

## Today's Suggested Schedule—March 2026, Week 3

**Bible Story:** Be Humble / Love Your Enemies • *Matthew 5:38-48*

**Bottom Line:** Love like Jesus even when it's hard.

**Conversation Starter:** How can you show kindness to someone who makes you mad?

**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*

### **SLIDE: Theme**

#### **WELCOME**

*Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.*

#### **OPENER**

**HOST:** "Hey, everyone! Welcome back to another awesome week of our series called 'Upside Down!' How's everybody doing today?"

"I'm so pumped you're here because this month, we're learning what it means to live in an upside-down kind of way, the kind of way that looks totally different from what the world expects. And I don't mean hanging upside down from the monkey bars, even though that's fun too. I mean following Jesus by treating people the way He treats us, even when it's hard.

"And today ... oh, it's going to get real. We're talking about how to love people even when they're ... let's say ... kind of hard to love. You know, that friend who gets on your nerves, that classmate who's rude, that sibling who, let's be honest, you just really can't handle a lot of the time? Yeah. Those moments.

"The truth is, loving others, especially when they're unkind, can feel just like walking blindfolded sometimes. You're not sure where to step next, or how to respond, but Jesus shows us the way.

"Let's look at what our Bottom Line is for today!"

### **SLIDE: Bottom Line**

**[Bottom Line]** "Love like Jesus even when it's hard. Say that with me!"

**HOST AND KIDS:** **[Bottom Line]** "Love like Jesus even when it's hard!"

**HOST:** "Nice job, everybody. Let's go learn more about that!"

## WORSHIP

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “Hey, everyone! Let’s stand up and get ready to worship! This first song is called ‘Praise’ and it’s all about giving God the glory for who He is. When we praise God, we’re saying, ‘You’re amazing, You’re powerful, and You deserve all the credit!’

“No matter what kind of week you’ve had, God is still good. So let’s lift our voices, clap our hands, and give Him our best praise!”

**SONG:** “Praise”

“That was incredible! You sounded amazing! You can take a seat!”

“Let’s take a look at our Memory Verse for the month! This verse flips the way we usually think. The world tells us to focus on being the best, the smartest, or the most important. But we are instructed as followers of Jesus to be humble and put others first. I’ll read it, and then we can say it together.

**SLIDE:** Memory Verse

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “*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 (NirV)*”

“Let’s say it together and really think about what it means!”

**KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER:** “*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 (NirV)*”

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “That’s what Jesus did. He loved others even when it was hard. And when we choose to live like that, people can see His love through us.”

## BIBLE STORY

**VIDEO:** So and So Show

## APPLICATION

**COMMUNICATOR:** “The upside-down way Jesus taught is to love even when it’s hard, even when someone rolls their eyes at you, even when they talk behind your back, even when they cut you out of a group, or even when they keep being rude. Loving like Jesus doesn’t mean pretending the hurt isn’t real or letting people walk all over you. It means refusing to let the hurt be in charge of your heart. It means choosing a response that looks like Jesus instead of a reaction that looks like payback.

“When Jesus said, ‘*Love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you*’ (Matthew 5:44 NirV), He was inviting us to live free—free from replaying the moment, free from plotting revenge, free from giving someone else the remote to our emotions. (*Hold up the remote.*)

“So what does love look like this week? First, **pause**. Before the talk back, before the text back, before the clap-back, take a breath and ask, ‘Jesus, what looks like You right now?’

“Second, **pray for them specifically**. You don’t have to feel it to pray it, ask God to help them and to help you.

“Third, **go the second mile**. If it’s safe and wise, do one unexpected good thing—hold the door, share a pencil, invite them to sit with your group. That small choice says, ‘You don’t control my heart, Jesus does.’

“Fourth, **set good boundaries**. Loving like Jesus includes wisdom. If someone is being harmful or unsafe, tell a trusted adult and create space. Forgiveness and boundaries can go together.

“And when it still feels impossible? Remember, you are not doing this alone. Ask the Holy Spirit for strength. Remember how Jesus loved you first, when you didn’t earn it. You won’t get it perfect every time. That’s okay. Keep practicing pausing, praying, going the second mile, and setting boundaries when needed. Little by little, your reactions will start to look less like revenge and more like Jesus, and that’s how His love changes you and the people around you.”

### LANDING

**COMMUNICATOR:** “So this week, when it feels easier to stay mad or get even, hand the remote to Jesus. (*Hold up the remote.*) Let Him guide your response. When you want to hit rewind and replay what someone said to you, pause instead. When you feel like turning up the volume on your anger, choose to turn it down and listen for His voice. When you’re tempted to fast-forward through a hard moment, stop and ask for His patience. Every time you hand Jesus the remote, you’re saying, ‘I trust You more than my feelings.’ That’s real strength.

“So this week, let’s live differently. Let’s hand control to Jesus and let His love lead the way. Because the world doesn’t change when we fight back, it changes when we love back.

“Before we head to small groups, I want to leave you with one last question to think about.”

### **SLIDE: Conversation Starter**

**[Conversation Starter] “How can you love like Jesus when it’s hard?”**

“Think about it for a second. Maybe there’s someone in your life who’s tough to get along with, a classmate who gets on your nerves, a friend who hurt your feelings, or maybe even someone in your family. Loving them doesn’t mean pretending what they did was okay; it means choosing to respond in a way that looks more like Jesus.

“As you head to small group, I want you to really think about that. How can you love like Jesus when it’s hard? What would it look like to choose love instead of revenge this week? How could your choice to love actually change the situation, or even change you?”

### PRAYER

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Let’s talk to the God who will help you show love, even when it’s hard.”

“God, thank You for showing us what real love looks like. Jesus, You loved people who hurt You, and You forgave when it didn’t make sense. That kind of love feels impossible sometimes, but we know You can help us do it. This week, when it feels easier to stay mad or get even, remind us to hand You the

remote. Help us to pause, to listen, and to let Your love lead our hearts. Give us the courage to choose kindness, forgiveness, and grace when it's hard. We want to love like You do. Thank You for loving us first. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.”

**SLIDE: Theme**