

Day 1: Puppet Pal

Teacher: Our puppet's name is Christian (*or Christiana*). Let's all call for him (*her*) together. *Do so.*

Puppet: *Come up waving a mini sword as if pretending to sword fight someone.*

Teacher: Hi there, Christian. What're you doing?

Puppet: Oh, I'm pretending to be King Arthur!

Teacher: Was he the boy who pulled a sword out of a stone?

Puppet: Yes! I read how he grew up and became a great king who fought enemies in England.

Teacher: I know that story. King Arthur and his knights of the round table lived in a kingdom called Camelot.

Puppet: Yep! The good kingdom fought against bad kingdoms that wanted to destroy them. King Arthur and his knights were really brave! One knight even killed a dragon! *Pretend to stab a roaring dragon.*

Teacher: That's exciting! But you know King Arthur is just a story, right?

Puppet: I know.

Teacher: Did you know in real life there really are two kingdoms—God's good kingdom and the enemy's bad kingdom?

Puppet: What do you mean?

Teacher: Well, the Bible tells us how everything used to be all good. There was only one kingdom.

Puppet: What happened?

Teacher: An enemy named Satan tricked the first woman, Eve, and she disobeyed God's command to not eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The first man, Adam, ate the fruit too. Their disobedience was sin, which messed up the good kingdom on earth. All of creation fell under the curse of sin, including all people after Adam and Eve. Now, we have two kingdoms. The good one is ruled by God, and the bad one is led by the enemy, Satan. *Point to the GOOD KINGDOM/BAD KINGDOM POSTER that you used earlier.*

Puppet: And they're in a battle?

Teacher: Yep. You're pretending to be King Arthur, but there's a real battle going on out there. You can't see it, but it's really happening.

Puppet: Oh no! Should I be scared? *Duck down and hide.*

Teacher: Not if you're on God's side, because he wins! Nobody can beat our all-powerful God! Satan's not equal to God. He can't beat God!

Puppet: *Come back up.* Wheew! That's good to know.

Teacher: And of those two kingdoms, only one is good. Only one is kind. Only one is true! Do you know which one?

Puppet: God's!

Teacher: Right! God is good and great, and God's kingdom is great!

Puppet: And like you said, of the two kingdoms, only one is true—God's!

Teacher: *Hold up the DAY 1 RHYME TIME POSTER.* Yep! Let's say this together, "Of two, only one is true!" *Do so.*

Puppet: Of two, only one is true. I want to remember that! Well, I've got to go fight dragons and rescue maidens. Bye for now!

Teacher: Bye, Christian! See you tomorrow.

Day 2: Puppet Pal

Puppet: *Come up looking around at the children and saying: Huzzah! Huzzah! (Ha-SAW!) That means hooray! I'm so glad you're here again today!*

Teacher: Christian, yesterday we learned about the first two people. Kids, do you remember their names? *Take responses.* They were Adam and Eve. *To Christian.* Who was the enemy that tricked Eve and got them to disobey God's command and eat the fruit?

Puppet: Um. I forget. Do you all remember who it was? *Take responses.*

Teacher: Yes, it was Satan in the form of a serpent. Satan is the enemy who rules the bad kingdom. *Take POSTER 2: BAD KINGDOM out of the treasure chest and hold it up or put it up.* Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, we're all born into that bad kingdom—we all disobey God's commands, which is called sin.

Puppet: So you mean everyone's going to be stuck in the bad kingdom forever?

Teacher: Nope! God had a great plan to rescue us. He sent Jesus, the leader of the good kingdom. *Hold up/put up POSTER 1: GOOD KINGDOM.* Jesus is God's one and only Son. He was in heaven with God, but he chose to come down from that beautiful and perfect place to rescue us so we can be part of the good kingdom.

Puppet: Let's give Jesus the loudest claps we can to thank him! *Do so.*

Teacher: He actually came to earth as a baby. That's what we celebrate at Christmas! *Hold up/put up POSTER 3: BABY JESUS.*

Puppet: I love Christmas! I help my mom set up our nativity scene, which has baby Jesus.

Teacher: I love Christmastime too! But Jesus didn't stay a baby in a manger. He grew up and lived a perfect life. We all sin, but Jesus never did. He's the only one who never did anything wrong.

Puppet: Wow!

Teacher: But then, when he was a grown man, he allowed some men from the bad kingdom to put him to death. They nailed him to a cross, which hurt a lot. *Hold up/put up POSTER 4: JESUS ON THE CROSS.*

Puppet: Why would he let them to do that? Jesus is stronger than the bad kingdom and all its people!

Teacher: Because Jesus loves each of us, even when we're in the bad kingdom fighting against him. And he knew we could never make it to God's perfect heaven on our own because of our sin. God is holy, which means he's without sin. And he can't let sinners into heaven. Jesus gave his life in place of ours, taking the punishment for sin, so our sin could be forgiven.

Puppet: Jesus must really love these boys and girls.

Teacher: He does! And the cool thing is that he didn't stay dead!

Puppet: What? That's impossible! Once you're dead, you're dead.

Teacher: Not for Jesus! Because he's God, he can do anything, including coming back to life.

Puppet: So the men from the bad kingdom couldn't keep him dead?

Teacher: Right! Neither Satan nor death could defeat Jesus! Jesus is alive and living in heaven. *Hold up/put up* POSTER 5: EMPTY TOMB. He made the way for us to be able to get to heaven some day, and he offers us the gift of eternal life with him, which we need to receive.

Puppet: So boys and girls aren't automatically part of the good kingdom?

Teacher: Nope. Remember that we're all born into the bad kingdom because of sin. But does anyone know how to become a member of God's kingdom? *Take answers.* Let's learn what God teaches in his Word, the Bible. First, ADMIT. *Hold up/put up* POSTER 6: ADMIT.

Puppet: Let's say that together. *Do so.*

Teacher: Admit you're a sinner. This is called repenting. Repenting is sort of like turning your back on sin. We repent when we say we're sorry for our sins and turn from them. Can you think of a time you sinned? *Take responses.*

Puppet: I had to say sorry for yelling at my sister this morning. That was a sin to get angry and say mean things, right?

Teacher: Yep, sin is disobeying God and his Word. God says we're to be kind (*Ephesians 4:32*). Have you ever been unkind to someone? God says we're always to tell the truth (*Ephesians 4:25*). Have you ever told a lie? God says we're to obey our parents (*Ephesians 6:1*). Have you ever disobeyed your parents? If you agree that you've ever sinned, even once, then admit that to God. Tell him you're sorry and want to repent.

Puppet: What else does the Bible say about how to become part of the good kingdom?

Teacher: Second is to BELIEVE. *Hold up/put up* POSTER 7: BELIEVE.

Puppet: Let's raise our hands and shout that together. *Do so.*

Teacher: Believe that Jesus really did come to earth for you. He lived a perfect life and never sinned. Then he died and rose from the dead, all because he loves you. The Bible tells us that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life—life with God in his good kingdom (*John 3:16*).

Puppet: That's what I want—to be in God's good kingdom!

Teacher: Third is to FOREVER RECEIVE. *Hold up/put up* POSTER 8: FOREVER RECEIVE.

Puppet: Let's look at our neighbor and say that to them. *Do so.*

Teacher: If you admit you're a sinner, repent of (turn from) your sins, and believe Jesus died and rose from the dead, then you can forever receive him. That means you want to be part of his forever kingdom and follow him. Sometimes this isn't easy. In fact, it can be hard at times. But the good news is you'll want to obey God's commands now instead of your own or the enemy's. Even though you won't follow perfectly, God will give his Holy Spirit to help you.

Show the DAY 2 RHYME TIME POSTER. So it comes down to needing to decide your side. Let's say that together. *Do so.* You're either in the bad kingdom or the good kingdom.

If you want to talk with someone more about this, you may follow ___, and they'll help you. Otherwise, you can stay with me, and you'll learn how to be ready each day to live for God's kingdom. Remember that your troupe leaders or any of us here are happy to talk to you anytime this week about this important decision to become a child of God and a part of his good kingdom.

Let's say goodbye to Christian! *Do so.*

Day 3: Puppet Pal

Teacher: Good morrow, all! I wonder what Christian's up to today. Should we call him? *Do so.*

Puppet: *Come up with a belt on, showing it off.* How do you like my new belt?

Teacher: I like it. Kids, what do you think of it? *Take responses.* Hey, Christian, does this have anything to do with the special belt I was telling the kids about yesterday?

Puppet: It sure does! It's called the belt of . . . the belt of . . . *Have the kids help finish the phrase.* Oh, right, the belt of truth.

Teacher: That's right. If you believe God's Word—every word of it—and you want to be a person who tells the truth, you're wearing the belt of truth.

Puppet: Are there any more pieces of the armor of God? I want lots of protection!

Teacher: Yep! The next one's called the breastplate of righteousness. *Read Ephesians 6:14.*

Puppet: Beast plate of whatness? That sounds dangerous!

Teacher: *Chuckle.* No, not *beast* plate, *breastplate* of righteousness. Do you hear the word *right* in righteousness? You can call it the breastplate of right because it reminds you to do right. That means you'll obey God's directions and make the right choices God wants you to make, like telling the truth, being kind, and obeying your parents.

Puppet: What's a real breastplate look like?

Teacher: It's worn right here to protect your heart. *Put the mini breastplate over the puppet's shoulders and chest/back area.* Knights wore them to protect vital organs like their heart and stomach.

Puppet: Good idea! I don't want my stomach poked with a sword!

Teacher: Yep. When you obey God and do right, you're protected from the trouble bad choices can get you into. God doesn't want his children to think, "What can I get away with?" That doesn't show much love for God! That's actually how the enemy wants you to think. In fact, if you feel like you need to hide your actions, you know you're not wearing the breastplate. God wants you to think, "I love God and want to please him, so what does the Bible tell me to do?"

Puppet: I want to please God and stay out of trouble!

Teacher: That's good! Then keep asking God every day to help you do right in God's sight. *Hold up the DAY 3 RHYME TIME POSTER.* Let's say, "Do right in God's sight!" together. *Do so.* Reading the Bible every day helps you learn what God wants you to do.

Puppet: Well, speaking of doing right, I hear my mom calling, so I need to do right and obey. Gotta go!

Teacher: See you around, Christian! Kids, while Christian's leaving, let's talk about a king in the Bible who desired to do right.

Day 4: Puppet Pal

Teacher: Huzzah! Hooray! I'm glad to see all of you today here in the strongest part of the castle, the keep. Do you think we can get Christian to visit again? *Take responses, then have the kids call for him.*

Puppet: *Come up wearing the belt and breastplate from yesterday. Also have a mini shield.* Hey, everyone! Look what I've got!

Teacher: Well, I see you have your belt on. What's that belt called, kids? *Take responses.*

Puppet: It's my belt of truth. God's Word is true!

Teacher: And you have your breastplate on. What's the breastplate called, kids? *Take responses.*

Puppet: The breastplate of righteousness. When I learn the Bible, it helps me to do right.

Teacher: But now I'm wondering what you're holding there.

Puppet: That's the next piece of armor. It's called the shield of faith.

Teacher: That's really important to have because it will protect you. You see, knights always carried big shields into battle because the shield protected them from flaming arrows.

Puppet: I'm not going to have real flaming arrows come my way, am I?

Teacher: No, but the enemy sends invisible flaming arrows to try to get you to mess up.

Puppet: I sure don't want the enemy's arrows to make me mess up and sin.

Teacher: That's why you need your shield to block them. And you need another piece of armor too—a helmet. *Put the helmet on the puppet's head and read Ephesians 6:16–17.*

Puppet: What does that do?

Teacher: The helmet of salvation reminds us that Jesus saves us from sin, and doesn't want us to keep doing the same sins over and over. Now that you have your shield of faith and helmet of salvation, you're protected from the arrows the enemy will send your way.

Puppet: How does the enemy shoot arrows at us?

Teacher: Well, they aren't real arrows. But the enemy and the people in his bad kingdom will try to get you to mess up or give up using his D-darts. *Show the D-DARTS POSTER and briefly explain the terms.*

Puppet: Those are some dangerous darts the enemy uses! But I have my shield of faith and helmet of salvation to help me. *Block with the shield or duck behind it.*

Teacher: That's right! *Add the shields and helmets to the KNIGHT POSTERS.* The armor of God helps protect his children from the enemy's D-darts. Let's take a look at how the enemy got a very wise king in the Bible to mess up and sin. I'll pass out a red flag to each of you, and then we'll begin.

Puppet: Okay. See you later!

Day 5: Puppet Pal

Teacher: Welcome, knights and maidens, to our last day in the keep. Should we check in on Christian one last time?

Puppet: *Come up with a jester hat and a juggling ball. Mutter to yourself: I just can't do it!*

Teacher: What's wrong, Christian? You're wearing such a fun jester's hat, but you don't seem very happy.

Puppet: I'm frustrated! Jesters make people laugh and entertain them with juggling. I want to be a juggler sooo much, but I just can't get the hang of it.

Teacher: Let me see you try.

Puppet: *Throw the ball up and miss catching it. Sigh a big sigh, then say dejectedly: See? I'm terrible! How can I juggle and catch three balls if I can't even throw and catch one?*

Teacher: Juggling's a challenging skill to learn. Have you been practicing a lot?

Puppet: Well, no. But I sure do wish I was good at it.

Teacher: How do you expect to get good if you aren't putting any effort into it?

Puppet: I don't know. I just hope I will.

Teacher: Let me give you some advice, Christian. It doesn't work that way. You aren't going to get better until you get serious about practicing. The effort you put into it will make a big difference in how good you'll be at juggling.

Puppet: Do you really think so?

Teacher: I know so. For example, what if a doctor didn't study and practice his skills? Would you want him doing brain surgery on you? *Pretend to do a surgical cut by the puppet's head.*

Puppet: No way! I wouldn't want him anywhere near my brain!

Teacher: What about a pilot who hadn't practiced flying and landing a plane? Would you want to take a trip with him?

Puppet: No way! I'd have my mom drive me instead!

Teacher: Did you know that knights in medieval times had things they had to practice too?

Puppet: Really? What?

Teacher: Sword practice! And the swords back then were heavy. They had to practice with them to get strong enough to swing them around to defend themselves and attack enemies. What do you think would happen if knights didn't practice with their swords?

Puppet: They'd probably get sliced by an enemy knight! *Pretend to get cut and slump down as though dead or injured.*

Teacher: Yes. They wouldn't last long as knights if they didn't practice.

Puppet: Yikes! I better go and practice my juggling!

Teacher: That's a good idea! But before you go, let me tell you something else you need to practice—something very important.

Puppet: What? The piano?

Teacher: No. It's the next piece of the armor of God. Just like the knights used swords, the last piece of our spiritual armor is a sword.

Puppet: Oh, I've seen sword fighting in movies. *Pretend to sword fight in the air.*

Teacher: Our invisible sword is called the sword of the Spirit. *Read Ephesians 6:14–17. Show the KNIGHT POSTERS and attach the SWORDS or have a boy and girl do so.* The sword of the Spirit is the word of God, which is the Bible. A knight's sword wouldn't do him any good if he never used it during a battle, would it? Well, the Bible won't be the help it should be if we aren't learning it and practicing how to use it.

Puppet: What do you mean? How can we learn and use God's Word?

Teacher: You know, sometimes God's children leave the Bible just laying around. Kids, if you have a Bible somewhere in your house, shout, "Sword of the Spirit!" *Take responses.* Does that Bible ever sit there and not get opened for days and days? *Pause.* Every day, you've got to be hearing, memorizing, and using the Bible. You've got to train your brain with the Bible. *Hold up the DAY 5 RHYME TIME POSTER.* Let's say, "Train your brain!" together. *Do so.*

Puppet: Wow! That's a lot to remember—to wear all the armor of God and train my brain.

Teacher: That's why God tells us to put on the armor, then *pray*. He'll help his kingdom keepers use the armor to fight against sin and obey him.

Puppet: Whew! I'm glad God will help. Well, I'm going to try to train my brain by memorizing my Bible verses! Then I can practice juggling. Bye for now!

Teacher: Goodbye, Christian! Now, let's listen to a great example of how Jesus used the sword of the Spirit against the attacks of Satan.

