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## EXPLORERS

Seeking God in the Great Outdoors

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DESERTS

## WEEK 4: DESERTS

**BIBLE VERSE:** *How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You. Psalm 139:17-18 (NKVJ)*

**BOTTOM LINE:** God cares about every area of your life!

### SUPPLIES

- Pack of copy paper
- Copies of “God Cares” cards
- Crayons or markers
- Copies of WEEK 24– Take Home Sheet

### LEADER NOTES

*God cares about every area of our lives!*

*There’s nothing too big or too small that happens to us that He doesn’t notice.*

*He sees it all! Sometimes kids feel like God isn’t aware of everything that goes on in their everyday lives.*

*Use this lesson to help them realize that the same God who knows the number of grains of sand on the earth, knows ALL about them because He made them!*

*Pray that students will understand how much God cares about them and want to share that knowledge with everyone else!*

### WELCOME

**Say:** I’m glad to see all of you today!

In this series, we are learning that ALL of us are explorers.

How many of you have ever been curious about something?

Or maybe you like to pretend to be a detective, gathering facts and clues to figure something out.

*Allow responses.*

Those are all qualities of an EXPLORER.

We are using the great outdoors to teach us some things about God.

Today is all about exploring DESERTS.

Have any of you ever been to a desert?

Even if you haven't explored a desert in real life, most of us have seen one on TV or in a movie.

I don't know about you, but to me, they always seem really big, really hot, and really sandy.

I'm not sure that I would want to trek across a desert, but that's what we're about to do in our Opening Activity.

Before we jump into our lesson, let's start by going over some guidelines that will help us have an awesome day together.

### **THINGS TO REMEMBER**

- Unless we ask you to stand up, please stay in your seats.
- We will give you time to talk, but when a leader is talking, please listen.
- We want to keep your personal items safe, so keep your phones, toys, and fidget toys under your seat.
- And most of all, we want to take a moment to pray and ask God to help us learn something about Him that we've never known before.

If you don't know God at all, today will be your day to hear who He is.

*Ask a leader or student to open in prayer.*

### **WORSHIP**

*This would be a great time to open with a time of praise and worship.*

### **OFFERING**

*Encourage students to give their offering willingly and with a grateful heart.*

### **OPENING ACTIVITY: DESERT TREKKERS**

#### **GAME SET-UP**

Divide students into 4 equal teams.

*It really doesn't matter how many people are on each team.*

*Everyone will have a chance to participate.*

Give each team 5 pieces of paper.

Choose a starting point and an ending point.

The ending point should be at least 15 feet away from the starting point.

## **HOW TO PLAY THE GAME**

On GO, each team will place their 5 pieces of paper on the ground in a straight line, pointing towards the ending point.

Students will have to move their team from the start to the end by walking across their 5 pieces of paper; continually moving the last piece of paper to the front, creating a path for them to follow.

They must walk ONLY on the sheets of paper.

The entire team will have to move all at one time by trying to squeeze onto the sheets of paper.

If a team member steps off the paper and onto the ground, the team must start over, OR you could also just make them wait 5 seconds and then keep going.

The goal is to 1) See who can cross their “desert” first

OR 2) See if everyone can complete the activity, with no winner.

Just for Fun: Have each team name the “desert” they just crossed.

*After the activity, have each team pick up the paper and throw it away.*

*Then, have students return to their seats for the large group lesson.*

## **TEACH**

**Say:** I’m sure that walking across our desert was much easier than crossing a real one!

Did you think that activity as easy or hard? Tell me why.

*Allow a few responses from students.*

Today is all about deserts.

Deserts are pretty interesting, so let’s start by learning a few fun facts!

*Show the “Deserts Slide Show,” either on TV/projection, or even print the slides and show them to the students.*

**Slide 1:** Title Slide

**Slide 2:** The word "desert" is mentioned over 50 times in the Bible.

**Slide 3:** The Sahara is the largest desert in the world. (There are “hot deserts” and “cold deserts”. The Sahara is the largest hot desert.)

**Slide 4:** The Sahara Desert covers 3.5 million square miles.

**Slide 5:** Europe is the only continent without at least one desert.

**Slide 6:** The Tuareg people live in the Sahara Desert.

**Slide 7:** The Antarctic desert is a cold desert because little rain ever falls from the sky.

**Slide 8:** God knows how many grains of sand are in the world... and He knows all about you!

**Slide 9:** Title Slide

**Say:** I hope you learned a couple of fun facts. Deserts are pretty cool.

I want us to start our lesson by reading a Bible verse.

**Let’s read Psalm 139:17-18 NKVJ.**

*How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!*

*How great is the sum of them!*

*If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand...*

In the New Living Translation, this verse says, “*How precious are your thoughts **about** me, O God. They cannot be numbered!*”

**Ask:** Do you realize that God thinks about you?

*Allow responses.*

Well, He does!

Imagine this: You give your best friend something that you have made.

- Girls... maybe you made a friendship bracelet or a necklace.
- Guys... maybe you gave a friend a toy car, or an action figure that is important to you.

Now, when you gave it to your friend, you explained that it was really important and special to you.

Every time you see that friend, you wonder if he or she is taking care of it, if it's broken, etc.

You just wonder about that item.

How would you feel if you went to their house and saw it just lying on the ground?

What if your friend told you they threw it away?!?

That would probably make you feel awful because you cared about it, and you gave it to your friend because you care about your friend.

It would be especially difficult to give away something you had made with your own hands and never think about it again.

Now, think about this... who made you? God.

Do you think God would create you and then never think about you again?

The Bible verse we just read says that the thoughts of God number more than we can count. That's a lot!

So, why do you think God thinks about us?

*Allow a few responses from students.*

Because He CARES about us. This verse also says that God's thoughts about us outnumber the grains of sand.

How many grains of sand are there in the world?

No one knows... but God knows.

You see, God knows things that no one else knows.

He knows things about you, that no one else knows.

And not only does He know, but He cares because you are His creation.

That's pretty awesome!

Today, I want you to remember our bottom line: God cares about every area of your life!

He cares about the little things and also the big things.

He knows what you struggle with and He knows your strengths.

Not only does He care about you, but He cares about everyone.

**Ask:** Do you think there are people that you know that don't know how much God cares for them?

*Allow a few responses from students.*

I want you to think of one person that you think needs to know how much God cares.

We are going to pray for that person and then we are going to create something to show them how much God cares.

*Take a few minutes to pray and then divide into small groups.*



## SMALL GROUPS: LOWER ELEMENTARY

### SUPPLIES

- Copies of “God Cares” cards
- Crayons or markers

**Say:** Today, the desert sand reminds us of how much God cares about us.

Let’s think of a few things in creation that show us how much God loves us.

For example: Do you have a pet?

Do you think God created dogs and cats for us to enjoy, and for companionship?

Think of a couple more things that demonstrate God’s love towards us.

*Allow a few minutes for discussion.*

### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

*Pass out copies of the “God Cares” cards and crayons/markers.*

*Give students as many as they would like to hand out to people.*

**Explain:** Today, we talked about other people that may not know how much God loves them.

It’s not enough to just pray for people, especially when we have the opportunity to show God’s love to others.

We are going to take a few minutes and create a note that we can give to the people that we think need to know that God cares.

You can color it, draw on it, whatever.

Just make it look awesome and then, put the person’s name on it.

Then, make sure that it gets to that person somehow.

*Spend the next few minutes creating the cards.*

**SMALL GROUPS: UPPER ELEMENTARY****SUPPLIES**

- Copies of “God Cares” cards
- Crayons or markers

**Say:** Today, the desert sand reminds us of how much God cares about us.

Let’s think of a few things in creation that show us how much God loves us.

For example: Do you have a pet?

Do you think God created dogs and cats for us to enjoy, and for companionship?

Think of a couple more things that demonstrate God’s love towards us.

*Allow a few minutes for discussion.*

**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

*Pass out copies of the “God Cares” cards and crayons/markers.*

*Give students as many as they would like to hand out to people.*

**Explain:** Today, we were challenged to think about other people that may not know how much God loves them.

It’s not enough to just pray for people, especially when we have the opportunity to show God’s love to others.

We are going to take a few minutes and create a note that we can give to the people that we think need to know that God cares.

You can color it, draw on it, whatever.

Just make it look awesome and then, put the person’s name on it.

Then, make sure that it gets to that person somehow.

*Spend the next few minutes creating the cards.*

## BONUS: BIBLE QUIZ QUESTIONS

*If you have extra time, use the following questions at the end of the lesson.*

*Call two students to the front. Hand each student a KJV Bible, read the question, and then give the Bible reference.*

*The first person to give the correct answer, wins that round. The winner remains up front, and a new “challenger” takes the other student’s place.*

1. **Name an animal listed in Psalm 102:6.**

I am like a **pelican** of the wilderness: I am like an **owl** of the desert.

2. **What form of transportation did they use to depart from the desert? Mark 6:32**

And they departed into a desert place by **ship** privately.

3. **What did their fathers eat in the desert? John 6:31**

Our fathers did eat **manna** in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

4. **What are the prophets like? Ezekiel 13:4**

O Israel, thy prophets are like the **foxes** in the deserts.

5. **What did Joseph gather? Genesis 41:49**

And Joseph gathered **corn** as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

6. **Name one place where the people wandered. Hebrews 11:38**

(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in **deserts**, and in **mountains**, and in **dens** and **caves** of the earth.

7. **What will the desert blossom as? Isaiah 35:1**

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the **rose**.

8. **Name the two places mentioned in this scripture. Numbers 33:16**

And they removed from the desert of **Sinai**, and pitched at **Kibrothhattaavah**. :)