

## Today's Suggested Schedule—February 2024, Week 3

**Today's Bible Story:** One More Time (Go the Extra Mile) • *Matthew 5:41*

**Today's Bottom Line:** Be kinder than you have to be.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.* Colossians 3:12 (ESV)

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

**Basic Truth:** I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

*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 opportunities to do more than they have to. Pray that kids would recognize those opportunities to be kind and do something even kinder. Pray that as you and your few encounter unfair situations, that you'd stand strong by choosing kindness so others can see God at work.*

Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

### **LARGE GROUP (35 minutes)**

**STORY:** Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

**WORSHIP:** Inviting People to Respond to God

Hang Time

Welcome/Opener

Worship

Bible Story

Bottom Line

Prayer

Closer

### **SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)**

**GROUPS:** Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Story Exploration

Bible Story Review: Story Illustrations

Application Activity: Kindness Plates

Memory Verse Activity: Go the Extra Mile!

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

**HOME:** Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

*Use this if kids have questions about following Jesus.*

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word gospel. Clarify that the word gospel means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

If a child has expressed interest in following Jesus, please let the parents know so they can be a part of the conversation that their child is having about faith.

### What Now?

If you put your trust in Jesus Christ and believe in Him as the One who forgives your sins and makes it possible for you to know God, we are so proud of you! There is no greater single decision that you could make.

We believe that baptism is an important next step for you. Baptism is your way of telling your friends and family, “Hey, I'm a follower of Jesus!” If you're interested in learning more or participating in baptism, talk to a staff member about the next steps you should take.

## Kindness Activity

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

**What You Need:** Kindness Tree from previous weeks, blue sticky notes, and pencils

*Note: This activity will be added to each week this month. Keep the “tree” with sticky notes attached to use again each week.*

### What You Do:

- Point out the Kindness Tree from previous weeks.
- Review some of the sticky notes from previous weeks.
  - From the pictures and words on the sticky notes, mention some of the ways the kids have been shown kindness and the ways they showed kindness to others.
- Invite kids to think of a time they have shown kindness without even being asked.
- To get kids thinking, ask:
  - Have you ever seen trash on the floor at school and picked it up without your teacher asking?
  - Have you ever hung your towel up after your bath or shower because you know that’s where it’s supposed to go?
  - Have you ever fed your pet without being asked because you knew it was time for them to eat?
- Give each kid a blue sticky note and a pencil.
- Instruct the kids to draw on the sticky notes a way they have shown kindness to someone without even being asked! Be ready to help as needed.
- Invite kids to share their drawing with the group.
- Once kids have shared their sticky note, instruct them to add their sticky note somewhere on the tree.
- *Optional: Add a caption to each sticky note as kids share.*

### What You Say:

“We have only one more week to help our Kindness Tree grow. It looks so great! We should be kinder than we have to be, and we should show kindness even when no one has asked us to do anything.

**[Transition] Have you ever heard someone say, ‘Go the extra mile’? Let’s find out what that has to do with kindness.”**

## **GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)**

### **Story Exploration**

In Jesus' time, Roman soldiers had the authority to compel civilians to carry their gear for one mile. This practice was likely viewed as mean and embarrassing by those who were forced to comply.

- **Relating it to Kindness:**

Jesus' instruction to go the extra mile goes beyond mere compliance; it's an invitation to respond to hostility with kindness and generosity. Instead of begrudgingly fulfilling the minimum requirement, we're called to exceed expectations and willingly offer additional assistance.

- **Demonstrating Kindness in Action:**

Imagine being in the shoes of someone who is asked to carry a Roman soldier's gear. Going the extra mile might involve not only carrying the gear but doing so with a cheerful attitude, offering to carry it farther than required, or providing additional help or support along the way. (Proverbs 17:22)

- **Reflecting Jesus' Character:**

By going the extra mile in acts of kindness, we reflect the character of Jesus himself. Throughout his ministry, Jesus consistently demonstrated kindness and compassion towards others, even in the face of opposition or mistreatment. (Luke 6:35)

- **Going Beyond Self-Interest:**

Kindness, as demonstrated in Matthew 5:41, challenges us to look beyond our own self-interests and consider the needs and well-being of others. It's about being willing to inconvenience ourselves for the sake of someone else's benefit. (Matthew 16:24, Philippians 2:3-4)

- **Inspiring Others:**

When we go the extra mile in kindness, we not only bless the recipient of our actions but also inspire others to do the same. Our acts of kindness can have a ripple effect, spreading love and compassion throughout our communities. (Proverbs 15:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Matthew 5:16)

In essence, Matthew 5:41 teaches us that true kindness is proactive, generous, and sacrificial. It's about more than just meeting expectations; it's about surpassing them with a heart full of love and compassion, following the example of Jesus Christ. And by following Jesus' example, we may have the opportunity to share with someone else about what God has done for us. But for people to see something different about you, they have to see it in you. If people don't see anything different about you than any other person, ask yourself about your relationship with God and how it is impacting your life.

## \*1. Story Illustrations

### [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

*Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment*

**What You Need:** Blank white paper, pencils, timer, and crayons (or markers)

#### What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Give each kid a piece of blank white paper.
- After handing out the paper, ask: “What was your favorite part of the Bible Story today?”
- Demonstrate as you direct kids to fold their paper in half (hamburger style) and open it back up.
- Give each kid a pencil.
- Set out the crayons or markers.
- Let kids know they are going to be today's Bible Story illustrator and pretend to be the main character of the story!
- Ask kids to imagine a Roman soldier has just asked them to carry his super-heavy pack.
- Tell the kids that they'll have three minutes to draw and set the timer.
  - If time allows, invite kids to color their drawing.
- Instruct the kids to draw on the left side of the page. Point to the left side for each kid.
- Direct the kids to include two very important details in their picture: the expression on their own face and on the soldier's face in this moment.
  - Cue the kids to think about the feelings they might have about being asked to carry the soldier's heavy load. Ask: “If a Roman soldier asked you to carry his pack, would you be sad, upset, mad, or scared?”
  - Cue the kids to think about the Roman's soldier's feelings. Ask: “Would the Roman soldier be happy, confident, or rude?”
- After the three minutes, instruct the kids to illustrate on the right side of the paper with what they would be thinking and feeling at the next big moment in the story: They ask the soldier if they can carry his pack for the second mile.
- Direct the kids to include two very important details in their picture: the expression on their own face and on the soldier's face in this moment.
  - Cue the kids to think about the feelings they might have about *asking* to carry the soldier's heavy load for a second mile. Ask: “Would you be happy, confident, sad, upset, mad, or scared?”
  - Cue the kids to think about the Roman's soldier's feelings. Ask: “Would the Roman soldier still be happy, confident, rude, sad, or upset? How would he be feeling now?”
- Set the timer for three minutes.
- Tell the kids that they'll have three minutes to draw.
  - If time allows, invite kids to color their drawing.
- Invite the kids to show their pictures and explain their feelings and drawings.

#### What You Say:

“Your pictures came out so interesting! Like your character in the pictures you drew, it's important to remember that sometimes things will be unfair. When that happens, you can choose kindness! You can even **[Bottom Line] be kinder than you have to be.** You can help clean up a mess that you didn't make, or decide to set aside some of your birthday money to buy a surprise for someone else. When

you do that, others can see God's love."

***[Make It Personal] (Share a time when you chose to respond with kindness and decided to go the extra mile, or about a time when someone did that for you.)***

## 2. Kindness Plates

### [Live for God | Application Activity]

*Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery*

**What You Need:** Individual snack-size packs of M&M's, prepared paper plates, dice, and hand wipes;

*Optional: prepared bags of mini items*

### What You Do:

- Help the kids clean their hands with a wipe.
- Instruct the kids to gather in a circle.
- Give each kid a small pack of M&M'S and a plate.
  - *For a non-food option: give each kid a prepared sandwich bag of fun, small items (mini erasers, stickers, or colorful beads)*
- Direct the kids to put the M&M's from their pack (or items from their bag) on the side of the plate marked, "the first mile."
- Set up a plate for yourself as well.
- Explain that kids will take turns rolling the dice and decide if they are going to go the extra mile and give away that many M&M's (or other items).
- Give the dice to one kid.
- Instruct that kid to roll the dice.
- Direct the kid to choose whether they want to keep their M&M's (or other items) or go the extra mile and share them.
- If the kid decides to keep their M&M's (or other items), instruct them to do nothing.
- If a kid chooses to give away their M&M's (or other items) direct them to take the number of M&M's (or other items) that is rolled on the dice from the side of their plate labeled "the first mile" and move them to "the extra mile" side of someone else's plate.
- Ask some of the following questions as they relate during the game:
  - Do you want to give anyone an M&M (or other items)?
  - Who are you going to give M&M's (or other items) to?
  - Is it someone you just want to give it to or is it someone who gave you one first?
  - Why are you choosing to give those M&M's (or other items) away?
  - Why are you choosing to keep yours?
  - How does it make you feel?
- Continue the game around the circle until everyone has rolled the dice and completed their turn.
- Take from your own plate if kid's plates run low throughout the game.
- *Optional: Allow kids to eat the M&M's, or give them another fresh pack to eat.*

### What You Say:

"What happened when you gave away your M&M's (or other items)? (*Pause for responses.*) Your supply may have lessened, but other people's plates started collecting M&M's (or other items) on 'the extra mile' side of their plate! We still all ended up with some!

"It was fun to watch so many of you smile as you received M&M's (or other items)! It's such a good feeling to share kindness and receive kindness! Just like in our game today, you may be asked to do something that seems unfair, like having to turn the TV off to go set the table. It may not be exactly what you want to do, but showing kindness really does help others see Jesus! Remember to **[Bottom Line]** be kinder than you have to be."

### 3. Go the Extra Mile!

#### [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

*Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body*

**What You Need:** Bibles, pool noodles, and painter's tape

#### What You Do:

- Use the painter's tape to create two starting lines on one side of your group space.
- Create another two tape lines on the other side of the group space. Explain these lines represent the "Mile Marker."
- Look up Colossians 3:12 and read it out loud to the group.
- Read the verse a few times, inviting the group to repeat it after you.
- Leave the Bible open for reference and place it at one "Mile Marker" tape line.
- Open another Bible to Colossians 3:12 and leave it at the other "Mile Marker" tape line.
- Divide your group into two teams.
- Instruct each group to line up behind the taped starting lines.
- Give the first kid on each team a pool noodle.
- Direct the first kid in each line to tell the next kid on their team, "Carry my pack!"
- Instruct the first kids on both teams to hand the pool noodle to the second kids in line.
- Direct the first two kids on both teams to walk to the "Mile Marker" while the second kids walk behind them while carrying the pool noodle.
- When a pair of kids reaches their team's "Mile Marker," direct the kid holding the pool noodle to say the verse to the first kid.
  - Invite the kids to refer to the Bibles if needed.
  - Help with reading, as needed.
- When finished reciting the verse, instruct that team's pair of kids to walk back to the starting point (the first kid simply walks; the second still carries the pool noodle).
- When the pair arrives back at their team, direct the kid holding the noodle to start the process over by telling the next kid in line, "Carry my pack!"
- Continue the game until every kid on both teams has had a chance to carry the pool noodle and say the verse.
  - Be sure the first kid to start in the line on both teams gets to have their turn when the last kid in line has completed carrying the noodle and saying the verse.
- The first team to finish is the winner!

#### What You Say:

"We should go the extra mile with people we are close to, with people we are not close to, and even with people we don't really like. We should always show kindness. It would be so easy to get frustrated when people are not kind to you. Jesus made it pretty clear that we are to **[Bottom Line] be kinder than you have to be!**

"Our verse has some great ways to show kindness, and we can do it because we're God's special, dearly loved people! So this week, and every week, wear kindness and patience like you wear your clothes! Choose to **[Bottom Line] be kinder than you have to be!**"



## 4. Pray and Dismiss

### [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

#### What You Say:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember?
- How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission?

**What You Need:** Paper plate, pencil, and coach's whistle

#### What You Do:

- Direct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Join the circle yourself!
- Show the kids the three objects: the plate, the pencil, and the coach's whistle.
- Share what each of the objects represent:
  - The plate represents home—we eat meals at home!
  - The pencil represents school—we learn and write at school using our pencils!
  - The coach's whistle can represent sports, or any person who is in charge of us, like our teachers or other adults.
- Share that you're going to pass the objects around the circle, and when an object comes to a kid, they can pray out loud or silently, asking God to help them go the extra mile in the area that object represents this coming week.
- Model a prayer first as you hold each object and start the object's journey around the circle.
  - Plate: "God, please help me remember to clean up after myself at home without even being asked!"
  - Pencil: "God, please help me be willing to share if any of my classmates ask to borrow something."
  - Coach's Whistle: "God, please help me to listen to my grown-ups this week and to be a good listener."
- When the objects come back around to you, gather them up.
- Close your group time in prayer.

#### What You Say:

"Dear God, thank You for showing us what it means to be kind like Jesus. Please show us how we can go the extra mile at home, at school, and everywhere we go. Remind us to always **[Bottom Line] be kinder than you have to be**. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, invite the kids to share their "Story Illustrations" paper and explain how they imagined themselves in today's Bible Story going the extra mile.

## GETTING READY

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

### Kindness Activity

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

#### What You Need:

- Kindness Tree from previous weeks
  - *This will be used throughout the month. If you need to take it down after group time, be sure to store it for future weeks this month*
- Blue sticky notes, one for each kid
- Pencils, one for each kid

### **GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)**

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

**(Choose as many of these activities as you like.)**

*\* If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #1.*

### Story Exploration – No supplies

#### **\*1. Story Illustrations**

**[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]**

*Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment*

#### What You Need:

- Blank white paper, one piece for each kid
- Pencils, one for each kid
- Timer, one for each Small Group
- Crayons or markers

#### **2. Kindness Plates**

**[Live for God | Application Activity]**

*Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery*

#### What You Need:

- Individual snack-size packs of M&M's, one or two bags per kid (if you want an extra bag to take home)
  - *Optional: For a non-food alternative, prepare small bags of alternate prizes for each kid within sandwich bags (mini erasers, individual stickers, colorful beads, etc.)*
- Paper plates, one for each kid plus one extra
  - *Before group time: Use the permanent marker to draw a line down the middle of each plate, write "the first mile" on the left side, and write "the extra mile" on the right side.*
- Dice, one for each Small Group
- Hand wipes, one pack for each Small Group

#### **3. Go the Extra Mile!**

**[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]**

*Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body*

**What You Need:**

- Bibles, two for each Small Group
- Pool noodles, two for each Small Group
- Painter's tape

**4. Pray and Dismiss**

**[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]**

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

**What You Need:**

- Paper plate, one for each Small Group
- Pencil, one for each Small Group
- Coach's whistle, one for each Small Group

**HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience**

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app**