

Week 1: Excellence (Feb. 3-8)

Today's topic is Excellence. Can anyone tell us what excellence means? Can anyone tell us what excellence looks like?

Verse: 2 Timothy 2:15 "Do the best you can to be the kind of person that God will approve and give yourself to him. Be a worker who is not ashamed of his work – a worker who uses the true teaching in the right way".

Commentary: Excellence means greatness—the best of the best. It's rare and requires practice, patience, and hard work. Excellence stands out, like earning an A in school, Michael Jordan's career, or LSU's championship teams in baseball and women's basketball. Strive for excellence in all you do, and celebrate others' excellence—you'll recognize it when you see it!

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for teaching me the value of excellence. Help me to honor you in all I do. In your name, we pray, amen.

Week 2: Character (Feb. 10 - 15)

Today's topic is Character. What do we mean when we say someone has a good character?

Commentary: Good character means having qualities like kindness, truthfulness, and doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. Do you know someone with good character? Do you strive to have it?

One of God's traits is generosity. He blesses us with spiritual gifts like **Wisdom** to make good choices and **Knowledge** to tell the truth and help others. These gifts help us serve God by treating others with kindness and being good people in His kingdom.

Verse: Luke 6:31 "Do for other people what you want them to do for you."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your kindness and generosity. Help me be kind and generous to my teammates, to encourage them, and to treat everyone with respect. In your name, we pray, amen.

Week 3: Love (Feb. 17 - 22)

Love is a strong feeling of affection, interest, or enthusiasm for someone or something. Today we are gathered to play baseball...a sport we love to play or are growing to love!

Commentary: We show love for others through kindness, respect, and encouragement in our words and actions. When someone is unkind, do we seek revenge, or do we show kindness, pray for them, and play fairly? Love doesn't hold grudges or seek revenge.

God loves us the same way—He forgives our mistakes, welcomes us back, and gives us strength to finish well. The Bible teaches us to love others as God loves us, showing His love through our actions.

Verse: 1 John 3:18 "My children, our love should not be only words and talk. Our love must be true love. And we should show that love by what we do."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your love. Help us love others as you love us. Guide us to do our best, encourage fairness, and have fun. In your name, we pray, amen.

Week 4: Joy (Feb. 24 - Mar. 1)

Today's topic is joy. Joy is a gift of great satisfaction or success in doing, finding, or getting something. With joy there is satisfaction in doing something meaningful and fulfilling.

Commentary: Joy is different from happiness. Happiness depends on circumstances—when things go our way, we're happy. But Joy is a gift from God that doesn't depend on how we feel.

For example, practicing ground balls repeatedly might feel boring and make us unhappy. But Joy comes from knowing this practice helps us become better players and do our best. Working hard on something important, even when it's not fun, can bring Joy because it makes us and our team stronger.

Verse: James 1:2 "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of Joy that comes from you and doesn't depend on our circumstances. Help us to find Joy in working hard and doing what's important, even when it's not easy or fun. Remind us that our efforts make us better and help our team. In your name, we pray, amen.

Week 5 : Peace (Mar. 3 - 8)

Today we will talk about what it is to have peace as it means in the Bible. This kind of peace is a piece of mind and of the heart that is deep down inside of us.

Commentary: True peace comes from God. How do we get it? By doing two things:

1. Trusting God in all circumstances—whether in success or disappointment. We have peace knowing God is in control and will guide us toward what's good, even if we don't always see it that way.
2. Working hard. We may not be the most talented, but with practice and perseverance, we'll improve over time. Keep going, and you'll see growth.

Verse: Colossians 3:23-24 "In all the work you are doing, work the best you can. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for men. Remember that you will receive your reward from the Lord, which he promised to his people. You are serving the Lord Christ."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for this time in Your presence. Help us remember that in the busyness of life, our time with You and with each other is what truly matters. Lead us to build strong, loving relationships that honor You. In Your name, we pray, amen.

Week 6: Patience (Mar. 10 - 15)

Patience is the ability to wait for a long time and to remain calm without becoming annoyed or upset. It is being able to wait peacefully. Sometimes that is easier said than done.

Commentary: Patience is a gift from God. For those who don't know God, it can be hard to stay patient. We need His help to trust that His ways and timing are better than ours. We may want something now, but God may have a different plan. Trust Him, wait calmly for His answer, and your patience will stand out..

Verse: Psalms 27:14 Wait for the Lord's help. Be strong and brave and wait for the Lord's help."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of patience. Help us to trust in Your timing and believe that Your ways are better than our own. When we're tempted to lose patience, remind us to wait calmly and trust You. May our patience stand out to others as a reflection of Your love. In Your name, we pray, amen.

Week 7: Kindness (Mar. 17 - 22)

Today's theme is kindness. What does it mean to show kindness to others? Kindness is best shown by being nice to those who are not nice to us. It is also doing more for others than they might ordinarily do for us.

Commentary: In the Bible, Kindness is not simply being nice most of the time. And it is not about being nice when others are nice to us. Kindness instead is about being gracious when others are rude or angry with us. Kindness is responding to others with gentleness, patience, or by just walking away when others are mean. Showing them, biblical kindness shows them good Christian values.

Verse: Joshua 2:12 "So now, make me promise before the Lord. Promise that you will show kindness to my family just as I showed you kindness. Give me some proof that you will do this."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, help me today to show kindness and compassion to others. Guide me to what is always pleasing to you so that my life becomes a living testimony to your love for us. It is in your name we pray, amen.

Week 8: Goodness (Mar. 24 - 29)

Today's theme is Goodness. Which means doing what is right, treating everyone equally, and showing kindness, just like Jesus has done. To live this way, we must walk closely with God.

Commentary: The Bible emphasizes the importance of being good over 700 times! A perfect, loving God created goodness, reflected in His son, Jesus. Goodness means doing what is right without favoritism, treating everyone equally, and choosing kindness first. It's about doing the right thing, as Jesus would, not based on our feelings. To do this, we must walk closely with God.

Verse: Micah 6:8 The Lord has told you what is good. He has told you what he wants from you: Do what is right to other people. Love being kind to others. And live humbly, trusting your God."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your goodness to us. Your goodness is who You are, and we trust in it as we see it in the world around us. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear Your word. In Your name, we pray, amen.

Week 9: Faithfulness (Mar. 31 - Apr. 5)

Today's topic is Faithfulness. Faithfulness is persistently seeking and following God who is always faithful and loyal to us. Here are some things God does for us:

Commentary: God created us for a purpose. He pursues and stays with us. He knows what is best for us. He speaks for us when we just don't know. He will never leave us or forsake us. God is for us and not against us!

How great is that? When things are difficult, we can remind ourselves of God's faithfulness to us to help us overcome worry and anxiety. We trust in the Lord to be faithful to us!

Verse: 1 Corinthians 1:9 "God is faithful. He is the one who has called you to share life with His son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for creating us with a purpose and for always being with us. We trust in Your faithfulness and know You will never leave us. When life gets difficult, help us to remember Your presence and overcome our worries. We rely on Your strength and guidance. In Your name, we pray, amen.

Week 10: Gentleness (Apr. 7 - 12)

Today's topic is Gentleness. Gentleness is treating others with kindness and respect, even when standing up for what is right.

Commentary: When playing our best, we avoid trash talking or being mean. We embrace good competition, respect others, and value the decisions of umpires and coaches. We celebrate wins and remain gracious in defeat, knowing we'll improve next time. We never cheat or disrespect others, and we find strength in gentleness.

Verse: Colossians 3:12 "God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So always do these things: Show mercy to others; be kind; humble; gentle; and patient."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, help us treat others with gentleness today, no matter what happens on the field. Guide us to play our best, have fun, and encourage each other to live with gentleness in our hearts. If we get angry, help us respond with kindness. In Your name, we pray, amen.

Week 11: Self-Control (Apr. 21 - 26)

Today's theme is Self-control. Self-control is the ability to control our emotions, thoughts, and actions.

Commentary: Whether we are angry, worried, frustrated or tempted to say and act out our anxieties, self-control is the ability to not give into bad behavior. Like kindness and gentleness which we have talked about already, self-control is also a gift from God. We need God's help to overcome our emotions and to think and act according to God's will for us. It is not that we are weak if we fail but that we must rely on God and trust that He will help us when we need to control our feelings and not overreact!

Verse: Proverbs 25:28 "A person who does not control himself is like a city whose walls have been broken down."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, I submit myself to You today, asking for Your help in exercising self-control. Guide me not to overreact with anger or frustration, but to encourage others and myself to do better. I trust in You to lead and guide me. In Your name, we pray, amen.

Week 12 Recap (Apr. 28 - May. 3)

Today's theme is a summary of the last 11 weeks of scripture and prayer. We have been talking about gifts from God that He gives us freely and abundantly to help us be better people according to His purposes for us.

Commentary: We know that God gives us Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control. These gifts are also called Fruit of the Spirit. By fruit we mean that God has given them to us and that we are also responsible to take care of the gifts he gives us. It is like picking ripe fruit from a tree that we have been taking care of. God provides the tree and the fruit, and we praise Him with our obedience.

Verse: Galatians 5:22-23 Traini "But the Spirit gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law that says these things are wrong."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for all the spiritual gifts You've given us. Help us use these gifts to live better lives and show Your love to others. May our example reflect Your goodness and influence. In Your name, we pray, amen.

Week 13: Leadership (May. 5 - 10)

Today's topic is leadership. Who can tell me what leadership means? What are some of the qualities of a good leader?

Commentary: Leadership is a person's ability to influence others to do and be better. Good leaders serve their team and consider the needs of others first. Jesus tells His disciples that leaders should not exercise authority over people. Instead, whoever wants to become great must lower himself to be a servant. Leaders realize that serving others is the only way to lead with a pure heart, free of pride and arrogance.

Verse: Mark 9:35 "Jesus sat down and called the Twelve Apostles. He said, 'Anyone who wants to be first must be the last. And they must be the servant of all.'"

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, I pray for all leaders of your people. I pray that they will not lead selfishly for their own gain but to serve your people for good. Help me Father to be obedient to your word today so that I can become a stronger leader tomorrow. It is in your name I pray, amen.

Week 14: Gratitude (May. 12 - 17)

Today's topic is Gratitude. Gratitude is about having a thankful heart in every situation, focusing on the good even when things are tough. It helps us recognize God's love and care in both big and small blessings

Commentary: Gratitude is more than saying "thank you"; it's having a thankful heart, even when things aren't perfect. God wants us to be thankful in every situation. Thanking Him helps us focus on the good, not just the bad. Even when things are tough, God is with us. Gratitude helps us see His love in the small blessings of life, like a good meal or a kind friend. The more we thank God, the more we see how He cares for us.

Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 "Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus."

Prayer: Dear God, thank You for all the blessings You give me. Help me remember to be thankful every day, even when things aren't easy. Teach me to see Your goodness in everything. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.