

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BASKETBALL DEVOTIONS

10-18 year olds

Week 4

Love Your Enemies

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The objective is the goal or main teaching point of this week's study. If you convey one thing to your players, make it this.

Read this passage aloud to the kids, as it will be the focus of this week's study. Each week's memory verse will be in bold.

Our lessons for our older age groups are designed to be more discussion-based. This section is for the coach to read ahead of time so that he/she understands the goal of the discussion and is able to direct the conversation.

Objective This lesson will teach the kids what biblical love is and how we can love those who are unkind to us.

Scripture Passage:

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' **But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you...** For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?"

Matthew 5:43-47 (Memory verse, Matthew 5:44, in **bold**)

Coaches Guide

As Christians, we know we're supposed to love people, and it can be hard enough to love those who are kind to us. But in Matthew 5:43-47, Jesus gives one of the most difficult commands in the whole Bible: to love our enemies, the people we don't get along with.

In order to love our enemies, we first need to understand what real, biblical love is. Love isn't just an emotion or a warm, fuzzy feelings about someone. Love is active. It requires us to be selfless and put the needs and wants of others before our own. Love seeks to bless people and treat them the way God's Word tells us to. Jesus is our ultimate example of love, and the best way to learn how to love others is by looking at Him.

Loving our enemies doesn't just mean ignoring those you don't get along with or learning to live with those who are unkind to you. It also isn't being a pushover and letting others take advantage of you. Instead, Jesus is telling us not to respond to mistreatment with sin of our own, but to actively show our enemies biblical love. That means not just putting up with them, but looking for ways to bless them and show them kindness.

Loving our enemies is meant to set Christians apart from others. As Jesus points out, if we just love our friends, we are no different from the world around us. Even unbelievers know how to love their friends. But when we as Christians love those who are unkind to us, it is a good testimony to non-believers. Loving our enemies is a way to be salt and light, like we learned last week.

Team discussion gives questions to ask your team in order to discuss today's topic. Use the information from the coaches guide to steer the conversation toward the biblical truth.

"On the Court" gives some in-game situations where today's lesson can be applied, while "Off the Court" gives examples from everyday life. Encourage them to do the things you listed during the game today.

These are some final notes/goals to accomplish this week. These are not meant to be read, but are instructions for the coach.

Team Discussion

1. What do you think the most difficult command in the Bible is? Why?
2. What does real, Christian love mean? How can we learn more about what love is and what showing love looks like?
3. What does it mean to love your enemies? Are Christians supposed to be passive or pushovers? Are we supposed to just learn to ignore those who are unkind to us? Or is loving our enemies something more?
4. How does obeying this command make us different from the world around us (like "salt and light," as we learned last week)?
5. Is there someone in your life that's difficult to love? What makes it hard to love that person? What are some ways for you to love that person?

On the Court

- Do you have a teammate who is unkind to you or gets on your nerves? Treat them with love, even if they are unkind in return.
- In sports, it can be easy to treat the other team (or sometimes even the refs) as "enemies," but that is not true, especially in a Christian league where they are your brothers and sisters in Christ, and you need to show them love and kindness.

Off the Court

- There might be someone at school you don't get along with. Think of a kind thing you can do for that person to actively show them Christian love.
- Sometimes your siblings can be the hardest people to get along with, but you especially need to love members of your family.
- Don't just ignore those who are mean to you. See if through kindness you can make things right with them.

The Game Plan

1. Review last week's memory verse, Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Give a ticket to any player who can recite it.
2. Learn and memorize Matthew 5:44 with your team. Encourage them to practice the verse over the week.
3. As a team, brainstorm ways to "love your enemies." Have the kids think of someone they don't get along with, and encourage them to show love to that person this week.