



WEEK FOUR– JANUARY 2026 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *Jesus Chooses Matthew | Luke 5:27-32 (Supporting: Romans 12:1)*

Conversation Starter: *What does it look like to live for God?*

Memory Verse: *Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:8 NIRV*

Bottom Line: *Practice living for God.*

Series Overview: While choosing to follow Jesus is the most important decision a kid can make, it's only the first step! Learning to live and love like Jesus is a lifelong journey that can feel big and abstract for kids. That's why it's so important to provide handholds for kids (and grownups!) to grow in four specific areas of spiritual formation. We call these Faith Skills: Hear from God, Pray to God, Talk about God, and Live for God. This month, we'll walk through all four skills as displayed in the life of Jesus. Kids will discover the value of talking with others about God through the story of young Jesus in the Temple. They'll practice praying to God through The Lord's Prayer and hearing from God in the parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders. We end the month with the story of Jesus choosing Levi, also known as Matthew, to follow Him—and how Matthew left everything he knew to begin living for God. Just like learning a new instrument or skill, it takes commitment and a game plan to follow Jesus. But as kids learn to spend time daily practicing Faith Skills, even for a short time, they will become more and more like Jesus.

8:45 - 9:05 | 10:45 – 11:05 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Connection Centers

Connect: a time that invites kids to share with others and leaders

What You Need: Activity Bins + Coloring Sheets (find on your shelves in space)

What You Do:

- *PRE-CONNECTION TIME*
 - **Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Ask God to give kids a curiosity for what’s in the Bible, that they would read it and interact with it. Pray that you would be able to be a source of help for kids when they don’t understand Scripture and that they would come to you with their questions. Pray that what kids learn through the Bible would help them make wise choices.**
- *DURING CONNECTION TIME*
 - Greet each child by name and with a high five or fist bump!
 - **Make sure to grab second sticker from the child + place it on your sticker sheet**
 - Invite kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
 - Pull out your activity bins + set aside some coloring sheets for kids to partake in your small group space
 - Ask questions in order to connect with + get to know your few as you partake in activities alongside them...you can use these:
 - **What’s one win from this month—big or small?**
 - **If January had a theme or title, what would you call it? Why?**
 - **What’s something you learned about yourself this month?**
 - **Would you rather redo January with one change OR fast-forward to March? Why?**
- *AFTER CONNECTION TIME*

- *Use this time to review over how to be successful in small group time as well as Flatirons Kids by using the SG Structure 101 sheet featured on your activity shelf*
 - Go over each rule to create a great small group experience
- Transition into the Opening Small Group Activity

9:05 - 9:20 | 11:05 – 11:20 | OPENING SMALL GROUP

OPENING ACTIVITY

What You Need: Tissues

What You Do:

- Welcome the kids with a high-five or fist bump.
- Invite kids who have brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Give each kid a new, single tissue.
- Show them how to place the tissue on their head.
- Explain that you are going to call out some ninja warrior moves, and they have to try to do them without the tissue falling off their head.
- Call out simple moves one at a time:
 - “Ninja warrior, walk in a circle!”
 - “Ninja warrior, touch your toes!”
 - “Ninja warrior, turn around!”
 - “Ninja warrior, hop on one foot!”
- If a kid’s tissue falls, invite them to just pick it up and keep playing.
- Celebrate everyone for trying their best.

What You Say:

“Great job, ninja warriors! It was tricky to follow the plan and keep that tissue on your head at the same time! *[Transition]* **In our Bible Story today, we’re going to meet a man named Matthew who made a big move to follow Jesus’ plan for his life. Let’s go find out what he did!**”

9:20 - 9:50 | 11:20 – 11:50 | LARGE GROUP

We wrap up the month with Jesus calling Levi, also known as Matthew, to follow Him. Levi was a tax collector, and no one liked tax collectors. They were seen as traitors to their people since they collected taxes for the Roman government... and skimmed plenty off the top for themselves. When Jesus showed up, Levi suddenly faced a huge decision: stay in his lane and live for comfort—or step out in faith and follow Jesus. As we know, Matthew made the leap. He even welcomed Jesus to his house for dinner and invited other tax collectors and outcasts to share this new freedom. From that point, Matthew spent his entire life following Jesus and sharing the story of Jesus. [BOTTOM LINE] Practice living for God.

9:50 – 10:10 | 11:50 – 12:10 | SMALL GROUP

LIVING FOR GOD SCENARIOS

[Live for God | Application Activity]

What You Need: Slips of paper with different scenarios written on them

What You Do:

- Divide the group into pairs or trios.
- Give each group a scenario. Here are some examples:
 - *You see the new kid sitting by himself on the playground at recess.*
 - *You see a person trip and drop all their books in the hallway between classes.*
 - *Your friends start making fun of someone you know.*
 - *You know the answer in class, but you also know the kid next to you is struggling to understand.*
- Tell the groups their challenge is to come up with two different ways to respond to the scenario: *one that shows what living for God looks like, and one that doesn't.*
- Give them a few minutes to plan a very short, simple skit for both responses.

- Invite each group to perform their two skits for the rest of the group.
- After each one, discuss: *Which response showed what it means to live for God? Why?*

Inclusive Pro-Tips:

- *Allow groups to simply talk through their two responses or draw pictures instead of creating a full skit.*

What You Say:

“Great job with those skits. It’s pretty clear which choices honor God, right? The Pharisees in our story were focused on who was ‘good enough’ to be around. But Jesus had a totally different view of things. He came for everyone—especially the people who knew they needed help. Matthew got that. That’s why he immediately hosted a banquet to introduce his friends—other ‘sinners’—to Jesus. He knew they needed Jesus too. That’s a key way we *[Bottom Line]* practice living for God: by introducing people to Jesus.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Gather your group and talk through these discussion questions.
 - Why do you think Jesus chose someone like Matthew, who wasn’t very popular, to follow Him?
 - What do you think it means to “live for God” instead of living just for yourself?
 - What are some ways you can show love for God and others in your everyday life—at school, home, or with friends?
 - Romans 12:1 says to offer your whole self to God. What might that look like for you?

- Matthew’s life changed when he met Jesus. What’s one change you could make this week to live more like Jesus?
- Close by praying as a group.

What You Say:

“It’s awesome to be able to pray for each other. That’s one way we can help each other be wise builders. Let’s finish our time by praying together for our whole group.”

“God, thank You that You speak to us in so many ways—You want us to build our lives on a firm foundation. Help us not just to be hearers of what You say, but doers. Help us make the wise choice to listen and obey You this week. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”