

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 5:43-48



The STORY

Read the message Jesus gave to teach us to love our enemies in Matthew 5:43-48.

Please note: The discussion questions in the following sections are written to serve as a guide in teaching our youngest children. Three to six year olds are not going to be able to answer these questions like their older brothers and sisters. Please refer to the God's Story Preschool Curriculum Outline for additional ideas.

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion.

- What is Jesus trying to teach the crowd? (Jesus is trying to teach the crowd that they are to love people perfectly like God loves people.)
- Who did Jesus say we should love? (We should love everyone, not just our friends, but our enemies too.)
- Who did Jesus say we should pray for? (Jesus said we should pray for those who persecute us.)
Ask the children if they know what persecution means. They may not know. Give them a simple definition: Persecution is to treat people badly as in a verbal insult or physical harm.

CRAFT QUESTIONS

Coloring sheets have been provided that exemplify today's lesson: rain coming down on a crowd.
Engage the children by asking:

- What is interesting about this picture? (Rain falls on the just and the unjust)
If no one remembers, remind them of what they heard in the scripture passage by reading Matthew 5:43-48 again.
- Why do you think God gives all men the blessings of rain? (God loves all people because all men are made in the image of God.)
- What other blessings does God give all men? (The passage lists sunshine, but in fact just about every blessing He gives believers He also gives unbelievers, with the exception of eternal life.)

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SNACK QUESTIONS

While the children are eating the snack, engage the children by asking:

- Why is it harder for us to love those who are our enemies? (It is easy to love someone who also loves you. Enemies do not love us back. It is much harder to love those who only give you hatred.)
- How can we love our enemies? (We can treat them with kindness, pray for them, and avoid saying unkind things about them. The children may think of political enemies but you can give them the example of another child who makes fun of them.)
- How should you act to show love to someone who makes fun of you? (Jesus taught us to “turn the other cheek” that is, not say wrong things in return.)
- Why do we need to be perfect, like God? (God is holy and in Him there is no sin at all. The only way we can live with Him in heaven is to be perfectly holy like He is. Of course, this is impossible because we are already sinners. Therefore, we need the perfect life of Christ bestowed upon us through the cross. It is Jesus’ perfect obedience that is given to us at our conversion.)



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WHERE IS the Gospel?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Jesus followed his teaching to love His enemies. Paul said to the Romans:

"If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." (Romans 5:10)

The requirement that we should love our enemies and be perfect is an impossible task. The only way we can be perfect is because of Jesus, who did not treat us as our sins deserved. He also gave us His perfect obedience in exchange for our sinfulness. Jesus did this and made a way for us to have fellowship with God in heaven. As Christians, we stand forgiven and hold the honor of perfect obedience given to us as a gift by Christ.

Even though we cannot follow perfectly, we should strive to follow Jesus' example to love those who persecute us. By doing so, we give the Lord glory.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

