



LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Teaches Us to Love Everyone

SCRIPTURE: [Matthew 5](#)

WORD OF WONDER: [from Matthew 5:8](#)

Kindness. It's a buzzword. We see it on T-shirts.

Choose kindness!

Kindness matters!

Kind is the new cool!

It's easy to be kind when people are kind to us. It's not so easy when they drag our name through the mud or talk behind our back.

Jesus takes kindness to a new level.

Jesus says to love.

Love your enemies.

Pray for your enemies.

Really? Is that even possible? Read [Matthew 5:43–45a](#).

Can you imagine wearing a T-shirt that says, "Love Your Enemies," while screaming at the driver who cut you off on the road? Not a good look! I get it. It's a tough thing to do.

When we love our enemies, it doesn't mean the hurt doesn't exist, but we choose to love because God loves us. We choose to pray for our enemies instead of hating them because God loves us. We choose to show mercy instead of being cruel because God loves us. As followers of Jesus, we choose to be like Him and trust Him to be in charge and show us how to love others with His mercy and grace.

As you lead kids today, remember some of them have been hurt deeply by others.

- How can you invite kids to let God care for their hurt?
- How can you help kids understand what loving their enemies looks like?

—Stephanie Rhyne

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DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Jesus is the Son of God and the “exact representation” of the heavenly Father ([Hebrews 1:3, NIV](#)). He tells of the Father’s mercy and care for the world. God is unwavering in patience; God’s people can love enemies if they trust God to handle evil.

WHAT?

“You have heard that it was said ...” ([Matthew 5:43, NIV](#)) is Jesus’ way of introducing a quotation from the Law of Moses. He heightens rather than diminishes the demands of the Torah, giving authoritative commentary on the way God’s people must behave.

WHERE?

Jesus’ early ministry is set in the small villages of Galilee. Pharisees and Sadducees—influential and religious Jews—would be less likely to travel all the way down from Judea. But large crowds are nonetheless coming from all the surrounding regions ([Matthew 4:25](#)).

WHEN?

By this early point in Matthew’s narrative, Jesus already has enemies. Herod slaughtered babies to try to try to kill Him. And as an adult, Jesus carried on the legacy of John the Baptist, who was arrested and would soon be executed ([Matthew 14:3–12](#)).

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

Jesus had enemies, but His greatest enemies turned out to be the powers of sin and death (see [1 Corinthians 15:20–28](#)). To be like Jesus and like our Father in heaven, we must seek the welfare of people we perceive as enemies.



Curiosity

LESSON 3 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: colorful foam hearts (1 for every 2 kids), pipe cleaners (at least 1 per kid), heart-shaped beads and pony beads, coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Coloring Sheet](#) (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas what we'll be learning about today?

Play Station: Heart Matching

Set-up: Ahead of time, cut out paper hearts. Then cut the hearts in half, but don't cut in a straight line (example: wavy line, jagged line, etc.). Mix up the hearts and place them on the table.

Play: Challenge kids to pick up a heart half and see if they find someone else who is holding the matching half to their heart. Guide them to start by looking for a matching color, then the matching cut line.

Play Station: Friendship Bracelets

Set-up: Set out the pipe cleaners and beads on the table.

Play: Invite the kids to create friendship bracelets by threading beads onto pipe cleaners and then twisting the ends of the bracelets closed. They can create bracelets for themselves or for others. Talk about ways they can show love to others.

Play Station: Loving Our Enemies Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the [Coloring Sheet](#). Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of someone they love.



9:00 Service

Belief

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words:
God, thank You for being with us today. Please help us listen closely as we learn more about loving everyone. Thank You for giving us the Holy Spirit to guide us in being more like You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Read from

The Big Picture Bible p216

"The Sermon on the Mount"

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see the face of God.

—Matthew 5:8

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- Who first said the words from our Word of Wonder?
- How can God help us have a pure heart?



Faith

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

Game: Sharing Kindness

SUPPLIES: paper (1 sheet per kid), tape, lightweight small ball (1 per every 5 kids)

Ahead of time, curl the sheets of paper to create cones, and tape them so they hold their shape. You will need one for each kid.

Line kids up in single-file lines of five kids each. Give each kid a paper cone.

Who does Jesus want us to love? Allow kids to respond. **Yes. Jesus wants us to love everyone!** **How can we show that we love everyone?** Allow kids to respond.

One way we can show love toward others is by being kind to them. Sharing kindness through our words and actions can go a long way. Let's play a game to help us remember to love others by sharing kindness.



Hold up one of the lightweight balls. **This ball represents our kindness. It kind of looks like a scoop of ice cream! And these paper cones almost look like ice cream cones! Instead of sharing ice cream, we're going to pretend to share kindness. In this game, you need to pass the ball of kindness down your line using just your paper cone—no hands!**

Model for kids with another leader or a kid how to use the paper cones to pass the ball. Then signal the kids to begin the game by saying, "Go." You can encourage the kids to share one act of kindness they can do each time they pass the ball.

Allow kids to play the relay game, passing the ball from kid to kid. Cheer kids on as they finish the task. Allow kids to continue to play and rotate different kids to the front of the lines as desired.

9:00 Service



Identity

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for His great love and His help He gives to us to love everyone.

God, thank You for our special time today to learn more about You. Thank You for loving us so much, no matter what. Please help us show love and kindness to everyone this week. Thank You for giving us Your Spirit to guide us in following You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May you feel the love of God as you choose to love everyone this week.

9:00 Service

Closing Game: Right or Left

Gather kids together. **Can anyone say today's Wonder Truth?** Allow kids to respond. **Today's Wonder Truth is: Jesus teaches us to love everyone! We are going to play a game that will help us remember this truth.**

Let's begin by standing in the middle of the room. I'm going to tell you about something that could happen with you and a friend. Go right (point to the right) or left (point to the left) to give your answer. There are no right or wrong answers. Just different answers. And they all allow us to show love to others! Here we go!

Someone is mean to you. Do you ... ask the person to stop (point to the right) or go find a new friend to play with (point to the left)? Give kids time to go to the side that shows their choice.

Have kids stand in the middle again.

Your friend throws trash on the ground. Do you ... ask him to pick it up (point to the right) or pick it up and throw it away yourself (point to the left)? Give kids time to go to the side that shows their choice.

Have kids stand in the middle again.

A friend falls down and scrapes her knee. Do you ... run to help her (point to the right) or let an adult know she needs help (point to the left)? Give kids time to go to the side that shows their choice.

Have kids stand in the middle again.

A friend is playing with a toy that you want. Do you ... ask for a turn when he's done and play with something else (point to the right) or ask if you can play with him (point to the left)? Give kids time to go to the side that shows their choice.

Make It Inclusive!

If you have a child unable to move back and forth in the room, invite him to point which way he would answer.

9:00 Service