

Alley SG - February 24-25, 2018

Bible Truth: Mercy, Mercy Me (Love Your Enemies) • Matthew 5:43-48

Bottom Line: Be kind to people who aren't kind to you.

Key Question: How can you be kind to people you don't get along with?

Memory Verse: "Do to others as you want them to do to you." Luke 6:31, NIV

1. Just For Fun

- **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?
- **Let** students discuss the answer to the question.

2. Get Your Head in the Game

What You Need: Index cards, markers

What You Do:

- **Choose** two volunteers, then assign them the numbers "one" and "two"
- **Give** them each an index card and a marker
- **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 marker and then ask the following question: "Without saying any names, what is one word you would use to describe an enemy acts towards others?"
- **Let** kids show their answers and compare them with what you have written.

Wrap Up and 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. But God has some words to add to our lists."

3. Discussion 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?

4. Verses to Take with You

What You Need: Bible, sticky notes (one per kid), quarter

What You Do:

- **Give** everyone a sticky note.
- **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, whom can you go to 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?
- **Ask** the students to tear their sticky note to the exact size and shape of a quarter without actually seeing the quarter ahead of time.
- **Compare** the paper quarters with the real thing to see how closely they match.
- **Say:** "You came close to matching the quarter. I'm guessing that as you tore your sticky note, you had the image of an actual quarter 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?
- **Wrap up** by asking each of the students to finish this sentence in his own mind: "I need to remember Jesus' example this week when I _____."

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: Index cards, pens

What You Do:

- **Give** partners 3 index cards and pens.
- **Invite** them to work with their partners to write each of the following on their index cards:
 - “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?
- When finished, let partners briefly share what they wrote.
- **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 all of 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.”