

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

Theme

Love your neighbor.

Object

A picture of "Mr. Rogers;" two rolls of toilet paper

Scripture

Luke 10:25-37

Today our lesson is called, "Won't you be my neighbor?" But before we get started, let's play a quick game. (Have kids form two circles, and identify them as the "blue group" and the "red group." Have groups choose one child from their group to be the "wounded" and have that child stand in the center of their circles. Give each group a roll of toilet paper.)

(Say these next words exactly.) On go, you'll care for the wounded. To do this, the wounded player will be wrapped with an entire roll of toilet paper. Let's see which group can do it the fastest. Go! (Allow time, and then point out who was wrapped first, without directly congratulating a team. Have everyone sit in their circles.)

I wonder if you've heard of Mr. Rogers? (Show the picture of Mr. Rogers.) You might've seen him on TV in his show, "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood." He always started the TV show singing this song:

It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood

A beautiful day for a neighbor...

Maybe you've heard it. Who are some of your neighbors? (Pause for kids to respond.) Mr. Rogers called all the children and adults who watched him his neighbors. Really, Mr. Rogers saw all people as his neighbors.

So, the kids sitting next to you would be your neighbors. (Have kids give high-fives to the kids next to them.) And the kids sitting across the circle are your neighbors. (Have kids give high-fives to kids sitting across from them.) For the blue group, even the kids in the red group are your neighbors, and vice versa. (Have kids high-five with kids on opposing teams.)

The Bible tells us that one time a lawyer came to Jesus and asked how he could have eternal life. Jesus answered him with a question: "What does the Bible say?" Jesus asked.

The man answered, repeating exactly what the Bible says: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself." (Have children repeat the verse after you.)

Jesus told the man, "You're right. Do this and you'll live." But then the man asked, "Who is my neighbor?"

Jesus answered the man by telling a story about a Jewish man who was traveling from Jerusalem and was attacked by robbers and left to die. A Jewish leader saw him, but walked right on by. Another Jewish man walked right on by, too. But a Samaritan man—someone who might've seemed like an enemy—had compassion when he saw the hurt man. He stopped, helped take care of the man's wounds, and took him to a hotel. He even paid those who helped the man get better.

After the story, Jesus asked, "Which of these three men was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by the robbers?"

What do you think?

The lawyer knew the neighbor was the Samaritan, even though Jewish people and Samaritans were kind of enemies. Jesus told the lawyer, "Now go and love your neighbor."

Knowing what you know now, would you have played our game any differently? Explain.

Jesus wants us to know that all people in this world, kids and people we've never met, and ones we do know, are all our neighbors who we're called to love.

God, Jesus taught us to love our neighbor. Help us to be a good neighbor to everyone we meet. In Jesus' name, amen.



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