



WEEK ONE – MARCH 2026 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *John the Baptist Is a Witness about Jesus | John 3:22-36*

Bottom Line: *Jesus must increase. I must decrease.*

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 NIRV)*

Conversation Starter: *How can I show others that Jesus is better?*

Application: *Humility: Putting others first by giving up what you want*

Series Overview:

Since Jesus instructs us to live in a way that's opposite of culture, this month's theme is "Upside Down: Treat others the way Jesus treats you." Fun upside-down visuals are a great reminder that the way we're called to live and serve with humility may "feel" upside down. But in reality, it's right side up!

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, pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time and for the kids that show up each week! Pray over their time here and the lessons they learn, relationships they build.*
- *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 :
 - *Do you know what humility is? What is it?*
 - *What's a time being kind was harder than being right?*
 - *Who's someone you've seen treat others really well? What stood out about it?*
 - *Would you rather people notice you for your achievements or how you treat others? 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: "Disciple Decoder" Activity Page; Pencils

What You Do:

- Give each kid a "Disciple Decoder" Activity Page and a pencil.
- Explain that they are to decode the names of some of Jesus' first followers. The word bank at the bottom is there to help if they get stuck.
- Let the kids work individually or with a partner to solve the puzzles.
- Once everyone is done, go over the answers together.

What You Say:

"Nice work, detectives! You cracked the code. In today's true story from the Bible, we're going to hear about John the Baptist. His followers had to do some decoding of their own. John the Baptist gave his followers a major clue about Jesus, and it changed everything for them. *[Transition]* **Let's go and hear about the clue that John the Baptist shared with his followers that pointed them to Jesus.**"

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

Throughout the month, we take a look at humility in the life of Jesus, and in the lives of people He encountered. In Week 1, followers of John the Baptist are up in arms about all the people going to follow Jesus. He's the competition, right? But John the Baptist is secure in his calling—that his whole purpose is to point people to Jesus, rather than to himself. [BOTTOM LINE] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.

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

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Ask your group these questions & talk about them as a group.
 - John’s followers were upset that people were leaving him to follow Jesus, but John was joyful. Why do you think John wasn’t jealous or upset—and what can that teach you about humility?
 - John said, “*He must become more important. I must become less important*” (John 3:30 NIV). What do you think that means in your own life? How could you live in a way that points people to Jesus instead of to yourself?
 - It can be easy to want attention, popularity, or praise. How can focusing on Jesus first help you deal with those feelings when they show up?
 - John’s joy came from seeing Jesus’ work grow, even if his own influence shrank. When have you found joy in helping someone else succeed—or letting someone else shine?
 - The story says that when we focus on Jesus more than ourselves, we find peace and hope. How might your thoughts, choices, or worries look different if you really believed that Jesus is bigger than any problem you face?

VERSES TO TAKE WITH YOU

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

What You Need: Bibles; “Bible Bookmark” Activity Page; Coloring Supplies

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.
- Give each kid a bookmark from the “Bible Bookmark” Activity Page and make coloring supplies available.
- Read this month's Memory Verse together that's on the bookmark.
- Instruct the kids to decorate their bookmark. They can color the words and the designs around it.
- Suggest the kids take their bookmark home and put it in their Bible or a book they are reading as a reminder about humility.

TAKE A SNAPSHOT

[Live for God | Application Activity]

What You Need: Bookmarks from Verses activity; Pencils

What You Do:

- Have each kid keep their bookmark handy and choose something to write with.
- Instruct the kids to make a list of things that are important to them on the back of their bookmarks. (e.g., family, friends, sports, video games, school, being popular).
- After a minute or two, encourage the kids to look at their list and circle the top 3 most important things.
- Then, instruct the kids to share their top 3 with a partner or the whole group.

- Lead a discussion with these questions:
 - Is it bad to have things that are important to us? (*No!*)
 - What happens when something on our list becomes MORE important than Jesus?
 - What did John the Baptist mean when he said: “*He must become more important. I must become less important*” (*John 3:30 NIV*)?
 - What does it look like in real life to make Jesus more important than the other things on our lists?

What You Say:

“It’s good to have things that are important to us! God gives us family, friends, and fun things to enjoy. Today in our Bible Story, John the Baptist reminded us of a really important truth. He made less of himself—and he made a big deal of Jesus. John the Baptist wasn’t upset about losing followers; he was filled with joy because his purpose was being fulfilled! He was doing what he was made to do—to point people to Jesus!

“When we put Jesus at the very top of our list—above everything, because as John told us, He is ‘*above everything*’ (*John 3:31 NIV*)—all the other things find their right place. When you make a big deal of Jesus, you’re showing the world their loving Savior. Make your life a big arrow that points to Him. When we do this, people will see, love, and follow Jesus. It’s living out the truth that **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.**”

Close in prayer or invite a kid to pray!