



WHAT'S UP IN KIDS MINISTRY THIS MONTH

June 2018

Jesus loved turning things upside down. We often hear him say things like “It was taught, ... but now I say to you ...”

As followers of Jesus, our ways should be different to the world's. Our values should be Jesus' values. As parents we have daily opportunities to do as Jesus did, and not to do as the world does. In Matthew 5 Jesus teaches us the Beatitudes. The blessings from living an upside down life. Those who mourn, will be comforted. Those who thirst and hunger will be filled. To the merciful, mercy will be shown. For the month of July most of the classes will be focussed on introducing the children to the Beatitudes. We get a lot of opportunities in our families to practise the values in this message and to see the beatitudes (blessings) flow over into our lives. One of the values we can often struggle with in our own lives and to show it to others, is mercy.

Showing mercy to our children, shows them the heart of God. Mercy, by definition, is to offer someone something that they don't deserve. Mercy doesn't come very natural to us as humans. We tend to be pretty selfish by nature.

Micah 6:8 is a great goal for the type of person you'd like your child to become. “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

So how do we help our children to “love mercy”. Here are three ideas that might help...

First, look for opportunities to show your child mercy. Actually, you don't have to look that hard. Throughout the day there are plenty of opportunities to give your child something that they don't deserve. One of the best ways to do this is to extend mercy to your child. Are they having a bad day? If so, say, “I can see you're having a bad day, so how about I do some of your chores for you.” Or “You really hurt my feelings when you said that (or acted like that), but I want you to know I love you and that I'm not going to hold it against you.” Or “What's done is done. Let's just work together to get past it instead of bringing it up over and over again.”

Second, catch your child offering mercy. Keep your eyes open for an opportunity to celebrate your child when they offer mercy to a sibling or a friend. When this happens, make it a big deal and celebrate your child. Say something like, “When you showed mercy to your friend, you reminded me of the way God shows mercy to us. I'm very proud of that!”

Third, tell your story of how God showed you mercy. The idea of God showing mercy is a hard concept for a child to understand. So tell your story of “God's mercy” to your child whenever they will listen. Don't just tell it once, tell it to them again and again. Make sure to say something like, “God chose to forgive me of my mistakes. He gave me His love when I didn't deserve it. I'm so grateful for God's mercy.” When your child hears your story of

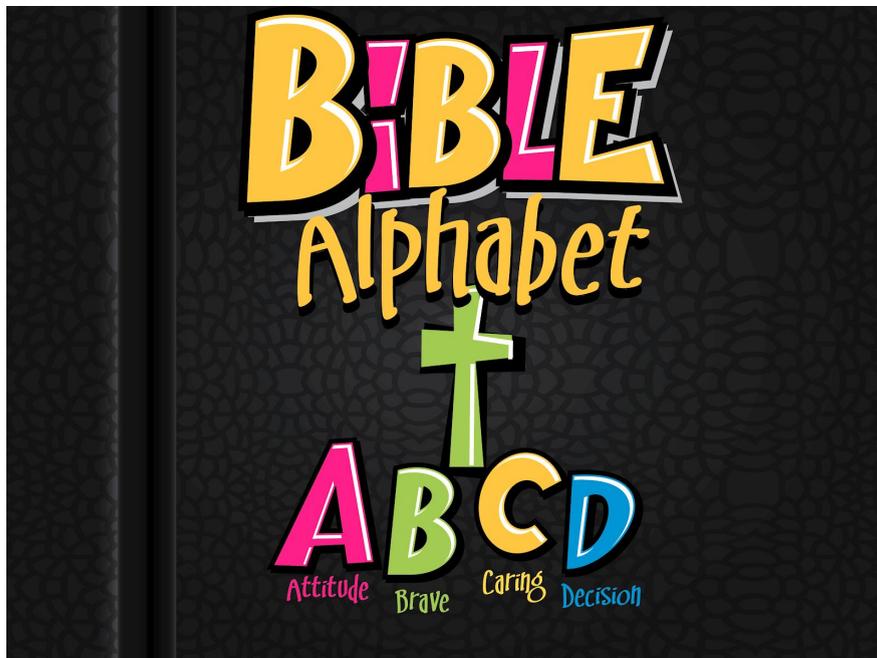
receiving God's mercy on a regular basis, they'll start to understand over time that God wants to offer them that very same mercy. And that, is the greatest gift of all.

We will close off the month with a Family service on 29 July. You will have the opportunity to have your children with you in the service and to worship together as a family! The Seedlings will be with you during the singing and then they will be signed in before the communion. The Starters through to Seniors will stay in the service and will perform their music item to the church. Please be prepared for having your children with you in the service: talk to your children about what will happen and how to behave; have a small, quiet (no plastic wrapping) snack available if they're hungry; have a quiet activity for the little ones to help them if they are distracted.

Preteens will join the service on 22 July so they can see the Teens lead the service. On 29 July the preteens will need to be at church at 9:15 to help set up chairs and the communion. They will also serve communion to the church on that day.

Our classes for July:

Seedling class:



Bible Alphabet : The ABCs (and Ds) of Following Jesus

One of the foundational building blocks of knowledge is learning your ABCs. The foundation of living a Godly life is learning how to live like Jesus lived.

Memory Verse: "I serve God with my whole heart." Romans 1:9a (NIRV)

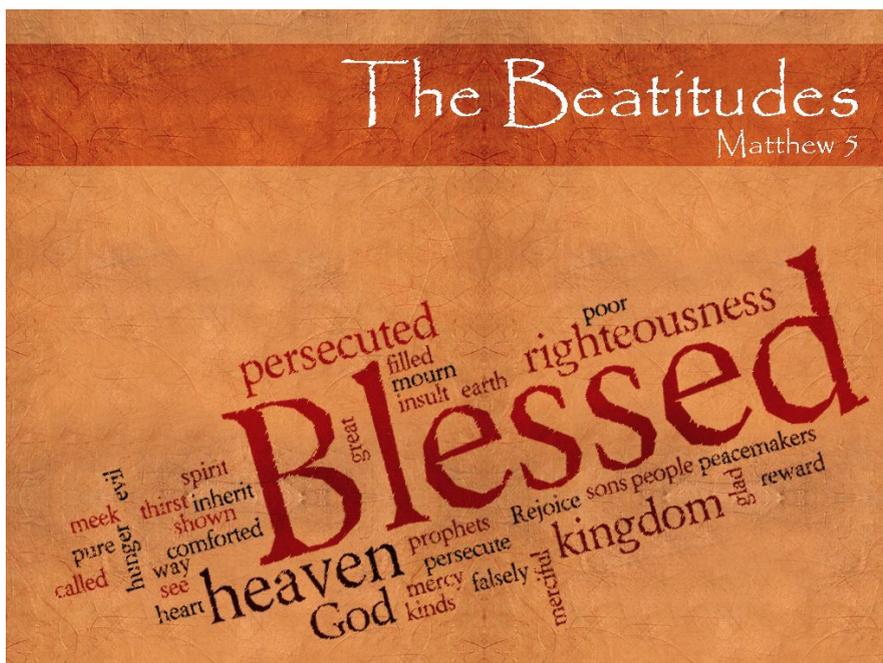
This is how we teach it to them:

Teach the kids the verse, using the following hand motions: "I" (hold your hands at chest level and point to yourself with both thumbs) "serve God" (bring your palms together, forming a bowl with your hands. Lift your arms up above you, separating your hands.) "with my whole heart" (bring your arms down in a sweeping motion. Cross your arms over your chest.)

Lessons:

1. A is for Attitude – Seedlings will learn that Jesus wants us to have an attitude of helping and serving. Others first, not me first. John 13:3-5, 12-17, Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet
2. B is for Brave – Seedlings will learn that Jesus helps us be brave and choose to do what's right even when we are scared. Matthew 14:22-33, Jesus Walks on Water
3. C is for Caring – Seedlings will learn that we can love and care for people the way Jesus did. Acts 3:1-10, Peter Heals a Crippled Man
4. D is for Decision – Seedlings will learn that living a Godly life all starts with deciding to follow Jesus. Mark 1:16-20, The First Disciples

The Starters to Seniors Group:



The Beatitudes lay down a foundation for the values and teachings of Jesus. The Beatitudes are so rich and deep that each could be its own book. We hope that by giving the children an introduction to them and encouraging them to memorise them, that a lifetime of learning can begin. We will be helping them to memorise the Beatitudes but would appreciate your help with it.

This is how we will be teaching it to them. Please practise this with your children at home.

Matthew 5: 3 - 12

Hand Symbols for Each Beatitude

"The Hands-itudes"

We will be using hand symbols to teach the children the beatitudes.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	two hands outstretched and empty, then lifted up to heaven
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.	One hand held like an upside down smile (sad mouth) in front of their faces Other hand gently rubbing/patting the sad one
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth	fingers interlocked in prayer then turned over to "see all the people" who inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.	two hands forming an empty cup, then one hand filling the other and the 'cup' hand feeling the weight of its being filled
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.	One hand palm up, covered by other hand then flip hands over and covered hand is lifted by by the other hand.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.	two hand forming the heart moving the heart-hands up to your eyes to "see" God
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God	interlock thumbs with hands crossed to make a bird (hands are the wings), which turns into two hands shaking each other.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	Fingers point to palm like pointing to nail points lift hands to heaven
"Blessed are you when people insult you,	a fist hits an open hand,

persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.	
Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven ...	and the fist withdraws/comes apart and shakes in happiness (jazz hands).

1 July: Introduction to the Beatitudes – The children will learn what the word Beatitude means and learn about that if they follow God’s way they will be blessed. In this lesson they will also meet the Beati-dudes: two surfers who love to do things God’s way.

Music Workshop: The children will hear, see, sing, and keep a Beatitudes beat along with scripture and The Beatitudes rap. They will answer the question, "Who's beat do you follow?" and "What's the beat that Jesus is laying down?"

Movie Workshop: The children will watch 2 short videos about the Beatitudes and learn that they can trust God to make them happy (bless them) rather than trying to gain happiness the worldly way.

Preteens



The preteens are continuing their study of the book of Acts. They have been learning about the early church and they will have an opportunity on 22 and 29 July to join the main service to not only see the church in action, but to also serve the church.

Please have your preteen at church at 9:15 on 29 July. They will help set up the hall and pour the communion cups. During the service they will serve the communion to the church.

Please continue to encourage your preteen to read the book of Acts - at least 4 chapters a week. They should finish it by 15 July.



FAMILY DEVOTIONAL IDEAS

These are just ideas to help guide you. Adapt them to your own family.

Devotional Idea A:

"Live Like That" by the Sidewalk Prophets.

Here's the official version from the band with boldly presented lyrics and images.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfosSggwQS0>

Here's the "lyrics" version.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwZsywhXDg8>

Add the song to a Spotify playlist and talk about it. Or you can read the Beatitudes as a family from Matthew 5: 3-12. Explain to your children that the song talks about the yearning to "live like Jesus" - which is what the Beatitudes are also calling us to do.

Devotional Idea B:

Game:

Pile of boxes wrapped in paper (even newspaper is fine).

Stack a pile of loosely wrapped boxes of various sizes and shapes at one end of the room.

Each family member must race to the pile of presents, unwrap one, and bring it back to other side of the room. The only catch is that you cannot use your hands!

When everyone is done, say that the lesson today is about gifts from God.

Lesson

Adapt the lesson to your children's ages.

Read Matthew 5:1-12 aloud. Tell your children that there is a word that is going to come up a bunch of times in this passage and they must see if they can catch it! (This is from the New International Version. Feel free to read from your preferred translation, but be aware that the language may vary from one translation to the next.)

Did anyone catch that important word? Right, the most important word in this section is the word BLESSED. The word blessed shows up nine times in these twelve verses. That means it is an important idea. Matthew 5:1-12 is known as the Beatitudes. Beatitudes is an old, fancy word that means blessed. The Beatitudes are a list of blessings from God.

So what is a blessing? (Allow children to answer. Don't correct them, just get a feel for what they think blessings are.) We use the word blessing a lot. We ask God to bless our family,

bless us, we even say “bless you” when someone sneezes! When you ask people what blessing means, you may get a lot of different answers. Some people say having a home is a blessing. Others say their pets are blessings. Most everyone would agree that family is a blessing. Lots of people say a blessing is God’s love and peace in their lives. Do you think these people, and your answers are right? Yes! It is a blessing to have a home, and a family, and pets, and friends, and food and toys, and getting to go to school, and having God’s love and peace in our lives. These things are all blessings. But being blessed means so much more than that. Here’s a simple way to define what a blessing is: a blessing is God’s gift of favor in our lives, even when we don’t deserve it. Because God loves us, he wants to give us good things.

Let’s look at Scripture to prove it. Turn a few pages in your Bible to Matthew 7:9-11. “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”

Do we, your parents love you? Of course! How do we show you that we love you? We feed you, teach you, take you to school, care for you when you are sick, play with you, hug you, and buy you things that you need and want. We give you good things out of love. Now in Matthew 7, Jesus is saying that if moms and dads on earth love you that much, and they are not perfect, but imperfect sinners just like everyone else, how much more does our perfect heavenly Father love and care for us? God blesses us and gives us good gifts because he loves us.

Now do you always get your way with us, your parents? Of course not. You can’t stay up all night, you can’t have ice cream for dinner, and you can’t ride your bicycle on the motorway. You have to go to bed and get a good night’s sleep. You have to do your homework before playing on the computer. You have to have vegetables with dinner. And sometimes you get a new jumper for a present instead of cool Legos. Why would we do these things? (Allow answers.)

It’s because we know that you need these things to live a happy, healthy life. You have to eat well, sleep well, stay safe and work hard in school to feel your best and do your best. Now let’s think about how that relates to our relationship with God. Do we always get what we pray for? Do we always get our way? No, we don’t. Matthew 7:11 says that our Father in heaven will give us good gifts when we ask him. There’s just one thing. God knows what a good gift is better than we do. Sometimes when we think of blessings, we think of stuff, like money or food or a house. These things can be blessings. We may think about health and family and friends when we think of blessings. These things can be blessings too. But what about people who don’t have homes? What about people who are sick and in the hospital? What about orphans who don’t have any family? Are these people not blessed? Has God forgotten about them?

I want you to listen closely here, because this is very, very important. We can be homeless, family-less, and in the hospital, and still be very, very blessed.

Read Psalm 29:11. “The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.” When we follow Jesus, God strengthens us and gives us peace. We don’t have to have nice things or even be healthy to be blessed. We are blessed when God is with us, and

God is with us, in our hearts, when we choose to love him and follow his commandments.

Devotional C:

Game: M&M Move

Gentle movements are the key to this game. The goal is to move M&M candies from one bowl to another by sucking through a straw and getting the M&M to stick to the end of the straw. When they stop sucking, the candy will fall. If they move too abruptly, the candy will fall. Any candies that fall onto the floor or table don't count for any points.

Give everyone their own small pack of M&Ms. The first kid to move all their candies from one bowl (or cup) to another wins. You can also see how many M&Ms each kid can transfer in one minute.

Lesson:

Adapt the lesson to your children's ages.

Talk about the Beatitudes and ask the children what they have learned about them. Ask if they can remember what the word "Beatitude" means? If they can remember any of them?

Remember, the Beatitudes tell us what our attitudes should be. "Blessing" means God's special favor in our lives, and that blessings aren't always what we expect.

Read the whole Beatitudes passage in Matthew 5:1-12.

The third Beatitude is "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." Meek is a little word with a big meaning! Most people today don't really understand what Jesus meant by "meek." The world tells us that it isn't a good thing to be meek. They think meek means weak, when it doesn't at all! The word meek is pretty cool. Once we understand what Jesus means by meek, we will have a better chance at being meek.

If you have a dictionary look up the word, or use an online dictionary. The dictionary might say meek means "having or showing a quiet and gentle nature: not wanting to fight or argue with other people." (From www.merriam-webster.com). That is what meek has come to mean over the years. But when Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" in Matthew 5:5, he wasn't thinking about just a quiet, submissive nature. He wasn't thinking about not wanting to fight or argue. You know the New Testament of the Bible was originally written in Greek, right? Well, the Greek word for meek was used in a couple of different ways. Sailors would use the word meek to describe a gentle breeze. Farmers would use the word meek to describe a wild animal, like a horse, that had been trained to submit

to and follow the farmer's lead. Both these definitions describe strength under control. The sailor harnesses the power of the wind using his sails, so his boat can move. The farmer trains wild horses so they can be used for farm work, like plowing fields and riding. The wind doesn't become weak when the sailor uses it to sail, and neither does the horse become weak when he does farm work or when people ride him. The power of the wind and the power of the horse are used, not lost. So when Jesus says Christians are meek, he is not saying they are weak. He is saying they submit to God's will and they let God lead their lives. Meek people trust in the Lord because they know that God's ways are best. Let's take a look at part of Psalm 37. Chances are, Jesus may have been thinking about this very passage as he taught today's Beatitude. Follow along as I read Psalm 37:5-11.

This passage paints a pretty good picture of what it means to be meek. We see in verse 5 that the meek person commits his way to the Lord and trusts in him. Sometimes it can be easy to think that we know best and that we can manage things all by ourselves. Meek people trust that God knows best, and they follow him.

In verse 7 God tells us to be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him. The patience this passage is talking about refers to patiently waiting for the Lord to deal with people. I don't know about you, but sometimes I can get really annoyed when I see people who do bad things getting their way. Sometimes people get rich by stealing or they seem to have a good life even though they don't follow God. I want to ask God to punish them! I want these people to get what they deserve! But that is NOT being meek.

Sometimes wicked and evil people win or get good things. Sometimes people can even say mean things to you because you are a Christian, and they get away with it! God does not want us to lash out angrily at people. We aren't supposed to be like Batman, who takes justice into his own hands. When we are meek, we trust that God will do justice. Now this does NOT mean that you should ignore it if someone is hurting you. If someone is bullying or hurting you in any way, tell someone you trust. Being meek does NOT mean you let yourself get beat up. It means you let God take care of that person's punishment instead of getting angry and fighting back. If someone is hurting you, tell someone you trust and let them help you. When you are meek, you do not seek revenge on someone who did something wrong.