

2-9-26 He Loves Me - Unconditional Love/Transactional World KIDS Study Guide

Overview

God loves us **all the time** — even when we make mistakes! That's called **unconditional love**. But most people in the world love others only when they're "good" or do nice things first. That's called **transactional love** (like saying, "I'll be your friend... if you share your toy"). Jesus tells a story about a dad and his two sons to show us how God really loves us — and how we should love other people too!

Big Ideas:

God's love never stops.

Even when we're naughty, Jesus still loves us and died for us (Romans 5:8).

Most people love like a trade.

"You're nice to me → I'm nice to you." But God doesn't love like that.

The grumpy big brother

In Jesus' story, the older brother got mad when his dad forgave the younger brother who ran away. He wanted punishment, not a party. He didn't want his brother back.

Big question for our hearts:

When someone hurts us, do we want them to get in trouble... or do we want them to be say sorry and be right with God and with us again?

Four easy ways to love like Jesus:

Let go of wanting payback. Don't try to "get even."

Stop keeping score. Don't stay mad forever or bring up old hurts again and again.

Be brave and kind anyway. Love people even when it feels scary or they don't deserve it.

Give love like it's candy. Be extra kind, share, forgive — even when they don't give any back!

Fun Questions to Think About

- When do you act like "I'll only be nice if they're nice first"?
- Have you ever been mad at a brother, sister, or friend and wanted them to get in trouble instead of making up?
- Who is the hardest person for you to forgive right now? (It's okay to say their name out loud to God.)
- How do you feel inside when you stay mad for a long time?
- If God loved you only when you were perfect... how much love would you get? (Thankfully He doesn't do that!)
- What's one kind thing you could do for someone even if they were mean to you?

Things You Can Do This Week

- Pick **one person** who made you mad or hurt your feelings. Say a quick prayer for them every day this week.
- Do **one nice thing** for them — even if they don't say sorry (maybe smile, share a snack, hold the door).
- When you start to get mad and want to "get them back," stop and say: "Jesus forgave me. I can let this go too."
- Be extra generous: share your toys, give compliments, help someone — even if they don't do it back.

- Be kind to **yourself** too! When you mess up, don't stay mad at yourself. God still loves you.

Fun Group or Family Talk Ideas

- Tell about a time someone forgave you when you didn't deserve it. How did it feel?
- Why do you think the big brother was so grumpy when his little brother came home?
- Which one is hardest for you:
 - Letting go of wanting to get even?
 - Stopping being mad for a long time?
 - Being kind even when you're scared?
 - Giving love without getting anything back?
- Can you think of a time when forgiving someone made things **way better** than staying mad?
- If Jesus was sitting right here, who do you think He would want you to forgive or be kind to this week?
- Let's pray together for that person right now — ask God to help you love them like He does!