

Our Traditions and God's Will

OBJECTIVE: *To examine traditions, keeping those that are good, letting go of those that might blind us to more important issues.*



WORSHIP

Sing praise and worship songs as well as songs about love and commitment to Jesus. Here are some suggestions.

"Be Still and Know"

"Change My Heart, O God"

"Freely, Freely"

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

"Shine, Jesus, Shine"

"They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love"

"This Little Light of Mine"

STORY

The Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37

- A traveler is robbed, beaten, and left to die.
- Two religious leaders pass by but do not stop to help.
- A Samaritan stops and helps the wounded man.

With everyone in the group, make an audio tape of the Good Samaritan story, including narration and sound effects. Ask: "What did the priest and Levite do? (They were men who followed lots of rules and traditions.) Did that keep them from seeing a real need?"

MEMORY VERSE

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Luke 10:27).

Help the children remember the verse by saying it with hand motions.

Love (point to your heart)
 the Lord your God (point upward)
 with all your heart (cross hands across your chest)
 and with all your soul (keep hands there and pat once)
 and with all your strength (make muscles with arms)
 and with all your mind (point to your brain)
 and, love your neighbor as yourself (hands across chest again)

ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to support the story and to provide a springboard for discussion.

ACROSS THE BARRIER. Make a barrier out of pillows or chairs across a room. Everyone stands on one side of the barrier. The object is to get to the other side. Each person may get there any way he wants. Participants must go one at a time. Encourage each person to think of a different way to get there (over, under, around, through, removing pillows or chairs). Discuss what would happen if one person said his way was the only way or said, "We've always done it that way." Discuss people's traditions versus God's instructions.



FIND THE ORNAMENT. Show everyone a small, unbreakable Christmas ornament. (This activity can be used to lead into the next one.) Everyone closes his eyes. An adult hides the ornament. Then the children look for the ornament. The one who finds it can hide it next. Discuss how the Lord wants us to seek him with as much (or more) determination as we had seeking the ornament. "Seek me and live" (Amos 5:4).

OUR TRADITIONS. Let each family tell about some Christmas traditions they observe. Discuss how we feel about someone whose traditions are different from our own. Ask: "Do our traditions block us from accepting other people? What traditions are important?"

WHAT FOR? Bring a paper cup, gelatin powder, a cob of corn, and Dominoes. Also bring scissors, paper, glue, a pie pan, and paint or food coloring. Ask the children to tell you what each item (cup, gelatin, corn, Dominoes) is used for. (They will probably give traditional answers: drink, eat, play game.) Then make a cup flower by cutting the sides of the cup from top to bottom in several places. Bend the sides out. Make a glue design on paper and sprinkle gelatin powder over it as if it were glitter. Pour a little paint or food coloring in the pie pan, press the corn onto it and then onto paper. Line up the dominoes, on end, close to each other, and tap the last one to see them fall. Ask: "Can traditions keep us from seeing something good?"

QUESTIONS

1. What is a tradition? Tell some traditions you have.
2. Are traditions good or bad?
3. How do you feel when someone speaks differently than you are used to hearing or looks different than what you are used to seeing? Does that block you from hearing what they say? Why or why not?

KIDS' COUNCIL

BRING IT HOME

- It's a tradition to put candles on birthday cakes. It's a tradition to shoot fireworks on the Fourth of July. What are some traditions you like? What are some traditions you don't like?
- Do you know anyone whose traditions are different than yours?
- Have you ever visited another country where they had different traditions? If so, tell about it.
- How can you be friends with someone who has different traditions?

SHARE AND PRAY

- Ask the children to share their concerns and pray for each other.
- Thank God for the good traditions their families have.
- Ask God to show us how to love and help our neighbors.

ADULT STUDY QUESTIONS

- In the story of the Good Samaritan, what was wrong with what the priest and Levite did?
- The Jewish leaders criticized and despised Samaritans. Who do many Christians criticize and despise today?
- Is there any area today in which Christians are in danger of being like the priest and Levite?
- Read and discuss John 13:35. Think about this verse in connection with the memory verse, Luke 10:27. Read and discuss Matthew 22:34-40.

SNACK AND FELLOWSHIP

Rocky Road Bars. Stir $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt together in one bowl. Beat together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup brown sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup melted margarine, and 2 egg whites. Stir the flour mixture into the sugar mixture just until it's blended. Stir in $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups granola cereal and 1 small package of chocolate chips. Spray a 9-by-9-by-2-inch pan with cooking spray. Spread the batter into the pan and bake at 350 degrees for about 28 minutes. Let it cool before cutting it. Talk about the rocky road on which the people in the story traveled.