

23 | 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

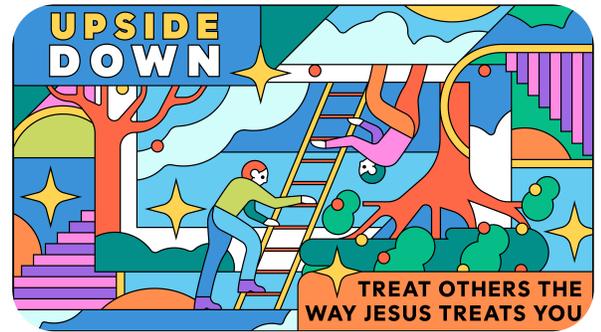
Small Group (25 minutes)

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

Social

5 min

23 Social Activity | Made to Explore

What You Need

-  Offering container 1
-  Prepared clear, plastic jars or cups of the same size (two for each Small Group) 1
-  Paper plate 1

What You Do:

- Welcome the kids by name with a high five or fist bump!
- Invite the kids who brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Show the two jars to the kids.
- Ask, "Which jar do you think has MORE pieces of cereal inside? The big cereal or the small cereal?" Let them point and guess.
- Pour a small scoop of each cereal onto a plate and count the pieces together to show how many more of the small pieces fit in the same space.

What You Say:

"Wow! Great guessing! You are really good at that game! So many more of the small cereal pieces fit inside! Sometimes, being smaller means you can fit more in. In our story, John the Baptist's friends were worried because the crowds following him were getting smaller, while Jesus' crowds were getting bigger. They thought it was a popularity contest! **[Transition]**In our true story from the Bible today, we're going to hear how John the Baptist knew that becoming smaller, or less important, was actually a good thing because that meant Jesus was becoming bigger. He was joyful about it! Let's go find out why!"

5 min

Bible Story Review

5 min

23 – Jesus Is #1 | Made to Create

What You Need

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---------|
|  | "Foam Finger" Activity Page | 0 |
|  | Coloring supplies | Several |
|  | Stickers | Several |
|  | Clear tape | 1 |

What You Do:

- Review the story: Remind the kids that John the Baptist told everyone that his job was to get the people ready for Jesus. He knew Jesus was the most important one!
- Give each kid a cutout and a strip from the "Foam Finger" Activity Page and let them use crayons, markers, and stickers to decorate it.
- Help kids roll their strip up (that says **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.**) and tape it to the back of their foam finger.
- Tell the kids their foam finger shows that Jesus is number one! Help them practice holding it up and cheering, "Jesus is number one!"

What You Say:

"These are so fun, and they look amazing! John the Baptist wanted everyone to cheer for Jesus. He knew that his job was to bring less attention to his life so Jesus could get more attention. John's followers were worried, but John set them straight. He told them, *'I am not the Messiah. I was sent ahead of him'* (John 3:28 NIV). John knew Jesus was the Rescuer, God's Son, the Savior of the whole wide world! John wasn't sad; he was filled with joy, like a friend at a wedding cheering for the groom! He taught us that **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.** Let's all use these foam fingers and cheer for Jesus! Jesus is number one!"

5 min

Application Activity

5 min

23 – Jesus at the Top | Made to Play

What You Need

-  "Jesus at the Top" Activity Page printed 0 on Avery labels
-  A stack of plastic cups for each group, 1 including a prepared cup with the Jesus label on it

What You Do:

Before group time:

- Place a Jesus sticker on one cup in each group's stack.
- Print "Jesus at the Top" Activity Page on Avery® Labels #22807 or equivalent, one sticker for every two kids
- Plastic cups, 10-12 for every two kids (including one for each pair of kids to put the Jesus sticker on)
- Divide the kids into pairs. (Feel free to create groups of three if it's a better fit for your group!)
- Give each pair a stack of plastic cups, including one cup with a sticker of Jesus on it.
- Challenge the pairs to work together to build the tallest tower they can.
- Once they've built their tower, instruct them to carefully place the cup with the picture of Jesus right at the very top.
- Walk around and admire their towers, pointing out how Jesus is at the top of every one.

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What You Say:

"Wow! Great building! You all put Jesus right at the top of your towers! That's exactly what John the Baptist was teaching his friends. John said that Jesus is 'from above' (John 3:31 NIV) and is 'above everything' (John 3:31 NIV). Putting Jesus at the top shows what John the Baptist meant. No one else is more important for people to know or see than Jesus. Jesus offers to be each person's Savior, their Rescuer forever, and their eternal Friend.

"So make a big deal of Jesus in your life. Try to point to Jesus in everything you do. People will see His love when you are kind and helpful. People will see His forgiveness when you forgive. People will see His justice when you're fair. When we remember that Jesus is the most important and put Him first, we are showing that *[Bottom Line]* Jesus must increase. I must decrease."

5 min

Memory Verse Activity

5 min

23 – Memory Verse Motions | Made to Move

What You Need

 Bibles

1

What You Do:

- Give every kid a Bible and direct them to look up Philippians 2:3.
- Demonstrate how to look up the verse using the Bible Navigation Tips below:

Finding verses for 2-3rd graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find the name of the book in the list. When they find the book, lead them to look at the page number beside it. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find that book. Help the kids find the page. When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find the correct chapter. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find the correct verse in that chapter.

- Repeat the verse aloud several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Guide the kids to put their Bibles aside.
- Gather the kids and explain that you'll work together as a group to make up motions for your new Memory Verse.
- Say the verse line by line and invite the kids to share their ideas for simple motions for that part of the verse.
 - *Don't do anything only to get ahead. (Maybe shake head "no" and wiggle fingers forward.)*
 - *Don't do it because you are proud. (Maybe puff out chest.)*
 - *Instead, be humble. (Maybe crouch down low.)*
 - *Value others more than yourselves. (Maybe point to friends.)*
 - *Philippians 2:3 (Open hands like a book.)*
- Use their ideas and practice the whole verse with the motions together.

What You Say:

"You came up with the best motions for our Memory Verse! This verse helps us remember to be humble, which means putting others first. John the Baptist showed us humility when he joyfully put Jesus first. That's what we're learning today: **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.** Even when John the Baptist's friends were upset that the number of John's followers was getting smaller, and the number of Jesus' followers was getting larger. John put Jesus first because he knew that it was all about Jesus! He knew that **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.**"

5 min

Prayer

5 min

23 – Pray and Dismiss | Made to Reflect

What You Need

No supplies needed

What To Do:

- Lead the group in praying a s'more prayer.

What You Say:

"Has anyone made a s'more before? They are ooey gooey and delicious! Let's use a pretend s'more to help us pray. Let's start with a graham cracker and say, 'Dear God, thank You for loving us even when things get hard or messy. Then comes the sweet chocolate. God, thank You for sweet moments and people who bring joy to our days. Next is the ooey, gooey warm marshmallow. God, help us spread Your love to others. Now let's add the other graham cracker on top and thank God for sending His Son, Jesus, so we can live forever with God.'"

"Dear God, thank You for our families and friends. Most of all, thank You for Jesus, who came from above to save us. Help us to be like John the Baptist and have joy when we point others to You. Help us to remember that **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.** We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Getting Ready | 23

Small Group

GETTING READY

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 Minutes)

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Opening Activity

Made to Explore

What You Need:

- Offering container
- Clear, plastic jars or cups of the same size; two for each Small Group
- Large-sized cereal (like Honey-Comb® or Shredded Wheat®), enough to fill a jar or cup
- Small-sized cereal (like puffed rice or Cheerios®), enough to fill a jar or cup
- Paper plate, one for each Small Group
- *Before group time:*
 - *Fill one jar with the large cereal and the other jar with the small cereal.*

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible Story applies to real-life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. Jesus Is #1

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Create

What You Need:

- Print "Foam Finger" Activity Page on cardstock and cut, one set for every kid
- Coloring supplies, enough for each Small Group to share
- Stickers, enough for every kid to decorate their foam finger
- Clear tape, one roll for each Small Group

2. Jesus at the Top

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Play

What You Need:

- Print "Jesus at the Top" Activity Page on Avery® Labels #22807 or equivalent, one sticker for every two kids
- Plastic cups, 10-12 for every two kids (including one for each pair of kids to put the Jesus sticker on)
- *Before group time:*
 - *Place a Jesus sticker on one cup in each group's stack.*

3. Memory Verse Motions

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move

What You Need:

- Bibles, one for every kid

4. Pray and Dismiss
[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]
Made to Reflect

What You Need:

- No supplies needed

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue App**.

Supplies

23 Social Activity | Made to Explore Quantity

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Offering container | 1 |
| 2. | Prepared clear, plastic jars or cups of the same size (two for each Small Group) | 1 |
| 3. | Paper plate | 1 |

23 – Jesus Is #1 | Made to Create Quantity

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---------|
| 1. | "Foam Finger" Activity Page | 0 |
| 2. | Coloring supplies | Several |
| 3. | Stickers | Several |
| 4. | Clear tape | 1 |

23 – Jesus at the Top | Made to Play Quantity

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | "Jesus at the Top" Activity Page printed on Avery labels | 0 |
| 2. | A stack of plastic cups for each group, including a prepared cup with the Jesus label on it | 1 |

23 – Memory Verse Motions | Made to Move Quantity

- | | | |
|----|--------|---|
| 1. | Bibles | 1 |
|----|--------|---|