

DIVE IN

As families enter, host is standing beside an oversize prop photo album. Verse is on a large banner next to the photo album. Dart board is set up. Allow kids to throw foam darts at the dart board in a line until it's time to begin.

HOST

Do you have photo albums at your house? Do your parents have pictures of you in there? Do you know why your picture is in there?

Get some responses.

HOST

Pictures help us to remember things. You guys are probably great at remembering things. As a matter of fact, we're hoping that you'll remember this verse by the time we're done today.

Read the verse from the banner

Let's all say it together...

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." - John 3:16

That's great.

HOST

When you came in you all threw darts at the dart board. If the mark is the bull's eye on the dart board, then everything else is a miss. In any of these circles (*point to outer rings*) is a miss, and missing the dart board entirely is a miss. Some shots are closer than others, but for the sake of this illustration, unless you hit the bull's eye it's a miss no matter how close it is. Some of you hit the bull's eye, but not every time.

Host takes shots at the dart board, involving the audience along the way

That's a lot like how life works. God designed us to live a certain way and gave us freedom to make our own choices. The dart board was designed for you to hit the middle, but whether or not we do depends on us. Often times we're going to hit the mark and live the way God intended. But many times we're going to miss the mark. The Bible has a word for that. How many of you have heard of the word "sin"? To sin, is to miss the mark. Some times we do a better job than other times. But all of us have missed the mark. The mark is God's way for us to live. Since none of us are perfect, none of us are good enough without God's help. We all need God's help because if we could live perfect lives apart from God we would. None of us hit the bull's eye every time.

Today we're going to be talking about two different families. We're going to talk about your family - the family you were born into, and God's family. Did you know that God has a family? Now you weren't born into God's family, but He made a way for you to become a part of His family. As a matter of fact, becoming a part of God's family is the whole reason we have this church. It's the reason we do Discovery Island and KidStuf. It's the reason that your parents are here with you all today, and the reason this gigantic photo album is sitting right here. Are you guys ready to take a look?

Open book to first page. Pictures of parents & kids on left page, and "God Loved" on the right page. Heart icon attached to the page on the right.

HOST

Okay, I'm going to tell you something you already know. Maybe you were told it this morning. Your parents love you, don't they? Of course they do! Moms and Dads love their kids. You can tell that by looking at these pictures of parents and kids. Now nobody really has a picture of God, but there are some things we know about God, and the most important thing we know about God and the very first thing we need to know is "God loves." Let's say that together.

Get response.

HOST

Right, God loves. But you already knew that because you read it in the verse didn't you? Let's say that first part of the verse again. "For God so loved . . ." Perfect. Let's take this (icon of the heart), and put it over here (on the banner). Now the first thing we need to know and remember always about God is that "God loved." God loved you before you were even born. He loves you right now. So far we've turned one page and we know that our parents love us, and God loves us too. Are you guys ready to see what's on the next page? Well, God did what people do when they love .

Turn the page

HOST

He gave. What does it look like these kids are celebrating?

Get response - "Christmas"

HOST

Does anybody have any idea how many days it is until Christmas? At Christmas your parents give you presents because they love you and they want you to be happy. Well, Christmas is really a huge celebration of the great gift that God gave us because He loves us. God gave the most important, valuable, and perfect thing He had to **you**. His Son. Do you know His Son's name? Right, Jesus. God sent His Son as a present to you to make a way for you to be a part of God's family forever. Now your parents probably give you things like bikes and dolls and socks for Christmas. Do you know why God gave us His Son? There is something that gets in the way of us becoming a part of God's family. God had to send His son to get that "something" out of the way. He knows that the stuff we do wrong separates us from Him. Do you remember the word for that? Right, sin. Our sin keeps us apart from God, and we would stay that way. But because God loved, He gave His Son, Jesus, to fix that relationship. Have you ever done anything that you know is wrong? Yeah, we all have, and that's what separates us from God.

How many of you have a dog? Cool, I do too. His name is Rocko. How many of you have a fence around your yard so your dog can't get out? Me too. As the owner and caretaker of our dog we decided to put a fence up so he couldn't get out. Not because we want to control him, but because we *love* him. We know that he would be in danger of getting lost, stolen, or hurt if he was allowed to go anywhere at any time. So, we have a rule that he isn't allowed outside the yard without being on a leash. As you can imagine, he's broken that rule a few times. Just like us, he has a curiosity that leads him to do things he shouldn't. Whenever we break a rule, there are consequences. When Rocko has broken that rule, we let him know he did something wrong and then put him in the basement – which is like time out for him.

One time he was almost hit by a car, right in front of us. Clearly, our rule is not to hurt him, but rather to help him.

The same is true in life. God has rules, not because he wants to control us, but because he loves us and knows what's best for us. When we sin we go against God, and break His rules. The consequence for sin is death. That doesn't mean we're going to die every time we mess up, not at all. It means when we die we would be separated from God forever. But, there's good news.....

Jesus, God's son, came to take our sins away. In order to do that He had to die. He died on a cross for us, and He rose again in three days. He gave his life for us so that we could be a part of God's family. So the second thing we need to know about God is that "God gave."

Move cross icon over to banner.

Show Lion King Video Clip

HOST

As you could see, Mufasa had to die so that Simba could live. There was no way he could save Simba without giving his own life. There was also no way Simba could save himself. But, because he loved his son, he willingly gave his life for him. That's what God did for us. He saved us because we couldn't save ourselves. He sent His son Jesus to die in our place, so that we could live with him forever.

This cross helps us remember that God gave us His Son so that we could be a part of His family. So let's go over the two things we know about God? God loved. God gave.

Say the two things together.

HOST

Great, let's go over the first two parts of the verse now. "For God so loved the world He gave His one and only Son . . ."

Begin to turn the next page.

HOST

So we know that God loved, and God gave. That's what we know about God. Now what do we need to do now that we know that? What do you usually do when somebody gives you a present? You take it, right? God said you could accept His gift by doing something very important. So now we have: God loved. God gave.

Turn page.

HOST

We believe. Check out some of these families.

Look at some of the pics and talk about them.

HOST

Now why do you think there's a chair here to tell us about the word "believe?" Well, do you know what it means to believe in something? It means to trust. You already trust in things everyday. Take this chair for example. I could say all day long "I trust this chair to hold me up." But what do I have to do to show that I really trust it? Right, I have to sit in it. I have to put my weight in it. Am I trusting now?

Hover over the chair, sit half way, etc.

HOST

Am I trusting now?

Sit all the way in the chair.

HOST

That's what it's like to believe because believe really means "to trust in". To accept the gift that God gave you, you trust in Jesus with your whole life and rest in the fact that He died for you and He came to life again. So just like you trust the chairs at your house to hold you up, you know you can trust God no matter what.

Take "We believe" chair icon to the banner.

HOST

Okay, so far this is what we know. God loved. God gave. We believe. Okay, now let's go over the first three parts of the verse. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes . . ." Okay, stop right there. There is just one more thing we need to do to be a part God's family. Are you ready to find out what it is? I can't wait. Let's see.

Turn page.

HOST

We receive.

Let everyone say it together.

HOST

We receive. This looks like a great party. Is that a piñata? There are a lot of people getting a lot of great things on this page. But what God has for you is better than candy, birthday cakes, and presents combined. What God wants to give you is ten, a hundred, a thousand times better than any of the things on this page! Imagine the most fun party you've ever been to, and it never ends. That's hard to imagine isn't it? Yeah, but that's how cool the gift that God has for you really is. We receive the gift of being in God's family, and being with God forever and ever. We get to go to the most ginourmous party ever, in a place that Jesus is making especially for you. Now that's a great present!

Place gift icon on banner.

HOST

Let's go over this again. God loved. God gave. We believe. We receive. Now let's say the whole verse that you learned together.

Lead kids and parents through the verse.

HOST

Do you know this story that you all learned today, is what the whole Bible is about? And this verse that we all learned, tells the whole story in one little sentence. Do you remember where to find it in the Bible? Now don't look! Right, John 3:16. In Discovery Island we talk every week about the fact that the Bible is where we go to find out how to make wise choices. Sometimes we say it's like a flashlight, showing us where to go, and what to do. One of the things the Bible tells us to do when we decide to accept the good gift is to get baptized. The word "baptize" literally means to immerse or submerge in water. Jesus was baptized and instructs all those who

follow him to be baptized as well. Baptism is a picture of what Jesus did for us. Going under the water symbolizes Jesus' death and burial and raising up from the water symbolizes Him raising up from the grave and defeating death. Baptism also symbolizes the washing away of sin and beginning a new life, a fresh start.

Well, we've reached the end of this photo album and now I would like to talk to the parents for just a moment.

Direct kids to quiet activity and lead parents through the homework questions. Talk parents through the next steps including their take home materials.