



*Key Scriptures:* Psalms 18:37-40; 27:1-5; Exodus 23:4-5; Proverbs 24:17-18; 25:21; Matthew 5:43-47

### BIBLE BASIS FOR LEADERS

Any relationship is complicated, but relationships can be even more complex as kids near the preteen years and young people navigate the waters of deep friendships for the first time. Along with intense friendships can come intense dislikes and even enemies. Use this lesson to help kids recognize that their responses to the people around them can make a huge difference in their relationships.

In **Psalm 18:37-40** kids will grapple with the description of David chasing down his enemies and capturing them. Use these verses to remind kids that violence isn't the way Jesus tells us to respond to enemies.

King David was no stranger to enemies. In **Psalm 27:1-5** David assures us that we don't need to be afraid, even if someone really does hate us or is out to get us. Use this passage to help kids see that even enemies like David's enemies aren't a reason to be afraid. God is with us and will protect us as he protected David.

**Exodus 23:4-5** and **Proverbs 24:17-18; 25:21** remind us not to be happy when our enemies stumble and fall. God calls us to feed our enemies when they're hungry and give them water when they're thirsty. Through these passages, kids will recognize the importance of helping their enemies.

Use **Matthew 5:43-47** to help kids really understand what it looks like to love someone who hates them. Through this Scripture, kids will come up with specific ways they can treat their enemies as Jesus calls them to—with love and kindness.

### THE LESSON AT A GLANCE

Lesson Sequence		What Kids Will Do	Supplies
1	(5 minutes)	Build relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christian music</li> <li>• music player</li> <li>• snacks</li> </ul>
2	(10-15 minutes)	Play a game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paper clip</li> </ul>
3	(10 minutes)	Try to complete a challenge, and then discuss what it's like to be picked on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paper</li> <li>• pencils</li> <li>• trash can</li> <li>• masking tape</li> </ul>
4	(25 minutes)	Explore what the Bible says about enemies and how to treat them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bibles</li> <li>• pencils</li> <li>• large sheet of paper</li> <li>• tape</li> <li>• markers</li> <li>• small rocks or marbles</li> </ul>
5	(5 minutes)	Play a game, and talk about how to act lovingly toward their enemies.	

## OPENING

Play Christian music as kids enjoy snacks and friendship. Give kids this discussion starter as they eat. Say: **Ask three people in our group to name a pair of movie, TV, or comic-book enemies.**

Allow time, and then play the three-minute countdown included with your download to let kids know how much time is remaining. Gather kids together.

Say: **Enemies are always being sneaky, and this game will require you to be pretty sneaky and sly.**

To begin the game, have kids hold out their right hands and close their eyes so you can secretly pass a paper clip to someone. Shake several other kids' hands, too, so kids won't know who got the paper clip. Then have kids open their eyes, walk around, and greet each other with handshakes. Kids should say, "Nice to see you today." (Encourage them to do this with funny accents.) The person with the paper clip will try to pass it off during a handshake. When that person successfully passes off the paper clip, the person receiving the paper clip will continue shaking hands as if he or she doesn't have the paper clip. The person who successfully passed off the paper clip will count to 20 and then yell, "Where, oh where is my paper clip?" without revealing who the paper clip was passed to. Everyone else will try to guess who has it. Play several rounds, having a different person begin the paper clip "passing" each time. After about 10 minutes, take the paper clip and have kids sit down.

Ask: **What was the most challenging thing about this game?**

Say: **You had to work hard to be sneaky and fool your friends. In a game, that's pretty fun. But in real life when people are sneaky and try to fool us, it's not so fun. In fact, people who do that in a mean way might be considered our enemies. Today we'll dive into how to love our enemies. That's hard stuff!**

## BIBLE STUDY INTRODUCTION

Distribute paper and a pencil to each person. Say: **Take a minute to draw or write about how you feel when someone's mean to you or picking on you.** Pause. **Now crumple your paper into a tight wad no one can read.**

Form three groups. Place a trash can in the center of the room. Ask two groups to stand shoulder to shoulder around the trash can, facing out. Tape a circle on the floor about 2 feet in front of them.

Say: **Everyone outside the circle will be a Thrower. Throwers will have 30 seconds to toss their paper wads past the Defenders and into the trash can. Defenders can only use their bodies to block shots and may not touch anyone outside the circle. If a Defender blocks a shot, the Thrower can pick up the paper and try again. If the shot falls within the circle, a Defender can throw it back out. Once a Thrower gets a paper into the can, that Thrower can offer to help someone else.** Play until everyone has had a chance at both positions.

Ask: **What was it like for you when someone kept you from throwing away your paper?**

• **How is that like how you feel when someone is constantly mean to you or picks on you?**

Say: **Relationships can be complicated; sometimes we just don't get along with someone. It can seem like someone's only purpose is to get in our way. Once in a while, we may even believe that a person hates us, and we might call that person an enemy. So the question is, "What if someone hates me?" What are we supposed to do? Let's talk about that.**

## BIBLE STUDY

Form three groups and have them gather at one end of the room. Assign each group one of the following passages: Proverbs 24:17-18, Proverbs 25:21, or Exodus 23:4-5.

Tape a large sheet of paper on the opposite wall, and place a set of markers nearby. On one side of the paper write "Do," and on the other side write "Do Not."

Say: **It seems like enemies have been around forever—even in the Bible! Each group has a Bible passage that tells us what to do—and what not to do—to our enemies. When I say "go," you'll read aloud the passage with your group. Be sure everyone hears it well. Then take turns running to the sheet of paper and writing one thing your verse said to do or *not* to do. Then run back and let another group member go. Keep taking turns adding to the paper until all the information from your verse has been shared. Then you can all sit down. Oh, and you'll do the whole thing with a rock in your shoe.**

Hand kids each a small rock or marble and have them place it in the bottom of their shoe. Say "go" to begin the activity. Continue until all groups are seated.

Ask: **Call out how it felt to walk or run with a rock in your shoe.**

- **How is that like having someone who's mean to you?**

Say: **Let's look at all the things you wrote down.** Read aloud the things kids wrote. **Think about your painful, tender, uncomfortable foot. Think of the pain an enemy causes you.**

Ask: **How hard is it to do—or not do—these things to an enemy?**

- **Why do you think God asks us to act this way?**

Say: **Let's take a look at someone in the Bible who definitely knew what it was like to have enemies. King David had been a brother, a shepherd, a warrior, and a king. You can bet he had people who didn't like him very much. Let's listen to what he said.**

Lead kids in finding and reading aloud Psalm 18:37-40.

Say: **Call out three words that tell what David wanted to do to his enemies.**

Ask: **What would be the result if people did those things to each other?**

- **What would happen to relationships?**

Say: **Well, David learned and grew and listened to God. His heart changed over time. Let's see what he wrote about his enemies later.**

Lead kids in finding and reading aloud Psalm 27:1-5.

Say: **Turn to a friend and tell about a time you were afraid of the way someone might treat you.** Share your own example of a time you were afraid of being treated in a hurtful or embarrassing way. Allow a couple of minutes for kids to share, and then take responses.

Say: **King David was afraid of his enemies at times, but when he wrote this psalm, he wasn't afraid.**

Ask: **What clues can you find that might explain why?**

- **What can you learn from David's attitude?**

Say: It sounds like David knew he could trust God to take care of him...and to deal with his enemies God's way. The same God who loved and protected David loves and protects you. God gives us parents and teachers who can also help us when we're really worried about being hurt. Jesus knew we'd face people who don't like us. I'm going to read Jesus' words about how to treat our enemies. While I do, I want you to fold your hands as if you're going to pray. Pause. Now, when most of us fold our hands, we naturally lay one thumb over the other. As you listen to Jesus' words, switch the thumb that's on top.

Read aloud Matthew 5:43-47.

Ask: How did it feel to have your thumbs switched?

• How would it feel to treat your enemy the way Jesus asks you to in this passage?

Say: It can seem weird or unnatural or uncomfortable to love our enemies. But Jesus loves them, and the least we can do is try to show his love.

## CLOSING

Say: Let's close with a simple activity.

Turn out the lights. Choose one person to be the Lighthouse for the group. The Lighthouse will stand somewhere in the room and remain motionless while whispering, "Jesus loves you" over and over. Everyone else will have their eyes closed and must find the Lighthouse. Once a person finds the Lighthouse, he or she should link arms with the Lighthouse or with someone already linked. All connected players should join in whispering, "Jesus loves you." After everyone has found the Lighthouse, turn on the lights (unless you'd like to play again).

Say: Jesus' love can draw people—even our enemies—to Jesus. No one likes to feel hated. Plain and simple, hate doesn't feel good—for you or your enemy. So don't hate back; respond with love instead. This week, I challenge you to act lovingly toward your enemies. If you don't think you have enemies, choose one or more people you find hard to get along with, and make an effort to do loving things for them. Then watch what God does in your relationships when you take the risk to follow him more closely!

Find the Parent Page for this lesson included with this download. Print copies for kids to give to their parents, or send the file to parents via email.

