

March 2-3 | W1

Today's Suggested Schedule—March 2026, Week 1

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

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*

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

Prelude: Setting the Tone for the Experience

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction

- Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

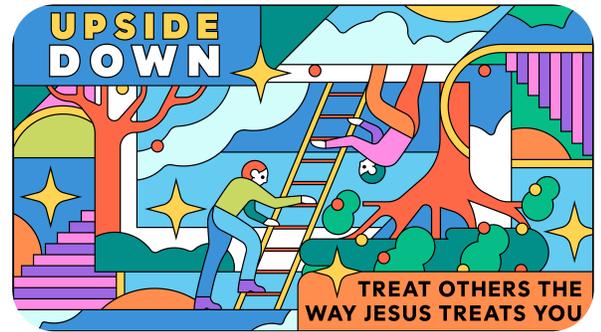
Worship: Inviting People to Respond to God

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections from God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

- Bible Story Review: Jesus Is #1
- Memory Verse Activity: Memory Verse Motions
- Discussion Questions
- Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss 2nd-3rd grade



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

Social

5 min

Social Activity | Made to Play

What You Need

-  Offering container 1
-  Print "Jesus Puzzle" Activity Page on cardstock, one set for each Small Group 1
-  Optional: Floor tape, enough for each Small Group 1

5 min

Bible Story Review

5 min

23 – Jesus Is #1 | Made to Create

What You Need

-  "Foam Finger" Activity Page 0
-  Coloring supplies Several
-  Stickers Several
-  Clear tape 1

What You Do:

- Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Place the images from the "Jesus Puzzle" Activity Page in a grid of three rows of three pictures.
- As kids arrive, invite them to work together, flipping each piece over and rearranging as needed, to complete the giant picture of Jesus. Tape to secure if desired.

What You Say:

"Look at that! You worked together to put all the pieces into one big picture of Jesus! In the true story from the Bible we are going to learn about today, some of John the Baptist's friends were confused. They could only see a little piece of what was happening and thought it was a popularity contest between John the Baptist and Jesus. **[Transition]** But John the Baptist helped people see the big picture—that Jesus is God's Son, the most important One! Let's go find out more!"

What You Do:

- Review the story: Remind the kids that John the Baptist told everyone that his job was to get the people ready for Jesus. He knew Jesus was the most important one!
- Give each kid a cutout and a strip from the "Foam Finger" Activity Page and let them use crayons, markers, and stickers to decorate it.
- Help kids roll their strip up (that says **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.**) and tape it to the back of their foam finger.
- Tell the kids their foam finger shows that Jesus is number one! Help them practice holding it up and cheering, "Jesus is number one!"

What You Say:

"These are so fun, and they look amazing! John the Baptist wanted everyone to cheer for Jesus. He knew that his job was to bring less attention to his life so Jesus could get more attention. John's followers were worried, but John set them straight. He told them, 'I am not the Messiah. I was sent ahead of him' (John 3:28 NIV). John knew Jesus was the Rescuer, God's Son, the Savior of the whole wide world! John wasn't sad; he was filled with joy, like a friend at a wedding cheering for the groom! He taught us that **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase.**

5 min

Memory Verse Activity

5 min

23 – Memory Verse Motions | Made to Move

What You Need

 Bibles

1

I must decrease. Let's all use these foam fingers and cheer for Jesus! Jesus is number one!"

What You Do:

- Give every kid a Bible and direct them to look up Philippians 2:3.
- Demonstrate how to look up the verse using the Bible Navigation Tips below:

Finding verses for 2-3rd graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find the name of the book in the list. When they find the book, lead them to look at the page number beside it. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find that book. Help the kids find the page. When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find the correct chapter. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find the correct verse in that chapter.

- Repeat the verse aloud several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Guide the kids to put their Bibles aside.
- Gather the kids and explain that you'll work together as a group to make up motions for your new Memory Verse.
- Say the verse line by line and invite the kids to share their ideas for simple motions for that part of the verse.
 - *Don't do anything only to get ahead.* (Maybe shake head "no" and wiggle fingers forward.)
 - *Don't do it because you are proud.* (Maybe puff out chest.)
 - *Instead, be humble.* (Maybe crouch down low.)
 - *Value others more than yourselves.* (Maybe point to friends.)
 - *Philippians 2:3 (Open hands like a book.)*
- Use their ideas and practice the whole verse with the motions together.

What You Say:

"You came up with the best motions for our Memory Verse! This verse helps us remember to be humble, which means putting others first. John the Baptist showed us humility when he joyfully put Jesus first. That's what we're learning today: **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.** Even when John the Baptist's friends were upset that the number of John's followers was getting smaller, and the number of Jesus' followers was getting larger. John put Jesus first because he knew that it was all about Jesus! He knew that **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.**"

5 min

Discussion Questions

5 min

Discussion Questions

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Prayer

5 min

23 – Pray and Dismiss | Made to Reflect

What You Need

No supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask:

- John's followers were upset that people were leaving him to follow Jesus, but John was joyful. Why do you think John wasn't jealous or upset—and what can that teach you about humility?
- John said, *"He must become more important. I must become less important"* (John 3:30 NIV). What do you think that means in your own life? How could you live in a way that points people to Jesus instead of to yourself?
- It can be easy to want attention, popularity, or praise. How can focusing on Jesus first help you deal with those feelings when they show up?
- John's joy came from seeing Jesus' work grow, even if his own influence shrank. When have you found joy in helping someone else succeed—or letting someone else shine?
- The story says that when we focus on Jesus more than ourselves, we find peace and hope. How might your thoughts, choices, or worries look different if you really believed that Jesus is bigger than any problem you face?

What To Do:

- Lead the group in praying a s'more prayer.

What You Say:

"Has anyone made a s'more before? They are ooey gooey and delicious! Let's use a pretend s'more to help us pray. Let's start with a graham cracker and say, 'Dear God, thank You for loving us even when things get hard or messy. Then comes the sweet chocolate. God, thank You for sweet moments and people who bring joy to our days. Next is the ooey, gooey warm marshmallow. God, help us spread Your love to others. Now let's add the other graham cracker on top and thank God for sending His Son, Jesus, so we can live forever with God.'"

"Dear God, thank You for our families and friends. Most of all, thank You for Jesus, who came from above to save us. Help us to be like John the Baptist and have joy when we point others to You. Help us to remember that **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.** We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Supplies

Social Activity | Made to Play Quantity

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Offering container | 1 |
| 2. | Print "Jesus Puzzle" Activity Page on cardstock, one set for each Small Group | 1 |
| 3. | Optional: Floor tape, enough for each Small Group | 1 |

23 – Jesus Is #1 | Made to Create Quantity

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---------|
| 1. | "Foam Finger" Activity Page | 0 |
| 2. | Coloring supplies | Several |
| 3. | Stickers | Several |
| 4. | Clear tape | 1 |

23 – Memory Verse Motions | Made to Move Quantity

- | | | |
|----|--------|---|
| 1. | Bibles | 1 |
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