



FEBRUARY THEME

REWIND

Kindness Deserves a Replay

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 5:43-48

Mercy, Mercy Me | Love Your Enemies

Spark Story Bible pgs. 274-275

Love Your Enemies

BOTTOM LINE

Be kind to people who aren't kind to you

MEMORY VERSE

"Do to others as you want them to do to you."

Luke 6:31, NIRV

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

FOR LEADERS ONLY

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

Key Question: **How can you be kind to people you don't get along with?** There are times when we face people who we feel don't deserve our kindness. Most likely, we all have a list of people who we don't get along with and why those people don't deserve our kindness. But Jesus tells us to love our enemies. Through this question, we hope families start to discover how they can show kindness to people who fall into this category.

We finish out our month in **Matthew 5:43-48**. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus expands the scope of who deserves our kindness. Not everyone will be kind to us; some may be quite mean to us. Jesus says that we should love our enemies and pray for them.

Bottom Line: **Be kind to people who aren't kind to you.** As we discover what Jesus says about loving our enemies, we pray that families discover ways they can show God's love and kindness to people they might not get along with all of the time. They don't have to be best friends, but they can be kind.

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 regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Everyone has people around them who are unkind at times. And everyone has experience with being that unkind person. Ask God for the strength to respond to unkindness with the opposite: kindness. Pray that God would give your kids the courage to be kind even when someone is not kind to them.

•• JUST FOR FUN

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Ask: Would you rather live on a beautiful island with someone you don't get along with or live in a cold, dark cave with your best friend?
- Another option: If there was a machine that could turn an enemy into a friend, what do you think it would look like? What would it be called? How would it work?
- Encourage them to ask each other questions about any of the answers they gave.

•• GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME



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

What You Need: Index cards, pens

What You Do:

- Choose two volunteers, then assign them the numbers “one” and “two”
- Give them each an index card and a pen
- Ask a question such as, “What is something you love to smell?” Partner one writes his answer to the question, and partner two writes what he thinks partner one will put for his answer.
- Switch out partners after each round, letting students take a turn in both roles. Keep score if desired. (1 point for partner two if he guesses correctly; 1 point for partner one if his answer is not guessed correctly)
- Encourage partners to answer honestly. After each round, let partner one give more details about his answer to help others get to know him in a non-threatening environment. No making fun of anyone’s answers.
- Below are suggested questions to get the game started. You can repeat the same question with different partners or come up with additional ones that fit your group.
- Invite the students to ask funny questions of their own.
 - Use one word to describe your feet.
 - What’s your favorite animal with a tail?
 - Where would you go if you could go anywhere in the world?
 - What did you eat for dinner last night?
 - If you could have a superpower, what would it be?
 - What’s the first thing you say when you get up in the morning?
 - When was the last time you wore slippers?
 - What’s the longest you’ve ever slept?
 - What would you buy with \$100?
- Say, “I have one last question, but this one is for each of you to answer. I’ll write down what I think most of you will say then we’ll see how close I come.”
- Give each student a note card and pen and then ask the following question: “Without saying any names, what is one word you would use to describe how an enemy acts toward others?”
- Let kids show their answers and compare them with what you have written.

What You Say: “That last question is one we probably don’t like to think about. Everyone has someone they don’t get along with. We might not call that person our enemy, but we probably don’t call him our friend. My guess is that the face of someone you don’t like popped into your mind as you thought of your answer to my question. Enemies are all of the things you described. **[Transition] Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship we’ll learn/we learned how God wants us to act towards enemies.**”

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room 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.

•• TAKE A SNAPSHOT [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Pipe cleaners



What You Do:

- Give each student four pipe cleaners.
- Ask your students to shape their pipe cleaners into something that represents the way they feel when someone has been unkind to them. (NOTE: They don't have to use all of the pipe cleaners.)
- When finished, they can take turns telling the story or the meaning behind their shapes but without mentioning names.
- Ask: "Without using names, how would you describe an enemy?"

What You Say: "There will be times in your life—maybe even today—when people are not going to be kind to you. They might be rude instead of polite. They might say something about you behind your back, make fun of you, not include you, or do any number of things that are just plain mean. It happens to everyone here, but that doesn't make it any easier. However, what does help is knowing that it happened to Jesus and that He showed us how to respond when it happens to us."

●● **BIBLE STORY EXTENSION** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: Bible, copy paper, pens

What You Do:

- Acknowledge that we all have people we don't get along with.
- Say: "We don't have to be best friends with everyone we know, but we DO need to treat even the people who aren't kind to us with respect and kindness. Who knows, God might use us to play a part in turning someone's heart around and changing an enemy into a friend."
- Ask: "Have you ever watched the kindness of one person turn the unkindness of someone else around?"
 - Tell about a time when a friend or family member loved you when you were being mean and unlovable. How did you feel?
 - Have you ever been kind to someone you didn't like and then you eventually ended up being friends?
- Read Matthew 5:43, then let the students think of a few reasons why responding to our enemies in this way could be a problem.
- Hand out copy paper and pens. Explain that you are going to teach them how to "magically turn unkindness upside down!"
 - Have everyone write the word "unkind" in large print on their paper.
 - Hold the paper on each side with both hands. The word should be facing the audience and right side up.
 - Fold the paper vertically in the middle from right to left, closing the word inside.
 - Now, fold it in half horizontally, bringing the top of the paper down to the bottom. Snap your fingers.
 - Open the first fold by bringing the flap closest to you upwards.
 - Open the second fold by bringing the flap furthest from you back around to the right. Now, the word "unkind" will be upside down!
- When they have succeeded in turning the paper upside down, read Matthew 5:44 then let the students share reasons why Jesus' way (*showing kindness*) is a better way to respond to those who treat us badly.

What You Say: "Turning unkindness upside down took some effort. Turning an enemy into a friend will take effort, too. It starts with an act of kindness as you pray for God to turn the heart of an enemy into a friend."

●● **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do: Ask some of the following questions...

- Why do you think people are unkind?
- Jesus, the kindest person ever, had enemies. Why was that? What can we learn from his example?
- What's the big deal about kindness? Why does it matter so much? Why is it worth the effort?
- What should you do if you are being bullied? What about if you see someone else being bullied?



- If you can't stop someone from being unkind to you, what should you do?

•• **VERSES TO TAKE WITH YOU** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Bible, scrap paper, nickel

What You Say: "We face a lot of situations where it's hard to be kind. Some are little annoying things like when someone cuts in front of you in line. Others are much bigger and hurt much worse, for example, when someone makes up a lie about you. Big or small, kindness is still the way to respond to the mean stuff that comes at you.

—What are good ways to react to the small, irritating things that family members and others do to you?

—If someone hurts you in a big way, to whom can you go for help and encouragement?

—Do you think a huge, deep, ugly hurt means you're off the hook and can forget about showing kindness to that person? After all, they don't deserve it, right? What d'ya think?"

What You Do:

- Give everyone a scrap of paper.
- Ask the students to tear their scrap paper to the exact size and shape of a nickel without actually seeing the nickel ahead of time.
- Compare the paper nickels with the real thing to see how closely they match.
- Say: "You came close to matching the nickel. I'm guessing that as you tore your scrap paper, you had the image of an actual nickel in your mind, trying to remember its exact size. You pictured the real thing then tried to imitate it. That's how it works with kindness, too."
- Read or ask a couple of volunteers to read Ephesians 4:32 and Leviticus 19:18 to the group.
- Ask:
 - Name some things about Jesus that you picture in your mind when you think of him as our perfect example of kindness.
 - How do Ephesians 4:32 and Leviticus 19:18 encourage you?
 - What part of these verses might be the hardest for you to live out this week?
- Ask each of the students to finish this sentence in his own mind: "I need to remember Jesus' example this week when I _____."

PRAY AND SEND [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Discuss the features of a TV remote control
- Ask kids to imagine a remote control that has the power to rewind, pause, or fast-forward their lives.
- Invite them to think about and discuss the following:
 - "Rewind" – What's something you can do to go back and repair a hurt you've caused or experienced recently?
 - "Pause" – Rather than getting angry or getting even, what's a better way to respond the next time you're wronged by someone? (*For example, pray for someone, do them a favor, and so on.*)
 - "Fast-Forward" – What's one way you can show kindness this week?
- Close in prayer...

"Dear Jesus, you know what it's like to have enemies. You know what it's like to be hurt, betrayed, ignored, made fun of and hated. But more than that, you know how to show kindness in the midst of an unkind world. Help us to learn from you. Help us follow your example this week and to treat others the way you would treat them and the way we would like to be treated. In your name we pray. Amen."

Give each child a **GodTime** card. Sunday leaders, hand out **Parent Cue** cards to any family who has not yet received one this month.