

MEET KOEN

FROM CHICAGO

BIBLE TRUTH:

God gives us His Word so we can know how to live.

KEY VERSE:

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Psalm 119:105 (ESV®)



NOTES FOR THE TEACHER

As you prepare for this "GO Reach Kids" lesson about Koen and his home in Chicago, here a few ideas for adapting the experience to your particular situation:

- Prior to the lesson, secure several small puzzles (no more than 50 pieces). Make sure you have enough puzzles for every 4-5 kids. You also will need to collect several items related to "light" for a display table in the "Focus on the Video." Possible items might include a flashlight, a light bulb, a box of matches, a candle, and so forth.
- In the "Focus on the Bible" section we provide a Bible story based on the Bible truth and the key verse. You might consider extending the study over two weeks with the first week looking at the "Focus on the Nations" emphasis and the second week studying the "Focus on the Bible" information. If you decide to split the lesson over two weeks, make sure to emphasize the Bible truth and the key verse in both lessons.
- In addition to the core lesson, we also provide some optional activities. Feel free to use these as time allows. They also make fun pre-class activities or can keep kids engaged as a wrap-up to the lesson.
- The PowerPoint slides we have provided can help you during the "Focus on the Nations" piece of the activity. These extra tools can enhance the learning experience.

- We have provided a downloadable parent handout related to this lesson. Simply make copies of the handout and distribute them to your parents.



1. Focus on the Nations (About 5 minutes)

Prior to the session, set up several puzzle stations around the room. Make sure you have enough puzzles for every 4-5 kids.

To start today's lesson, group the kids into teams of 4-5 and send each team to one of the puzzle stations. Explain that they will have three minutes to get as much of their puzzle done as possible. Encourage the members of the team to work together to figure out where the pieces go.

Give the kids three minutes to work on the puzzle. After the time is up, let each team share how far it got in putting the puzzle together. Emphasize that it's OK if they didn't finish their puzzle. Talk about

CHICAGO FUN FACTS

- **Chicago was incorporated as a city in 1837. It is the third largest city in the United States and is home to approximately 3 million people.**
- **The Willis Tower (formerly known as the Sears Tower) is the tallest building in the United States and one of the tallest in the world. The tower is 1,450 feet tall, not including the 300 foot antennae on top.**
- **On October 8, 1871, the Great Chicago Fire ignited in a barn behind the O’Leary home. The flames burned for two days, killing at least 300 people and leaving the heart of Chicago’s business district in ruins.**
- **The Chicago River actually flows backward. A series of canals built between 1892 and 1922 move harmful stuff in the river away from Lake Michigan, the city’s main water supply.**
- **The Ferris wheel was invented in Chicago in 1893.**
- **In a 1916 poem, Carl Sandburg called Chicago the “City of the Broad Shoulders” because of its many industries. It also is known as the Windy City.**

some things that helped them with their assignment. (Possible answers: working with friends, starting with the border pieces, looking at the box to see what the finished puzzle should look like, and so forth.)

Ask if any of the kids have ever been to Chicago, Illinois. Share the Fun Facts about Chicago. Explain that today’s video shares the story of Koen, a 10-year-old who lives in Chicago and loves the Bible. Encourage them to listen carefully to how Koen uses the Bible to help him put the pieces of his life into place—just like working a puzzle.

2. Focus on the Video (About 10 minutes)

Show the video of Koen telling his story.

After the video, allow several children to share some things that stuck out to them. Ask them to describe how he compared the Bible to working a puzzle in his life.

Direct the kids’ attention to the display table you have created. Show them each item on the table and ask them to describe the primary purpose of those items. After you have talked about each item, ask the kids to identify what all of them have in common. (Answer: They all can provide light in dark places.) Talk about what could happen if they had to walk through a dark room without a light. Point out that lights help us avoid tripping over things and they give us an extra measure of security when things are dark.

Enlist a volunteer to read today’s key verse: “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). Explain that the Bible is God’s Word and that it can be a light for us. It can help us avoid things that might hurt us, and it provides a sense of security when things feel dark. Read

today's Bible truth: "God gives us His Word so we can know how to live." Remind the kids that this is what Koen has learned and it has made a huge difference in his life.

3. Focus on the Bible: Joshua Takes Charge

Ask the kids if they have ever been given a job or an assignment they thought was impossible. Allow two or three volunteers to briefly share their story. Encourage them to imagine what it would be like to be put in charge of a whole nation—especially if they had to follow one of the greatest leaders that nation had ever known! Point out that this was exactly what Joshua faced in Joshua 1.

Moses had led the people of Israel faithfully for 40 years. But he had died, and God had put Joshua in charge. Joshua was willing, but he wasn't quite sure where to start. The Lord pointed him in the right direction by pointing him to His Word.

Read Joshua 1:6-9 and ask the kids to listen for any phrases that occur more than once. Highlight God's challenge to be strong and courageous. Explain that Joshua really would need to be strong and courageous as a leader, but his strength and courage wouldn't depend on his own power or wisdom. Emphasize that God told Joshua that he would find all the strength and courage he would need as long as he remembered God's words.

Point out that God's Word—the Bible—still gives us strength and courage to live today. Read today's Bible truth again and emphasize the Bible as a guide for our lives. Encourage the kids to spend time in God's Word each day, learn what it says,

and obey it to the best of their ability.

4. Focus on the Key Verse: Psalm 119:105

Write today's key verse on the board or on a large sheet of paper: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). Direct the kids to read the verse aloud a couple of times to get familiar with it.

Explain that you will begin covering up certain words with pieces of construction paper. Cover the word "lamp" and direct the kids to say the verse. Continue covering key words and repeating the verse until all the words are concealed. Finally, cover the reference and encourage the kids to quote the verse from memory.

Uncover the verse and read it aloud one more time.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

"Focus on the Video" Activity: Song Search

Prior to the lesson, collect several hymnals or songbooks. Divide the kids into groups and give each group a hymnal or songbook. Encourage them to find songs that talk about God's Word and write down how those songs describe the Bible. After a few minutes, let the teams report on their findings. Highlight today's key verse and Bible truth. Talk about how the Bible is a light and a guide for our lives each day.

"Focus on the Key Verse" Activity: This Little Light of Mine



Turn out some of the lights in the room so it is darker than normal. Light a candle and hold it up for the kids to see. Talk about how even a little bit of light makes a difference in a dark room. Explain that while the candle probably doesn't give you enough light to see across the room, it does give you enough light to see your next step. Point out that this is the picture painted in Psalm 119:105. In biblical times, a lamp was not a spotlight that could be seen for miles. It was more like a candle that let you take one step at a time. God's Word doesn't always answer every question we might have about the future exactly when we ask, but it does help us know God better and learn how to respond to Him one step at a time.

**FOCUS ON THE HOME:
DIG DEEPER**
(DOWNLOADABLE HANDOUT)

For the Parents

During this week's GO lesson your children learned about a boy named Koen, who lives in Chicago, Illinois. He is involved in Awana® at his church and that has helped him learn to appreciate the Bible. He loves reading the Bible and seeing what it tells him about living each day. He compares it to a puzzle. The Bible helps him know how to put each piece of his life in exactly the right place. His story reminds us that God gave us His Word to help us know how to live. To learn more about Koen, you can view his story at awana.org/stories. You also can use these questions to start the conversation with your kids about what they learned from Koen and how they can discover God's plan for their lives in His Word:

- Why do you think Koen gets so excited when he starts talking about the Bible? How do you think that excitement rubs off on those around him?
- When have you learned something special from the Bible? How do you try to put that truth into practice each day?
- Koen mentioned that he hopes that he can teach others about the Bible some day. What are some ways you can talk with other people about the Bible? Who can you share an encouraging word from the Bible with this week?

Family Activity: Put It All Together

Koen compared walking with God to building a puzzle. The Bible helps him know where to put all the pieces to make sure they are in the right spot. It guides him and teaches him how to make sense of those times when he needs God's wisdom and direction.

To help your family remember that the Bible guides us and helps us make sense of our lives, find a puzzle you can work on together. Remind them of Koen's illustration. Point out that we all need help at times because life can be confusing. Sometimes the pieces of our puzzle don't seem to fit just right. But God gave us His Word so we could know how to live—and how we could fulfill His plan for our lives