

Today's Suggested Schedule—February 2024, Week 3

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

Today's Key Question: When have you been surprised by kindness?

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.

PRELUDE: Setting the Tone for the Experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

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

SMALL GROUP (15 minutes)

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction

Just for Fun

Opening Activity

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 (Communicator Script)

Key Question

Prayer

SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Story Exploration

Application Activity: Take a Snapshot

Bible Story Review: Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions

Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You

Prayer Activity: Make It Personal with Prayer

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.

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. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: Hula-Hoop (or a circle of rope or tape), craft sticks (or actual sticks)

What You Do:

- Create a “campfire” using the Hula-Hoop (or circle of rope or tape) on the floor.
- Invite kids to sit around the “campfire.”
- Give each kid a large and small stick.
- Explain that you will describe a situation that seems unfair or one in which it might be hard to do more than the kids feel they need to.
- If the kids think the situation you describe is easy for them to be kind, instruct them to toss their small stick into the campfire.
- If the kids think that situation would be hard for them to show kindness, direct them to toss their larger stick into the campfire.
- One at a time, share an “Extra Mile Scenario” below and pause for kids to throw their sticks.
- After the kids throw their sticks, ask the kids who threw in their big sticks:
 - Why would it be hard to be kind in this situation?
 - What would need to happen to make it easier to be kind?
- ***[Make It Personal] Interact with the kids about times when you need God’s help to go the extra mile. Keep the examples appropriate for this age and do not name specific people.***
- After each statement, direct the kids to retrieve their sticks for the next scenario.

Extra Mile Scenarios:

- Ask, “Is it easy or hard to go the extra mile and be kind when . . .”
 - You and your best friend got invited to a laser tag party.
 - Your friend got invited to a laser tag party, but you didn’t.
 - You got invited to a laser tag party, but your friend didn’t.
 - Your mom said you can’t go to the laser tag party, and you think it’s unfair.
 - You just want to be left alone, but your younger brother keeps bothering you.
 - You’ve done all the clean-up jobs your dad asked you to, but there’s still more work.
 - You’re tired after a long basketball game and just want to chill out, but your parents want to hear all about it.
 - Even though you weren’t goofing off, the coach is making everyone do extra laps because some of the kids on your team were causing trouble.
 - A kid at school makes it a point to shove you every time he walks past you in the hall.
- Encourage kids to think of other scenarios to share with the group.
- Make sure kids know if they are ever in a situation where they are being bullied or persistently treated unfairly or unkindly, it’s completely fine to go to a trusted adult and talk to them about it. Help them to understand that “going the extra mile” never means that we let others harm or take advantage in ways that worry or frighten us.

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: Prepared Bible, empty water bottle, hydrogen peroxide, dried yeast, warm water, liquid dish soap, cookie sheet tray, paper cup, red food coloring

What You Do:

- Place the bottle containing the hydrogen peroxide on the tray.
- Instruct the kids to gather around.
- Give one kid the marked Bible to read Matthew 5:41 to the group.
- Ask:
 - What do you remember from the Bible story that would make this example of kindness something the Jewish people would find difficult to do? *(If needed, remind kids that a Roman soldier could ask anyone along the road to carry his heavy gear for one mile and that person was required to do so.)*
 - What are some reasons why carrying a Roman soldier's gear an extra mile would be the last thing a Jewish person would want to do? *(Aside from the fact that it would be hard work and possibly out of the way, the Romans were enemies and generally treated the Jewish people badly.)*
 - If Jesus gave us a modern-day example of overflowing kindness—going the extra mile—to help someone you don't really like, what might it be?
- Follow the steps below to illustrate an overflowing action:
 - Add the eight drops of red food coloring to the bottle with the hydrogen peroxide in it.
 - Add one tablespoon of dish soap into the bottle.
 - Gently swirl the bottle around to mix the ingredients.
 - In a small paper cup, combine the warm water and the yeast.
 - Stir the yeast and water mixture for about 30 seconds.
 - Pour the yeast and water mixture into the bottle.
 - The ingredients will begin to foam and overflow from the bottle.
- Say: "Some obvious changes took place when certain ingredients were mixed together. They reacted in a way that caused them to overflow out of the bottle."
- Ask:
 - How might adding a greater amount of kindness to a situation completely change it? Can you share an example?
 - When have you been surprised by kindness?
 - If kindness shows up in someone's life, what would you expect to see them saying and doing? What would you NOT see them doing?
 - What "ingredients" are needed for someone's life to overflow with kindness?
 - Why be kind?
- Challenge the kids to think of one thing they can do this week to be extra kind to someone.
- Clean up and put the ingredients safely away.

3. Discussion Questions

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask:

- When you choose to be kinder than what is expected, what does that communicate to someone?
- Would you say that having basic manners such as saying “please” or letting someone go ahead of you in line is going the extra mile? Why or why not?
- If you go out of your way to be kind but expect something in return, is it still going above and beyond? Why or why not?
- How could you surprise someone this week by going out of your way to be kind? What if it was someone who was hard to get along with or someone you don’t normally hang out with? In what ways might your act of kindness change things for the better?
- How can going the extra mile point people to Jesus?
- How does a relationship with Jesus impact you going the extra mile?

4. Verses to Take with You

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: Bibles, paper, “Poison Ivy” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Instruct the kids to look up and read Ephesians 4:32, 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. (New) If it’s in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book of Ephesians. Once they find Ephesians, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find chapter 4. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse, 32, within the chapter they’ve already found.
- Lead the kids to say the verse together out loud a few times.
- Ask:
 - What examples of going the extra mile do you find in this verse?
 - In what ways is forgiving an act of going the extra mile?
 - When we go out of our way to be kind to someone but they don’t seem to notice or return the kindness, how can this verse encourage us to continue being kinder than we need to be?
 - Explain why forgiveness is an act of kindness.
- Give each kid a sheet of paper.
- Show kids the “Poison Ivy” Activity Page.
 - If needed, explain what poison ivy is and why hikers would want to know what it looks like to avoid touching it.
- Teach kids the “Leaves of three, let it be” saying for identifying and avoiding poison ivy.
- Ask: “Have you ever had a rash or reaction from poison ivy? If so, what was it like?”
- After kids have a good look at the picture, set the drawing from the “Poison Ivy” Activity Page aside.
- Challenge each kid to tear their paper to the exact size and shape of poison ivy leaves.
- When finished, compare them with the original and choose a winner.
- Ask:
 - What are some ways Jesus went above and beyond for us?
 - How we can imitate Jesus’ example?
- Direct the kids to tear off the smallest piece they can from the edge of their “poison ivy” (paper).
- Place the scraps together, compare the pieces, and choose a winner with the smallest piece.
- Ask:
 - What are some small, everyday acts of kindness that a Jesus follower would do?
 - What are some ways a kid can go above and beyond in kindness?

5. Make It Personal with Prayer

[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: Wide strips of elastic, permanent markers

What You Do:

- Let kids know they're going to create something to remind them to go the extra mile and show kindness this week.
- Give each kid a strip of wide elastic and a permanent marker.
- Instruct the kids to neatly write "Go the EXTRA mile" across the length of elastic in whatever writing style they choose.
- When the kids are finished, instruct the kids to stretch their piece of elastic to see how far it will expand.
- Help kids connect the way the elastic stretches to how they can remember to STRETCH the kindness they show others this week by going above and beyond and being kinder than they have to be.
- Close your group time in prayer.

What You Say:

"Dear God, thank You for choosing to be kinder than You had to be by sending Your only Son, Jesus. This week, when we're tempted to ignore a chance to be kind, help us remember how much You love us, then help us go the extra mile and choose to do more than we need to. Help us show our love for You by showing love to those around us even when they don't treat us the way we think they should. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

GETTING READY

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

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 Minutes)

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

(Choose one or both of these activities.)

1. Just for Fun

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

What You Need:

- Offering container

2. Opening Activity

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

What You Need:

- Pens
- Print "Campergory" Activity Page on paper and cut apart—one set for each Small Group
- Timer—one for each Small Group

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.)

1. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Hula-Hoop (or rope or tape)—one for each Small Group
- Wide craft stick (or large stick from a tree)—one for each kid
- Small craft stick (or small stick from a tree)—one for each kid

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need:

- Bible marked at Matthew 5:41
- Empty 16 oz. water bottle—one for each Small Group
- ½ cup hydrogen peroxide (3% solution)—one for each Small Group
 - Before Small Group, add the hydrogen peroxide to the empty bottle
- One Tablespoon (one packet) of dry yeast for each Small Group
- Three Tablespoons of warm water for each Small Group
- One Tablespoon of liquid dish washing soap of any kind for each Small Group
- Red food coloring—one bottle for each Small Group

- Small cup—one for each Small Group
- Cookie sheet tray—one for each Small Group

3. Discussion Questions

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need:

- No supplies needed

4. Verses to Take with You

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need:

- Bibles
- Paper—one for each kid
- Print “Poison Ivy” Activity Page on paper—one for each Small Group

5. Make It Personal with Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Permanent markers
- White, 1-inch wide elastic—one roll for each Small Group
 - Similar to: <https://bit.ly/46TXtgB>
- *Before group time: Cut an eight to ten-inch piece of white elastic for each kid.*

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**