

# "Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Ephesians 4:32

Kindness. It is what our 11 year old dog McCoy needs to exhibit to his new baby sister Elsa. When she nips at his ears, kindness is not forthcoming! It is very interesting to me that most of the verses in the New Testament that deal with kindness also have some correlation with forgiveness. Instead of taking revenge, show kindness. When someone nips you on the ears, don't retaliate with a growl. Instead, be tender-hearted, kind, and forgiving. When you think about it, that is exactly what God has done for us. He took on the payment and punishment for our sin so that we would experience His loving-kindness. People tend to categorize God as "the God of the Old Testament" and "the God of the New Testament." I've heard many people make the comment that in the Old Testament, God is all wrath and anger, and in the New Testament we see His mercy. I strongly disagree with this assessment. God demonstrates His *hesed*, Hebrew for "loving-kindness", time and time again in the Old Testament. He shows it to the outcasts Hagar and Ishmael. He shows it countless times to His people Israel.

My hope is that you will grow in the knowledge of the LORD this week as you encounter His *hesed*: His great loving-kindness.

## **Parent Overview for This Week:**

Throughout the week, show your family random acts of kindness. Write a note and put it in your kids lunchboxes, or leave a little note on their pillow. Make their bed for them one day. Show a kindness to your spouse (flowers, written letter, helping with chores). Your whole family will engage in acts of kindness toward the end of the week.

**DAY ONE: Understanding Kindness**

You and your kids will begin to brainstorm about what true kindness looks like by going on a scavenger hunt. You will need to have written out the acts of kindness on sheets of paper and put them in Easter eggs--or just hide the papers around the house. Your kids will find them and as a family you will talk through the different acts of kindness.

**DAY TWO: The Kindness of the LORD**

Today, you and your children discover the loving-kindness of our covenant God. There will be a few scriptures that you and/or your children can read through and discuss. If you have older children, a great Biblical story that reveals the kind heart of God is found in Genesis 21. When Hagar and Ishmael are sent away, God meets them in their need. It is a beautiful story of God's love, kindness, and provision.

**DAY THREE: Biblical Portrait of Kindness: David and Mephibosheth**

For today's lesson, you will want to make sure you have read up on the conflict/history between David and King Saul. It is important that your kids understand how Saul mistreated David, and that David had every right as King to retaliate against Saul's family. Not only does David not take revenge, but he invites a member of Saul's family to dine at his table. This is kindness in action!

**DAY FOUR: Be Kind to One Another**

Today's focus will be showing kindness to another person when we feel they don't deserve it. This is a hard lesson not only for siblings but for relationships at school. You will all read through some scriptures and come up with ideas of how to show kindness to those we really don't feel like loving.

**DAY FIVE: Other Acts of Kindness**

For the rest of the week, you and your family will be engaging in special acts of kindness for one another. I've included a short list of ideas, but by all means come up with your own! Each family member will do 3 acts of kindness for the other members of the family. Before you start the week on "Goodness" make sure you talk about how these simple acts of kindness made a difference.

Also, today you will have your family devotion out of the house and on the streets. Walk through your neighborhood--by houses, churches, and schools. You will give your family an opportunity to come up with ways to show kindness to your neighbors and the needy around you.

**FRUIT OF THE WEEK: Peaches or Pears OR have each child pick a favorite fruit (make some different recipes that feature these favorites as an act of kindness).**

Here is a link to one of our favorites: [Peach Crisp with Maple Cream Sauce](#)

## DAY ONE: UNDERSTANDING KINDNESS

Verse for the Day: Col. 3:12 "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

- Begin today's lesson with prayer, asking God to reveal His kindness to you.
- Read the scripture for the day and talk about putting on kindness like a piece of clothing.
- Tell your kids to think about the word kindness when they put on a certain article of clothing each day this week. For instance, when I put on my shoes, I'm going to think about putting on kindness. Let them pick which article they want to use. This will really stick with them throughout the week!
- Ask your kids: "What is kindness?" "How do we show kindness?"

ACTIVITY: Kindness Scavenger Hunt

- Hide several Easter eggs around the house and in each egg put a strip of paper with one of these words:
  - tenderness
  - concern for others
  - helping those in need
  - loving the unlovable
  - reaching out to the lonely
  - giving of your own money or possessions
  - reaching out to a schoolmate
  - saying thank you to a teacher or parent
- Have your kids search through the house for the eggs and bring them back. Divide them evenly among your kids.
- Have your kids read the strips of paper in each egg and talk about them together.
- Share with each other about times you have each shown kindness.
- End with prayer, asking God to give you opportunities to show His kindness this week.

## DAY TWO: THE KINDNESS OF THE LORD

Verse of the Day: Hosea 11:4

- In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for kindness is *hesed*. This word is often used in describing God's kindness.
- Share this definition with your kids (or at least as much as they would understand): "*unfailing love, loyal love, devotion, kindness, often based on a prior relationship, especially a covenant relationship*"
- Talk about what unfailing love means. God's love will never fail us.
- What does loyal love mean? God is loyal to us.
- How about devotion? Give some examples of devotion.
- When you become a Christian, you are in a covenant relationship with God--a binding relationship that lasts for eternity. Because of this relationship, we experience His kindness and mercy every day.

Now we are going to look at some verses that describe God's kindness.

- Hosea 11:4: "I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them."
  - In a few minutes you are going to demonstrate this verse with your children so that they have a visual picture of how God shows kindness to us.
- Jeremiah 9:24: "BUT LET HIM WHO BOASTS BOAST ABOUT THIS: THAT HE UNDERSTANDS AND KNOWS ME, THAT I AM THE LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.
  - Notice that kindness is a part of God's nature--His character. He DELIGHTS in kindness. Do we delight in being kind?
- Isaiah 54:8: "In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer."
  - notice how God contrasts the length of His anger with the length of His kindness! temporary vs. eternal!
- Titus 3:4 "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."
  - God demonstrates His kindness by saving us from our sin. We did ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to deserve God's kindness. Make sure your kids understand this!

ACTIVITY: Cords of human kindness

- If you have some rope, string, or even a dog leash, tie one end around a child's wrist or waist and tie the other end around a parent's wrist or waist. Have the parent walk and notice how the child stays safely tethered to his/her parent. Pretend that you are walking through some dangerous path. How would God's tether keep us safe from harm?
- This is a visual picture of Hosea 11:4. God leads His people in this way. We are bound to Him in His love.
- You could also have your child carry something heavy for a while, then lift it from their shoulders---to show how God lifts our burdens. Ask your children: "What are some things that weigh heavy on you?" God can take them from you!
- He even bends down to feed us--both physically and spiritually. Jesus Christ came down to earth. He came down to our level, so to speak. Philippians 2 talks about how He left His glory and took on the form of a servant---human form. He wanted to proclaim the Good News with human lips. If that isn't kindness, I don't know what is!

- Ask your kids what this teaches them about God's kindness to us.

End the lesson by thanking God for His kindness to us, even though we don't deserve it.

## **DAY THREE: A Biblical Portrait of Kindness: David and Mephibosheth**

Scripture for the Day: 2 Samuel 9

- Before you read this passage, ask your children if they know any Bible stories about King Saul and David and what happened between them.
- Remind them that Saul tried to kill/hurt David on many occasions because he was jealous of David.
- Saul's son Jonathan was David's friend, and he warned David to flee from Saul because he knew King Saul was going to hurt/kill David.
- During this time period, when a new King took over, if the previous King was an enemy, all the old King's family would be destroyed or exiled.
- But lets see what David did when he took over the throne from Saul.
- Have your children read/or you read this story, found in 2 Samuel 9:1-13

After you have read the story, talk about the kindness he showed to one of Saul's family members. Remind them what normally would have happened to Mephibosheth, and how David's actions demonstrated true kindness.

- End with prayer, asking God to reveal to each family member a person to whom they can show kindness, instead of harshness or revenge. You will be talking more about this in the coming days.

## **DAY FOUR: BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER**

Verse of the Day: Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

- Begin by saying a prayer and reading the verse of the day
- Ask the question: "Has anyone ever sinned against you?"
  - Let each child share a situation/story
- "How did you feel?" "What did you want to do?"
- "Have you ever sinned against God?"
- "How do you think this affects God?" "Did you know that we can grieve the Holy Spirit?" (Ephesians 4:30)
- "Remember that 'the payment for sin is death'. Did God take revenge upon you?"
- "What did He do instead?"
- Read the scripture of the day AGAIN!
- "So because you have been forgiven, accepted into God's family, and given the same inheritance as Jesus, how should we respond to those who sin against us?"

Read **1 Thessalonians 5:15**: "Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else."

- "What does it mean to pay back wrong for wrong?"
- "When your brother or sister yells at you, how would you pay back wrong for wrong?"
- "What should you do instead?"
- Ask your kids to come up with other examples of paying back wrong for wrong.

Read **Luke 6:35**: "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked."

- Notice again that God is kind to the sinner, and we should likewise be kind.

Application:

- "What are some things you can do to show kindness to the bullies/enemies at school?"
  - Don't give angry/mean looks
  - Give a genuine smile
  - Say hi or ask how they are doing
  - Don't talk about the person behind their back
- "What are some ways you can show kindness to your brother/sister?"
  - Give a random hug
  - Say I love you
  - Do something for them. Do their chores for them one day.
  - Write a short encouraging note
  - Say I'm sorry.
  - Ask if he/she needs help with something.

Finish by having each family member pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give ideas about how to show kindness to one another. Ask each family member to carry out an act of kindness toward someone. When you meet again for devotions, have your family share what they did.

## **DAY FIVE: ACTS OF KINDNESS**

Verse for the day: Prov. 12:25 An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.

Begin with prayer and by reading today's verse.

- "Did anyone speak a kind word to someone since we last met?"
- "Let's remember that a kind word can cheer someone's heart. Don't neglect speaking kind words to those around you."

- "What acts of kindness did God lay upon your heart?"
- "Throughout the weekend, lets each do 3 kind things for one another as a family."
  - Help with chores without being asked
  - Write kind notes
  - Give hugs/kisses, say I love you
  - Offer to help when you normally wouldn't
  - Give a small gift
  - Speak words of encouragement to one another

ACTIVITY: Look for opportunities.

Today, or one day during the weekend, get your family out of the house and take a walk through your neighborhood.

- As you walk by certain homes, talk about how you as a family can show kindness to your neighbors. (invite them for a meal, leave a gift or food on their doorstep)
- If you have a church in the neighborhood, pray for them as you walk past. Indicate to your kids that praying for other churches and people is a kind thing to do!
- If you have a school in your neighborhood, walk around it and talk about the people who are often overlooked and talk about ways your kids can reach out to the lonely and the overlooked. (Leave a kind note for or say a kind word to the janitor, the librarian, the girl who eats by herself every day).
- If possible, go to an area of town where you know the poor and needy hangout. Take a small box filled with toiletries, socks, and a scripture verse to give to them. Or, take items to your local food pantry or crisis center. On your way there, read these verses:
  - Prov. 14:21 He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.
  - Prov. 14:31 He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

Remember to show acts of kindness to your family members throughout the weekend and until you begin the lessons on "Goodness." Your kids will love coming up with ways to show kindness.

**2Tim. 2:24 "And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful."**