

## WEEK 3

### ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

## OPPOSITE DAY

### THE BIG IDEA

Our enemies help us learn to love.

### THE BIBLE

**Love Your Enemies:** Luke 6:27-38;  
I John 4:7-21

## LARGE GROUP TIME

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

### MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs 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!](#)*
  - "Everywhere I Go" (Tim Timmons)
  - "To The Edge" (Vineyard Kids)
  - "Your Love For Me" (North Point Kids)
  - "Believe It" (Gateway Kids Worship)

### ACTIVITY | Opposites Showdown

- Welcome to Opposite Day number three! This month, we've been talking all about opposites and how sometimes, what God wants for us is the opposite of what we want.
- Let's begin with another game about opposites!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Split the group into two teams and give each team a dry-erase board, markers, and an eraser. Prepare a list of opposites to use for this game (e.g., hot/cold, short/tall, up/down, open/close, etc.) because you will be calling out a word and one member from each team has to write its opposite as fast as they can. Try to match up kids who are similar in age to face off with each other, and allow team members to help with thinking of and spelling out the word.*

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Print out two identical sets of images and give one set to each team. Call out a word and have each team work together and go through the stack of images to find the opposite of the word you said. Or say, "The opposite of short is tall. Can you find a picture of something tall?"*

- **Okay, let's try one more all together. What would be the opposite of the word "friend"?**
- It's so easy to love our friends, right? Our friends are who know us the best and who we have the most fun with. **But what about our enemies?**
- Today, we are going to see what the Bible says about enemies. It definitely is the opposite of what we naturally want to do and think!

### ACTIVITY | Heart Toss

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Label four hula hoops as "friends," "family," "neighbors," and "enemies." Set up the "friends" and "family" hoops the closest so that it's easy to drop a beanbag into them. Place the "neighbors" one a little farther back, and the "enemies" hoop the farthest. Have kids try getting a beanbag into every hula hoop.*
- Loving our friends and family members can be pretty easy, just like tossing the bean bags into the hula hoops. The farthest hula hoop away was "enemies," and that was much harder to get a beanbag into than the "friends" or "family" hoop, right? It was more challenging, but it wasn't impossible!
- We call people we don't really get along with, enemies. Maybe they were unkind to us or maybe there's just something about them that we don't really like. It might be hard to love them, but it's not impossible – just like our game showed.

### QUESTION | Why is it so hard to love our enemies?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a story of an exchange you had with someone you might consider an enemy. Talk about your struggles with showing them love even though they were treating you in an unkind way. Then ask kids who are willing to give their thoughts on why loving our enemies is so hard.*
- In the Bible, there are stories that share the importance of loving everyone . . . even those people we believe don't deserve our love. That sounds really hard to do, right?
- **Why do you think it's so hard to love our enemies?**
- That's right! When someone is mean to us, it's so easy to be mean right back and decide to treat them in an unkind way.
- There are many possible reasons why someone becomes our enemy and why they treat us poorly. Sometimes, those enemies might have been mistreated by someone else which causes a lot of fear and anger to build up inside of them. Then they release it by being mean to everyone else.
- That said, it's never okay for someone to be unkind to you – whatever the reason – and you should always tell a trusted grownup if you don't feel safe. The enemies we're talking about today are people who hurt our feelings, not people who hurt us physically.
- However, one way we can begin to love our enemies is to show compassion. There might be more to their story than you know and Jesus cares deeply about that person, too.

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

**BIBLE STORY | Love Your Enemies**

- We have been learning quite a few things from Jesus that are often the opposite of what we think. Today's Bible story is no different.
- **What makes someone an enemy?**
- There are tons of reasons why you might feel an extreme dislike for someone, or why someone might feel that way about you. We spend a lot of energy being angry at such a person but Jesus tells us to handle it differently.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read or ask a volunteer to read Luke 6:27-35 aloud in directed segments.*
- **Let's read Luke 6:27-30.** Did we just read that right? Jesus tells us to do what for enemies?
  - Love them. Bless them. Pray for them. Give without expecting anything in return.
  - This is not easy to do for our loved ones but to do it toward an enemy who doesn't deserve it at all? That seems unreasonable!
  - But Jesus helps us understand why we should do this.
- **Let's read Luke 6:31.** Jesus wants us to show our love to people we consider enemies because we would want to be treated the same way! But it's even more than that.
- **Let's read Luke 6:32-36.** Jesus says loving our enemies is one way we can show that we really love God.
  - Because loving someone who loves us back, being kind to someone who's kind to us . . . anyone can do that.
  - But it takes someone who has experienced God's amazing love to be able to love someone without wanting the same love in return.
  - We simply love because we are loved!
- **Finally, let's read Luke 6:37-38.** These verses tell us that the "why" behind loving our enemies is just as important as the act of loving them.
  - In addition to showing compassion and kindness to our enemies, we have to check ourselves to make sure we are doing things for the right reasons.
  - When you love an enemy, but you feel superior to them for doing it, then that's not really loving them. We are often told to be the "bigger person," but in God's eyes, we are the same.
  - And sometimes we might say we forgive someone so that someone will come along and recognize us and make us feel good for doing it. God sees what we do even when no one else does and in time, God will give us good things when we keep loving others selflessly.

**BIG IDEA | Our enemies help us learn to love.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Use the color wheel pieces from previous weeks and label it with the words from this week's Big Idea (see your Shop & Prep List). This time, put up only red, orange, and yellow leaving empty spaces where volunteers can come up and fill in with green, blue, and purple to complete the wheel and reveal the Big Idea.*
- Today's Big Idea is NOT . . . **Our enemies help us learn to love.**
- Okay, just kidding, that IS our Big Idea! Happy Opposite Day!

### VIDEO | Opposite Day, Episode 3

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

### ACTIVITY | Lots of Love

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up a large sheet of butcher or bulletin board paper. Have kids draw as many hearts on the paper using their fingers until the entire paper is filled (kind of [like this](#)).
- Look at all the hearts on this page. You did a fantastic job of covering this paper with hearts but I'm pretty sure we could fit more!
- This reminds me that there is enough love to go around to everyone! We should love everyone, even those who are unkind to us or those who are different from us in some way.
- God wants us to love everyone, even our enemies. And even though it might not seem like it, **our enemies help us learn to love** because if we can love our enemies . . . we can love anybody!

### OBJECT LESSON | Heavy or Light

- We just heard about how God wants us to love our enemies.
- I have two buckets here. One is heavy, and the other one is light. Imagine the heavy one represents those people we know who are hard to show love to, and the light one represents those people it's easy to show love to.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare two buckets — one with heavy items and one with light items. Invite a leader to pick them up one at a time (encourage them to exaggerate their expressions).
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Involve your preteens to lift either bucket. You could even use it as a challenge to see how long a pair of volunteers can hold the bucket up — most likely the one with the heavier bucket will be the first to set it down!
- **Which bucket was easier to lift?** The lighter one, right?
- The Bible tells us it won't be easy to love people who are unkind, but that's kind of the point. If it's easy, then it's not really a challenge — anyone can do it. But Jesus reminds us that we can do more than just love the people who we like. We can show God's love to those who need it most —our enemies.

### BIBLE | I John 4:7-21

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare two paper hearts that are exactly the same size. Label one "God" and the other "love." Invite two volunteers to hold a heart each. Read I John 4:7-21 aloud, and instruct the volunteers to hold up their heart each time their word (i.e., "God" or "love") is read.
- In this Bible passage, we kept hearing the same two things over and over again: God and love. **Has anyone figured out how God and love are related?**
- It's not just that God loves us or God wants us to love. This passage gives us the answer . . . God IS love! *[Overlap the two hearts together.]*
- Jesus knew what he was talking about when he told us to love our enemies. It's the same love that God showed the world even when many people turned their backs on God and rejected Jesus.
- But God never stopped loving us and wants us to show that same love to everyone.

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

**REFLECTION | When I'm the Enemy**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You might consider breaking off into smaller groups to have kids discuss this together, assigning a leader to each group if possible.*
- We talked a lot so far about showing love to our enemies. But we've only thought about how other people treat us. Having an enemy means that you are an enemy, too.
- Remember what Jesus told us to do? To do to others as we would want them to do to us, right?
- **Have you ever thought about how you treat others?**
- **Can you remember a time when you were unkind and hurt someone else's feelings?**
- **What if someone else had said or had done to you what you did at that moment?**
- Loving our enemies means understanding that they are also someone with feelings and someone who deserves love, just like you and me.
- And that is one way that **our enemies help us learn to love!**

**ACTIVITY | Sticks and Stones**

- **Have you ever heard the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me?"**
- The thing is, words can actually be very hurtful. When someone says something to insult us or tell us we're not accepted, it makes us feel awful.
- But even in the middle of such a terrible situation, **our enemies help us learn to love** when we don't let their words hurt us.
- When we believe that God loves us no matter what and we don't need the approval of other people, then even when our worst enemy says something mean to us, we can let it go and not let it upset us.
- And when we stop getting upset, our enemies most likely will back off. And who knows? One day, they could even become our friends!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give each kid a rock and painting supplies. Encourage kids to decorate their rocks with a drawing or a phrase that will remind them of today's Bible lesson.*
- A rock by itself is neither good nor bad. It's just a rock. But if you threw it, it could become a weapon that breaks things. However, if you chose to treat it like something valuable, that's what it becomes.
- So, we're going to decorate these rocks today to remind ourselves that we can change the way we see our enemies. We can change the story if we start loving them and treating them like we treat our friends, or how we would want to be treated.

**MEMORY VERSE | Sticky Verse**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Write II Corinthians 12:9a on a poster board and read it out loud. Have kids say the verse with you, and cover up one word at a time with sticky notes with each recitation until the entire verse is covered up and kids can recite the verse from memory!*

- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Type out the memory verse, including reference and translation, on a document. Then change the color of all the letters in the words - except for the first letter of each word to white (which makes them invisible but maintains spacing.) Then print these sheets out to use as a memorization tool for preteens to use during the lesson or as a take-home sheet.
- ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Find pictures that represent the memory verse, copy and paste them onto a word document and see if kids can figure out what the pictures are trying to show.

### PRAYER

- Dear God, even though it's not easy, help us to show your love to people we don't usually get along with. Thank you for showing us how to love, especially in the way you sent your son, Jesus, for us! Amen.

## SMALL GROUP TIME

### DISCUSSION

- Who would you consider an enemy?
- How does Jesus want us to treat our enemies?
- Why should we do that?
- Read I John 4:8. Why does this verse tell us that if we don't love, we don't know God?
- Which is better – to stay mad at someone or forgive them? Why?
- Is your enemy God's enemy? How does God see your enemy?
- What is one thing you can do to love someone that's an enemy?

### ACTIVITY | Spread the Love

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a coffee filter and have them write the Big Idea and decorate it however they'd like. Afterward, have them fill a pipette with water and drop water on their design then watch the colors run and spread throughout.
- Just like how the colors spread throughout the filter, we can spread love, too. It might start small, but the more often we love and the more people we show love to, the more we can grow! We get to know God more each time we love. After all, our God is so loving that even **our enemies can help us learn to love!**

### MEMORY VERSE | II Corinthians 12:9a (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided in your Programming folder or at [growcurriculum.org/II Corinthians12-9a](http://growcurriculum.org/II%20Corinthians12-9a).
- Let's practice this month's memory verse together!
- **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."**