AFFIRMATION: What I believe in my heart
is what I show in my actions.

HOW WE BEHAVE — Unit 4

>> Introduction

Eight point: By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe.

Affirmation: What I believe in my heart is what I show in my actions.

Overview

The Jesus of the scriptures was a man of action. He was someone who healed, demonstrated compassion, took a stand against injustices, loved unconditionally, and told his disciples to go and do likewise. As followers of Jesus, Progressive Christians are dedicated to treating their fellow human beings with kindness, caring, and compassion.

Genuine compassion is acting in a manner that enhances another's well-being. However, compassionate actions are often most needed when wellbeing has been taken away through sickness, war, poverty, or social injustice. Such negative situations are out of children's control, and they could easily feel disturbed and overwhelmed by them. The lessons in this unit touch only briefly on negative situations and serve as background for understanding the lives of people who have acted with love, support, respect, and forgiveness towards others.

The lessons in this unit focus on biographies of "spiritual heroes" whose actions demonstrate courage, compassion, faith, service, love, and forgiveness. These heroes come from different times in history, but their actions relate to our understanding of Jesus' time as well. To emphasize this connection, lessons are paired with a biblical example.

- Clara Barton, whose compassion for others led her to start the American Red Cross, paired with the biblical story of Jesus healing.
- Desmond Tutu, who helped guide South Africans on a path of forgiveness and reconciliation, paired with the biblical story of Joseph.
- Mary of the Bible, who demonstrated her love by anointing Jesus' feet.
- Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller, women who forged a special teacher-student bond through compassion and trust, paired with the biblical story of Jesus teaching his disciples.
- Mother Teresa, who lovingly ministered to the poorest of the poor, whom she saw as "Jesus in disguise," paired with the biblical story of Jesus eating with the outcasts.
- Young people, 5 to14 years old, who are currently expressing their compassion for others through creative actions.

These people are truly heroes for compassion in action. The stories presented in these lessons are just snapshots of their lives as a whole. To give you a broader understanding of each person, additional background information is included at the end of each lesson.

Story: Clara Barton

HOW WE BEHAVE

>> Lesson 1: Clara Barton — Comfort to Others

Eight point: By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe.

Affirmation: What I believe in my heart is what I show in my actions.

Getting to the Heart of the Lesson

Clara Barton is probably most well known as the founder of the American Red Cross, whose mission is to "relieve and prevent suffering in war and peace at home and abroad."

This lesson gives you an opportunity to connect with the American Red Cross in your area. Local chapters have a wealth of information, materials, and inspiring stories to share. Volunteer opportunities vary by location, and you may find that there is a community need that your church, including children, could meet together.

The lesson also allows you to make a connection between Sunday school and a service project the church or your family may already be doing, such as helping the homeless, supplying items for a food bank, or participating in other volunteer programs. Children learn by example, and it will be a powerful experience for them to contribute to a service project that the whole congregation is doing.

One of the children's activities in this lesson is creating comfort and care bags, bags filled with toiletries and items for personal comfort. The church congregation may want to provide the supplies for this activity. Although this activity takes additional preparation, it gives children a meaningful way to provide comfort to others.

Teacher Reflection

Remember a time when you received comfort or care from someone. What did the person say or do? How did you feel before and after being comforted or cared for?

Think of a time you comforted someone else. What did you do? How did you feel after doing it? What was the person's reaction?

Was it easier for you to give or receive comfort?

Quotations by Clara Barton

Offering a hand up, not a handout. [What Clara said about the American Red Cross]

It irritates me to be told how things have always been done. I defy the tyranny of precedent. I go for anything new that might improve the past.

I may be compelled to face danger, but never fear it, and while our soldiers can stand and fight, I can stand and feed and nurse them.

It has long been said, that women don't know anything about war. I wish men didn't either. They have always known a great deal too much about it for the good of their kind.

Bible Verses

Isaiah 58: 6-9a
Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the

oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

Matthew 25: 35-40
For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

James 2: 15-17
If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Opening the Lesson

Movement Activity: Head Shoulders Knees and Toes

Materials: 3 x 5 cards with body parts written on them: Head, Shoulders, Knees, Toes, Eyes, Ears, Forehead and Nose

Directions

1. Tell the children that today's lesson focuses on a woman named Clara Barton. She was a kind and compassionate nurse who took care of many people. Since nurses help our bodies, the opening activity relates to parts of the body.

2. Children will probably know this classic movement activity. If any do not, show them how to touch each body part as you sing it:

Head, shoulders, knees and toes; knees and toes.
Head, shoulders, knees and toes; knees and toes.
Eyes and ears a forehead and a nose,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes; knees and toes

3. Sing it again, but substitute a hum rather than singing "head."

4. Each time you sing it, substitute another body part with a hum, until you're humming the entire song.

5. Sing the song faster each time, so by the last time you're really racing through it.

Variation

Because this may be a very familiar song to children, you can keep them interested by mixing up the order of the body parts after singing it in the usual order.

1. Put the 3 x 5 cards into a box or envelope, and have one of the children draw out one card at a time. Tape them up on the wall or board in the order in which they're drawn, in a column from top to bottom.

2. Sing the body parts based on the order of the cards. It may be something like this:

Knees, eyes, toes and forehead; toes and forehead.
Knees, eyes, toes and forehead; toes and forehead.
Shoulders and ears a nose and a head,

Knees, eyes, toes and forehead; toes and forehead.

3. It will take concentration to get right and mistakes are bound to happen, usually followed by lots of laughter.

4. If all of the children are fully participating, and you have time, you may want to take down the cards, shuffle them, and have another child choose the order. Be sure to stop at the height of the fun.

Buddy Band-Aids

Materials needed: stuffed animals or plastic toy animals, one per child; assorted colorful Band-Aids, one per child with a few extras

Preparation: Scatter the animals around the room. They should be visible, but some may be hard to see without careful looking.

Directions

1. Tell children that there is an animal buddy whose head, shoulder, knee, toe, eye, ear, forehead, or nose needs a Band-Aid.

2. At your signal, have them find an animal in the room and bring it back to the story area.

3. Once they're seated with their animal, give them a Band-Aid to put on their animal's head, shoulder, etc. They can hold their animals during the story.

Building the Lesson

Read the biography of Clara Barton. The story begins with a true story of three modern-day Red Cross volunteers, which will help the children relate the past to the present.

After reading the story, discuss the questions at the end.

Relating to the Life and Teachings of Jesus

Depending on the children you are teaching, you can share this with them as well:

Jesus' followers believed that he was a healer. They thought he could touch someone or simply pray and make people well. The Gospels are full of such stories and most of them help us understand what his followers thought about Jesus and his ministry.

One healing story shows how Jesus might have changed his mind about who can be defined as God's children. In this story, Jesus encounters a Canaanite woman whose daughter was very ill. All of the stories up until this time show Jesus helping only his fellow Jews. Like most people of his time, Jesus had very "tribal" thinking. He seemed to believe that anyone who was not a Jew was a foreigner, or was unclean and not really as valuable. That was, until he met this Canaanite woman.

The Canaanite woman asked Jesus to help her daughter (Matthew 15: 22-28). He ignored her because she was a foreigner. But she persisted and kept asking for help. Jesus then insulted her by saying, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." A lot of people, when they feel insulted, get angry or walk away or even try to do something violent. But this Canaanite woman was desperate and must have looked Jesus straight in the eyes before she bowed and said, "Yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

We can only imagine what went through Jesus' mind in those few seconds, but clearly a light went on. He may have suddenly realized that this woman is like any other loving parent. She was no different than a Jewish mother and her love was a reflection of God's love. We don't know for sure, but it appears that something changed. Jesus decided to heal the woman's daughter and it seemed that after this being a Jew was no longer a requirement for Jesus' love, friendship and healing.

Finding something you recognize in a stranger connects you to them in a new way. It creates a sense of Oneness. Jesus recognized this woman's love, and he changed his mind about her because of it. Have you ever changed your mind about someone after you got to know them? Do you think we sometimes have "tribal thinking," like Jesus did at the beginning of the story? Why is that? How might we experience Oneness with others more often?

Making Comfort and Care Bags

Comfort and care bags can be made for a variety of situations. When given to the homeless, the bags are often called "blessing bags." They consist of toiletries, snacks, and items for personal comfort. You can also make the bags to be given away at a food bank or to people who are evacuated to a shelter after a natural disaster. Schools may appreciate having "first-aid bags" on hand in case of emergencies, and there are organizations that send "school bags" to children in need in other countries. Assembling the bags will not take long, especially with the help of another adult.

Materials needed: Collect the items from the list at the end of the lesson. Your congregation may want to buy or contribute the items for the care bags or there may be a local business that would donate them

Preparation: Place items on tables around the room so it's easy for children to pick them up in order.

Directions

1. Give each child a one-gallon plastic bag.

2. Have them walk around the room putting one of each type of item into the bag.

3. When their bag is full, have them draw a picture and write a message to put into the bag. The message may be simple, such as "I hope the things in this bag are a blessing to you." The children should sign the cards with just their first na and age.

If you're unable to get the items for the comfort and care bags, you may create food bank bags.

1. Have children bring in non-perishable food items for several weeks before this lesson.

2. In class, decorate reusable grocery bags and fill them with the food.

3. Have children include a picture and note (as above) to the recipient of the bag.

Alternate Activity: Give Appreciation/Love

If you're not able to make comfort and care bags to give away, children can give a note of thanks/appreciation/love. Before beginning the craft, ask the children to think of someone who they would like to comfort, support, or thank. It might be a parent, brother or sister, friend, neighbor, teacher, or someone at church. Tell the children the craft activity will let them give comfort and kindness to that person. Show the children a finished project.

Materials needed: construction paper in a variety of colors, heart template, scissors, crayons or markers, tape

Preparation: Complete one of the hearts as an example.

Directions

1. Invite children to choose two colors of construction paper, one for a heart and one for arms and hands.

2. Have them trace a heart onto one piece of paper and cut it out. Have them draw a face on one side of the heart. On the back side, have them write, "You are appreciated" or "You are loved" or "You are great!"

3. Using the other piece of construction paper, have them trace their hands and cut them out. Then have them cut two strips of paper, 6 inches long and 4 inches wide.

4. Tape the hand cutouts to the end of the strips and tape the strips to the sides of the heart to look like arms.

Source: This activity is a revision of an activity from *Give-It-Away Crafts for Kids* published by Group Publishing. This book includes 52 craft projects that children can make as service projects to give to others.

Tip: Think about how you want to handle the situation if one of the children wants to give you their project. You may want to encourage them to pass their cards around to others, but you don't want to hurt their feelings by not accepting their gift.

Closing the Lesson

Materials needed: a large piece of white paper or poster board with a large heart drawn on it with the word: "aid" or "help" or "blessings" in the heart.

1. Have children gather in the altar area. Place the comfort and care bags or the give appreciation hearts on or around the heart drawing. Ask children how it feels to know that they're helping someone. Repeat the unit's affirmation together several times. Offer a prayer that acknowledges the comfort and blessings that are being sent out to others with the bags/hearts.

2. Have children help you put all of the comfort and care bags into a large box to be delivered, or have them retrieve their hearts to be given away.

3. Remind them how these gifts can really be helpful to comfort others. Thank them for their participation.

Story: Clara Barton

Materials: A helpful visual aid is a picture of the Red Cross symbol, available online

It was a hot summer day in a small town in Colorado. A teenage girl named Ashley asked a group of younger children, "Who wants to play tag?" A chorus of "I do!" rang out as a whole bunch of kids ran outside. Other children stayed inside and colored pictures or played board games. Everyone was having a good time, which might seem hard to believe since a forest fire was burning nearby.

But the kids and their families were safe at a shelter—a place where people could stay until the fire was put out. Even though the families couldn't go home for a while, they had food to eat and places to sleep. And thanks to three sisters, Ashley (17), Alyssa (15), and Allison (12), the children at the shelter had fun games and activities to play. The three sisters were volunteers for the Red Cross.

What's the Red Cross? (Show the symbol of a red cross on a white background.)

It's an organization that helps people stay safe and healthy. Allison learned about the Red Cross when she was just little girl, and instead of playing "house" or "school" like the rest of her friends, she played "Red Cross." Her mother said, "She would sign people in when they came into the kitchen, ask people to volunteer, and pretend she was in a Red Cross shelter."

In a way, Allison was just like Clara Barton, the person who started the Red Cross in America over 130 years ago. Clara liked to help people, too. When her brother was badly hurt in a farm accident, Clara stayed home from school to take care of him. She was only 11 years old, but she nursed him for two years until he was well again.

When Clara was older, the American Civil War started. She knew that the soldiers were suffering and she wanted to help them. She didn't take sides—she wanted to help all of the soldiers. So she asked herself, "What do the soldiers need? How can I comfort them?"

She found out that the soldiers needed basic things like food, medicine, and clothes. Clara was determined to get them the supplies they needed, and she finally got permission to go to them on the battlefield. She brought them bread, canned vegetables, bandages, combs, clean shirts, handkerchiefs, and blankets.

When a soldier was wounded, Clara would do what she could to help him.

She rode on the horse-drawn wagons right to where the fighting was, which was a very brave thing for her to do. She said, "While our soldiers can stand and fight, I can stand and feed and nurse them." The soldiers were so grateful for her help they called her the "Angel of the Battlefield."

After the war, Clara went to Europe and found out about an organization called the International Red Cross. They were doing exactly what she had done—helping soldiers. But Clara realized that it wasn't just soldiers who needed help and supplies. There were other times when ordinary people needed food, clothing, and shelter, too, such as when there was a fire, flood or tornado.

Clara came back to the Untied States ready to convince Americans that there were lots of ways they could help one another. At first not very many people listened to her, but she didn't give up. Finally, after eight years, the American National Red Cross was formed.

Today, when people want to comfort others, they can join the Red Cross. There are over half a million Red Cross volunteers all over the United States. They don't get paid to help; they do it because they want to help others. There's even a Junior Red Cross for young people. Ashley, Alyssa, and Allison were all trained to be babysitters by the Red Cross. The girls say that they like helping people, and Ashley adds, "It's a lot of fun." There are many other organizations like the Salvation Army or Doctors Without Borders that people can volunteer for as well. Opportunities for helping others are abundant in this world and can be as simple as comforting a friend.

Discussion Questions

1. From the age of 11, Clara devoted her life to bringing care and comfort to others. Does hearing her story make you want to find ways to help others? What are ways that we can help people feel better? (Note: the comfort and care bags children make will help heal people.)

2. Clara believed that all people are equal no matter their color, race, age, or gender. Jesus saw God in all people. Do you feel that all people should be equal?

3. Clara lived over a hundred years ago! Things were very different then. Can you imagine her courage to stand up for women's rights and equality?

Background Information

As a child, Clara Barton's father taught her to "honor God and love mankind," which she did through her service. Serving others was the joy of her life. She found ways to serve her family, community, country, and world. Clara was caring and compassionate, as well as calm and practical. She could initiate projects, organize others, and accomplish whatever she set out to do. In addition to starting the American Red Cross, she was a strong advocate for women's rights and equality for all people.

The American Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It offers services in six major areas: domestic disaster relief; community services for the needy; communications services and comfort for military members and their families; the collection, processing, and distribution of blood; educational programs on first aid, health, and preparedness; and international relief and development programs.

Aspects of Clara Barton's life that are emphasized in this lesson

- Compassionate actions and service to others is an important part of life. From the age of 11, Clara Barton devoted her entire life to bringing comfort and care to others.

- All people are equal. Clara served people no matter what their race, religion, gender, nationality, or political views.

>> Lesson 1: Clara Barton — Comfort to Others

Important Dates in Clara Barton's Life

- 1821: born December 25th in Massachusetts
- 1833-1835: cared for her bedridden brother
- 1839-1854: began teaching, established the first free public school in New Jersey
- 1861: Civil War, Clara provided supplies for soldiers' comfort
- 1869: learned about the International Red Cross while in Europe
- 1881: founded the American Red Cross
- 1912: died April 12th in Maryland

Checklist for Comfort and Care Bags

Below are some typical items to put into comfort and care bags. Use small sizes of soap, shampoo, etc. one-gallon plastic zippered bag to hold all of the items:

- ChapStick
- small packages of tissues
- toothbrush (in original container)
- toothpaste
- comb
- soap
- Band-Aids
- mouthwash
- antiseptic wipes
- wash cloth
- hand towel
- nail clippers
- deodorant
- foot powder
- trail mix
- granola bars
- crackers
- juice boxes
- pack of gum
- depending on weather, a warm pair of socks or gloves

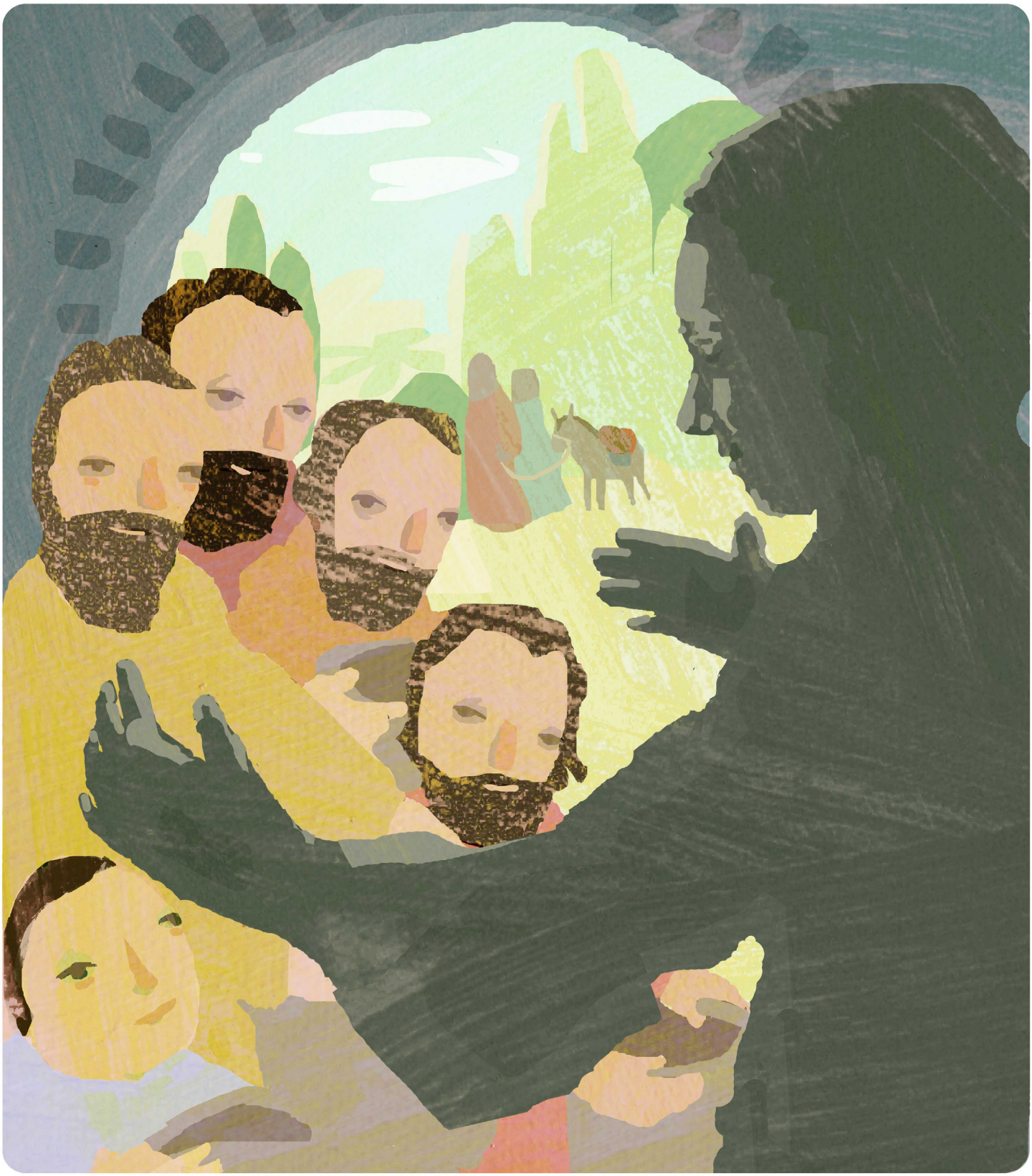
Additional items for children may include, school supplies, bubbles, or a coloring book and crayons.

Items for a first aid bag:

- various sizes of Band-Aids
- aspirin tablets and ibuprofen tablets
- antiseptic cleansing wipes (sting-free)
- gauze pads
- adhesive tape

Items for a school bag:

- pencils
- pens
- markers
- notebook paper
- eraser
- ruler
- folders
- small notebook



Story: Desmond Tutu and the Story of Joseph

HOW WE BEHAVE

>> Lesson 2: Desmond Tutu — Forgiving Others

Eight point: By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe.

Affirmation: What I believe in my heart is what I show in my actions.

Getting to the Heart of the Lesson

Forgiveness is the act of compassionately releasing the desire to punish someone for an offense. As the head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Archbishop Desmond Tutu helped guide South Africa toward forgiveness as the country recovered from the system of apartheid.

Forgiveness means choosing to let go, move on, and favor the positive. Tutu says, "In the act of forgiveness, we are declaring our faith in the future of a relationship and in the capacity of the wrongdoer to change. We are welcoming a chance to make a new beginning."

Two of Tutu's children's books are featured in this lesson: *God's Dream* and *The Children of God Storybook Bible*. After hearing stories, including the Bible story of Joseph who forgave his brothers, children will practice forgiveness by acting out everyday situations involving friends and family members.

Relating back to the teachings of Jesus in the Unit 1 overview, clearly forgiveness was central to Jesus' teachings as well. "How often must I forgive if a brother sins against me?" Peter asked Jesus. Jesus was reported to have replied, "Not seven times but seventy-seven times." Of course learning not to judge another is an integral and necessary part of real forgiving. There are really two types of forgiveness. One is where someone that has harmed you comes to you and apologizes, asking for forgiveness. The other is a little more complex. In this case, the person does not repent, apologize, nor request forgiveness. When you offer forgiveness in this case, it requires spiritual depth. Forgiving does not mean that you condone their behavior (and it may also mean that you need to adjust your behavior — like confronting a bully or telling an adult). Forgiveness at this level is a decision not to let someone's action affect us in a negative way or have power over us. It is letting go of the past so that we might be free to live fully in the present.

Teacher Reflection

Forgiveness Ceremony

Fire is a powerful symbol of transformation, and ceremonies involving fire are common to all cultures and religions. During this simple fire ceremony you will focus on forgiveness. You will need a candle, metal bowl, trivet, slip of paper, and a pencil or pen.

1. Choose a time when you won't be disturbed for 10-15 minutes.

2. Sit in a quiet place, such as at your home personal altar space.

3. Place the metal bowl on a heatproof surface (trivet).

4. On a small slip of paper, write the name of a situation you would like forgive.

5. Light the candle and offer a prayer that states your intention to release and forgive the hurt and/or anger.

6. Touch the paper to the candle flame to set it alight, which symbolizes releasing your hurt and transforming into forgiveness. Drop the paper into the bowl to finish burning.

7. Sit quietly for a few minutes as you visualize your heart warmed with a feeling of forgiveness. Inwardly acknowledge that the parts of yourself that were consumed with hurt or anger have been released and replaced with love.

8. Keep in mind that forgiveness is often a process, and that you may need to consciously choose to forgive a person or situation many times before you can fully let go of your hurt.

Quotations by Desmond Tutu

Without forgiveness, there is no future.

Forgiving is not forgetting; it's actually remembering — remembering and not using your right to hit back.

We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, not educated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all. We all belong to this family, this human family, God's family.

Bible Verses

Matthew 18: 21-22
Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven times."

Mark 11:25
Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

Opening the Lesson

Tell children that today's focus will be on a man named Desmond Tutu, who helped the people of his country, South Africa, forgive one another. Explain that when people act with compassion and understanding, like Clara Barton from the previous lesson, they are warm-hearted because their hearts are filled with love.

But sometimes people do things that make us sad or angry. We might even want to hurt them back. When we feel this way, our hearts are frozen. However, when we forgive others, we "unfreeze" our hearts and we can love again. When we let go of our anger and forgive, we can experience joy and freedom.

Movement Activity: "You're Forgiven" Freeze Tag

Freeze tag is an active game that can be played in an open area inside or outside. Be sure to designate clear boundaries.

Inside

1. Choose one person to be IT and have the other players spread around the room.

2. Signal the game to begin and have the players walk around the room, trying to avoid the one who is IT. Instruct players to keep moving swiftly, but safely.

3. When IT touches a player, that player must immediately "freeze" (stand still in the spot where they were tagged). Play continues until everyone is frozen.

4. Then IT returns to each frozen player and stands in front of them. The frozen player must say, "I forgive you" to be unfrozen.

5. Play again with another player as IT.

Outside

Enlarge the playing area so that players run rather than walk. However, keep in mind that running games can be frustrating for children who are not fast on their feet. Be aware of your group's abilities and modify the game as needed.

Tip: to make the game more challenging, instruct IT to unfreeze players in the order in which they were frozen.

Building the Lesson

As an introduction to the story about Desmond Tutu, ask children, "What do you dream about in your loveliest dreams? Do you dream about flying high or rainbows reaching across the sky?" [These are the opening words of Desmond Tutu's picture book *God's Dream*.]

Allow time for children to briefly share one lovely thing they dreamed about. They may get into long and detailed descriptions, so guide them in keeping their responses brief.

Then ask, "Do you know what God dreams about?" Allow time for children to briefly share some of their ideas.

Read the story about Desmond Tutu and Joseph.

After reading the story, discuss the questions at the end.

Role-Playing: Putting the "Give" in Forgive"

Materials needed: small toy, candy bar, blocks or legos, crayons, book, soccer ball, sign that reads "REMEMBER"

Directions

Following the discussion questions about the story, ask children:

1. "Why is it important for us to forgive?" Remind them of the Freeze Tag game. When we're angry, our hearts are frozen. When we forgive, our hearts are warmed with love. Forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves because we feel better when we love.

2. Explain to children that sometimes it's hard to forgive someone who has hurt you. Doing something kind for the person can help you get over your hurt and make it easier for you to forgive.

3. Write the word "give" on the board. Then add the letters "f-o-r" in front of it to spell the word "forgive." Remind children that even though Joseph was hurt by his brothers, he choose to give them food when they needed it. He put the "give" in "forgive."

4. Explain that when friends or family make us angry and do or say things that hurt our feelings, we can choose to give them kindness and forgive them. When we forgive, we make a new beginning and restore our loving relationship with our family or friends. It's never too late to make a new beginning.

5. This would also be a good time to reaffirm that some behavior is not okay. Explain that if anyone is being harmed or threatened it's very important that they talk to you or another trusted adult.

6. Divide children into pairs. Explain that one person will be called "YOU" and other person will be a family member, friend, or classmate.

7. Give each pair a card with the role-play situation written on it, or verbally tell pairs their situation. Explain that they will act out the situation and YOU will react by getting angry, upset, or feeling hurt. But then YOU will remember to choose forgiveness and do something kind instead. Give pairs a few minutes to decide what kind action they will act out and practice with the props.

8. Bring all children back together. Designate a "stage area" and an "audience area."

9. Remind children that forgiving is a choice, but sometimes we forget to make that choice. Explain that at some point during their skits, you will hold up a sign that says REMEMBER. That will be the signal for the actors to "freeze." The audience will stand up and say in unison, "Remember, you can choose to forgive." Then the audience will sit back down, and the actors will continue with their role-play with YOU making the choice to forgive and doing something kind.

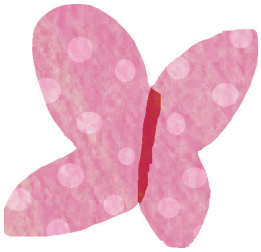
Optional: If you have time, you may want to extend the activity to help children develop greater empathy and understanding for the person who has hurt them.

1. Explain that often it helps us to forgive another person if we "put ourselves into their shoes" by imagining how that person might have felt or why he or she might have done or said what they did.

2. Review the role-plays and have children brainstorm (imagine why) the brother, sister, mom, dad, classmate, or friend might have done or said what they did.

Possible role-play situations are listed below. Feel free to create your own situations that are applicable to your group.

- Your little brother took your toys while you were at school. YOU get angry.
- Your baby sister knocked down your LEGO structure. YOU get mad.
- Your baby brother colored with crayons on your favorite book. YOU get upset.
- When his friends are over at your house, your older brother won't let you join them. YOU feel left out.
- Your brother let your gerbil out of its cage. YOU get angry and worried.
- Your sister ate the candy bar you were saving for your snack. YOU get mad.
- Your parent was late picking you up at school. YOU get mad and upset.
- Your parent didn't see you play soccer because of work. YOU feel hurt.
- A classmate called you names at recess. YOU feel hurt.
- Your friend didn't invite you to her birthday party. YOU feel sad.
- Your friend said something that wasn't true about you to others. YOU get mad.



Tip: Some groups love to role-play, while others may be reluctant to perform. Adapt the activity to suit your group. You or an assistant may act out one or more of the situations, with children giving the REMEMBER cue.

Art Activity: Family Portrait

1. Point out to the children that Joseph forgave his brothers because his love for them was stronger than his anger. Explain that we can remind ourselves how much we love and appreciate our family members so that we can keep our love stronger than our anger or hurt.

2. Have children draw a family portrait — a picture that includes each person in their family within a picture frame. Explain that family looks different for everyone and give children permission to draw an image of their church family or their friend family if they prefer.

3. Invite them to write a kind word about each person or something they appreciate about each person underneath the person's image (possibly on the frame).

Closing the Lesson

Bring children together into a sharing circle. Invite children to show their family portrait and share one of the words they wrote.

Ask the question: What happens if you don't want to forgive?

Take responses and add if necessary: Unforgiving thoughts and angry feelings can harden your heart and you'll probably start feeling unfriendly and crabby. Eventually you'll feel really miserable. Not forgiving hurts you more than it hurts the other person. But if you can't forgive on your own, you can always call on God's energy to help you forgive. (See A Joyful Path, Year One for a lesson about allowing God's love to help us forgive.)

It's also important to let children know that forgiveness doesn't mean that you should let another person keep on hurting you. There are times when other people's actions are not acceptable, like bullying or abuse. At those times, it's important to tell a trusted adult and to not put up with harmful behavior. At some point in your life it may feel right to forgive even those situations, but that does not mean that hurting others is ever okay.

Forgiveness Fire Ceremony

This ceremony is similar to the one described in the teacher reflection.

Materials needed: one small piece of paper per child, metal bowl, trivet, candle, matches

1. Put the candle and metal bowl (on the trivet) in the center of the circle. Explain that a fire ceremony is one way to help us release our hurts.

2. Give each child a small piece of paper. Invite them to think of a situation or a person they would like to forgive. When they know who or what they would like to forgive, have them crumble the paper into a loose ball and put the paper in a metal bowl.

3. When everyone's paper is in the bowl, light them on fire. As the fire burns, children can imagine that their hurt and anger are released and their hearts warmed with forgiveness. Burning the paper with someone's name on it means we are "burning" our anger or hurt connected to that person.

4. End with a prayer. You may want to use imagery in your prayer. You may want to use the something like following: "Beloved friend, God, I release my hurt and anger through forgiveness. I find many ways to show love and kindness to my family and friends. My heart is warmed by divine love."

Story: Desmond Tutu

Sources: Adapted from *The Children of God Storybook Bible* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and *God's Dream* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams.

Show children a photo of Desmond Tutu. During the story, show them where South Africa is on a world map.

This is what Desmond Tutu thinks God dreams about: "God dreams about people sharing. God dreams about people caring. God dreams that we reach out and hold one another's hands, and play one another's games, and love one another's hearts. But God does not force us to be friends or love one another. It does happen that we get angry and hurt one another. Soon we start to feel sad and so very alone. Sometimes we cry, and God cries with us. But when we say we're sorry, and forgive one another, we wipe away our tears and God's tears, too. God dreams that we will see that we're all brothers and sisters even if we have different mommies

and daddies or live in far away lands ... Do you know how to make God's dream come true? It's really quite easy — as easy as sharing, loving, caring; as easy as holding, playing laughing; as easy as knowing we are family because we are all God's family."

Desmond Tutu knows how important it is to care, share, and forgive because he grew up in a country where people didn't do that. When he was a child in South Africa, white people didn't treat black people fairly. They took away their land; they didn't let them vote; they didn't let them go to the same schools or learn the same things as white people. But Desmond Tutu grew up in a loving home where all people were respected. He said, "I never learned to hate."

When he was older, he became a priest, and spoke out against the unfair things that were happening to black people. It took many years, but finally South Africa ended the unjust laws. They even elected a black president.

But people still felt hurt and angry. Their hearts were frozen and filled with memories of all the bad things that happened in the past. They needed to forgive, but it was so hard that they needed help.

Desmond Tutu helped them. He and others gave them places where they could meet and share their stories about what had happened. The people who had been hurt explained what had happened to them and asked, "Why did you do this?" The people who had done bad things came and had the chance to say, "I'm sorry." They talked and listened to one another, and then the ones who were hurt could choose to forgive. Even though it was really hard, many of them made that choice.

Desmond Tutu encouraged them to forgive. He wrote books about forgiveness for adults and children. One of his books is called *God's Dream*. Another is called *The Children of God Storybook Bible*. There's a story in it about Joseph from the Old Testament (Genesis 50:15-21):

Joseph's brothers were jealous of him. They thought their father loved him more than he loved them, so Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave and told their father that Joseph was dead. He was taken to Egypt and put into prison. He was treated badly. He had to work really hard all day and wasn't given much to eat.

One day the Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, told the jailers to bring Joseph to him. As Joseph stood before the Pharaoh, he was so afraid he was shaking. The Pharaoh said, "Last night I had a strange dream. I summoned you because I hear you understand the language of dreams."

Joseph said, "It is not I, but God who will reveal the meaning of your dream."

The Pharaoh described his dream, "Seven fat cows came out of the river, followed by seven thin cows. And then the thin ones ate the fat ones."

Joseph prayed for God's help in understanding the dream and then explained it to the Pharaoh. He said, "The seven fat cows mean that for seven years there will be plenty for people to eat. And the seven thin cows mean that then there will be seven years when not a drop of rain will fall. The crops won't grow and there will be no food to eat. If you store grain during the first seven years when there is plenty of food, there will be enough food when the drought comes. That is why the thin cows ate the fat ones."

Pharaoh saw that Joseph was wise and made him governor of Egypt to oversee the crops and food. Joseph made sure that all the extra grain was stored and saved for the future. After seven years, just as Joseph had said, there came a terrible drought. People came to Joseph to ask for food. One day Joseph's brothers came to beg for food. They didn't recognize Joseph. They only saw a finely-dressed Egyptian leader. But Joseph recognized them and gave them food. And after a while, he told them who he was.

His brothers knew they had been wrong to treat Joseph so badly, and they were really afraid that he would punish them. Because Joseph was a friend

of a friend of the Pharaoh, he could have chosen to punish his brothers. But Joseph's love for his family was stronger than his anger. "I love you," he said. "You are my family." He threw his arms around his brothers and kissed them.

Questions for Discussion

1. According to Desmond Tutu, what can we do to make God's dream come true?

2. Why was forgiving so important to Desmond Tutu?

3. Why did Joseph forgive his brothers? Do you think it was hard for him to forgive?

4. Have you ever had to forgive someone? How did you feel?

Background Information

Desmond Tutu's life has been shaped by apartheid, the legalized system of segregation of races in South Africa. As a black child growing up in the 1930s and '40s, Tutu knew that he wasn't treated the same as white children, but he was raised in an atmosphere of tolerance at home. He says, "I never learned to hate."

Apartheid was a way of life for decades. Many non-whites were forced from their homes and had to live in designated areas in the 1960s. The limited rights they had were taken away. Nelson Mandela, who later became the first black president of South Africa, emerged as a protest leader and was thrown into jail. Tutu spoke out against apartheid during the 1970s and '80s, but it wasn't until 1990 that apartheid laws were repealed.

To help heal the deep wounds caused by apartheid, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 1994, and Tutu became the chairperson. The TRC focused on "restorative justice" rather than punishment. Victims of abuse, as well as perpetrators, had an opportunity to tell their stories. Tutu said, "True reconciliation is never cheap, for it is based on forgiveness, which is costly." The TRC has become the model for other communities around the world trying to heal from the pain of social injustice.

Tutu came onto the international stage when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Amidst the atrocities of apartheid and in the face of overwhelming odds for change, Tutu remained optimistic about the ability of human beings to do good.

Aspects of Desmond Tutu's life that are emphasized in this lesson

- Forgiveness provides an opportunity for a new beginning. Desmond Tutu guided South Africa through a process of forgiveness and reconciliation after years of apartheid.

- Forgiveness ends the cycle of revenge and leads to an experience of joy. Desmond Tutu wrote books for adults and children's about the importance of forgiveness.

Important Dates in Desmond Tutu's Life

- 1931: born October 7th in South Africa
- 1961: became a priest in the Anglican Church
- 1984: awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
- 1986: elected the first black Archbishop of Cape Town
- 1995-98: chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- 2010: retired from public life to spend more time with his wife, children, and grandchildren

Story: Mary Annoints Jesus

HOW WE BEHAVE

>> Lesson 3: Mary — Acting with Love

Eight point: By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe.

Affirmation: What I believe in my heart is what I show in my actions.

Getting to the Heart of the Lesson

Jesus taught a path of behavior that he believed could lead to true happiness. He suggested that we could find this true happiness by following his example of living a life based on love and compassion. We show our love for others through our actions — our behavior.

Acting with love can look very differently depending on cultures and circumstances. In this lesson, children listen to the Bible story about Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus, who showed her love for Jesus by anointing his feet with expensive perfumed oil. Anointing feet with oil might seem like a really unusual custom to children today, but it was considered a humble act of love during Jesus' time. Mary was demonstrating her love for Jesus through her behavior.

A subtle message of the story is that the energy (emotion and mental attitude) behind an action is as important as the action itself. Jesus recognized the love behind Mary's action, telling the disciples she would be remembered forever for what she did.

Teacher Reflection

- Read the stories of Mary anointing Jesus with oil, both from the Bible and the children's version of the story.
- Mentally say the affirmation, "My actions show the love in my heart I have for others." Visualize yourself going through your day. Who are the "others" you might meet? How could you show them your love?
- Recall some of the actions you've recently done that showed your love for someone. Did any of your actions require that you give up something precious to you? (You may give up possessions, but also consider less tangible things. For example, your time and energy or your opinions are also precious.) Did anyone disapprove of your actions?

Bible Verses

Mark 12: 30-31
Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

John 4:8
Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13
And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Opening the Lesson

John 12:3 says, "And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume." The activities in this lesson

will fill the room with fragrance. Lavender is suggested, but choose a scent that is pleasing to you. We suggest you choose a natural essential oil rather than any perfume or synthetic fragrance as many children will be sensitive to these. You can find essential oils in most drugstores or natural food stores.

Story and Game: Fill the Oil Jar

Materials needed: a large box to represent a big oil jar (decorate it with paper or markers to make it look special), wads of paper to represent the oil (enough so every child can find 2 or 3)

Materials for the story: small, fancy container to represent Mary's jar of oil, one cotton ball per child, lavender oil, a long, black wig or black yarn cut into long lengths (optional)

Preparation

1. Scatter wads of paper all around the room before the children arrive. Make some of them obviously visible and others more hidden but still in plain view.

2. Put a drop of lavender oil on each cotton ball and place the balls in the fancy container.

As children come into the room, have them sit around a table as if they were eating dinner. If you don't have a large table, you could spread a white sheet on the floor and have children sit around it pretending they were at a table. Designate one child to be Jesus. Ask them to pretend they're having a good time at a special dinner.

Dramatize the following story segment. To heighten children's interest, use a wig and other props.

Jesus was at the home of friends who had given a dinner in his honor. He was eating and drinking at the table and having a good time when a woman came in. She had long, black hair and was carrying a jar of precious perfumed oil. (Dramatically show the jar you're holding.) She took the top off the jar, and instantly the house was filled with the loveliest smell of lavender. (Open up the container and let every child smell it.) She poured the perfumed oil onto Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. (Pantomime pouring and wiping.)

Explain that in Jesus' time perfumed oil was very valuable. It was kept in jars and was only used for special occasions.

Game Directions

1. Introduce the game "Fill the Oil Jar." The object of the game is for the group to collect perfumed oil (wads of paper) and put them into the oil jar (box). Tell children that they will work together to collect as much oil as they can in just one minute.

2. Set a timer for one minute, and give the signal to begin.

3. When the time is up, count how much oil they collected.

4. Play the game again to see if they can beat their score.

Tip: The second time you play, make any necessary adjustments to suit your group, such as adding more wads of paper and/or extending the playing time.

Building the Lesson

Read the entire story, even the first part that you already dramatized. Discuss the questions at the end.

Sharing Sweet Smells

Materials needed: three or four fragrant items, such as cinnamon (you can brew some spice tea and bring it in a small jar), a vanilla candle, baby powder, rose-scented soap, an orange or lemon, spices such as cloves or mint

Mention to the children that the smell of the lavender oil was a really important part of the story. Ask the group

if they have any favorite smells. One at a time, pass the sweet-smelling items around the circle for everyone to smell. While the item is being passed, have children share any memories they have related to the smell.

Craft Activity: Lavender Scented Jars

Materials needed: small jars with lids (baby food jars work well), colored construction papers, markers or crayons, tape, cotton balls infused with lavender oil from Opening the Lesson

Preparation: Cut construction paper to a size just large enough to wrap around a jar with slight overlapping.

1. Introduce the unit affirmation, "My actions show the love I have in my heart for others." Use hand movements as you say it aloud together several times:

- My actions show…[Children reach out in front of them with their palms upward.]

- the love I have in my heart…[They place their hands on their hearts.]

- for others. [They spread their arms out to both sides to be inclusive.]

2. Just as Mary's actions showed her love for Jesus, ask children what they might do to show their love for someone. Write their responses on the board under the affirmation.

3. Give each child construction paper and coloring materials. Have children draw a scene that shows a loving action or a scene from the story.

4. Tape the drawings around the jar and place a cotton ball infused with lavender inside. Securely put the lid on it.

5. Children may give the jar to someone or keep it to remind themselves to share their love with others.

Note: While lavender oil on a cotton ball is not harmful, when it's applied directly to skin it may cause irritation in some people. Lavender oil is toxic if taken orally. Pregnant and breastfeeding women should avoid using lavender.

Closing the Lesson

Anointing Hands

Tell children when Mary poured oil onto Jesus' feet and wiped it with her hair, she was "anointing them with oil." Explain that they will use hand lotion to experience what it feels like to anoint someone and also to be anointed. Remind them that just as Mary was acting in a loving way when she anointed Jesus feet, they should act in a kind and gentle way when anointing each other's hands. (sense of touch)

Materials needed: hand lotion (lavender scented if possible), small paper cups, quiet music

Preparation: Pour a small amount of lotion into each cup.

1. Play some quiet music to set the tone.

2. Divide children into pairs and give each pair a small cup of hand lotion. If there is an uneven number of children, you or an adult helper will need to pair up with a child.

3. Have one child of each pair use some of the lotion and gently rub it onto the hands of the other child.

4. Switch roles.

5. Ask children to describe what it was like to selflessly anoint someone else's hand. What was it like for them to have their hands anointed?

6. End with a prayer or by saying the affirmation together.

Story: Mary Anointing Jesus' Feet

Included below are two adult versions from the Bible for your personal inspiration. Read the children's version aloud to your class. The first part of the story is the same as the dramatized segment you read in Opening the Lesson.

Adult versions of the story from the Bible

John 12:1-8
(American King James Version)
Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bore what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying has she kept this. For the poor always you have with you; but me you have not always.

Mark 14: 3-9
(American King James Version)
And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she broke the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble you her? She has worked a good work on me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you will you may do them good: but me you have not always. She has done what she could: she is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she has done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

Children's version to read aloud:

Source: Adapted from *Children of God Bible Storybook Bible* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Jesus was at the home of friends who had given a dinner in his honor. He was eating and drinking at the table and having a good time when a woman came in. She had long, black hair and was carrying a jar of precious perfumed oil. She took the top off the jar, and instantly the house was filled with the loveliest smell of lavender.

She generously poured the sweet-smelling oil onto Jesus' feet. Then she leaned over letting her long, black hair fall down to the floor. She used her hair like a towel to gently wipe his feet.

When some of Jesus' disciples saw what she had done, they grumbled among themselves. "What a waste!" they said. "That perfumed oil is very expensive. She should have given the oil to us. We could have sold it, and we'd have more money to give to the poor."

When Jesus heard them he said, "Leave her alone. There will always be poor people, and you will have many other times when we can help them. But you won't always have me with you. Mary has done something very beautiful — she has shown me how much she loves me. What she has done today will be remembered forever."

Discussion Questions

1. Imagine Jesus walking a very long way in sandals on a hot, dusty road. How might it have felt to have his feet rubbed with oil?

2. Why do you think Mary's story is remembered after so many years?

3. The oil was very precious. Mary had saved it to be used for a special occasion. What do you have that is precious to you? (Answers might include a favorite doll or toy). How might you share it with others? (Allowing someone to play with it).

4. When we love, we share the best that we have. That is why Mary used her most precious oil. How can you share your highest love with others? (You may suggest ways such as sharing your last piece of cake, sharing friends, or making a card for a friend.)

5. When you give a gift in love, do you expect or need something back from that person?

6. When you share love with someone does it bring you joy? (You may want to explain that we share love because we see ourselves in others. I am you, you are me. So if you know that something brings you joy, it is likely to bring joy to others. By giving love, you are actually giving yourself a gift because it will bring you joy!)

Background Information

- Historians and scholars have identified several ways oil has been used in the past: in ceremonies for priests and kings, as a sign of friendship, as medicine for the sick, symbolically for spiritual healing or designating status, for preserving dead bodies, and as a refreshing toiletry item (like a cosmetic). People still use oils today for healing and as perfume.

- The Bible refers to the oil that Mary uses as "spikenard" in some versions and as "nard" in others.

- Spikenard is a flowering plant of the valerian family that grows in China and India. It was considered a luxury in ancient Egypt and the Near East. Spikenard is still used in Tibetan healing incense and as a tonic in India, Tibet, and China.

- Nard is the name ancient Greeks used for the herb we call lavender.

Aspects of Mary's life that are emphasized in this lesson

- We show our love through our actions. Mary anointed Jesus' feet with perfumed oil even though other people disapproved because the oil was so expensive.

Story: Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller

HOW WE BEHAVE

>> Lesson 4: Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller Compassion and Trust

Eight point: By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe.

Affirmation: What I believe in my heart is what I show in my actions.

Getting to the Heart of the Lesson

Genuine compassion is acting in a manner that enhances another's wellbeing. In this lesson, children will learn about Anne Sullivan, a dedicated teacher whose compassion and selfless service completely transformed the life of a blind and deaf child, Helen Keller.

Anne not only taught Helen, but also lived with her and took care of her for almost 50 years. She stayed by Helen's side, putting Helen's needs before her own. The following anonymous description could have been written with Anne Sullivan in mind, "God understood our thirst for knowledge, and our need to be led by someone wiser. He needed a heart of compassion, of encouragement, and patience; someone who would accept the challenge regardless of the opposition; someone who could see potential and believe in the best in others. So He made teachers."

Helen, who was vulnerable and dependent, completely trusted Anne. Through her receptivity to Anne's help and guidance, Helen learned to express her own ideas and find avenues of service in her life. She is an example of a courageous and inspiring woman.

Relating to the Life and Teachings of Jesus

Similar to Anne, Jesus was a compassionate teacher whom his disciples trusted. He taught people to trust and to love compassionately. He was also very patient with his disciples who often had a hard time understanding his teachings. Learning to trust that God will provide is a repeated and fundamental message of Jesus the teacher. Marcus Borg argues in his book, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, this love or compassion is the kind of love that Jesus believed was the "central quality of a life faithful to God." He also compares this kind of love to that of a mother who carries us in her womb and gives birth to us. This sense of a compassion that is womblike, "has nuances of giving life, nourishing, caring, perhaps embracing and encompassing as a mother, loves the children of her womb and feels for the children of her womb."

Borg writes, "… It is only when we appreciate this dimension of Jesus' emphasis on [this] compassion that we realize how radical his message and vision were. ... He directly and repeatedly challenged the dominant sociopolitical paradigm of his social world and advocated instead what might be called a politics of compassion. This … social vision continues to have striking implications for the life of the church today."

Teacher Reflection

Helen referred to Anne as "Teacher." She used the term with the utmost respect and loving appreciation. Jesus' disciples called him "Teacher." (Rabbi). They recognized that he could open doors of understanding for them.

- Take a few moments to reflect on a teacher who has had a positive influence on you. What words or actions do you remember? How did they affect you?

- What does it mean to you to be a teacher? How are love, compassion, and dedication expressed in your teaching?

Quotations by Helen Keller

We are never really happy until we try to brighten the lives of others.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen nor even touched, but just felt in the heart.

I know that life is given us so that we may grow in love. And I believe that God is in me as the sun is in the color and fragrance of the flower, the Light in my darkness, the Voice in my silence.

Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.

Quotations by Anne Sullivan

Every obstacle we overcome, every success we achieve tends to bring man closer to God.

Children require guidance and sympathy far more than instruction.

Bible Verses

Psalm 23
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff — they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Psalm 121
A Song of Ascents. I lift up my eyes to the hills — from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and for evermore.

Heb 13: 5b-6
Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' So we can say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?'

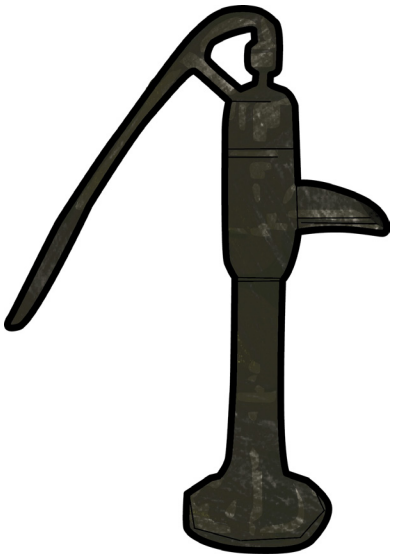
Opening the Lesson

Tell the children, "Today we are going to continue talking about how we behave based on our beliefs." Read the affirmation to the children and have them repeat after you. Explain that when we really believe something in our hearts, it is easy to act out of that belief. If you believe in love, it is easy to behave in ways that show love. Let them know that today we will be focusing on two women in history from around 100 years ago, Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller. These women are considered heroines because of their actions in their lives. Just like Clara Barton, Desmond Tutu, and Mary from our last lessons, these women felt and believed in compassion and trust and they were able to help people because of their belief in compassion and trust. Explain that compassion means to love selflessly.

Has anyone heard of Helen Keller or her teacher Anne Sullivan? Did you know that Helen was deaf and blind? Have you ever known anyone that was deaf or blind? What would that be like? What would that feel like?

The following game uses blindfolds, giving children an experience of what it feels like to be blind like Helen Keller. This may help them relate more easily to Helen when you read the story. If any children are uncomfortable being blindfolded, they can just close their eyes. Peeking or opening eyes is perfectly acceptable at any time during the games.

Pin the Water on the Spout



This group game, a variation of old favorite "Pin the Tail on the Donkey," uses the image of an outside water pump. A water pump is an important part of the story of Helen Keller's life, yet many children may have never seen such a pump. Playing the game will prepare the children for the story.

Materials needed: enough blindfolds (strips of cloth) for half of the class, butcher paper or poster board, blue construction paper, tape

Preparation

1. Cut construction paper into the shape of water droplets about 4 inches long, enough for one per child.

2. Draw a picture of an old-fashioned water pump with a handle and spout onto the paper or poster board.

3. Attach the picture to the wall and arrange the room so children can stand a distance away from the wall.

Directions

1. Explain that the objective of the game is to have the water come out of the spout on the pump. Have children line up to take turns playing. Give the first child a droplet with tape on the end of it.

2. Turn the child around three times, and instruct the child to tape the droplet at the end of the spout. (Optional: After the droplet is taped on the wall, quickly write the child's name or initials on it. This may increase the focus and interest in the game, or it may add a level of competition that is not helpful to your group. Decide what will work best for your group).

3. Repeat the process with the next child. When all children have had a turn, have them notice how far away the droplets were placed.

4. Ask them what would have made it easier to get the droplets closer to the spout. If no one mentions it, ask them what it would have been like if the group called out directions to them while they were moving toward the drawing.

Building the Lesson

Read the short biography about Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan. You'll make the story come alive for the children if you finger spell the words "doll" and "water" at the appropriate place during your reading. Use the chart of the American Manual Alphabet (available online) to learn the hand positions for these words. Practice them several times beforehand.

After reading the story, discuss the questions at the end.

Blind Walk Obstacle Course

Tell the children, "We are going to do an activity where we can experience what it feels like to be a guide (as Anne Sullivan did) and what it feels like to completely trust another person (as Helen Keller did)."

Preparation: Set up a simple obstacle course around the room or outside. Use items that children can walk around (chair), step over (box), and duck under (crepe paper streamers hung from the ceiling). Make sure the obstacles set up are safe and age appropriate. Have at least as many obstacles as you have pairs of children.

1. Divide children into pairs. Scatter them around the room or playing area.

2. Blindfold one child in each pair, who is called the truster. The non-blindfolded half of the pair is called the helper.

3. Have them hold hands. The job of the helpers is to guide the trusters as they slowly walk together over, under, and around various items. If possible, helpers should remain silent, gently using their hands to lead their partners. However, to keep their partners safe, they may need to also give directions out loud.

4. After several minutes, switch roles so that every child experiences both being a helper and a truster.

5. When finished, gather children together and ask them which role they enjoyed the most. Which role was easier for them?

Closing the Lesson

Hand Signing

Materials needed: chart of the American Manual Alphabet, available online

1. Using the chart, practice with the group to teach them the finger spelling for W-A-T-E-R.

2. Once they know the letters, have them pair up with a partner and spell "water" into each other's hands. To focus more on the feeling, the person who is being spelled to may close his/her eyes.

3. Depending on your time, you may teach other short words, such as "apple" or "tree."

4. Anne said that she knew that there was a power greater than herself, but didn't know it had a name until she learned about God. End the lesson by teaching the finger spelling of G-O-D. Have children spell it to their partners.

5. End with a prayer of thanks for all those who help us learn.

Optional Additional Activities

Depending on how much time you have, you also may want to do one of the following blindfolded activities.

Blindfold Drawings

This game is a quiet art activity done individually, but with group participation.

Materials needed: enough blindfolds (strips of cloth) for half of the class, paper, one pencil per child

1. Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil.

2. Blindfold the children and tell them to draw the item you suggest. For example, the sun up in the sky.

3. Once everyone has drawn the sun, suggest additional items to add to the picture. For example, draw a cloud next to the sun. Give each child an opportunity, one at a time, to suggest something to add to the picture.

4. When everyone is finished, spread out all of the

drawings next to each other so children can see the differences.

5. Ask children what would have made drawing easier. If no one mentions it, ask children what it would have been like if you had placed their pencils on the correct spot on the paper each time you mentioned a new item.

Prui (pronounced Proo-ee)

This high-trust game requires a large open area, either inside or outside.

Materials needed: enough blindfolds (strips of cloth) for half of the class

Explain that Prui is a wonderful creature that they will help grow as they play the game. Then, give children an overview of how to play the game:

1. Everyone will be scattered around the playing area and blindfolded (or keep their eyes closed).

2. You will tap one person on the shoulder and that person will become the first "Prui" and will take off his/her blindfold. The Prui will stand in the same place with his/her eyes open during the entire game.

3. The other children will put up their "bumpers," bring their hands up in front of them, and wander around the playing area. When they bump into someone, they will ask, "Are you Prui?" If the response is the same question back ("Are you Prui?"), they have NOT found Prui.

4. If the answer is silence, they have found Prui. They take off their blindfold (or open their eyes) and join hands with the Prui in a chain. They are now part of Prui, and if someone bumps into them, they remain silent too.

5. Eventually everyone becomes a part of Prui, which will stretch out in a long line.

6. Blindfold children, choose a Prui, and signal the game to begin. As play continues, the room (or playing area) will become quieter and quieter.

7. When the game is over, gather children in a circle and ask them to describe what it was like for them to wander around "blind." How did they feel when they found the Prui? What was it like to watch the other children wandering around blind?

Story: Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller

Helen Keller was born over a hundred years ago. When she was about a year and a half old, she became very, very sick. She almost died. When she got better, her mother and father were so happy. But then after a while they realized that Helen had lost her hearing and her sight. The illness had left her deaf and blind.

Helen grew up in a dark and silent world. Her parents couldn't tell her where to walk or play because she couldn't hear them, and they couldn't show her because she couldn't see them. She couldn't talk because she had not learned before she was sick, so she couldn't tell her parents what she wanted or what she was thinking. Her parents tried to teach her things, but it was very difficult. Helen couldn't make sense of anything, and she felt upset and frustrated. Sometimes she threw temper tantrums, screaming, and hitting the people around her.

"I don't know how to help Helen," her mother said.

"We need help," her father said. So they hired a young teacher to come and live with them. The teacher's name was Anne Sullivan. Even though Anne had never taught anyone before, she had ideas about how to help Helen because Anne had had trouble seeing when she was a child, too. She went to a school for the blind and learned how to read and write. When she was a teenager she had an operation. Afterwards, she could see better, but she still had to take special care of her eyes.

Anne knew that Helen's hands would need to become

her eyes and ears. She gave Helen a doll and "finger spelled" D-O-L-L the word into Helen's hand. *(Pause and show children how the word "doll" is finger spelled using the manual alphabet.)* Anne took Helen on walks in nature, touching objects along the way, patiently finger spelling each one — L-E-A-F … G-R-A-S-S … T-R-E-E.

At first Helen thought it was just a game. She copied Anne's hand movements, but she didn't connect the movement of her fingers with the object she was touching. Anne thought Helen would learn better if it was just the two of them away from the rest of the family, so they moved her to a little cottage by themselves. Over a month went by, and Helen still hadn't learned the name of anything. And Helen still had terrible temper tantrums! It was really hard for Anne, but she kept trying to help Helen.

Then, one day, a miracle happened. Anne took Helen outside to a water pump, shoved Helen's hand under the spout and started pumping. While the cold water flowed over one of Helen's hands, Anne finger spelled the letters W-A-T-E-R into Helen's other hand. *(Pause and show children the manual letters for "water." First show the children the letters, then finger spell into your own hand.)*

Suddenly everything clicked for Helen. She made the connection between the movements in her hand and what she was feeling. It was called WATER! In a flash, Helen understood that all of the movements Anne had been making into her hand stood for what she had been touching. Excitedly Helen pounded the ground. Anne spelled "E-A-R-T-H." Anne couldn't get enough. She touched and touched everything she could, and Anne quickly spelled the word into her hand. That first day Helen learned 30 words.

Anne was so happy. She wrote in her journal, "My heart is singing for joy this morning! A miracle has happened! The light of understanding has shone upon my little pupil's mind, and behold, all things are changed!"

Anne dedicated the rest of her life to helping Helen. She didn't think about herself; she only thought what she could do for Helen. Anne taught Helen to finger spell and to read and write in Braille, raised dots on paper that represent letters. Anne helped Helen learn about Christianity. When she learned about God she said, "I always knew He was there, but I didn't know His name!"

Helen loved to learn, and she trusted Anne to teach her what she needed to know. Anne went to college with her, finger spelling all of the class lectures and textbooks into Helen's hand. Anne's sensitive eyes were often red and tired, but she was devoted to helping Helen. If Helen doubted herself, Anne encouraged her. "You can do it!" she said. As a result, Helen was the first deaf and blind person to graduate from college.

When Helen was older, she traveled around the world "speaking" and writing about her life and beliefs. To her surprise, she became famous. Presidents, queens, and movie stars all wanted to meet her. Helen's life was happy — full of love and adventures. But she never forgot her teacher. She said, "The most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me."

Discussion Questions

1. What qualities made Anne such a good teacher? What made Helen a good student?

2. How is learning words using finger spelling different from learning words by reading the letters on the page?

3. Helen said, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen nor even touched, but just felt in the heart." Helen felt God and Jesus in her heart. What do you think God feels like?

4. Helen trusted Anne. Trust is really about letting go of fear. Is there a fear that you can let go of?

5. Jesus was also a teacher like Anne. He had to be very patient with his students, or disciples, and they had to trust him as their teacher. In what ways do you think Jesus was like Anne? What ways do you think Jesus was compassionate?

6. Have you ever had a teacher that you really trusted and learned kindness from?

Background Information

The lives of Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller are intertwined in service and mutual appreciation.

- Anne: "My heart is singing for joy this morning! A miracle has happened! The light of understanding has shone upon my little pupil's mind, and behold, all things are changed!"

- Helen: "The most significant day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me. I am filled with wonder when I consider the immeasurable contrast between the two lives which it connects."

Aspects of Anne Sullivan's life that are emphasized in this lesson

- Putting the needs of another person before our own is an expression of love and compassion. Anne Sullivan dedicated herself to helping Helen have a meaningful life.

Important Dates in the lives of Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller

- 1866: Anne Sullivan born
- 1880: Helen Keller born. Anne Sullivan learns to read and write at the Perkins School for the Blind.
- 1882: Helen was severely ill and lost both her sight and hearing.
- 1887: Anne became Helen's teacher
- 1900-1904: Anne attended college with Helen, communicating all of the lectures and textbook information to Helen. Helen became the first deaf and blind person to graduate from college.
- 1904-1938: With Anne's help Helen became an author, motivational speaker, writer, and activist for social causes.
- 1938: Anne died
- 1938-1968: Helen continued to travel, write, and inspire people around the world, until her death.

Story: Mother Teresa

HOW WE BEHAVE

>> Lesson 5: Mother Teresa — Doing Something Beautiful for God

Eight point: By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe.

Affirmation: What I believe in my heart is what I show in my actions.

Getting to the Heart of the Lesson

Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." These commandments are two sides of the same coin — loving God and loving others.

Mother Teresa epitomizes both of these behaviors. She said, "I realized that I had the call to take care of the sick and the dying, the hungry, the naked, the homeless — to be God's Love in action to the poorest of the poor."

Through inward prayer, Mother Teresa established a personal connection to God, and her service became the outward expression of God's presence in her life. She believed that every being has an innate right to respect and ethical treatment, and she provided dignity to people who had been denied dignity by society.

The activities in this lesson give children an opportunity to experience both prayer and service.

Teacher Reflection: Prayer

Prayer connects our hearts with God's presence. However, praying "to God" as a "someone" outside of ourselves keeps us separate from God's energy. An Eastern teacher used this story to explain God's all-pervading presence:

A school of fish was swimming together in the ocean. They asked each other, "What is water?" None of them were able to come up with an answer, so they swam over to a big, wise fish and asked, "What is water?" The wise fish answered, "Water is above you and below you, to the left and the right, within and without. You live and move and have your being in an ocean of water."

The story reminds us that we live and move and have our being in an ocean of divine energy — within God's all-pervading presence.

- Practice praying "in God" rather than "to God."

- Sit quietly. Pray using the same words you usually use when speaking with God. However, instead of sending your prayer outward, feel your entire self enveloped within God's presence, existing inside of divine love. Offer your prayer as if you are "in God." You always are.

Quotations by Mother Teresa

There are no great acts, only small acts performed with great love.

Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.

It isn't necessary to go out to the slums to find a lack of love and poverty. There is someone who suffers in every family and in every neighborhood… I want you to be concerned about your next-door neighbor. Do you know your next-door neighbor?

Each one of them is Jesus in disguise. (Note: She said about the poor.)

Bible Verses

Mark 2: 15
And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax-collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples — for there were many who followed him.

Luke 22: 32-33
but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.' And he said to him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!'

Hebrews 13: 1-3
Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.

Opening the Lesson

Mother Teresa said, "Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love."

Think of Mother Teresa as the children enter the room, greeting each one with a warm smile.

Tell the children that today they are going to learn about Mother Teresa who saw all people as children of God, no matter if they were poor, sick, wealthy, or different in some way. Tell them that Mother Teresa saw God reflected in all the faces of the people she met, and she felt like everyone deserved respect. Jesus also looked for God in all people.

Movement Activity: Mirror Movements

Mother Teresa saw God reflected in the faces of the people she met. In this movement activity, children will reflect each other. (Note: Mirroring each other's body language has been shown to build rapport and strengthen bonds.)

Materials needed: flowing, peaceful instrumental music

Music Tip:
Ashana: All Is Forgiven

1. Have students get into pairs, facing one another about three feet apart. One child becomes the leader and the other becomes the "mirror."

2. Moving only from the waist up, have the leader make simple gestures or movements. Tell the mirror to copy the leader's movements exactly—just as a mirror would. Remind them that mirrors can't talk.

3. Explain that the leader does not try to trick his partner. On the contrary, the leader works very hard not to trick the mirror, but to perform movements that the mirror can follow precisely. Coach the leader to use smooth, continuous movements, because abrupt movements almost always catch the mirror lagging. Playing background music that is flowing and peaceful will encourage smooth movements.

4. Switch roles so that the children can have the experience of being both the leader and the mirror.

5. Initially have children just do arms-and-face mirroring. Once they master the upper body, you can have them add the lower body.

6. Also remind leaders to keep facing their partners, because if the leader looks away, the mirror will copy the movement and look away, too, and won't be able to see the leader to mirror him.

Building the Lesson

Read the story about Mother Teresa. It is adapted from *The Children's Treasury of Heroes* by William Bennett. This book is an excellent resource and includes heroes from the past and present, both real and fictional. After reading the story, discuss the questions at the end.

Set up materials for the two stations described below. Have an adult helper at each station. Divide your class in half. While one group strings prayer beads, the other group will make a snack. Then they will switch stations.

Station One — Making Prayer Beads

Explain that Mother Teresa used a rosary when she said her prayers. A rosary is a string of beads used to count prayers. As a Catholic, the prayers Mother Teresa said included the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, and Glory Be to the Father. Tell children that Hindus and Buddhist also use prayer beads to count the number of times they repeat a mantra (holy words or sounds).

Materials needed: one or more pipe cleaners per child, assorted beads with holes large enough to accommodate pipe cleaners, completed sample bracelet to show the children before beginning. You can buy supplies at craft stores or buy necklaces at thrift stores and garage sales and cut them apart.

1. Give each child a pipe cleaner and have them choose several beads to string.

2. When done, the adult helper twists the ends of the pipe cleaner to fit the child's wrist.

3. Children who complete their prayer beads before the others can make an additional bracelet for someone or do the Color a Smile activity.

4. Switch stations.

Station Two — Making Snacks

Materials needed: photo of Mother Teresa, small paper plates, knives for spreading, rice cakes, cream cheese, blueberries or blueberry jam. Substitute ingredients to accommodate children with dairy allergies.

1. Show the photo of Mother Teresa and explain that blue and white are the colors of the sari Mother Teresa and her missionaries always wore. Read Mother Teresa's quotation: "Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love."

2. Explain that they will decorate a snack to look like a smiling face and serve it to someone else at the end of class.

3. Give each child a paper plate with a rice cake. (Rice is a staple in India.)

4. Have children spread their rice cake with cream cheese. Use the blueberries to decorate their rice cake with a smiling face—two eyes, nose, smile, and a band of blueberries across the forehead. Have them put their plate in a location where they can easily retrieve it for the end of class.

5. Switch activities. If they finish making the snack before it's time to switch, they can do the Color a Smile Activity.

Additional Activity: Color a Smile

Have this activity ready for children who finish making prayer bracelets or snacks, or do it as an alternate activity.

Mother Teresa is known for her kind smile. A smile is a simple, uplifting action that's so easy to do. Children can share their smiles with others through a non-profit organization called "Color A Smile" that collects crayon drawings from children. Every month "Color

a Smile" distributes these drawings to nursing homes, Meals on Wheels programs, and individuals all across the country. Their goal is to make people smile!

Materials needed: crayons, standard 8 1/2 x 11 letter size paper or print out "color in" pages from the Color a Smile website at www.colorasmile.org.

1. Draw a cheerfulpicture using crayon, marker, or colored pencil. Do not use glitter, paint or paste.

2. Sign the front of the drawing with your first name and age.

3. Do not put a date on any drawing.

4. Use one side of the paper only. (No fold over cards)

5. Mail completed drawings to Color a Smile, PO Box 1516, Morristown, NJ 07962-1516

Closing the Lesson

Praying and Sharing Food Together

Gather children together in the altar area with their prayer beads. Explain that the Missionaries of Charity begin and end their day with prayer.

Explain that prayer isn't making wishes to someone up in the sky. It's making a connection with God, the loving energy that surrounds us all the time. Prayer connects our hearts with God's presence. However, praying "to God" as a "someone" outside of ourselves keeps us separate from God's energy.

You may tell children the "Fish Story" from the Teacher Reflection, which is repeated below:

A school of fish was swimming together in the ocean. They asked each other, "What is water?" None of them were able to come up with an answer, so they swam over to a big, wise fish and asked, "What is water?" The wise fish answered, "Water is above you and below you, to the left and the right, within and without. You live and move and have your being in an ocean of water."

Alternately, you could use the following analogy from Mother Teresa:

An electrical light can be turned on by a switch. But, if there is no connection with the main source of power, then the light won't turn on. Prayer is our connection with God — with Love. When we pray we connect to our power source. When we're connected, then we can serve with love.

You can pray anytime, anywhere. You do not have to be in a chapel or a church.

Tell children that their prayer beads are a reminder that they remember to connect with God's energy at any time. They don't need to be at a special place at a certain time. The Sisters of Charity say their prayers when traveling or when walking through the streets. They do everything in an atmosphere of prayer.

Say a prayer together. *Children Praying a New Story,* by Michael Morwood has many great prayers for children. Here is a great one for this lesson, found on page 94:

We give thanks for the kindness of Jesus.
We give thanks for the ways he helped people and for the times he healed people.
We give thanks for his friendship with each of us.
We give thanks for our health,
for our eyes and our ears
and our hands and our feet.
For all the good things we have in life, we give thanks.
Amen.

Have children get their snack plates and come back to the circle. Ask them to face a partner, smile, and serve each other by exchanging plates.

Relating to the Life and Teaching of Jesus

While eating, bring Jesus into the lesson. Ask the children:

- Did you know that Jesus was known to eat with people who were considered "outcasts?"
- Do you know what an outcast is?

Explain that an outcast can be anyone who is not included a group. Sometimes an outcast is not included because they look different, because of money, because of what they wear, because of their beliefs, or simply because other people have called them different or said they shouldn't be included.

Ask the children:

- Have you ever felt like an outcast?
- How did it feel to not be included?
- Have you ever sat with someone at lunch that was alone?

Story: Mother Teresa

Source: *The Children's Book of Heroes* by William Bennett. This book is an excellent resource for inspiring stories. It has been edited for length, and some additional information has been added.

One way to get to know someone is to follow the person around to see what they do throughout the day. In this story you will imagine that you're following a woman named Mother Teresa. When she was 18 years old, she became a nun, which means she devoted herself to Jesus.

To follow Mother Teresa, you travel to India to the city of Calcutta where some of the poorest people in the world live. These were the people Mother Teresa wanted to help. She said "each one of them was Jesus in disguise."

You start your day really early in the morning because Mother Teresa gets up long before the sun comes up. She says her prayers before she does anything else. "Everything begins with prayer," she says. After eating breakfast and doing chores with the Sisters, she goes out onto the streets.

You follow her to the parts of the city where the buildings are dirty, the street are full of trash, and the people wear tired, sad looks on their faces. She sees a child, perhaps no older than you, sitting against the wall. His clothes are ragged and his face is covered with dirt. He doesn't have a home and doesn't know where his parents are.

Mother Teresa wipes the dirt off his face and the tears from his eyes. Taking him by the hand, she leads him to a place where the Sisters will give him a bath and new clothes. Then they will try to find a family who will love him and take him into their home.

Mother Teresa continues walking until she comes to the home of a woman who is sick. She's all alone because no one will come near her; they're afraid they'll catch her sickness. Mother Teresa bends over her bed. She gives her some medicine. She washes the places on the woman's skin that are diseased and sore. Then she cleans the room and opens the windows to let in the fresh air.

"God has given us each a lighted lamp," Mother Teresa says. "It is our job to keep it burning. We keep it burning only by pouring oil inside. That oil comes from our own acts of love."

Now follow Mother Teresa to the house of a family who haven't eaten all day. The children are hungry. Mother Teresa gives this family some rice, and their eyes light up. Then the mother of the family does something wonderful. She takes the rice and divides it into two parts. She takes one half and carries it to the family next door, telling Mother Teresa, "They are hungry, too."

Mother Teresa smiles. "We call these people poor. But they are rich in love!"

She feels that all people deserve respect and love.

Follow Mother Teresa a little longer, and you see her walk up to an old, old man who is lying on the street. "How are you doing?" she asks kindly as she gently lays her hand on his shoulder.

His face lights up. "It has been so long since I felt the warmth of another's hand!" he cries. "It has been so long since anyone cared to speak to me!"

Mother Teresa talks to him for a while, giving him comfort. "The worst hunger of all is the hunger for love," she tells you. "The worst sickness is the feeling that no one wants you."

You follow Mother Teresa all day long as she helps people, and the day ends back with the other Sisters. She says her prayers before going to bed.

If you came back another day, you might see Mother Teresa flying to another country to help people who have been in an earthquake. Sometimes she goes to places where there has been a war. If you followed her all over the world you would see thousands of people being inspired by her example. They would begin helping the sick and poor in their own neighborhoods.

Finally, you follow her when she receives one of the highest honors in the world—the Nobel Peace Prize. She accepts the prize humbly, not getting all puffed up with pride. She says about herself, "I am just God's pencil. That is all I am. I am his tiny pencil, and he writes through me. He uses me to write what he likes."

Mother Teresa lived her life following these words, "Let everything you do be something beautiful for God."

Discussion Questions

1. How did Mother Teresa begin her day?
2. What were some of the places Mother Teresa visited on her walk throughout the city?
3. Why did Mother Teresa say that the woman who gave some of her food to her neighbor was "rich"?
4. What can you do today that would be something beautiful for God?
5. How can you show respect for all beings?
6. Mother Teresa says to start with helping your neighbors. Is there someone in your neighborhood that you would like to do something kind for?
7. Mother Teresa said, "Let us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love." Can you offer a smile to the people you meet today?

Background Information

For Mother Teresa, everything started from prayer. When an American journalist approached and asked Mother Teresa if she had a message for the American people, Mother Teresa didn't say "give more" or "love one another more." Rather she answered without hesitation, "Yes, they should pray more."

Mother Teresa was devoutly Catholic and profoundly devoted to Jesus. She found inspiration in praying the Catholic rosary. John Shelby Spong offers these Progressive Christian thoughts about prayer:

I do not pray to a supernatural being who lives above the sky and who in answer to my prayer will change the shape of history or my own personal destiny . . . Most of the prayers I hear people talking about sound to me like adult letters to Santa Claus. I understand prayer to be my attempt to commune with the holy, to be open to the holy, to allow the holy to live through me. ... I also believe that any time any one of us prays for another, it places into the universe positive power that no one can quantify, nor should they try to do

so. ... [Prayer] feeds my sense of growing into oneness with the source of all life and love."

Aspects of Mother Teresa's life that are emphasized in this lesson

- Our behavior shows what we believe in our hearts. Mother Teresa believed the sick, hungry, poor, orphaned, and dying were God's children, just as everyone is, and she devoted her life to taking care of them.

- Prayer is a way to connect with God. For Mother Teresa, everything started from prayer.

Important Dates in the Mother Teresa's life

- 1910: born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu on August 26th, in Skopji, Macedonia
- 1922: decided to live a religious life.
- 1928: joined Catholic Convent in Ireland
- 1931: took the name Teresa while working in India
- 1947: set up her first school in Calcutta's slums
- 1950: started The Missionaries of Charity to serve the poorest of the poor
- 1979: won the Nobel Peace Prize
- 1997: died on September 5th in India

Story: Young People Giving Generously

HOW WE BEHAVE

>> Lesson 6: Young People—Giving Generously

Eight point: By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe.

Affirmation: What I believe in my heart is what I show in my actions.

Getting to the Heart of the Lesson

Generosity means sharing what we have to benefit someone else. A first step in being generous is recognizing the needs of others. The previous individuals highlighted in this unit have exemplified a generosity of spirit as they acted with compassionate hearts to help others. But we don't want to unwittingly give children the message that they have to wait to be an adult before they can be generous. This lesson includes three real-life stories about children, ages 6-13, who saw a need and responded by generously giving.

Keep in mind that children should practice generosity by choice. Giving needs to come from inside for it to be meaningful and build character. As adults, we can encourage generosity, but we should never force it. Forcing children to be generous can cause bitterness and resentment. But when children show the desire to be generous, adult support and positive affirmation can help them put their desire into action.

Each of the young people presented in this lesson saw a need and did something about it. Their stories illustrate that it's not only adults or people from the past who can make a difference. Children can be compassionate and generous, too.

One of the best ways to encourage generosity is by example. After doing this lesson, you may want to involve your class in a project that may already be happening at your church, such as an ongoing service project, helping serve meals at a the homeless shelter, or collecting food for your local food bank.

If desired, take a moment to re-read "The Heart of the Lesson" in Unit 1, Lesson 2: Experience of Joy. Jesus made it clear that to experience the realm of God we need to let go of our fear that without our possessions we are somehow less. He encouraged the rich man to sell all his possessions and give the money to the poor so that he would be free from the hold his wealth had over him.

Teacher Reflection

Take a few moments to acknowledge the generosity in your life — both giving it and receiving it.

- Consider what other generous actions you've done during the past week or month. How do you feel about doing them? What would life be like if you didn't do them? Remember that teaching Sunday school is an act of generosity. You are giving your time, energy, and love to the children in your class.

- Consider what generosity you've received in the past week or month. How have these generous actions made a positive difference in your life? Take time now to mentally thank each person who has been generous to you.

Quotations

"When you combine the wisdom and experience of an adult with the spirit of a kid, great things can happen."

— Zach Bonner (young person who started the Little Red Wagon Foundation)

"The great feeling you get from making a difference in the lives of others is more powerful than anything else you can do."
— Brittany Bergquist (young person who started Cell Phones for Soldiers)

"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can."
— John Wesley

Bible Verses

Matt 6:21
For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

James 1:17
Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Opening the Lesson

Gift Guessing Game

Let the children know that this is the last lesson about how we behave. Say and repeat the affirmation: *What I believe in my heart is what I show in my actions.* Remind them that in the previous lessons, you've talked about people who are good examples of behaving in ways that are based on their beliefs in compassion, trust, love, and respect. Explain that today they're going to learn about young people who believed in generosity and put their belief in generosity into action by helping others. Ask the children:

- Do you know what it means to be generous? (It means to share what we have to benefit someone else.)
- How old do you have to be to be generous?

This activity sets the stage for the stories of generosity that follow in Building the Lesson.

Materials needed: five decorative gift bags (bows are optional); one of the following items placed in each bag: cell phone, framed photo of a happy family, water bottle, stuffed toy animal, child's coat

Preparation: Number the bags one through five and place them around the room.

1. Gather the children in a circle and point out the gift bags around the room. Briefly discuss the fun and excitement of giving and receiving gifts. Let the children know that this is just a game and that no one will be keeping the gifts.

2. Give each child a pencil and paper and have them number their papers from one to five. Then, direct them to one of the bags, spacing them out so that there aren't too many children at one bag.

3. Invite children to guess what gift might be inside the bag. They can pick up the bag and gently lift it, squeeze it, or shake it, but they shouldn't tip it upside down or be rough with it. Tell them to write their guesses next to the number on their paper that corresponds to the number on the bag.

4. Children move around the room to each bag. When done, have them gather again in a circle.

5. Collect the bags and open them one at a time, asking children to volunteer their guesses. Reveal the contents and ask, "Why might you give someone such a gift? Who could use or would like this gift?" Encourage children to talk about the reasons they give to others and how it makes them feel.

Building the Lesson

Thumbs Up — Thumbs Down

Tell children that you're going to make some statements. If they think the statement is true, they should make a thumbs up gesture. If they think the statement is false, they should make a thumbs down gesture.

- There are lots of ways to be share. (thumbs up)
- You don't have to an adult to be generous. (thumbs up)
- Only rich people have enough money to give gifts. (thumbs down)
- Kids can't really make a very big difference in the world. (thumbs down)
- It feels good to give. (thumbs up)

Stories about Young People Giving Generously

Using the props from the guessing game, read the real-life stories about boys and girls who have given generously: Brittany and Robbie Bergquist (Cell Phones for Soldiers), Zach Bonner (water bottles for hurricane victims and help for homeless kids), and Roja (giving her coat to a cold child).

Discuss the questions at the end of each story and the wrap-up questions after all of the stories.

Closing the Lesson

Art Activity: Do It Daily

Materials needed: white paper (one piece per child), crayons or markers

Emphasize that boys and girls in the stories didn't start out to do a big project. They started out small. The important thing is that they didn't just think about doing something, they actually did it. Remind children of the unit's affirmation: *My actions show the love I have in my heart for others.*

1. Ask children what things they can do this week to be generous to family and friends. Remind them that they are generous when they share their time, their talents, and their feelings. Showing kindness, happiness, and love are also ways to be generous. List their ideas on the board. If children need some help, you can share some of these suggestions from the Virtues Project:

- Surprise a brother or sister by making their bed or doing one of their chores.
- Help a parent bring in the groceries.
- Draw a special picture and place it on a family member's pillow or mail it to a relative or friend that lives far away.
- Play the "hello" game and smile by saying "hello" or "nice to see you" to as many people as you can in a single day.
- Bring plastic bags and gloves with you next time you go to the park to pick up litter.
- Ask a parent to help bake cookies for a neighbor. Bring some of those same cookies to the fire station or police station to thank them for their service.
- Sit with someone different at lunch and get to know them.

2. Give each child a piece of paper. Have them first fold it in half lengthwise; then fold it into thirds crosswise. When they open it up, there will be six squares.
3. At the top of the paper write: Every day is a good day to be generous.
4. Invite children to draw a picture in each of the

six squares that will remind them of a generous action they can do each day in the week ahead. For example, they can draw a picture of a grocery bag to represent helping a parent carry in the groceries or a picture of a dog to represent taking their neighbor's dog for a walk.

5. Suggest that they put the picture where they will see it every day as a reminder.

Tip: Explain the meaning of the picture to parents so they can support their child's generosity throughout the week.

Song: All the World is My Friend

An uplifting way to end this lesson and the entire unit is by singing and doing the motions to the song "All the World Is My Friend" by J. Donald Walters. You can listen to the simple tune by searching online for "Joy Singers I Came from Joy."

All the world is my friend.
(Children spread their arms out to their sides as if embracing the whole world.)

When I learn how to share my love.
(Bring arms in and place their hands on their hearts.)

When I reach out my hands and smile.
(Reach arms straight out in front while smiling.)

When I live from above.
(Reach arms straight up above their heads and look up.)

Story: Young People Giving Generously

Robbie and Brittany Bergquist

(While reading the story, use the cell phone and family photo as props)

Robbie Bergquist, age 12, and his sister Brittany, age 13, were having breakfast one morning when they heard a news story about a soldier who racked up an $8000 cell phone bill by calling his family from Iraq.

They thought, "That's not right! The troops had to pay for their own calls home? Didn't they have a right to call home?" Robbie and Brittany had a cousin in Iraq and they knew how worried their parents were when they hadn't heard from him for a while.

Right then they decided to help pay the soldier's phone bill. So they ran up to their bedrooms, pulled the plugs out of their piggybanks, ran back downstairs, and threw $14 on the table. At school, they collected another $7 from their friends. When they brought the $21 to the bank to start an account, the bank manager was so impressed he added an additional $500. This encouraged Robbie and Brittany to keep at raising money.

The kids held car washes and bake sales, but eventually decided to recycle used cell phones and buy phone minutes. (pull out the cell phone) Then they sent the phones to soldiers who could call home for free.

News stations did stories about Robbie and Brittany, and soon the project skyrocketed. Brittany said, "Thousands of people wanted to support the troops, but they never had a way to do it." Soon cell phones filled their garage, blocked their front hall, and surrounded the piano in their living room.

Every day after school, they'd have phone messages and e-mails waiting for them. Working on their project every free moment, they missed school games, dances, and parties. Even though it was hard sometimes, Robbie said, "This is our fun."

They started a charitable organization called Cell Phones for Soldiers. "We take for granted our ability to call home and speak to our families," said Brittany. "The troops don't do that. They appreciate what we're doing. That's what sparks us to do more." They get thank yous from soldiers who have been able to stay connected to their families. [show family photo] Robbie appreciates

all that his parents have done to help them. "We have the perfect family to start a program like this," he said, "the most supportive parents."

By 2012, Cell Phones for Soldiers had provided more than 150 million minutes of free calls to soldiers and had recycled nearly 10 million cell phones. Robbie and Brittany aren't teenagers any more, but they are still helping soldiers.

Discussion Questions

1. Who do you like to call on the phone?

2. Who do you like to get a call from?

3. Do you think that Robbie and Brittany had fun finding ways to be generous?

Zach Bonner

(While reading the story, use the water bottle and stuffed toy animal as props. Also use a U.S. map.)

When Zachary Bonner was six years old, a hurricane hit Florida and left many people without any water. Zach's neighborhood in Valrico, Florida had plenty of water, so he decided to help. Zach was inspired by Peace Pilgrim, which we learn about in Unit 6. Going door-to-door with his little red wagon, Zach collected water bottles for people in need. [pull out the water bottle] By the time he was finished, he had collected 27 truckloads of water bottles.

After that experience, Zach realized how good it felt to help people. So he just kept doing it. Along with help from others, Zach started an organization to help homeless children called Little Red Wagon Foundation. There are now volunteers from all over the U.S.

When he was 10, Zach decided to do a charity march. He called it "My House to the White House" and did it in three stages [Use the map to show children the 3 stages.] At first Zach's mother thought he was too young for such a big project. But she knew he would finish anything he started, so she said okay. "Zach likes to do charity work," she said. "This is what he wants to do."

In stage one, he walked from Tampa to Tallahassee, Florida. In stage two, he walked from Tallahassee to Atlanta, Georgia. And in stage three, he walked from Atlanta to Washington, DC. That's a total of almost 2,000 miles! Zach said, "If you have love in your heart then you have to use it. It takes a lot of hard work but it's a lot of fun." He gave the money he raised to homeless shelters for kids in Tampa and Washington, DC. "Kids need a safe place to sleep," Zach said. [pull out the stuffed animal]

In 2010, when Zach was 13, he walked across America from Tampa to Los Angeles. [show map] It took him from March to September. When asked if it was hard to do, Zach said, "When you're having a bad day you (have) to realize that someone else is having a lot worse of a day than you."

Zach says that his plan is to keep helping as many kids as he can, have fun, and keep it simple.

Discussion Questions

1. After collecting bottles, why did Zach keep helping others?

2. Why did Zach want to help others?

Roja

(While reading the story, use a child's coat as a prop.)

Some projects, like Robbie's, Brittany's, and Zach's get a lot of attention. They appeared on TV and in magazines. But there are children helping others every day who never get a lot of attention, but feel good about what generously giving whatever they can. Roja is a good example.

Roja had a simple birthday at home with her family. They had all contributed a little money to buy her a new winter coat. She thought it was the most beautiful coat she had ever seen. As a special birthday surprise they took her out for dinner ...

As they all walked happily back to the car, Roja noticed a little girl on the street. She looked about the same age as Roja. But she was dirty, cold and alone. Roja's eyes stayed fixed on her as the girl slowly approached the car with her hands stretched out, as if asking for something.

Roja, her brothers and parents searched the car for some fruit or something healthy to give to the little girl. But on that day they had nothing. Roja noticed the girl's runny nose and kindly offered her a tissue. The little girl walked away wiping her nose and her tears. Roja sat silent and then said to her mother "Mommy, that little girl is sick because she is cold. May I give her my new coat, please?"

Her mother said, "If that is what you want to do, of course you may." Roja jumped out of the car and ran towards the little girl, taking off her coat as she went. She wrapped the coat around the girl's shoulders and came back to the car.

Roja smiled and began to shiver. Her younger brother Kamal, who noticed that Roja was cold, took off his coat and wrapped it kindly around her shoulders.

This story is excerpted from the "Virtues in Action" book on generosity by the Children's Virtues Development Project.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Roja smiled?

2. How does this story show that giving is contagious—spreads to others?

Wrap-up Questions

1. How old were the children in the stories?

2. Jesus taught about giving to the poor and being generous. He told a rich man to give away all his possessions so that he could be free. Do you think that we can feel more free and joyful when we give?

3. Even though the actions the children did were different, what is similar about the stories?

   (If not mentioned by children, you can add the following: They saw a need and thought of a way to meet that need. They didn't have a lot of money to start with. They didn't do it alone. Their parents and others in the community helped them. Being generous made them feel really happy.)

Background Information

Although the stories are about children, these young people (especially Robbie, Brittany, and Zach) couldn't have done what they did without help and support from adults. In some cases, it took technical and organizational resources as well as media coverage to spread their message. However, the children's ideas and enthusiasm got the ball rolling. As Zach said, "When you combine the wisdom and experience of an adult with the spirit of a kid, great things can happen."

Aspects of young people's lives that are emphasized in this lesson

- Generosity is contagious. These young people inspired others to give too.

- Giving feels good. Each of the young people expressed how good they felt to help others.

- Kids can make a difference. These young people began their projects when they were six to 13 years old.