Teachers, I know all of you have someone in your life that doesn't know Jesus. I know that many of you are still praying either for family members or friends to accept Jesus into their lives. You know that there are many kids in your Kids' Church classes that are experiencing the same thing. Maybe one or both of their parents need to accept Jesus in their lives. Maybe it's a cousin or a friend that needs to accept Jesus. Maybe they are praying for these people but they need to know that there is more that they can be doing. Today we want to teach the children that they have to \textit{prepare the way for Jesus}. Nobody wakes up in the morning and says, “Hey I think I'll start serving God today.” Not everyone goes to a church, so how will these people ever come in contact with Jesus? Easy. They come in contact with us and we \textit{prepare the way for Jesus}. We introduce them to Jesus and then Jesus can forgive them of their sins. We introduce them to Jesus and then Jesus can start changing their lives. We introduce them to Jesus and then Jesus can fill them up with his love. Jesus can do what He needs to do, but we must prepare the way.

Jesus is no longer on this earth. In fact the Bible says He is sitting at the right hand of the Father. If Jesus is no longer on this earth, how will people know Him? They will know Jesus if we show Him in our lives. People need someone to show them who Jesus is and then Jesus will do the rest.

Throughout the Bible, God used men and women to \textit{prepare the way for Jesus}. I believe God wants to use the children in our Kids’ Church to \textit{prepare the way} for Him, but it's going to take more than just wishing and hoping people will get saved, it will take them getting out and \textit{preparing the way for Jesus}.

\textit{Somebody has to prepare the way and that somebody is you!}

1. There are people who need your example.
2. There are people who need your help.
3. There are people who need your encouragement.
**PRE-OPENING ACTIVITY: Improvisation Story**

*Participants:* Everyone in Kids' Church

*Props:* A white board and dry erase markers

*Preparation:* Think of a title for your story. For example, “The Green Elephant that went to the Supermarket” or “The Butterfly that got lost in the Forest.” Titles like this will give the children a direction for the story.

*Playing:* This is a very fun activity. Tell everyone in Kids' Church that we are going to write our very own story. It will take everyone to write this story and it will take a lot of creativity. Sit all the children in a large circle. Let's say the story is about the green elephant that went to the supermarket, starting with the Kids' Church leader every person in the circle will add one word to the story. Someone will write the story on the white board as it unfolds. Two or three times around the circle and you will end up with a very entertaining story about a green elephant who went to the supermarket.

**OPENING**

Welcome
Rules
Opening Prayer
Pledges
Songs of your Choosing
4 Reasons

**GAME TIME**

1. **Soda Pop Pass**
   *Props:* Four six-packs of inexpensive soda and duct tape.

2. **Fruit Looping Pizza**
   *Props:* Fruit Loops cereal, four small slivers of pizza, two plates and a table.
LESSON TIME

Short Overview of the Lesson

Quiet Seats Explanation

Props: 4 red balloons, 4 blue balloons, a whistle, and quiet seat prizes.

Lesson Introduction

Props: 3 Poster boards, one says, “Heaven”, another “Not good enough” and the last “Doesn't know Jesus”. You will also need two crates and 3 actors - a homeless man, a normal man and Jesus.

Power Point: Somebody has to Prepare the Way

Sub points:
1. There are people who need your example.
2. There are people who need your help.
3. There are people who need your encouragement.

Memory Verse

“Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” (Isaiah 40:3)

Props: Overhead projector, blank transparency or posterboards.

Bible Lesson: “The Example Examination” (Matthew 3:1-14)

Props: A Bible, 3 actors, 3 Bible costumes and a kiddie pool.

Object Lesson #1: “There are people who need your example.”

Props: Posters of famous people and a mirror.

Object Lesson #2: “There are people who need your help.”

Props: 2 actors and a mirror.

Object Lesson #3: “There are people who need your encouragement.”

Props: A balloon and an air pump.

Life Lesson: “Max Leads the Way”

Props: Illustrated Story
WELCOME

Props: Whistle

All this week I thought about today. On Monday I thought about what lesson we would do. On Tuesday I got all the things I needed for the lesson and the games. On Wednesday and Thursday I prayed for this service. On Friday I got all the songs ready. On Saturday I came in to set up the room, and finally Sunday has come and we are here! Why did I tell you my whole schedule? Because I wanted you to know that I had to prepare for today. I knew that God wanted to do something special in Kids’ Church. He loves us and He always wants to meet with us. But what good would it be if the room was locked, the lights were off, and there was no way to come in? That’s why I made sure that I prepared everything for God to be able to do what He wants to do. That’s what we’re going to be talking about later today—preparing the way for Jesus. Are you ready for Kids’ Church today? Everybody put 10 fingers up in the air and count down with me. 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1.

RULES

Kids’ Church always works best when we work together. When we follow rules, things run smoothly. There are many children here today. In order for us all to have fun and learn, we all have to follow the same rules. We do not play favorites in Kids’ Church and we do not allow bullies either. We all follow the same rules. Today we have a shortcut to help us remember the rules. The shortcut is the word “SOW.” Let us sow a good seed today by obeying the rules. (Keep the rules posted or write them on the chalkboard or on poster board.) Let us review the rules:

S- Stay in your seat.
O- Obey your leaders.
OPENING PRAYER

Dear God,

Today I am here with some friends and we came to learn about you and to tell you how much we love you. God, we need you today. We need you to teach us how to live. We need you to teach us how to prepare the way for Jesus. That’s why we came here today to meet with you. God, we don’t want to be here without you. So please be our guest today. We love you so much. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

PLEDGES

Graphics are included in the power point presentation.

SONGS OF YOUR CHOOSING

If you have a Praise and Worship team, it would be great to implement them for this part of your service. If you do not have a Praise and Worship team, then use CD’s. Try to play songs that the kids will know. Have the songs written on transparencies or posterboards so the entire audience can see the words and participate in your Praise and Worship time.
OPENING

THE FOUR REASONS WHY WE COME TO KIDS CHURCH

**Props:** Posterboard or overhead projector so everyone can see the “Four Reasons.”

Every week, always take time to teach the kids why they come to Kids’ Church. “Spaced Repetition” is the name of the teaching technique that we employ at this point in the lesson. The concept is simple; by reinforcing and repeating these four key truths every week, it becomes ingrained in our children. Have the kids repeat “The Four Reasons Why We Come to Kids’ Church.” You can even give rewards to kids who can say them correctly without help. Pick two boys and two girls, and have them say the “Four Reasons” without looking at them. Doing this every week can be a great start for your kids to always know why they are doing the things we tell them to do every week.

1. To love God first
2. To learn His word
3. To lead others to Jesus
4. To live right every day

Graphics are included in the Powerpoint Presentation.

Before you pick the two boys and girls to say the four reasons, teach them to everyone as a group. You can start off by saying to the kids, “If you are in school and someone asks you why you go to church, what will you say?”
Lesson 9

1. Use your game time as a review time.
2. Make sure you have two opposing teams.
3. Assign runners.
4. Assign someone to operate your CD player.
5. Put someone in charge of organizing and cleaning up games.
6. Put someone in charge of giving out prizes.
7. Ask simple questions.
8. Explain the game well.
10. Make sure you rehearse the games with your workers.

Leader’s Notes

Games are fun and exciting. I do not know one single kid who does not like to play games. I do not know one single kid who does not like to win cool prizes after playing a game. Let’s face it, kids are bored at church. They want to laugh, play, and have fun. Teachers want them to learn the Word of God. Is it not possible to have both? Who says Sunday School has to be dry and boring? There is a middle ground. Include games in your Sunday School.

Game Time should be:

- A review of last week’s lesson
- Fun
- Organized

A review of last week’s lesson
The only way that kids can play a game, is if they answer a question from last week’s lesson. Instantaneously, kids are going to start listening to your teaching every week because they want to play a game.

Fun
Game time must be fun! Make sure your games are exciting and unpredictable not get in a rut with your games. You need to keep the kids guessing as to what will happen next.

Organized
We call game time, “controlled chaos.” We want the kids to have the most fun they can have in a controlled environment. There is a lot of organization required for game time. For instance, someone has to:

- Set-up and clean-up the game
- Pick kids to answer the review question
- Operate the CD player
- Help the kids pick a prize

For other game ideas, click here.
GAME TIME

**REVIEW QUESTIONS**
Select one child from each team who can answer their review question correctly to play in this first game. Allow each child to choose four partners of the same sex to play this game with them.

1. Last week's memory verse said, “Give thanks to the Lord for He is ______?” Answer-Good.

2. Just before King Jehosaphat went out to battle, what did he and his army do? Answer-Thank God.

**GAME #1**

**Soda Pop Pass**

**Participants:** Five boys and five girls. You can choose more participants if you want to involve more kids just make sure you have an equal number of boys and girls.

**Props:** Four six-packs of inexpensive soda and duct tape.

**Preparation:** Secure each six-pack of soda with duct tape to keep the cans from falling out of the plastic holders. The object of the game is for each team to pass their two soda packs, one at a time, to the front of the room. Line up the two teams with the person in the back of each line becoming the team captain. Give them these instructions.

**Playing:** The game begins with the team captains at the back of the room. When you say “Go” they hand the first soda pack to their team’s line and the teammates pass the six-pack up the line to reach the front of the room.

The captains run to the front during the passing and wait to receive the six-pack from their team. When it reaches them, they place it at your feet and run to the back to repeat the process with the second six-pack. The first team to complete passing both of their six-packs to the front is the winner.
Lesson 9

1. Use your game time as a review time.
2. Make sure you have two opposing teams.
3. Assign runners.
4. Assign someone to operate your CD player.
5. Put someone in charge of organizing and cleaning up games.
6. Put someone in charge of giving out prizes.
7. Ask simple questions.
8. Explain the game well.
10. Make sure you rehearse the games with your workers.

Leader's Notes

Precautions: Demonstrate the game so the teams understand what they are to do. Explain that it requires teamwork.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

This is a group game so you don't need to ask questions. But if you decide you don't want to play this game here are some questions you can ask to choose participants.

1. We can give thanks to God because He understands us. What does He collect in a jar? Answer—Our tears.
2. In the story what destroyed Sarah's house? Answer—a hurricane.

GAME #2

Fruit Looping Pizza

Participants: One boy and one girl.

Props: Fruit Loops cereal, four small slivers of pizza, two plates and a table.

Preparation: Place the plates on the table. Put two small pieces of pizza on each plate. Pour cereal over the pizza so the slivers of pizza are completely covered.

Playing: Mark off a starting line at the back of the room. Have the participants stand at the starting line, facing the audience. The table should be about 25 feet away. Let the players know that they may not use their hands. When you say “Go” they run to the table. Using only their mouths, they eat through the Fruit Loops until they can get one piece of pizza in their mouths. Holding the pizza with their mouths, they run back to the starting line. They chew the pizza while facing the audience. They repeat the process with the second piece of pizza. The first one to finish both pieces is the winner.

Precautions: Keep the pizza pieces small. Consider using plastic trash bags to cover the children's clothes.
Lesson 9

Leader's Notes

1. This is what we are teaching.
2. This is why we are teaching what we are teaching.
3. This is our supporting verse.
4. This is how we will support the powerpoint.

SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Power Point
Somebody has to prepare the way

Direction
That somebody is you

Memory Verse
Prepare ye the way of the Lord (Isaiah 40:3)

Sub Points
• There are people who need your example
• There are people who need your help
• There are people who need your encouragement

KEY WORDS AND KEY PHRASES

Key words and Key phrases that should be used throughout the lesson.

Somebody has to prepare the way
That somebody is you
People
Need
Example (Object Lesson #1)
Help (Object Lesson #2)
Encouragement (Object Lesson #3)
Quiet Seat

Props: You will need a loud whistle, four blue balloons for the boys’ side, and four red balloons for the girls’ side. You will also need helpers on the boys’ side and helpers on the girls’ side to pass out the “Quiet Seat” prizes. Prizes like candy, snacks, or Bibles are all effective prizes. The prizes are given only to the kids who are the quietest during the teaching time. The “Quiet Seat” time officially starts after the whistle has been blown.

Presentation: Boys, I have four balloons on your side. If I see you talking to your friends or playing with your neighbor, I am going to pop a balloon. If I pop all four of your balloons, I am going to give all of the candy to the girls. Girls, you also have four balloons. If I see any type of distraction on the girls’ side, I am going to pop a balloon. If I pop all four of your balloons, I am going to give all of the candy to the boys. I have quiet seat watchers walking around looking for the perfect kids. A perfect kid is a kid who is sitting up straight, feet on the floor, hands in your laps, and whose eyes are on the teachers. If the quiet seat watchers see a perfect kid, they will slip a piece of candy into your hand. You are not to eat that candy until you are outside of the building. Everyone should be sitting up straight with your feet flat on the floor. No one should be moving around at this time. The bathrooms are now closed. The only ones who will be moving around in here are the quiet seat watchers. Their job is to watch you, not us. If I see anyone talking, I will pop a balloon. You know what happens if we pop all of your balloons; you go home today with nothing. We are now ready for the most important time of the day. It is now time for the preaching of the Word of God. On the count of three, I will blow my whistle, and quiet seat time will officially began. One, two, and three. (Blow the whistle.)

Leader’s Notes

When explaining the “quiet seat rule” teachers should be sure to communicate well. You are communicating your expectations to the kids. Kids need to know what the rules are, and the consequences for breaking them.

Tips
1. Use pauses
2. Look at the kids when you are talking to them.
3. Do not pace. (Stand strong and make purposeful movements.)
4. Make sure you speak with authority. (This does not mean yelling; it means having a clear, strong and stern voice.)
5. “Quiet Seat” time does not officially begin until you blow the whistle. (You can not pop a balloon until you blow the whistle.)
Lesson 9

Leader’s Notes

Props: 3 Posterboards, one says, “Heaven”, another “Not good enough” and the last “Doesn’t know Jesus”. You will also need two crates and 3 actors - a homeless man, a normal man and Jesus.

Preparation: Tape the signs that say, “Not good enough” and “Doesn’t know Jesus” to a crate. You are going to need a helper to bring out the “Heaven” poster and a helper to bring out the obstacles during the teaching.

Presentation: Jesus’ desire has always been for all men to be in Heaven with Him forever (Illustration 1--Jesus and the “Heaven” sign are on one side of the stage), but there are things that stop people from reaching Jesus. Things that are blocking the way.

(Illustration 2 & 3--The homeless man enters and stands in the middle of the stage. A helper will bring out the 1st obstacle - the crate that says, “Not good enough” and set it between the homeless man and Heaven).

That's where you come in. Jesus wants you to help remove those things from their path to Him. He wants you to prepare the way for others to meet Him.

See this man? Jesus wants to have a good relationship with him, but something is in the way (Point to the crate that says, “Not good enough”). He doesn't think he is good enough to know Jesus, in fact he doesn't even believe that people like him are welcome in church. See, this is blocking his way to Jesus. You can prepare the way for him by going up to him and inviting him to come to church and telling him that God loves him no matter what (Remove the obstacle and homeless man stands next to Jesus).
(The normal man enters and stands in the middle of the stage. A helper will bring out the 2nd obstacle - the crate that says, “Doesn't know Jesus” and set it between the normal man and Heaven).

See this man, Jesus wants him to spend eternity in Heaven with Him, but there’s something blocking his way to Jesus. (Point to obstacle #2). This man has never heard of Jesus. You know that no one can go to Heaven if they don’t believe in Jesus. You can prepare the way for Jesus to save him by telling the man about what Jesus has done for him. When you tell others about Jesus, you are preparing the way for Jesus to come and save them.

Jesus is waiting in heaven for people to come to Him. They can’t come to Jesus if somebody doesn’t tell them about Him.

Somebody has to prepare the way, that someone is you.

• There are people who need your Example
• There are people who need your Help
• There are people who need your Encouragement
“Prepare ye the way of the Lord”
Isaiah 40:3 (KJV)

Props: Overhead projector and a transparency with the scripture verse written on it. If you do not have an overhead projector then use posterboard with the verse written in markers large enough so everyone can read it.

Preparation: Set the overhead before the lesson begins so all you have to do is turn the projector on or if you have a postcard board with the verse written on it. Make sure it is ready to be carried out.

Presentation: Today’s memory verse says, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” Wait, there’s a strange word in that sentence. Do you see it? That’s right! It’s the second word, “ye.” Ye is just another way of saying you. So you could read the memory verse like this, “You need to prepare the way of the Lord.”

What an exciting verse! The Bible says Jesus is coming back again. He came the first time as a man, but the Bible says one day a trumpet is going to sound, the clouds are going to split, and Jesus is coming to the earth to gather His people and take them to Heaven. He will take the Christians to spend an eternity in Heaven with Him. That’s why you need to tell everyone, just as John the Baptist did, to repent of their sins. Jesus is coming back soon. Somebody has to prepare the way for others to meet Him, that someone is you.
THE EXAMPLE EXAMINATION

Matthew 3:1-14

Props: When telling the Bible lesson you always need to have a Bible in your hands so that the kids understand that the story is not fictional but true. You will need 3 actors and 3 Bible costumes - John the Baptist and 2 ordinary men who have encountered John the Baptist. You also need somewhere John can baptize these two men; something like a kiddie pool or maybe blue cloth representing water.

Point: Somebody has to prepare the way for others to meet Jesus. That somebody is you.

Preparation: The skit will begin with the two men talking in the middle of the stage. The pool needs to be set up not center stage but off to the side.

Presentation: Today’s Bible lesson takes place in the Desert of Judea. Everything was pretty normal until one day a very strange man came speaking a very strange message. (Illustration 4--John the Baptist enters.)

John the Baptist: “Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is near.” (John needs to say this a few times).

Teacher: John looks pretty funny doesn't he? The Bible says his clothes were made of camel's hair and he wore a leather belt around his waist, even though John looked strange, people came to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. (Illustration 5--The other two actors run to John). What was John talking about when he said repent? John was telling everyone that they needed to purify themselves of their sins and when they ran out to meet him they confessed their sins to John. They began to tell him all the things that were wrong in their lives and then John baptized them in the Jordan River.
That's why they call him John the Baptist. *(Illustration 6--The actors walk over to the pool and John begins to baptize them one by one)*. Some people just thought John was strange and they didn't believe his message. They didn't understand why they had to repent or why they had to be cleansed from their sins. That's when John said this:

**John the Baptist:** I baptize you with water for repentance. After me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

**Teacher:** Someone was coming after John, someone more powerful. That someone was Jesus. **John was preparing the way for Jesus.** John warned the people in the Desert of Judea.

Do you know God wants to use you in the same way He used John? **He wants you to prepare the way for Jesus.** Actually, some of us in this room may be a little different like John was, but that doesn't matter to God. He wants to use you no matter your size, your age, what you look like, or how you dress. It doesn't matter to God. He gave you a message. You are to go to your neighborhood, your school, your family and tell them, “Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is near.” Tell them that God loves them and He's coming for them. Show them that they don't have to keep living their lives the way they have been living. Sometimes when you tell people about Jesus they will think you're strange just like they did with John. They might not believe you, just as they didn't believe John, but that doesn't change your message and it doesn't change your job. **Somebody has to prepare the way for others to meet Jesus. That somebody is you.**
OBJECT LESSON 1
I'm Following your Example

Props: For this object lesson you will need to get pictures of famous people, people that the kids would know like singers, actors or athletes. You want to pick someone who is not a good example of Christ. You will also need a mirror.

Preparation: Do not show the pictures right away. You will unveil them one by one as you as you speak about each person in the picture.

Point: There are people who need your example.

Presentation: On Sunday night at 8:00pm I was at home watching an award show honoring music. They gave out many awards to different bands and singers honoring them for their music and talent. Now in my hands I am holding a picture of someone very famous, someone you know very well, I'm going to turn it around but remember it is still quiet seat time. (Reveal the picture.) I know you all know who this is. As the award show went on this singer won an award and they went up to the stage and the first thing they said was, “I want to thank God for this award.” I thought that was weird because the song she won that award for was a song that used curse words and talked about hurting other people. Now let me ask you something. I'm not going to ask you if you think she is talented or if you like her music, but do you think she is a good example of God? Do you think that she is showing other people what God is really like? No, but many people look up to this singer and a lot of people follow her example, in fact, most of you were excited when I showed you this picture. Many people want to be like her, but she is not preparing the way for God. She is not being a good example of God. (If you have another picture, go through that example too.)
Okay, I have one more picture. Are you ready for this one? *(Illustration 7 & 8--Hold the mirror behind your back, take a little pause and then pull out the mirror. Slowly work your way from one end of the room to the other side of the room.)* The last person I want to talk about is you. You are an *example* too, but what kind of *example* are you? Are you an *example* of God? Do you act the way Jesus would act? The Bible tells us to be an *example* to all believers in the way you live (1 Tim 4:12) *There are people who need your example.* The only way they will see Jesus is through you. Through the way you treat others with kindness. The way you talk without cursing and the way you live like Jesus. Do you really want your friends and family to give their lives to Jesus? Then it's going to come through your *example* not through their *example.* *(Point to the other poster.)* *Somebody has to prepare the way for them to meet Jesus. That somebody is you.*

**OBJECT LESSON 2**

*I Need your Help*

*Props:* Two actors and a mirror

*Point:* *There are people who need your help.*

*Preparation:* One actor will have crazy wacky hair. Either you can buy a wig or you can actually take someone's hair, tease it, and spray color and hair spray. The idea is that their hair needs to look crazy.

*Presentation:*

*Lisa:* AHH, I can't believe this! *(Illustration 9--Lisa comes running in hysterically looking in the mirror.)*

*Patty:* What's wrong?

*Lisa:* What do you mean what's wrong? Look at me! I look like a monster.
Lisa: (Illustration 10--Girl points to her crazy hair.) I wanted to get the new hair style that everyone is getting. I knew exactly what I wanted, hair that stops at the shoulders with pretty blonde streaks and that's what we tried to do.

Patty: What do you mean we tried to do?

Lisa: Me and Mickey. We tried to cut my hair.

Patty: Your little brother!

Lisa: Well he held the mirror up for me while I cut it. I thought we could do it but look at it. It's awful! Please Patty you have to help me. Can you fix my hair?

Patty: I can't fix your hair.

Lisa: What am I going to do? I need help!

Patty: I can't fix your hair but I know someone who can.

Lisa: Tell me who it is. Who can fix my hair?

Patty: A professional. You need to see a beautician. He will know how to fix your hair. Here, I'll give you the number of my hair stylist. (Illustration 11--Patty and Lisa exit)

Teacher: Lisa was in trouble. She had a problem, and she needed help. The only person that could fix her problem was a professional. There are people around you that need your help. They have sin in their lives and they want to get rid of it but they don't know where to go. It is up to you to point them to someone who can help them. You cannot take away their sin but you know someone who can. The Bible says that Jesus came to forgive us of our sins (Col 1:14). He's the professional when it comes to sin. He knows how to cleanse them of sin and He wants to forgive them of their sin. There are people who need our help. You must point them to Jesus so that He can forgive them of their sins.
OBJECT LESSON 3
I Need your Encouragement

Props: Two actors and a mirror

Point: There are people who need your encouragement.

Preparation: For this object lesson you will need a microphone stand so that your two hands are free to pump air into the balloon.

Presentation: Everyday I see people who are sad, hurt and empty. I know people who are sad because they lost people in their family to death. I know people who are hurt because they have been rejected; no one wants to be their friend. I know people who feel empty inside. They don't have joy or love. We are surrounded with people who are hurt and broken. They are like this balloon. (Illustration 12--Show the kids the balloon.) They are empty and without life. We need to encourage them. What does encourage mean? It means to give someone courage, courage to get through their tough situations. How many of you remember a time when you felt sad or hurt and someone encouraged you? Remember how that made you feel? It was good and it gave you the courage to keep on going.

Let me show you what happens when you encourage someone. This balloon is someone who is very sad and this air pump is your encouraging words. Every time you say something kind to someone like, “God loves you and He's going to take care of you,” this is what you do to them. (Illustration 13 & 14--Pump some air into the balloon.) You build them up. You might say, “I really appreciate you.”
(Pump some more air into the balloon.) You build them up even more. What's something else you can say to encourage someone? “Thank you for being my friend.”

(Illustration 15--Pump some more air into the balloon.) Look what happened to that person. Instead of feeling sad and empty on the inside, now they are built up in love and they are full of joy.

This is exactly what Jesus would do and this is exactly what Jesus wants us to do. We have to care about people. That’s what will help them change. **There are people who need our encouragement.** They need to know that people care about them, that the church cares about them. The Bible says that kind words are like honey-sweet to the soul and healthy to the body (Prov. 16:24). When you **encourage** someone with your words, they see you are full of God’s love then they will want to follow God too. **Somebody has to prepare the way. That somebody is you.**
Frame 1
Today's story takes place in a jungle. Max monkey was climbing up trees and swinging around. He loved to play and have fun, but some of the other animals weren't as fun as Max, or as friendly as Max. They'd rather keep to themselves. Roger raccoon didn't want to play and he didn't care much for anyone else in the jungle. Max always asked Roger if he wanted to do something together but Roger always shrugged him off. Many years ago Roger's parents died and now he didn't want to be close to anyone. Some of the other animals gave up on Roger. They thought that if he didn't want to be their friend then why should they be his? Max never gave up hope on Roger. He was always kind to Roger and always invited him to do things.

Preaching Point
Maybe you know someone just like Roger, someone who is hurt. There are many people walking around who are hurt. Jesus loves these people and He wants them to know His love. Jesus wants to use you and me to show these people His love. There are people who need your example just like Roger needed Max's example. We have to prepare the way for Jesus to come and heal broken hearts.
Frame 2

Everyone was having such a wonderful time watching Max swinging around and performing his little routines, but Bobby Bear began to smell something. “Hey you guys do you smell that? It smells like something’s on fire.” All the animals nodded their heads; they could smell it too. “Look over there!” George the giraffe pointed to some trees off in the distance. They all looked and they could see smoke filling the air. First it started as a small cloud but it grew rapidly and they could feel the jungle getting hotter and hotter. They realized that there was a huge fire in the jungle.

Frame 3

They saw a helicopter in the air. Chief Fred Scott was trying to make his way to the animals to rescue them but the smoke was too thick and the fire was growing bigger and bigger. The flames were reaching high into the sky. He had no choice but to move away from the flames. He reached for his bullhorn and said, “Make your way to Sunny River. There I will be waiting for you with the chopper. I repeat. If you can hear me go to Sunny River.”
Lesson 9
Leader’s Notes

Frame 4
Sally squirrel began to cry frantically. “What are we going to do? This is terrible; we are trapped!” All the animals began to panic.

But Max knew panicking was not the answer. “Listen! Everybody calm down. You heard what the chief said. We have to get to Sunny River. That’s where the helicopter is waiting for us. That is our way out of here. If we can just get to the helicopter, then we will be fine. Let’s go, everybody follow me.” The animals all followed Max’s lead including Roger. Max was preparing the way.

Frame 5
Max led the animals through the jungle. His goal was to get everyone to Sunny River to be rescued by the helicopter. Some paths were blocked off by the fire and others by trees that had fallen, but Max continued moving forward getting them through the jungle. They were running through the jungle when they had to jump over a log. The animals jumped over it one by one. They all made it successfully until it was Roger’s turn. He leaped over the log but it was so high he tripped and fell. “Wait! Roger fell,” said Sally Squirrel. The animals watched in disbelief.
Frame 6

“Let’s just go,” said George giraffe. “We don’t have time and besides it’s just Roger. He wouldn’t help any of us if we were in trouble.” Max knew Roger was in trouble. “No, you are wrong; we are not going to leave him behind.” Max went back. He grabbed Roger by the hands and picked him up.

Preaching Point

George wanted to abandon Roger when Roger was in need. It was completely the wrong attitude. Max had to stand up to George and say that was wrong. Standing up to people and telling them they are wrong is one of the hardest things to do, but if we are going to prepare the way for people that means standing up to them and telling them what is wrong. Sometimes that means standing up to your friends and saying you can’t treat people that way, or standing up to family members and saying it’s not okay to fight. There are people who need your help. Prepare the way by helping them do what’s right.

Frame 7

Max and the animals continued to maneuver through the jungle and finally they saw Sunny River. “Look there’s the helicopter!” said Bobby Bear. They ran to the helicopter and as soon as they arrived, Chief Fred lowered a rope for the animals to climb up into the chopper.
One by one the animals began to climb the rope. George Giraffe made it up easily and so did Sally Squirrel. Bobby Bear was next. He grabbed the rope and began to pull himself up. Bobby kept looking over his shoulder and he saw the flames getting closer. He began to panic and his grip began to loosen. “I'm slipping, I'm going to fall. Someone help me!” Max saw what was happening and he began to encourage Bobby, “Come on Bobby you can do it. Don't let go. You're going to be just fine, just keep climbing.” With every encouraging word Max spoke, Bobby got stronger and he tried harder. He kept climbing until he made it to the top.

**Preaching Point**

*There are people who need your encouragement.* You know people who want to give up, who don't feel like *they can hold on anymore*. That's when they need your encouragement; that's when they need to hear that Jesus loves them. People want to be around other people who are *encouraging*, who are kind to them, and when you do this you are preparing the way for Jesus.
Frame 9
After Bobby made it into the helicopter safely Max looked at Roger. “Come on Roger; it’s your turn.” “I’m not going.”
“What do you mean you’re not coming?” asked Max in disbelief. “I mean I’m not getting in the helicopter. I’m going to find my own way out of here.” “Roger there is no other way. This is the only way out. Come on grab the rope!” Max grabbed Roger’s arm but Roger pulled freed from his grasp. “I can save myself. I don’t need you.” And then he ran back into the jungle.

Preaching Point
Many people go through life thinking that they can save themselves. They think they don’t need Jesus. Roger thought he could make it on his own. Max prepared the way for him to be saved, but he decided that he didn’t want Max’s help. Some people will not want your help. They may not want to hear what you have to say about Jesus. Maybe people in your family have rejected what you have to say about Jesus, or friends at school have tuned you out, but you never stop preparing the way for others. God still expects us to prepare the way for him. We must do everything we can to introduce people to the one who can save them -Jesus. Somebody has to prepare the way and that somebody is you.

Frame 10
The fire was getting closer and Max had to get into the helicopter. He climbed the rope and pulled himself into the helicopter. Chief Fred began to pull away and all the animals watched as Roger walked back in to the jungle, back into the fire.
BOYS AND GIRLS, RIGHT NOW I WANT YOU TO BOW YOUR HEADS WITH ME. I WANT YOU TO THINK OF ONE PERSON WHO NEEDS JESUS. DO YOU HAVE THAT PERSON IN YOUR MIND? NOW I WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU’RE GOING TO DO TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR THEM TO MEET JESUS. ARE YOU GOING TO INVITE THEM TO CHURCH? ARE YOU GOING TO TELL THEM WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU? ARE YOU GOING TO PRAY FOR THEM? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR THEM? OKAY LET’S PRAY.

CLOSING PRAYER
Dear Jesus,
I have one person in my mind that I want to prepare the way for them to meet you. Jesus I ask you to give me the courage to approach them and do what you are asking me to do. Thank you for using me to prepare the way for you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.
Sometimes, children will want to sit in the back and not participate. Be very strict on this. “Nonparticipation-tis” can spread like a disease and affect all your children. All it takes is one boy or one girl sitting down during the songs and then it will spread. Once it gets rooted in, it is difficult to get it out.

*Things you can do to stop “Nonparticipation-it is”*

1. **Set clear expectations.** If they are going to be a part of your program they must participate. From the stage encourage all the kids to participate in the songs. Explain if they don’t want to participate they don’t have to - they are free to leave!

2. **Use your workers.** Have your workers and staff walking around encouraging the children to be involved in every part of the program. If they see anyone sitting down during the songs it is their job to encourage them to stand up.

3. **Use incentives** to encourage participation. The loudest singer gets extra candy. The boy or girl cheering the loudest for their team gets extra candy.

4. **Be creative.** Find different ways to draw the children in every week. Use different songs, creative games. Try to stay unpredictable, don’t get in a rut.