

# **THEME 3**

## **God Teaches Us How to Live**

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God is a kind and loving God who has given us guidelines so we can live together peacefully in our classrooms, at home, and on the earth. God has given us friends, families, pastors, and teachers to help us. This theme, with four units, is designed to show children how rules help us live in harmony. It highlights the importance of obedience to God through the stories of Daniel and the widow of Zarephath. Children will be reminded that Jesus invites us to have a special relationship with him, based on love.

Theme 3 includes the following units:

- Unit 1: Love, the Greatest Rule
- Unit 2: Trust and Obey
- Unit 3: Jesus Is a Friend to You and Me
- Unit 4: Jesus' Great Gift of Love

# Kindergarten—Unit 9

## Love, the Greatest Rule

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Through a discussion of rules, children will learn why rules are necessary and helpful. They will look at the rules God gave to Israel (*the Ten Commandments*) and two important teachings from Jesus about loving God and your neighbor.

### LESSONS

1. The Ten Commandments
2. Who Is My Neighbor?
3. Love One Another

# Unit 9: Love, the Greatest Rule

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## Unit Information

### SUMMARY

God gives us rules so we can live together in harmony and peace. Rules benefit us as individuals, as well as a community. Children will learn the Ten Commandments and discover that all our actions should be based on a sincere love for God and our neighbor. If we love God and truly try to serve God, then love for all people will follow.

### KEY BIBLE TEXTS

- Exodus 20
- Leviticus 19:18
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 18
- Matthew 7:12
- Matthew 22:34-40
- Mark 12:28-34
- Luke 6:31
- John 13:31-35
- 2 John 5-6

### BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

#### The Ten Commandments

Exodus is the story of Israel's release from bondage in Egypt and the people's journeys in the desert. The book ends with the people of Israel free and on their own. For three months following their departure from Egypt, the Israelites traveled in the wilderness. Finally, they encamped near Mt. Sinai. As the people of Israel formed their own community in the desert, they needed rules to live by, to guide their common life together. Exodus reveals God as their covenant-maker. The scene at Mt. Sinai shows clearly that God is in charge. God delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt without making any demands or setting conditions for their release. The covenant made at Mt. Sinai, however, highlights the mutual accountability in the Israelites' relationship with God.

The core of this covenant with God came to be known as the Ten Commandments. The commandments are grouped into two categories. The first four deal with religious duties—what God expected of the people. The next six focus on relationships among people, emphasizing respect and care for one another. The Ten Commandments have played an important role in our religious heritage. They are the basis for rules that have guided ethical behavior within the human family for centuries.

#### Love One Another

The religious leaders of the day once asked Jesus, "Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" (Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31). Perhaps as keepers of the law, they were testing his knowledge. Or they might have been testing his authority. Jesus showed his knowledge of Old Testament scriptures by answering with the *Shema*, the essence of Jewish faith: One must love God above all else.

As we have seen earlier, this commandment was also the foundation of the Ten Commandments. The injunction to place God first is found elsewhere in scripture as well. The familiar commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself” was first given in the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18). Jesus was the first teacher to link these two commandments. Jesus essentially said that it is not possible to love God without loving your neighbor. Loving God involves loving one’s neighbor. The two must go hand-in-hand to faithfully follow God.

### **Who Is My Neighbor?**

Jesus’ emphasis on the importance of loving your neighbor led the religious leaders of his day to ask more questions. The lawyer in Luke 10:25-29 questioned Jesus about how to obtain eternal life. Jesus prompted the lawyer to answer his own question. As with the story of the rich, young ruler, the lawyer answered that following the law was the way to obtain eternal life. Trying to get around the demands of the law to love your neighbor as yourself, the lawyer asked another question: “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan as an answer. Luke is the only gospel to tell this parable. The meaning of the story seems clear. The sharp contrast of the Samaritan to the priest and Levite is shocking. A Samaritan represented both racial and religious impurity to Jesus’ listeners. The message is clear. Those who show love to those who need it are following the commandment.

### **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS**

- God has given us rules because God loves us.
- Parents, teachers, pastors, and friends help us obey God’s rules.
- Jesus taught that loving God and loving your neighbor were the most important rules to live by.
- Your neighbor is anyone in need.

### **WORSHIP / BIBLE MEMORY**

At the beginning of each lesson, light a candle (or battery-powered light), call your students to quiet themselves and prepare to worship and learn about God. Name the behaviors you want to see during your time of class worship: quiet, calmness, respectfulness, listening.

1. Introduce the Bible memory verse. The Golden Rule, or Luke 6:31, is a verse your students may already know. They may use the rulers they create in “Love One Another” to help memorize the verse.
2. Practice the Ten Commandments. If you want a challenge for your students, memorize the Ten Commandments together. Use pictures to represent each commandment. For example:

#### **GOD**

god, god, god    *(Only one God)*

Idol with X across it    *(Don’t worship idols.)*

GOD written in gold,    *(God’s name is holy. Don’t use it in a bad way.)*  
maybe sitting on a throne

Church    *(Keep the Sabbath holy.)*

Mom and Dad (*Honor your parents.*)

Gun with X across it (*Don't murder.*)

Wedding rings (*Stay with your wife or husband.*)

Masked robber with X across (*Don't steal.*)

Person with speech bubble, saying (*Don't lie.*)  
"I didn't do it. He did."

Two houses, one poor (*Don't wish for someone else's things.*)  
and one rich

3. Sing one or more of the these songs from *Jubilee Songbook*:

—Love One Another, page 50

—I Need a Friend, page 51

—Be Kind to One Another, page 52

—Song of Forgiveness, page 55

4. Pray together:

*The Ten Commandments*

Ask God to help your students follow each commandment that applies to them.  
Pray for strength to follow specific commandments, not just in general.

*Love One Another*

Ask for prayer requests from children, reminding them that when we love someone, we pray for that person. We want to let God know how we feel and what we want for that person.

*Who Is My Neighbor?*

Pray for our neighbors, near and far. Structure your prayer so that you pray for families, then school and church, local neighborhood, and finally the worldwide community.

## **ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING**

Observe students and listen to their discussions during unstructured times. These questions can guide your assessment of students for this unit:

- Do they have a sense that rules guide our work and play?
- Do they understand that rules can help them work and play together harmoniously?
- Do they have a sense of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior?
- Are they beginning to have an internal sense of control over their behavior?
- Do they exhibit an attitude of caring for others through everyday activities?

## **MEMORY PASSAGES**

This unit offers the following verses for students to memorize: Luke 6:31 and the bonus verses, Deuteronomy 6:18a and John 13:34. You will find them in large format on pages 265-267, to copy as take-home sheets for students.



Do to others  
as you would have them  
do to you.

Luke 6:31



Do what is  
right and good  
in the Lord's sight.

Deuteronomy 6:18a



A new command

I give you:

Love one another.

As I have loved you,

so you must love

one another.

John 13:34

# Love, the Greatest Rule

## LESSON 1: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

### Objective

Children will understand that God has rules for people. They will be able to say some of those rules.

### Key Concepts

- God gave the people of Israel rules to help them live together peacefully.
- God wanted the Israelites to love God.
- The rules God gave can help us live peacefully with others.

**Text:** Exodus 19:16—5; 20:1-21

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 30-40 minutes

### Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Chart paper and marker
- Poster with two columns, labeled “Love God” and “Love People”
- Basket or box
- Copy of Ten Commandments, paraphrased (p. 271)
- Self-hardening clay, toothpicks or plastic knives
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: plain bumper stickers *OR* contact paper cut into strips

### Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story.
- Cut apart the Ten Commandments and place them in the basket or box.

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**1. Worship and Bible memory.** See Unit Information, pages 263-264.

**2. Review your classroom rules** on chart paper, recording the children’s ideas. These may be official or unofficial rules that guide their social interactions. Ask the children if they like rules. Why or why not? Accept any opinions. Spend a moment of silence to think about what a day without classroom rules would be like. Then guide children’s thinking by quietly asking:

- What if everyone tried to talk at once?
- What if we ran and yelled in the hallway?
- What if someone hit you?
- What if someone told a lie about you?
- What if no one would give you a turn?

After thinking silently about these scenarios, go back to your list of classroom rules and try to establish a rationale for each rule. *For example:*

No hitting.

No putdowns. *(To keep bodies and feelings from being hurt.)*

Raise your hand when you want to talk in a group.

Give everyone a turn. *(To give everyone a chance to share and learn.)*

Don't throw trash on the ground.

Water the plants and feed the class pet. *(To take care of God's earth.)*

## LESSON STEPS

**1. Tell the story of the Ten Commandments**, taken from Deuteronomy 5:6-21. Simply tell the story, or act it out with the children.

The Hebrew people had been walking through the wilderness for many weeks. They had escaped from Egypt and come a long way into the wilderness. Back in Egypt, life had been hard, but now they were going to a new land God had promised to give them. Moses was their leader, and God spoke to Moses from time to time and told him what to do.

On and on the Hebrews walked—men, women, and children. Donkeys carried the baggage and tents. Herds of sheep and cattle followed. It was hard to find food and water in the wilderness for so many people and animals! Sometimes there was hardly anything to eat and little water to drink. Then the people began to complain. “What shall we do?” they cried to Moses. “We should have stayed in Egypt. At least there we always had enough to eat!”

Moses prayed to God, and God sent food from heaven for the people to eat. Once, Moses even brought water out of a rock for the people to drink! So the Hebrew people trusted Moses. They learned that God would take care of them and provide what they needed.

Now the people were camped near a high mountain, Mount Sinai. They were glad to pitch their tents and stay there for several days. But they weren't allowed to touch the mountain, because it was holy.

One day, God called Moses to climb up alone to the very top of the holy mountain. When Moses climbed up and was out of sight, the whole mountain trembled and shook. Lightning flashed in the sky, and thunder rumbled.

“What's happening?” the people asked. Everyone was afraid. Mothers and fathers put their arms around their children. Some bowed their faces to the ground. High up on the mountain, Moses was not afraid. He stayed for many days to talk with God. When he came down, he carried two heavy stone tablets. On the stones were carved God's rules for the people. These rules are the Ten Commandments.

Moses read God's rules to the people and explained the commandments as God had told him. He asked the people to remember how God had led them on their escape out of Egypt and cared for them in the wilderness. He told them of God's great promise to keep taking care of them, if only they would obey and live in a way that pleased God.

The people listened to every word Moses said. They nodded their heads and told him, “All the words which the Lord has spoken, we will do.”

Then Moses built an altar to God at the bottom of the holy mountain, and the people worshipped God. That was an important day, a time that the Hebrew people would remember for many years. Fathers told the story to their children. And the children told the same story to *their* children. God had chosen them as a special people. God promised to love and care for them, and they promised to obey his laws.

**2. Wonder about the story**, using the following statements:

- I wonder what Moses saw on top of the mountain.
- I wonder what those stone tablets looked like.
- I wonder if the Hebrew people kept their promise to follow God’s laws.
- I wonder what God’s laws are for me.

Then pray, “Thank you, God, for giving good rules. Help us to follow what you want us to do. Amen.”

**3. Love God and love people.** Gather around the poster with two columns labeled “Love God” and “Love People.” Have the basket or box with the Ten Commandments slips nearby. Talk with the children about the words on the poster. Who is someone we love? How do we show that person that we love them? One at a time, pull out a commandment slip and read it to the children. Let them decide whether it is a rule that helps us show love to God or show love to people. Tape or glue each commandment under the appropriate category.

Only worship the one, true God. *(Love God)*

Don’t make any idols. *(Love God)*

Don’t use God’s name in a bad way. *(Love God)*

Don’t work on the Sabbath. *(Love God)*

Honor your father and your mother. *(Love people)*

Don’t kill anyone. *(Love people)*

Stay with your wife or husband. *(Love people)*

Don’t steal anything. *(Love people)*

Don’t lie to anyone. *(Love people)*

Don’t wish for other people’s things. *(Love people)*

**4. Create clay tablets.** Explain how messages were written in ancient times. Before the days of paper and computers, people wrote on clay tablets, stone, or other natural objects. Provide self-hardening clay for the children to create “tablets” symbolizing Moses’ tablets. Invite them to draw pictures or write words with toothpicks or plastic knives, to represent one of the commandments. If there is enough room, they may write as many words as they would like to represent different commandments or all of one commandment. When children are finished, put the tablets in a safe place and allow them to harden. Make sure students’ names are attached to or scratched into the clay.

## **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)*

- **Make bumper stickers.** In Deuteronomy 6:9, God tells the Israelites to write the law on their doorposts and gates. Provide plain bumper stickers or contact paper cut into large stickers. Invite children to write phrases or draw pictures that tell about laws that help us respect God and people.
- **Memorize the Ten Commandments** together. Use pictures representing each commandment to jog children’s memories. (See examples in Unit Information, pages 263-264.)

Only worship the one, true God.

Don't make any idols.

Don't use God's name in a bad way.

Don't work on the Sabbath.

Honor your father and your mother.

Don't kill anyone.

Stay with your wife or husband.

Don't steal anything.

Don't lie to anyone.

Don't wish for other people's things.

# Love, the Greatest Rule

## LESSON 2: WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

### Objective

Children will understand that when Jesus said, “Love your neighbor,” he meant anyone in need.

### Key Concepts

- Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan.
- Jesus wants us to love our neighbors.
- Our neighbors include anyone who is in need.

**Text:** Luke 10:25-37

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 30-40 minutes

### Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- *People* by Peter Spier (Random House, 1988)
- 12" x 18" sheet of construction paper for each child
- Tape, scissors, glue
- Magazines with photos of people from different ethnic groups (such as *National Geographic*)
- Daily prayers (p. 275)
- Picture and story of missionary family
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: video or DVD about children in another country
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: band-aids, fine-tip markers

### Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story.
- Prepare construction paper to make table prayer reminders. See lesson step 4, page 273.
- Make one copy of the daily prayers for each child.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option one, invite a missionary or person from another country to visit your class.

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**1. Worship and Bible memory.** See Unit Information, pages 263-264.

**2. Read the book *People*,** and talk about how people are different. They live in different places. They look different. They do different things. Explain that in today’s story they will hear about two people who were different. One was a Jew and one was a Samaritan. These groups of people didn’t like each other. But in the Bible story, one of them decided to be a neighbor to the other.

## LESSON STEPS

**1. Tell the story of the Good Samaritan.** This is an excellent story to act out with the children. You may act it out several times to let everyone have a chance to play a role. If you do, see if children can tell the story the second or third time. Choose one child to be the victim, several to be robbers, one to be the Levite, one to be the priest, one for the Samaritan and one for the innkeeper. Have the robbers hide.

A lawyer asked Jesus, “Teacher, what should I do to get eternal life?” Jesus asked a question back: “What does the law say?” The lawyer said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus replied, “You are right; do this and you will live.” But the lawyer asked, “Who is my neighbor?” To answer his question, Jesus told this story:

A man was walking from Jerusalem to Jericho. *(Victim walks slowly from one point to another, past robbers.)* On his way, some robbers jumped out, beat him up, and left him lying on the ground, half dead. *(Have robbers gently “beat” victim and lay him on ground.)*

A priest, who is like a pastor, happened to walk down the same road. When he saw the beaten man, he moved to the other side of the road so he wouldn’t have to look too closely at him. *(Priest walks past victim.)* Then a Levite, a religious man who made sure people followed the religious laws, passed by the place where the man lay. But just like the priest, the Levite passed by on the other side. *(Levite passes by.)*

Finally, a Samaritan came to where the man lay. *(Samaritan comes to victim and stops.)* When he saw him, the Samaritan felt sorry for him. He went up to him and bandaged him, pouring oil and wine on his wounds to help them heal. *(Samaritan pretends to bandage victim.)* The Samaritan put the wounded man on his animal and took him to an inn. *(Both walk to inn.)* That night, the Samaritan stayed with the man and took care of him. The next day, he took out some money and gave it to the innkeeper, saying, “Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.” *(Samaritan pretends to give money to innkeeper and leaves.)*

When Jesus finished telling this story, he asked the lawyer, “Which of these three do you think was neighbor to the man who fell among robbers?” The lawyer said, “The one who was kind to him.” And Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”

**2. Wonder about the story.** Explain that Jesus told this story to show people what God is like. God always loves us, no matter what we do. Then wonder about the following statements:

- I wonder why the priest and the Levite wouldn’t help, even though they were important people in the church.
- I wonder why the Samaritan helped the man, even though the Jews hated Samaritans.
- I wonder who is my neighbor.

Then pray, “God, we’re glad that the Samaritan was a neighbor to the man who was hurt. Help us to be neighbors and help people, too. Amen.”

**3. Play a game.** Choose one of the following games to encourage students to think of their classmates as neighbors:

### Who Is My Neighbor?

Have children sit in circle on floor. One child sits in middle with his/her eyes closed. While child's eyes are closed, point to another child to be the "neighbor." Child in center asks, "Who is my neighbor?" "Neighbor" child answers, "I am your neighbor." If child in center can identify "neighbor's" voice, he/she takes that person's place in the circle and the "neighbor" becomes the guesser.

### Touch a Neighbor

Announce, "Everyone touch a neighbor who is wearing blue." Children must each touch something blue on another person. Continue with "Touch a neighbor's knee," "Touch a neighbor's hair," "Touch a neighbor's shoe," etc. Make game more complicated by saying, "Touch a neighbor's leg with your elbow," or "If you're wearing red, touch a neighbor's hand." Make up your own variations for as long as interest holds. Keep the game moving!

**4. Make table prayer reminders.** Ahead of time, prepare a reminder for each child by folding in half a 12" x 18" sheet of construction paper. Make additional folds 3" from each end to form a bottom, and tape together. The reminder should be able to stand on a table with approximately 6" x 12" showing on each side. Fold in the bottom so that the prayer reminder lies flat for children to decorate.

Begin the activity by giving each child a blank reminder. Provide magazines, with pictures of people who look different from your class, scissors, and glue. Invite children to cut out pictures and glue them to one side of the reminder. Then give each child a copy of the daily prayers to glue on the other side. These are simple prayers, reminding your students and their families that their "neighbors" are both near and far.

**5. Pray for a missionary family.** Close by showing a picture of a missionary family supported by Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Mission Network, a local mission network or local congregation. Tell their story, if you can, and pray that their message to our "neighbors" will be one of peace and joy.

## **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)*

- **Invite natives of another country or missionaries** in your community to come to your classroom and share about our neighbors around the world. Ask them to share positive ways we can relate to our global community. Invite them to show a few pictures *(only as many as will hold your students' interest!)*.
- **Learn about neighbors around the world.** Borrow an age-appropriate video or DVD about children in another country from Mennonite Central Committee ([www.mcc.org/catalog](http://www.mcc.org/catalog)).
- **Write a class letter** or make individual pictures/letters to send to a classroom of children from another culture. You may have a Hispanic, Asian, or African community in your area that could share some details of their lives with your students and vice versa. Emphasize your desire to be friends.
- **Bands of love.** Give children band-aids and fine-point markers and invite them to write "I Love You" on a band-aid and put it on a classmate's arm *(with the child's permission)*.

## Daily Prayers

**Monday:** God, you gave me a wonderful family. Help me to treat them as well as I want to be treated. Amen.

**Tuesday:** Thank you, God, for everyone at my school and church. They are my neighbors, and I love them. Amen.

**Wednesday:** Help me, God, to remember that the people in my town are my neighbors, too. I want to show them love. Amen.

**Thursday:** God, you gave me a whole country of neighbors. Show me some ways I can show love to people who live in other parts of my nation. Amen.

**Friday:** God, even people who live in other countries are my neighbors. I don't know them, but I want to help anyone who needs help. Amen.

## Daily Prayers

**Monday:** God, you gave me a wonderful family. Help me to treat them as well as I want to be treated. Amen.

**Tuesday:** Thank you, God, for everyone at my school and church. They are my neighbors, and I love them. Amen.

**Wednesday:** Help me, God, to remember that the people in my town are my neighbors, too. I want to show them love. Amen.

**Thursday:** God, you gave me a whole country of neighbors. Show me some ways I can show love to people who live in other parts of my nation. Amen.

**Friday:** God, even people who live in other countries are my neighbors. I don't know them, but I want to help anyone who needs help. Amen.

# Love, the Greatest Rule

## LESSON 3: LOVE ONE ANOTHER

### Objective

Children will be able to name the two greatest commandments, according to Jesus. They will be able to tell ways they could show love to their neighbors.

### Key Concepts

- Jesus taught that loving God is the greatest rule.
- Jesus taught that loving your neighbor is the second-greatest rule.
- Following these two rules helps us live together peacefully.

**Text:** Mark 10:17-22; Mark 12: 28-31; Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 40-50 minutes

### Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Bible
- Large sheet of paper, marker
- For Bible story: story figures, story cloth, small bed, small doll clothes
- Flat, wooden rulers or paint stirrers (or similar pieces of wood), gold spray paint
- Fine-point markers
- *Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister (North-South, 2002)
- For Extend the Lesson, art activity one: sheets of card stock (1 per child), white glue and sand *OR* colored glue
- For Extend the Lesson, art activity two: letter stencils, wallpaper samples
- For Extend the Lesson, art activity three: bread dough, foil pie pans

### Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story.
- Paint wooden rulers or paint stirrers with gold spray paint to make “Golden Rules,” *OR* cut from gold metallic poster board.

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**1. Worship and Bible memory.** See Unit Information, pages 263-264.

**2. The most important rules.** Remind children that long ago, God gave rules to people. Those rules said that you should love God and not hurt other people. God gave those laws, the Ten Commandments and the Shema, to Moses. When Jesus came, he said there were two most important rules. (*Read Matthew 22:36-40.*) We need to love God, but we need to love people, too. Besides not hurting people, we should act in loving ways to them, even if we don't know or like them. So, the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love all people.

On a large sheet of paper, list children's suggestions of ways we show love to God (*pray, sing, go to church, etc.*) and ways we show love to people (*hugs and kisses, sharing, kind words, etc.*).

## LESSON STEPS

**1. Tell the stories of the rich, young ruler and Dorcas.** The first story is short, and may be told with story figures or acted out with a student playing the part of the rich, young ruler. For the second story, use story figures. You will need one for Dorcas, several for other widows, one for Julia (*who represents one of the widows in the Bible*), two for men, and one for Peter. You also need Dorcas' bed and several small doll clothes.

**Our first story today** is about a young man who wanted to have eternal life, or live forever. He knew about the Ten Commandments and the first great commandment, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. But Jesus' second great commandment to love your neighbor as yourself was much harder for him to follow.

Once, when Jesus was traveling down the road with his disciples, the young man ran up to Jesus and knelt down in front of him. He asked, "Good teacher, what do I need to do to live forever?"

Jesus didn't answer the young man's question right away. First, he asked, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God!" Then Jesus answered the question. "You know what God's rules are. Do not kill. Stay with your wife. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not cheat. Be good to your father and mother."

The young man said to Jesus, "Teacher, I have kept all these rules ever since I was young!" Jesus looked at the man and felt love for him. Then he said, "You are missing one thing. Go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor. Then you will have treasure in heaven. When you have done that, come and follow me."

When Jesus said that, the young man looked sad. He was very rich. He could not do what Jesus asked. He walked away.

**Our second story** tells of someone else who tried to follow the great commandments. Unlike the rich, young ruler, Dorcas happily used everything she had to help the poor around her. (*Put figures of Dorcas and her friends near bed, with clothing laid around them. Put Peter off to one side and Julia and two men in another direction.*)

(*Point to Dorcas.*) Dorcas lived long ago, not long after Jesus lived on earth. Dorcas never met Jesus, but she had heard of his good works and believed he was the Son of God. She belonged to a group of believers in the city of Joppa. Dorcas was a widow. Her husband had died, and she gave her time to helping others. There were many poor and sick people in Joppa, where Dorcas lived. She was good at sewing, so she made clothes for the poor, sick people who had only rags to wear. (*Point to clothing.*) Dorcas sewed and sewed. Cloth was expensive. People didn't have many clothes in those days, so a new tunic to wear was a wonderful gift.

One day, Dorcas got sick. (*Lay Dorcas on bed with other women around.*) She lay in her bed, getting worse and worse. Finally, she died. Her friends, the other widows, were filled with sadness. They told Julia, one of the Christians, that Dorcas had died. (*Have several widows go to Julia.*) Julia knew that Peter was traveling near their city. She sent two men to Peter (*move the two men to Peter*) to tell him, "Please come to us quickly!"

Peter went with the men to Joppa. (*Put Peter, two men, and Julia at Dorcas' bed.*) They took Peter to the room where Dorcas' body lay. Her friends showed

him all the clothing Dorcas had made for the poor. They cried and cried, because they were so sad to lose their friend.

But Peter told everyone to leave. *(Remove all figures except Peter and Dorcas.)* He knelt down and prayed. Then he turned to Dorcas' body and said, "Dorcas, rise." She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, sat up. Peter gave her his hand and lifted her up. *(Stand up Dorcas figure.)* Then Peter called her friends into the room and showed them that Dorcas was alive. *(Put all figures back by Dorcas.)* Many people throughout the city heard the news and believed in the Lord.

**2. Wonder about the stories**, using the following statements:

- I wonder what the young man did after he left Jesus.
- I wonder whether I need to do more than just follow the rules.
- I wonder why Dorcas made clothes for people she didn't know.
- I wonder what Dorcas' friends said when they saw her alive.
- I wonder what I could do to help people, like Dorcas did.

Then pray, "Thank you, God, that the young man followed your good rules. Thank you that Dorcas did even more, by loving and giving to others. Help us to love others, too. Amen."

**3. Make a "Golden Rule" reminder.** Give each child a "Golden Rule" and black fine-point marker. Write these words on the board for children to copy, or give them each a printed copy:

Treat others like you want to be treated.

*(If the copying task seems too hard for your students, have them simply write "Love" or "Love each other.")*

**4. Do role plays.** Gather again to role-play situations that invite students to think, "What does God want me to do?" Call individual students forward to stand with you as you read the following situations. *OR*, if that seems too embarrassing, use large magazine pictures of people. Read each situation and have children "measure" on their golden rulers to see what they could do to show love to others. If they were in this situation, how would they want to be treated?

- Mary lives next door to you. It's no fun to play with her. Every time you play, she HAS to be in charge. Once, after she went home, your favorite stuffed animal was missing. Now Mary has a problem. Her dad lost his job and Mary has to go live with her grandma far away until he finds a new one. Mary is sad. What could you do to show love to her?
- Sam lived in New Orleans, but his home was destroyed in a hurricane. Sam has no clothes, no toys, and nowhere to live. Your church has adopted Sam's family and wants people to donate money and things. What could you do to show love to Sam?
- You have been saving your birthday money and allowance for months, to buy a special toy. You almost have enough. On Sunday, at church, your pastor told you about a village in Africa where it hasn't rained for many months. The cows have no grass and no water. The people need help. Your pastor is encouraging everyone to contribute money to help the village dig a new well. What could you do to show love to those people?

- Josh, a classmate, is very sick. He needs to have an operation. You don't know Josh very well. He is quiet and hardly ever plays with anyone else. But he will be in the hospital for four weeks. What could you do to show love to him?
- Alice is an old woman who lives in the same nursing home as your great-grandma. Every time you visit your great-grandma, Alice is sitting in her wheelchair in the same place. You have never seen anyone visit her. She looks very sad. What could you do to show love to Alice?

**5. Read the book *Rainbow Fish*, as a closing to the lesson, emphasizing the joy in giving.**

### **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 40-50 minutes.)*

- **LOVE art activities.** Use the word LOVE in one of the following art activities:
  - Give each child a sheet of card stock. Invite them to draw and color pictures of people showing love to others, filling the paper. When they are finished, give them each a bottle of white glue and instruct them to write the word LOVE with the glue, on top of the pictures. Sprinkle sand onto the glue and let it dry. Then shake off extra sand. *OR* simply use colored glue to write LOVE, without using sand.
  - Provide large stencils of the letters, L O V E. Invite children to trace the letters onto wallpaper samples, then cut out and glue on a large piece of paper.
  - Using purchased (*or homemade*) bread dough, let children shape the letters for LOVE and place them on foil pie pans. With a parent's help, bake the dough and tell students to share it with someone they love.