

Today's Suggested Schedule—August 2022, Week 1

Note: This version of the curriculum is designed especially for churches with fewer leaders and kids. You may want to use it if you have just one or two leaders and if you combine all your kids in both Large and Small Group time.

Today's Bible Story: The Greatest (Greatest Commandment) • *Matthew 22:34-40*

Today's Bottom Line: Love God by loving others.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins.* 1 John 4:10 (NIRV)

Monthly Virtue: Love—Showing others how much they matter to you

Basic Truth: I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

PRELUDE: Setting the Tone for the Experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

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

Early Arriver

Opening Activity

I will have word search—crossword puzzle dittos and coloring pages that contain the scripture found in our Bible story:
Matthew 22: 37-40

We will also reinforce friendship by making friendship bracelets.

We will start the 30 second countdown and Kirsten will lead the following :

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

Kirsten enters reading a book, completely engrossed and not noticing the kids.

Video (Media Package): Countdown (30- or 60-second version)

Video (Media Package): Theme

OPENER

Continue to read for a few seconds, just until it starts to feel awkward, then look up.

LEADER: “Oh, goodness—I’m so sorry! This book is just SO good. I got completely caught up in the story. Really epic stories can do that, can’t they? I just never want to put them down!

Put the book down.

“The most epic of ALL stories though, is the one that God is writing. It’s one God has been writing since the beginning of time—or before! And God’s story is all about love.

“What IS love?

Video (Media Package): Theme Transition to Virtue

“Love is showing others how much they matter to you.

Video (Media Package): Virtue Transition to Theme

“And no one shows more love than God! We can read all about God’s love as we read the Bible. (Hold up Bible.) What’s cool about God’s story is that it’s a love story . . . and it’s full of lots of different kinds of writings. In the Bible, we can find history, wisdom, advice for life, poetry, and more!

“That got me thinking about a great way that we could kick off this month as we learn more about God’s epic story.

“Before we start singing, let’s check out this video together.

Video (Media Package): Live Loud Video from Get Reel

SLIDE: Theme Background

“God’s love is truly amazing. God’s love will never fail! And since we’ve experienced God’s love for ourselves, we can choose to SHARE it with other people. Let’s sing and thank God for always loving us, no matter what we might face in life. Here we go!

Video (Media Package): “How Amazing” Dance Moves Music Video

SLIDE: Theme Background

“God doesn’t just love; God IS love. As we read in 1 John 4:16 (NirV): God is love. Anyone who leads a life of love is joined to God. And God is joined to them.

“Every day, we can choose to love like God does. Let’s sing this song and tell God, ‘We want to love like You!’

Video: “Love Like You” / track 9 from Make a Move

SLIDE: Theme Background

“The world really is better when we’re working together—and worshipping together! You can all have a seat.”

BIBLE STORY

SETTING UP THE STORY

LINDA :“God’s story really is EPIC, and we can read about it in the books of the Bible. *(Hold up Bible.)*

“We’ll be going through the Bible together this year, starting from the very beginning. If you’re reading through the Bible in order, normally you’d start with the book of Genesis, chapter one. *(Flip to the beginning of Genesis.)* But before we look at the creation of the world, we’re starting out today with something JESUS said—much later. This is something that’s true throughout the WHOLE Bible. In fact, it’ll help us see how the Bible is a love story for the ages!

“To set the stage for this amazing, epic thing Jesus said, we need to look at the book of Exodus, which is the second book of the Bible. *(Flip to Exodus.)* In this book, we can read how God led the people out of slavery in Egypt as they followed their leader, Moses.”

THE RULES

LEADER: “Unlike the nations around them, the Israelites worshiped only ONE God. After God led the Israelites out of slavery, God called Moses up to Mount Sinai.

“Listen to what God said to Moses.

Open the Bible to Exodus 19:4-6 (NirV) and read.

“You have seen for yourselves what I did to Egypt. You saw how I carried you on the wings of eagles and brought you to myself. Now obey me completely. Keep my covenant. If you do, then out of all the nations you will be my special treasure. The whole earth is mine. But you will be a kingdom of priests to serve me. You will be my holy nation.

Hold up the book representing the ten commandments, so the kids can see the front that says “TEN COMMANDMENTS.”

“Then God gave Moses commandments, or rules, for the Israelites to follow. They weren’t printed in a book, but they were engraved on stone tablets. Since I didn’t have any stone to use today, this book will do.

“Here is what God says. *(Read off the back of the book.)*

“Don’t put any other gods in My place.
Don’t make statues of other gods to worship.
Don’t misuse the name of God.
Rest on the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
Honor your father and mother.
Do not murder.
Keep your promises to your husband or wife.
Do not steal.
Do not lie.
Do not be jealous or envious of what others have. *(Paraphrase of Exodus 20:3-17)*

Set the book down on the table. Begin reaching in the prop box and pulling out the other books, creating a giant stack on top of the first book, as you continue talking.

“The ten commandments were just the beginning, though. There were many, many, many more rules. In fact, there were 613 laws in total. And then the religious leaders added even more of their OWN laws to keep people from breaking the 613 laws God gave!

Keep stacking.

“Over hundreds of years, the religious leaders dedicated themselves to getting every detail of every single rule just right—and they tried to make sure everyone else did, too. They figured it was the only way to know for sure that God would be pleased with them.

“Even under Roman rule, the Jewish leaders made sure to keep every single law just perfectly. But they were far more worried about getting things right than about what was in their hearts.”

Stop stacking.

THE SAVIOR

LEADER: “THEN . . . Jesus arrived on the scene. Jesus began traveling around, teaching crowds of people. And He didn’t act like any other teacher or rabbi.

Begin digging around in the prop box and pulling out props to set on the table, starting with the heart pillow.

“Jesus showed love by gathering followers from the outcasts. He spent time with the people everyone else avoided. He showed them that they MATTERED to Him. He made blind people see, and He made people who couldn’t walk get up and dance. He healed people who had terrible skin diseases.

Hold up the bandages, then set them down on the table.

“Jesus invited women to follow Him—something no other rabbi would do. He welcomed little children, blessed them, and spent time with them.

Hold up a children’s book or toy, then set it down on the table.

“Jesus was changing everything—and the religious leaders didn’t like it. They began looking for ways to trap Jesus and get Him to say or do something that would get Him in trouble.

“One Sabbath day, Jesus was inside a synagogue where there was a man with a twisted hand. The leaders called out to Jesus to ask Him if the scriptures allowed healing on the Sabbath. According to the law, God’s people were only supposed to REST on the Sabbath. So Jesus knew that the religious leaders were trying to catch Him breaking the law by healing the man. Listen to how Jesus responded.

Open the Bible to Matthew 12:11-12 (NirV).

“What if one of your sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath day? Won’t you take hold of it and lift it out? A person is worth more than sheep! So the Law allows us to do good on the Sabbath day.

“Then Jesus healed the man’s hand!

“See, Jesus didn’t come to take AWAY the law. Jesus came to show us what it means to keep the rules the way God intended. Jesus came to show that the greatest thing we can do is love!”

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

LEADER: “During Passover week, the whole city was stirred up to see what Jesus would do, and the religious leaders were trying to figure out how to stop Him. Several religious leaders came to Jesus. One of the leaders asked Jesus, ‘Which is the most important commandment in the Law?’ (Matthew 22:36, NlrV)

“This law expert thought that Jesus would have to pick just ONE law and ignore the others. Then everyone would get upset!

“But listen to Jesus’ shocking and simple answer. He said . . .

Open the Bible to Matthew 22:37-40 (NlrV).

“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 you love yourself.’ Everything that is written in the Law and the Prophets is based on these two commandments.

“In a few short sentences, Jesus had taken 613 laws and wrapped them up into just TWO things to remember.

Throw the blanket on top of the books and place the heart pillow on top of the stack.

“Love God. Love others.”

Video: Bible Story

SLIDE: Theme Background

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

Kirsten “Jesus knew that God looks at our hearts and the reasons WHY we do something, not just our ability to follow rules. If we truly love God and love others, then all those other rules will fall into place. If you love God, you won’t put other things ahead of God. If you love others, you won’t steal or break promises to them.

“As followers of Jesus, we can ask, ‘What does it look like TODAY for me to love God and love the people around me?’

“It wasn’t always easy for Jesus’ followers then—and it’s not always easy for us now. But God can help us. We can show that we love God by loving others and by *[Basic Truth]* treating others the way we want to be treated.

“Remember . . .

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] “Love God by loving others.

“Let’s pray and ask God to help us do that.”

SLIDE: Theme Background

We will gather in a circle and encourage the children to give a prayer of thanks and/or a prayer request

PRAY

LEADER: “Dear God, we are so grateful for Your amazing, deep love for us. We know that nothing can change or ever WILL change Your love for us. Help us remember how much You love us, and show that same love to each other. Show us how to do what Jesus said is most important: love You and love other people. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

CLOSER

Linda: “Life is full of rules. We have rules that we have to follow in all kinds of different situations. *(Hold up Bible.)* Some people think of the Bible as a book of rules.

Pull the pillow and blanket off so the giant stack of books is visible again.

“The Bible does include God’s good rules for our lives, but it’s way more than that. It’s a collection of stories, poems, and a whole lot of history. The Bible was written by a bunch of different writers over hundreds of years, and yet somehow, miraculously, it tells the same EPIC love story. It’s about God’s amazing love for people throughout history . . . AND God’s amazing love for you and me!

Hold up the heart pillow.

“As we journey through the Bible this year, let’s remember what Jesus said is the MOST important thing: Love God. Love others.

SLIDE: God’s Big Story 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.

“We could say it this way.

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] “Love God by loving others.

“Show you love God by loving the people God has created.

Move around to the front of the table and hand out the

props to various kids.

(Wrap the blanket around a kid's shoulders.) "So when you're kind to someone in need, you're loving God. (Hand the children's book or toy to a kid.) When you cheer someone up who's sad, you're loving God. (Hand the box of bandages to a kid.) When you take care of someone who's sick, you're loving God. (Give the heart pillow to a kid.) And when you forgive someone, you're loving God.

"There are a lot more ways to live this out, so let's head over to Small Group to figure out what this might look like in our everyday lives!"

Collect the props and dismiss kids to their small groups.

Optional Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

We will have snack and if time allows we will play a game.