

## THE ROAD TO HUMILITY AND GENEROSITY

All Activity Sheets

### KEY WORDS

RIGHTEOUSNESS BEATITUDES POOR IN SPIRIT MEEK

### BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 14:1 and 7-11

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the preadolescents understand that the Beatitudes are to be lived here and now; and especially understand what it means to be “poor in spirit” and “meek”

### MEMORY VERSE

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

### PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

A plaque in a gift shop said: “Dear God, I would like to have the opportunity to prove that money does not buy happiness.” What brings happiness in this world? Too often, as the thinking above suggests, we focus on money, material goods, personal achievements or external circumstances. We think that if we find the right job, or we have the latest electronic device, we’ll be happy. Many preadolescents find themselves basing their happiness on their possessions and achievements, especially when they compare what they have with what their peers possess.

God has a different plan. True contentment and joy are not found in what we do or have, but in whom we serve. Jesus develops this message in The Beatitudes.

Preadolescents are developing their concept of life. They’re beginning to make their own choices according to what they value most, why things are worth fighting for and what faith means to them. They’re building their own image that’s under the ruthless attack of their peers, who often oppose and belittle them. Jesus’ words are true and worthy to be our standard of life.

Preadolescents can spend their lives trying to reach a fruitless image that gives them peace, or they may discover that true joy and peace are achieved when we recognize the tremendous need we have of God, and live our lives in humility and generosity.

## BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

A highlight of my childhood was when we formed the “Western Band”. Although the name does not seem so, this group was formed by a dozen students who rode their bicycles, ran as fast as they could and incessantly shouted like crazy, from end to end through the streets of the neighborhood. The group was huge. This band soon needed some requirements for their membership, which were few but very specific. Each member had to own a bicycle, commit to running wildly and make a lot of deafening noises. It was a great band while it lasted. Despite its short existence, I see a parallel with the Sermon on the Mount and The Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) mark the beginning of the so-called Sermon on the Mount. The word beatitude is not found in the Bible. It comes from the Latin word blessing. Some translations of the Bible use the word happy. But many times, happiness is related to circumstances of a lucky life. Instead, blessed refers to the deepest well-being and spiritual joy that comes from being in proper relationship with God. The meaning of The Beatitudes is that Christians can experience peace and inner joy despite external circumstances. It is not an emotion in itself, although it results in joy.

The Beatitudes announced the important values of the kingdom of God, which Jesus announced. Membership of the kingdom of God imposed, as in the “Western Band”, specific requirements to its members. Certain characteristics must identify those who claim to be part of it.

It becomes instantly apparent that the values of the kingdom of God are directly opposed to those of the world. For example, its members must be “poor in spirit” (Matthew 5:3). Instead of being arrogant, seeking self-righteousness and self-reliant, God’s people must recognize their absolute poverty before God. They understand that they must depend completely on God for their life, salvation and righteousness. This attitude is incompatible with spiritual pride. True humility is achieved when we recognize all that we are, or hope to become, comes from God.

The term “meek,” used in Matthew 5:5, is often misunderstood. Many people associate meekness with shyness or false humility. Meekness is not a form of weakness. Rather, it comes from our recognition of God’s sovereignty and the humble acceptance of our poverty. Recognizing that we’re “poor,” we discipline ourselves to respond to others with generosity and patience, not arrogance. The circumstances of life are accepted from the hand of God without resentment. This may include accepting a low social status, as illustrated in Luke 14:1 and 7-11, in the parable of those invited to the wedding.

The Beatitudes are as valid today as they were 2,000 years ago. Pray for yourself and your students to know the joy of living as members of the kingdom of God.

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

### **I’m looking for a job**

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #409-A. Ask the students to circle the person / profession they would like to be when they grow up, or draw one if theirs is not there. Ask: “What do you want to be when you grow up?”

Then direct their attention to the second question: “Who do you want to be when you grow up?” Explain that the first question refers to our actions, our roles, and our responsibilities in life. The second, on the other hand, has to do with our inner life, with our character. Ask students to describe the type of character they would like to have.

Say: “Deciding what we’ll do in life is very important. And we can serve God with almost any career we choose and according to our talents and gifts. Who we’ll be as adults is a much more important issue. This will depend on the decisions we make today. In the coming sessions, we’ll learn what Jesus teaches us about the lifestyle of someone who wants to follow God. In The Beatitudes, found in Matthew 5:1-12, Jesus describes the character, qualities and actions that Christians should have.

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #409-B.

## TEACH THE LESSON

### **“Struggling to sit at the party”**

Prepare a guest to present the monologue during the session (Ben). Have a costume from the time of Jesus if you wish. The monologue is based on Luke 14:1, 7-11.

You know? It was an incredible party! I definitely felt out of place. You know what it feels like when you’re with people who intimidate you. I had never been invited to a party like this before. All the important people were there.

Even Jesus was there! Many were aware he was there, trying to see what he would do. Oh, excuse me, I didn't introduce myself. My name is Ben, and I'm here today to tell you about one of the most memorable days of my entire life. It was the day I heard Jesus tell us how we should live.

Anyway, at this party, all those important people were trying to impress each other. You know, in our country, the one who sits closest to the host is the one who has the greatest honor. Everyone at this party expected to be considered the most famous and recognized guest! I stayed in the background, just watching what was happening, as I said, this was not my usual group of friends.

I had mixed feelings. It made me smile and sad at the same time. No one had real interest in anyone else, nor did they listen to each other. Each person tried to get the best possible spot at the table.

Jesus was frustrated by everything going on; but in the end he reassured people with a powerful and disturbing story:

"When someone invites you to a wedding feast, don't take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place."

They all became very quiet. Nobody moved a muscle. And Jesus continued speaking.

"But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests."

I've never had the opportunity to return to a luxurious party, but I assure you, I will not forget this one.

Jesus is the most important person who lived on this earth. And yet, he gave his life to serve others. I want to be like Jesus. I hope you do too.

Ask the students if they have gone through a similar experience. Let them ask questions about the story. Apply the teachings of The Beatitudes regarding the monologue.

Let's talk about the monologue

Ask: "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you classify people's attitudes at the wedding party?" Allow them to explain their answers.

What attitudes guided people to behave the way they did? (Pride, they probably thought they were more important than others and deserved the best seats, etc.)

What qualities could those people have had to look more like those Jesus taught about in The Beatitudes? (Be humble, think others are important, etc.)

Ask students to read Matthew 5:3,5. Highlight the blessings for those who are poor in spirit and for the meek.

Have the students notice that the poor in spirit and the meek are already enjoying the kingdom of heaven here on earth; "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (v.3).

## CONNECT THE LESSON

### The beatitudes

This is an excellent unit with five lessons. Students will have time to learn all the Beatitudes of Matthew 5:3-12. Prepare a special prize for those who remember all the memory verses. Challenge them to do it. Promise that at the end of the unit, they'll receive a reward. If you wish, you can have the prize on a shelf in the room for them to see every day. Perhaps you can have rewards for first, second and third place. Be sure to provide specific guidelines to these rewards. Use your creativity and resources regarding the awards. The purpose is for preadolescents to learn this important portion of the Word, which contains great teachings for the joyful Christian life. Give the prize at the end of the unit. Think of smaller gifts for the rest of the students. Talk to your church leaders regarding the necessary resources and the budget for your group. There are also parents and adults who want and can collaborate for these types of projects. Do not feel that you're alone.

### Let's go skiing

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #409-C (Let's go skiing!). Ask volunteers to read Luke 14:1 and Luke 14:7-11 to the group, and then have the students complete the activity on the page. After they have finished, ask them to share their answers.

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #409-D (Attitudes). Discuss with the students the questions that talk about attitudes. Provide opportunities for questions. (Clarify concepts.)

Do you live as if you need God, or in general, do you try to do everything on your own?

Do you always want to be first in everything, or do you also allow others to be first?

Do you speak badly about others to take advantage of them, or do you speak well of others and treat them the way you want to be treated?

## **PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE**

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Write the Bible memory verse on 15 cards. Before the session, hide them in different places in the room. Write the passage on the board and review them several times. Then ask the students to look for the cards and assemble the puzzle. If you want to have a competition between boys and girls, prepare two sets of cards with different. Remember that they learn by playing and having fun.

Express words of encouragement to those who learned it. Challenge those who need more time. Remember that not everyone learns at the same speed.

## **WRAP-UP**

### **Pray**

Pray together for the Lord to make you poor in spirit and meek, indispensable qualities for living in peace and harmony with others. And above all, for the Lord to continue working in your life and in those of the students.

### **Encourage**

If there is a chorus or hymn related to the theme, you can sing it at this time to encourage the group to live in peace and harmony with others.

### **Invite**

Say goodbye to the students and tell them to read Matthew 5:4, 6 and Luke 18:9-14 for next session. Remind them to welcome visitors.