

**EPIC**<sup>™</sup>

# **LEADER GUIDE**





## LESSON 1: The Epic Choice

### OVERVIEW

#### Main Story

- Daniel Rejecting the King's Food

#### Key Scripture

- [Daniel 1:8-16](#)

#### Big Truth

- Everyday, we get to make the epic choice of being faithful to God—even small decisions to be faithful are epic choices. We can be faithful because God is faithful!

#### Memory Verse

- “Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much.” Luke 16:10

#### Activities

- Kickoff: It's a bird! It's a plane!
- Getting the Point (The Epic Plotline): Act It Out: Mission Possible
- Going Deeper (The Heroic Response): Powerful Choice
- Memory Verse Activity: This or That
- Wrap Up

#### Prep

- Read Daniel 1.
- Reflect on times in your own life when you've abstained from something the world was offering in order to be faithful to God. (For example waking up early to spend time with God, fasting from food to pray for breakthrough, etc.)
- Pray for the kids in your group to grow in their understanding of the powerful choice to be faithful to God.

The word "EPIC" is written in a bold, 3D, comic book style font. The letters are yellow with red outlines and are set against a blue background that looks like a comic book explosion or speech bubble. The entire graphic is on a yellow background.

# EPIC

## WELCOME

Say: **Welcome to our Life Group! I am so excited you are all here! Not only are we going to be competing for the Spirit Stick together during our Rec time (give your squad a shoutout!), we will also meet together every day for Life Group Bible Study.**

Say: **I want to know: What are you most excited for this week at camp?** *[Allow time for responses, then share what you're most excited for.]*

Say: **During our Life Group time, we're going to be learning from stories in the Bible, so be sure to bring your Bible and Bible Study Booklet with you every day! We are going to read the Bible to learn more about God and His EPIC love for us.**

Say: **Our theme this week is Epic. This week we will look at God's epic work in the life of Daniel and his friends. God also invites us into this epic story through an epic rescue, giving us a chance to make epic choices and take epic stands with Him by our side.**

Say: **In order for us to have the best time learning about God during Life Group, we're going to follow a plan each day in our Bible Study. So, just like a superhero plans how they win a battle, we're going to have a plan to practice spending time with God at camp this week.**

Say: **In our first section, we're going to hear "The Epic Plotline" as we read the Bible story. During this time, we will read and learn what the Bible is teaching us.**

Say: **Then, after we figure out the plotline, we're going to hear a "Heroic Response." We will learn the main points of the Bible story and apply it to our lives. Through using this plan, we are going to get to learn and celebrate God's epic love and plan for us!**

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## KICKOFF

### ACTIVITY: IT'S A BIRD! IT'S A PLANE!

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Say: **Let's get to know each other a little more by playing a game! You have all been zapped and given superpowers!" Allow each person to say their secret identity ( real name), their superhero name, and their super power.**

Say: **For example, " , My secret identity is Miriam, and my superhero name is Tick Tock. My superpower is the ability to time travel." Then, the next person would go, "I'm Captain Vendor, but my secret identity is Steve. My superpower is the ability to shoot any kind of snack food out of my eyes, and I have superhuman strength."**

Say: **What a fun way to get to know each other a little more! Did you know that God thinks you really are super? When we decide that we want to follow Jesus, we actually are given something that is like an amazing superpower from God! When you trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives inside of you. The Bible says the Holy Spirit is our helper to live faithful to Jesus ! (John 14:26)**

Say: **This week, we're going to be learning about a man named Daniel and his three friends who loved God and had some epic moments in their lives because they chose to trust God! Daniel and his friends lived a long, long time ago in the town of Jerusalem. One day, the king of Babylon named Nebuchadnezzar came into Jerusalem and took over! Let's all say "King Nebuchadnezzar" five times as fast as we can! [Give students 10 seconds to try this!]**

Say: **For the next three years, King Nebuchadnezzar forced Daniel and his three friends Hananiah (*han-a-NIE-a*), Mishael (*Miy-SHAA-ehL*), and Azariah (*az-uh-RIE-uh*) to serve under King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel and his friends were going to be trained in all of the evil ways of Babylon. Then they would serve the king forever!**

Say: **So, that's where we pick up our story today! Let's turn our Bible's to Daniel 1. Once you find Daniel, chapter 1, look for the small number 8. Once you find it, place your finger on it, and put your other hand in the air.**

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## EPIC PLOTLINE

### ACTIVITY: ACT IT OUT - MISSION POSSIBLE

Say: **For the next part of our story, I'm going to need some help acting out what happens. So, I'm going to need 6 volunteers!**

Choose volunteers from your group to play the following roles:

- **Actor 1: Daniel**
- **Actor 2: King's Chief Eunuch**
- **Actor 3: Guard**
- **Actor 4: man eating King's food (cheeseburger and fries)**
- **Actor 5: man eating King's food (huuuuge ice cream sundae)**
- **Actor 6: man eating King's food (gallons of soda)**

The Life Group members chosen for acting roles will follow your instructions as you narrate the Bible story. Those who are not acting out the story will sit in the "audience" and pretend to eat popcorn while watching the others act out Daniel 1:8-14.

Say: **"Daniel determined that he would not defile himself with the king's food or with the wine he drank. So he asked permission from the chief eunuch not to defile himself."** [*Instruct Daniel to skip to find the King's Chief Eunuch.*]

Say: **"God had granted Daniel kindness and compassion from the chief eunuch, yet he said to Daniel, 'I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and drink. What if he sees your faces looking thinner than the other young men your age? You would endanger my life with the king.'" [The chief says in the deepest voice ever, 'Daniel, you don't have to eat the food! But what if you look different?']**

Say: **So Daniel said to the guard [doing pushups] whom the chief eunuch had assigned to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink."** [*The guard stops doing pushups.*]

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Say: **“Then examine our appearance and the appearance of the young men who are eating the king’s food, and deal with your servants based on what you see. He agreed with them about this and tested them for ten days.”**

Say: **While we don't know what foods they ate, we do know that they were not the kinds of foods God told His people to eat. While Daniel was eating veggies, one man was** *[eating a cheeseburger and let out a big belch.]* **The second man had** *[sticky chocolate all over his face from an ice cream sundae bigger than a car.]* **The third man** *[gulped, gulped, and gulped gallons of soda.]* **All three of the men** *[fell asleep]* **from being so full—***[they were all snoring!]*

Say: **Let’s give a round of applause to our amazing actors! Great job everyone! Let’s all gather back to our seats to finish reading the Bible story together. We’re going to pick the story back up in verse 15 so, everyone place your finger on Daniel 1:15.**

## The Heroic Response

*Give your kids a few minutes to reflect and read the questions in the Bible study booklet.*

Say: **Do you think it was an easy choice not to eat what everyone else was eating? Do you think that Daniel was made fun of for his choice to only eat vegetables?** *[Allow time for responses.]*

Say: **Sometimes, being faithful to what God has said in the Bible or through the Holy Spirit can cause us to look funny to the people around us. Daniel and his friends made the choice to be faithful to what God said instead of following the crowd around them.**

Say: **Let me share a moment in my life when I faced a difficult decision to be faithful to God.** *[Draw on your own personal experience. Share as you feel comfortable.]*

Instruct your Life Group to turn to the reflection questions in their booklets. Guide the students to write out or draw a picture of a time when they faced a difficult choice. Plan out ways to be faithful to God in the little things.

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Say: **Even when we face difficult choices to do what is right, we know that God is faithful. We have the gift of the Holy Spirit living within us to help us be faithful!**

Say: **Do you know what is so cool? We are going to have so many opportunities to love God and others during our time at camp this week! As we spend time in Bible study, at worship, and even on the rec field, we will learn to love God more and choose to make epic choices for Him!**

Pray and dismiss.

## MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

Say: **Put your finger on Luke 16:10 in your Bible.** *(helps with Bible literacy)* **Now let's do an activity called "This or That." When everybody says, "This or That" we will choose between the two word options in the booklet to discover the memory verse. Circle the ones that are in the verse.**

## BONUS ACTIVITY

### CAFETERIA TELEPHONE

Instruct everyone to sit in a circle. The leader will whisper a phrase into someone's ear and then that person whispers it to the person sitting next to them. The phrase travels around the circle in this pattern until it gets to the last person. The last person to have the phrase whispered to them says what was told to them out loud for everyone to hear. Typically, the phrase will change by the time it reaches the last person. Reveal the correct phrase.

Ideas for Cafeteria Telephone phrases:

- Extra large cheese pizza
- Cheeseburger with no tomato and fries
- Ooey Goopy cinnamon roll with extra frosting
- The original chicken sandwich with no pickles and extra Chick-fil-A sauce



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## Lesson Two: The Epic Rescue

### OVERVIEW

#### Main Story

- Daniel and the Lions' Den

#### Key Scripture

- [Daniel 6](#)

#### Big Truth

- Just like God made the epic move to rescue Daniel from the lions' den, God made the epic move to rescue us from our sin by sending Jesus to die in our place. God's epic rescue changes everything for us!

#### Memory Verse

- "My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths; and they haven't harmed me, for I was found innocent before him. And also before you, Your Majesty, I have not done harm." Daniel 6:22

#### Activities

- Kickoff: The Great Tower Escape
- Getting the Point (The Epic Plotline): Setting the Noble Stage
- Going Deeper (The Heroic Response): Joining the Royal Family
- Memory Verse Activity: Ye Olde World Search
- Wrap Up

#### Prep

- Read Daniel 6.
- Spend time thanking God that He rescued YOU by sending Jesus to die on the cross. Allow the Holy Spirit to bring fresh joy to you as you reflect on your own salvation.
- Pray for your group by name. Pray that today would be the day of salvation for each of them who haven't yet decided to follow Jesus.



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## WELCOME

Say: **Welcome back to Life Group! I am so excited for our time together today! What has been one of the best and hardest moments for you at camp so far?**

*[Allow your group members to share their highs and lows from the week.]*

Say: **Before we kick off today's Life Group Bible Study, I want to know: Who remembers the Big Truth we learned yesterday in Bible study?** *[Call on a kid who knows the Big Truth to recite it for the group. Then repeat it as a group a couple of times.]*

*Yesterday's Big Truth: Everyday, we get to make the epic choice of being faithful to God—even small decisions to be faithful are epic choices. We can be faithful because God is faithful!*

Say: **Great job! What about the memory verse we learned from Luke 16? Who thinks they can say it by memory?** *[Choose a volunteer to recite the memory verse, then repeat it as a group a couple of times.]*

*Yesterday's Memory Verse: "Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much." Luke 16:10*

## KICKOFF

### ACTIVITY: THE GREAT TOWER ESCAPE

Say: **Let's start today off with a game called "The Great Tower Escape." What is the name of the game?** *[Allow them to repeat the name of the game!]*

Say: **There's a big tower in your booklet with a dragon around the roof. The bricks of the tower are actually a maze. Draw your rope to climb out of the tower to escape the dragon.**

*Age range options:*

- *Younger ages could work together*
- *Make it more challenging by not allowing students to pick up their pen*
- *Give them a time limit*

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Say: **Who thinks this may have something to do with what we're going to learn today during Life Group Bible Study?** *[Allow your group to respond.]* **I agree!**

## EPIC PLOTLINE

### ACTIVITY: SETTING THE NOBLE STAGE

Say: **Before we dive into our Bible story, let's learn today's Big Truth. Today's big truth is: God made the epic move to rescue us from our sin by sending Jesus to die in our place. God's epic rescue changes everything for us!**

Say: **Today we're going to learn from another epic story about Daniel during his time of captivity under a new king named Darius. As I read the story, everyone is going to move to a corner.**

*Assign titles to each corner of the room. Explain that there are specific actions to complete in each corner.*

- **Corner 1: The King's Palace**—stand at attention in the palace
- **Corner 2: Daniel's House**—be on their knees in a praying posture in Daniel's house
- **Corner 3: The Lion's Den**—prowl like lions in the den

*Read the story as the Royal Narrator (we suggest using an authentic British accent), and the group moves quickly from scene to scene:*

- *Corner 1: Daniel 6:1-9*
- *Corner 2: Daniel 6:10-11*
- *Corner 1: Daniel 6:12-15*
- *Corner 2 → Corner 3: Daniel 6:16-17*
- *Corner 1: Daniel 6:18*
- *Corner 3: Daniel 6:19-23*
- *Corner 1 → Corner 3: Daniel 6:24*
- *Corner 1: Daniel 6:25-27*
- *Corner 2: Daniel 6:28*



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## THE HEROIC RESPONSE: JOINING THE ROYAL FAMILY

Say: **This epic story of how God rescued Daniel from the lion's den is a picture of how God has *epically* rescued you and me! Although we don't need rescuing from lions, unless you work at the zoo, we do need rescuing from our sin. Jesus does that for you and me.**

Say: **Romans 3:23 says that we all have sinned. This means that we have all chosen things that have caused us to wander away from the epic life God wants us to live. Sin is choosing the opposite ways of God. It's when we disobey him.**

Say: **It is because of our sin that we become separated from God. The Bible says that there is nothing we could do to earn our way back. We cannot obey enough or do enough good things, or anything else you can think of to find our way back to God. Romans 6:23 says our sin causes us to be separated from God forever.**

Say: **But there is GOOD NEWS! God loves us so much. Even though we choose sin and go astray, Jesus brings us back. This is how God rescues us. Jesus came to die on the cross for our sins and completely forgive us. God is epic about all of us because He loves us! God sent Jesus to die so we could have a relationship with Him. Remember, we couldn't do anything to earn our way back to God, and so, by His grace, He made a way back for us. Jesus is the only way ! (John 14:6) We needed to be rescued, and through Jesus, now we can be saved.**

Say: **Isn't that amazing? God loved us so much and Jesus died for us to have a relationship with Him! Is that epic or what?!**

*Give your kids a few minutes to reflect and read the questions in the Bible study booklet.*

Say: **So, how do we respond? How do we, the sheep, respond to Jesus, our Shepherd, making a way for us to be found? Let's spend some time learning about how we can respond to God.**

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Say: **The Bible says that if we confess with our mouths and believe in our hearts that Jesus is Lord, we will be saved . (Romans 10:9) What does that mean? (Allow kids to answer.)**

Say: **This means we when we admit that we are sinners, believe that Jesus died to forgive us of our sins, and confess Jesus as Lord, we are choosing to turn away from sin and choosing to trust Jesus with all of our lives. It is choosing to repent of our sins and having faith in Jesus.**

Say: **To help us understand what it means to repent of our sins, we're going to stand up.**  
*(Guide your group stand.)*

Say: **I want you all to turn and face right, then close your eyes. With your eyes closed, picture a moment when you chose to sin. This could be a moment when you were angry at your sibling and were mean to them or maybe you lied about something to your mom or dad. Think about that moment when you chose to sin.**

Say: **Now, we're going to jump and turn 180 degrees. With your eyes still closed, I want you to picture Jesus on the cross. Picture God saying how much He loves you! Picture Jesus giving you a gift of forgiveness for your sin. Instead of you being punished for your sin, Jesus takes the punishment for you.**

Say: **You can open your eyes and sit back down. You see, repenting of our sin means we turn our back on sin by confessing or telling our sins to Jesus, and we turn toward God by receiving His forgiveness and choosing to love Him. Simply, repentance is a change of mind, heart, and action.**

*Leaders Note: This is an amazing moment to share your personal salvation story. Share with your Life Group how you were led astray by sin and how the love of God transformed your life. It's important that kids know that we all mess up. Repentance is not a one-time transaction between us and God. Truly being saved is an act of repentance, and the fruit of repentance is a changed life.*

*Pray and dismiss.*



## MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

### ACTIVITY: YE OLDE WORD SEARCH

Say: **Turn to the Ye Olde word search in your camp booklet. Now turn to Daniel 6:21 CSB. Let's take some time to find all the words that are in the memory verse. Once you've found all the words, put your hands on your head!**

## BONUS ACTIVITY

### FINGER JOUSTING

INSTRUCTIONS: Choose two people to hold hands like they are arm wrestling. Instruct them to extend their index fingers of the hands they are holding together. The objective of the game is to try and poke the opponent while keeping their index finger locked under the other, while not letting it go out of the other's hand.



## Lesson Three: The Epic Stand

### OVERVIEW

#### Main Story

- The Friends Delivered from the Fire

#### Key Scripture

- [Daniel 3:24-30](#)

#### Big Truth

- When we take an epic stand, Jesus stands with us. Standing up for what we believe can feel lonely and scary, but, thankfully, we are never truly alone. Jesus is always by our side.

#### Memory Verse

- “But even if he does not rescue us, we want you as king to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up.” Daniel 3:18

#### Activities

- Kickoff: Zero-Gravity Relay
- Getting the Point (The Epic Plotline): The Stand
- Going Deeper (The Heroic Response): Galactic Breakthrough
- Memory Verse Activity: The Launch Codes
- Wrap Up

#### Prep

- Read Daniel 3.
- Reflect on a time in your life when the presence of God brought you comfort, courage or strength.
- Pray for your group to experience the presence of God that yields fruit in His faithfulness and goodness in their lives.

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## WELCOME

**Say: Welcome back to our last Life Group Bible Study of the week! Everyone, show me your saddest expression. Ready? One, two, three!**

**Say: It has been an awesome week, and we have learned so many amazing things about God! Let's review what we've learned so far!**

*Review the Big Truths and memory verses from the previous two days as a group:*

### **Lesson One**

- *Everyday, we get to make the epic choice of being faithful to God—even small decisions to be faithful are epic choices. We can be faithful because God is faithful!*
- *“Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much.” Luke 16:10*

### **Lesson Two**

- *God made the epic move to rescue us from our sin by sending Jesus to die in our place. God's epic rescue changes everything for us!*
- *“My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths; and they haven't harmed me, for I was found innocent before him. And also before you, Your Majesty, I have not done harm.” Daniel 6:22*

## KICKOFF

### **ACTIVITY: ZERO GRAVITY RELAY**

**Say: Our next game is going to take some imagination, so I need everyone to close your eyes. Imagine that you are now an astronaut! You're about to go to the moon! The rocket is taking off in 3 ... 2 ... 1!**

**Say: Open your eyes now! We just landed! Now that we are on the moon, let's break up into 2 teams! One at a time, the teams will skip to the end of the room (like there isn't any gravity) and place either an X or O on the tic-tac-toe board in the camp booklet.**

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Say: **The next person in line can go when the first person returns in their zero-gravity fashion. The game can continue until each booklet's tic-tac-toe board is full.**

Say: **Wasn't that fun? Let's come back down to earth! Today, our Bible story is about three of Daniel's friends who worked together to stand up for what they believe and they experienced an epic move of God!**

Say: **This Bible story happened when King Nebuchadnezzar was still in charge. (All say King Nebuchadnezzar five times as fast as possible.) King Nebuchadnezzar had made a huuge golden statue of himself. And he decided to make a law that said anytime someone heard any kind of music, they were to immediately fall down and worship his statue. If they did not do this, they would be thrown into the fire.**

Say: **Some of the king's men told him that Daniel's friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were not worshiping his statue! When the king questioned them, they said, "Nebuchadnezzar, we don't need to give you an answer to this question. If the God we serve exists, then He can rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire, and He can rescue us from the power of you, the king.**

Say: **But even if He does not rescue us, we want you as king to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up." The king was furious and ordered that these three friends be thrown into the fire. And, that's where we pick up our story!**

Say: **Alright! Everybody turn in your Bibles to Daniel 3:24-30. Put your hands in the air when you get there! Now everybody turn your camp booklet to page 39. As we read, we will stop and answer the questions about the story.**

*Read Daniel 3:24-30, and stop for the multiple choice questions.*

1. *How many people were thrown into the fire?*

- **3**
- 5
- 4



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2. How many people did the king see when he looked into the fire?
  - 1
  - **4**
  - 3
3. What happened to Shadrach, Meshach and Abendego in the fire?
  - **They were unharmed.**
  - Their clothes burned away.
  - They turned to gold.
4. How did King Nebuchadnezzar respond to them being rescued from the fire?
  - He was furious.
  - **He worshiped God.**
  - He gave them all hugs.
5. What was the result of these friends' epic stand?
  - God was glorified.
  - God was faithful.
  - God was rescuer.
  - **All of the above**

## THE HEROIC RESPONSE: GALACTIC BREAKTHROUGH

Say: **So, what does this story mean for us? How can we take an epic stand for Jesus? And how can we look different from the world around us? Let's spend some time asking God for help to answer these questions by writing in our camp booklets!** [Encourage your group to spend time with God answering the questions below. These questions can also be found in the camp booklet.]

### **What does it mean to take a stand?**

*Answer: We should live a life that stands out! That means taking a stand for the things that Jesus did. When you take a stand, you will look different from the world around you but taking a stand is always worth it.*

### **How can you take a stand for God in your own life?**

*Answer: Taking a stand can be as simple as inviting friends to church, being kind to others, or being a light to people in your class or sports team! Taking a stand can seem scary, but God is with us. He gave us His Spirit, so we never have to take a stand alone again.*

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**Write down a prayer asking God to help you stand strong and resolved. Thank Him for being with you everywhere you go!**

*Leaders Note: During this time, our hope is that your Life Group members grow in the understanding that taking a stand is not just for them. By following Jesus, we are mandated to spread His light into the darkness. Help your Life Group members make connections on how they can continue to take a stand and share the good news at home after camp ends.*

## MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

### ACTIVITY: THE LAUNCH CODES

Say: **Each word in the memory verse is broken down by the number that corresponds to the order of the alphabet (A:1, B:2, etc.) (Example: 2-21-20 5-22-5-14 would be "But even ..."). It's your job to take the memory verse, and figure out the launch code! (For younger groups, feel free to work on this as a group!)** "But even if he does not rescue us, we want you as king to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up." Daniel 3:18

## MISSIONS OFFERING

Say: **Did you know that you can take a stand for Jesus that could impact people you've never met? How cool is that? There are people all over the world who do not have the light of Jesus and who have never even heard the name of Jesus!**

Say: **Because we have the good news of Jesus, we get to go and share about God with people who are living in the dark without the light of Jesus. They do not know that Jesus died for their sins. They don't know about God's amazing love for them! They don't know that God has an epic rescue plan for them!**

Say: **This is what the Bible calls The Great Commission. Jesus told His followers to go and share about His love with people all over the earth!**

Say: **The Holy Spirit helps us take a stand and share the good news of Jesus. God wants to use you to share this good news in everyday life and all around the world. This begins today! You can be a part of this great mission by sharing the**



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love of Jesus with people you see all the time! Whether it's the person who sits next to you in math class, someone on your soccer team, or someone who sits alone in the lunchroom, Jesus has given us His love to share with others.

Say: **You can take a stand for people who you've never met before in countries you have never even visited! We have a chance to do that today at camp! In our Life Group, we have a chance to give an offering to support missionaries living in South America who are shining the light of Jesus to people who have never heard of Him before.**

Say: **The International Mission Board (IMB) has one goal: to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost people of the world. Last summer, Student Life along with other Lifeway camps donated over \$294,000 to the IMB. This year we want to give over and above to support the efforts of the IMB Missionaries in Santiago, Chile. Right now, there are missionaries sharing the good news of Jesus with local Chileans who don't know Him. Church plants are being started, relationships formed with unbelievers, and the good news is being spread. The IMB offering is an opportunity to give to something much bigger than ourselves; it's an opportunity to give to a movement of the gospel of Jesus Christ being spread around the world.**

Say: **You don't have to give to our offering at camp, and the offering is not the only way God can use you. It's not even the only way God can use you while at camp. But this can be a great way to live an epic life for Jesus. If you choose to give to the offering, you'll help share Jesus' love to people in South America.**

*Collect your Life Group's offering **(and don't forget to bring it to worship tonight)**, pray with your group to close the lesson, and let kids spend any extra time working on the memory verse activity. Then, see if you can remember all three Memory Verses and Big Truths from this week!*

*Pray and dismiss.*