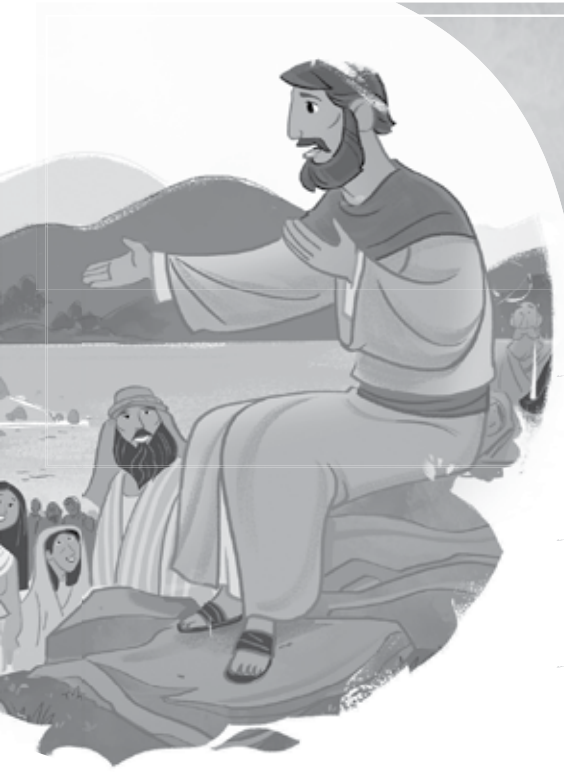

*Use Week of:*

## Unit 23 • Session 1

# The Sermon on the Mount

**BIBLE PASSAGE:**
Matthew 5–7

**STORY POINT:**
Jesus taught people how to live in God's kingdom.

**KEY PASSAGE:**
John 14:25-26

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:**
What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**
**(10–15 MINUTES)**
**PAGE 76**

→

**TEACH THE STORY**
**(25–30 MINUTES)**
**PAGE 78**

→

**APPLY THE STORY**
**(25–30 MINUTES)**
**PAGE 84**

Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit ministrygrid.com/gospelproject.



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# **LEADER** Bible Study

One of Jesus' most well-known teachings is the Sermon on the Mount. On that day, crowds of people had come to hear Jesus. Jesus went up on a mountain in Galilee, sat down, and began to teach.

Jesus' sermon is recorded across three chapters in the Gospel of Matthew, 5–7, and it tells how believers should live. While Matthew 5:1-2 specifies that Jesus taught His disciples, Matthew 7:28 reveals that the crowds listened to His sermon as well.

First, Jesus began with the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes describe God's great blessings for believers. God's kingdom belongs to the spiritually needy, God will comfort those who are sad, and God will give mercy to those who show mercy to others. Jesus gives believers reason to be glad when life on earth is hard because great rewards await in heaven.

Jesus also taught how believers should live in a world that does not honor Him. Jesus called believers "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-14). He said the good works of His followers should cause others to give glory to God.

God's people had the law of Moses, but some of them—the Pharisees, in particular—were concerned mostly with the appearance of being righteous. They tried hard to look righteous on the outside, but it was all an act. Jesus warned against hypocrites, people who pretend to be something they're not. When a person knows and loves Jesus, he or she has a changed heart that wants to honor Jesus.

As you teach kids Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, emphasize that this moral teaching was not a list of requirements for being accepted by God. Rather, Jesus described what a person's life looks like when that person follows God and lives to honor Him. God's standards remind us that we rely on His grace through the gift of salvation in His Son.



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## The Sermon on the Mount

*Matthew 5–7*

Great crowds of people followed Jesus wherever He went. **One day, Jesus** went up on a mountain. He sat down and **began to teach about the kingdom of God.**

**First, Jesus taught about the blessings that come to those who follow Him. He said:**

**"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.**

**Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.**

**Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.**

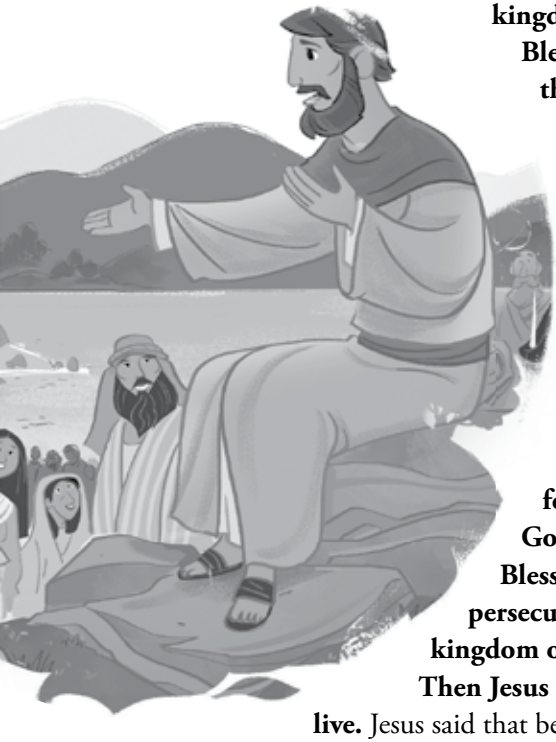
**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.**

**Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.**

**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.**

**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.**

**Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs."**



**Then Jesus taught how believers should live.** Jesus said that believers are the light of the world. "Let your light shine before others so that they may see the good things you do and choose to praise God."

**Then Jesus taught about God's law.** Jesus did not come to get



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rid of the law, but to obey it perfectly. **He said that to enter heaven, a person can't just look righteous on the outside**—like the religious leaders. **A person must be righteous on the inside too**, obeying God for the right reasons**.**

**Jesus said, "Love your enemies, and pray for them."** He said, "When you give to people who are poor, give in secret. And when you pray, don't pray just so that people will hear you." Jesus taught the people how to pray.

**He also said, "Forgive others. If you forgive those who sin against you, God will forgive you too. But if you don't forgive them, God will not forgive you."**

**Jesus said, "Do not collect treasures on earth, which can be destroyed or stolen. Collect treasures in heaven instead. For where your treasure is, that is where your heart will be also."** He taught that God provides for His people.

Jesus taught the people many things. When He finished teaching, **the crowds were amazed because He taught them like one who had authority.**

*Christ Connection: Jesus taught people what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should live, how they should treat one another, and how to love God. People who trust in Jesus live to honor God and show what His kingdom is like.*

**Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Use pauses:** As you tell the story, pause between paragraphs or following dialogue to draw kids' attention.
- **Call for active listening:** Challenge kids to count how many times they hear the word *taught*.



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# INTRODUCE the Story

**SESSION TITLE:** The Sermon on the Mount

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 5–7

**STORY POINT:** Jesus taught people how to live in God's kingdom.

**KEY PASSAGE:** John 14:25-26

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

## Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about a favorite teacher. What was special about him or her? What did they learn from that teacher?

## Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Mountain Teachings" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "Mountain Teachings" on the activity page. Guide kids to use the picture clues to fill in the blanks.

**SAY** • Have you ever heard of these teachings? Do any of them seem strange to you? These are some of the things Jesus taught about living in God's kingdom. Let's get ready to hear more.

LOW PREP

## Session starter (10 minutes)

**OPTION 1:** Around the world

Instruct kids to sit in a circle. Choose one player to be *It*. She will stand next to a seated player. Explain that you will say a word. *It* and the seated player will race to say the opposite of the word. If *It* correctly responds first, she will



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move to the next seated player. If the seated player responds first, *It* takes his seat and he becomes *It*.

Play continues around the circle. The first player to respond correctly moves on, and the other player sits down. Continue until one player makes it all the way around the circle and back to her seat.

Sample opposites: *for/against, apart/together, admit/deny, friend/enemy, alive/dead, awake/asleep, backward/forward, upside-down/right-side up, before/after, light/dark, bad/good, begin/end, blessing/curse, below/above, come/go, cold/hot, create/destroy, crooked/straight, down/up, temporary/eternal*

**SAY** • When Jesus came to earth, He taught about God and His kingdom. The kingdom of God is very different from the ways of the world. In many ways, God's kingdom is the opposite of the world. Today, we will found out what God's kingdom is like.

**OPTION 2:** Follow my example

Choose a simple craft you can lead kids in creating with a demonstration. You might choose to paint an image, draw an illustration, or sculpt something from play dough. Give kids the necessary supplies and lead them through the steps.

• watercolor paints and paper, play dough, or other craft material

**SAY** • What other things have you learned how to do by following others' examples? In the Bible story we will hear today, Jesus taught His followers how to live. Then He spent His ministry showing them how to live. We'll find out more about the example Jesus set for His followers.

## Transition to teach the story



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# **TEACH** the Story

**SESSION TITLE:** The Sermon on the Mount

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 5–7

**STORY POINT:** Jesus taught people how to live in God's kingdom.

**KEY PASSAGE:** John 14:25-26

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

**Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas:** Simulate a school classroom by arranging a desk or table at the front of the room as a teacher's desk. Arrange office supplies, folders, and various books or papers on the desk. Decorate the walls with a calendar, educational posters, and a classroom schedule. You may position a couple of student desks at the front of the room. Make decorations as simple or complex as you like. You may project the theme background slide.

## Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- Bible
- textbooks

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

*[Leader enters wearing business casual attire or a T-shirt for a local school with jeans. He or she also carries a Bible and a few textbooks.]*

**LEADER** • Hello, everyone! My name is [*Mr./Mrs.*] [*your name*]. Welcome to my classroom! My students are all on summer [*spring/fall/winter*] break, so I'm just preparing for their return. I'm glad you could join me today.

Teachers spend a lot of time in the classroom,



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even when kids aren't around because we want to be prepared to teach! One way I prepare is by making sure I'm really familiar with the material I'm going to teach. [*Gesture to the textbooks.*] I'm sure you didn't come here to learn spelling words or math equations, though.

[*Hold up a Bible.*] I'm excited to share with you about Jesus! Did you know that Jesus was a teacher? Thousands of people came to hear Him teach. Jesus didn't tell the people about geography or chemistry though. Let's find out what He did teach about.

## Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • When you listen to today's Bible story and the other stories we'll hear over the next few weeks, keep the big picture question in mind: ***What did Jesus teach when He was on earth?***

This is a great question. Jesus' public ministry only lasted three years. What He taught was really important! ***What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.***

## Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. • Giant Timeline

**LEADER** • God the Son came to earth as a baby. His earthly parents were Mary and Joseph. He grew up in Nazareth and began His ministry when He was about 30 years old. Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River. He called twelve men to follow Him as His disciples. He traveled between the regions



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of Judea and Galilee, performing miracles and teaching people. Today's Bible story took place on a mountainside near the Sea of Galilee. Jesus' teaching here is called "The Sermon on the Mount."

## Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

- Bibles
- "The Sermon on the Mount" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Open your Bible to Matthew 5–7. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "The Sermon on the Mount."

**LEADER** • Jesus' teaching on the mountainside is known as "The Sermon on the Mount." First, Jesus taught people about God's kingdom. God's kingdom is not like life on earth. In fact, in many ways, God's kingdom seems "upside-down" compared to life on earth. On earth, the types of people who seem to get ahead are people who are greedy or popular. They like to argue or think they deserve whatever they want. But Jesus said God's kingdom is for people who are poor in spirit and who are treated wrongly for doing the right thing. God has blessings for people who are humble, for those who want what God wants, and for those who are peacemakers.

Also, **Jesus taught people how to live in God's kingdom.** What did Jesus say believers are like? Look at Matthew 5:14-16. [*Allow kids to read the verses and respond.*] Believers are lights in a dark world. How we live can lead others to God.

How did Jesus say we should treat our enemies? Look at Matthew 5:43-45. [*Allow kids to read the verses and respond.*] The Old Testament law said to love your neighbor. Some people thought that meant you should also hate your enemies. But Jesus taught a



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better way to live; He said to love your enemies. We can live this way even now. One day Jesus will return, and His kingdom will extend over all creation.

## Christ connection

**LEADER** • Jesus taught people what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should live, how they should treat one another, and how to love God. People who trust in Jesus live to honor God and show what His kingdom is like.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 83 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

## Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 23, Session 1" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about what Jesus meant when He spoke about treasures in heaven. Guide them to discuss what they have that they could be generous with.

- "Unit 23, Session 1" questions from kids video

## Missions moment (3 minutes)

**LEADER** • **Jesus taught people how to live in God's kingdom.** We can learn from the Bible and from other Christians about how to live in God's kingdom. One man was not following Jesus, but when he started reading the Bible, he believed. Today, he shares Jesus with others in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Now that he knows Jesus, he is living life on mission!

- "Meet Kesavan" missions video

Play the missions video. Lead kids to practice saying Kesavan Balasingham's name (KAY-seh-van bah-lah-SING-hem). Remind kids that churches give to missions to spread the gospel and to help start churches, like the one Kesavan started—Fellowship Church Rouge Park. Close in prayer for Kesavan and his ministry in Toronto.



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## Key passage (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- "I Have Spoken (John 14:25-26)" song

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 14:25-26.

**LEADER** • ***What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.*** Jesus spent three years with His disciples and taught them many things. He made them an incredible promise. Jesus knew He would not be with them on earth forever; He promised to give them the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit would help them remember everything Jesus taught. When we trust in Jesus, we too receive the Holy Spirit. He teaches us and reminds us what is true. Let's sing.

Lead kids in singing "I Have Spoken (John 14:25-26)."

## Sing (4 minutes)

- "Just As I Am" song
- Bible

Open your Bible and read aloud Psalm 67:3-5.

**LEADER** • **Jesus taught people how to live in God's kingdom.** Those who trust in Jesus look forward to the day when they will live forever with God in His perfect kingdom. Let's praise Him with a song.

Sing together "Just As I Am."

## Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

**LEADER** • Lord God, thank You for Your Word. As we follow Jesus, help us live as light in a dark world. Help us honor You with our lives. We love You. Amen.

## Dismiss to apply the story



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## **The Gospel:** God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.



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# APPLY the Story

**SESSION TITLE:** The Sermon on the Mount

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 5–7

**STORY POINT:** Jesus taught people how to live in God's kingdom.

**KEY PASSAGE:** John 14:25-26

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- sticky notes
- marker

Before the session, write the key passage as words or phrases on separate sticky notes. Scatter the notes around the room. Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 14:25-26 together.

Challenge kids to find and collect the parts of the key passage on the sticky notes around the room. Invite kids to work together to arrange the key passage in the correct order. When kids finish, lead them to read the key passage together.

**SAY** • ***What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.*** Jesus' ministry on earth lasted for three years. Jesus promised that when He left, He would send the Holy Spirit to help them—and He did!

## Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Matthew 5. Remind kids that the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—tell of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Explain that Jesus' sermon in Matthew 5



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happened early in His ministry. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 5:1-3.

**SAY** • Jesus sat down on a mountain near the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. [*Point to the Sea of Galilee (D6) on the New Testament Israel Map.*] Jesus taught many people while He was on earth. In His sermon, **Jesus taught people how to live in God's kingdom.**

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. How is the kingdom of God different than the world? *Clarify for kids that the kingdom of God is His rule and reign. We enter God's kingdom when we trust in Jesus and recognize His authority over our lives. God's kingdom is upside-down in many ways compared to the world. His kingdom reflects His values, such as gentleness and humility.*
   (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 12:28.)
2. How can believers be lights in a dark world? *Remind kids that Jesus is the light of the world. We are to reflect Him in how we live our lives. Being a light in a dark world means bringing the truth of Jesus to places where there is darkness and lies. Believers can share the gospel with boldness and choose to live in ways that honor God. Help kids identify actions or attitudes that may be associated with "light" (honoring to God) versus "darkness" (dishonoring to God).*
   (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 5:16.)
3. What blessings come to those who follow Jesus? *Lead kids to recognize that God's blessings do not necessarily mean gaining prosperity on earth. Earthly blessings are good gifts, but they do not last forever and are not guaranteed. God does promise to bless us in the greatest way by giving us Jesus. He promises to transform those*



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*who trust in Jesus to make us like His Son.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 1:3.)

**LOW PREP**

- "Kesavan Story Cards" printable

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

## Activity choice (10 minutes)

**OPTION 1:** Kesavan's story

Before the session, print and cut apart the story cards.

**SAY** • We're learning about a missionary in Canada named Kesavan Balasingham. We're going to hear some facts from his life that we learned earlier in the missions video. Then we'll work together to put these details in the correct order.

Distribute the story cards to volunteers. Ask the volunteers to stand in a line and read the statements one at a time. Invite the rest of the group to work together to move the kids in the line so that the cards they are holding are in order. Take time to answer questions that the kids may have about Kesavan.

**SAY** • Jesus changed Kesavan's life. Instead of hurting other people and living a sinful life, he asked Jesus to forgive him, and he changed the way he was living. Now he teaches other people how to live in God's kingdom.

- Bibles
- poster board, 1 piece per group
- markers or crayons

**OPTION 2:** Jesus' teaching posters

Form up to four groups of kids. Assign each group a passage from today's Bible story: *Matthew 5:14-16; Matthew 5:43-47; Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 6:19-21*.

Instruct each group to find and read its assigned passage. Then group members should work together to create a poster about Jesus' teaching in the passage. Kids can include words and drawings. Encourage them to think of specific



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ways they can obey Jesus' teachings.

When groups finish, call for them to share their posters with the rest of the class. You may also prompt them to consider how those teachings differ from the teachings of the world. Consider hanging the posters in the room for the remainder of the unit.

**SAY** • **Jesus taught people how to live in God's kingdom.** He taught people what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should live, how they should treat one another, and how to love God. People who trust in Jesus live to honor God and show what His kingdom is like.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

## Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Beatitude Match" activity page, 1 per kid

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for His Word and for His teaching that equips us for living in a dark world. Pray that the light of Jesus would shine through kids as they seek to live for Him.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Beatitude Match" on the activity page. Kids should match each sentence with its correct ending. Encourage kids to find and read Matthew 5:3-10 to check their work.

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.



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