

Group Hug!

Bible Story: Group Hug! (Jesus and the Children) • *Mark 10:13-16*

Bottom Line: There's always time to be kind.

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.

Early Arriver Activity (8:45) (10:30) (5:45)

What You Need: An offering container

What You Do:

Welcome kids as they arrive and collect their offerings. Ask them about something great that happened this past week.

What You Say:

"Did someone in particular make that awesome thing possible, perhaps by being kind to you in some way? How did that make you feel about that person? What do you think makes a person kind? Who is someone who might think you are kind?"

Plug In (9:00) (10:45) (6:00)

A Special Visitor

What You Need: Toy animal that can be pets.

What You Do:

Introduce the group to the animal you've brought with you. Explain whom it belongs to and how the group has been entrusted to care for it today. Discuss how to care for your pet. Talk about pets they have (or have had), including what it meant to make time for those pets. Point out how we have to decide if we're going to be kind to such creatures or harass them, such as constantly tapping on a fishbowl or yelling at a dog.

What You Say:

"Having a pet can be a challenge. Sometimes people get busy and overlook their responsibilities to care for their pets, and sometimes we do the same thing with our friends and family—we overlook opportunities to care for them. **[Transition] Let's go to Large Group and learn more about caring for others and how to show them they are valuable.**" Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Prayer Time

After large group, gather children in their small groups. Lead them in prayer focusing on "The Bottom Line."

Catch On #1

Disciples, May I? (review the Bible story / great for active learners)

What You Need: A bag of small candy (or grapes), hand sanitizer

What You Do:

Designate one or two members of your group to be "the disciples," and put them in control of the candy (or grapes). Make them each clean their hands with the hand sanitizer. Explain that if anyone else wants a piece, he or she has to ask, "Disciples, may I have something sweet?" Based on however the students playing the disciples are feeling, they can say, "Sure," or "No, not right now," or "Yes, but first you have to do something and prove you're worthy of it." This is where they can get creative and ask another student to hop on one foot, dance like a turkey, and so on. Monitor this to make sure nothing is cruel, but all in good fun.

Debrief afterward, asking the non-disciples how they felt about the experience. See if anyone can relate this back to today's Bible lesson from when the disciples tried to keep the kids from being able to spend time with Jesus. Finally, offer everyone (including the disciples) a free round of candy or grapes.

Note: For a non-food option, consider using stickers or beads. If you use beads, also provide lanyard material or stretchy bracelet cord so the kids can make bracelets after the activity.

5-6 Challenge:

Do the activity as described above, but along with asking someone to do a physical action, the “disciples” will also ask kids to tell one way they were kind to someone this past week or one way they plan to be kind to someone this coming week. They have to answer the question WHILE doing the action.

What You Say:

“We don’t always realize how sometimes we can be like the disciples were in today’s Bible story, but when we’re unkind to people, they don’t get to see God in us and realize how awesome He is. **[Apply] Instead, we need to be like Jesus and show kindness to everyone. Kindness can be like connecting the dots between everyone and God.** Kindness is showing others they are valuable by how you treat them. And sure, kindness shows other they are valuable to you, but when you show kindness you are also showing them that they are valuable to Jesus, too. It’s why **[Impress] there is always time to be kind**, or else we might just end up forgetting to share what we’ve found in Jesus with others.”

Catch On #2

I Want ... So I Will ... (application activity)

What You Need: “I Want ... So I Will ...” Activity Pages, pencils

What You Do:

Lead a brief discussion with your group about how sometimes people stop your efforts for showing kindness. You can allow them the chance to share personal stories here (without using any names!) or any examples they’ve seen in their lives or history when people faced people who were unkind even when they tried to extend kindness to them.

Point out that sometimes we contribute to this when we want others to be kind before we’ll be kind in return, or when we decide that we’ll stop being kind if the other person doesn’t return the kindness.

Hand out the Activity Page and use it to talk through the ways that we want kindness extended to us, and how we can extend that same kindness to others.

[Make It Personal] Share about a time when you were so inspired by someone else’s act of kindness that you wanted to pay it forward and be kind to others.

What You Say:

“Sometimes we wait to be ‘all in’ on something until we see other people are ‘all in’ on it first. This can be true even of kindness if we wait for others to be kind to us before we decide if we’ll be kind to them. But it’s like we learned today: **[Impress] there is always time to be kind**, which means that **[Apply] kindness can begin with us if we allow it. You may even end up being the one who models to others what kindness looks like as you show them they are valuable by how you treat them.**”

I'll Be There for You**Bible Story:** I'll Be There for You (Ruth and Boaz) • *Ruth 1–2***Bottom Line:** Be kind to your family and friends.**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.**Early Arriver Activity (8:45) (10:30) (5:45)****What You Need:** An offering container**What You Do:**

Welcome students as they arrive and let them know how glad you are that they're here. Collect their offerings. Ask questions such as: What is one of your favorite things about Small Group? How have the other kids in our Small Group been kind to you? How have people at home or school shown kindness to you?

What You Say:

"This is our second week looking at the power of kindness. Hopefully you had a chance to apply some of what we talked about last week by showing others they are valuable by how you treat them."

Plug In (9:00) (10:45) (6:00)**Prop It Up****What You Need:** Non-inflated, latex-free balloons and permanent markers, hand pump (*optional*), music (*optional*)**What You Do:**

Pass out a non-inflated balloon and marker to each student. Explain that they are to write on the balloon a kind word that they would like to hear from someone this week, such as a word of encouragement regarding something specific or a simple affirmation. Next, instruct them to blow up the balloon (or use a hand pump to inflate it), tie it off, and hang onto it until everyone else is ready.

On your signal, have everyone lie down on the ground and prepare to launch their balloons into the air with a big push. Encourage them to keep the balloons off of the ground, whether they're propping up their own balloon or someone else's. Let them know that you'll be signaling them again to grab the closest balloon to them as the game pauses. Have them go around and say one thing they can do to show others the word that's written on their balloon. Resume the game, repeating this process a few times.

5-6 Challenge: You can do this challenge on its own or as an extension of the above activity. Give each kid a balloon to blow up and tie off. (If they did the activity above, give each kid a fresh balloon.) Then ask kids to sit in a circle, and hand out permanent markers. Challenge kids to write something kind on their balloon about the person sitting on their left. When everyone is finished, give each kid a chance to say what is on his balloon and then present it to the person on his left.

What You Say:

"Not only do you have family and friends that care about you, but you also have a church family who shows you kindness. **[Transition] Let's go to Large Group and learn about how kindness had an impact on one family in the Old Testament.**" Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Prayer Time

After large group, gather children in their small groups. Lead them in prayer focusing on "The Bottom Line."

Catch On #1**Poster Prompts (application activity)****What You Need:** Large pieces of paper or newsprint, markers**What You Do:**

Pass out the paper and markers and explain that you're going to be creating posters that can be hung up on each person's household refrigerator. The goal is to come up with at least five choices to be kind, which is a list that either the group can brainstorm together or each student can develop on his or her own. These are meant to be kind things that anyone can do, such as taking care of the trash, vacuuming, cleaning the toilet, yard work, cooking, and more.

Next, tell students to create a headline at the top of the paper that reads: “I dare each of us to be kind by ...” and then add their list of ideas under it. **[Apply] They can decorate it, but the main challenge is to have it be something they can take home, post on the refrigerator, and share with their family as a one-week challenge.** They can dare each family member to either do one of the things they normally don’t do or try something they’ve never tried before. Think of this as an activity that’s meant for our serving to be done in secret where maybe only God will know that they did it.

[Make It Personal] (Share about a time you were relieved when another person was kind and did something that you were supposed to have done.)

5-6 Challenge: In addition to the ideas for how their family members can be kind to each other, challenge kids to come up with an idea or two for how their ENTIRE family can be kind to some friends who are in need or even some extended family members who might need kindness right now. Encourage kids to be creative yet realistic in planning out their acts of kindness.

What You Say:

“We often need reminders to either do the things that our family normally does, or to do this without seeking attention. That’s the attitude Jesus had—often doing things for people and asking that they wouldn’t tell others about it. This can be especially challenging in our families when we want others to notice what we’ve done. This means that we look for the opportunities, even when they aren’t obvious. **[Impress] Be kind to your family and friends.**”

Catch On #2

Bucket Can Shootout (memory verse activity / great for active learners)

What You Need: Bibles, buckets, scrap piece of paper

What You Do:

Ask for a volunteer to read the memory verse out loud as everyone else follows along. Next, ask for another volunteer who is willing to try to say it without looking at the Bible. Whether the student speaking from memory succeeds or not at saying it accurately, affirm the effort. Point out how one person’s efforts can inspire another.

Next, pair students up and pass out scrap pieces of paper to them. Instruct them to rip them into smaller pieces that can be crumpled up into small paper balls. Have each pair designate which person will shoot the paper balls into the bucket from five feet away, and which one will kneel near the bucket can to assist in making sure the pieces go in. Allow each group to have a turn, with both members saying the memory verse together before they begin, and then firing away.

What You Say:

“When you’re the one taking important shots at something in life, God helps you along the way. **[Apply] However, many of your family and friends might be trying to do something great, too, and they might need you to kindly assist them.** God has called you to **[Impress] be kind to your family and friends** by doing to them what you would have them do for you. He’s given you these relationships for a reason, whether you get along with everyone or have to work at it. Show others they are valuable by how you treat them.”

If you lead mostly older kids, consider asking these discussion questions:

- What are some ways God has showed kindness to you? How is your life different because of God’s kindness?
- Explain how remembering God’s kindness to you can help you in being kind to others.
- Share an example of how your family members or closest friends have been kind to you.
- What is one thing you can tell a family member or friend that you think would really impact them in a good way? Describe how this could change that person’s life for the better.
- Describe the kind of relationship you want to have with your family? How might the kindness you show today impact that?

Don't You Forget About Me**Bible Story:** Don't You Forget About Me (the least of these) • *Matthew 25:35-40***Bottom Line:** Be kind to people who are overlooked.**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.**Early Arriver Activity (8:45) (10:30) (5:45)****What You Need:** An offering container**What You Do:**

Welcome students as they arrive and collect their offerings. Explain that as everyone comes in you're going to all work on creating a fun group handshake together, with everyone adding a new part to it. As you welcome each person, talk about a time that they felt included in on something big, like having even a small part in a play or having one of their ideas chosen by someone as something a group or class might do. Discuss the following questions: How does it feel to be included? How does it feel to be overlooked? How can doing something silly like making a fun handshake help everyone to feel included? What are some other ideas like this?

Plug In (9:00) (10:45) (6:00)**The 100****What You Need:** "The 100" Activity Pages, pencils**What You Do:**

Ask the group to take a guess as to how many people there are in the world (7 billion). After letting them answer, ask them to guess how many are in your town (find the answer to this ahead of time or look it up on a mobile device during Small Group). Finally, ask them to guess at how many people live in their immediate neighborhood or attend their school. Explore with them how each of those categories can create some kind of connection, such as how groups of people might focus only on certain types of music, go to certain restaurants, or spend time with certain people.

Hand out pencils and "The 100" Activity Page to each student. Explain that this is to help them realize the differences between the various people in the world, using the analogy of what it might look like if all statistics were in place but there were only 100 people on earth. As you read this, take note of their reactions. What stands out to them and why? Respond to the questions on the sheet together regarding how we can show kindness even in the midst of such diversity.

5-6 Challenge: Explain that with all of that diversity on earth, there are many organizations that have been created to help with some of the issues like hunger, clean water, and so on. Put kids into groups of two or three and challenge them to come up with an idea and a name for an organization that could show kindness to people with needs in their own community. For example, the group "Kindness Kids" makes sure that nobody eats lunch alone at school.

What You Say:

"Of course, the world is larger than 100 people, but you probably mean 'the world' to one person. Today we're going to explore what it means to not overlook anyone as we follow Jesus. Kindness is showing others they are valuable by how you treat them. **[Transition] Let's go to Large Group and hear one of Jesus' teachings on this idea.**" Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Prayer Time

After large group, gather children in their small groups. Lead them in prayer focusing on "The Bottom Line."

Catch On #1**What I Like About You (review the Bible story / great for active learners)****What You Need:** No supplies needed**What You Do:**

Review the Bible story with students, asking them for their thoughts on what Jesus meant when He said that how we treat others is how we treat Him. Use the metaphor of their families, such as how the way they treat their siblings can affect their parents. Ask them if this is what they think Jesus means, or something else.

Next, have everyone make a circle, and ask for two volunteers to stand in the center and face each other. On your signal, one is to compliment the other while high-fiving that person. The other person has only a few seconds to compliment that person back, while also high-fiving that person back. This pattern goes on until someone runs out of something to say, to which another person in the circle can shout “TAG IN” and take that person’s place, resuming the compliments back and forth until someone else tags in. Play as many rounds as you’d like, ideally trying to get everyone in.

Finally, debrief your experience and talk about what made that fun or challenging. Talk about how they had to really dig deep in some situations to come up with a kind word to say, and how we can do this for the people in our lives who may need us to look hard to notice what they need a kind word or affirmation for.

5-6 Challenge: Challenge kids to use their mobile devices or social media accounts to send a compliment to someone who is overlooked every day this week. It doesn’t have to be the same person every day. If any kids don’t have mobile devices or social media accounts, encourage them to find other unique ways they can compliment those who are overlooked this week. Talk through some ideas together.

What You Say:

“This was not only a fun game, but I’m guessing God also used it to say something encouraging to someone here. He’s taken the time to make His love for us known through the Bible, and He wants us to share that love with each other. You can show others they are valuable by how you treat them. Even when we know this is important, we might not follow through and do it. **[Apply] Maybe the key is like how, in this game, you may have felt inspired to compliment someone because you’d just been complimented. Similarly, in enjoying how Jesus has been kind to you first, you can become more inclined to [Impress] be kind to people who are overlooked.**”

Catch On #2

Cheat Sheets (application activity)

What You Need: Note cards, pencils

What You Do:

Hand out the note cards and pencils so every student has one of each. Spend a few moments brainstorming together the different categories in their life, such as: home, friends, school, neighborhood, world, extracurricular activities, and more. *(Note: If someone mentions church, you can use this to affirm that church activities are be a part of our lives, but as Christians, how we respond to following and believing in Jesus should show up in all those other categories as well. Our faith is not just something that shows up when we’re at church but something that should impact every area of our lives.)*

Next, have them prepare to write down the top six areas that they feel take up most time in their lives. They’ll write three on one side of the card and three on the other side of the card, leaving a blank space under each category to write something else down.

Finally, brainstorm some of the different ways that each of these areas can use some added kindness to not overlook the needs of the people kids interact with in those areas. For example:

- Home: Call your grandparents on a weekly basis to tell them you love them.
- Neighborhood: Take care of a busy neighbor’s yard or garbage.
- School: Make a thank you card for staff members, from teachers to administration to administrative assistants to the custodial team.

Once the kids have completed their cards, give them the opportunity to share one idea with the group. Challenge them to carry this note card around with them all week long wherever they go as a mini-cheat sheet to prompt them to take action.

[Make It Personal] (Share about a time when you did something out of the ordinary for an overlooked person and you felt like it made that person’s day.)

What You Say:

“What if acts of kindness like this are how we can join Jesus in changing the world? **[Apply] We would have to be as intentional about making sure it came across as more than good deeds, perhaps by telling people**

that you hope your actions remind them that God loves them. Show others they are valuable by how you treat them, especially making sure to *[Impress]* be kind to people who are overlooked.”

Agents of K.I.N.D.**Bible Story:** Agents of K.I.N.D. (Barnabas and Saul) • Acts 9:26-30**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.**Early Arriver Activity (8:45) (10:30) (5:45)****What You Need:** An offering container**What You Do:**

Welcome kids as they arrive and collect their offerings. Ask them about some of the more challenging parts of their week, such as: Did you get into an argument with someone? Was anyone unkind to you? What happened? What did you do about it? Have you ever been mad at someone only to find out it wasn't really a big deal at all?

(Note: As kids are sharing, make sure they don't use any specific names.)

Plug In (9:00) (10:45) (6:00)**How Can I Help?****What You Need:** Extra tie-shoes (optional)**What You Do:**

Let the group know that they're going to need to untie their shoes and retie them; only they won't be allowed to do it themselves. They'll have to wait for another person to ask, "How can I help?" so they can give a one-step command, such as "Put a shoe lace in each of your hands." The other person will then have to ask, "How can I help?" again (and at every step) in order for the person to give the next one-step command. No one can just give an all-encompassing command, like "Do whatever it takes to tie my shoes."

Switch places and give the other person the chance to play the opposite role. Debrief about the experience afterward, from what was enjoyable to what was frustrating about this activity.

What You Say:

"It can feel frustrating to have to wait on another person to do something you can totally do yourself.

Relationships are often the same way. Some people can be frustrating, while others are just mean and unkind sometimes. In those moments, you realize how challenging it can be to show kindness. **[Transition] Let's go to Large Group and hear a story about some people who needed to show kindness to someone who hadn't been kind to them.**" Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Prayer Time

After large group, gather children in their small groups. Lead them in prayer focusing on "The Bottom Line."

Catch On #1**Old Maid Switch Up (review the Bible story)****What You Need:** a few sets of Old Maid cards**What You Do:**

Talk about the Bible story, taking note of how the different Christians reacted to Saul after he encountered Jesus. Some feared what he might do, although Barnabas spoke up for Saul and said he was a changed man. Ananias also helped Saul and showed him kindness.

Ask your group for thoughts on how this might apply in their everyday lives. Don't ask them to share a name out loud, but to think about someone they'd have trouble believing had made a real life change. Challenge them to consider how they think of that person now.

Next, put the kids into groups of three or four and pass out one set of Old Maid cards per group. Ask them how they normally have played Old Maid. (You don't want to be the one left with the Old Maid at the end.) This time the rules are switched up a little. In order to win, you need to be the one holding the Old Maid card at the end of the game. If a group finishes a game before you run out of time, allow them to play again. When you do run out of time for the activity, the winners are those holding the Old Maid, even if the game is not yet completed.

What You Say:

“Most of the time, life is more like the official rules of Old Maid. When someone is unkind to us we want to get rid of them or treat them unkindly in return. But God asks us to do something different. He asks us to **[Impress] be kind to people who aren’t kind to you**. Because Barnabas and Ananias did this, Saul went on to become the Apostle Paul and God used him to change the world. **[Apply] When you are kind, you don’t just show others they are valuable, but you may even help them to become the kind of people who also show others they are valuable to God.**”

Catch On #2

Friendly Fire (*application activity / great for active learners / possible large-group activity*)

What You Need: Assortment of action figures, dolls, or mini-figures; assortment of other random, unbreakable objects; scrap paper; pens or pencils

What You Do:

Bring out the random assortments of items, instructing students to pick one action figure and one random object. Don’t tell them anything further about the game until everyone has made their selections.

Next, have them each take a scrap sheet of paper and write down something mean either they’ve heard someone say or someone has said to them. Talk about what they wrote down the paper. How does it feel to have these things said to you? Why do you think people say things like this to others? Have them crumple their paper into a ball.

Next, explain that kids will all sit on one side of your space and use the crumpled paper to attack the action figures on the other side of the space. Tell everyone to stand up their figures on one side, along with their random object as a shield or barrier. Once you’ve set this up, have everyone go back to the other side of the room and attack, one at a time, starting from youngest to oldest. Everyone gets one shot at trying to knock over someone else’s figure while hoping that their own remains standing. You can play just one round or two rounds and see where the game ends.

Note: If you share a room with multiple Small Groups, you could do this activity as an entire room together. Or you could designate space for each group and do the activity at a predetermined time, so that one group isn’t distracting another group as they do a different activity.

Repeat the same set up as before, getting everyone ready to attack. The only difference is this time YOU will stand in front of the action figures as an act of kindness. They should still try to get the action figures around you, but this time you can swat the paper away. Play a round or two this way. If you have time, let kids volunteer to take turns as a defender.

[Make it Personal] (*Share about a time when someone got involved in a situation that helped you out from getting attacked or being misunderstood by others.*)

5-6 Challenge: Take a few minutes to talk about how people can be attacked or bullied on social media. Ask if any of them have been bullied in this way or if their friends have. Come up with some ideas for how they can show others kindness on social media. How can they help shield their friends from being hurt on social media? What can they do to try to counterattack cyber-bullying?

What You Say:

“It’s one thing to read about stories of kindness in the Bible, and another thing to live out those stories ourselves. People can be hurtful not just with their actions but most often with their words. What God is challenging us to do is to not JUST be kind to people we get along with, but also to **[Impress] be kind to people who aren’t kind to you**. **[Apply] Maybe this means not fighting with someone who says something mean to you, or perhaps it means starting a friendship with someone it would be easier to avoid**. You show others they are valuable by how you treat them.”