

LIFE OF CHRIST
from the gospel of
Matthew

LESSON 6

LOVING YOUR ENEMIES

MATTHEW 5:38-48

Life of Christ

Loving Your Enemies

Matthew 5:38-48

Younger Verse

“Love your enemies.” Matthew 5:44

Older Verse

“I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you.”
Matthew 5:44 (CEV)

Lesson Goals

Learn that followers of Jesus must love all people
Understand what it means to love our enemies
Remember the three things Jesus said to do for our enemies

Welcome Time

Think of ways you can be nice to someone (give them a card, share a snack or toy, pray for/with them, etc.). In today’s lesson, we will talk about being nice to those who are not nice to us. So we should do the kind things you mentioned to ALL people—even our enemies! And you might turn an enemy into a friend!

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible before teaching it. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

Jesus continued to teach his followers about how to live. He started with different attitudes He wanted them to have. Then He talked about sharing His light with others. Today, we will look at His teaching about how to deal with difficult people.

Jesus had a lot to say about how to treat other people. He said to *always* love others. And this means even loving those who are unkind. Just because they are not as easy to love doesn’t mean we shouldn’t love them. In fact, Jesus said we can show people that we are God’s children by loving those who do not love us.

Ask: Can you think of a time when someone was nice to you even though you had not been nice to them? How did it make you feel? Jesus told His followers that they should not try to get back at a person who had hurt them. Instead, they should show kindness. This is sometimes different than what we *feel* like doing. But we must obey Jesus because we *know* it is the right thing to do.

So rather than fighting someone who has hit us, we should **pray for them** and walk away. Even if someone does something that *really* hurts us—like telling lies about us or making fun of us, we should **forgive them, love them and pray for them. These are the three things Jesus told his disciples to do for their enemies. We must do the same.**

Jesus set the example for us. After He was arrested, the Jewish leaders found people to tell lies about Him to get Him in trouble. And before He was crucified, the soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head and said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and laughed at Him. They continued to mock Him—all the way to the cross and His death. But do you know what He prayed when He was on the cross? “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Wow! That is a huge amount of love and forgiveness.

Jesus loves us, too! He died and came back to life so that we can live in heaven with God one day. We must believe and trust in Jesus. He died for all the wrong things we have done. We must trust Him and ask Him to come into our life. Jesus will stay with us forever and take us to heaven one day. Do you believe in Jesus? We can share with you how; just ask.

Review Questions

1. How can we show people that we are God's children?
(Answer: by loving our enemies)
2. What are the three things Jesus said we must do for our enemies?
(Answer: Forgive them, love them and pray for them.)
3. Should we only be nice to those who are nice to us?
(Answer: No! We must be kind to ALL people—even those who are not kind to us.)
4. How did Jesus set the example of loving enemies?
(Answer: On the cross, he prayed for the people and asked God to forgive them.)

Prayer Time

Pray for God to give us strength to love even our enemies. Tell the students to pray silently for the person/people they have a hard time loving.

Life Application

Jesus taught His disciples to “treat others the way you want to be treated” (Luke 6:31). Ask the students if they would like to have these things done to them.

1. Someone trips you in the hallway.
2. A student helps you with your homework.
3. When you fall down at recess, everyone laughs at you.
4. You move to a new class, and a person invites you to eat at their table at lunch.

God cares about how we treat each other. He made all of us, and He loves all of us! He wants us to look for the good in people. Get the kids to think of good things they can say about each other. You can start, then go around the circle. Examples: smart, fun, nice, etc.

Planning for Next Lesson
The Lord's Prayer
Matthew 6:5-14

Preschool Lesson
For
Loving your enemies

One day, Jesus sat down and talked to His friends. He told them that God loved them very much. He also told them that they should love other people. Jesus told His friends that they should love *everyone*, not just the people who were nice to them.

It is easy to love people who are nice to us. It is much, much harder to love people who are NOT nice to us. But Jesus said people will know we are God's children if we love EVERYONE.

Ask: Can you think of a time when someone was nice to you even though you had not been nice to them? How did it make you feel? Jesus told His followers that they should not try to get back at a person who had hurt them. Instead, they should show kindness.

Jesus didn't mean that we should like the bad things that people do. We should love the person, not what they are doing. And we have to keep doing the good things that God wants us to do.

Jesus really did tell the people to be kind and love ALL people. He told them that God also loved everyone and cared for ALL people. Jesus wants us to be kind to others too. He wants us to love and care for others just like He cares for us.

Let's pray and ask God to help us be kind to ALL people this week.

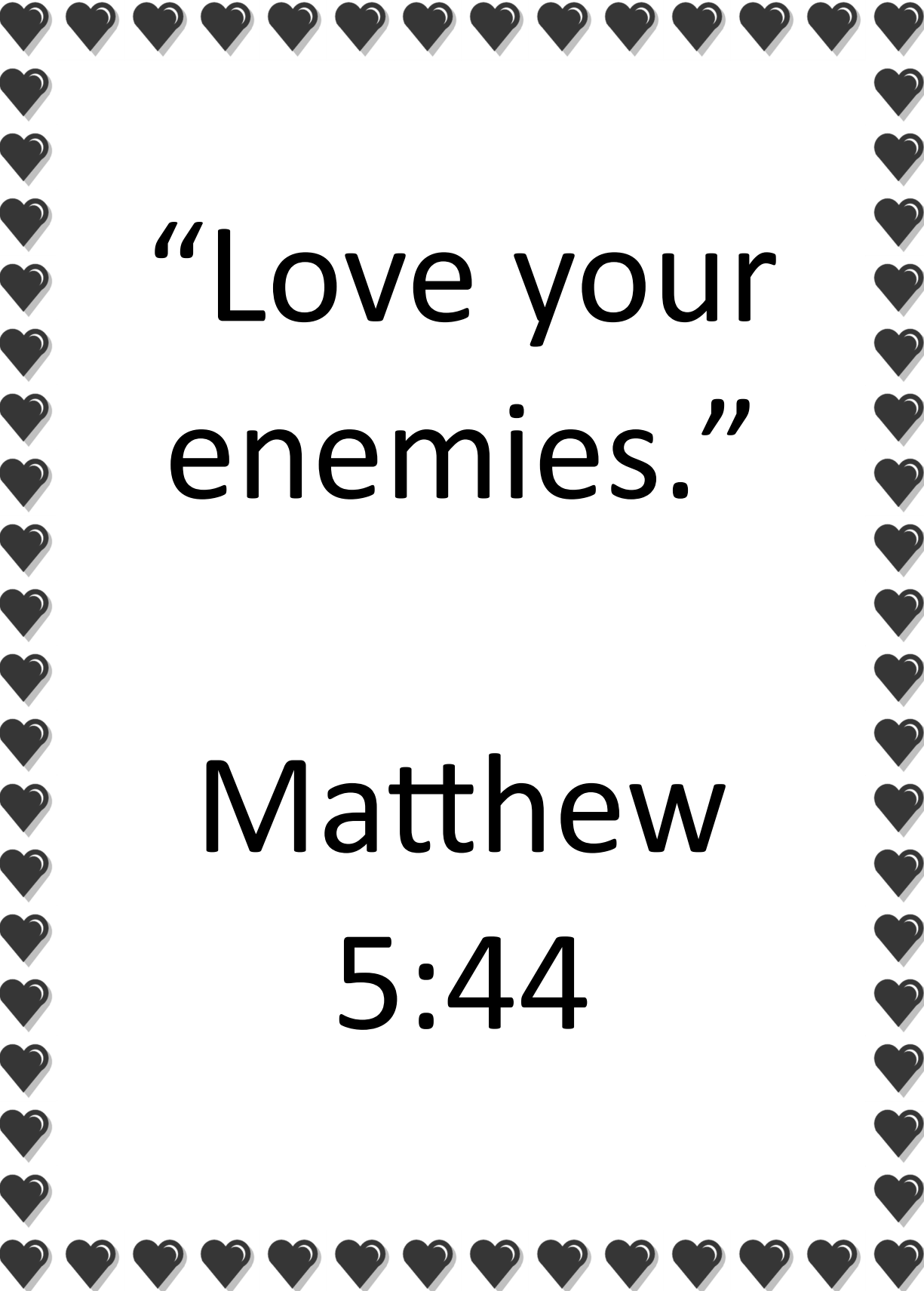
Hands-on Activities For Loving your enemies

Sing “Jesus Loves Me,” but change the words to “Jesus Loves You.” Have the kids point to each other while they are singing. *“Jesus loves **you**, this I know, for the Bible tells **you** so. Little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves **you** . . . The Bible tells **you** so.”*

Bring a piece of sandpaper for the kids to feel. Scratch it on a surface—paper or wood. Ask the kids if they would want to sleep on or sit on sandpaper. No! It doesn’t feel comfortable. Sometimes we don’t feel comfortable around certain people. We may think they are “rough around the edges.” When we pray for them and love them, God will smooth out the rough edges and we may become good friends! Let the kids feel something soft like cotton or silky material.

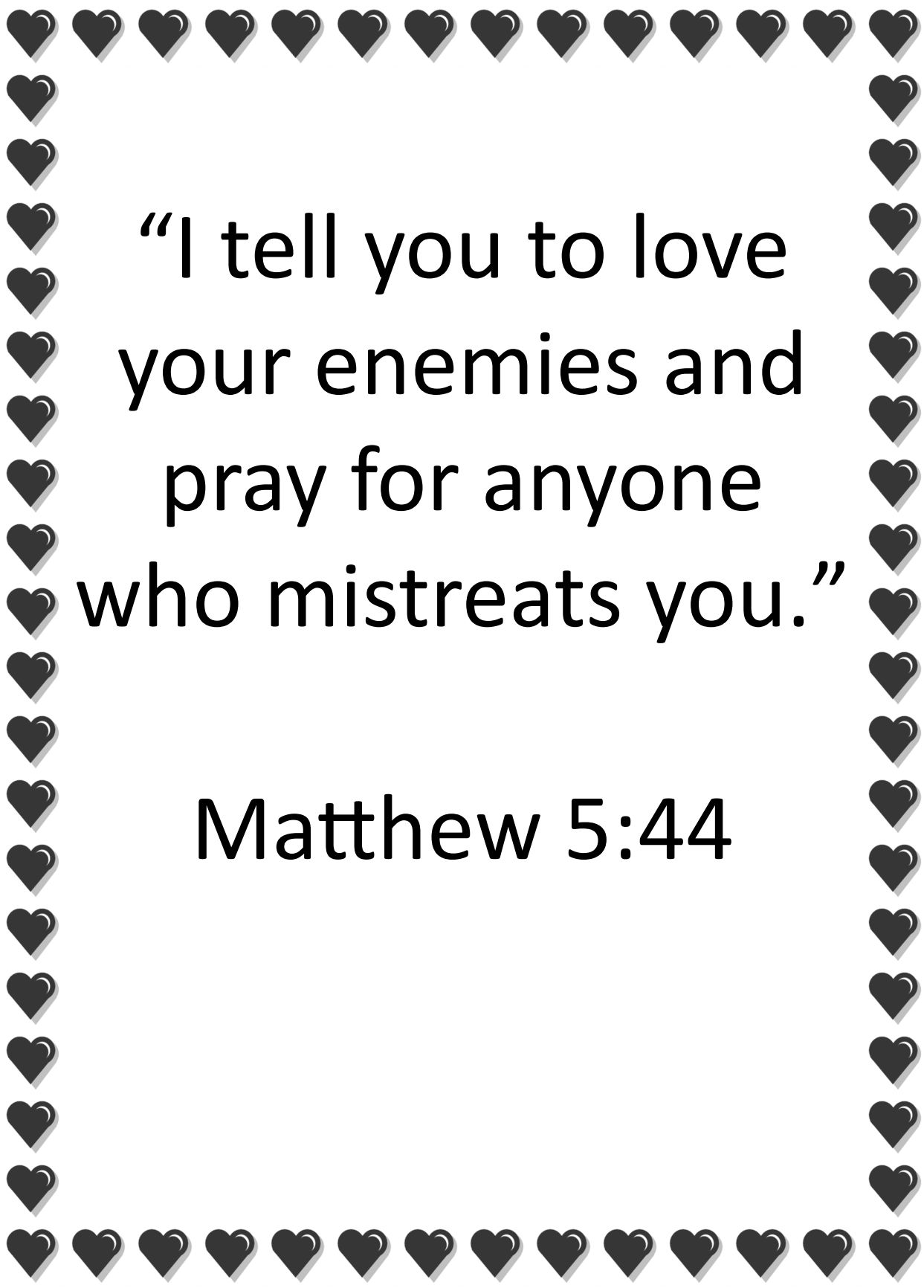
Bring two magnets that repel on one side and attract on the other side. Have the magnets face the repelling side. Try to slide the magnets together. As they repel, share how most people feel like this towards their enemies. Now turn the magnets so that they attract. Explain that Jesus wants us to love our enemies and pray for those who want to hurt us. Show the kids how the magnets stick together.

Make hearts with construction paper. Have the children write “Love your enemies” on their heart. Then on the other side, write “Pray for your enemies” to remind them to pray for those who have hurt them.



“Love your
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Matthew
5:44



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Matthew 5:44

E U T C A P A S Z I J F
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you

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your
anyone
you