

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

Social

5 min

Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play

What You Need

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

What You Do:

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

What You Say:

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

5 min

Bible Story Review

5 min

Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Create

What You Need

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

What You Do:

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

What You Say:

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

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

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

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

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

5 min

Application Activity

5 min

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Connect

What You Need

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

What You Do:

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

What You Say:

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

5 min

Discussion Questions

5 min

Preteen Discussion Questions

What You Need

No supplies needed

Ask:

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

5 min

Memory Verse Activity

5 min

Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Play

What You Need

	Bibles	1
	Paper	1
	Writing supplies	1

What You Do:

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

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

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

What You Say:

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

5 min

Prayer

5 min

Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect

What You Need

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



EveryChild Tips

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

What You Do:

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

What You Say:

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

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

Getting Ready | Preteen 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 Play

What You Need:

- Offering container
- Mini cookies (like Oreos® or Chips Ahoy®), several for every kid (Be mindful of allergies.)

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. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Connect

What You Need:

- Whiteboard and dry-erase marker, or posterboard and marker; one for each Small Group

2. Bible Story Extension

Talk about God | Bible Story Review

Made to Create

What You Need:

- Print "Love Challenge" Activity Page on cardstock, one for every kid
- Print "Challenge Stickers" Activity Page on Avery® Labels #5165 or equivalent, one set of hearts for every kid
- Scissors or 2" heart punch, one for each Small Group
- Coloring supplies, enough for each Small Group to share

3. Discussion Questions

Talk about God | Bible Story Review

Made to Connect

What You Need:

- No supplies needed

4. Verses to Take with You

Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity*Made to Play***What You Need:**

- Bibles, one for every kid
- Paper, one piece for every kid
- Writing supplies, one for every kid

5. Make It Personal with Prayer**Pray to God | Prayer Activity***Made to Reflect***What You Need:**

- Bibles, one for every kid
- Graham crackers, enough for each Small Group to share
- Frosting, enough for each Small Group to share
- Small candies (like sprinkles or M&Ms®), enough for each Small Group to share
- Paper plates, one for every kid
- Popsicle sticks, enough for each Small Group to share
- Hand wipes, enough for each Small Group to share

EveryChild Supplies

- *Alternative, safe snack items in the case of allergies.*

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 resource, the **Parent Cue App**.

Supplies

Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play

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

Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Create

	Quantity
1. "Love Challenge" Activity Page	1
2. "Challenge Stickers" Activity Page (One set per kid)	1
3. Scissors or 2" heart punch	1
4. Coloring supplies	Several

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Connect

	Quantity
1. Whiteboard and dry-erase marker, or posterboard and marker	0

Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Play

	Quantity
1. Bibles	1
2. Paper	1
3. Writing supplies	1

Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect

	Quantity
1. Bibles	0
2. Graham crackers	Several
3. Frosting	Several
4. Small candies (like sprinkles or M&Ms®)	Several
5. Paper plates	1
6. Popsicle sticks	Several
7. Hand wipes	Several