

Lesson 24 - God gave us a Heart to Love

Aims

- * To learn that God gave us a heart so we can love others
- * To learn that when we love others unselfishly, God will bless us

Materials

- * “The Star Jewels”, from The Children’s Book of Heroes, by William J. Bennett
- * small pictures from the story, heart-shaped stickers or heart shapes to cut and paste
- * a large heart to cut and paste
- * a picture to colour

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction
2. The Star Jewels
3. Discussion
4. Activities - act out the story, cut & paste pictures, colour a picture
5. Review aims
6. Prayer

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1) Introduction

We are all God’s children. He created out of His love. He wants us to feel his love and learn to give love others. He wants a world where all people learn to love each other, to build a one family under God. Love is a feeling that comes from our heart. When mummy and daddy say they love us we feel warm inside. When we say we love someone they feel warm in their heart. Today’s story shows what happens when we love others, the way God wants.

2) The Star Jewels

A poor girl goes to the woods to collect firewood for her grandmother and takes a piece of bread for the journey. On the way she meets a hungry boy. She gives him the bread. Later she meets a girl who is cold. She gives her warm dress to the girl. Then she meets an old woman and gives the woman her shawl. Finally she gathers sticks for her fire. On the way home she meets an old man who needs firewood. The girl gives it to him. The man then turns into an angel. Because she has shown such unselfish love to all the people she met, she is rewarded with jewels falling from the sky.

3) Discussion

- * Why did the girl go to the forest?
- to collect firewood

* Who did she meet and what did she give them?

- a hungry boy - a piece of bread
- a cold girl - a dress
- an old woman - a shawl
- old man - firewood

* What was her reward?

- jewels from the sky

* Why was she rewarded?

She felt love in her heart for each person she met. This is why she could give so many things away. When we help others in such a way, something will always come back to us. When we love others unselfishly, God will bless us.

4) Activities

- * Act out the story. Use props - bread, coat, shawl, sticks, plastic gems
- * Cut and paste pictures from the story and and decorate with hearts
- * Colour the picture
- * Cut out a big heart shape. Write the names of the people you love on it.

5) Review the aims of the lesson

- * To learn that God gave us a heart so we can love others
- * To know that when we love others unselfishly, God will bless us

6) Prayer

Say a prayer to thank God for giving us our hearts, so we can feel love and learn to love.









The Star Jewels

ADAPTED FROM THE BROTHERS GRIMM

This beautiful little story echoes the words we find in the Gospel of Matthew: "I was hungry and you gave me food I was naked and you clothed me. "

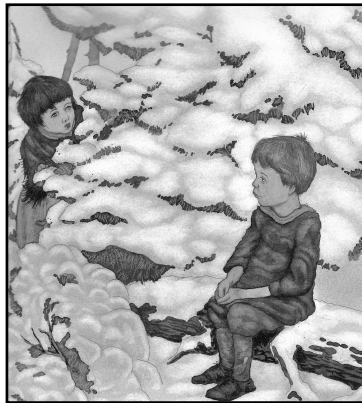
A little girl once lived all alone with her old grandmother on the borders of a forest. They were so poor that they were scarcely able to buy food to eat or clothes to cover them.

"Never mind, Granny," the little girl would say. "Someday I will be big enough to work, and then I will earn so much that I will be able to buy everything that we need, and to give something to other poor folk as well."

One day the child went off into the forest to gather sticks. These she hoped to sell for a few pennies in the town over beyond the hill. She was to be gone all day, so she took with her into the forest a bit of bread, which was all they had left to eat.

It was winter, and the air was bitterly cold. The child wrapped her little shawl about her and ran on as fast as she could. She was hungry, but she intended to save her crust until after the sticks were gathered.

Just as she reached the edge of the forest she met a boy even smaller than herself, and he was crying bitterly. The little girl had a tender heart. She stopped and asked the child why he was weeping.



"I am weeping," he answered, "because I am hungry."

"Have you had nothing to eat today?" she asked.

"I have had nothing, and I am starving, for I do not know where to go for food."

The little girl sighed. "You are probably hungrier than I am," she said, and she took the crust from her pocket and gave it to the boy. Then she again hurried on.

A little farther on, she met another child, who was even more miserable looking than the first, for this child seemed almost frozen with cold. Her clothing hung about her in rags, and her skin looked blue through the holes.



"Ah," cried she, "if I had but a warm little dress like yours! Help me, I pray you, or I will certainly die of cold."

The good little girl was filled with pity. "I have both a dress and a shawl," she thought. "I will give one of them to this poor child."

She took off her dress and gave it to the child, and then wrapped the shawl closely about her shoulders. In spite of the shawl she felt very cold. Still, she was near the place where the sticks were to be found, and as soon as she had gathered them, she would run home again.

She hastened on, but when she reached the place where the sticks were, she saw an old woman already there, gathering up the fallen wood. The old woman was so bent and poor and miserable looking that the little girl's heart ached for her.



"Oh, oh!" groaned the old woman. "How my poor bones do ache. If I had but a shawl to wrap about my shoulders I would not suffer so."

The child thought of her own grandmother and of how she sometimes suffered, and she took pity on the old woman.

"Here," said she. "Take my shawl," and slipping it from her shoulders, she gave it to the old woman.

And now she stood there in the forest with her arms and shoulders bare, and with nothing on her but her little shirt. The sharp wind blew about her, but she was not cold. She had eaten nothing, but she was not hungry. She was fed and warmed by her own kindness.

She gathered her sticks and started home again. It was growing dark and the stars shone through the bare branches of the trees. Suddenly an old man stood beside her. "Give me your sticks," said he, "for my hearth is cold, and I am too old to gather wood for myself."

The little girl sighed. If she gave him the sticks would have to stop to gather more. Still, she refuse him. "Take them," she said, No sooner had she said this than she saw it old man who stood before her, but a shining angel. "you have fed the hungry," said the angel. "You have clothed the naked, and you have given help to those who asked it. You shall not go unrewarded. See!"



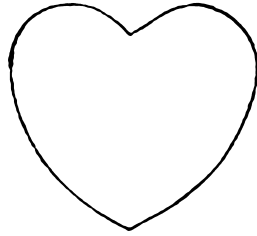
At once a light shone around the child and it seemed to her that all the stars of heaven were falling through the bare branches. But these stars were diamonds and rubies and other precious stones. They lay thick the ground. "Gather them together," said the angel, they are yours."

Wondering, the child gathered them together - all that she could carry in the skirt of her little shift. When she looked about her again, the angel was gone, and the child hastened home with her treasure. It was enough to make her and her old grandmother rich. From then on they lacked for nothing. They were able not only to have all they wished for, but to give to many who were poor. So they were not only rich, but beloved by all who knew them.

Cut out the pictures and stick them in the boxes in the correct order. Decorate with hearts.



God gave us a heart to love



1.



2.



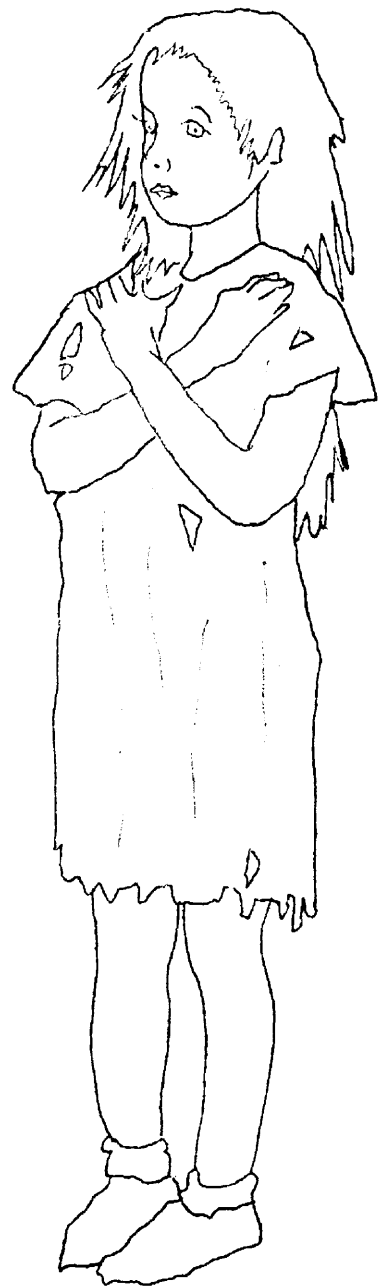
3.



4.



God gave us a heart to love



Cut out a heart and write the names of the people you love

