

Session 1: I Am Special, Safe, And Accepted



Time Plan

Getting Started 30 minutes	Free Play (20 minutes)	
	Welcome (5 minutes)	
	Announcements (5 minutes)	
Worship 20 minutes	Prayer (5 minutes)	
	Game (5 minutes)	Choose one: "Pass the mint" or "Guess Who?"
	Praise (10 minutes)	SuperStar
Word 45 minutes	Bible Verse (5 minutes)	"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)
	Interview (5 minutes)	
	Teaching Time (20 minutes) Reflective Worship (10 minutes) Explore the Bible (5 minutes) Illustration (5 minutes)	Genesis 1-3
	Story Time (15 minutes)	<i>The Adventures Of Lilly Pepper</i> – Trouble At School (video: 4.5 minutes) <i>The Lightbringers</i> – It Begins (video: 8.5 minutes)
Response 10 minutes	Prayer (5 minutes)	Remember to give out this week's activity sheet if you haven't already.
	Next Week (5 minutes)	

Overview

When Adam and Eve were created, they had life in all its fullness. God met all their needs. They were perfectly accepted, secure and significant. In the "fall" they lost their relationship with God. The result for us is that we are born with a huge need for acceptance, security and significance. Jesus came to restore the very same life, acceptance, security and significance that Adam and Eve had originally.

Getting Started

Free Play (20 minutes)

Welcome (5 minutes)

This is a chance to welcome the children but also an opportunity to have fun with them.

Announcements And Ground Rules (5 minutes)

Just as games have rules so that you can play and have fun, clear discipline guidelines are needed so the children know what is or isn't acceptable in the context of this gathering. Only two simple rules are necessary:

1. Nobody leaves their seat. If they need to go to the bathroom then they must put their hand up and ask permission from a leader.
2. When you ask for quiet, everyone sits down, focuses on the front, and makes no sound.

Worship

Prayer (5 minutes)

In two sections:

1. **Giving Thanks:** Children who have prayed for something the week before (or several weeks before) and whose prayers have been answered should be asked to come and tell the others how God answered their prayer.
2. **Bringing Needs:** Some of the children will want to pray for certain things. Allow them to come and mention what they are praying for and ask God together to answer prayer.

Game Choose one (5 minutes)

Game 1 – Pass The Mint

PREPARATION A packet of mints with holes in them, e.g. Polo or LifeSavers, and straws.

PLAYERS Four to five per team.

SET-UP Each player has a straw. The first player has the straw through the mint.

OBJECT Each team has to pass their mint to each member of the team (via a straw) till the last team member has the mint. No hands can be used.

WINNING The first team to have the mint passed down every member.

Game 2 – Guess Who?

PREPARATION A list of questions (e.g. Do you have brown eyes? Are you wearing red? Do you have a fringe? Do you have freckles? etc.).

PLAYERS Everyone.

SET-UP Leader with a list of questions.

OBJECT All the children begin standing. After each question the children sit down if they match what is being said.

WINNING The last child standing is the winner.

Praise SuperStar (10 minutes)

The song that has been specially written for this lesson is “SuperStar”, an anthem for *The Lightbringers* theme. We think your group is going to love it! See if they can come up with some actions for it. We suggest using a few praise songs for each session so you may want to introduce another song like “God Made Me Special” which will be used during the Steps to Freedom. Enjoy!

FUN FACT: Wayne Tester, who, together with his wife Esther, wrote and recorded the songs in *The Lightbringers*, won the competition to write the theme song for the Sydney Olympics where his song was performed in the opening ceremony. Ask the children to guess how many people heard that performance live.... It was an incredible 3.7 billion people in the TV audience around the world. That’s half the population of the world listening to the same song at the same time!

RAP

*SHOUT IT OUT LET’S MAKE SOME SOUND – GOD IS GREAT SPREAD LOVE AROUND
WE WERE LOST BUT NOW WE’RE FOUND – PARTY ‘CAUSE WE’RE HEAVEN BOUND*

CHORUS

*YOU LIGHT UP THE NIGHT JESUS, YOU ARE THE SUPERSTAR
YOU LIGHT UP THE NIGHT JESUS, YOU ARE THE SUPERSTAR
YOU, YOU, YOU ARE THE LIGHT, LIGHT, LIGHT OF THE
WORLD, WORLD LIGHT OF MY LIFE
YOU LIGHT UP THE NIGHT JESUS, YOU ARE THE SUPERSTAR*

*YOU ARE GALACTICAL, SUPERNATURAL – YOU, YOU, YOU, YOU, Y’YOU, YOU
YOU ARE REMARKABLE, INCOMPARABLE – YOU, YOU, YOU, YOU, Y’YOU, YOU*

PRE-CHORUS

*JESUS, YOU REALLY LOVE ME – JESUS, YOU REALLY WANT ME
JESUS, I’M GONNA LET YOUR LIGHT – SHINE, SHINE, SHINE, SHINE, SH’SHINE*

REPEAT CHORUS & RAP

*PARTY ON LET’S COME UNWOUND – COME UNWOUND, COME UNWOUND
PARTY ON LET’S COME UNWOUND – COME UNWOUND, COME UNWOUND*

*FAMOUS ETERNALLY, FOR INFINITY – YOU, YOU, YOU, YOU, Y’YOU, YOU
YOU SHINE AMAZINGLY, OH SO FAITHFULLY – YOU, YOU, YOU, YOU, Y’YOU, YOU*

REPEAT PRE-CHORUS & CHORUS

IN YOUR PRESENCE NIGHT IS BRIGHT AS DAY EVEN DARKNESS IS AS LIGHT

REPEAT CHORUS TWICE

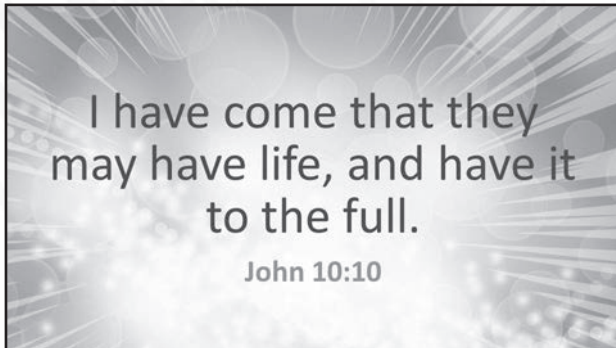
PARTY ON LET’S COME UNWOUND

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Word

I Am Special, Safe, And Accepted – Genesis 1-3

Bible Verse To Memorize (5 minutes)



- ▶ “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)

Interview (5 minutes)

Invite one of the leaders or one of the children to come and tell the group what Jesus has done for them; how He’s helped them in work/school; how He cares for them; how they first made their decision to become a Christian. If the person is very nervous, interview them. If they are more confident, allow them to speak freely – taking notice of the timing allowed for this section.

Teaching Time (20 minutes)

1. Reflective Worship (10 minutes)

2. Explore The Bible (5 minutes)

Genesis 1-3



► In order to find out the answer to the question, “Where did I come from?”, we need to go back to the very start of the Bible, to the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 1-3.

When Adam and Eve were created, they had everything that they needed – all their needs were met by God. Adam had a purpose (to rule over the animals), everything was provided for, and they knew they belonged to God. Verses 26 and 27 (Genesis 1) tell us that God created human beings in God’s image and therefore Adam and Eve had a spiritual connection with God. But, when Adam and Eve were tricked by the devil into eating the fruit (what the Bible calls sin) they lost that connection with God. For the first time they began to have negative emotions, feeling fearful, depressed, and rejected (Genesis 3:10).

So, God sent Jesus to undo the work that the devil had done when he tricked Adam and Eve. God sent Jesus to bring us life and restore that connection with God (John 10:10).

How do you think Adam and Eve felt before they ate the fruit? What about afterwards? What had changed?

3. Illustration Choose one (5 minutes)

Illustration 1– Who am I?

Objects Needed: Water, lemon juice, cotton bud, white card and lamp, or alternatively buy invisible ink.

Create invisible ink by mixing a few drops of water with some lemon juice. Dip the cotton bud in the lemon juice and write on the white card, “The invisible things are as real as the stuff that’s visible”.

Who am I? My name is _____. I have _____ hair.

But is this who I am? What if I dyed my hair or lost my arm? Would I still be me?

What you see with your eyes are just the outer things of me.

Take this paper (*hold up blank sheet of white card*) – you can all see that this is plain white paper with no writing on it. But when I hold it to a light (*shine a desk lamp onto the paper*) you can see words (you could ask one of the children to read what it says). The invisible things are as real as the stuff that's visible.

We are made in God's image! That means that we are spiritual beings. In other words, we are made up of not just our bodies (the things you can see) but also the things that we can't see (our spirits).

Illustration 2 – God-Shaped Hole

Object Needed: Mint with hole e.g. Polo or LifeSavers.

Inside every one of us is a God-shaped hole in our hearts (hold up mint). It's a bit like this mint.

This is how we were created – with a hole in the middle! Do you remember our Bible lesson about Adam and Eve? Sin separates us from God.

So how do we get our God-shaped hole filled?

A famous Mathematician (Pascal) once said, "There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every person, and it can never be filled by any created thing. It can only be filled by God".

Without Jesus we are empty but when we ask Jesus into our hearts He fills this hole with His Spirit, we are no longer separated from God, and we can have that connection with God. It's really easy – we just have to ask!

Illustration 3 – Safe, Special, And Accepted

Objects Needed: Cardboard Box (with no bottom) on a table with words SPECIAL, SAFE and ACCEPTED written on it. Current kids' magazines, certificate of achievement, football, pretend money.

In our life we all need to feel safe, special, and accepted (show box). We need to know that we are important. God has designed us this way. BUT, rather than looking to God, we may look to other things: good school results (*put certificate in the box*), being the best at sport (*put football in the box*); trying to be popular and following what our friends are doing (*put magazines in box*); having lots of money (*put money in box*) etc.

This might help us at first, but what happens when we are not picked for the team or we fail our test or our money runs out or our friends let us down? Kids, by filling our lives with anything other than God (*pick up box and let the contents fall*) will leave us feeling empty, just like this box. You can't feel safe, special, and accepted from this stuff. It is only God that can meet these needs. After all He created us this way and knows us better than we know ourselves!

Story Time (15 minutes)

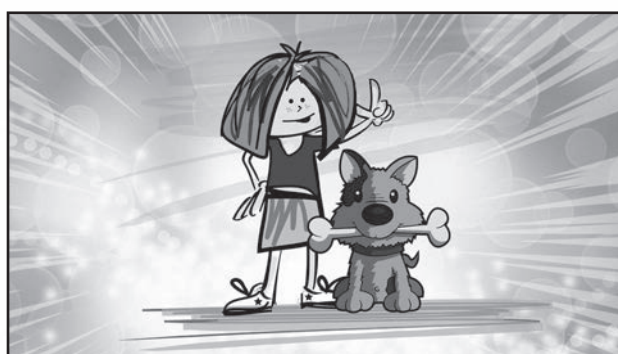
The Story For Younger Children – *The Adventures Of Lilly Pepper*

Chapter 1 – Trouble At School

The video is 4.5 minutes. Take some time after the story to ask and listen to what the children think. Then go to the response and prayer time.



► Welcome to *The Adventures Of Lilly Pepper*! Are you ready? Let's go! Chapter 1, Trouble At School.



► Lilly Pepper was seven years old. She lived with her mum and her baby brother, Jake, and a very scruffy dog called Mop. A strange name, but that's what Lilly wanted to call him when she was just two, so mum had agreed. That was the other thing about Lilly Pepper, she was very determined. In fact, her second name wasn't really Pepper at all. She'd been called that once by mum – because she liked eating raw peppers, green, yellow, red, she liked them all – and now she refused to be called anything else.

In the first weeks of any new school year when her real name was called on the school register, she would stand up, put her hands on her hips, and proclaim:

“Mr Edwards, my name is Lilly Pepper.”

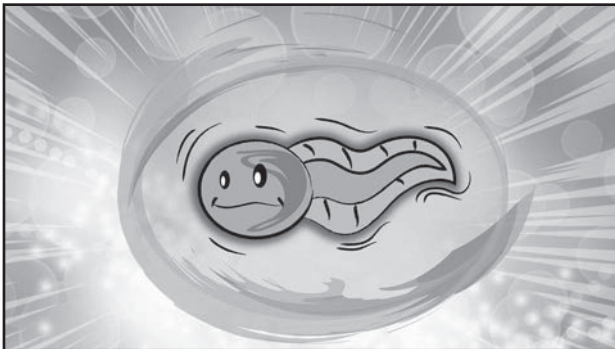
And after she did that a few times, Mr Edwards – like every teacher before him – gave in. Anything for a peaceful life, but deep down Mr Edwards knew that this class was not going to give him a peaceful life. They were approaching summer break, and every morning for the whole year, with a sigh, Mr Edwards had called, “Lilly Pepper.”

And Lilly would stand, smile and announce,

“Here I am, Mr Edwards, ready for action.”



► Lilly was definitely “lively”. That was the word Mr Edwards used at parents evening in describing Lilly to her mum. But, in the staff room, he simply rolled his eyes and said, “She’s wild!” She wasn’t wild. She simply liked to think for herself and she didn’t do things just because everyone else did and she wasn’t that keen on believing everything Mr Edwards showed on the whiteboard unless he could prove it, and that is why, today, Lilly found herself standing outside the Principal’s office, waiting to explain what she’d done in class!



► It had started when Mr Edwards had shown the class a picture of a tadpole on the whiteboard. A tiny wriggly tadpole. And told the children that this is how all life once began. And then the next picture showed the tadpole with legs, and then it got bigger and bigger and by the end of the pictures it had changed into a monkey. Then more pictures of monkeys changing to eventually look like people. And Mr Edwards concluded his talk with the words,

“And that’s where all people came from. Now, let’s write that down in our books.”

But Lilly burst out laughing. She was laughing so loud it was hard to hear anything else. And then she said it, the line that was going to get her sent straight to the Principal.



► “I don’t think that’s right, Mr Edwards. We do look a bit like monkeys, but that shouldn’t make us think we came from them! God made you, Mr Edwards, just like He made everyone.”

Well, Mr Edwards didn’t know what to do. Lilly was still laughing because she had found the whole thing so ridiculous. The other children were now making monkey sounds. Mr Edwards was getting more and more cross, desperately trying to explain that we all came from monkeys. And with Lilly Pepper’s giggles still echoing in his head he got far too angry and shouted at the top of his voice:

“You’re all monkeys.”

The class stopped and stared. But Lilly Pepper called out, “No we’re not. We’re children. God made us children, not monkeys.”

And that was the last straw. Lilly was sent to see Mrs Stevens, the Principal, to explain her actions. What will Mrs Stevens do? We’ll find out next time. See you soon!

Take some time to ask and listen to what the children think about the story.

The Story For Older Children – *The Lightbringers*

Chapter 1 – It Begins

The video is 4.5 minutes. Take some time after the story to ask and listen to what the children think. Then go to the response and prayer time.



- ▶ The rain continued to fall. The night had come early – it always did at this time of year.



- ▶ Lightning flashed across the sky illuminating the solitary figure that knelt before the gravestone. Eventually she stood and walked past the overturned graves. Her feet slogged through the mud. Thunder rumbled nearby.

She walked between the two pillars supporting the rusty gates, gates held by a loose rusty chain, but she easily squeezed through. These gates had been closed for many years. She stood on the edge of the road. The dazzling lights of a truck highlighted her bedraggled brown hair. Her clothes were wet through. Her denim jacket was completely drenched and no defence against this type of weather, but it was the only jacket she had. Her jeans clung tightly to her legs. Then the truck passed.

No one would notice the flowers on the grave. No one came to the graveyard unless it was for mischief. This graveyard had not been used for many years. Nobody remembered the people buried there now. Except one.

Lightning flashed but the girl had gone.



- The rain continued to fall.

Sophie woke early. Her wet clothes still hanging on the chair at the end of the bed. The Home was silent. It wouldn't be for long. But, these moments were hers and she used them to stare at the ceiling and to think.

There were some things she was sure about. She was sure there was no parallel universe where everything was different and where the accident hadn't happened. She was sure that no new parents were going to walk through the door and take her away from the Home. She used to think that when she first arrived aged five, but four years had passed since then, and nobody wanted to adopt a nine-year-old girl who was considered "unusual". And finally she was sure that Thomas, who lived across in the boys' house, was always going to be crazy – in a good way, but definitely crazy. She was just sure.



- But there were some things about which she was less sure. God. God was one of those areas in which she was less sure. She used to be absolutely sure. If God existed then He wouldn't have let the accident happen, and since the accident did happen, there couldn't possibly be a God. But now she was less sure. Particularly now that the new care-worker had arrived in the Home. She was used to new care-workers. They didn't stay for long, a few buckets of wallpaper paste above the door that would fall onto an unsuspecting man or woman as they came into the kitchen, itching powder gently poured down their back and a worm or two dropped into their cup of tea was usually enough to see them off. But, Mr Dundenter was different. They had placed the bucket of paste above the door, but no matter how many times he went in and out the bucket didn't move. But one walk through by Thomas and squelch/splat! He was covered. And Mr Dundenter didn't seem to notice the itching powder at all, even though Sophie had put a whole handful down his neck when she had pretended to bump into him. And when he had got to the end of his cup

of tea to see the worms wiggling at the bottom, he simply smiled, said, "Oh worms. My favourite," and lifted his cup one more time and swallowed the worms... Leaving Sophie and Thomas feeling slightly sick.



► But that wasn't what made her unsure. It was what happened the day before. She had come home from school, sat in her room reading her library book and completely lost track of time. When she did look at the clock it was past dinner time and Cook was strict on meal times. She jumped up, ran to the stairs and realizing too late that her laces were untied, she tripped and tumbled down 20 stairs before landing in a crumpled heap at the bottom.

The Home had been built specially to look after orphan children. Children who had no other family. It had a boys' house and a girls' house. Well that's what they were called – they were not separate houses. There was a central area where they ate their food and played their games, and in two different directions from that area there were stairs, one set to the left that led to the boys' rooms and one to the right that led to the girls'.

And now everyone was looking up from their food to see poor Sophie in a heap on the floor, at the bottom of the girls' stairs, moaning pitifully.

"She's dead," announced Stacey, who always thought the worst.

"She can't be dead," proclaimed Thomas, "I can hear her moaning. And you don't moan when you're dead...."

"She's not dead." It was Cook's voice, "But she has hurt herself badly." Everyone ran towards Sophie. But they hadn't got particularly far before Mr Dundenter sent them back to their seats. It was Mr Dundenter who walked over to Sophie and he knelt beside her. Sophie was crying. It hurt. It hurt a lot.

"It's my leg," Sophie sobbed.

Mr Dundenter took hold of her hand, closed his eyes and said,

"Jesus, you healed so many people in the Bible. Please make Sophie's leg better."

Immediately, she felt calm and peaceful. When she looked down, her leg looked completely normal. No pain at all. She stared at Mr Dundenter. He winked. Winked! Nothing else was said. She stood up walked to the table, ate her dinner, and everything carried on as normal.

So, she wasn't sure anymore. Actually, she was really, really confused. If there wasn't a God, what had happened yesterday? Who fixed her leg?

She turned over and looked at the clock. 5:30 am. She had crept back through her window just after midnight. But there was no getting around it. She was wide awake. Enough thinking. Time to get up. This was a Saturday. It was curious how she always found it easier to get up when there was no school. But this was a girl with a mission. Today she was going to find Mr Dundenter and ask him how he did it...

Find out what happens next in next week's instalment of *The Lightbringers*.

Take some time to ask and listen to what the children think about the story.

Response

Prayer (5 minutes)

Invite the children to stand and ask if anyone wants to ask Jesus to be their forever friend using the ABC prayer (this can be done in small groups or as one large group):

A – Admit your sins and ask for forgiveness;

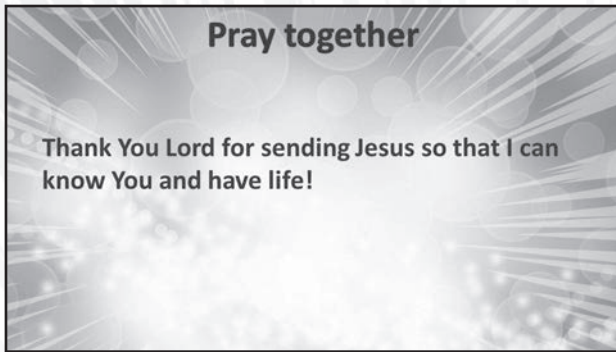
B – Believe in Jesus;

C – Choose to follow Jesus for the rest of your life.

Dear God, I admit I have done wrong things and I need You. Please forgive me for my sins. I believe Jesus died and rose again for the things I've done wrong. I declare that Jesus Christ is now my Lord and Saviour. Thank You for saving me. I choose to follow You for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ask the children to speak to a leader if they prayed that prayer and have booklets to give out. There is also an example parent letter available in the downloads.

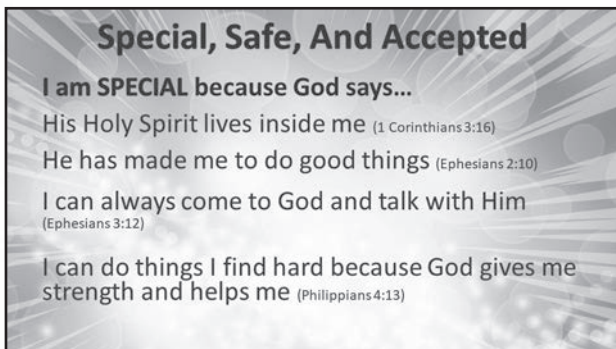
Pray that everyone will hear the truth God wants to show them today. Then encourage all the children to say the following prayer:



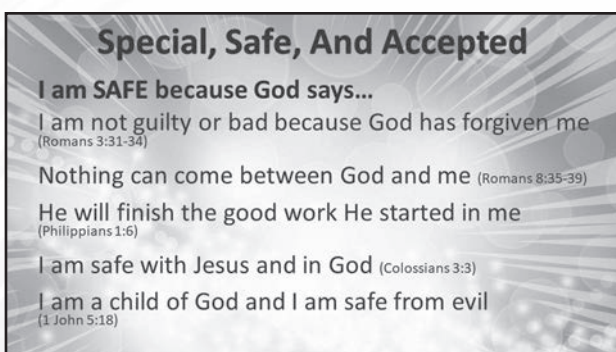
- ▶ Thank You Lord for sending Jesus so that I can know You and have life!

Special, Safe, And Accepted

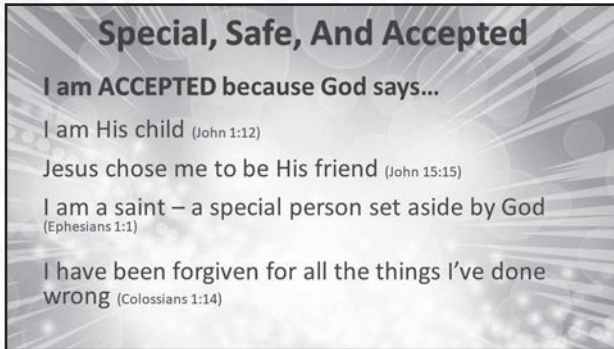
What does God say is true? Read together the list of "Special, Safe, And Accepted" truths from their activity sheets or from the PowerPoint. Pause after each section for a quiet moment of reflection. At the end you could ask if any child is willing to share which truth was particularly special for them.



- ▶ I am **SPECIAL** because God says:
His Holy Spirit lives inside me (1 Corinthians 3:16)
He has made me to do good things (Ephesians 2:10)
I can always come to God and talk with Him (Ephesians 3:12)
I can do things I find hard because God gives me strength and helps me (Philippians 4:13)



- ▶ I am **SAFE** because God says:
I am not guilty or bad because God has forgiven me (Romans 3:31-34)
Nothing can come between God and me (Romans 8:35-39)
He will finish the good work He started in me (Philippians 1:6)
I am safe with Jesus and in God (Colossians 3:3)
I am a child of God and I am safe from evil (1 John 5:18)



- ▶ I am **ACCEPTED** because God says:
I am His child (John 1:12)
Jesus chose me to be His friend (John 15:15)
I am a saint – a special person set aside by God (Ephesians 1:1)
I have been forgiven for all the things I've done wrong (Colossians 1:14)

Make sure you hand out the activity sheet. As time allows spend some time together completing the activity sheet. The children can also take it home to complete.

Next Week (5 minutes)

Highlight next week's course. Keep it exciting:

"Next week everyone who comes will get a _____", "Next week we'll hear the next part of this exciting story", etc.

