

Katie



The Sunday
School Lady



MATTHEW 5 LOVING ENEMIES

Scripture: Matthew 5:38-48

Open: Greet, Praises, Requests, Pray

Supplies: 30 Ballons- 20 white with eyes and teeth drawn on, 10 red with hearts drawn on. Optional: sweatshirts and coats, heavy backpacks, fake money.

Ask:

We're going to play a bit of a game. I am going to list off qualities in a person, and I want you to tell me if you want to be that person's friend or not. If they sound like a good friend, run to the right side of the room. If they sound like a bad friend, run to the left side

- She always saves you a seat at lunch
- She laughs at you when you make a mistake
- He trips you on the playground
- He brings you a present on your birthday
- He encourages you on your team
- She is in a group project with you and makes you do all the work

Come up with as many examples as you like.

Ask, "What are some of the things that make a good friend? What makes a bad friend? What do we do with bad friends? Today, we're going to talk about how Jesus wants us to interact with people who maybe aren't very kind. (This is a tricky subject. Depending on the age of your kids, make sure they understand by the end of the lesson that they do not need to stay in abusive situations. It is good to tell someone and get out of those. They can, however, love people that are hard to love).

Read: Matthew 5:38-48

Explain:

When Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said" he is referring to the laws God laid out in the Old Testament. It almost sounds like he is going against the law. But he isn't. He is explaining the heart of the law. Originally, the law allowed for people to respond with an equal punishment. If someone poked an eye out, their eye got poked out. If someone knocked a tooth out, their tooth was to get knocked out. This was actually meant to stop an escalating situation. Often, in those days, if someone's eye got poked out, the victim or their family might become outraged and try to do something even worse to the person who hurt them. This would start a horrible cycle of violence, so God's law said only an equal punishment was allowed.

Explain Continued:

Jesus isn't going against this but is explaining the heart of the law. He doesn't just want to stop a bigger, meaner retaliation; he wants his followers to stop retaliation completely. (If necessary, explain the words escalation and retaliation, sibling situations often provide good examples for this).

The four examples Jesus gives show different insults or injustices. A slap would have been offensive and painful, Jesus says to offer both cheeks. Jesus says not only to give them their cloak, but their tunic as well. If Roman soldiers demanded someone carry their military gear, the person was required by law to walk with them a mile. Here, Jesus tells them to double it willingly. Finally, if someone wanted to borrow money, Jesus said to give (without interest) and do so willingly. After you've read it, have the kids pair up.

Act it out:

Tell the kids that this time they are going to act out what you read. Obviously, they may not actually hit someone, but try to be the best actor. If you choose to bring sweatshirts and coats, have one put them on and then offer it to another. Bring heavy backpacks and have them march around the room for vs 41. Have fake money or paper money for vs 42.

Game:

Divide the room into half with chairs down the middle like a volleyball net. Give each group ten balloons with teeth and eyes on them. Tell them that they get to bomb the other team with balloons. The first ones to get all the balloons to one side wins. Set a timer. If no one wins after 5 minutes, count balloons and the team with the least on their side loses.

Explain:

Did you notice how the balloons kept coming back? It was hard to ever stop them.

For the next game, give one team the teeth and eye balloons and another red heart balloons. If a red balloon touches the ground on the opposing side, the teacher will remove a tooth or eye balloon from play. Play until only heart balloons are left.

Explain:

We are called to answer mean people with love. We are told by Jesus to love others in the same way he loves us- not by paying them back for what they deserve. Sometimes, our love will result in that person being nice to us, like the love balloons removing the tooth and eye balloons. Sometimes, the person won't change. But that isn't up to us. We can only control what we can do, and that is to respond to the person the way Jesus does- with love, forgiveness, and kindness. How can you love and pray for an enemy at school this week?

Memorize: Matthew 5:44