

**WEEK**

**ONE**

# Preteen | W1

## Today's Suggested Schedule—March 2026, Week 1

**Bible Story:** John the Baptist Is a Witness about Jesus • *John 3:22-36*

**Bottom Line:** Jesus must increase. I must decrease.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3* Nlrv

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

### Prelude: Setting the Tone for the Experience

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

### Small Group (15 minutes)

#### Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction

- Opening Activity

### Large Group (35 minutes)

#### Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

#### Worship: Inviting People to Respond to God

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections from God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

### Small Group (25 minutes)

#### Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

- Bible Story Review: Bible Story Ring Toss (K-1st grade), Jesus Is #1 (2nd-3rd grade), Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions (Preteen)
- Application Activity: Upside Down Craft (K-1st grade), Jesus at the Top (2nd-3rd grade), Take a Snapshot (Preteen)
- Memory Verse Activity: Memory Verse Motions (K-1st grade), Memory Verse Motions (2nd-3rd grade), Verses to Take with You (Preteen)
- Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss (K-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade), Make It Personal with Prayer (Preteen)

### Home: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- Parent Cue App



### Bible Story

John the Baptist Is a Witness about Jesus • *John 3:22-36*

### Conversation Starter

How can I show others that Jesus is better?

### Bottom Line

Jesus must increase. I must decrease.

### Monthly Memory Verse

*Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3* Nlrv

5 min

## Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play

### What You Need

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  Offering container               | 0 |
|  "Disciple Decoder" Activity Page | 1 |
|  Pencils                          | 1 |

### What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a high-five, fist bump, or a wave.
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Give each kid a "Disciple Decoder" Activity Page and a pencil.
- Explain that they are to decode the names of some of Jesus' first followers. The word bank at the bottom is there to help if they get stuck.
- Let the kids work individually or with a partner to solve the puzzles.
- Once everyone is done, go over the answers together.

### What You Say:

"Nice work, detectives! You cracked the code. In today's true story from the Bible, we're going to hear about John the Baptist. His followers had to do some decoding of their own. John the Baptist gave his followers a major clue about Jesus, and it changed everything for them. **[Transition]** **Let's go and hear about the clue that John the Baptist shared with his followers that pointed them to Jesus."**

5 min

## Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Explore

### What You Need

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Flashlight                        | 0 |
| Small mirror                      | 1 |
| Room or area that can be darkened | 1 |

### What You Do:

- Gather the kids together and turn down the lights in your room as much as possible.
- Turn on the flashlight and shine it on a wall. Say, "In the Bible, Jesus is called the light of the world."
- Then, hold up the mirror. Ask, "Is this mirror a light?" (*No.*)
- Shine the flashlight onto the mirror so that the light reflects onto another wall.
- Move the mirror around to make the reflection dance on the walls. Ask the group: "Is the mirror making its own light?" (*No, it's just reflecting the light from the flashlight.*)

### What You Say:

"That's exactly right. The mirror isn't the source of light; it only reflects the light. In our story, John the Baptist was like this mirror. His job wasn't to BE the light. His job was to REFLECT the light—to point everyone to Jesus—Jesus, the true light. John the Baptist knew his purpose was to make Jesus shine. That's what he meant when he said, **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.**

"You and I can be like the mirror, just like John the Baptist, and reflect Jesus' light. Make a big deal of Jesus in your life. Try to point to Jesus in everything you do. People will see His love when you are kind and helpful. People will see His forgiveness when you forgive. People will see His justice when you're fair.

"You can also talk about Jesus and speak His name whenever you have the chance, so people make the connection between the goodness you're showing and the Jesus you love. You're not just being kind; you're being like Jesus. You're not just being merciful; you're being like Jesus. And this God who is your friend wants to be their friend too. When you make a big deal of Jesus, you're showing the world our loving Savior."

5 min

## Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Play

### What You Need

 Paper

 Writing supplies

0

1

### What You Do:

- Give each kid a piece of paper and something to write with.
- Instruct the kids to make a list of things that are important to them. (e.g., family, friends, sports, video games, school, being popular).
- After a minute or two, encourage the kids to look at their list and circle the top 3 most important things.
- Then, instruct the kids to share their top 3 with a partner or the whole group.
- Lead a discussion with these questions:
  - Is it bad to have things that are important to us? (*No!*)
  - What happens when something on our list becomes MORE important than Jesus?
  - What did John the Baptist mean when he said: “*He must become more important. I must become less important*” (*John 3:30 NIV*)?
  - What does it look like in real life to make Jesus more important than the other things on our lists?

### What You Say:

“It’s good to have things that are important to us! God gives us family, friends, and fun things to enjoy. Today in our Bible Story, John the Baptist reminded us of a really important truth. He made less of himself—and he made a big deal of Jesus. John the Baptist wasn’t upset about losing followers; he was filled with joy because his purpose was being fulfilled! He was doing what he was made to do—to point people to Jesus!

“When we put Jesus at the very top of our list—above everything, because as John told us, He is ‘*above everything*’ (*John 3:31 NIV*)—all the other things find their right place. When you make a big deal of Jesus, you’re showing the world their loving Savior. Make your life a big arrow that points to Him. When we do this, people will see, love, and follow Jesus. It’s living out the truth that **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.**”

5 min

# Memory Verse Activity

5 min

## Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Create

### What You Need

|   |                                |   |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
|  | Bibles                         | 1 |
|  | "Bible Bookmark" Activity Page | 1 |
|  | Coloring supplies              | 1 |

### What You Do:

- Give every kid a Bible.
- Invite them to look up Philippians 2:3 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

**Finding verses with 4th-5th graders:** Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Read the Memory Verse together out loud several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Invite the kids to set their Bibles aside.
- Give each kid a bookmark from the "Bible Bookmark" Activity Page and make coloring supplies available.
- Read this month's Memory Verse together that's on the bookmark.
- Instruct the kids to decorate their bookmark. They can color the words and the designs around it.
- Suggest the kids take their bookmark home and put it in their Bible or a book they are reading as a reminder about humility.

### What You Say:

"These bookmarks look awesome. It has our verse on it. Let's say it together. *Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3 NIV).* Great job. Our verse is a powerful reminder of what humility looks like. It's not about thinking less of yourself, it's about thinking of yourself less. It's about putting others first. John the Baptist lived out this verse perfectly—**[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.** As you open your Bibles this week at home and see this bookmark, remember to live out this verse and point people to Jesus!"

5 min

# Discussion Questions

5 min

## Preteen Discussion Questions

### What You Need

No supplies needed

### What You Do:

#### Ask:

- John's followers were upset that people were leaving him to follow Jesus, but John was joyful. Why do you think John wasn't jealous or upset—and what can that teach you about humility?
- John said, "*He must become more important. I must become less important*" (John 3:30 NIV). What do you think that means in your own life? How could you live in a way that points people to Jesus instead of to yourself?
- It can be easy to want attention, popularity, or praise. How can focusing on Jesus first help you deal with those feelings when they show up?
- John's joy came from seeing Jesus' work grow, even if his own influence shrank. When have you found joy in helping someone else succeed—or letting someone else shine?
- The story says that when we focus on Jesus more than ourselves, we find peace and hope. How might your thoughts, choices, or worries look different if you really believed that Jesus is bigger than any problem you face?

5 min

# Prayer

5 min

## Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect

### What You Need

-  Index cards or small pieces of paper 0
-  Writing supplies 1



### EveryChild Tips

- *For kids who find writing challenging, allow them to draw pictures or symbols to represent their prayers for each prompt.*
- *Offer to write for a kid who wants to share their prayers verbally but has difficulty writing them down.*

### What You Do:

- Give each kid an index card or a small piece of paper and something to write with.
- Encourage kids to complete the following three sentences on their card. Assure them that no one else will see their answers.
  - "God, thank You for ... "
  - "God, I'm sorry for ... "
  - "This week, please help me ... "
- Give the kids a few minutes of quiet to write.
- When everyone is done, explain that they can keep the card with them this week as a personal prayer list.
- Close by praying for the group.

**[Make It Personal] Fill out your own card as an example and participate with the group.**

### What You Say:

"It's good to be honest with God and to know He hears everything we write and think. God loves us no matter what, and we can trust Him. So tell Him all of your thoughts, share all of your worries and fears. Nothing is too big for God. God will never leave you or forsake you. Let's finish our time by praying together."

"God, thank You for being so great. We are sorry for the times we make ourselves or other things more important than You. This week, please help us to be humble and put others first. Help us to live in a way that shows everyone how great You are. We want to live in a way that says, **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.** We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

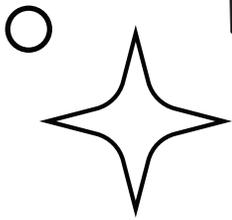


# Activity Pages

Preteen

Activity Pages are created to extend each week's planned activities, helping leaders intentionally reinforce the week's Bible Story, Bottom Line, or Memory Verse. Each page uses the monthly story images and key applications to spark engagement through games, puzzles, and hands-on creativity making learning God's Word fun, memorable, and meaningful for every kid.

# Disciple Decoder



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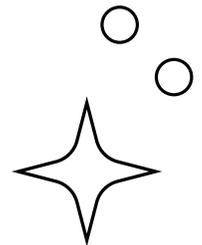
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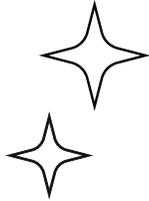
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Answers: Thaddaeus, Andrew, James, Philip, Peter, Bartholomew, James, Simon the Zealot, John, Judas Iscariot, Thomas, Matthew

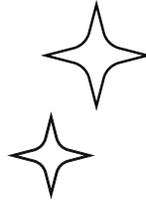
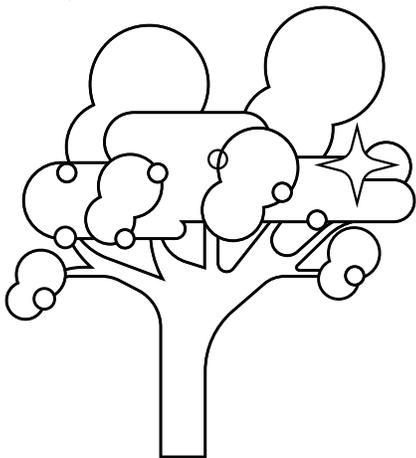
**What to Do:**  
Print on paper.  
One for every kid.

**"Disciple Decoder" Activity Page**  
March 2026, Week 1, Small Group Preteen  
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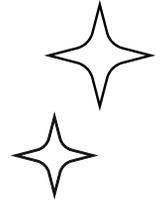
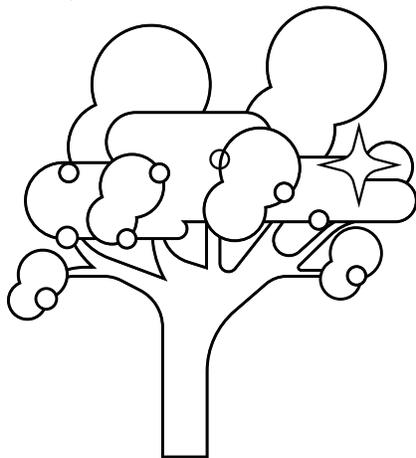
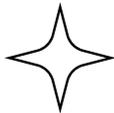
**Don't do anything  
only to get ahead.  
Don't do it because  
you are proud.  
Instead, be humble.  
Value others more  
than yourselves.**

**Philippians 2:3 NIV**



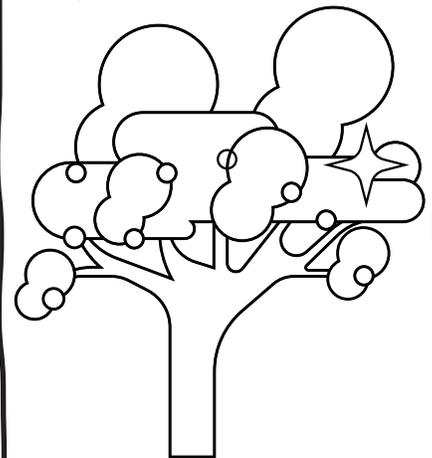
**Don't do anything  
only to get ahead.  
Don't do it because  
you are proud.  
Instead, be humble.  
Value others more  
than yourselves.**

**Philippians 2:3 NIV**



**Don't do anything  
only to get ahead.  
Don't do it because  
you are proud.  
Instead, be humble.  
Value others more  
than yourselves.**

**Philippians 2:3 NIV**



**What to Do:**  
Print on cardstock and cut.  
One for every kid.

**"Bible Bookmark" Activity Page**  
March 2026, Week 1, Small Group Preteen  
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**WEEK**

**TWO**

# Preteen | W2

## Today's Suggested Schedule—March 2026, Week 2

**Bible Story:** A Roman Commander Has Faith • *Matthew 8:5-13*

**Bottom Line:** Remember God is most important.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3 NIV*

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

### Prelude: Setting the Tone for the Experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

### Small Group (15 minutes)

#### Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction

Opening Activity

### Large Group (35 minutes)

#### Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

#### Worship: Inviting People to Respond to God

Opener

Worship

Bible Story (sections from God's Big Story are listed as optional)

Prayer

### Small Group (25 minutes)

#### Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Bible Story Review: Act It Out (K-1st grade), Puppet Show Retell (2nd-3rd grade), Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions (Preteen)

Application Activity: Who's Who (K-1st grade), Application Roll (2nd-3rd grade), Take a Snapshot (Preteen)

Memory Verse Activity: Color by Number (K-1st grade), Memory Verse Balloon Bop (2nd-3rd grade), Verses to Take with You (Preteen)

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss (K-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade), Make It Personal with Prayer (Preteen)

### Home: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App



### Bible Story

A Roman Commander Has Faith • *Matthew 8:5-13*

### Conversation Starter

How do you show that God is important?

### Bottom Line

Remember God is most important.

### Monthly Memory Verse

*Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3 NIV*

5 min

# Social

5 min

## Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play

### What You Need

👤 Offering container

1

### What You Do:

- Welcome the kids by name with a high five or fist bump!
- Invite the kids who brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Instruct the group to stand up and spread out.
- Explain that you're going to play "Do the Opposite." You will give a command, and the kids are to do the exact opposite as quickly as they can.
- Start with simple commands and get faster as they get the hang of it.
  - "Jump up high!" (*They should crouch down low.*)
  - "Sit down!" (*They should stand up.*)
  - "Whisper your name!" (*They should shout their name.*)
  - "Look to the left!" (*They should look to the right.*)
  - "Put your hands on your head!" (*They should put their hands on their toes.*)
- Let kids take turns giving the commands.

### What You Say:

"Nice job! It takes a lot of focus to do the opposite of what you're told. Sometimes the way Jesus asks us to live feels opposite to what the world tells us to do. The world says, 'Be the most important!' But we are learning to be upside-down and put others first by giving up what we want. **[Transition]** In our true story from the Bible today, a powerful Roman commander—an enemy of the Jewish people—shows us a different, 'upside-down' way to think about power and authority. Let's go find out more."

5 min

# Bible Story Review

5 min

## Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Play

### What You Need

 Bible, marked at Matthew 8:5-13 (NIRV) 1

### What You Do:

- Explain that as you retell the story of the Roman commander, you're going to call out "Freeze!" at key moments.
- When you say "Freeze!", everyone is to freeze in a pose that represents that part of the story.
- Open your Bible and read through the story, pausing at the bullet points below to have them freeze.
- Jesus entered the city of Capernaum. (*Maybe they pose like they are walking.*)
- The Roman commander approached Jesus with a worried look while he explained about his sick servant. (*Pose with a worried/pleading face.*)
- The commander said to Jesus, "Just say the word and my servant will be healed" (Matthew 8:8 NIRV). (*Pose with a hand up, showing humility and trust in Jesus' authority.*)
- Jesus was amazed at the commander's faith. (*Pose with a shocked or impressed look.*)
- The moment the servant was healed at that moment back at home. (*Pose by jumping up with joy and energy.*)
- After each freeze, talk about what was happening in that moment.

### What You Say:

"Great job with those poses! My favorite one is when the commander said, 'Just say the word and my servant will be healed' (Matthew 8:8 NIRV). He was a very powerful guy with authority over about one hundred soldiers, but he was humble enough to know that Jesus' power was way bigger than his own. Jesus is most powerful. Jesus said He had not found faith so strong in all of Israel. The commander is a perfect example of what it looks like to **[Bottom Line] remember God is most important.**

**[Make It Personal]** (Share an age-appropriate way you try to remember that God is the most important. For example: "It's easy for me to try and control everything in my life. But this story reminds me that I need to be more like the commander and just say, 'God, I trust Your authority. Just say the word.' It's a good reminder for me to be humble and remember God is in charge, not me.")

5 min

# Application Activity

5 min

## Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Connect

### What You Need

 Hat or bowl

 Slips of paper

 Writing utensils

1

1

1

### What You Do:

- Give each kid a few slips of paper and a writing tool.
- Tell them you're going to have a Q&A session, but they're the ones providing the questions.
- Ask them to write down any question they have about God, faith, the Bible, or Jesus. Assure them that there are no bad questions and they don't have to write their name on it.
- Instruct them to fold their questions and put them in the hat.
- Mix up the questions. Draw one question to read it aloud to the group.
- As a group, try to answer the question. It's okay to say, "I don't know, but that's a great question we can look into." The goal is the conversation, not having perfect answers.
- Use the discussion to point back to the idea that even when we have questions, we can trust God no matter what.

### What You Say:

"These are incredible questions. It's so important to ask questions and keep asking them! The Roman commander in our story had faith even though he might not have understood everything about Jesus. He understood authority; he told his soldiers, 'Go,' and they went. The important Roman commander knew that Jesus had a higher authority over absolutely everything. His faith was so strong that Jesus was amazed. Even when we have big questions, we can have that same kind of faith, trusting that God is in charge. Nothing is too big or too hard for God. We can take anything to God and He will listen. God is always there to help. We can trust God no matter what! **[Bottom Line] Remember God is most important.**"

5 min

# Memory Verse Activity

5 min

## Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Play

### What You Need

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|  | Bibles  | 0 |
|  | Whiteboard and dry-erase marker or posterboard and marker | 1 |
|  | Sticky Notes  | 1 |

### What You Do:

- Give every kid a Bible.
- Invite them to look up Philippians 2:3 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

**Finding verses with 4th-5th graders:** Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Read the Memory Verse together out loud several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Invite the kids to set their Bibles aside.
- Write each word or short phrase of the Memory Verse on a whiteboard or posterboard.
- Read the verse together a few times.
- Then, give one kid a sticky note to place over one word.
- Say the verse again with that word covered up.
- Give another kid a sticky note to cover another word.
- Recite the verse again as a group.
- Continue until all words are covered up.
- Say the verse one more time as a group.

### What You Say:

"Great job! You are really learning this Memory Verse. This verse is the definition of humility. The Roman commander showed humility by caring for his servant and saying he was 'not good enough' for Jesus to enter his home. When we truly believe that God is most important, it makes it a lot easier to live this verse out and value others more than ourselves.

**[Bottom Line] Remember God is most important."**

5 min

# Discussion Questions

5 min

## Preteen Discussion Questions

### What You Need

No supplies needed

### What You Do:

#### Ask:

- The Roman commander had a lot of power, but he still asked Jesus for help. What does that tell us about what it means to be strong or in charge in God's eyes?
- Jesus was amazed by the commander's faith. What do you think it means to have the kind of faith that "amazes" Jesus?
- The commander believed Jesus could heal his servant just by speaking. What are some things in your life that you need to trust God can handle—without you having to control it?
- The Roman commander humbled himself, even though he was important. What are some ways you can show humility and remember that God is most important in your own life?
- Jesus said people from all over would be part of God's kingdom—not just a certain group. How does that change the way you think about who God's love is for and how we should treat others?

5 min

# Prayer

5 min

## Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect

### What You Need

No supplies needed

### What You Say:

- Say, "The Roman commander knew that God's authority was bigger than any problem and stronger than any sickness. Sometimes, it's good to just stop and remember how big God is. Nothing is too big for God. We can take any problem or worry or fear to God. We can trust God no matter what."
- Lead the kids in a "silent prayer."
- Instruct the kids to pray silently for something big in their life that they want to ask God for help with.

### What You Say:

"It's good to pause and remember who is in charge and the ultimate authority. The Roman commander had faith that Jesus could heal his servant just by saying the word. Let's close in prayer."

"God, thank You for being all-powerful and having all authority. Thank You for the example of the Roman commander who showed us what amazing faith looks like. Help us to be humble this week and to always **[Bottom Line] remember God is most important.** We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

**WEEK**

**THREE**

# Preteen | W3

## Today's Suggested Schedule—March 2026, Week 3

**Bible Story:** Be Humble/Love Your Enemies • *Matthew 5:38-48*

**Bottom Line:** Love like Jesus even when it's hard.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3 NIV*

### **Prelude: Setting the Tone for the Experience**

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

Note: This leader guide is created with inclusion in mind. It supports children with learning differences, disabilities, or special needs as they participate alongside their peers. Look for the highlighted sections for extra tips to help welcome and include every child. For more resources, check out our free *A Place at the Table* course with Kim Botto and EveryChild Curriculum. ([joinamazing.com/everychild](http://joinamazing.com/everychild))

### **Small Group (15 minutes)**

#### **Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction**

Opening Activity

### **Large Group (35 minutes)**

#### **Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways**

#### **Worship: Inviting People to Respond to God**

Opener

Worship

Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)

Prayer

### **Small Group (25 minutes)**

#### **Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect**

Bible Story Review: Light the Story

Application Activity: Upside Down Hearts

Memory Verse Activity: Prayer Chain

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

### **Home: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience**

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App



### **Bible Story**

Be Humble/Love Your Enemies • *Matthew 5:38-48*

### **Conversation Starter**

How can you show kindness to someone who makes you mad?

### **Bottom Line**

Love like Jesus even when it's hard.

### **Monthly Memory Verse**

*Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3 NIV*

5 min

# Social

5 min

## Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play

### What You Need

-  Offering container 1
-  Mini cookies (like Oreos® or Chips Ahoy®) (Be mindful of allergies.) Several

### What You Do:

- Welcome the kids by name with a high five or fist bump!
- Invite the kids who brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Give each kid a mini cookie.
- Explain the challenge: They are to place the cookie on their forehead, and, using only their facial muscles (no hands!), try to move the cookie down their face and into their mouth.
- It's silly, a little messy, and a lot of fun.
- Give them a few tries. Cheer for everyone's effort—whether they succeed or not.

### What You Say:

"That was hilarious and way harder than it looks! Sometimes doing the right thing, or the thing Jesus asks us to do, can feel just as awkward and difficult as moving that cookie. **[Transition] Today, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us one of His most challenging instructions ever. It definitely feels 'upside down.' Let's go find out more.**"

5 min

# Bible Story Review

5 min

## Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Create

### What You Need

|   |  |         |
|---|--|---------|
|  | "Love Challenge" Activity Page                       | 1       |
|  | "Challenge Stickers" Activity Page (One set per kid) | 1       |
|  | Scissors or 2" heart punch                           | 1       |
|  | Coloring supplies                                    | Several |

### What You Do:

- Give each kid a "Love Challenge" Activity Page and instruct them to decorate around the exterior of their paper.
- Direct the kids to select three heart stickers from the "Challenge Stickers" Activity Page to add to their "Love Challenge" Activity Page.
- Use the scissors to cut out or use the heart punch to punch out the three heart stickers from the "Challenge Stickers" Activity Page each kid selects.
- Instruct kids to color in the hearts as they complete each challenge.

### What You Say:

"Jesus said that we should not only love our friends but also love our enemies and pray for those who hurt us (Matthew 5:44). This challenge is about choosing kindness and putting others first, even when it's hard—that's how we show the world we are His followers!

"Jesus said that if someone forces you to go one mile, you should go two miles (Matthew 5:41). That means choosing to do more than what is required, especially for someone who might not expect it or even deserve it. When you choose kindness instead of revenge, you are showing the powerful love of Jesus.

"As you go through your week and color in the hearts of the challenges you complete, remember with each one, you are loving like Jesus when it's easy and when it's hard. This really captures the 'upside down' message Jesus was teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. It's easy to love people who are nice to you. But loving your enemies? That takes God's help, big time. And Jesus ended by saying, '*So be perfect, just as your father in heaven is perfect*' (Matthew 5:48 NIV). It's not our natural reaction to be kind to people who are unkind to us. But Jesus calls us to a higher standard, to be like our Father in heaven. He wants us to **[Bottom Line] love like Jesus even when it's hard**, because that's what shows the world what God's love really looks like.

**[Make It Personal]** (Share an age-appropriate example of how you showed Jesus' love, even though it was really hard. For example:

"There was a time someone at work was really unfair to me, and my first instinct was to take revenge and complain about them to everyone. But I remembered this teaching from Jesus. Instead of complaining, I chose to pray for them and even did something nice for them. It was really hard, but it totally changed how I felt, and eventually, our relationship got better.")

5 min

# Application Activity

5 min

## Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Connect

### What You Need

-  Whiteboard and dry-erase marker, or posterboard and marker 0

### What You Do:

- Tell the group that Jesus didn't just talk about loving others; He showed it. As a group, you're going to brainstorm a simple service project you could do together to "love like Jesus" in a practical way.
- Ask: "What are some ways we could love others like Jesus?"
- Write their ideas on the board.
- Then, brainstorm simple ways your group could show love to one of those groups.
  - Make cards for residents of a local nursing home.
  - Collect socks or toiletries for a local shelter.
  - "Chalk the walk" with kind messages on the sidewalk outside the church.
- Choose one idea that your group is excited about and could realistically do. Make a simple plan to put it into action.

### What You Say:

"These are incredible ideas. It's one thing to talk about loving people, but it's another thing to actually do it. When we serve others, we are putting others first. When people see you choosing to love when it's hard, they'll know that you're different. They'll see that you're a follower of Jesus. We are choosing to **[Bottom Line] love like Jesus even when it's hard.** That's humility in action."

5 min

# Discussion Questions

5 min

## Preteen Discussion Questions

### What You Need

No supplies needed

### Ask:

- Jesus said to love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you. Why do you think Jesus wants us to respond to mean or hurtful people with love instead of revenge?
- Going the "extra mile" was a choice the person could make to show kindness. What might it look like for you to "go the extra mile" for someone who isn't kind to you?
- It's easy to love people who love us back, but Jesus asks for more. What's the difference between the kind of love Jesus talked about and the kind of love most people show?
- Jesus said that when we love our enemies, we show we are God's children. How can showing love to difficult people help others see what God is like?
- Loving others like Jesus can feel impossible sometimes. When it's really hard to be kind or forgiving, what can you do to let God help you love that person anyway?

5 min

# Memory Verse Activity

5 min

## Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Play

### What You Need

|   |                  |   |
|---|------------------|---|
|  | Bibles           | 1 |
|  | Paper            | 1 |
|  | Writing supplies | 1 |

### What You Do:

- Give every kid a Bible.
- Invite them to look up Philippians 2:3 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

**Finding verses with 4th-5th graders:** Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Read the Memory Verse together out loud several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Invite the kids to set their Bibles aside.
- Give each kid a piece of paper and a marker.
- Assign each person to write down just three or four words of the Memory Verse, Philippians 2:3. (e.g., Kid 1 writes "Don't do anything," Kid 2 writes "only to get ahead," etc.)
- Once they've written their part, invite the kids to crumple their paper into a tight ball.
- Encourage each kid to toss their crumpled paper into a pile in the center of the circle.
- On "Go," instruct everyone to grab a crumpled paper, open it up, and work together as a group to put the verse back in the correct order on the floor.

### What You Say:

"Nice teamwork! You unscrambled that verse perfectly. 'Value others more than yourselves' (Philippians 2:3 NIV). That's a tough one. It's the opposite of what the world tells us. But it's exactly what Jesus modeled, and it's the key to being able to love your enemies. Not a single person ever has been perfect, except for Jesus! But with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can grow more and more to be like Jesus as we learn to love our enemies like He does. We can **[Bottom Line] love like Jesus even when it's hard.**"

5 min

# Prayer

5 min

## Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect

### What You Need

|   |         |
|---|---------|
|  Bibles                                  | 0       |
|  Graham crackers                         | Several |
|  Frosting                                | Several |
|  Small candies (like sprinkles or M&Ms®) | Several |
|  Paper plates                            | 1       |
|  Popsicle sticks                         | Several |
|  Hand wipes                            | Several |



### EveryChild Tips

- Be mindful of any food allergies and have alternative, safe snack items available.

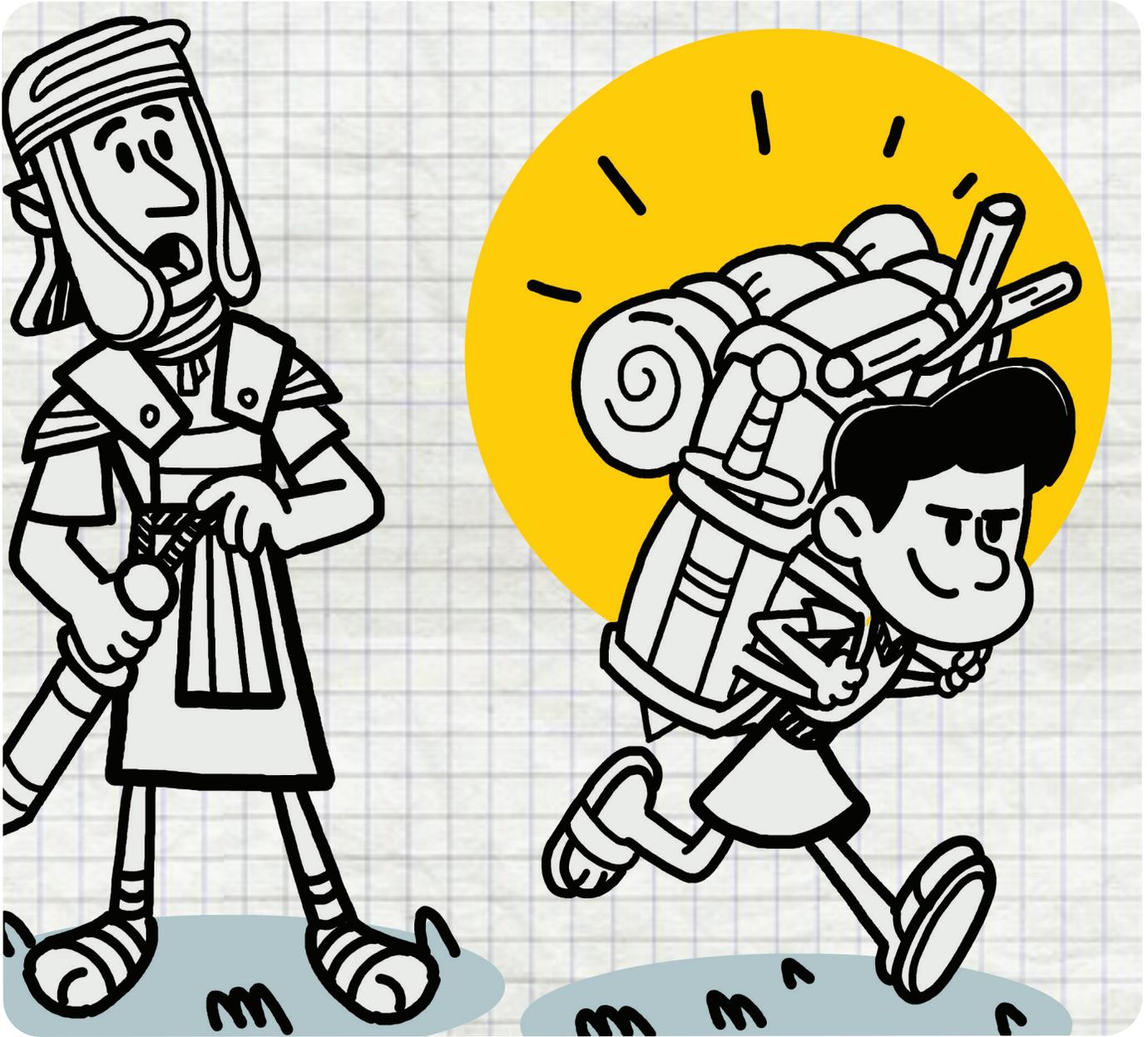
### What You Do:

- Give each kid a graham cracker "base."
- Explain that you're going to create a prayer snack.
- Say, "First, let's spread some frosting on our cracker. As we do, let's think of one person who is hard for us to love. We're 'covering' them in prayer."
- Say, "Now, let's add some sprinkles or candy. For each piece we add, let's ask God to help us show a specific act of kindness to that person." (e.g., "Help me say something nice," "Help me not to talk about them behind their back," "Help me share with them.")
- Once their prayer snack is created, they can eat it.
- Close the time in prayer.

### What You Say:

"It's not always easy to pray for people who are hard to love. But Jesus tells us to do it. His command is 'Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you' (Matthew 5:44 NIV). It changes our hearts and helps us see them more like He sees them. Let's pray together."

"God, thank You for loving us perfectly, even when we don't deserve it. It's really hard to love our enemies, but we want to be like You. Please help us with the people we prayed for today. Give us Your strength and Your love so we can **[Bottom Line] love like Jesus even when it's hard.** We need Your help! We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."



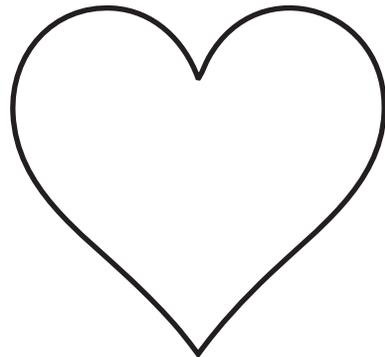
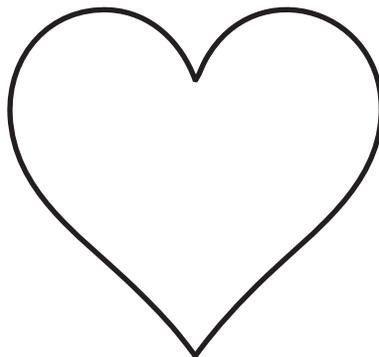
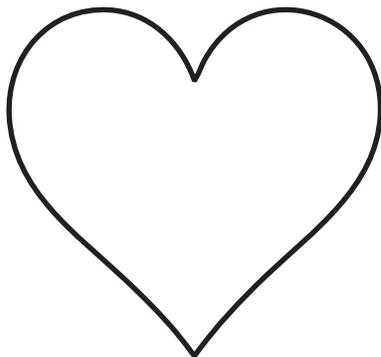
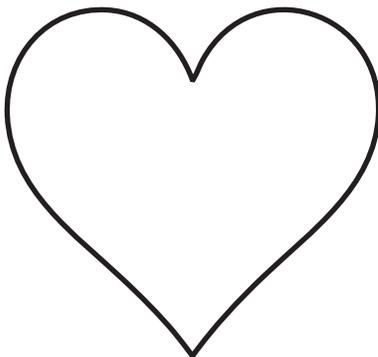
# Activity Pages

Preteen

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# Love Challenge

As you go through your week and color in the hearts of the challenges you complete, remember with each one, you are loving like Jesus when it's easy and when it's hard.



**Share Your Success:** Which heart did you find easiest to color in? Why was that particular act of kindness simple for you to do?

**The Hardest Heart:** Which challenge was the most difficult to complete? Why?

**The Surprise:** What was the most surprising reaction you got from someone when you showed them kindness?

**What to Do:**  
Print on cardstock.  
One for every kid.

**"Love Challenge" Activity Page**  
March 2026, Week 3, Small Group Preteen  
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Invite someone  
new to play with  
you.

Write a thank-you  
note to your  
teacher or  
principal.

Draw pictures for  
people in a  
nursing home.

Forgive someone  
who hurt your  
feelings.

Pray for someone  
who's having a  
hard day.

Sing a happy song  
to cheer someone  
up.

Tell your family  
why you love  
them.

Share your  
favorite Bible  
story with a  
friend.

Invite someone  
new to play with  
you.

Write a thank-you  
note to your  
teacher or  
principal.

Draw pictures for  
people in a  
nursing home.

Forgive someone  
who hurt your  
feelings.

Pray for someone  
who's having a  
hard day.

Sing a happy song  
to cheer someone  
up.

Tell your family  
why you love  
them.

Share your  
favorite Bible  
story with a  
friend.

**WEEK**

**FOUR**

# Preteen | W4

## Today's Suggested Schedule—March 2026, Week 4

**Bible Story:** Mary and Martha • *Luke 10:38-42*

**Bottom Line:** Make time for Jesus first.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3 NIV*

### **Prelude: Setting the Tone for the Experience**

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

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### **Small Group (15 minutes)**

#### **Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction**

Opening Activity

### **Large Group (35 minutes)**

#### **Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways**

#### **Worship: Inviting People to Respond to God**

Opener

Worship

Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)

Prayer

### **Small Group (25 minutes)**

#### **Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect**

Bible Story Review: Parachute Story

Application Activity: Jesus Above All

Memory Verse Activity: Quiet Line Up

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

### **Home: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience**

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App



### **Bible Story**

Mary and Martha • *Luke 10:38-42*

### **Conversation Starter**

How can you make time for Jesus?

### **Bottom Line**

Make time for Jesus first.

### **Monthly Memory Verse**

*Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3 NIV*

5 min

# Social

5 min

## Preteen Social Activity | Made to Move

### What You Need

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  Offering container   | 0 |
|  Floor tape           | 1 |
|  Crumpled paper balls | 1 |
|  Paper plates         | 1 |

### What You Do:

- Welcome the kids by name with a high five or fist bump!
- Invite the kids who brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Create two start lines using floor tape at one end of the room.
- Create two finish lines using floor tape at the other end of the room.
- Divide the group into two teams and instruct each team to line up behind the start line on one end of the room.
- Give the first kid in each line a crumpled paper ball and a paper plate.
- Explain the relay race: One at a time, the kids are to use the paper plate as a fan to "blow" their paper "trash" across the room to the finish line, and then run back and hand the plate to the next kid in line.
- The first team to have all its players finish wins.
- Play a second round where the kids have to fan the paper ball while walking backward.

### What You Say:

"That was a lot of work! You were all so busy fanning that paper across the room. And you definitely didn't want to stop because you wanted to get to the finish line! It's easy to get busy with tasks and forget what's most important. **[Transition] Today's true story from the Bible is about two sisters, Mary and Martha. One of them was very, very busy ... Let's go find out what Jesus thought about all her work."**

5 min

# Bible Story Review

5 min

## Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Play

### What You Need

-  Bible 1
-  Small, handheld whiteboard and dry-erase marker and dry-erase eraser, or large paper and writing utensil 1



### EveryChild Tips

- For kids who are not confident in their drawing skills, allow them to act out the scene as a charade instead of drawing.
- Write or draw the prompts on slips of paper so kids can see them instead of relying on whispering.

### What You Do:

- Read Luke 10:38-42 out loud to the group.
- Tell the group you're going to play a version of *Pictionary* to review the story, but upside down.
- Divide into two teams.
- Instruct one kid from the first team to sit across from the other team. Give them a large pad of paper and writing utensil, or a handheld whiteboard with a dry-erase marker and a dry-erase eraser.
- Whisper one of the following prompts to them:
  - Mary sitting at Jesus' feet.
  - Martha cooking food.
  - Martha feeling worried and upset.
  - Jesus talking to Martha.
- That person has one minute to draw the scene for the other team to guess. (The scene should face the person drawing, but look upside down for the team guessing.)
- Alternate teams until all the prompts are drawn.

### What You Say:

"Great job with those drawings! It was challenging to guess when the pictures were upside down! You did a great job drawing Martha being so busy and Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus. Martha was so busy doing things for Jesus and His friends' visit to her house, while Mary sat with Jesus and spent time with Him. Martha got so upset that she said to Jesus, 'Lord ... Don't you care? Tell her to help me!' (Luke 10:40 NIV). But Jesus said that Mary chose what is better. It is most important to spend time with Jesus.

"It's a good reminder for us all. Are we letting our 'busyness' get in the way of being with Jesus? We can get busy with good things like Martha. We can get busy with practice, homework, friends, shows, and even chores. Those are all good things to do, but let's remember to do what Jesus said is most important and **[Bottom Line] make time for Jesus first.**"

5 min

# Application Activity

5 min

## Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Connect

### What You Need

 My Week" Activity Page

1

 Pencils

1

### What You Do:

- Give each kid a page from the "My Week" Activity Page and a pencil.
- Instruct them to fill in their typical weekly schedule. Encourage them to write down things like school, sports practice, homework, chores, and screen time.
- Once the kids have their busy week filled in, invite them to look for the empty spaces.
- Challenge them to find specific times this week where they can intentionally "make time for Jesus."
- Instruct them to write "Time with Jesus" in some of the empty slots on their calendar.
- Invite them to share with a partner what time they chose and what they plan to do during that time (e.g., pray, read a devotional, listen to worship music).

### What You Say:

"It's easy for our schedules to fill up, isn't it? If we aren't intentional, time with Jesus can get squeezed out. Martha spent time being busy making everything wonderful for Jesus' visit. She was doing good things, but Jesus told Martha that Mary had chosen what was better. Mary spent time sitting at the feet of Jesus and listened to Him.

"Our days can get very busy. We can get busy with sports practice, music lessons, clubs, playing with friends, or doing chores. These are all good things, but Jesus taught us that it's most important to spend time with Jesus. When we spend time with Jesus before we do all of those activities, the awareness that He is with us makes all of those activities better! We can spend time with Jesus by praying, reading the Bible, listening to worship music, or singing praises to Him. Making an actual plan on a calendar is a great way to make sure we **[Bottom Line] make time for Jesus first.**"

**[Make It Personal]** (Share an age-appropriate time of how you make time for Jesus first. For example: "My week can get super-crazy, and if I don't decide ahead of time when I'm going to connect with God, it often doesn't happen. For me, the best time is right in the morning before everyone else gets up. I schedule it just like any other appointment, because Jesus said only one thing is needed, and that time with Him is the most important thing I can do.")

5 min

# Memory Verse Activity

5 min

## Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to \*\*

### What You Need

|  |  |         |
|--|--|---------|
|   | Bibles   | 1       |
|   | Print "The Color of Humility" Activity Page on cardstock | 1       |
|   | Colored pencils or fine-tip markers                      | Several |
|  | Music player to play quiet worship music                 | 1       |

### What You Do:

- Give every kid a Bible.
- Invite them to look up Philippians 2:3 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

**Finding verses with 4th-5th graders:** Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Read the Memory Verse together out loud several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Invite the kids to set their Bibles aside.
- Give every kid a "The Color of Humility" Activity Page and make the colored pencils/markers available.
- Explain that this is like an "adult" coloring page, with more intricate designs. They can take their time to color it.
- As they color, play some quiet worship music in the background.
- This activity is meant to be calm and reflective, giving them space to think about the words of the verse.

### What You Say:

"This is a great verse about humility. It reminds us to think about others more than ourselves. It seems 'upside down,' but it's exactly what Jesus did. And when we think about it, making time for Jesus is an act of humility too. It's saying that Jesus is more important than all the other things we could be doing. It's how we show that only one thing is needed—to **[Bottom Line] make time for Jesus first.**"

5 min

# Discussion Questions

5 min

## Preteen Discussion Questions

### What You Need

No supplies needed

### Ask:

- Martha was busy serving, and Mary chose to sit and listen to Jesus. Why do you think Jesus said that Mary had chosen “what is better”?
- It’s easy to get caught up in doing good things and forget about God. What are some ways your day can get so busy that you forget to spend time with Jesus?
- How could making time for Jesus first actually help you do other things better?
- Mary didn’t have to do anything to earn Jesus’ attention—she just chose to be with Him. How does that show the way God wants us to connect with Him?
- Jesus is always with us, even when we are busy. What are some small ways you could acknowledge Jesus’ presence with you—at school, at home, or with friends?

5 min

# Prayer

5 min

## Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect

### What You Need

-  12-inch piece Yarn 1
-  Scissors 1

### What You Do:

- Cut yarn into 12-inch lengths, one for every kid.
- Give each kid a piece of yarn.
- Show them how to tie the yarn loosely around their finger or wrist as a reminder.
- Ask them to think silently about one thing that keeps them busy and distracted from spending time with God.
- Lead them in a prayer, asking God to help them with those distractions.

### What You Say:

"This week, when you see this piece of yarn on your finger or wrist, let it be your reminder. Let it remind you to pause and focus on Jesus. It's all about being before doing. Be present with Jesus. Pray before you study for the big test, pray before you go hang out with your friends, pray before you begin your big list of chores. Talk to Jesus and remind yourself that He will be with you as you go throughout your day. When you **[Bottom Line] make time for Jesus first**, then you're ready to go out and do all the awesome things that God has made you for—knowing that Jesus is with you every step of the way. Let it remind you to **[Bottom Line] make time for Jesus first**. Let's pray.

"God, thank You for the story of Mary and Martha. It's such a good reminder for us. We get so busy doing so many different things, and sometimes we forget that being with You is the most important thing. Please help us this week to find time to be with You. Help us to choose what is better. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

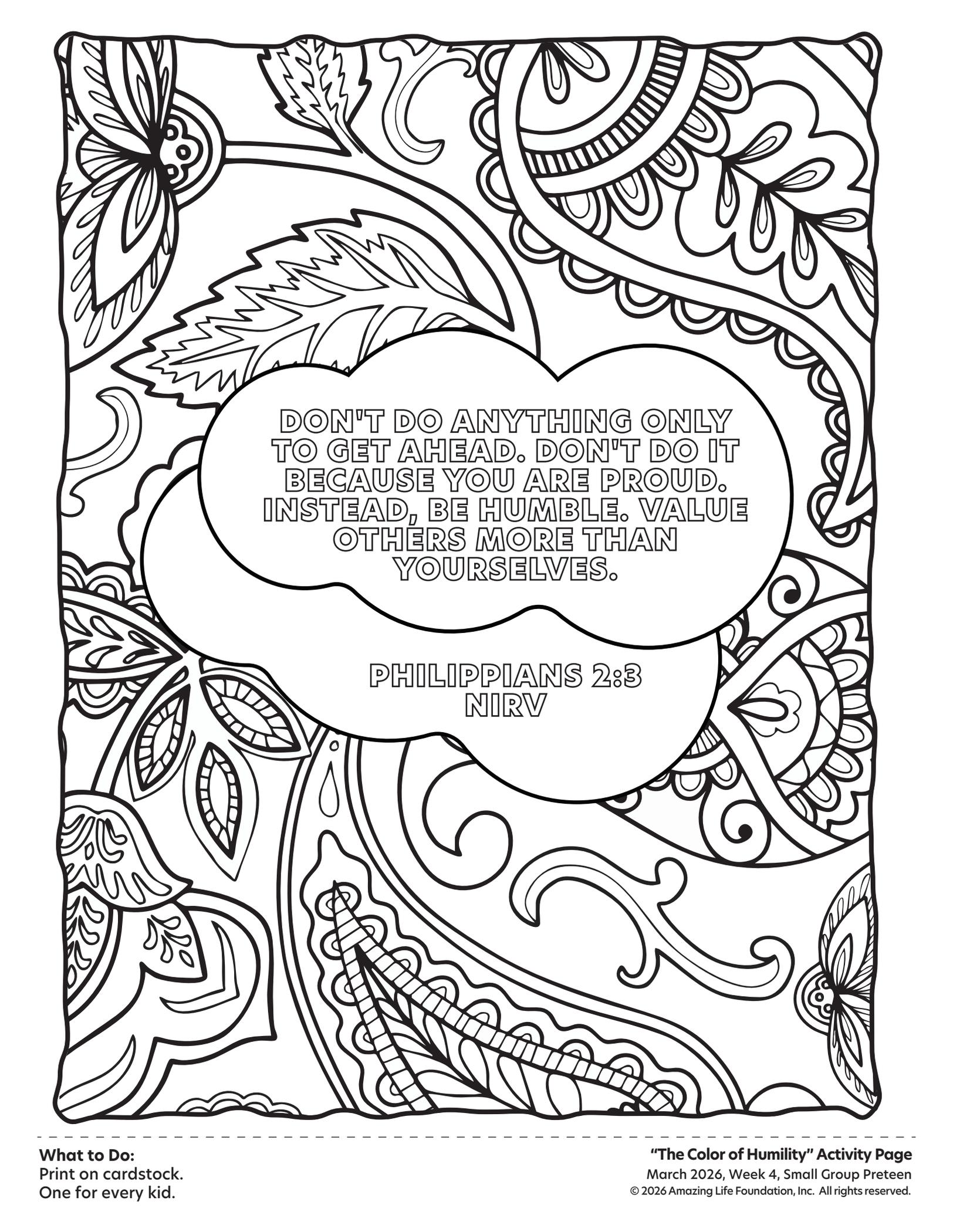


# Activity Pages

Preteen

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DON'T DO ANYTHING ONLY  
TO GET AHEAD. DON'T DO IT  
BECAUSE YOU ARE PROUD.  
INSTEAD, BE HUMBLE. VALUE  
OTHERS MORE THAN  
YOURSELVES.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3  
NIRV

**What to Do:**  
Print on cardstock.  
One for every kid.

**"The Color of Humility" Activity Page**  
March 2026, Week 4, Small Group Preteen  
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**WEEK**

**FIVE**

# Preteen | W5

## Today's Suggested Schedule—March 2026, Week 5

**Bible Story:** Palm Sunday / Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet • *John 12:9-19, 13:1-17*

**Bottom Line:** Jesus showed us how to be humble.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3 NIV*

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

### Prelude: Setting the Tone for the Experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

### Small Group (15 minutes)

#### Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction

Opening Activity

### Large Group (35 minutes)

#### Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

#### Worship: Inviting People to Respond to God

Opener

Worship

Bible Story (sections from God's Big Story are listed as optional)

Prayer

### Small Group (25 minutes)

#### Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Bible Story Review: Jesus Thaumatrope (K-1st grade), Build the Story (2nd-3rd grade), Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions (Preteen)

Application Activity: Humble Feet (K-1st grade), Cheer for Jesus (2nd-3rd grade), Take a Snapshot (Preteen)

Memory Verse Activity: Your Best Foot Forward (K-1st grade), Hopscotch Memory (2nd-3rd grade), Verses to Take with You (Preteen)

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss (K-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade), Make It Personal with Prayer (Preteen)

### Home: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App



### Bible Story

Palm Sunday / Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet  
• *John 12:9-19, 13:1-17*

### Conversation Starter

Jesus showed us how to be humble.

### Bottom Line

Jesus showed us how to be humble.

### Monthly Memory Verse

*Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.* • *Philippians 2:3 NIV*

5 min

# Social

5 min

## Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play

### What You Need

|  |         |
|--|---------|
|  Offering container | 1       |
|  Paper              | 1       |
|  Coloring supplies  | Several |

### What You Do:

- Give each kid a sheet of paper and something to draw with.
- Invite the kids to create their own sketch of the disciples based on what they think those followers of Jesus might have looked like.
- Offer gentle hints as needed:
  - "Some disciples were fishermen—what might they look like after spending long days on the water?"
  - "One was a tax collector—maybe he dressed differently or carried tools for counting money."
  - "Some were younger, some older."
  - "One was known for being very curious and asking lots of questions."
- Let kids share their drawings and explain why they drew each disciple the way they did.

### What You Say:

"These drawings are awesome! It's interesting to imagine what the disciples may have looked like. They were all regular people, fishermen, a tax collector, young men, curious learners. And yet Jesus chose them to be part of His team. **[Transition] Today, we're going to hear a story about how Jesus, the most powerful King, did something surprising and humble for these very people you've drawn. Let's find out what happened.**"

5 min

# Bible Story Review

5 min

## Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Play

### What You Need

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  Paper plates | 1 |
|  Marker       | 1 |
|  Music player | 1 |



### EveryChild Tips

- *Emphasize that there are no "outs" in this game to reduce anxiety for kids who dislike competition.*
- *If movement is a challenge, kids can sit in a circle and pass the plates around. When the music stops, they talk about the plate they are holding.*

### Before group time:

- On each paper plate, write a simple act of humble service. Examples:
- Let someone else go first in line.
- Give a genuine compliment to someone.
- Listen to someone's story without interrupting.
- Help with a chore at home without being asked.
- Clean up a mess you didn't make.
- Create as many plates as you have kids in your Small Group.

### What You Do:

- Set the prepared plates in a circle on the floor.
- Play a version of musical chairs. When the music stops, instruct all of the kids to find a plate to stand on.
- Instead of anyone being "out," go around the circle and invite each kid to read the act of service on their plate.
- Ask them to share when or how they could do that humble act this week.
- Remove one plate and play again. Now, kids will have to share plates, practicing humility in the game itself.

### What You Say:

"It's one thing to talk about being humble, but it's another thing to actually do it. These are all practical ways we can put others first. Now, showing humility like Jesus is tough, because the world tells us we're supposed to get ahead and be important. You'd think a king would ride into town in a chariot or on a powerful war horse, right? But Jesus had already fulfilled so many prophecies. And now He chose to fulfill another by riding into Jerusalem on a humble young donkey. Then, instead of ordering His followers to serve Him, Jesus took off His outer clothes, knelt down, and began to wash their feet. **[Bottom Line] Jesus showed us how to be humble**, and He wants us to follow His example."

5 min

# Application Activity

5 min

## Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Connect

### What You Need

-  Large sheet of butcher paper 1
-  Washable markers Several

### What You Do:

- Spread the butcher paper on the floor.
- Challenge kids to try and write a word from today's story, like "JESUS," "HUMBLE," or "SERVE" on the paper by holding a marker between their feet.
- It will be awkward, silly, and probably messy. Let them laugh and have fun with how difficult it is.
- Gather them to discuss:
  - How did that feel? Was it easy or hard?
  - How do you think this activity relates to our story about Jesus today?

### What You Say:

"That was pretty awkward, right? It felt weird to use your feet for something they aren't designed for. Imagine how the disciples felt when Jesus, their teacher and King, knelt down to wash their dirty feet. It was completely upside down and unexpected. Jesus, the true King of the universes, chose to take on this humble job. Jesus even washed the feet of Judas Iscariot, whom He knew was about to betray Him to the religious leaders!

**[Bottom Line]** "Jesus showed us how to be humble. He never used His power or authority to make people do stuff for Him. He asked people to join Him—He didn't force them. Now, showing humility like Jesus is tough, because the world tells us we're supposed to get ahead and be important. If you need help being humble, ask Jesus to help! When you began to follow Jesus, His very Spirit, the Holy Spirit, came to live inside of you. The Holy Spirit knows how to be humble, and He will help you!"

5 min

# Memory Verse Activity

5 min

## Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Connect

### What You Need

 Bibles

1

### What You Do:

- Give every kid a Bible.
- Invite them to look up Philippians 2:3 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

**Finding verses with 4th-5th graders:** Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Read the Memory Verse together out loud several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Instruct everyone to hold their Bible.
- Explain that you are going to call out a Bible verse reference, and they are going to race to see who can look it up in the Bible and read it first.
- First, call out this month's Memory Verse: "Philippians 2:3!"
- Instruct the first kid to find it to stand and read the verse(s) aloud.
- Then, look up a few bonus verses about humility and serving. After each one, ask how it connects to our story.
  - Matthew 23:11 NlrV ("The most important person among you will be your servant.")
  - 1 Peter 5:5 NlrV (In the same way, I'm speaking to you who are younger. Follow the lead of those who are older. All of you, put on a spirit free of pride toward one another. Put it on as if it were your clothes. Do this because Scripture says, "God opposes those who are proud. But he gives grace to those who are humble.")
  - John 13:14-15 NlrV ("I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you should also wash one another's feet. I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you.")

### What You Say:

"The Bible has so much to say about humility! It's clearly a big deal to God. It's the 'upside down' way of Jesus and His kingdom. The world says to be first, but Jesus says to be a servant. Jesus modeled what it means to put others first. **[Bottom Line] Jesus showed us how to be humble**, and the Bible is our guide to learning how to live that way."

5 min

# Discussion Questions

5 min

## Preteen Discussion Questions

### What You Need

No supplies needed

### Ask:

- Jesus is the King of the universe, yet He chose to ride a humble donkey and wash His disciples' feet. Why do you think Jesus chose humility over showing His power in those moments?
- Jesus washed the feet of Judas Iscariot, even though He knew Judas would betray Him. What does this teach us about serving others, even when they don't deserve it or might hurt us?
- Peter didn't understand at first why Jesus washed his feet. Why do you think God sometimes asks us to do things that don't make sense at first? How can trusting Him help us grow?
- Jesus gave an example of putting others first and told His followers to do the same. In your daily life, what are some ways you can practice humility and serve others like Jesus did?
- The world often tells us to be the most important or to get ahead. How is following Jesus' example of humility different from the ways the world measures success, and why does it matter?

5 min

# Prayer

5 min

## Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect

### What You Need

|  |         |
|--|---------|
|  Green construction paper | Several |
|  Markers                  | 1       |
|  Scissors                 | 1       |
|  Bowl                     | 1       |

### Before group time:

- Cut green construction paper into the shape of palm leaves, one for every kid.

### What You Do:

- Give each kid a paper leaf and a marker.
- Instruct the kids to write their names on one side of the leaf.
- Encourage the kids to fold their leaves and put them into the bowl.
- Mix up the leaves.
- Pass the bowl around and have each person draw one leaf. (If they get their own, they should put it back and draw again.)
- Tell them to take that leaf home and put it somewhere they will see it this week—like their mirror or desk.
- Their mission is to pray for the person whose name is on their leaf every day this week.

### What You Say:

"Now, showing humility like Jesus is tough, because the world tells us we're supposed to get ahead and be important. But we know Jesus is most important! We need the help of the Holy Spirit inside us to set aside what we want in order to serve others like Jesus. When we ask Jesus to give us the ability to be humble, He will do it! One of the best ways to be humble and put others first is to pray for them. It's a humble act of service that makes a big difference. When you pray for the person on your leaf, you're following Jesus' example. Let's pray!

"Jesus, thank You for being the ultimate example of humility. Thank You for serving Your friends and giving Your life for us. It's amazing. Help us to follow Your example. Give us the strength to put others first this week, starting with the person on our leaf. Help us to show the world what Your 'upside down' love looks like. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."