

WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

BLESSED RIGHTEOUSNESS HAPPINESS HUMBLE GENTLE HUNGER THIRST

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 14:1, 7-14.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help preadolescents understand that if they are humble and gentle, they will find happiness.

MEMORY VERSE

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matthew 5:6, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

In many societies, the meaning of happiness has been distorted in such a way that many people do not know it. For many, happiness is about getting what you want when you want it. Television and advertising have been responsible for spreading the idea that happiness is the result of satisfying all personal desires. For example, if young people do not have the latest fashionable clothes or the latest video game or the latest cell phone, they may feel that they are deprived of something they should have, and therefore they are unhappy. That is, their state of mind is determined by purchasing power and popularity.

However, the Word of God teaches us that only in Jesus do we find complete happiness. That is what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount and in other parables.

It is important that our students learn to examine themselves and differentiate between desire and need. They must know God’s plan in order to survive in societies dominated by greed. Some may be trapped in the insatiable desire to have all that this world offers, but they should know that only in Jesus do we find the way to true happiness.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Matthew 5:1-12. The Beatitudes, with which the Sermon on the Mount begins, constitute the first of the five sermons of Jesus that Matthew includes in his Gospel.

The word “blessed” (or happy) refers to the spiritual joy we feel when God approves of our conduct. Therefore, the Beatitudes describe the qualities and characteristics of the true disciple of Christ, showing that we can experience inner peace and joy, despite external circumstances.

“Poor in spirit” (Matthew 5:3) are those who, recognizing their spiritual need, understand that they must depend on God in everything. True humility results from recognizing that everything we are, or hope to be, comes from God.

The term “meek” (Matthew 5:5) is often misinterpreted, associating meekness with timidity or false humility. Meekness is not a form of weakness, but a spiritual condition in which we recognize that God is in control. The meek are those who have discipline to follow God’s direction and accept what he allows.

Read Luke 14:1 and 7-14. In the parable of the wedding feast, Jesus gave a lesson to the guests who wished to occupy the positions of honor. Everyone knew that seats near the host were for special guests. Those who struggled to occupy the first places showed their pride and the concept they had about themselves. However, those seats were reserved for people whom the host considered special.

The teaching of the parable is that God does not like us to honor ourselves. Rather, let others honor us. This point of view is contrary to that of the world, where each person defends his own interests first.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What makes you happy?

Ask that the students to tell the group everything that makes them feel happy. List these on the blackboard or on a large paper. Then, decide together how to number them according to their importance.

Then ask them:

How long do you think this will make you happy?

Can any of the above be destroyed easily?

If what we wrote down disappeared, how do you think it would affect the lives of those your age?

Explain that many times, people seek happiness in the wrong people or places, and their mood changes according to the possessions they have or what happens to them each day. That means that their mood is temporary and that its foundation is not safe.

Tell the group: “In today’s session, we will learn the secret to enjoy happiness in a genuine and true way.”

TEACH THE LESSON

Before the session study Matthew 5:1-12, Luke 14:1 and 7-14. Be prepared to teach the lesson.

The beatitudes

If you have a chalkboard, write the word “BEATITUDE”. If not, write it on a large paper or a card and show it to the group. Ask the students if they know the meaning of that word. Listen to their responses, and explain that “beatitude” means happiness, blessing and approval from God. The blessed person is a happy person, but it is not the kind of happiness that the world offers. It one that is enduring and eternal.”

Read with the group Luke 14:1 and 7-14. Then, have your students explain what they understand from the passage. Supplement the information in light of the Word of God.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Create a story!

Allow time for your class to do the work on Student Activity Sheet #354. They should write in the blanks what they think happens

in each scene. Talk about the attitude that Christians should have when they suffer injustices and are mistreated. Ask some volunteers to tell what they wrote.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Write the memory verse on a large piece of cardboard with big letters so that the children find it easy to learn it. Repeat it together a couple of times and place the cardboard in a visible place in the room throughout the unit.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Gather them together to pray and give thanks to God for teaching all of you through the Beatitudes the secret of happiness. Intercede for the sick, and encourage everyone to attend the next class.

Encourage

Encourage your children to put into practice at home and at school the lessons they have learned.

Invite

Tell something interesting about the next session to encourage the group to attend. Do not forget to contact those who were absent.