



# WEEK 1

## ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE



### **BIG IDEA**

God loves everyone.

### **THE BIBLE**

**Nicodemus:** John 3:1-21;  
(1 Corinthians 13)

### THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

## LARGE GROUP TIME

- MUSIC** | Worship Time
- ACTIVITY** | The Human Shuffle
- ACTIVITY** | Love Pox
- OBJECT LESSON** | No Measure
- THE BIG IDEA** | God Loves Everyone
- VIDEO** | Real Love, Episode 1
- BIBLE STORY** | John 3:1-21
- OBJECT LESSON** | Sin Removal for All
- ACTIVITY** | Balloon Pop
- SCRIPTURE** | 1 Corinthians 13
- REFLECTION** | Love is important to God.
- ACTIVITY** | Love is. . .
- PRAYER**
- MEMORY VERSE** | 1 John 4:11

## SMALL GROUP TIME

- DISCUSSION**
  - Who was Nicodemus?
  - What did Nicodemus learn from Jesus?
  - How did God show His love for us?
  - Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Which of these love actions (i.e., being patient and kind; not being envious, proud, rude, easily angered, etc.) is the most challenging for you? Why?
  - How do you usually show someone you love them?
  - What do you think is different about how God loves and the way people love?
  - What's one way you can make God's love "contagious" to everyone around you this week?
- ACTIVITY** | God Hearts Everyone!
- MEMORY VERSE** | 1 John 4:11



# WEEK 1

## HACKS FOR PRETEENS



**BY MIKE SHELEY**

### HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES FOR PRETEENS

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

#### **MUSIC | Worship Time**

Add these songs to the worship playlist for your preteens: "[Real Love](#)" by Hillsong Young and Free / "[Love Won't Let Me Down](#)" by Hillsong Young and Free / "[I Just Need U](#)" by TobyMac.

#### **ACTIVITY | Love Pox**




The group activity demonstrates love being contagious using stickers. Have preteens experience a different kind of contagious that is familiar to them—viral videos! Utilize that cultural phenomenon in this fun activity to connect with sharing God's love. Let preteens come up with ideas to make their own viral video, act it out, record it on a device, and if you have a way to do so, share the video with families after the lesson. Remind preteens it doesn't have to be perfect. We're just going for fun. You can have a fun discussion afterward about what makes videos go viral, and what we can do to make the sharing of God's love go viral.

#### **ACTIVITY | Love is. . .**

This activity allows kids to act out the various descriptions of love as described in 1 Corinthians 13. In addition to this activity, give each kid five index cards. On one side, they write the name of someone who could use God's love this week. On the back, they make a checkbox and write a specific way they will share God's love with that person. Have them take the cards home and encourage them to execute what they wrote!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# MIKE SHELEY

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Mike Sheley is the Middle School Pastor overseeing ministries for preteen (5th-6th grade) and young adolescent (7th-8th grade) students at Mount Pleasant Christian Church in central Indiana. He has been in student ministry for over twenty years, with more than twelve of those years in his current position. In his current ministry, preteens participate alongside middle schoolers for weekly programming, but have their own lessons and special events. However, part of the health of the ministry is due to the close friendship and working relationship Mike has with the children's ministry team.

Mike is married and has three kids - one in college,

one in high school and one in middle school. Mike has had the joy and challenge of ministering to all of his kids as their youth pastor during their preteen and middle school years.

Mike's odd jobs over the years have included working at the his local Apple Store, Target, and at a couple fast-food restaurants. He has a weird fascination with presentations and fonts.

If you'd like to chat with Mike about spiritual disciplines with preteens, parent ministry or developing better presentations, reach out! He would love to connect with you!

**ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, Amber Stephens, Linda Moon, Lauren Wierzba.

**TEACHING VIDEOS:** Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, Linda Moon, Jared Callahan.

**PRETEEN HACKS:** Mike Sheley.

**SPECIAL NEEDS HACKS:** Eugenia Lee.

**MEMORY VERSE SIGN LANGUAGE:** Sunny Brown.

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Josh Gosney, Jules Gray, Elle Campbell.

**LAYOUT DESIGN:** Jules Gray, Elle Campbell.

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:** Kenny Campbell, Tash McGill, Stephen Switzer, Ali Anne, Eddie Irvin, Ari Raines, Kellee Gentry, Tim Syman, Josh McLemore, Amber Gaddis.



# WEEK 1

## HACKS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



**BY EUGENIA LEE**

### *HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS*

In children's ministry, you've got a wide range of ages you need to engage every week, but kids with special needs tend to get overlooked, so here are a few adjustments you can make to this week in order to keep your kids with special needs more engaged.

#### **ACTIVITY | Love Pox**

This activity requires physical interaction. Give students with special needs clear boundaries on having gentle hands, with quiet voice and body as they spread "Love Pox" to other friends. Model how to stick their dots on other students. Prompts like "my turn" for modeling, and "your turn" for them to try are familiar to our students with special needs. If a student has difficulty, do it as a team with a peer buddy or a volunteer by walking over to other students together and have the student place a dot on other students. You may also try what experts call "hand over hand" prompt, where you put your hand over the student's hand and guide her hand to do.

#### **THE BIG IDEA | God Loves Everyone**

Offer students with special needs a volunteer opportunity for the skit. Including students with special needs in this capacity may require extra planning, but it is well worth it. If you decide to do so, communicate with the parents ahead of time to set up students for success. Provide practice tips to parents and have the student have a dress rehearsal if s/he needs. You may also have one typical student or a peer buddy to pair up with a student with special needs and perform the "volunteer" part together. The peer buddy can model the action with words and the student with special needs may imitate the peer buddy.




**ACTIVITY | Balloon Pop**

As the name suggests, the group will pop balloons during this activity. Encourage students to stay in the room as much as they can, even if the stimulations bother them. If a student communicates to you about discomfort, always honor their request and say "I understand." Provide alternatives, such as having their own balloon and playing without popping, or having the printable in a sack or a box from where the student can draw and see the message. For pre-readers, students may look for the message pieces hidden around the room and a volunteer can read the pieces for them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# EUGENIA LEE



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Eugenia Lee currently serves as a volunteer leader at Newsong Church in Santa Ana, CA. Having children of her own with special needs, she started leading a support group of parents with special needs children and collaborating with children's ministry. In time, she learned that she loved working with children with special needs and realized it was her calling. She has worked on accommodating and modifying curriculum for students with different needs as well as training 1:1 buddies for many years. Helping children with special needs gave her so much joy that she decided to pursue a teaching career in special education. In a few short weeks, she will be ready to have her own classroom at a public school!

She is also working on a volunteer training manual specifically geared toward layperson volunteers working with children with disabilities in any setting.

Eugenia and her husband live in Orange county, CA with their four amazing children. Home is her favorite place on earth: spending time with her family, cooking up some BBQ, and sharing good conversation with close friends.

If you have any questions about curriculum accommodations and modifications, engaging with parents of special needs children, training volunteers, and so on, feel free to get in contact with her via email, Instagram, or Facebook!

**ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, Amber Stephens, Linda Moon, Lauren Wierzba.

**TEACHING VIDEOS:** Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, Linda Moon, Jared Callahan.

**PRETEEN HACKS:** Mike Sheley.

**SPECIAL NEEDS HACKS:** Eugenia Lee.

**MEMORY VERSE SIGN LANGUAGE:** Sunny Brown.

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Josh Gosney, Jules Gray, Elle Campbell.

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# WEEK 1

## ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE



### BIG IDEA

God loves everyone.

### THE BIBLE

**Nicodemus:** John 3:1-21;  
(1 Corinthians 13)

## LARGE GROUP TIME

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

### MUSIC | Worship Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Worship together (using a live band or YouTube videos) with songs about God's love! Here are a few you can choose from:*
  - ["John 3:16"](#) by JumpStart3
  - ["Your Love"](#) by Sovereign Grace Kids
  - ["I Love You"](#) by Yancy
- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Add these songs to the worship playlist for your preteens: ["Real Love"](#) by Hillsong Young and Free / ["Love Won't Let Me Down"](#) by Hillsong Young and Free / ["I Just Need U"](#) by TobyMac.*

### ACTIVITY | The Human Shuffle

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give each kid a card from a standard deck of playing cards. Call out a category of card types (i.e., shape, color, letter, number) and group the kids with the same card type together. For added fun, you can see which group forms the fastest.*
- *Did you know there is only one of each card in a deck of cards? Even though each of our cards is different, they are all a part of the same deck. Even though each of us is different and unique, we are all a part of the same world that God has made, and He loves us all the same!*

**ACTIVITY | Love Pox**

- **Has anyone here ever had chickenpox?** Chickenpox is something we never want to get because it's so itchy, but "Love Pox" is something we definitely want to get!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Place some red dot or heart stickers all over yourself, and dramatically say, "I've got a serious case of love pox. . . and it's highly contagious!" Go up to one of the kids and say, "God loves you!" while putting a sticker on them. Then, give every kid a sheet of red dot or heart stickers and have them do the same to each other. Allow 30 seconds for the kids to stick stickers on as many people as possible. Be sure to join in!*
- These stickers represent God's love. When we show God's love to others, it's contagious!
- God loves it when we spread His love to others because God's love isn't just for a select group of people. God's love is for everyone!
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Give students clear boundaries on having gentle hands, with quiet voice and body as they spread Love Pox to other friends. Model how to stick their dots on other students. Prompts like "my turn" for modeling, and "your turn" for them to try are familiar to our students with special needs. If a student has difficulty, do it as a team with a peer buddy or a volunteer by walking over to other students together and have the student place a dot on other students. You may also try what experts call "hand over hand" prompt, where you put your hand over the student's hand and guide her hand to do.*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Replace this with the following activity: Let preteens come up with ideas to make their own viral video! Then act it out. record it on a device and if you have a way to do so, share the video with families after the lesson. Remind preteens it doesn't have to be perfect. We're just going for fun. You can have a fun discussion afterward about what makes videos go viral, and what we can do to make the sharing of God's love go viral.*

**OBJECT LESSON | No Measure**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Place a measuring cup, tape measure, and stopwatch on the bottom of different trays. As you ask the following questions, reveal each hidden item on the tray to reveal an answer. Can you measure how much God loves us? (reveal measuring cup). Can you measure how high God's love is? (Reveal tape measure). Can you measure how long God will love us? (Reveal stopwatch).*
- None of these things can measure God's love. If they could, the measuring cup would show God's love is overflowing! The tape measure would show God's love is higher than the heavens! And the stopwatch would show God will love us forever!
- The only real measure of God's love is the cross. God loved us so much that Jesus—God's own son!—was sent to save us by dying on the cross. But it wasn't just to save you and me —God's love is for everyone.

**THE BIG IDEA | God Loves Everyone**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Recruit a kid or adult volunteer to dress up as your special guest—this character will appear every week throughout this series. (You could choose to give them a cutesy, thematic*



name like Loveina, Heartencia, Olive Yall, Dr. Saul Mate, etc.). Some costume ideas: big sunglasses, wigs, giant cardboard heart . . . the sillier the better.

- **Volunteer:** *(Enters, sobbing into a tissue.)*
- **Leader:** *Hey (insert volunteer/character's name) . . . are you okay?*
- **Volunteer:** *(Between sobs.) My friend, Ann, just told me that God loves her. (Blowing nose in tissue and then handing it to leader.)*
- **Leader:** *Well, it's true! (Holds tissue out with index finger and thumb.) Wait . . . why is that making you cry?*
- **Volunteer:** *Because . . . what about me?! I wanna be loved, too! (Wails louder, then pretends to blow nose into leader's shirt.)*
- **Leader:** *There, there, (insert name). As a matter of fact, you are loved. I'm so glad you're here today because today's Big Idea is: God loves —*
- **Volunteer:** *(Looks up hopefully.) . . . me?*
- **Leader:** *Yes! And me! (Looks at kids.) And all of you. Because **God loves everyone.** Now, how about you go get yourself together while we dig into the lesson? (Have everyone say goodbye to the volunteer.)*

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Offer students with special needs a volunteer opportunity for the skit. If you decide to do so, communicate with the parents ahead of time to set up students for success. Provide practice tips to parents and have the student have a dress rehearsal if s/he needs. You may also have one typical student or a peer buddy to pair up with a student with special needs and perform the "volunteer" part together. The peer buddy can model the action with words and the student with special needs may imitate the peer buddy.*

## SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

### VIDEO | Real Love, Episode 1

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

### BIBLE STORY | John 3:1-21

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Summarize Nicodemus' encounter with Jesus in John 3:1-21.*
- When Nicodemus was a Pharisee, he was a very respected religious leader. In fact, it was his job to help the people understand God's laws and the type of life God wanted them to live. So, Nicodemus was known to be an expert when it came to matters about God.
- But when Nicodemus met Jesus, he learned that he didn't know or understand as much as he thought he did. So, Nicodemus snuck away in the middle of the night to talk to Jesus. Nicodemus listened to everything Jesus had to say and even discovered that some of his ideas about God were not exactly right.
- That evening, Nicodemus learned just how much God loved the whole world.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read John 3:16-17 together.*
- And because of this love, God had a plan to save the world —through Jesus! That night,

Nicodemus started to follow Jesus because he learned God loves everyone, including a Pharisee like him! And God still loves everyone today!

### OBJECT LESSON | Sin Removal for All

- God created the world and everything in it. But when sin entered the world, God found a way to save us all.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use chlorine-free bleach, iodine, and water to show how Jesus came to take away our sins. Prepare 4-5 clear cups filled halfway with water. Be sure to try out this experiment beforehand.
- When God first created human beings, we were perfect and flawless (*pick up a cup with water*). But because of sin (*add a few drops of iodine into cup*), our lives weren't perfect anymore and we could no longer be close to God. That's why God sent His son, Jesus (*pour bleach into iodine-water mixture until liquid becomes clear*), to remove our sin and make us clean again! But God didn't do this for just a few people (*repeat demonstration with remaining cups*)—God did this for everyone because God loves us all so much.

### ACTIVITY | Balloon Pop

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before the kids arrive, print and cut the printable provided in your 'Printables' folder. You can prepare 8-12 balloons (duplicate the printable if you want to have more balloons). Insert a slip of paper into each balloon. Then, inflate them. Ask for two kid volunteers to compete popping balloons by sitting on them and obtaining the message inside. The one who can put today's Big Idea together wins!
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Encourage students to stay in the room as much as they can, even if the stimulations bother them. If a student communicates to you about discomfort, always honor their request and say "I understand." Provide alternatives, such as having their own balloon and playing without popping, or having the printable in a sack or a box from where the student can draw and see the message. For pre-readers, students may look for the message pieces hidden around the room and a volunteer can read the pieces for them.

### SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 13

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 in chunks (see below).
- God loves everyone, so if we love God, then we need to love everyone, too! But what is love, and how can we show it to others?
- **Let's read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.** These verses show us that love is the most important thing. We can have as many toys and electronics, friends, and cool things we can do as we want, but if our hearts are not filled with love, then the Bible tells us that those things don't mean anything at all.
- **Now, read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.** These are all qualities of God's love, which means we need to have these things, too. We all have moments when it's hard to show love. But that is what God does and what He wants us to do, too!
- **Look at 1 Corinthians 13:8-13.** God loves us with a love that lasts forever. It never ends and

never runs out. When we show others the same kind of love, it's a sign we are becoming more like Jesus!

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

**REFLECTION | Love is important to God.**

- Love is really important to God. Everything about who God is and what God does comes from love. In the same way, love needs to be the reason why we act a certain way, too.
- **Think of a time or two when it was hard for you to love someone. Take a moment to tell God you are sorry for those times and ask God to help you love everyone in your life and the people you meet.**

**ACTIVITY | Love is . . .**

- **INSTRUCTION:** *Choose some or all of the following “love is” words based on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7– patient, kind, not jealous, humble, polite, caring for others, controlling your temper, forgiving, good, honest—and write each one on separate index cards. Separate kids into pairs or groups of three and assign each pair/group a card. Instruct them to create a 15-second skit demonstrating their “love is” card. Give them a couple minutes to prepare, then have them share with everyone, and see if the rest of the group can guess what their card was!*
- There are so many ways we can show love to others. Some ways are simple and easy, while others may be a little more challenging. Either way, showing love no matter how we do it is so important!
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *In addition to this activity, give each kid five index cards. On one side, they write the name of someone who could use God’s love this week. On the back, they make a checkbox and write a specific way they will share God’s love with that person. Have them take the cards home and encourage them to execute what they wrote!*

**PRAYER**

- Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to save us all. Just like you helped Nicodemus, help us to understand your great love and to share it with everyone!

**MEMORY VERSE | 1 John 4:11**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Put some prizes into an empty coffee can and close the lid. Ask each kid to say one word from the memory verse and pass the can on. The kid who gets the reference part (i.e., book, chapter, and verse) says the whole memory verse. If they are correct, they get to take a prize out of the can. Repeat this as many times as you would like, shifting the order so everyone gets a chance at a prize from the can!*

**SMALL GROUP TIME**

## DISCUSSION

- Who was Nicodemus?
- What did Nicodemus learn from Jesus?
- How did God show His love for us?
- Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Which of these love actions (i.e., being patient and kind; not being envious, proud, rude, easily angered, etc.) is the most challenging for you? Why?
- How do you usually show someone you love them?
- What do you think is different about how God loves and the way people love?
- What's one way you can make God's love "contagious" to everyone around you this week?

## ACTIVITY | God Hearts Everyone!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *On a piece of poster paper, draw a heart in the middle and write "God" inside of the heart. Invite one of the kids to come up and also draw a heart with their name inside it. Then, draw a line connecting their heart to "God." Continue until everyone has had the opportunity to do this. After everyone has gone, start drawing lines connecting all of the kids' hearts to each other, too.*
- The kind of love God has shown us is unlike anything we could ever imagine. But God makes it available for everyone! Let's follow Jesus' example and show love to everyone!

## MEMORY VERSE | 1 John 4:11

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Introduce kids to this month's memory verse, teaching them the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided.*