

March Preteen | 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

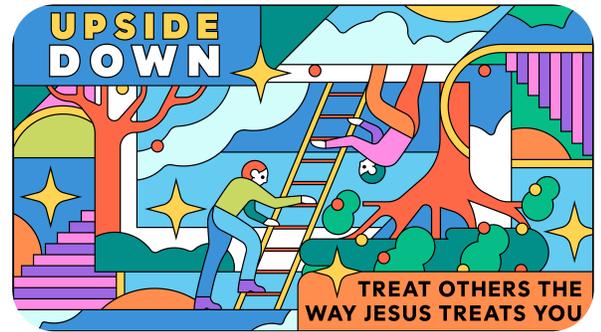
Worship: Inviting People to Respond to God

- 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

- Application Activity: Take a Snapshot (Preteen)
- Bible Story Review: Discussion Questions (Preteen)
- Prayer Activity: Make It Personal with Prayer (Preteen)



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

Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play

What You Need

 Offering container	0
 "Disciple Decoder" Activity Page	1
 Pencils	1

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a high-five, fist bump, or a wave.
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Give each kid a "Disciple Decoder" Activity Page and a pencil.
- Explain that they are to decode the names of some of Jesus' first followers. The word bank at the bottom is there to help if they get stuck.
- Let the kids work individually or with a partner to solve the puzzles.
- Once everyone is done, go over the answers together.

What You Say:

"Nice work, detectives! You cracked the code. In today's true story from the Bible, we're going to hear about John the Baptist. His followers had to do some decoding of their own. John the Baptist gave his followers a major clue about Jesus, and it changed everything for them. **[Transition]** Let's go and hear about the clue that John the Baptist shared with his followers that pointed them to Jesus."

5 min

Application Activity

5 min

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Play

What You Need

 Paper	0
 Writing supplies	1

What You Do:

- Give each kid a piece of paper and something to write with.
- Instruct the kids to make a list of things that are important to them. (e.g., family, friends, sports, video games, school, being popular).
- After a minute or two, encourage the kids to look at their list and circle the top 3 most important things.
- Then, instruct the kids to share their top 3 with a partner or the whole group.
- Lead a discussion with these questions:
 - Is it bad to have things that are important to us? (*No!*)
 - What happens when something on our list becomes MORE important than Jesus?
 - What did John the Baptist mean when he said: "He must become more important. I must become less important" (John 3:30 NIV)?
 - What does it look like in real life to make Jesus more important than the other things on our lists?

What You Say:

"It's good to have things that are important to us! God gives us family, friends, and fun things to enjoy. Today in our Bible Story, John the Baptist

5 min

Discussion Questions

5 min

Preteen Discussion Questions

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Prayer

reminded us of a really important truth. He made less of himself—and he made a big deal of Jesus. John the Baptist wasn't upset about losing followers; he was filled with joy because his purpose was being fulfilled! He was doing what he was made to do—to point people to Jesus!

“When we put Jesus at the very top of our list—above everything, because as John told us, He is *‘above everything’* (John 3:31 NIV)—all the other things find their right place. When you make a big deal of Jesus, you’re showing the world their loving Savior. Make your life a big arrow that points to Him. When we do this, people will see, love, and follow Jesus. It’s living out the truth that **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.**”

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?

5 min

Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect

What You Need

-  Index cards or small pieces of paper 0
-  Writing supplies 1



EveryChild Tips

- *For kids who find writing challenging, allow them to draw pictures or symbols to represent their prayers for each prompt.*
- *Offer to write for a kid who wants to share their prayers verbally but has difficulty writing them down.*

What You Do:

- Give each kid an index card or a small piece of paper and something to write with.
- Encourage kids to complete the following three sentences on their card. Assure them that no one else will see their answers.
 - "God, thank You for ... "
 - "God, I'm sorry for ... "
 - "This week, please help me ... "
- Give the kids a few minutes of quiet to write.
- When everyone is done, explain that they can keep the card with them this week as a personal prayer list.
- Close by praying for the group.

[Make It Personal] Fill out your own card as an example and participate with the group.

What You Say:

"It's good to be honest with God and to know He hears everything we write and think. God loves us no matter what, and we can trust Him. So tell Him all of your thoughts, share all of your worries and fears. Nothing is too big for God. God will never leave you or forsake you. Let's finish our time by praying together."

"God, thank You for being so great. We are sorry for the times we make ourselves or other things more important than You. This week, please help us to be humble and put others first. Help us to live in a way that shows everyone how great You are. We want to live in a way that says, **[Bottom Line] Jesus must increase. I must decrease.** We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Supplies

Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play Quantity

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Offering container | 0 |
| 2. | "Disciple Decoder" Activity Page | 1 |
| 3. | Pencils | 1 |

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Play Quantity

- | | | |
|----|------------------|---|
| 1. | Paper | 0 |
| 2. | Writing supplies | 1 |

Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect Quantity

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Index cards or small pieces of paper | 0 |
| 2. | Writing supplies | 1 |