

Preteen | W2

Today's Suggested Schedule—March 2026, Week 2

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

Bottom Line: Remember God is most important.

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

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

Prelude: Setting the Tone for the Experience

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

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

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction

Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

Worship: Inviting People to Respond to God

Opener

Worship

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

Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

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

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

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

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

Home: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App



Bible Story

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

Conversation Starter

How do you show that God is important?

Bottom Line

Remember God is most important.

Monthly Memory Verse

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

5 min

Social

5 min

Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play

What You Need

 Offering container

1

What You Do:

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

What You Say:

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

5 min

Bible Story Review

5 min

Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Play

What You Need

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

What You Do:

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

What You Say:

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

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

5 min

Application Activity

5 min

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Connect

What You Need

 Hat or bowl	1
 Slips of paper	1
 Writing utensils	1

What You Do:

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

What You Say:

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

5 min

Memory Verse Activity

5 min

Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Play

What You Need

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

What You Do:

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

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

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

What You Say:

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

[Bottom Line] Remember God is most important."

5 min

Discussion Questions

5 min

Preteen Discussion Questions

What You Need

No supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask:

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

Supplies

Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play

- | | Quantity |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Offering container | 1 |

Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Play

- | | Quantity |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Bible, marked at Matthew 8:5-13 (NirV) | 1 |

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Connect

- | | Quantity |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Hat or bowl | 1 |
| 2. Slips of paper | 1 |
| 3. Writing utensils | 1 |

Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Play

- | | Quantity |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Bibles | 0 |
| 2. Whiteboard and dry-erase marker or posterboard and marker | 1 |
| 3. Sticky Notes | 1 |