



WEEK TWO – MARCH 2026 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *A Roman Commander Has Faith | Matthew 8:5-13*

Bottom Line: *Remember God is most important.*

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 :
 - *Be honest: can you still hang upside down on the playground bars? How long?*
 - *What's something in life that feels "backward" but is actually better in the long run? (apologizing first, sharing credit, etc.)*
 - *When is it hardest to put someone else first?*
 - *Do you think being humble makes someone weak or strong? 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: N/A

What You Do:

- Welcome the kids by name with a high five or fist bump!
- Invite the kids who brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Instruct the group to stand up and spread out.
- Explain that you're going to play "Do the Opposite." You will give a command, and the kids are to do the exact opposite as quickly as they can.
- Start with simple commands and get faster as they get the hang of it.
 - "Jump up high!" (*They should crouch down low.*)
 - "Sit down!" (*They should stand up.*)
 - "Whisper your name!" (*They should shout their name.*)
 - "Look to the left!" (*They should look to the right.*)
 - "Put your hands on your head!" (*They should put their hands on their toes.*)
- Let kids take turns giving the commands.

What You Say:

"Nice job! It takes a lot of focus to do the opposite of what you're told. Sometimes the way Jesus asks us to live feels opposite to what the world tells us to do. The world says, 'Be the most important!' But we are learning to be upside-down and put others first by giving up what we want. *[Transition]* **In our true story from the Bible today, a powerful Roman commander—an enemy of the Jewish people—shows us a different, 'upside-down' way to think about power and authority. Let's go find out more.**"

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

In Week 2, meet a Roman commander who comes to Jesus for help. Instead of

asserting his power and status, the man humbly asks Jesus to heal his servant. The commander even trusts that Jesus is so powerful that He only needs to speak and the boy will be made well. [BOTTOM LINE] Remember God is most Important.

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. If it helps kids engage in conversation, let them color while they talk.
 - The Roman commander had a lot of power, but he still asked Jesus for help. What does that tell us about what it means to be strong or in charge in God’s eyes?
 - Jesus was amazed by the commander’s faith. What do you think it means to have the kind of faith that “amazes” Jesus?
 - The commander believed Jesus could heal his servant just by speaking. What are some things in your life that you need to trust God can handle—without you having to control them?
 - The Roman commander humbled himself, even though he was important. What are some ways you can show humility and remember that God is most important in your own life?
 - Jesus said people from all over would be part of God’s kingdom—not just a certain group. How does that change the way you think about who God’s love is for and how we should treat others?

VERSES TO TAKE WITH YOU

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

What You Need: Bibles; Whiteboards; Dry Erase Markers; sticky notes

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.
- Write each word or short phrase of the Memory Verse on a whiteboard or posterboard.
- Read the verse together a few times.
- Then, give one kid a sticky note to place over one word.
- Say the verse again with that word covered up.
- Give another kid a sticky note to cover another word.
- Recite the verse again as a group.
- Continue until all words are covered up.
- Say the verse one more time as a group.

What You Say:

“Great job! You are really learning this Memory Verse. This verse is the definition of humility. The Roman commander showed humility by caring for his servant and saying he was ‘not good enough’ for Jesus to enter his home. When we truly believe that God is most important, it makes it a lot easier to live this verse out and value others more than ourselves. *[Bottom Line]* **Remember God is most important.**”

BIBLE STORY EXTENSION

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- Explain that as you retell the story of the Roman commander, you're going to call out "Freeze!" at key moments.
- When you say "Freeze!", everyone is to freeze in a pose that represents that part of the story.
- Open your Bible and read through the story, pausing at the bullet points below to have them freeze.
 - Jesus entered the city of Capernaum. (*Maybe they pose like they are walking.*)
 - The Roman commander approached Jesus with a worried look while he explained about his sick servant. (*Pose with a worried/pleading face.*)
 - The commander said to Jesus, "Just say the word and my servant will be healed" (*Matthew 8:8 NIrV*). (*Pose with a hand up, showing humility and trust in Jesus' authority.*)
 - Jesus was amazed at the commander's faith. (*Pose with a shocked or impressed look.*)
 - The moment the servant was healed at that moment back at home. (*Pose by jumping up with joy and energy.*)
- After each freeze, talk about what was happening in that moment.

What You Say:

"Great job with those poses! My favorite one is when the commander said, 'Just say the word and my servant will be healed' (*Matthew 8:8 NIrV*). He was a very powerful guy with authority over about one hundred soldiers, but he was humble enough to know that Jesus' power was way bigger than his own. Jesus is most powerful. Jesus said He had not found faith so strong in all of Israel. The commander is a perfect example of what it looks like to **[Bottom Line] remember God is most important.**

[Make It Personal] (Share an age-appropriate way you try to remember that God is the most important. For example: “It’s easy for me to try and control everything in my life. But this story reminds me that I need to be more like the commander and just say, ‘God, I trust Your authority. Just say the word.’ It’s a good reminder for me to be humble and remember God is in charge, not me.”)

Close in prayer or invite a kid to pray!