

Lesson Plan

August 23rd, 2026

This Month's Truth: I am designed for a purpose

Bible Story: Love your enemies (Matthew 5:43-48)

Theme Verse: Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in Heaven. (Matthew 5:16b)

Teachers rally with your team a few minutes before kids start to arrive: Rally is a pre-service time for you to be expectant and equipped before the kids start arriving. Go over the lesson and any ideas for the day. Pray over your space and for the kids that will be coming that they will be connected to the person of Jesus.

Share: We get to teach kids today that loving like Jesus means loving differently than the world loves. Jesus taught that His followers are to love when it costs them something, even when they are not shown love and kindness in return. Jesus taught that we are even to love our enemies. (Read Matthew 5:43-44.) While our natural desire may be to love those who love and are kind to us, let's help kids learn that loving like Jesus means loving all people, even when it is hard for us.

Pray: Lead the group in prayer, asking God for help loving others like Jesus this week.

Pre Service

Arrival time, please use this time to build relationships with kids and encourage them to build relationships with one another.

Service

What To Do:

- **Teacher** Start 5-minute countdown **5 minutes prior to service start time.**

Teacher Opener: It is good to see everyone! I am ____, and I will be your Host! I will be your what? (Host!) That is right! A host is someone who leads a game or program. Hosts always know what happens next, even though the audience might not. Hosts introduce what is next by saying, "Next up!" When a host says, "Next up," you can trust that the show is going according

to plan. God is the ultimate host! He leads everything. Say, “Next!” (Next!) Say, “Up!” (Up!) Say, “Next up!” (Next up!)

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John Corner Game

What You Say: We’re going to play a game called “Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John”. Does anyone know where we know these names from? (The Bible, The Gospels). This game is going to be like a game called Four Corners. Does everyone know this game?

For this game I need a volunteer to be It. It will stand in the middle between all the Gospel names. They will close their eyes and count to 10. Then everyone else will quietly go to one of the Gospel names. The person that is It will say, “Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I pick. . .” and then choose one of the Gospel names. Any kids standing near the sign of the name picked will move to stand in the middle with It. The game will continue until only one kid is left at a Gospel name. That kid then becomes It for the next round.

Leader Tip: Play however many rounds as time allows.

What You Say: Great job everyone! That game was so fun and what a great way for us to memorize the books of the Gospel.

Great job, everyone! Today we get to learn about a story in the Bible from the book of Matthew. Matthew is the first book of the Gospels. Just like the person who was It had a specific purpose for the game today we get to learn about the purpose God has for us. You were designed by God for a purpose! God has a plan for your life. He knows how life works best. Today, we are going to learn more about how God has designed you and your life. Turn to your neighbor and say, “You are designed for a purpose!” (You are designed for a purpose!) Point to yourself and say, “I am designed for a purpose!” (I am designed for a purpose!)

Transition Script to go into the Intro Video: Everyone, say, “Next up!” (Next up!) Next up is “Nifty News with Niki Nevada!” Niki is nifty, and she tells us nifty news along with her coworkers, Neena and Neemee. If you are ready for the news, say, “Take it away, Nikki!” (Take it away, Nikki!)

Play Intro Video

What You Say: Without touching anyone else, let me see your best karate chop while you say, “Love-Jitsu” in 3-2-1! (Love-Jitsu!) While Love-Jitsu, throwing eggs, and covering your brother in grass clippings are not great ways to show love, we do have a great example we can follow. God’s Son, Jesus, loved God and loved others perfectly when He was on earth. We can read

about how Jesus loved in the Bible. In the what? (Bible!) Right! God designed us for a purpose, and part of that purpose is to love God and love others. We can do that by loving like Jesus taught us to love. Let me hear you say, “Let’s love like Jesus!” (Let’s love like Jesus!)

Worship

What You Say: I am so excited for worship this morning! Let’s all come up front and worship together!

What To Do:

- Turn lights off
- 2 songs of worship
- **Teachers and Small Group Leaders worship with the kids, modeling what it looks like to give God our praise. Stand in the front of the room, or next to the kids- but not in the back.**
- Dismiss the kids back to their seats when the songs are over

What To Do:

- Have the kids **open up** a physical Bible and find the Bible story for that day.
- Use the Bibles provided in the classroom if a kid does not have their own Bible with them.

Transition Script to go into the Bible Story Video: (Open the Bible to Matthew 5:43-48.) Say, “Next!” (Next!) Say, “Up!” (Up!) Say, “Next up!” (Next up!) Next up is our Bible story! The Bible is God’s true message about Himself. Our Bible story today comes from a book in the Bible called Matthew. What book does it come from? (Matthew!) The book of Matthew is from the second part of the Bible, or the New Testament. In this Bible story, Jesus talked to His followers about how God has designed us to live. Point to yourself and say, “I am designed for a purpose!” (I am designed for a purpose!) Get our Bible story started by saying, “Next up!” (Next up!)

Play Bible Story Video

Questions to consider asking after the video:

- What is something that you learned about God from the video?
- What is something that you learned about people?
- What can you take away from the video?

- How can you apply the lesson from today into your life?

Making The Connection Script: Jesus taught about who we should love and how we should treat others, and it was very different from what we would expect—even today! When it comes to loving others, Jesus taught that how we feel about other people is not what is most important. Instead, Jesus taught that we can show God’s love to others in an extravagant way, like the way God loves us.

Most people are kind to people who are kind to them or love people who love them. But Jesus taught that followers of Jesus are to love differently; we are to love when it costs us something, even if we are not shown love and kindness in return. Jesus taught that we are to even love our enemies. Let me hear you say, “Let’s love like Jesus!” (Let’s love like Jesus!)

Use the Three Circle Graphics on the Playlist

(Circle two) Jesus is our example of how to love because He loved us when we were His enemies! In another book of the Bible called Romans, it says that we are enemies of God because of our sin. Sin is when we choose to do what we think is best instead of following what God says is best. Our sin separates us from God and makes us God's enemies. Sin is a big deal, and it is just and right for God to punish sin. The Bible teaches us that the punishment for sin is death and separation from God forever. No matter how hard we try to be good, do what is right, and to love God and other people, we cannot do it perfectly. We need Someone to rescue us from sin and help us love like God made us to love.

(Circle three) But God’s love is greater than our sin! Everyone, say, “God’s love is greater!” (God’s love is greater!) Because of God’s great love and kindness toward us, He sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for our sin and die in our place. Jesus died for us on a cross even though we were enemies of God! And what is even more amazing is that Jesus did not stay dead! God brought Jesus back to life to show that Jesus conquered sin and death. Jesus is the ultimate example of love because He loved us even when we were sinners and His enemies.

(Circle one) When we ask Jesus to forgive our sins, He will! Jesus forgives us and makes our relationship with God what God designed from the beginning. He helps us be who He made us to be. Our hearts are made new, and we are restored! Jesus said He will return and make everything new. We will love God and love each other perfectly, the way God designed. Until then, we can show and share God’s love like Jesus did!

Sometimes we may wonder, Is it OK that I treat others like they treat me? When others are kind

to us, it is easy to treat them with kindness too! But when people are mean or rude to us, it is not always easy to treat them with kindness. God did not make us to respond meanly or rudely too. Instead, God made us to follow Jesus's example to love others instead of hating them or treating them like they treat us. Since God loves us with that kind of never-giving-up love, we can love others with that same love—even people who are not loving toward us. Then they will experience the love God has for them.

If you want to know more about God's never-giving-up love that He shows through Jesus, please come talk to me or your small group leader! You can respond to God's love by asking Jesus to forgive your sin and become the leader of your life. He loves you, just like He loves every single person on earth. Say, "Let's love like Jesus!" (Let's love like Jesus!)

Theme Verse Review:

Theme Verse Motions:

Let your light shine before others, (Move your arms in a circle toward each other with palms facing forward, crossing in front of your body.)

so that they may see your good works (Move your arms in a circle toward each other with palms facing up, crossing in front of your waist.)

and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Push your hands up to the sky with palms facing in.)

Matthew 5:16b (Hold your hands out like a book.)

What You Say: Next up is our Theme verse! Jesus's example of loving others is like a light in a dark place. Tune in as we learn this verse together!

Play Theme Verse Video

What You Say: This Bible verse tells us to let our light shine before others. Loving people who are unkind to us is like shining a light in a dark place. When we love those people, we are reflecting Jesus's love to the world! Say, "Let's love like Jesus!" (Let's love like Jesus!)

Large Group Closing:

What You Say: God designed you on purpose and for a purpose. He also designed this world on purpose and for a purpose. Say, "I am designed for a purpose!" (I am designed for a purpose!) When we live and love like Jesus taught us, we are following God's design for our lives. Loving

others, even when they don't love us, is not always easy. But when we know that Jesus chose to love us, even when we were God's enemies, it helps us to love others like God loves us. Say, "Let's love like Jesus!" (Let's love like Jesus!) Let's pray and talk with our amazing and loving God in 3-2-1.

Closing Prayer: God, thank You for loving us even when we were Your enemies. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for our sins by dying on a cross. Thank You that Jesus came back to life, so we can have a relationship with you now and forever. Please give us Your love for the people around us—even when they are hard to love. We love You! Amen.

Transition to Small Group Time: Split the kids into small groups. This can be done either by age, grade, or gender.

Small Group Time:

Option #1: Connection Questions

What To Do: Next up, we will dive deeper into our Bible story together!

1. I will give you two options, and you will tell me which option you like most and why. First, vanilla or chocolate? (Allow kids to answer and share your own.) Second, summer or winter? (Allow kids to answer and share your own.) Last, salty or sweet? (Allow kids to answer and share your own.) Those are some fun choices! Even when we prefer different things, we can all be kind to people who are different from us!
2. The Bible tells us that we are designed to love others like Jesus loved us. Let's open our Bibles to **Matthew 5:43-45** and read about it together. (Invite kids to open their Bibles. Read the passage aloud or invite a kid who volunteers to read the passage aloud. Be sure to have Bibles available for kids who need one. Help kids find the passage so everyone can follow along together.) In these Bible verses, Jesus taught what it means to live in a way that honors and points others to God with our words and actions. We point people to God when we love those who do not love us. What are some ways we can show other's God's love with our words and actions? (Allow kids to answer and share your own. Answers may include we can invite people to sit with us at lunch; I can choose to be kind to someone even after they are mean to me; and so forth.)
3. The Bible says that God loves us even when our sin made us His enemy (read Romans 5:8-10). He loves us that much! What are some ways we can notice God's love for us? (Allow kids to answer and share your own. Answers may include God has given me a

place to live; God forgives my sin through Jesus; God loves me because the Bible says so; and so forth.) If you want to know more about how much God loves you and how He shows that love through Jesus, please come talk to me! God made the way for our sins to be forgiven. I would love to tell you about how Jesus can forgive you and give you a forever relationship with God!

4. The Bible tells us when we love like Jesus, we are following God's design for our lives! Next up, **let's love like Jesus!** Who is someone you can love like Jesus would this week? What is something you learned today? Is there anything you have questions about? (Allow kids to answer and share your own answer.)

Option #2: Prayer Chain

What You Say: Today we're going to make something really special. We're going to make some prayer chains. In our Bible story today we learned about loving our enemies. One way we can love people that we may not get along with is by praying for them and praying that God would soften our hearts to them.

(Hold up one paper strip.) These strips of paper don't look like much by themselves, do they? (Pause for answers.) But when we connect them together, they become something stronger—a chain! (Link two strips together.) Prayer is a little like that. Every time we pray, we're growing closer to God, and we're remembering that He cares about every person and every situation. I'm going to ask you to think of someone or something to pray for.

You might think of:

- Someone in your family
- A friend
- Someone who is sick
- Your teacher
- Someone who feels lonely
- Someone who doesn't know Jesus
- Even someone who has been unkind to you.

Loud and Clear: Jesus taught us something surprising. He said we should even pray for people who are difficult to love. That doesn't mean what they did was okay, but it means we ask God to help them and to help us love like Jesus. As you finish writing your prayer, fold your strip into a circle and staple it. Now let's connect it to the chain. (Connect one.) Every link reminds us of another prayer we can bring to God.

Look at our chain. It started with one little strip. Now look how long it is! Our prayers matter too. Sometimes they seem small, but God hears every single one. When you see a chain this week, I hope you'll remember that God is always listening when you pray.

Option #3: Activity Page

What To Do: This activity page helps us remember some big things we have learned about today. As you color and work on activities, talk to a friend about some of your favorite parts of our time together.

Leader Tip: Get to know the kids better. Ask them what they remember about the Bible story or remind them that they can love everyone like Jesus, even when those people are not nice or kind. Next up, let's live in God's design by loving like Jesus!

Loud And Clear: God's design for us is not scrambled but clear! We are to love others like Jesus. When we do, we are showing them God's amazing love!

Close out in prayer:

What To Do:

- Ask for any specific prayer requests
- Pray with the group
- Lead the group in the prayer below.

What You Say: God, thank You for Your love and for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die and rise again in our place. Give us courage to ask Your forgiveness for our sins. Help us share Your love with others, no matter how they treat us. Amen.

Dismissal:

Leader Tip: Work with your team to dismiss the kids in a fun, manageable, and safe way. As kids leave, make sure they have all of the crafts and papers. Share with the person picking them up something positive you observed today. Invite them back next week.