**Backpack Blessings 4-Week Children’s Ministry Curriculum**

**Highlighters**

**TAGLINE:**

A School Year Focused on Blessing Others

**BOTTOM LINE:**

Focus your attention on sharing words of encouragement!

**OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn, “I can highlight others with words of encouragement.”

**KEY PASSAGE:**

Mark 14:1-9, Jesus Anointed at Bethany

**MEMORY VERSE:**

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

**SUMMARY:**

Highlighters help us keep track of the important information in our textbooks and notes. When others criticized the woman anointing Jesus' feet, the Savior encouraged and “highlighted” her loving actions. We can bless others when we encourage them. When we “highlight” the good things that they are doing, it uplifts them and encourages them to do it more.

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

Help us look for the good in others and encourage them to see it. Help us be highlighters the way that you are the light!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**MEMORY VERSE**

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIV)

“And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.” Hebrews 13:16 (NLT)

“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Hebrews 13:16 (KJV)

**LARGE GROUP:**

Introduce the memory verse by reading it to the kids from your Bible. Ask, “What does it mean to be good to others? What are some examples of that?” Say, “God is asking us to look for opportunities to bless others. I’m challenging us all to take that seriously and really work on being kind, encouraging, and sharing with others this week!”

**SMALL GROUP:**

Give each small group leader a backpack with highlighters for each kid. Instruct leaders to open up the backpack and hand out a highlighter to each kid. Next, ask them to highlight the verse in their Bible or write it down on a piece of paper and highlight it that way. After kids have read and highlighted the memory verse, invite them to go around in a circle highlighting one thing God has done that is good in their lives.

**That is One Way to Behave, but this is Another!**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

4 Chairs

4 Desks (or a table for all the kids to sit at, facing the teacher)

4 Books

4 Backpacks

**CHARACTERS:**

Ryan

Lindsey

Amy

Booker

Mrs. Blessing

Narrator

**CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:**

Ryan – male student

Lindsey – female student

Amy – female student

Booker – male student

Mrs. Blessing – Teacher

Narrator

*Begin with Mrs. Blessing standing on stage right facing her students to the left and the students in their chairs facing their teacher.*

MRS. BLESSING: Everybody be quiet, now! Get out your books, hurry up. You are moving too slow today.

*(Students get out their books from their backpacks and put them on their desks. Ryan moves slowly.)*

LINDSEY: Hurry up, Ryan. You are so slow.

RYAN: Oh yeah, well you are mean!

AMY: You both are annoying just be quiet.

BOOKER: Annoying? Amy, you are the most annoying in the class!

AMY: Hey! That’s not true Booker.

*(Everyone in the class freezes. The narrator steps on to the stage from stage right.)*

NARRATOR: That scene we just watched was hard to see. From the teacher’s impatience to the children’s unkindness to one another, it was not how God asked us to treat one another. Hebrews 13:16 says, “Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” There was a lot wrong with the way everyone was treating one another. Let’s try that scene again, and this time, we will do it from a place of following Jesus and loving others the way He loves us!

*(The narrator leaves the stage and everyone unfreezes and begins the scene again.)*

MRS. BLESSING: Good morning kids! I’m so happy to see you all today. Let’s all get out our books.

(Everyone gets their books out except for *Ryan who has trouble with the zipper on his backpack.)*

LINDSEY: Ryan, would you like some help with that?

RYAN: Yes, please. Thanks, Lindsey, my zipper is stuck.

*(Lindsey helps Ryan and he is able to get out his book.)*

MRS. BLESSING: You are doing a great job, Lindsey, thanks for helping your friend.

LINDSEY: Thanks, Mrs. Blessing.

*(Amy looks in Lindsey’s backpack.)*

AMY: Wow, I love the design on your notebook in your backpack, Lindsey, did you draw that?

LINDSEY: Yeah, thanks Amy! I love to draw.

BOOKER: You are really good at drawing.

MRS. BLESSING: Great job following directions and getting out your books, let’s all turn to page 15 and can I have a volunteer to read?

*(Booker raises his hand.)*

BOOKER: I will, Mrs. Blessing.

MRS. BLESSING: Excellent, Booker. Thank you for volunteering, you are a great reader.

*(Everyone freezes. The narrator enters the stage again.)*

NARRATOR: The second way was much better than the first. People were treating one another kindly and with respect. The teacher was a good example and the children helped and encouraged each other. Can anyone raise your hand and tell us one way the teacher, Mrs. Blessing, shared words of encouragement? Can anyone raise their hand and share one way that student gave words of encouragement? Great! We can spend our time acting one way or another. If we choose to be unkind and harsh with others, we will discourage one another and make each other feel worse. If we choose to be kind, patient, and encouraging, we will lift one another up and highlight the things that each other does well. This will encourage others to do more good!

END SCENE

**OBJECT LESSON**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

Highlighter

This highlighter does a great job emphasizing the words that it highlights. As you highlight words, they stand out! A highlighter makes a great tool in school because you can highlight a new word in a paragraph to help you learn it or highlight an answer to a problem to help you remember how to solve it in the future.

This new series that we are learning about is called Backpack Blessings! In our backpacks at school, we carry many things. One thing we can carry is a highlighter. Highlighters help us keep track of important information in our textbooks and notes. But did you know that you and I can act like a highlighter too? It’s true! We can bless others when we encourage them. When we highlight the good things that they are doing, it uplifts them and encourages them to do it more!

One great way to be a highlighter at school is to tell your friend when they do a great job running in gym class, high five your friend when they get a good grade on a test and they are excited about it, and encourage your friend by telling them they ‘can do it’ when something is hard and it will help them try again, compliment your friend when you like their art, their ability to play an instrument, or their other amazing talents! When we highlight the good things about each other, we help others see the good in themselves and it gives them confidence.

This school year, let’s focus on blessing others! This is just one way that we can bless one another. By highlighting the good we see in others to help them see their potential and live up to it! God has given us all the potential to follow Him, choose good, and live out the purpose He has given us! And we get to highlight that for one another to help each other see the good that God has placed in us!

**LARGE GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY**

**Highlight the Good!**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

Glow Sticks

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Have kids sit in a large circle. Turn off the lights and have them all crack their glowstick so that it glows. Begin the game by handing your own glowstick to a kid in the circle and offer words of encouragement to them. (Point out something good that they have done, something positive about them, or compliment them.) That kid will now have two glow sticks. The person with two glowsticks must take a turn to complement/encourage another friend by getting up and giving a glowstick to that friend. Once they have received and given a compliment they must move to the middle of the circle and have a seat. Kids can only choose those who are sitting around the outside of the circle to give the next encouragement to. Keep going until everyone has received words of encouragement. Ask the last kid who gets a compliment to share one encouraging thing to say about the entire class so they have a turn to share words of encouragement.

**VARIATIONS:**

For a very large group, split the kids in half and have two or three circle games going at the same time.

**WHAT’S THE POINT?**

This is good practice for us to encourage one another and to be looking for ways to lift one another up.

**LARGE GROUP LESSON**

**Highlighters**

**TAGLINE:**

A School Year Focused on Blessing Others

**BOTTOM LINE:**

Focus your attention on sharing words of encouragement!

**OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn, “I can highlight others with words of encouragement.”

**KEY PASSAGE:**

Mark 14:1-9, Jesus Anointed at Bethany

**INTRO:**

We are beginning a new school year and as we do, let’s focus this new year on blessing others. A SCHOOL YEAR FOCUSED ON BLESSING OTHERS is all about kindness, patience, encouragement, being a good and trustworthy friend, sharing with those in need, and praying for one another. Let’s start the year off right by following what scripture tells us to do. “Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings!” It’s all about FOCUSING YOUR ATTENTION ON SHARING WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT!

Let’s play a quick game from our seats. If I say something that is good or a way to share with others, stand up. If I say something bad, stay seated. Are you ready?

Laughing at someone who falls down. *(sit)*

Cheering your friend on at a basketball game. *(stand)*

Handing a tissue to someone who sneezed. (*stand)*

Offering some of your apple slices at lunchtime. *(stand)*

Telling someone they aren’t good enough to play. (*sit)*

Telling someone how nice their shirt is. (*stand)*

Bragging about how great your dessert is and not sharing it. *(sit)*

You guys did great. We can recognize when we are being a blessing to others and when what we are doing is unkind and unhelpful. Today we will read how Jesus blessed and encouraged others as a great example of how we can do that too.

**READ MARK 14:1-9**

**MAIN POINT:**

How did Jesus act as a HIGHLIGHTER? When other people criticized the woman anointing Jesus’ feet, He encouraged and “highlighted” her loving actions. She did something loving and good as a sacrifice for Jesus when she gave away all her perfume. Jesus said how kind and loving it was. He pointed it out and helped the woman and everyone else in the room see that she had done the right thing. “She did what she could!” Jesus acknowledged and pointed out the good that the woman did. We can do the same of one another, acting as highlighters.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is the light. It also tells us that we are to be the light like Jesus. So when we notice people being the light, we can highlight that! We should celebrate that! We can point it out and let them know they are doing a good job! We can encourage others when they are good at things because those are blessings from God. Just like Jesus did for the woman who anointed Him with oil, we can encourage others when we see the good things they are doing because it encourages them to do it more.

**DRIVE IT HOME:**

This year is a SCHOOL YEAR FOCUSED ON BLESSING OTHERS! We can HIGHLIGHT OTHERS WITH WORDS OF ENCOURAGMENT. Look for ways to encourage others all week long! Take notice of the good things they do and point them out! Take notice of the good things Jesus is teaching you to do, and thank Him for changing your heart to be more like His!

**CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

Help us look for the good in others and encourage them to see it. Help us be highlighters the way that you are the light!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)**

**ICEBREAKER:**

What is your favorite thing in your backpack?

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:**

Hebrews 13:16

Give each small group leader a backpack with highlighters for each kid. Instruct leaders to open up the backpack and hand out a highlighter to each kid. Next, ask them to highlight the verse in their Bible or write it down on a piece of paper and highlight it that way. After kids have read and highlighted the memory verse, invite them to go around in a circle and highlight one thing God has done that is good in their lives.

**SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:**

Create a highlighter race. Have kids line up on one side of the room, and drag one foot across the floor like a highlighter, race to the other side of the room without lifting their one foot, and using their other foot move across the room. They will have to shift weight from the foot they are moving and the foot they are dragging, back and forth to make it to the other end. See who can “highlight” the floor and make it all the way across first!

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Read Mark 14:1-9

What did Jesus recognize as good that the woman did?

Why was it good?

What is one good thing someone did for you this week that you can thank them for? (Parents, siblings, friends, teachers, etc.)

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

You are Holy and good. You are the one who teaches us how to be good. Thank you for showing us love so that we can love others with our actions.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3RD-5TH)**

**ICEBREAKER:**

What is your favorite thing in your backpack?

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:**

Hebrews 13:16

Give each small group leader a backpack with highlighters for each kid. Instruct leaders to open up the backpack and hand out a highlighter to each kid. Next, ask them to highlight the verse in their Bible or write it down on a piece of paper and highlight it that way. After kids have read and highlighted the memory verse, invite them to go around in a circle and highlight one thing God has done that is good in their lives.

**SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:**

Create a highlighter race. Have kids line up on one side of the room, and drag one foot across the floor like a highlighter, race to the other side of the room without lifting their one foot, and using their other foot move across the room. They will have to shift weight from the foot they are moving and the foot they are dragging, back and forth to make it to the other end. See who can “highlight” the floor and make it all the way across first!

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Read Mark 14:1-9

How did Jesus highlight the woman’s actions?

Why were they good?

How can we do better at recognizing others for good deeds?

What is one good thing someone did for you this week that you can thank them for? (Parents, siblings, friends, teachers, etc.)

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

You are Holy and good. You are the one who teaches us how to be good. Thank you for showing us love so that we can love others with our actions.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME**

**TRUE OR FALSE**

Many people thought what the woman was doing was a waste of perfume.

TRUE

Jesus saw the woman for the heart that she had and knew that she did it out of love.

TRUE

God’s word tells us to not to forget to be bad and take from others.

FALSE

We can highlight other people’s good actions by speaking encouraging words to them the way Jesus did to the woman with the perfume.

TRUE

One way we can encourage someone is by telling them they are doing a bad job.

FALSE

**MAKE IT STICK**

5 Simple Ways to Make This Week's Lesson Stick

**IN THE CAR:**

On the drive home, ask your child what he learned about this week:

How can we highlight the good things that other people do? With words of encouragement which uplifts them and encourages them to do it more! Jesus encouraged the woman who poured perfume on Him because she did it out of love for Him. Mark 14:1-9, Jesus Anointed at Bethany

**HANGING OUT:**

Make this week's lesson real:

Ask your kid who in their life could use some encouragement this week.

Ask your kid if they have been remembering to encourage their friends/siblings throughout the week.

**AT DINNER:**

Here are some great discussion starters:

Why is it sometimes hard to encourage other people when they are doing good?   
  
What can get in the way of us doing that well?

Why do you think it was hard for the people to see the good in what the woman was doing pouring the perfume on Jesus?

**AT BEDTIME:**

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

**PARENT TIME:**

This series is all about blessing other people around us! One way we can do that is by highlighting the good things we see in others. This encourages them to keep being good! Take some time to highlight good qualities in your child and let them know what they are. Positive reinforcement helps kids to recognize their strengths and also to see their potential. We all have the potential for good when we follow Jesus!

**TAKE HOME ACTIVITY**

**Highlight the Good Poster**

**Items you will need:**

Highlighters (pink, yellow, green, blue, etc.)

Cardstock Paper

Ask kids to make a poster by writing good qualities that they have in bright highlighter colors all over their poster. Encourage them to hang this up at home to remind them of the good that God has done in their lives and that He has taught them to do!

Examples: Creative, Kind, Fun, Entertaining, Smart, Courageous, Patient, Happy, etc.

**Backpack Blessings 4-Week Children’s Ministry Curriculum**

**Calculator**

**TAGLINE:**

A School Year Focused on Blessing Others

**BOTTOM LINE:**

Focus your attention on being a good friend!

**OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn, “I can bless others by being reliable and trustworthy.”

**KEY PASSAGE:**

John 21:15-19, Jesus Reinstates Peter

**MEMORY VERSE:**

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

**SUMMARY:**

Some teachers allow students to use a calculator to count up the right numbers in their math problems. We want to be human calculators for our friends; letting them trust that they can count on us to keep our word. We can reflect Christ’s love to others by keeping our word to our friends and doing what we say we will do. Even though Peter did not always keep his word, he devoted his life to following Jesus when he experienced Christ’s forgiveness.

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

Help us to be good friends that others can count on and trust!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**MEMORY VERSE**

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIV)

“And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.” Hebrews 13:16 (NLT)

“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Hebrews 13:16 (KJV)

**LARGE GROUP:**

Ask, “What is a true friend like?” Describe a true friend with words like, “loyal,” “trustworthy,” “kind,” “faithful,” “honest,” etc. Put the memory verse up on the big screen. Ask, “Does this verse describe a true friend? Yes!” Ask a few volunteers to share about one of their friends and a few reasons why they are such a good friend to them. Say, “That is a blessing, that God has given you such a good friend. Today I want to challenge us to be true friends to others, just like those people you described!”

**SMALL GROUP:**

*Ahead of time, write the verse in large print and cut out each word individually. Put each word inside of its own blown-up balloon.*

Hand a balloon to each kid. Ask them to stomp on it to find a piece of the memory verse. Then instruct kids to work together to piece the verse together in order. If there are more balloons than kids, hand out a second balloon for each kid, and so on, until all the words are revealed.

**That is One Way to Behave, but This is Another!**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

4 Chairs

4 Desks (or a table for all the kids to sit at, facing the teacher)

4 Pieces of Paper

4 Pencils

**CHARACTERS:**

Ryan

Lindsey

Amy

Booker

Mrs. Blessing

Narrator

**CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:**

Ryan – male student

Lindsey – female student

Amy – female student

Booker – male student

Mrs. Blessing – Teacher

Narrator

*Begin with Mrs. Blessing handing out paper and pencils to each kid at their desk. Then walks to stage right to stand in front of the students.*

MRS. BLESSING: We will begin the oral test. I will ask you questions, and you will write down answers in complete sentences starting with #1.

*(Amy raises her hand.)*

MRS. BLESSING: Yes, Amy.

AMY: Mrs. Blessing, you said we wouldn’t have a test until next week.

MRS. BLESSING: I changed my mind.

RYAN: But, that’s not fair!

BOOKER: I haven’t studied yet.

MRS. BLESSING: Calm down students.

LINDSEY: You lied to us!

AMY: Lindsey, you are no different! You lied to me. You said I could borrow your animal eraser yesterday and then you didn’t let me.

MRS. BLESSING: Now we are really getting off subject.

RYAN: That’s just like Booker! He promised he’d help me practice for basketball and then when we got out to recess, he went to play football with someone else instead.

BOOKER: I changed my mind!

*(Everyone freezes. The narrator enters stage right.)*

NARRATOR: Looks like this classroom has gotten out of hand! What seems to be the problem here? Mrs. Blessing told the kids the test was next week and then changed it at the last minute. The students in the class were not being reliable friends to one another. Saying one thing, and doing another. That is what we call being untrustworthy. But what if it all happened another way?

*(Everyone unfreezes.)*

MRS. BLESSING: The paper that I just passed out to you is your study guide for next week’s test. I am going to review what we have learned and I hope you take notes so that you can study from this paper. But first, we will do indoor recess because it’s raining today!

AMY: Hey Lindsey, can I borrow your animal eraser like you said I could?

LINDSEY: It’s my favorite, so please be careful with it Amy. But yes, you can borrow it since I promised!

AMY: Yay, thank you! It is so cool.

RYAN: I’m bummed.

BOOKER: What’s wrong?

RYAN: Yesterday you played football, and now today it’s indoor recess. I wanted you to help me practice basketball, remember?

BOOKER: Oh yeah! Hey, I totally forgot about that yesterday, Ryan. I’m so sorry!

RYAN: You did? I thought you just decided not to help me.

BOOKER: No way man! I just forgot.

RYAN: So you’ll still help?

BOOKER: Yeah, definitely, the next day that we have outdoor recess.

RYAN: You are a good friend, Booker.

*(Everyone freezes again.)*

NARRATOR: What a difference that was. It was like night and day. How important is it for us to be reliable, trustworthy, and true to our word? It’s so important. When we do what we say we will do, people learn that they can trust us and that is what makes a good friend and a good example to others. From Mrs. Blessing to the students, everyone is responsible for keeping their word and being a loyal friend!

END SCENE

**OBJECT LESSON**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

Backpack with a Calculator inside

Last week the object from our school backpack we focused on was a highlighter! And we learned to be like the highlighter, to highlight the good in other people by pointing it out with words of encouragement! This week, I’m going to dig into this backpack and see what I can find!

Ah, yes. Take a look at this! It’s a calculator. What does a calculator do?

Calculators count up numbers to find the answer to a math problem. Just like a calculator can be counted on to find the correct answer, we can be like a calculator and allow other people to count on us. What does it look like for someone to count on us?

It means that they can rely on us. That we do what we say we are going to do. That we are a faithful trustworthy friend. That we are loyal and we will continue to be a good friend they can count on.

As long as you put the problem in the calculator correctly, it will give you the correct answer every time. People are not perfect, we make mistakes. But we can still try to be a good friend and someone others can count on. Jesus is the perfect example of a reliable friend. When we reflect on Christ’s love to others, we see how to be loyal and trustworthy.

**LARGE GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY**

**Lean on Me!**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

N/A

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Have kids partner up and stand back-to-back. Instruct kids to lean their back on their friend's back, and vice versa. Both will be leaning on one another. Each counts on the other to lean so that they don’t fall. Set a 2–3-minute timer. Tell partners to stay learning as long as they can. If anyone moves or falls, ask them to have a seat and wait for the rest.

Next, have the kids turn to face their partner. Instruct them to put their arms out in front of them and lock hands with their partner. Then lean towards one another again, each counting on the other one to keep leaning so no one falls. Set another 2–3-minute timer.

Finally, ask kids if it was hard to rely on someone else. Encourage kids to remember that friendship is about being there for one another.

**VARIATIONS:**

N/A

**WHAT’S THE POINT?**

Friendship requires trust! When we lean on our friends, they also need to be able to lean on us. It’s a two-way street. Friendship only works if both friends are reliable, trustworthy, and loyal!

**LARGE GROUP LESSON**

**Calculator**

**TAGLINE:**

A School Year Focused on Blessing Others

**BOTTOM LINE:**

Focus your attention on being a good friend!

**OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn, “I can bless others by being reliable and trustworthy.”

**KEY PASSAGE:**

John 21:15-19, Jesus Reinstates Peter

**INTRO:**

This new school year is focused on blessing others! How have you been a blessing to others this past week? Does anyone have an example of a way they were able to encourage a friend? It’s great to hear that you guys are practicing being a highlighter of good! Today we are going to FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON BEING A GOOD FRIEND. What does it mean to be a good friend and how can we do that!?

Jesus had many friends and he was always the perfect friend to them. Jesus, God’s son, is perfect and never made mistakes. His friends, however, sometimes did. And Jesus offered them forgiveness and grace. We are going to make mistakes sometimes because we are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God. But we can look at Jesus as our example and become a better friend. The closer we are to Jesus, the more we become like Him. So, let’s dive in and read John 21:15-19 to learn more about what it’s like to be a true friend.

**READ JOHN 21:15-19**

**MAIN POINT:**

This might not be what you would have expected. Jesus asked Peter if he loved him 3 times! It sounds like Jesus took Peter’s love and loyalty seriously. Sometimes we want to know if someone is our true friend. We might ask the question differently like, “Do you want to be friends?” or offer them a BFF bracelet.

When we ask someone if they will be our friend what we are really asking is, “Do you love me?” Not in a romantic way, of course, but in a loyal way. In a way that says that they care about us, they will be reliable and trustworthy. Someone that we can count on and that can count on us. That’s what friendship is.

But Jesus also had a command for Peter to do. He kept telling him to “Feed my sheep.” What do you think that meant? Well, in the Bible, God’s people are referred to as His sheep. Jesus was saying that if Peter truly loved and followed God, that He would love others, care for others, and tell others about Jesus. That’s what “Feeding His Sheep” means. To be a true friend of Jesus means that we are true friends to one another. Matthew 25:40 says, “Whatever you have done for the least of these brothers and sisters, you have done for me.” When we love others well, it's one expression that we love God well! This is because He is our shepherd and we are his sheep. He is our father and we are all His children. God wants us to be true, reliable, loyal, trustworthy friends to one another.

Peter didn’t always keep his word. He made mistakes. He denied that he even knew Jesus when Jesus went to the cross. The opposite of being a loyal friend. But Peter devoted his life to following Jesus once he experienced Jesus’ forgiveness for his sins. When we commit to following Jesus and He forgives us for our sins, we commit to becoming more and more like Christ! This means being a friend the way Jesus is our friend.

**DRIVE IT HOME:**

WE CAN BLESS OTHERS BY BEING RELIABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY! LET’S FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON BEING A GOOD FRIEND. This week, think about how you can be someone others can rely on, how you can stay loyal, and how you can keep your word and do what you say you are going to do. This is the mark of a good friend, and when we have Jesus in our hearts, we can be that good friend!

**CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

Help us to be good friends that others can count on and trust!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)**

**ICEBREAKER:**

What do you count on and use/need the most in your backpack?

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:**

Hebrews 13:16

*Ahead of time, write the verse in large print and cut out each word individually. Put each word inside of its own blown-up balloon.*

Hand a balloon to each kid. Ask them to stomp on it to find a piece of the memory verse. Then instruct kids to work together to piece the verse together in order. If there are more balloons than kids, hand out a second balloon for each kid, and so on, until all the words are revealed.

**SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:**

*Ahead of time, gather one calculator, paper, and pencils.*

Play, “Can you keep up with the calculator Game”. Give kids math problems to solve. Check the answer with the calculator and if they get the answer right, they can move on to the next round. If not, they can sit and watch the rest of the game. Continue on until everyone is out or until you run out of time.

Examples of easy problems to start out with: 1+3= , 5-2=, 10+4=

Examples of more difficult problems: 19-4=, 20+15=, 7x4=, 12/3=

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Read John 21:15-19

What did Jesus ask Peter?

What did He tell Peter to do?

What is one example of how to be a true friend?

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of friendship! Help us to be good friends to one another!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3RD-5TH)**

**ICEBREAKER:**

What do you count on and use/need the most in your backpack?

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:**

Hebrews 13:16

*Ahead of time, write the verse in large print and cut out each word individually. Put each word inside of its own blown-up balloon.*

Hand a balloon to each kid. Ask them to stomp on it to find a piece of the memory verse. Then instruct kids to work together to piece the verse together in order. If there are more balloons than kids, hand out a second balloon for each kid, and so on, until all the words are revealed.

**SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:**

*Ahead of time, gather one calculator, paper, and pencils.*

Play, “Can you keep up with the calculator Game”. Give kids math problems to solve. Check the answer with the calculator and if they get the answer right, they can move on to the next round. If not, they can sit and watch the rest of the game. Continue on until everyone is out or until you run out of time.

Examples of easy problems to start out with: 5+6=, 10+10=, 9-3=

Examples of more difficult problems: 37-12=, 45+39=, 8x9=, 100/25=

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Read John 21:15-19

What did Jesus ask Peter?

What did He tell Peter to do?

What does it mean to “Feed my sheep?”

What is one example of how to be a true friend?

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of friendship! Help us to be good friends to one another!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME**

**TRUE OR FALSE**

Peter was a perfect friend to Jesus.

FALSE

Jesus is the perfect example to us of what friendship is.

TRUE

We can be a true friend by doing the opposite of what we say.

FALSE

A true friend is loyal, reliable, and trustworthy.

TRUE

When Jesus says to “Feed my sheep,” he means to love others, care for others, and tell others about Jesus.

TRUE

**MAKE IT STICK**

5 Simple Ways to Make This Week's Lesson Stick

**IN THE CAR:**

On the drive home, ask your child what he learned about this week:

What makes a true friend? Someone reliable, loyal, and trustworthy. Jesus is the perfect example of a true friend. Peter denied Jesus and was not a loyal friend, but Jesus offered Peter forgiveness and showed Him what it meant to follow Him and be a true friend to others. John 21:15-19, Jesus Reinstates Peter

**HANGING OUT:**

Make this week's lesson real:

Ask your kid who is a friend that you can count on?

Ask your kid what ways can you work on being a better friend to others?

**AT DINNER:**

Here are some great discussion starters:

When we follow Jesus, it means that we treat people how?

What are some ways you can show others they can count on you as a loyal friend?

Is there someone you need to ask forgiveness from, the way Peter did? God offers us forgiveness for our sins!

**AT BEDTIME:**

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

**PARENT TIME:**

Backpack Blessings is all about blessing other people around us! One way we can do that is by being a friend others can count on. Just like we can count on a calculator to give us the correct answer. Challenge your kid to follow through and do what they say they are going to do in friendships and other relationships. Encourage them to write down promises and commitments that they make to help remind them to follow through. When we follow Jesus, we learn to be loyal, reliable, and trustworthy!

**TAKE HOME ACTIVITY**

**A NEW kind of Friendship Bracelet!**

**Items you will need:**

Blank/White Slap Bracelets (Make your own blank slap bracelets can be purchased in bulk)

Permanent Markers

Give each kid 2 blank slap bracelets and ask them to write “Lean on me!” on their bracelet. Next instruct them to decorate the bracelet for a friend that they wish to give this friendship bracelet to. Then allow them to design one for themselves. They can make matching bracelets or another design.

Play “Lean on Me” song while kids are working on their craft!

(two versions)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOZ-MySzAac&ab_channel=BillWithers-Topic>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfs0c2zkRvU&ab_channel=CollinsvilleChristianChurch>

Say, “This is a great way to tell your friend that they can count on you to be there for them!”

**Backpack Blessings 4-Week Children’s Ministry Curriculum**

**Lunch**

**TAGLINE:**

A School Year Focused on Blessing Others

**BOTTOM LINE:**

God can use our small gift to make a big difference!

**OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn “I can bless others by sharing what I have with those in need.”

**KEY PASSAGE:**

John 6:5-13, Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

**MEMORY VERSE:**

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

**SUMMARY:**

The crowd had gathered to hear Jesus preach and to see his miracles. When they grew hungry, one small boy willingly gave his lunch of 5 loaves and 2 fish to bless them. When we are willing to share what we have with others, Jesus can take what little we have and use it to bless many.

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

Thank you for multiplying our small gifts to make a big difference! You are an awesome God!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**MEMORY VERSE**

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIV)

“And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.” Hebrews 13:16 (NLT)

“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Hebrews 13:16 (KJV)

**LARGE GROUP:**

*Ahead of time, gather a bowl and candy for all the kids. (Be sure to include options for kids with allergies, sugar-free, etc.)*

Say, “Look at all of this candy that I have! I have two choices when it comes to this candy. First, I can brag about how much I have and enjoy it all on my own. Second, I could share the candy since I have more than enough for others. When God gives us more than we need, it’s often so we can share it with others. But when we hold on to it and don’t share, we are forgetting that it’s a gift from God and to be thankful for what He’s given us and share it with those around us.

Pass around the candy bowl and tell the kids they can each take one piece. Put the memory verse up on the big screen and ask the kids to read it out loud with you as they enjoy their candy.

**SMALL GROUP:**

*Ahead of time, gather index cards and pencils.*

Ask kids to write a list of things that God has provided more than enough than they need. For instance, food, clothes, toys, etc. Next to each thing they have more than enough of, ask them to write one idea of how they can share it with others. Ask the kids to look up the memory verse reference in their Bible and copy it down on the back of their notecards as a reminder to share with others this week!

**That is One Way to Behave, but this is Another!**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

4 Chairs

4 Desks (or a table for all the kids to sit at, facing the teacher)

4 pieces of paper and 4 pencils

Mug

Bag of Chocolate

**CHARACTERS:**

Ryan

Lindsey

Amy

Booker

Mrs. Blessing

Narrator

**CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:**

Ryan – male student

Lindsey – female student

Amy – female student

Booker – male student

Mrs. Blessing – Teacher

Narrator

*Begin with Mrs. Blessing sipping from her mug and eating a piece of candy, standing on stage right facing her students to the left and the students in their chairs facing their teacher.*

MRS. BLESSING: Okay, kids. We have one more hour until lunch. In that last hour, you will all be working on writing your essay for English. Remember, it needs to be at least 3 paragraphs and each paragraph needs to be at least 4 sentences.

*(Ryan turns to Amy.)*

RYAN: No fair. She’s drinking hot chocolate and eating candy right in front of us, and I’m hungry.

AMY: A whole hour until lunch!

MRS. BLESSING: No talking please, everyone get to work on your essays.

LINDSEY: Mrs. Blessing. Can we have some candy too?

MRS. BLESSING: No. Now start writing.

*(Everyone starts to write. Booker pulls out a snack from his pocket and starts eating it.)*

LINDSEY: Booker, can I have some?

BOOKER: No, this is mine.

LINDSEY: No fair! Booker has a snack!

*(Everyone freezes.)*

NARRATOR: Mrs. Blessing may have made a mistake here. Can anyone tell me what that mistake was? Drinking delicious hot chocolate and eating candy right in front of your students when you don’t plan on sharing with them is unkind. It can make the students feel left out, like the teacher doesn’t care about them, and even hungrier waiting for another hour for lunch. It may not have been her intention to rub it in that she had hot chocolate and they didn’t, but even if it wasn’t her intention, that is what she ended up doing. Also, Booker noticed that his friends wanted to eat and brought out a snack to show off and not share. Let’s watch a better way of handling this situation!

*(Mrs. Blessing no longer has a mug or candy in her hands.)*

MRS. BLESSING: Okay, kids. We have one more hour until lunch. In that last hour you will all be working on writing your essay for English. Remember, it needs to be at least 3 paragraphs and each paragraph needs to be at least 4 sentences.

RYAN: I’m hungry.

AMY: Me too.

*(Booker gets a snack out from his pocket and raises his hand.)*

BOOKER: Mrs. Blessing?

MRS. BLESSING: Yes Booker.

BOOKER: Can I share my snack with everyone?

MRS. BLESSING: You certainly can, Booker. In fact, I have a bag of candy and if everyone works really hard, I’ll walk around and hand out a piece to each of you too.

LINDSEY: Yay, thank you Mrs. Blessing.

MRS. BLESSING: It is always good to share our blessings with one another!

(*Everyone freezes.)*

NARRATOR: God has given us many blessings and the best way we can thank Him for those blessings is by showing kindness to others and sharing them. When we get greedy and forget to share, we turn others away and make them feel unloved. We also can become bitter and unthankful for the blessings that we have. Instead, we can recognize that God has provided all the blessings we have and enjoy sharing them with those around us! What do you have that you can share today?

END SCENE

**OBJECT LESSON**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

Lunch Box with a sandwich and fruit

What is everyone's favorite time at school? Raise your hand if it’s gym class. Raise your hand if it’s math. How about recess? What about lunchtime? As you can see, I have my lunchbox here. Lunch is often a favorite because everyone gets hungry. But what if I were to tell you that you didn’t have lunch to eat that day? Would it still be your favorite time of day? Probably not! Maybe you forgot your lunch and now you are very sad and hungry. Or maybe you ran out of money to buy lunch and now you’re not sure how you will eat.

One way we can bless others in our BACKPACK of BLESSINGS is by sharing what we have with those in need. If your friend forgot their lunch and you have extra, why not share a little? In my lunchbox, I have a sandwich and some fruit. I could share a piece of fruit with my friends if they didn’t have anything to eat. Or what about in class? Say your friend forgot their pencil that day and you had an extra…wouldn’t it be nice if you shared with them? You might be surprised what else you have in your backpack that could help a friend. For instance, if you have an extra sweatshirt and your friend forgot their jacket, you could let them borrow it during recess. These acts of kindness that we do for each other make such a difference!

We can bless others by sharing what we have with those in need! We might not have much to give, but God is able to use our small gifts to make a big difference!

**LARGE GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY**

**Sharing What You Have Makes a Big Difference Activity!**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

Paper plates, plastic spoons, paper bowls, napkins, plastic cups, juice, allergy-free veggie chips and allergy-free cookies, apple sauce, and picnic blankets

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Split the kids into 10 different teams. Give each team a different item. Team 1 gets plates, team 2 gets spoons, team 3 gets bowls, team 4 gets napkins, team 5 gets cups, team 6 gets pitchers/jugs of juice, team 7 gets veggie chips, team 8 gets allergy-free cookies, team 9 gets apple sauce, and team 10 gets picnic blankets.

Say, “Each team got one item. Do you guys think this is fair? Those of you who got spoons, are you happy with just spoons? How about those of you with the cookies, do you think it’s fair that only your team got them? Sharing what you have makes a big difference. If each team holds on to all of that item and doesn’t share, then some teams will get to eat and some will not. Some will have juice, but no cups to drink it with. But when we all come together and share what we have, then everyone can enjoy the picnic.”

Ask the team member to hand out items to the other teams so that everyone has one of each item. Encourage them to work together to share the picnic blankets so each team has one to sit on, a pitcher of juice so each team has one to share, etc. Ask a small group leader to sit with each team and make sure they are sitting and eating their picnic appropriately. When everyone has gotten something to eat and drink, have each small group leader lead the team in a prayer of thanks to God for providing what they need through one another sharing.

**VARIATIONS:**

For a small group of kids, instead of teams, hand an item to each kid individually or in pairs and then talk about how it’s much better to share.

**WHAT’S THE POINT?**

We can bless others by sharing what we have with those in need! It’s important to remember that all of our blessings come from God and not to get greedy and hog it all for ourselves. Instead of thinking about possessions as belonging to us, we should think about them as gifts from God that He has given to us to enjoy and share with others.

**LARGE GROUP LESSON**

**Lunch**

**TAGLINE:**

A School Year Focused on Blessing Others

**BOTTOM LINE:**

God can use our small gift to make a big difference!

**OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn “I can bless others by sharing what I have with those in need.”

**KEY PASSAGE:**

John 6:5-13, Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

**INTRO:**

This is a school year focused on blessing others! Today we have been talking a lot about hungry people. Hungry kids waiting for lunchtime at school. Hungry kids who forgot their lunch that we can share with. And a bunch of hungry kids here at church, having a picnic that we shared with one another! In the Bible, there is a story about a very large crowd of hungry people. They came to listen to Jesus teach and after he was done, they were very hungry. The disciples had an idea of what to do about that problem. They suggested that Jesus send them all away so they could all go home to eat. But, Jesus had a different idea. Jesus knew that by the time the people traveled back home it would be late and they would have a lot of work to do to prepare a meal. Many of them probably wouldn’t have been able to eat until midnight!

Have you ever been hungry and had to wait to eat? It’s very uncomfortable, isn’t it? Maybe you were on a trip and you needed to wait until the next rest stop. Perhaps the refrigerator was low on food and you had to wait until someone was able to go grocery shopping. One hungry person can become pretty grumpy. So, can you imagine a whole crowd of hungry people? 5,000 of them, to be exact?! That is quite a lot of hungry grumpy people! Raise your hand if you would want to be responsible for feeding 5,000 people! Now raise your hand if you would want to be responsible for feeding 5,000 people with just 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. Yikes…that doesn’t sound like enough, does it? Jesus had a way to feed the 5,000 people. Let’s read and find out what happened!

**READ JOHN 6:5-13**

**MAIN POINT:**

Wow! Can you believe it? Jesus took just 5 loaves and 2 fish and prayed. They multiplied into enough food to feed 5,000 people! That is amazing! The boy who had the food was willing to share. But that small amount of food ….how could that be enough to make a difference when there are 5,000 hungry people? The amazing thing that God does is He is able to take the smallest of gifts that we offer to Him, and turn them into huge blessings. GOD CAN USE OUR SMALL GIFT TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE!

Did you notice that in the passage it even said that there were leftovers!? That is so incredible! They ended up with more loaves and fish at the end then they started out with to begin with. Jesus performed a miracle and multiplied the bread and fish. He is able to do that with the blessings that we share too.

Many times, when we see the needs that other people have, we think that there isn’t much that we can do to help. We can think that we won’t make that much of a difference by helping them. But God’s word teaches us that even in the small ways that we help those in need, God can use it in big ways! For instance, if you donate food to a food bank to provide dinner for homeless people, God can use that food bank as a safe place for those people to go, to eat, to learn about Jesus, and it can grow into an amazing ministry! The small gifts and ways that we help make a big difference in people’s hearts.

Our BACKPACK BLESSINGS series is teaching us that we can BLESS OTHERS BY SHARING WHAT WE HAVE WITH THOSE IN NEED! Just like the little boy shared his lunch and Jesus made it enough for the entire crowd to eat. We can share our snacks at school, our toys at home, our clothes to those in need, our time volunteering, and the love of Jesus with others!

**DRIVE IT HOME:**

GOD CAN USE OUR SMALL GIFTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, so let’s start sharing what we have today! After all, everything we have is a gift from God. We were not given those blessings from God to hog, to store away and hide, to become greedy with. Instead, we were given those blessings to enjoy and to bless others with!

**CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

Thank you for multiplying our small gifts to make a big difference! You are an awesome God!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)**

**ICEBREAKER:**

What is something you enjoy when a friend, parent, or sibling shares with you?

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:**

Hebrews 13:16

*Ahead of time, gather index cards and pencils.*

Ask kids to write a list of things that God has provided more than enough than they need. For instance, food, clothes, toys, etc. Next to each thing they have more than enough of, ask them to write one idea of how they can share it with others. Ask the kids to look up the memory verse reference in their Bible and copy it down on the back of their notecards as a reminder to share with others this week!

**SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:**

Go around in a circle and share what your favorite game is, and if others don’t know, how to play it. Say, “It’s great to share fun ideas of games to play with one another. There are so many ways that we can share things with one another. Sometimes it’s things others need, sometimes it's wise advice, sometimes it's fun new ideas like these games we shared!”

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Read John 6:5-13

Who was willing to share their loaves of bread and fish?

How big of a difference did that end up making once Jesus prayed and handed it out?

What is one way you can share with others this week?

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

You are awesome and have the ability to multiply the gifts that we give! Thank you for working miracles and using us to help others.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3RD-5TH)**

**ICEBREAKER:**

What is something you enjoy when a friend, parent, or sibling shares with you?

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:**

Hebrews 13:16

*Ahead of time, gather index cards and pencils.*

Ask kids to write a list of things that God has provided more than enough than they need. For instance, food, clothes, toys, etc. Next to each thing they have more than enough of, ask them to write one idea of how they can share it with others. Ask the kids to look up the memory verse reference in their Bible and copy it down on the back of their notecards as a reminder to share with others this week!

**SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:**

Go around in a circle and share what your favorite game is, and if others don’t know, how to play it. Say, “It’s great to share fun ideas of games to play with one another. There are so many ways that we can share things with one another. Sometimes it’s things others need, sometimes it's wise advice, sometimes it's fun new ideas like these games we shared!”

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Read John 6:5-13

Who was willing to share their loaves of bread and fish?

How big of a difference did that end up making once Jesus prayed and handed it out?

What is one way you can share with others this week?

Why is it important to pray and ask God to multiply what we share with others?

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

You are awesome and have the ability to multiply the gifts that we give! Thank you for working miracles and using us to help others.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME**

**TRUE OR FALSE**

Jesus prayed and handed out chicken and rice to only 10 people in the crowd.

FALSE

Jesus multiplied what the boy had given and there was enough to feed 5,000 people.

TRUE

God calls us to bless others by sharing what we have with those in need.

TRUE

When the disciples got done handing out the loaves and fish, there was enough left over to fill 12 baskets.

TRUE

When we have been blessed, we should hold onto it and not give any of it away.

FALSE

**MAKE IT STICK**

5 Simple Ways to Make This Week's Lesson Stick

**IN THE CAR:**

On the drive home, ask your child what he learned about this week:

What can God do with the small gifts that we are willing to give? He can multiply them and provide a way for them to make a BIG difference. Jesus multiplied the loaves of bread and fish that the boy shared and it was enough to feed 5,000. We can bless others by sharing what we have with those in need. John 6:5-13, Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

**HANGING OUT:**

Make this week's lesson real:

Ask your kid when the last time they shared with someone was.

Ask your kid how they plan to share their blessings with others this week.

**AT DINNER:**

Here are some great discussion starters:

Do you think the boy thought his bread and fish would be enough for everyone in the crowd?

How does this verse apply to what we are talking about? 2 Corinthians 12:9 (Hint: God can do big things with our small gifts.)

Why is it hard to share sometimes? Why is it important to remember all of our blessings come from God?

**AT BEDTIME:**

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

**PARENT TIME:**

Our Backpack Blessings curriculum taught us the importance of sharing what we have with those in need. If your child is having a difficult time sharing, it may be because they aren’t aware that the only reason they have blessings is because God has provided that for them. It’s important for our kids to learn where possessions come from so they can see their need for God and how much they depend on Him to have those needs met. When we humble ourselves before God and see that our blessings come from Him, we are much more likely to share them with others and have less of a feeling of entitlement. A wonderful way to help teach this to your child is to volunteer together at a food bank, shelter, or hospital and have conversations afterward about why it’s important to help those in need because we could just as easily be the ones in need!

**TAKE HOME ACTIVITY**

**Sharing is Caring Coupons**

**Items you will need:**

Slips of paper

Markers

Give each kid 2 or 3 slips of paper to write coupons. Each coupon can be written to hand out to a friend, sibling, or parent. These coupons must contain an item they are willing to share with someone. For instance, they could give their sibling a coupon that says “20 minutes to play with my video game” or hand their parent a coupon that says, “I will share 15 minutes of my time helping you weed” etc. Another idea could be a coupon for a friend to “Split the candy bar in half and share it together”. Remind kids that they can share possessions, things people need, their time, their energy, their help, and more! One interesting idea is to share 30 minutes of time to help their younger sibling learn to read!

Say, “Hand these coupons out this week to offer your help and to share with others. This is a great way to remember to share with those in need this week!”

**Backpack Blessings 4-Week Children’s Ministry Curriculum**

**Bookmark**

**TAGLINE:**

A School Year Focused on Blessing Others

**BOTTOM LINE:**

Praying helps us stay connected to God.

**OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn “I can bless others by praying for them.”

**KEY PASSAGE:**

Mark 1:35-39 & Mark 11:20-24, Prayer

**MEMORY VERSE:**

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

**SUMMARY:**

When we read, bookmarks keep us in the right place in our textbooks. In the book of Mark, we learn that prayer is key to keeping us in the right place in life. Praying helps us to stay connected to God, to share our problems, and to find wisdom. We can also bless other people with our prayers, asking God to bless them, heal them, and help them.

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

We pray for our friends, family, and even those we struggle to get along with. Help them with their needs and teach them to depend on you!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**MEMORY VERSE**

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIV)

“And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.” Hebrews 13:16 (NLT)

“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Hebrews 13:16 (KJV)

**LARGE GROUP:**

Put the memory verse up on the big screen. Read it to the kids. Ask, “Can anyone remind us of some ways that we have learned to bless others? We’ve learned to bless others by sharing words of encouragement, by being a reliable and trustworthy friend, and by giving to those in need. Today we will learn one other way to bless the people around us.” Say, “This is a great verse because it reminds us to be good to others. Turn towards a friend and take turns reading this verse to one another. Great job! That was a good reminder for us all!”

**SMALL GROUP:**

*Ahead of time, gather pens and a Post-it sticky note pad.*

Hand out Post-it sticky notes to each kid. Ask them to write the memory verse down on their sticky note and take it home with them today to stick on the mirror in their bedroom or bathroom. Say, “Next time you go to look in the mirror you will have this reminder to read. As you get ready for a new day brushing your hair and brushing your teeth…you can read this verse to remind you not to forget to be good to those around you!”

**That is One Way to Behave, but this is Another!**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

4 Backpacks

**CHARACTERS:**

Ryan

Lindsey

Amy

Booker

Mrs. Blessing

Narrator

**CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:**

Ryan – male student

Lindsey – female student

Amy – female student

Booker – male student

Mrs. Blessing – Teacher

Narrator

*Begin with Mrs. Blessing standing on stage right facing her students to the left and the students standing in line chatting loudly.*

MRS. BLESSING: What am I going to do with you all? How many times do I have to ask you to be quiet when you line up? It’s like there is nothing that I can do to make you all learn to line up quietly!

AMY: Sorry Mrs. Blessing.

BOOKER: Sorry.

*(Kids quiet down.)*

MRS. BLESSING: Now, it’s time to head home for the day. Does everyone have their backpacks?

*(Everyone freezes.)*

NARRATOR: That is one way to behave…but I bet there is a better way, don’t you. Mrs. Blessing was getting frustrated with her students. It sounds like she has told them multiple times to line up quietly but they aren’t listening to instructions. Mrs. Blessing has become frustrated with them. Have you ever become frustrated with someone? Like no matter what you do, they don’t seem to learn from their mistakes or make better choices? That can become overwhelming and can cause us to become impatient. Raise your hand if you’ve ever been frustrated with someone else.

NARRATOR: We can get to a place that there is nothing left to do about someone else’s behaviors or situations. We’ve tried everything. We’ve spoken with them, we’ve tried to give them advice, we’ve tried yelling at them…nothing seems to work. This is because it is not our responsibility to control other people. We can’t make them do things, all we can do is try to teach them and hope they will learn. There is a way to help others even when they won’t listen to us anymore! There is hope. Do you know what that is? We can pray for them! We can bless other people with our prayers asking God to bless them, heal them, help them, and give them wisdom to make good choices. Many things are out of our hands, especially when it comes to other people. Many times, the best way that we can help others is by giving them to God by praying for them and asking Him to help them! Let’s watch Mrs. Blessing handle this situation in another way.

*(Everyone unfreezes. Kids chat loudly.)*

MRS. BLESSING: Please be quiet everyone.

*(Kids keep talking. Mrs. Blessing bows her head and prays in her head for a few seconds, then looks up at the kids and waits for them to quiet down.)*

LINDSEY: Guys, Mrs. Blessing is waiting on us!

RYAN: Everybody. Shhhhh!

*(Kids get quiet and face forward in line towards their teacher.)*

MRS. BLESSING: Thank you for quieting down. May I remind everyone that when we line up, we do it quietly, please? It is time to head home. I hope everyone has a great weekend and I will see you all on Monday. Remember, next week is our history test.

*(Mrs. Blessing walks towards stage right and kids follow her off stage.)*

NARRATOR: You might have noticed that when Mrs. Blessing became overwhelmed, she bowed her head and said a short prayer. This is something we can all do when we become frustrated, overwhelmed, worried, and more. When other people are too much to handle or when we are concerned for someone who is sick or in pain and there isn’t anything we can do to fix it, we can always pray for them. Mrs. Blessing prayed for patience with her students and God helped her to wait patiently for them to quiet down. She also prayed that God would help them learn from their mistakes. When we pray for those around us, God works in their hearts and our hearts! One of the best ways to bless others is by praying for them!

END SCENE

**OBJECT LESSON**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

Bookmark and Bible

I brought a bookmark with me today to keep my place in the Bible. We will be reading from Mark later, so I’ll turn to Mark and put this bookmark there to save my spot. That way when I go to read it to you, it will be ready to go and I won’t lose my place!

Bookmarks are really helpful. They keep the right place in our textbooks at school. And did you know that in the book of Mark, we learn that prayer is key to keeping us in the right place in life? Just like a bookmark keeps me in the right place to read, prayer keeps me in the right place so I stay connected to God.

But why is it so important to stay connected to God? When we have a relationship with God where we talk to Him every day, it helps us so much! We can talk to God about our problems and He helps us find wisdom to solve them. When we stay connected to God in prayer, we remember that God is the one providing for our needs and it keeps us humble. This is good that we remember that He is God and we are not, otherwise, we try to do life on our own and get into lots of trouble.

As we stay connected to God in prayer, we can also bless other people through our prayers! Not all of our prayers need to be about us. Sometimes when we are concerned for someone, when someone is upsetting us, or when we see others have needs, we have a hard time knowing what to do about it. There are some needs that only God can provide for. There are some problems only God can fix! We can pray for others and ask God to bless them, heal them, help them, give them wisdom, and teach them. So don’t forget that in your BACKPACK FULL OF BLESSINGS you have the ability to pray for other people too! There is so much power in prayer and Jesus is waiting for you to come to Him and make those requests so that He can help you!

**LARGE GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY**

**Bookmark It!**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

Bibles and Bookmarks

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Split kids into teams of about 5-10 kids and give each team a Bible and a bookmark. Have kids sit in a circle and with each round, pass the Bible and bookmark to their right so everyone gets a turn. Each round that you do, call out a book of the Bible. The kid with the Bible and bookmark in their lap will quickly look for that book of the Bible. They have the option to use the table of contents but that can take longer. As soon as they find the book they will need to mark it with their bookmark. It can be anywhere in that book; it does not have to be the first page. Once they mark it they will raise their hand. The first team to mark it correctly gets a point. Then they will pass the Bible to their right and you can call out another book of the Bible for the next round. Continue on until everyone has had a turn or if it’s a small group of kids, until you’ve done at least 5 rounds.

Add up the points at the end to see which team Bookmarked the most books of the Bible first and announce the winner.

**VARIATIONS:**

For a small group of kids, they can all work as individuals or as partners.

**WHAT’S THE POINT?**

This fun race can be challenging! There are a lot of books of the Bible and some are very small and hard to find. Everyone did a great job looking and trying their best! When we put our bookmark in the right place, it helps us find that spot in our book again. When we stay connected to God in prayer every day, it helps us stay in the right place! This is because it keeps our minds fixed on Him and Jesus can help us and those we pray for.

**LARGE GROUP LESSON**

**Bookmark**

**TAGLINE:**

A School Year Focused on Blessing Others

**BOTTOM LINE:**

Praying helps us stay connected to God.

**OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn “I can bless others by praying for them.”

**KEY PASSAGE:**

Mark 1:35-39 & Mark 11:20-24, Prayer

**INTRO:**

This is A SCHOOL YEAR FOCUSED ON BLESSING OTHERS! Today we have been learning how we can bless others by praying for them. Have you been in a situation where your friend or sibling needed help but there wasn’t anything you could do to help them? Sometimes there are things we can do, like let them borrow our coats or give them a hug when they are sad. But sometimes there isn’t a lot we can do to help somebody because it’s out of our hands. Maybe your friend had to go to the hospital because they became really sick. Situations like this are so hard! We can send them a card to let them know we care and we can pray for our friend and ask God to help them. He is powerful and can step into the places that are impossible for us!

Where are some places that we can pray? Can anyone raise their hand and tell us a good place to pray? Those are wonderful places. Did you know that you can pray anywhere? At home, at school, out at recess, on the bus, in the car, at gymnastics, on the field, at church, at your grandmas…the list goes on and on. No matter where we are, we can pray for those around us! Let’s read some examples that Jesus shared about prayer.

**READ MARK 1:35-39 & 11:20-24**

**MAIN POINT:**

I love how Jesus took the time to go off and pray on his own. He knew that staying connected to God the Father is important and he made it a priority in his life. When we stay connected to God and pray every day we grow closer to Him. We learn from Him and our faith grows strong. We learn that we can count on Him to help us in times of trouble. We learn that we can depend on Him for everything. Even when it comes to our friends and family. We can ask God to help them too.

The other example that we read was about having faith that God will answer our prayers. The disciples noticed that the prayer that Jesus prayed came true and the fig tree withered up. They were surprised by it. Jesus explained that when we believe that God will help, it will be done. It takes faith to believe that God will answer our prayers, but He will. He chooses to answer them in His timing and in His way, but He will always answer them. We can trust that God will work all things out for the good of those who love and are called according to His purpose! So pray!

Pray for your needs. Pray for the needs of others. Ask for God’s help. Believe! He is mighty to save!

**DRIVE IT HOME:**

I CAN BLESS OTHERS BY PRAYING FOR THEM and so can you! PRAYING HELPS US STAY CONNECTED TO GOD. And when we are connected to Him, amazing things happen! Miracles happen. He works in and through us! He helps those we pray for. He often has better plans than we even ask for and we learn to trust that He will do what is best. It’s good to pray “God’s will be done” because we realize that the plans that we have are not always God’s plan. We can ask for His help and we can submit to His will knowing that He knows what is best and will carry out that plan according to His will! Let’s bless others by praying for them this week.

**CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

We pray for our friends, family, and even those we struggle to get along with. Help them with their needs and teach them to depend on you!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)**

**ICEBREAKER:**

If you could mark a spot in your favorite book, which book would that be and what place would it be in the book? Or instead, your favorite movie, show, or YouTube video?

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:**

Hebrews 13:16

*Ahead of time, gather pens and a Post-it sticky note pad.*

Hand out Post-it sticky notes to each kid. Ask them to write the memory verse down on their sticky note and take it home with them today to stick on the mirror in their bedroom or bathroom. Say, “Next time you go to look in the mirror you will have this reminder to read. As you get ready for a new day brushing your hair and brushing your teeth…you can read this verse to remind you not to forget to be good to those around you!”

**SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:**

*Ahead of time, gather chairs and a device to play and pause music easily.*

Play musical chairs and say, “This is a lot like trying to save your spot with a bookmark! Claim your chair before anyone else takes it!”

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Read Mark 1:35-39 & 11:20-24

What were some of the miracles that Jesus was doing after He went away to pray? (Mark 1:39)

What did we learn today that is a great way to bless others?

Who is someone that is in need of prayer?

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

Thank you for giving us a way to be connected to you through prayer! We pray for those in need, that you would provide for them today!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3RD-5TH)**

**ICEBREAKER:**

If you could mark a spot in your favorite book, which book would that be and what place would it be in the book? Or instead, your favorite movie, show, or YouTube video?

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:**

Hebrews 13:16

*Ahead of time, gather pens and a Post-it sticky note pad.*

Hand out Post-it sticky notes to each kid. Ask them to write the memory verse down on their sticky note and take it home with them today to stick on the mirror in their bedroom or bathroom. Say, “Next time you go to look in the mirror you will have this reminder to read. As you get ready for a new day brushing your hair and brushing your teeth…you can read this verse to remind you not to forget to be good to those around you!”

**SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:**

*Ahead of time, gather chairs and a device to play and pause music easily.*

Play musical chairs and say, “This is a lot like trying to save your spot with a bookmark! Claim your chair before anyone else takes it!”

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Read Mark 1:35-39 & 11:20-24

What were some of the miracles that Jesus was doing after He went away to pray?

Why is staying connected to God in prayer so important?

What did we learn today that is a great way to bless others?

Who is someone that is in need of prayer?

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

Dear God,

Thank you for giving us a way to be connected to you through prayer! We pray for those in need, that you would provide for them today!

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

**POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME**

**TRUE OR FALSE**

When we pray for others, it is important to believe and not doubt God’s ability to help them.

TRUE

As long as we pray once a year, we are staying very connected to God.

FALSE

A relationship with God is a daily relationship of prayer and reading the Bible.

TRUE

Prayer keeps us in the right place, connected to God.

TRUE

We are not blessing others just by praying for them.

FALSE

**MAKE IT STICK**

5 Simple Ways to Make This Week's Lesson Stick

**IN THE CAR:**

On the drive home, ask your child what he learned about this week:

What is another way that you have learned to bless others? By praying for them! When we stay connected to God in prayer, we can ask Him to bless, heal, help, and give wisdom and strength to those around us. It is important to believe in God and trust that His will is best. Mark 1:35-39 & Mark 11:20-24, Prayer

**HANGING OUT:**

Make this week's lesson real:

Ask your kid who they have been praying for this week.

Ask your kid if there is something you can pray for them this week.

**AT DINNER:**

Here are some great discussion starters:

How does a bookmark compare to how prayer also keeps us in the right place?

Explain how Jesus made prayer a priority in his life.

Intercessory prayer means to intercede on someone’s behalf and pray for them. Who could you pray on behalf of now?

**AT BEDTIME:**

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

“Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 (NIRV)

**PARENT TIME:**

Today we learned in Backpack Blessings, that prayer is a great way to bless those around us. Gather together as a family and pray for people in your neighborhood, church, family, etc. together. Ask your child to share prayer requests for someone they notice needs help. Encourage them to join in praying or pray in their head for their friend.

**TAKE HOME ACTIVITY**

**Share the Blessing of Prayer**

**Items you will need:**

Scissors

Pattern paper

White paper

Glue sticks

Hand kids a piece of plain white paper and ask them to write the verse from Numbers 6:24-26, “The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

*(For younger kids you can have the verse printed ahead of time.)*

Next, ask the kids to cut out the verse from their paper to make a nice square, oval, or rectangle shape. Then hand out patterned paper for kids to glue their white pieces to. Encourage them to cut around the patterned paper with a fun design like zig-zags or waves.

Say, “This is a prayer. A prayer that we can pray for other people. Take this home and pray this prayer for friends/family/and those that we have a hard time getting along with. You can also give this as a gift to someone to let them know you are praying for them!”