What Is Love?

Bible Story: What Is Love? (Love Is . . .) • 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a
Bottom Line: Love others because God loves you.
Memory Verse: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23a, NIrV
Life App: Life App—What God is doing in you to change the world around you
Basic Truth: I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

Focus the Energy (Small Groups, 10-15 minutes)
PREVIEW
Plug In is designed to introduce children to the day’s topic in a setting that gives them individualized attention from their Leader and plenty of interaction with a small group of peers.

2nd–3rd Grade
GET READY
Early Arriver
• Color sheets
Fruit Basket Turn Over
• Print the “Fruits” Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart; two sets for each small group
• Scissors

1. Early Arriver Idea
What You Need: color sheets
What You Do:
• Welcome kids as they arrive
• Ask the following silly questions about fruit, and let kids try to guess the answers.
  o What grows in bunches on a tree that monkeys love to eat? (bananas)
  o What do you eat that has seeds on the outside? (strawberries or raspberries)
  o What’s green on the outside, pink or red on the inside, and eaten in slices? (watermelon)
  o What fruit has the same name as its color? (orange)
  o What rhymes with orange? (nothing; trick question!)
  o What fruit has anywhere from 600 to 1400 seeds inside of it? (pomegranate)
  o Is a tomato a fruit or a vegetable? (It’s a fruit! Other things we think are vegetables that are really fruits include eggplant, olives, peas, avocado, cucumber, pumpkin and zucchini.)
  o What is the world’s smelliest fruit? (It’s durian, an Asian tropical fruit with a creamy pulp which can smell like a sweaty socks or wet garbage. It’s so stinky that it’s been banned on the mass transit system in Singapore.)
2. Fruit Basket Turn Over
What You Need: “Fruits” Activity Page, scissors

What You Do:
• Circle kids up and pass out a fruit card to each child, making sure that at least two kids have the same card. (Note: If the cards aren’t cut apart, use the scissors to do so.)
• Encourage the kids to look at their card without showing it to their neighbors.
• Explain that you will call out a fruit from the list below.
  o Apple
  o Banana
  o Strawberry
  o Blueberry
  o Peach
  o Watermelon
  o Orange
  o Raspberry
• If kids are holding a card with that fruit, they must get up and switch spots with another person holding the same card.
• After several rounds, call out different categories such as:
  o Fruits that are red
  o Fruits that have a fuzzy outside
  o Fruits that have to be peeled to be eaten

What You Say:
“That was some fast moving fruit! [Transition] Our Bible story today is ALL about fruit, but it’s not the kind you eat! Let’s go find out about this special fruit.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

**Powers Up** Engage the Heart (Large Group, 35 minutes)

PREVIEW
Power Up is designed to engage children in worship in a large group setting. Music, prayer, and an innovative approach to the Bible story are always a part of this interactive time.

**Catch On** Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25 minutes)

PREVIEW
Catch On is designed to help kids understand how the day’s topic applies to them. They’ll discuss real-life experiences, interact with a close-knit group of peers, and participate in a variety of activities that appeal to different learning styles. Life-application and memory-verse activities, as well as prayer, are always a part of this hands-on time.
Catch On: Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25-30 minutes)
Make the connection of how today’s Bible story applies to real life experiences through interactive activities and discussion questions.

2nd–3rd Grade

GET READY
* 1. Draw It, Sculpt It, Act It, Sing It, Rap It
   - Print the “Verse Phrase and Scenario Cards” Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart; one set for each small group
   - Scissors
   - Paper
   - Pencils, crayons, and/or markers
   - Bible

2. Cause and Effect
   - Dominoes or a marble run set

3. Order Up
   - Bibles
   - Print the “Memory Verse Phrases” Activity Page and cut apart; one set for each small group

Prayer
   - No supplies needed

* 1. Draw It, Sculpt It, Act It, Sing It, Rap It
What You Need: “Verse Phrase and Scenario Cards” (Activity Pages); Bible; scissors; paper; pencils, crayons, and/or markers

What You Do:
- Read today’s Bible passage to the group: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a.
- Pair kids up. Give each pair a card.
- Encourage the kids to read the scenario and then come up with a response that lines up with their verse phrase.
- Using the materials provided, instruct pairs to decide how they want to present their response to the rest of the group.
  - They can draw it, act it out, or write a poem or lyrics to sing it or rap it for the group.
  - Some of the verse phrases might require a bit of nuancing for the kids who were assigned to them. (For instance, for “love is not proud,” help kids understand that it’s okay to be proud of your own hard work, but it’s not okay to brag and throw it in others’ faces. For “love does not want what belongs to others,” it’s okay to think someone else’s toy is cool; it’s not okay to want it so badly that you’re mean to that person.)
- Give kids a few minutes to complete their assignment and then present to the group with the phrases in the following order:
  - Love is patient.
  - Love is kind.
  - Love does not want what belongs to others.
  - Love does not brag.
  - Love is not proud.
  - Love doesn’t get angry.
  - Love doesn’t keep track of wrongs.
  - Love never gives up.
What You Say:
“Wow, I LOVE all the creativity you’ve displayed to show what real love looks like. I’m so glad that God has given us His Word to teach us the best way to live and that He loves us more than we can imagine. You can [Bottom Line] love others because God loves you.”

[Make It Personal] (Tell your kids about a time when you chose to love someone who was hard to love because of God’s love for you. You may want to pick one of the phrases above to help you think about a time when you chose to be patient, kind, etc., in order to show love to someone else.)

2. Cause and Effect
What You Need: Dominoes or a marble run set

What You Do:
- If using dominoes, pass out one domino to each child. Make sure you keep one for yourself.
  - Instruct the kids to line up the dominoes in a serpentine formation about an inch apart.
  - Place your domino at the front of the line and then push it over so that it knocks the rest of them over as well.
- If using a marble run set, pass out the pieces and give kids time to assemble the set.
  - Select a child to hold the marble and then release it to watch it roll through the run the kids have created.
- Talk about the cause and effect relationship of the option you’ve chosen.
  - If using dominoes, talk about how tapping the first domino caused all the other dominoes to fall too.
  - If using the marble run, talk about how releasing the marble caused it to fly through all those crazy twists and turns.

What You Say:
“That was a super fun cause-and-effect activity. Let’s think about another kind of cause and effect. Can you give me some examples of times when it’s hard to love others? (Pause.) Today we’re learning that you can [Bottom Line] love others because God loves you. What is the cause for why we love others? (Because God loves us.) Because God loves us, what should the effect be? (That we show love to others.) What is the effect when we love others? (Pause for responses.)

“We don’t love because others deserve it. We don’t love because we feel like it or because it’s convenient. We love others because God has shown love to us. The cause is that God loves us first. He showed us how. And because He loves us, the effect is that we love others. This week, let’s remember to [Bottom Line] love others because God loves you.”
3. Order Up
What You Need: Bibles, “Memory Verse Phrases” (Activity Page)

What You Do:
- Pass out the Bibles to pairs of kids and use the navigation tips to help them find Galatians 5:22-23a. Read it aloud as a group together.

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Galatians in the list under “New Testament.” When the kids find Galatians, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Galatians. Help the kids find the page. When they find Galatians, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 5. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verses 22-23a in chapter 5.

- Place all the memory verse phrases in the center of the circle, and instruct pairs to draw a phrase.
- Encourage the kids to hold up their phrase as a pair and then move around to get in verse order.
- Read the verse aloud together once they are in order.
- If time allows, instruct kids to place their phrases back in a stack facedown on the floor.
- Shuffle the phrases and let pairs pick one again WITHOUT showing the rest of the group.
- Once each pair has selected a phrase, instruct them to line up again in verse order, this time without talking.

What You Say:
“When you trust Jesus as Savior, God gives you the gift of His Holy Spirit to help you live the way He wants you to. That’s how we can show patience and kindness and love and joy and peace. It’s because of God’s Spirit IN us, not because of anything we can do on our own. And the first thing on this list of ‘fruit’ is what? (Pause for responses.) Yes, love! You can [Bottom Line] love others because God loves you.”

Pray and Dismiss
What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:
- Gather the kids to sit together in a circle.
- Lead them in a “call and response” prayer.
- The “calls” below correlate to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a.
- After you say the call from scripture, kids will complete it with “love others because you love me.”

What You Say:
“You can [Bottom Line] love others because God loves you. Let’s pray and ask God to help us love others the way He loves us. I will say a phrase naming a time when it’s hard to love. I want you to complete it by saying, ‘love others because You love me.’ Let’s pray.
“Dear God,
“When I’m impatient, help me to . . . love others because You love me.
“When others are being unkind, help me to . . . love others because You love me.
“When I want what someone else has, help me to . . . love others because You love me.
“When I want my own way, help me to . . . love others because You love me.
“When I’d rather stay mad, help me to . . . love others because You love me.
“Thank You for loving me and showing me how to love others. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to share the first fruit of the Spirit you talked about today and tell WHY we should love others.
Walking on Sunshine

Bible Story: Walking on Sunshine (Apostles Are Treated Badly) • Acts 5:17-42
Bottom Line: Choose joy no matter what’s going on.
Memory Verse: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23a, NIV
Life App: Life App—What God is doing in you to change the world around you
Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Focus the Energy (Small Groups, 10-15 minutes)

PREVIEW
Plug In is designed to introduce children to the day’s topic in a setting that gives them individualized attention from their Leader and plenty of interaction with a small group of peers.

2nd–3rd Grade
GET READY
Early Arriver
• Color sheets
• Paper
• Pencils

Choose Your Own Ending
• Papers from Early Arriver
• Markers or crayons

1. Early Arriver Idea
What You Need: color sheets, paper, pencils

What You Do:
• Welcome the kids to your group as they arrive.
• Give each kid a piece of paper and pencil.
• Ask them to draw a horizontal line to divide the paper in half.
• On the top half, instruct them write one “high” (awesome thing) that happened this week.
• On the bottom half, instruct them to write one “low” (not-so-awesome thing) that happened this week.
• When finished, let kids share what they’ve written.
2. Choose Your Own Ending

What You Need: Papers from Early Arriver, crayons or markers

What You Do:
- Ask the kids to choose either their “high” or “low” and think of a crazy alternate ending. This can be as outrageous or as normal as they choose.
- Instruct students to flip their paper over and write a story based off of their “high” or “low” with a different ending.
- Give suggestions for writing:
  - Journal or paragraph form
  - Graphic novel with illustrations
  - Comic book style: divide the page into several boxes to create the comic strip look
- Give the kids a few minutes to write and then share their endings with the group.

What You Say:
“Some of you chose to write about the awesome thing and some of you chose to write about your not-so-awesome thing from this week. [Transition] Today we’ll hear a TRUE story from the Bible about a situation that was DEFINITELY not awesome, but God turned it into something amazing.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

**POWERUP** Engage the Heart (Large Group, 35 minutes)

PREVIEW
Power Up is designed to engage children in worship in a large group setting. Music, prayer, and an innovative approach to the Bible story are always a part of this interactive time.

**CATCH ON** Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25 minutes)

PREVIEW
Catch On is designed to help kids understand how the day’s topic applies to them. They’ll discuss real-life experiences, interact with a close-knit group of peers, and participate in a variety of activities that appeal to different learning styles. Life-application and memory-verse activities, as well as prayer, are always a part of this hands-on time.

**Catch On: Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25-30 minutes)**
Make the connection of how today’s Bible story applies to real life experiences through interactive activities and discussion questions.

2nd–3rd Grade
GET READY
* 1. Story Order Towers
  - Bibles
  - Print the “Story Order Cards” Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart; two sets for each small group
  - Two rolls of tape
  - 20 plastic cups

2. Joy All Over
  - Deck of cards
    * NOTE: For groups larger than 12 kids, you may want to provide two decks of cards.
  - Bag of wrapped candy or other small toy items

3. Put Your Back Into It
  - Print the “Memory Verse Phrases” Activity Page and cut apart; one set for each small group
  - Tape
  - Bibles

Prayer
  - Index cards
  - Pencils

* 1. Story Order Towers

**What You Need:** Bibles, “Story Order Cards” (Activity Pages), rolls of tape, cups

**What You Do:**
- Divide your group into two teams.
- Give each team a set of “Story Order Cards,” a Bible, a roll of tape, and ten cups.
- Instruct the teams to work together to read the cards and put them in story order. They maylook up today’s Bible story for reference: Acts 5:14-72.
- When a team is finished, they must raise their hands and let you quickly check their order.
  - The religious leaders were angry that so many people were trusting in Jesus. They arrested Peter and John and threw them into prison for preaching about Jesus.
  - That night, the door of the prison swung open and an angel led Peter and John out of their cell.
  - The angel told Peter and John to go back to the temple and to keep preaching about Jesus. So early the next morning, they went back to the temple courtyard.
  - The high priest sent guards to the prison. But when they arrived, the jail was securely locked with no one inside.
  - Someone said, “Look! The men you put in jail are preaching in the temple courts right now!”
  - The religious leaders were so angry, but they were afraid the crowd would turn on them. So they brought Peter and John in before the Sanhedrin.
  - When the religious reminded them of their orders NOT to preach about Jesus, Peter and the other apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than human beings!” (Acts 5:29 NIV)
  - The religious leaders wanted to have them put to death, but Gamaliel spoke up saying, “If these men are working only in their human power, it will fail. But if it is from God, nothing can stop them.”
  - Jesus’ followers continued to tell others about Jesus, even though they faced danger and possible death for their message.
  - Because of their faith in Jesus, those early followers could [Bottom Line] choose joy no matter what’s going on.
- Then teams will tape each card to a cup, stack the cups in a pyramid, and knock it over. The first team to complete all these tasks wins!
What You Say:  
Wow! You are FAST! Great job, everyone. Even when they were faced with being thrown in jail or worse, those early followers of Jesus STILL had joy. Their joy wasn’t based on how they felt or the situation in front of them. They had joy deep down because of what Jesus had done! We probably won’t face going to jail for what we believe but like those early followers of Jesus, we can [Bottom Line] choose joy no matter what’s going on.”

[Make It Personal] (Tell the kids about a not-so-great thing that happened this week at home, school, or work. Talk about how you chose joy even in the midst of that hard or crazy circumstance. Make sure to keep your example age-appropriate.)

2. Joy All Over
What You Need: Deck(s) of cards, bag of wrapped candy or other small toy items

What You Do:
- Shuffle the cards and deal out four cards to each player. (Kids may look at their cards, but they shouldn’t show them to each other.)
- For each round, select a card as the “joy” card for that round (specific number, jack, queen, king, or ace).
- Let the kids take turns placing a card on the discard pile in the center. They may play any card they choose. You are simply waiting each round for someone to play the designated joy card.
- When a child plays the “joy” card, make a big deal shouting, “We’ve got a joy card!” and pass out a treat or piece of candy to each child in the group. Once a joy card is played, the round is over.
- Gather cards, shuffle and play again, selecting a new joy card for the next round.
- If the kids run out of cards without playing a joy card, gather all the cards, shuffle, and play again, selecting a new joy card for the next round.
- Play several rounds to allow children to collect a few treats.

What You Say:  
“How did it feel knowing you had the joy card in your hand before you played it? (Pause.) Do you think joy can spread to others? How? (Pause.) When we [Bottom Line] choose joy no matter what happens, we can show others what we believe. We can spread joy to others just like when you played that joy card! Because when you have real joy, other people will notice a difference in you. So this week, remember what Jesus has done for you so that you can [Bottom Line] choose joy no matter what’s going on.”
3. Line Up
What You Need: Bibles, “Memory Verse Phrases” Activity Page, and tape

What You Do:
- Encourage kids to look up Galatians 5:22-23a using the navigation tips from Week One, and review it together.
- Instruct the students to line up shoulder to shoulder.
- Tape a memory verse phrase from the Activity Page onto each child’s back. Don’t allow kids to see the phrase you’ve chosen for them.
- Kids must work together to get themselves in verse order, lined up shoulder to shoulder.
- When they think they’ve arranged themselves correctly, check their work by reading the verse aloud.

What You Say:
“If a pear tree produces pears and an apple tree produces apples, what ‘fruit’ does this verse tell us that the Holy Spirit will produce in us? (Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) Which of these fruits are we talking about today? (Pause.) How can you have joy even when things aren't awesome? (Pause.) Who can you call on to help you? (Pause.)

“Remember, we’re learning all month long that when we trust Jesus as Savior, we have the Holy Spirit to help us. And God’s Spirit will produce the fruit of love, joy, and peace and all the wonderful things listed in this verse. We don’t have to pretend to be happy using our own strength. God is with us and He will help us to [Bottom Line] choose joy no matter what’s going on.”

Pray and Dismiss
What You Need: Index cards, pencils

What You Do:
- Allow kids to choose a partner. Give each child an index card and a pencil.
- Encourage kids to write down something they need prayer for this week.
- Let the kids exchange cards and pray for each other either silently or out loud.
- Encourage the kids to take the cards home to pray for each other this week.
- Close your time in prayer.

What You Say:
“Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us so much. You are a great big God, and you already know what’s on our hearts and what’s written on these cards. In each of these situations, help us to [Bottom Line] choose joy no matter what’s going on. We love You so much. It’s in Jesus’ name we pray, amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to share their high/low stories from earlier and talk about how through the Holy Spirit we can [Bottom Line] choose joy no matter what’s going on.
Peaceful Easy Feeling

Bible Story: Peaceful Easy Feeling (Don’t Worry) • Matthew 6:25-27
Bottom Line: You can have peace because God is in control.
Memory Verse: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23a, NIrV
Life App: Life App—What God is doing in you to change the world around you
Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Focus the Energy (Small Groups, 10-15 minutes)

PREVIEW
Plug In is designed to introduce children to the day’s topic in a setting that gives them individualized attention from their Leader and plenty of interaction with a small group of peers.

2nd–3rd Grade
GET READY
Early Arriver
• Color sheets
• Index cards
• Pencils
Birds and Flowers
• Any craft supplies you have on hand like paper, crayons, school glue, feathers, chenille stems, tissue paper, etc.

1. Early Arriver Idea
What You Need: color sheets, index cards, pencils

What You Do:
• Welcome the kids to your group
• Pass out an index card and a pencil to the kids as they arrive.
• Instruct kids to write down the BEST thing that happened to them this week on one side of the card and the WORST thing that happened this week on the other.
• Collect the cards and make sure you can read what they’ve written so you can use them for an activity after Large Group.
2. Birds and Flowers
What You Need: Paper, crayons, school glue, feathers, chenille stems, tissue paper, and other craft supplies

What You Do:
- Place all the provided supplies in the center of the small group area.
- Encourage the children to use the supplies in any way they choose to create either a bird or a flower. They may illustrate them on paper or create 3D versions.
- After several minutes, let the kids share their creations with the group.
- Set their bird/flower creations aside for Prayer time.

What You Say:
“Wow! There is so much creativity in this group. [Transition] I wonder what birds and flowers have to do with our Bible story today. Let’s head to Large Group to find out.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

**Power Up** Engage the Heart (Large Group, 35 minutes)

PREVIEW
Power Up is designed to engage children in worship in a large group setting. Music, prayer, and an innovative approach to the Bible story are always a part of this interactive time.

**Catch On** Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25 minutes)

PREVIEW
Catch On is designed to help kids understand how the day’s topic applies to them. They’ll discuss real-life experiences, interact with a close-knit group of peers, and participate in a variety of activities that appeal to different learning styles. Life-application and memory-verse activities, as well as prayer, are always a part of this hands-on time.

Catch On: Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25-30 minutes)
Make the connection of how today’s Bible story applies to real life experiences through interactive activities and discussion questions.

2nd–3rd Grade
GET READY
1. Birds and Flowers Tic-Tac-Toe

**What You Need:** “Birds and Flowers” and “Scenarios” Activity Pages; scissors, floor tape

**What You Do:**
- Cut apart the “Birds and Flowers” and “Scenarios” Activity Pages.
- Divide the group into two teams.
- Give one team the “bird” cards and the other team the “flower” cards.
- Use the tape to create a large tic-tac-toe grid on the floor in your small group area.
- Place the scenario cards in a stack facedown next to the grid.
- Teams will take turns selecting a card, reading the scenario, and sharing out loud how they could have peace in that situation.
- Once a team has shared their answer, they may work together to decide where to place their “bird” or “flower” on the grid.
- The first team to get three birds or flowers in a row wins!

**What You Say:**
“You gave some great answers. When the not-so-great stuff happens, it’s hard to remember that God is in control. But He is. He made you. He loves you. Every time you see a bird or flower, I want you to remember that [Bottom Line] you can have peace because God is in control.”

[Make It Personal] (Tell about a time when you felt peace in the midst of a pretty crazy circumstance. Maybe a pipe burst and your basement flooded or maybe you lost a job but trusted God to take care of you while you searched for another one. Make sure the example is age appropriate.)
2. Peck a Verse
What You Need: Bibles, “Memory Verse Phrases” (Activity Pages), clothespins

What You Do:
- Look up Galatians 5:22-23a and review it together as a group.
- Scatter the phrases on the floor around your small group area.
- Give each kid a clothespin, and challenge the kids to pick up the cards. They may only pick them up with a clothespin, mimicking a bird’s beak either by using their hand to open and close the clothespin or putting it in their mouth and using their teeth to open and close the pin.
- Then, still using only the clothespins, kids must work together to put the phrases in verse order and repeat the verse together to check their work.
- Then REVERSE the process.
- Select one kid to remove a phrase.
- Encourage the kids to recite the verse again, including missing phrase.
- Continue removing a phrase and repeating the verse until the kids can recite the verse from memory.

What You Say:
“Have you ever watched a bird peck around to find twigs for its nest or food for its young? This week, when you find yourself becoming anxious about something or you start to worry, think about this verse. God can help you find peace even when things are uncertain. Peace is a fruit that His Spirit can produce in you when you trust Jesus! So remember, [Bottom Line] you can have peace because God is in control.”

3. Finding Peace
What You Need: Index cards from Early Arriver, clothespins

What You Do:
- Grab the index cards the kids filled out in Early Arriver. Make sure you have one card for each child.
- Scatter the cards on the floor a few feet from your small group space.
- Let the kids take turns running to the scattered cards to pick up one using a clothespin.
- Encourage the kids to pick a card that isn’t theirs and then sit back down in your small group area.
- Once all the kids have returned with a card, give them a minute to turn to the not-so-great side, read it, and then come up with a way you could have peace when you remember that God is in control.
- Let each child share their response with the group.

What You Say:
“I know it’s easy to worry and to think we have to figure things out on our own. But that’s the opposite of what God wants us to do when we begin to worry. Instead, we need to remember that He is with us. He already knows what will happen, and He is in control. You can trust Him because He made you and He loves you so much. [Bottom Line] You can have peace because God is in control.”
Pray and Dismiss
What You Need: Birds and flowers kids created in Social

What You Do:
- Allow kids to hold their birds or flowers as you pray for them.

What You Say:
“Just like the birds and flowers don’t worry about what they will eat or what they will wear, we do not need to worry about our lives either. God is in control, and He has a good plan for us. We just need to trust Him and follow His Word. When we do, we’ll find real peace. [Bottom Line] You can have peace because God is in control. Let’s pray.

“Heavenly Father, we love You. Thank You for the beautiful birds and colorful flowers You’ve created with such care. Every time we see one this week, remind us that You are in control so we don’t have to worry. Thanks for always taking care of us. We trust in You. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to show off their bird or flower creation and explain how [Bottom Line] you can have peace because God is in control.
Right Here Waiting

**Bible Story:** Right Here Waiting (Simeon at the Temple) • *Luke 2:22-35*
**Bottom Line:** When you need to wait, ask God for patience.
**Memory Verse:** The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23a, NIrV
**Life App:** Life App—What God is doing in you to change the world around you
**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

**Plug In**

*Focus the Energy (Small Groups, 10-15 minutes)*

**PREVIEW**
Plug In is designed to introduce children to the day's topic in a setting that gives them individualized attention from their Leader and plenty of interaction with a small group of peers.

**2nd–3rd Grade**

**GET READY**
**Early Arriver**
- Color sheets
- Piece of butcher paper or poster board
- Marker

**What Are You Waiting For?**
- Paper
- Pencils
- *(Optional)* timer/stopwatch

1. **Early Arriver Idea**
**What You Need:** color sheets; butcher paper or poster board; marker

**What You Do:**
- Welcome kids as they arrive
- Ask kids to name some things they can do now that they couldn’t do when they were younger.
- As kids give answers, write them down on the butcher paper or poster board.
2. What Are You Waiting For?

What You Need: Paper, pencils, (optional) timer/stopwatch

What You Do:
- Hand out a piece of paper and a pencil to each child.
- Instruct kids to list things they have to wait for. Tell them to make sure their neighbors can’t see their lists.
- Give them two minutes to write down as many answers as they can.
- When the two minutes are up, select one child to share his list.
- Kids should check their own lists and cross off any answers that match those shared by that kid.
- Continue letting kids share their lists until everyone has a list of answers that are unique to them.
- Instruct kids to tally up their points: one point for every unique answer.
- Place the butcher paper or poster board list from Early Arriver in the center of your small group area and compare the two lists: things you once had to wait for that you can do easily now, and the things you are still waiting for.

What You Say:
“Do you know what these two lists have in common? Waiting! No matter your age, you will always have to wait for something. [Transition] In our Bible story today, we’ll hear about a man who waited a LONG time for something that had been promised to him. Let’s find out if he waited with patience or if he gave up.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

**POWERSUP**

Engage the Heart (Large Group, 35 minutes)

PREVIEW
Power Up is designed to engage children in worship in a large group setting. Music, prayer, and an innovative approach to the Bible story are always a part of this interactive time.

**CATCH ON**

Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25 minutes)

PREVIEW
Catch On is designed to help kids understand how the day’s topic applies to them. They’ll discuss real-life experiences, interact with a close-knit group of peers, and participate in a variety of activities that appeal to different learning styles. Life-application and memory-verse activities, as well as prayer, are always a part of this hands-on time.

**Catch On: Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25-30 minutes)**
Make the connection of how today’s Bible story applies to real life experiences through interactive activities and discussion questions.
2nd–3rd Grade
GET READY
1. Pass It On
   • Beanbag
2. One Word at a Time
   • Bibles
Prayer
   • Kids’ garden gloves from the “Watch It Grow” activity

1. Pass It On
What You Need: Beanbag

What You Do:
   • Guide the kids to circle up and sit on the floor.
   • Play music on your smart phone or hum or sing a tune as the kids pass the beanbag around the circle.
   • Stop the music (or singing/ humming) after the beanbag makes several passes around the circle. Make them wait for it!
   • Read a question from the list below.
   • Allow the kid holding the beanbag when the music stops to select a friend to answer.
   • The kid selected may get help from friends if he needs it.
   • Continue passing the beanbag and stopping the music at random until all questions have been asked and answered.

Review Questions:
1. Today’s Bible story is about a man named what? (Simeon)
2. What promise did God make to Simeon? (That he would see the Messiah before He died)
3. Did God give a specific date or time when he would meet the Messiah? (No! Simeon had to wait.)
4. Who came to the temple to have their baby dedicated? (Mary and Joseph)
5. Who was the baby? (Jesus, the Messiah)
6. God’s Spirit prompted Simeon to go the temple courtyard. What happened? (Simeon held the baby, praised God, and said a prayer of dedication)
7. How did Mary and Joseph respond when Simeon prayed for Jesus? (They were amazed)
8. Why do you think Mary and Joseph responded this way? (They were surprised that Simeon recognized who Jesus really was, even though he was only eight days old)
9. How do you think Simeon felt after meeting Jesus that day? (Grateful, happy, excited that he was able to meet the SAVIOR)
10. Have you ever had to wait a long time for something? What happened?

What You Say:
“Waiting isn’t easy. Most of the time, we want what we want right now. I’m sure Simeon was anxious and wondered when or if God would fulfill His promise. But I think all that waiting and trusting actually caused Simeon’s faith to grow! And I’m thankful that he relied on God to help him in the waiting. God can help us, too. [Bottom Line] When you need to wait, ask God for patience.”

[Make it Personal] (Tell the kids about a time when you had to wait for something as a kid. Were you patient? Why or why not? Did you think to ask God to help you wait?)
2. One Word at a Time
What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:
- Circle up the kids to sit on the floor.
- Open Bibles to Galatians 5:22-23a and quickly review this month’s verse together.
- Challenge the kids to say the verse popcorn style: one word per kid at random around the circle.
  - They’ll need to watch each other. If two kids say the same word at the same time, they must start the verse over again.
  - This will require patience, as they’ll need to pay attention to the friends around them so they don’t double up on the same word.
- Repeat the complete verse in the same way two or three more times.
- If you choose, time the group to see if they can do this faster and faster!

What You Say:
“That was crazy! You really had to pay attention and be patient to make sure you didn’t say the same word at the same time. Patience is hard, but I’m so thankful to know that God doesn’t expect me to be patient on my own. He will ALWAYS help me so I can be loving and kind and joyful and gentle and faithful and peaceful and PATIENT! [Bottom Line] When you need to wait, ask God for patience.”

Pray and Dismiss
What You Need: no supplies

What You Do:
- Talk for a minute about how a farmer carefully plants, waters, tends to, and ultimately waits for his crop to produce fruit.
- Pray together that God would work in us to produce the good “fruit” of patience in us.

What You Say:
“Farmers understand patience. They plow the field, then plant, then water, and then tend to the soil for a LONG time before they see any ‘fruit’ from all that labor. As you watch your seeds sprout over the next few days, think about a farmer and the patience it takes to do such a big job. And [Bottom Line] when you need to wait, ask God for patience. Let’s pray.

“Heavenly Father, You are an amazing, loving, and mighty God. Thank You for the gift of Your Spirit when we put our trust in Jesus. Thank You for helping us to show patience when it’s the last thing we feel like doing. When we’re tempted to become angry or frustrated or impatient, help us to rely on You for help. We love You. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, hand each parent their child’s garden glove and parent note, and encourage the kids to share what they learned about patience and asking God for help when they wait.
Kind & Generous

**Bible Story:** Kind & Generous (The Good Samaritan) • *Luke 10:25-37*

**Bottom Line:** Be kind to everyone.

**Memory Verse:** *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.* Galatians 5:22-23a, NIrV

**Life App:** Life App—What God is doing in you to change the world around you

**Basic Truth:** I should treat others like I want to be treated.

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**Plug In**

**Focus the Energy (Small Groups, 10-15 minutes)**

**PREVIEW**

Plug In is designed to introduce children to the day’s topic in a setting that gives them individualized attention from their Leader and plenty of interaction with a small group of peers.

**2nd–3rd Grade**

**GET READY**

**Early Arriver**

- Color sheets

**Bandage Relay**

- Latex-free adhesive bandages (such as BAND-AID® brand); one for each kid PLUS one extra

1. **Early Arriver Idea**

**What You Need:** color sheets

**What You Do:**

- Welcome the kids to your group as they arrive.
- Ask:
  - What are some things that are hard for you to do?
  - What are some things that are easy for you?
  - What is something that used to be hard but isn’t hard anymore?
2. Bandage Relay
What You Need: Adhesive bandages

What You Do:
- Divide the group into two equal teams.
  - If you have an unequal number of kids, the team with the lesser number will need to designate someone to go twice.
- Place two equal stacks of bandages (one stack per team) about 20 feet away from your small group area.
- Line up the teams.
- One child at a time from each team will crabwalk to their team’s pile of bandages, unwrap one, stick it on his arm or leg, and crabwalk back to tag the next person in line.
- The first team to get all their players back with a bandage on is the winner!

What You Say:
“That was hilarious! Good thing we don’t have to crabwalk every time we need a BAND-AID!
[Transition] Let’s head to Large Group to find out about someone who really needed help when he was badly hurt. He definitely needed more than a BAND-AID!”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

**Power Up** Engage the Heart (Large Group, 35 minutes)

PREVIEW
Power Up is designed to engage children in worship in a large group setting. Music, prayer, and an innovative approach to the Bible story are always a part of this interactive time.

**Catch On** Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25 minutes)

PREVIEW
Catch On is designed to help kids understand how the day’s topic applies to them. They’ll discuss real-life experiences, interact with a close-knit group of peers, and participate in a variety of activities that appeal to different learning styles. Life-application and memory-verse activities, as well as prayer, are always a part of this hands-on time.

**Catch On: Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25-30 minutes)**
Make the connection of how today’s Bible story applies to real life experiences through interactive activities and discussion questions.

2nd–3rd Grade
GET READY

1. Scrambled-Up Story
   - Print the “Scrambled Story Word Cards” Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart; one set for each small group.
   - Pencils
   - NOTE: If you have typically have groups that are larger than 10 kids, make two copies of the Activity Page.

2. Kill ’em with Kindness
   - Print the “Kindness Scenario Strips” Activity page and cut apart; one set for each small group

3. Ordering Fruit
   - Print the “Fruit Phrases” Activity Page and cut apart; one set for each small group
   - Bible

Prayer
   - No supplies needed

* 1. Scrambled-Up Story

What You Need: “Scrambled Story Word Cards” (Activity Page), pencils

What You Do:
   - Instruct kids to close and cover their eyes (no peeking!) as you hide the “Scramble Story Word Cards” around your small group area.
   - Once all cards are hidden, ask the kids to open their eyes.
   - Explain that you’ve hidden ten cards about today’s story around your small group space, and they need to find them.
   - Instruct kids to stop looking once they’ve found a card, so that everyone has a chance to find one.
   - Once found, they will need to unscramble the word(s) and write it on the back of their card.
   - Answers: Jesus, neighbor, Jericho, thieves, hurt man, first guy, second guy, Samaritan, innkeeper, kindness
   - Review today’s story (using the paragraph below), allowing each child to hold up their card when they hear that word.

What You Say:
   “I want you to hold up your word when you hear it. Ready? Let’s review!

“JESUS often told stories to answer questions. When he was asked, “Who is my NEIGHBOR?” Jesus told the story about a man who traveled to JERICHO and was attacked by THIEVES on the road. They took everything, beat him up, and left him all alone. The FIRST GUY, a priest, saw the HURT MAN, but instead of showing KINDNESS and stopping to help, he crossed over to the other side of the road. Then a SECOND GUY, a church leader, saw the HURT MAN, but instead of showing kindness and stopping to help, he also crossed over to the other side of the road. Finally, a SAMARITAN came by. He showed KINDNESS by stopping to help the HURT MAN. He bandaged up the man’s wounds and took him into town where he paid an INNKEEPER to care for the HURT MAN. The SAMARITAN understood just how important it was to [Bottom Line] be kind to everyone.

“Great job! I love how Jesus told stories to teach us important lessons. In this story, the Samaritan was the LAST person the hurt man would have expected to help him. But he did. The Samaritan stopped. He chose to be kind first. And that’s what we need to do too. In every situation, no matter if we feel like
it or not, we need to choose kindness first. Like that Samaritan, my challenge to you is to **[Bottom Line] be kind to everyone.**”

**[Make It Personal]** *(Tell the kids about a time when you were the recipient of a random act of kindness. Maybe the person in front of you paid for your coffee, or maybe someone shoveled your sidewalk in the middle of winter. Talk about how a small act of kindness helped you to choose kindness, too.)*

### 2. Kill 'em with Kindness

**What You Need:** “Kindness Scenario Strips” (Activity Page)

**What You Do:**
- Encourage kids to choose a partner.
- Give each pair a scenario strip.
- Pairs will read the scenario strip and plan a way to act out how to show kindness in that scenario with words or actions or both.
- Allow a few minutes for kids to plan, and then let the pairs read their scenario strip to the group and then act out their kindness scenario for everyone to see.

**What You Say:**
“It looks like you know a LOT about kindness. I love how you demonstrated kindness with your words and actions. This week, I want you to think about being kind first! In every situation, let kindness take the lead. It doesn’t cost you anything to be kind, and it can certainly make a BIG difference. So let’s choose to **[Bottom Line] be kind to everyone.**”

### 3. Ordering Fruit

**What You Need:** “Fruit Phrases” (Activity Page), Bibles

**What You Do:**
- Select a volunteer to look up Galatians 5:22-23a and read it aloud to the group for review.
- Scatter the “Fruit Phrases” around the small group area and instruct the kids to gather them and put them in order.
- Say the verse together as a group.
- Remove one fruit phrase and repeat the step above.
- See if the kids can recite the whole verse despite the missing phrase.
- Continue removing a phrase at a time and repeating the verse until the kids can say it from memory.

**What You Say:**
“All month long, we’ve been talking about the fruit that God can produce in us when we have a relationship with Him. I’m so glad God doesn’t expect me to show any of these in my own strength. I know it can be super hard to lead with kindness first and **[Bottom Line] be kind to everyone.** When you find yourself having trouble with that this week, I want you to say this verse to yourself as a reminder that God will help you!”
Pray and Dismiss
What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:
• Gather the kids to sit together in a tight circle.
• Lead the kids in prayer, asking God for help so they can choose kindness first.

What You Say:
“Heavenly Father, thank You so much for always treating us with kindness. When we’re tempted to talk back, respond with an unkind word, get our way, or make a point, help us lead with kindness first. We pray that Your Holy Spirit would remind us that kindness is always the best choice. We know we can only [Bottom Line] be kind to everyone with Your help. We love You. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to tell their parents about your challenge to choose kindness as their first response this week so they can [Bottom Line] be kind to everyone.