



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE

W₄ A₁ I₁ T₁ F₄ O₁ R₁ I₁ T₁

THE BIG IDEA

Everyone needs a Savior.

THE BIBLE

John Prepares for Jesus:
Mark 1:1-8; (Isaiah 40:1-8)

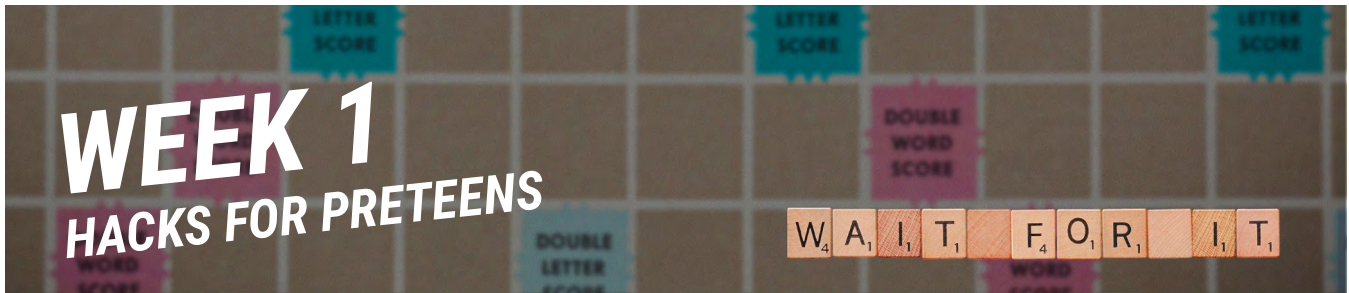
THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- MUSIC** | Worship
- ACTIVITY** | Battleship
- ACTIVITY** | Candyland Relay
- ACTIVITY** | Saving Tower
- SCRIPTURE** | Mark 1:1-8
- THE BIG IDEA** | Everyone needs a Savior.
- VIDEO** | Wait For It, Episode 1
- ACTIVITY** | Sorry!
- STORY** | Prepped!
- SCRIPTURE** | Isaiah 40:1-8
- REFLECTION** | How Can We Prepare?
- ACTIVITY** | Make Room
- MEMORY VERSE** | Memory!
- PRAYER**

SMALL GROUP TIME

- DISCUSSION**
 - What message did John the Baptist have for the people?
 - Why did people come to see John? How do you think you would have responded to John's message?
 - How did this prepare the way for Jesus?
 - Read Isaiah 40:1-8. Who is the one "crying out in the wilderness" and who is the one who will bring glory to God?
 - What are some ways we can remember we need a Savior?
 - How can you make room for God this week?
 - Who in your family or circle of friends needs a Savior?
- ACTIVITY** | Words with Friends
- MEMORY VERSE** | Micah 7:7 (NIV)



BY STEPHEN BAY

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.

ACTIVITY | Candyland Relay

Make this a ring toss game! Use [curtain rings](#) to represent life savers (or print life saver shapes out of colored card stock, cut out the center holes, and use them as throwing rings). Set out an array of small paper cups, brims down, on the floor to represent those who need rescuing from the sea. Lay a strip of tape down to mark a line where kids will toss the rings and try to land them on one of the paper cups.

ACTIVITY | Saving Tower

Instead of printing out pictures of modern-day heroes, ask kids to give an example of one before they pull out a Jenga block. Have them also explain why they're heroes. What makes them a hero? What is it they do to save or protect others? Encourage kids to expand their thinking on what defines a hero these days.

ACTIVITY | Make Room

Have the kids write down four things that take up a lot of their time, then ask:

- **Which of these things are must-dos (like homework and chores)?**
- **Which of these things are just for fun (like playing games or texting friends)?**
- Just like you would clean up your guest room to make room for house guests, we should clean up to make room for Jesus in our hearts.
- **How can we make more room?** Take a look at your list and cross out one thing that you can replace with spending more time with Jesus.



BY CHRISTIN RICKMAN

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 | Candyland Relay

Since fine motor coordination is a common struggle for kids with special needs, use larger objects as life savers, (e.g., [curtain rings](#)) and pass them from person to person using their index fingers.

ACTIVITY | Saving Tower

Print out one-sentence descriptions or pictures that would match the jobs on the blocks. For example, if a kid pulls out the block with "fire fighter," they would then look for a sentence that says, "I help put out fires," or an image of a building on fire. Have at least one peer or adult partner periodically redirect kids to the purpose of the activity.

STORY | Prepped!

To help engage kids, provide props or pictures to accompany your story. Maybe someone was helping you get ready for a fun event? Bring in some articles of clothing, accessories, and other things you needed to get ready.



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

W₄ A₁ I₁ T₁ F₄ O₁ R₁ I₁ T₁

THE BIG IDEA

Everyone needs a Savior.

THE BIBLE

John Prepares for Jesus:
Mark 1:1-8; (Isaiah 40:1-8)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

MUSIC | Worship

- Today, we're going to be talking about John the Baptist, who made a way for Jesus. But first, let's worship God for being the one who makes a way for us!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Sing along to the song "[Way Maker](#)."*
- **How has God made a way for you or kept promises to you?**

ACTIVITY | Battleship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have all the kids roam around the room freely, while pretending they are swimming. One person will be the "shark" and one will be the "battleship." The shark will try to tag as many people as possible. Once a person is tagged, they will need to sit down and wave both of their arms in the air. The battleship's job is to set the tagged people free. When you are set free, stand up and start swimming again. Choose a time limit or length of a song and see how many people are sitting and how many are standing at the end of the game!*
- Just like in our game, we can face times where we get stuck and need a rescue! We are all people who are in need of being saved.
- **Have you ever felt stuck?**
- **Have you ever felt like the problem you were facing required some outside help from someone you trust?**

ACTIVITY | Candyland Relay

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a chopstick and tell them to stand in a line. Tell the kids to hold the chopstick between their teeth so it is pointing out straight. Depending on your group's ages, you can also have them just hold the chopstick in their hand. At one end of the line, put a LifeSaver candy on the end of the kid's chopstick. The goal is to pass the LifeSaver from chopstick to chopstick, down the line, without dropping it.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Use [curtain rings](#) to represent life savers (or make your own) and make it a ring toss game! Set out an array of small paper cups, brims down, on the floor to represent those who need rescuing from the sea. Lay a strip of tape down to mark a line where kids will toss the rings and try to land them on one of the paper cups.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Since fine motor coordination is a common struggle for kids with special needs, use larger objects larger objects as life savers, (e.g., [curtain rings](#)) and passing them from person to person using their index fingers.
- **Does anyone know why the candy is called a LifeSaver?**
- The shape of the candy looks a lot like a life preserver, which is something found on ships that are used to help people float in the water in the event of an emergency.
- Just like you kept that LifeSaver nice and safe, there are things in our lives that also keep us safe!
Can you think of any?

ACTIVITY | Saving Tower

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print out small pictures of modern-day heroes (e.g., doctor, firefighter, teacher, delivery person, street cleaner, etc.). Tape the pictures to Jenga blocks. Each time a kid pulls out a block that has a picture on it, encourage them to talk about each hero and the different jobs that come with each role. You could also just write on the blocks.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Instead of providing the pictures, ask kids to give an example of one before they pull out a Jenga block. Have them also explain why they're heroes. What is it they do to save or protect others? Encourage kids to stretch their thinking on what defines a hero these days.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Print out one-sentence descriptions or pictures that would match the jobs on the blocks. For example, if a kid pulls out the block with "fire fighter," they would then look for a sentence that says, "I help put out fires," or an image of a building on fire.
- **Who do each of these people save or protect?**
- Some jobs require us to learn things to save people in a specific type of danger. However, we'll hear stories about how Jesus is a unique type of hero because Jesus saves everyone!

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

SCRIPTURE | Mark 1:1-8

- For those of you who remember what's been going on with God's people, you'll remember that they endured some difficult times. But God promised a Savior would come. So they waited. And waited.

- Many prophets talked about this Savior that was to come – this was way before they knew that the Savior would be Jesus. Prophets also talked about someone who would come before Jesus, and be a messenger who would prepare the way for the Savior. That person was John the Baptist.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Print out the verses and pass them out to eight different kids. Instruct them each to take turns reading the verses in order to tell the story. Afterward, summarize the scripture.*
- **Let's read Mark 1:2.** In this story, John was preparing the way for the Savior, but it wasn't by cleaning or cooking a multi-course meal. John was preparing people's hearts by baptizing people and letting them realize they indeed need a Savior.
- **Let's read Mark 1:4-5.** John is Jesus' messenger and reminded people that everyone needs saving. But it's not the kind of saving the people were thinking of. The Savior was coming to save the people from being separated from God by their sins. John told the people that they needed to repent – to say sorry for disobeying God and have a new relationship with God.
- **Let's read Mark 1:7-8.** We need to be connected to God. When the first humans disobeyed, they felt disconnected from God. They needed help! The same is true for all of us because we all sin and need saving.

THE BIG IDEA | Everyone needs a Savior.

- Have you ever rolled a double in a game before? It's when you get the same number on two dice. Rolling a double is usually considered lucky, and it will be for us today because we get to hear the Big Idea only when someone rolls a double!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Purchase or create two giant dice and encourage the kids to take turns passing and rolling the dice. When they roll two of the same number, have them yell "Yahtzee!" or "Let's see!" or another fun phrase.*
- You did it! Now for one more roll . . . a drumroll!
- Today's Big Idea is: **Everyone needs a Savior.**

VIDEO | Wait For It, Episode 1

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

ACTIVITY | Sorry!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Mark off spaces using tape on the ground (about 1' part) going all around the perimeter of the room. Split the group into four teams, which can be as small as two kids per team. Place each team in the four corners of the room. One at a time, team members will roll the dice (use the giant ones from the Big Idea reveal) and move the number of "spaces" (tape marks) that come up on the dice. If someone lands on a space that is occupied, the person that was there gets bumped and has to go back to their starting corner and start all over. . . SORRY! The objective is to get all your teammates around the board and back to your starting corner. Have players who are finished sit in the middle of the room and cheer on their remaining teammates!*
- **What happened when another player kicked you off your space?** You had to start from the beginning! Sorry!

- But you know what? It's kind of what happens when you say sorry to God. You can't just keep going in the direction you were going – you have to say, "Sorry God!" and start over. And this time, hopefully you will go the way God wants you to!

STORY | Prepped!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a story about someone in your life who has helped prepare you for something. This can be preparing you for school, a big test, a party, etc.*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *To help engage kids, provide props or pictures to accompany your story. Maybe someone was helping you get ready for a fun event? Bring in some articles of clothing, accessories, and other things you needed to get ready.*
- **Why do we prepare for important things in life?**
- **How did you feel when preparing for something big in your life?**

SCRIPTURE | Isaiah 40:1-8

- Remember we mentioned before that the prophets of old talked about the Savior as well as the messenger who would come to prepare the way for the Savior? This is one of the prophecies!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Split the group into two, and have one group read Isaiah 40:1-4, and the other read Isaiah 40:5-8. Give each group some paper and drawing supplies and have each person draw some of the words they see in the text. Have them hold up the picture of the word when it is read aloud.*
- **Let's read Isaiah 40:3-5.** The person who is telling us this story wants us to hear how important it is to get ready for the Savior. This Bible passage says things like "fill in the valleys" and "level the mountains" – it sounds like when we are trying to make our house look presentable for guests! John the Baptist wanted people to prepare for the Savior in very much the same way, but instead of making themselves and their homes look nice, John told people their hearts needed be ready.
- **Let's keep reading in Isaiah 40:6-8.** Isaiah wants us to know that lots of things are flimsy and changing, but God's Word? Never! So, when the Bible tells us that we need a Savior, we can trust this is true.
- These are some awesome drawings! Let's put them in a row and see if we can remember what we just read just by looking at these pictures!

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

REFLECTION | How Can We Prepare?

- Today, we heard about how John the Baptist was Jesus' messenger and helped to prepare the way for Jesus. Just like anything that is important, the coming of the Savior required preparation.
- **Do you believe Jesus is important enough to prepare for?**
- John prepared for Jesus' arrival to Earth, but we can also prepare for Jesus. We can prepare for Jesus to enter our hearts!
- **Do you believe there are things in life Jesus can save you from?**

- If you believe we need Jesus to be our Savior, what are some ways you can prepare your heart for Jesus?
- One way I can think of is by admitting I make mistakes sometimes and I need help to choose the right things to say and do.

ACTIVITY | Make Room

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give the kids four small pieces of paper. Ask them to draw four different things in life that take a lot of their time. Now, play “One of These Doesn’t Belong!” Ask them to remove one thing and give them a picture of a cross to remind them to give up a bit of time dedicated to that hobby/activity to spend more time with Jesus. You can listen to [“Make Room”](#) by Jonathan McReynolds as kids work through this activity.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** After writing down their four things, reflect on which of these things are must-dos (like homework and chores) and which are just for fun (like playing games or texting friends). Then, talk about making room for Jesus – just like you clean up your guest room to make room for house guests, you should “clean up” to make room for Jesus in your heart. Finally, ask them to cross out one thing on their list and replace it with spending more time with Jesus.
- Let’s think about how we can make room for Jesus. Put this in a place in your house where you will see it every morning as you get ready as a reminder to spend time with Jesus!

MEMORY VERSE | Memory!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print out two copies of the memory verse printable and cut out the cards. Lay all the cards facedown in the middle of the floor. Split the group into two teams. Have one member from each team come to the middle, and at the count of three, they flip over one card. If they flipped over matching cards, they can each take it with them back to their team. Keep playing until all the pairs are found, Then, have each team try and put their cards in order to make today’s memory verse in Micah 7:7!

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank You for sending people into our lives who remind us that we need a Savior. Help us to also prepare the way for Jesus by turning away from our sins, and making our hearts a place where you’d want to stay. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- What message did John the Baptist have for the people?
- Why did people come to see John? How do you think you would have responded to John’s message?
- How did this prepare the way for Jesus?

- Read Isaiah 40:1-8. Who is the one “crying out in the wilderness” and who is the one who will bring glory to God?
- What are some ways we can remember we need a Savior?
- How can you make room for Jesus this week?
- Who in your family or circle of friends needs a Savior?

ACTIVITY | Words with Friends

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Print out the Words with Friends printable. Ask the kids to cut out paper Scrabble tiles and glue them on the board, spelling out three names of the people on their list. Let them get creative in arranging the names by overlapping shared letters.*
- Make a list of people you know. We talked about how **everyone needs a Savior** — that includes the names you just wrote down. And don't forget to put yourself on this list, too!
- **Everyone needs a Savior** and being kind to others prepares their hearts to feel the love of Jesus! Talk to God about helping you be someone who makes a way for others to know that they need a Savior, too.

MEMORY VERSE | Micah 7:7 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided.*