

## WEEK 2

### ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

## OPPOSITE DAY

### THE BIG IDEA

Our struggles bring us closer to Jesus.

### THE BIBLE

**Blessings and Woes:** Luke 6:17-26;  
Jeremiah 17:5-10

## LARGE GROUP TIME

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

### MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
  - "Everywhere I Go" (Tim Timmons)
  - "To The Edge" (Vineyard Kids)
  - "Your Love For Me" (North Point Kids)
  - "Believe It" (Gateway Kids Worship)

### ACTIVITY | Opposite Relay

- Welcome to our second Opposite Day! Let's kick things off with a relay race with an opposite twist!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Divide the group into two teams, then have half of each team line up on one side of the room and the other half on the opposite side. When you say go, the first person from each team will crab walk backward toward their teammate on the other side. Have them tag their teammate, who will bear walk forward back to the other side and tag their teammate there. The first team to have the entire team switch sides wins!

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Have kids either walk forward or backward instead of crawling. For kids with limited mobility, give them the role of judging which team wins or alter the game so that kids are passing a ball down a line backward or trying to aim at a goal backward.

- **Was it hard to race backward?**
- Today, we are going to hear about how some ways may seem backward, but they actually aren't!

### ACTIVITY | Opposite Bingo

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Distribute a Bingo card (there are four versions) to each kid and a marker. Take an extra Bingo card, cut out each square, fold them up, and put them in a container. Draw out a word and say the opposite of that picture. Kids will have to locate the opposite of what you say (i.e., the paper you drew). First to get five in a row should yell "Ognib!" ("Bingo!" backwards).
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Give preteens [blank bingo boards](#) they can fill in with more advanced words ([like these](#)). You could choose to input words from the list into a randomizer app to select words for gameplay.
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Instead of calling out the picture's opposite, call out the image you draw from the container. Or to make it even easier, enlarge each picture and show it to the kids so they know exactly which square to mark off on their boards.
- Having to find the opposite of what I was saying made this Bingo activity just a little bit more challenging right?
- We'll talk today about how some challenges we face are actually good for us!

### POLL | Weather Opposites

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids pick a side of the room for each weather question you ask (e.g., "hot" go to the left side, "cold" go to the right side). After they pick a side, then tell them the activity they would have to do during that weather. Are they happy with the choice they made? Let them switch sides if they want to.
- **Do you prefer hot or cold weather?**
  - What if you had to go swimming at the beach?
- **Do you like sunny or cloudy weather?**
  - What if you had to clean up your neighborhood outside for four hours?
- **Do you like dry or rainy weather?**
  - What if you had to play a baseball game?
- **Do you like still or windy weather?**
  - What if you had to fly a kite?
- Even though we prefer certain types of weather, we can't really control the weather. It might be a struggle if it rains on the day we were supposed to go to an amusement park or if it's too windy on a day we want to play outside, but we can adjust our plans and not let the weather ruin our day!
- Today's Bible story is going to tell us about more things Jesus said that people might have struggled to understand. But the people who understood were able to know God better because of it!

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

**BIBLE STORY | Blessings and Woes**

- We are learning once again about how the teachings of Jesus seem opposite to what we would think to do on our own.
- Today's Bible story is about two opposites: Blessings and woes.
- **Does anyone want to take a guess at what a "blessing" is? What about a "woe"?**
- Generally, a blessing is a good thing. It's what we want. A woe is not-so-good, and we would use it to describe something that we don't like. But let's see what kinds of things Jesus said were blessings and what he considered to be woes.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite another leader or kid volunteer to read Luke 6:17-26 aloud as the kids follow along. Create two columns on a board labeled "blessings" and "woes." Start jotting down keywords as the passage is read.*
- Jesus' teachings shocked the crowd because what Jesus was saying was the opposite of what they were taught to do.
- Let's look at this list together. According to Jesus, these things are blessings:
  - When we don't have what other people might have.
  - When we don't have enough of the things we need.
  - When we are facing sad times.
  - When people tease us for following Jesus.
- These are the things that Jesus said are woes:
  - When we have everything we need.
  - When we have everything we want.
  - When we have nothing to worry about.
  - When we are popular and well-liked by many people.
- Huh? That seems . . . opposite! Shouldn't having the things we need and being liked by everyone be blessings?
- Jesus isn't saying that it's bad to be happy. But when life is all good, we forget to talk to God. Jesus is reminding the people that when things aren't great, we can rely on God. Praying to God and asking for help is a way we stay connected to God.

**BIG IDEA | Our struggles bring us closer to Jesus.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Use the color wheel pieces from last week and label it with the words from this week's Big Idea (see your Shop & Prep List). This time, put up only the secondary colors (i.e., green, purple, orange) leaving empty spaces where volunteers can come up and fill in with the primary colors (i.e., red, yellow, blue) to complete the wheel and reveal the Big Idea.*
- Today's Big Idea is NOT . . . **Our struggles bring us closer to Jesus.**
- Okay, just kidding, that IS our Big Idea! Happy Opposite Day!

**VIDEO | Opposite Day, Episode 2**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

### ACTIVITY | Count Your Blessings

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Distribute to each kid a bag of M&Ms, Skittles, or other candy that comes in assorted colors or shapes. From their bag, ask them to take out as many treats as they want onto their hand. Then tell them that for every [choose a color] candy they took out, they need to name something they are thankful for. For every [choose another color] candy, they should name something they struggle with. If they have none of a specific color, by default they should name just one.
- Thank you for sharing, everyone! We got to hear a little bit about things that are going well in your life and the things that might be a struggle.
- But remember what we learned today? Even the things that challenge us or stress us out can be good things because **our struggles bring us closer to Jesus**. So, all the things you said just now can be blessings! Wow!

### ACTIVITY | Blessings Collage

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Gather newspapers, magazines, scissors, glue sticks, and construction paper ahead of time. Create eight groups then assign each group a letter from the word “blessing” and have them draw a large outline of it on their poster paper (have leaders help if needed). Have kids fill in their block letter with images that remind them of blessings. Designate a space on a wall where you can put the posters up on display (which should look something [like this](#)).
- As you work in your groups to create your collage, don’t forget that blessings are not only the good things in life. See if you can spot some images to include that might not look like a typical blessing, but you know that it can be when you bring it to Jesus!

### BIBLE | Jeremiah 17:5-10

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Jeremiah 17-5-10 with the group or ask a few volunteers to read aloud.
- Speaking of blessings and woes, the prophet Jeremiah had a few things to say about what kinds of people God wanted us to be.
- [Read verses 5-6.] These verses tell us that when a person trusts only in their own strength and abilities instead of leaning on God, they are like a “bush in the wastelands.” That means they are cut off from the main source of life!
- [Read verses 7-8.] A person who trusts in God at all times, though, is like a “tree planted by the water.” Even when the weather gets warm, that kind of tree doesn’t worry because its roots lead to the stream so they will always be connected to life!
- Now how can we tell the difference between these two types of trees, or people?
- [Read verses 9-10.]
- That’s right! It starts with the heart (hey, that rhymes!). Our actions are a result of what is in our hearts. That’s why we need to make sure our hearts are thankful for both our blessings and our woes. Because even our woes or **our struggles bring us closer to Jesus**.

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

**REFLECTION | In Your Own Words**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pair up kids and have them look up Luke 6:17-26 in their Bibles. Have each pair pick out one verse that stands out to them and rewrite it in their own words according to what they think it means.*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Provide colored pencils or gel pens – especially bold colors and glitter – and sketch paper for preteens to draw and color. Encourage them to draw a two-panel comic where one side depicts a “blessing” from the passage and the other side is its corresponding “woe.”*
- **Who wants to share one of these verses in their own words?**

**RESPONSE | Snow in Summer**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show [this clip](#) of “In Summer” from Frozen (or check out [this live-action version](#)). Then give each kid a piece of cardstock paper and drawing tools to draw a summer scene. Have them make a snowman out of marshmallows and glue it onto their backdrop.*
- **What normally happens to snow in summer?** *Olaf dreams about summer even though he’s a snowman. Instead of focusing on all the things that could go wrong for him during summertime – like melting! – Olaf talks about all the fun things he could do!*
  - Now, this is a silly example but when it comes to our own struggles, we can learn a thing or two from our favorite snowman.
  - Whenever we face obstacles or challenges, what is the first thing we tend to do? We worry, complain, get frustrated, and so on.
  - But today’s Bible story and Big Idea tell us that if we see our struggles as a way to draw closer to God, it will change everything. God can use the things we have a hard time with to bring us into a closer relationship with God.
- **Is there something you’ve been really struggling with lately?** *Why don’t you take a minute to write it down on this piece of paper?*
- Now turn your paper over, and we are going to create our own “snow in summer” scene. As you create this, think about the struggle you just wrote about. **In what way can this bring you closer to God?**

**MEMORY VERSE | Words and Motions**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Work with kids to come up with motions for each word in the memory verse from II Corinthians 12:9a. Once you go through it together a few times, alternate with the kids where you say the verse while the kids do the motions, then flip it so that you do the motions while the kids say the words.*

**PRAYER**

- Dear God, thank you for showing us that we don’t have to face our struggles alone. Even when times are tough, help us to always remember we can talk to you about anything and we can grow closer to you even in our struggles. Amen.

## SMALL GROUP TIME

### DISCUSSION

- What was an example of a “blessing” in today’s story?
- What was an example of a “woe”?
- Why did Jesus call such good things a “woe” instead of a blessing?
- Read Jeremiah 17:8. What is the benefit of a tree that’s planted by the water? How is that like someone who trusts in God?
- What are some struggles that are going on in your life or in the world we live in?
- How does a struggle bring us closer to God?
- Can you think of a struggle that brought you or someone you know closer to God?

### ACTIVITY | Blessing or Woe?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Similar to the Bible story, create two columns on a board or poster labeled “Blessed are you” and “Woe to you.” Type or write out each of these parts from today’s Scripture on its own paper: Who are poor, Who hunger now, Who weep now, Who are less liked, Who are rich, Who are well-fed, Who laugh, Who are popular. Have two kids face off to see who can get more of the papers in the right column. Continue until everyone has had a chance to try.
- As we wrap up today’s Bible story today, we have to remember that going hungry is not always a blessing just like being well-fed is not always a woe. What matters is that whether or not we are struggling, we stay connected to God. We can take that one step further and pray for people who are struggling in our communities and around the world so that they can know God, too.

### MEMORY VERSE | II Corinthians 12:9a (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Practice this month’s memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we’ve provided in your Programming folder or at [growcurriculum.org/II Corinthians12-9a](http://growcurriculum.org/II%20Corinthians12-9a).
- Let’s practice this month’s memory verse together!
- **“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”**