



FEBRUARY THEME

PLAYLIST

Put Love into the Mix

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 5:43-47

Never Gonna Give You Up | Love Your Enemies

Spark Story Bible, pg. 274-275
Love Your Enemies

BOTTOM LINE

Love others because they matter to God

MEMORY VERSE

“Here is my command. Love one another, just as I have loved you”
John 15:12, NIV

LIFE APP

Love | Choosing to treat others the way you want to be treated

BASIC TRUTH

I should treat others the way I want to be treated

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **LOVE** and God’s character, as shown through God’s big story.

Key Question: When is it hard to love others? Loving others won’t always be easy. We are often very aware that there are people we don’t get along with or who don’t get along with us. We hope to start thinking about those moments when it’s more difficult to show love. When we’re aware of those moments, we can pray about a better response than the one in our head. Hopefully, we’ll choose to show love.

Jesus brought his followers to a mountain to explain to them what it means to live as part of God’s kingdom. During that message, he said something surprising about love. In **Matthew 5:43-47** Jesus said, “You’ve heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy.’ But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you” (NIV). Jesus wanted us to know that love is bigger than we think, and every one deserves love.

Bottom Line: Love others because they matter to God. We tend to make judgement calls on who deserves to receive love. But that’s not the way God works. All people are created in God’s image, and regardless of how much we get along or not, we should work to be kind and show God’s love to them. We’ll seek to help families understand how they can do this for the people in our lives.

SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today’s story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each group member by name. Ask God to help your kids see each person they meet as someone who was made by God intentionally, and in God’s very image. Pray that your group will be inspired by Jesus’ example to treat everyone with love and respect, especially those they find challenging to get along with.

•• **EARLY ARRIVER**

Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Index cards, pens

What You Do:

- Give each kid an index card and ask them to write the name of either a villain or a hero.
- Kids will take turns sharing what they wrote, and the group will try to guess the name of the character’s opposite.
- To get kids’ thinking going, some example character pairs might include:



- Superman and Lex Luthor
- Batman and the Joker
- Dora the Explorer and Swiper
- Jack Sparrow and Barbosa
- Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader
- Princess Anna and Prince Hans
- Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort

•• DO THE OPPOSITE

Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Ask the kids to stand facing you.
- Tell the group that you will say a word out loud.
- Instruct them to respond back by acting out the opposite word.
- Some suggestions might include:
 - Happy/sad, hot/cold, hate/love, small/big, young/old, short/tall, stop/go, up/down, backward/forward, etc.

What You Say: “That was fun! You guys are great actors and really know your opposites! **[Transition]** Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we will hear/we heard a story about how Jesus wants us to do the opposite of what we really feel like doing when someone is not nice to us!”

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to Fellowship Hall for Children’s Ministry worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]

GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

•• NOT SO EASY! [Talk about God | Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Ball-pit ball, “You Decide Scenarios” activity page, plastic cup, masking tape

What You Do:

- Take a moment to talk about and help kids define the word “enemy.”
 - An enemy can be someone who’s not very nice to you or other people.
 - It can be someone you just don’t get along with.
- Use the tape to mark a starting line.
- Place your large bin about five feet away from the starting line. Tell kids that the large bin is the “Family” bucket.
- Place your small bin next to the large bin. Tell kids that the small bin is the “Friends” bucket.
- Set the plastic cup about 10 feet from the starting line. Tell kids that the cup is the “Enemies” bucket.
- Give one group member the ball-pit ball. Ask him/her to stand behind the line.



- Tell the kids that you will be reading different scenarios, each of which fit into one of the three categories: family, friends, or enemies.
- Instruct them to toss the ball-pit ball in the corresponding bucket after you are finished reading each scenario.
- After kids toss the ball, give them time to retrieve the ball and hand it to another group member before you read the next scenario.
- Encourage kids to show love to each other by making sure they rotate who gets to throw the ball each time.

What You Say: “It was pretty easy to toss the ball into the first two buckets but harder to get it into the last one—the ‘enemies’ bucket. It’s the same with loving people. It often can be easy for us to love our friends and family but much harder to show love to those who aren’t often nice to us or people we just don’t get along with.

“There are times when someone is mean to us and we just want to be mean back. But Jesus showed love to those who weren’t nice to him, and he wants us to do the same. It doesn’t matter if someone ‘deserves’ our love or not. What matters is that each and every person you meet was made by God and matters to God.

[Make It Personal] *(Share a time when someone wronged you and you chose to show kindness instead of reacting poorly. Share how difficult it was to do the opposite of what you really wanted to do. Also, share how it impacted the other person.)* “Unkind people matter to God, just like kind people matter to God. **[Bottom Line]** Love others because they matter to God.”

•• **LET IT GO!** [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: “What Would You Do Cards,” copy paper, markers

What You Do:

- Pair kids up and give each pair a card.
- Ask the kids to brainstorm creative ways they can be loving toward others in the situation described on the cards.
- Challenge kids to come up with more than one way to deal with each situation.
- Set out paper and markers, but give pairs the option to act out their solutions as well.
- **NOTE:** Remind kids they are made in the image of God. They matter to God. God doesn’t want them to be hurt or be treated poorly by others. If they are being harmed in any way, encourage them to share their hurts with a trusted adult. Consult with Family Ministry staff about any situation that you feel needs to be addressed.
- Give kids a few minutes to brainstorm ideas, draw, and/or make plans for their skits.
- Be prepared to help get their thinking going, if they’re stumped for ideas.
- As you invite pairs to share their solutions, read the corresponding card out loud before letting them present what they came up with.

What You Say: “Wow! You guys were great. Have you ever found yourself in situations like the ones we talked about? *(Pause for responses.)* How did you respond? *(Pause for responses.)* But we serve a loving God. God loves us and shows us that we matter. Even though it’s the harder thing to do, walking away is often better than being mean back. When you find simple ways to show kindness to those who aren’t nice to you, you’re showing them that they matter to God. **[Bottom Line]** Love others because they matter to God.”

•• **HULA VERSE CHALLENGE** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move | An activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Bible, Hula-hoop *(by the leader bin cabinets)*

What You Do:

- Look up and read this month’s memory verse: John 15:12 *(NirV)*
- Tell the kids that you’re looking for a hula verse champion.
- Ask the kids to stand in a circle.
- Select one kid to stand in the center and give him/her the hula-hoop.

