



Supplies

- toothpicks (15 per small group)

Try to Solve a Brain Teaser

Say: **Today we learned from the Bible about a time Jesus' disciples thought they had an impossible challenge on their hands. Jesus had told them to feed an enormous crowd of people from just five loaves of bread and two fish. The math didn't add up. How could that small amount of food feed *thousands* of people?**

Let's see what it's like to try to work out a challenge where things just don't add up.

- Give each small group 15 toothpicks, and have kids lay out the toothpicks in the middle of the group on the ground or another surface.
- Then say: **You have 15 sticks. Return six to me, and keep 10.**
- Make sure kids know breaking toothpicks is not allowed.
- Allow plenty of time for kids to think and work together with their small groups on the brain teaser. (If anyone has solved this puzzle before, kindly ask them to keep the answer quiet so others can try to find the answer on their own.)
- If kids get frustrated and declare that it's impossible because $15-6=9$, calmly ensure them there is a way to give you six toothpicks and keep 10.
- Once someone has figured out the answer or kids have been working for a while and haven't discovered the answer, call time and ask for their attention.

Talk About It

Ask: • **If you thought this challenge was impossible to solve, why did you think so?**

• **If you found the answer, what made you think outside of what the math was telling you?** (If no one gets to the answer in your group, simply omit this question.)

Say: **This challenge is a tough one because our brains are used to math and numbers having absolute right or wrong answers, so when we subtract 6 from 15, our math knowledge tells us it's impossible to leave 10. Since 15 minus 6 is 9, how in the world can there be 10 when there are only nine? Use nine toothpicks to spell out the word TEN in all capital letters. There you have it: T, E, N, ten. It's a creative answer to the puzzle that takes looking past what the math is telling you and trusting that there's a solution.**

We can do the same with real-life things that feel impossible—we can trust that *God* has a solution.

Have kids discuss the following question in their small groups.

Ask: • **What's something in your life that feels impossible?**

Say: **Like with the puzzle, you might not be able to find an answer for what seems impossible, but you can talk with God in prayer about any problem and trust that God can help you find the best solution. God is bigger than math that doesn't add up, bigger than fear or worry, bigger than anything that tells us "it's impossible." That big, powerful God is our provider, so even the impossible is possible.**