

Session 1

The Treasure Hidden in Following Instructions

Preparing Your Heart to Teach Session 1

How good are you, as an adult, at following instructions? In the midst of the daily routines of life, we all must comply with others' guidelines. Some people do better at it than others. God uses authorities in our lives to guide and direct us every day. One of the reasons it's so important to learn to follow others is that it prepares us to follow God. Even those who are strong leaders must learn how to follow someone else.

God speaks often to his children. Sometimes that speaking comes directly through his Word. Other times it happens in our hearts or through someone else. Those who are accustomed to following instructions are more readily able to hear from God when he speaks to them. Those who are resistant to instructions often find listening to God more difficult.

Take a moment and ask yourself how you're doing in this area. It's hard to teach children to do something that we ourselves struggle with. Thank God for the people in your life who help train you in this area. Thank them as well and commit to listening more attentively to the instructions of others and to God.

What Children Learn in Session 1

Hidden within obedience are the secret ingredients children need to be successful in life. God knows that, and that's one of the reasons why he placed children in families. Kids must learn now how to be successful as employees, team members and future mates. When kids learn to obey, they learn all kinds of helpful things that will equip them for later in life.

A good Instruction Routine contains several components. Parents often expect obedience but kids don't recognize its value so they resist. This session gives children a vision for the benefits of learning to follow instructions well.

Theme: Following instructions means I come when called, give a response, and report back.

Repeat these words over and over again so that kids can give an answer to the following question: What did you learn? Answer: Following instructions means I come when called, give a response, and report back. If you practice that question and answer, and emphasize this truth, then parents will hear these words at home when they ask their kids what they learned. Remind kids that responsiveness to instructions is a treasure inside of you that people will love.

Read Along in the Book, "Parenting is Heart Work"

The Introduction to *Parenting is Heart Work* provides motivation to look past behavior to the heart. It's easy to focus only on behavior because that's what's visible. But the heart is more complicated. Teaching children to follow instructions has some definite heart implications. Chapter 4 shows how working on behavior the right way can actually contribute to heart change. Behavior is a symptom. In fact, sometimes working on behavior becomes a way to get to the heart. The two are linked closely together. In order to gain the most from an Instruction Routine it's necessary to keep an eye on the heart. Character qualities like cooperation and responsibility grow out of a good Instruction Routine.

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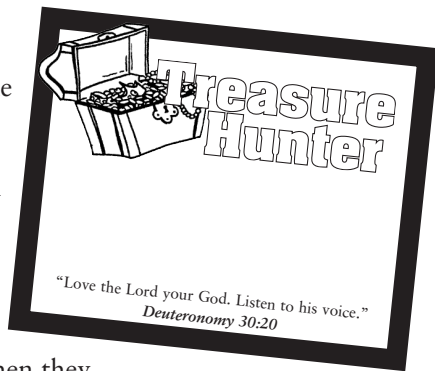
Theme

Following instructions means
I come when called, give a response,
and report back.

Welcome Activity

Preparation:

Photocopy onto cardstock the name tags at the end of this lesson. Punch holes and cut yarn into 16" lengths. Provide crayons or markers.



What children first experience when they walk into the room is important. Consider things like music, decorations, and a friendly greeting. Welcome kids by saying things like, "Oh here's another Treasure Hunter to join our group." Have children sit down at a table and color a Treasure Hunter name tag. Help the children with the yarn so they can wear their name tags after they are decorated.



Together Time

Use the ideas below along with your own thoughts and the Bible to dialogue with the children and help them see that hidden within obedience are the secret ingredients that make a person successful in life.

Object Lesson Can You Obey?

In just a moment we're going to play a game. I'm going to have you all laugh but when I put my hand in the air, I want you to stop laughing and get ready to hear what I say next. I want to see who will obey and stop. Okay, ready? Laugh. Allow that to go on for about 5 seconds and then

put your hand in the air. It's helpful to have a couple of other leaders participate with you because sometimes children don't respond quickly to this game and they continue on. That, by the way, is a good reason to play it and to teach this lesson. "Many of you obeyed and stopped right away, but some didn't. I want to see if you can obey. Let's try again." Laugh.

You can play this game a few times replacing "laugh" with "grumble," or "whisper."

Children have various responses to this game. Some will rebel and not stop, but most of the time kids will get into the activity and follow instructions. Some will even freeze in place.

Tell the kids that you like the way they are obeying and that obeying is an important part of life. In this lesson we're going to talk about obeying and some practical ways that kids can do their part to follow instructions well. Most importantly, there's an attitude in the heart that leads to cooperation and that's a treasure.

Bible Story

God is Looking for Kids Who Will Listen

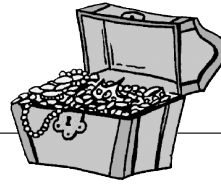
Samuel didn't live with his parents. He was raised by another family. The dad in this new family was Eli. He was a priest and his job was to take care of God's house. Samuel learned how to sweep and clean and run errands for Eli the priest. He learned how to carry firewood, and straighten things up in the house of the Lord.

Samuel wanted to do what was right. Two other boys in this new family did the wrong thing. They were always getting into trouble. They were mean and would fight with people. But Samuel loved God and wanted to do what was right. Eli could see that something was different about this little boy. Samuel wasn't like his own sons. His heart was in the right place.

One night Samuel went to bed just like any other night. He lay down on his mat on the floor and fell asleep. Sometime later he heard something that woke him up. Someone was calling his name.

"Samuel, Samuel."

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*It must be Eli.
I wonder
what he
wants.*

Samuel
got up and
ran into
Eli's room.

"Yes, Eli,
here I am. What do you want?"

Kids, when someone calls you, do you come over to that person to talk to them? That's the kind thing to do. Some kids just yell back to the other room, "Yeah, whadaya want?" That isn't kind. The best thing to do is what Samuel did. He heard someone call his name and he went to find out why.

If you want to be successful in life then you'll want to learn to follow instructions well at home. In fact, God has hidden a treasure within obedience. What if I told you there was a golden treasure hidden in a cave but you'd have to dig and work hard to get it? Would you do the work? Sure you would because you want all that gold. You want to be successful in life and God wants you to be successful too. That's why he's given you a treasure but he's hidden it in a place where you have to work hard. God has hidden a treasure inside following instructions.

If you learn how to follow instructions well, you'll gain a great treasure. Let's talk about three things that you can do when you're given an instruction. First, come when called. Second, give a response like "Okay Mom." And third, report back when you get the job done. What are those three things? (Repeat them a couple of times so kids get the idea.)

Samuel knew how to follow instructions. That's why he went right into Eli's room when he heard his name called. If you do that same thing, Mom and Dad will say to themselves, "Wow, this child is very responsible."

But it wasn't Eli who called him. "I didn't call you. Go back to bed." So Samuel returned to his cot and lay down quietly.

"Samuel, Samuel." *There it is again. Eli must have changed his mind and now he wants something.* So again Samuel got up and went into the other room and he said, "Yes Eli, what can I do for you?"

When you're involved in a project or you're tired, it's not easy to come when someone calls you, is it? Some kids ignore their parents when they call, but not Samuel. He wanted to do what was right. He got up again and went into Eli's room.

"I didn't call you," said Eli. Samuel was puzzled. Someone was calling him, but he didn't know who it was. So, he went back to bed.

It happened one more time and Eli said to Samuel. "This time when you go back to bed, if you hear someone calling you, then say, 'Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.' It sounds like God wants to talk to you, Samuel."

And that's what Samuel did. He went back to bed and listened. After a short time he heard the voice again. "Samuel, Samuel."

"Speak Lord, for your servant is listening."
At that moment God spoke to Samuel. This was the first time but not the last. Samuel was a young boy who wanted to serve the Lord and listen to him, and God wanted to talk to Samuel.

Kids, one of the reasons God wants you to learn to come when you're called and listen to your parents is so that you'll be ready. Lots of practice listening to parents gets you ready to listen to God. He wants to speak to you. Sometimes he'll speak to you through his Word, the Bible. Other times he'll speak inside your heart, but will you be able to hear him? You will if you learn to obey Mom and Dad. Listening and obeying your parents is practice for listening to God. He is looking for kids who know how to obey because he wants to use them in this world to serve him.

This Bible story was taken from 1 Samuel 3.

Bible Verse

Deuteronomy 30:20

"Love the LORD your God, listen to his voice."

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Transition

What are the three things we talked about that you can do when you're given an instruction: Come when called, give a response, and report back. Good. I'm going to test you on those three things again in a few minutes but right now I'm going to see if you can follow instructions as we play a game together. You have to listen carefully now because this game requires that you follow instructions.

Game (For Older Children) The Hand Game

The purpose of this game is to have fun but also to help children understand that following instructions is sometimes difficult and requires work to do the job well.

Children sit in groups of five around a table with all hands flat on the table palms down. Each person picks their right hand up and places it face down to the right of the left hand of the person on their right. Now each person should have two hands in front of them neither of which are their own. One player starts by lifting fingers only and hitting the table once. The next hand clockwise repeats by tapping once, and the next, and the next, and so on. Any hand can tap once or twice. Two taps reverses the direction. If someone moves a hand out of turn, that hand is removed from the table. The game continues until only two hands remain.

As children get into this game they begin to give each other instructions, again providing more opportunity to discuss the value of listening to instructions.

Use this game to talk about always being ready to receive instructions. You never know how things might change and so you always have to be ready. The same is true in family life. If you are always ready to receive instructions, then when Mom or Dad asks you to do something you can stop what you're doing and respond right away.

Following instructions is the sign of a good employee too. So, if you work hard to learn this when you're young, you'll be growing a treasure in your heart that others will see as you get older. People will say, "Wow. She is a great helper. I want her on my team." Or, "I like the way he responds the first time. I'm going to hire him to work for me."

Game (For Younger Children) The Hand Game

Have everyone put their hands on the table. "See if you can follow instructions now. Put one hand on top of your other hand. Good. Put them back on the table again. Now put one hand on top of your neighbor's hand next to you. Good. Now put both hands in your lap. Put one hand on your head. Put one hand on the table. Wiggle your fingers in the air. I'm seeing if you can follow instructions." Some younger children may be able to tap around the table one person at a time. Remember that the goal is learning to follow instructions even when it's difficult.

Explain to children that they always need to be ready to receive an instruction. The same is true in family life and following instructions is a treasure.

Transition

Now I'm going to ask you a very important question: What three things can you remember about receiving instructions? Come when called, give a response, report back. Good. I'm going to see if you can remember those three things after we're done making a craft and then playing a game.

Craft The Chicken Game

Preparation: Photocopy the "Chicken" page at the end of this lesson onto card stock. You'll need a paper plate for each child, one brad for each child, crayons or markers, and scissors.



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This activity serves as a craft and then as a fun game for following directions.

First, have children cut out the “spinner” base and glue it onto the back of a paper plate. Use a ballpoint pen to poke a hole in the center of the spinner base and a hole puncher to make a hole in the pointer.

Use a brad to attach the pointer to the spinner. Fasten the brad loosely so the pointer can spin freely.

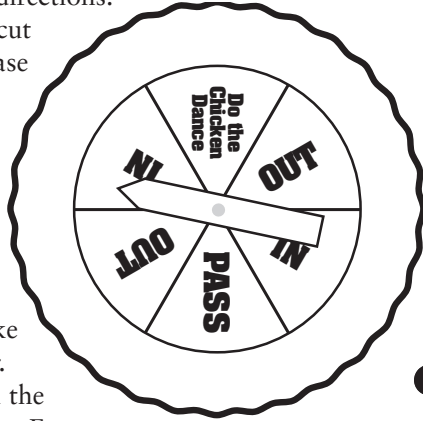
Have the children color the six eggs and then cut them out.

Playing the Game: Start by doing the Chicken Dance. This is a fun, high energy, dance that lasts about 2-3 seconds. Have everyone do it together first. Stand up. Put your thumbs under your armpits, flap your elbows up and down like a chicken, bend at the waist, turn around two times, squawk like a chicken and then sit down. That is the chicken dance.

Some children may, at first find this rather embarrassing. That’s okay. Kids seem to get into it more as the game progresses. If someone doesn’t want to do the chicken dance tell them they can just say “balk balk.” As the game continues, children tend to grow in their willingness to do the dance. Take a group picture of those willing to do the Chicken Dance.

Set half the games aside and allow two people to share one game. Each player receives three eggs. As you play this game, spin the spinner. If it lands on IN you put one egg under the spinner. Then it’s the next person’s turn. If the spinner lands on OUT then you have to take one egg out. If it lands on “Chicken Dance” then you have to stand up and do the chicken dance.

The game ends when the first child gets all the eggs in. A child is out and must watch when he or she has no more eggs to remove. Acknowledge the winner and those who do the Chicken Dance.



For Younger Children

You may want to do most of the cutting, gluing, and assembling, and allow children just to color the pieces.

Have each child play with their own spinner, with the teacher directing one child at a time. It’s especially fun for the young children to watch one of their peers get up and do the chicken dance. The kids take turns spinning and following the instructions before the next child’s turn.

Transition

When you know how to follow instructions you can learn to play fun games. Why else do people follow instructions? Do grownups have to follow instructions? What if they didn’t listen to the policeman or their boss at work? Where else do we listen to instructions (church, library, etc.)?

What are the three things about receiving instructions that you’re trying to remember? Come when called, give a response, report back. Good. We’re going to practice that right now as we do a role play together.

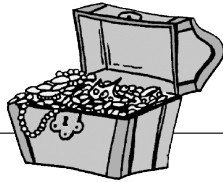
Role Play

Preparation: Make up the instruction cards as suggested in this activity.

“I have some different instructions written on pieces of paper here. I need a person to be the mom who will give the instructions, and someone to receive them who can act as a child.” Set up several role play situations where the child is acting like he’s busy playing, watching TV, asleep, or otherwise busy. The mom can also be busy, angry, gentle, or intense. Have children role play several positive and negative responses to instructions. Practice the three things that make a good instruction.

- Come when called
- Give a response
- Report back

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For instructions you might use some of these ideas:

- Move the trash can over to the door.
- Bring me five chairs and line them up here.
- Please get me a glass of water.
- Take four pencils and form them into a square.
- Write your name on the board along with your favorite kind of food.

Talk to the children about a right way and a wrong way to respond to instructions. Emphasize with kids the value of responding well with an “Okay Dad” kind of response. Also encourage children to report back by saying “I’m done,” or “I did it. Would you like to check my work?”



Transition

You guys are doing great at following instructions. We’re going to play another game now and see how well you can do at giving and receiving instructions. Some of you will be giving instructions and some will be receiving them. I’m going to be listening to those who are receiving instructions to see if they say “Okay.”

Activity (For Older Children) Human Knot Game

Have children form into groups of five. Children should grab hands with others in the group following these guidelines: You can’t hold the hand of the person next to you. You can’t hold two hands of the same person. Once the hands are all grabbed then the group must “untie” the human knot, by listening to each other’s instructions.

This is a fun game to watch and to participate in so it might be helpful to allow one group to go at a time while others watch and coach them on. Following instructions when a number of people are trying to lead can be a challenge and provides some interesting debriefing discussions afterwards.

Play the game 2-3 times especially listening to how children give and receive instructions. Talk about the process by asking, “How did it go?” “Who was

giving instructions?” “What happened when you listened?” “What happened when you didn’t listen?”

Activity (For Younger Children) Follow the Leader

Preparation: Provide enough hand towels for each pair of children to share one.

Divide children into pairs. Give each pair one hand towel. Have the children hold opposite ends of the towel. Tell them this is an activity to see how well you can lead and follow. Put several chairs around the room to create obstacles. Ask the leaders to guide the followers through the maze. After about 30 seconds, ring a bell or flash the lights, signifying that it’s time to reverse roles and the follower becomes the leader. Go back and forth several times practicing leading and following.

After you’re done, ask children “Which did you like best: leading or following?” Have a discussion about the importance of following the leader, following instructions, and listening to Mom and Dad as they try to lead the family.

Activity (For Younger Children) Traffic Cop

Preparation: Make a stop sign out of red paper or cardboard using the template and instructions at the end of this lesson.



Have one child sit in a chair and have a second child march around the chair. When the “traffic cop” holds up the stop sign in the air, the “traffic” must stop. If the child doesn’t stop, he must sit down and another child gets to be the traffic. Tell the children, “We want to see how well you can follow instructions on a sign.” After playing this game a few times you may try to add an additional child as part of the traffic. As the numbers increase for the traffic, children tend not to pay attention to the stop sign. You may tell children that when the stop sign goes up, you must stop. If you don’t stop then you have to come over to the watching area.



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Talk about signs in life that give instructions and why they're important. Stop lights protect cars from crashing. A fire alarm tells people to get out of a building and so on. The important thing is that children learn how to obey whether it's a sign or spoken words. Following instructions is important.



Transition

Let's see who remembers the three things about receiving instructions? Good. Come when called, give a response, and report back. Now we'll eat some fun food if we can follow instructions.

Snack

Preparation: Purchase the ingredients on the recipe card at the end of this lesson. Photocopy the recipe card for each child. Provide a zip-lock bag for each child.

Treasure Recipe

Follow instructions and put the following things in your plastic bag.

- 10 Goldfish
- 5 Brown M&Ms
- 6 Small Pretzels
- 10 Raisins
- 3 Orange M&Ms
- 4 Jelly Beans
- 7 Chex Pieces
- 4 Green M&Ms
- 8 Mini marshmallows

(What do you do with the extra M&Ms? The teachers get to eat them.)

This activity emphasizes "reporting back" in the instruction process. You might put the ingredients on the table and have children report when they're ready to have their work checked before they eat the recipe. Or you may have stations around the room where children go and get the ingredients, put them into their bag and report back. You will need to give the instructions verbally to younger children and guide them through the procedure. As children have fun eating, talk about the importance of following instructions and why reporting back is important. When kids report back they then get to hear things like "You did a good job," "Great," "I like that," and so on. Reporting back is an important part of the job.

Review and Close

Bring the children together to help them process the day's activities. Talk about the lessons learned from the activities and the Bible story. Following instructions is important. What kind of instructions do parents give to their children? Sometimes children aren't very good at receiving instructions. They whine, or complain, or have bad attitudes.

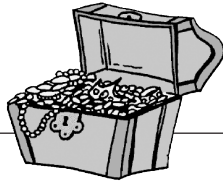
But learning how to follow instructions in your family is so important because God is preparing a treasure right now in your heart. When you learn to follow instructions at home you will become a better friend and a helpful adult. People will appreciate you more and others will see that you are growing up and learning how to listen.

We learned today that it's important to come when called. Getting close before receiving or giving instructions is very important because it strengthens relationships. Parents will be pleased when you learn to come when called. It makes the whole process run much better.

It's also important to learn to give an answer back when someone gives you an instruction. Start practicing this at home and you'll see some good things happen. Again, not only will your parents be pleased, but when you give an answer to others you are becoming a treasure. Teachers say, "My, that person responds very well." You will begin to develop a good reputation for yourself. And that itself is a treasure.


Be sure to end the instruction time by reporting back. Come back and say to Dad or Mom, "I finished the job." When you do that, parents are impressed and you get to hear Mom or Dad say, "Thank you." Or "Great, you're free to go." Most importantly, when you do these things you're learning how to receive instructions elsewhere in life. Others will be impressed and you'll be moving well on your way to being successful in life. One of the treasures in family life is learning to follow instructions. I'm going to ask you one more time what the three things are that we've talked about that make up following instructions? Come when called, give a response, and report back.

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Welcome Activity Instructions:

Photocopy this page onto heavy paper or cardstock and use it according to the instructions in this lesson.




Treasure
Hunter

“Love the Lord your God. Listen to his voice.”
Deuteronomy 30:20

A rectangular card with a black border. It features a line drawing of an open treasure chest on the left. To the right of the chest, the words "Treasure" and "Hunter" are written in a large, outlined, sans-serif font. Below the chest and text, there is a quote in a smaller font: "Love the Lord your God. Listen to his voice." followed by "Deuteronomy 30:20" in italics.


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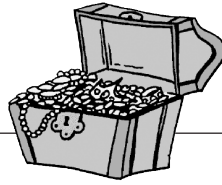
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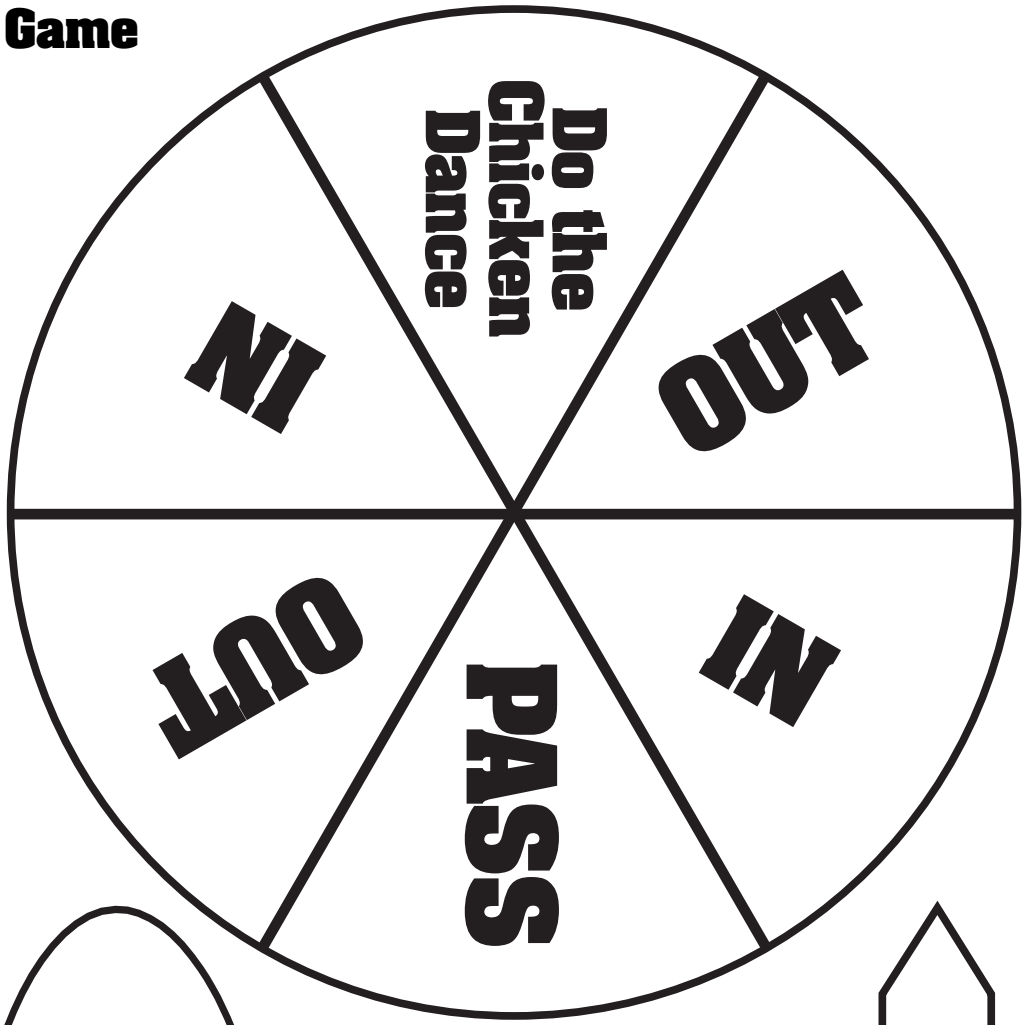
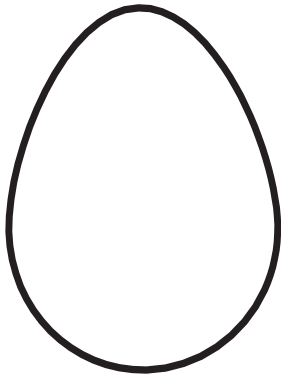
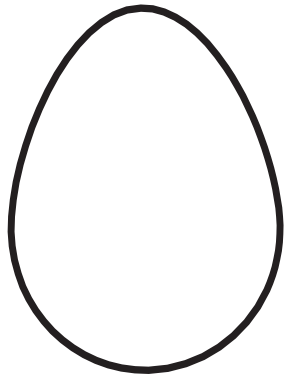
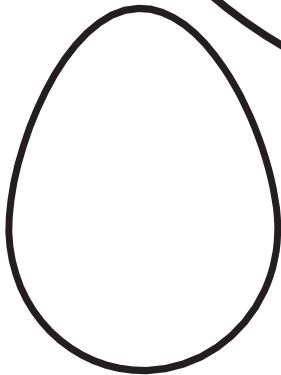
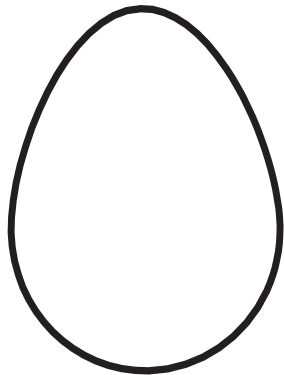
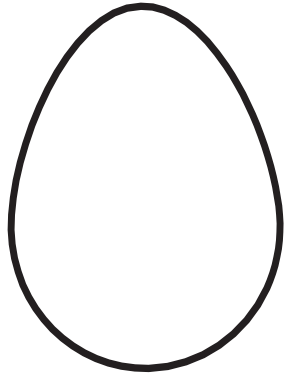
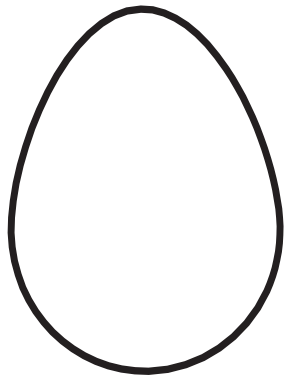
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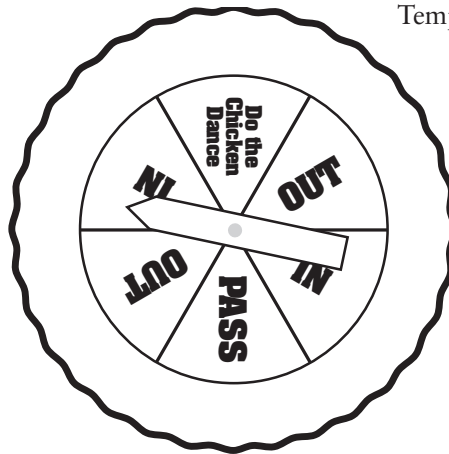
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The Chicken Game

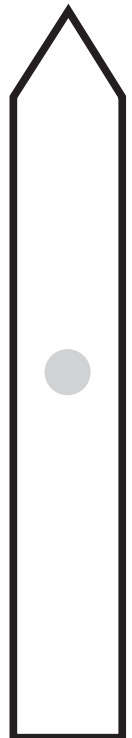


Spinner Base

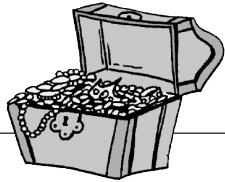
Spinner Template



Craft Sample



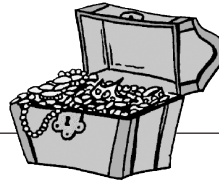
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Traffic Cop Activity Instructions:

Photocopy this page onto red construction paper.
Cut out the sign and staple or tape it to a paint stir
stick or other stick to use in the “Traffic Cop”
Activity.





Session 1

Snack

Treasure Recipe

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(What do you do with the extra M&M's?
The teachers get to eat them.)

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Teaching Children How to Follow Instructions

Dear Parent,

Giving instructions to children can be a challenge, especially when kids don't cooperate. In our lesson this week we talked about the benefit of following instructions and we taught the children three key elements that will make them successful in this area.

Theme: Following instructions means I come when called, give a response, and report back.

In order for children to change, though, parents must also change. We would suggest that a good Instruction Routine requires that parents connect with their kids by getting close to them before giving the instruction. Often this means calling children and teaching them to **come when called**.

After you give an instruction it's good for kids to respond with "Okay, Mom," or "Okay, Dad." **This response** is a common courtesy but it confirms that cooperation is developing.

Having children **report back** after they do the job gives you a change to inspect their work, teach about thoroughness if necessary and then praise them. Take time to end every instruction time with affirmation. Release children after they've done the job. Kids need to know that they are done and they've accomplished what you've asked.

We used the Bible story about Samuel listening to God's voice and Deuteronomy 30:20 to teach children that learning to listen to God starts by obeying parents. We used other games and activities to emphasize this truth. You might ask your child about the Chicken Game and play it together. Be sure to follow instructions!

Blessings,

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