

Jesus Teaches About Loving Enemies

Luke 6:27-38



Worship Theme:



We worship God by loving others.

Weaving Faith Into Life:



Children will worship God by loving others.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
1 Let's Praise God! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	Sing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My God Is" • "Jesus Loves Me" • "God Loves Us So" • "His Great Love" (Romans 5:8) • "Do to Others" (Luke 6:31) 	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, cups, unsweetened cocoa powder, milk, thermal container, sugar, spoons

Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	Happy and Sad Help tell about the golden rule.	Classroom Supplies: Poster board, markers
	* Doing Good to Others Play a game to learn about loving others.	Classroom Supplies: 4 heart stickers per child, masking tape, treats
	Right Hand, Left Hand Learn a finger play about God's way.	

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	* Keep Away Play a game to explore Jesus' feelings.	Classroom Supplies: Newspaper, 3 pieces of candy per child
	* "Who's Your Enemy?" Watch a video that explores how kids feel about enemies, and how they could show love to enemies.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment
	Job Descriptions Personalize Luke 6:27-31, 35-36.	Classroom Supplies: Bibles, paper, pencils

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
3 Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i>	The Offering Offer their gifts to God and remember to do to others as they would have others do to them.	Classroom Supplies: Offering bowls, slips of paper, pens
	Love With the Love of Jesus Think about what it means to love with the love of Jesus as they sing.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment
	Do to Others Participate in a responsive prayer to show their love of God through their actions.	

* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together. Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Section 2. Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

Jesus Teaches About Loving Enemies

Luke 6:27-38

Luke 6:27-38 is a continuation of Jesus' Sermon on the Plain. In it Jesus teaches what it really means to love. The Jews knew what enemies were, and when Jesus talked about people who cursed them, mistreated them, struck them, and stole from them, the Jews likely thought of the Romans. It would have been tough for Jews to accept the idea that they should love their oppressors.

But Jesus wasn't saying that they should have warm feelings toward their enemies. Instead, Jesus was telling them to love their enemies as a conscious act of will, to act in ways that would please their enemies, to behave toward them as a merciful God would. Jesus' command runs exactly counter to the human impulse. Even so, this is the law of love that God wants to see in the hearts of those who follow Jesus.

Jesus also points out the emptiness of loving only those who love us. That's easy! Our love shouldn't be based on the expectation of being loved in return; instead we should look forward to a heavenly reward because we have treated people as God wants us to treat them (Luke 6:35).

In his summary of this teaching (Luke 6:35-36), Jesus stresses the importance of the principle he has explained.

Our very position as children of God is at stake. If we are "sons of the Most High," we will live and love in the way Jesus describes. When people watch us, they should see our merciful God in our attitudes and actions.

Devotion for Leaders

As we think of loving our enemies, it's important to be thankful that Jesus drew us into a relationship with himself. He did this despite our hostility to him because of the sin from which he saved us.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Re-read the familiar verse Luke 6:31. In what areas of your life do you find it difficult to put this verse into practice? Now compare this verse to Luke 6:36, and contemplate how Jesus is merciful to us. As our relationship with the Lord grows, we will want to express our love for him by being merciful to others.

Why We Worship for Leaders

We worship a God who is merciful: He's kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Worldly standards of good behavior are based on an eye-for-an-eye concept of fairness. Jesus gives us another standard of conduct, one that's in sharp contrast to the "Don't get mad—get even!" world we live in. According to Jesus, we have the responsibility to "get over it," not for the sake of the wrong-doer, but for the sake of God.

When we overcome our natural tendency to demand earthly fairness, we honor God. God asks us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, to pray for those who mistreat us. Doing so moves our focus from ourselves and our rights to God and his mercy. When we focus on God's kindness, we have the power to love others around us—even the difficult ones.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Let's Praise God!—Make sure your video equipment is ready. Before the worship session, prepare hot cocoa using unsweetened cocoa powder and omitting any sugar mentioned in the preparation instructions. Put the cocoa in a thermal container.

"Who's Your Enemy?"—Watch "Who's Your Enemy?" at least once before the worship session so you'll be familiar with it.

Preschool Activities—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

1 Let's Praise God!

Play music videos from the *KidsOwn Worship DVD* as children arrive. Greet children by name, and say, "I'm so glad you're here today! Find a friend, and ask your friend what the golden rule is."

When all the children have arrived, gather them around you.

Say ▶ **Welcome! As I greeted each of you, I asked you to find a friend and ask that friend what the golden rule is.**

Ask ▶ • **What answers did you get?** (Be kind to others; do to others as you would have them do to you.)

Say ▶ **I've heard some pretty strange explanations in the past. Some people think it means the person with the most gold makes the rules! But the golden rule really has nothing to do with wealth or the color gold. Golden is an old way of saying "most important."**

Luke 6:31 says, "Do to others as you would have them do to you," and verses 27-38 tell us how to do this. The golden rule is God's idea. Let's remember who God is and why we can trust his ideas for us. The next song will help us remember who he is.

ALLERGY ALERT

See Session 4.



Worship Leader Tip

The cocoa activity in Let's Praise God! works best if you can offer your kids sugar packets rather than passing a sugar bowl around.

▶ Sing "My God Is."

Say ▶ As our creator, God has some pretty good ideas about how we should live life, doesn't he? Jesus is God. And Jesus is the one who first told us about the golden rule. It's a great plan for getting along with others, but it's much more than that! It's a way of communicating his love to others. Let's sing about who he is and how much he loves us.

▶ Sing "Jesus Loves Me."

Say ▶ I've prepared a treat for you today. It's hot cocoa made from scratch. Since it's special, I'm going to serve it to you and then walk you through a couple of steps to help you appreciate it. Don't taste it until everyone is served so we can appreciate the cocoa together. Serve everyone a cup of hot cocoa and a spoon. The more cocoa you pour into a cup, the more sugar kids will need to add, so keep the quantities small.

Stir the cup a little so you can get a good whiff of how rich and chocolaty this cocoa is. Mmm. Now taste just a little.

Ask ▶ • What do you think? (It tastes bad; the chocolate isn't sweet.)

• What did my words—what I told you—lead you to believe? (That the hot chocolate would taste good; that we were going to have a fun snack.)

Say ▶ I built up the benefits of this cocoa, but it isn't as great as I made it sound, is it? The cocoa I gave you is bitter.

Ask ▶ • If I tell you how wonderful my God is and then show you some nasty or bitter attitudes instead of God's sweetness, what might you think of God and Christians? (God isn't very nice; Christians don't follow God like they should.)


• If I tell you my God is love, but I don't show love to others, what might you think of God and Christians? (God doesn't love people; Christians aren't very nice people.)

Say ▶ I'm going to let each of you add sugar to your cocoa so you can really enjoy it. As you enjoy the cocoa, think about sharing God's love. If we want to share God's love with others, we need to give them the whole "recipe"—we can't leave out any of the parts. God's love is sweet. It is kind and merciful. Let's worship God as we think about his love.

▶ Sing "God Loves Us So."

Say ▶ That's a wonderful kind of love—higher than the highest mountains, deeper than the deepest seas, stretching to the farthest horizon. But there is one more thing about Jesus' love.


It never ends. Never. It is everlasting, no matter what mistakes we make. Let's praise Jesus as we sing this song about his great love.

 Sing "His Great Love" (Romans 5:8).

Say God is always loving—that's what we mean when we say God has "everlasting love." But we aren't always loving.

Ask • When is it hardest for you to be loving and kind? (When people are mean to me; when I am in a bad mood.)

Say When God's love reaches to you and touches your heart, you can be like Jesus by loving others. You can treat others the way you want to be treated, even if they are unkind to you. Let's sing this song to help us remember to treat others the way God wants us to treat them.

 Sing "Do to Others" (Luke 6:31).

Pray God, sometimes it's hard to show your love to people who are mean or ungrateful. But we know you can help us. And we are willing to try to love others because we love you and want to honor you. In Jesus' name, amen.

2 Let's Learn the Point!

Preschool Activities, pages 175-176

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

Elementary Activities

* Keep Away

Have children form groups of three. Give each group one sheet of newspaper, and have kids crumple it to form a ball. Have the children sit on the floor in their groups so that one person is sitting between the other two to play a game of Keep Away. Give each child three pieces of candy.

Say Each group has its own ball. I've also given each group member three pieces of candy. You can do whatever you want with the candy as you play, except put it in your mouth. You can give it to someone else, or you can keep it. You'll play Keep Away, but you must remain seated at all times.

Leader Skillbuilder

Not all the children will understand the idea of doing to others as you would have them do to you. Many will already evaluate behavior the world's way and may even need to look out for themselves because of a less than optimal home situation. Be patient when teaching a concept that goes so much against the flow of society.

ALLERGY ALERT

See Session 4.



Let the kids start tossing the paper ball and trying to keep it away from the person in the middle. As soon as the middle person gets the ball, he or she will trade places with one of the throwers. After two minutes of play, if the middle people have not yet traded places, have them do so. Make sure that each child gets a chance to be in the middle.

- Ask**
- **What did you think of this game?** (The game wasn't very fair to the people in the middle; I didn't want to have to be in the middle.)
 - **When you were in the middle, what strategy did you use to get the paper ball?** (I reached as high as I could; I offered candy to the other person to get the ball.)
 - **Did any of you use the candy to bribe your group members to give you the paper ball?**

Say Raise your hand if someone used candy to try to bribe another player and get out of the middle.

Raise your hand if someone in your group kept the candy for him- or herself.

Raise your hand if someone in your group gave candy to someone just because that person asked for a piece.

Raise your hand if someone in the group gave a piece of candy to one of the tossers after he or she was out of the middle.

- Ask**
- **Which action with the candy is most like this passage of Scripture: "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you"?** (Giving the candy to a person who was trying to keep the ball away from me; giving the candy to someone just to be nice.)
 - **Which action is most like this Scripture: "Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back"?** (Giving the candy to someone because they asked for it; not trying to take my candy back after I gave it away.)
 - **Why would anyone want to give candy to someone who was being mean, even if it's just in a game?** (Because God would want us to; because then we are following the golden rule.)
 - **Why would anyone want to give his or her last candy (or first) to someone just because the person asked?** (Because they wanted to be nice to that person; because God said to be kind to others.)

Say God asks us to do just those kinds of things. He asks us to give to people who might be ungrateful and to loan without expecting our things to be returned. There's only one reason to live that way. Not because we think there's something really great about losing, but because being willing to lose in order to love people pleases God. We worship God by loving others in the way he asks us to.

Jesus Teaches About Loving Enemies

Luke 6:27-38

Worship Theme:



We worship God by loving others.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Happy and Sad—Prepare a large happy face and a large sad face on pieces of poster board.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo point to the large happy face or sad face in the “Happy and Sad” activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.



Happy and Sad

Say I’m going to tell you what Jesus said when he taught a very large group of people. I need your help, though. I’ll be talking about doing good and about people who aren’t nice. Every time I talk about something not nice, I’ll point to the sad face, and I want you to say, “Boo!” When I talk about something good, I’ll point to the happy face, and you can say, “Yea!” Let’s practice before I begin telling you what Jesus taught this big group of people.

Point to the sad face and help the children respond with a loud “Boo!” Then point to the happy face, and encourage the children to respond with “Yea!”

Say Jesus wanted people to know how to treat each other, so he told them how. Jesus knows there are people who will be your enemies. Point to the sad face.

But Jesus said to love them. Point to the happy face.

He knows there might be people who hate you. Point to the sad face.

But Jesus said to do good to them. Point to the happy face.

There will probably be people who say bad things to you and do mean things to you. Point to the sad face.

But Jesus said to pray for them and bless them. Point to the happy face.

Jesus said he wants us to be nice to all people and treat them the way we would like to be treated. This is called the golden rule. Point to the happy face again.

Jesus wants people who follow him to act differently than people who don’t know him. He wants us to follow this rule, too!

Preschool Activities

* *Doing Good to Others*

Use masking tape to mark a square on the floor. The square should be big enough to allow all the children to move freely in it. Give each preschooler two heart stickers.

Say ▶ Our Bible story today tells us that if someone asks us for something, we should give it without expecting to get it back. In fact, Jesus told people that, if someone asks for your coat, you should give even more than the person asked for.

Each of you has two stickers. You're going to walk inside the square and shake hands with your friends. If someone asks you for a sticker, you can give the person one sticker or two stickers. But as soon as you have no stickers left, you have to stand outside the square.

Walk through the game with a couple of children until the kids understand how to play. Then let the children play the game. Join in the game yourself, and ask the children to give you a sticker. If you have any helpers, have them play the game, too.

Lead the first child who gives away both stickers to the edge of the square, and give him or her a treat. Soon the children will be trying to give their stickers away rather than trying to keep them. Continue playing until all the children have received treats.

Ask ▶ • When you didn't know you were going to get something good at the end of the game, how did you feel about giving away your stickers?

Say ▶ You know, pleasing God is the best treat of all! We worship God as we do what he wants us to do. God wants us to do nice things to show our love for others even when it's hard. You were all very good at giving your stickers away. I'm going to thank you for that by giving the stickers back to you now! Give the children two stickers each.

ALLERGY ALERT



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

Right Hand, Left Hand

Teach this finger play to your preschoolers to help them remember Jesus' teachings.

**This is my right hand.
I use it to do good.
This is my left hand.
I treat others as I should.
Right hand,
Left hand,
Love every day.
Right hand,
Left hand,
This is Jesus' way.**

*(Hold out your right hand, palm up.)
(Wave your right hand, palm up, back and forth.)
(Hold out your left hand, palm up, next to your right hand.)
(Clap your hands together.)
(Hold your right hand out, palm up.)
(Hold your left hand out, palm up.)
(Clap your hands together.)
(Hold your right hand out, palm up.)
(Hold left hand out, palm up.)
(Point up with one finger.)*

(continued from page 174)

* “Who’s Your Enemy?”

Show the “Who’s Your Enemy?” video. It shows how several children think the world might look if people loved their enemies.

Ask

- **Have you had enemies treat you like the kids in the video talked about? Explain.** (Yes, I’ve had people ignore me; yes, I know annoying people; no, but I’ve had enemies do other mean things.)
- **What do you think the world would look like if people treated their enemies with love?** (The world would be cleaner; everyone would be smiling.)
- **Do you think the world will ever really be like this? Why or why not?** (No, because there are a lot of mean people in the world; no, because everyone sins.)
- **Why do you think Jesus wants us to love our enemies?** (Because he loved us; so that we can get along with each other.)
- **Who can you show love to—even though that person might have been mean to you?** (My brother when he is teasing me; the bullies at school.)

Say

Loving our enemies can be really hard. But it’s what God wants us to do. Loving others honors God.

Job Descriptions

Have children form groups of three.

Say

Many people who work in large businesses have what are called job descriptions. A job description describes what an employee is expected to do as part of his or her job. In some ways, the Scripture passage we looked at today is like a job description. It’s a list of things that people who want to honor God are expected to do.

In your group, choose a Reader, a Recorder, and a Reporter. The Reader will read the Scripture, the Recorder will write down your group’s thoughts, and the Reporter will share the thoughts with the whole group. Allow the children time to follow your instructions.

Here’s your task. Look at Luke 6:27-31 and 35-36. For each action Jesus tells people to do, tell something similar he might say to someone in your school. For example, if the Bible says, “If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic,” you might say, “If someone wants your pencil, let him have your eraser, too.”

Give each group a pencil, a piece of paper, and a Bible. Allow groups to complete the job descriptions, then ask them to share their ideas with the rest of the children. If you have extra time, you might ask the children to tell which of all the job description items they heard would be hardest for them to do.

3

Let's Pray!*The Offering*

Hand each child a slip of paper and something to write with.

Say ▶ Today as we take our offering, I want you to write the name of one person who has not been kind to you on your piece of paper. As the offering bowl comes by you, put the piece of paper in it, and ask God to help you love that person and treat him or her in a way that would honor God. Remember—as you show God's love to that person, you are worshipping God in your everyday life. If you can't think of a name to put on your paper, write the name of a friend who might need God's help in a hard situation. If you have an offering today, put that in the bowl also.

Choose several children to help collect the offering. Encourage older children to assist younger children with the writing if necessary.

Love With the Love of Jesus

Say ▶ Treating others with love and kindness can be very hard to do. Only Jesus' love for us can make us able to love others his way. Think about what it means to love as Jesus does as you worship him with this song.



Sing "The Golden Rule."

Do to Others

Ask children to form two groups. Explain that the children in Group 1 will say, "Do to others..." when you point to them and the children in Group 2 will say, "...as you would have them do to you," when you point to them.

Say ▶ Let's pray together to God today. I'll start. Then I'll point to Group 1, and you'll say, "Do to others..." Then I'll point to Group 2, and you'll say, "...as you would have them do to you."

Pray ▶ Dear God, when others are my enemies, help me to remember to... Point to the two groups in turn.

When others say bad things and do mean things to me, help me to remember to... Point to the two groups in turn.

When people don't give things back, and treat me badly, help me to remember to... Point to the two groups in turn.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Say ▶ Every day this week, remember that you are worshipping God as you allow Jesus to help you treat others as you would like to be treated.

