

WEEK 2 LESSON GUIDE

HOW TO...

BIG IDEA

Jesus taught us how to love our enemies.

BIBLE

Love Your Enemies: Matthew 5:43-48;
Deuteronomy 30:15-20

LARGE GROUP TIME

Hello and welcome back to *How To . . .*! Jesus, when he lived on earth, taught his friends how to do all sorts of things. And today, Jesus helps us to learn the same things! Let's kick things off with a fun how-to video!

[Before beginning the program each week, share a fun "How-To" video with the kids. [Here's a video](#) we like, but feel free to show something fun you've come across recently! It can be anything from a crafting or building project to a cool "life hack" using ordinary things.]

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "Light of the World" (Hillsong Kids)
 - "Blueprint" (Lifeway Kids Worship)
 - "Love Everybody" (North Point Kids)
 - "Freedom is Here" (Covenant Kids)

ACTIVITY | How to Have a Heart

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Draw a [large heart puzzle](#) on the white poster board, and cut them out into puzzle pieces before the activity. Split the kids into as many groups as you have puzzle pieces. Give each group a few minutes to draw or write things that represent loving and kind things they'd do for their favorite person onto their puzzle piece. Invite a representative from each group to help piece the heart puzzle together, then glue it onto the second poster board. Point out some things kids have drawn, then consider asking them to think about these questions.

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Prepare some images from magazines or from web searches of things that your kids can select from and paste onto their heart pieces.

- Now, how about someone who isn't your favorite person, maybe someone who made you really mad once or didn't do something kind for you? **What would it look like to give love to that person?**
- It can be tough thinking about giving love to people we don't like or people who hurt us, isn't it? Jesus has some things to teach us when it comes to learning how to love others!

ACTIVITY | How To Build a Human Pyramid

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to learn how to build a human pyramid! Come up with a few formations for kids to try. (Check out [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#) video for some inspiration!) It'll involve some adult support, supervision, and help when they get stuck.

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Instead of having them build pyramids with their bodies, consider providing a few different supplies (e.g., marshmallows, cups, popsicle sticks, blocks, etc.) to build a pyramid or a tower instead.

- Some human pyramids are harder to form than they look! You have to plan who's going to be in each position, then make sure everyone is safe while climbing on, and so on. If people on the bottom or the middle—or even on the top—decided not to be a part of the formation, it wouldn't exist! But, with a bit of help from your leaders, you were all able to get into formation!
- In today's Bible story, Jesus will challenge us to do something that can be pretty tough to do! But with Jesus' help, we can learn to do it, even if it seems impossible at first!

QUESTION | What are some things that you know you should do, but find hard to do?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids pair up and ask each other the questions below.
- **What are some things that you know you should do, but find hard to do sometimes?**
- **Why is that?**
- When something is easy for us to do, we usually don't mind doing it. But, let's face it. When something is challenging for us, we can find it easier to just not do it, or let someone else do it for us!
- Today's Bible story talks about how Jesus taught people how to love everyone, even people who didn't love them back. Listen closely, and you'll discover how to do it, too!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 5:43-48 (Love Your Enemies)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week for the Bible story, set up your space with a table, tablecloth, and stools. Revamp a used rectangular box to look like a [subscribe button](#), and place it in your teaching area. For this week's story from Matthew 5:43-48, ask a volunteer to play Matthew. Wear the "Howie" and "Matthew" name tags if using them.

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Bear in mind, when you teach about loving your enemies, that there may be kids in the room who are victims of abuse. Remind kids that loving our enemies doesn't mean that we need to allow people to continue hurting us. Remind kids that you and your leadership team are here to help if they ever want to open up about anything they have or are currently experiencing.

- **Howie:** Hello and welcome to another episode of *How To* with Howie! I'm your host Howie Doothings and here to help us with today's "how-to," please welcome back my friend Matthew, who was a disciple of Jesus!
- **Matthew:** Hey everyone! Thanks for having me!

- **Howie:** Of course! I'm sure you have a busy schedule so thanks for squeezing us in! Now, Matthew, you are known as a disciple of Jesus, correct?
- **Matthew:** Yes I am! I do my best to follow all of Jesus' teachings and teach others about what it means to love God and love people.
- **Howie:** Wow! I love that! So today I wanna talk about something pretty confusing Jesus said during a sermon — it was that we are to quote "love your enemies." Now that's a big statement and seems like it might be tough to do. Why did he say that and can you teach us *how to* love our enemies?
- **Matthew:** Well, it didn't make a lot of sense to me either. When someone is unkind or seems to dislike us for no real reason, it's very difficult to show that person any kindness, let alone love! We always thought it was fair to just treat someone exactly the same way they treat us, but Jesus said God had something different in mind . . . God says to love everyone.
- **Howie:** EVERYONE?
- **Matthew:** Mmhm. Everyone. Of course, we have to use our judgment here. It's not like Jesus wants us to go give a hug to people who hurt or mistreat us. But sometimes we learn that our grudges against others are based on something so small that we can learn to let those things go, learn to forgive, and eventually, love!
- **Howie:** Okay well let's ask the real question now: HOW? How do we do that exactly?
- **Matthew:** The first step, I think, is changing the way we see the people we might consider our enemies. Instead of seeing them as the villains in our lives, we can see them the way God sees them. God has just as much love for that person as for you!
- **Howie:** Okay. Picturing someone I don't get along with in my head. Okay. And God loves them as much as God loves me, huh? Wow, that does change the way I see them!
- **Matthew:** Exactly! The next thing you could do is realize that you don't always have to win or be right. Be the first to apologize and make those small gestures to reach out to someone. And if they're trying to live God's way, they'll be happy you did and it'll help dissolve that animosity between you two right away!
- **Howie:** Wow that is great advice! I know we're used to just loving the people who are nice to us and give us things, but wow, to think we can take this next step and love someone who's not one of our favorites? It's gonna be tough, but I think we're up for the challenge!

BIG IDEA | Jesus taught us how to love our enemies!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the piñata from Week 1 and hang it up in your ministry space. Write the Big Idea on a piece of paper, fold it up, and attach it to a piece of string. Then tape the paper to the back of the piñata so kids can't see it, but let the string hang down. When it's time for the reveal, yank on the string attached to the paper, so that the paper drops. Allow a volunteer to retrieve it and read it aloud. (You'll use the piñata the intended way in Week 4.)
- Today's Big Idea will tell us the How-To of the day! I wonder what it could be?
- **Jesus taught us how to love our enemies!**

VIDEO | How To . . . , Episode 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

VIDEO | How to Love Your Enemies

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video like [this one](#) (1:35-3:11) of how Jesus taught people how to love their enemies. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- **Jesus taught us how to love our enemies.**

- Jesus gave the people very real examples of how they can love their enemies, especially relevant to what was going on during that period of time in history.
- Jesus wants people to love others the way God loves them. Jesus is showing us that God's love is meant for everyone, whether we feel like they deserve it or not. Love means not hurting others, and love can look like giving something precious away because you trust that God will take care of you. Love goes above and beyond to show someone God's love for them.
- **We may not have to carry a soldier's armor for a mile, but can you think of some situations in your life where you could show love to your enemies?**
- Maybe it's choosing to not get back at someone who hurt you or showing them extra kindness when they're being mean or unfair. Whatever it is, that person will have experienced God's love for them through you.

ACTIVITY | How To Do the Impossible

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Place tape on the floor to mark where kids will throw bean bags from. Set up the first bucket a few feet from the starting line. Have kids take turns throwing the bean bag into the bucket. Some kids might even exclaim how this is too easy! Next, place the second bucket a couple of feet or so behind the first bucket. Again, have kids take turns throwing the bean bag into the bucket. Lastly, amp up the challenge by placing the third bucket, upside down, several feet behind the second bucket and see who can get a bean bag into this bucket.
- **Was it easy to get the bean bag into the first two buckets?** Definitely! Was it harder to get it into the last bucket? It was more than just "harder!" It was practically impossible since the bucket was upside down!
 - The first bucket represents our family, and the second bucket represents our friends.
 - **Can anyone guess what the last bucket represents?** Yep, our enemies.
- It's pretty easy to love our family and friends . . . and, sometimes, it feels impossible to love our enemies!
- But let's see how a little bit of an adjustment to the bucket [*Turn the bucket upright.*] makes it less impossible. Just that little tweak made a difference and makes us more confident to rise to the challenge.
- Think about the huge difference it makes if we trusted in Jesus' help as we step up to the challenge of loving our enemies!

SCRIPTURE | Deuteronomy 30:15-20

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Make two arrow signs, one that says, "God's Way" and another that says, "Other Ways" Set them up to point in opposite directions. Have kids stand up, then demonstrate that, as you read the passage for them, you will walk either "God's Way" or "Other Ways" depending on what the verse is describing. Encourage kids to walk as a group with you as they listen and follow along.
- **What do you think is the worst decision you've ever made in your life?**
- **What is the biggest decision you've ever made in your life?**
- In this life we are all faced with decisions, some big, some small. The choice these verses face us with is the choice to choose life or death . . . to choose God or not.
 - If we choose God then we will slowly be filled with not only life but true joy. The love we receive after we choose God is unlike any other!
 - **How can sharing God's love with everyone we meet change things?**
 - **How can this help us to love people who are more difficult for us to love?**
- Loathing or mistreating our enemies is not exactly life-giving. Instead, as Jesus taught us in the Bible story today, we can love our enemies. That is a choice we make to choose God and choose life.

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

REFLECTION | How to Patch Things Up

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids take a piece of construction paper, fold it in half, and tear out the shape of a heart. Have them then tear the heart into four pieces, then swap hearts with a neighbor. As kids patch up their neighbor's "heart" with tape, have them share their thoughts on the questions below.*
- **What are some ways we get our hearts broken?**
- **Can you think of a time someone said something to upset or hurt you?**
- **What about a time when you did that to someone else?**
- **What can we do to patch things up with someone you don't get along with?**
- We cannot control how others treat us, but we can always control how we treat others. Especially because we don't know the whole story, sometimes. It's possible that the people who broke our hearts got their hearts broken, too.
- God reached out to us and loved us long before we loved God back. **Jesus taught us how to love our enemies** by loving all of us!

ACTIVITY | How To Share the Love!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Split the room in half to form two teams. Designate a line or use a long piece of tape to separate the sides. Empty a bag of cotton balls on the ground for each team, or use large marshmallows instead for more distance! Start a timer for one minute and have each team sneak as many cotton balls to the other side as possible before time runs out. When the timer goes off, ask a few follow-up questions.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Make this more challenging for preteens by having the teams stand far away from the dividing line (about 4–6 feet away) on each side. Everyone gets one cotton ball or marshmallow that they have to throw with their non-dominant hand. Whichever team gets the most across the line (or as close to it) wins! Discuss with preteens what would have made this game easier, then talk about what would make loving their enemies easier.*
- The goal of this game is to share the love! And by love, I mean cotton balls! You will have one minute on the clock, and the team with the fewest amount of cotton balls on their side wins! So get ready to give it all away!
- **Do you think you have a lot of love to give?** Sometimes, I don't feel like I have a lot to give, but I remember that I have God's love, and God's love is infinite! **Jesus taught us how to love our enemies**, and he made it possible for us to even have God's love so we can give it away.
- **How would knowing that you have God's love inside you help you to love your enemies?**

MEMORY VERSE | John 13:15 (NIV)

- **"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Recruit an adult volunteer or two to lead kids in learning how to memorize this month's memory verse. You can let them choose from a list such as [this](#), have them make up their own, or assign them a memorization method. Provide them time to prepare and the materials needed to carry it out.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Show preteens a YouTube video about how to memorize things more easily – for example, how to remember the order of the planets or multiplication tables. See if they can work together to come up with a memorization technique for this month's verse.*
- **(Don't forget to also check out the memory verse signs – a combination of SEE and ASL – available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/John13-15.)**

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for Jesus and teaching us the importance of loving our enemies. It will always be hard to love people who we don't get along with but we know that we can with your help. Help us to remember that our enemies are not your enemies and that we can love the way you do! Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- In addition to loving our neighbors, who does Jesus say to love?
- Why do you think Jesus wants us to not only love people who love us back?
- Read Matthew 5:48. Do you think Jesus really expects us to be perfect? What do you think Jesus means by this?
- Read Deuteronomy 30:16. How do you think this command to love God relates to loving our enemies?
- What can you do when you're finding it hard to love someone in the moment?
- What is something that can remind you to love your enemies every day?
- Think about someone who might have been unkind to you this past week. What is one way you can choose to love that person this week?

ACTIVITY | Remember to Love

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Distribute one printable, eight jumbo craft sticks, twelve mini sticks (jumbo sticks cut in half), and one piece of string to each kid. Have them decorate the printable then tape the ends of their string to the back of it to create a hanger. Glue eight jumbo sticks horizontally to the back of the printable. The kids can paint the sticks at this time, using a thin layer of paint so it dries quicker. While the glue and paint dry, have them start coloring their mini sticks with the markers. Then, have kids lay out their mini sticks to form the letters LOVE, as shown [in this example](#), then glue them down. Invite them to use the puffy paint to further decorate their mini sticks.
- With God's help, we can learn how to better love those around us . . . especially our enemies!
- When you take your craft home today, **where is somewhere you can place it to remind you to love everyone around you?**