

The Greatest Commandment

Bible Story Focus: Look for ways to love people like Jesus.

The Greatest Commandment • *Matthew 22:36-40*;
1 Corinthians 13

Memory Verse: “Let us keep looking to Jesus.” Hebrews 12:2, NIV

Key Question: Who wants to be your friend forever?

Bottom Line: Jesus wants to be my friend forever.

Basic Truth: Jesus wants to be my friend forever.

Make It Fun Activities

Love to Help

What You Need: “Needs” and “Helping” Activity Pages, cardstock, and scissors

What You Do:

Shuffle the “Needs” cards and place them face down in a grid pattern on one side of the activity area. Shuffle the “Helping” cards and place them face up in a grid pattern on the opposite side of the playing area. Gather the children in the center of the activity area. Select one child to walk to the “needs” grid, select one card, and bring it back to the group. Talk about the need on the card and what they think might help. Then send a second child to the “helping” grid to find the card that can meet that need. When the child returns, have the children hand both cards back to you. Repeat with new children until all cards have been matched.

If time allows, shuffle, set up piles again but this time, place all cards face down. Children must turn over a help card one at a time until they find a match.

What You Say:

“Today, we’re learning that we should look for ways to love people like Jesus. One way we show love is by helping! We can help people by giving them what they need. I have two piles of cards over in the activity area. On one side, I have pictures of someone who needs help. On the other side, I have pictures of things that can help them. Let’s head over to our activity area. If a friend is hurt, can giving him a Band-Aid® help him feel loved? What about sharing your snack? *(Pause.)* Yes! We can always show love by helping. I’m so glad to know that Jesus loves me and that I can love others. **[Bottom Line]** **Jesus wants to be my friend forever.** Jesus loves each one of you SO much, and He wants you to share His love with others!”

Uncover the Story

What You Need: “Story Pictures” Activity Pages; cardstock; construction paper

What You Do:

Set the pictures on a table in this order: Jesus and Zacchaeus, Jesus Feeding the 5,000, Jesus and the Woman at the Well, Jesus and Peter, heart. Cover each picture with a piece of construction paper. Gather the children around the pictures. Review the Bible story as you uncover the pictures one at time.

What You Say:

(As you gather around the pictures) “Hmm. I thought we would have pictures from our story to look at today. I wonder if these are the pictures. I really can’t see anything because they are covered up. Looks like we are going to have to uncover the story! Oh! I know who this is. This is Zacchaeus. Remember how Jesus was Zacchaeus’ friend when he didn’t have any friends? Jesus was a good friend and loved Zacchaeus no matter what.

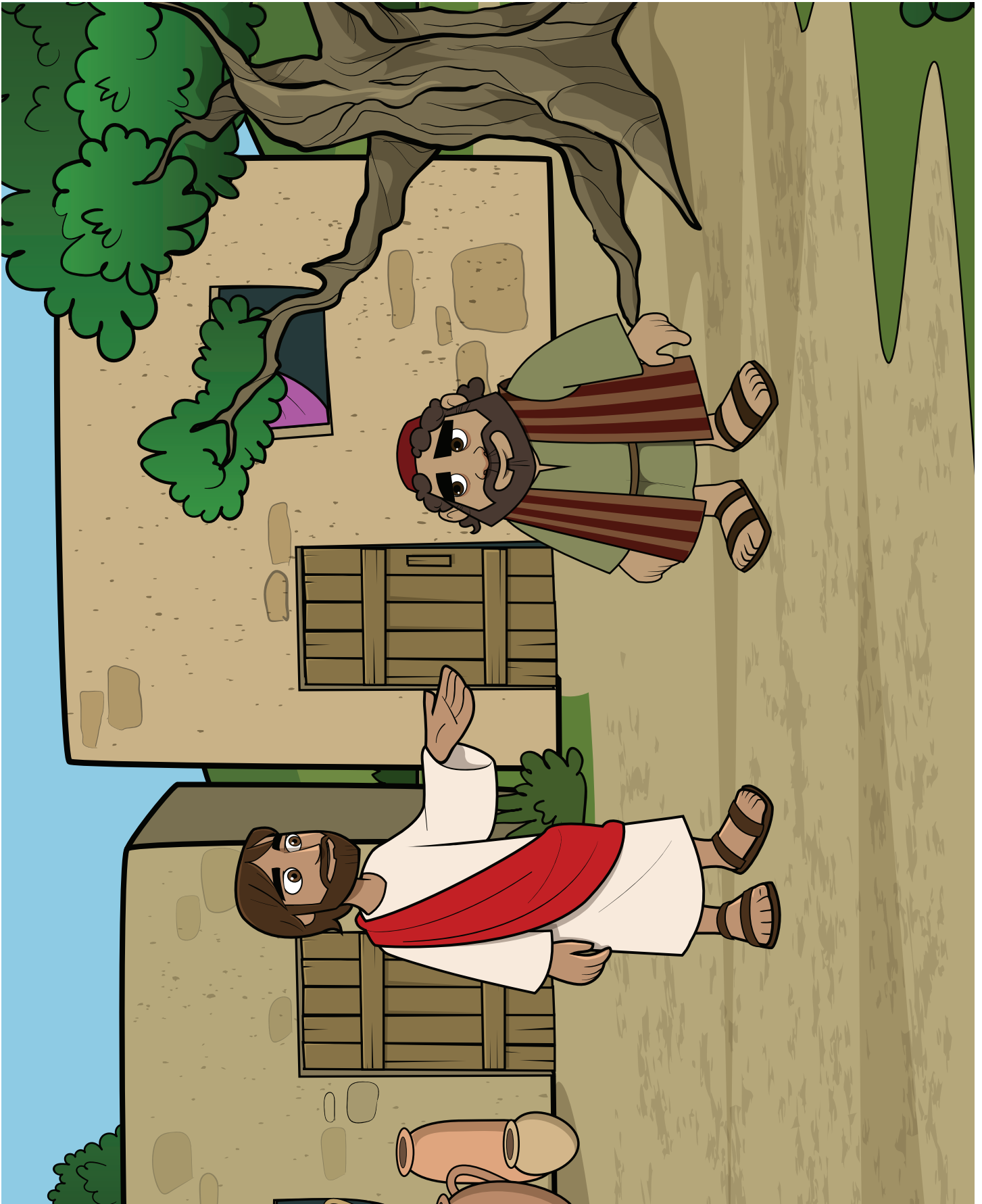
(Uncover picture two.) “It looks like Jesus and a lot of people. Do you think this is when Jesus fed all of those hungry people? *(Pause.)* I do, too! Jesus loved the people and took care of them.

(Uncover picture three.) “I think I see Jesus and a woman. Yes. And she’s with Jesus. They’re standing by a well where people get water. This is when Jesus was a friend to a woman who was different than Him. Jesus loved the woman and was her friend. It didn’t matter that they were different.

(Uncover picture four.) “Okay. This one has two men. I see Jesus and . . . Peter! Oh, remember when Peter wasn’t a good friend to Jesus? Jesus still loved Peter and forgave him.

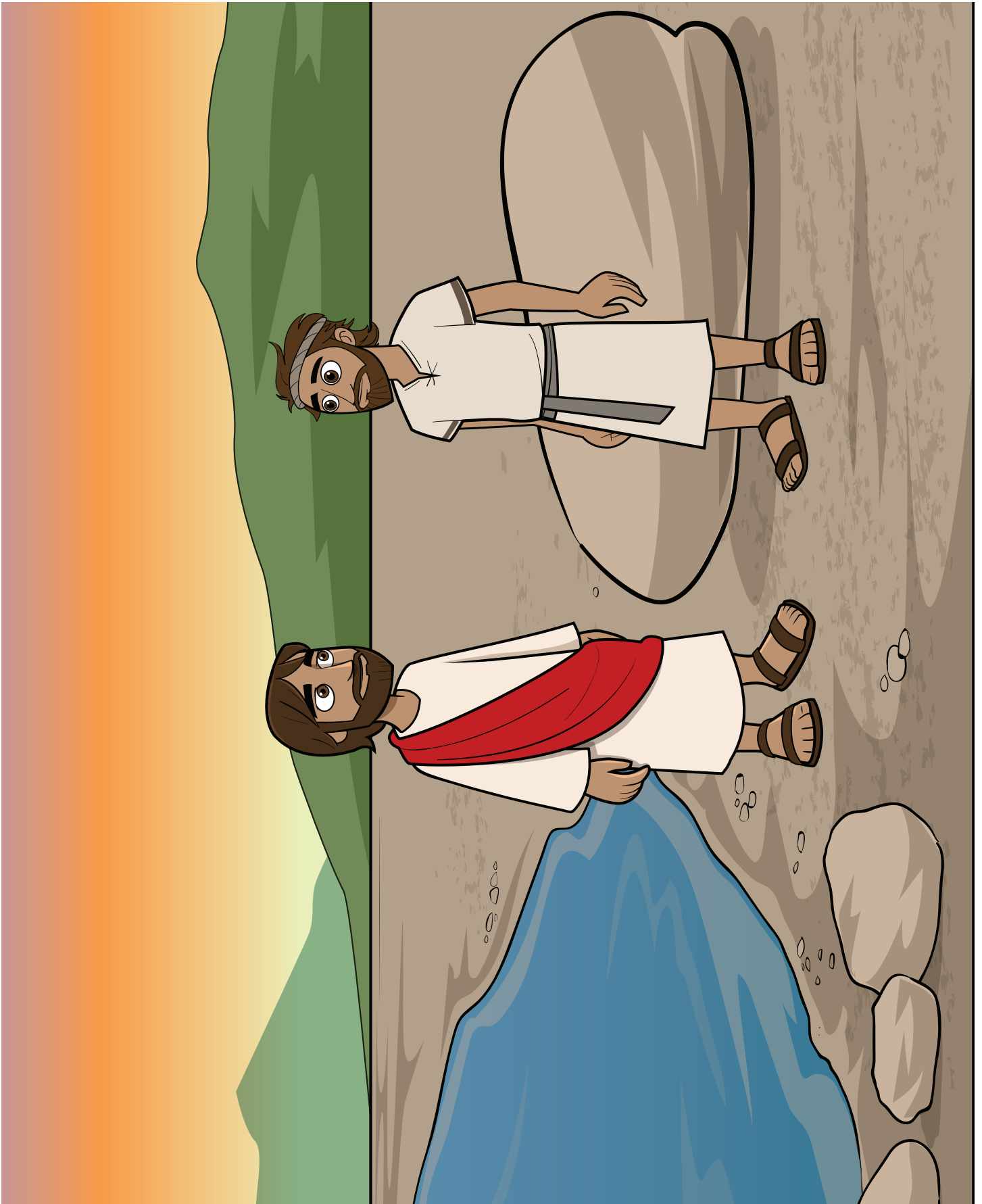
(Uncover picture five.) “Okay, last picture. It’s . . . it’s . . . it’s a heart! It’s a big red heart! It’s a big red heart because of all the ways Jesus loves us! And today we learned that Jesus wants us to love people the way Jesus loves people. We can be a friend to someone who doesn’t have a friend, we can share our food, we can be kind to people who are different than us, and we can forgive people when they do something wrong.”

“Jesus loves everyone. He loves everyone SO much that He wants them to be His friend forever. That means you and you and you and you—EVERYONE! So tell me: **Who wants to be your friend forever? [Bottom Line] Jesus wants to be my friend forever!**”





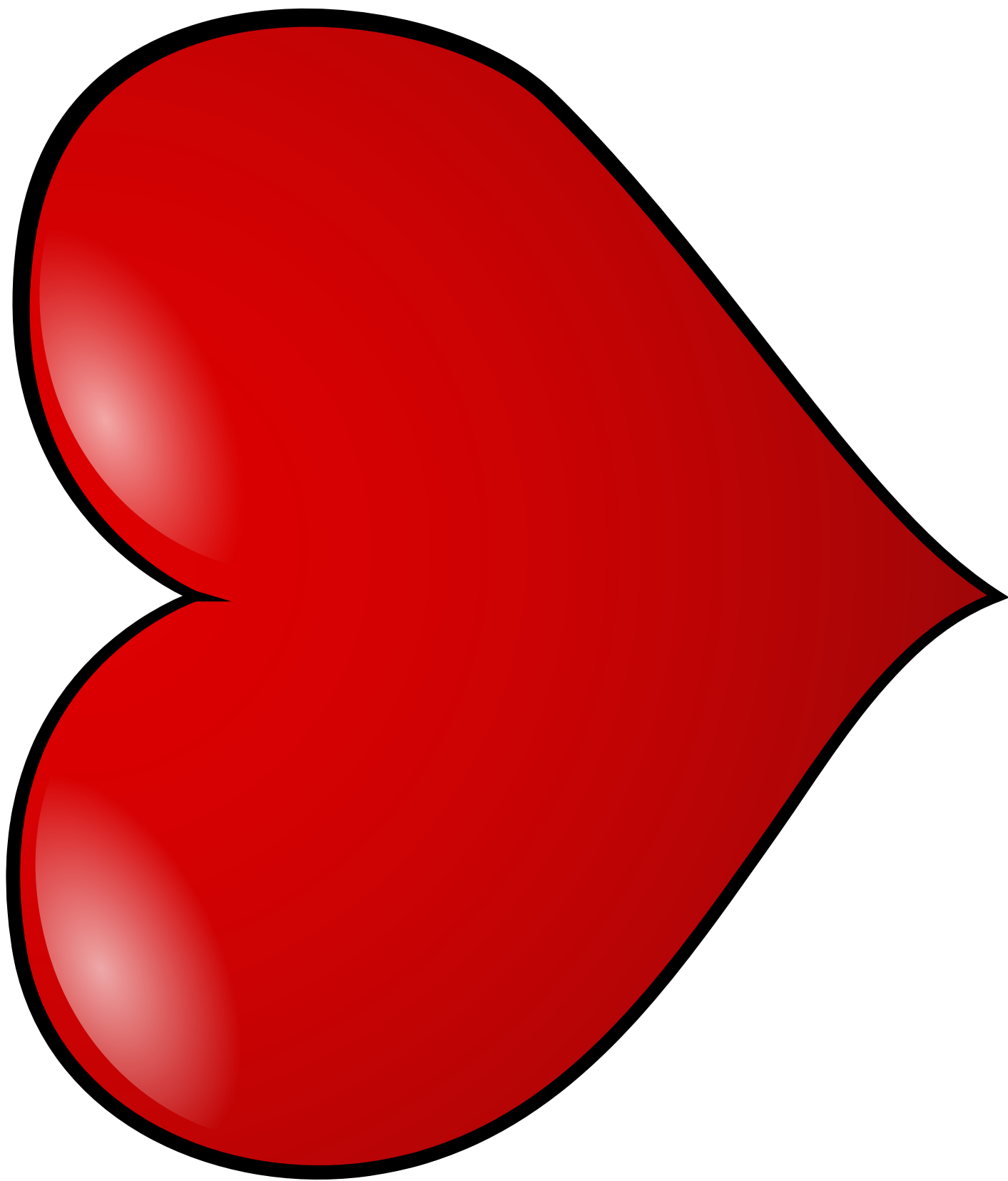




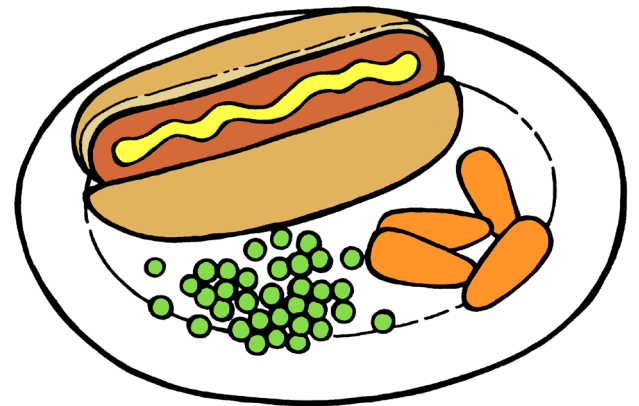
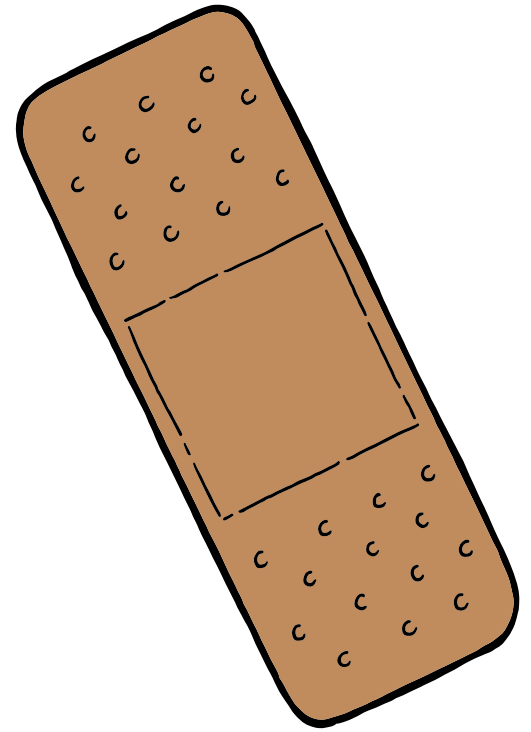
Story Pictures (4 of 5) • *Uncover the Story* • Small Group • Focus Day 5

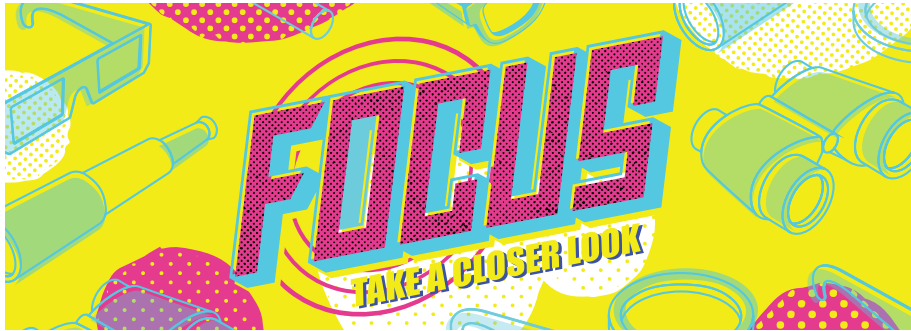
Copy on cardstock. One per activity.

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DAY FIVE

MATTHEW 22:36-40; 1 CORINTHIANS 13

Jesus teaches us that the greatest thing we can do is love people the way He loves us.



REMEMBER THIS:

"Let us keep looking to Jesus." HEBREWS 12:2, NIrV



SAY THIS:

Who wants to be your friend forever? JESUS WANTS TO BE MY FRIEND FOREVER.



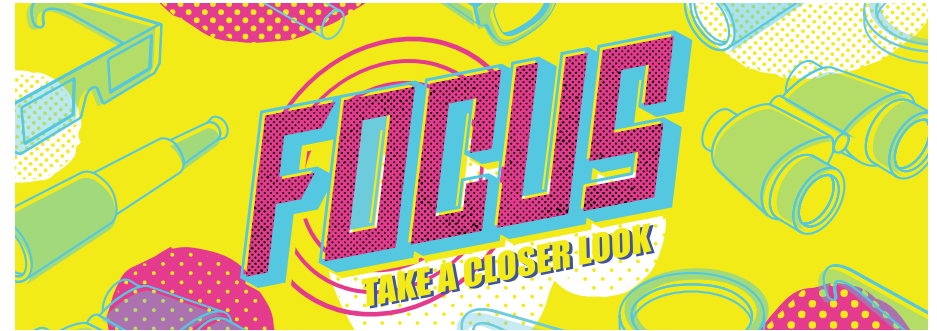
DO THIS:



Cuddle with your child this month and pray, "Dear God, Jesus taught us that the most important thing we can do is love people the way He loves us. Please help me do that. Help me love people the way Jesus loves me. I know [child's name] is going to grow up watching me, and I want him/her to see me following Jesus. I love You, God. In Jesus' name, amen."

BASIC TRUTH:

JESUS WANTS TO BE MY FRIEND FOREVER.



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THE WORK OF TEACHING KIDS TO VALUE EVERYONE

By Lauren Terrell

"I will never be friends with Will*! He has a funny looking hand, and I will never play with him!" my 4-year-old passionately declared the moment she climbed in the backseat of our car after her first day of pre-k.

I froze, eyes wide, mouth open. My eyes flicked to the rearview mirror where I could see my little girl, scowling, arms crossed over her new navy dress with the words "BE KIND" spelled out in sequins. Where had I gone wrong? How had I missed the signs that I was raising a monster?? What were the magic words I had to say to reverse this immediately?

After every tactic I knew to compel my daughter to show empathy toward Will was met with an outright dismissal, I ended with a clear demand: **"I want you to be kind to everyone because everyone is important."**

"I knooooooww-uh! STOP TALKING!"

Confirmed: I was raising a monster.

That afternoon, as she watched Daniel Tiger (singing, "In some ways we are different, but in so many ways, we are the same" in the background), I ordered no less than 10 Everyone Has Equal Value-themed picture books to subtly slide into our bedtime story rotation.

I added movies to our queue with diverse heroes, researched places we could go

as to expose her to all kinds of people. And I signed our family up for a Meals on Wheels route.

I wish I could say she went back to school the next week and invited Will over for a play date. But I learned that I can't teach love in one day. There were no magic words I could say.

The truth is, my work on this subject will never be done. Not after reading all the books, watching all the movies, and delivering all the meals. Not even after she got in the backseat one day in May and announced, "Will is actually my friend!"

Being intentional about the books we read, the people we interact with, the way I speak to and about others—this is work I should have been doing all along—work I must continue doing the rest of my life.

We all have prejudices, fears, and biases. And we all have to be willing to do the work needed to make sure the next generation is one defined by their ability to see the intrinsic value in every person they meet.



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