

Upside Down: Jesus changes everything

WEEK
ONE

APRIL 2020

GRADES
K-5

STARTER

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

252 KIDS

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PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

STORY

SETTING UP THE STORY

LEADER: "Like I said, we're picking up God's Big Story, and I need your help. I need everyone here to help me by making some sound effects. Cool? When I point to your group, you'll make the sound effect, but you have to watch me for prompts on when to get louder (*thumbs up motion*), when to get quieter (*thumbs down motion*), and when to stop (*hand up, palm out like a stop sign*).

"First of all, who thinks they can make good snoring sounds? Show me.

Pick two or three kids who can fake snore and group them together.

"Now I need a couple of you who can make sounds like people eating. I've got some dishes here for you.

Select a couple of kids and give them the cookie sheet, cups/glasses, silverware, etc. Show them how to make clinking sounds, murmuring sounds, etc.

"Everyone else, I need your help making some crowd sounds. First, let's pretend to cheer. (*Let kids practice.*) Great! Next, let's practice our shocked sound. Like this. (*Demonstrate a gasp, and let kids practice.*) Well done. Lastly, let's use our feet to stomp on the ground like we're running away. (*Let kids practice.*)

Note: If you're in a room with carpet, you can have another cookie sheet and some spare shoes in the prop box to let the kids stomp the shoes on the cookie sheet to make "running away" sounds.

"You all seem ready. Just pay attention now for when I call on your sound effect, and don't forget to look to me so you know when to get louder or quieter or when to stop. All right. Let's begin.

(*Hold up Bible.*) "As we've been making our way through the Bible together this year, you may have noticed something that tended to come up a lot: the religious leaders did NOT like Jesus or His message. They spent months plotting to silence Jesus, but none of their plans had been successful. In fact, Jesus had become more popular than ever! On the Sunday before Passover, Jesus entered Jerusalem to great CHEERS from the crowds.

If the kids don't automatically cheer, repeat the line. Use hand motions to cue the kids to get louder and louder, then quieter and quieter, and finally stop.

"But things were about to change for the religious leaders and their plotting, because one of Jesus' disciples, Judas, went to them with a plan. Judas said he would hand Jesus over to them in exchange for 30 pieces of silver.

"Jesus is God's Son, so He knows everything. That means He knew what Judas had planned. But He also knew that His mission was to face those who hated Him and to allow them to take Him without defending Himself."

PASSOVER

LEADER: "The time had come to celebrate Passover, and Jesus had gathered with His closest friends to share the special meal.

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Nod at the “eating sounds” kids to prompt them. Cue them to get a bit louder, then softer, and then really soft as you continue.

“Jesus shared the meal with them, and then He led them out of the city. By this point, Judas had already left them to go finish his plan of turning Jesus over to the religious leaders.

Hold up your hand to stop the sounds.

“Jesus knew what was coming, and He wanted to prepare His friends for what would happen next. He told them:

Open the Bible to John 16:16 and 16:28 (NirV) and read.

“In a little while, you will no longer see me. Then after a little while, you will see me. . . . I came from the Father and entered the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

“Then Jesus led the disciples toward the garden of Gethsemane. He told them how the next few days were going to go. He told the disciples that they were actually going to turn away from Him. In fact, they would even deny knowing Him. Peter couldn’t believe this idea. He told Jesus he would never turn away from Him. But Jesus told Peter that before the rooster crowed again—in other words, before the next morning—Peter would deny knowing Jesus three times.

“Peter insisted he would never do that, and the other disciples said the same thing.”

PRAYING IN THE GARDEN

LEADER: “Eventually they reached the garden. Let me hear the leaves rustling in the breeze.

Wave your fingers together to make a soft rustling sound, and nod to cue the rest of the kids to join you. Then give them the stop sign.

“Jesus told the disciples to sit there while He went to pray, but He took Peter, James, and John with Him a little farther. Jesus knew what He was about to do, and it felt very heavy for Him. Listen to what He told the three men:

Open the Bible to Matthew 26:38 (NirV) and read.

“My soul is very sad. I feel close to death. Stay here. Keep watch with me.”

“Then Jesus walked a little farther and stopped to pray.

“He said:

Open the Bible to Matthew 26:39 (NirV) and read.

“My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering away from me. But let what you want be done, not what I want.”

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

"After Jesus finished praying, He returned to His friends, but instead of praying, He found them . . . sleeping.

Look to the "snorers" and nod to cue them to snore.

"Whoops!

Direct them to get louder and then much softer.

"Jesus had some words for His disciples for sure.

Open the Bible to Matthew 26:40-41 (NirV) and read.

"Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray. Then you won't fall into sin when you are tempted. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

Stop the snorers.

"Then Jesus left the men and went back to pray a second time. He prayed:

Open the Bible to Matthew 26:42 (NirV) and read.

"My Father, is it possible for this cup to be taken away? But if I must drink it, may what you want be done."

"After He finished praying the second time, Jesus returned to His disciples, and once again, He found them sleeping.

Look to the "snorers" and nod to cue them to snore.

"Yikes!

Direct them to get louder and then much softer.

"So He left them and went away again.

Stop the snorers.

"For the third time, Jesus prayed the same thing—begging for God to take away what was coming and yet sharing His trust in God's plan.

"Then Jesus went back to His disciples, who were—yep, you guessed it—sleeping.

Look to the "snorers" and nod to cue them to snore.

"Surely they were caught up on sleep by now?!"

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

Direct them to get louder and then much softer.

"Jesus said:

Open the Bible to Matthew 26:45-46 (NirV) and read.

"Are you still sleeping and resting? Look! The hour has come. The Son of Man is about to be handed over to sinners. Get up! Let us go! Here comes the one who is handing me over to them!"

Stop the snorers.

JESUS ARRESTED

LEADER: "Yes, Judas had arrived. There was a large crowd of people with him, carrying swords and clubs. This mob had been sent by the religious leaders.

"Part of Judas' plan was to greet Jesus with a kiss so the mob would know who to arrest. Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek and greeted Him. Jesus responded: *"Friend, do what you came to do"* (Matthew 26:50, NirV).

"The men who arrived with Judas grabbed Jesus to arrest Him. As they did, Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. The crowd gasped!

If the kids don't gasp, do it yourself, and then give them a few seconds to do it.

"But Jesus stopped Peter.

Open the Bible to Matthew 26:52-54 (NirV) and read.

"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him. "All who use the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I can't ask my Father for help? He would send an army of more than 70,000 angels right away. But then how would the Scriptures come true? They say it must happen in this way."

"Jesus touched the servant's ear, and the man was healed. The crowd probably gasped again!

Pause to let them gasp.

"Then Jesus spoke to the crowd:

Open the Bible to Matthew 26:55-56 (NirV) and read.

"Am I leading a band of armed men against you?" he asked. "Do you have to come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courtyard teaching. And you didn't arrest me. But all this has happened so that the words of the prophets would come true."

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

LEADER: “And just like that, things happened as Judas had planned, and just like Jesus knew they would. The mob arrested Jesus and led Him away.

“Jesus’ friends, who had promised to stay with Him through anything, ran away. Okay, everyone, give me one last sound. Let’s make those runaway sounds.

Have the kids start making the sound of feet running away. Have them get louder first, then quieter, then stop.

“Jesus had chosen the path that would bring life for everyone—but it would cost Him everything.

“Judas might have thought this had gone according to HIS plan . . . but it was actually part of God’s plan all along. It had always been God’s plan to send Jesus to be our Savior. Now the time had come for Jesus to put God’s plan into motion, and Jesus followed through. He showed the perfect example of humility. He put US first when He died on the cross for our sins.

“We can follow Jesus’ example, too.

CG: Bottom Line Slide

“We can choose to **put others first**.

“But you and I know that’s not always easy. Even Jesus had to beg God to help Him. So surely you and I need to ask God for help if we want to put others first. We need God’s help in order to **[Basic Truth] treat others the way we want to be treated**. Let’s talk to God about that now.”

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

PRAY

LEADER: “Dear God, it’s amazing to see how Jesus chose to put us first. Jesus was PERFECT. He had never done anything wrong. But He was willing to give up His life on the cross. He put us first when He died for us, and it was all part of Your good plan. We want to show humility and follow the example Jesus gave us, but we need Your help. Please give each of us the strength we need to **put others first**. We love You, and we ask these things in Jesus’ name, amen.”

CLOSER

LEADER: “Thank you all for your help with those sound effects!

Gather any props you’ve handed out.

“Putting others first isn’t easy. Think about it: even Jesus had to ask God for help.

TALK ABOUT GOD

BIBLE STORY
REVIEW

BIBLE STORY

The Way

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane
Matthew 26:36-56
(Supporting: Luke 22:39-46)

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

LIFE APP

Humility—Putting others first by giving up what you think you deserve

BOTTOM LINE

Put others first.

BASIC TRUTH

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



IMAGINE

an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

* 1. FIRST AND LAST

WHAT YOU NEED: "First and Last Story Script" Activity Page, wrapped prize

WHAT YOU DO:

- Arrange the group in a circle and read the First and Last Story Script.
- Instruct kids to pass the wrapped prize every time you say the word "first" as you read from the script.
- Every "first" moves the prize two spaces to the left.
- Play until the script ends. The person who is holding the prize at the end is the winner.
- If possible, encourage the winner to share their winnings with the rest of the group.

WHAT YOU SAY:

"You really didn't want to hear 'first' in this game if you had the prize. When you heard the word 'first,' you knew the prize was going away from you. But most of the time in life, we want to be first! What are some times when we want to be first? Why does that feel important? (*Invite discussion.*)"

"In our Bible Story today, Jesus—who deserved to be first more than any person who's ever lived—set aside all His rights and His plans, and He **put others first**. He followed God's plan for rescuing all people from sin, even when it wasn't easy for Him, and even when He didn't want to go through a difficult time.

"Jesus showed us how to **put others first**, by asking God for help. When it's time to **put others first**, what can YOU do to ask for God's help? What can you say to Him?" (*Allow time for responses. Encourage kids to think about specific times when it's hard to put someone else first.*)"

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

**LIVE
FOR GOD**
APPLICATION
ACTIVITY



PLAY

an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

BIBLE STORY

The Way

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane
Matthew 26:36-56
(Supporting: Luke 22:39-46)

MEMORY VERSE

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Put others first.

BASIC TRUTH

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

2. NOT MY WILL

WHAT YOU NEED: No supplies needed

WHAT YOU DO:

- Arrange the kids in rows of three, facing forward.
- Play a version of "Simon Says."
 - Start as the first leader.
 - Give the group a simple direction: Put your hands on your head.
 - They should all obey and say, "Not my will, but yours."
 - Play a few more rounds, telling them to do various simple actions: hop on one foot, flap like a chicken, sit down, twirl around, etc.
 - If you choose, let a couple of responsible older kids to take a turn being the leader.

WHAT YOU SAY:

"In this game, you put [leaders' names] and me first by doing what WE asked, not what you wanted. Have you ever done that in real life? (*Invite responses: by obeying their parents instead of playing or by letting their sibling/friend choose an activity or meal instead of insisting on their own way.*)

"There are a lot of opportunities in life to **put others first**. We don't always see those opportunities because we get focused only on what we want."

[Make It Personal] (Share a time when you could have put someone else first but you chose to focus on what you wanted instead. What happened as a result? How did you feel? How did the other person feel?)

Optional Discussion Questions for Older Kids

If you lead 4th, 5th, or 6th graders, consider asking these discussion questions:

- What does it feel like to always focus on what you want, no matter what?
- How have you put someone else first recently?
- How does it feel to focus on someone else and make an effort to put THEM first?
- Who is someone specific you can put first this week, and what could you do to put them first and yourself second?

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

HEAR FROM GOD

MEMORY VERSE
ACTIVITY



MOVE

an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and
taps into the energy in the body

BIBLE STORY

The Way

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane
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to get ahead. Don't do it
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LIFE APP

**Humility—Putting others
first by giving up what
you think you deserve**

BOTTOM LINE

Put others first.

BASIC TRUTH

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

3. NEW FIRSTS

WHAT YOU NEED: Bibles

WHAT YOU DO:

- Look up this month's memory verse, Philippians 2:3, and use the Bible Navigation Tips below if needed.

Finding verses with a multi-age group: Guide all kids 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, ask a middle elementary kid (2nd -3rd grade) to find Philippians in the list under "New Testament." When the kid finds Philippians, lead them to look at the page number beside the word and say it aloud, explaining that the number tells them on what page they can find Philippians. Ask older elementary kids (4th-5th grade) to help younger ones find the correct page in their own Bibles. When they all find Philippians, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Ask a kindergartner or 1st grader to find chapter 2, and give time for all the kids to turn the pages to find it. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers, and ask a middle elementary kid to find verse 3 in chapter 2. Then, read the verse aloud slowly, especially for your pre-readers; or ask older elementary kids to read it to the group.

- Assign a word or phrase from the verse to each kid.
- The kid who has the first word or phrase should line up first and then everyone else behind them, in verse order.
- Kids say their word/phrase down the line in order.
- For the first round, let kids say the entire verse in order.
- On the next round, when the verse gets about halfway down the line, call out the name of a DIFFERENT kid to be first.
- That kid should run to the front of the line, and everyone behind him should follow. (In other words, keep the verse in verse order.)
- The new first kid will say their original word and then the next kid says their word, and so on.
- Keep changing who's first, allowing the verse to get to the end at least once.
- Say the whole verse together once before settling in for discussion.

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

**HEAR
FROM GOD**
MEMORY VERSE
ACTIVITY



MOVE

an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

WHAT YOU SAY:

“That was a lot of work to keep up with! It’s hard, but this verse makes it clear that we should **put others first**. One way to do that is NOT to do something just to get ahead. Have you ever seen a line forming for a ride at an amusement park or maybe for your favorite swing on the playground? Did it make you want to run to the line to make sure you got a good spot? Well, this verse basically tells us not to do that! God certainly doesn’t want us to miss out on fun things, but He does want us to think about others and how we can put them first.

“The next time you see a line that you want to run over to before it gets longer, how can you **put others first?**” (Let a few kids respond with some ideas. Encourage them to think about letting a few others go first in line, but help them understand that that doesn’t mean they have to be completely LAST, either!)

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

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GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

PRAY TO GOD PRAYER ACTIVITY



MOVE

an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

BIBLE STORY

The Way

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(Supporting: Luke 22:39-46)

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LIFE APP

Humility—Putting others first by giving up what you think you deserve

BOTTOM LINE

Put others first.

BASIC TRUTH

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

PRAY AND DISMISS

WHAT YOU NEED: Coins

WHAT YOU DO:

- Give each kid a coin, and gather kids in a circle.
- Ask the first kid to flip his coin and call either "heads" or "tails" while the coin is in the air.
- No matter how it lands, guide him to pray, "Dear God, even if I don't get what I want, help me to **put others first.**"
- Continue around the circle, letting each kid pray that sentence prayer.
- Close in prayer at the end.

WHAT YOU SAY:

"Dear God, through Jesus, You showed us how to **put others first.** Jesus followed Your plan to put us first even though it meant a lot of pain and suffering for Him. Please help us to put others before ourselves this week. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, if possible, send the coins home with the kids to remind them to **put others first** this week.

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PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience

For Leaders Only
Create the Environment
Monthly Overview

15
MIN

SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Early Arriver
Coin Toss Tournament

25
MIN

STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

Welcome/Opener
Worship
Communication
Prayer

10
MIN

WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God

"Lift My Voice" from *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*
"Thank You God" from *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*

25
MIN

GROUPS: Creating a safe place to connect

The First and Last
Not My Will
New Firsts
Prayer

HOME: Prompting action beyond the experience

GodTime
Parent Cue

I have four legs and cannot walk. (table)

I am always on my way, but never ever arrive today. (tomorrow)

If I have it, I don't share it; if I share it, I don't have it. (secret)

What gets wetter the more it dries? (a towel)

What goes up and down but never moves? (stairs)

What can you hold without touching? (your breath)

What is black and white and read all over? (a newspaper)

What to Do:

Print one copy for each small group.

Riddles

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FIRST Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey and the crowd pulled off palm branches to welcome Him in. The disciples must have been so amazed at all the celebrations, they didn't know where to look FIRST. Jesus knew this would anger some of the other leaders and that the FIRST person they'd talk to was Judas. He wasn't the FIRST disciple to follow Jesus, but he had been with Jesus a long time and knew His routine.

Judas eventually planned to betray Jesus, but FIRST there was a feast to prepare for. Jesus served His disciples the Passover meal, a reminder of when God had FIRST rescued the Israelite people from the Egyptians. Jesus knew that this was the last meal with His friends.

They all went to the garden then, where the FIRST stars of the night could just be seen in the sky. Jesus knew that the FIRST thing He would do before God's plan for the night got started was to pray. Jesus left His friends, FIRST asking them to pray for Him and then asking them to wait. He prayed to God and said, "Not my will, but Yours be done." Jesus was willing to put all of us FIRST even if it meant suffering.

When He went back to His disciples the FIRST time, they had fallen asleep, so He went to pray by Himself a couple more times. Every so often, Jesus would check on His friends but it was just like it was the FIRST time He'd left. They were fast asleep.

Jesus woke them up, and they could see Judas, FIRST in line of a big mob. A lot of things happened at once. FIRST, Judas kissed Jesus to let all of the others know that they should arrest Him. Peter drew his sword FIRST before any of them, but Jesus told him to put it away. Jesus was led away by the angry crowd of people to be sent to His trial, and for the FIRST time since they'd met Him, the disciples felt truly alone.

What to Do:

Print one copy for each small group.

First and Last Story Script

April 2020, Week 1, K5 Starter

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