

Growing in Gentleness

Lesson Scripture: I Samuel 24

Bible Truth: My gentleness and humbleness can grow.

Bible Story: I Samuel 24

Bible Verse: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves.” (Philippians 2:3, NIV)

FOCUS

Learning Activity: “What Is Gentleness?”

Preparation

If possible, arrange for a mother and her baby to visit the class.

Make a sign that says “Gentleness=Humility” on one side and “Pride” on the other. Draw a happy face on the “Gentleness=Humility” side and a sad face on the “Pride” side.

Materials

baby doll or ask a mother to visit the class with her baby

Presentation

Show the class the baby doll or real baby. Say: **Babies are so special. Each of you was once tiny like this baby and someone had to take good care of you. Have any of you ever held a baby?** Allow children to answer. **When you hold a baby, an adult usually tells you to be gentle. They are explaining that you need to hold the baby softly and carefully.** Ask the mother to demonstrate how she holds the baby gently, or let children practice holding the baby doll gently.

Say: **The word “gentleness” in the Bible refers to how we treat everyone, not just babies. Just like we have to be gentle with a baby, Jesus wants us to be gentle with others. Since you can’t hold people like we hold a baby, the Bible tells us another way to be gentle. It says we should think about other people and what they need before we think of ourselves. It is also having the attitude of wanting to help other people instead of wanting to be better than them. We call this being humble. So gentleness equals humility.** Show the sign you made. **The opposite of gentleness and humility is pride.** Turn your sign over.

Read the following stories to the children. Ask them to tell you if the child in the story demonstrated gentleness and humility or pride. As children give answers, turn your sign to the correct side to reinforce the concept.

1. **Mary was tired and just wanted to read her book. Her little sister kept asking her to play. Mary yelled at her sister and told her to be quiet. Which quality did Mary demonstrate?** (Mary demonstrated pride. Pride is thinking that what you want is more important than what other people want.)
2. **John was planning to go outside and play, but he noticed his mom was very tired. He decided to stay and help her clean the house. Which quality did John demonstrate?** (John demonstrated gentleness and humility because he thought about what his mom needed instead of what he wanted to do.)
3. **James scored the only two goals in the soccer game. He bragged to everyone about how great he played and never mentioned how the other team members had helped. What quality did James demonstrate?** (James demonstrated pride because he wanted everyone to think he was better than the other players.)
4. **Kaylee got a good grade on her spelling test, but her friend was upset because he did not do well. Instead of talking about her good grade, Kaylee offered to help her friend study for the next test. What quality did Kaylee demonstrate?** (Kaylee demonstrated gentleness and humility because she thought about her friend and how she could help him instead of talking about her good grade.)

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Philippians 2:13

Preparation

Write Philippians 2:13 on a piece of poster board.

With a permanent marker, write the word "humility" on one balloon and the word "pride" on the other. You may need to inflate the balloons to write on them. Do not tie the balloons. Allow the words written with the marker to dry and then deflate the balloons.

Materials
two balloons
permanent marker
poster board
marker or crayon
music player or someone to play an instrument

Explanation

Say: **This verse contains two phrases that mean the same thing as "pride."** Ask a child to underline the words "selfish ambition" and "vain conceit." **This verse tells us that we should not do anything with a prideful attitude.** Show children the balloon with the word "pride" written on it. It should be deflated. **This balloon reminds me of prideful children. What are some of the things you say or do when you are prideful?** Allow children to answer. Inflate the balloon as you speak about each one of the characteristics. **Yes, prideful people insist on doing things their way, brag about the things they have done or what they have, and also want to be the first in everything.** Ask someone to hold the balloon full of air. Be sure it remains inflated but do not tie it.

Say: **The second part of the verse tells us that instead of being prideful, we should have a different attitude.** Ask a child to underline the word "humility." **Being humble is valuing or thinking of others before ourselves.** Show children the balloon with the word "humility" written on it. It should be deflated. **This balloon reminds me of the children that reflect the fruit of gentleness and humility in their lives. Can you think of some ways these children behave?** Allow children to answer. Inflate the balloon as you give the following examples: **When these children receive an award or are honored in some way, they give God the glory. They know that God is the one who helps them in everything. They are considerate with others. Also, things don't have to be done their way. Our verse tells us that God wants us to be humble. Let's keep humility.** Tie the "humility" balloon. **And let's get rid of pride.** Ask your helper to let the air out of the "pride" balloon.

Memorization Activity

Ask the children to sit in a circle. While listening to some music, ask them to pass around the "humility" balloon. When the music stops, the child holding the balloon says the Bible memory verse. Continue playing until each child has had the opportunity to say the verse.

INSTRUCT

Bible Story: "David Demonstrates Humility," I Samuel 24

Preparation

Read and study I Samuel 24.

Make a cave by draping a sheet or large piece of cloth over several chairs. Have children enter the "cave" and sit in the back as you tell the story. Ask a volunteer to play the part of Saul and enter/exit the "cave" where appropriate in the story.

Presentation

Say: **Do you remember the name of the first king of Israel?** Allow children to answer. **Yes, it was King Saul. Unfortunately, Saul was a prideful man and often disobeyed God. God had already decided that because of Saul's disobedience, He would replace Saul with David as the new king of Israel. In the meantime, the people of Israel were starting to realize that David was a better leader than Saul, and this made Saul angry. He was full of pride and wanted everyone to think that he was the best leader. Saul decided that the best way to solve this problem was to have David killed.**

Materials

Bible
paper
crayons
markers
chairs
sheet or large piece of
cloth

The first part of today's Bible story takes place in a cave. David and the men with him were hiding in the back of a cave. Let's pretend to be David's men and hide in this cave. Sit with the children in the back of the cave you made prior to class.

Suddenly, they heard a noise. David motioned for his men to be quiet. One single man entered the cave. Volunteer enters the cave and pretends not to see the children. It was Saul, and he didn't know that David is there. David's men whispered to him that this would be the perfect time to kill Saul. They could get rid of this enemy forever. David quietly walked up behind Saul, but instead of killing him, he cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Saul left the cave without knowing that David was near. Volunteer leaves the cave.

Ask the children to crawl out of the cave and sit in a circle. David exited the cave and called out to Saul. He showed Saul the piece of robe he had cut off. Saul realized that David had the opportunity to kill him, but He didn't do it.

David demonstrated gentleness and humility. Even though Saul was trying to kill him, David considered Saul's life more important than his own and did not kill Saul.

APPLICATION

Learning Activity: Skit, "What Should They Do?"

Preparation

Write each of the following scenarios on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Mary is tired and just wants to read her book. Her little sister keeps asking her to play.
2. John is planning to go outside and play, but he notices his mom is very tired.
3. James scored the only two goals in the soccer game.
4. Kaylee got a good grade on her spelling test, but her friend was upset because he did not do well.

Materials
paper
pencil

Presentation

Divide children into four groups. Give each group one of the stories from the FOCUS activity. Ask the groups to act out how the child in each situation could respond with pride and then how the child could respond with humility.

MINISTRY TIME

Preparation

None

Presentation

Say: **Being gentle and humble means thinking of others and what they want before thinking about yourself. Can you think of some things that your parents sometimes want you to do that you don't like to do?** Allow children to answer. Include things such as cleaning their room, helping with dinner, doing homework, etc. **Can you think of somethings that your friends sometimes want to do or play that you don't like to do?** Allow children to answer.

Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to write or draw something on the paper that they can do this week that will make someone else happy. Encourage them to pick something that they personally do not like to do. (Clean their room, help with dinner, play a certain game with a sibling or friend, etc.)

Say: **Let's ask God to help us do the things that we wrote on our papers so the fruit of gentleness can grow in our lives.** Say a prayer asking God to help them complete the tasks they have written down.

Say: **As you are practice having an attitude of gentleness and humility, God will make the fruit of gentleness grow inside of you.** Take any fruit-shaped papers with the word "gentleness" written on them (located at the bottom of the poster from Lesson 1) and move them from the bottom of the poster into the tree.

Materials
"Christian" tree poster (from Lesson 1)
paper
pencil or crayons

Bonus Activity

Learning Activity: Game, "Connect the Squares"

Preparation

Divide a large piece of paper into sixteen squares. You should have four across and four down.

Prepare review questions for the lesson. Some suggested questions are:

Whose side was God on?

What does it mean to be gentle and humble?

What does it mean to be prideful?

How did David show humility?

Why was Saul jealous of David?

Recite Philippians 4:3.



Presentation

Divide the children into two teams. Ask each team to select a captain and give their team a name. Ask them some review questions, alternating between teams. When a child answers correctly, the captain will place the name of the team in one of the squares. The objective of the game is for the teams to connect four squares horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. Remind the players that they should not only look for ways to connect four squares for their team but also to block the opposing team's chances of connecting four squares. Remind each team to consult with their team players before placing their team's name on a square.