

3

Who Are the Blessed?

Service
Like Jesus, we love and serve others unconditionally.

POWER TEXT

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

KEY REFERENCES

- Luke 6:27-36
- Matthew 5:43-48
- Romans 12:14-21
- *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, chap. 3, pp. 73-75
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 62-65
- Student lesson on page 42 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation
- No. 11, Growing in Christ
- No. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that we serve God when we love people who are not easy to love.
- **Feel** that God loves all people and wants them to love the same way.
- **Respond** by thinking of ways to show love for those we find difficult to love.

POWERPOINT

We honor God when we serve people who are not easy to love.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jesus tells people to forget the old way of thinking of your enemies; He has a new way. His way is to love them, do good to them, pray for them. Why? Because God's children behave differently from others in the world; we reflect God.

This is a lesson about service.

Serving people who can return a favor or pay back a kindness is not the type of service Jesus talks about in this lesson. This is about serving when there is no hope of a thank you, when people may get angry just because you are there, or not even notice the kindness at all. This is the role of real Christian service, the foundation of Christlike servanthood: doing good for the sake of the Master, without the hope of reward.

Teacher Enrichment

No instruction of Jesus has ever generated so much debate as the directive to love one's enemies. The Greek word used here is *agapan*. "*Agapan* extends love even to those who do not love us. *Agapan* is selfless. . . . *Agapan* . . . can be and is commanded, for it is under the control of the will. To *agapan* our bitterest enemies is to treat them with respect and courtesy and to regard them as God regards them." "Christian love seeks the good of all . . . , whatever their race or creed" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 340).

This kind of love is what distinguishes the Christian from others. It demonstrates that the Christian ethic is positive and is patterned on God's grace.

"God pours His blessings upon all. 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' He is 'kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.' Luke 6:35. He bids us to be like Him" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 311).

Whom do I consider an enemy? What can I do to really love the unlovable in my world? Why is it difficult to love juniors at times?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Love Love or Just Love?*	Bibles, poster board, markers
		B. Friends and Enemies	Bibles, newsprint, pens/pencils, markers
		C. World Enemies	world map, markers
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 37. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, glove
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	Bibles
		Experiencing the Story	Bibles
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenario*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Hard to Love*	paper, pencils
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments	
		B. Reminder to Parents	
		C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ poster board
- ☐ markers

Love Love or Just Love?

Ask students to get into groups of three to five. Give each group a piece of poster board or some large paper along with markers. Say: **Think about the different kinds of love you feel and experience with your family and friends. Brainstorm for two or three minutes as many different kinds of love as you can, and name them so others can understand. Then sketch an illustration for each type of love, putting your name for it below the sketch.**

Give the students opportunity to go around and look at the work other groups have done.

Debriefing

Ask: **How many types of love did you think of? Why are there different types of love? Jesus realized that there are different types of love, such as love between friends, love between a husband and wife, love between parents and children. He also mentioned another kind of love: love for your enemies. Did anyone illustrate that one? How is this kind of love like or unlike the love you feel and experience in your other relationships? How would you characterize this kind of love? How do you show it? Let's say together our power text, Romans 12:21:**

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

Our power point reminds us that:

We honor God when we serve people who are not easy to love.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ newsprint
- ☐ pens/pencils
- ☐ markers

Friends and Enemies

Organize the class into groups of three or four. Distribute to each group a large size paper, markers, and pens or pencils. Have each group use their supplies to write and/or draw about how people treat their friends. Allow students to share the lists or drawings they created to describe ways friends treat each other.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did Jesus ask us to treat our enemies? Let's find and read Matthew 5:43-48. How does this relate to what you have just drawn?** Say: **Jesus asks us to love our enemies. Just as we love our friends and do good things for them, we need to treat our enemies lovingly and kindly.**

Our power text is Romans 12:21. Let's say it together,

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

Today we are learning that:

We honor God when we serve people who are not easy to love.

(Adapted from Michael Warden, ed., *Ready to Go Meetings for Youth Ministry* [Loveland, Colo.: Group, 1992], p. 100. Used by permission.)

C

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ markers

World Enemies

Before Sabbath School, prepare a list from a current news magazine and have it ready to make it available to the students. Ask students to work as a group and mark on the world map countries that are having conflicts involving violence and/or war within their own border or with other countries.

Debriefing

Ask: **How many countries did you mark? What does this say about our world? What message did Jesus leave us in regard to treating others? Let's repeat together our power text, Romans 12:21:**

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

Jesus was telling us that:

We honor God when we serve people who are not easy to love.

Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Give Me Oil in My Lamp" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 139)
"Love Is in Your Hand" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 134)
"Love, Love" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 132)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults* (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location of the mission story.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ glove

Say: **Our offerings sometimes go to help people who might be considered enemies of Christianity—people who are cruel to others or are involved in tribal or national wars. In some respects, then, we are following Jesus' command to love our enemies when we give our offerings. Our glove can represent the hand of a person who does not know Christ or His grace.** Continue to use a plastic or cloth glove to collect the offering in the next few lessons this month.

Prayer

Say: **Think of names of one or two people who are unkind to you. Let's pray that God will give you the ability to really love these people.**

Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Introducing the Bible Story

Tell class members to close their eyes for a few minutes and think of someone who has treated them badly and acted like an enemy. Ask: **What did that person do to you? How did you respond? Today we'll be learning about how Jesus asks us to treat our enemies.**

We honor God when we serve people who are not easy to love.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Experiencing the Story

Ask the class to take turns reading aloud from Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36; and Romans 12:14-21. Then divide the students into groups of four to eight. Say: **Create a short skit that illustrates how you can apply the verses we read to your own lives.**

After the skits are presented, ask: **How difficult is it to actually do these things? Can they be done? Why does Jesus tell us to do them? Did Jesus act this way?**

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3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Exploring the Bible

Divide the students into six groups. Ask each group to take a text that is written on the board and find people who demonstrated loving their enemies:

1. 2 Kings 5:1-3 (Captain Naaman and wife's maid)
2. Luke 23:32-34 (Jesus and those who crucified Him)
3. Genesis 45:1-7 (Joseph and brothers)
4. 1 Samuel 24:1-7 (David and Saul)
5. Acts 7:54-60 (Stephen and those who stoned him)
6. Acts 16:22-34 (Paul, Silas, and jailer)

Ask: **What common elements do these loving people possess? How easy is it to do what they did? How would you have reacted if you had been in their place? Let's repeat together our power text, Romans 12:21:**

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

Remember our power point:

We honor God when we serve people who are not easy to love.

Accommodations for students with special needs:
Have students with visual impairments sit near the board or prepare for them ahead of time a handout in large font, listing the Bible references for this activity.

Scenario

Read the following scenario to the students:

Love my enemies? No way! How could anyone ever do that? **Saliba couldn't believe what he was hearing.** ***Besides, why does Jesus want me to do that?*** **He thought about the old man down the street who always yelled at him and accused him of stealing his things when he had never done anything to make him angry. Then he thought about his teacher last year who picked on him just because he was a Christian—no other reason.** ***How can I love them? Why should I?***

Debriefing

Say: **Saliba comes to you, trying to figure this out. How could you help him to understand what Jesus says and why? What personal experience would you be able to share? How can you share with him that:**

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4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

Hard to Love

Allow time for students to share with the class what they did during the past week to show kindness to those who were unfair to them or mistreated them. Ask: **Did you have a chance to show kindness to someone who is giving you a hard time? Did you pray for anyone who is hard to love?**

Say: **List at least six ways you can demonstrate love to those who are not easy to love. Think of one person in particular and make a plan to show love to that person. Write down your plan and take it home to share with another person. Keep a written record of your daily efforts and the impact on others of your unselfish love. Think of how sharing Jesus' love with others has changed you.**

Debriefing

Ask: **What example does Jesus give for how to treat people who are hard to love? How can you remind yourself of your plan to show love to someone during the week? As you show love to someone who is hard to love, what do you think the results will be? How can kind acts that you do for others help you personally?**

We honor God when we serve people who are not easy to love.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Say: **Dear Jesus, we want to be like You and love people even when they don't love us. Please give us opportunities to show them Your love. Amen.**

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to guide your children spiritually. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Jesus heals the son of a royal official. As we serve others we can introduce them to Jesus.**

Notes

Student lesson

Who Are the Blessed?

Would you like to experience lasting joy and real fulfillment? Would you like to feel blessed even when people are unfair to you? Let's look at Jesus' secret to how this is possible.

Try to imagine what it would have been like living in Jesus' day in Palestine. Picture children's giggles and laughter as they played outside, perhaps climbing trees, playing tag or hanging out with their friends. While mothers cooked the next meal, fathers worked at their trade. Suddenly everyone stopped what they were doing. Joyfully they began to run toward the same place. They had just received the good news that Jesus had come to their town! They couldn't wait to be with Him and to hear what He had to say!

Jesus sat down on the warm grassy hillside, and everyone found a comfortable place where they could listen. Smiling at the crowd, Jesus began to teach. The fascinating thing was that Jesus often had surprising things to say. Today He taught about how anyone can be truly blessed. This was exciting! Who doesn't want to be blessed? To most people being blessed means being rich, famous, smart or good-looking. Eagerly the crowd waited to see what Jesus would say.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," Jesus began, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

Wow! Now, that was unusual. Who would think that being poor is a blessing? Isn't it a blessing to have everything? Well, often when people are really rich or famous they are not humble enough to realize that they need God. And a life without God has no real meaning or joy. Jesus was talking about those who are "poor in spirit," who recognize their need of God and His guidance in their lives. Only those who invite God into their lives will benefit from the blessing of His presence.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (verses 4-6).

Think about the significance of these words. Blessed are those who want to know God as much as they want food and water. Nothing can quench your thirst or satisfy your hunger except real food and water. Nothing this world has to offer can ever fill the deepest needs of your heart except Jesus. He is the answer if you are sad, worried, or lonely. A life filled with Jesus is exciting, peaceful, and joyful.

At this point Jesus looked at the crowd and continued, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (verses 7-9). Do you want to be a child of God? Be a peacemaker! Include that classmate of yours who maybe doesn't look attractive or who doesn't act just right. Be a friend to everyone. Then you will experience real happiness in your heart.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven" (verses 10-12).

Blessed are those who do what is right even if people treat them unfairly. Yes, it can be hard to do what is right especially if you feel you are all alone. Some may even laugh at you for taking a stand for what is right. Don't get discouraged. Pray and ask Jesus to give you wisdom to stand firm no matter the circumstances.

Jesus also included a teaching that people today call the golden rule. Jesus said, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12). In other words, Jesus calls us to treat others the way we want to be treated. Your friends may tell you to "get even" with a mean person or "ignore them." But what if you heaped extra kindness on them when they were mean? Can you imagine what your classroom or your home would be like if everyone practiced the golden rule? Pray not just for your friends and family but for those that are mean and unfair. Jesus will give you the wisdom and power to love your enemies.

Jesus doesn't just want us to "do good things" or to "avoid doing bad things." He wants to change our hearts completely so we can love God and others unconditionally. God will help grow your faith so you won't even worry like you used to. You will know that God can take care of you and He has a solution even for impossible situations.

Do you want to experience real joy? Do you want to be truly blessed? Invite Jesus into your life so that you can treat others the way you want to be treated, with unconditional love!

KEY REFERENCES

- Luke 6:27-36
- Matthew 5:43-48
- Romans 12:14-21
- *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, chap. 3, pp. 73-75
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 62-65
- Our Beliefs, nos. 10, 11, 14

POWER TEXT

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

POWER POINT

We honor God when we serve people who are not easy to love.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 32.

Sunday

READ Read Matthew 5:43–45 and this week's lesson, "Who Are the Blessed?"

WRITE Write the power text on a small card and place it in your Bible where the text appears.

REVIEW Review the power text, Romans 12:21.

PRAY Ask God to forgive you for holding grudges against people who have done wrong to you.

Monday

READ Read Matthew 5:46–48.

ASK Ask an adult to tell you about a time they showed kindness to an enemy. What happened? What did they learn from their experiences?

WRITE Write a note asking for forgiveness to anyone you may have treated unkindly.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray that the person you may have wronged will forgive you.

Tuesday

READ Read Luke 6:27-36.

THINK Think of specific ways you can do each of the following this week:

a. "Love your enemies" (verse 27).
b. "Do good to those who hate you" (verse 27).
c. "Bless those who curse you" (verse 28).
d. "Pray for those who spitefully use you" (verse 28).

MAKE Choose one of the four quotations above. Using a material of your choice (clay, Play-Doh, papier-mâché), make an object that illustrates the quotation you chose.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you act on your plan to do good.

Wednesday

READ Read Romans 12:14–21.

LIST Think of a person that is hard for you to like. List three things you can do to show kindness to this person. Look for opportunities this week to do these things.

THINK What does it mean to be "overcome by evil" (verse 21)? How can you avoid that?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you treat difficult people with kindness.

Thursday

READ Read Psalm 23:5.

THINK Why should this verse be encouraging to a person who has enemies?

FIND During a nature walk or in a nature book, observe how an animal or plant responds to its enemies. How is this similar or different from how you respond to your enemies? How does knowing Jesus make a difference?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you be loving to your enemies.

Friday

READ Read Luke 6:27–36.

THINK If everyone in your school—students, teachers, and administrators—lived by the principles outlined in this Bible passage, how would school life be different?

LIST In your Bible study journal, list some ways your school would be a better place if everyone followed the teaching of Jesus described in Luke 6:27–36.

WRITE Write a song or a poem that tells how we should respond to our enemies. You might take a song you already know, and write totally new words about loving your enemies every day. Sing your song, or read your poem to someone else.

REPEAT Repeat the power text by memory.

PRAY Ask God to help you live by His principles.