

Preteen | W1

Today's Suggested Schedule—July 2026, Week 1

Bible Story: The Story of the Farmer • *Matthew 13:1-23*

Bottom Line: God's kingdom grows when you hear and do what He says.

Conversation Starter: What are you going to do with what you've heard?

Monthly Memory Verse: *God's kingdom is not about eating or drinking. It is about doing what is right and having peace and joy. All this comes through the Holy Spirit.* • Romans 14:17 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

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

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

Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Application Activity: Take a Snapshot

Bible Story Review: Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions

Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You

Prayer Activity: Make It Personal with Prayer

Home: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App



Bible Story

The Story of the Farmer • *Matthew 13:1-23*

Bottom Line

God's kingdom grows when you hear and do what He says.

Conversation Starter

What are you going to do with what you've heard?

Monthly Memory Verse

God's kingdom is not about eating or drinking. It is about doing what is right and having peace and joy. All this comes through the Holy Spirit. • Romans 14:17 NIV




5 min

Social

5 min

Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play *Uses Minimal Supplies*

What You Need

 Offering container	1
 Floor tape	1
 Random things that are available in your Small Group area	Several

Providing Time for Fun Interaction

What You Do:

Before the Activity:

- Use floor tape to create a large square on the floor (about 2 x 2 feet).

During the Activity:

- 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.
- Challenge the group to see how many people they can fit inside the square at one time. They can stand, sit, or get creative, but everyone's whole body must be inside the lines.
- After they set their first record, challenge them to do it more quickly the next time.
- Then, play again, but this time, see how many *things* they can fit in the square, along with themselves (shoes, backpacks, Bibles, etc.).

What You Say:

"Great teamwork! It's amazing how much you can fit into a space when you plan it out. We have to be intentional about what we make space for in our lives too.

"When Jesus taught, He often used parables. A parable is a short story using everyday objects and situations to help explain something about God and His kingdom. A parable makes you think and feel. It helps you understand something true for yourself instead of just repeating what someone else told you. Today, we're going to hear a story or parable Jesus told to teach us about making space in our hearts for something really important. Let's go hear this parable Jesus taught!"

Groups

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

25 minutes

Groups 1/5




5 min

Bible Story Review

5 min

Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Play

What You Need

 Bible	1
 Paper	1
 Writing supplies	1



EveryChild tips

- Pair kids to work together.*
- Groups 3/5

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

What You Do:

Before the Activity:

- Print “The Word Order Game” on paper, one per kid.

During the Activity:

- Open the Bible to Matthew 13:1-23, and review the story of the farmer.
- Share main ideas, like:
- Jesus was teaching about God’s kingdom, and He told a parable, or story, about a farmer.
- The farmer scattered some seed on the ground.
- The seed fell in four different types of places on the ground.
- None of the seeds grew well, except those that fell on the good soil.
- The seeds that grew in good soil produced a huge harvest!
- Jesus told the story to show that when people hear God’s message about His kingdom and understand it, they produce way more than He planted!
- Encourage kids to unscramble the words in each line to create a sentence from the Bible Story.

What You Say:

“Nice work! You put the sentences together perfectly. It’s a simple parable, but Jesus used it to teach a huge truth. It’s not just hearing God and His Word that matters. What we do with it after we hear it changes everything. Matthew 31:23 NIV says, *But the seed that fell on good soil is like those who hear the message and understand it. They produce a crop 100, 60 or 30 times more than the farmer planted.*”

“People with soft hearts hear God’s words. They read what God says in the Bible. They listen to the Holy Spirit. They talk to God about what they hear. They ask God for help. And over time, people with soft hearts become more and more like Jesus through the help of God’s Spirit inside them. In this way, God’s kingdom continues to grow. Jesus explained that some people have hardened their hearts to the truth. They won’t accept the truth, even if they hear it directly. But other people have soft hearts. They’re ready to hear God’s words. This parable helps people understand an important truth about God’s kingdom. **[Bottom Line] God’s kingdom grows when you hear and do what He says.**”


5 min

Application Activity

5 min

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Play

What You Need

 Plastic cups

1

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

What You Do:

During the Activity:

- Group the kids into pairs, and instruct them to stand or sit face-to-face with the cup on the floor in between them.
- Call out an action: "Head!" "Shoulders!" "Knees!" or "Cup!"
- The kids are to listen carefully and touch their head, shoulders, knees, or grab the cup.
- When you say, "Cup," the kids try to be the first one to grab the cup.
- The kid who grabs the cup first wins the round.
- Reset cups, and continue to call out the actions: "Head!" "Shoulders!" "Knees!" or "Cup!"
- Increase the speed at which you call out the actions, making it more difficult.
- Repeat as time and interest allow.

What You Say:

"That game takes serious listening skills! You couldn't just guess; you had to wait for me to say, 'Cup' before you could act. It's like that with our faith. Jesus asks us to be people who don't just hear what He says, but who actually do what He says. It takes practice to be a good listener and an obedient follower. You can ask God to soften your heart so His words will take root and grow in your life. When you're sad or afraid or frustrated, you can ask God for help and trust that He's always with you so your heart doesn't become hard or bitter. Over time, as you continue to listen to and follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit will grow good fruit, the good fruit of God's kingdom, in your life.

"God, the King of the kingdom, is loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and He has self-control. As you stay close to Him, He will grow His fruit in you. And as God grows His fruit in you, the Holy Spirit can work through you to point to God's kingdom in the world around you.

"And as you live out that fruit God will grow in you—as you're kind, or loving, or honest—you're saying: 'Hey, look! This kingdom is awesome! The King who reigns over it is kind, loving, and honest—just like I was. He loves you and wants you to follow Him as King and be your friend. Do you want to be a part of God's kingdom too? You can! The Bible says that everyone who accepts what Jesus did on the cross for their sins is welcomed into God's kingdom—and God's family—with open arms!

"You can point to God's kingdom as you live out the fruit He will grow in you! Remember, **[Bottom Line]** God's kingdom grows when you hear and do what He says."

[Make It Personal] (Share how you do what you can to make your heart "good soil." You can say something like: "Sometimes when I read the Bible, God shows me something I need to do, like apologize to someone. It's easy to just close my Bible and forget about it. But I've learned that when I actually do what I heard, that's when my faith really grows. It's not always easy, but it's always worth it.")

Groups 2/5









5 min

Memory Verse Activity

5 min

Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Create

What You Need

	Bibles	1
	Spray bottles	Several
	Water	Several
	Lima beans	1
	Paper towels	1
	Resealable sandwich bags	1
	Permanent marker	Several
	EveryChild Supplies: Spoon or pipette	1



EveryChild tips

- In place of a spray bottle, provide a spoon or pipette to use to add water to the paper towel.
- **Groups 5/5**

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

What You Do:

Before the Activity:

- Fill the spray bottles with water.

During the Activity:

- Give every kid a Bible.
- Invite them to look up Romans 14:17 using the Bible Navigation Tips below:

Finding verses with 4th-5th graders: Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Read the Memory Verse out loud together several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Invite the kids to set their Bibles aside.
- Give each kid a lima bean. Tell them this bean is like the seed in the parable.
- Give each kid a paper towel, and have them spray their paper towel so it's slightly wet (not dripping).
- Ask kids to fold the paper towel and place it in their bag.
- Ask kids to place their lima bean in the bag on the side of the paper towel, then seal the bag.
- Ask kids to write their name on the bag with the marker.
- Challenge them to take their "seed" home and tape it to a sunny window. Tell them that in a few days, it should start to sprout.
- Invite kids to take an additional lima bean home for a parent or adult as well and see whose lima bean grows first.

What You Say:

"This little seed is a great reminder of our Bible Story. Right now, it doesn't look like much. But if we give it what it needs, water and sun, it will grow. Our hearts are the same. When we give our hearts what they need by reading the Bible, praying, and listening to God, our faith will grow. As you continue to listen to and follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit will grow good fruit, the good fruit of God's kingdom, in your life.

"Our Memory Verse today tells us that God's kingdom is full of good things—righteousness, joy, and peace. That's because the King is good. And that's the good fruit, the good fruit of God's character, that He wants to grow and grow in you.

"As you watch this seed grow, ask God to make your heart good soil, to grow His good fruit in you."

5 min

Discussion Questions

5 min

Preteen Discussion Questions *Uses Minimal Supplies*

What You Need

No supplies needed

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

What You Do:

- **Ask these questions and discuss:**
- Why do you think Jesus used a story about farming instead of just explaining about God's kingdom plainly?
- What do the seeds represent in this story?
- What does it mean that the good soil produced 30, 60, or 100 times more?
- **[Conversation Starter] What are you going to do with what you've heard?**

Groups 4/5

5 min

Prayer

5 min

Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect *Uses Minimal Supplies*

What You Need

-  Music player 1
-  Soft music 1

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

What You Do:

During the Activity:

- Invite the kids to find a comfortable spot in the room. You can dim the lights if you'd like.
- Ask them to close their eyes and think about the four kinds of soil Jesus talked about.
- Lead them through a time of quiet reflection with these prompts. Pause for about 30 seconds after each one.
- Hard path: "When do I ignore God?"
- Rocky soil: "When do I quit when things get hard?"
- Thorny soil: "What distracts me most?"
- Good soil: "Where am I growing?"
- Now invite them to take time to pray quietly for the piece they need to ask God's help with.
- After the quiet time, close in prayer for the whole group.

What You Say:

"Let's pray together and ask God to help us be like the good soil."

Prayer:

"God, thank You for this time to be quiet and listen. We want our hearts to be like the good soil—soft, ready, and prepared for Your words to grow. Forgive us for the times we ignore You, give up too easily, or let other things become more important than You. Help us to be people who not only hear what You say, but actually do it. We want to be part of Your growing kingdom. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Getting Ready | Preteen Small Group

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

SOCIAL:

Opening Activity

Made to Play

What You Need:

- Offering container, one per Small Group
- Floor tape, one roll per Small Group
- Random things that are available in your Small Group area, several per Small Group

What You Do:

- Use floor tape to create a large square on the floor (about 2 x 2 feet).

GROUPS:

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

1. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God \ | Application Activity]

Made to Play

What You Need:

- Plastic cups, one for every two kids

2. Bible Story Extension

Talk about God \ | Bible Story Review

Made to Play

What You Need:

- Bible, one per Small Group
- "The Word Order Game" Activity Page, one per kid
- Paper, one piece per kid
- Writing supplies, one per kid

What You Do:

- Print "The Word Order Game" on paper, one per kid.

3. Discussion Questions

Talk about God \ | Bible Story Review

Made to Connect

What You Need:

- No supplies needed

4. Verses to Take with You

Hear from God \ | Memory Verse Activity

Made to Create

What You Need:

- Bibles, one per kid
- Spray bottles, several per Small Group
- Water, several per Small Group
- Lima beans, at least one per kid
- Paper towels, one per kid
- Resealable sandwich bags, one per kid
- Permanent marker, several per Small Group

EveryChild Supplies:

- *Spoon or pipette*

What You Do:

Before the Activity:

- Fill the spray bottles with water.

5. Make It Personal with Prayer

Pray to God \ | Prayer Activity

Made to Reflect

What You Need:

- Music player, one per Small Group
- Soft music, one per Small Group

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resource: **Parent Cue App.**

Supplies:

- EveryChild Supplies: Spoon or pipette

Supplies

Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play *Uses Minimal Supplies*

	Quantity
1. Offering container	1
2. Floor tape	1
3. Random things that are available in your Small Group area	Several

Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Play

	Quantity
1. Bible	1
2. Paper	1
3. Writing supplies	1

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Play

	Quantity
1. Plastic cups	1

Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Create

	Quantity
1. Bibles	1
2. Spray bottles	Several
3. Water	Several
4. Lima beans	1
5. Paper towels	1
6. Resealable sandwich bags	1
7. Permanent marker	Several
8. EveryChild Supplies: Spoon or pipette	1

Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect *Uses Minimal Supplies*

	Quantity
1. Music player	1
2. Soft music	1