

# Mercy, Mercy Me

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

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

**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: Setting the Tone for the Experience (9:00, 10:15, 11:30)**

**9:00 & 11:30**

### **Wheel of Unkindness**

- Wheel of Unkindness; 1 for each small group

**10:15**

### **Early Arriver**

- No supplies needed

## **Bible: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (9:15, 10:30, 11:45)**

- Bible Presentation in Large Group

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

**9:00 & 11:30**

### **Bombarding Balloons**

- Inflated balloons; 1 for each kid
- Timer

**10:15**

### **Balance to the Force**

- 8 small heavy objects labeled "Kind"
- 8 small light objects labeled "Unkind"
- Plastic coat hanger scale:
  - Hang one plastic bag from each end of the hanger; tie only one handle of the bag, leaving the bag open so objects can be placed inside
  - This will make a balancing scale if the hook of the hanger is balanced on someone's finger, or a dowel, railing, etc.

## **Prayer (9:50, 11:05, 12:20)**

- No supplies needed

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

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## **Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (Small Groups, 15 minutes)**

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's Bible Truth.

*Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Everyone has people around them who are unkind at times. And everyone has experience being that unkind person. Ask God for the strength to respond to unkindness with the opposite: kindness. Pray that He would give your kids the courage to be kind even when someone is not kind to them.*

**9:00 & 11:30**

### **Wheel of Unkindness**

**What You Need:** Wheel of Unkindness

#### **What You Do:**

- Encourage kids to form a circle so you can put the spinner in the middle where they can all reach.
- Allow every kid to spin and act out the unkind challenge they land on.
- Continue until each kid has a turn and as time and interest allows.

#### **What You Say:**

"Sometimes we laugh at people or do or say things that are unkind. But the truth is, if you're unkind in a serious way, it can really hurt someone. **[Transition] Today in Large Group we are going to learn what we can do for people who are being unkind to us.**"

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

**10:15****Early Arriver Idea***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:**

- Welcome each kid to Small Group.
- Ask about their week. Did they find a way to be kind to someone who was overlooked? How did they do it?
- Play “Opposites Popcorn.”
  - Start by saying a word with an opposite, like “up.”
  - The first kid to stand up and shout “down” (the opposite of “up”) gets to call out the next example, like “light.”
  - Then the kid to stand first and yell “dark” gets to call out the next example. Play as long as time allows.
- Talk about opposites for a little while.
  - What do they think the opposite of “friend” is?
  - What about the opposite of “kindness”?

**What You Say:**

“Opposites is a theme for us in Large Group today. I know we’ve been talking about kindness all month. Today, we’re going to look at what happens when the opposite of kindness becomes part of the picture. Let’s go check it out.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

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## **Bible: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 25 minutes)**

### GETTING READY

#### 1. Opener/Closer

**What You Need:**

- Host

#### 2. Bible Truth

**What You Need:**

- Historyteller
- Host
- Bible, highlighted with the selected verses
- Remote control
- A box of action figures

#### 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, 25 minutes)**

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

**CG:** 10 Second count down

**CG:** Rewind Theme Slide

*Host enters with lots of energy and welcomes kids into the environment.*

**HOST:** "Hey, everybody! It's me, [Host's name]! Welcome to [your environment's name], the place where the coolest kids come to hang out, have fun, and learn. If you want to have fun, I want you to turn up the volume (*point to your ear*) here. Give your ear a gentle twist. Like this. (*Twist ear.*) Then say, 'Turn it up!'"

**HOST and KIDS:** (*Twist ear.*) "Turn it up!"

**HOST:** "There we go! That's better, right? Now that you've got your volume all the way up, let's take a couple of minutes to remind ourselves what we're talking about this month: KINDNESS! Raise your hand if you think you remember the definition. (*Pause for response.*) Let's see if you were right."

**CG:** Kindness Slide

"Yeah! Let's read this together."

**HOST and KIDS:** "Kindness is showing others they are valuable by how you treat them."

**HOST:** "One more time!"

**HOST and KIDS:** "Kindness is showing others they are valuable by how you treat them."

**HOST:** "You nailed it! We have talked about so many ways to be kind this month. We've talked about being kind at home, being kind at school, being kind to people in your family, being kind to people you know a little bit, and even being kind to people you might not know at all. I can't wait to find out who we're talking about today!"

**SFX:** Upbeat game music

*(Hold your hand to your ear.)* “Looks like we’ll find out after our game today! OOOH, and this one’s a good one! Here’s how you play.

“I’ll describe a popular character who is known as a ‘bad guy’ or an ‘enemy’ in a movie you’ve probably seen. When you think you can name the movie, raise your hand. I’ll call on you, and you can answer. Everyone understand? Great! Let’s play!

*Host leads the game and comments as kids respond. If it seems like the kids are having a hard time answering, you can ask Small Group Leaders to help them or give them hints or you can continue to give hints.*

“Here’s our first FAMOUS enemy.

“Any guesses? I’ll give you a hint. These bad guys were in bad moods until they devoured a certain happy, hugging, and always-singing creature. *(Pause for response.)* Yes! These are the Bergens from the *Trolls* movie!

“And here’s our next enemy.

“Here’s your hint. This bad guy is the captain of a ship. But he’s only got one good hand. *(Pause for response.)* Great job! That’s Captain Hook—Peter Pan’s arch nemesis.

“Let’s see our next enemy!

“Your hint for this one is . . . he caused quite a *storm*. He is the key rival to a leading racer, Lightning McQueen *(Pause for response.)* I loved that movie! Yes, this is Jackson Storm from *Cars 3*. Let’s keep going!

“This is an older movie. You may not have seen it, but I bet you’ve heard of it. There’s a princess involved. Her name may ring a BELLE. *(Pause for response.)* You sure know your movies! This wasn’t tricky for you. This is Gaston from *Beauty and the Beast*.

“This one is a little trickier. He started off as a bad guy, but in the end, he really GREW on people and minions alike! *(Pause for response.)* Yep! You guessed it! It’s Gru from *Despicable Me*.

“This one is from another classic princess movie. It’s about a princess who lived in a tower where things got a little HAIRY. *(Pause for response.)* You’ve got it! It’s Mother Gothel from *Tangled*, the story of Rapunzel.

“You guys did a great a job knowing your enemies. Maybe—just maybe—our game is a hint for what we’ll talk about later. I say we find out. Please welcome [Historyteller’s Name].”

*Host exits. Historyteller enters.*

**SETTING UP THE BIBLE TRUTH**

**HISTORYTELLER:** “Hey, everyone! Hope you’re doing great today! We’ve been hanging out all month talking about what God says about being kind to others. By now, it’s no secret. Kindness is important not only for us, but also to God. We know that He wants us to treat other people like they’re really important and valuable, because they are!”

“And you know what? That SOUNDS good. Maybe it even sounds easy. How hard can it be to be nice to people? Well, maybe that’s true if they are nice to you! But what if they AREN’T nice to you? Then what do you do?”

“Raise your hand if you’ve ever been treated badly by someone for no reason. I mean, there’s no other way to say it. They were just mean! *(Raise your hand.)* Yeah, me too. Unfortunately, that’s real life. Not everyone is going to be nice and kind all the time. In fact, there are probably times what we’ve not been so nice to people around us too. But when you feel like someone is treating you badly, you have a choice to make, right? How will you respond? Will you only be kind to people who are kind to you? Or what if you chose to be kind to people who are UNkind to you? What might happen then? Well, let’s find out together.”

**WHAT NOT TO DO**

**HISTORYTELLER:** “[Host’s name] is going to help me out here for a second. Looks like he’s brought some friends.

*Host enters with the prop box of action figures, etc.*

“Let’s start at the bus stop. You’re at the bus stop waiting for the school bus to come and pick you up for school. But you’re not alone. You’re standing with other kids from your neighborhood, one of whom is the girl from down the street. You two don’t get along very well. She seems to have a bad attitude about most things. She looks at you and says, ‘Oh. You’re wearing THAT?’ Oooooohhhhhh. I bet you can think of what you WANT to say back, right? On the inside, you probably feel like this.

*Host pulls out the two chess pieces and starts making them fight each other, making punching and kicking noises.*

“You probably feel like saying . . . *(long pause)* something that’s not very kind.

*Host puts down the chess pieces so kids aren’t distracted by the movement.*

“Or what if your family wants to order pizza, and you’re trying to figure out what toppings to get on it. You just want cheese. No pepperoni. No onions. No gross mushrooms. But your older brother is like, ‘UGH! Plain cheese? That is SO boring. What a waste of a good pizza!’ *(Pause.)* Let me guess how you’re feeling in that moment.

*Host holds up the Rey and Kylo Ren action figures and starts making them fight each other, making light saber noises.*

“Raise your hand if you’d be tempted to say something not-so-nice back to him. *(Raise your hand.)*”

*Host puts down the action figures.*

“Or maybe you’re picking teams for football, and you’re one of the last ones picked. The team captain looks at you, sighs, and says, ‘I guess I’ll take him.’ The worst, right? I bet I know how you feel when that happens.

*Host holds up the Angry Birds and starts making them fight each other, making angry squawking noises.*

“You’d probably have a hard time not saying something mean back to him, am I right?”

*Host puts down the Angry Birds.*

### LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

**HISTORYTELLER:** “Whenever something like that happens, the first thing we want to do is get revenge and make people pay for what they’ve done to us. But is that the best way to live? That’s a big question, isn’t it? And when we have big questions like that, the first place we should look is the Bible. And it turns out that Jesus actually talked about how to respond to people who aren’t kind to us. He was on a mountainside teaching a large crowd of people. You can read what he said in the book of Matthew, chapter 5. *(Hold up Bible.)* [Host’s name] is going to read it for you.”

*Host opens the Bible and reads.*

**HOST:** “You have 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. . . . If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Even the tax collectors do that. If you greet only your own people, what more are you doing than others? Even people who are ungodly do that. So be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” *(Matthew 5:43-44, 46-48 NIV).*

**HISTORYTELLER:** “Wow. Thanks, [Host’s name]. There you have it. ANYONE can be kind to people who are kind to them. But Jesus is calling us to a much higher standard. He’s challenging us to **[Bottom Line] be kind to people who aren’t kind to you.**”

### WHAT TO DO

**HISTORYTELLER:** “Now, here’s the deal. In the examples we talked about earlier, you probably wouldn’t call those people your enemies. But you DO need to know how to react when someone you know does something unkind. The secret is, we’ve got to stop and ask God for help in those moments. We can’t rely on ourselves to be able to respond with love and kindness, because our first instinct is to get back at them and do something mean in return. We’ve got to rely on God to help us, so we don’t accidentally become an Angry Bird! *(Hold up one of the Angry Bird stuffed animals.)* You know what? Let’s hit rewind *(hold up the remote)* . . .

**SFX: Rewind**

“ . . .and see if we can replay those situations a little bit differently.”



*Historyteller and Host hold up the two chess pieces and act along while they say the dialogue.*

“Oh. You’re wearing THAT?” (*Hold up the remote.*)

**SFX: Rewind**

**HOST:** (*Long pause, deep breath.*) “Yeah. I actually really like it. Everybody’s got their own style, you know. Which I think is cool.”

*Historyteller and Host hold up the Rey and Kylo Ren action figures and act along while they say the dialogue.*

**HISTORYTELLER:** “UGH! Plain cheese? That is SO boring. What a waste of a good pizza!” (*Hold up the remote.*)

**SFX: Rewind**

**HOST:** (*Long pause, look up like you’re saying a quick prayer.*) “You know what? That’s why it’s a good thing they let you split up the toppings. We can each get what we want on our half. I don’t mind picking a couple things off anyway.”

*Historyteller and Host hold up the Angry Birds stuffed animals and act along while they say the dialogue.*

**HISTORYTELLER:** (*Sigh.*) “I guess I’ll take him.” (*Hold up the remote.*)

**SFX: Rewind**

**HOST:** (*Long pause.*) “Don’t worry, man. You won’t regret it. We’re going to win this.”

**HISTORYTELLER:** (*To Host*) “Thanks, man. Nice job.” (*Give him a fist bump.*)

*Host exits.*

### **WRAPPING UP THE BIBLE TRUTH**

**HISTORYTELLER:** “There’s something important I want you guys to see here. In those scenarios, notice that the two of them didn’t have to immediately become best buds. You don’t necessarily have to be their friend, but you can be friendly. You can be kind even if they’re not.

“And it’s not like you have to roll over and take it when someone is being awful to you. You should always tell someone not to do something that’s bothering you. Tell a teacher or other adult if they won’t stop after you’ve told them to stop. But you can be confident and respond to their unkindness with kindness. Let’s take a look at our Bottom Line for today.

**CG: Bottom Line Slide**

**[Bottom Line]** “Be kind to people who aren’t kind to you. When we do that, it’s powerful and really stands out. After all, it’s normal for people to act mean when others are mean to them. But when you can show kindness even when the other person doesn’t deserve it, that shows something different—something special. It shows other people what it really looks like to follow Jesus. And you never know. Sometimes people can be changed forever by a simple act of kindness.

“Let’s pray and ask God to help us be kind to people even when they’re not kind to us.”

“If you have an offering with you today, raise your hand and we will bring the bucket over to you.”

“Now, up on your feet and give some mad respect to our Power Praise team!”

*Power Praise team enters as Historyteller exits.*

### **Worship**

**SFX:** “Rock this Planet”

**SFX:** “Live Loud”

**SFX:** “Forever Reign”

*Host enters as Power Praise Team exits.*

### **Closer**

**HOST:** “Wow. What an incredible truth from Jesus. But this isn’t always easy, is it? I mean, there will be times in your life when people aren’t going to be kind to you. They will cut in front of you in line. They will talk about you behind your back. They might even call you names or just be plain mean.

“But people like that need to be loved, too. Sometimes that’s what they need the most. After all, sometimes, we’re ‘people like that.’ And when you are, kindness is usually what helps you feel better and come out of the unkindness cycle. So,

**CG:** *Memory Verse Slide*

“‘Do to others as you would have them do to you.’ Even when they are unkind.”

“You see, Jesus died on a cross to show us He loves us no matter what—no matter what mistakes we’ve made or what bad things we’ve done. We don’t have to do anything to earn that love. And if you’re a follower of Jesus, you have the opportunity to show others that same kind of love.

**CG:** *Bottom Line Slide*

“One thing to remember today is this: **[Bottom Line]** Be kind to people who aren’t kind to you. When someone is mean to you, you’re going to be tempted to be mean back. When someone insults you, you’re going to be tempted to insult back. When that happens, think about Jesus and what He did for you. Ask Him to help you show kindness to the people who may not have earned it.

“Do you think you can do that? Is that something you can replay (*hold up the remote*) . . .

**SFX: *Rewind***

“. . . at school, in your neighborhood, or on your team? I think you can, with God’s help! That’s what you’re going to talk about back in your small groups. Have a great time! See you next time!”

*Dismiss children to their Small Groups.*

**CG: *Small Group Slide***

**Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (10 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****Bombarding Balloons****What You Need:** Balloons; 1 for each kid, timer**What You Do:**

- Give each kid a balloon, and tell kids to stand in a wide circle.
- Then take the balloon from 2 or 3 kids and tell them to stand in the middle of the circle.
- Explain that the other kids will throw their balloons at the kids in the middle.
- The kids in the middle have to stand still, not hit the balloons back, and say kind things for 20 seconds.
- Kids can pick up balloons and throw them again, but they have to stay at least five feet away from the kid in the middle when they throw them. (Show them how far five feet is.)
- Give each kid a turn in the middle. If any kid doesn't want to stand in the middle, don't force it. Just move on to the next kid.
  - After each kid has had a turn
  - Ask your few to share (without using names) about something unkind that someone has done to them.
  - As they respond, ask them what the opposite would be in that situation. How could that person have been kind instead of unkind? For example: Someone cut in front of me in line. They could have waited their turn instead.
  - After you have had some discussion, remind your few of this month's memory verse.
  - Encourage them to go out and be the kindness that they wish to see.
  - Repeat the verse together as a group.

**What You Say:**

"When someone hits you or throws unkind words at you, you want to do it back to them. But Jesus tells you to **[Bottom Line] be kind to people who aren't kind to you**. But I want to explain something about that. It doesn't mean you should just let someone be mean to you over and over again. If someone keeps being mean, tell an adult, and then don't play with them again. God just wants you to avoid being mean back to them, not to keep getting hurt by them."

"Our memory verse this month tells us that we should show the kindness to others that we would want to receive ourselves. I want to encourage you to go out and be the kindness that you wish to see. If you want people to wait their turn in line, you should let someone go in front of you! Whatever sounds like a really cool thing to be given, give that very thing to someone else. And don't forget to **[Bottom Line] be kind to people who aren't kind to you**, not just those who are kind."

**10:15****Balance to the Force**

**What You Need:** Prepared scale, labeled heavy objects and light objects, spinner (available on the Lead Small App)

**What You Do:**

- Gather your group into a circle and set the objects in a pile in the middle.
- Ask for a volunteer to balance the scale by putting the hanger on their extended index fingers.
- Use a spinner (available on the Lead Small app) to decide how much of each type of object gets put on the scale at a time.
  - Or play in teams: Unkind goes first and puts an unkind action down; the Kind team reads through the kind actions and chooses the most appropriate response.

**What You Say:**

“This scale isn’t an exact model of our lives, but it shows something important. Which weighed more: kindness or unkindness? *(Allow for answers.)* So, no matter how many unkind acts were on one side, they could never cancel out kindness. Even when it feels like there is more unkindness in the world, kindness is more significant; it makes more of an impact.

“What would happen if you were kind to the person who is most unkind in your school? How would that affect your whole class? *(Allow for answers.)* What about if you were kind to the kid on your team who’s always complaining about the other players? What could that do for your team? *(Allow for answers.)* For me, it was like this. ***[Make It Personal] (Share an age-appropriate time when either you were kind to someone who was mean and it changed the situation, or when someone was kind to you when you didn’t really deserve it.)*** Kindness has a huge impact on everyone around you. That’s why it’s important to ***[Bottom Line]*** be kind to people who aren’t kind to you.”

**All Service Times**

**Pray and Dismiss (10 minutes)**

**[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]**

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

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Gather the group and lead them in a responsive prayer.
- Tell them their part: "I will be kind."
- Point to them a few times so they get the hang of it, and encourage a respectful attitude.
- Close the group by praying together.

**What You Say:**

"Dear God, this week, help us remember this prayer:

"When people are unkind to me, *I will be kind*

"When people are rude, *I will be kind*

"When people are unfair, *I will be kind*

"When people are inconsiderate, *I will be kind*

"When the kindest thing to do is to ignore them, *I will be kind*

"When the kindest thing to do is accept them, *I will be kind*

"When the kindest thing to do is to serve them, *I will be kind*

"When the kindest thing to do is to pray for them, *I will be kind*

"Always the kindest thing to do is to love them. *I will be kind*

"Because despite my unkindness You loved me, *I will be kind.*

"Amen."