

People of Faith

Moses: Obedience

Adults

Before Class

- Prepare* Prepare for this lesson by reading Exodus 3: 1-22, I Samuel 15:20-22, I Samuel 16:7, Santiago 1:22, Psalm 19:7,8,11, Juan 14:15 Romans 13:1-2 Acts 4:9 y 5:29. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.
- Plan* What materials and room arrangements will you need for this lesson? Make sure all of your physical needs are planned for well ahead of time.
- Practice* Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.

Welcome

Introduce yourself to the youth. Tell them your name, a little general information about yourself and tell them something you like doing. Ask each adult to share their name and something they like doing. It should be something they really enjoy, whether they do it every day or every so often

Memory Passage for Today

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. Luke 10:27 (NRSV)

Introduction

Hand out a blank sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each student.

Ask them to write what would be their perfect day

Give them time to write.

Then when they are finished, ask the students, as they feel comfortable, to share what they wrote.

There are some things that you like doing and some that you don't like to.

Surely on your perfect day you'd be doing only the things that you enjoy or things that are not stressful, or tiring or uncomfortable.

But in reality we know there are a lot of things that we do not like to do. One of those things is obeying.

Obedience is something that we don't like to do because it implies bending my will, my comfort, my wishes to comply with person's will, comfort and wishes.

But let's start at the beginning...

- **What is obedience?**

Allow the students to come up with some definitions of what obedience is.

Ask 3 people to read the following passages: John 6: 38; John 4:34; Luke 22:42.
These verses describe the obedience Jesus had towards his Father and serve as a guide to help us define obedience:

“Obedience is submitting one’s will voluntarily to the revealed will of God in every circumstance in life.”

It is NOT enough to know what obedience is; otherwise it would be enough to have a dictionary in hand to know what to do.

Instead, through the Bible God teaches us other things about obedience.

Learning the Word

- Why does God speak about obedience so much in the Bible?

There are several reasons.

As you mention these reasons, write them down on the board.

1. Obedience is important to God.

Let’s look at an example:

1 Samuel 15:20-22

What did God order Saul to do?

Did Saul do as God ordered?

Was it a bad idea to offer God a sacrifice?

What was more important to God?

James 1:22

Is God interested only in us listening to the Word?

What does God desire?

2. Obedience is for our own benefit.

Psalm 19:7,8,11

What are the blessings that obedience brings to our life?

What do we find through being obedient to God?(v. 11)

Read James 1:25 aloud.

This passage says that a person that obeys the law will be blessed and happy. True happiness comes from living a life of obedience to God.

3. Obedience is the best way to show God that we love him.

John 14:15

What should we do if we love God?

I can’t say that I love God if I am unwilling to obey God.

4. Obedience to God comes first.

Romans 13:1-2

Whom should we obey?

Acts 4:9 y 5:29

But, whom should we obey above all other people?

5. God knows obedience is not easy and that we need to be reminded to do it.

When a mom tells her son to do something, it is because the child is not doing it, or because the son does not like or does not want to do it. In the same way, God tells us in several Biblical passages that we should obey because many times we are not doing it, or because we don't like what God is asking us to do or because we don't want to do it.

Many times we look for excuses not to obey:

a. "What could be so wrong, if everyone does it?"

Examples: Cutting in line next to someone we know instead of going to the end of the line. God asks us to be patient and respectful of others. Buying and watching pirated movies. God tells us to obey our authorities, and that is illegal and dishonest. Gossiping, complaining, mocking are all things that God asks us NOT to do but we are used to doing.

People of faith don't act in this way even if everyone is doing it.

b. "It's just that if I don't feel it, it doesn't count. That's hypocritical."

God asks that we love our enemies; if we wait until we feel the desire to do it, we will not be able to obey. Sometimes the feeling comes later.

Feeling it is not a condition or prerequisite for obedience.

c. "If no one else does it, why should I do it?"

Examples: If she does not greet me, why should I? God says: Do not pay evil for evil, but good for evil.

"My boss is sneaky! He wants me to do it so he won't have to?" It does not matter. Everyone will have to account to God for their own decisions.

People of faith do what's right even if no one else is doing it.

d. "It would be better if I did it my way."

Give an example: ...

Maybe it's easier, but it is not right and it is not necessarily the best way.

We think we have good excuses so we don't have to obey, but really they are not.

- An example of obedience: Moses.

Ask the group to read Exodus 3: 1-23.

This event in Moses' life marked a change in his life and in the life of the people of Israel.

Share with the group some of the important details which happened before the story in Exodus 3:1-22.

(Previous important events: The people of Israel lived in Egypt as slaves. Moses was a part of the Israelites but he lived in Midian with his wife's family. Moses had grown up in Pharaoh's daughter's house. Moses had escaped from Egypt after killing an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite slave).

Read again the Exodus 3: 1-23 passage. You can use another version.

Let's analyze this event:

Did Moses listen to God and then do what God ordered?

Was it easy or comfortable for Moses to obey? Why?

Did Moses' obedience lead to a blessing? How?

Pharaoh would tell Moses what to do and not do. Did Moses obey Pharaoh? Whom did Moses obey?

Moses was a person of faith who loved God. Moses actively showed his love for God through his obedience. People of faith listen and obey God.

Reflection

The following questions are not for the group to answer aloud. They are here for them to meditate on and they can answer in a personal and private way in writing if they desire

In Moses' life, there was a Pharaoh.

It was an important, powerful man who inspired fear and respect. People in general did not want to be on his bad side.

Do you have a Pharaoh like that in your life? Is there someone important who does not live a life obedient to God and who will notice when you do the right thing? Is there a Pharaoh that may judge you for obeying God and for doing what God asks you to do in the Bible?

In Moses' life there were the people of Israel, his fellow Israelites, his brothers and sisters. People he saw daily and constantly.

Is there in your life a group of people that are with you all the time and who can tell you frankly what they think about what you do? Do you have friends, relatives, co-workers that may mock you or call you names for obeying God and doing what God asks you to do in the Bible?

Many times, we are too worried about what others will say or think, and we care more about that than about what God says or thinks. And for fear of "what others will think of me," we do not obey God.

But I Samuel 16:7 says: "The LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

Are you willing to leave your own sense of comfort, your own preferences just so you can obey God?

Are you willing to submit your will to God's will?

Let's Take It One Step Further

Share with the group something from your own life about obedience.

It can be a time when you really did not feel like obeying Biblical instructions but that even without wanting to you did it and received a blessing because of it

Or you can share an area in your life where it is difficult to obey but constantly you make yourself do it even when you might look bad to others.

Likewise, ask the youth to share something from their own experience.

Youth like to disobey their parents because they do not want to stop watching TV.

What do the youth treasure that keeps them from obeying God?

(To be vulnerable in front of others is not easy to do, but it is an exercise in humility and recognizing our need for God.)

Application

People of God show God they love him through obedience. And not just any kind of obedience, but done with a good attitude. It is voluntarily submitting and trusting that God will not ask us to do something bad, but only that which is best for us.

Is that how you obey?

If this is not how you obey... you have offended God. Ask God's forgiveness.

If it is hard for you to obey God... Ask God for help. God will give you the necessary courage to do it.

Make a decision to obey God in all situations in your life.

Make a decision to obey God because God wants the best for you and is only asking you to do what is good and right.

Option: Journal

Give students their journals and give them time to reflect on the questions and write their answers. Collect journals from students and store them in a safe place where no one else can access them. They will take their journals home on Friday.

Conclusion

God asks us for obedience. God requests that we joyfully fulfill what the Bible asks.

Sometimes what God asks is easy, but some times it is hard. But it is never impossible or wrong. I have to obey God in all situations in my life. Through my obedience I show God that I love God with my whole heart, with all my soul, with all my strength and with all my mind.

People of Faith

David: Trust

Adult

Prepare Prepare for this lesson by reading I Samuel 17:1-58 Psalm 22:4-5 Psalm 28:7, Psalm 56:3-4, Proverbs 3:5, Judges 7:1-23, 2 Cor.12:5-10, Phil. 2:5-13. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.

Plan What materials and room arrangements will you need for this lesson? Consider how you will make the telling of the Bible story come alive for the students. Make sure all of your physical needs are planned for well ahead of time.

Practice Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.

Welcome

Welcome the students.

Review the theme from yesterday (Obedience)

Go over the memorized passages for yesterday and today.

Memory Passage for Today

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13 (NRSV)

Introduction

Tell the students: Today we are going to focus on what it means to trust God. We are going to discover how God is always with us and makes us strong, so we don't have to be afraid.

Bible Lesson

Passage for the day: I Samuel 17:1-58. Ask a couple of students to take turns reading the story.

(Goliath was nearly 9 feet tall (almost as tall as a basketball hoop!) and his armor alone weighed as much as a person! David alone could never have defeated Goliath, but with God on his side, God gave David the victory over Goliath and the Philistine army.)

Connecting With The Passage

Discuss the following questions, and encourage responses from all participants.

- 1. Why were the soldiers of Israel so afraid in this story? They were very afraid of Goliath, because he was such a giant. They did not think they could defeat him one on one.***
- 2. Why do you think Goliath wanted to fight one on one with another soldier and have that fight count for the whole war? Goliath wanted the Israelites to be scared, and since he had such a size advantage of any individual soldier from Israel, Goliath knew that he would***

win. He taunted the Israelites for forty days! Without God, it is certain that they could not defeat Goliath or the Philistines. It is interesting that the Israelite army seemed to forget that God was on their side.

3. **Why was David so upset about what Goliath was saying?** *Because he was disrespecting God and the army of God.*
4. **When talking with King Saul, what did David say had prepared him to fight Goliath?** *David tells Saul about the times when David had killed lions and bears threatening his family's sheep. Notice that David realizes that he was only able to kill these animals because he trusted in God, so he actually says it was God who saved him from the lion and the bear.*
5. **What made it look like David could never defeat this giant?** *David was not a soldier, was young and much smaller than Goliath. David didn't have the same weapons that Goliath had.*
6. **What did David know would make the difference to make David defeat Goliath?** *David knew that putting his trust in God alone would bring him victory, because he knew that God wanted Israel's army to win.*
7. **How did David make sure that anybody seeing this fight between him and Goliath would have known that it was God who was going to win the fight and not David?** *With no weapon other than his sling, David didn't seem well equipped to defeat the giant. David made it clear that the victory would come not from David's might, but from God's might. David says: "You come at me with weapons, but I come against you in the name of the Lord and with the Lord's power"*
8. **Do you think that David was afraid? Why or why not?** *Perhaps he was a little nervous, because he was human, but he was not afraid because God had delivered David before and so David knew that God would do it again, and David felt that God was definitely on his side against the Philistines.*
9. **Did David brag about being the one who defeated Goliath?** *No, instead he said it had been God all along who defeated Goliath.*
10. **What are some of David's qualities that we should emulate? What examples can you give of David displaying these qualities in the story?** *Hard working (shepherding), Obedient (to father, to King Saul), Faithful (to God), Brave, Trusted God, Humble (knew it was God doing all this)*
11. **What does it mean to trust in God?** *Let the class offer their thoughts, then read to them Psalm 28:7 "The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him." Trust implies knowing that the strength we need does not come from us, but comes from God. Trust means not relying only on ourselves, but completely relying on God. The more we trust in God and rely in God's power, the more God is able to do through us.*
12. **What are times when it is easy to trust in God and times when it is harder?** *How easy or difficult it is to trust God varies from person to person. Knowing that God has helped us in the past helps us trust God: "In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame." Psalm 22:4-5. "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid; what can flesh do to me?" Psalm 56:3-4 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight."*

Proverbs 3:5 Still, it is human nature to try to be independent, and so we all need to grow in how we trust God to lead us in our lives.

- 13. What kind of difficulty or problem would frighten you if you had to face it all alone? How can you trust God completely in these situations so it is God fighting the battle, not you?**

Application

Have a student read aloud Judges 7:1-23

- 1. The story of Gideon brings up similar trust issues as the story of David and Goliath. Why did God want to reduce the size of Gideon's army? So the victory could not be attributed to anything other than God's power**

Have a student read aloud 2 Cor. 12:5-10 and Phil. 2:5-13

- 2. What does it mean when Paul writes "[God's] grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness... Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong"? Paul talks about being weak (on his own power) and being strong (only through God's grace). You're at the age where you want to do things on your own, you want to be independent, self-sufficient. The temptation is to think that you don't need anyone to do what you want to do. Paul is saying that can only get us so far. The real strength does not come from us, but comes from God. And the only way for us to access that divine strength is to let go of our efforts to be "strong" and by being "weak" we let God be all of our strength.**
- 3. Trusting God takes discipline, prayer, and risking "weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ." But with Christ on our side, we have God's strength, and like with David, although we are weak, we are able to do things far beyond what our own strength would have accomplished.**
- 4. How can imitate Christ's servant attitude so we can trust God more fully?**

Option One: Seeing as God sees

Using the activity sheet, have students think of a particular challenge or problem, then have them write outside the glasses how we see things and inside lenses how we will see things differently if we trust in God completely.

Remember that when you are doing something, no matter how difficult or scary it is, you are never alone. God is always with you and God will guide you to do the right thing. God helps you be smarter, braver, more patient and obedient. If we try to do things all by ourselves, we might not be able to get too far. But with God, we can do all things! (review the verse for today)

Option Two: Journal

Give students their journals and give them time to reflect on the questions and write their answers. Collect journals from students and store them in a safe place where no one else can access them. They will take their journals home on Friday.

Let's Take It One Step Further

(This section is optional: if you decide to skip this section, go straight to Conclusion)

Option 1

TRUST FALL: *Have every group member find a partner of approximately equal height and weight. One partner will be the one who falls, and one will be the one who catches (it may be a good idea to have one person fall and more than one person be the catchers, to ensure no one is hurt). The partners will get the chance to act in both roles. The faller's responsibilities are to stay as straight as possible, not to bend at the waist or knees, keep their arms across their chest, and communicate with the catcher(s). The responsibilities for the catcher(s) are to get in a sturdy stance (usually one leg in front of the other in a lunge position), be aware, keep their hands right below the faller's shoulder blades, use the arms as shock absorbers, not to underestimate the force being generated by the faller, and constantly communicate with and reassure the faller. The faller will be standing with his/her back to the catcher(s), who is(are) standing three feet behind the faller facing the faller's back. When the faller is ready, the catcher(s) will hold out their hands very near the faller's shoulder blades without touching the faller yet. The catcher(s) will then give the signal for the faller to close his/her eyes and slowly begin to fall straight back, without bending at the knees or waist. As the faller's body leans backward, the catcher(s) follows the body's fall closely with his/her hands without touching the faller. Just before half way down the fall, the catcher(s) will catch the faller's shoulders in his/her hands and gently slow the fall's progress until the catcher(s) is(are) able to stop the descent completely before the faller reaches the ground. After three tries, the partners should switch roles.*

Option 2

Let's practice what it means to trust.

Trust Walk

Materials: Blindfold

Have the students each get a partner. Blindfold one of each pair. The other person in the couple will lead the one blindfolded giving verbal instructions (and should only reach out to hold them to keep them from stumbling over something). If possible, lead the kids on a walk around the building and outside (if it's not possible to go outside, guide them within the church building). Have the seeing partner guide the blindfolded partner describing what they are passing and being sure to steer them away from all objects in their path. Midway through the walk have the partners trade jobs. When you return to the classroom discuss the activity with them.

Ask: What was it like to be blindfolded? What was it like to be the guide? How did you have to trust each other? Trust the guide not to let us run into things, trust them to tell us the truth about what they were seeing. How is trusting in God like trusting your guide? Trust him even though you can't see him, listen to his word (the Bible)

NOTE Give the group members the opportunity to say “no” to these exercises. Trust activities are very serious activities.

Ask: What was it like closing your eyes and falling back? Who did you have to trust in this activity? How is falling back into your partners arms like trusting God? How do you know you can trust God?

Conclusion

It is easy to think that David was the one that defeated Goliath, that even though David may have been young and inexperienced it was his ability to use the sling that won him this battle. But what the Bible tells us is clear: it was God working through David. What David did was trust God so completely, that it was God acting through David to defeat the Philistine and show the people that they needed to trust in God. David didn't brag and say “I am a giant killer” but instead he proclaimed “God gave us this victory.” Continue to think about areas in your life where God wants you to trust him more, so that it is not you alone fighting, but instead it is God giving you these victories to honor God. And when God gives you those victories, don't go bragging about what YOU did, but tell others that because you TRUSTED in God this happened, so therefore the one that deserves the credit is God.

People of Faith
David: Trust
Adult



People of Faith

Ruth: Love

Adults

Before class

Prepare Prepare for this lesson by reading Ruth 1 - 2:12, Matthew 5:44, 1 Cor. 13: 4-7, 1 John 4:8. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.

Plan Materials you will need for this lesson: Bible, Paper for each student, pencils and a blackboard or something to write on, your driver's license, passport or another photo ID. If the students want to take notes, they need to have paper and pencils or pens available. For the optional activity: pencils, sheets or small pieces of paper.

Practice Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.

Welcome

Greet the group.
Briefly go over the lesson learned yesterday.

Memory Passage for Today

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35 (NRSV)

Introduction

Show the group your license or ID
Ask them what these documents are for.
Let the students give answers

One of the purposes of these documents is that they identify the ID's holder. This card identifies me. What's my name? Where do I live? Where was I born? etc.

In summary, the ID identifies me in people's eyes

People of faith need to "use" their ID card to be recognized: love.

God tells us in John 13:35 that others will know we are his disciples if we have love for one another.

That should be our ID card so people will recognize us.

The love we show one another should say that we are children of God. It should say we are part of a special family.

Bible Lesson

Read Ruth 1-2:12 ahead of time to prepare for the class.

Ruth was a woman of faith who showed love to her family, and this was her ID for people to know her.

Ruth and Orpah were two Moabite women who were married to Naomi's two sons. Naomi was a widow from Judah. After a few years of marriage, the two sons also died leaving Naomi and the two Moabites widowed.

Naomi decided to return to her land and send her two daughters-in-law back to their own people. Orpah decided to return to her people but Ruth decided to stay with her mother-in-law Naomi.

The kinship between them was through marriage. When Ruth's son (who was Naomi's son) died, the kinship was dissolved.

But Ruth said something very beautiful and interesting to Naomi in Ruth 1: 16-17.

Have a previous arrangement with a student to stand up and read aloud this passage at this time.

In what Ruth tells Naomi, she is establishing a link between them much stronger than linkage by marriage or by blood relation. Now they would have the same God. Now they would belong to the same people even if they had been born to different nations. Now they were part of the people of God. They were people of faith, part of the great family where members loves one another.

Now, as part of the same family, Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem, Naomi's hometown.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, it was the beginning of the barley harvest. In biblical times, it was allowed for people in need to glean in the fields so long as they had permission and gleaned after the gleaners (workers) had gone through the field first. This way, the main harvesting was for the land owner but from that same field people in need would also feed.

Let's read what happened then.

Read Ruth 2:1-12. You may ask the group members to take turns reading aloud a verse each until the passage is finished.

In verse 12 Boaz says to Ruth "May the Lord reward you for your deeds"

Of what deeds is Boaz speaking?

Let the group answer.

(Ruth did not have a husband; she was a widow. She did not have to stay with her mother-in-law but she decided on her own to do just that.

Ruth had to do some physical labor to help Naomi and get enough food for both of them..

The hard work would have been physically demanding: stooping to gather those ears of grain under the hot sun for hours. The workers had told Boaz that she had been at it since morning)

Verse 11 suggests that Boaz knew something about Ruth. Though seeing her work was the first time he had seen, he had already heard about her.

Boaz knew that Ruth was a widow; he knew that she had decided to leave her father and mother and stay with her mother-in-law. He knew that Ruth was far from her land, her people, and that she had voluntarily traveled to an unknown land.

The love that Ruth showed her mother-in-law Naomi was her ID card before Boaz and surely before other people.

This love was evidence she belonged to the people of faith, that she was part of this great family, a family where members love each other.

Let's see how Ruth loved Naomi.

What is love?

To love is to seek another person's wellbeing.

As you share each point, write it down on the board.

- Love is not just a feeling.

Sometimes we think, wrongly, that love is only a feeling. Certainly love includes feelings most of the time, but it is not the essence of love.

Let's look at Ruth. She maybe felt love for Naomi, but that alone would not have helped Naomi, for example if Ruth had said that she loved Naomi but then did not help Naomi.

If love were only a feeling, then God would not ask us to love our enemies. (*Matthew 5:44*)

In fact, there are times when we don't feel like loving a particular relative or church member (even a spouse) but that is no reason not to be kind to them.

- Love implies action.

Love is shown through actions. It is not just saying "I love you" or hugging or kissing someone, but true love is shown if it is backed up with actions.

Many times we think love is something passive, when in reality it is very active, because it implies actively seeking the other person's wellbeing.

To act in love implies time and effort. Sometimes it is hard to sacrifice what one would like to do just so we can act out of love towards another person.

The Bible says that God showed his love for us sending his son to die on the cross for us. This definitely was an act of love, more than just a feeling of love.

Ruth not only told her mother-in-law that she loved her, but showed it with actions. Ruth helped her mother-in-law and sought her wellbeing. She brought her food.

- Love implies that a decision is made.

It probably would have been easier for Ruth to just stay in her hometown. There she was in an environment she knew. She had people she knew and customs she was used to. Maybe she had relatives that could have helped her. It would have been easier than living with an older woman.

But, Ruth chose to show love for her family. Naomi was her family.

As people of faith, many times we have to make the decision to do what is right to show our love to a brother or sister in the family of faith.

We can't say: "I had no choice but to talk back" "After that, I had to get mad" "Everybody was doing it so I thought it was OK" etc. We always have at least two options:

1. Do what's wrong. 2. Do what's right – show love to another person.

Even when you don't "feel" like loving you, I have decided to do it and I will act accordingly.

Rut sought Naomi's wellbeing, in other words, Ruth loved Naomi.

She showed her family the love that people of faith have when she decided to act in love.

As a consequence of that love, Ruth became well known. Boaz knew of her and other people surely also knew of her. Ruth's love was her ID. It was evidence of who her God was. It was the mark of the people of faith.

Reflection

There are many types of families.

Some people define family according to the people that live under the same roof.

Other people define family according to the blood running through your veins.

But when we talk about the family of the people of faith, we are referring to the family we form because we have the same Heavenly Father.

The family of the people of faith lives in different parts of the world, speaks different languages, belongs to different social classes but has the same Heavenly Father. And that makes us brothers and sisters. We are a very special family.

Others should know that we are part of the people of faith by the way in which we love one another. We should be recognized by how we treat each other.

Do you actively love your spiritual family?

Do you decide to show love to your brother or sister even when you don't feel like doing it?

Do they know that you are a person of faith when they see the love you show to others?

Let's Take It One Step Further

Share with the group a time when you felt someone loved you. Share what the person did for you to make you feel that s/he loved you even without telling you.

You may share an loving action done to you which implied action and making a decision.

Application

Read 1 Cor. 13: 4-7

This is a biblical definition of what love is.

Sometimes we think that love only refers to nice things but that is not always true, really.

If when you love someone you do look for the other's wellbeing and not your own, then you probably have times when you have to decide to do things that are not very pleasant to still show your love for them.

For example:

- Seeking out the person who doesn't say hello to you in order to greet them.**
- Seeking reconciliation with someone even if the situation was not your fault.**
- Being kind to someone we don't like much.**
- Being kind to the person who mocks us or is not nice to us, etc.**

Read again 1 Cor. 13:4-7

This is the type of love by which people of faith should be identified. This is the type of love we should show one another.

This is the type of love you should practice.

Look for opportunities to show this love to people around you.

Actively seek the opportunity to show love with your actions to members of the great family which makes up the people of faith.

- **Remember that it implies the decision to do it, but it also implies action, even when the feeling is not present. (*It is not being hypocritical, but it is being obedient, Matthew 5:44*).**
- **Remember that God asks us to treat others like we want to be treated, and you like being treated with love.**

If you have not treated someone with love, you need to ask God for forgiveness. God will forgive you.

Think of a person whom you have not loved in this way and do it.

Option: Journal

Give students their journals and give them time to reflect on the questions and write their answers. Collect journals from students and store them in a safe place where no one else can access them. They will take their journals home on Friday.

Optional Activity

Give each person a pencil and a piece of paper.

Ask them that individually and in silence they write down the name of a person whom they should love but have not shown love to.

First they have to ask God for forgiveness for not loving them, and then ask God for help to stay strong in the decision to love that person.

(It could also be the name of a person to whom they would like to show love.)

After writing the name of the person, they should write how exactly they are going to show them love. Encourage the group to choose a specific action.

*Once they have written the name of the person and the way in which they will show them love, ask them to fold and put away the paper.
Tell them not to throw that paper away until they have done what they had written down.*

Prayer: Lead the group in prayer. Ask God to help them show their love actively and intentionally to others.

Conclusion

People of faith show their love for God by loving their neighbor.

We can't say that we love God and then not love our neighbor, because the Bible says in 1 John 4:8 that it is not possible.

So, if we truly love God, we will love our neighbor.

It is not about not doing to others what we don't like done to us, but it is about doing to others what we like done to us.

The people of faith are a big family where everyone loves each other.

Just like Ruth's love for Naomi was her ID, we should be known for the love we show each other.

Then we would be living out what God asks us to do:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27

People of Faith

Martha and Mary: Service

Adult

Before Class

- Prepare* Prepare for this lesson by reading Luke 10:38-42, Matthew 25:31-46, 1st Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31, Galatians 5:16-26, James 2:14-17. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.
- Plan* What materials and room arrangements will you need for this lesson? Make sure all of your physical needs are planned for well ahead of time.
- Practice* Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.

Welcome

- Welcome the children.*
- Review the themes for the previous days (Obedience, Courage, Love)*
- Go over the memorized passages for the week and for today*

Memory Passage for Today

The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all. I Corinthians 12:7 (Today's English Version)

Introduction

Tell the students: Today we are going to focus on what gifts God has given us (things we do well naturally or do well after much practice) and how we are to use them in the way God wants us to use them. Our focus will be the word Service, that is, how we serve God. God wants us to serve God with our unique gifts.

Bible Lesson, Option 1: Four Strand Garland

Passage for the day: Luke 10:38-42

Tell students: We are going to read today's Bible passage in a new way which is part prayer, part scripture reading. I am going to ask five of you to take turns reading the passage. Once you have the volunteers, make sure you have Bibles or photocopies of the passage available for them.

Here is how we are going to do this. We will sit here in silence for a few moments, trying to focus ourselves in God. If during this time of reading and praying you find your mind wandering or getting distracted, simply let those thoughts go and focus on quieting down your mind. **Let's begin.** Let them have about fifteen or thirty seconds of silence. They may close their eyes if they want to. **Pay attention to your breathing: feel yourself taking a breath; feel yourself exhale.** Let them have about fifteen or thirty seconds of silence. Now our first volunteer will read the passage through once, reading it slowly. We will listen to the passage and on this first time through the passage, I want you to think of what the story is all about. After this first reading, give the group a minute to reflect in silence.

Focus on your breathing. Pause for a few seconds. Now our second volunteer will read the passage. This time, reflect about what God is trying to teach you with this story. After this reading, give the group a minute to reflect in silence.

Our third volunteer will read now. Remember to breathe. Pause for a few seconds. Now, how does this passage make you feel gratitude towards God? After this reading, give the group a minute to reflect in silence.

It's time to read it again, and this time what I want you to do is consider: Is there something I need to confess to God? Do I need to admit to God that I have missed opportunities to serve God? After this reading, give the group a minute to reflect in silence.

We will now hear the passage read one last time, and I want you to think about how God is using this passage to guide you and tell you how to serve God better. After this reading, give the group a minute to reflect in silence.

Let's slowly come back from our attitude of reflection and prayer. You may open your eyes now. Would anyone like to share some of what they felt God was saying to them? Focus first on the lessons of gratitude and instruction. If the students don't feel comfortable sharing, invite them to continue to reflect on these insights internally.

Bible Lesson, option 2: Dramatic Reading

Passage for the day: Luke 10:38-42

If you feel that your class would not benefit from acting out the Bible lesson using the reading in Option 1, then ask several students to collaborate reading the Bible passage. Student 1 will read the narrator parts. Student 2 will be the voice of Martha. Student 3 will be the voice of Jesus. Encourage them to be creative and engaged in their reading. Be sure they are reading the same version of the Bible (you can provide them with Bibles or photocopies of the text).

Connecting With The Passage

Discuss the following questions, and encourage responses from all participants.

- 1. When Jesus went from town to town, he and his disciples depended upon the kindness of the townspeople for food and shelter. When Martha saw Jesus in her town, what did she do? She invited him into her home for a meal.**
- 2. A guest in those days would receive the best the host had to offer. Martha was hurrying around to give the best she had to Jesus. What did her sister Mary do? Mary sat at Jesus' feet to hear what he had to say.**
- 3. Martha was upset that Mary did not help fix a meal for Jesus. Was Jesus also upset? No, Jesus was not upset.**
- 4. What did Jesus tell Martha? What do you think that means? Martha! Martha! You are worried and upset about so many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken from her. --- We need to focus first on learning from Jesus about God, and all other things can come after that.**
- 5. Do you think Jesus appreciated Martha? Why? Answers will vary. Encourage reflection on the contributions Martha and Mary were making to Jesus' ministry.**
- 6. When it comes to serving God, are you more likely to be like Martha or like Mary? Why? Answers will vary. Encourage reflection on whether they prefer action or reflecting, leading or following, etc.**

7. **Being here in Vacation Bible School means that we are like Mary, because we come here to learn about God. What are some of the things we have learned about God and Jesus so far this week?** *Answers will vary. Encourage reflection on the main themes: Being obedient, asking God to give us courage, loving other people. That's great! It is very important that we continue to learn about God, not just this week, but every week at church, and at home, reading our Bible. Since we are learning all those things about God, now God wants us to use the gifts God has given us to serve God...*

Application

1. **Each one of us has gifts that God has given us, things we can do and things we are good at. What are some of the gifts that God has given you?** *I can sing. I am a good parent. I play an instrument. I help my neighbors. I take care of my sick mother. I am nice to people, I help at church, etc.*
2. **Jesus needs each of us to serve him according to what we do to serve others. The Bible tells us that anything we do for others, it is as if we are doing it for our Lord. God says in Matthew 25:35-37,40: "I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me." But the people say: when did we see you like that, Lord? And God replies "I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did it for me."** *Ask a student to read the Matthew 25:31-46 passage.*

Let's think about what kinds of things we can do to serve God by helping others and by being active in church. *Give the students a pen/pencil and a blank sheet of paper each. Tell them to draw two buildings: one will be a church and the other one will be a house – they can make it a simple drawing! Now instruct them to write down next to the drawing of each building what kinds of things they can do to serve God by serving others. So, for example, next to the church they could write "Help with the women's circle" or "Sing in the church choir" and next to the house they could write "Read a passage of scripture with my family every day" or "Go to church with my children" Encourage creative responses that help others and that can relate to ministries in a church.*

Let's Take It One Step Further

God gives each of us spiritual gifts. "The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all." (I Corinthians 12:7). This 1st Corinthians passage lists several spiritual gifts. *Have a student read I Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31. Write down on the board (if one is available) each of the gifts or positions mentioned. (Remind the class that this list is only a partial list, that God gives other gifts as well.). Ask the class: Name people they know in their families, in the church, who have and use these gifts. How do they use them to help others, to serve in the church? What are things you can do to follow their example of service? Do you have any examples in your own life of how you have used the gifts God has given you to serve God?*

The Bible challenges us not only to place all our trust in Jesus, but it also says that our actions need to follow in line with our faith in Jesus. In other words, what we do needs

to be consistent with what a person of faith following Jesus ought to do. *Ask a student to read James 2:14-17.*

*Invite your class to pause now and say a prayer. Tell them to be open to how God is guiding them to serve. Lead them in this prayer: **Lord, we are grateful that you give us gifts and that you offer us opportunities to use them. As we read these scriptures, deep down we can hear you calling us to use our gifts in new ways. Where do you want me to serve you, Lord? Pause here for a few seconds. How do you want me to serve you in your church? Pause here for a few seconds. How can I serve you by serving people in need? Pause here for a few seconds. Thank you for the way your Spirit speaks to us and guides us to love you and serve you better. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.***

Give students a blank piece of paper and a blank envelope. Have them write down on the top of the page: "Three ways in which I feel God is leading me to serve Him." Tell them this is a note they are writing to themselves, a note no one else needs to see. Once they have finished the note, have them fold it and insert it in the envelope. Tell them that when they have sealed the envelope, they should write their name and address on it for you to mail it to them in two weeks as a reminder. If you think mailing the notes is not practical, have them write their name on the envelope and write: Open on date x (a date two weeks from the day you are conducting this lesson). If you are mailing the notes, collect them at this time. If you are not mailing them, ask them to take their note home and place it where they will be able to find it in two weeks.

The gifts that God gives us, when put to his service, produce the fruits of the Spirit which are listed in Galatians 5:16-26. *Have a student read that passage. Write down on the board (if one is available) the nine fruits of the Spirit. **A life lived by the Spirit yields these gifts in our lives. Which of these fruits of the Spirit do you feel God produces in your life right now? Why? What are some examples of service to God where these fruits would be evident? Which of these fruits of the Spirit do you feel it is most challenging to show in one's life? Why?***

Option: Journal

Give students their journals and give them time to reflect on the questions and write their answers. Collect journals from students and store them in a safe place where no one else can access them. They will take their journals home on Friday.

Conclusion

Our week together is almost over, but I want to encourage you to keep thinking about ways in which you can serve God. Remember that God gives each of us a way to serve him with our talents and gifts. And remember that when we use those gifts to help others, we are serving God. People of faith serve God in any way they can.

People of Faith

Martha and Mary: Service Handout for Adults

Today we are going to focus on what gifts God has given us (things we do well naturally or do well after much practice) and how we are to use them in the way God wants us to use them. Our focus will be the word Service, that is, how we serve God. God wants us to serve God with our unique gifts.

NOTES

Bible Lesson Passage for the day: Luke 10:38-42

Connecting With The Passage

Discuss the following questions, and encourage responses from all participants.

- 1. When Jesus went from town to town, he and his disciples depended upon the kindness of the townspeople for food and shelter. When Martha saw Jesus in her town, what did she do?**
- 2. A guest in those days would receive the best the host had to offer. Martha was hurrying around to give the best she had to Jesus. What did her sister Mary do?**
- 3. Martha was upset that Mary did not help fix a meal for Jesus. Was Jesus also upset?**
- 4. What did Jesus tell Martha? What do you think that means?**
- 5. Do you think Jesus appreciated Martha? Why?**
- 6. When it comes to serving God, are you more likely to be like Martha or like Mary? Why?**
- 7. What are some of the things we have learned about God and Jesus so far this week?**

Application

- 1. Each one of us has gifts that God has given us, things we can do and things we are good at. What are some of the gifts that God has given you?**
- 2. Let's think about what kinds of things we can do to serve God by helping others and by being active in church.**

- 1. God gives each of us spiritual gifts. “The Spirit’s presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.” (I Corinthians 12:7). This 1st Corinthians passage lists several spiritual gifts.**
I Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31.
- 2. Name people they know in their families, in the church, who have and use these gifts. How do they use them to help others, to serve in the church? What are things you can do to follow their example of service? Do you have any examples in your own life of how you have used the gifts God has given you to serve God?**
- 3. The Bible challenges us not only to place all our trust in Jesus, but it also says that our actions need to follow in line with our faith in Jesus. In other words, what we do needs to be consistent with what a person of faith following Jesus ought to do.**
James 2:14-17.
- 4. The gifts that God gives us, when put to his service, produce the fruits of the Spirit which are listed in Galatians 5:16-26. A life lived by the Spirit yields these gifts in our lives. Which of these fruits of the Spirit do you feel God produces in your life right now? Why? What are some examples of service to God where these fruits would be evident? Which of these fruits of the Spirit do you feel it is most challenging to show in one’s life? Why?**

Conclusion

People of Faith

Jesus and the Children: Faith Adults

Before Class

Prepare Prepare for this lesson by reading Matthew 6:26-32, 18:3-6 and 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18: 15-17, Psalm 86:15, Hebrews 11:1, John 20:29, Psalm 14:1. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.

Plan Materials that you will need for this lesson: Bible. An illustration of a human heart and a human brain. They don't have to be real, they could be simplified drawings. Newsprint and marker or blackboard and chalk. For the optional activity, paper and pencil for each person

Practice Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.

Welcome

*Greet the group.
Briefly go over the lesson learned yesterday.*

Memory Passage for Today

Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Mark 10:14 (NRSV)

Introduction

Show the drawing of the human heart.

This is a heart. Raise your hand if you have one.

A question: how do you know for sure? Have you seen it? Have you looked inside to see if you actually have a heart inside?

Show the drawing of the brain.

Now, this is a brain. Raise your hand if you have one.

A question: how do you know for sure? Have you seen it? Have you looked inside to see if you actually have a brain inside?

If you do not see it, how can you be certain that you have both a brain and a heart?

You have faith that you actually have a brain and a heart.

That is what faith is about, believing and being certain about what one believes.

The Bible gives us the definition of faith:

Let's read Hebrews 11:1 to find the definition.

Read the passage together with the group if you choose a well known version. Read it aloud by yourself if you choose a less popular version.

- **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (King James)**
- **Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (New International Version)**
- **Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (New Revised Standard Version)**

**Faith is very important in life.
One behaves according to one's faith.**

A person who has faith does not behave like a person who doubts, or a person who worries. You don't spend your days worrying: Do I still have a brain? Do I really have a heart?

In the same way, for people who have faith, they believe in God always and under any circumstances.

God wants those who love him to have faith in him. The people of faith are precisely that: they are people of faith, that is, people that believe in God, and in this way, they show their love for God.

Jesus knows that children give a clear example of what it means to have faith, and in fact, we read in the New Testament that Jesus set them up as an example for his disciples and for the entire crowd with him.

Bible Lesson

Read ahead of time Matthew 18:3-6; 19:13-15; Mark 10: 13-16; Luke 18: 15-17

Read aloud Mark 10:13-16.

In this story we see that Jesus gives no instructions to prevent the children from coming to him, instead he sets them up as an example. Jesus says that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them, but that is not all he said. Jesus says that we should receive the Kingdom of Heaven as children do.

Some of us could think that we should be like children, and that is what he said, but at times children do behave in ways they shouldn't.

So, what does it mean?

Let's read the passage again. *Read it in unison.*

It says that we should be like children in a specific way, in the way they receive the kingdom of heaven.

How does a child receive the kingdom of heaven? With FAITH.

In the Matthew 18: 6 passage, Jesus is talking about children and mentions that they believe in him, that is, that they have faith in him.

**So, children are examples of faith.
But, what is the child's faith like?**

**A child's faith is evident in the way they relate to other people.
Let's think about how a child relates to his/her parents.**

Write down on the board the following key phrases.

Children :

1. **Children trust instead of worry.**

A child does not spend all day worrying about whether his/her parents will feed him/her, because generally a parent will give the child what they need. Parents, in general, give their children food, clothing, a place to sleep. So, the children will play during the day or do other things except worry about what they will eat or wear or where they'll sleep.

- **Just as children trust in their parents instead of worrying, in the same way we need to trust in our Heavenly Father.**

Listen to Matthew 6:26-32 (Read the passage or ask ahead of time for someone to read the passage at this point) . If the birds and the lilies do not worry, we should not worry because we are worth more in God's eyes.

Read again verse 30. What a quality displayed by people who do not trust that God will care for them? (they don't have much faith).

Trust shows the certainty that another person is trustworthy.

Children trust their parents because they know that their parents will take care of them.

They know that they can count on their parents.

- **Just as the parents take care of their children, so God takes care of his own.**

Parents may be imperfect in their job as parents, but God is not.

God is a Father that provides for his children what they need. God is a Father that gives more than what we need, and fills us with blessings.

When he does not give us something it is because we don't need it or we should not have it.

I am not speaking only about material goods, but I am talking about any situation in life.

God is our Father and he has a plan laid out for us, and does not act on a whim or as it occurs to him, but acts according to what will make us better every day. We can trust in God in any situation because he is committed to the work God has in progress in each of us.

When we go through hard times, it may seem that God has forgotten us or that God is not in control of all things, but the truth is that even in our difficult moments God is with us.

When something happens that seems bad, do not ask yourself “Why?” but ask yourself “What was this for?” Remember that God has a specific purpose for all that happens. So, what is God asking you to learn through this tough situation? What virtue is God wanting you to practice in the problem you are working through?

God is all-powerful, is good, is sovereign and is trustworthy.

You have to trust instead of worry because God is trustworthy. Let God to take care of you.

2. Children believe their parents exist rather than doubt they exist.

A child knows their parents are real. When they are in school and can't see their parents, they don't doubt that the parents stopped existing, but they know that even though they don't see them, they still exist.

- **Just as the children believe in their parent's existence even when they can't see them every minute of the day, in the same way we need to believe in the existence of our Heavenly Father.**

Parents are not immune from sickness, accidents or death, but God is.

For people, (*parents*) there are limits of time and space, but not for God.

God has always existed and will always exist and we are always in his presence. Jesus told Thomas in John 20:29: “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

Believing shows our confidence that we trust the other person exists and is real.

Children know that their parents are not trying to run away from them.

- **Just as children trust in the existence of their parents, we should believe that God exists and is in control over all things.**

If we don't believe this, we are being foolish (*Psalm 14:1*)

Sometimes we say that we believe in God but then we act as if God didn't exist:

a) We go through life trying to solve our problems on our own instead of asking God for help.

b) When we have problems or difficulties, we go around asking ourselves: Where is God? as if God were hiding, instead of asking ourselves: How does God want me to act in this situation?

If we decide that we believe in God then we need to live according to that conviction.

Living with the certainty that God exists, that God is not a myth or the creation of superstition.

3. Children believe a person is telling them the truth, rather than doubt them.

A child generally will believe what their parent tells them, and does not spend time thinking whether it is logical or possible. The child simply believes.

In fact, sometimes parents may lie to their children in a very obvious way to everyone except to the child. For example, you can tell a young child that the stork brings babies to families and they will believe it.

Children do not doubt that their parents are telling them the truth. They do not evaluate if their parents are telling the truth or not. When parents make a promise to their children, the children expect without a doubt that the promise will be fulfilled. Children do not go around all day doubting whether dad will or will not do what he promised.

- **Just as children believe what parents tell them without doubting, in the same way we should believe everything that God tells us through God's Word, the Bible.**

God has let us know all about his promises, commands and principles through the Bible. This is why we say the Bible is the word of God.

But we don't always take it into account or seriously when it comes to putting it to practice, and that is when we end up showing we don't fully believe it.

At times we look for solutions or guidance in places like popular magazines that include "advice," or in the horoscopes, or in other places rather than going to the Bible.

If we say that we believe in God then we need to live with the conviction that God has given us the solutions in the Bible for all difficulties we might face in life, and that God is in full control of every situation.

Believing shows our certainty that the other person will keep their promises and that what they say is true.

Children believe their parents because they are sure that they are not lying to them and that they will keep their promises (whether or not that is true or not).

Even when parents have not able to keep all their promises, children continue to believe in them.

- **God does not lie because God is truth and God keeps his promises because God is a faithful God.**

Psalm 86:15 says God is great in mercy and truth. God is truth, God is faithful, and because of this, we can believe in God instead of doubt.

You can believe in God.

In summary, following the children's example, people of faith should:

- 1. Trust in God (*instead of worrying*).**
- 2. Believe in the existence of God (*instead of doubting*).**
- 3. Believe in the Word of God (*instead of looking for truth elsewhere*).**

These are some of the ways it is clear that people of faith love God.

Reflection

If I asked right now for you to raise your hand if you believed in God, the majority of you would do it.

**But if someone could secretly videotape your life, what would they see?
Would they see a person full of worries instead of full of trust in God?
Would they see a person who doubts God's existence and that God may be real when they face difficulties?
Would they see a person looking for answers to their problems in other places instead of in the Bible?**

Let's Take It One Step Further

Share with the group an experience from your own life where in the midst of a problem you decided to solve it without really trying to figure out what God wanted you to do. This "solution" was more a product of your worrying and a byproduct of living like God really didn't exist or were trustworthy.

Application

➤ Trust

One of the clearest ways to show that a person has faith in God is to trust in God. A person of faith trusts in God through any situation. It doesn't matter how tough it is, how painful, or how unjust the situation may seem, you can trust in God.

When you find yourself in a situation in which you may be tempted to doubt or you feel tempted to worry about things that are not within your control, remember who God is and don't fall for the temptation.

You can trust. You can believe. You can have faith.

➤ Seek communion with God rather than pull away from God.

As with children who are constantly seeking to be with their parents, we should also long for and actively seek a relationship with our Heavenly Father.

A child, even when s/he is independent, will always look for mom or dad to show them the things s/he enjoys or has accomplished. They look for approval from their parents; they want to know what the parents think about what they have done or plan to do. They seek the parents out even if the child has been disciplined recently. The children enjoy talking with their parents, tell them about the TV show they have watched or the joke they heard at school.

In the same way, we should seek communion with God. It is not only about coming to God when we are in need, because even if we don't realize it, we always need God. Pray and talk with God. Read your Bible and learn who God is and what God expects of you.

Option: Journal

Give students their journals and give them time to reflect on the questions and write their answers. When they are done, they can take their journals home.

Optional Activity

Hand a half-sheet of paper and a pencil to every student.

*Ask them to think for a few minutes about a difficult situation they are going through right now. Ask them to write that situation or problem on the paper and then to fold it in half. Then ask them to think if there is something in the midst of this situation which **they** should do.*

Do you get any guidance, in the Bible, for how God is asking you to behave? Is there any guidance, in the Bible, for how God wants you to speak?

Each person has to be responsible for their actions, words and thoughts while they are in a tough situation.

But everything else is in God's hands. God alone can change circumstances; God alone can change the people involved in those tough situations.

So, we can do what we are responsible for and then TRUST in the real and living God.

Write on the paper how God is asking you to be more obedient in the difficult situation you wrote down, and then fold the paper in half again.

Write on the paper: I should trust. I should have faith.

Ask the group to put away their papers and that when they see it in their pocket or purse, that they remember that they have to do what is their responsibility and then to trust in God for the rest. They also have to trust that God will help us to do what we are responsible for, whatever it is they wrote down that they should do.

Trusting in God will help us stay strong and do what is right even if God allows the tough situation to continue.

Conclusion

Faith is very important, because without it, it would be impossible to please God.

That's what Hebrews 11:6 says

“Without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

So, have faith. You have a real and living God who is faithful and trustworthy.

Having faith, you will show God that you love God “with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27