



WEEK ONE – FEBRUARY 2024 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *The Kindness of Jesus* | Matthew 8:1-4, 9:10-13, 19:13-15

Key Question: *What does kindness look like?*

Memory Verse: *“You are God’s chosen people. You are holy and dearly loved. So put on tender, mercy and kindness as if they were your clothes. Don’t be proud. Be gentle and patient – Colossians 3:12*

Virtue: *Kindness – Showing others they are valuable by how you treat them*

Core Insight: *Restoration*

Series Overview: God showed kindness by sending Jesus for us—even when we didn’t deserve it. Because of God’s love for us, we can be kind to everyone. Kindness is a fruit of the Spirit. And when you show kindness to others, you give them a glimpse into the heart of God, and how much God loves them. Kindness should be a characteristic of people who follow Jesus. Not only did Jesus model kindness, but He also commanded it. He taught us to treat others the way we want to be treated.

Key Question: What does kindness look like? In some ways, kindness can feel subjective. What one person sees as an act of kindness, another might see as an obligation. That’s why we start our preteens with a conversation about kindness. When you can identify what kindness can look like, you start to see all the ways you can show God’s kindness to others.

9:00 - 9:15 | 11:00 – 11:15 – EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Blanket

What You Do:

- Welcome kids as they arrive with a high five or first bump
- Invite kids to sit in a wide circle
- Choose one kid to be the “camper” to go inside the “tent” – to stand in the center of the circle with a blanket or sleeping bag over their head and with eyes closed
- Secretly select one kid in the circle to be the “trail guide” making sure the “camper” does not see or hear who is chosen
- At your signal, instruct everyone in the circle to begin swatting imaginary flies
- Direct the “camper” to come out from the “tent”
- When the “camper” is not looking, instruct the “trail guide” to quietly begin a different camp related movement (such as chopping wood)
- Direct the rest of the kids in the circle to immediately begin to mimic the “trail guide’s” action
- Give the “camper” about one minute or two guesses to figure out who is the “trail guide”
- Switch “campers” and “trail guides” and repeat as time allows
- Invite the kids to brainstorm additional actions the trail guide can use such as:
 - Pretending to reel in a fish
 - Climb a steep trail
 - Stomp a bug on the ground
 - Swim in a lake

What You Say:

“Great job following the trail guide. On an actual hiking trip, a trail guide leads the way and makes sure hikers don’t go in the wrong direction. Follow the trail guide and you won’t get lost or end up in a bear cave. [Transition] When it comes to life, we have Someone who shows us the way. Let’s find out why showing kindness is one of the best ways to follow the example set by Jesus.”

9:15 - 9:45 | 11:15 – 11:45 – LARGE GROUP

Large Group Overview: We start this month in the **book of Matthew** as we look at three moments of kindness from Jesus’ life. Whether Jesus was healing the sick, blessing little children, or sharing meals with people who others seemed to disregard, He was full of love and kindness. With the way He treated others, Jesus made sure that everyone knew they were valuable in God’s eyes.

9:45 – 10:05 | 11:45 – 12:05 – SMALL GROUP

Take a Snapshot

[Live For God | Application Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Prepared butcher paper; markers; painter’s tape

What You Do:

- Invite the kids to sit in a circle
- Give each kid a marker and one of the butcher paper strips
 - If you have a group of fewer than five kids, give each kid two strips
- Invite kids to write a word or short phrase on their strip of paper they feel describes or defines what kindness is

- Go around the circle and invite each kid to share their phrase
- Ask: “Why did you choose to use that particular word or phrase when describing kindness?”
- Continue around the circle, challenging kids not to repeat any of the previous words or phrases
- **[Make It Personal] Include a word or phrase of your own and share it with the group**
- Tape the five foot prepared butcher paper “post” to a wall, door or other upright surface
- Explain that hiking trails often have signposts or trail markers that show what’s ahead or which direction hikers should go to reach their destination
- Invite kids to create a trail marker by using the tape to attach their strips of paper to the post
 - If possible, leave the trail marker in place for use later in prayer time

Discussion Questions

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Ask:
 - Is there a difference between being nice and being kind? Explain.
 - Why do you think kindness is so important? How do you feel when someone is kind to you versus when someone is unkind to you?
 - “Kindness is always cool.” Explain why you agree or disagree with that statement.

Make It Personal With Prayer

[Pray To God | Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding + application

What You Need: Butcher paper trail marker from “Take a Snapshot” activity

What You Do:

- Ask kids to sit down near the butcher paper trail marker
- Together, read the words + phrases they wrote on the signpost to describe kindness
- Invite kids to pick a few of the words that challenge them and try to improve their kindness skills this week
- Allow a couple of minutes for kids to pray silently or aloud, asking God to help them in the areas on the trail marker they chose
- After the kids have had a few minutes to pray, close your group time in prayer

What You Say:

“Dear God, thank You for Your kindness toward us. Help us to follow Your example and treat others with patience and love. Remind us to be as mindful of the way we wear kindness as we are of the clothes we put on. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”