God Wants Us to Help Others • Lesson 2

Bible Point

We can show God’s love by helping others.

Bible Verse

“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples” (John 13:35).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Students will

- realize that God wants them to help others,
- recognize needs in their world today, and
- pray for God’s help in serving others.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

- God wants us to help others.

Matthew 25:34-40; Hebrews 6:10

It’s easy to come away from this passage thinking that our good works can save us—can win us heaven and eternal life. However, that’s not what Jesus means in this passage. The Bible clearly teaches elsewhere that we gain eternal life through faith in Jesus, which is possible only because of what God did for us through Jesus’ death on the cross (see Ephesians 2:8-9). What Jesus is saying here is that people who truly have faith—and don’t just say they have faith—will be doing the actions described in Matthew 25:35-36. We’ll be taking care of poor and hurting people around us. If we fully understand what God has done for us, our faith will result in lives of gratitude that abound with love for and actions on behalf of those less fortunate than ourselves.

Notice that the sins Jesus condemns here are not terrible things that humans do—they are the neglect of good things that Christians should do. Too often today we worry about not doing bad things—sometimes to the point of creating a list of legalisms to keep ourselves and our children from sinning—without giving a thought to the things God might want us to do that we’re ignoring entirely. And sometimes we tend to think we need to preach the message of salvation to people without having any concern for their physical needs. This passage makes it clear that helping others in physical need is a priority with God. Jesus even calls these hurting people his brothers and sisters (Matthew 25:40). Sure, we should be concerned about their eternal souls, but sometimes they need to have their temporal bodies taken care of before they can hear what we say.

Another Scripture used in this lesson is Matthew 25:31-33.

Prayer

- Read Ephesians 2:8-10.
- When’s the last time you saw someone in real physical need? What did you do?
- Pray: Dear God, as I think about my students, I realize they probably have a lot of real needs. Help me to…
Lesson 2

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your students.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

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Welcome

As kids arrive, ask about ways they put last week’s lesson into action. Ask questions like “How did the Bible guide you last week?” or “What’s something you found advice about in the Bible that surprised you?”

Tell the kids that whenever you sound the hand groan tube, they are to stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you. Explain that it’s important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.
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Attention Grabber

One-Minute Helpers

SUPPLIES: none

Help students form pairs. In each pair, have kids decide who will be called a Helper and who will be an Assigner. Announce that although the Assigners will be in charge first, they will switch roles before the game is over. Ask each of the Assigners to hold a critter popper.

Say: Assigners, it’s now time to assign your partners a “One-Minute Helper” task that will help another person. There are three rules to keep in mind as you decide on a task:

• It must be possible for the task to be completed in one minute.
• The task must be something the person assigning it would be willing to do.
• If the task is too difficult to do in 60 seconds, the task can be declined and another task assigned.

For example, the task you assign may be to help someone in our room feel good by delivering a compliment. Or it may be straightening the books on the bookshelf or cleaning off a table. Assigners, you’ll have 30 seconds to think of a One-Minute Helper task. Ready? Start thinking!

After 30 seconds, call time. Say: Tell your partner the task you want him or her to do. Pause.

Now, I’ll say, “Three, two, one, blast off!” When I say “blast off,” Assigners will pop the critter poppers, and Helpers will begin helping. Then I’ll call time after one minute. Here we go!

Count down and then call time after one minute.

When Helpers have completed their tasks, have the Assigners pass the critter poppers to the Helpers, and have partners switch roles.

After kids have played the game a second time, collect the critter poppers, and have kids sit in a circle.

Ask: • How did you feel as you did your tasks? (Good; silly.)
• Was the task in this game something you ever would have done on your own? Why or why not? (Yes, it’s something I do all the time; No, I never would have thought of it.)

• In this game, someone told you how to help. How do you know how to help others in real life? (I know to help when I see someone having trouble; when I see someone needing help with something; I help when someone else is busy but I’m not.)
• What’s one thing you did in the past week or two to help someone? (Set the table; cleared the dishes; helped my friend with homework.)
• How do you feel when you’re helping others in real life? (Good; like I’m doing something special.)

Say: When we help others, we usually end up helping ourselves as well. ➤We can show God’s love by helping others. Today we’ll learn how important it is to show God’s love to others by helping them.

Return the critter poppers to the Learning Lab.

Always discuss each activity with your students. Don’t skip over the discussion part of an activity in order to complete additional activities. The activities allow kids to experience Bible truths. The printed discussion questions and summary statements help students explore their feelings, discover important principles, and decide how to apply these principles to their lives.
**The Least of These**

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, CD player

Before class, cue the CD to “The Least of These” (track 9).

Help students form two groups. Say: **We can show God’s love in so many ways. In the Bible, Jesus talked about ways we can help people. Let’s play a game that will help us discover people’s needs and how we can meet them.**

Have each group stand in a circle. Give one person in each circle one of the heart locks, and give someone else one of the keys. Say: **As you listen to the CD, you’ll hear people tell about needs they have. As we’re listening, pass the heart lock and the key in opposite directions around your circle. When I stop the CD, stop passing the heart lock and key. If you’re holding a key, think of a way that you could help someone with the need you just heard; then walk to the person holding the heart lock, unlock it, and share how you could help the person on the CD. Then trade places with the other person so that you’re standing in his or her spot in the circle. Ready?**

Play each part of “The Least of These,” pausing between parts to allow students to share. After all parts have been played, put the CD and the heart locks and keys away.

Then have kids form one circle, and ask:

- **What else can you do for someone with one of these needs?** (Share some food or a drink; visit with them; write a letter.)
- **How would your actions help?** (It would relieve their hunger; it would help them be less lonely.)
- **Who have you seen with one of these needs?** (Homeless people downtown; kids at the park; the old people at my grandma’s rest home.)
- **What did you do when you saw that person?** (Nothing; stared; looked away; prayed for them.)
- **How did your actions help that person?** (They didn’t; my prayers helped.)

Help students form trios, and give each person a Bible. Say: **Jesus told us how important it is to help people in need. In your trio, choose a Reader to read Matthew 25:34–36 aloud. The other two people will read Matthew 25:37–39 together. Then have the first Reader read verse 40 aloud. When he or she is finished, turn to Hebrews 6:10. Everyone should read that verse in unison.**

Allow a few moments for students to read, and then ask:

- **Why is helping others so important?** (Because it shows how much we love God; because it shows how much God loves those people.)
- **How does helping others show God’s love?** (We are made in God’s image; when we help others, God’s love shines through us.)
- **How is helping others like helping God?** (All people are created in God’s image, so when we help others, it’s like helping God; we can’t really help God, but we can obey his command to help others.)
- **What part of the verses that you just read makes you want to help others? Explain.** (That God will remember how hard we work for him; when we help others, we’re helping Jesus.)
Say: **Jesus said these words to help us realize that we can show God's love by helping others.** Let's find out more.

## Loving Proof

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, newsprint, markers, tape

Help students form groups of three or four. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker that won’t bleed through. Explain that they will have one minute to write as many ways as they can think of that other people would know that they are Christians. Give a couple of examples, such as having a fish symbol on the family car or wearing a cross. Tell them to start, and time them for one minute. After 60 seconds, call time.

Next, have one volunteer from each group share one of the group’s answers with the class. Write answers on a sheet of newsprint taped to a wall. Continue having each group share an answer until they’ve shared all their ideas without repeating any. Answers might include the music we listen to, bumper stickers, Christian T-shirts, going to church, and rules they keep about things they don’t do.

Ask: **What good are all those other things if we don’t love others? What will non-Christians think of us?** (They’re no good without love; non-Christians will think we’re hypocrites or fakers.)

Say: **There’s nothing necessarily wrong with those things. In fact, many of them are good things to do. But does anyone know how Jesus said that others would know that we are his followers?**

Have students turn in their Bibles to **John 13:35**

> “Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Ask for a volunteer to read the verse aloud while classmates follow along. Then ask:

- **Jesus said that others would recognize his followers by their love. How well are you doing in that area?** (I try to show love to others; I’m not doing so well; I could do better.)

- **How can you show you’re one of Jesus’ followers?** (By my love; by being nice to others; by telling people about Jesus.)

Say: **We can show God’s love by helping others. There are so many ways that we can help in our world today because lots of people have never experienced God’s love. Let’s find out more about how we can show God’s love by helping others.**
Lesson 2

Heal the World

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, newsprint, markers, pencils, tape

Help students form pairs. Give each pair a sheet of newsprint and several markers that won’t bleed through.

Say: **Let’s use this sheet of paper to represent your world—the world you live in every day:** your school, your home, and your community. The needs Jesus talked about in the book of Matthew are in our world today, although you might not recognize them. Think about the people you see every day or every week and the needs they have. Fill your paper with pictures of those people and those needs. They don’t have to be in any order—make a collage of needs. Your pictures can even face different directions and overlap each other. I’ll sound the hand groan tube after a few minutes to let you know when to stop.

After three to five minutes, sound the hand groan tube and say: It looks as if you’ve got some creative collages! Now turn your papers over, and write in pencil one way you could help meet each need shown on your collage.

Allow pairs about three minutes to brainstorm. Then say: **Show us your collage. Tell us about the pictures on the front and explain what needs they represent.** Then have your partner tell us what you could do to help that person.

After each pair shares, let that pair tape its collage to the wall. After everyone has shared, ask:

- **What do you think when you look at these collages?** (They make me sad to see so many needs; they make me feel like I should be doing more to help.)
- **How would the things you wrote help make our world better?** (We could help all these people, and then maybe they could help other people someday; there wouldn’t be quite so many needy people or quite so many needs.)
- **How would the things you wrote help show God’s love to others?** (Those people would see that we care about them; maybe they would think that if we care about them then God cares about them, too.)

Say: **In the Bible, Jesus gives us a lot of ideas for helping others, and you’ve all come up with really great ideas on your collages, too.**

Ask: **Choose one person who could use your help. How can you help him or her this week?** (I’ll be nice to the kid nobody likes at school; I’ll go ask my neighbor how she’s feeling.)

Say: **We can show God’s love by helping others.** With your partner, pray for the person you just shared about. Ask God to help you know the best way to help him or her. When you finish, stand near your collage.

When each pair is standing by its collage, lead kids in praying for some of the needs in the world today. Offer a prayer similar to this one: **Dear God, thank you for helping us when we’re in need. We pray that you will let us know what we can do to help our hurting world. Give us the courage to do what you want. In Jesus’ name, amen.**
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**Hands-On Bible Curriculum—Grades 3 & 4**

**SUPPLIES:** CD player

Before this activity, cue the CD to “Who Do I Help?” (track 10).

Ask children to sit in a close circle. Say: **We can show God’s love by helping others.** But who should we help? Listen quietly as I play a passage from Matthew 25, and think of people in your life you could help.

Play CD track 10, “Who Do I Help?” Then return the CD to the Learning Lab.

Say: **We can show God’s love by helping others.** And this passage shows us that when we help others, it’s as if we’re helping Jesus himself. Let’s close in prayer, asking God for opportunities to serve others—and courage to follow through on our opportunities.

Please hold your palms so they’re facing upward (demonstrate), and close your eyes. I’ll begin the prayer, asking God to use our hands to help others. Then we’ll go around the circle to my left, and each of you will say a way we can help others. You can say just one word or a whole sentence. Maybe you can help by showing love to your sister, raking leaves for a neighbor, or by listening to a friend. I’ll give you a few moments to think of a way you can help others.

After a few moments, begin a prayer similar to this one: **Dear God, we lift our hands to you. Please use our hands to help others. I can begin helping by praying for others.**

When students have each mentioned a way to help others, close the prayer by saying: **Dear God, thank you for letting us be part of your work here on earth. Thank you for letting us show your love by helping others. Please give us courage as we serve you. In Jesus’ name, amen.**

Encourage kids to bring their Bibles to class with them next week. Bringing their own Bibles will help kids become familiar with using and turning to the Bible.
Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week’s topic.
**Hands-On Fun at Home**

**Lesson 2**

**Bible Point**

We can show God’s love by helping others.

**Bible Verse:**

“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples” (John 13:35).

**Talk It Over**

We can show God’s love by helping others.

- Who is it hardest for you to help? Why?

- What can you do to help that person this week?

**Check It Out**


How can these verses change your attitude about helping others? How will your work be different, knowing that it’s for God?

Read Isaiah 58:6-7.

Why do you think these actions make God happy? Why does God want us to care for people like this?

**ETC.**

Make one index card for each of Jesus’ statements in Matthew 25:35-36. On one side of the card, write the first half of the “I was...” statement. For example, write, “I was thirsty.” Each morning read a card. During the day, look for some way to help someone with that need. You may serve a glass of water to your dad when he comes home, feed your little brother a snack, or sit next to a new person at school to keep her company. When you’ve helped someone, turn the card over, and write what you’ve done.

**ETC.**

**ETC.**

**Faith Walk**

Plan with your family to work a few hours in a homeless shelter, food bank, or some other place where you can help needy people. As you work, show God’s love through your words and actions. When you get home, pray for the people you met. Thank God for the opportunity to show his love to others.

**Idea!**

Make a thank you note that says on the inside: “I was ____________ and you _____________. ”

When a family member or someone helps you, fill it in, and give them the card.

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