

MARCH LG | W1



Bible Story

John the Baptist Is a Witness about Jesus •
John 3:22-36

Conversation Starter

How can I show others that Jesus is better?

Bottom Line

Jesus must increase. I must decrease.

Monthly Memory Verse

Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves. •
Philippians 2:3 NIV

5 min

Large Group Opener

5 min

Opener

What You Need

 Host	1
 red paper plates	20
 blue paper plates	20
 Timer (or smartphone or watch or countdown)	1
 Floor tape	1

What You Do:

- Download the slides or optional videos and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
- Download music and/or sound effects on an authorized basis from a resource such as Apple Music®, Amazon Music®, and/or a sound effect library and have it ready to play. Or, if you choose to stream music, refer to the terms and conditions of your streaming service. Note that you will likely need a commercial license in order to stream music publicly. Also confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform music and sound effects in your kids' environments, such as a blanket PERFORMmusic™ license from CCS. *Note: Legally, a song and/or sound effect belongs to the songwriter/composer who created it and the publisher who markets it. Performance rights organizations (PROs) license public performances (live or recorded) of their members' music. PROs in the U.S. are ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC. It is up to you to make sure your church has permission to perform or play a recording of a song and/or sound effect.*
- *Optional:* Download a countdown video from a royalty-free site. Load it into your presentation software and have it ready to play during the Opener. You could also keep time on a smartphone or watch. *Note: Some presentation software, such as ProPresenter, includes a built-in countdown clock that can be overlaid on a still image.*
- Create a starting line with floor tape.
- Mix up both colors of paper plates, and lay them face down all around the floor.

HOST: "Hey, everyone! I'm so glad you're here today! This month, we're starting a brand-new theme called *Upside Down!* Everyone say: 'Upside Down!'"

KIDS: "Upside down!"

HOST: "Great job!! The full title of the series this month is: 'Upside Down: Treat others the way Jesus treats you!'"

"So this month, we're going to learn how to live the way Jesus did, to treat others the way He treats us. And that might look a little different from what we're used to. It might even look ... upside down!"

"Now, to kick things off, I have a super fun game called 'Flip It!'"

SLIDE: Flip It! Title

"I need two teams of three people to play our game. If you'd like to volunteer, raise your hand!"

Choose 6 kids from the kids who have their hands raised. Invite them on stage and create two teams of five. Designate one team as Team Red and the other kids for Team Blue. Encourage both teams to form two separate lines behind the tape start line you have created.

"Here's how this game works. On the floor, you can see 10 paper plates scattered all over. Some are red, some are blue, and all are flipped over. We've got two teams, Team Red and Team Blue.

"When I say 'Go,' one kid from each team will run out, flip over one plate that matches their team color, and then run back to tag the next person. Then the next kid on that team gets to go! You'll keep flipping plates until all 10 of your plates are flipped over. We'll see which team flips their plates the fastest! Sound good?"

"Awesome! Everyone, find your team and get ready. Everybody else, let's cheer them on!"

"Is everybody ready? (Make sure the two teams are lined up and ready to go.) Awesome! Let's get our game started! Ready ... set ... GO!"

AUDIO: Upbeat music

Reset for another round if time allows with different groups of kids.

"You know, that game reminded me of what we're learning today. Everything kept flipping back and forth, down to up, and that's kind of like what happens when we follow Jesus.

"We are going to unpack all this month on how to live 'Upside Down!' It's going to be great!

"Today's Bible Story is about a man named John the Baptist. He was really popular; everyone came to hear him speak. But when Jesus showed up, John showed us something important: 'Jesus must increase, and I must decrease.' That's our Bottom Line for today!

SLIDE: Bottom Line

"Can you say that with me?"

KIDS AND HOST: [Bottom Line] "Jesus must increase, I must decrease!"

"That means more of Jesus in our lives, and less of us trying to be the most important. When we put Jesus first, everything else in our lives starts to make sense!"

6 min

Worship

3 min

I Can't Stop Singing

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

This is Amazing Grace

What You Need

No supplies needed

Memory Verse

What You Need

No supplies needed

"Give it up for our teams! You guys were flipping plates like pros! That game was all about things getting flipped upside down — and that's exactly what we're talking about this month.

Sometimes following Jesus feels a little upside down. Instead of trying to make ourselves the most important, we make **Jesus** the most important. Instead of saying, 'Look at me!' we say, 'Look at Him!'

And when we really understand who Jesus is and how good He's been to us, we can't help but respond with joy. We can't help but sing! So let's stand up, clap your hands, and sing like people who know Jesus is number one!"

"Wow! You all sang that like you meant it! Now, let's sing another song that helps us remember something so important that Jesus gives us—freedom! When we follow Him, we don't have to worry or try to be the best. Jesus already loves us completely! Let's sing this one loud!

"Man, I love that! When you know how good Jesus is, it's like praise just spills out of you. You can't hold it in!

And the reason we can't stop singing is because of what Jesus has done. He didn't just give us good advice. He didn't just tell us how to live. He rescued us. He loves us. He leads us. He deserves to be at the very top of our lives.

This next song reminds us just how powerful and amazing He really is. As we sing it, think about this: if Jesus is that amazing... then He deserves to increase in our lives. Let's sing it!"

"Great job, everyone! I love worshipping God with you all! Here's what we can remember today—worship doesn't stop here. You can keep worshipping God this week by the way you live, the way you treat people, and the way you trust Him. You can keep worshipping God all through the week!

"This whole month, we're learning how to live *Upside Down!* We're discovering what it means to treat others the way Jesus treats us. When we live with humility, when we think of others first, we show everyone that Jesus loves them.

"Our Memory Verse for this month reminds us how to do that. It's found in Philippians 2:3. I'll read it first, and then we'll all say it together!

SLIDE: Memory Verse

WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves.—Philippians 2:3 NIV"

"Now, let's say it together, nice and loud!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Don't do anything only to get ahead."

33 min

Bible Story (Live)

3 min

INTRODUCTION

What You Need

No supplies needed

WORSHIP LEADER: *"Don't do it because you are proud."*

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"Don't do it because you are proud."*

WORSHIP LEADER: *"Instead, be humble."*

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"Instead, be humble."*

WORSHIP LEADER: *"Value others more than yourselves."*

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"Value others more than yourselves."*

WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: "Philippians 2:3!"

"Great job! That's such a powerful reminder that following Jesus means putting others first. When we do that, we make Jesus more important than anything else in our lives."

Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!

If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, there are two sections in the script below that are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." (Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!) We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!

Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend. Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!

Make sure the table is set on stage so the Storyteller can place their Bible on it and read from it. Make sure all of the props are ready on the table.

STORYTELLER: "Hi, friends! I'm so glad you're here today! This month, we're learning what it means to live *Upside Down!* Our theme of this month is called: 'Upside Down!' Living Upside Down means we do things God's way, even when it looks different from what everyone else is doing.

"This week, in our true story from the Bible, we're going to hear a story about someone who lived that way. His name was John the Baptist. Lots of people thought John was amazing, but when Jesus came along,

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

John showed us something really special: **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.**

"And we're going to find out what that means for us today! But before we start our story, let's remember something really awesome we're doing this year. We're going to read the key stories from the Bible together as we go through it cover to cover!

"Why? Why are we going through the Bible? Well, part of the reason God gave us the Bible is so we can get to know Him! Every story we read in the Bible helps us see who God is and how much He loves us.

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.

"Some time after God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they asked for a king like the other nations around them. God gave them a king, and then many more kings (and one queen) followed. Sadly, after a long time of turning away from Him, God allowed His nation to be split 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.

5 min

SETTING UP THE STORY

What You Need

No supplies needed

"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!"

STORYTELLER: "So we're continuing our journey through the Bible. We're right at the part of the Bible when Jesus was on Earth. He came to Earth to show us who God is! So let's see what He had to teach us about living upside down!

"To get started, let me ask you a question for you to think about: Have you ever been part of something where you wanted to be the one who got noticed? Like maybe you worked hard on a project and really wanted everyone to see it ... or maybe you scored a goal and hoped people were cheering *your* name. Raise your hand if you like being noticed sometimes! (*Raise your hand and acknowledge the other kids who have their hands raised too.*)

"Yeah, that's totally normal! It feels good when people notice us. But today's story shows us something *upside down*, something that feels backward at first.

"It's about what happens when we stop trying to make ourselves look the biggest and the most important ... and instead, make *Jesus* the biggest.

"As we go through our story, I am going to need your help. Can you hold up your pointer finger, like this?"

Demonstrate how to hold up your pointer finger like you are saying that something is number one.

"Great! Now, hold up that pointer finger as you say this: 'Jesus is number one!'

KIDS AND STORYTELLER: "Jesus is number one!"

STORYTELLER: "Awesome! At certain points in our story, I will hold up my finger and we can say that cheer together!

"Because today's true story from the Bible is about a man named John the Baptist, who had to make a choice: did he want people to see him, or see Jesus? He wanted the whole world to know that (*hold up your pointer finger and lead the kids to say ...*)

KIDS AND STORYTELLER: "Jesus is number one!"

STORYTELLER: "Great! You guys are ready! Let's get into our story."

STORYTELLER: "John the Baptist was kind of a big deal. God gave him a special job—to help people get ready for Jesus. John lived out in the desert, wore clothes made of camel hair, and even ate locusts! Sounds

5 min

JOHN'S FOLLOWERS GET JEALOUS

What You Need

No supplies needed

a little gross, right? But people didn't care, they were so amazed about what John was saying and doing!

"Crowds came from all over to hear John speak. They wanted to learn how to live God's way. And when they decided they wanted to follow God, John would baptize them in the Jordan River as a sign of their new beginning following the Lord. John even baptized Jesus!

"So imagine this: huge crowds of people were listening to John, asking questions, following him, cheering for him. Everyone was talking about him. John was kind of famous!

"But then Jesus came on the scene. And pretty soon, more and more people started following *Jesus* instead of *John*. Can you imagine how that felt for John's followers? They had been part of something big! But now, it felt like someone else was getting all the attention. One day, John's followers came to him. They looked frustrated and jealous, and they said this:

Open the Bible to John 3:26 (NirV) and read.

"Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

"Whoa! They were talking about Jesus! John's friends were upset because they thought this was bad news. They thought John was losing followers, losing his spotlight.

"Let's all make a jealous face, like someone just took your turn on the best swing at recess AND is playing with your best friend.

Make a jealous face and comment on the kid's faces.

"Yeah. That's how John's followers felt.

"But John didn't see it that way at all. He didn't get jealous or try to get the crowd back. He didn't say, 'Hey, wait! What about me?' Instead, John was calm.

"Because John knew something his followers didn't. He knew *his job wasn't to be the most important*. His job was to point people to *the most important Person, Jesus*. He wanted the whole world to know that (*hold up your pointer finger and lead the kids to say ...*)

KIDS AND STORYTELLER: "Jesus is number one!"

STORYTELLER: "Great job! Listen to how John responded to what his followers said:

Open the Bible to John 3:27 (NirV) and read.

John replied, "A person can receive only what God gives them from heaven."

5 min

JOHN CHOOSES HUMILITY

What You Need

No supplies needed

"That means John knew everything he had—his job, his followers, his abilities—all came from God. And if God wanted people to follow Jesus, that was *good*. John wasn't upset that his time in the spotlight was ending. He was *glad* that more people were starting to see Jesus for who He really was, the Rescuer God had promised.

"That's why this part of the story is so upside down. Normally, when we lose attention, it feels bad. But John taught us something powerful—life isn't about keeping the spotlight on *us*. It's about shining the light on *Jesus*. God wants us to show the world (*hold up your pointer finger and lead the kids to say ...*)

KIDS AND STORYTELLER: "Jesus is number one!"

STORYTELLER: "Great! You got it! Let me carry on with our story. John could see that his friends were upset, but he wanted them to understand something bigger, something they couldn't see yet.

"He turned to them and said:

Open the Bible to John 3:28-29 (NIRV) and read.

"You yourselves are witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Messiah. I was sent ahead of him.' The bride belongs to the groom. The friend who helps the groom waits and listens for him. He is full of joy when he hears the groom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete."

"So ... what did that mean? Well, back in Bible times, a wedding was a really big deal. The groom was the star of the celebration, and his friend's job was to help him get everything ready.

"John said he was like that friend. His job was to help get everyone ready for Jesus. He wasn't the star—Jesus was. And when Jesus finally arrived, John wasn't jealous. He was *full of joy!* Because God was at work and the plan He had told everyone about for such a long time was finally coming true! The One John had been talking about, the One who would save the world, was finally here! John knew that his job was to show everyone that (*hold up your pointer finger and lead the kids to say ...*)

KIDS AND STORYTELLER: "Jesus is number one!"

STORYTELLER: "You got it! John was just pointing to the greatest one! Now, let's look at what John said next.

Open the Bible to John 3:30-31 (NIRV) and read.

"He must become more important. I must become less important. The one who comes from above is above everything. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks like someone from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above everything."

"John didn't want to keep people's attention on himself. He wanted to point to Jesus! And the reason why is because Jesus is from heaven.

5 min

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

What You Need

No supplies needed

He is above everything. John wanted to help everyone understand who Jesus really was, and why Jesus deserved to be the one everyone followed. John shared this about Jesus:

Open the Bible to John 3:34-36 (NirV) and read.

"The one whom God has sent speaks God's words. That's because God gives the Holy Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has put everything into his hands. Anyone who believes in the Son has eternal life. Anyone who does not believe in the Son will not have life."

"Wow. That's what John wanted everyone to know—that Jesus isn't just another teacher, or another prophet, or another important person. He's *God's own Son*."

"That's why John was so happy when people started following Jesus instead of him. Because that's exactly what was supposed to happen! Jesus is the Savior from heaven, John wasn't! John didn't need to be the one everyone followed. He didn't need to be the biggest, the best, or the most important. He just wanted everyone to see Jesus. He wanted everyone to see that (*hold up your pointer finger and lead the kids to say ...*)

KIDS AND STORYTELLER: "Jesus is number one!"

STORYTELLER: "You guys got it! So let's think about what we learned from John the Baptist today. Everyone knew who John was, but when Jesus came, John didn't try to stay in the spotlight. Instead, he said:

Open the Bible to John 3:30 (NirV) and read.

"He must become more important. I must become less important" (John 3:30 NirV).

"That's humility. John wanted everyone to see how amazing Jesus was, not how great *he* was. And because he pointed people to Jesus, people were able to see Jesus!

"That's living upside down. And when we live like that, when we make a big deal of Jesus, people don't just see *us*, they see *Jesus* through us. And we want everyone to see Jesus!"

SLIDE: Bottom Line

"That's why our Bottom Line for this week is: **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.** Say that with me."

Host enters and joins in.

KIDS, STORYTELLER, AND HOST: **[Bottom Line] "Jesus must increase. I must decrease."**

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, we talked about a very important person in Jesus' life—Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist! John the Baptist taught us so much about Jesus. His whole life was an arrow that pointed to Jesus! One of the important ideas that John the Baptist taught was this: 'Jesus came from heaven, and He tells us all about heavenly things.' That's a big reason why God sent Jesus. He came to teach us heavenly things. Jesus came to show us who God is and what God is like! And while Jesus was here on Earth showing us what God is like, Jesus also lived a perfect life. He did not sin at all. Then He gave up that perfect life to break the awful curse of sin that we were under. The King of heaven died and rose again to set us free, so that we could be close friends with God again—forever!

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

SLIDE: Week 1 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 we learned from John the Baptist how Jesus must increase and we must decrease!"

8 min

Closing

5 min

WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

What You Need

No supplies needed

HOST: "So what about us? What's our part in this story? Well, John's job was to point people to Jesus—and that's our job too! We can't baptize people in a river like John did, but we can show people who Jesus is by the way we live every day.

"So let's point people to Jesus! When we share what we have, we aren't just being kind, we are showing people Jesus! He is kind too! When we tell the truth, we aren't just being honest, we're showing people what Jesus is like! He is truthful too! When we bring a bandage to someone who is hurt, we aren't just showing compassion, we are showing what Jesus is like! He is compassionate too!

"So as you go throughout this week, be like John, and be a big arrow that points to Jesus! Jesus is number one! In the morning, you can ask Jesus, 'Jesus, I want to live pointing to You today. Please show me how!' And when He nudges your heart throughout the day—at school, at the playground, at home—do what He says.

3 min

PRAYER

What You Need

No supplies needed

"As you are a big arrow that points to Jesus, people will see Jesus!"

STORYTELLER or HOST: "Let's take a moment to talk to God together. Everyone, bow your heads and close your eyes so we can focus on Him."
"Dear Jesus, we want to live with humility. We want to make You number one in our lives every day. We want our lives to be a big arrow that points to you! When we start to think too much about ourselves, remind us to point to You. Thank You for loving us so much. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Supplies

Opener	Quantity
1. Host	1
2. red paper plates	20
3. blue paper plates	20
4. Timer (or smartphone or watch or countdown)	1
5. Floor tape	1