



Date: _____
Series: Our "Can Do" God
Winter Year 2, Lesson 34

God Heals Our Hurts on the Inside

Primary Scripture: Ephesians 4:31-5:2

Key Verse: Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ."

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kids understand physical wounds and hurts. They are now learning more about spiritual wounds and hurts. One of the greatest spiritual hurts we can have is when we hold bitterness, unforgiveness, or revenge in our lives. Like all sin, this spiritually wounds us. Today's lesson presents the Gospel, which shows Jesus as one who heals us of spiritual hurts. He gives us acceptance and forgiveness. In acceptance he loves us for whom we are. In forgiveness, he loves us despite what we have done. With faith in him, we receive healing for our souls, which lets us share his love with others.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus gave his life for us as an offering and sacrifice, so that we would be forgiven and have all that we need for spiritual healing.

Jesus in us: We imitate Jesus because, through the power of God's Holy Spirit, Jesus can live in us.

Jesus through us: We can forgive others even as God has forgiven us through Christ. Because we have been healed, we can share that healing with others.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Light a stick of incense and walk among the children as you talk to them. The purpose will be to invite them into the presence of God to worship.

The incense reminds us of a scripture verse from Ephesians 5:2, "Live in love as Christ also loved us. He gave his life for us as an offering and sacrifice, a soothing aroma to God."

In the Old Testament, incense was often burned in worship. This reminded the people that their prayers ascended to God like incense. There were other things that they burned. The people burned animals as an offering for their sins. It probably did not smell as good as incense, but it reminded the people that the life of an animal had to be sacrificed as a payment for their sin.

Today's Bible verse says that Jesus offered himself to God just like incense. He was, in a way, just like the burnt offerings that people many years before him offered to God. He gave his life as a payment for sin, just like animals were used as a payment for sin. Jesus did it willingly so that we could enter God's presence.

That is what we are doing today as we worship. When we sing songs and pray, it is just like smoke rising to God, and it smells good to him. We are telling God that we love him, and, in turn, he is pleased with the sacrifice of our praise. Let's worship.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Take two Band-Aids and affix them in the shape of a cross over your clothing near your heart.

When do we have to wear Band-Aids? *(When wounded or injured.)*

There are other hurts that we can have on the inside, in our soul. Our soul is the deepest part of our person, where we think and feel, and have our personality. Sometimes our soul gets hurt, and we would like to put a Band-Aid over it to help it get better. Do you think a Band-Aid like this on my shirt would help me have healing in my soul? No, of course not. Notice that the Band-Aids are in the shape of the cross. That reminds me that there is one thing that can help the hurts that I have on the inside – Jesus.

The most hurtful thing that can happen to our souls is the damage that happens when we sin against God. God wants to heal it. The way he does this is by giving us his Son, Jesus. When we ask Jesus for forgiveness and ask that he would live in our lives, it is just like taking out the hurt of sin and covering it with Jesus. When we trust Jesus as our Savior, we are reminded of how much God loves us and how wonderful it is that God would live in our hearts.

Let's do that now. Let's talk to God about anything in our hearts that we might have done wrong. If we are feeling bad about something, we need to tell God about it so we experience his forgiveness. We need to talk to God about anything we've done wrong so that we can have healing. Everyone think of something right now that you have done wrong.

In your mind, talk to God about those things.

Pause for private confession.

There is one other sin that often hurts us and we don't even know it. If we are thinking of someone that we hate, are mad at, or we want to get even with, that is something that can damage our hearts and hurt our souls. We need to pray to God for forgiveness. We need help to forgive people instead of holding a grudge against them. Let's pray for that now.

After a pause make an announcement of forgiveness.

The Bible says that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins. He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Because you believe in Jesus as your Savior, your sins are forgiven. God gives you a brand new start. He even helps heal your soul.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Bring the burning incense near the offering plate. Show the kids that, as they give their offerings to the Lord, it is like a fragrant smell going to the Lord. Say:

We do not burn animals any more as offerings. We still can give money to God, though. It is pleasing to God when he sees that we put him first in all things.

As kids bring their offerings forward, tell about the current mission project.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

“Hoop Toss or Hoop Shoot”

Supplies needed: masking tape, hula hoops, balls that are either colored the same or marked so that they can be distinguished for each team. Take caution that the balls used for this game are appropriate for the room size and will be safe.

In advance, make two lines on the floor with masking tape about ten yards apart and long enough so that half of the kids can spread out on each side. Between the two lines, place several hula hoops.

Divide the kids into two teams. Have each team stand behind a tapeline on the floor facing the other team.

The object of the game is to see which team can toss the most balls into the hula hoops at the end of a set amount of time (*a minute or two*). The trick of the game is that a team may try to toss the ball into a ring or throw the ball hard so that it knocks out one of the opponent's balls. The opposing team may retrieve the balls that are overshoot as long as they do not step over their line. They can then go to the trading zone, which is at the very end of their lines, and trade with a player on the other side.

After the game is played, have kids return to their seats and explain:

The hula hoops represent the deepest part of ourselves – our soul. We need love, and God wants to give us love. This is like the balls that are tossed into the circles.

But, we can also have injuries in our soul. That is like when the balls are thrown to knock out one of the other balls. Our souls get injured when we intentionally do something wrong against God.

Our souls can especially be injured when we do not forgive others and show God's love and kindness to others. That is like when you would try to knock the other team's ball out of the circle, but instead, knocked your own team's ball out. Refusing to forgive others hurts us more than it hurts anyone else. Today we are going to hear from God's word how he wants to heal our souls.

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Supplies needed: a paper cup labeled "our soul" with baking soda in the bottom of it, a clear glass with an equal measure of vinegar, an object to poke a hole in the bottom of the paper cup and a bowl to catch the seeping liquid.

Read Ephesians 4:31-5:2 segments as follows:

Talk about bitterness while holding up the glass of vinegar. Read verse 31,

"Get rid your bitterness, hot tempers, anger, loud quarreling, cursing, and hatred."

Then ask:

What kinds of things make you really mad?

What kinds of things do we do to get even?

After you discuss this with the kids and solicit their answers, take the glass of vinegar into the audience. Ask the kids to smell it.

Does this smell good or bad? Yuck! It's terrible. Sometimes when we think only about what someone has done wrong against us, it is like we collect these bad-smelling thoughts.

Who gets hurt? We do! When someone does something wrong to us, we think of the mean things we can do to get even. We think that we are getting ahead by hurting the other person. God's word tells us that, actually, we are only hurting ourselves. It is like putting poison into our soul.

Pour vinegar into paper cup.

Imagine this cup is our soul and we are putting this bad stuff in. Look what happens. It bubbles and foams out. What happens to us is that our bitterness and anger spill out around us and ruin other parts

of our lives as well. We can become so angry with someone that our good times with our friends can also be ruined.

But Jesus took our bitterness upon himself.

Poke a hole in the bottom of the cup. Drain it into the bowl.

This vinegar smells terrible, doesn't it? Wouldn't you hate to drink it? When Jesus was dying on the cross and needed a drink, did you know what they gave him? It was vinegar very similar to this. It says in Mark 15:36: *"One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink."* (NIV)

When Jesus was on the cross, he took all of the bitterness and sin in our lives upon himself. Because Jesus has taken our bitterness upon himself, we do not need to hold it against other people.

Read Ephesians 4:32-5:2.

"Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ. Imitate God, since you are the children he loves. Live in love as Christ also loved us. He gave his life for us as an offering and a sacrifice, a soothing aroma to God."

Application:

The following true story needs to be read to the children, allowing them to interact with the storyteller.

The Story About Ben

Have you ever felt hurt inside? So hurt that you wanted to hurt others? I want to tell you a story – a true story about a little boy. This little boy's name was Ben. Ben was eight years old. Like a lot of other eight year-old boys, he liked sports, especially soccer. He loved the kids in his second grade class, and he loved his dog, Sam.

There was a problem – a big problem. The kids on Ben's soccer team did not like him. The kids in his second grade class did not like him. His dog, Sam, did not even like him! You see, Ben was mean.

One day he was playing soccer with his friends. Everything was going okay until the other team scored three goals in a row. Now that made Ben very angry. So, the next time Tyler came down the field with the ball, Ben decided he was not going to let Tyler score again.

It just made him mad! Instead of kicking for the ball, Ben kicked Tyler. While Tyler was bending over to rub his leg, Ben punched Tyler in the side.

All of Tyler's friends saw what happened. It made them very angry. The coach saw what happened and called Ben to the side. The coach said, "Ben, that is not how to be a good sport when you are playing soccer."

Ben was still so angry. He was angry now, not only because he was losing the game, but also because everyone seemed to be picking on him and yelling at him. Because he was so mad, he spit at the coach.

Do you know what happened? The coach made him sit. What would you have done if you had been one of the kids on the team? How would you have treated Ben?

The next day, Ben came to school and he was still very angry about soccer. He became angrier as the other kids kept calling him "Ben, the Meanie! Ben, the Meanie!"

At recess, when he and Christine were standing in line to swing, he pushed her out of line. When she tried to get back in line, Ben would not let her in and he hit her.

When they went to lunch, Ben was mad at Dale. Dale had been calling him, "Ben, the Meanie!" When Ben picked up his lunch tray, he put his fingers only under the edge of it. He tipped Dale's lunch tray so it dumped all over the floor.

Later in art class Ben was mad at Angela. Angela, who always did the most beautiful art pictures, was showing everyone her wonderful painting. Ben looked at her and said, "It's ugly just like you are! And just like your mother is!" Angela burst into tears. Everyone was angry with Ben. They said, "Ben, you are just mean! You are a meanie!"

Ben decided to hit the closest person to him. This just made him angrier and angrier.

Everyone who walked by Ben later that afternoon was either hit or kicked by him. What would you have done if you were one of his classmates? What would you have said to Ben?

The next day nobody wanted to play with Ben. You see, everybody who played with Ben got hit. Nobody wanted to eat lunch with Ben, either. Finally, Robert had to sit down across the table from Ben. Do you know what Ben did? Ben threw salt in Robert's food.

That afternoon some of the moms came in after school and said, “We don’t want our kids to have to sit by Ben anymore. He’s mean and says mean things to them. He draws on their papers, he hits them, and he pinches them.” The moms asked the teacher to make Ben sit all by himself.

The teacher loved Ben, though. She loved Ben as much as she loved Christine, Robert, Dale, and all the other boys and girls in her class. She had been praying. She would ask God to show her how to love Ben.

God did a wonderful thing! Sometimes teachers are not smart enough to figure everything out all by themselves. God is, though. God used this teacher and said, “I want you to say this to the boys and girls in your room...”

The next day Ben needed to go see the nurse because he had not been feeling well. While he was gone, the teacher said to the other children, “Let’s do an experiment!”

Now all second grade boys and girls love to do experiments, so they happily agreed. Then the teacher said, “We are going to do an experiment that God showed me how to do. This is what I want you to do. Anytime Ben hits anyone, I want you to look at him and say, ‘I forgive you, and I love you because God loves you.’ Anytime Ben says something mean to you, I want you to turn around and say, ‘I forgive you, and I love you because God loves you.’ Anytime Ben does anything at all that makes you angry, I want you to say, ‘I forgive you, and I love you because God loves you.’ Let’s do this experiment and see what happens. Let’s see if God can change Ben. Do you think God can change Ben?”

Guess what happened! That day at recess, Ben walked up and knocked Christine down. At first, Christine wanted to stand up and punch him back. Instead, she stood and said, “I forgive you, Ben. I love you because God loves you.”

Ben looked at her and then turned and walked away. Christine was rather surprised because Ben usually kept being mean.

The next morning in school, Ben shoved all of his crayons and books over onto Dale’s desk. Usually Ben did those kinds of things to make people angry with him. Dale looked at him and said, “I forgive you, Ben. I love you because God loves you.”

For the next two weeks, every time Ben did anything mean or said anything bad, his classmates would look at him and say, “I forgive you, and I love you because God loves you.”

Do you know what happened? Ben started changing. Ben started being kind to people. Ben even held the door open for his teacher. At recess, he asked Christine if he could push her on the swing. She thought he would be mean and push her off of the swing, but he pushed her in a nice way.

The next day, Robert ate lunch with Ben again. They actually had a lot of fun talking about the soccer game the night before.

By the end of the school year, Ben was a changed boy. The teacher looked at her class and said, “We started an experiment a long time ago. It was an experiment that God wanted us to do. Let’s stop and figure out what happened in our experiment.”

As the boys and girls talked about it, they realized that Ben had changed. God had changed him from the inside out. Ben had a lot of hurt in his life and things that made him angry. God could change that by loving Ben through other people.

Do you think God can change hurts inside you? Do you have hurts that just make you angry? Can God use you to change hurts in other people? Let’s pray about that.

Pray for God to heal the hurts that are in people’s hearts. Also, pray to help the kids find people who are hurting so they can love them and bring them to Jesus, the Master Healer.



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Let kids share times they were kind to someone who was unkind or mean. Did it make a difference?

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- incense to be burned

The Power of the Cross:

- two Band-Aids

Learning Game:

- masking tape
- hula hoops
- balls that are either colored the same or marked so that they can be distinguished for each team

Bible Event:

- paper cup with baking soda in it and labeled “Our Soul”
- clear glass, the same size as the paper cup, filled with vinegar
- an object to poke a hole in the bottom of the paper cup
- bowl

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