



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE

REVEALED

BIG IDEA

God can help me grow.

THE BIBLE

The Sower and the Seed: Matthew 13:1-23;
(James 1:22)

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- **ACTIVITY** | Making a Masterpiece
- **ACTIVITY** | Where Can Plants Grow?
- **OBJECT LESSON** | What Grows?
- **THE BIG IDEA** | God can help me grow.
- **VIDEO** | Revealed, Episode 1
- **BIBLE STORY** | Matthew 13:1-23
- **ACTIVITY** | Growing Things
- **ACTIVITY** | Classic Games
- **SCRIPTURE** | James 1:22
- **ACTIVITY** | Things Jesus Said
- **RESPONSE** | Doing Things Jesus Said
- **PRAYER**
- **MEMORY VERSE** | Jeremiah 33:3

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- What were the four different places where the farmer's seeds fell?
- Which seed was the only one to produce a crop?
- What was the hidden meaning in today's Bible story?
- Re-read James 1:22. What does it mean when it says we are lying to ourselves if we only listen to what God says?
- What are some things you know God tells us to do?
- Is it usually easy to do what God says to do?
- If you don't know what God says about something, how can you find out?

■ **ACTIVITY** | I Will. . .

■ **MEMORY VERSE** | Jeremiah 33:3



WEEK 1

HACKS FOR PRETEENS

REVEALED

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.

OBJECT LESSON | Where Can Plants Grow?

Modify the planned object lesson to give preteens a visual heads-up about the Bible story coming up. In addition to the four cups outlined in the lesson, add three more cups that have soil and a small plant/ flower growing in them already (or recently planted). Put the cups in the following order: empty, rocks, thumb tacks, soil, three cups with good soil and plants. Use small sticky notes and to label the backs of these cups, in the same order: "S", "O", "I", "L", "=", "U", "S". Say, "In today's Bible Story, we are going to see that these different soils represent us," then turn each of the cups around to show: "SOIL = US".

ACTIVITY | Things Jesus Said

This activity prompts kids to identify the things Jesus actually said. Use this list to preteens to give them a bit more of a challenge! (You can copy-paste this list to a new document)

- Love your neighbor (Matthew 19:19)
- God helps those who help themselves. (Not)
- Love your enemies! (Matthew 5:44)
- Follow me, and I'll make your life easier. (Not)
- Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. (Matthew 6:21)
- Let my people go! (Not-actually Moses-Exodus 5:1)
- This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. (Not-actually Psalm 118:24)




- I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. (John 15:1)
- I am the gate for the sheep. (John 10:7)

RESPONSE | Doing Things Jesus Said

Challenge preteens to create a mind map or a list of the instructions they know Jesus has given us—things he wants us to do. Then have them pick one of these things that they need to start doing or start doing a better job of this week.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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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 Synan, Josh McLemore, Amber Gaddis.



WEEK 1

HACKS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

REVEALED

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 | Where Can Plants Grow?

Many students with special needs love tactile input of different textures. Instead of the cups used in this activity, you can put the different "soils" (to be introduced in the Bible story) in large bins so kids can put their hands inside. To mimic the texture of rocks, use beans or gravel; for thorns, dry spaghetti broken up into pieces for a prickly texture; and for soil, sand or rice (or other materials along those lines). You can even hide different items in there for them to dig in and find.

ACTIVITY | Things Jesus Said

Pair up pre-readers with fluent readers for activities like this. The pairs can complete this activity together. This is generally an excellent advice for any activity that has to do with reading, writing and comprehending. These activities can often push away the students with learning disabilities by making them feel nervous to engage in groups. Be knowledgeable of students with learning disabilities like dyslexia (reading disorder), which is invisible and you cannot tell from appearances. Easiest and safest way to find out would be simply asking parents to let staff know so teachers can be mindful of their needs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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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 Wierzb.

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WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

REVEALED

BIG IDEA

God can help me grow.

THE BIBLE

The Sower and the Seed: Matthew 13:1-23;
(James 1:22)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Making a Masterpiece

- **What do plants grow from?** That's right, seeds! Today, we are going to use seeds to do some "growing" of our own.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Get a good amount of seeds in varying sizes (a bag of birdseed works well). Use the printable from your Week 1 Printables folder (or let kids draw their own) and use liquid glue to trace the outline. Then, have the kids paste the seeds onto the picture outline to reveal the picture. (For a bit of extra flair, let the kids pre-paint some seeds, giving it a few minutes to dry)
- Isn't it so cool that a giant tree or beautiful flowers all come from just one of these seeds? Just one of the many ways God reveals wonders to us!

ACTIVITY | Where Can Plants Grow?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare four clear cups, each with different "soils" in them: 1) empty (to represent the path), 2) rocks 3) thumbtacks (to represent thorns) and 4) soil. Give some or all of the kids a bead (to represent seeds). Say, "Pretend these beads are seeds. When I say, "Go," I want you to go put your seed in the cup where you think a plant would most likely grow if you planted a real seed. Ready? Go!" (If any of the kids pick cups 1, 2, or 3, gently ask them why they thought that was the best choice, but make sure you don't imply they are wrong.)
- Most/All of you picked cup number four. That's because, for a plant to grow big and healthy, it has to be in soil. But just wait — we will soon see that when we talk about soil, we're actually not

talking about plants at all!

- ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Many students with special needs love tactile input of different textures. Instead of in cups, you can put the different “soils” above in large bins so kids can put their hands inside. To mimic the texture of rocks, use beans or gravel; for thorns, dry spaghetti broken up into pieces for a prickly texture; and for soil, sand or rice (or other materials along those lines). You can even hide different items in there for them to dig in and find.*
- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *In addition to the four cups above, add three more cups that have soil and a small plant/ flower growing in them already (or recently planted). Put the cups in the following order: empty, rocks, thumb tacks, soil, three cups with good soil and plants. Use small sticky notes and to label the backs of these cups, in the same order: “S”, “O”, “I”, “L”, “=”, “U”, “S”. Say, “In today’s Bible Story, we are going to see that these different soils represent us,” then turn each of the cups around to show: “SOIL = US”.*

OBJECT LESSON | What Grows?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Take a plant seed and a wilted flower petal or leaf. Hold them up for the kids to see, or you might consider passing them around for the kids to touch (make sure no one swallows anything!). Ask the group, “If I were to plant both of these things in the ground, which of these things will grow?” (Allow kids to answer) “Why do you think that?”*
- You are all right. Between the two items, the seed will more likely grow into a plant because healthy stuff is supposed to grow! Growing is a good thing. We are supposed to grow up physically (like getting taller), and grow up emotionally, (like getting more mature), and grow up spiritually (in the ways that we trust Jesus and live the way God wants us to). That’s why today’s Bible story is so important – it’s going to show us how we grow!

THE BIG IDEA | God can help me grow.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Bring in a potted plant, a trimmed branch or flowers, or even take a quick garden or nature walk, if possible. Then, ask the kids the following questions to generate responses and discussion. Also, prepare a manila envelope with the words “Secret Ingredient” on the front, and a sheet of paper that says “GOD” inside it. Seal it and when it’s time, give it to one of the kids to open and show everyone.*
- **Have any of you ever planted anything? What was it? Did it grow?**
- **What do you need to do to help plants to grow?**
- **Do plants grow quickly or slowly?**
- A lot goes on behind the scenes to help make something grow, right? The same is true for you and me! **What are some things that help you grow?** *(Allow kids to answer)*
- Yes, those all help us grow. But did you know there’s a super secret ingredient that helps us the most? **Wanna know what it is?** *(Hand a kid the envelope to open)* That’s right—it’s GOD! Repeat after me now: God can help me grow!

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

VIDEO | Revealed, Episode 1

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

BIBLE STORY | Matthew 13:1-23

- God really wants us to grow — grow in how we trust God, grow in how we serve God, grow in how we live for God. Jesus tells tons of stories in the Bible that are called “parables,” which is really just a fancy word for a short story with an important message tucked away inside.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Summarize Matthew 13:3-9. Queue up the [this video](#) (or another video like it) for the latter half of the Bible story presentation.
- So, there is a guy planting some seeds. **What do you think he was planting?** (Allow students to call out answers — the sillier the better!) Alright, let's say he was planting (insert silly example from kids' suggestions), but the seeds didn't fall in the same place. Some of them fell along the road, some fell in between rocks, some fell where there were thorns, and some fell on good soil. You can probably tell which seeds actually grew, right?
- At first, it seems like Jesus is just telling a plain old story about a farmer planting seeds. So, you're probably wondering, “What does that have to do with us?” This story has a deeper meaning: Jesus is sharing with us one of the most important ways we can grow in our relationship with Him.
- **Let's continue watching this video to find out what Jesus was trying to reveal through this parable. . .**
- **So, what do you think the soil represents?** This is a tricky one so it's totally okay if you don't get it right away. But the soil represents us! Jesus says good soil is like someone who hears God's Word, understands it, and takes action. Doing this helps our faith to grow!

ACTIVITY | Growing Things

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a clear plastic cup, a few seeds to choose from (only plant one!), and some potting soil. Let the kids decorate the outside of their cups if they want, and encourage them to write “God helps me grow!” If time permits, give each kid a piece of paper and have them draw what their plant is going to look like when it's “all grown up.”
- Right now, all you have is a seed hidden in the soil. But one day, it won't be a seed anymore — it will grow and reveal a beautiful plant! Now, you get to watch your plant grow just like God watches you grow!

ACTIVITY | Classic Games

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can start with a simple game of “Simon Says” and let the kids get their wiggles out a bit. Afterward, say, “But growing in God isn't like a game of ‘Simon Says’ — God is not going to trick you into messing up! God WANTS you to win. God wants you to grow! Let's try a different game.” Start “Charades” and act out the following things: Bible, friends, parents, praying,

church (or you could whisper them to kid volunteers and have them act out the words).

- **What did all of those words we just acted out have in common?** These are all things and people God uses to help us grow!

SCRIPTURE | James 1:22

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Watch and sing along to [this video](#) (or another video like this one).
- **There are two commands in this verse: one to DO, and one to NOT DO. What are they?**
- This Bible verse is telling us when we only listen without doing what the Bible says, we “deceive ourselves.” That means we are believing something about ourselves that is not true. We can’t grow in God just by simply knowing and saying the right things — we must also do the right things we learn from God’s Word.

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

ACTIVITY | Things Jesus Said

- We just learned from James 1:22 that we need to listen AND do what the Bible says. The first step to doing, though, is knowing what the Bible says!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and cut the printable in your Week 1 folder. Most of these are things Jesus said in the Bible. A few definitely are not. Have kids work with a small group or in pairs (group pre-reader kids with older kids) to glue only the strips of paper that are things Jesus said onto construction paper.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Pair up pre-readers with fluent readers for activities like this. The pairs can complete this activity together.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Use this list to preteens to give them a bit more of a challenge! (You can copy-paste this list to a new document)
 - Love your neighbor (Matthew 19:19)
 - God helps those who help themselves. (Not)
 - Love your enemies! (Matthew 5:44)
 - Follow me, and I’ll make your life easier. (Not)
 - Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. (Matthew 6:21)
 - Let my people go! (Not-actually Moses-Exodus 5:1)
 - This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. (Not-actually Psalm 118:24)
 - I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. (John 15:1)
 - I am the gate for the sheep. (John 10:7)

RESPONSE | Doing Things Jesus Said

- (Linked to the “Things Jesus Said” activity) Focus on one thing on this paper that Jesus DID say. **Can you think of one way you can translate that into action this week?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Encourage each kid to try to come up with a response. If they need prompts, suggest things like: I will share my things with my sister, I will pray and talk to God this week, I will

stand up for kids who are being picked on at school.

- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Challenge preteens to create a mind map or a list of the instructions they know Jesus has given us—things he wants us to do. Then have them pick one of these things that they need to start doing or start doing a better job of this week.

PRAYER

- God, we love You. Thank You for helping us grow, like seeds do in good soil! Remind us to do more than just listen to what the Bible says — help us to do what it says.

MEMORY VERSE | Jeremiah 33:3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** This is a modified version of the classic Hangman game. Draw a snowman using a whiteboard, chalkboard, or a drawing app (such as Microsoft Paint or something similar), create as many blanks as there are letters in today's memory verse. Have kids yell out vowels and consonants to help fill in all the blanks (to expedite the activity, you could fill in a few of the vowels already). Each time the kids yell out a letter not in the verse, "melt" away a piece of the snowman by erasing it.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- What were the four different places where the farmer's seeds fell?
- Which seed was the only one to produce a crop?
- What was the hidden meaning in today's Bible story?
- Re-read James 1:22. What does it mean when it says we are lying to ourselves if we only listen to what God says?
- What are some things you know God tells us to do?
- Is it usually easy to do what God says to do?
- If you don't know what God says about something, how can you find out?

ACTIVITY | I Will. . .

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the kids to take the "response" they made during "Doing Things Jesus Said" and create a [DIY frame](#). On the insert (a 4"x6" note card or postcard-sized piece of paper), have kids write out their commitment sentence in fun colors, draw a picture that represents it, or illustrate it in some other creative way.
- Put this somewhere at home, where you can easily see it every day, to help you remember to do what you know God would want you to do. Even when you face a challenge, don't give up! **God can help us grow.**

MEMORY VERSE | Jeremiah 33:3

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