



# WEEK 1

## PRESCHOOL LESSON OUTLINE



### **BIG IDEA**

Jesus trusted God.

### **THE BIBLE**

**The Garden of Gethsemane:** Matthew 26:36-46

#### THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

### **WELCOME TIME**

- **ACTIVITY** | Garden Moves
- **ACTIVITY** | Flower Yoga Poses

### **TEACHING TIME**

- **THE BIG IDEA** | Jesus trusted God.
- **VIDEO** | Level Up, Episode 1
- **BIBLE STORY** | Matthew 26:36-46
- **ACTIVITY** | Garden of Trust
- **PRAYER**

### **DISCUSSION TIME**

- **SNACK** | Garden Snacks
- **ACTIVITY** | Praying in the Garden
- **ACTIVITY** | Trust Poster
- **MEMORY VERSE** | Hebrews 12:2

### **PLAY TIME**

- **ACTIVITY** | Coloring Page
- **ACTIVITY** | Garden Play
- **ACTIVITY** | Play-Doh Garden



# WEEK 1

## HACKS FOR TODDLERS

# LEVEL UP

**BY KAREN ERNE**

### HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES FOR TODDLERS

In children's ministry, you've got a wide range of ages you need to engage every week, but toddlers tend to get overlooked. But you know your toddlers need more than just babysitting, so here are a few adjustments you can make to this week in order to keep your toddlers more engaged.

#### **GENERAL TIP | Cultivate Trust**

The first place toddlers learn to trust God is by the care given by their parents and caregivers. As your toddlers' teachers, you are entrusted with cultivating that trust in the way you interact with your kids. My byword is, "Just love the kids. Everything else is just icing."

#### **GENERAL TIP | Go Outdoors!**

Do you have access to an outdoor space? Perhaps a garden? Take your toddlers outside and talk to them about spending time with God. Tell them, "God made the flowers. God made the trees. And God made you!"

#### **ACTIVITY | Flower Yoga Poses**



Toddlers should not be expected to stand on one foot. Just ask them to stand up tall and reach their hands up like a tree.

#### **ACTIVITY | Garden of Trust**

Give each child two flowers - one with a sad face and one with a happy face. Help them choose which face to bring up to the mural for each question.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# KAREN ERNE

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Karen is a volunteer in the preschool area of Hallmark Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. She has about nineteen years of experience as a Preschool Minister in local churches.

Karen's passion is connecting little ones to the truths of the Bible. Kids learn when they are playing, so Karen writes fun lessons that will help teachers show kids how much Jesus loves them.

Karen is a wife and a mom. She and her husband, Ed, have four kids aged ten through seventeen. Their family loves hiking, fishing, and fossil hunting together.

When Karen is not doing a Bible study with her church friends or helping out at her kids' school, she is often sewing. Karen makes stuffed animals, blankets, toys, and even clothes with her sewing machine.

If you'd like to chat about how your church can more strategically connect parents with ways to teach babies, ones, and twos about the Bible, reach out. She would love to connect with you!

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# WEEK 1

## PRESCHOOL LESSON GUIDE

# LEVEL UP

### **BIG IDEA**

Jesus trusted God.

### **THE BIBLE**

**The Garden of Gethsemane:** Matthew 26:36-46

## **WELCOME TIME**

### **ACTIVITY | Garden Moves**

- Today's story takes place in a garden. Let's play a garden game with these special flowers.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use masking tape to make labels on the stems of artificial flowers. On each label, write an action such as skip or hop (or you can use colors and say, "Skip for blue, hop for yellow"). Place flowers in a pot or vase. One at a time, have each kid pick a flower. Read the label and have kids move around the room as the label directs. Try to give each kid a chance to pick a flower. For more fun, play lively music while the kids move. When the music stops, kids freeze and wait for the next flower to be picked. (Bonus: Add more actions for the kids to do if you want more variety, such as crawl, clap, dance, etc.)

### **ACTIVITY | Flower Yoga Poses**

- In today's story, Jesus went into the garden to spend quiet time with God. We have been moving around a lot in our garden, so let's quiet our mind and our body to get ready to hear about Jesus and God.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Instruct kids in the following modified yoga poses:
- **Tree Pose:** Tell kids to plant one foot firmly on the ground and then rest the other foot on the leg that is standing. Tell them to lift their hands in the air like tree branches.
- **Lotus Pose:** This pose is basically the criss-cross applesauce pose most kids know from preschool class — sitting with legs crossed and hands on knees.
- **Lotus Mudra:** Tell kids to hold their hands together like a closed flower and then slowly spread their fingers out to resemble a flower blooming.

- ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** *Toddlers should not be expected to stand on one foot. Just ask them to stand up tall and reach their hands up like a tree.*

## TEACHING TIME

### THE BIG IDEA | Jesus trusted God.

- Today, we are going to talk about a time when Jesus went into the garden to spend time with God. Jesus was going to do something really hard – the hardest thing ever. But Jesus trusted God. That is this week’s Big Idea: Jesus trusted God.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Print out this week’s printable and have the kids color in the flowers. As they color, you can have them repeat the Big Idea among themselves a few times.*

### VIDEO | Level Up, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week’s preschool [teaching video](#).*

### BIBLE STORY | Matthew 26:36-46

- Now pretend you are one of the flowers in the Garden of Gethsemane. Listen to the story and imagine you are watching everything that happened.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 26:36-46 slowly and with expression, encouraging the kids to imagine the scene.*
- **How many times did Jesus pray?** Jesus prayed three times because Jesus was about to do something really hard. **Can you count with me?** One, two, three (*Ask the kids to count along on their fingers*).
- **What did Jesus’ friends do while Jesus was praying?** That’s right! They were sleeping! Show me how you sleep (*Ask kids to pretend to sleep*).
- **How do you think Jesus felt while praying?** Jesus was probably very sad. How do you look when you are sad (*Ask everyone to make a sad face*)?
- Jesus had a hard choice to make. **But Jesus trusted God.**

### ACTIVITY | Garden of Trust

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Post a large piece of mural paper on the wall. Provide each kid with two flower-shaped cutouts and a crayon.*
- Pick one of your flower cutouts. Imagine you had a hard decision to make like Jesus did. **How would you feel?** Draw a face on your flower that shows how it feels to have to do something really hard.
- Now, bring your flower up to our garden and we will help you glue (or tape) it on.
- This time, get your other flower. Think about how it would feel to trust God about your decision. Draw a face on your flower showing what that would feel like.
- Bring that flower up to our garden mural for us to help you glue it on.
- Look at all those flowers with all those big feelings. I’m so glad we can trust God to help us just like Jesus trusted God.

- ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Give each child two flowers - one with a sad face and one with a happy face. Help them choose which face to bring up to the mural for each question.

### PRAYER

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Either give each kid an artificial flower from earlier to hold, or, if space allows, ask them to gather around the garden mural you just created.
- Let's pray in our garden, just like Jesus did.
- **Dear God, help us to trust You just like Jesus did. Amen.**

## DISCUSSION TIME

### SNACK | Garden Snacks

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Serve flower-shaped cookies and apple juice. While the kids are eating their snack, have an informal discussion about what the kids have learned today! You can ask questions like:
- **Why was Jesus in the garden?**
- **What did Jesus do?**
- **What did Jesus' disciples do?**
- **Do you think they understood what Jesus was going through?**

### ACTIVITY | Praying in the Garden

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Let each kid choose which part to play to re-enact today's story – Jesus, a disciple, or a flower in the garden. If no kids are comfortable pretending to be Jesus, play that part yourself. If more than one want to be Jesus, repeat the exercise, letting a different kid play the Jesus role. Remember, this does not have to be a line by line accurate enactment, just a general idea of what happened.
- Jesus prayed because He didn't want to do the hard thing, but in the end Jesus trusted God.

### ACTIVITY | Trust Poster

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write TRUST in big letters in the center of a poster board. As you ask the kids these questions, write some of the answers on the poster.
- **Who can you trust in your life?**
- **How do you know you can trust them?**
- **Do you think you can trust God? What things remind you that you can trust God?**
- **What hard things might God be asking us to do?**

### MEMORY VERSE | Hebrews 12:2

- Let's plant a memory verse garden! When I plant the flower, say the word with me.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write one word from the memory verse on each construction paper flower. As you put each flower on a green poster board, say the word and have the children repeat it after you. Then, say the verse together two or three times as you point to the flowers.

## PLAY TIME

*While you're waiting for parents to pick up their kids . . .*

### ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use this time while the kids color to remind them of today's Bible story, the Big Idea, and the memory verse.

### ACTIVITY | Garden Play

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Provide artificial flowers and an upside-down colander for fine motor skills practice. Encourage the kids to stick the stems of the flowers in the holes of the colander to make their own floral arrangements.

### ACTIVITY | Play-Doh Garden

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Provide Play-Doh and chenille stems for children to use to make the garden Jesus was in when Jesus prayed.

*Encourage your preschoolers to help clean up the room while they wait for their parents.*