

21 Daily Devotionals for Kids

1. Binoculars- Object Lesson on Reading the Bible

Bible Verse: N/A

Big Idea: Don't forget to study God's word.

Object Lesson Text:

See these? Pretty cool aren't they? They're called binoculars, and we use them to see things that are far away. For instance, if you are going bird-watching, you bring one of these along, so you can see the birds up close. If the bird is high up in a tree, you can look through these and see every detail of the bird. You can see its colour, what kind it is, and how it acts.

Binoculars can be a very important tool for some people. You can be far away but still see things up close. You know binoculars remind me that we need to look closely at the Bible. A lot of times we read the Bible just because we think we have to, or because we're told to. We never stop and read a verse so we can find out what it means, or why God wrote it. The Bible is full of examples of how we should live. The stories in the Old Testament aren't there to just teach us a history lesson, they are there to help us find out how to live with each other, and how to obey God in every situation.

The New Testament is an amazing place to find God's promises, and the message of the Gospel in the best news in the world. With all these amazing chapters in the Bible, just think what we can learn if we looked a little bit closer, and spent a little bit more time reading and studying God's Word. If we skim through the Bible, we won't learn what God is trying to teach us. If you're having a bad day, how can you discover a verse about joy without stopping to read God's Word? You may be needing some advice on a relationship. But how can God speak to you if you don't look closely and examine the examples God gave in the Bible? So remember these binoculars, and remember to take a closer look at the Bible.

2. 35mm Film- Object Lesson on Prayer

Bible Verse: N/A

Big Idea: We can talk to God.

Object Lesson Text:

I wonder if any of you can tell me what this is. This is a roll of 35mm film, and up until the early 2000s, it was the primary way people took pictures. The process of taking photographs was invented and perfected in the late 1800s. Photographers loaded film into cameras that were specially designed to take and imprint images onto the film. A photo developer then processed the film in a darkroom and turned it into a negative. This was a very delicate procedure because if the undeveloped film was exposed to light, you would lose all your photos! Once developed, the negative would then be used to make the prints that people put in picture frames and photo albums.

For more than 100 years, people had to buy film, send that film off for processing, and make prints, 24 pictures at a time. But odds are that your own kids will never even see a roll of 35mm film. Why? Because of digital photo technology!

In the days of 35mm film, you were limited to about 24 photos per roll of film. Now we have cameras that can take literally thousands of photographs! What's more, with digital technology, there's no film to develop and no negative required. You can upload images to your computer and print them by the hundreds at a fraction of the cost of developing film and making prints!

New parents used to have to budget their film when taking photos of their new baby. They'd take a photo here, a photo there, and once a roll of film was done, they'd have to wait a few days to even see their photos. Now they can snap hundreds of pictures at a time, whenever and wherever they choose, with no limitations!

The Bible tells us that going to God used to be a very difficult process. People could not go directly to the Lord in prayer. They had to go to a temple. They had to go through ceremonial washings. They had to purchase a sacrifice. Then they had to take that sacrifice to the priest, who took the sacrifice to the altar for them and asked forgiveness for their sins. But thanks to Jesus, we no longer have so many obstacles between us and God. When we pray in the name of Jesus, who was the ultimate sacrifice for our sins, we can pray directly to God. We can commune with God all day with no limitations.

3. Box- Object Lesson on God's Power

Bible Verse: 1st Corinthians 2:9

Big Idea: With God, anything is possible.

Object Lesson Text:

See this box. It's just a regular cardboard box. But you can store all sorts of things in it. They're especially useful when you move to new house, and have a lot of things to pack. Boxes are mainly for storing things, but, when you pack you want to stay organized, so you know which things go into which boxes. You might put your toys in one box, and your books in another. You want to separate the kitchen stuff, from the living room stuff. Boxes are great for organization, but you have to make sure they're the right size.

I mean you couldn't put a vacuum cleaner in a box like this size. You know sometimes we try to do that with God. God is huge he's bigger than the earth, the Sun, and the universe. He created the universe. Our minds can't even fathom how God does what he does. He's all-powerful. He's everywhere at once. So why do we try to put God in a box? What I mean by that is a lot of times we think God can't do something.

For instance, have you ever prayed for the salvation of a friend? Maybe a family member? Have you ever prayed for the salvation of your city? What about your state? What about the whole country? If you don't believe God can save your city, you're putting God in a box? Don't forget, he's the one that created the world. Know that God has no limits. You can trust him with anything. If you have something big on your heart that God has asked you to pray for it, don't put it aside or think it's impossible. Just pray. You'll be amazed at what God can do. 1st Corinthians 2:9 says, "however as it is written: no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." Don't put God in a box. Pray as big as you can so you and your faith can grow.

4. Baby Food- Object Lesson on Growing in Christ

Bible Verse: Ephesians 4:14-15

Big Idea: Seek God with all your heart.

Object Lesson Text:

Is anybody here hungry? I know sometimes it's hard to sit through church without a snack, so I thought I'd bring a little something along this morning. Are you guys hungry? All right, who wants some ... strained peas? Or maybe mixed vegetables? Or look, broccoli!

What's the matter? Is there something wrong with this food? You bet there is. This is baby food, isn't it? And you guys don't want to eat this anymore? Why? Because you're not babies! You're all grown up, and you can eat grown up food.

What's your favourite food? Is it pizza? Or maybe hamburgers? How about hot dogs or macaroni and cheese? I love all that stuff too. I wonder, though, do any of you like oysters? Or how about salad? Anyone eat salad? What about Indian food? Or Japanese food?

Some of you guys might grow into that food one day, but right now, you've found your ideal menu, haven't you? You know something? This baby food reminds me of when I first became a Christian. The Bible says when you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you are born again. That makes you a baby Christian, doesn't it? And everyone knows a baby needs baby food. But there's something else we can learn from this baby food: we have to grow up some time, don't we? Because you don't see your parents sitting down to a nice jar of strained peas, do you?

That's why it's important that you don't stop learning about Jesus after you accept him as your Saviour. You need to study the Bible, spend time in prayer and Sunday School, and worship God. This is the spiritual food you'll need to grow up strong in the Lord, just as real food helps your body grow. I want to challenge you guys: don't get stuck in the baby food stage. Seek God with all your heart, because if you do, the Bible promises that you will no longer be "infants tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ." (Ephesians 4: 14-15)

5. Apple Seeds- Object Lesson on God's Protection

Bible Verse: John 16:33

Big Idea: Trust in God.

Object Lesson Text:

How many of you guys like apples? Apples are great food because you can do so many different things with them. You can make apple sauce. You can make candy apples. You can make apple pies and apple cakes. You can use them in salads with fruits and vegetables. You can make apple juice and apple cider to drink. Or, you can simply pick up an apple and eat it by itself.

Have you ever accidentally eaten an apple seed? They're usually stuck in the core of the apple, and it's not easy to get to, but sometimes it happens, doesn't it? Well, here's something you might not know: apple seeds are poisonous. Each apple seed has just a little, tiny bit of poison in it. It's not near enough to hurt you. You'd have to eat LOTS of apple seeds to even begin to feel sick. But it's still in there.

You know, sometimes in life, we encounter hard times. Bad things happen, we get sick, we struggle. But just like the apple seed, God promises never to give us more than we can handle. If you accidentally swallow an apple seed, it's not going to hurt you, because it's no more poison than your body can handle. And when hard times come, God promises he will help you through them, because he won't give you any more than you can handle.

Before he was crucified, Jesus said to his disciples, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)
Let's take a moment to thank God for that promise.0

6. World Map - Object Lesson on God's Plan For Our Lives

Bible Verse: Jeremiah 29:11

Big Idea: We can trust God with our lives.

Object Lesson Text:

Tada! It's a map. The world is so big you can go so many places, and if you've ever been on a trip, you know you have to have all the places you visit mapped out so you don't get lost. So let's say that we were going from here to here. What roads would you take? Where will you stop for petrol? Where will you spend the night?

These kind of things have to be planned out for a fun and safe trip. Have you ever thought of our lives being like a map? We like to have everything we do planned out for the future. Where will we go to school? Where will we live? What will I be when I grow up? But sometimes instead of a place we can pinpoint on a map, we end up with a big question mark. God doesn't always give us the answers to those questions right away.

The world is big, and there are lots of places we can go to live, or go to school. Sometimes we don't know where that will be. Does that mean we have to worry? No! God is still taking care of you and he will reveal the road to your next stop in his own time. The Bible says in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future." How many of you have plans for the future?

Well, as we just read, God has plans for you too. It may be that God's plans are different from yours, and you may not like that. For instance, normally our plan would be to go sit at lunch with friends, but what if God's plan for you is to make some new friends? You may not want to do it at first but I think you'll find out that God's plan is always the best plan. After all, he is God, isn't he? So next time you look at a map remember that God is looking at one too- the map for your life. Enjoy the ride. Even if you don't know where you're going yet, and if you're listening, God will tell you what the next stop is.

7. VHS, DVD, & Blue-ray- Object Lesson on God's Faithfulness

Bible Verse: 2 Timothy 2:13

Big Idea: God is faithful.

Object Lesson Text:

I have some movies here. Well what's different about them? Well they're all in different formats aren't they? This one is a VHS, you need a VHS player for it. This one is a DVD and you need a DVD player for this one. And this one is a Blue-ray, you need a Blue-ray player to watch it.

All this has been invented in the past 20 years. What do you think you'd invent next? When a new version is made the old one stops being made. Eventually no-one will want a VHS anymore. SO people who want to watch movie or TV shows will have to keep up with the change.

Everything changes. There is always something new coming. It can be hard to stay with the latest trends, be it clothes music or even what words we say. Don't you think it would be funny and a little weird if I said groovy all the time, like it was the 1960s? But if I said "cool" that would be totally normal right?

Well this world is constantly changing what's cool doesn't stay cool forever. People changed too. But do you know who always stays the same? God. You can see in the Bible that God stays consistent. You can always count on him to stand by his word, and you can always count on him to love you. If you feel alone this week, remember that God is always there for you he is unchanging 2nd Timothy 2:13 says, "if we are faithless he remains faithful he cannot deny himself." So be thankful today that God isn't like the world as if there are a new version of him every few years. God doesn't change at all.

8. Vacuum- Object Lesson on God's Love

Bible Verse: N/A

Big Idea: God will never give up on us.

Object Lesson Text:

How many of you help with the vacuuming in the house? For those of you who have vacuumed or watched your parents do it, let me give you a scenario. Let me know if you've seen or done this before. You're going along vacuuming the floor and you see a large piece of lint or something on the floor. You run the vacuum over it pull it back and the lint still there. You stop. It shouldn't be there. You run the vacuum over it again, still there! You try it again and it's still there. So what do you do? You put the vacuum in the upright position, you pick up the lint, you look at it, and then you set it back down on the floor so you can try again.

Kind of silly isn't it? You've picked it up in your hands. Common sense would say to throw that piece away in the trash can. But no; you gave the vacuum a second chance. Sometimes it lets you down even after you've lent it a hand, but other times that little bit of movement is just what the vacuum needs suck up that piece of lint.

In a funny way this little scenario reminds me of how God is with us. God puts people in our lives so we can share the gospel with them through our words and our deeds. But we walk on by and don't do anything, but God gives us another shot. But we let them down again and again and again so God steps in and gives them or us a nudge so we can have a second chance.

It must drive God nuts sometimes the way we keep missing the moments he gives us. If it does, he doesn't show it, he just keeps on giving us another chance. God knows we're not perfect, that's why he died. To pay the price for our sins. That's why he still gives us second chances. It's embarrassing to think of all the times you might have failed him, but we can take comfort in this, God will never ever give up on us, so long as you're willing to follow him he will always be willing to give you a second chance.

9. Dog Treats- Object Lesson on Worshipping God

Bible Verse: Job 1:21

Big Idea: We should always praise God, in good and bad times.

Object Lesson Text:

I brought along some snacks this morning. Anybody here like doggie treats? Eww, pretty gross! Especially this box of treats! Look at the flavour. Doesn't sound very good, does it? I bet you guys would much rather have cookies or fruit, right?

You know who does love these treats? Dogs. Do any of you have dogs? I bet they love treats. A dog will do just about anything for a treat. They will sit, lie down, roll over, play dead, fetch a ball. If the dog knows he or she is going to get a treat, that dog will do whatever you want.

But you know something? When a dog does something for a treat, they do it for selfish reasons, don't they? When you first train a dog, the dog becomes conditioned to do tricks because they receive a reward. If you weren't waving one of these yummy treats, they might just walk away and ignore you.

You know sometimes we respond to God that way. We act nice and we pray because we want God to give us a treat, don't we? But God doesn't want us to love him like that. Whether we have good times or bad, God wants us to love him, and thank him for all the things he's given us. A man named Job modelled this kind of love. God decided to test Job, and he took away every good thing Job had. But Job refused to walk away from God. Job said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." (Job 1:21)

When good things happen, we should rejoice and thank God. But let's not forget to thank God in the bad times, because no matter how bad things are, he is still God.

10. Sealed Jar- Object Lesson on Perseverance

Bible Verse: N/A

Big Idea: Trust in God.

Object Lesson Text:

Have any of you ever gone to the pantry to get some jam or a pickle and couldn't open the jar? It's pretty frustrating, isn't it? You're hungry and the only thing separating you from a nice peanut butter and jam sandwich or crunchy pickle is a tiny piece of metal on top of a jar.

Thankfully for you guys, there's something you can do with that tightly sealed jar. If it won't open for you what do you do? You take it to mom and dad. A grown-up with bigger hands and more arm strength is like the Mighty Eagle on a tight lid. If you can't open it, mom probably can. If she can't open it, dad probably can, and if dad can't open it, well dad will probably find some other creative way to get it open.

Some situations in life are like the stuck jar. You can try and try all you want but you can never get it to work out the way you want it to. It'd be so nice to have God come flying down from the sky and save the day, but God doesn't work that way. Sometimes God has a plan in the waiting and the struggling that we can't see when we're in the middle of it.

Take the story of Joseph for example. Joseph was sold into slavery and then tossed into prison. God could have crashed into that prison and sprung him out anytime, but if God had done all that, Joseph would not have been at the right place and the right time to save Egypt and his family from a famine. If God was in the business of saving us every time things went wrong, we would never learn anything ourselves. We just sit back and wait for the quick and easy rescue, and never learn to trust in the Lord ourselves. We never learned to soar on our own.

The next time you come across a stuck jar. take a moment to thank God for the way he teaches us to trust in Him through waiting. Ask him to give you perseverance and to prepare you to do his will then go find mom and dad to help you.

11. Battery- Object Lesson on Love

Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Big Idea: Without love we are nothing.

Object Lesson Text:

Does everyone see what I have in my hand? It's a battery, and it's something I bet all of you depend on every day. Batteries are little power packs that let us run all these things without having to be plugged into a stationary power source. We use batteries in all kinds of devices: cell phones, iPods, wireless microphones, toys. Even cars run on bat-teries. What other things can you think of that require batteries?

There's nothing more frustrating than playing with your favourite toy or talking on the cell phone when all of a sudden - the battery dies! It doesn't matter if it's the coolest, flashiest toy or the most expensive phone available. If the battery goes dead, it's com-pletely useless.

Batteries remind me of something Paul wrote about love. In 1 Corinthians 13, verses 1- 3, Paul said, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."

As you grow up, you're going to discover the talents that God has given you. You can be the greatest singer, the smartest teacher, the most brilliant preacher. But as you do, remember this battery. And remember that without love, you are no better than a dead cell phone.

12. Road Maps- Object Lesson on God's Plan for Us

Bible Verse: N/A

Big Idea: God has a direction for our lives.

Object Lesson Text:

Have any of you ever come across some of these at your home? These to be pretty common around your house and in the glove box. Well these are maps, as you can probably tell specifically road maps. Roadmaps help people find their way from place to place.

If you moved into a new town, you'd buy a street map to help you figure out how to get to work, school, or church. If you went on vacation, you need a provincial map to help you get from home to Cape Town, and once you got to Durbanville, you need another street map to help you find your hotel. And once you get to the park, you need a map to help you find all the rides.

Imagine if you were to get lost and all you had to find your way were these maps. You have to search and search to find where you are, and then you have to search and search to find the right road. If you're lucky you find a place to stop and ask for directions. You can probably imagine how many arguments moms and dads would get into on the way to Cape Town.

If Dad got lost it wouldn't stop and ask for directions. All these maps are now obsolete thanks to smart phones and GPS. Now almost everyone has an app on their phone that don't only give some directions, but also tells them where they are at all times. If you've ever walked into a bookstore, you'll find that one of the largest sections it's a self-help section. They have books on everything from making money, to finding love, to being happier. But just like these maps, those books are not necessary.

We have a source in God and God's Word. And he can tell us where we need to go. What's more, God knows where we are. There's no getting lost. God knows where we are, how far off the path we are, and what it takes to get us there, and God will never say no when we ask for help. He'll always be there to help us find our way back. One day we may find we won't need our phones to get around anymore. Our map apps will be as out of date as these maps. But one thing never changes, and that's God's love for us. God has a direction and a plan for your life. All it takes is a willing heart to follow his lead.

13. Pillow- Object Lesson on Rest

Bible Verse: Matthew 11:28

Big Idea: God provides total rest.

Object Lesson Text:

Does everyone see this? It's a pillow. We use pillows to rest our heads on when we sleep. We wouldn't be very comfortable without a pillow to rest our heads or neck on. And our back would start hurting and we wouldn't get that much sleep that night. Getting a good night's sleep is really important, especially if you want to be energetic and active the next day. Sleep helps our body in a lot of ways. It helps our muscles rebuild and gives our stomach time to digest all the food we ate that day. Sleep is necessary. Without it we wouldn't survive. You know kind of like this pillow, God also provides comfort and rest. But I'm not talking about sleep for our bodies; I'm talking about rest for our souls. Do you know what a soul is? Our souls are spirits that live forever and when we die, our spirits live on. When you accept Jesus into your heart, you accept his promise that your soul will live forever in heaven. If you don't accept Jesus, your soul will end up in hell. That's not a very nice place to be. So it would be nice to know for sure that we're going to heaven. I think I would lose a lot of sleep if I didn't know where I was going when I died. Fortunately, Jesus said he will give us rest. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus says, "come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." If we love Jesus and follow him, he will give us rest and comfort. We can be assured that we will spend an eternity with God in heaven. We'll never have to be tired, or stressed, or worried. So get a good night's sleep tonight, and when you lay your head on your pillow, remember that God provides a total rest in heaven.

14. Permit- Object Lesson on Doing What's Right

Bible Verse: N/A

Big Idea: Just because you can do something, doesn't mean you should do it.

Object Lesson Text:

I'm going to show you something that will one day change your whole life. It's not a very big object. It's small—only about an ounce in weight. As a matter of fact, it's just a piece of paper—not even a full sheet, but a little slip. But this slip of paper will be your first step into a whole new world. What is it? It's a learner's permit. If you have one of these with your name on it, it means you are finally old enough to learn how to operate a car. When you have this piece of paper in hand, you will be able to sit in the driver's seat, start the car, put it in gear, and drive—so long as you have a licensed driver in the car, of course. A learner's permit is a legal document stating that it is permissible for you to drive. It is one step away from a full-fledged driver's license. When you have your permit, you'll learn to drive on your street, park in your driveway, parallel park, and even navigate the interstate. Let me ask you a question: How many of you think it would be wise to take the car out on the interstate your very first time behind the wheel? No practice on side streets, no practice on local roads. Just merge onto the interstate and take it up to 70 miles per hour. Would that be legal? Sure! If you have a licensed driver in the car, it's legal. That permit says you are allowed to drive on the interstate. But it would not be a wise decision for an inexperienced driver who has no feel for being behind the wheel to hit the interstate on day one. The apostle Paul talked about how some things are permissible but not beneficial. As you grow up, you're going to discover that a lot of things are permissible but not beneficial, just like driving on the interstate for your first driving lesson. When you turn 18, it will be permissible for you to smoke cigarettes, but given the health risks that come with smoking, it would not be beneficial. You will also be permitted to get a credit card when you turn 18, and the credit card company would be happy to permit you to max out your card on the very first day. But would it be beneficial to put yourself in debt for R500, R1,000, or more when you're still in high school? No way! Having permission to do grown-up things is exciting, but with growing up comes more responsibility. You're going to find a whole world of things that are permissible. But it's crucial that you stay close to the Lord so that you'll know when something permissible may not be beneficial.

15. No. 2 Pencil- Object Lesson on Preparedness

Bible Verse: N/A

Big Idea: Be prepared for tests you may face in life.

Object Lesson Text:

Can someone tell me what this is? It's a pencil, but specifically what kind of pencil? How many of you have a stack of these in your desk at school? How many of you got cold chills when you saw that #2? Anyone? The #2 pencil is important. Why? Because it's the pencil required to take any kind of standardized, fill-in-the-bubble tests. You're going to be using a lot of these pencils from now until the end of college, and you better have them handy at all times! It would be a bad idea to show up on test day without a #2 pencil! As Christians, we are going to be tested, but this isn't the kind of test you take with a #2 pencil. Your faith will be tested by people who do not believe in the Bible. You will meet people who believe Jesus was a good teacher, but not the Son of God. You will meet people who do not believe in the creation story. You will meet people who will tell you that God and the Bible are nothing but a myth. How can you as students prepare for that kind of a test? When you have a test coming up in school, what do you use to help you prepare? You use your textbook! And the Bible is the very first place we can look for answers. There are also many books that have been written about God, the Bible, Jesus, and our faith that will help you answer some of the tough questions for yourself and others. You can also turn to other believers when you have tough questions. Your pastor, your Sunday school teacher, and other adults have all faced questions like these, and they'd be happy to help you search for answers. Don't forget about your parents. They've probably faced these same questions, and they'd love to help you do the same. The Bible says that all of us will be tested. Even Jesus was tested when Satan tempted him in the wilderness. But you don't have to be unprepared. Start seeking answers now, and you'll be more than ready when life throws you a surprise test.

16. Mirror- Object Lesson on Reflecting Jesus

Bible Verse: N/A

Big Idea: Show Jesus to others through your actions.

Object Lesson Text:

Can you see yourself? This is a mirror. Mirrors have been around for hundreds of years and they pretty much have one purpose: to reflect. They can reflect light, colours, and images. Can you imagine what it was like before they invented mirrors?

They probably only had a lake or a pond to look at? And even then, it wasn't an accurate reflection. I don't think you have blue or green skin. The best mirrors are flat and they have the perfect reflecting surface. They can show things the way they really are.

God wants us to do the same thing. Except he doesn't want us to reflect ourselves, he wants us to reflect the image of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ was the only perfect being, who came down to live on this earth. We're not all perfect and we accept God's grace because of that. If you reflect Jesus with your actions and what you say, people will see what it's like to become a Christian, and they may want to become Christians too.

Some people may not like what they see. There are a lot of Christians around the world who are not liked because they reflect like Jesus and not themselves or the world. You have to use Jesus as your role model and he will reflect himself through you. He can make you the perfect mirror so that people will see what he is like and what is Jesus like. He is kind and thoughtful.

He doesn't do bad things, and he loves all people. Can he be like that? I know it's hard sometimes, but just like a mirror has to be in front of the object it's reflecting, you had to stand in front of Jesus to reflect his image. So next time you look at yourself in a mirror, think about how you can reflect Jesus' face today.

17. Level- Object Lesson on Balance

Bible Verse: Ecclesiastes

Big Idea: Make God the centre of your life.

Object Lesson Text:

Has anyone had a chance to use one of these tools? What is it called?

A level is a really special tool. You can see it has a small tube of liquid with two lines marked on it and a bubble inside. When the bubble is directly in the centre of the two lines, the level is perfectly balanced with the centre of gravity. Can anyone tell me when you might use this and why it would be so useful?

If you've ever helped your mom or dad hang a shelf or a picture, you know how important a level can be. When you're hanging a shelf, you want it to be balanced and level to the ground. If it's not balanced, what happens when you put things on the shelf? They can slide off! And depending on what you put on that shelf, that can create quite a mess.

The level is a good reminder that we need to have balance in our lives. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon talks about how there is a time and a season for everything. Right now, your lives are pretty simple. There's a time to play, a time to do schoolwork, a time to be with family, a time to spend with the Lord, and of course, a time to rest. As you grow older, you're going to have more things taking up your time: sports, music, school clubs, volunteer work, jobs, and, of course, more homework. It's going to get more and more challenging to make time for all the things you want to do and have to do.

So how do you keep balanced? Let's look at the level. We know the level is balanced when the bubble is in the centre of the two lines. Just like the bubble, we can keep our lives balanced when we keep God in the centre of our lives. When you put God first, God will give you the wisdom to know how to keep that balance. You'll learn to make time for the stuff you have to do—like homework, practices, and jobs—with the stuff you want to do—like playing and having fun—and the stuff you need to do—like spending time with God and your family.

When God falls away from the centre, things can get out of balance very fast. But when you keep God in the centre, you'll find you have more than enough time to do the important things in life!

18. Ice Tray- Object Lesson on Patience

Bible Verse: Hebrew 10:36

Big Idea: When we have patience, the wait will be worth it.

Object Lesson Text:

How many of you, when you sit down to dinner, like a nice cold drink with ice? Ice makes our drinks taste better. Why is that? Do you guys have ice makers in your fridge at home? Ice makers are nice be-cause they're always making new ice without us ever having to do anything, don't they?

How many of you guys have seen one of these? This is an ice tray, and if your fridge doesn't have an ice maker, I bet you can find several of these in it. Ice trays are pretty simple. Each one has all these little pockets that you fill with water. Then you stick it in the freezer, and in a few hours, you have some nice ice cubes.

The problem with ice cubes is that it does take a while to freeze. If you pull it out too soon, the cubes may only freeze on the outside, and when they melt, your drink will get all watery. And that's no good, is it? But we all like cold drinks better than warm, right? I mean who likes a warm Coke, or a warm Kool-Aid? Sometimes we have to be patient in waiting for ice. Especially on a hot day? We will wait for the ice cubes to freeze because they are worth it.

You know there are a lot of things in life that require patience. Sometimes it's hard to wait for the end of the school day, isn't it? Or maybe we can't wait for the weekend. Some of you guys may find it hard waiting for your favourite sports season, or Christmas. And how about growing up? How many of you can't wait to be old enough to drive?

The Bible teaches us that we need to learn patience. Many things in life take time and the more patient we are, the more we will enjoy life. Because if you spend all your time being impatient, you're going to miss out on what God has in store for you each day. Good things come to those who wait. The Bible tells us that patience is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Hebrews 10:36 tells us, "For you have need of patience; that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise." Next time you feel impatient, remember the ice tray. And remember, the wait will be worth it!

19. Hourglass- Object Lesson on Time

Bible Verse: N/A

Big Idea: Don't waste the time God has given you.

Object Lesson Text:

Does anyone know what this is? Do any of you have one of these in your home? The hourglass is kind of an out of date technology. It's not good for telling time, but it is good for timed activities.

The most common use of an hourglass these days is in games like Cranium. When you use the hourglass to limit the time, players have to draw or guess. Cranium is not the only game with a timer of sorts. In college and pro basketball, they use a shot clock to limit the amount of time a team can hold the ball without trying to score. This keeps the team from holding onto the ball and slowing the game down.

Same goes for the play clock in football. As soon as the play is whistled dead, they start the clock and give the offense a limited amount of time to get set, and run the next play. Shot clocks, hour glasses, and timers are unrelenting. They keep moving, even though we want to stop and take a breath. There's no turning the clock back or flipping the hourglass over. You play, you finish, and the game moves on.

There's no shot clock in real life; not normally anyway. It's a shame because maybe if we had a ticking clock to remind us of time that's passing, we wouldn't waste so much of it. We spend time on the computer and in front of the TV that could be spent in the Word. We spend time goofing off instead of ministering to others. And once that time is gone, we will never have it to give again.

My prayer for you today, is that you will live as if you had an hourglass in front of you. You only have so much time, and God wants you to make the most of it. There's a time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant, a time to reap, a time to cry in, a time to laugh. Don't waste this precious gift that God has given you.

20. Flashlight- Object Lesson on Being the Light of the World

Bible Verse: Matthew 5:15-16

Big Idea: You are the light in the darkness.

Object Lesson Text:

This is a flashlight. If you're going someplace you know will be dark, you're gonna want to bring one of these along. For instance, if you're going camping where there aren't any electric lights, you can just switch this on. You're going to need a flashlight to see when the sun goes down.

You might use a flashlight to see things where the light can reach, like underneath the table or a shelf. Has the power ever gone out in your house because of a storm? Flashlights are really helpful then. Did you know that God wants us to be lights? I know we don't actually glow like light bulbs, but he's talking about a different kind of light. Jesus told a parable in Matthew 15 through 16, "neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl instead they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

So you see God wants us to use our words and actions to shine the light of Christ. If people see that you're a good and faithful person, they will wonder what makes you that way, and that's how you shine the light. You tell them that Jesus makes you that way. When you shine the light in darkness, what happens to the darkness? It disappears. The light takes over. Some people live in the darkness. They don't know how to have joy or goodness because they've been in the dark so long without Jesus Christ. But if you come near them and live life with them, you can act like this flashlight, and shine light into their darkness. Don't ever be afraid because God always provides the light.

21. Folding Chair- Object Lesson on Seeking God

Bible Verse: Matthew 6:33

Big Idea: Give God everything you do.

Object Lesson Text:

(You will need a real folding chair for this illustration. Bring the chair out, and ask for a volunteer. Hand the chair to the student without unfolding it and give the student the following direction.) Sit in the chair. (The student will try to open the chair. Stop him or her! Do not let the student open the chair. Firmly repeat your previous instruction to sit in the chair, but do not let the student open the chair. When the student resists, ask him or her why he or she is not listening to you and sitting. When the student tells you he or she has to open the chair first, you can take the chair back and let the student sit down. As the student does so, go on with the lesson by asking the following.)

Does anyone think [he or she] can do what I asked? Can anyone sit in this chair without opening it? You can't sit in a folding chair unless you open it. A folding chair has four legs to support you. Folded, the chair has only two legs touching the floor. Without those other two legs and the seat down, you can't sit in a folding chair.

I wanted to do this to illustrate something to you: Sometimes in life, there are times when you want to jump ahead. You want to dive in and do something exciting. But you can't just jump in and do what you want. For example, you can't run on the football field and play wide receiver if you've never practiced with the team. As another example, you can't perform surgery in a hospital without first going to college and medical school. You have to take care of first things first.

What's sad is that there are people who jump ahead and do what they want without putting first things first. And the biggest thing most people forget to do first is to seek the Lord. If you have an important decision to make, you should first take it to the Lord. If you are starting something new that will require your best, you should pray about it. Even if you're going to start a new project to serve God—be it volunteering or starting a band or whatever—you need to seek the Lord first. Am I saying that God will booby trap you if you don't go to him first? No! But God knows you and your heart better than you know yourself. He has a plan for you, and if you want to live that plan to the fullest, you need to get right with God.

Matthew 6:33 tells us to seek God first, and "all these things" will be added to us. That doesn't mean we'll get everything we want. In fact, when we seek God first, sometimes he brings our plans to a screeching halt. But if that happens, it's because God has another plan—a plan that is bigger and better than anything you could imagine. But first things first: You need to seek the Lord.
