

Theme: Introducing the RLC: Being, Forgiving, Serving, Giving, Going

Bible Verse: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." **Matthew 7:24-27**

Big Idea: Coming to church and hearing Bible stories about Jesus is important, but we also know that we can begin following the commands and principles that Jesus teaches us. So, for the next 40 days, our entire church is going to hear the words of Jesus and put them into practice as we learn to live like Jesus in 5 main areas.

BEING: Jesus wants us to spend time with Him and build a close relationship. Before we do things for Him, it's important to get to know Him better. Our time with Jesus helps us do what He asks more effectively.

FORGIVING: Jesus teaches us about grace and forgiveness. It can be hard to accept God's forgiveness or to forgive others. But to truly show Jesus in our lives, we need to understand and share this grace with everyone.

SERVING: After spending time with Jesus and understanding His forgiveness, we feel excited to help others. We want to serve our community, support those in need, and show love to our neighbors because of what Jesus has done for us.

GIVING: Jesus talked a lot about money and being generous. If we follow Jesus, we should be generous with what we have. Being a follower of Jesus means sharing and giving to others.

GOING: One of Jesus' last instructions was to share the Good News with everyone. We are called to tell others about Jesus and how He forgives and loves us all.

***DO THIS NOW:** Read the 5 areas above and think about how well you're already doing in that area.

- Put a TRIANGLE next to the area you're most interested in learning about.
- Put a STAR next to the area you think will be most challenging for you.
- Put a HEART next to the area you feel like you're already doing pretty well.

Take this home and talk to your parents about your responses!

Dear Parents:

In the Red Letter Challenge, we are committing to putting the words of Jesus into practice for the next five weeks. Those five weeks are divided into five themes: Being, Forgiving, Serving, Giving, and Going. Each week we will have different ideas and ways that your child(ren) can try to put Jesus' words into practice.

****Keep an eye out for these weekly handouts and help your child accomplish one, some or all challenges each week!**



Theme

BEING with Jesus

Bible Verse

Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

Big Idea

BEING week focuses on the importance of spending quality time with Jesus and building a strong relationship with Him. This helps us live out our faith more effectively. There are some main categories of ways we can connect with Jesus, but each person may find different ways to do each of these things and that’s okay!

***DO THIS NOW:**

Below are some ways you can enjoy spending time with Jesus. Write a 1, 2, or 3 next to each option to share how much you think you’d enjoy experiencing Jesus in that way.

1 (I think I’ll **DISLIKE** it), 2 (I **MIGHT** like it), or 3 (I think I’ll **LOVE** it)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write or draw about your favorite Bible story. | <input type="checkbox"/> Learn something new about God or life with Him. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read your Bible daily before bed this week. | <input type="checkbox"/> Give up something I prefer to do for a little while. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memorize the Lord’s Prayer | <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrate God with thanks and praises aloud. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to your favorite praise/worship song. | <input type="checkbox"/> Write my thoughts about God in a journal. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go outside and enjoy nature. | <input type="checkbox"/> Draw pictures to remind me of God. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a nap. | <input type="checkbox"/> Pray to God. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write down 5 of God’s promises to you. | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete a YouVersion daily devotional. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sit quietly for one minute. | <input type="checkbox"/> Thank God for 5 things He’s done in your life. |

Dear Parents:

In the BEING week, kids will explore spiritual disciplines, such as reading the Bible and listening to worship music, to practice incorporating spending quality time with Jesus in the regular rhythms of their life. These disciplines will be practiced all throughout this 40 day challenge, but this week focuses specifically on simply being with Jesus, as we believe that a deep connection with Him empowers our actions. Later in the challenge, there will be more opportunities for outward-focused activities, but the key lesson here is that, like Jesus, our actions (what we *do*) flow from our relationship with God. Put simply, we emphasize “Be Before Do” which means we BE with God before we DO for God. Connecting with God before taking action for Him helps us make sure that we are depending on Christ’s strength and not our own human effort to get things done.

Challenge: Help your kid enjoy one of their “#3” options this week and challenge them to do one of their #1 options and share how it made them feel.



Theme

FORGIVING like Jesus

Bible Verse

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

Big Idea

Why is FORGIVING like Jesus important?

***DO THIS NOW:**

On the back of this paper, choose one of the areas below to write or draw about as you prepare your heart to forgive others and to receive the forgiveness that God offers you.

- Write one sin that you need help to stop doing. Who can help you?
- Write some sins you are angry at someone else about. When will you forgive them?
- Write a list of sins you have done and want to ask for forgiveness for. Tell God sorry and accept His forgiveness.
- Write the name of someone you need to say "I forgive you" to. When will you tell them?
- Write the name of someone you need to say "I am sorry" to. When will you tell them?

Dear Parents:

Forgiveness is the theme this week! Sometimes kids find it easier to forgive than adults do! Forgiveness is something we start teaching our kids at a young age, because we can all understand what it feels like to be hurt by someone.

Forgiveness is something that is so easy to talk about, but really hard to actually do. For kids, we start with the importance of obedience before understanding. We don't always understand completely how forgiveness works, or even why we need to forgive, but actually saying the words out loud and telling kids not to seek revenge is the first steps in the lifelong lesson of practicing forgiveness.

Parents, modeling asking for and giving forgiveness is a powerful teaching tool for our kids. This week, please share your own personal stories of how you've been hurt and had to forgive. Use everyday events like someone cutting you off on the road or a mistake at a restaurant or even times when you have to break a promise you made to your child to talk through forgiveness. We forgive our children, and sometimes our children have to forgive us! When offenses happen in a family, use those as starting points to talk about forgiveness and healing.

Challenge: Flip this paper over and read your kid's responses. Notice the areas they are struggling in. How can you help them take steps toward true repentance? What guardrails can you put in place to help them not commit the same sins repeatedly?

Notice if they did not respond in writing. Ask them the same questions aloud and listen for ways you can support them in giving or receiving forgiveness this week.



Theme

SERVING like Jesus

Bible Verse

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10

Big Idea

Why is SERVING like Jesus important?

***DO THIS NOW:** Look at the list below of different ways to serve others. Underline anything you have done before. Circle anything that you'd like to do this week! Add anything specific that you're gifted to do. Show this list to your family and choose something you've circled to complete!

- Serve someone who couldn't or wouldn't pay you back.
- Put someone else's needs before your own.
- Let someone have their way instead of you.
- Spend quality time with someone who is different from you.
- Serve someone younger than you.
- Hold the door open for someone.
- Make something and give it to someone.
- Do a chore for someone.

- _____
- _____

Dear Parents:

This week we are focusing on the awesome opportunity we have to both understand our own gifts and talents and then use them to help and serve others. Our motive for serving should be that we love and serve others because Christ first loved and served us. Our serving ultimately comes as a response to God's redeeming love on the cross for us and His continued love and service to us: taking care of us every day.

Challenge: Tell your child what unique gifts and talents God has given to them. Be specific as you take the time to see them as a wonderful child of God and affirm them as being wonderfully made by Him on purpose and for a purpose. Which of the things above do they want to do this week? How can you help? Notice where fear, laziness, busyness, or selfishness is preventing your child from serving others and help them overcome the obstacles.



Theme GIVING like Jesus

Bible Verse

It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35

Big Idea

Why is GIVING to Jesus important?

***DO THIS NOW:**

On the back of this paper, write a list or draw pictures of some of your favorite things. It could be things you own, like toys, games, or clothes. Or maybe it's your favorite food, book, or snack.

Next, pick three things from your list that you could give to someone else to bring them joy or help meet their need.

Imagine yourself giving one of those things away. Draw an emoji below to show how you think you'd feel:

Dear Parents:

The Red Letter Challenge includes principles that often become clearer as children grow, but kids can grasp them remarkably well. For example, children often embrace the concept of giving more easily than adults. Their generosity can be truly inspiring when they are given opportunities to share. This week, we will discuss the motive for giving and recognize Jesus as the Ultimate Giver. Understanding what Jesus has given to us helps us give generously to others. We give because we have been given everything. If your child feels prompted to give something that makes you hesitate, remember that allowing them to give freely supports their growth and reflects the beauty of their generosity.

Challenge: Flip this page over and look at some of your child's favorite things. Notice the ones they are willing to give away and prompt a conversation about their generosity. Identify a person or place they can take their give-away item to. Encourage them to slow down and name the emotions they feel when they give things away - especially things of value!



Theme GOING like Jesus

Bible Verse

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations. **Matthew 28:19a**

Big Idea

Why is GOING with Jesus important?

***DO THIS NOW:**

Are you more curious about Jesus now than you were 5 weeks ago? If so, that's great! We want to keep answering your questions and helping you learn about Jesus. Choose the option below that is most true for you:

What do you think about trusting Jesus as your Savior and Lord? color the star

- ☆ Wait - I'm not ready to talk about becoming a Christian.
- ☆ Already - I have already trusted Jesus as my Savior.
- ☆ Ready - I'm ready now. I want Jesus to be my Savior.
- ☆ Questions - I have questions. Flip this paper over and write your questions on the back.

Dear Parents:

As we wrap up this Red Letter Challenge, we don't end with an easy task! GOING is sometimes hard for kids to understand because they are always told "go brush your teeth", "go clean your room", "go to school". GOING to kids just feels like a command to obey, rather than an invitation to share about Jesus in adventurous, fun ways that use our stories and personalities to highlight who He is! We want to instill in our children the understanding that GOING with Jesus is not a task to be completed, but an adventure to embark on! And it doesn't matter how old we are when we choose to follow Jesus. We are called on a great commission to be a witness. We will have the Holy Spirit with us at all times, and we never go alone.

Challenge: Before our kids can get GOING, they have to first believe in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. They have to admit that they are sinners who needed Jesus' sacrifice and choose to accept the gift of eternal life by following Jesus now and forever. **Read your child's response above.** Based on what they have shared or asked, lead them through next steps in their relationship with Jesus. They may need to pray, write their testimony, get baptized, or meet with someone to have their questions answered. As always, your Children's Minister is available and would love to hear from you!

Remember, no matter what your child responded, you get to still model life in Christ for them! End the challenge by choosing some intentional ways to show them how you can begin reaching people with the Gospel:

- Eat dinner together as a family and pray beforehand
- Speak to neighbors you haven't met yet. Provide an act of kindness towards them
- Speak to a stranger. Pause and let the interruption happen in your day

