

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 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

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 NIV*

5 min

Large Group Opener

5 min

Opener

What You Need

 Host	1
 inflated balloons	6
 Upside-Down goggles	2
 kid volunteers	2
 Timer (or smartphone or watch or countdown)	1

What You Do:

- Download the slides or optional videos and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
- Download music and/or sound effects on an authorized basis from a resource such as Apple Music®, Amazon Music®, and/or a sound effect library and have it ready to play. Or, if you choose to stream music, refer to the terms and conditions of your streaming service. Note that you will likely need a commercial license in order to stream music publicly. Also confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform music and sound effects in your kids' environments, such as a blanket PERFORMmusic™ license from CCS. *Note: Legally, a song and/or sound effect belongs to the songwriter/composer who created it and the publisher who markets it. Performance rights organizations (PROs) license public performances (live or recorded) of their members' music. PROs in the U.S. are ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC. It is up to you to make sure your church has permission to perform or play a recording of a song and/or sound effect.*
- *Optional:* Download a countdown video from a royalty-free site. Load it into your presentation software and have it ready to play during the Opener. You could also keep time on a smartphone or watch. *Note: Some presentation software, such as ProPresenter, includes a built-in countdown clock that can be overlaid on a still image.*
- Blow up 6 balloons.

HOST: "What's up, everybody! Welcome to [Name of Environment]! I am so *pumped* to be here because we're starting a brand-new theme called 'Upside Down!'"

"The full title of this theme is 'Upside Down: Treat others the way Jesus treats you!'"

"Now, when something's upside down, it's not how you expect it to be, right? Well, this whole month, we're going to talk about how Jesus flipped the way people thought life should work. He showed us what it looks like to treat others the way *He* treats us.

"And spoiler alert, when we start living like Jesus, it's not about *me first* anymore. I know sometimes that is hard to hear ... but Jesus showed us that we actually have the best life when we put God first. That might sound upside down, but it's exactly how Jesus lived.

"All right, let's get things moving with a game I like to call 'Upside Down Keepy Uppy!'"

SLIDE: Upside Down Keepy Uppy Title

"You know how we do it around here, we always gotta crank it up a notch. This is not your normal 'keep the balloon in the air' game because today ... we're doing it *upside down!*

"Each round, two of you will wear these awesome upside-down goggles. Have you ever seen these? They're pretty crazy. They flip your vision, so when you look down, everything looks like it's up! It's pretty wild, and for everyone else watching, it's pretty entertaining.

"Your job is simple: keep as many balloons in the air as you can for 60 seconds. I've got six! You can use your hands, elbows, knees—whatever it takes—but don't let them touch the ground.

"Sounds easy, right? Well ... not when your world's flipped *upside down!*

"I need two brave volunteers who think they can master keeping the balloons in the air. If you want to play the game, raise your hand!

Choose two kids from the audience who have their hands raised. Invite them to come up to the front with you. Give each kid a pair of goggles.

"All right, team, you're going to be working together. When I say 'Go,' the timer will start. Your goal? Keep all your balloons in the air for one full minute.

"All right, team, goggles on! *(Pause as the kids put their goggles on.)*

"Great! Now that we're ready, let's start the game! Ready ... set ... go!

AUDIO: Upbeat music

Start the timer and start the game.

This is not as much of a competitive game, but more so just funny to watch! So if the kids drop the balloons, allow them to pick them back up.

After a minute, stop the music and say:

HOST: "You crushed it! But let's think about this for a second. Keeping all those balloons up took a lot of focus, right? You couldn't just focus on one, you had to keep track of *everything* at once ... upside down.

"Life can feel like that sometimes. We're trying to keep everything 'up,' our grades, our reputation, our friends, our image. But it's kind of exhausting trying to keep ourselves at the center all the time. This month, we're learning that following Jesus means turning things upside down.

"It's not about keeping *me* lifted up ... it's about lifting *Him* up. And by doing that, we start learning to live a lot differently.

11 min

Worship Option 1 | Amazing Music

3 min

Praise | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

I'm Free! | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Memory Verse

"That's what today's story is all about: how John the Baptist realized that Jesus must increase ... and he must decrease.

"That's our Bottom Line for the day! Check it out!"

SLIDE: Bottom Line

HOST: "Let's say it together!"

KIDS AND HOST: [*Bottom Line*] "Jesus must increase. I must decrease."

HOST: "Awesome job! Let's learn more about what that means!"

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Music and Orange Kids Music. We've created these worship resources to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids by incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Orange Kids Music can be purchased at store.thinkorange.com. Amazing Music is available on APlay with Amazing+, or as an Add-On.

"Hey, everyone! I'm so glad you're here today. Our first song today is called 'Praise.' This song reminds us that no matter what is happening around us, God is always worthy of our praise. When we sing, we're not just saying words; we're thanking God for who He is and for all He has done. So as we sing, let's lift our voices and focus on Jesus. Let's give Him the honor He deserves!

"Wow! You all sang that like you meant it! Now, let's sing another song that helps us remember something so important that Jesus gives us—freedom! When we follow Him, we don't have to worry or try to be the best. Jesus already loves us completely! Let's sing this one loud!

"Wow! You all sang that like you meant it! Now, let's sing another song that helps us remember something so important that Jesus gives us—freedom! When we follow Him, we don't have to worry or try to be the best. Jesus already loves us completely! Let's sing this one loud!

"Great job, everyone! I love worshipping God with you all! Here's what we can remember today—worship doesn't stop here. You can keep worshipping God this week by the way you live, the way you treat people,

What You Need

No supplies needed

10 min

**Worship Option 2
| Orange Kids
Music**

5 min

O Priase

and the way you trust Him. You can keep worshipping God all through the week!

"This whole month, we're learning how to live *Upside Down!* We're discovering what it means to treat others the way Jesus treats us. When we live with humility, when we think of others first, we show everyone that Jesus loves them.

"Our Memory Verse for this month reminds us how to do that. It's found in Philippians 2:3. I'll read it first, and then we'll all say it together!

SLIDE: Memory Verse

WORSHIP LEADER: "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"

"Now, let's say it together, nice and loud!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do it because you are proud."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do it because you are proud."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Instead, be humble."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Instead, be humble."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Value others more than yourselves."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Value others more than yourselves."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

"Great job! That's such a powerful reminder that following Jesus means putting others first. When we do that, we make Jesus more important than anything else in our lives."

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Music and Orange Kids Music. We've created these worship resources to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids by incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Orange Kids Music can be purchased at store.thinkorange.com. Amazing Music is available on APlay with Amazing+, or as an Add-On.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Alright, everyone, let's get ready to worship! This is our chance to celebrate how good God is! He made each one of us. He loves us more than we can imagine, and He's always with us, no matter what we're going through."

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Thank Yout God | Worship song**What You Need**

No supplies needed

Worship Closer**What You Need**

No supplies needed

24 min

**Bible Story
(Video)**

12 min

StoryLab Bible Story | Video**What You Need**

No supplies needed

12 min

**So and So Show Bible Story |
Video****What You Need**

No supplies needed

31 min

Bible Story (Live)

"When we sing, we're not just saying words, we're thanking God for who He is and all the amazing things He's done. So come on, let's stand up, smile big, and sing out loud to show God how much we love Him!

"You guys sound amazing! Did you know God hears every word? He loves it when we take time to worship Him, not just with our voices, but with our lives. Let's keep worshipping together!

"Great job, everyone! I love worshipping God with you all! Here's what we can remember today—worship doesn't stop here. You can keep worshipping God this week by the way you live, the way you treat people, and the way you trust Him. You can keep worshipping God all through the week!

Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your

3 min

INTRODUCTION

What You Need

 Communicator	1
 Bible	1
 Table	1
 Trophy or mirror ("Reputation" prop)	1
 Smartphone ("Online Identity" prop)	1
 Hoodie ("Image" prop)	1

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!

If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, there are two sections in the script below that are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." (Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!) We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!

Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend. Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!

What You Do:

- Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
- Confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids' environments (see above under Opener).
- While teaching the Bible Story, hold up the props to give examples of what you are teaching on.

Make sure the table is set on stage so the Communicator can place their Bible on it and read from it. Make sure the props (the trophy/mirror, the smartphone, and the hoodie) are ready on the table as well.

COMMUNICATOR: "Okay, I'm loving this theme, 'Upside Down!' We can get so used to how we live and what we do. So then, when we actually start looking at the way Jesus lived, it can *feel* upside down to what we're used to!

"We're going to unpack so much this month, learning what it means to live like *He* did, to treat others the way *Jesus* treats us. And sometimes that means flipping our usual way of thinking.

COMMUNICATOR: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

TRUTH**What You Need**

No supplies needed

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. 'Help us!' they cried out to God. God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

"After God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they disobeyed God—again and again and again. Even the kings God gave them rebelled! So, God split the nation in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. Oh no! After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

"And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised! While Jesus was on Earth, He showed us who God is because He is God!

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!"

COMMUNICATOR: "This week we're continuing our journey through the Bible. We're at the part in the Bible where Jesus was on Earth! And this interaction with John the Baptist happened while Jesus was on Earth.

"Now, John the Baptist was kind of a big deal. He had been out and about telling people to get ready, because God's promised Rescuer was coming soon. Crowds came to hear him. People followed him. But when Jesus arrived ... everything started to change. People started to follow Jesus and not John.

"And John's followers were totally shocked. This is what happened: *Open the Bible to John 3:26 (NirV) and read.*

They came to John and here is what they said to him. "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River is baptizing people. He is the one you told us about. Everyone is going to him."

COMMUNICATOR: “Now, John had been preaching that the Messiah was coming! And John even baptized Jesus! So John wasn’t some random guy teaching in the desert. He was pretty well known! People traveled to hear him preach, confess their sins, and be baptized. He had followers and disciples! If there had been social media, John would have been trending #DesertPreacher.

“But someone else started to get a lot of attention ... and things started to change fast. People were leaving John to follow Jesus!

“Can you imagine how that felt to all of John’s followers? For a long time, John had been *the guy*. The one everyone wanted to hear. The one everyone followed. But now people were leaving him to follow Jesus.

“Let’s stop right there for a second. Remember how we talked about how we’d feel if all of a sudden, everyone started paying attention to someone else instead of us?

“Yeah. That would sting a little.

“That’s what John’s followers were feeling. They couldn’t understand how their leader, their hero, could just step aside and let someone else take the spotlight. But John knew something his followers didn’t. He knew this moment wasn’t about losing fame; it was about lifting Jesus up.

COMMUNICATOR: “When Jesus started getting all of the attention. John didn’t panic. And he didn’t pout. He didn’t complain about losing followers. Why didn’t he freak out?? Because he knew exactly why he was there. This is what he said:

Open the Bible to John 3:27-30 (NIRV) and read.

“A person can receive only what God gives them from heaven. You yourselves are witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah. I was sent ahead of him.’ The bride belongs to the groom. The friend who helps the groom waits and listens for him. He is full of joy when he hears the groom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become more important. I must become less important.”

“Did you catch that? John said, *“He must become more important. I must become less important” (John 3:30 NIRV)*. That’s what humility looks like. John wasn’t bitter that Jesus was becoming more popular; he was *excited!* *The Messiah, the one who saves, had come!* This was what John had been preparing for all along.

“Let’s unpack what he meant.

Pick up the “reputation” object—the trophy or mirror.

“Some of us spend a lot of time trying to make *this* bigger. Our reputation. We want people to say, ‘Wow, they’re so talented. They’re so cool. They’ve got it together.’ How many of you here have ever thought or said things like:

- I care a lot about what others think.
- I don’t want to let them down.
- I’ve got to keep a good image in front of them.
- I don’t want to stick out or be made fun of.
- I’ve just got to keep my reputation!

"Here's the thing: it's not bad to care what others think. But it gets dangerous when you start worrying so much about what others think that you change who you are. And that becomes what you focus on—keeping up your reputation.

Pick up the smartphone.

"Or maybe it's this—our followers, our posts, our streaks. We want to be noticed. We want to stay with the trends, and either we don't have a phone, so we feel like we're left out, or we don't post enough, or we didn't get enough views on a certain video. It can just become exhausting if we aren't careful.

Pick up the hoodie.

"Or this: what we wear, what we have. We think, 'If I just look the part, I'll matter more.' Everyone is dressed a certain way, and if I don't, then I'm not cool. I don't fit in. If I don't get those shoes for my birthday I asked for, I'm not good enough ...

"Do you see how if we stay in these mindsets, it's a never-ending cycle? There will always be new shoes we don't have, always be a friend group we aren't a part of—the list goes on and on.

"John saw things differently. He saw that really all he needed was more of Jesus, and less of John. It's not that John thought he didn't matter. He definitely mattered! We all matter! He just knew that the best thing he could do with his life was to point people to Jesus.

"John knew this—when Jesus increases, everything else finds its right place. Jesus wasn't just another good teacher. He is the Son of God!

John said this in the Bible:

Open the Bible to John 3:31 (NirV) and read.

"The one who comes from above is above everything."

"In other words: Jesus isn't from here. He's from heaven. He is God! And then John said something even more amazing:

Open the Bible to John 3:34-36 (NirV) and read.

"The one whom God has sent speaks God's words. That's because God gives the Holy Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has put everything into his hands. Anyone who believes in the Son has eternal life."

"Did you hear that?"

"Anyone who believes in the Son has eternal life" (John 3:36 NirV). That means forever life, with God. That's why John didn't care about losing attention on himself. He was just a person, Jesus is the Savior—the Source of eternal life.

"John wasn't losing anything; he was gaining everything by pointing to Jesus. This is why it's so important for Jesus to increase in our lives and we decrease. We actually gain so much more.

5 min

APPLICATION**What You Need**

No supplies needed

5 min

**GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER
(OPTIONAL)****What You Need**

No supplies needed

COMMUNICATOR: "So let's think about what that means for us. **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase, I must decrease.** That doesn't mean we stop being ourselves or disappear. It means we choose to put Jesus first.

"When you focus on your reputation, what starts happening? It's easy to start getting anxious and worried all the time. When you focus on your image, it's easy to get insecure and almost feel like you're not enough. When you live for your followers on social media apps, you always want more; it's never enough. When you chase after what fades—like trends, clothes, jokes, the cool groups—you eventually become tired.

"But when you focus on Jesus, you get peace—peace that passes all of your understanding. When you live for Jesus, you already *have* more. Jesus completes you. When you chase after Jesus, you'll find life that lasts.

"John figured it out. He didn't have to be the star. He just had to shine his light toward the real one.

"That's what it means when we say: **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase, I must decrease.**

"So use your whole life as an arrow that points to Jesus. Be kind, like Him. Be fair, like He is. Be compassionate, like He is. You're not just being kind, you're being like Jesus. You're not just being merciful, you're being like Jesus.

"And then, start talking 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. Because this good God who is your friend wants to be their friend too. Over time, you are continually pointing people to Jesus.

HOST: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story—the picture that says, 'Jesus' Life.' Jesus Himself came to teach us about who God is!

"This week, we talked about a very important person in Jesus' life—Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist! John the Baptist taught us so much about Jesus. His whole life was an arrow that pointed to Jesus! One of the important ideas that John the Baptist taught was this: 'Jesus came from heaven, and He tells us all about heavenly things.' That's a big reason why God sent Jesus. He came to teach us heavenly things. Jesus came to show us who God is and what God is like! And while Jesus was here on Earth showing us what God is like, Jesus also lived a perfect life. He did not sin at all. Then He gave up that perfect life to break the awful curse of sin that we were under. The King of heaven died and rose again to set us free, so that we could be close friends with God again—forever!

5 min

LANDING**What You Need**

No supplies needed

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!"

SLIDE: Week 1 Timeline Image

If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's Timeline Image on the clothesline.

"This week we learned from John the Baptist how Jesus must increase and we must decrease!"

COMMUNICATOR: "So maybe for you, being humble can start with even some simple things:

- Letting someone else go first.
- Choosing to help instead of trying to look good.
- Talking to God before posting something for attention.

"Every time you do that, you're saying, 'Jesus, You increase. I'll decrease.' And when we live that way, people don't just see *us*, they start to see *Him*."

"Let's remember today's Bottom Line together."

SLIDE: Bottom Line

"Say it with me."

COMMUNICATOR AND KIDS: [Bottom Line] "Jesus must increase. I must decrease."

"That's what humility looks like. It's upside down. And it's the best way to live."

"With this Bottom Line ...That's not something you just *hear once* and instantly know how to do. It's something we *practice*—every day, in little choices."

"So here's the question I want you to think about, not just right now, but all week:

SLIDE: Conversation Starter

[Conversation Starter] "How can I show that Jesus is the most important in my life?"

"Think about that. When you go to school, or hang out with friends, or scroll through your phone, what does it look like to make *Jesus* the most important?"

"Maybe it's letting someone else get the credit. Maybe it's giving up time to help instead of competing. Maybe it's choosing what's right even when nobody else is watching. There are so many ways."

3 min

PRAYER

What You Need

No supplies needed

"But here's the thing, when Jesus becomes more important in your life, it changes *how you see everything*.

"That's what I want you to talk about later in your group. Be honest. Be real. And don't be afraid to ask questions.

COMMUNICATOR: "Let's pray together.

"God, we love You. We want to walk in real humility. Help us stop trying to make ourselves the most important person in the story. Teach us to live upside down, to let You increase while we decrease. When we're tempted to make life about ourselves, remind us to lift You higher instead. And through our lives, let others see who You are. We love You, and we want more of You, Jesus. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Supplies

Opener	Quantity
1. Host	1
2. inflated ballons	6
3. Upside-Down goggles	2
4. kid volunteers	2
5. Timer (or smartphone or watch or countdown)	1

INTRODUCTION	Quantity
1. Communicator	1
2. Bible	1
3. Table	1
4. Trophy or mirror ("Reputation" prop)	1
5. Smartphone ("Online Identity" prop)	1
6. Hoodie ("Image" prop)	1

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)

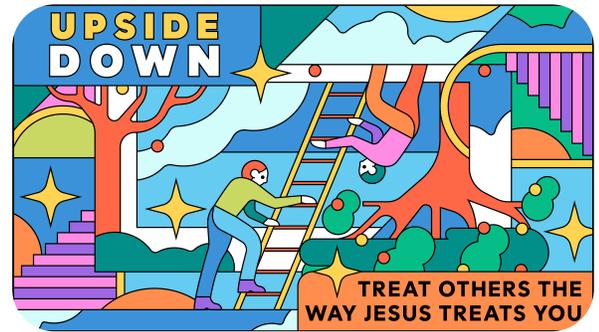
Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss (K-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade), Make It Personal with Prayer (Preteen)

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

Large Group Opener

5 min

OPENER

What You Need

 Host	1
 kid volunteers for each round you do (Kids will ask for new volunteers at the start of each round!)	3
 silly hats (like a top hat, football helmet, straw hat, party hat, etc.)—1 hat is for the Host, and 3 are for the kids.)	4
 Timer (or smartphone or watch or countdown).	1

- Have the 4 silly hats lined up at the front of the room.

HOST: "Hey, everyone! Welcome back to another awesome week of 'Upside Down!' How's everybody doing today?"

"I'm so glad you're here because this month, we're learning about what it looks like to live differently, to treat others the way Jesus treats us. And today, we're talking about something that can really flip our thinking: remembering that God is most important, not us."

"Before we jump into the true story from the Bible that we're looking at today, we're going to start with a game called 'Upside Down Obstacle Course!' But here's the catch, you're not going to run it the normal way. You're going to run it backwards!"

SLIDE: "Upside Down Obstacle Course Title"

"I'm going to need 10 volunteers and will split you into two teams of five. You'll start at the line, and when I say, 'Go,' you'll walk backwards around the cones, jump backwards through the Hula Hoops®, then run back to the start line—you guessed it—backwards! Then you'll tag the next teammate. The first team to finish the obstacle course wins!"

"Okay, raise your hand if you'd like to volunteer!"

Pick ten kid volunteers from the ones who have their hands raised, split them into two teams of five, and line them up at the start line.

"Okay teams, get ready! And remember, you have to stay backwards the WHOLE time!"

"3 ... 2 ... 1... GO!"

AUDIO: Upbeat Music

Play the game. Kids weave in and out of the cones backwards and jump backwards through the Hula Hoops®. Once they finish the obstacle course, they continue to walk or run backwards to their team at the start line and tag the next teammate. The first team to have all team members complete the course wins.

Make sure kids are staying backwards the whole time—both when they go through the obstacle course and when they go back to the start line to tag the next teammate.

"Woohoo! [Team name] won! Let's give a big hand for both of our teams! If time allows, ask for ten new volunteers and repeat the game."

HOST: "Nice job, everyone! You all had to really adjust to doing everything backwards! You can all head back to your seats!"

"Looks like it's time to check out our Bottom Line! Let's see what it is for today."

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "Remember God is most important." Today, we're going to learn about a very important person who knew that God is the most important! This story will help us remember that we should always go to Him first. It's so good to have such a good God in charge!"

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Music and Orange Kids Music. We've created these worship resources to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids by incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Orange Kids Music can be purchased at store.thinkorange.com. Amazing Music is available on APlay with Amazing+, or as an Add-On.

3 min

Praise | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

Waiting Here for You | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Memory Verse

What You Need

No supplies needed

WORSHIP LEADER: "Our first song today is called 'Praise!' This song reminds us that we can praise God no matter where we are or what's going on. He's the most important one in our lives, and He deserves all our thanks! So let's stand up, get our hands ready, and give our biggest praise to God!"

"This next song reminds us that even when we have to wait or when things don't make sense, God is always with us. He hears our prayers, and we can trust Him because He's the one who's in charge. Let's sing 'Waiting Here for You.'

"Great job, everyone! I love worshipping God with you all! Here's what we can remember today, worship doesn't stop here. You can keep worshipping God this week by the way you live, the way you treat people, and the way you trust Him. You can keep worshipping God all through the week!

"You all did such an amazing job worshipping today! Now, we're going to look at our Memory Verse for this month. This verse reminds us how to live the way Jesus did, with humility, which means putting others first and remembering that God is most important. It's found in Philippians 2:3. I'll read it first, and then we'll all say it together!"

SLIDE: Memory Verse

WORSHIP LEADER: "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"

3 min

Worship Option 2 (Orange Kids Music)

3 min

O Praise | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

Thank You God | Worship Song

"Now, let's say it together, nice and loud!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do it because you are proud."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do it because you are proud."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Instead, be humble."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Instead, be humble."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Value others more than yourselves."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Value others more than yourselves."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

"Great job, everyone! When we remember this verse, it helps us live upside down—not just thinking about ourselves, but putting God and others first."

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Music and Orange Kids Music. We've created these worship resources to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids by incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Orange Kids Music can be purchased at store.thinkorange.com. Amazing Music is available on APlay with Amazing+, or as an Add-On.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Alright, everyone, let's get ready to worship! This is our chance to celebrate how good God is! He made each one of us. He loves us more than we can imagine, and He's always with us, no matter what we're going through."

When we sing, we're not just saying words, we're thanking God for who He is and all the amazing things He's done. So come on, let's stand up, smile big, and sing out loud to show God how much we love Him!

What You Need

No supplies needed

24 min

**Bible Story
(Video)**

12 min

StoryLab Bible Story | Video**What You Need**

No supplies needed

12 min

**So and So Show Bible Story |
Video****What You Need**

No supplies needed

28 min

Bible Story (Live)

"You guys sound amazing! Did you know God hears every word? He loves it when we take time to worship Him—not just with our voices, but with our lives. Let's keep worshipping together!"

Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!

If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, there are two sections in the script below that are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." (Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!) We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!

Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend.

3 min

INTRODUCTION

What You Need

 Host

 Storyteller

 Bible

 Table

Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!

COMMUNICATOR: "Alright, let me ask you something. When something happens in your life—big or small—who do you run to?"

"For instance, when something awesome happens, maybe you got a new pet or aced a test, who do you tell first?"

Pause and let kids shout answers.

"Nice! Okay, what about when something not-so-awesome happens? Like when you get in trouble, or something scary happens, or you feel left out. Who do you run to then?"

Listen to a few responses.

"Yeah, it's funny how that can change, right? Sometimes it's a parent, a friend, a teacher, or maybe even a pet.

"We're going to play a quick game to find out. It's called 'Who Do I Run To?'"

"Here's how it works. Each corner of the room is going to stand for someone you might run to. We've got:

Corner 1: Parent

Corner 2: Friend

Corner 3: Teacher or Leader

And Corner 4 is a wildcard. That means anyone else you might run to who's not listed.

"Can I have four leaders who will hold these signs in the corners?"

Choose four leaders, give each leader a sign, and direct them to hold their sign and stand in a corner.

"I'll read a situation, and you'll pick your corner fast. You'll have 10 seconds to decide. Ready? Let's do it!"

Read each round, and pause as the kids run to the corner they want to choose for that round.

Round 1:

"When you're sick, who do you run to?"

Round 2:

"When you're scared, who do you run to?"

Round 3:

"When you've made a mistake, who do you run to?"

5 min

TENSION**What You Need**

No supplies needed

Round 4:

"When you need advice, who do you run to?"

"Okay, that was awesome. And it's so great for us all to have people we go to. We should always have people literally in our corner! But here's the thing. There's one Person we can always run to, no matter what's happening. Anybody know who I'm talking about?"

"Exactly. It's God! No matter what's going on, He's always ready to listen, to help, and to guide us. And that's what today is all about—learning what it looks like to remember that God is the most important One in our lives."

COMMUNICATOR: "Alright, so we just played 'Who Do I Run To?' and I want you to keep that question in your head as we go into today's story. Because sometimes, when life gets tough, we forget who to run to first. "There are going to be moments in our lives, whether we believe it or not, where we will not know what to do. No matter how smart we are, or how strong we think we are, we are stuck needing help.

"Because here's the truth, no matter how old we get or how confident we feel, every single one of us hits moments when we can't fix the problem ourselves.

"Maybe it's someone you care about who's hurting. Maybe it's a situation at school that feels impossible. Maybe it's something you wish you could snap your fingers and solve ... but you can't.

"And that feeling? It's uncomfortable. It can be very frustrating. And it can feel kind of scary when you are facing a situation, and you can't fix it.

"Now, imagine with me this: imagine being someone who is used to being in control. Someone who gives orders. Someone people listen to instantly. Someone others depend on to fix things.

"Imagine being *that* person ... and suddenly realizing there is nothing you can do to change what's happening. Your power, your influence, your plans—none of it helps.

"What would you do then? Who would you run to for help? Would you even feel comfortable asking for help ... if everyone expects you to have the answers?"

"This is where today's true story begins. It starts with someone powerful, someone respected, someone who had every reason to rely on themselves. And yet, they reached a moment where they couldn't fix something really important.

"But before we get into our true story from the Bible today, let me tell you something amazing we're doing this year!

"We're going to read the key stories of the Bible from cover-to-cover!

"Why are we going through the Bible? Is it because we really want to learn more about the Bible? Well, not exactly. Part of the reason God gave us the Bible is so we can learn about Him. He could have kept who He is a secret from us, a big mystery of the universe. But He didn't! He wants us to know Him, so He gave us the Bible. So as we go through the Bible this year, our hope is that we'll learn about Him!"

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. 'Help us!' they cried out to God. God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

"After God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they disobeyed God—again and again and again. Even the kings God gave them rebelled! So, God split the nation in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. Oh no! After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

"And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised! While Jesus was on Earth, He showed us who God is because He is God!

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!"

COMMUNICATOR: "We're continuing our journey through the Bible! We're at the part of the Bible where Jesus was on Earth! And today we're going to look at a conversation Jesus had with someone when he hit a moment he couldn't fix on his own ... and this person was a Roman commander.

What You Need

No supplies needed

Open the Bible to Matthew 8:5-6 (NIRV) and read.

"When Jesus entered the town of Capernaum, something unexpected happened. When Jesus entered Capernaum, a Roman commander came to him. He asked Jesus for help. 'Lord,' he said, 'my servant lies at home and can't move. He is suffering terribly.'"

"Now, this was a big deal. A Roman commander wasn't just any person. He was powerful. He had authority. He was used to giving orders and having people jump the moment he spoke.

"But in this moment? None of his power could fix the problem. So instead of pretending he had everything under control, he ran straight to Jesus.

"That alone must have shocked the crowd.

Open the Bible to Matthew 8:7-9 (NIRV) and read.

Jesus said, "Shall I come and heal him?" The commander replied, "Lord, I am not good enough to have you come into my house. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. I myself am a man under authority. And I have soldiers who obey my orders. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes. I tell that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it."

"Okay, let's pause there for a second. I want everyone to try something with me. Sit up straight. Imagine you're a commander—you're in charge of about a hundred soldiers. When you give an order, people listen.

"Ready? I'm going to say, 'Go,' and you move your hands like you're sending someone away. Then I'll say, 'Come,' and you motion like you're calling them back. Ready? Go ... Come ... Go ... Come! (*Demonstrate as the kids make the motions.*)

"That's what the Roman commander did every single day. He gave orders. He directed people. He had real power. He could make people move, and they'd do it. He could command soldiers, servants, and workers, and they would listen instantly. He didn't have to ask or beg.

"But look at what he said to Jesus. 'I'm not good enough to have You come to my house. Just say the word, and it'll happen.' That was him understanding that Jesus had the highest authority, and that he needed to go to the most important.

"This man, one of the most powerful people in town, realized something amazing. Jesus was the real One in charge!

"Jesus has authority over everything—over sickness, over distance, over life itself. So the Roman commander knew that Jesus didn't even need to show up. If Jesus just spoke, it would be done.

"That's faith. That's upside-down thinking. That's what it means to remember that God is most important.

Open the Bible to Matthew 8:10 (NIRV) and read.

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. He said to those following him, "What I'm about to tell you is true. In Israel I have not found anyone whose faith is so strong."

"The Roman commander amazed Jesus! Can you imagine being the person who amazed Jesus? The Son of God actually stopped and said, 'Now that's faith.' Not a religious leader. Not one of His disciples. Not someone who had followed Him from the beginning, but a Roman commander. An outsider!

"I bet everyone there went quiet for a moment. The Jewish people listening must have been surprised. They thought they were the ones who were supposed to have the strongest faith. But Jesus was showing them that real faith doesn't depend on where you're from or how much you know, it's about who you trust. Jesus said this:

Open the Bible to Matthew 8:11-12 (NIRV) and read.

"I say to you that many will come from the east and the west. They will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of heaven. They will sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But those who think they belong in the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness. There they will weep and grind their teeth."

"See, it's not your family or where you live or how good you are that makes you a part of God's kingdom. It's your faith in Jesus, your choice to be on His team, that makes a way for you to live forever in heaven with God.

"Then something amazing happened.

Open the Bible to Matthew 8:13 (NIRV) and read.

Then Jesus said to the Roman commander, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment.

"Did you catch that? Jesus didn't have to walk to the man's house. He didn't have to see the servant. He just spoke, and the healing happened instantly.

"That's how powerful Jesus is. That's how much authority He has. He doesn't need to be in the room. He doesn't need help. When He speaks, things change.

"And that's what the Roman commander understood. He ran to Jesus and asked for help, knowing Jesus could fix it because Jesus is in charge. Everything answers to Him.

"So think about it for a second. When something feels out of control in your life, when you can't fix it or figure it out, who do you run to?"

5 min

APPLICATION**What You Need**

No supplies needed

5 min

**GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER
(OPTIONAL)****What You Need**

No supplies needed

Because the commander went to Jesus. He knew that Jesus was the most important."

COMMUNICATOR: "That same kind of faith is what Jesus invites us to have. Whether you realize it or not, we all have moments when we try to take control. We think: 'If I just work harder, if I just fix this, if I just prove myself—I can make it right.' But that is when life starts to feel upside down. You get tired, anxious, and frustrated because you're trying to do what only God can do.

"Instead, Jesus invites us to come to Him first. To stop trying to handle everything alone. It's not about praying perfect prayers or having everything figured out. It's simply about saying, 'Jesus, I trust You.'

"When we're frustrated, we can know that God is most important, and go to Him first. When we're scared, or happy, we can **[Bottom Line] remember God is most important**, and make time for Him. Throughout the day, make God the most important.

"When you make God the most important part of your life, everything else starts to fall into place. You stop worrying so much about what you can't control, and start finding peace in knowing that He is already working. That doesn't mean life will always be easy, but it does mean you don't have to carry it all yourself. When you run to Jesus first—like the Roman commander did—you will see that He has the power to do more than you ever could on your own."

COMMUNICATOR: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story—the picture that says, 'Jesus' Life.' Jesus came to teach us about who God is!

"This week, we talked about a super-important truth that's true over all of life—Jesus is in charge! The Roman commander showed that he knew Jesus was in charge, and Jesus was so impressed! Jesus really is in charge ... of everything. Darkness and evil must answer to Him. And that dark curse of sin answers to Him too. As we learned throughout God's Big Story, God has been working and working and working to send us Jesus! Then once Jesus came, He lived a perfect life, and died on a cross to pay for our sins. Now, we can be close to God again. And one day, when Jesus returns, the curse of sin and death that infects this world will be no more! The God who is in charge loves us so much!

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!

8 min

Closing

5 min

LANDING

What You Need

No supplies needed

SLIDE: Week 2 Timeline Image

If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's Timeline Image on the clothesline.

"This week we learned from the Roman commander coming to Jesus!"

COMMUNICATOR: "So this week, when things get hard or feel out of control, I want you to remember the Roman commander. He had every reason to rely on his own power, but instead, he chose to trust Jesus. That is what real faith looks like. It's not about having all the answers. It is about knowing who to run to first.

"When life feels upside down, when things don't go your way, or when it feels easier to worry or give up, stop for a second and remember who is really in control. Run to Jesus. Let Him lead. He is strong! He is the strongest!

"The world tells us that we have to prove ourselves, that we have to stay in control. But Jesus shows us something different. He shows us that when we put God first, knowing He is most important, everything else finds its right place. That is why we remember this simple truth.

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "Remember God is most important. Say that with me!

COMMUNICATOR AND KIDS: *[Bottom Line]* "Remember God is most important."

COMMUNICATOR: "Before we head to small groups, I want to leave you with one last question to think about."

SLIDE: Conversation Starter

[Conversation Starter] "How do you show that God is most important?"

"Today we talked about a Roman commander who was in charge of all of these soldiers, yet he chose to trust Jesus instead of himself. That is a huge reminder for all of us. Because sometimes, without even realizing it, we start running to other things first—our friends, our phones, our plans, or even our own strength. But real faith starts when we realize that God is most important.

3 min

PRAYER

What You Need

No supplies needed

"So think about this: How do you show that God is important? Maybe it's taking a few minutes to pray before your day starts. Maybe it's thanking Him before you post or text. Maybe it's showing kindness when you really don't want to.

"Whatever it looks like for you, remember that you can show God is most important through the choices you make and the way you treat people. Just like the commander, you can trust that Jesus' words are true and His power is real. The same God who was in charge of the Roman commander's life is in charge of yours!

"As you go to small group, talk about it. Be honest. Share what gets in the way sometimes, and talk about how you can make God first again this week. Because when we run to Jesus first, everything else starts to fall into place."

COMMUNICATOR: "Let's talk to the God who is in charge."

"God, we want to trust You, even when it does not make sense. Help us to remember that You are the most important part of our lives. When we are tempted to try to fix everything on our own, remind us to run to You first. When we start to worry or feel out of control, remind us that You are strong enough to handle it. We are choosing to trust You more this week. We want to put You first in what we say, in what we do, and in how we treat others. We love You, Jesus, and we want to follow You every day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

AUDIO: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.

SLIDE: Theme

Supplies

OPENER		Quantity	INTRODUCTION		Quantity
1.	Host	1	1.	Host	1
2.	kid volunteers for each round you do (Kids will ask for new volunteers at the start of each round!)	3	2.	Storyteller	1
3.	silly hats (like a top hat, football helmet, straw hat, party hat, etc.)—1 hat is for the Host, and 3 are for the kids.)	4	3.	Bible	1
4.	Timer (or smartphone or watch or countdown).	1	4.	Table	1

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)

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

Large Group Opener

5 min

OPENER

What You Need

 Host	1
 Table	1
 kid volunteers for each round you do (You will ask for three new kid volunteers at the start of each round!)	3
 sets of blocks, enough for three kids to make an object	3
 small containers of Play-Doh®	3
 sheets of aluminum foil, long enough to make an object (may need more depending on how many rounds you do)	4

- Set up the blocks, Play-Doh®, and 2 sheets of aluminum foil on the table.

Things to have ready: 2 start lines made of floor tape. 2 lines made of floor tape. 2 blindfolds. Game slide. Bottom Line slide.

HOST: "Hey, everyone! Welcome back to another awesome week of our series called 'Upside Down!' How's everybody doing today?"

"I'm so pumped you're here because this month, we're learning what it means to live in an upside-down kind of way, the kind of way that looks totally different from what the world expects. And I don't mean hanging upside down from the monkey bars, even though that's fun too. I mean following Jesus by treating people the way He treats us, even when it's hard.

"And today ... oh, it's going to get real. We're talking about how to love people even when they're ... let's say ... kind of hard to love. You know, that friend who gets on your nerves, that classmate who's rude, that sibling who, let's be honest, you just really can't handle a lot of the time? Yeah. Those moments.

"Well, Jesus actually had something incredible to say about that, and we'll learn what it is soon. But first, let's start with a game that's a little bit backwards. You're going to need to follow and listen carefully. It's called 'Lead the Way!'

SLIDE: Lead the Way Title

"Here's how it works. I need two teams, and each team will have two players. One player is going to be blindfolded, and the other is going to be their guide.

"The blindfolded player will have to walk backwards. Yep. You heard that right. Backwards! That means you can't see where you're going, and you can't even tell what direction you're facing! You'll be walking completely upside down from what feels normal. That's the challenge!

"See these two paths on the floor? They're full of twists, turns, and zigzags. The guide's job is to use only their voice to help their teammate get to the end. If the kid who is blindfolded gets too far off the line, the guide will need to lead them back to it before they can keep going. But remember ... you can only use your voice to guide your teammate!

"The first team to reach the end of their line wins. And if you're in the audience, your job is to cheer them on! Okay, let's pick our volunteers! Raise your hand if you'd like to play!

Pick four volunteers from the kids who have their hands raised, split them into two teams of two, and line them up at the start line. Name the teams "Team One" and "Team Two."

Give one kid from each team a blindfold and make sure they are facing backwards on the starting line.

"All right, teams, let's get ready to go upside down!

"3 ... 2 ... 1 ... GO!

AUDIO: Upbeat music

Start the game. Encourage each team as they race and involve the audience. Make sure the blindfolded kids are walking backwards and staying on the line, and make sure the kids who are guides are using only their voices to guide the blindfolded kids.

"Woohoo! [Insert team name] is the winner!

If time allows, ask for four new volunteers and repeat the game.

"Great job, everyone! You know, that game is actually a lot like what we're learning about today.

"Because the truth is, loving others, especially when they're unkind, can feel just like walking blindfolded sometimes. You're not sure where to step next, or how to respond, but Jesus shows us the way.

"Let's look at what our Bottom Line is for today!

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "Love like Jesus even when it's hard. Say that with me!"

HOST AND KIDS: [Bottom Line] "Love like Jesus even when it's hard!"

HOST: "Nice job, everybody. Let's go learn more about that!"

11 min

Worship Option 1 (Amazing Music)

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Kids Worship and Orange Kids Music. We've created these songs to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids, incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen these specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Be sure to share the links to these songs with parents so

3 min

Praise | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

I'm Free! | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Memory Verse

What You Need

No supplies needed

they can stream them at home or in the car! Songs can be purchased at store.thinkorange.com or for free with APlay.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hey, everyone! Are you ready to worship? Today, our first song is called 'Praise.' It's all about lifting our voices to say, 'God, You're amazing!' There's *never* a bad time to thank God for His love. So let's stand tall, clap those hands, and show God how thankful we are!"

"Now, let's sing another song that fits perfectly with what we're learning today. It's called 'I'm Free!' When we follow Jesus, we don't have to be stuck worrying about what people think or trying to be the best all the time. Jesus helps us live with joy and peace, even when it's hard. So let's jump, dance, and sing loud, because in Jesus, we are free!"

"Great job, everyone! I love worshipping God with you all! Here's what we can remember today, worship doesn't stop here. You can keep worshipping God this week by the way you live, the way you treat people, and the way you trust Him. You can keep worshipping God all through the week!"

"Now, let's take a look at our Memory Verse for this month. It's one of my favorites because it reminds us how to live *Upside Down*, the way Jesus wants us to live."

"Let's break it down so we can understand it better, and then we'll all say it together!"

SLIDE: Memory Verse

Don't do anything only to get ahead. That means, don't just think about yourself.

Don't do it because you are proud. That means, don't brag or try to look better than someone else.

Instead, be humble. 'Humble' means putting others first.

Value others more than yourselves. That means treating people like they matter ... because they *do!*

"Now, let's say it together, nice and loud!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "*Don't do anything only to get ahead.*"

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "*Don't do anything only to get ahead.*"

WORSHIP LEADER: "*Don't do it because you are proud.*"

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "*Don't do it because you are proud.*"

WORSHIP LEADER: "*Instead, be humble.*"

6 min

Worship Option 2 (Orange Kids Music)

3 min

O Praise | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

Thank You God | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

24 min

Bible Story (Video)

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Instead, be humble."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Value others more than yourselves."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Value others more than yourselves."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

"Awesome job! You just said the Memory Verse like pros! This verse reminds us to put others before ourselves. We can start with even the small things, like sharing a toy or asking if you can help someone clean. Ask God this week to help you be humble and value others this week! That's what living *Upside Down* looks like!"

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Music and Orange Kids Music. We've created these worship resources to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids by incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Orange Kids Music can be purchased at store.thinkorange.com. Amazing Music is available on APlay with Amazing+, or as an Add-On.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Alright, everyone, let's get ready to worship! This is our chance to celebrate how good God is! He made each one of us. He loves us more than we can imagine, and He's always with us, no matter what we're going through.

"When we sing, we're not just saying words, we're thanking God for who He is and all the amazing things He's done. So come on, let's stand up, smile big, and sing out loud to show God how much we love Him

"You guys sound amazing! Did you know God hears every word? He loves it when we take time to worship Him, not just with our voices, but with our lives. Let's keep worshipping together!"

12 min

StoryLab Bible Story | Video

What You Need

No supplies needed

12 min

So and So Show Bible Story | Video

What You Need

No supplies needed

38 min

Bible Story (Live)

3 min

INTRODUCTION

Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!

If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, there are two sections in the script below that are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." (Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!) We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!

Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend. Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!

Make sure the table is set on stage so the Communicator can place their Bible on it and read from it. The Communicator should hold a remote control—could be a real TV remote or a prop.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Hey, everyone! Quick show of hands, who here controls the remote at your house? (*Hold up the remote.*)"

What You Need

👤	Storyteller	1
👤	Host	1
👤	Bible	1
👤	Table	1
👤	Adult volunteers	2

5 min

TENSON**What You Need**

No supplies needed

"Yeah, that's what I thought. There's always that one person who somehow always has it. And they're powerful, right? One click, boom, total control. You can change the channel, skip ads, rewind your favorite part, you could even choose to watch the same movie over and over again.

"Boring ad? Click. Funny moment? Rewind. Your sibling is talking way too loud? Volume wayyyy up. Someone asks you to take out the trash? Hopefully you pause and go take out the trash!

"Wouldn't it be great if we could do that in real life? Okay, imagine this with me! Someone at school is being rude, click! Mute. (*Push the pretend "mute" dramatically.*) You're done. Someone gossips about you, click! (*Push the pretend "rewind" dramatically.*) Rewind, so you can think of the perfect comeback. Or when your brother eats the last slice of pizza, click! (*Push the pretend "power button" dramatically.*) Power off his video game.

"It would feel so amazing to have that kind of control, right? But here's the thing ... we don't get a remote in real life. (*Hold up the remote.*) And when things get hard or unfair, we don't get to mute people, rewind moments, or skip the parts we don't like. So what happens then?

"Because when someone hurts us or annoys us, we have a decision to make. And that is where today's story really begins.

COMMUNICATOR: "You know, the thing about not having a remote for real life is that things happen that we don't get to control. People say things that sting. Friends let us down. Someone rolls their eyes at you or talks behind your back. And the worst part? You can't mute them. You can't rewind the moment. You can't delete what they said.

"When that happens, something starts happening inside us. We replay the moment in our heads over and over again—rewind, replay, rewind, replay. And the more we replay it, the angrier we feel.

Share an age-appropriate story of how you kept replaying what someone said and wanted to get back at them.

"It's wild how fast hurt can turn into a plan. You start imagining how to make them feel what you felt. You start thinking, 'They deserve it.' You want control. You want payback. You want your moment. And without even realizing it, you hand the remote of your emotions to the person who hurt you. You don't say it out loud, but your heart is basically going, 'Here. You decide how I feel today.'

"So, I want to ask you: what do you do when someone hurts you, and everything in you wants to get even?

"Because the story we're about to look at starts in the exact same place, with people who wanted payback, people who wanted fairness, people who wanted control, but then Jesus taught something upside-down. But

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

before we get into our true story from the Bible today, let me tell you something amazing we're doing this year!

"We're going through the key stories of the Bible from cover to cover!

"Why are we going through the Bible? Is it because we really want to learn more about the Bible? Well, not exactly. Part of the reason God gave us the Bible is so we can learn about Him. He could have kept who He is a secret from us, a big mystery of the universe. But He didn't! He wants us to know Him, so He gave us the Bible. So as we go through the Bible this year, our hope is that we'll learn about Him!"

COMMUNICATOR: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. 'Help us!' they cried out to God. God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

"After God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they disobeyed God—again and again and again. Even the kings God gave them rebelled! So, God split the nation in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. Oh no! After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

15 min

TRUH**What You Need**

No supplies needed

"And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised! While Jesus was on Earth, He showed us who God is because He is God!

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!"

COMMUNICATOR: "We're continuing right along in our journey through the Bible. We are at the part of the Bible where Jesus was alive on Earth! Let's listen to something He said.

"Jesus was teaching on a mountainside, and a huge crowd had gathered around Him. They'd heard about the miracles He'd done. They'd heard how He taught with authority no one had ever seen before. And honestly? A lot of the people were probably expecting Him to tell them how to fight back, how to stand up for themselves, or how to make things fair again. That's what they were used to hearing from leaders. But instead, Jesus began describing what God's Kingdom is *really* like, and it was nothing like they expected.

Open the Bible to Matthew 5:38-39 (NirV) and read.

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye must be put out for an eye. A tooth must be knocked out for a tooth.' But here is what I tell you. Do not fight against an evil person. Suppose someone slaps you on your right cheek. Turn your other cheek to them also."

"Okay, hold up. That doesn't sound right, does it? Because everything in us says, 'If someone hurts me, I'll hurt them back.' That's what's fair! But Jesus said, 'Don't fight back. Don't get even.' This is something we are not used to doing; it doesn't come naturally to us.

"Let's go back to the remote. (*Hold up the remote.*) We start rewinding those moments, those words people said. (*Dramatically push a pretend "rewind" button.*) 'Why did they say that? I should have said THIS back!' Every time you replay it, you feed your anger. And before you know it, the other person's words are controlling you more than the remote ever could.

"But Jesus said, *pause.* (*Dramatically push a pretend "pause" button.*) Stop letting their actions write your story. Turn the other cheek. That doesn't mean you pretend it didn't hurt; it means you refuse to let hate be in charge.

Open the Bible to Matthew 5:40-41 (NirV) and read.

"Suppose someone takes you to court to get your shirt. Let them have your coat also. Suppose someone forces you to go one mile. Go two miles with them."

"That part sounds weird to us, but it made perfect sense to the crowd listening to Jesus. Back then, Roman soldiers could force anyone to carry their heavy packs for one mile. You didn't get to say no. It was humiliating, and people hated it. But Jesus said, 'Don't just go one mile.

Go *two*.' What?! Why would anyone do *extra* for someone who's being unfair?

"Because that's what love looks like. The first mile is what they can *make* you do. The second mile is what you *choose* to do, and that's where love lives. When you love your enemy, you're not saying what they did was okay. You're saying, 'You don't get to control my heart anymore.'

"See, when you don't hit rewind or volume up, (*Dramatically push a pretend "rewind" or "volume" button.*) when you don't react in anger, you're actually showing people what God is like.

Open the Bible to Matthew 5:43-44 (NirV) and read.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy.' But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you."

"Wow! Raise your hand if you think this is definitely upside-down thinking! Right?! I mean, loving your enemies?! That's tough! Praying for people who hurt you, that's really hard!

"But when we choose to follow Jesus, things start changing in us. And the Holy Spirit can help us start loving the people who frustrate us, start praying for them, even if they have hurt our feelings.

"Think about this: Anyone can hit play on anger. (*Dramatically push a pretend "play" button.*) Anyone can hit rewind on revenge. (*Dramatically push a pretend "rewind" button.*) But I'm challenging you to hand over the control, and give it to Jesus. (*Hold up the remote control.*)

"That's what makes it upside down. The world says, 'Fight back.' Jesus says, 'Love back.' And that's how the Kingdom of God sometimes works—completely opposite from what we want to do, but it's worth it. Every time you choose to love when it's hard, you're becoming more like the One who loved you first.

Open the Bible to Matthew 5:46-48 (NirV) and read.

"If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Even the tax collectors do that. If you greet only your own people, what more are you doing than others? Even people who are ungodly do that. So be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

"Not a single person has ever 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.

"Anyone can love people who are nice to them. That's really easy. But it takes *God's love* to love people who hurt you."

"That's why this ... (*Hold up the remote.*) isn't about control anymore. It's about surrender. When you do that, when you choose to love like Jesus even when it's hard, you're not just copying Him. You're *becoming* like

5 min

APPLICATION**What You Need**

No supplies needed

5 min

**GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER
(OPTIONAL)****What You Need**

No supplies needed

Him. You're living upside down, and showing the world the heart of your Father."

COMMUNICATOR: "The upside-down way Jesus taught is to love even when it's hard, even when someone rolls their eyes at you, even when they talk behind your back, even when they cut you out of a group, or even when they keep being rude. Loving like Jesus doesn't mean pretending the hurt isn't real or letting people walk all over you. It means refusing to let the hurt be in charge of your heart. It means choosing a response that looks like Jesus instead of a reaction that looks like payback.

"When Jesus said, '*Love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you*' (Matthew 5:44 NIV), He was inviting us to live free—free from replaying the moment, free from plotting revenge, free from giving someone else the remote to our emotions. (*Hold up the remote.*)

"So what does love look like this week? First, **pause**. Before the talk back, before the text back, before the clap-back, take a breath and ask, 'Jesus, what looks like You right now?'

"Second, **pray for them specifically**. You don't have to feel it to pray it, ask God to help them and to help you.

"Third, **go the second mile**. If it's safe and wise, do one unexpected good thing—hold the door, share a pencil, invite them to sit with your group. That small choice says, 'You don't control my heart, Jesus does.'

"Fourth, **set good boundaries**. Loving like Jesus includes wisdom. If someone is being harmful or unsafe, tell a trusted adult and create space. Forgiveness and boundaries can go together.

"And when it still feels impossible? Remember, you are not doing this alone. Ask the Holy Spirit for strength. Remember how Jesus loved you first, when you didn't earn it. You won't get it perfect every time. That's okay. Keep practicing pausing, praying, going the second mile, and setting boundaries when needed. Little by little, your reactions will start to look less like revenge and more like Jesus, and that's how His love changes you and the people around you."

HOST: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story—the picture that says, 'Jesus' Life.' Jesus Himself came to teach us about who God is!

8 min

Closing

5 min

LANDING

What You Need

No supplies needed

"This week we learned a hard, hard truth that Jesus taught. Jesus taught us that when someone hurts us, we are to show them love back. But Jesus wasn't teaching us something that He didn't live out. In fact, He lived it out on the biggest scale ever. We had so many sins, and sins grieve God. Not only that, but all people for all time had sinned and grieved God. But on the cross, even though Jesus had lived a perfect life, Jesus took on all of that sin, and paid for it. Jesus said, 'Forgiven!' It's the ultimate power when love defeats sin, and that's exactly what Jesus did, for all of us.

SLIDE: Week 3 Timeline Image

If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's Timeline Image on the clothesline.

"And this week, we learned how Jesus taught us that we should love our enemies!"

COMMUNICATOR: "So this week, when it feels easier to stay mad or get even, hand the remote to Jesus. (*Hold up the remote.*) Let Him guide your response. When you want to hit rewind and replay what someone said to you, pause instead. When you feel like turning up the volume on your anger, choose to turn it down and listen for His voice. When you're tempted to fast-forward through a hard moment, stop and ask for His patience. Every time you hand Jesus the remote, you're saying, 'I trust You more than my feelings.' That's real strength.

"So this week, let's live differently. Let's hand control to Jesus and let His love lead the way. Because the world doesn't change when we fight back, it changes when we love back.

"Before we head to small groups, I want to leave you with one last question to think about."

SLIDE: Conversation Starter

[Conversation Starter] "How can you love like Jesus when it's hard?"

"Think about it for a second. Maybe there's someone in your life who's tough to get along with, a classmate who gets on your nerves, a friend who hurt your feelings, or maybe even someone in your family. Loving them doesn't mean pretending what they did was okay; it means choosing to respond in a way that looks more like Jesus.

"As you head to small group, I want you to really think about that. How can you love like Jesus when it's hard? What would it look like to

3 min

PRAYER

What You Need

No supplies needed

choose love instead of revenge this week? How could your choice to love actually change the situation, or even change you?"

COMMUNICATOR: "Let's talk to the God who will help you show love, even when it's hard."

"God, thank You for showing us what real love looks like. Jesus, You loved people who hurt You, and You forgave when it didn't make sense. That kind of love feels impossible sometimes, but we know You can help us do it. This week, when it feels easier to stay mad or get even, remind us to hand You the remote. Help us to pause, to listen, and to let Your love lead our hearts. Give us the courage to choose kindness, forgiveness, and grace when it's hard. We want to love like You do. Thank You for loving us first. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

AUDIO: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.

SLIDE: Theme

Supplies

OPENER	Quantity
1. Host	1
2. Table	1
3. kid volunteers for each round you do (You will ask for three new kid volunteers at the start of each round!)	3
4. sets of blocks, enough for three kids to make an object	3
5. small containers of Play-Doh®	3
6. sheets of aluminum foil, long enough to make an object (may need more depending on how many rounds you do)	4

INTRODUCTION	Quantity
1. Storyteller	1
2. Host	1
3. Bible	1
4. Table	1
5. Adult volunteers	2

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.

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)

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

Large Group Opener

5 min

OPENER

What You Need

No supplies needed

HOST: "Hey, everyone! Welcome back to another week of our theme for this month—'Upside Down!' How's everybody doing today?"

"Awesome! This month, we've been learning what it means to live upside down, to treat others the way Jesus treats us, even when that looks totally different from the way the world does things.

"Today, we're talking about something really important—something that can actually flip the way we live every single day. It's all about making time for Jesus first. But before we dive in, we've got a crazy game to get us thinking about focus and paying attention. It's called 'Reverse Charades'! Is everyone ready to play?"

SLIDE: Reverse Charades Title

"Here's how it works! I'm going to pick two volunteers to come up here. You'll be standing side by side, facing the audience. Behind you on the screen, there's going to be a picture. You can't see it, but everyone in the audience can! The picture has two things on it that are totally random and out of the box.

"The audience's job is to act out what's on the screen without saying the words. You two will have to guess what the picture is based on what the audience does. Each round, we'll get two new volunteers to come up and try! Got it?"

"Okay, first I need two volunteers who want to do some guessing! If you want to guess, raise your hand!"

Choose two volunteers from the kids who have their hands raised. Invite them to come on stage.

"Okay, now that everyone is settled, let's play our first round. If you're in the audience, do your best to act out this picture for our volunteers!"

SLIDE: Reverse Charades 1 (Toaster on clouds)

Audience acts out the charades image, and the two volunteers try to guess what it is.

"Nice! Let's give our two volunteers a hand! You guys crushed it! You can return to your seats!"

"Let's do another round! I need two more volunteers! Raise your hand if you'd like to volunteer!"

Choose two volunteers from the kids who have their hands raised. Invite them to come on stage.

SLIDE: Reverse Charades 2 (Basketball player dunking a donut)

"Okay, if you're in the audience, do your best to act out this picture for our volunteers! Volunteers, you two try to guess what they're acting out!

Audience acts out the charades image, and the two volunteers try to guess what it is.

"Awesome job! Let's give a big hand for our volunteers! You guys can return to your seats!

If time allows, continue with more rounds. Ask for two new volunteers at the beginning of each round. The other rounds are listed next.

Optional Additional Rounds:

SLIDE: Reverse Charades 3 (Cat astronaut)

SLIDE: Reverse Charades 4 (Pizza skateboard)

SLIDE: Reverse Charades 5 (Upside down house)

SLIDE: Reverse Charades 6 (Elephant rollerskating)

SLIDE: Reverse Charades 7 (Flying dinosaur superhero)

"Great job, everyone! You can all be seated. Now, that game might've felt a little crazy with people acting all around you while you were trying to figure out what was going on. It's kind of like life, right? There's always something fighting for your attention. But if you're not careful, you might miss what really matters.

"Today's Bottom Line reminds us of what's most important.

SLIDE: Bottom Line

"When we **[Bottom Line] make time for Jesus first**, everything else in our lives starts to fall into place. Let's say our Bottom Line together!"

HOST AND KIDS: [Bottom Line] "Make time for Jesus first!"

HOST: "Great job, everyone!"

11 min

Worship Option 1 (Amazing Music)

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Music and Orange Kids Music. We've created these worship resources to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids by incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or

3 min

Praise | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

Waiting Here for You | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Memory Verse

What You Need

No supplies needed

combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Orange Kids Music can be purchased at store.thinkorange.com. Amazing Music is available on APlay with Amazing+, or as an Add-On.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hey, everyone! It's so good to see you! I love that we get to spend this time together worshipping God. You know, worship is one of the best ways we can make time for Jesus. When we sing, dance, or even just listen, we're showing God that He's the most important part of our day."

"Let's start with a song that helps us focus on how great He is. Go ahead and stand up, stretch those arms, and get ready to praise!

"Wow, that was awesome! You all bring so much joy when you sing. Worship is powerful because it helps us remember who God is and how much He loves us. When we stop and spend time with Him, everything else fades away, and we recognize that He is number 1 in our lives!

"This next song reminds us that even when we have to wait, Jesus is with us. We can take a breath, slow down, and remember to trust Him. Let's sing 'Waiting Here for You!'

"Great job, everyone! I love worshipping God with you all! Here's what we can remember today: worship doesn't stop here. You can keep worshipping God this week by the way you live, the way you treat people, and the way you trust Him. You can keep worshipping God all through the week!

"Now, let's take a look at our Memory Verse for this month. It's such a good reminder of what it means to live the *upside-down* way, God's way. It's not about being first or trying to get ahead. It's about slowing down, being humble, and putting others first, just like Jesus. It's Philippians 2:3! I'll read it, and then we'll all say it together!

SLIDE: Memory Verse

"Now, let's say it together, nice and loud!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do it because you are proud."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do it because you are proud."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Instead, be humble."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Instead, be humble."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Value others more than yourselves."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Value others more than yourselves."

6 min

Worship Option 2 (Orange Kids Music)

3 min

O Praise | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

Thank You God | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

"Awesome job! This verse helps us remember how to treat people in the best way. When it says, 'Don't do anything only to get ahead,' it means we shouldn't do things that are wrong or hurtful just to be first or to win. We don't have to always be better than everyone else. Philippians 2:3 also says, 'Don't do it because you are proud.' That means we don't need to brag or show off. Instead, we can be humble, which means we can share, take turns, and let others go first.

"Then it says, 'Value others more than yourselves.' That means we can think about other people and care about them as much as we care about ourselves. We can help someone when they need it, be kind when someone feels sad, and notice ways to make others feel special. When we live this way, we are showing the world the love of Jesus!"

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Music and Orange Kids Music. We've created these worship resources to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids by incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Orange Kids Music can be purchased at store.thinkorange.com. Amazing Music is available on APlay with Amazing+, or as an Add-On.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Alright, everyone, let's get ready to worship! This is our chance to celebrate how good God is! He made each one of us. He loves us more than we can imagine, and He's always with us, no matter what we're going through.

"When we sing, we're not just saying words, we're thanking God for who He is and all the amazing things He's done. So come on, let's stand up, smile big, and sing out loud to show God how much we love Him!"

"You guys sound amazing! Did you know God hears every word? He loves it when we take time to worship Him, not just with our voices, but with our lives. Let's keep worshipping together!"

24 min

Bible Story (Video)

12 min

StoryLab Bible Story | Video

What You Need

No supplies needed

12 min

So and So Show Bible Story | Video

What You Need

No supplies needed

38 min

Bible Story (Live)

3 min

INTRODUCTION

Make sure the table is set on stage so the Communicator can place their Bible on it and read from it. Have the leader ready with their props to interrupt. Have another leader ready to call your phone. Make sure your phone is on loud.

COMMUNICATOR: "Alright, everyone, by show of hands, who here gets easily distracted? Right, it's so easy! Let's say you are trying to do devotions, you get out your Bible, and you are ready to focus. And then all of a sudden you hear your brother turn on the TV, and you really want to watch, but you are trying to focus, and then all of a sudden you see a notification pop up on your phone or tablet—another distraction! And then all of a sudden, you smell the most delicious brownies someone is baking in the kitchen. There are endless distractions!"

Phone starts ringing. COMMUNICATOR pulls it out.

"Oh, hang on one second, yeah? Uh-huh. I'm kind of teaching right now. No, not a great time. Okay, bye."

"Sorry! Where was I? Oh, right, distractions."

What You Need

 Storyteller	1
 Host	1
 Bible	1
 Table	1
 Communicator's phone	1
 Leader to be the person calling on the phone	1
 Random props for the leader who is distracting: plunger, rubber chicken	Several
 Extra copies of the script for the leader calling on the phone, and the leader with the distractions	Several

5 min

TENSION**What You Need**

No supplies needed

Phone buzzes again. COMMUNICATOR ignores it and puts it face down.

"Ever have one of those days when it feels like the whole world is trying to get your attention? Like you can't focus for five seconds without something popping up?"

A leader walks onstage, holding a plunger or another random object.

LEADER: "Hey, sorry to interrupt! Quick question, did you get my email about the snack for our leaders next week? We really need someone to grab donuts. Would you be able to?"

COMMUNICATOR: "Oh ... right now?"

LEADER: "Yeah, I mean, you could order them on your phone really quick!"

COMMUNICATOR: "I'll ... handle it later. Thanks!"

Leader leaves, distractedly checking their phone, bumping into something on the way out.

COMMUNICATOR: "You okay, [leader's name]? Also, they were holding a plunger, weren't they? I don't even want to ask. Okay. That's a great example. Even leaders get distracted. And it's funny ... but also kind of true. We get distracted by everything—good things, random things, loud things, normal things. And if we're not careful, all those distractions can pull us away from what matters most."

COMMUNICATOR: "The thing about distractions is that they don't always show up waving their arms and yelling. Sometimes they're actually good things, things we care about, things we want to do well, things that feel important in the moment. But even good things can pull our attention in a dozen different directions if we're not careful. And when everything starts demanding our focus at the same time, it becomes really easy to miss what matters most."

"Think about your week. Maybe you sit down ready to spend a few minutes with Jesus, but then you remember homework you forgot to finish. Or your phone buzzes. Or someone calls your name. Or a message pops up. Or you suddenly feel hungry. It's like the second you try to focus, the world decides to start shouting. And the moment you planned for Jesus has completely disappeared."

"And honestly? This happens to all of us. Not because we don't love Jesus, but because everything else feels louder. We tell ourselves we'll spend time with God later, after school, after practice, after homework, after we're not tired anymore. But later comes, and we're still distracted. Still busy. Still pulled in every direction. And the thing we *meant* to do gets pushed to tomorrow ... again."

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

"So what do you do when everything in your life is fighting for your attention, and you end up missing the one thing that matters most? Because distractions aren't a sometimes thing, they're an everyday thing. If we don't learn how to choose what's better, we'll keep giving our time and energy to everything except the One who matters most.

"And believe it or not, someone in our true story today dealt with this exact struggle. Not because they were doing anything wrong, but because they were doing so many good things that they almost missed the best thing.

"But before we get into that amazing true story from the Bible today, let me tell you about the amazing thing we're doing this year! We're going to read the key stories of the Bible from cover-to-cover!

"Why are we going through the Bible? Is it because we really want to learn more about the Bible? Well, not exactly. Part of the reason God gave us the Bible is so we can learn about Him. He could have kept who He is a secret from us, a big mystery of the universe. But He didn't! He wants us to know Him, so He gave us the Bible. So as we go through the Bible this year, our hope is that we'll learn about Him!"

COMMUNICATOR: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. 'Help us!' they cried out to God. God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

"After God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they disobeyed God—again and again and again. Even the kings God gave them rebelled! So, God split the nation in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. Oh

15 min

TRUTH**What You Need**

No supplies needed

no! After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

"And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised! While Jesus was on Earth, He showed us who God is because He is God!

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!"

COMMUNICATOR: "We're continuing our journey through the Bible in today's story! We're at the part of the Bible where Jesus was on Earth! Let's hear about something that happened during His life!

"So Jesus and His friends were traveling, teaching, and helping people. When they reached a town called Bethany, they stopped at the home of two sisters, Mary and Martha. These two were close friends of Jesus, and they were so excited to see Him."

"Martha wanted everything to be perfect for Jesus and His friends! So Martha got busy doing all of the things necessary to make their visit wonderful. Martha may have been preparing a meal or getting the house ready for all those guests. She wanted everything just right for Jesus and His friends."

Phone buzzes. Communicator glances at it, sighs, and sets it down again.

"Meanwhile, Mary? She sat right at Jesus' feet, listening to Him teach. She didn't want to miss a word."

Leader reenters, carrying another random prop, a rubber chicken, to add to the distractions.

LEADER: "Hey, sorry again. Quick thing. Do you know where we keep the extra extension cords? Something is unplugged backstage, so yeah, trying to fix it, just need that extension cord ..."

COMMUNICATOR: "No idea. Maybe... not right now?"

LEADER: "Right, sorry! My bad."

"Oh, also, did you get my text about the volunteer meeting?"

COMMUNICATOR: "Still in the middle of something!"

LEADER: "Got it! Carry on!" *(Exits dramatically.)*

COMMUNICATOR: "Were they holding a rubber chicken?! I'm so confused right now. Okay, where were we? Oh yeah, Martha was running around doing all the work, and Mary was sitting and listening and being with Jesus. Eventually, Martha got frustrated. She burst into the room and basically tattled on her sister to Jesus! And you could almost hear the frustration in her voice."

Phone buzzes again. Communicator stops mid-sentence, looks at it, and sets it down deliberately.

"Because let's be honest, sometimes, we are just like Martha. We want everything to go right. We want to do things for Jesus, but we end up too distracted to actually spend time with Him.

"Martha asked Jesus to tell her sister to get up and help her. This is exactly what she said:

*Open the Bible to Luke 10:40 (NirV) and read.
She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, my sister has left me to do the work by myself. Don't you care? Tell her to help me!"
"Jesus responded in a way that probably surprised Martha."*

Open the Bible to Luke 10:41-42 (NirV) and read.

*"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered. "You are worried and upset about many things. But few things are needed. Really, only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better. And it will not be taken away from her."
"When Martha burst into the room, she was convinced she was right. But instead of agreeing, Jesus looked at her with love and said something totally unexpected.*

"Jesus wasn't saying that what Martha was doing was bad. The food, the cleaning, the serving—it was all good! But it wasn't the *best* thing. Martha had missed the best thing. She was doing things *for* Jesus, but she wasn't spending time *with* Jesus.

Phone buzzes one more time.

"You know what? This phone keeps doing exactly what that work was doing to Martha, trying to pull my attention everywhere else."

Turns the phone off and sets it face down.

"I'm turning this off ... there. There have been a lot of distractions today!!! Wow, hold on ... do you hear that? Peace. Sometimes, that's exactly what we have to do—pause, silence the noise, and choose to focus on what's better. And in every case, being with Jesus is what is better.

"See, Jesus didn't ask Martha to stop caring about people or stop doing things for others. He just reminded her that those things aren't the most important thing. The most important thing is Him. When you start your day with Jesus, when you pause to talk to Him before everything else, you'll notice something: the rest of your day changes.

5 min

APPLICATION**What You Need**

No supplies needed

5 min

**GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER
(OPTIONAL)**

"You'll still have responsibilities. You'll still have people to care for. But instead of feeling rushed, worried, or distracted, you'll have peace. You'll remember that Jesus is with you, helping you, guiding you, and giving you strength.

"When you make time for Jesus first, it doesn't mean everything else stops, it just means everything else gets better. Because when your heart is focused on Him, you'll handle everything else differently. Maybe that means putting your phone down when you pray. Or unplugging your game console. Maybe it means listening before you speak. Maybe it's pausing in the middle of your day to say, 'Jesus, I'm listening.' Whatever it looks like for you, it starts with one simple choice—to **[Bottom Line] make time for Jesus first.**

"Jesus wants to be with you, and He doesn't want to have to earn your attention. He wants all of it. He wants you."

COMMUNICATOR: "Martha's story reminds us that sometimes we can be so busy *doing* things for God that we forget to actually *be* with God. She wanted to impress Jesus with her hard work, but all He really wanted was her attention. That's a big deal, because it means Jesus doesn't measure how much we do, He looks for how close we are to Him. It's pretty amazing that we can be in the presence of the Almighty God. Let's not miss it.

"Think about this phone. (*Hold up your phone.*) It's not bad, it's helpful. But if I'm always looking down at it, I miss what's happening right in front of me. It's easy for all of us to get stuck in distractions, texts, notifications, videos, and noise. They pull our focus in every direction, and before we know it, we've lost the quiet moments when we can actually listen for God's voice. Jesus told Martha that Mary had chosen what was *better*. Mary wasn't being lazy, she was being present.

"Making time for Jesus first doesn't mean you stop doing the things you love. It means you start by inviting Him into them. You can talk to Jesus while you walk to school, thank Him before a big game, or ask for peace before a hard conversation. It's choosing to pause before rushing into your day and saying, 'Jesus, I'm here.' The truth is, when you give Him your time first, the rest of your day shifts. You're calmer, kinder, and more aware of the people around you."

HOST: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!

SLIDE: God's Big Story

What You Need

No supplies needed

8 min

Closing

5 min

LANDING**What You Need**

No supplies needed

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story—the picture that says, 'Jesus' Life.' Jesus came to teach us about who God is!

"This week, we learned that deepening our friendship with Jesus is the most important thing we can do in our lives. Well, God feels that way too. That curse of sin that everyone was put under after the Garden of Eden kept us from being close to God. But that didn't stop God! He spent years and years and years—look how faithful He was (*gesture to the God's Big Story slide and the Timeline Images*)—to set the stage of human history for Jesus to come. And then when Jesus came, He lived a perfect life, and paid for that sin. And by paying for that sin, He made a way for us to be close friends with God again! God worked throughout human history so we could be close to Him again! Our friendship with God is so important to Him that Jesus gave His life for it!

"Let's put our image on our timeline!"

SLIDE: Week 4 Timeline Image

If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's Timeline Image on the clothesline.

"This week, we learned about Mary and Martha and that our friendship with Jesus is the most important thing!"

COMMUNICATOR: "So this week, when your schedule feels full, when you're jumping from one thing to the next, remember this story. Remember Martha running around, trying to get it all done, while Mary just sat at Jesus' feet. It wasn't that Martha's work didn't matter, it just wasn't what mattered *most*.

"When life feels loud or your mind feels crowded, try what Mary did. Pause. Sit still. Take a deep breath. Imagine setting everything else down—the noise, the stress, the expectations—and focusing on Jesus. He's already waiting for you, ready to listen, ready to guide, ready to give you peace.

"Because the truth is, the world is always going to shout for your attention. But when you slow down and make time for Jesus first, you'll find something the world can't give you, the presence of God. Everything else might still be spinning, but you will be with Jesus.

"So this week, choose what's better. Choose to make time for Jesus first."

3 min

PRAYER**What You Need**

No supplies needed

SLIDE: Bottom Line

"Before we head to small groups, I want to leave you with one last question to think about."

*SLIDE: Conversation Starter***[Conversation Starter] "How can you make time for Jesus?"**

"Think about your week for a second. What usually takes up most of your time: school, sports, gaming, scrolling, or hanging out with friends? None of those things are bad, but sometimes they can fill up so much space that we forget to pause and spend time with God."

"Maybe for you, making time for Jesus means starting your morning with prayer before you reach for your phone. Maybe it's reading one Bible verse before bed or taking a few quiet moments to thank Him during the day. Maybe it's pausing before playing a game and reading a devotional instead. It doesn't have to be big or perfect, just honest."

"So as you head to your small group, think about this: What would it look like for you to make Jesus the first thing, not the last thing? What's one change you could make this week to spend a little more time with Him, and see how it changes your day?"

COMMUNICATOR: "Before we pray, would you think about what your biggest distraction is right now? And would you give it to the Lord, and ask Him to help you make Him first in your life?"

Pause for a moment to let the kids talk to God, and then close in prayer.
 "Jesus, thank You for showing us what really matters. Sometimes we get so caught up in doing things, that we forget to just be still and spend time with You. Thank You for reminding us, like You reminded Martha, that the most important thing is sitting with You, listening, and being close to You. Help us this week to slow down. Help us to turn off distractions and make space to talk to You. When our days feel busy or stressful, remind us to pause and remember that You're right there with us. Thank You that You love us, not because of what we do, but because of who You are. Jesus, help us choose what's better, to make time for You first. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

*AUDIO: Play high-energy music as the kids exit**SLIDE: Theme*

Supplies

INTRODUCTION	Quantity
1. Storyteller	1
2. Host	1
3. Bible	1
4. Table	1
5. Communicator's phone	1
6. Leader to be the person calling on the phone	1
7. Random props for the leader who is distracting: plunger, rubber chicken	Several
8. Extra copies of the script for the leader calling on the phone, and the leader with the distractions	Several

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

Large Group Opener

5 min

OPENER

What You Need

👤	Host	1
👤	10-15 kid volunteers for each round you do (You will ask for new volunteers at the start of each round!)	10
👤	Tape	1
👤	Pieces of paper—one that says, "UP," and the other "DOWN" (See "What You Do" section to make them)	2
👤	Optional: Thick, black marker	1

What You Do:

- Download the slides or optional videos and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
- Refer to week 1 to confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids' environments.
- In bold, write or print the word "UP" on one piece of paper and the word "DOWN" on the other piece of paper.
- Tape one piece of paper on the wall at one end of the room, and the other piece of paper on the wall at the other end of the room.

HOST: "Hey, everyone! Welcome back to another awesome week of 'Upside Down!' That's our theme this month, and it's our last week!

"This whole month, we've been learning how following Jesus turns our world upside down. It changes the way we think, the way we live, and the way we treat people around us.

"Now, I don't know about you, but sometimes when the world is turned upside down, it gets a little confusing! So today, we're going to play a game that's totally unpredictable and totally wild! It's called ...

SLIDE: The Floor Is Upside Down! Title

HOST: "'The Floor Is Upside Down!' All right, here's how this works! I'm going to call out one of three commands, 'Up,' 'Down,' or 'Freeze.' When I say one, you have to move to that spot on the floor, or just freeze!

"But ... there's a catch! After a few rounds, everything is going to flip. So pay attention, because once the world goes *upside down*, the rules change completely! I've also got some signs hung up to show you where to go.

Gesture to "Up" and "Down" signs on the walls.

"Okay, let's pick some volunteers for our game! Raise your hand if you'd like to volunteer! I need ten to fifteen of you!

Choose 10-15 kids from the ones who have their hands raised and direct them to the game area.

"Ready? Everyone spread out so you've got room to move. Let's do a practice round.

AUDIO: Upbeat music

Play a few normal rounds. Call out "Up," "Down," or "Freeze." Kids have to run to that area or freeze. This is not a competition, just a fun game! Stop the music when you're done.

"All right, you're doing great! But now ... it's time to flip the world upside down and add a new command! When I say 'Up,' that now means 'Down'! When I say 'Down,' that means 'Up'. When I say 'Freeze,' you have to DANCE! If I say, 'Dance,' you have to FREEZE! Got it?"

"Let's see if you can keep up in the upside-down world! Ready?"

AUDIO: Upbeat music

"Up!

Kids run to "Down Zone."

*"Freeze!
Kids dance.*

"Down!

Kids move to "Up Zone."

"Dance!

Kids freeze.

If time allows, continue with more rounds. Ask for 10-15 new volunteers at the beginning of each round.

"Okay, everybody, stop where you are! You all crushed it! That got a little wild, huh? You never knew what was going to happen next! That's kind of what we've been learning about this whole month. And when Jesus came, He flipped everything upside down—what people expected about the world and what it means to follow God.

"Let's look at our Bottom Line for today. It reminds us that we can be humble like Jesus!"

SLIDE: Bottom Line

HOST: [Bottom Line] "Jesus showed us how to be humble!"

"Say that with me!"

HOST AND KIDS: [Bottom Line] "Jesus showed us how to be humble!"

HOST: "Exactly. Today, we're going to see how Jesus, the King of kings, didn't act like any king you'd expect. He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. He washed His friends' feet. And He showed everyone what real greatness looks like—putting others first."

11 min

Worship

3 min

Praise | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

Hosanna (Praise Is Rising) | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Memory Verse

What You Need

No supplies needed

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Music and Orange Kids Music. We've created these worship resources to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids by incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Orange Kids Music can be purchased at store.thinkorange.com. Amazing Music is available on APlay with Amazing+, or as an Add-On.

"It's good to see you all! It's time for worship! Worship is one of the ways we show God how much we love Him. When we sing, we're not just saying words, we're telling God, 'You are the most important.' And today, we're going to start by singing a song that helps us do exactly that."
"Let's get on our feet, shake out your arms, and get ready to move as we sing 'Praise!'"

"Great job! You sound incredible! I love hearing you shout out praise to God. Now, our next song is extra special, it reminds us of the story we're learning today. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, people waved palm branches and shouted 'Hosanna!' which means: 'Save us, we pray!'"
"So as we sing 'Hosanna (Praise Is Rising),' imagine being in that crowd, cheering for Jesus, the humble King, who came to serve and save us. Let's give Him our best praise!"

"I love worshipping God with you all! Let's move on to looking at our Memory Verse we have been learning about all month! It's one of my favorites because it reminds us how to live *upside down*, the way Jesus taught us to live. When we're humble, we stop trying to be the most important and start looking for ways to lift others up instead. That's what Jesus did every day, and it's what we can do too! Now, let's take a look at our Memory Verse for this month. It's Philippians 2:3! I'll read it, and then I will lead you through it!"

SLIDE: Memory Verse

WORSHIP LEADER: "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)"

"Now, I'll lead you through it. Say it after me—nice and loud!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead."

6 min

Worship Option 2 (Orange Kids Music)

3 min

O Praise | Worship Song

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

Thank You God | Worship Song

WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do it because you are proud."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do it because you are proud."
WORSHIP LEADER: "Instead, be humble."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Instead, be humble."
WORSHIP LEADER: "Value others more than yourselves."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Value others more than yourselves."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Awesome job, everyone! You just said that verse like pros! This verse reminds us that we can live like Jesus—kind, humble, and full of love. It's not about trying to get ahead or look the best. It's about seeing others the way Jesus sees them and choosing to care first. This week, you can show humility in simple ways: let someone else go first in line, help a friend who's having a hard day, or say something kind instead of something mean. When you do, you're living *upside down*—just like Jesus!"

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Music and Orange Kids Music. We've created these worship resources to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids by incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Orange Kids Music can be purchased at store.thinkorange.com. Amazing Music is available on APlay with Amazing+, or as an Add-On.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Alright, everyone, let's get ready to worship! This is our chance to celebrate how good God is! He made each one of us. He loves us more than we can imagine, and He's always with us, no matter what we're going through.

"When we sing, we're not just saying words, we're thanking God for who He is and all the amazing things He's done. So come on, let's stand up, smile big, and sing out loud to show God how much we love Him!"

"You guys sound amazing! Did you know God hears every word? He loves it when we take time to worship Him, not just with our voices, but with our lives. Let's keep worshipping together!"

What You Need

No supplies needed

24 min

Bible Story (Video)

12 min

StoryLab Bible Story | Video

What You Need

No supplies needed

12 min

So and So Show Bible Story | Video

What You Need

No supplies needed

38 min

Bible Story (Live)

Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!

If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, there are two sections in the script below that are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." (Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!) We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!

Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend.

3 min

INTRODUCTION

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

TENSION

What You Need

No supplies needed

Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!

COMMUNICATOR: "Welcome to our final week of this series—'Upside Down!' All month long, we've been talking about how following Jesus flips things upside down. The way we treat people, the way we forgive, the way we love—it all starts to look different from what the world expects. And today, we're talking about another upside-down idea: humility.

"Now, let's be honest, humility is kinda weird. Because most of the time, the world says things like: 'Stand out.' 'Be the best.' 'Make sure everyone knows how talented you are.' 'Get noticed.'

"But humility? Humility says the opposite. Humility says you don't have to be the center of attention. You don't have to look powerful. You don't have to show off. And that can feel ... strange and different. It feels upside down.

"Think about this: when you hear the word 'greatness,' what pops into your head? Probably something big, loud, impressive, powerful. Maybe bright lights or famous people. Or some huge victory moments. But what if greatness doesn't always look like that? What if greatness looks like something simpler ... something quieter ... something unexpected? And that's what we're exploring today.

COMMUNICATOR: "Let's be honest here, who likes being noticed? It feels good when someone sees your effort, compliments your skills, or recognizes what you can do. But sometimes, without meaning to, we start chasing that feeling. We start caring a little too much about what people think, how impressive we look, or whether anyone is paying attention.

"But I want to unpack what humility is with you all. Humility definitely feels upside down a lot of the time. Because it doesn't try to shine. Humility doesn't push to the front. It doesn't need a spotlight. But there's the struggle of us thinking things like this: 'Be important. Look impressive. Make sure people see you.' Suddenly, choosing humility feels like choosing to go unnoticed ... and that's not easy.

"Think about it. How do you react when someone else gets the attention you wanted? When someone else gets the spotlight, the compliment, the shoutout, or the win? It's not easy to be excited for them. It's even harder to stay humble when everything in you wants to jump in and be noticed.

"Is it hard for you to be humble? We all have faced it. The struggle between wanting to look important and choosing to be humble is right where our true story from the Bible begins. It starts with huge

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

expectations, a moment of excitement, and a crowd that thought they knew exactly what greatness should look like ... only to discover something completely upside down.

"But before we get into that amazing true story from the Bible today, let me tell you about the awesome thing we're doing this year! We're going to read the key stories of the Bible from cover-to-cover!

"Why are we going through the Bible? Is it because we really want to learn more about the Bible? Well, not exactly. Part of the reason God gave us the Bible is so we can learn about Him. He could have kept who He is a secret from us, a big mystery of the universe. But He didn't! He wants us to know Him, so He gave us the Bible. So as we go through the Bible this year, our hope is that we'll learn about Him!"

COMMUNICATOR: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. 'Help us!' they cried out to God. God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

"After God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they disobeyed God—again and again and again. Even the kings God gave them rebelled! So, God split the nation in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. Oh no! After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

15 min

TRUTH**What You Need**

No supplies needed

"And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised! While Jesus was on Earth, He showed us who God is because He is God!

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!"

COMMUNICATOR: "We're continuing our journey through the Bible. And we're right at the part where Jesus was on earth! Let's learn more about what happened while Jesus was on earth!

"Jesus had become known everywhere. People had heard the stories, how He healed the sick, fed thousands with just a few loaves and fish, and even raised Lazarus from the dead.

Open the Bible to John 12:9-11 (NirV) and read.

Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there, so they came. But they did not come only because of Jesus. They also came to see Lazarus. After all, Jesus had raised him from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus too. Because of Lazarus, many of the Jews were starting to follow Jesus. They were believing in him."

"The city was buzzing. People were flooding into Jerusalem for Passover, wondering if Jesus was the King they'd been waiting for. But to understand what happened next, we need to look at what people expected a king to look like.

SLIDE: Teaching 1 Expectation: A gleaming golden crown

"When you picture a king, this is what you picture: power, glory, and a crown that says, 'I'm in charge.'"

SLIDE: Teaching 2 Reality: A simple image of Jesus

"But when people looked at Jesus, they didn't see a crown. They saw someone humble, gentle, and ordinary-looking—and yet He was the true King.

Open the Bible to John 12:12-15 (NirV) and read.

The next day the large crowd that had come for the feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. So they took branches from palm trees and went out to meet him. They shouted,

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Blessed is the king of Israel!"

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it. This is just as it is written in Scripture. It says,

"City of Zion, do not be afraid.

*See, your king is coming.
He is sitting on a donkey's colt."*

"The crowd was excited, cheering for Jesus as their King. But then Jesus rode in on a donkey—a peaceful, humble animal. That wasn't what anyone expected.

SLIDE: Teaching 3 Expectation: A mighty war horse surrounded by soldiers

"This is what people expected a king to ride.

SLIDE: Teaching 4 Reality: Jesus rode a small donkey.

"But Jesus arrived riding an animal like this, humble and gentle.

SLIDE: Teaching 5 Expectation: A majestic throne

"Kings usually sit high above everyone else.

SLIDE: Teaching 6 Reality: Jesus walking among ordinary people while He was on earth.

"But Jesus walked right next to people—the hurting, the lonely, the forgotten. He didn't separate Himself. He came close.

"Everything people expected a king to be, Jesus flipped upside down.

"Later that week, Jesus and His disciples gathered for a special Passover meal. Jesus knew His time with them was almost over. He knew He was about to give His life to rescue the world.

SLIDE: Teaching 7 Expectation: A golden scepter or royal staff

"If anyone deserved something like this, it was Jesus—a symbol of power and authority.

SLIDE: Teaching 8 Reality: A towel and a basin of water.

"But instead, Jesus did something no one expected.

Open the Bible to John 13:5-9 (NIV) and read.

After that, he poured water into a large bowl. Then he began to wash his disciples' feet. He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter. "Lord," Peter said to him, "are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You don't realize now what I am doing. But later you will understand."

"No," said Peter. "You will never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you can't share life with me."

5 min

APPLICATION**What You Need**

No supplies needed

"Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet! Wash my hands and my head too!"

"The disciples didn't understand. Washing feet was the lowest job in the house. But Jesus wasn't just cleaning their feet, He was showing what real love and real humility look like.

Open the Bible to John 13:12-15 (NIRV) and read.

When Jesus finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes. Then he returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' You are right. That is what I am. I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you also should wash one another's feet. I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you."

"A King knelt to serve. A King washed dirty feet. A King used His power to love, not to show off. This is the kind of King Jesus is. And this is the example He gave us: real greatness comes through humility."

COMMUNICATOR: "When Jesus knelt down to wash His friends' feet, He wasn't just being nice. He was showing us something powerful. He was teaching us that real greatness doesn't come from having everyone notice you or listen to you, it comes from choosing to serve. When we put others first, we start to look more like Him. That's what humility really is: not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. Humility is remembering that other people matter too.

"Living like Jesus means making time to serve instead of waiting to be served. It means noticing the people others ignore. It might mean giving up being right in an argument so peace can win instead. It could be sitting with someone alone, letting your sibling go first, or helping out without being asked. Every time you choose to serve, you show people what Jesus looks like.

"Now, that's not easy. The world doesn't celebrate humility. The world says, 'Be first. Be the best. Be seen.' But Jesus flipped that upside down. He showed us that the greatest people are the ones who serve. The strongest people are the ones who forgive. The most powerful people are the ones who love, even when it costs them something. That's the kind of life Jesus invites you to live, a life that points to Him.

"So when you go through this week, look for ways to live upside down. You can choose to love when it's easier to stay mad, to help when no one says thank you, to listen when someone needs a friend. Because when you live with humility, you're showing the world what real love looks like—the love of Jesus."

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

8 min

Closing

5 min

WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

What You Need

No supplies needed

COMMUNICATOR: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story—the picture that says, 'Jesus' Life.' Jesus came to teach us about who God is!

"This week, we learned that Jesus is a humble King. And that's a truth He lived out His whole life! Jesus is a King, the King of heaven and earth. He sits at the right hand of God in heaven! He left heaven and came down to earth to live His life with the people He created. Then, while He was on earth, He lived an absolutely perfect life, and laid down that perfect life to pay for our sins. Humble, humble, humble. Over and over throughout history, throughout God's Big Story (*gesture to the timeline*) we kept turning our backs on Him, but He came to rescue us anyway. The King submitted Himself to an earthly life and an unfair death, all to rescue us. What a great, great love. What a great, great King.

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!

SLIDE: Week 5 Timeline Image

If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's Timeline Image on the clothesline.

"This week, we learned about Palm Sunday and the humble King Jesus washing the disciples' feet!

COMMUNICATOR: "So this week, when you think about Jesus, the King who could've demanded anything, but chose to serve, who chose to ride in on a donkey into Jerusalem, let it remind you to live in humility too. The world says to stand taller, to grab attention, to be first. But Jesus says to kneel, to lift others, and to serve first. When you choose to serve instead of shine, when you choose kindness over credit, you're showing the world who your King really is.

"Jesus didn't just tell His followers to live differently; He showed them how. He washed feet. He carried a cross. He gave up His life so that we could find ours. And now He invites *you* to do the same: to love first, to serve first, and to live with a heart that says, 'More of Jesus, less of me.' Because when you make space for Him to lead, He'll help you see people the way He does, and that kind of love can change the world.

3 min

PRAYER**What You Need**

No supplies needed

"Before we head to small groups, I want to leave you with one last question to think about.

SLIDE: Conversation Starter

[Conversation Starter] "When has someone put you first?"

"When has someone done something kind for you, even when they didn't have to? Maybe a friend who let you go first, a parent who listened when you messed up, or a teacher who gave you another chance. Maybe it was something small ... maybe it was something that made you feel seen, loved, or cared for. When someone puts you first, it reminds you what real love looks like. It's not loud or flashy. It's humble!

"So think about that this week: *When has someone put you first?* And how could you do the same for someone else? Because every time we choose to serve—every time we put others first—we're following the example of Jesus."

COMMUNICATOR: "Let's talk to the God who will help us be humble!"

"Jesus, thank You for showing us what real love looks like. Sometimes we want to be first. We want to be noticed. But You remind us what real love and humility look like. Help us to follow Your example, to love people the way You do—to listen, to forgive, and to look for ways to lift others up. When it's hard to be humble, remind us of You kneeling to wash Your friends' feet. When we feel like we need to win, remind us that You already won by giving Your life for us. Teach us to live every day with hearts that say, 'More of You, less of me.' We love You, Jesus. Thank You for loving us first. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

AUDIO: Play calm music as the kids exit.

SLIDE: Theme

Supplies

OPENER	Quantity
1. Host	1
2. 10-15 kid volunteers for each round you do (You will ask for new volunteers at the start of each round!)	10
3. Tape	1
4. Pieces of paper—one that says, "UP," and the other "DOWN" (See "What You Do" section to make them)	2
5. Optional: Thick, black marker	1