



WEEK 4

ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE



BIG IDEA

Love is the best choice.

THE BIBLE

The Greatest Commandment: Mark 12:28-34;
(1 Corinthians 9:24-25)

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- MUSIC** | Worship Time
- ACTIVITY** | Grab the Cup
- ACTIVITY** | Catch Love!
- QUESTION** | Rules are Rules
- THE BIG IDEA** | Love is the best choice.
- VIDEO** | Real Love, Episode 4
- BIBLE STORY** | Mark 12:28-34
- VIDEO** | "Love God, Love Others"
- OBJECT LESSON** | Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength
- SCRIPTURE** | 1 Corinthians 9:24-25
- ACTIVITY** | Love is the Big Idea
- REFLECTION** | Loving Our Neighbors
- PRAYER**
- MEMORY VERSE** | 1 John 4:11

SMALL GROUP TIME

- DISCUSSION**
 - What does Jesus say is the greatest commandment?
 - What about the second greatest commandment?
 - How do we love God? How do we love our neighbors?
 - Read Mark 12:31. Think of a time when you didn't treat someone the way you would have wanted to be treated. If you come across a similar situation today, what would you do differently?
 - What is something you can do to love God with all your heart and soul this week?
 - What is something you can do to love God with all your mind and strength this week?
 - Who is one person in your life who really needs God's love? What can you do for that person this week to love them as yourself?
- ACTIVITY** | Love in Action Puzzle
- MEMORY VERSE** | 1 John 4:11



WEEK 4

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.

QUESTION | Rules are Rules

This activity is a thinking out loud type of activity for the group. For preteens, encourage active participation by having kids write down on sticky notes as many rules they think society needs (one rule per sticky note). Group all those sticky notes together on a wall or other surface. Then cover all the little notes with a [giant sticky note](#) that says "Love God and Others," demonstrating that these are the greatest (therefore biggest) rules to follow!

VIDEO | "Love God, Love Others"

You can show this video as an alternative or supplement to this activity. Ask preteens to share what they thought the students said was helpful, which questions they would have had a hard time answering, and what they thought about how loving God and others sums up everything you need to know to do what God wants.




ACTIVITY | Love is the Big Idea

Additionally, help preteen students practically apply the things discussed today! Have kids make simple blank tent-fold cards by writing "You are Loved!" on the front and Mark 12:30-31(the words, not just the reference) on the back. They can write a note on the inside to someone they're thinking of and what they can do to help show them they are loved. Feel free to let them decorate the card afterward!

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 4

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 | Grab the Cup


Have an adult, older, or peer buddy assist the student with this activity, not for behavior modification purposes but just to be present as a friend. Having a peer buddy is so valuable for all students, with or without disabilities. You can provide brief peer buddy trainings like [this](#) and see [examples](#) of how others have successfully implemented a peer buddy program.

MEMORY VERSE | 1 John 4:11

Make this activity interactive by involving special needs kids to come up and erase a word and the whole class recite the verse chorally. Or, assign them a job, such as being in charge of handing the eraser to the other students as they come up to erase a word. These jobs don't have to be exclusive to special needs kids, either! The idea is to involve all our kids equally and to include them in all activities. Be intentional and creative about inclusion!

ACTIVITY | Love in Action Puzzle

Some students with special needs actively protest to disengage from non-preferred activities. If drawing (or any other activity previously suggested) is not their thing, ask what they would like to do instead (MOTIVATOR). Once you identify the MOTIVATOR, say calmly and clearly: "First (ACTIVITY), then (MOTIVATOR)". For example, if a student dislikes a craft activity that the group is supposed to do and wants to do the trampoline instead, you would say, "First (craft), then (trampoline)." At this point, the goal is not for the students to fully engage in the first activity, but to learn to follow






instructions without engaging in problem behavior. Knowing ahead of time what the student likes will be helpful to motivate students to stay engaged during small group.

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.

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WEEK 4

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

Love is the best choice.

THE BIBLE

The Greatest Commandment: Mark 12:28-34;
(1 Corinthians 9:24-25)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

MUSIC | Worship Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Worship together (using a live band or YouTube videos) by reviewing last week's worship playlist:*
 - ["Let us Love One Another"](#) by The Rizers
 - ["Love the Lord"](#) by Shout! Praises Kids
 - ["Beat of Your Love"](#) by Watoto Children's Choir

ACTIVITY | Grab the Cup

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask for four volunteers. Pair up the kids and have each pair sit or stand facing each other. Ask some review questions from previous weeks (see below). The first kid to grab the cup and answer the question correctly wins! If the first kid answers incorrectly, the partner gets an opportunity to answer. [Optional: If your kids wouldn't mind, you could use a giant inflatable hammer or a feather instead of a cup, and the person who answers correctly gets to gently bop their partner on the head or tickle them! But be on alert for any possible tension!]*
 - **Who was Nicodemus?**
 - **What did Nicodemus learn from Jesus?**
 - **How did God show His love for us?**
 - **Why did the lawyer ask Jesus a question?**
 - **Who was the "neighbor" in the story of the Good Samaritan?**

- How did the Samaritan show kindness?
- What does the Bible say about how we should treat our enemies?
- How does loving our enemies show we are God’s children?
- Should we love only those who are kind to us?
- Great job remembering all the things we’ve been learning about God’s love!
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Have an adult, older student, or peer buddy assist the student with this activity, not for behavior modification purposes but just to be a friend. You can provide brief peer buddy trainings like [this](#) and see [examples](#) of how others have successfully implemented a peer buddy program.*

ACTIVITY | Catch Love!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Switch partners from the previous activity. Make crumpled up paper balls out of two different colors of paper. Tell the kids which of the two colors is the “love” ball. Have each pair stand at least three feet apart. Designate one kid as the thrower and the other as the catcher. Have the thrower wear a blindfold, then give him or her a bucket filled with paper balls of both colors. When you say, “Ready, set, LOVE!” the thrower grabs a paper ball from the bucket and throws it toward the catcher. The catcher will try to catch only the “love” paper balls with their bucket, and the pair who catches the most “love” paper balls wins!*
- Just like you were able to choose which paper balls to catch, we can choose who and when to love. And spoiler alert: the answer to “who?” is “everyone” and “when?” is “always!”

QUESTION | Rules are Rules

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask the kids, “What are some rules you have to follow? They can be rules at home, school, on the road, or anywhere else within our community.” Allow kids to respond and prompt them to say as many as they can think of. After they’ve given you a good variety of answers, ask, “Which of these do you think is the most important rule?” Allow the group to discuss.*
- Sometimes, we don’t like rules because they usually tell us we can’t do something. But rules are actually really good! Having rules keeps us safe.
- Now, I know you all think ___ is the most important rule out of all of these, but today, we are going to find out what Jesus says are the most important rules. These rules are so epic, that if you keep these, you’re basically keeping them all!
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Have kids write down on sticky notes as many rules they think society needs (one rule per sticky note). Group all those sticky notes together on a wall or other surface. Then cover all the little notes with a [giant sticky note](#) that says “Love God and Others,” demonstrating that these are the greatest (therefore biggest) rules to follow!*

THE BIG IDEA | Love is the best choice.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have a kid or adult volunteer enter as the same character from the previous two weeks (it can be the same or a different volunteer).*
- **Volunteer:** *(Enters, with bits of toilet paper stuck to their shoe.) Hi, everyone! Another fun week of showing God’s love to people—it’s so—*
- **Leader:** *(Looks at the toilet paper on Volunteer’s shoe.) Um—*

- **Volunteer:** –amazing! YES! How did you know that’s what I was going to say?
- **Leader:** Actually–
- **Volunteer:** Yes, it’s ACTUALLY amazing! (*While Volunteer is talking, Leader keeps trying to interrupt to tell Volunteer about the toilet paper.*) Yesterday, this guy cut in front of me at the grocery store. Normally, I would have been SO mad, but I decided to be kind. . . even though it was hard. He was so thankful and then he explained to me that he was in a hurry because he was buying dog food for a stray puppy he just found . . . (*Starts to sob.*)
- **Leader:** I thought we would be done with the crying by now!
- **Volunteer:** (*Still sobs.*) Poor puppy! It must have been so hungry! I’m so glad I let the guy cut in line!
- **Leader:** Well, I’m very proud of you, (*insert name*). That was a great example of today’s Big Idea–**Love is the best choice**. Speaking of which, I have to tell you. . . (*Whispers dramatically.*) you have a piece of toilet paper stuck to your shoe.
- **Volunteer:** (*Looks at bottom of shoe.*) Oh. Oops! Thanks for telling me! That was very loving and kind of you. By the way, (*Whispers.*) you have something stuck in your teeth.
- **Leader:** (*Immediately covers mouth with hand.*) Thank you. I’ll be right back.

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 | Mark 12:28-34

- So, there’s a little backstory to today’s Bible story. **Do any of you remember a guy from the Bible named Moses?** Here’s a quick review:
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show [this video](#) (or another video like it). While you are showing the video, you or another leader can dress up in an old man beard and carry cardboard “tablets” and re-enter the room as Moses to teach the rest of the lesson!
- Some time after, God gave Moses–I mean, *me*–these Ten Commandments so that I can share with people about how God wants us to live. Do you know what’s on here? (*Allow kids to interact and volunteer answers*) There’s a lot! Some of them are “Worship God only,” “Honor your parents,” “Do not steal,” and “Do not lie” (*See Exodus 20*). The Ten Commandments were passed down from generation to generation for many years.
- Fast forward hundreds of years later. . . Jesus appears on the scene, and as the son of God, He knew all the answers (And people had a LOT of questions–remember the lawyer who asked the “who’s my neighbor” thing?).
- Let’s read Mark 12:28-34. We have been learning a lot about God’s love this month. But now we need to figure out how do we love God? Today’s Bible verse tells us to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength. That’s pretty much saying, love God with EVERYTHING you have, right? But it doesn’t stop there! Jesus tells us also to love our neighbor as ourselves. . . which is pretty much saying, love others with EVERYTHING, too!

- Let's dive in a little deeper and find out why loving God and others with everything we've got is the best choice!

VIDEO | "Love God, Love Others"

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show [this video](#) (or another video like it). Then, ask the kids to discuss the following questions in pairs.
- **Why do you think people didn't like Jesus?**
- **What do you think of Jesus' answer to the question they asked?**
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** You can show this video as an alternative or supplement to this activity. Ask preteens to share what they thought the students said was helpful, which questions they would have had a hard time answering, and what they thought about how loving God and others sums up everything you need to know to do what God wants.

OBJECT LESSON | Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Lay a large garbage bag or tarp on the floor and have the children sit around it. Label four clear glasses or vases with the words 'heart,' 'soul,' 'mind,' and 'strength' using sticky notes. Prepare a pitcher of red Kool-Aid you will use to fill the glasses. Begin to fill up each glass and have the students tell you to stop when they think it's completely full. {Note: To prevent excessive spills, you could also set the glasses in a shallow dish}
- Look at how all the glasses are filled up all the way to the top! The liquid uses up the entire glass! When we love God with ALL of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, there is nothing held back—we use everything for God.

SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 together as a group. If your kids have Bibles or if you have the Bible passage available for them, have them read along or read aloud. Otherwise, read to them.
- **Has anyone ever played a sport or been involved in some type of competition? What is the ultimate goal of the competition?** That's right! To win!
- At the end of the day, God wants us to be committed. Making God happy should always be our number one goal. We do this by thinking about every choice we make. And just in case you get lost among all the choices you have to make each day, you can be sure of one thing— love is the best choice!

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

ACTIVITY | Love is the Big Idea

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and cut out the printable in your Week 4 'Printables' folder. Shuffle up the cards, each containing a word from the four Big Ideas we have been learning from our "Real Love" series. Spread the cards on the floor or on a table, and have the kids find the Big Ideas. You could

do this activity with a small group of kids or select volunteers to try one at a time.

- **What's the word all of these Big Ideas have in common?**

- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Additionally, have kids make simple blank tent-fold cards by writing "You are Loved!" on the front and Mark 12:30-31(the words, not just the reference) on the back. They can write a note on the inside to someone they are thinking of and what they can do to help show them they are loved. Feel free to let them decorate the card afterward!*

REFLECTION | Loving Our Neighbors

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Go to the [Compassion International website](#) and view a few of the children's profiles, reading about their different communities and countries. You could either browse through the site with your kids, or you can prepare a slideshow with screen grabs.*
- When Jesus tells us to love our neighbors, He's not just talking about people who live near us. It means all people are our neighbors, even if they live in other parts of the world.
- **These are some of our neighbors from other countries. What kinds of needs do you think they have? And what can we do to show them love?**
- Remember – God loves everyone and God wants all of us to love everyone, too!

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank You giving us the greatest commandments. Help us to love You with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Show us also how to love everyone around us the way You want us to.

MEMORY VERSE | 1 John 4:11

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Write the memory verse on a chalkboard or whiteboard and have the kids recite it together. Then, erase the last word of the memory verse and have the kids recite the verse again. Keep erasing one word at a time and saying the verse together until the board is blank!*
- ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Make this activity interactive by involving special needs kids to come up and erase a word and the whole class recite the verse chorally. Or, assign them a job, such as being in charge of handing the eraser to the other students as they come up to erase a word.*

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **What does Jesus say is the greatest commandment?**
- **What about the second greatest commandment?**
- **How do we love God? How do we love our neighbors?**
- **Read Mark 12:31. Think of a time when you didn't treat someone the way you would have**

wanted to be treated. If you come across a similar situation today, what would you do differently?

- What is something you can do to love God with all your heart and soul this week?
- What is something you can do to love God with all your mind and strength this week?
- Who is one person in your life who really needs God's love? What can you do for that person this week to love them as yourself?

ACTIVITY | Love in Action Puzzle

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Make a big heart out of poster paper. Then, cut up the heart into smaller pieces (like a puzzle), depending on how many kids you have (if you have a large group, then break off into smaller groups and prepare multiple heart puzzles). Give each kid a puzzle piece and have them draw a picture of themselves doing something out of love for God and/or people. After everyone has completed their piece, spend time as a group to piece the heart puzzle together.
- When we choose to show love, we can catch a glimpse of God's very big heart that is full of love for us! God didn't have to, but God chose to love us. . . which really goes to show that love is the best choice.

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** If drawing (or any other activity previously suggested) is not their thing, ask what they would like to do instead (MOTIVATOR). Once you identify the MOTIVATOR, say calmly and clearly: "First (ACTIVITY), then (MOTIVATOR)". At this point, the goal is not for the students to fully engage in the first activity, but to learn to follow instructions without engaging in problem behavior. Knowing ahead of time what the student likes will be helpful to motivate students to stay engaged during small group.

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.