

FEBRUARY LG | W2



Bible Story

The Most Important Commandment • *Matthew 22:34-40*

Bottom Line

Love God. Love others.

Monthly Memory Verse

"I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you." • John 13:34 NIV

5 min

Large Group Opener

5 min

OPENER

What You Need

-  Table 1
-  Bag of candy hearts 1
-  Paper straws 1
-  Cups 1
-  Timer 1

HOST: "Hello, hello! Welcome, everyone! This month, we're talking about sharing the love of Jesus as we 'Like and Subscribe' to the incredible things He teaches.

Show the box/bag of candy hearts.

"And whether you love candy hearts or hate them, here is one way you can share a little love.

Pick out a few candy hearts and read them. The following is an example of what you could find!

"Candy hearts! Let's see ... (*read a few*). This one says, 'Be Mine.' And this one says, 'Miss You.' And here's one that says, 'Call Me.' Today, we're gonna play a game to share the love with some of these hearts. Do any of you know what a 'Minute to Win It' game is? If you do, raise your hand. (*Acknowledge the raised hands.*) A 'Minute to Win It' game is just a super-fun game that you have to play in just sixty seconds. And they all get a big 'like' (*give a thumbs-up*) in my book.

"Our minute-to-win-it game today is a special Valentine's challenge. I need [number] volunteers (*based on how many you decide*) who want to collect candy hearts! If you'd like to do that, raise your hand!

Select your volunteers from the kids who have their hands raised and bring them up on stage. Encourage them to stand behind the table. Place a cup on the table in front of each volunteer.

Slide: Valentine Challenge Title

"Your job is simple. You have one minute to collect as many of these candy hearts as possible in your cup.

Pour out candy hearts evenly across the table(s).

"BUT!—you can't touch these hearts with your hands! Instead, each one of you will get a paper straw!

Give each volunteer a paper straw.

"You must use this straw to suction up each heart, move it to the cup in front of you, and then drop it in—like this.

Demonstrate sucking on the straw to suction a heart. Then drop it into your hand.

12 min

Worship

3 min

WORSHIP | This is Living

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

WORSHIP | Echo

What You Need

No supplies needed

"Simple? Yes. Easy? Well ... you're about to find out. Everyone ready? It's time to SHARE THE LOVE!

AUDIO: Upbeat music

Start the game and start the timer. Lead the rest of the kids in encouraging and cheering on the volunteers. Offer help if it's needed.

When the minute is up, say ...

"Time's up, straws down! Let's count up those hearts and find out who our winner is!

Help count up the hearts in each volunteer's cup. Announce the winner.

"Let's give a big round of applause for all of our volunteers."

Send volunteers back to their seats.

"You guys are awesome at sharing the love!"

WORSHIP LEADER (steps up, upbeat):

"Hey everybody! You all did an *awesome* job in that game — I love how you jumped in and cheered each other on.

Today we're continuing our series *Like and Subscribe*, where we're learning about how big God's love is — and how we get to share that love with others.

Jesus didn't just tell us to follow rules. He showed us that life with Him is about something way better — real life, full life.

So let's celebrate that life together. Everybody stand up — let's sing **This Is Living!**"

WORSHIP LEADER:

"Wow — great singing! You guys are bringing it today!

That song reminds us that life with Jesus is full of joy and purpose. But today we're learning something really important from Jesus Himself.

When someone asked Jesus what mattered most, He didn't give a long list.

He summed it all up with two things: **Love God. Love others.**

This next song is a little newer for us, and we're excited for you to learn it.

5 min

Memory Verse

What You Need

No supplies needed

1 min

Worship Closer

It's all about how God's love doesn't stop with us — it *echoes* out into the lives of the people around us.

As you sing, think about how the love God puts in your heart can show up in the way you treat others.

Let's learn this one together — **Echo!**"

WORSHIP LEADER:

"You did such a great job learning that song — give yourselves a hand!

That song fits today perfectly, because Jesus didn't just tell us to love God —

He told us to love **other people** the same way He loves us.

And that's exactly what our memory verse is about.

These are Jesus' own words, telling us how to live out God's love every day.

Let's get ready and say it together."

(Move directly into Memory Verse: John 13:34)

SLIDE: Memory Verse

"I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you" John 13:34 NIV.

"Now, repeat after me!

WORSHIP LEADER: *"I give you a new command."*

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"I give you a new command."*

WORSHIP LEADER: *"Love one another."*

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"Love one another."*

WORSHIP LEADER: *"You must love one another,"*

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"You must love one another,"*

WORSHIP LEADER: *"just as I have loved you."*

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"just as I have loved you."*

"Well done!"

"When we love one another like Jesus loves us, we're making the world look more like God's Kingdom! Great job!"

What You Need

No supplies needed

36 min

Bible Story (Live)

3 min

INTRODUCTION**What You Need**

-  Bible 1
-  Table 1
-  16 very large, cardstock or posterboard hearts 16

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)**What You Need**

No supplies needed

STORYTELLER: "I'm so excited! We're going to spend some time together getting to know God better! Welcome, everyone!"

"Today we're continuing our series: 'Like and Subscribe!' When you find something online that you think is awesome and you just want to share it, you 'like' it and you 'subscribe' so you don't miss a single episode. This month, we're learning about God's great love—you want to tune in to that and share it with others too! This week, we're going to learn what Jesus said are the most important things!"

"But before we get into our true story from the Bible, let me tell you about something awesome we're doing this year! We're going through the Bible cover-to-cover!"

"Why? Well, God gave us the Bible so we can get to know Him. So as we go through the stories of the Bible, we'll learn about God!"

STORYTELLER: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)"

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!"

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too."

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!"

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. 'Help us!' they cried out to God. God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land."

"After God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they disobeyed God—again and again and again. Even the kings God gave them

5 min

SETTING UP THE STORY

What You Need

No supplies needed

rebelled! So, God split the nation in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. Oh no! After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

"And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised! While Jesus was on earth, He showed us who God is because He is God!

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!"

What You Do:

Make sure the table is set on stage so the Storyteller can place their Bible on it and read from it. On either side of Storyteller, place a stack of very large cardstock or posterboard conversation hearts with phrases written on them in large, readable letters (these should look like conversation hearts!) Make sure the hearts are ordered with the first heart (heart #1) face up on the top of one stack, the second heart (heart #2) face up on the other stack, and so on, alternating between the two stacks. Which hearts go in which stack (and in what order) are listed below—it's based on odd and even numbers.

- 1) Trick questions!
- 2) Put God first!
- 3) Don't worship false gods.
- 4) Honor God's name in everything you do.
- 5) Honor God by resting on the seventh day.
- 6) Honor your parents.
- 7) Don't murder.
- 8) Be faithful to your spouse.
- 9) Don't steal.
- 10) Don't lie.
- 11) Don't envy what others have.
- 12) 613 Laws
- 13) Love God.
- 14) Love others.
- 15) Heart and soul
- 16) Mind

STORYTELLER: "Today we're continuing our journey through the Bible. (*Hold up Bible.*) We're at the part of the Bible where Jesus Himself is on earth. Jesus came to earth to teach us about God, and today He's going to tell us the two most important things in the entire Bible!

"Since we've been sharing the love today, I need a couple of volunteers to help me tell the story ... using more conversation hearts! Who would like to help? If you'd like to help, raise your hand!

5 min

GOD'S LAWS**What You Need**

No supplies needed

Choose two kids from the kids who have their hands raised. Invite them to come up and stand on either side of you, each one in front of a stack of hearts.

"Great. These hearts have messages on them—just like conversation hearts do! Now, when I point to you, I want you to pick up the top heart on your stack and hold it up high so we can all see what it says. (*Point to the first volunteer.*)

"I'll cue you first to hold up the top heart in your stack with the words facing out so we can all see them. (*Point to the second volunteer.*) And then you will do the same thing second. We'll go back and forth.

(*To audience*) "Now, when one of our volunteers holds up a heart, I want everyone to shout it together if you can read it. We'll all go through the conversation hearts together!

"Everyone ready? Great! Let's get started on our true story from the Bible!"

"Near the end of Jesus' time on earth, Jesus traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. The religious leaders were on high alert. They were afraid that Jesus was changing the way they had always done things, and they were looking for a reason, any reason, to get rid of Him.

"So the religious leaders plotted to ask Jesus ... what?"

Cue the first volunteer to hold up the first heart in their stack (heart #1). Their heart reads "Trick questions." Lead the audience to say: "Trick questions."

"Trick questions! The religious leaders were being sneaky! They figured that no matter how Jesus answered, people would be mad. But time after time, Jesus turned the questions back on the religious leaders or gave a wise and unexpected answer. At last, the leaders came up with a question they were *sure* would trap Jesus.

"A law expert approached Jesus and said:

Open the Bible and read Matthew 22:36.

"Teacher ... which is the most important commandment in the Law?"

"Simple question, right? Well, not so much. See, the Jewish people followed a *lot* of rules and commandments—going all the way back to when God led His people out of slavery in Egypt.

"In the wilderness, God met with their leader, Moses, on Mount Sinai. God gave Moses important laws and instructions to help the people follow God and live the best life. We know these as the Ten Commandments. Let's take a quick look at them. (*To volunteers*) We're gonna do this super-fast, so be ready!

Cue the second volunteer to hold up the next heart (heart #2). Lead the audience to read the heart. Then cue the first volunteer to do the next one (heart #3). Lead the audience to read the heart. Continue until all ten hearts are read. This should move quickly since the Ten Commandments are not the main focus of the lesson. Encourage the kids to read along with you.

"Put God first!

"Don't worship false gods.

"Honor God's name in everything you do.

"Honor God by resting on the seventh day.

"Honor your parents.

"Don't murder.

"Be faithful to your spouse.

"Don't steal.

"Don't lie.

"Don't envy what others have.

"Whew! Those are all good things, right? But there weren't just ten laws. In fact, there were ...

Cue volunteer to hold up the next heart: "613 Laws"

"613 laws! That's a LOT of rules to follow.

"And then, over time, the religious leaders got worried that people might mess up and break those laws too, so they added even *more* rules around those laws to make sure people didn't get anywhere close to breaking God's laws.

"Whew. Following all those laws and rules sounds kind of impossible, right? In fact, most ordinary people couldn't even try to keep them all. It was a full-time job!

STORYTELLER: "But, back to the question from our law expert:

Open the Bible and read Matthew 22:36.

"Teacher ... which is the most important commandment in the Law?"

"See how tricky that is? 613 laws, plus a bunch of additional rules. If Jesus picked one, He'd upset all the people who thought a different law was the most important. But Jesus wasn't stumped. He replied—

Open the Bible and read Matthew 22:37-40.

5 min

JESUS' ANSWERS

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

What You Need

No supplies needed

"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 yourself.' Everything that is written in the Law and the Prophets is based on these two commandments."

"Wow. Do you hear what Jesus just did? He took all those laws and rules, and simplified them down to two.

Cue both volunteers to hold up "Love God" and "Love others."

"[Bottom Line] Love God. Love others!"

"Let's say what's on these hearts, since Jesus told us that they are the most important of all.

"Let me say them, and then you can repeat them after me!"

"Love God!"

KIDS: "Love God!"

STORYTELLER: "Love others!"

KIDS: "Love others!"

STORYTELLER: "Awesome! Let's do it again!"

"Love God!"

KIDS: "Love God!"

STORYTELLER: "Love others!"

KIDS: "Love others!"

STORYTELLER: "Woohoo! Great job! You just summed up all of the laws in the Bible!"

STORYTELLER: "The very most important thing for anyone ever is to love God. In fact, the first four of the Ten Commandments point to this!"

"Put God first!

"Don't worship false gods.

"Honor God's name in everything you do.

"Honor God by resting on the seventh day.

"We love God because He loved us first, and as we learn more and more about God, we grow to love Him even more.

"One of the main ways that we show our love for God is to obey Him and be like Him, by *loving others*. That's what the last six of the Ten Commandments point to.

"Honor your parents.

"Don't murder.

"Be faithful to your spouse.

"Don't steal.

"Don't lie.

"Don't envy what others have.

"Jesus didn't say to get rid of any of these other laws. He said that if we simply focus on loving God and showing God's love to people, then we'll end up keeping all those other laws too.

"So that's my job. That's your job. Love God with everything in your—

Cue the last two hearts. "Heart and soul." "Mind."

"Heart and soul ... and mind! Study and learn about who God is and what He is like. Invite Jesus into your emotions—the good ones and the hard ones. Ask God's Holy Spirit to lead you and help you experience the depth of God's love for you.

"And when you stay connected to God, then you can pour out God's love to the people around you.

"Volunteers, thank you so much for your help today—learning about the most important things! You can return to your seats. Let's give them some applause for their help today!

Lead the applause as the volunteers return to their seats.

STORYTELLER: "Not only did Jesus silence the religious leaders who were trying to trick Him, but Jesus gave us a way to keep all of God's laws by remembering two simple things.

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "Love God. Love others. Say that with me."

Host enters and joins in.

KIDS, STORYTELLER AND HOST: **[Bottom Line]** "Love God. Love others."

3 min

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

HOST: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!"

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story—the picture that says, 'Jesus' Life.' Jesus Himself came to teach us about who God is!"

"This week, Jesus Himself taught us what the most important things are. And He would know, since He is God! God wants us to know what's right and true, so He sent Jesus to earth to come and tell us. We don't have to wonder what the most important things are because God told us! Then, not only did Jesus tell us the most important commandments to keep—the ones that sum up all of the other laws—He kept every single law. It's like Jesus said: 'When you mess up, know that I've done it all for you! You don't have to lose heart!' Jesus lived an absolutely perfect life, following all of those laws, and then He gave up His life as the perfect sacrifice. He paid for our sins. He broke that awful curse. He loves us so, so much that He rescued us all!"

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!"

SLIDE: Week 2 Timeline Image

If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's Timeline Image on the clothesline.

"This week Jesus taught us what the greatest commandments are!"

8 min

Closing

5 min

WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

What You Need

No supplies needed

HOST: "So what's our part in this story? I think you know it already!
[Bottom Line] Love God. Love others."

"One of the most important ways you can love God is by deepening your friendship with Him! That's why He made you, to be His close friend! When you choose to follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you. And He goes through every moment of your life with you. That means you can also love God by talking with Him about every little thing in your life, and listening to Him, just like you would a friend."

"Another way you can love God is by getting to know Him through His Word, the Bible. As you love God, He will fill your heart up with His love, and you'll want to pour out love just like He does."

"There are *so many* ways that we can show love to others! Ask the Holy Spirit to nudge you and open your eyes to people who might need God's love throughout your day, like a lonely kid who needs someone to play with at recess. You can offer words of encouragement and remind someone that God loves them. You can lend a helping hand or just sit

3 min

PRAYER

What You Need

No supplies needed

with a friend who is sad and listen. And you can even be kind to someone who has been rude to you.

"Love God. Love others. It's not always easy, but God is always, always with you to help you do it."

STORYTELLER or HOST: "Let's talk to God right now! Bow your heads and close your eyes.

"Dear God, thank You so much for sending Jesus to show how much You love us. Thank You that Jesus makes it clear that we can follow all Your laws by loving You and loving others. Help us listen to Your Holy Spirit this week so that we can learn how to love You and how to show love to others. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Supplies

OPENER	Quantity
1. Table	1
2. Bag of candy hearts	1
3. Paper straws	1
4. Cups	1
5. Timer	1

INTRODUCTION	Quantity
1. Bible	1
2. Table	1
3. 16 very large, cardstock or posterboard hearts	16