

Mercy, Mercy Me

Bible Truth: Mercy, Mercy Me (Love Your Enemies) • Matthew 5:43-48

Bottom Line: Be kind to people who aren't kind to you.

Key Question: How can you be kind to people you don't get along with?

Memory Verse: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." *Luke 6:31, NIV*

Life App: Kindness—Showing others they are valuable by how you treat them

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

Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (9:00, 10:15, 11:30)

9:00 & 11:30

Get Your Head in the Game

- Index cards
- Markers

10:15

Just For Fun

- No supplies needed

Bible: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (9:10, 10:25, 11:40)

- Bible Presentation in Large Group

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (9:40, 10:55, 12:10)

9:00 & 11:30

Bible Story Extension

- Bibles
- 1-2 Blankets depending on the size of each small group

10:15

Verses to Take with You

- Bible
- Sticky note; one per student
- Quarter

Prayer: Making it Personal (9:55, 11:10, 12:25)

- Three index cards for every two students
- Pens
- One TV or DVD remote with fast forward, pause, and rewind buttons

Dismiss (10:00, 11:15, 12:30)

Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (Small Groups, 10 minutes)

Take some time before your students arrive to pray for them. Pray that they would catch the vision of treating others like God treats us, that they would understand the concept of loving their enemies and treating them with kindness. Pray that they would leave small group with one action step that they could do this upcoming week to love their enemies.

9:00 & 11:30**Get Your Head in the Game****What You Need:** Index cards, markers**What You Do:**

- **Choose** two volunteers, then assign them the numbers “one” and “two”
- **Give** them each an index card and a marker
- **Ask** a question such as, “What is something you love to smell?” Partner one writes his answer to the question, and partner two writes what he thinks partner one will put for his answer.
- **Switch** out partners after each round, letting students take a turn in both roles. Keep score if desired. (1 point for partner two if he guesses correctly; 1 point for partner one if his answer is not guessed correctly)
- **Encourage** partners to answer honestly. After each round, let partner one give more details about his answer to help others get to know him in a non-threatening environment. No making fun of anyone’s answers.
- Below are suggested questions to get the game started. You can repeat the same question with different partners or come up with additional ones that fit your group.
- **Invite** the students to ask funny questions of their own.
 - Use one word to describe your feet.
 - What’s your favorite animal with a tail?
 - Where would you go if you could go anywhere in the world?
 - What did you eat for dinner last night?
 - If you could have a superpower, what would it be?
 - What’s the first thing you say when you get up in the morning?
 - When was the last time you wore slippers?
 - What’s the longest you’ve ever slept?
 - What would you buy with \$100?
- **Say**, “I have one last question, but this one is for each of you to answer. I’ll write down what I think most of you will say then we’ll see how close I come.”
- **Give** each student a note card and marker and then ask the following question: “Without saying any names, what is one word you would use to describe an enemy acts towards others?”
- **Let** kids show their answers and compare them with what you have written.

Wrap Up and Say:

“That last question is one we probably don’t like to think about. Everyone has someone they don’t get along with. We might not call that person our enemy, but we probably don’t call him our friend. My guess is that the face of someone you don’t like popped into your mind as you thought of your answer to my question. Enemies are all of the things you described. But God has some words to add to our lists. Let’s go to Large Group and find out what they are.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

10:15**Just For Fun***Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding***What You Need:** No supplies needed**What You Do:**

- **Ask:** Would you rather live on a beautiful island with someone you don't get along with or live in a cold, dark cave with your best friend?
- **Another option:** If there was a machine that could turn an enemy into a friend, what do you think it would look like? What would it be called? How would it work?
- **Let** students discuss the answer to the question.
- **Encourage** them to ask each other questions about any of the answers they gave.

. Everyone has someone they don't get along with. We might not call that person our enemy, but we probably don't call him our friend. My guess is that the face of someone you don't like popped into your mind as you thought of your answer to my enemy to friend machine question. God has some things to say on the subject of enemies, friends, and us. Let's go to Large Group and find out what they are."

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

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Life App: Kindness—Showing others they are valuable by how you treat them

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

Bible: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 30 minutes)

GETTING READY

1. Opener/Closer

What You Need:

- Host
- Two "Buzzers" for the game

2. Bible Truth

What You Need:

- Communicator
- Bible

3. Worship

What You Need:

- Power Praise Team

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- "Rock This Planet"
- "Live Loud"
- "Forever Reign"

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Bible: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 30 minutes)

Engage kids' hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible Truth, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

CG: 10-second countdown

CG: Rewind Theme Slide

Host enters.

Welcome

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game (Super Bowl), movie opening, or a viral video on YouTube, etc. February events include: The Winter Olympics during February 9-25, Valentine's Day on February 14, and Random Acts of Kindness Day on February 17. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

Host transitions to Worship.

WORSHIP

SFX: "Rock this Planet"

SFX: "Live Loud"

SFX: "Forever Reign"

Power Praise team exits as Host retakes the stage. Host transitions to the opening game.

Opener

HOST: "Hey everyone! I've got a great game to get us started today. Our theme this month is Rewind: Kindness Deserves a Replay, so we've been celebrating some of our favorite movies. Now, I know many of you know your Disney movie heroes, but I'm wondering . . . how are you at identifying Disney movie villains?"

"We're going to go guys versus girls this time. Let me get three guys and three girls up here who think they're Disney experts."

Host chooses three guys and three girls and has the boys face the girls on stage (like Family Feud). Give each team something they can use as a buzzer (rubber ducky, flag, bell, etc.).

“In just a moment, an image will appear on the screen. You’ll see a series of emojis together that will hopefully make you think of a movie. Now, I DON’T NEED THE NAME OF THE MOVIE! I need the villain from that movie. So when you hit the buzzer and I call on you, give me the famous villain from that movie. You got it? All right, let’s go!”

“Here’s our first movie. Can you name that villain?”

CG: Emoji Villain Game Slide 1a

Host calls on the first team to buzz in and gives them a chance to answer. If they get it wrong or can’t answer, the other team gets a chance to guess. Reveal the answer slide once the teams have guessed.

CG: Emoji Villain Game Slide 1b

Host leads them through all seven clues and seven answers.

CG: Emoji Villain Game Slides (#2-7)

HOST: “Wow! You guys really know your movie villains! This time, the *[guys/girls]* are the champions. Thanks for playing.”

Host dismisses contestants to their seats. Host exits as Communicator enters.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: “What’s going on, my people?! As we get started today, imagine yourself sitting quietly in your math class. Now, you’re *really* good at math, and the teacher has just explained a *really* hard math problem. You understand exactly how she did it, but there are some people around you who look really confused. One of them is your *best friend*, and you decide to take the time to explain it to her, even though you are probably going to have to do some of your work at home now because of the time it took. But, hey, maybe it’s worth it; you’re a good friend—nice job!”

“But, as you are about get started with your own work, you feel a tap on your shoulder. You turn around and it is *that* kid. You know . . . the one that teases you and gets other people to laugh at you. The one kid that tripped you while you carried your lunch across the cafeteria. He asks, ‘Can you explain it to me, too?’ And your response?”

CG: GIF #1 of somebody telling somebody no

“Now, let’s go to your soccer game. All throughout the game, this kid on the other team has been taking cheap-shots at you and trash talking. ‘How dare you say that about my mama!’ Then, while going for the ball, he trips and hurts his ankle. He’s lying on the ground. Your response?”

CG: GIF #2 of somebody hysterically laughing

“Finally, let’s go to your own home. This kid who lives near you has been driving you crazy. He’s loud and obnoxious, yelling at cars as they drive by. He keeps taking stuff out of your yard without asking. And when it finally shows back up, it’s scratched or broken! The next day as you are walking out to the bus, you watch as someone backs his car over the kid’s bike, where it was left in the street. The kid comes running out of the house to find the mangled piece of metal. Your response?”

CG: GIF #3 of somebody pointing and laughing

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “Now, all month long we’ve been talking about what God thinks about kindness. Showing kindness is definitely a wise choice. I think we all know that by now. But the truth is that just like these scenarios, you don’t always get along with everyone. You’ll always face the kid in your math class, the trash talker on the other team, or that kid in the neighborhood. So does that mean you’re off the hook? Can we just show kindness to the people who are kind to us, but we don’t have to worry about showing kindness to the people who aren’t? Wow, those are really good questions. I’m thinking we need to head to God’s Word and find out some answers. Sound good?”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “Thankfully Jesus Himself had something to say about this. Matthew records a famous series of teachings called The Sermon on the Mount. This is one of the longer teachings of Jesus that we have in our Bibles, and it has been called “The Sermon on the Mount” because on this particular day, Jesus and His followers were sitting on the side of a small mountain by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus explained how His followers could live as part of God’s kingdom.”

“Listen to what Jesus says. *(Read directly from Matthew 5:43, NIV)* “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy . . .’”

“Pause. Now as Jesus says these words, I’m sure there were a lot of people shaking their heads ‘yes.’ In fact, there are probably a lot of people in the crowd responding like this . . .”

CG: GIF #4 of cheering (you know that’s right!)

“See, that day when Jesus spoke to those crowds, several enemies might have come to mind. The whole country was controlled by the Romans, and they HATED the Romans. The Romans were mean and nasty. The people Jesus was talking to were constantly reminded that they weren’t truly free while the Romans ran the show!”

“And not only did they have enemies on the outside, like the Romans, but they had enemies on the inside, too! The Romans hired Jewish people as tax collectors. These were native people who would collect the taxes from their own people—taxes that would go to the Romans. And these tax collectors were crooks! They would take more than they were asked to and keep the extra!”

“And then there were the people living on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, the pagans of the Decapolis! These people stood for everything they were against.”

“Romans. Tax collectors. Pagans. There were PLENTY of enemies in that day. The people might have thought to themselves, ‘We’re with You, Jesus! We hate our enemies!’”

“But Jesus wasn’t finished speaking yet. Listen to this.”

(Continue reading from Matthew 5:44-45a, Nlrv) But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you. Then you will be children of your Father who is in heaven.”

“You know what the crowd is thinking when Jesus said that?”

CG: GIF #5 of somebody confused or dumbfounded

“Showing kindness to enemies? That’s shocking! But did you catch the WHY? Jesus says when you do this, you will be like your Father in heaven. But we need to ask: how does God do that?”

“Jesus continues. *(Read directly from Matthew 5:45b Nlrv) ‘He causes his sun to shine on evil people AND good people. He sends rain on those who do right and those who don’t,’*” *(emphasis ours).*

“When God sends the sun, He doesn’t just send it to people who love Him or go to church or sing worship songs to Him. He sends the sun for everyone, because even God loves those who might not love Him back. And when God sends the rain, which we think maybe is a bad thing because it cancels our game or gets us wet when we’re walking home, but for them it was a good thing because it waters the crops. He doesn’t just send rain to people who read the Bible or go to *[name of environment]*. He sends the rain for everyone because even God loves those who might not love Him back.”

“In the passage, Jesus goes on to say that ANYBODY can love people who love them. Even the Romans or the tax collectors or the pagans can do that. But to show kindness to people who are pretty unkind to you? That is tough. That takes God’s help and God’s strength.”

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “So let’s go back to your math class . . . and the bully who is tapping you on the shoulder asking for your help on math. Now think about what Jesus is saying. Anybody can help her best friend with math. That’s easy. But what if we want to take Jesus seriously and be like our Father in heaven? Then we are going to show kindness and help the bully understand the math problem.”

“Or think about the soccer game. If that were our teammate rolling on the ground with the ankle injury, it would be easy to help him up and walk him over to the bench. But when it is the kid who has been throwing cheap shots and trash-talking all game? That’s tough! But if we want to be like our Father in heaven, we’re going to reach down and help him up, put our arm around him and walk him to the bench.”

“Finally, let’s go back to the neighborhood and the obnoxious neighbor who had it coming when his bike got run over in his driveway. If that were our friend, we’d feel pretty bad for him . . . maybe even loan him our bike while he gets his fixed. But loaning our bike to the neighborhood kid who steals it half the

time anyway?! You've gotta be crazy! But if we want to be like our Father in heaven, we're going to walk over, help him collect all the bike pieces, and maybe even offer to let him borrow our bike."

"Now, I'm not saying that you are going to best friends with everybody. And to be honest, there are some people who are hard to trust and you shouldn't hang around with. But there is always a way to show kindness, even to the people who are not kind to us. After all, someone in your life might think that you are the enemy. Regardless of how people "feel" we are asked to live by Truth; God's truth. And that truth includes 'Do to others as you would have them do to you.' Luke 6:31, NIV."

CG: Memory Verse Slide

"What we tend to forget is that everyone has their way of looking at things. Our feelings will lead us in all kinds of directions. That's why it is important to remain grounded in Truth; to act on Truth; to live according to Truth. That truth includes loving your enemies and showing kindness to those who you "feel" are not kind to you. After all, that unkind person might be you to someone else. But what if we were all kind, no matter what. Maybe things would begin to shift in hearts. Shift enough to where God could grow in their lives. Maybe."

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "So . . . as you head to small group, I want you to think about your own lives right now and who you might say it is a challenge to be kind to right now. And even though I gave three examples, I'll bet you have some *even better* ones that you can discuss as a group. And as you share, I want you to consider this question: How can you be kind to people you don't get along with?"

CG: Key Question Slide

"Wouldn't that be amazing if this week you acted just like your Father in Heaven and showed kindness to the most unexpected people? It might even make them go like this . . ."

CG: GIF #6 of somebody complete shocked/surprised (happy)

"Let's pray."

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard then dismisses them to small group.

SFX: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.

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Life App: Kindness—Showing others they are valuable by how you treat them

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

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (Small Groups, 15 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible Truth applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

9:00 & 11:30

Bible Story Extension

What You Need: Bible, blanket(s)

What You Do:

- **Acknowledge** that we all have people we don't get along with.
- **Say:** "We don't have to be best friends with everyone we know, but we DO need to treat even the people who aren't kind to us with respect and kindness. Who knows, God might use us to play a part in turning someone's heart around and changing an enemy into a friend."
- **Ask:** "Have you ever watched the kindness of one person turn the unkindness of someone else around?
 - Tell about a time when a friend or family member loved you when you were being mean and unlovable. How did you feel?
 - Have you ever been kind to someone you didn't like and then you eventually ended up being friends?
- **Fold** a blanket so there's only enough room for all the kids to sit or stand facing one direction (You may need to form another team on another blanket if everyone won't fit).
- **Face** the students and **read** Matthew 5:43, then **let** the students think of a few reasons why responding to our enemies in this way could be a problem.
- **Challenge** the students to work together to turn their blanket(s) to face the other direction but do so while staying on the blanket the whole time.
- When they have succeeded in turning the blanket(s), **read** Matthew 5:44 then let the students share reasons why Jesus' way (showing kindness) is a better way to respond to those who treat us badly.

Wrap Up and Say:

"Turning a blanket around while standing on it took some effort. Turning an enemy into a friend will take effort, too. It starts with an act of kindness as you pray for God to turn the heart of an enemy into a friend."

10:15**Verses to Take with You****[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]***Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application***What You Need:** Bible, sticky notes; one per kid, quarter**What You Do:**

- **Give** everyone a sticky note.
- **Say:** “We face a lot of situations where it’s hard to be kind. Some are little annoying things like when someone cuts in front of you in line. Others are much bigger and hurt much worse, for example, when someone makes up a lie about you. Big or small, kindness is still the way to respond to the mean stuff that comes at you.”
 - What are good ways to react to the small, irritating things that family members and others do to you?
 - If someone hurts you in a big way, whom can you go to for help and encouragement?
 - Do you think a huge, deep, ugly hurt means you’re off the hook and can forget about showing kindness to that person? After all, they don’t deserve it, right? What d’ya think?
- **Ask** the students to tear their sticky note to the exact size and shape of a quarter without actually seeing the quarter ahead of time.
- **Compare** the paper quarters with the real thing to see how closely they match.
- **Say:** “You came close to matching the quarter. I’m guessing that as you tore your sticky note, you had the image of an actual quarter in your mind, trying to remember its exact size. You pictured the real thing then tried to imitate it. That’s how it works with kindness, too.
- **Read** or ask a couple of volunteers to read Ephesians 4:32 and Leviticus 19:18 to the group.
- **Ask:**
 - Name some things about Jesus that you picture in your mind when you think of Him as our perfect example of kindness.
 - How do Ephesians 4:32 and Leviticus 19:18 encourage you?
 - What part of these verses might be the hardest for you to live out this week?

Wrap up by asking each of the students to finish this sentence in his own mind: “I need to remember Jesus’ example this week when I _____.”

All Service Times**Pray and Dismiss (5 minutes)****[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]**

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

What You Need: Index cards, pen, TV or DVD remote with fast forward, pause, and rewind button

What You Do:

- **Give** partners 3 index cards and pens.
- **Refer** to the TV remote and ask students to imagine that it has the power to rewind, pause, or fast-forward their lives.
- **Invite** them to work with their partners to write each of the following on their index cards:
 - “Rewind” – What’s something you can do to go back and repair a hurt you’ve caused or experienced recently?
 - “Pause” – Rather than getting angry or getting even, what’s a better way to respond the next time you’re wronged by someone? *(For example, pray for someone, do them a favor, and so on.)*
 - “Fast-Forward” – What’s one way you can show kindness this week?
- When finished, **collect** the cards and sit together in a circle, then let partners briefly share what they wrote.
- **Hand** the remote to the student on your right, then invite him to pray (silently or out loud) using ideas discussed earlier. Then, have him pass the remote to the right when he’s done.
- When the remote is back in your hands, **close** in prayer.

“Dear Jesus, You know what it’s like to have enemies. You know what it’s like to be hurt, betrayed, ignored, made fun of and hated. But more than all of that, You know how to show kindness in the midst of an unkind world. Help us to learn from You. Help us follow Your example this week and to treat others the way You would treat them and the way we would like to be treated. In Your name we pray, Amen.”

Pass out Parent CUE cards as adults arrive for pick-up.