

WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

Communicator Guide

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Show Me the Way
The Kindness of Jesus
Matthew 8:1-4,
Matthew 19:13-15,
Matthew 9:10-13

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What does kindness look like?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Jesus showed us how to be kind.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"You are God's chosen people.
You are holy and dearly loved.
So put on tender mercy and
kindness as if they were your
clothes. Don't be proud.
Be gentle and patient."
Colossians 3:12, NIV

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.

WEEK 1

Key Question: **What does kindness look like?** In some ways, kindness can feel subjective. What one person sees as an act of kindness, another might see as an obligation. That's why we start our preteens with a conversation about kindness. When you can identify what kindness can look like, you start to see all the ways you can show God's kindness to others.

We start this month in the **book of Matthew** as we look at three moments of kindness from Jesus' life. Whether Jesus was healing the sick, blessing little children, or sharing meals with people who others seemed to disregard, He was full of love and kindness. With the way He treated others, Jesus made sure that everyone knew they were valuable in God's eyes.

Bottom Line: **Jesus showed us how to be kind.** As we consider how we can show kindness to others, the best place to start is with Jesus. When we read about how Jesus was kind to others, we can learn how to reflect God's love with the way we treat others and show them they are valuable. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God was so incredibly kind to us. In response, we can choose to be kind to the people we meet each day.

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "Some of you may have trouble offering kindness or seeing who needs kindness. If that's you, go to God! Ask God to give you the eyes to see those in need of words of encouragement or a helping hand. At your school, in your neighborhood, and in your home, there are people needing someone like you to show them the kindness of Jesus!"

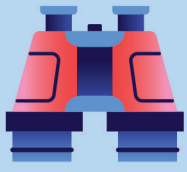
"As we head to Small Groups, we want you to consider this question:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

"What does kindness look like?"

"I realize some of you may have trouble coming up with examples of kindness. However, don't worry! We are so excited you are here to participate in discussions with your Small Group Leaders. They can help you come up with examples. But before we leave, let's pray together thanking God for Jesus and the example of kindness He was for all of us!"

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

WELCOME

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game (World Aquatics Championships, Super Bowl, Nordic World Ski Championships), Black History Month, Ground Hog Day, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

OPENER

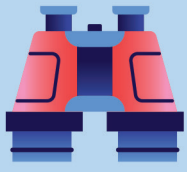
HOST: "Welcome, Adventurers! I see a lot of happy campers here at [Name of Environment]. Looks like you've had your coffee and granola!"

"Now, I realize you could be out rafting some raging river, free-climbing a monster mountain, or paragliding off a sheer cliff, but thankfully you aren't! Each of you opted to join us on this journey called life, and we are glad you're here . . . and as a reward, we're kicking things off with a wild game.

"It may or may not involve toilet paper. Who's ready for a game I like to call, 'Grab 'N Go'?"

SLIDE: 'GRAB 'N GO'

Call four kid volunteers to stand in front of the stage with their backs to the audience.



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

Then have four adult volunteers stand around the outskirts of the room, each holding a roll of toilet paper and another random non-expedition item, like a pack of printer paper or a microphone.

“Okay, no peeking! The game starts out super simple. Our adventurous volunteers stand here, backs to the group, not peeking in the slightest. When I say, ‘Ready . . . set . . . Grab ‘N Go!’ each volunteer will move as quickly as humanly possible to the adult volunteers and grab an item they’re holding.

Walk over to a volunteer and hold up a roll of toilet paper.

“Not just any item—it has to be an item that you’d see, need, or seek while on an expedition. Toilet paper, treasure, a map, bears, things like that!

“However, one of you will be stuck with an item that has nothing to do with an expedition! If you are stuck with an item, don’t worry—you’ll still have a chance to win the game. Here’s how.

“After round one is done, everyone will take their items with them to the front and set them down on the table where they’re standing. On the next ‘Ready . . . set . . . Grab ‘N Go!’ everyone will be asked to run and grab another item from the leaders—but the person who got stuck with the wrong item *can steal someone else’s while they’re getting a new one*. Indiana Jones style, you’ll swap out your wrong item with their right one! You can only swap things out once per round—and you can only grab one item per round as well.

“At the end of all the rounds, whoever has the most correct items—ones you’d find on an expedition—is the winner! Questions? No? Great! Let’s go!

AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC

Play the game for four rounds. Each round will have a specific “expedition” item. They are, in order, Round 1) toilet paper, Round 2) a stuffed wild animal, Round 3) a map, and Round 4) a piece of gold treasure.

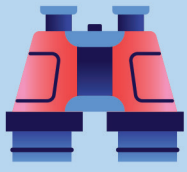
In addition, each round will also have an item that you wouldn’t find on an expedition. They are, in order, Round 1) a microphone, Round 2) a ruler, Round 3) package of printer paper, and Round 4) dry-erase markers.

After Round One, gather volunteers at the front of the room, backs to the large group. Have the adult volunteers change their position in the room and continue.

“Excellent job! For Round Two, you’re on the hunt. Something ferocious. Something wild. Good luck! And remember, one of you can steal and swap a wrong item for a right one. Ready! Set! Grab ‘N Go!

After Round Two, gather volunteers at the front of the room, backs to the large group. Have the adult volunteers change their position again and continue.

“Amazing! For the third round, you’ll need to know where you’re going. You’ll need something to help you navigate. Ready! Set! Grab ‘N Go!



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

After Round Three, gather volunteers at the front of the room, backs to the large group. Have the adult volunteers change their position again and continue.

"Final round. The culmination of this game and our expedition. You've got the map. You've defeated the wild animals. You got your toilet paper for . . . well, you know. Now it's time to grab a treasure. Do you steal someone else's? Go for the gold? Ready? Set? Grab 'N Go!

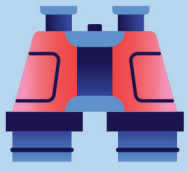
Play the final round, and when all volunteers have four items each, gather them back at the front.

"One last chance to swap! If you've got things you don't find on an expedition, this is your last chance to switch it out with another player!

Finish the game. At the end, see which volunteer has the most correct items. If there is a tie, celebrate all winners.

"Wow! Can we get a round of applause for all our adventurers today? *(Pause for applause)* Now everybody grab your enthusiasm and welcome our Worship Leader, *[Name of Worship Leader]*, to lead us in singing really loud to worship our amazing God!"

Host exits as Worship Leader enters.



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hi, everybody! I'm so excited that we get to praise God here today. This song says, 'We want to love like You . . . in everything we do.' Every day, we can choose to share God's love together. Let's sing about it!

AUDIO: "LOVE LIKE YOU" / TRACK 9 FROM MAKE A MOVE

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "LOVE LIKE YOU" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Yes! We can show God's love everywhere we go. So good! Before we continue in worship, let's watch this.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): LIVE LOUD VIDEO FROM GET REEL

"We have a new song to sing today. It's called 'Your Love.' God's kindness makes us feel SO loved . . . and that makes us want to show love and kindness to others. Let's thank God for being so kind to us. Sing along as you catch on.

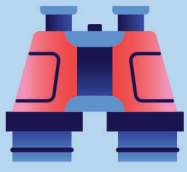
AUDIO: "YOUR LOVE" / TRACK 7 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "YOUR LOVE" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Listen to these words from Isaiah 63:7: 'I will talk about the kind things the Lord has done. I'll praise him for everything he's done for us.' (NirV) No matter what happens in our lives, we can remember that we are children of God. Let's keep singing and thanking God for being so loving and kind. Sing this with me."

AUDIO: "YES I AM" / TRACK 5 FROM EVERYTHING TO ME

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "YES I AM" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leader exits.

Communicator brings a backpack carrying the toilet paper, wild stuffed animal, map, and golden treasure from the earlier game.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Welcome, everyone! I love seeing you here today, and this is one of my favorite times of the week. When I'm here at [Name of Environment], I'm totally comfortable! I've been here before, I've done this a bunch of times, and I know exactly what to do.

"I know where to find the mic. I know where the props are. I've got my script, my Bible, and my people around me to help out. I'm confident because I've been there, done that. It's way easier to do something when you've done it before, right?

"Honestly, though, there are some situations where I'm not so confident. Deep sea scuba diving. Never done that. Hibachi chef, no clue how to flip the little shrimp into my hat. Put me somewhere remote in the great outdoors? Let's just say I'd have difficulty knowing what to do in that situation. Although I love a cool beanie and lightweight puffer vest as much as the next person, I haven't spent enough time outside to know what to do when an emergency arises.

"What about you? What's your outdoor knowledge? Let's test it out!

Ask the next set of true/false questions. Have kids vote by standing if they think it's true and sitting if they think it's false.

"First question. True or False:

SLIDE: TRUE OR FALSE QUESTION 1A

"If you are approached by a bear, quickly run and climb the nearest tree.

Allow time for the group to stand or sit.

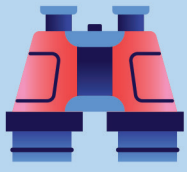
"The correct answer . . . is false!

SLIDE: TRUE OR FALSE QUESTION 1B

"Many bears will chase if you run, and they are excellent tree climbers. Rather, if a bear keeps coming closer to you, stand your ground, talk forcefully, look big, and use bear spray if necessary. You know . . . because everyone randomly carries bear spray.

"Next question! True or False:

SLIDE: TRUE OR FALSE QUESTION 2A



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

"If you run out of water, go to the nearest lake or stream that looks clear and take a drink.

Allow time for the group to stand or sit.

"The answer . . . is false!

SLIDE: TRUE OR FALSE QUESTION 2B

"You can get super sick by drinking out of a lake or stream. There's so much gross stuff in there that you can't even see—and before you drink something that will make your rear end explode, you'll have to take steps to clean the water. Filter it, boil it, something. If you don't, you'll end up in a situation that is no fun . . . at all!

"Next one. You ready? True or False:

SLIDE: TRUE OR FALSE QUESTION 3A

"If you're lost in the woods, water and shelter are more important than finding food.

Allow time for the group to stand or sit.

"It's true!

SLIDE: TRUE OR FALSE QUESTION 3B

"You can survive over a week without food but only a few days without water. Plus, shelter is needed to keep you warm, dry, and maybe even off the ground.

"Two more! True or False:

SLIDE: TRUE OR FALSE QUESTION 4A

"If you're not sure about eating something out in the wild, like berries or mushrooms, watch to see if an animal like a bird or squirrel eats it. If they do, it will probably be safe for you to eat, too.

Allow time for the group to stand or sit.

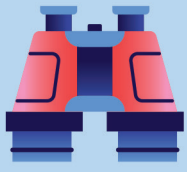
"The answer is *totally* false!

SLIDE: TRUE OR FALSE QUESTION 4B

"Please do not ever eat berries or mushrooms just because you saw Bambi eating it. The Amanita Mushroom, beautiful and orange, are eaten by lots of different kinds of wildlife, but they're absolutely toxic to humans!

"Last one. True or False:

SLIDE: TRUE OR FALSE QUESTION 5A



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

"If you need to make a shelter, the best place for it is on top of a hill, visible, in a clearing, so you can spot potential rescuers coming.

Allow time for the group to stand or sit.

"The correct answer is false!

SLIDE: TRUE OR FALSE QUESTION 5B

"You might think it's a great idea to get out in the open, on top of a hill, but not so much. It's smarter to place the shelter in a location that will NOT be exposed or blown over by the wind. The nights can get crazy cold—and being unprotected will make things even more miserable!"

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "Fortunately, most of us may never be on the type of expedition that will demand you know how to fend off a bear. Or which mushrooms are okay to eat. Or what to do if you run out of water. However, all of us are on a different kind of expedition.

"Life. Figuring out how to live it, live it well, and follow Jesus through all of it.

"One of the ways to navigate life and one of the things that helps with pretty much every situation is kindness.

"If I were to test your kindness knowledge, I'm betting each of you would score really high. There's no doubt you know lots of ways to demonstrate kindness toward friends, strangers, and even your siblings, hard as that may be sometimes, the little stinkers.

"But if you know *how* to be kind, and even *when* to be kind . . . why do you often choose to do the opposite? If you're not using it, why is it so hard to let your little brother play your Switch? Why do you argue with friends and classmates over who's first in line? Why do you feel the need to one-up each other all the time? When there's an open seat next to you on the bus, why can't the new kid sit down?

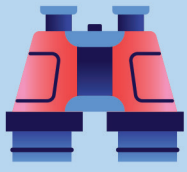
"Great questions. (*hold up Bible*) And thankfully, we've got a great source to find some answers. One of the coolest parts of the Bible is studying the way Jesus lived His life. When we look at the things Jesus said and did, we can better understand how to treat others. Let's dig in and discover how Jesus showed kindness throughout His life."

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: "Before I continue, I need three volunteers who would be willing to help me on stage. You won't need to do anything crazy. I mean, not too crazy. Yet. To start, all you'll need to do is stand on the stage next to me. Are there any willing participants?"

Call up three volunteers to stand at the back of the stage. Pick three volunteers who are a bit outgoing and game for anything.

"Now, at the time of these stories, Jesus was known as a wise leader and teacher. Even though there was no TikTok, no YouTube, and no DMs, people still had heard about or had seen the amazing things Jesus did. He could heal those who were sick, hurt, or disabled. As word of Jesus traveled, large numbers of people would show up to hear His lessons or receive healing.



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

"In the book of Matthew, we learn of a time Jesus came down a mountainside followed by a crowd. This wasn't uncommon—people followed Him everywhere. This time, though, Jesus was approached by a man with a skin disease.

Ask one volunteer to step forward. Take the roll of toilet paper and wrap the volunteer up like a mummy.

"Yeah, sorry, my friend, you're the one with the skin disease.

Continue wrapping him up as you talk, comically wrapping his head as well.

"At this time, there was no cure for most skin diseases. And they could be straight nasty. They could cripple your hands and feet, cause paralysis, even cause some to lose fingers, toes, and limbs.

"And back then, anyone with a horrible skin disease would be banished from their home and city because of the religious laws. People feared contracting the disease and viewed these people as being unclean, so no one wanted to come anywhere near them—much less touch them!

Finish wrapping up the volunteer and move to place a hand on his shoulder, but then stop short. Because skin disease.

"Some of the symptoms, like open sores all over your body, made someone with this disease stand out in a crowd. If you had a skin disease, everyone knew it, and everyone was probably grossed out by it. Still, knowing all of this, the man disregarded the crowd, didn't go off by himself, but instead approached Jesus. No doubt the crowd would have been appalled, but it didn't matter to this guy. He knew he needed to get to Jesus.

"As he approached, the man knelt down on the ground in front of Jesus asking for help.

Ask the volunteer if he can kneel—and if you wrapped him up quite a bit it will be a bit funny if he tries.

"Close enough. Once the man knelt, Jesus looked at him. Instead of backing away, Jesus did the unthinkable. The Bible says,

Open the Bible to Matthew 8:3a (NirV) and read.

"Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.

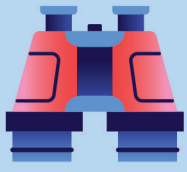
Place a hand on the volunteer's shoulder.

Open the Bible to Matthew 8:3b (NirV) and read.

"Jesus said, 'I am willing to do it . . . Be clean!'

"And right away . . .

Start ripping off the toilet paper, have the volunteer help.



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

“ . . . the man was healed of his skin disease. Completely. Feet, fingers, sores—all completely normal. No one else would give this guy the time of day, but Jesus showed incredible kindness. He placed His hands on him and healed him. Because of what Jesus did, this man could return to his family and friends.

Ask the volunteer to step back and then beckon the second volunteer to step forward. Hand this volunteer the stuffed wild animal.

“This was a common thing for Jesus. I’m not talking about the healing part, which He also did all the time—I’m talking about hanging around and being near those who were often overlooked, or shunned, or considered unimportant.

“The next example of Jesus showing kindness involves kids—and kids who chances are—weren’t that much younger than all of you in this room.

“Jesus had traveled from Galilee across the Jordan River near Jericho. By this time, you already know that word got around about the Savior, so people were clamoring just to get a glimpse. Whole families would come. Parents brought out their kids to ask Jesus to bless them. And thankfully, today, we have one such kid. Can you . . . ? Do you mind . . . ?

Ask the volunteer to kneel on the ground and act younger than he or she is.

“(leaning down, talking slowly, as if to a young child) That’s right, little Billy/Sally! We’re here to see Jesus! (pinch his or her cheek) Now, take your stuffed animal and don’t stray too far!

“(Address the large group) Kids today, huh? Anyway, in today’s world, we realize that kids are the future. Famous people even sang a song about it. Children are super important, cared for, and loved. Back then, though? In Jesus’ time? Kids were just mostly seen as being in the way.

“They weren’t seen as important, and there was a perception that kids had little value. That they were kind of annoying, really.

Turn to the volunteer.

“But not you, little Billy/Sally!

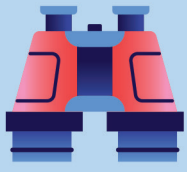
“(Address the large group) The disciples even believed that kids needed to be neither seen, nor heard. In this crowd, with all these families and people, kids ran right up to Jesus—and the disciples totally yelled at them and told them to back off. They felt children were not worth the time and attention of Jesus.

“Conversely, Jesus didn’t see it that way at all. He stepped in to flip the situation around.

Open the Bible to Matthew 19:14 (NIV) and read.

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me. Don’t keep them away. The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them.’

Stand near the volunteer and pull them into a side hug.



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

"Jesus thought that kids were great! (*lean down, affecting baby voice*) And you are, little Billy/Sally! Don't let those mean old disciples tell you that you can't see Jesus!

"(*Address the large group*) Despite the opinions of others, Jesus showed amazing kindness. He welcomed those kids, laid His hands on them, and blessed them."

Have the second volunteer stand and step back in line with the first. Then beckon the third volunteer to step forward and hand him or her the map and the golden treasure.

"Finally, I have one more example of Jesus spending time with a group of unexpected people. And this person? (*look at volunteer, laying it on thick*) Well, this person was just the worst. Horrible. People hated this person. You know why?

Slap a hand on the volunteer's shoulder.

"It's because he was a . . . TAX COLLECTOR!"

Gasp, overreact with comic revulsion.

"(*change demeanor*) I'm just kidding, you're not that bad. But back in those days? A tax collector? People despised those guys! Mainly because they (*point to the map*) knew where everyone lived and (*point to the gold treasure*) took people's money!"

"And, wouldn't you know it, while walking around town, Jesus saw a tax collector named Matthew. Tax collectors were usually avoided because they were considered traitors by the Jewish community. Men like Matthew worked for the Roman government by collecting taxes. And to make matters worse, some tax collectors would charge more than they should and pocket the rest—making them wealthy. They could be total crooks!"

"When Jesus saw Matthew, He walked up to him and spoke two words. Just two. It wasn't 'Quit it!' Or 'Stop stealing!'"

It was:

Open the Bible to Matthew 9:9b (NirV) and read.

"Follow me.

"And amazingly, Matthew did. He left his life, his home, everything he knew, and followed Jesus. Soon after, Jesus traveled to Matthew's house with more tax collectors and others known for making poor choices in life.

"The religious leaders, who were always uptight about strict rules, saw this and were shocked Jesus would spend time with people like Matthew. People who had troubled reputations. People who everyone else avoided. After Jesus heard their concerns, He spoke up by saying,

Open the Bible to Matthew 9:12b-13 (NirV) and read.

"Those who are healthy don't need a doctor. Sick people do. Go and learn what this means, 'I want mercy and not sacrifice.' I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me."



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

“In other words, Jesus didn’t come to save those who were already doing great. He came, specifically, for those who weren’t. He came to show kindness to those who were never shown kindness.”

Communicator collects each of the props and directs the volunteers to go back to their seats.

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “Jesus didn’t just spend His time hanging out with people who were important or had it all together. Each of these true stories give us a glimpse into the heart of Jesus. Those with contagious skin diseases, young kids, and distrusted tax collectors were not out of reach from the Son of God! Quite the opposite. Despite their social standings and reputations, Jesus chose to demonstrate kindness to these people.

“And His kindness didn’t stop there. When Jesus died on the cross, He demonstrated the greatest example of kindness this world has ever seen. It’s odd, thinking that what Jesus did for us on the cross was *kind*. Maybe you think of ‘kind’ things as holding the door open for someone, sharing a pencil, or letting someone else pick the largest piece of pizza.

“But with Jesus, He never does anything halfway . . . or small. In the ultimate display of kindness, He bore the punishment for our sins so we didn’t have to. In doing so, Jesus paid the debt even though we did nothing to deserve it. An ultimate example of kindness.

“By studying His life, we’re shown how to treat other people. It’s easy to be kind to others when you like them. But Jesus made it clear—kindness is for everyone. *Everyone*. This means we can keep our eyes open for people who are often overlooked. You can select the least skilled basketball player first at recess instead of waiting to pick them last. You can step away from your friend group for a moment to introduce someone standing without any friends. And, yes, you could even let your little brother play your video games.

“We can keep our eyes open to offer kindness to all kinds of people! Everywhere you look, you’ll find someone who needs your kindness to remind them they’re valuable.”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “Some of you may have trouble offering kindness or seeing who needs kindness. If that’s you, go to God! Ask God to give you the eyes to see those in need of words of encouragement or a helping hand. At your school, in your neighborhood, and in your home, there are people needing someone like you to show them the kindness of Jesus!

“As we head to Small Groups, we want you to consider this question:

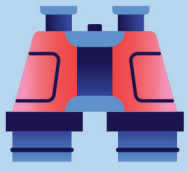
SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“What does kindness look like?”

“I realize some of you may have trouble coming up with examples of kindness. However, don’t worry! We are so excited you are here to participate in discussions with your Small Group Leaders. They can help you come up with examples. But before we leave, let’s pray together thanking God for Jesus and the example of kindness He was for all of us!”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.



GEAR UP

AN ADVENTURE
IN KINDNESS



WEEK
ONE

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP