



WEEK THREE – FEBRUARY 2019 – SECOND/THIRD

Bible Story: *Never Gonna Give You Up* • Matthew 5:43–47

Bottom Line: *Love others because they matter to God*

Memory Verse: *“Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins.” – 1 John 4:10 (NIRV)*

Life App: *Love—Choosing to treat others the way you want to be treated*

Basic Truth: *I should treat others the way I want to be treated.*

Summary: Jesus brought His followers to a mountain to explain to them what it means to live as part of God’s kingdom. During that message, He said something surprising about love. In Matthew 5:43–47 Jesus said: *“You’ve heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy.’ But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you.”* Jesus wanted to be sure that love is bigger than we think, and everyone deserves love.

PRE-SERVICE ACTIVITIES

1. Early Arriver Idea

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Index cards; pencils

What You Do:

- Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and asking about their past week
- Invite kids to place their offerings in the *For Everyone* box on the wall near the main entrance
- Give each kid an index card or scrap piece of paper.
- Ask kids to write the name of either a villain or a hero.
- Kids will take turns sharing what they wrote, and the group will try to guess the name of the opposite character's name.
- To get kids' thinking going, some example characters might include:
 - Superman and Lex Luthor
 - Batman and Joker
 - Batman and Riddler
 - Jack Sparrow and Barbosa
 - Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader
 - Mr. Incredible and Syndrome
 - Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort

What You Say:

"[Transition] Let's go to Large Group, where we will hear a story about how Jesus wants us to do the opposite of what we really feel like doing when someone is not nice to us!"

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

LARGE GROUP

OVERVIEW:

Bottom Line: *Love others because they matter to God. We tend to make judgement calls on who deserves to receive love. But that's not the way God works. All people are created in God's image, and regardless of how much we get along or not, we should work to be nice and show God's love to them. We'll help kids understand how they can do this for the people in their life.*

SMALL GROUP

1. Not So Easy!

[Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Three prepared buckets, ping-pong balls, “You Decide Scenarios” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Take a moment to talk about and help kids define the word “enemy.”
 - An enemy can be someone who’s not very nice to you or other people.
 - It can be someone you just don’t get along with.
- Use the tape to mark a starting line.
- Place the “Family” and “Friends” buckets about five feet away from the starting line.
- Place the “Enemies” bucket about 10 feet from the starting line.
- Give each kid a ping-pong ball
- Ask kids to line up behind the line.
 - **Note:** *They don’t have to line up single file. Depending on how wide your space is, three to five kids can stand next to each other at one time. This way, multiple kids are able to throw their balls at the same time for each round.*
- Tell the kids that you will be reading different scenarios, each of which fit into one of the three categories: family, friends, or enemies.
- Instruct them to toss their ping-pong balls in the corresponding bucket after you are finished reading each scenario.
- After kids toss their balls, give them time to retrieve the balls before you read the next scenario.
- Encourage kids to show love to each other by making sure they rotate who gets to throw their balls first each time.

What You Say:

“It was pretty easy to toss the ping-pong balls into the first two buckets but harder to get it into the last one—the ‘enemies’ bucket. It’s the same with loving people. It often can be easy for us to love our friends and family but much harder to show love to those who aren’t often nice to us or people we just don’t get along with.

“There are times when someone is mean to us and we just want to be mean back. But Jesus showed love to those who weren’t nice to Him, and He wants us to do the same. It doesn’t matter if someone ‘deserves’ our love or not. What matters is that each and every person you meet was made by God and matters to God.

[Make It Personal] (Share a time when someone wronged you and you chose to show kindness instead of reacting poorly. Share how difficult it was and how it felt to do the opposite of what you really wanted to do. Also, share how it impacted the other person.)
“Unkind people matter to God, just like kind people matter to God. [Bottom Line] Love others because they matter to God.”

2. Let It Go

[Application Activity]

Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play

What You Need: “What Would You Do Cards” (Activity Page), paper, markers

What You Do:

- Pair kids up and give each pair a card.
- Tell the kids to brainstorm creative ways they can be loving toward others in the situation described on the cards.
- Challenge kids to come up with more than one way to deal with each situation.
- Set out paper and markers, but give pairs the option to act out their solutions as well.
 - **NOTE:** *Remind kids they are made in the image of God and because they matter to Him, He doesn’t want them to be hurt or be treated poorly by others. If they are being harmed in any way, encourage them to share their hurts with a trusted adult. Consult with church staff about any situation that you feel needs to be addressed.*
- Give kids a few minutes to brainstorm ideas, draw, and/or make plans for their skits.
- Be prepared to help get kids’ thinking going, if they’re stumped for ideas.
- As you invite pairs to share their solutions, read the corresponding card out loud before letting them present what they came up with.

What You Say:

“Wow! You guys were great. Have you ever found yourself in situations like the ones we talked about? (Pause for responses.) How did you respond? (Pause for responses.) But we serve a loving God. He loves us and shows us that we matter to Him. Even though it’s the harder thing to do, walking away is often better than being mean back. When you find simple ways to show kindness to those who aren’t nice to you, you’re showing them that they matter to God.
[Bottom Line] Love others because they matter to God.”

3. Pray and Dismiss

[Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Tell kids to close their eyes and think about someone who has been mean to them recently.
- Encourage them to take a few seconds and silently pray for that person.
- Instruct them to ask God to help them be kind in the future when someone is mean to them.
- Close with the prayer below.

What You Say:

“God, thank You for making all of us and loving us. We’re so glad we all matter to You. Help us to remember that EVERYONE matters to You—even people who aren’t kind to us. Help us to always be kind back to people who are mean to us. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

*Let’s say the Bottom Line together one more time. Repeat it after me. **[Bottom Line] Love others because they matter to God!**”*

As adults arrive to pick up, ask the kids to share how God wants them to love people they wouldn’t normally love.