meant to help us be more fruitful, and **God gives us second chances.**

MEMORY VERSE | Jeremiah 33:3 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Help kids learn this month's memory verse by setting the words (including the Scripture reference) to the tune of "Jesus Loves The Little Children." You can also have kids repeat the verse after you in small chunks, say it using silly voices, or create simple hand motions for keywords.
- **"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."**

PLAY TIME

ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and distribute [the coloring page](#) along with crayons or markers. You can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse as the kids color.

ACTIVITY | Match The Fruits

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, prepare sixteen small paper cups turned upside down, with a large pom-pom hidden under each cup. Make sure that you have hidden only two of each color. Encourage kids to find the matching "fruits" by picking two cups to uncover the pom-poms. If the colors match, remove the cups and the pom-poms from the batch. If they get it wrong in this game, they can flip the cups back over and try again.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Help toddlers feel loved by reading together. Reading board books together can be an excellent way to give one-on-one attention and show that each kid is valuable to you. Expect to read a book over and over again because toddlers love repetition.

ACTIVITY | Leaf Art

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have tracing paper, crayons, and leaves. Show the kids how to place the leaf under the tracing paper and rub it with a crayon. The imprint of the leaf will show.