

WEEK  
**THREE**

FEBRUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

## Communicator Guide

### 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

**"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 3

**Key Question: When have you been surprised by kindness?** We hear a lot about random acts of kindness, and it's true; often the best kindness is the kind that feels completely random. We pray that this question will help preteens discover how they feel when someone surprises them with kindness. And when that happens, we hope to guide them to figure out the unexpected, surprising ways they can show kindness to the people in their life.

For week three, we turn to **Matthew 5:41**. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught, "Suppose someone forces you to go one mile. Go two miles with them." To us, that might sound strange, but to those listening—not so much. Jesus' listeners knew that a Roman soldier could force them to carry their pack for a full mile. Jesus said to go two! And in doing so, Jesus reminded His followers about the importance of going above and beyond in the way they chose to respond to others.

**Bottom Line: Be kinder than you have to be.** Often kindness can feel like an obligation. Because of that, we tend to do the bare minimum when it comes to being kind to others. What if we helped kids look at it differently? What if we helped them see that kindness can be extravagant and unexpected? It's that sort of kindness that can change people's hearts and show them how much God loves

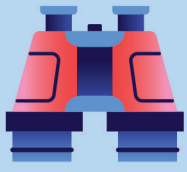
### LANDING

**COMMUNICATOR:** "If you're not sure how to show this kind of kindness, look no further than Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, He gave His life for each one of us even when we didn't deserve it! The kindness Jesus demonstrated and lived was extraordinary! And we get to search for ways to spread His love and kindness to others.

"We are about to head to Small Groups, but I want each of you to ponder this one question.

### SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

**"When have you been surprised by kindness?"**



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## 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.**

## 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, Black History Month, President's 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:** "Hello everyone, and welcome back to [Name of Environment]! Here we try to have a good time—and hopefully learn a thing or two along the way. We're continuing our adventure in kindness, and today we've decided to flip things around. Or inside-out, rather.

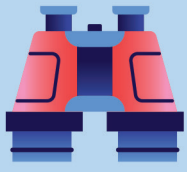
"Instead of having the outdoors stay outdoors, we've decided to bring the outdoors inside. Literally.

"Depending on where you live, some of you might've happened upon a certain kind of wild animal. The burglar of the backyard barbecue. I'm talking about, of course . . .

**SLIDE: PHOTO OF A RACCOON**

". . . The Trash Panda.

"While taking out the trash last night, I came up on one of these little critters rooting through my garbage can. Ordinarily, you should give these animals some distance, but I decided to do something you should never, ever try at



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home. I captured the furball with my bare hands! I risked life and limb for each of you! And before I came in today, I trained this striped rabbit to help us with our game today. Care to meet him?"

**AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC**

*A volunteer dressed as a raccoon enters, wearing sunglasses and bopping to the music. After a few moments, cut the music as the volunteer hits a pose.*

**VOLUNTEER AS RACCOON:** "Sup."

**HOST:** "Yep! Totally real raccoon, not a volunteer in a costume. At all. And if you think that I found this guy rooting around my garbage cans last night and I captured him and dressed him up like that . . . don't you worry about it.

"Who's up for some 'Trash Panda Trivia'? Fourth vs. Fifth? Let's go!

**SLIDE: "TRASH PANDA TRIVIA"**

*Choose three fourth and three fifth graders to the stage and stand the groups opposite one another.*

"Playing 'Trash Panda Trivia' is simple. Trash Panda here . . .

*The volunteer gives an upward chin nod and then gives his way to the middle of the room, away from the teams.*

". . . will move around the room to various spots. (To someone in the Large Group, as an aside) If he asks, don't give him any money.

"(Address the teams) I'll ask a survival trivia question. If one of you up here knows the answer, you must run off the stage and be the first person to tag him. Do that—and you get to answer the question! If you are correct, you get ten points for your team. If you're wrong, the opposing team automatically is awarded the points.

"Any questions? No? Let's play!

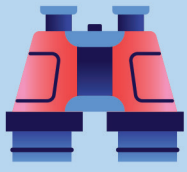
**AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC**

**SLIDES: "TRASH PANDA TRIVIA" QUESTIONS 1-7**

*Host calls for slides for each question and answer. As the raccoon is bopping around the room, start asking questions. After each round, kids need to return to the stage in the ready position. Use the following questions or feel free to add your own.*

**Trash Panda Trivia Questions**

- Do humans need approximately eight cups of water each day? YES
- Is Mt. Rushmore the tallest mountain in the world? NO, it's Mount Everest.
- Generally speaking, are insects and bugs a good survival food? YES
- Do poisonous snakes exist? NO! There are venomous snakes in this world but no poisonous snakes.



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- Is touching a wild raccoon dangerous? **YES**
- Are fuel (wood) and heat (spark) the only elements needed to start a fire? **NO, oxygen is also needed.**
- Is the entire dandelion plant edible—flower, stem, and roots? **YES**

*When finished, declare a winner. Lead the Large Group in a round of applause.*

"What an incredible display of survival knowledge! Let's hear it for our winners!"

"And even though we've done it today . . . you should never touch a raccoon."

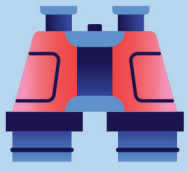
**VOLUNTEER AS RACCOON:** "Hey, I'm totally harmless."

**HOST:** "Yeah, you're alright. Give a hand to our Resident Raccoon, will you?"

*The volunteer exits, comically shucking and jiving to music in their head.*

"Well, that happened. Let's never speak of it again. Let's move on to some incredible music with [Name of Worship Leader]—let's sing out loud and worship our awesome God!"

*Host exits as Worship Leader enters.*



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## WORSHIP

*Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Hello, friends! I love to sing God's praises with all of you. Each day, we can live by giving our whole heart and soul to God. That's what this song says: 'I'll give my all to You, whatever You choose for me to do.' Come on and sing with me.

**AUDIO:** "ALL TO YOU" / TRACK 1 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

**OPTIONAL VIDEO:** "ALL TO YOU" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"That's right! We can choose to live every day for God. A great way we can do that is by giving kindness away. We've experienced God's love for ourselves, and now we can share love and kindness with others. Let's have some fun as we sing 'Give a Little Kindness.' Here we go!

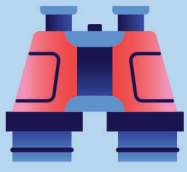
**AUDIO:** "GIVE A LITTLE KINDNESS" / TRACK 8 FROM THIS LOVE

**OPTIONAL VIDEO:** "GIVE A LITTLE KINDNESS" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"I love it! So good. What has God done in your life that you're grateful for today? Can you think of something? That's your reason to sing today. We all have a reason to praise God. As we read in Psalm 147, verse 7: 'Sing to the LORD and give him grateful praise.' And in verse 11: 'The LORD takes delight in those who have respect for him. They put their hope in his faithful love.' (NirV) Let's take time to thank God for being so good to us. Let's be grateful in our worship."

**AUDIO:** "I'M SO GRATEFUL" / TRACK 3 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

**OPTIONAL VIDEO:** "I'M SO GRATEFUL" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



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## COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

*Communicator enters as Worship Leader exits.*

*Stand next to the pre-set backpack.*

### INTRODUCTION

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Friends, thanks so much for being here today! We've got some fun stuff planned—and I can't wait to dive right in!

*Pick up the backpack.*

"I'm heading out on a trip, and I've got my backpack with me. Unfortunately, I still need to pack it up. I'd love some help gathering up essentials to ensure a safe trip into the wild. Is anyone willing to assist me on stage and pack my backpack?"

*Choose an eager volunteer, someone who isn't afraid of a hard or gross task.*

"Thanks! Might be a bit gross . . . you okay with that? (Pause for a response)"

"Great! I have several tasks for you. You ready?"

*Lead the volunteer over to the table where various items are spread out. Explain the tasks, one at a time, moving on to the next task when he or she is finished.*

*The tasks are as follows:*

- 1) matching/folding dirty (hiking) socks and placing them in the backpack*
- 2) cleaning off really dirty (hiking) shoes with damp rag and placing them in the backpack*
- 3) bare-handing un-canned Spam, putting it in a Ziploc baggie, and placing in the backpack*
- 4) rolling up a sleeping bag and stuffing it in the backpack.*

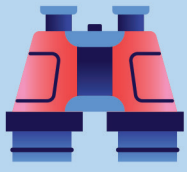
*Once the volunteer has completed the tasks, hand him or her a wet wipe or a paper towel, celebrate the effort with some applause and recognition, and then direct them to stand off to one side of the stage.*

"Awesome job! You weren't grossed out at all. I'd love to have you on the next expedition! Don't go far . . . I'll need you a little bit further into this expedition."

### TENSION

**COMMUNICATOR:** "I'm guessing there are quite a few kids in here who could've completed these tasks with the same confidence and skill as [Name of volunteer]. Conversely, there are also a few of you who wouldn't touch that stuff at all. So gross!

"It makes me wonder . . . some are willing to dive in, get your hands dirty, just to help someone else out. And some might be a bit hesitant. For example, most of us would be willing to hang out with a new kid at school if your teacher asked. You might even go a bit further and invite them into your friend group."



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"Some of you would pass at that, thinking other people would be better at it than you.

"A few of you might help your brother or sister with math homework if your mom or dad asks you. You might even go a bit further, pulling out your old textbooks, writing out problems, and quizzing them.

"Others might claim that you're too busy to help. Don't have time. Don't want to. They'll figure it out anyway, right? You had to when you were their age.

"We've talked about times when it's hard to be kind to others—and how to find God's help with that. This week, though, we're digging into going above and beyond just the bare minimum.

"Most of us will show the kind of kindness that is asked of us. Not everyone will go above and beyond. Why don't we? Why don't we look for ways to truly bless others with kindness—even when we don't want to or it's difficult or us to do so?

"Yeah, we ask the tough questions here at *[Name of Environment]*, don't we? Good thing we've got an incredible library of books with a whole lot of answers that can help us today. It's filled with stories of people who knew God, and we can learn about our relationships with God from theirs. Let's take a closer look."

## TRUTH

*Give the previous volunteer the backpack to wear.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Do you mind? Just for a bit? Thanks. Oh! And do you mind following me while I talk? You won't have to do anything. I promise.

*Lead the volunteer around the room, weaving in and out of the crowd. There will be certain spots to stop and add things to the backpack.*

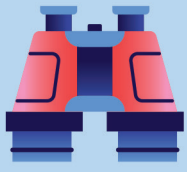
"Today, we head to the book of Matthew. It's the very first book of the New Testament in your Bibles. In it, you can read all about the life and death of Jesus Christ. The author, named Matthew, was a despised tax collector working for the Roman government. However, Matthew's life dramatically changed when Jesus invited him to become one of His disciples. The tax collector left his stable job and steady income to follow Jesus. Day and night, Matthew traveled with this Man named Jesus from Galilee. Matthew witnessed many miracles and heard the teachings of Jesus! Matthew wrote down Jesus' story to prove to other Jewish people that Jesus is, in fact, who He said He was—the Messiah, and the Savior of all people.

*Lead the volunteer to a spot where there are a few stacked Bibles.*

"Oh, great! I was looking for those! We'll need these on our journey. Do you mind packing those in the backpack?"

*Take a moment to let the volunteer put the Bibles in the backpack. Afterward, continue walking around, with the volunteer following.*

"Matthew wrote about one particular sermon called the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus shared on a hillside. At the start of Jesus' ministry, He traveled around teaching about God's Kingdom and healing people who were sick. As you would expect, news spread of this new Rabbi! Some people came to Him to be healed. Some came to hear His teaching.



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"On the day at the hillside, the crowds started to gather. Jesus saw this, hiked up the mountainside with His disciples, sat down, and began to teach about God's Kingdom. His disciples were there, too.

*If you have a stage, move onto the stage so you are a bit above the large group. If you don't have a stage in your room, push two chairs together and stand on those.*

"Jesus took the opportunity on the hillside to teach. In this sermon, He covered topics like being the salt and light of the world, anger, making promises, prayer, and giving to those in need.

*Point to some pre-set lunchboxes off to the side.*

"Ooh! Lunch! Do you mind grabbing those and packing them in the backpack? Thanks!

*Take a moment to let the volunteer put the lunches in the backpack. Afterward, continue talking, standing on the chairs.*

"In His sermon, Jesus explained what it looks like to treat others with God's love. [Name of Volunteer] do you mind handing me a Bible from the backpack?

"This is Jesus talking here. He said,

*Open the Bible to Matthew 5:41 (NirV) and read.*

*"Suppose someone forces you to go one mile. Go two miles with them."*

"Wait. Who would force anyone to go a mile?

"Jesus was talking to the Jewish people here. During this time, the Roman government ruled the land, and the Roman soldiers weren't the most popular people, either. They were really harsh. In fact, Roman law allowed soldiers to choose any citizen along the road to carry their gear. Depending on the rank of the soldier, their equipment and gear could weigh anywhere from 60 to 100 pounds!

"And here was Jesus telling everyone to carry it longer. Funny enough, this statement from Jesus is where we get the phrase 'go the extra mile.' Have you heard that before?

"Obviously, the soldier's gear would be much different than my backpack [Name of volunteer] is holding, but the premise is similar. This backpack belongs to me, and I've asked someone else to hold it.

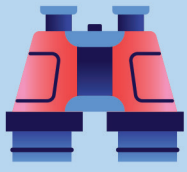
"With this perspective, listen to Jesus' words one more time.

*Open Bible to Matthew 5:41 (NirV) and read.*

*"Suppose someone forces you to go one mile. Go two miles with them."*

"Imagine the shock and objection from the crowd! Jesus was proposing that they should do good to those who wronged them or inconvenienced them! Not only that, but Jesus was also telling the crowd to go above and beyond that. An extra mile. To Roman soldiers.





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“Jesus was asking people to show kindness to those who really don’t deserve it—and furthermore, to show extra kindness even when things got really, really tough.

*Turn to the volunteer holding the backpack.*

“You really didn’t know what you were in for when I asked you to help. You stuck your hands in some pretty gross stuff, you lugged around a backpack this whole time, and you were a super good sport about the whole thing. Because of your kindness, you can have what’s in the small front pouch of the backpack.

*Have a prize of some kind—candy, a gift card, something more than just a small gift. Something that goes just a bit above and beyond.*

“Thanks for helping out! Let’s hear it for [name of volunteer]!”

*Lead applause as the volunteer hands you the backpack and heads back to his or her seat.*

## APPLICATION

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Jesus had a remarkable way of communicating God’s truth to others. He used everyday situations to paint a really clear picture what His point was.

“While on that mountainside, Jesus could’ve told the people simply to be nice. God wants you to be nice to other people. Makes sense, right? However, Jesus chose to use a Roman law to really hammer it home. Everyone listening knew Roman soldiers could *force* someone to go one mile, but Jesus gave the audience another option—to *give* a second mile. Jesus knew this was a powerful word picture, and He wanted them to remember His point.

“And it is a point we are still talking about today because it is still applicable to us! All around us, we have opportunities to go the extra mile. Thankfully, no Roman soldier—or me—will require you to carry their equipment or their backpack . . . but you *will* encounter others who will ask a lot of you. All of you will face situations that will feel unfair, and that is where you can stand strong by choosing kindness.

“If it is your day to clean the kitchen and your family decided not to rinse any plates or dishes off, you could smile as you clean them instead of just chucking them in the dishwasher. If you are asked to feed your dog, you could also take a minute to clean up the huge mess around his bowl.

“When we do more than is required, even when it’s not fair, you show God’s amazing love to those around you.”

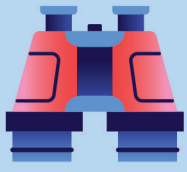
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**COMMUNICATOR:** “If you’re not sure how to show this kind of kindness, look no further than Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, He gave His life for each one of us even when we didn’t deserve it! The kindness Jesus demonstrated and lived was extraordinary! And we get to search for ways to spread His love and kindness to others.

“We are about to head to Small Groups, but I want each of you to ponder this one question.

### SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

**“When have you been surprised by kindness?”**



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“Maybe someone in your life went above and beyond what you were expecting. Was it a parent at home? Maybe it was teacher or a friend at school? Think about how you would answer that question and be ready to share the answer with your Small Group. Before we leave, let’s all pray together and ask God for help going the extra mile with the people in our life!”

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

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

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

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**