

*Get Ready!***Blessings**

By: Myra Montgomery

**Text**

Matthew 5:1-12

Key Quest Verse

Pay attention, my children! Follow my advice, and you will be happy. Proverbs 8:32 (CEV)

Bible Background

Here is Matthew's understanding of the central points in Jesus' teaching. Just as Moses went up the mountain to bring a new law to the people, so Jesus from the mountain describes the way God wants us to live now. Jesus commends the meek, the merciful, those with undefiled hearts, and those who work for peace. These are virtues we have come to know throughout our whole history with God. Others in the list are more surprising. Jesus blesses the poor, the hungry, and the weeping as well as the virtuous, recognizing the injustice of their situation and assuring them of God's care.

Get Ready!

Lesson Quest

What I want my students to:

Know: God blesses those who follow Jesus.

Feel: When something bad happens, God takes care of us.

Do: Jesus' followers are gentle, kind and peaceful.

Leader's Devotion

The Beatitudes describe the characteristics of the collective community of Christians. An individual may not have all the virtues described, but God wants us to try to obtain as many as we can.

Get Set!**Option A**

Materials: A tub of water, a bar of soap, a towel, and a banana.

(In very dramatic fashion, begin by washing and drying your hands. Then take out the banana, peel it, and take a bite before beginning your lesson) **Do you ever forget to wash your hands before eating? Oh, I think that we all forget occasionally. I am sure that it is a good thing to wash your hands before eating, but, according to Jesus, there are some other things that are far more important. The religious leaders during the time Jesus lived were very concerned about cleanliness. They had many religious laws and traditions which they followed to make sure that nothing unclean went into their mouth. One day some of these religious leaders asked Jesus why his disciples were not keeping their tradition of washing their hands before they ate. (I guess Jesus' disciples sometimes forgot like you and I do.) Jesus answered these religious leaders by telling them that what comes out of your mouth is more important than what you put into it. He said that the words that come out of your mouth come from your heart and those words show whether you are clean or unclean. Jesus talked about the importance of having a pure heart and many other things. Let's take a look at our lesson!**

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Option B

Probably everyone here this morning has sung the song, "If You're Happy." You know the one I'm talking about—"If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. If you're happy and you know it clap your hands. If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it. If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands." I wonder how that song would go if it were sung by a bunch of birds? Maybe it would go like this, "If you're happy and you know it, flap your wings." What do you think a dog would do to show that he was happy? Wag his tail? "If you're happy and you know it, wag your tail. (swish-swish) If you're happy and you know it wag your tail. (swish-swish) If you're happy and you know it, then your tail will surely show it. If you're happy and you know it wag your tail. (swish-swish)"

I heard a story about a little puppy that noticed that whenever he was happy, his tail wagged, so he thought he had found the secret to happiness. One day he shared the secret of happiness with an older dog. He said, "I have learned that the best thing for a dog is happiness, and that happiness is in my tail. So I am going to chase my tail; and when I catch it, I shall have happiness!" The old dog replied, "I too, believe that happiness is a marvelous thing for a dog, and that happiness is in my tail. But I have noticed that when I chase it, my tail keeps running away from me; but when I go about my business, it follows me wherever I go." Let's read about what Jesus said about true happiness.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Get Set!**Bible Story**

Advanced Preparation: Provide markers for students to highlight portions of the story in their Bibles.

“Come”, Joshua called to his friend. "Jesus is up on the hill. Let us go hear what he has to say." Many people came to hear Jesus teach. Often Jesus would sit on the side of a hill so that people could see him while he shared with them how they could grow in God's way. The Beatitudes are some of the things that Jesus shared with the people. The word Beatitude means "blessings".

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)

- God blesses those people who depend only on Him.

They belong to the Kingdom of heaven.

- God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort!
- God blesses those people who are humble. The earth will belong to them!
- God blesses those people who want to obey Him more than to eat or drink.

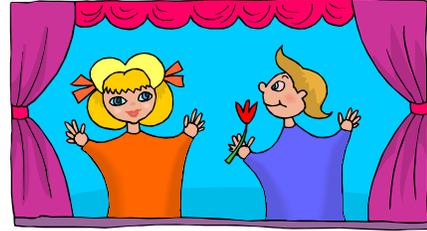
They will be given what they want!

- God blesses those people who are merciful. They will be treated with mercy!
- God blesses those people whose hearts are pure. They will see Him!
- God blesses those people who make peace. They will be called His children!
- God blesses those people who are treated badly for doing right.

They belong to the Kingdom of God.

- God will bless you when people insult you, mistreat you, and tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me. Be happy and excited! You will have a great reward. People did these same things to the prophets who lived long ago.

Go!



Blessings Play

PUPPETS

Materials: Several copies of the Resource Pages puppet scripts, four or more puppets

Quest Connection

Procedure: There are 2 skits. Each has 4 characters. You may have to repeat one of the skits to give everyone a chance to perform or you might choose different options about who speaks depending on how many children are present. Let each child have a chance to operate a puppet or they will be disappointed. There are a lot of questions provided, probably more than you could possibly cover. Choose the questions you feel are most relevant for your age group, but do ask enough questions to relate these skits to the concepts we are teaching about God.

Divide the class into groups of four children that want to perform with a puppet. (Infrequently, a child does not want to operate a puppet.)

You have several options about who will read the parts. You may pre-record the entire skit on cassette tape before class to read all the puppet parts while children act out with the puppets.

You may also allow each child to read and act out his/her own puppet part. Give out scripts to each group and assign parts. Many scripts are written such that any gender can play the parts. Names are usually only used as prompts for the puppeteers. Let the children line up quietly to choose a puppet.

After skit 1 (or all versions of skit 1), ask the performers to sit down and have a brief discussion with all children about what happened in the play. Some possible discussion questions follow.

After Joshua got hurt, how did his friends comfort him? bought soda, visited him, brought cookies, plan to make a card, showed concern and made sure everyone knows about it who might care for Joshua **Who else helped comfort Joshua?** his own mother took him to the doctor, father is buying safer equipment, doctor is helping to heal him, other mom is making cookies **If you were Joshua how would all this attention make you feel?** loved, cared for, comforted...

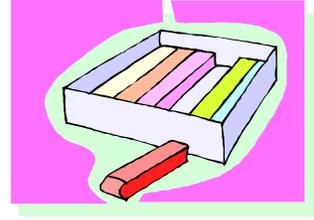
What are the good things that came out of this accident? Joshua knows his parents and friends will care for him when bad things happen; He is going to be more careful, and maybe his friends will be more careful, too; He is getting a better helmet; He is going to recover fully, so he wasn't hurt too badly **Do you think it was just "luck" that kept Joshua from getting hurt badly?** probably the difference between having faith in God and not—when we have faith we believe God cares for those who trust in Him; when we do not have faith we believe it was luck or good coincidence. **Where do you think the good things come from?** ultimately from God, sometimes directly from Him and sometimes through other people who are loving, kind, and caring like Jesus **Can you think of anyone who might need some comfort today because something bad is happening to him or her?**

Go!**Quest Connection**

Procedure: Perform skit 2. After skit 2 discuss the skit together: **Why was Matthew nice to the new kid, David?** felt sorry for him because he seemed lonely, wouldn't want to feel that way himself. **Have you ever tried to think about how someone else might be feeling?** might mention this is called empathy. **If you did, did it make you want to help them more? Which child was acting more like Jesus, the one who thought the new kid was strange or the one who tried to be nice to him?** Nice. **How else did Jesus suggest we behave, through his words and his actions?** gentle, peacemaking, loving, faithful...**Do you know what Jesus did for you?** died so that your sins would be forgiven. **Does Jesus ask much of us, considering what he has already done for us?** NO! **Are there reasons you don't feel like being nice?** Don't like someone, don't like an activity, hungry, tired ... **Should you be nice anyway?** Yes, because Jesus asks us to be nice. **Do you think that if you try to be nice, it will become easier with time?** Yes. **What will happen if we are nice, as Jesus and God ask us to be?** We will be blessed, sometimes immediately like in this story, sometimes later on, God and Jesus see and know all that we do.

Close

Tell the children to draw a face that seems gentle, kind, loving, and peacemaking. They can write, "I will try to be like this" on their drawing paper.

Go!**Sidewalk Art****ARTS/CRAFTS****Materials:** Colored chalk**Quest Connection**

Procedure: Take your class out to a sidewalk or parking lot and let them become sidewalk artists! Leave the masterpieces for others to enjoy!

Suggest the following ideas: **Draw a picture about a time you were gentle. Draw a picture of what you think a peacemaker looks like. Draw a picture of what you will do to be more pure in heart.**

Close

Read the Beatitudes to your students.

Go!**Acting Out****DRAMA**

Materials: A list of The Beatitudes

Quest Connection

Procedure: Discuss each Beatitude with children, give or ask children to give examples of how a person would act who is following each Beatitude. See attached “examples sheet” for ideas and suggestions.

After discussing the Beatitudes ask children to form small groups (2 to 3 per group). Depending on the group you may ask the shepherds to help you assign groups or children can select their own groups. Each group can choose a Beatitude to act out. It does not matter if several choose the same one. They shouldn’t tell which one they have chosen.

Next, the small groups develop a little skit or scene demonstrating their Beatitude. Give them about 10-15 minutes to practice. Wander about from group to group giving suggestions and encouragement. They can be acting out a modern or a biblical scene.

Close

After practicing have children gather in a circle to watch each other’s skits/scenes. Have each group perform without telling which Beatitude they are acting out. When they are done ask the audience to guess which Beatitude was demonstrated and why they thought so. Give praise and cheers (maybe a small prize such as a sticker) for right answers.

Go!**Book Making****LITERATURE**

Material: Several sheets of plain paper, markers, colored pencils or crayons, copy of the Resource Page-Book for each student.

Quest Connection

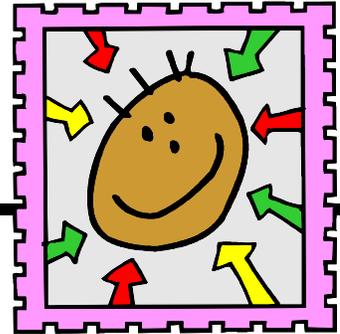
We are going to make a book. These are the words to a prayer, asking God to help us follow the directions for living that Jesus gave us in the Beatitudes.

Make the books any size you desire. Have students cut apart each verse of the prayer. Glue one verse on each page. Have students illustrate the verse on each page.

Close

Say the Key Memory Verse together. You may want to have this verse printed on a banner and hung in the room, write it on the white board in the room, or have it on slips of paper that each child can take home.

Pray! Ask the children if they have any prayer requests. Thank God for sending Jesus to show us how to live so that we can do what is right and be blessed.

Go!**Let It Stick****GAME****Materials:** Assorted stickers, Bible**Quest Connection**

Help the students form two groups. Place a sticker on the back of each person in the first group. Then give a few people in this group extra stickers, which they will hold in their hands. The other kids in this group should pretend to have stickers in their hands. Tell the second group (those without stickers) that they must try to keep the people in the first group from placing stickers on their backs.

Begin the game, allowing the first group to chase the second group and put stickers on their backs, or pretend to do so. When the first group has given away all its extra stickers, stop the game. The players from the second group who now have stickers on their backs will become part of the first group. Repeat the game until everyone has been “stuck” in one group.

Close

It is so easy to get caught up or stuck with a group of friends that don't really follow the teachings of Jesus. What are the friends like that you hang around with? Are you both a good influence on each other? Read the Beatitudes

Go!**Wipe It Away!****OBJECT LESSON****Materials:** Kerosene lamp, matches, wiping cloth**Quest Connection**

Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

When you bring the lamp to class have it all shiny and clean. Light the wick and replace the glass globe. Talk about how this light was the light of Jesus in our heart for all to see. Slowly turn up the wick and have it burn too brightly so that the glass will become sooty and black. Explain that it is the sin that creeps into our lives, bad language, stealing, lying, teasing others and things that hurt others and God. Try to wipe this away from the outside by saying I will do better, I'll try to stop, etc . . . but the dirt will remain deep down in our heart. Now our light is so dull and barely visible for others to see that we are Christians, and we can't shine for Jesus. The only way to clean this sin away is to ask Jesus to forgive us, and to ask others to forgive us too. God then cleans the inside of our hearts (remove the globe and allow to cool for a moment while you talk and now clean the inside with a cloth). As it becomes clean talk about how only God can forgive our sins and clean our hearts .We need to ask for forgiveness often and not let our light become so dull. We are examples for God and other people are watching us to see if we mean what we say. We need to keep our lives clean so others will be drawn to God by our example and love for Him, and we can tell others so they can have the light of Christ in their lives too!

Close

These are the words to live by—to be faithful disciples—a light to everyone in this great big, sometimes scary world.

JOURNAL

Prompts for journal writing: Make strips of paper with the following sentences and put them in a bag. Ask each child to pick a paper and finish writing their sentence. Then share your answers. Option: try acting out the sentence instead of reading it. Younger children may need to have their sentence read to them and can draw instead of write.

Today I will show mercy or comfort to...

Today I will be humble about...

Today I will make peace with...

Today I will help the poor by...

When someone calls me a name or treats me badly I will...

Today I will follow and obey God better by...

Use water paints and paint the picture of Jesus teaching the Beatitudes to the crowd.



Pay attention, my children! Follow my advice, and you will be happy. Proverbs 8:32 (CEV)

The Beatitudes

J E H I G H U T B U N M Z X O
R N A I U I W F F I R F E O M
W R C M H R R Z J E U A A E E
D D B A N P E S R Q O Y S W K
T L A I O E K L F J M C Y I O
E E A G N Q A R Q K J D P S Z
O M U Y Q H M W E M E T B A Z
P O O R J I E F V Z L L C Q S
C X R J D C C R M A U X O W M
D R A W E R A F I F N O M X Q
J B L E S S E D I T H P F Y O
Z S M A T I P C X V U T O K B
K M M O R C R H U R U C R L E
B V O G Q E G M E I F W T A Y
Q F A K M I F Z W J H I H Y E

BLESSED MERCIFUL INHERIT
MOURN COMFORT MEEK
 OBEY EARTH
 PEACEMAKER GRIEF
 POOR HUMBLE

RESOURCE PAGE

PUPPET SKIT 1

For Goodness Skate!

Scott: “I keep thinking about what happened to Joshua. I was with him at the new skate park, and he fell down pretty hard. I bought him a soda with my own money.”

Angelica: “My mom said it really hurt when he fell and he kept getting worse all night. His mom took him to the doctor the next day. The doctor said he pulled a muscle and can’t do very much for a while.”

Frank: “My mom made me go visit him. She said I should cheer him up. She made a whole batch of chocolate chip cookies for me to take. I was glad I went. He was really bored and a little sad, but he told me it was his fault. He said he was trying to cut in front of someone because he didn’t want to wait. He said once he’s better, he’s going to be more careful at the skate park.”

Elizabeth: “You mean he’s going to skate again?”

Frank: “Sure, as much as it hurt, Joshua said he thinks it’s going to make him a better skater. He said he’s not going to be in such a hurry.”

Angelica: “I heard his father is buying him a better helmet. The skate shop said Joshua was lucky that he didn’t really hurt his head because his helmet didn’t fit right.”

Elizabeth: “I hope all this makes up for what happened to him. I wouldn’t want to get hurt like that. I think I’ll make a card for him.”

Scott: “When bad things happen, maybe good things happen to make up for it. Who knows—this might have kept Joshua from getting really hurt in his old not-so-good helmet. This way he’s going to be OK, and he’s going to be more careful.”

Elizabeth: “That’s kind of what my mom says when bad things happen. She says that later on we can see how God was with us during the bad times. Then she always says, ‘Thank you God!’”

RESOURCE PAGE

PUPPET SKIT 2

IT PAYS TO BE NICE

Ben/Beth: “Why were you talking to that new kid? He seems a little strange.”

Matthew/Mildred: “He looked a little lonely. I wouldn’t want to be a new kid and have everyone ignore me, so I asked him some things about himself.”

Mom/Dad: “That’s nice, Matthew. That is the kind thing to do. It helps to think about how you would want to be treated—it helps you treat other people more nicely.”

Ben/Beth: “But what if I don’t feel like being nice?”

Mom/Dad: “You should act nice to everyone, no matter who they are or how they treat you, even if you don’t feel like being that way. After a while, it will get easier when you find out that most other people treat you nicely in return.”

Matthew/Mildred: “The new kid’s name is David, and he was really nice to me. He invited me to come to a hockey game. His Dad has tickets.”

Ben/Beth: “I wish I’d been nice to that kid.”

Mom/Dad: “But your reward for doing the right thing is not always so quick. Don’t be expecting every new kid you’re nice to, to take you to something exciting.”

RESOURCE PAGE

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-12 CEV

⁵ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the side of a mountain and sat down.

Blessings

Jesus' disciples gathered around him, ²and he taught them:

³God blesses those people who depend only on him. They belong to the kingdom of heaven!

⁴God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort!

⁵God blesses those people who are humble. The earth will belong to them!

⁶God blesses those people who want to obey him more than to eat or drink. They will be given what they want!

⁷God blesses those people who are merciful. They will be treated with mercy!

⁸God blesses those people whose hearts are pure. They will see him!

⁹God blesses those people who make peace. They will be called his children!

¹⁰God blesses those people who are treated badly for doing right. They belong to the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹God will bless you when people insult you, mistreat you, and tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me.

¹²Be happy and excited! You will have a great reward! People did these same things to the prophets who lived long ago.

RESOURCE PAGE- BOOK

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