

GAME PLAN

WEEK 2

BIG IDEA

Following God is the best game plan.

BIBLE

David and The Ark: 2 Samuel 6:12–22; Psalm 34:1–8

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Not only do coaches need a good strategy, but they have to place their players in the right field positions. This week, we'll explore the story of David and The Ark and see how God gave David a specific role in leadership. As he celebrated while some disapproved, David's dedication to God's plan reminds us that following God is the best game plan.

Large Group Time

Welcome

Huddle up, team! I'm so glad you're on the team as we practice *God's Game Plan* together! During this series, we are going to be learning all about what God has to say as our lives play out. This week, we will be talking about how to make sure we are making the right moves on the pitch (a *soccer field*) to get a win. Our teammate, David, is back to show us that sometimes, things we are called to do may seem a bit silly to others. But it's not silly to God, and that's what matters!

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Coach Says

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game, you will need space and a soccer-themed prize for the winner. It's a leveled-up version of "Simon Says." To play, have kids who can stand up. The coach will call out different sports drills (jumping jacks, toe touches, windmills, high knees, jog in place). The kids do the drill that is called out, but only when "Coach Says". If they miss a drill or they do a drill that was not prompted by "Coach Says," they're off the pitch. Consider handing out a soccer-themed prize for the last person remaining on the "pitch."*
- You had to stay focused and listen to the coach in this game. You might have had voices—from others or in your own head—telling you to give up or do something other than what "Coach Says."

- Life can be like that, too. The times when we get tired, confused, and lost are the hardest times to focus on God's game plan. But those are also the most important times to do just that!
- Focusing on God's game plan is a learned skill that takes practice. The good news is that God is always giving us chances to practice. And, unlike *Coach Says*, we are never out of the game for messing up.

QUESTION | Have you ever?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask the following questions. You can have every kid shout their answer but then ask a few kids to share their answers with everyone. Comment briefly on their answers —and have fun with this!*
 - **Have you ever been asked to do something by a coach or teacher that you thought was kind of silly? What happened?**
 - **Have you ever been caught dancing when you thought you were alone or no one was watching?**
 - **Have you ever scored a goal, scored a touchdown, aced a test, then did a victory dance? Care to demo for us?**

Today, we'll hear more about our teammate David who did the most epic victory dance ever! He was someone who knew that making the right choice and following God's game plan weren't always the most popular things. Let's see how this plays out in today's Bible story.

ACTIVITY | Wacky Soccer

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you will need three different-shaped balls (like a soccer ball, football, or tennis ball). You will need two goals on either side of a room. To play, divide kids into two teams. Play some music and let them play. Like soccer, kids can only use their feet. But unlike soccer, all balls will be in play all the time. The object is simple. Put the balls in the other team's net. Play doesn't stop when a goal is scored. The ball is simply kicked or tossed back into play. Set a timer, and the most goals at the buzzer wins! (For smaller spaces, consider bringing up three volunteers and assign each of them a different ball. They can take turns to kick their ball into a goal.)*
- When one ball is on the pitch, it's pretty easy to know what to follow. But it gets a lot harder when there are many balls or when they're not even the right ball for the game. In life, we have many things pulling our attention around.

Everyone wants us to believe that they have the best game plan and are the most important. Today, we will talk about how to focus on God's game plan, even when the people around us are focused on other things.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pretend you are on a soccer pitch as a free kick close to the opponent's goal is being set up. Ask one kid to play the role of David, the star player taking the kick. Ask another to play the goalie, who is Michal. You will play the announcer. When they hear their name, invite them to dribble or aim the ball at the goal. At other times, they can be still, like a freeze frame, so they don't distract the audience. Alright! Let's get on the pitch!*
- Alright, soccer fans, welcome to the arena where it's all going down! Or maybe you know it by its more international name ... football! Who's ready to score some goals?! *Gooooo!*
 - Let me explain the situation: Taking the free kick is David, who has recently become the king of Israel. He has some goals under his belt, but this would be the most important of his career! Seeing the ball hit the back of the net would mean getting something very special to a very special place.
 - The goalkeeper is Michal. She might give up a goal or two, but she doesn't want to see anybody doing any ridiculous victory dances!
- All caught up? **Okay, let's learn more about their role in God's game plan in 2 Samuel 6:12–13.**
 - David wanted the Ark of God to come to its rightful place. The Ark was very special to the people of Israel because it reminded them of how God had been with them throughout time, like when they were being rescued from Egypt. The Ark represented the power of God in a physical form.
 - Previously, it was being kept in the house of a man named Obed-Edom, whose household was blessed because they were taking care of the Ark. They were scoring goals left and right and were in fantastic form. The perfect strike for David would be bringing something that meant so much to the people back to where it belonged.
- **Read 2 Samuel 6:14–19.**
 - He shoots and scores! *(Have volunteer David shoot and score past volunteer Michal.)* The Ark was coming back! And as David followed the Ark of God, he began praising God and celebrating God's presence in the city.
 - Here's that awesome victory dance I was talking about! *(Invite the volunteer and everyone to dance together.)*
 - David offered sacrifices to God and blessed the city's people by sharing food with the crowds. David was so overjoyed that he wasn't even paying attention to the state of his clothes and how he must have looked to everyone else.
- **Read 2 Samuel 6:20–22.**
 - David's celebratory dancing was a little much for Michal, who was David's wife. She did not think that David's behavior was befitting a man of his position. She thought a king should be more dignified and serious.
 - **How would you have felt if you were David when Michal confronted you?**
 - But David didn't allow Michal's disapproval to get him down. He told her that even if it meant he would be somewhat "*undignified*," he would not stop celebrating for God.

What a riveting game in the stadium today! David's actions on the pitch today remind us that we don't have to care so much if anyone teases us for loving God so much. No matter what team you follow, remember always to follow God first!

VIDEO | A Clip Of A Goalie Trying to Score Points

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show this animated [short](#), "Goalie," or something like it, about a goalkeeper who is frustrated that he can't get in the game. We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context! For more information on legally using copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- There's a reason why sports teams need a game plan. Every player has to be in their assigned position and work toward a common goal. If a goalkeeper, for example, abandoned their post and tried to score points alone, the team could fall apart and make it easy for the *other* team to score points.
- As a follower of God, David knew his position was to worship God and lead the celebration as the Ark was brought into the city. He stuck to his assignment and followed through with all his might. He didn't allow any discouragement from Michal or anyone else to get him to back down from his purpose.

We can also trust God's game plan because God always wants what is best for us. We can count on that. So no matter how it plays out in the game, **following God is the best game plan!**

OBJECT LESSON | Pom-Pom Praise!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this object lesson, you'll need a cheerleading pom-pom (or a picture of one) and a [tissue paper pom-pom](#).
- Pom-poms are a staple at sporting events. The cheer squad for either team shakes the pom-poms vigorously to get the crowds excited during a game.
- Did you know that when the pom-pom was first invented, it was made of paper? When cheerleaders rattled them, they broke apart quickly and couldn't withstand harsher weather like rain or snow. By the end of the game, the pom-pom didn't look as festive anymore!
- I guess that was kind of what happened with David ... on the outside, anyway. He was celebrating so fiercely that he didn't notice the condition of his appearance. But that didn't stop him from what he wanted to do most—to praise God. The David God saw wasn't underdressed or improper. God saw someone who loved God with every inch of his being and wasn't afraid to show it!
 - **Have you ever had to make a choice between following God and doing what everyone else was doing?**
 - **What did you choose?**
 - **What would you do if you could do it all over again?**

Let's give a cheer for God! Rah! Hooray! **Following God is the best game plan.**

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 34:1-8

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the passage together. Choose volunteers to read each verse when prompted below in their best sports announcer or broadcaster voice.
- It's time for today's "Top Five" plays! Brought to us by Psalm 34:1-8.

- **Number five, it's verses 1–3.**Wow! The psalm writer decides to give God praise all the time, no matter what! And look at that! Even the afflicted, those with illnesses and problems, rejoice!
- **Number four, we've got verses 4–5.**What a play! God answered when the psalmist cried out. Like God always does!
- **Number three, verses 6–7, looking sharp!**Oh! It doesn't matter who calls on God. They will be answered. 24–7! 365! It's a game plan carried out to perfection! People revere and follow God, and God protects them and saves them.
- **Number two, let's recap verses 7–9!**The psalmist invites us, the readers, to "taste and see" for ourselves just how good God is. God welcomes anyone who seeks protection and rescue.
- **Number one, once again, it's Jesus for the win!**Just like David experienced God's protection all throughout his life, like when Saul would chase him for days, God protects and saves us, too ... most notably, through the person of Jesus, who God sent to rescue us from sin and separation.

Jesus still rescues us from trouble and shows us that **following God is the best game plan!**

VIDEO | Game Plan, Episode 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

REFLECTION | Pass It!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids sit in a circle on chairs. Start with a soccer ball yourself, then ask the first question and pass the ball with your feet to a person who wants to answer. Keep the ball moving around with all who wish to share.*
- **Following God is the best game plan.** When playing sports, we have a coach who comes up with the plays and tells us what to do in order to win the game.
 - **How is God kind of like a coach in this way?**
 - We also have spiritual coaches to do this for us in life. They could be our parents, church leaders, and even our sports coaches! They can help guide us in what it looks like to follow God.
 - **Do you have a spiritual coach?**
- Following God means spending time with God, whether it be by learning from the Bible, praying, or practicing the things we learned. It's also about having a relationship with God through Jesus, God's son. Following God in our Bible Story looked like David dancing behind the Ark of God.

What does following God look like in our day-to-day life?

RESPONSE | God's Plan Playbook

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You'll need to use the [printable](#) from last week (have extras available for kids who don't have one already). During the activity, have kids draw up a "play" based on a situation where they can choose to follow God. Invite them to use Xs and Os to represent different people and arrows to indicate how they'll move or what they'd do. It can end up looking something [like this](#).
- Okay, team, here's the situation: you are in a position where you have a choice to make—to follow God or follow the crowd.
 - Maybe you happen to come across a group of people making fun of someone.
 - Or they're going somewhere you know you shouldn't go.
 - Or you're being pressured to tell a lie. You can join in, or tell them it's not cool.
- **What do you do? How can you actively follow God and let people know that's the best game plan?**
- Draw up the play on your play sheet, using Xs and Os like the coach of a team would.

We can make many plans in our lives for what we can do each day. But above them all, **following God is the best game plan!**

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 33:11 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Learn the memory verse together using any combination of the resources provided: [memory verse coloring page](#), [sign language motions](#), or choose from [this list](#) of our favorite memorization techniques!
- **"But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations."**

Prayer

- God, thank you for inviting me to follow and celebrate you. Help me to follow you, even if it makes me stand out and be different. Maybe *especially* then. Help me choose your game plan every day. Amen

Small Group Time

Discussion

- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
 - **What was the Ark of God? Why was it so important?** *The Ark represented the presence of*

God. Those who had the Ark would be blessed.

- **What did David do when he finally brought the Ark into the city?** *David danced and leaped with joy.*
- **Why did Michal disapprove of how David celebrated the Ark of God coming into the city? How did David respond?** *Michal thought that David, as king, shouldn't have been so undignified. David said he'd be even more undignified if it meant worshipping God and following God's game plan.*
- **After reading Psalm 34:4–7, what are some of the things that God promises to those who follow?** *God promises we will be delivered from all fears and saved from troubles. God encamps around us and delivers us.*

- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- **What might following God look like?**
- **Why is it harder to follow God when people are watching?**

Who are the people who help us follow God?