

big faith

SESSION 11

Unit 3: Recipe for Love

Faith Focus: Jesus teaches us to love and welcome others.

Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. (John 13:34)

GROW IN FAITH

One Part Kindness—Mark 10:13-16

In today's Bible story, Jesus blesses little children. The disciples try to keep the children from Jesus, but Jesus is not having it! He reprimands the disciples for keeping the children away and makes a clear statement that access to him and to God's love is for everyone. In addition to blessing the children, Jesus uses this as an example to teach the disciples about the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven can be a difficult concept for children (and adults) to understand. Some people refer to the coming kingdom of heaven, alluding to a time in the future. However, Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven can be a present reality. By blessing the children, Jesus showed the time is now to welcome all into the kingdom.

Children can certainly relate to being told not to do something or maybe feeling too small to be included. Teaching this story is an opportunity to affirm children as an integral part of God's family. A kind and generous kingdom is a kingdom for even those who are small.

- Discuss the strengths of kids.
- Play inclusion games.

SESSION OUTLINE

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Faith Focus—Jesus Teaches Us to Love and Welcome Others

Random Acts of Kindness (Service)

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Big Faith Video

Faith Response

FUN WITH FAITH

Bowl of Kindness (Social/Emotional)

Heart Sculptures (Art)

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

SUPPLIES

crayons

scissors

small bags or envelopes

CEB Bible storybook

TV and DVD player or streaming device

permanent marker

bowl

paper

pencils

clay or soft modeling dough

heart-shaped cookie cutters of multiple sizes

plastic knives

plain lip balm

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, Activity Sheets, Activity Stickers

Prepare Ahead: Set up your area with the supplies and activity pages needed for today's session. Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16), Unit 3 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 5 & 20), and Unit 3 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18) to use later in the session.

- As children arrive, invite them to join you in a circle.
- Give each child a copy of the "Spring Sticker Page" (Activity Sheets—p. 29) and their own set of Activity Stickers. Have children place the sticker of children on the Session 11 space.

SAY: We are hearing stories that help us learn how to love each other well. We will hear stories about Jesus because he shared love with all people.

ASK: What do you know about Jesus? How did Jesus love people?

Faith Focus—Jesus Teaches Us to Love and Welcome Others

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, crayons

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 3 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 5 & 20). Photocopy "How to Bless" (Leader Guide—p. 76) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of "How to Bless."

SAY: Jesus was a kind person. He traveled and taught people about God and helped many people. Sometimes he blessed people.

ASK: What do you think it mean to "bless" someone? How do you bless someone?

- Give children time and space to read the options on the page and circle a word or phrase from each column to create a blessing they can share with others. Have older children help younger children or have them work in groups.

SAY: A blessing is a good wish or a hope for someone. We can offer a blessing for people to have good health, for peace in the world, for God to give someone comfort during a sad time, or many other things. Blessing someone is one way we can show our love for them.

Random Acts of Kindness

Supplies: Activity Sheets, scissors, small bags or envelopes

Prepare Ahead: Tear out “Random Acts of Kindness” (Session 11 Activity Sheet) for each child.

SAY: Jesus showed kindness toward everyone he met. We can follow his example of loving and welcoming people each day. We can even surprise people with kindness that they are not expecting.

ASK: Have you ever been surprised by kindness? Have you ever surprised someone else with kindness?

SAY: Some people practice “random acts of kindness” by placing cards with kind words or beautiful pictures around their neighborhood. This can brighten someone’s day and bring a smile to their face.

ASK: What kind messages would you like to spread in the world?

- Give each child an activity sheet. After reading through the cards, encouraged children to come up with their own act of kindness and draw or write it on the blank card.
- Have the children cut the cards apart and put them in a bag to take with them. Encourage children to leave the cards in different places for people to find.

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Supplies: CEB Bible storybook

- Invite the children to join you in a circle.
- Read the story of Jesus and the children (Mark 10:13-16) from your favorite CEB Bible storybook.

SAY: Jesus welcomed all people to follow him and learn from him. And he wanted children to be comfortable near him and learn from him too!

ASK: What do you think adults need to know about being kind? How can children teach each other about being kind?

Big Faith Video

Supplies: Big Faith DVD, TV, DVD player or streaming device

- Watch the Session 11 video on the Big Faith DVD or via your Amplify Media subscription.

- Share the questions on the screen with the children. You may also choose to add your own questions. Give children time to share their responses and ideas.

ASK: What was your favorite part of the video?

Faith Response

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, permanent marker

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 3 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18) and Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) if you haven't already.

- Invite children to wonder about the images on the posters.
- Encourage children to say the Bible verse with you: "Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other" (John 13:34).

SAY: Jesus teaches us a recipe for love. The stories we read about him in the Bible show us how we can create more love around us and in the world. Being kind is a big part of love.

ASK: Who is kind to you? Who do you treat with kindness?

- Lay the Faith Response Poster on the floor or a table and invite the children to gather around it.

ASK: What is one way you can be kind?

- As the children share their responses, use a permanent marker to draw or write them on the poster above the "Kindness" bowl.

FUN WITH FAITH

Bowl of Kindness

Supplies: bowl, small strips of paper, pencils, crayons

ASK: What are kind words that you could say to someone? What is a kind action you could do? What are kind words and actions that you like to hear and receive?

- Give each child two strips of paper. Direct them to write or draw on each paper something kind (a heart, a smiley face, a person giving someone a hug, someone helping, the word "love," or their own ideas).
- Have the children fold up the papers and put them into a bowl. Pass the bowl around the circle and have each child draw out two papers.
- Invite the children to unfold the papers and see the kindness someone shared.

SAY: There are many ways to be kind. We can be kind to ourselves, kind to other people, kind to animals, and kind to our planet.

Heart Sculptures

Supplies: quick-drying clay or soft modeling dough, heart-shaped cookie cutters of multiple sizes, plastic knives

ASK: Have you ever felt good when you were kind to someone? What happened?

- Invite each child to play with clay and use heart-shaped cookie cutters to create a sculpture using heart shapes. You may wish to group the children into twos or threes to work together.

SAY: We all know that it is good to be kind to others because it makes others feel good. But being kind to others also makes us feel good!

Tip: If you would like to add an extra step to this activity, allow the children to paint their creations once they are dry.

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, plain lip balm

Prepare Ahead: Display the Spring Big Faith Idea Poster (Class Pack—pp. 4 & 21). Photocopy the Unit 3 Family Faith Letter (Leader Guide—pp. 95–96) as needed.

- Show children the Big Faith Idea Poster.

SAY: In our Bible story today, Jesus invited the children to come to him and follow him. Some of the adults did not understand why Jesus wanted to invite the children to be nearby, but Jesus blessed the children.

ASK: What do you think Jesus said to the children when he blessed them? Has anyone ever blessed you? What was it like?

SAY: Sharing a blessing with someone is one way we can be kind. And we know that being kind creates more love in the world!

- Go from child to child offering a brief blessing to each child. Offer to make the mark of the cross on each child's hand with lip balm. Do not pressure any of the children to receive the mark. Examples of blessings: "Jesus loves you." "May you be kind like Jesus." "May you feel God's love every day."
- Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: Repeat after me: "God, thank you for sending Jesus to show us how we can be kind. Help us bless others by sharing our kindness and love with them. Amen."

- Send the Unit 3 Family Faith Letter and activity home with each child who has not yet received them.
- Also send home any activities or items made during today's session.

Circle one word or phrase from each column to create a blessing. You can write the complete blessing on the lines at the bottom of the page.

| | WHO | WHAT | WHEN | WHERE |
|--------|----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| May... | you | be safe | today | at home |
| | someone you love | be healthy | tonight | at church |
| | the world | feel loved | tomorrow | at school |
| | your family | be happy | this week | everywhere |
| | our church family | find joy | always | in our world |