

JESUS SHOWS LOVE TO HIS FRIENDS

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE FRIENDS COMMAND CONFRONT UNCONDITIONAL GUILT FORGIVE COMMITMENT

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

John 21:1-17

MEMORY VERSE

“You are my friends if you do what I command” (John 15:14, NIV*).

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To teach children that Jesus Christ never stops loving us.

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

John chapter 21 shows Jesus’ deep love for his disciples. It also shows how they responded to this love. At the beginning of the story, we see them returning from Galilee to go fishing. Most likely, they were seeking to escape the questioning and criticizing from the crowd in Jerusalem; or they returned because Jesus asked them to go to Galilee and wait for him there (Matthew 28:7).

Another reason could be because they were feeling discouraged about the death of their teacher. They felt confused and disappointed and they had decided to return to their previous profession—fishing. Whatever the reason may have been, their lives were in the middle of an emotional storm; their future seemed uncertain and they did not know what to do.

Evidently, Peter still felt a huge amount of guilt for having denied Jesus. So the disciples returned to fishing in the same place where the teacher had found them and called them to follow him.

The miraculous catch in John 21:17 is parallel to the miraculous catch when Jesus called his disciples to follow him (Luke 5:4-7). On both occasions they had been fishing all night long without having caught anything (Luke 5:5; John 21:3) and on both occasions Jesus asked them to take their nets and try to fish one more time. Both times the nets were filled with fish.

The repetition of the similar miracles was a key for John, because he was able to recognize Jesus.

In verses 15-17, Jesus asked Peter the same question three times: "Do you love me?" He had also denied him three times. Now, by the fire prepared by the Lord that loved him, Peter had to affirm his love for Jesus three times.

ADAPTATION

The appropriate response given the love that God shows us through Christ is to love him too. Jesus' love for his disciples and for us is not just an emotion. He showed them a love so strong that he could confront them when they did something wrong, and even stronger to forgive them. Jesus did not give up on his disciples, even when they had failed him in the biggest test they had faced up to that point.

The children have also faced failure and they need to know that God will not give up on them. Just as Jesus loved, confronted, and forgave his disciples, in the same way he will not give up when it comes to us. This love and commitment from the Lord inspires us so that we also can love him and commit to him.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

The children are very conditional with their love. They will only show it to someone who they believe has earned it. But if that person does something to hurt them or something they do not like, they stop loving them. Because of this, this lesson will help them to understand the way Jesus loves us, with an unconditional love that does not depend on our way of loving him.

TEACH THE LESSON

Carefully study John 21:1-17 prior to the session to be prepared to teach this lesson. Today's Bible story emphasizes Jesus' love for his disciples. It is a love that did not give up when Peter denied him, nor when the disciples abandoned him. This helps us understand the similarities between the miracles of the great catch when Jesus called his disciples and when he looked for them (see Lesson 28). He had called them to be fishers of men, yet here they are again, fishing.

Point out the fact that Jesus did not get upset or scold them. Rather, we see the opposite. We see in him a great tenderness and love for them. In preparing the fire for them where they could dry off and eat, we see a helpful, servant Jesus (Lesson 30). Ask, "What would you do if you had told a group of your friends to do something, then returned to find out that they had not done it?" (Let the children respond.)

Explain to them that the way Jesus reacts is amazing. He showed love to his friends. Remember to include in your class songs that lend themselves to the topic. For this lesson, you could sing "Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so."

If you use this song, prepare some visuals like the silhouette of a large heart shape (preferably red). Inside the silhouette write the first phrase of the song "Jesus loves me." Then make the silhouette of the Bible (can be open or closed) and inside write the next phrase of the song "the Bible tells me so". Ask two volunteers to hold up the visuals while you sing the song.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Jesus shows his love

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #136-A, colored pencils, and markers. Ask the children what objects are missing from the picture: the net full of fish, fish in the disciples' basket, fish on the fire Jesus is building, bread in the basket by Jesus. Give them time to draw all of the missing pieces. Ask, "How does Jesus show his love for his disciples through the objects that you drew?" (Jesus came to look for the disciples, even when they had previously abandoned and denied him. He helped them fish and he prepared their breakfast. He was not mad at them. He forgave Peter for denying him.) "How did the disciples respond to the love Jesus showed them?" (They were happy to see him; Peter told Jesus three times that he loved him.)

John 21:16

You will need Student Activity Sheet #136-B for today's lesson, plus scissors, and glue. The children will need to cut out the small squares with pictures in them.

The verse comes from today's Bible story. Read the verse from your Bible and explain what it means. Note that many times the Bible refers to people as sheep. Jesus told Peter to love and care for people just as a shepherd loves and cares for his sheep. Have the children paste the pictures onto the Student Activity Sheet #136-B in the correct places. Check that they do it correctly. When

they have finished, repeat the verse together.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Using the verse that you made at the beginning of the unit, review it with the children. Since this is the last lesson, make sure that all of them have learned it. If you have time, ask each child to repeat it.

If you think that one verse per unit is too easy for your children to learn, you can use two verses per unit, or one verse each week. If you do this, make sure that the verses are relevant to the lesson.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Finish with a prayer. Thank God for the marvelous friend we have in Jesus. Ask him to help the children follow him and recognize who he is. Ask him to help them serve him and love others like Jesus loves.

Encourage

If you did the memory verse using the individual footprints (Lesson 28) and you still have them in the room, give each child one to take home. The visual material that is left over can be used to reward children (for timeliness, attendance, good behavior, participation, etc.).

Remind the children to take their things home (worksheets, etc.).

Invite

Thank each child for attending today's session. Give a small recap of the unit. Give a preview of what is coming up in the next session, trying to make a connection and spark interest in the children so they do not miss. Challenge the group to invite their friends.