

# LESSON

## DOES GOD REALLY EXPECT ME TO LOVE *EVERYBODY*?

07

### TODAY'S BIBLE BASE

### Just for Teachers

#### **Bold Bible Truth** **GOD HELPS US GET ALONG.**

(John 15:12)

“This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.”

(John 15:12)

- **We're to love our enemies.**  
Luke 6:27-28
- **Be tenderhearted and humble toward others.**  
1 Peter 3:8
- **God's love for us**  
Romans 5:8; Romans 8:38-39; Luke 12:6-7
- **Jesus described love in action.**  
Luke 10:30-35

#### **Create a Bold Classroom Environment**

How you interact with your preteens sets the bar for how they'll interact with one another. As you model BE BOLD Values, you're helping kids see what love looks like when lived out in relationship—and that may be the most important thing they take home today.

#### **Pray for Your Preteens**

Love is as much a decision as an emotion. That may be a new thought for your preteens. Ask God to open their hearts—and yours—to the implications of that truth. Jot the names of your preteens below, and pray that God helps you love each one with his love.

(If you found it difficult to write names, make it a point to learn two names this week so you can more easily pray for specific kids!)



The answer to today's question might seem like a slam-dunk: Of *course* God expects us to love everyone—God's kingdom is all *about* love. But kingdom love is deciding to do what's best for someone, not necessarily having gooey, heart-melting affection for that person. Today your preteens will discover they can love even people they don't like!

## THIS LESSON AT A GLANCE

Section	What Preteens Do	Supplies	Easy Prep
<b>Begin Boldly</b> (about 10 minutes)	Enjoy a snack, review BE BOLD Values, report on Mystery Missions, and add questions to the whiteboard/poster board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BE BOLD Values poster</li> <li>• snacks</li> <li>• paper</li> <li>• markers</li> <li>• tape</li> <li>• scissors</li> <li>• whiteboard or poster board</li> </ul>	
<b>Game</b> (about 15 minutes)	Play Shark Tank.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paper plates</li> <li>• blanket</li> <li>• spray bottle with water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place a blanket on the floor in a corner of the room.</li> </ul>
<b>Question of the Week</b> (about 20 minutes)	Dig into the story of the Good Samaritan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bold Action Student Books</li> <li>• pens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tear out pages 29-30 from Bold Action Student Books.</li> </ul>
<b>Bold Action</b> (about 10 minutes)	Fill in A Day in the Life Maps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bold Action Student Books</li> <li>• pens or pencils</li> </ul>	
<b>Bold Blessing</b> (about 5 minutes)	Receive a prayer blessing and a Mystery Mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mystery Mission Cards</li> <li>• Mystery Mission Stickers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fold and seal a Mystery Mission Card for each preteen.</li> </ul>



### BEGIN BOLDLY (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

#### Arrival Activity

Greet preteens warmly as they arrive. Have healthy snack stuff on a table.

Have paper, scissors, and tape available and encourage kids to create models of inventions that could be helpful in a medical emergency. A pill that cures cancer, for instance, or a foldable, pocket-size ambulance.

Affirm efforts as kids create, and allow for a time of show and tell.

As you're ready to move on, remove the building materials from sight.

#### Welcome Kids

This week ask a willing reader to read aloud the BE BOLD Values from the BE BOLD Values poster:

**You're accepted just as you are.**

**We respect each other's thoughts and struggles.**

**We're all in this together.**

**God is here, ready to be your friend because you matter!**

Say: **Acceptance and respect: Those are both *great* ways to help someone feel loved. Thanks for making this a place acceptance and respect are the rule rather than the exception.**

**I feel loved when I'm here with you!**

## Mystery Mission Reports

Say: **Let's report in on how our Mystery Missions have gone. My last mission was...**

Briefly share how you followed through with a Mystery Mission, and then ask kids to partner up and do the same.

## Question Collection

Say: **Thanks for sharing those stories. If you aren't doing Mystery Missions, I want to encourage you to give them a try. It makes for some bold adventures!**

**Today we're talking about this:**

Write "Does God really expect me to love everybody?" on the whiteboard.

Say: **We're supposed to love people, but that's a lot harder than it looks, especially when some people aren't all that lovable.**

**One question I have about loving everyone is...**

Briefly write a question about loving others on the whiteboard.

Say: **What are *your* questions about loving others? Shout them out and I'll write them, or you can come up to the board and write your question yourself.**

Gather kids' questions on the board. Be sure to have enough markers so preteens can write their own questions.

Say: **If God is expecting us to love everyone, no matter what, that's something we need to look into—because it's probably not happening.**

**But before we dig into what the Bible says about loving others, let's dig into a game I call Shark Tank.**



### PRETEEN POINTER

Since not every preteen comes each week, let kids talk about their last Mystery Mission—no matter how long ago it was.



## GAME (ABOUT 15 MINUTES)

### Shark Tank

Gather kids in one corner of the room, and give each preteen a paper plate. Give one preteen an extra plate.

Explain your room has transformed into a shark tank—the floor is the surface of water in the tank, and sharks circle below. *Hungry* sharks.

Anyone who makes it across the tank to the far corner is safe on the shark-proof blanket. But the ice shelf on which kids stand is shrinking, and the only way to cross the tank is by standing on paper plates. If any parts of their bodies touch the surface of the water, sharks will attack.

### TIP

If you have a tile floor rather than carpeting, paper plates could get slippery! Consider using squares cut from shelf grip liners instead of paper plates.



### PRETEEN POINTER

Preteens are easily embarrassed, so set your spray gun to “medium mist” and be careful about where you aim when you spray. Lower legs are the safest target.



DOES GOD  
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The goal of the game: All kids will cross the tank by stepping on paper plates. After explaining the game, continue.

Say: **Work together to make it safely across the shark tank. If anyone falls in, sharks will notice and attack everyone. You’re all in this together!**

**Look around at everyone who’ll make this epic, dangerous journey. You may know everyone; you may not. You may like everyone; you may not. But you *must* help everyone stay safe.**

Show kids your water bottle. Announce if you see anyone slip into the water, you’ll squirt everyone in range—that’s the shark feeding frenzy—until all feet are back on paper plates.

Say: **Ready? Begin making your journey...now.**

After kids are all safely on the blanket, snap your fingers to transform the shark tank back into your room. Have kids sit where they were sitting before the game began and, as a group, talk about this:

❓ **What made this game a challenge? What did you do to overcome the challenges?**

❓ **How was helping others in this game like helping others in real life?**

Say: **In our game you chose to help everyone, and that’s a loving thing to do.**

**But being loving for five minutes is one thing. Being loving all day, every day, is another.**

**And does God really expect you to act in a loving way toward bullies? cheaters? people you truly don’t like...or who don’t like you?**

**Jesus told a story about a situation like that. It’s recorded in Luke 10:30-35. Let’s look at the story he told to see what we can learn about loving others.**



## QUESTION OF THE WEEK (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)

Recruit five preteens and assign them these roles: Jewish man, priest, Temple assistant, Samaritan, and donkey. Have the Jewish man stand next to you; send the other four actors to the far side of the room.

Tell the rest of your preteens they’re now bandits.

Say: **None of you have lines; just silently act out your part of the story as I read it aloud. One exception when it comes to acting: When I tell you bandits to beat up someone, just *pretend* to do it!**

**Ready? Lights, camera...action!**

**A Jewish man is walking from Jerusalem down to Jericho. It’s a dangerous stretch, not unlike our shark tank—17 miles of meandering road lined with lots of caves to hide in. That’s one reason it’s full of muggers and thieves, but this guy isn’t worried.**

**He’s walking along—walk in place, Jewish man. Pause. He’s having a *great* day.**

The sky is blue—look up, Jewish man. Pause. And the birds are singing—do you hear the birds, Jewish man? Pause. And look—there are some nice people who might want to stop and chat.

Unfortunately, those nice people are *bandits* and they're sneaking up on you. Pause. They're walking toward you...and now they're surrounding you. Pause.

And now they're beating you senseless. Pause.

They're taking your shoes. Pause. And your money. Pause. Wow—they're taking everything they can take! Pause.

Now they're headed back into hiding, leaving you for dead on the road. Pause.

But look—a priest is walking this way. Pause.

The priest knows he's supposed to help people—he's a professional religious guy—but as he comes to the Jewish man lying on the road, the priest steps to one side and keeps walking. Pause.

Well, *that* wasn't very helpful. Maybe the next person will be kinder and more loving. And that next person is a Temple assistant who's walking this way right now. Pause.

Temple assistants work in the Temple in Jerusalem—that's a religious job—so he's sure to help, right? But the Temple assistant steps to one side and *he* keeps on walking, too. Pause.

Here's a quick question for all you bandits watching this from your cave:



Why do you think the priest and the Temple assistant didn't help?

Take several responses from kids.

Say: **We don't really know why these two men weren't more loving because Jesus doesn't tell us.**

But priests are careful about touching dead bodies because, if they do, they have to do a ritual cleaning and can't do their jobs for a few days. So maybe the priest didn't stop because he had work to do.

Or maybe they were late for appointments. Or heading home to see family. Or they were afraid that, if they stopped, the bandits would attack them, too.

We don't know why these two Jewish men didn't help, but we know the next guy coming along probably *won't* help.

Why not?

He's a Samaritan, and Samaritans and Jews don't get along. Haven't for years. In fact, a Samaritan might actually be *happy* to see a Jewish man pounded into the pavement.

Here comes a Samaritan now, walking this way along with his donkey. Pause. When the Samaritan sees the man on the road, he runs to the injured man. Pause. The Samaritan is kneeling, checking the Jewish man's pulse. Pause.

**The Jewish man is alive, so the Samaritan bandages up his head...and feet...and hands...and his left knee...and his right elbow... This guy really *was* beaten lumpy!**

**Now the Samaritan is helping the Jewish man up and putting him on the donkey. Pause.**

**The Samaritan and donkey take the Jewish man to an inn where the Samaritan pays the innkeeper two silver coins—worth about two days’ wages—and tells the innkeeper to take care of the Jewish man.**

Lead a round of applause for all your actors.

Say: **Here are some questions for the whole group:**

**? Who doesn’t seem very loving in this story? And why do you answer as you do?**

Allow several responses.

**? Who *does* seem to be loving? And why do you answer as you do?**

Allow several responses.

Say: **Nobody used the word “love” in this story. Jesus didn’t say it, and neither do any of the characters Jesus describes. But still you said the Samaritan was loving because of what he did for the wounded Jewish man.**

**Clearly, we have some ideas about what it means to be loving toward others. Let’s dig into that. Let’s do some talking by doing some walking!**

Have kids stand in the center of the room.

Say: **Some people say love is mostly about what you *feel*. Others say it’s mostly about what you *do*.**

**What do you say?**

**If you say that loving others is mostly about how you *feel* about people, even if you don’t do anything in particular to show you love them, when I give the word, you’ll go stand over there.** Indicate one side of the room.

**If you think love is mostly about what you *do* for people, even if you don’t especially feel good about them, you’ll stand over there.** Indicate the other side of the room.

**Got it? Feelers over there...and doers over there.**

**Pick a side and walk over to it, please. You can’t stay in the middle.**

After kids pick sides, ask for several kids on each side to explain why they’re standing where they’re standing. Then have kids return to the center of the room.

Say: **Thanks for sharing your thoughts.**

**Here’s another question for you: Let’s say I’m a bully and I’m really mean to you and your friends. If God’s expecting you to love me, what does that look like?**

**Are you supposed to *feel* all warm and fuzzy when you see me, or are you**

**supposed to *do* things that are for my best?**

**What does loving a bully look like—what you *feel* or what you *do*?**

**Same sides of the room as before: Doers over there...and feelers over there. Take a side, please.**

Again, ask for several kids to explain their choices. If everyone's on one side, ask if someone can explain why somebody might pick the other side.

Thank kids for thinking about this issue, and then ask them to return to where they were sitting.

Say: **If being loving is all about feeling warm and affectionate for people, I don't think I can love bullies and other people who are mean to me.**

**But if loving others is about what I choose to *do*...how I choose to *treat* people...well, with Jesus' help I might be able to do that.**

**You might be able to pull off both ways to love a bully, but I'm not sure I can.**

**The Samaritan chose to be loving toward a Jewish man who could have been his actual *enemy*. We don't know how the Samaritan *felt*, but we know what he *did*.**

Have kids form pairs, and ask them to, in pairs, read the Bible passages on page 29 of the Bold Action Student Book.

Explain you want pairs to read the Bible passages listed and to check one of the boxes under each passage. Is love something you feel, something you do, or both?

Give kids time to fill out their pages. Read each passage aloud, and ask kids how they marked that passage and why they marked it as they did.

Say: **Sometimes you feel affection for people, and sometimes you don't. But you can always try to do what's best for people. You can take Jesus seriously when he tells his followers, "This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you."**

**Here's a question for us as a whole group:**

**❗ How *does* Jesus love us? If he wants us to love each other like he loves us, what does that look like?**

Allow several responses.

Say: **Thank you. I love hearing what you think!**

**One way Jesus loves us is that he *sees* us. He pays attention to us and knows what we need, what we want, who we are.**

**When talking to a crowd of followers, Jesus said this:**

**"What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7).**

**Jesus not only notices us, but he *sees* us—and loves us.**

All three men walking to Jerusalem noticed the beat-up Jewish guy, but only the Samaritan really *saw* him. The Samaritan saw he was alive and needed help, and then the Samaritan chose to act in a loving way toward the Jewish man.

Jesus does that with us, and with his help, we can do it with other people. **GOD HELPS US GET ALONG.**

We can pay attention and really see them. See how they're feeling. See if they're struggling. See if they need help getting up, dusting themselves off, and moving ahead in life.

Let's explore how that might look.



## BOLD ACTION (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

Ask kids to each grab a pen or pencil and look at page 30 of their Bold Action Student Books.

Explain the “A Day in the Life” maps are a day in their own lives. Tell kids to jot down where they are on a typical weekday, from the moment they wake up until the moment they fall asleep.

And tell kids to be *specific*—if they're at school, have them jot down the various places they are while at school: in the gym, the lunchroom, astrophysics class, wherever. If they're at home, where at home? In their room? At the breakfast table? In the shower?

Give kids time to document a typical day, and then give these instructions:

Say: **Now, next to all those places where you are in your day, jot down who's there with you. Maybe it's family, friends, classmates, or even strangers. Whoever it is, make a quick note next to each location.**

Allow kids time to make notes, and then continue.

Say: **All those people you wrote down are people you can choose to love the same way Jesus loves you.**

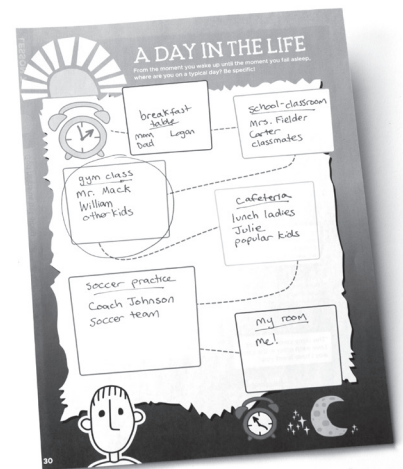
**Some may be people you don't like. You can love them anyway.**

**Some may be people who don't care about you. You can love them anyway.**

**Loving others is about feelings *and* actions. Sometimes God softens our hearts toward hard-to-love people and helps us feel warmly toward them.**

**Other times, not so much.**

**But we can still choose to love them by helping those who need help. By giving them a smile to brighten their day. By doing what we're about to do right now: We can pray for them. **GOD HELPS US GET ALONG**, and that happens when we start including him in our desire to be more loving.**





Ask kids to each get a partner and then circle a place on their maps where they run into someone who's not nice to them. Maybe it's a bully or someone who ignores them.

Say: **Tell your partner about why you circled what you circled. Who's there in that place who is hard for you to love?**

After kids have time to talk, continue.

Say: **Please silently pray for your partner. Ask God to help your partner act in a loving way toward that person who was just described.**

After 30 seconds say: **Amen.**

Say: **Now silently pray for that person who is hard for you to love. Ask Jesus if there's a way you can act in a loving way toward that person and, if so, what it is.**

After 30 seconds say: **Amen.**



## **BOLD BLESSING** (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

### **Pray**

Say: **Thanks for praying for others. That's a *huge* way to be loving toward someone—to pray for that person.**

**We can pray for people we like...people we don't like...people we don't even know. God knows who all those people are! And GOD HELPS US GET ALONG with those people.**

**In fact, since we're praying, let's take it on the road and go pray for some more people right now.**

Quickly exit the room and, as a group, go stand outside the door of another group that's meeting. If you're meeting in an otherwise empty building, go into a room where others meet and have your kids each stand behind a chair where someone will be sitting in the future.

Lead your kids in briefly praying for the people who are occupying or will occupy the space where you are. Then scoot back to your class—you've got more to do!

### **Send-Off Cheer**

Have kids stand in a circle with their hands in the center, like a sports team. Tell them that when you finish the Bold Blessing, they'll raise their hands and shout "Let's be bold!"

Say this Bold Blessing: **You're called to love others, so love boldly. See others as God sees them. Serve others as Jesus serves you. And because GOD HELPS US GET ALONG, lean on him for the strength to love even the unlovable. Now say it with me: *Let's be bold!***



### **PRETEEN POINTER**

So, pray aloud or pray silently? Expecting kids to pray aloud puts them on the spot, but never giving them the chance to pray in public may dampen their identifying with their faith. When you have group prayer and want to invite public, out-loud prayers, do just that: *invite*. Don't *demand*. And prayer isn't a performance art; never critique prayers offered by preteens.



## **Mystery Mission**

Say: **We discovered today that love is about more than just emotions. It's also a decision, and with God's strength, we can love anyone by loving and serving others like Jesus loves and serves us.**

**When you open this Mystery Mission Card, you'll be launched on an adventure with Jesus that you won't soon forget.**

**Open this when you get home—not before!**

**We'll talk about what happened the next time we get together.**

Distribute a Mystery Mission Card to each preteen. Take your own card home and complete the challenge, too!