
Copy Christ!

Sunday School Lesson from Ephesians 4:17-5:2



“Be kind”...we say it often, but what does it mean? How do we describe and encourage love and kindness in students, and how do we explain the importance of imitating Jesus, despite our troublesome human nature? It can be challenging to re-shape the naturally self-centered habits of children, but it’s important to provide them with God’s word as an example of how we ought to live. Kids can observe and explore how beautiful it is to love and serve others in genuine care.

Lesson focus: The passage focused on in this lesson provides several wonderful elements to discuss with students. The main emphasis is that we as Christians are called to set aside some of our natural inclinations in order to imitate Jesus and love others. We recognize that we are human and will have emotions like anger. However, rather than lashing out in those feelings, we can choose to “put on Christ” and build one another up in gentle kindness.

Passage: Ephesians 4:17-5:2

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper, markers, stickers, socks or fabric, paper plates, popsicle sticks, glue, scissors (all optional, depending which activities you choose to use).

More Teaching Ideas:

- Watch the video of this [children’s sermon](#) and related [Bible craft ideas](#)
- Download our full [Sunday School Lesson on Ephesians 4:17-5:2](#)
- Compare another [Sunday School Lesson from Ephesians 4](#)

Games and Lesson Introduction

Lesson Opening: This lesson involves imitating Jesus, helping others, and using words to help and build up others. A variety of simple activities could introduce those elements. To get started, select from one of the following openers, or select another of your own choosing!

- Imitate this...part of the passage involves imitating or “putting on” Christ. Discuss the idea of mimicry by playing charades. Invite students to imitate an animal or thing by acting it out without spoken words.
- Copy cat! Also in the imitate idea theme, pair up students and have them stand facing each other. Invite them to come up with actions that the other partner will “mirror”, performing them as a reflection in a mirror.
- “Build up with words”... use a practical object lesson to consider how we build one another up with what we say and how we live. Have children play a game like “Jenga” or build a block tower together. With each block, invite them to brainstorm positive statements that they might tell the other students, and encourage them to give these compliments to others.
- “Put on the new self relay”in honor of the admonition to be clothed in Christ, have students line up for a clothing relay. Have a large pile of clothing (sweaters, pants, etc.) on one side of the room. Allow student teams to race each other in walking across the room, putting on at least one piece of clothing, and returning to the line. Bonus points for the most creatively dressed team!
- Angry or gentle? Pair up students and role play how they might act with anger or kindness, given a variety of scenarios...invite them to consider conversations with an angry mindset in contrast to a gentle and respectful tone. Provide situations for them to work through.

Transition into the Scripture study component by discussing things that change and become new. Invite students to consider situations in their lives when they have altered. These things could be as simple as getting new clothes or taking a bath, or more significant events like moving houses or getting a new sibling.

Ask: How can we focus on positive thoughts and things in our lives?

Copy Christ - Bible Lesson from Ephesians 4:14-5:2

Bible Lesson: Use whatever translation best suits you and your audience. You might have older students take turns reading portions of the Scripture, or you may wish to read it out loud in an expressive voice. Explain that this part of the Bible is known as an epistle, which means it was originally a letter. The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the church in Ephesus (hence the name “Ephesians”), and it was meant to encourage them and remind them of who they were in Christ. It can do the same for us!

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. -Ephesians 4:17-24

Young children might not (well, hopefully) be familiar with the concepts of several of the “greedy impurities” mentioned here, but it is still worth noting how Paul builds this contrast. When we focus on Jesus, we put aside things we might do in sin, and we re-dedicate who we are to following God.

Ask: What makes you feel angry? When do you get mad?

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. -Ephesians 4:25-27

Emphasize for children that it is not a sin to feel anger. Even Jesus got angry. However, we don’t want to dwell on that. We don’t want to just wallow in how upset we feel, because that will only make us feel more upset. If we can resolve our conflicts or give our anger over to God, it will help us feel better. And to counter our anger, we can try to come up with positive ways to interact with others...

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your

mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. -Ephesians 4:28-29

Ask: What does it mean to only speak things that build others up?

When we try to live only for ourselves, it can be easy to say things that are untrue, or to try to hurt others with our words. It hurts others to use unkind words. Paul in these verses reminds us of the importance of saying things that will help others feel loved and cared for. We want to speak nice words to others!

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. -Ephesians 4:30-32

Brainstorm with students some of the wonderful things that Jesus did while He was on earth. He loved others. He healed, He loved people, and He gave His life for us! We are forgiven and renewed because of Christ. And He wants us to share that love with others. He wants us to forgive and to be “tenderhearted”, putting other people ahead of ourselves and to treat people with kindness.

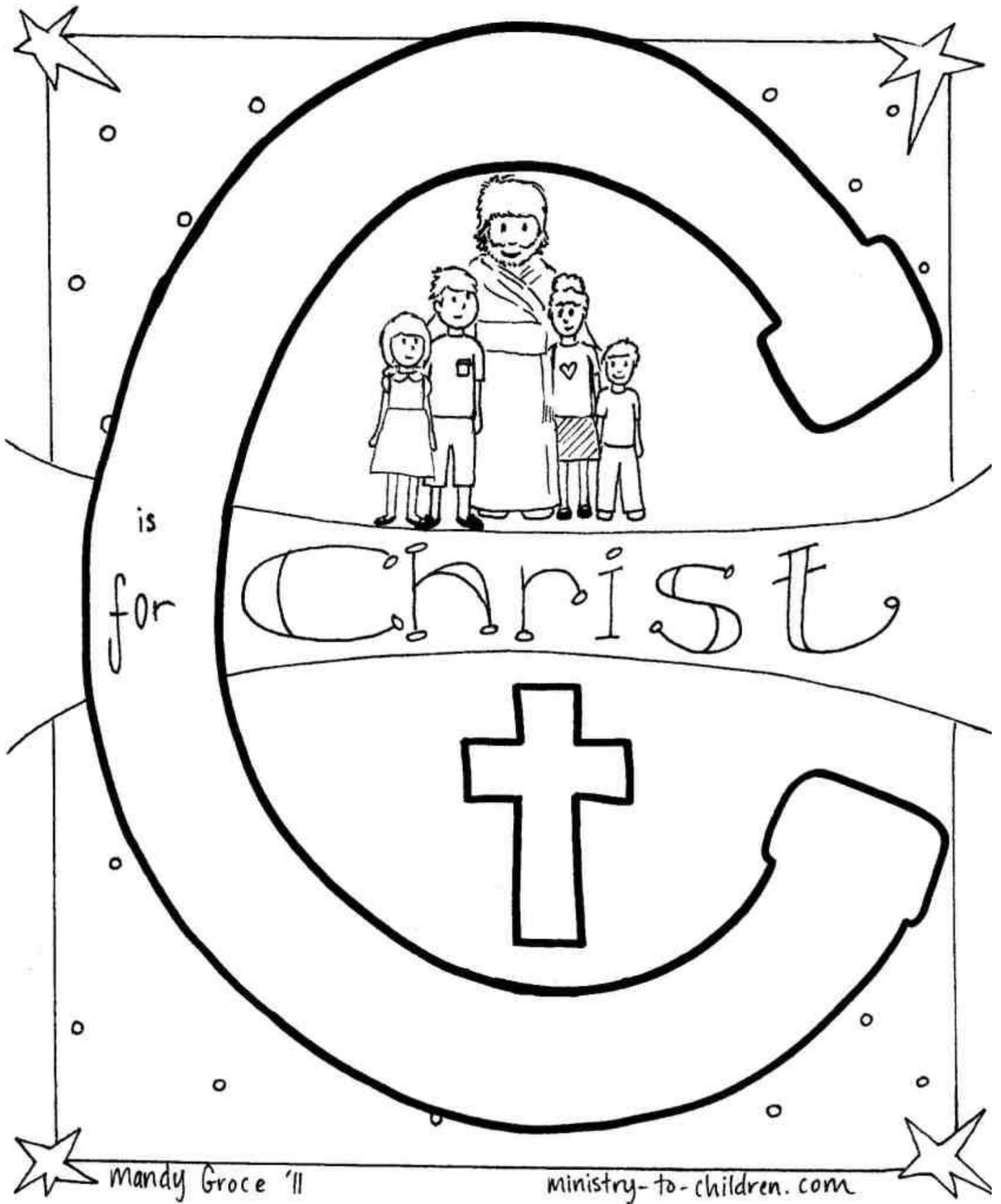
Ask: How can we be tenderhearted? What does that mean? How can we be gentle with others?

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. -Ephesians 5:1-2

What does it mean to imitate someone? When we imitate, we act like something else, or fill in the place of something. If we imitate God as His children, it's like imitating a beloved parent. We love other people and by doing that, we show them how Jesus lived and how He loves us! God knows that we won't be perfect like Him. But we can try to demonstrate His love and care to those around us!

Pray: Say a prayer to ask God for help in imitating Jesus and focusing on Him first and foremost. Thank God for the gift of relationships and ask Him to guide positive and uplifting interactions with those around us.

Craft Suggestions: “Flip side of anger mask”; “Anger stress relief ball”; “Build one another up Construction Puzzle”; or other crafts emphasizing the importance of using kind words and managing angry feelings.



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Sunday School Craft Ideas

What does it mean to imitate Jesus? How do we build others up with kindness and tenderheartedness? Is it a sin to be angry? This beautiful passage from Ephesians emphasizes the importance of genuine kindness. These crafts reiterate the significance of building each other up in love and controlling our reactions to emotion by focusing on Jesus. A “flipside of anger mask” reminds kids that we should imitate Christ, and not dwell on anger. An “anger stress ball” provides an alternative to lashing out in frustration. And a “collaborative construction puzzle” lets kids think of ways that they can support and encourage fellow students.

Bible Verses or Craft Captions to Consider... (Main Text: Ephesians 4:17-5:2)

- *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. -Ephesians 4:26-27*
- *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. -Ephesians 4:29*
- *A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger. -Proverbs 15:1*
- *Build each other up with kindness!*
- *Be kind and tenderhearted!*
- *Don't let the sun go down on anger!*
- *Love one another!*
- *Breathe through anger...God's got this!*

Craft one: “Flipside of Anger Mask”

You will need:

- Paper plates
- Popsicle sticks
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Markers, crayons, etc.
- Other decorations (jewels, stickers, etc.)

Procedure:

1. Decorate one side of the plate to be “angry”, using googly eyes or drawn eyes, expressive features, and a sunset to recall the verse.
2. On the opposite side of the plate, draw a cheerful, “kind face” feature, with reflection on the importance of being tenderhearted. Exaggerate the mouth to remember speaking uplifting words.
3. Attach additional verses or captions as desired.
4. Tape or glue a popsicle stick to the plate, to hold it up as a double-sided mask.



Craft Two: “Anger Relief Ball”

You will need:

- Socks
- Cotton or stuffing
- Stickers/decorations
- Markers/crayons (fabric markers advised)
- Rubber bands and/or pipe cleaners
- Glue
- Scissors
- Captions/verses



Procedure:

1. Decorate the outside of the sock(s) using words, stickers, small jewels, or other items.
2. Use cotton or stuffing to fill or almost fill the sock.
3. Secure the open end with a rubber band, and/or a decorative pipe cleaner or string.
4. Attach a verse or caption, if desired.
5. Use the sock as a stress reliever...squeeze it, smack it, or throw it!

Craft Three: “Collaborative Construction Puzzle”

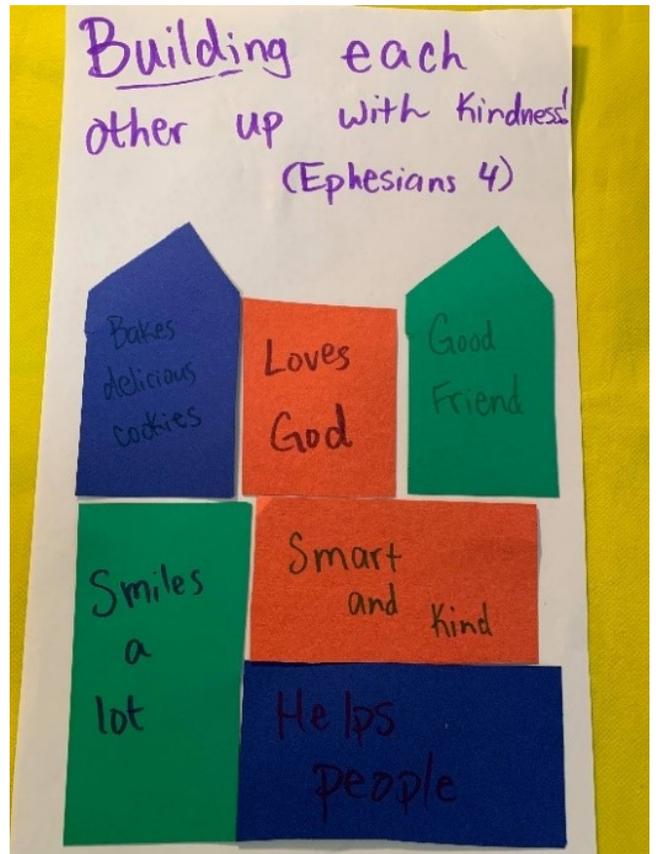
You will need:

- Paper Plates
- Small jewels or glitter (optional)
- Stickers/decorations
- Markers/crayons
- Glue or tape
- Construction paper/cardstock
- Scissors
- Captions/verses



Procedure:

1. Provide students with a collection of papers cut into varied shapes. Have each child write their name or initials on the backside of every shape.
2. Distribute the shapes among the other students, making sure they have the shapes of their peers (ideally, have each student receive one shape from everyone else in the room. Group sizes might make this challenging).
3. Instruct the students to take some time to write positive statements on the papers for their friends, making sure the piles will return with phrases that will build up.
4. Return the shapes to the original owner. Have them arrange and glue them onto the paper in the shape of a building, making sure that the positive compliments are facing up.
5. Add extra verses or decorations, and look to the “poster” as a positive affirmation reminder!





Thank you for downloading these free materials. Our team is grateful for your trust and pray that God will bless your ministry.

This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.



Every week she writes new [Sunday School lessons](#), [Bible crafts](#), and [children's sermons](#).

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

My name is Tony Kummer (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. It is my personal honor to share these resources with churches around the world.



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May God continue to bless your ministry!

Tony Kummer