

Alley SG-February 15th-16th, 2020

Bible Story: Never Gonna Give You Up (Love Your Enemies) • *Matthew 5:43-47*

Key Question: When is it hard to love others?

Bottom Line: Love others because they matter to God.

Memory Verse: This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:10 NIV)

1. Get Your Head in the Game

What You Need: “Pairs of Opposites” Cards (3 sets per group)

What You Do:

- **Divide** your group into 3 teams.
- **Give** each team a set of “Pairs of Opposites” cards, asking them not to look at what’s written on the cards.
- **Direct** kids to place the cards face down in two even rows in the middle of their circle.
- **Explain** that the cards contain words that are opposites, and kids will be playing a matching game with the cards.
- **Tell** kids to take turns flipping over two random cards.
 - If the words on the cards are opposites, that player keeps the cards.
 - If they aren’t, he turns them back over and it is the next player’s turn.
 - The first team to get all of the cards matched is the winner.

If you have a more active group, consider this alternate game:

- **Give** each kid one of the “Pairs of Opposites” cards, making sure both pairs of cards are given out.
- **Ask** kids to not say or show what is written on their card.
- At the same time, everyone will each act out what is on their card as they watch the rest of the group to find their “match” (the kid who is doing the opposite of their own action).

What You Say:

“When we follow Jesus, there will be times when He asks us to do the opposite of what our natural response might be. For example, He will tell us to be joyful even in hard times or to put others first instead of ourselves. Living for Jesus sometimes means doing the opposite of what we feel like doing. In Large Group, we’re going to learn about something God helps us do that’s the opposite of what we might normally want to do.”

2. Take a Snapshot

What You Need: Index cards (20 per group, per service), pens

What You Do:

- **Set** up two teams.
- **Ask** Team One to write down 10 things that people do that make them *hard to love*, one example on each index card.
 - *Instruct kids not to include anyone’s name.*
- **Ask** Team Two to write down 10 things people do that *show* love, one thing on each index card.
- **Bring** teams together when everyone’s finished.
- **Invite** someone from Team One to read one of their cards.
- **Ask** Team Two to share an action described on one of their cards that might be a helpful or loving way to respond in that situation.
 - If none of their cards fit the situation Team Two described, brainstorm as a group what a loving response might be.
- **Continue** in the same manner by having Team One read a card and Team Two respond with ideas written on their cards.

- **Encourage** kids to share experiences they have had in which a loving response has diffused a tense situation or helped turn an enemy into a friend.

What You Say:

“Throughout our lives, we will encounter lots of situations in which we are teased, annoyed, or treated unfairly by someone. As a follower of Jesus, we can (and SHOULD) respond differently from those who don’t know Jesus. When we come face to face with those who are hard to love, it’s an opportunity to remember that every person matters to God. He doesn’t hold back His love from people who treat others badly or give His love only to people who are nice. God made each of us in His image, and that means we matter to Him. God’s plan is to help each person come to know, love, and follow Jesus. When you show love to an enemy, you’re reaching out to them the way God does.”

3. Bible Story Extension

What You Need: Balloons (1 per pair of kids), painter’s tape (1 roll per group), straight pin (3 per group), Bibles

What You Do:

- **Provide** partners with a Bible, balloon, and tape.
- **Assign** one of the following verses to each team:
 - Matthew 5:44
 - Ephesians 4:32
 - Luke 6:28
 - Matthew 7:12
 - Proverbs 15:1
- **Ask** one partner to blow up the balloon and tie it off while the other partner looks up the verse.
- **Direct** kids to use two two-inch pieces of tape to make an “X” on their balloons.
- **Bring teams together** and sit in a circle.
- **Invite** one team to read their verse aloud.
- **Hand** one of the partners the straight pin as you instruct them to carefully push the pin through the middle of the taped “X.”
- **Leave** the pin in as kids discuss the verse together:
 - How does this verse suggest that we act, in terms of the way you should react to a person or situation that makes you angry, upset, or ready to “pop”?
 - Like the tape on the balloon, how might showing love to an enemy keep a tense situation from exploding into a fight or argument?
- **Remove** the pin and carefully pass it to another team.
- **Continue** around the circle letting teams take turns reading their verses and discussing them as they insert the pins into the taped area of their balloons.
- **Encourage** kids to choose the verse that helps them better understand how Jesus wants them to respond to an enemy. Read the verses again if needed.
- **Safely dispose** of the pin.

4. Discussion Questions

- Loving an enemy isn’t easy. Why is it worth the effort?
- Why do you think every person matters to God?
- Jesus showed love to everyone, but He still had enemies. What can we learn from His example?
- 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? How do you love that person without letting them continue to hurt you?

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: Bibles, Red Prayer Point Cards (from week 1)

What You Do:

- **Sit** in a circle.
- **Invite** the kids to choose a "Prayer Point" card, then read what is written on the front and pray silently.
- **Provide** as much time as needed for kids to pray.
- **Ask** kids to indicate they are finished praying by placing their sheets back in middle of the circle.
- **Lead** the group in a closing prayer or invite one of the kids to do so.

What You Say:

"Dear God, we know that You love us no matter what. Even if we never loved You in return, You would still continue to love us. Help us this week when we struggle to love those who are difficult. Remind us of the things we learned today and the way You want us to treat others because they matter to You. In Jesus' name, amen."

BEFORE DISMISSAL: AT "COMMUNION CALL"

HAND OUT "GOD TIME" CARDS TO EACH STUDENT BEFORE DISMISSING AND ALLOW THEM TIME TO BEGIN WORKING ON THE WEEKLY ACTIVITY

IF STUDENTS BRING THEM BACK THE FOLLOWING WEEK, THEY RECEIVE \$3 IN ALLEY CASH!