

WEEK
ONE

JANUARY 2024

LARGE GROUP

K-3

TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

I Want to Know What Love Is
Greatest Commandment
Matthew 22:36-40

Bible Verses

- Matthew 22:36-40 (NirV)
- Luke 16:10

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Love God and love others.

Story Supplies

WHAT YOU NEED:

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**"Suppose you can be trusted
with something very little. Then
you can also be trusted with
something very large."**
Luke 16:10a, NirV

- Large, clear plastic tub that says "Laws" on the side of it
- Two smaller, clear plastic bins labeled "Love God" and "Love Others"
- Enough ping-pong balls to fill the two smaller tubs (alternatively, you could use ball pit balls)

MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Responsibility—Showing you
can be trusted with what is
expected of you**

Host

WHAT YOU NEED:

BASIC TRUTH

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

- Host
- Three Small Group Leaders
- Three blindfolds (ideally sleep mask-style)
- "Blindfolded Pet Charades Words" printed from the LG Assets PDF and with each animal name cut out
- Cup to hold the slips of paper
- Host's phone



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PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

I Want to Know What Love Is
Greatest Commandment
Matthew 22:36-40

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Love God and love others.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"Suppose you can be trusted with something very little. Then you can also be trusted with something very large."
Luke 16:10a, NIRV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Responsibility—Showing you can be trusted with what is expected of you

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 KIDS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

OPENER

HOST: "Hey, everybody! It's so great to see you! Can you believe we're already at the start of a brand-new year? I mean, it's unbelievable!"

"This month, we're talking about something really important. It's kind of a big word: responsibility.

SLIDE: VIRTUE

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO VIRTUE

"Responsibility is **showing you can be trusted with what is expected of you.**

SLIDE: THEME

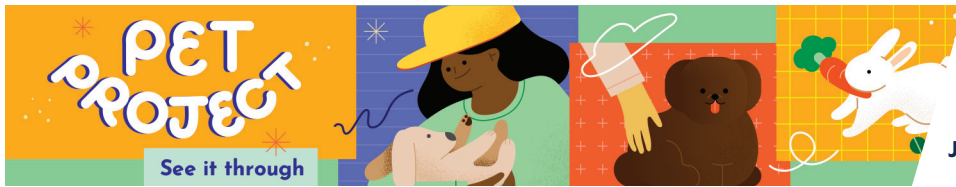
OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): VIRTUE TRANSITION TO THEME

"We all have responsibilities in life. We all have things that we're expected to do. You might have chores at home like putting away your laundry or dusting the furniture. Or maybe, if you have a pet, you have responsibilities like feeding them or filling their water bowl.

"I have a fun pet-themed game for us to play today, and I need three Small Group Leaders to come up and play. This game is called 'Blindfolded Pet Charades'!

Choose three Small Group Leaders to play the game and give each of them a blindfold. (They don't have to put it on yet.)

(to audience) "Raise your hand if you've played 'Blindfolded Pet Charades' before. (Pause.)



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AUDIO: CRICKETS

"No one? Really? Just kidding. I don't think anyone has ever played this game before.

"Here's how we play. In just a minute, each of these leaders will take turns pulling from this cup a slip of paper with the name of a pet or animal on it. They'll show that piece of paper to me so I know what the answer is. Then they'll quickly put on their blindfold and act like that animal while all of YOU try to guess what the animal is. (to contestants) Leaders, you can act like the animal, but you cannot make any sounds unless I tell you!

"Once I hear the correct answer, the next leader will do the same thing. We'll keep going until we hit our goal, which is ten animals in two minutes. Do you think we can do it? (Pause for response.) Let's give it a try. [Leader's name], you're up first. Remember, draw an animal name and show it to me, then put on your blindfold and act it out. Ready, set, go!

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (5-MINUTE VERSION, CUED UP TO 2 MINUTES)

AUDIO: FUN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

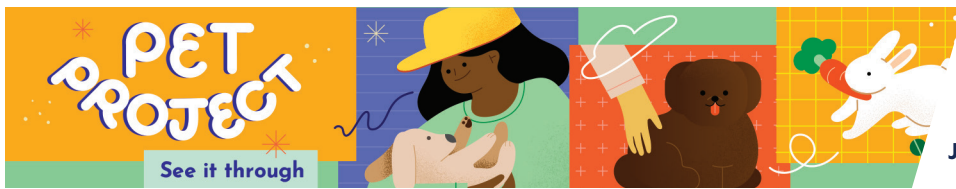
If you're not using an on-screen countdown, set a 2-minute timer on your phone.

Let the first leader pick a piece of paper from the cup, show it to you, then put on their blindfold. Listen to the kids' answers while the leader acts like the animal. Once you hear someone say the correct answer, call it out so everyone can hear and move on to the next leader.

Note: If the kids have a hard time guessing, you can give them a hint by letting the leader make sounds.

Keep going until the kids guess all ten animals. (You'll need to average about 10 to 12 seconds per animal in order to beat the clock.) Celebrate BIG when you hit the goal!

"That was AMAZING! You did it! Give a friend a high five to celebrate! Now, let's all jump up on our feet and get ready to sing, dance, and worship God."



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PRELUDE SOCIAL **STORY** WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

BIBLE STORY

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "Hi, everyone! Today, we're looking at something Jesus said that we can find in the book of Matthew. (*Hold up Bible.*) We'll get to see what Jesus said our biggest responsibility should be as we follow Him.

"Now first up, you should know some things about Matthew. Matthew was one of Jesus' closest followers. Matthew spent a lot of time with Jesus and wrote down his experiences with Jesus and the things he saw Jesus say and do.

(*Hold up Bible.*) "The book of Matthew is one of the four Gospels, which tell stories from the life of Jesus. When Jesus was about 30 years old, He began to travel from town to town, teaching and healing people. Everywhere Jesus went, lots of people gathered. Some people came to be healed. Others came to hear what Jesus had to say. This bothered the religious leaders, because they were afraid that Jesus would change things. They didn't believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and they were worried because so many people were choosing to follow Him.

"When Jesus entered Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover festival, crowds of people welcomed Him as a king. And the religious leaders REALLY didn't like that. So they began making plans to arrest Jesus. They would ask sneaky questions, hoping to trick Jesus into saying something that would get Him into trouble."

IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THIS

STORYTELLER: "One of these religious leaders asked a question to test Jesus.

SLIDE: STORY IMAGE 1 (RELIGIOUS LEADER ASKING JESUS)

Open the Bible to Matthew 22:36-40 (NirV) and read.

"Teacher," he asked, "which is the most important commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind.' This is the first and most important commandment. And the second is like it. 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' Everything that is written in the Law and the Prophets is based on these two commandments."

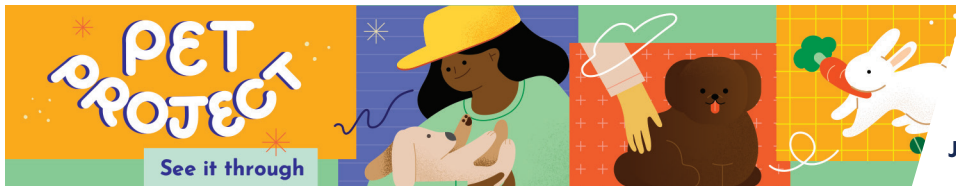
SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Stand behind the table.

"Okay, let's see if we can understand exactly what was happening. In those days, there were a lot of commandments and laws.

Put the clear tub full of ping-pong balls on the table. This tub should be labeled "Laws."

"These were laws that people were expected to follow in order to follow God's way. And not only were there a lot of laws, but the religious leaders kept adding more and MORE laws. They added laws that would keep you from breaking



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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

other laws. Then there were laws that would keep you from breaking the laws that were keeping you from breaking the original law. It was a lot to keep up with!

Drop the remaining ping-pong balls into the clear tub.

“But Jesus was saying that it was much simpler than it sounded. Jesus was saying that all of these laws (*hold up the clear tub of ping pong balls*) could be summed up with just two commandments: love God and love others.

Place the “Love God” and “Love Others” clear plastic bins on the table. Then pour the ping-pong balls from the original clear tub into the “Love God” and “Love Others” bins, with an equal amount in each. All of the ping-pong balls should end up in these two bins. Put the first clear tub under the table.

“Jesus said that when we show love to God and show love to people, we are already following ALL of the other laws! It’s not about keeping track of a long list of rules. When we follow Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit to be with us and guide us. Over time, God’s Spirit can show us new ways to do what’s MOST important: love God and love others.”

LOVE GOD

STORYTELLER: (*Reference the “Love God” plastic bin.*) “So let’s talk about what it looks like to love God.

“Remember, Jesus said . . .

Open the Bible to Matthew 22:37-38 (NirV) and read.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind.” This is the first and most important commandment.

“Raise your hand if you have an idea of how we might do that.

Call on kids to shout out different examples of ways to love God. For each one, take a ping-pong ball out of the “Love God” bin and toss it in the air, then put it back.

The kids may shout things like reading the Bible, praying, or singing worship songs. Suggest these ideas if they don’t.

SLIDE: STORY IMAGE 2 (KID READING AND PRAYING)

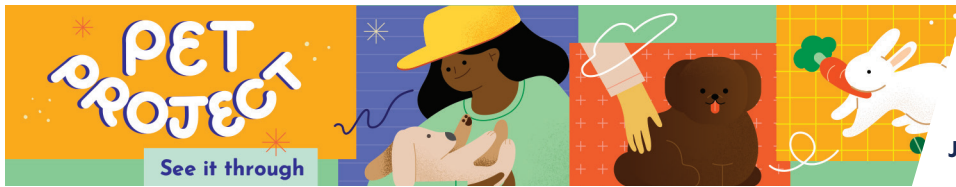
“That’s right! We can show love to God by spending TIME with God. We can read the Bible or ask someone to read it to us. We can take time to talk to God in prayer. We can tell God about the good things and the hard things that happen in our lives. We can ask God to help us. We can even show love to God by singing worship songs as a way to say thank You.”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

LOVE OTHERS

STORYTELLER: (*Reference the “Love Others” plastic bin.*) “Now, what does it mean to love others?”

“Do you remember what Jesus said about that?”



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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

Open the Bible to Matthew 22:37-39 (NirV) and read.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind.” This is the first and most important commandment. And the second is like it. “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

“One of the most amazing ways we can show love to God is actually by showing love to other PEOPLE. Because every single person in the world has been made in God’s image. Raise your hand if you have an idea of how we can love others.

Call on kids to shout out different examples of ways to love others. For each one, take a ping-pong ball out of the “Love Others” bin and toss it in the air, then put it back.

Affirm what the kids suggest. Make sure to mention the ideas below in case they don’t.

SLIDE: STORY IMAGE 3 (KID HELPING OTHERS)

“We can show love to others by sharing what we have. We can share our stuff, our time, and even our ideas and creativity!

“We can also show love by working hard to help people like our parents, siblings, friends, and teachers.

“We can use our words to encourage other people. That’s another great way to show love!”

Move in front of the table as you wrap up.

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “Jesus said the first and greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. Then Jesus said that the second commandment is like the first one: we should love others the way we love ourselves. We should **[Basic Truth] treat others the way we want to be treated.**”

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

“Love God and love others. That is our biggest responsibility! That is what’s expected of us as followers of Jesus.

“Let’s say it together.”

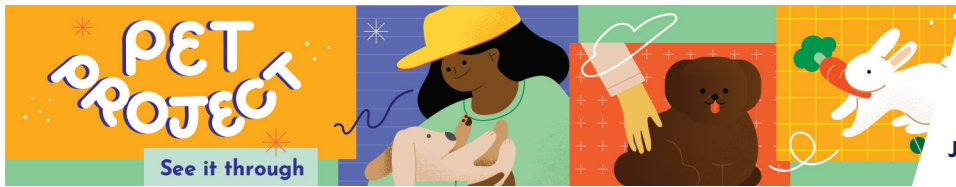
KIDS AND STORYTELLER: “Love God and love others.”

STORYTELLER: “Great job! Let’s pray and ask God to help us do that.”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

PRAY

STORYTELLER: “God, thank You so much for the reminder today that we should focus on loving You and loving others. When we do those two things, we’re doing what You’ve asked of us! Help us remember to show love wherever we go



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SOCIAL

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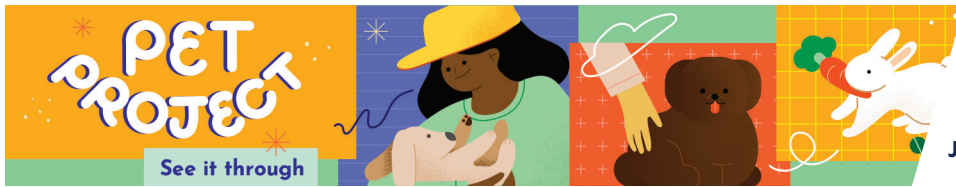
WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

and **[Basic Truth]** **treat others the way we want to be treated.** Help us find the right words to say in those times when it's hard to love someone. Thank You for loving us, God. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."



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CLOSER

Host enters as Storyteller exits.

HOST: “Don’t you just love how Jesus made it so easy to understand? **Love God and love others.** THAT’S how we should live our lives. That’s our greatest responsibility.

“Some of the religious leaders at that time had made following God feel difficult and complicated. But Jesus helped people see that it was much simpler than that.

“Remember . . .

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

“Love God and love others.

“When we show God’s love to other people, we get to show the world what God is like. When we sing a worship song, that’s a way that we can tell God, ‘I love You.’ When we help our parents around the house, that’s a way that we can share God’s love, too.

“Of course, it’s not always easy to **love God and love others.** But with God’s help, we can live out our biggest responsibility as followers of Jesus.

“Listen to what Jesus said in our memory verse, Luke 16:10.

SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE

“Suppose you can be trusted with something very little. Then you can also be trusted with something very large. (Luke 16:10a, NIV)

“Let’s show we can be trusted by living the way Jesus said to live. There are so many ways to **love God and love others.** And I bet you can come up with even more great ideas in Small Group. You can head that way right now!”

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

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

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP