



Date: _____
Series: Godly Actions Count (Summer)
Year 4, Lesson 13

Love Your Enemies

Primary Scripture: Luke 6:27- 31; Romans 12:14-21

Key Verses: Luke 6:27-28, “But I tell everyone who is listening: Love your enemies. Be kind to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who insult you.”

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

Kids are quick to learn the ways and standards of this world. In dealing with bullies or enemies, the standard response is to get even. The world says, “If someone hurts you, hurt them back.” Christ’s way is entirely different. Kids need to know that through the power of Jesus in their lives, they can actually love their enemies instead of mistreat them. This has a greater power of influence over their enemies’ behaviors, and it can even open the door for the gospel to be shared.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: While we were yet enemies of God, Jesus loved us and gave his life for us. In turn, we can love our enemies.

Jesus in us: Jesus dwells within us, giving us the power to love our enemies just as he loved us.

Jesus through us: Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can return good for evil. By sharp contrast to the world, this demonstrates the power of the gospel that can change lives.

Lesson 13 - 1

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.

Supplies needed: small squirt gun filled with water

Playfully squirt several kids with a squirt gun, avoiding their faces. Squirt one or two several times as if to "pick on" them. Then say:

We are just having fun right now, but sometimes people can do things in a mean way, like squirting you with a squirt gun when you don't want them to. When that is done to you in a mean way with a squirt gun, what might you want to do about it?

Let the kids guess.

Right, you might want to get a squirt gun and squirt them back.

Think about what it feels like when someone does something or says something to you in a really mean way. Maybe they make fun of you in front of your friends, or they push you on the playground or bully you. Maybe they exclude you from a group of friends. These types of things are actions that an enemy might do.

Did you know that God tells us how we should deal with that? Today we will discover that God's love is so powerful that he gives us the power to love our enemies and to overcome.

The power to love our enemies comes from the one who loved us while we were still enemies of God. Romans 5:8 says, “Christ died for us while we were still sinners. This demonstrates God’s love for us.” And verse 10 says, “If the death of his Son restored our relationship with God while we were still his enemies, we are even more certain that, because of this restored relationship, the life of his Son will save us.”

Let’s worship God for that gift and for being his friends and not his enemies.

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!

The Power of the Cross:

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

Supplies needed: over-sized squirt gun or a garden hose with a nozzle sprayer (The garden hose does not need to be hooked up to a water source.)

The leader who had the squirt gun in the Attention Grabber comes forward and starts to squirt the kids again. Then you come forward with an over-sized squirt gun or a hose with a sprayer nozzle and aim it at the other leader. He/she sets the gun on the floor and raises his hands in the air as if to say, “I give up!”

Did you know that God offers a power to us that is much bigger than this? (Referring to the oversized gun or garden hose.) Most people think that they have power when they get even or hurt someone back. But God says, “No, there is a power much greater.” In Matthew 5:44-45, he says, “But I tell you this: Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. In this way you show that you are children of your Father in heaven.”

God asks us to pray for our enemies. Can you think of a person who has hurt you or is an enemy? Let’s stop and pray for that person right now.

Dear God, we pray that you would give us your powerful love that would help us love even the people who act like our enemies. If we have tried to get even in any way, please forgive us and remind us that Jesus gave his life for us. Because of that, we can have the power to love in a bigger and better way. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want 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.

Supplies needed: squirt gun

Place the squirt gun on the altar and say:

I'm placing this squirt gun on the altar to remind us that sometimes there are people that we want to get even with because they have done something to hurt us. Even though we are in God's house, we may still have feelings of bitterness or anger toward them. If that happens, it gets in the way of our worship and our offering.

Listen to what Jesus taught in the Bible in Matthew 5:23-24. It says, "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and remember there that another believer has something against you, leave your gift at the altar. First go away and make peace with that person. Then come back and offer your gift."

Today before you bring your offerings, think about whether there is anyone with whom you are angry or whom you have not forgiven. Think of that person now. Let's have a moment of quiet time and pray for that person. Pause.

Dear God, you know who we are thinking of in our hearts that we hold bitterness toward or have a hard time forgiving. Sometimes it is hard getting along with that person. Those bad feelings we have can get in the way of our relationship with you. So please help us not hold any grudges against him/her. Help us forgive him/her and work out the problems that we might have. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Now let's bring our offerings forward.



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.

“Burning Coal Bombardment”

Supplies needed: paper sacks seven inches tall (one per group of six children), masking tape, stacks of newspaper, baseball cap for each group of six children

In advance, mark the room with a line of masking tape on one side of the room.

Divide the kids into teams of six and have each team stand behind the line.

Have one kid from each team put on a baseball cap. Give each team two feet of masking tape to affix a paper sack to the top of the kid's head wearing the baseball cap.

Note: Make sure tape doesn't get stuck to kids' hair.

Play the game in two rounds. In round one, three kids on each team will tear newspaper sheets into fourths and then crumple them into “burning coals.” As they do this, two other team members stand behind the line and try to throw the “burning coals” into the sack taped to the first team member's head.

In each round, the target person with the sack begins six feet from the line. He/she may kneel down if he/she wants to. Every time a burning coal is thrown, the target person takes a step back for a total of six steps backward. That completes a round. If the sack of burning coals ever falls off their heads, then the burning coals that are in the sack don't count. They must be removed and left on the floor. The target must keep his/her balance and keep the sack fastened on. The burning coals in the sack are dumped out and counted at the end of round one. They may be taken back to the throwing line and reused if you want. Then round two begins. The burning coals are again dumped out and counted after round two.

In round two, the children reverse roles. The ones who made the burning coals will become the burning coal throwers or the burning coal target, and the children who were the throwers and the target will make the burning coals.

Learning Point:

In Romans 12:20, it says that there is a way to put burning coals on top of someone's head. It doesn't really mean burning coals. By saying that, it means that you would help someone feel guilty or ashamed if they have done something wrong toward you. How do you put burning coals on top of someone's head?

Read Romans 12:20:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. If you do this, you will make him feel guilty and ashamed."

If he is your enemy and has done something mean to you, it's like putting burning coals on his head if you show him kindness in return. When this happens, he may feel guilty and ashamed for being mean.

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.

Part 1: "God saved us while we were still sinners. This demonstrates God's love for us." (Romans 5:8)

Supplies needed: old shirt covered with stains or dirt that can easily be slipped onto a child

Invite a volunteer forward. Call him John for illustration purposes.

Everyone, please imagine with me that when we put this shirt on John (insert the child's name), it reminds us of all the sin and the bad things that we have ever done.

Ask him to put on the dirty shirt.

As a matter of fact, this shirt also reminds us of any person who has rebelled and sinned against God. When this happens, this person is an enemy of God and separated from him. But we don't want to be enemies of God. We want to be friends with him.

So when you want to be friends with God, does God tell you that you must first clean up your act and stop doing all the bad things you are doing? *Then* you can go talk to him and be his friend? And *then* he will give you Jesus? OR, does God say: "Come to me with all your

sin. Come to me just as you are, and I will take it away from you. I'll make you my friend"?

What do you think he says, John (insert the child's name)?

Allow him to answer.

Let's see if he is right by looking at Romans 5:6-10. Here is what I want you to listen for. When did Christ die for us and give us forgiveness? Did he die for us and give us forgiveness after we got rid of our sin? Or did he do this while we were yet sinners?

Read Romans 5:6 – 7. Have a child read verse 8. Close with verse 10.

Even while we were enemies of God, Jesus died for us.

Because Jesus takes the sin off of us (remove the shirt from John) **and puts it on himself, we can come to him and be his friend. Jesus was kind to us when we were his enemies. Let's take a look at how we should treat our enemies.**

Part 2: “Be kind to those who hate you.” (Luke 6:27)

Supplies needed: the “LOVE” diagram at the end of the lesson or a symbol for love such as a red cut-out heart attached to a large poster board or a large writing pad, the “HATE” diagram at the end of the lesson or a symbol for hate such as a black cut-out blob attached to a large poster board or a large writing pad, thick black marker, scotch or masking tape (Optional: easel on which to prop up the posters; Optional: writing pad or piece of cardboard to place behind the posters to assist the leader in writing on the posters).

Prop up the “LOVE” poster where the kids can easily see it, and ask the kids what “love” looks like. Record their answers on the poster by writing simple words around the heart, such as helping, caring, giving gifts, giving hugs, etc. Tape the “LOVE” poster to a table or to the altar up front.

Prop up the “HATE” poster, and ask the kids what “hate” looks like. Record their answers on the poster by writing simple words around the “hate” diagram such as bully, mean, hurt, evil, angry, etc. Leave the poster propped up, or tape it to the table or altar next to the “LOVE” poster.

Some people think of love only as a feeling. That's not true. Love is an attitude and an action. An attitude is the way we think and an action is what we do. The attitude of love means to think in your mind that the other person is very important and he/she really matters. It is to care about him or her. An action is something I do

that helps another person. So love is not just a feeling. It is what we think and what we do.

Jesus said something very strange. He said love your enemies. Most people think that it isn't possible to love your enemies because you may not feel love toward someone who hurts you. But you can have an attitude and action that let's you act kindly toward them. In Luke 6:27, the Bible says, *"But I tell everyone who is listening: love your enemies. Be kind to those who hate you."*

We will look at three ways the Bible says you can be kind to those who hate you. To do that, I need a volunteer from the audience who is good at making up endings to stories. Come forward and sit up here with me, and get ready to complete the story that I tell, using your own imagination.

The first example that Jesus gives of how to be kind to those who hate you is to, "Bless those who curse you." Listen to the following story.

Once there was a third grader named Jenny who had a quick temper. She got mad very easily. And when she did, she used mean words and dirty words. Maybe it was because she heard some of those words at home. Her parents didn't use nice words to each other. But that still didn't make it right. It was just that Jenny didn't have someone helping her learn not to use such foul language.

At school, Jenny didn't like Rebecca at all. That's because Rebecca got better grades and seemed to have more friends than Jenny. Jenny was jealous of her. One day during recess, Jenny was playing near Rebecca and bumped into her. Jenny shouted at Rebecca, "Hey you bleep! Get out of my way, or I'll kick your bleep!"

Rebecca didn't get mad or upset but simply said, "I'm not in your way, and I won't bother you. But you can play in our game if you want."

"I don't want to play in your stupid bleeping game," said Jenny. "You're nothing but a bleep, bleep sissy."

The words hurt Rebecca. It was hard to look at Jenny. So Rebecca turned around and walked away. She could still hear Jenny jeering at her. Rebecca's friends gathered around and quickly began to say, "See? That

Jenny is such a brat! She has a potty mouth. And she's so mean. I would never want to play with her."

But Rebecca said something different. She said, "I think she has kindness inside. It just can't get out. I pray for her that she would let the love or kindness in so that she wouldn't be so mean. I'm sure she could be a very nice person. I think she needs a friend."

Just then, Jenny came up to the group. She said, "What do you mean, talking about me behind my back? Why you bleep bleep!"

But Rebecca's friends said "Wait a minute. Rebecca was just saying nice things about you."

"Oh, yeah, like what?"

"She said that you just needed a friend. She said that down deep, you have a lot of kindness that is probably just waiting to come out."

"Oh," said Jenny. "Well I guess I do." And at that, she walked away.

The next week, things began to change a bit. This is what happened.

Let the child fill in the story, and continue to create the story with the child.

Then dismiss the child and bring another volunteer forward.

The Bible also tells us to "pray for those who insult you."

This is a story about Dennis and Cody. Cody was a master at put-downs. He would say things like, "You're so ugly that your mom had to tie a bone around your neck just to get the dogs to play with you." He also said, "You're so stinky. If you're walking in the woods, the skunks walk out to join you." And he said, "You're so stupid that when you look up 'stupid' in the dictionary, your picture is there."

At first Dennis thought Cody was just trying to be funny. After all, people did laugh at his jokes, but he noticed the sneer on Cody's face when he told the stories. He noticed how much Cody wanted to get other people to laugh at whomever he was insulting. And Dennis had

had enough. He tried not to hang around where Cody was because he didn't want to get insulted or put down. But sometimes he just couldn't help it. After all, they played on the same basketball team.

When he asked his dad what he should do, his dad said something pretty unusual. He asked him if he had prayed about it yet.

"Well, not really," said Dennis. "I guess I should try that."

His dad continued. He asked, "When you pray for him, what will you pray for?"

"Well, I'll pray that he stops insulting me."

"Can you pray for more than that?"

"Like what?"

"Can you pray that Cody's heart would change? If his heart is hardened and he's mean with his words, pray that Cody would let God's kindness into his heart. Pray that Cody would change from the inside."

"That sounds like a great idea, Dad!"

Off Dennis went to pray. He prayed for Cody every night. At first, it seemed like it wasn't doing any good at all. Cody still insulted him. But now, Dennis was so used to praying for him that when Cody insulted him, it didn't bother him as much. And instead of trying to insult him back, he simply said a prayer in his mind: "Dear God, please bless Cody so that he won't be such a jerk with all of his mean words. Please find a way to get into his life."

Weeks went by until finally, something changed. After basketball practice, Cody came up to Dennis, and this is what he said...

Let the volunteer finish the story.

Dismiss the child and bring another volunteer forward.

The Bible also tells us this: *"If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other cheek as well. If someone*

takes your coat, don't stop him from taking your shirt. Give to anyone who asks you for something. If someone takes what is yours, don't insist on getting it back."
(Luke 6:29-30)

Here is the story.

"Turn the other cheek – that's a hard one," said Jamie. He was tired of getting picked on by Connor. Connor was bigger than most of the kids in his class. He also was the playground bully. Jamie seemed to be his favorite target. He had already talked to the teacher and his parents about Connor. That's what you're supposed to do when bullies pick on you. He also learned how to turn around and walk away from Connor's insults. But it hurt when he heard the word "chicken."

And now he was confused. At church, he heard that Jesus said that we should pray for those who persecute us. And if they hit us on one cheek, we should turn the other cheek. He had been praying about the situation. He prayed that Connor wouldn't bother him anymore. But he still didn't know what to do when it came time for a showdown. And then it happened. Everyone was getting ready to come in from recess to go to lunch, and it was important to be first in line for lunch. When the teacher turned her back, Connor pushed Jamie out of his spot and laughed out loud. Just then, the teacher turned around and saw Jamie getting up. The teacher must have suspected what happened and asked Jamie if he was okay and if he would like to take the position at the front of the line.

Jamie said the most unusual thing. He said, "Sure, but I was standing next to Connor. Can he come, too?"

Some of the kids snickered. Connor got quiet. The teacher knew all too well that Connor was usually the bully. This was interesting—someone being kind to Connor in response to his meanness.

The teacher said, "Sure, come on up, and Connor, you can come, too." When Connor came up, he had a puzzled look on his face. Jamie didn't say a thing, but later that week, something else happened where Jamie showed some kindness to Connor. In the classroom during a science project, Connor couldn't understand how to do his project. This is what Jamie did...

Let the volunteer finish the story.

Dismiss the volunteer. Conclude the stories and go back to the love and the hatred diagrams from the beginning.

Remember that love is not just a feeling. It is an attitude and an action, and the Bible says that we are to love our enemies and those who hate us. The only way to be kind to those who are our enemies is if we have been filled up on the inside with God's love for us. This gives us enough power to do kind things. We get filled up by thinking about what God has done for us and thanking him for it.

Let's remember that even while we were sinners, God sent his Son, Jesus, into the world. His Son was perfect. He lived for us, he died on the cross to lift away our sin, and, to those who believe, he promises to live in our hearts and give us his power to love others.



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.

Ask the kids to talk about any experience they have had in giving kindness to an enemy or to someone who was mean to them.

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:

- small squirt gun filled with water

Power of the Cross

- over-sized squirt gun or a garden hose with a nozzle sprayer (The garden hose does not need to be hooked up to a water source.)

Learning Game:

- paper sacks (One sack is needed for each group of six children. Make the paper sacks about seven inches tall by cutting off the tops of the sacks.)
- masking tape
- stacks of newspaper
- baseball cap for each group of six children

Bible Reading

- *Part 1:*
 - old shirt covered with stains or dirt that can easily be slipped onto a child
- *Part 2:*
 - the "LOVE" diagram at the end of the lesson or a symbol for love such as a red cut-out heart (Attach it to a large poster board or a large writing pad.)
 - the "HATE" diagram at the end of the lesson or a symbol for hate such as a black cut-out blob (Attach it to a large poster board or a large writing pad.)
 - thick black marker
 - Scotch or masking tape
 - *Optional:* easel on which to prop up the posters
 - *Optional:* writing pad or piece of cardboard to place behind the posters to assist the leader in writing on the posters



HATE

