

**Focus:** Kindness in our Hearts

**Materials:**

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest’s vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD: Bible Songs for Kids Vol. 1
- Gospel: In Lesson Plan
- Foam Heart

**Gathering** (children find/sit on a carpet square)

*Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Last week we talked about the way Jesus nourishes us to be good followers and if we believe we will please Jesus and live with him forever. This week we are going to hear a story where Jesus tells us it is more important to have kindness and love in our hearts more than anything else.*

**Opening Prayer**

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

*Say: Now let’s put our hands together and bow our heads.*

*Let us pray.*

*Dear God, you gave us rules to live a happy life. Help us keep love in our hearts, so that we can help others and be good followers of Jesus. We pray this in Jesus’ name.*

*Amen.*

**Song/Movement**

*Praise Him, Praise Him All ye Little Children*, track: 29, from [Bible Songs for Kids-Vol 1](#)

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

Praise Him, Praise Him  
All ye little children  
God is love, God is love

Replace Praise Him, Praise Him for verses 2-4 and repeat Praise Him on the final verse.

Praise Him, Praise Him  
All ye little children  
God is love, God is love

Love Him  
Serve Him  
Thank Him  
Praise Him

**Memory Verse**

*Say: Now let’s take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

*Keep kindness in your heart.*

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

*Say: Jesus wants us to be kind all the time. If we have an unkind heart, we can’t be kind to others and take care of them. In Jesus’ time there were many, many laws for the Jewish people to follow. They began to believe that following the laws was more important than following God’s love. God’s love is the reason the laws were created. When we keep God’s love in our hearts, we are growing God’s kingdom.*

**Gospel Story**

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Mark.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *“Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it.”*

**Read:** None, pp. N/A,

Jesus’ followers were eating a meal.

[Use fingers to eat imaginary food, smile and pat tummy]

They didn’t wash their hands before they ate.

[Hand over hand, as if washing, then shake head]

Some leaders saw this.

[Put hand over brow, as if searching for something]

Washing hands was a very important tradition for them.

[Hand over hand, as if washing]

They asked Jesus about this.

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]

“Why don’t your followers wash carefully before eating?”

[Hand over hand, as if washing]

This is an important tradition for our people.”

[Shake a scolding finger]

Jesus knew these people who asked the question.

[Tap forehead]

Their hands were clean,

[Hand over hand, as if washing]

but their hearts were not.

[Touch heart, then make a mean face]

Jesus answered them:

[Chatty hand]

“It is written in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

[Press palms together, then open like a book]

‘These people honor God with their lips,

[Smile and touch lips]

‘but their hearts are far from God.

[Touch heart, then make a mean face]

‘They care more about their little traditions

[Hand over hand, as if washing]

‘than they care about God’s great commandments.’

[Point heavenward]

“A little dirt on your hands

[Look at hands]

“is not nearly as bad as unkindness in your heart.

[Touch heart, then make a mean face]

“Unkindness leads to all sorts of bad behavior.

[Trace a frown with your fingers]

“You look at hands,

[Look at hands]

“but God looks into the heart.”

[Cross hands over heart]

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

### Discussion Starters:

- *Why were the leaders upset?*
- *Why did they think it was important for Jesus' followers to wash their hands?*
- *What did Jesus say?*
- *Why should we keep kindness in our hearts?*

### Reflection on Reading:

*Jesus isn't telling us that we shouldn't wash our hands eat. It is good to wash your hands to keep them clean. Jesus looked at those who were complaining about dirty hands and saw they had dirty hearts. He saw that their hearts were more interested in tattling than in keeping kindness in their hearts.*

*Jesus said that what is in our hearts leads to how we behave. If we were always tattling on others, Jesus would see unkindness in our hearts. But, if we treat others fairly, kindly and thoughtfully, by forgiving others and asking forgiveness when we have hurt someone, by helping those in need and caring for all of God's creation.*

### Gospel Activity

#### Activity 1:

#### **Love Go Round**

Have the children sit in a circle. Hand the heart to one child and chant the following while they pass the heart around the circle:

*There's plenty of love to go around,  
The more and more we share.  
Where is the love that goes around?  
Where is the love, O where?*

When the verse is done, whoever is holding the heart shares something they can do to be kind to others.

(you can play a portion of a song from one of the CD's instead-for example: Jesus loves me, this I know, Jesus loves the little children, I am so glad that Jesus loves me-instead of the verse.)

Repeat as time allows.

#### Activity 2:

#### **Kindness Brainstorming**

Each time we do something that is good and faithful to God' we help bring about his kingdom of love and peace. When we have kindness in our hearts we do good deeds. Let's see how many things we can think of we can do every day to show love for others.

Use the following list for prompts if needed—

- >Say a prayer for someone in need while you are waiting in line.
- >Say 'Thank You'
- >Let someone else go first.
- >Be willing to help others.
- >Leave the larger cookie for the next person.
- >Think of what Jesus wants you to do.
- >Tell the truth
- >Help without being asked.
- >Let others choose the game to play
- >Ask the new child at school to play with you and your friends.
- >Share your toys
- >Give someone a hug
- >Forgive someone who says they are sorry
- >Help someone with grocery shopping
- >Hold the door open for someone.

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

#### **Closing Prayer**

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who gives us rules that are just and fair?*  
*Do you believe in Jesus, who shows us the way to be honest and kind in following God's way?*  
*Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who changes our hearts and gives us the strength to be kind?*

#### **Sending Forth**

*Say: This week let's do at least one kind thing for someone else--in Secret! Don't let them know you did it, let it be a secret between you and Jesus.*

#### **Lining Up/Closing Song**

Play "*Jesus Loves the Little Children*" track 1 from Bible Songs for Kids-Vol 1 while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.