

Jesus Knows and Loves You

Memory Verse: Ephesians 4:32 *“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”*

Main Teaching: Jesus Knows and Loves You **Word Up:** Jesus loves everyone!

Supplies:

- Word Up Booklet – Word Up (Resource Pack)
- Small tub of playdough for each child – Small Group
- Recording for “Jesus Loves Me/Amazing Grace” and “Jesus is the Good News” - Worship (Sing About the King 3 CD)
- Optional Song Visual for “Jesus is the Good News” (cefpress.com)
- Clear container, milk, spoon and strawberry syrup – Object Lesson
- Memory Verse Visual – Memory Verse (Resource Pack)
- Joni Eareckson Tada Missionary Story – Missionary Story (Resource Pack)
- Copy of Thinking of you card for each small group – Small Group / Wonder Time (Resource Pack)
- Memory Verse Token Ephesians 4:32 for each child – Dismissal (Resource Pack)

Schedule at a Glance (75 min club):

15 min – Small Group Playdough Heart
 10 min – Worship
 10 min – Milk Object Lesson
 15 min – Memory Verse
 5 min – Missions Story
 10 min – Heads or Tails Game
 10 min – Small Group Wonder Time

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had trouble loving someone? This lesson shows how Jesus went to a woman most people didn't like. This Samaritan woman was an outcast. No one wanted to talk to her or be around her, but Jesus did. He created her and loved her.

We should love each other because we are all created in God's image. We need the Holy Spirit to help us love well, especially those others reject. This lesson will help children learn that Jesus knows them and loves them. Saved children will be challenged to ask the Holy Spirit to help them love people who are hard to love.



SMALL GROUP

Playdough Heart

Give each child a little tub of playdough and have them form it into a heart as you talk. Have them share things or people that they love and why they love them. (You could have a piece of wax paper to put under the playdough.)

WORSHIP

"Jesus Loves Me/Amazing Grace"

"Jesus is the Good News"

CLUB RULES

Review your looks like/sounds like chart to make sure kids know how they are expected to behave during club.



WORD UP!

"Jesus loves everyone!"

Close your eyes and think about a person you love. Maybe it's your best friend, your parents, your grandparents, or a teacher. We all have people in our lives we love, but there is someone who loves more people than we can even count. The Bible tell us that Jesus loves everyone in the entire world! Say with me, **"Jesus loves everyone!"** During the lessons when the teacher says "Word Up", stand and say **"Jesus loves everyone!"**

OBJECT LESSON

The Sweetness of God's Love

1. Pour milk into a clear glass or pitcher and talk about how delicious milk is. Ask the kids to raise their hands if they love milk.
2. Tell the kids that the milk is like the love we have for each other. When you love your friends, your parents, your loved ones, that is good but there is something even better than our regular love. It's God's love!
3. Demonstrate God's love and how it makes our love so much better by squirting some of the strawberry syrup into the milk.
4. Ask the kids, "What do you see? Is our love remaining the same? No, indeed it is not! The Love of God poured into the love we have will change our love into something sweeter! When you believe in Jesus, He can help you love others like He loves them. His love will spread all through you so you can love even the people that are hard to love."



MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 4:32 *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*

INTRODUCTION

What are some important things people should do? (Work, be kind, eat, take care of the world God gave us etc.) Are these things always easy? What are some important things that are really hard to do? (Allow responses and

share something you find hard.) Today's verse talks about some really important things we should do, but they aren't always easy. Listen and see if you can hear what these important things are.

PRESENTATION

(Read Ephesians 4:32 from Bible.) Did you hear what the important things are? If you didn't, keep listening and you'll figure it out. Our verse today is found in the New Testament book of Ephesians, chapter 4, verse 32. God used many different people to write the Bible, including a man named Paul. Ephesians was a letter written by Paul to the believers in Jesus who lived in Ephesus—that's why the people were called Ephesians. Paul wrote to remind them what Jesus had done for them and how they should live because of what Jesus did. All the books of the Bible—Old and New Testament—point to Jesus, who He is and what He has done to save the world from sin. Jesus is the theme of the whole Bible! You can trust what the Bible says because it is God's true Word. We can say just the address in 3 fun ways – cover one eye, cover the other eye, cover both eyes. Now let's read the memory verse together. (Read with children from visual.)

EXPLANATION

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted—God is saying He wants those who have believed in Jesus to be kind to each other. To be “tenderhearted” is another way to say “compassionate” or “sympathetic.” It means to show love and try to understand what other people might be going through. Sometimes being kind and compassionate can be hard.

forgiving one another—To forgive is to stop being angry at someone for what they have done to you. Forgiving also means if the person has done something to hurt you in the past, you don't continue to hold it against them. This can be very hard to do, especially if someone has hurt you. Forgiving someone does not mean you let someone continue to hurt you. If someone is hurting you, you should talk to an adult you trust about it. The next part of the verse tells you how and why you can forgive.

as God in Christ forgave you—You can be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving because God has been kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward you! Jesus showed you the greatest kindness in the whole world when He died on the cross for your sin. Sin is a big deal to God and His forgiveness is a big deal too. When someone believes in Jesus, He forgives every sin that person has ever done or will ever do. Because God forgives you, He gives you the strength to forgive others who have hurt you. He comes alongside you to help you do the hard thing of forgiving. When you remember His great forgiveness toward you, it can help you forgive others.

You can be kind and forgiving because God has been kind and forgiving to you

APPLICATION

Saved: If you have already believed in Jesus as your Savior, God wants to help you show His kindness and forgiveness to others, even if they are mean to you or have hurt you. This is impossible to do without God's help. That's why you can **ask the Holy Spirit to help you love people who are hard to love**. He will help you do the impossible and show kindness and forgiveness when you need to.

Unsaved: If you haven't believed in Jesus, you can know God has a way for you to be forgiven. God showed you the greatest kindness ever by sending Jesus to die and come alive again so your sins could be forgiven. Sin is anything we think, see, say or do that makes God sad or breaks His laws. The punishment for sin is to be separated from God forever. But Jesus gave His perfect blood to take the punishment for your sin. He did that because He loves you. Have you accepted His kindness by believing in Jesus? He wants to forgive you today!



INVITATION

The Bible God's Word says in Romans 10:13 *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* Everyone includes you! If you believe that you have sinned – done things that are wrong, and you believe that Jesus is the only one who can take care of your problem of sin, you will be saved, or rescued from the punishment of sin. You will no longer be separated from God, but instead you will be close to God now and forever. He will begin to help you think and act His way all throughout your life. God's love will be a part of you and He will help you love others with His love. Will you call on Jesus today to save you from your sins? Please bow your head and close your eyes. If you called on Jesus today for the very first time, or you want to talk to me more about what that means, would you please show me by raising your hand? If you raised your hand, please meet me in the back and I'll show you more from God's Word.

REPETITION

Clap a Word

Choose one child to hide their eyes in the back of the room. Choose another child to come up and point to a word from the verse. When you get to that word, clap instead of saying the word. The child hiding their eyes tries to guess what word was clapped

MISSIONS STORY

**Joni Eareckson Tada
Part 3 & 4**

Who remembers what Joni found out last week? (Allow response.) Dr. Sherrill told Joni and her parents that Joni would never be able to walk again. But Joni wouldn't believe it. God will help me to walk again, she thought.

Three-and-a-half months after Joni's diving accident, she was wheeled out of the hospital to a waiting ambulance and taken to the Greenoaks Rehabilitation center.

At Greenoaks, Joni saw more people in Stryker frames like the one she'd had at the hospital. Wheelchairs seemed to line the hallways, and no one was walking except the staff.

Joni's time at the rehabilitation center made her realize something. I'll never walk again, Joni thought. Accepting this truth was hard for her. But maybe I'll use my hands again! She would tell herself. Sometimes she thought she felt a tingling in her fingers. She hoped to use her hands and be

able to brush her own hair and dress herself and maybe even paint again.

One day the occupational therapist suggested, "You can do some of the things you used to do with your hands using your mouth, like you saw some of the others typing or drawing with a pencil or stick in their mouths."

"Absolutely not!" Joni insisted. "That's disgusting! I don't need to learn to write with my mouth when I'll be able to use my hands again."

Joni did not want to try using her mouth to draw or type, but one day, she agreed to at least try writing with her mouth.

"Grip the pencil between your teeth, being careful not to grip it too tightly," the therapist replied.

Joni bit down on the pencil, holding it lightly between her teeth. (If time allows, you may wish to ask for a volunteer to try write on a pad with a pencil in mouth.)



Jagged, curly lines appeared on the paper in front of Joni. Before long, she was forming letters. This isn't so hard after all, she thought. Soon she was drawing pictures of her favorite things. On each drawing she would put three letters—PTL. They reminded her to "Praise the Lord!"

Joni spent many hours with her new hobby—drawing with her mouth and adding a special Scripture verse to each picture. These became special gifts for family and friends.

During this time, Joni needed another surgery. Afterward she had to lay face down for 15 days. It would've been easy for Joni to complain and be angry. But she decided to use this time to read God's Word. As she read, Joni began to understand more about trusting God with whatever happened in her life, even if it meant she could never walk or use her hands ever again. Joni would pray for God to heal her but Joni was beginning to learn something about God and about herself. Healing wasn't what was most important. The most important thing was for her to grow to know and love God more. That was what God wanted for her and that was the best thing for her—better than being healed.

These lessons would be really important for Joni to remember. God was showing her truth about Himself that she would need to make it through all the changes in her life. God would also use these truths to help Joni do some pretty amazing things. Joni was beginning to trust God with whatever happened.

One day her parents asked her, "How would you like to go to California? There is a new hospital called Rancho Los Amigos in Los Angeles. We think the people there can help you."

Joni liked the idea. She was ready for the next challenge God had for her.

Rancho Los Amigos was beautiful, and there were people her own age there! This is pretty cool, she thought. Joni's therapy began right away. It was hard work but soon she could raise and lower her arms! A special spoon was attached to her arm splint, and she could now feed herself, even if not perfectly.

Joni worked hard at Ranchos Los Amigos. She was given an electric wheelchair and for the first time in a year and a half, she could finally get somewhere on her own without having to have someone push her around!

Soon the time came for her to go back home, but before she left, she had an important question for the doctor. "I've worked hard to be able to use my hands, but they're not cooperating. Will I ever be able to use them again?"

"No, Joni," the doctor told her. "You will never be able to use your hands again."

How would Joni react to this news? Would she remember what she had learned about God? Will she be angry at God or choose to trust Him?

Joni's doctor told her that not only would she never walk again, but she also would never be able to use her hands again. Joni had accepted that she'd never be able to walk again. But a quadriplegic—to have my arms and legs paralyzed for the rest of my life, Joni thought, is too much. Joni was angry and wanted to give up.

A friend told her, "Joni, you can't give up."

"Why not?" Joni asked.

"You have to use what you have left."

"That's not much," Joni answered angrily.

Joni began to spend long hours daydreaming about her life before the accident—walking on the beach, swimming, playing tennis, riding her horse, shopping with friends. She started to push people away. She now preferred to be alone rather than with family or friends. Her depression grew stronger.

One day, Joni realized she was living in a fantasy world—dreaming about the past and

wishing the future could be different. She had been angry at God, and she knew her attitude wasn't helping anything. She cried out to God, "God, if I can't die, then show me how to live."

One of the first ways God answered Joni's prayer was to bring a special friend into her life. His name was Steve Estes, and he would visit Joni often. God used Steve to help her study the Bible. Joni's love for God's Word and prayer came back, and she realized that God had been with her and helped her all along through everything she'd been through. He hadn't forgotten or left her. A quiet peace replaced the anger she'd felt since the accident.

Steve encouraged Joni to share with others how God had worked in her life through the accident. She agreed and spoke about God to the youth group at Steve's church.



Joni soon had more opportunities to speak. She also shared some of her paintings with the audiences, demonstrating how she'd make artwork using her mouth. When Joni would speak, she would tell people about what happened to her but she would also tell people about God and how he was working in her life even through her accident.

One city decided to have an art exhibit for Joni's paintings, and Joni was scheduled to be at the exhibit. On the day she went, there was a parade to welcome her, along with TV crews and a city official to announce that the mayor was making that week Local Appreciation Week and Joni Eareckson Day!

By the end of that day, Joni had sold \$1,000 worth of her drawings. She could hardly believe it! How would you feel if your city made a special day for you, or if you sold \$1,000 worth of artwork in a

day? (Allow response. If desired, show the back cover and tell the children that is a copy of something Joni painted.)

Joni got to speak to crowds of people about God and His help even in hard times, and one day Joni was invited to sing and speak at a Billy Graham crusade. This was a HUGE opportunity! Dr. Billy Graham was very famous, and he traveled all around the world sharing the Gospel of Jesus with people. Many people watched and listened as Joni shared how God had changed her life on the inside through her accident. God was using her to speak to thousands of people about Him!

Invitations to speak kept coming. Joni was even invited to the White House! Then an editor from a famous book publishing company called and asked if she'd be interested in writing a book to tell how God worked through her accident. God was using Joni to do His great work and to point people to Him. Joni thanked God for all the opportunities and experiences she was getting. Joni had changed. Instead of being angry at God about her accident, she trusted God to use it to tell others about His great love for them.

One day, a call came asking if she would be willing to make a movie to tell the world who God is and how He worked in her life. She agreed and soon she was on her way back to California where they would film a movie about her experience. God has used this movie to encourage many people since it was made in 1979.

Since her accident, God had brought many special people into Joni's life. The next person He was going to bring into her life, though, was going to be more special to Joni than all the rest. His name is Ken.

Who is Ken and how does God use him in Joni's life? You'll have to wait to find out.

ACTIVITY**Heads or Tails**

Have kids stand up and give them two choices. If they like the first one best, they put their hands on their head. If they like the second one best, they put their hands on their "tail" (bottom). Ex: Do you love ice cream (heads) or watermelon (tails)?

**SMALL GROUP / WONDER TIME****"A Love Letter from God"**

We have another letter to open today! (Open up envelope with God is love and He helps me to love note in it.)

It can be hard to love people who are hard to love or who have hurt us. One way we can love people is to pray and ask God to change our hearts and give us love for them. You can ask God to help you be kind, patient, and forgiving. We can also read in God's Word how Jesus loved many people who others did not love. The first four books of the New Testament – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – tell us all about Jesus and that He was kind and loving to all people.

Say with me **Word Up!** "**Jesus loves everyone.**" Do you remember our memory verse? Let's say it together. "Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*"

Can you think of anyone in your life that is hard to love? What is something nice you could do for them this week?

DISMISSAL

Hand out a memory verse token to each child and encourage them to memorize the verse and bring the token back completed next week. You could say "God loves Amber" – naming each child as you hand them their token.