

TRUE FRIENDS

LESSON 8



POWER PHRASE

I can help my friends in hard times!

MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 13:4a, "Love is patient and kind."

SUPPORTING DOCTRINES

For supporting doctrines, see our Statement of Faith at www.novoministries.org/statement-of-faith.

GOALS

The child will...

- Understand the importance of helping her friends when they are going through hard times.
- Believe that she should be loving, patient, and kind to others.
- Choose to help her friends in the good and bad times, even if they aren't kind in return.

REMINDERS

Some of the children are living in circumstances where they are facing many difficulties. It can be easy for them to become focused only on themselves and what they are facing. It is important that they learn to see the needs of others and help however they can. Through your example, help them learn to listen and pray for those that they love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to express our gratitude to the volunteers who contributed ideas toward the development of this series. All of our contributors are knowledgeable and have worked extensively with at-risk children. We thank them for the time they have invested in these children.

A SPECIAL THANKS

A special thanks to Carrie Enix for her willingness to impact thousands of children with the Gospel by sharing part of her story of how God has worked in her life.

The stories and photos shared in the Gospel Presentation activities are used by permission of the individuals.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

All Large Group or Small Group activity visuals or supply items followed by an asterisk (*) may be downloaded for printing at www.novoministries.org/resource.

JESUS RESURRECTS LAZARUS (BIBLE STORY — JOHN 11:1-44)

Visuals

- Bible Story Visuals*

Supplies

- Bible, Bible Insert for Large Group*, poster board, markers, “Press” badge or card, hat, toy microphone

Captivate #1 – Picture It!

- Choose a child or leader to draw elements of the Bible Story as you tell it. The volunteer does not necessarily have to draw well. Even using stick figures can be fun. Focus on adding facial expressions or specific actions for parts of the story.

Captivate #2 – News Flash!

- Recruit a child or leader to be the reporter covering a news report on the Bible Story. Give the volunteer a microphone, play microphone, or hairbrush to use as a microphone. You also could have the volunteer wear a hat with a “Press” card tucked in it or wear a “Press” badge. This activity will work best if the volunteer is given time to practice in advance.

Introduction

- Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were some of Jesus’ closest friends and lived in a town called Bethany. One day Lazarus became very sick, so his sisters Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus to tell Him that Lazarus was very sick, near death. But when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He didn’t immediately leave but instead stayed where He was. Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” He waited two more days before he traveled to go see Lazarus.

Story

- Retell the story from John 11:1-44.
- See Bible Story Script.

Conclusion

- Jesus risked His safety to go and raise Lazarus from the dead. He performed a miracle because of His love for Lazarus and his sisters and to give glory to God the Father. He showed us how we can help our friends when they are going through a hard time!

TESTIMONY

- Share about a time one of your friends was going through a difficult time and how you helped and encouraged her.
- Share about a time one of your friends helped you when you were having a hard time.

CHALLENGE

Visuals

- Key Point Visuals*, Power Phrase Visual*, Memory Verse Visual*

Supplies

- Bible, Bible Insert for Large Group*

Introduction

- In our Bible Story, we learned how some of Jesus' friends went through an incredibly hard time. Their brother got very sick and died. Jesus came to His friends to be there for them in their grief. Jesus even cried with His friends. Jesus showed us the importance of supporting others and being there for them when they need us. We too can help our friends in hard times!

Key Points

Everyone goes through hard times!

- Life is full of good times and very difficult times. No one has a life without difficult times.
- The Bible talks about how there are times or seasons for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). Explain how there will always be different things we go through. We need friends to help us through the hard times and to celebrate with us in the good times.
- 1 Peter 4:12, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you."

True friends are patient and kind!

- When a friend is going through a hard time, a true friend will show love. Sometimes our hard times don't last very long, but other times they last a long time. For instance, your friend might lose her dog and then find it later the same day. Her pain would be short. Or you may have a friend whose father died. Her pain would likely last a long time. One of the ways we show love is to be patient and kind to our friends as they go through hard times.
- 1 Corinthians 13:4a, "Love is patient and kind."

I can help my friends in hard times!

- We can be there for our friends in hard times. Sometimes helping our friends through a hard time means that we need to help them do something they can't do on their own. For instance, if your friend has a broken arm, you might carry her lunch for her. Sometimes helping our friends in hard times means that we just need to listen to them or simply sit with them in silence.
- Hebrews 13:16, "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."
- Philippians 2:4, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

CHALLENGE (CONTINUED)

Conclusion

Jesus' life shows us many things, including how to be a true friend. When people were going through a hard time, Jesus was there with them. He loved us so much that He even laid down His life for us so we could have the opportunity to have a relationship with Him!

Invitation

For the unsaved child:

- Who is there for you when you go through hard times? Do you know that God loves you and promises He will never leave His children (Deuteronomy 31:6)? If we confess our sins to Him, He promises to forgive us (1 John 1:9). He wants to have a relationship with us and be there for us always, but we must accept this gift of salvation.
- Invite the children to stay behind and talk to a leader if they have any questions or would like to ask Jesus to forgive their sins and be the Lord of their lives.

For the saved child:

- Do you know that God is always there for you? He will help you through any difficulty you might face. He also wants you to be there for others, to encourage and help them through their hard times, showing them patience and kindness.
- Encourage children to stay behind and talk to a leader if they have any questions.

PRAYING FOR YOU (ARRIVING ACTIVITY)

Supplies

- “I’m Praying for You” card*, coloring tools

Instruction and Application

- As the children arrive, ask them to think of someone they know who is going through a hard time. Have them think of ways they can help and encourage this person. Explain that sometimes when someone is going through a hard time, she can be grumpy or upset. These are the times that someone needs a lot of love, patience, and kindness. One way we can encourage our friend is to make a card and let her know we are there for her and praying for her. Have the children color their cards and write a personal note to their friends. Some of the children may need your help writing a note. They also can draw pictures for their friends. Pray together for their friends.
- Review the Memory Verse with the children. 1 Corinthians 13:4a, “ Love is patient and kind.”



HARD TIMES (MEMORY VERSE)

Visuals

- Memory Verse Visual*, Illustrated Memory Verse Visual*, Picture of someone comforting a child*

Supplies

- Bible, dry-erase board, dry-erase marker, eraser

A.G.A.I.N. Acrostic

A — Attention Grabber (Grab their attention with an interesting introduction and don't let go!)

Share examples of hard things that people go through (someone close to them dies, personal items are stolen or destroyed, someone hurts their feelings, someone hurts them physically, etc.). Discuss how they can be true friends in hard times by being there for their friends and being kind to them. Remind the children how much Jesus loves us and is always there for us. Ask them ways they can show love and support to their friends during hard times.

G — God's Word (Show them that the concept you are teaching them comes from the Bible.)

1 Corinthians 13:4a, "Love is patient and kind."

A — Awareness (Make them "aware" of the words and concepts.)

Love — affection, good will, love, brotherly love

Patient — to persevere or continue, to endure through difficult times, slow to anger

Kind — being friendly, generous, consider others more highly than oneself

I — In Their Lives (Teach them to apply the lesson "in their lives.")

Unsaved child (questions to ask an unsaved child)

How can you know that God loves you? How can you receive the gift of salvation? Why would God want you to be loving, patient, and kind?

Saved child (questions to ask a saved child)

How are you kind to others? How have you been patient with others even when they are being difficult? How does God want you to treat others?

N — Number of Times (Repeat the content again and again until the children understand it.)

Read from Scripture. Repeat after me. Play the Memory Game three or four times.

Memory Game

Play Erase A Word. Write the Memory Verse on a dry-erase board. Erase one word at a time, while letting the children guess the missing word.

MIRACLE (GOSPEL PRESENTATION)

Visuals

- “Who Is God?” and “What’s the Solution?” Foundational Gospel Truths Visuals*, Picture of Carrie Enix*

Supplies

- Bible, paper, writing tools

Instruction and Application

- Carrie Enix was 10 years old when she found out she was adopted. Already feeling like she didn’t fit in, Carrie struggled with her identity. Her father was an alcoholic and was never really around. She was bullied by other kids and abused by a stranger when she was only 11 years old.
- As a teenager she dated lots of boys, looking for someone to love her. She thought getting pregnant would be the answer. Carrie experienced many hurtful things during this time that caused her to continue to have a misguided mindset of relationships and love. When Carrie was 18, her mom kicked her out of the house. She stayed with friends and started doing drugs. She lost her car and job and eventually had nothing left. She decided to join the Navy, but right out of boot camp she found out she was pregnant with twins. In the years that followed, she had numerous unhealthy relationships and ended up marrying someone who was abusive. She felt like she didn’t deserve any better.
- After numerous miscarriages, she became pregnant again; but the doctors said the baby would have severe birth defects and she should end the pregnancy. Although Carrie didn’t know God, she cried out to Him and said she would raise her son for God no matter what was wrong with him rather than ending her pregnancy. Miraculously, Mason was born completely healthy!
- Carrie started going to church with a co-worker even though she didn’t understand much of what was said during the service. One day after church she talked with the pastor and told him she wanted Mason to be dedicated to God, even though she knew she didn’t deserve for him to be. The pastor told Carrie that God loved her unconditionally and wanted a relationship with her. That day Carrie asked Jesus to forgive her sins and be the Lord of her life!
- As a new believer, Carrie was able to dedicate Mason to the Lord with her church family that loved her and were helping her to grow in her relationship with God. God has done amazing things in her life and in her family. She finds every opportunity she can to tell others about God’s great love as well.
- Just like Carrie, we can know that God loves us unconditionally and wants a relationship with us. There is nothing we have done that is too bad that God can’t love and forgive us. Use the “Who Is God?” and “What’s the Solution?” Visuals to review.

Discussion

- Older Team: Have the children share whether they ever feel like they aren’t good enough.
- Younger Team: Have the children talk about what it means that God loves them unconditionally.
- Quiet Team: Have the children draw a heart and write the words GOD’S LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL in the center.
- Active Team: Have the children play Go, Go, Stop. If they are caught moving, they share what unconditional love is.

FLASHBACK (REVIEW QUESTIONS)

Supplies

- Review Questions*

Large Group Story Review Questions

- What were the names of Jesus' friends? (Mary, Martha, and Lazarus)
- Where did they live? (Bethany)
- What happened to Lazarus? (He got very sick, nearing death.)
- What did Mary and Martha do? (Sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was very sick)
- What did Mary and Martha expect Jesus to do? (Come and heal Lazarus)
- Why were Jesus' disciples worried about going back to Bethany? (Because there were men there planning to kill Jesus)
- How many days did Jesus wait before going to Bethany? (Two days)
- What did Jesus do when Mary came to Him? (He began to weep.)
- What did Mary tell Jesus? (That Lazarus had died)
- What did Jesus do? (He told Lazarus to come out of the tomb. He raised Him from the dead!)

Discussion Questions

- How can you help your friends in hard times?
- Is it always easy to help your friends in hard times? Why or why not?



SEASONS MOSAIC (CRAFT)

Visuals

- Craft sample*

Supplies

- Tree Template (one per child)*, little squares of construction paper (brown for the stump, shades of green, brown, orange, yellow, and red for the leaves), glue

Instruction and Application

- Give each of the children a Tree template. Have them fill in the tree stump and branches by gluing the brown squares onto the paper as shown on the craft sample. Then have them glue green squares to create spring leaves on the left sides of their trees. Then have them glue the red, orange, and yellow squares on the right sides of their trees to create fall leaves. Some of the squares can look like they are falling off the tree just like they do in autumn. Tell the children that this tree reminds us that we need to be there for our friends during the different “seasons” in life, including in hard times.
- Ask the children what a tree looks like during each season. Explain that, just like a tree, we go through different “seasons” in our lives. Some are wonderful and others can be very difficult. Whatever the season is, it is important that we are always there for our friends. We are to be loving, kind, and patient to others even if they aren’t that way to us.
- Have the children discuss different “seasons” that people may face. Maybe their parents are always fighting, or they have to move to a new neighborhood. Maybe they are fighting all the time with their siblings, or they are having trouble at school. Have the children discuss how they could be there for their friends in some of these seasons.
- Review the Memory Verse. 1 Corinthians 13:4a, “Love is patient and kind.”

WHAT'S THE POINT? (APPLICATION ACTIVITY)

Supplies

- “What’s the Point?” card*, paper, writing tools

Activity #1

- Give each child a “What’s the Point?” card. Have the children write what it means to help a friend even in hard times. Then have them write some ways they can help their friends this week.

Activity #2

- Have the children act out different situations where they can help friends in hard times. For children who are quiet, you can have them make a card to encourage a friend that they know who is going through a hard time.

NOW WHAT? (ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY)

Supplies

- Additional Activity #1: Coloring Page*
- Additional Activity #2: Word Scramble Activity Page*
- Additional Activity #3: Hidden Word Activity Page*
- Additional Activity #4: The Big Take Away Key Chain*

Instruction and Application

- These activities are to be used with your team as time allows to reinforce the lesson concepts. The children may take these home each week or do them while they are listening to you teach during Small Group. These activities require little to no explanation and can be great for moments when you are transitioning or don’t have time to start another activity.

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