

spiritual infant

DISCIPLE ME

THE ONE ABOUT GOD'S KINGDOM PART 2: THE UPSIDE DOWN

ICEBREAKER: FLIP THE SCRIPT

For this activity, everyone will think of a simple everyday task, something like making a sandwich, brushing your teeth, or brewing coffee; but instead of explaining it the usual way, you'll give the step-by-step instructions **in reverse order**.

For example, you might say, "First, eat the sandwich. Then, put the bread together. Then, add the peanut butter. Then spread the jelly. Finally, get out the bread." While you do this, the rest of the group will try to guess what task you're describing.

STUDY: THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

When Jesus talked about *the Kingdom of God*, He didn't describe a world that looked like ours. He described a world that flips it completely upside down. He said that in His Kingdom: the last become first, the poor are blessed, the proud are brought low, the humble are lifted up, enemies are loved, and that true greatness is found in serving. Life in His kingdom isn't just a different way of living - it's a whole new way of seeing and understanding the world.

Let's read the passages below, which describe the upside-down nature of God's Kingdom, and as we do, let's take notice of the different ways that Jesus flips the expectations of the world upside down.

Matthew 5:3–10	Matthew 20:25–28	Luke 6:27–31	Mark 10:13–16
----------------	------------------	--------------	---------------

- Which of Jesus' teachings in these passages feels the most upside-down to you?
- How does Jesus' definition of "blessed" challenge what the world usually says is success?
- Why do you think Jesus describes the Kingdom this way? What do you think He's trying to show about God's heart?
- In Matthew 20:26, Jesus says, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant." What could that look like in your workplace, home, or relationships?
- When you picture a "childlike" faith (Mark 10:15), what comes to mind? How might that change the way you approach God?

CONSIDER: LIVING RIGHT-SIDE-UP IN AN UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD

Following Jesus usually means living in ways that don't always make sense to the world around us. What He taught flips a lot of our instincts and values upside down. Our culture tells us to stand out and make a name for ourselves, but Jesus calls us to kneel down and serve. The world says, "Take care of yourself first," but He invites us to put others first. God's Kingdom just works differently - it's built on things like humility, mercy, and trust, not pride, power, or control. This means that following Jesus often means choosing the *opposite* of what feels natural:

- Instead of fighting for recognition → choose humility.
- Instead of chasing comfort → choose compassion.
- Instead of getting even → choose forgiveness.
- Instead of clinging to control → choose trust.

When we live like this, people notice. It's one of the ways that God's Kingdom breaks into everyday life - one small, upside-down act of grace at a time.

DISCUSS:

- Where is God inviting you to live differently - to respond in a "Kingdom way" instead of the world's way?
- What could it look like for you to "turn the world upside down" in your family, work, or neighborhood this week?

STUDY: KINGDOM LIVING

The Apostle Paul gives one of the clearest pictures of what this "upside-down" life looks like in Romans 12. Instead of paying people back for what they deserve, he calls followers of Jesus to respond in a totally different way, one that mirrors God's grace toward us.

Read Romans 12:14-21

This is what the Kingdom of God looks like when it shows up in everyday life - love that disarms hate, mercy that softens hearts, and goodness that breaks cycles of revenge. Every time we live like this, we bring a little piece of heaven to earth.

CHALLENGE: BLESS YOUR ENEMIES

Think of someone in your life who's been hard to love - maybe they've been critical, distant, or just rubbed you the wrong way. This week, take one small step to show kindness toward them. Send a simple text of encouragement, say a prayer for them, or do something thoughtful without expecting anything in return. This is what it looks like to live the upside-down way of Jesus - to "*bless those who persecute you*" (Romans 12:14) and let grace do what bitterness never can.