



Date: _____
Series: Signs on Believers Hwy
Winter Year 4, Lesson 37

Accept Others Who May Be Different

Primary Scripture: Colossians 3:11-15

Key Verse: Colossians 3:12-15, "As holy people whom God has chosen and loved, be sympathetic, kind, humble, gentle, and patient...Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Above all, be loving...God has called you into this peace by bringing you into one body."

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

Kids learn from society that people who are different from them are often looked down upon. Likewise, even in schools, kids form cliques that leave others out which somehow make them feel more significant. Kids put down others to make themselves feel better. All of this is part of our prideful human nature that encourages us to emphasize the differences we have with others and put them down. This is not true of God's Kingdom. God invites us to himself regardless of our faults and differences. Because of his acceptance, we can accept others. Kids need to learn to practice the acceptance that God gives to them.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus accepts us for who we are through the gift of his life and death on the cross resulting in complete forgiveness for us.

Jesus in us: Jesus gives us the power of his Spirit so that we, too, will have an accepting heart towards others.

Jesus through us: One of the greatest powers we have to offer others is forgiveness and acceptance. This is how the world will experience the love of Christ.

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: several goofy costume items such as hats, ties, smocks, belts, etc.

Invite three volunteers from the audience to come forward for a special wardrobe fitting. Use an assistant to quickly dress the kids in goofy costumes.

These kids sure look different than the rest of us. I wonder if these goofy looking clothes on the outside, might make them goofy people on the inside. I'm wondering if these kids are now goofier on the inside, or not as smart now, or maybe they are lazier now, or maybe they have become more dangerous.

Do you think because people wear something on the outside, it changes who they are on the inside? Or, are these the same three kids we brought up earlier? Yes, they are the same three kids we brought up earlier. It would be silly to imagine that just because we put different costumes on them that we change who they are.

Today we will discover that many times we judge people based on how they look on the outside. It might be their clothes, the color of their skin, the way they speak, what country they are from or even their body shape. We judge people on the outside and we may be quick to think that we are better than they are because of how they look on the outside.

Of course we know that God doesn't want us to do that. But he does want us to do this. Colossians 3:12 (NIV) says, *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."*

Instead of dressing up on the outside, we should dress up on the inside and put on spiritual clothes of kindness and patience towards each other. Today let's put on our spiritual clothes of love for God and for others as we worship him.

Prayer

Dear God, please clothe our hearts. Put lots of love on us so that we can better love you and love others as we worship you this day. Thank you for loving us so much that you gave Jesus for our sin. In his name. Amen.

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.

Supplies: two garments—one clean and nice, the other dirty

When we put our clothes on...

Hold up the nice garment.

...everyone can see what we look like on the outside. But who can see what we look like on the inside? We want to be clothed on the inside with caring and kindness, gentleness and patience. But sometimes we are not clothed that way. I wonder what that might look like to God? Maybe he sees dirty clothes?

Hold up soiled garment.

What are we to do with anything in our hearts that is displeasing to God? It's like a dirty garment. We must give it to him so that he can wash it clean by forgiving us of our sin when we admit to him that we need his forgiveness and ask Jesus to take away that sin. Let's do that now.

Prayer

Dear God, each one of us may have something in our hearts that is a dirty garment. Maybe we have been unkind to someone or judged someone based on what they look like on the outside. Maybe we are holding a grudge and are not forgiving another person. Maybe we have disobedience in our hearts. Each one of us needs to come to you to ask for your forgiveness and for you to clean any dirty clothes that we may be wearing on the inside. We ask you to do this because we trust Jesus as the one who washes away our sin by giving his life for us on the cross. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

If you have trusted in Jesus for his forgiveness, I want you to know that God washed away any uncleanness inside you and clothed you with the perfect robe of Jesus' righteousness. Let's worship him for that.

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.

Set a garment underneath the offering plate.

The Bible says that we are to clothe ourselves with caring. When we give our offering to the Lord, it means that we care about pleasing him and that we care for others. This offering will be used to help others.

Give examples of what your church is using the offering money toward.



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.

Number's Out

Give each kid an assigned number between two and six. As soon as the leader says, "Go!" each person should begin saying his or her assigned number out loud, repeatedly. Kids will have to find a person in the room with the same number, lock elbows with that person and continue adding people to the group until the group has the exact number of people linked as the assigned number.

Say for example:

If you are assigned the number four, when I say, "Go!" you say, "Four, four, four, four..." until you hear another person say, "Four." You then lock elbows with that person and, hopefully, you will find two others to link elbows with you, as well. But a fifth person cannot join because you are not allowed to have more than four people (as in this example) in a group with linked arms.

If you cannot find a group to join, then you must step outside of the circle until the next round. This game will end when there are only two people left.

Play several rounds of the game. Then gather kids together and debrief.

How did you feel playing the game if you were left out?

Take answers from the group.

Who can give me examples of how people might be left out of groups or not accepted? In other words, are people ever left out for the way they look?

Discuss, giving kids other hints about why people are sometimes excluded.

How about people with different skin colors, people with different nationalities or people who speak different languages? What about people who might not be as smart as others?

Which group of people does God love the most?

Discuss and conclude that there is no distinction. He loves them all equally.

Bible Presentation:

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: various garments including a large garment or sheet, Video – Veggie Tales, Are You My Neighbor?

Invite two volunteers to come forward.

Read Colossians 3:11-14 (NIV):

“Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.” (Vs. 11.)

According to this verse, what were some of the different groups back in Paul’s day? *(Some were the nationality of Greek, some were Jews. Some were slaves, some free.)*

Which of these kinds of people could have Christ live in their hearts? Each one of them. Because of that, they were all one group. We are all one group!

Hold up several different garments as an illustration while reading the following verse.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion (that means caring), kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” (Vs. 12.)

This describes how we can act, especially toward others who are different from us.

Have the two volunteers shake hands.

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” (Vs. 13.)

Sometimes people don't like others just because they are different. Sometimes people don't like others because they hold a grudge against them. That person did something to them once and they will not forgive.

God has the strongest power in the world. Because he forgave you so much, you have the power to forgive others who wrong you. By comparison, God forgave you much more than you will ever forgive another person.

Wrap the large garment or sheet around both people to show that God's love binds everyone together in perfect unity.

“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” (Vs. 14.)

Video:

Show the Veggie Tales video *Are You My Neighbor?* (30 minutes total running time).

The first story is called Story of Flibber-o-loo. This is the adapted parable of the Good Samaritan. In this story we learn that loving a neighbor means helping those in need – even if they don't live next door.

The second half of the video is titled, The Gourds Must be Crazy! Here the crew of the U.S.S. Applepies learns to deal with oddball crew members, Jimmy and Jerry Gourd. This shows kids that loving their neighbor means appreciating those who are different instead of making fun.



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.

Ask kids to tell about a time when they helped another person feel accepted or when they helped someone left out to feel included.

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.

Pray for different people (individuals or by group) who need God's acceptance and love. Ask that we give them the acceptance and love they need and desire and that we act as models for others who see our compassion.

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.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- several goofy costume items such as hats, ties, smocks, belts, etc.

Power of the Cross:

- two garments—one is clean and nice and the other is dirty

Offering:

- a garment to set under the offering plate

Learning Game:

- none

Bible Presentation:

- various garments including a large garment or sheet
- video – Veggie Tales *Are You My Neighbor?*, Big Idea Productions, 1995, 30 minutes total running time. ISBN #8015222699—order from <http://store.yahoo.net/yhst-54787164184156/areyoumyne.html>