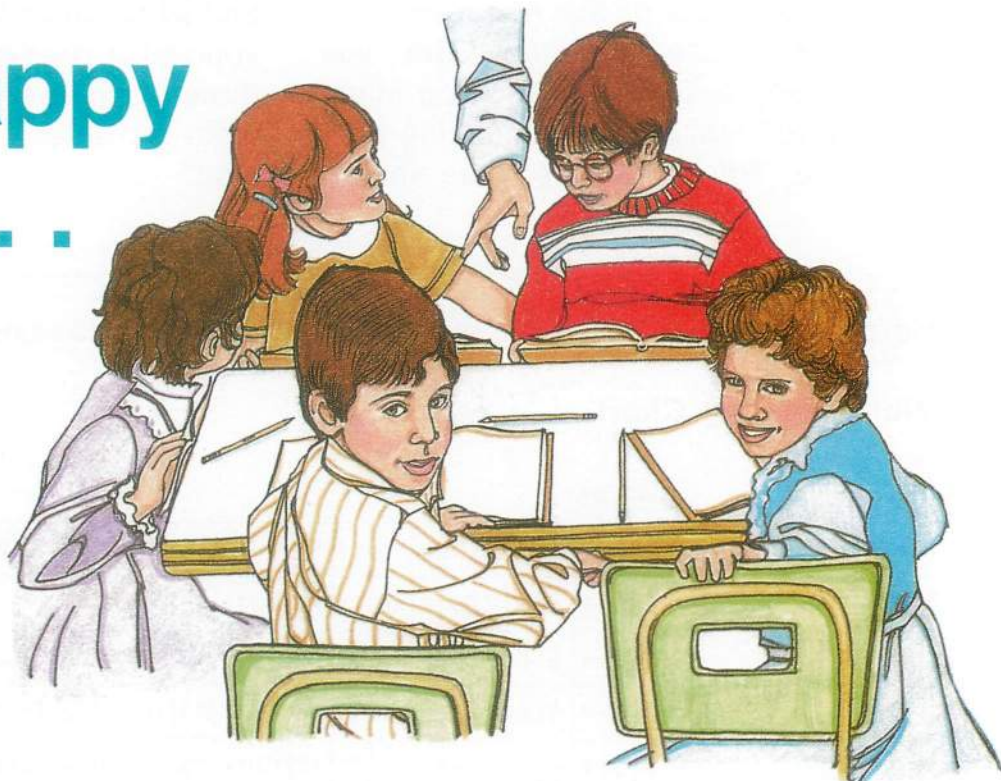


The Kingdom Now: The Beatitudes

The Happy Ones . . .



The Beatitudes
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You have probably heard people say things like this: I would be happy if I could just . . .

If I could just be rich!

If I could just be prettier (or stronger, or older or younger)!

If I could just become a rock star (or successful businessman, or could control other people or could be famous)!

Jesus knew what it really meant to be truly happy. He didn't try to become a rich king or a different person. He didn't treat people differently if they

were rich or poor, good looking or ugly, healthy or sick. Jesus treated everyone lovingly.

And Jesus didn't choose his friends by their popularity or their family background or because they were like himself. He chose all kinds of people for his friends, men and women, rich and poor, healthy and sick.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus tells us in his own words what happiness is really about. It is a list of what can make people happy. What he said is part of what is called the Sermon on

the Mount. This section of it is called the Beatitudes.

How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy are those who mourn; they shall be comforted.

Happy are the gentle and humble; they shall have the earth as their inheritance.

Happy are those who hunger and thirst to see right done; they shall be satisfied.

Happy are the merciful; they shall be shown mercy.

Happy are those whose hearts are pure; they shall see God.

Happy are the peacemakers; they shall be called children of God.

Happy are those who have been punished for trying to do what is right; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Matthew 4:23-5:10

The word Beatitude means blessed or happy. Let's look at what the Beatitudes mean for us. Who are the happy people Jesus talks about? Here are some explanations:

Poor in spirit —

Those who admit they have needs, that they don't have everything; that they depend on God to help them.

Those who care more for people than for things.

Those who mourn —

Those who understand how others feel because they've felt the same way.

Those who express their feelings to others so that others don't feel alone.

Those who learn from being hurt and

go on to make a happy life.

Those who use their hurting experience to help others.

The gentle and humble —

Those who treat other people with care, concern, respect, and love.

Those who don't try to prove they are better than others.

Those who are unselfish.

Those who hunger and thirst to see that the right thing is done —

Those who want life to be fair to all.

Those who are willing to do something for justice for others.

The merciful —

Those who care about others and do something to help them.

Those who try to understand why people act the way they do instead of just finding fault.

Those who are willing to forgive others.

Pure in heart —

Those who are honest with themselves, God, and others.

Those who try to do their best always.

Those who stand by their ideas and beliefs rather than hide them or give them up.

The peacemakers —

Those who help others get along.

Those who reach out to other people.

Those who stand by their ideas and beliefs rather than hide them or give them up.

Punished for doing what is right —

Those who do what is right even if they are laughed at or lose friends.

Those who lose something good because they would not lie or cheat.



Jesus Lived the Beatitudes

Living the Beatitudes is hard, but worth it! As Christians we try to follow the example of Jesus Christ. We try to do the things he did.

Jesus lived the ideas of the Beatitudes in what he did and what he said. He chose people like you and me, ordinary, hard-working people like Andrew, Peter, James and John, to be his first disciples.

Another person Jesus chose to be a disciple was Matthew. (You know he is also called Levi.) People were shocked to learn that Matthew was chosen. Matthew was a tax collector who worked for the Roman government which ruled over the Jews. They thought he cheated them when he collected the taxes and that he kept the money for himself. Jesus knew people

can change and offered to be Matthew's friend. That gave Matthew a new way of life.

Just like today, there were people in Jesus' time who were not very powerful or important. In Jesus' time children were not valued members of society. But Jesus knew the value of every human being, even each child. He welcomed children and blessed them. He even brought a little girl who had died back to life. One time Jesus told the adults that the Kingdom of God belonged to children.

Still others who weren't very valued in Jesus' time were women. They were not allowed to study religion or talk with men in public. But many women followed Jesus, too. Many were among his special friends. Two of them that you may have read about were Martha and Mary. They lived in Bethany and had a brother named Lazarus. Jesus would not ignore them. He often spoke to them and taught them and encouraged them to learn.

Today, there are groups of people that other people look down on because they are different or foreign or don't behave the same way as they do. In Jesus' time the Jews looked down on the Samaritan people. Even though the Samaritans and Jews were neighbors, the Jews didn't value the Samaritans at all. One day Jesus stopped by a well where a Samaritan woman was drawing up water. He spoke to her for a long time. This surprised a lot of people including his own disciples. Jesus wanted to show them and us that all people are valuable to him.

Jesus told lots of stories to show his followers how to prepare to live happily

in the Kingdom of God. He knew we have to practice living that way now. Here is a story Jesus told: A king judged his people and divided them into two groups. He said to the first group, "You have my father's blessing. Come, enter and possess the kingdom that has been made ready for you. For when I was hungry, you gave me food. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was a stranger you took me into your home. When I was naked, you clothed me. When I was ill, you helped me. When I was in prison, you visited me."

They answered, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and fed you, or thirsty and gave you drink, a stranger and took you home, or naked and clothed you? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you?"

The king answered, "Anything you did for one of my brothers, however humble, you did for me." (*Matthew 25:32-41*)

Living the Beatitudes helps us experience the kingdom now!

What Do You See When . . .

What do you see when the biggest kid in the school pushes and shoves to get to be first in line?

A bully?

A new kid in school who doesn't know how to be friendly?

A kid who might have problems and takes it out on others?

What do you see?

What do you see when your best friend doesn't meet you in the library after school?

A person who is not your friend any more?

A person who forgot a promise?

A person who doesn't care about you?

What do you see?

What do you see when a teacher yells at the class?

A meanie?

Someone who might have something bothering her or him that is getting in the way of teaching?

Someone who might be really tired because he or she didn't get enough sleep last night?

What do you see?

What do you see when your little brother gets something by crying and whining?

A cry-baby?

A kid who just wants everything for himself?

A person who is a real pest?

What do you see?

What do you see in people you love?

You see that even though you love them and they love you, it isn't always a smooth relationship.

There are times when you argue and then, the next day, you're best of friends again.

It is confusing sometimes.

Love seems simple when it's on a valentine or a television show, but in real life love can be confusing.

Maybe it's like a magician. Everyone knows that when a magician does a trick, there's more to it than what you can see. To understand the trick you

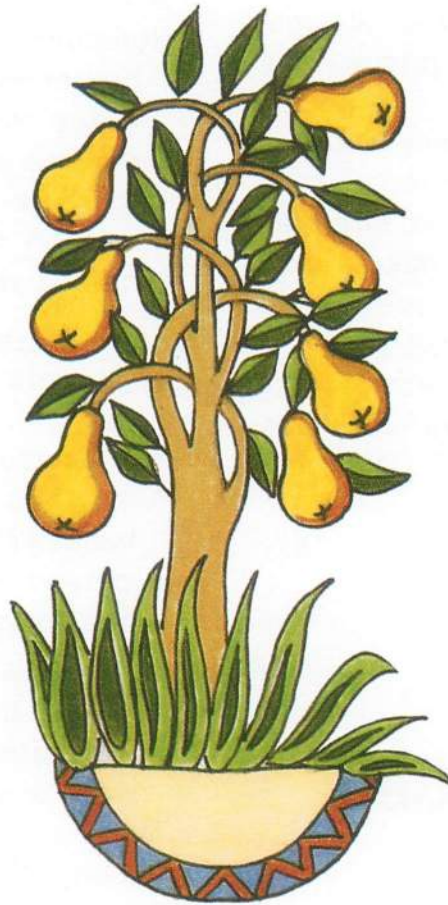
have to know the information the magician is hiding, the things under the table, the things stuffed up his sleeve.

In a way, each person we love is like a magician. Each is full of hidden secrets and mysteries. In each person there is always something more than you can see. Sometimes when people do things that hurt you, they are really

saying that they need your help!

It is not always easy to know what's going on inside the feelings of another person, even people we know and love very much.

But remembering, once in a while, that there may be more than meets the eye, helps us understand some of the secrets behind the magic of loving!



Materials Needed

- Plain paper place mats
- Markers/crayons
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Bibles

Procedure

1. As students enter, continue to praise each on things they have done well during the past year. Check homework briefly.

Start class with a prayer. (5 min.)

2. Before the students open their textbooks to session 2, show them a Bible and ask them to describe what it is. Ask what the two main parts are called, which part tells about Jesus, etc.

Have students open their texts to page 153, and announce that in today's lesson we will talk about the importance of the Old Testament to people in Jesus' time and to us today.

Have students read the first story, "It Is Written," and compare how Jesus learned about the events and people of the Old Testament and how we learn about the Old Testament today. Discuss why Jesus used to quote from the Old Testament in his teachings. (10 min.)

3. Look up the following passages to see some references to Scripture in the life of Jesus: Lk 2:23, Lk 4:1-13 (the Temptation), Lk 4:16-21, Lk 6:1-4, Lk 6:6-11, Lk 10:25-37, Lk 19:45-46, Lk 20:41-44. These references are all in Luke to make it easier for the children to look them up. You may use references in other Gospels if you wish. (10 min.)

4. Read "The Old Testament for Christians," and discuss. Draw comparisons between the passage from Isaiah and the life of Christ. A few have been provided to help start the activity. (10 min.)

5. Read the last section, "Can We Say, It Is Written?", and talk about getting into the habit of Bible reading. Tell students that if they don't understand something, they should ask their teacher or priest to interpret it rather than guess at the meaning themselves. (5 min.)

6. Explain the Bible reading chart to students and have them set their own goals for summer reading. (10 min.)

7. Work on the unit project by having students decorate placemats and make other party favors and decorations. They may want to make each part of the party favors and decorations represent a unit of study this year: hats—Bible, invitations—feasts, prayer card—prayer, plate—sacraments, cups—special people of the Church, nut cups—history, place mats—badarak and special services, napkins—life of Christ, for example. Each item could have a symbol for the unit on it or a name of someone studied, etc. (10 min.)

8. *Homework:* Give parents an invitation to the party!

End class with a prayer.

Extending the Lesson

1. Bring out old posters or photos of projects done over the year and review.
2. Have each student write five questions on a unit, then quiz the class.

Session 3—The Kingdom Now: The Beatitudes

Key Concepts

1. When we live according to the teachings of Jesus we will be happy and blessed no matter what condition our life is in.

2. The Beatitudes tell us about the happiness we will experience by living as Jesus taught, by keeping the covenant.

Objectives

Students will

1. Read "The Happy Ones . . ." and discuss things they do that make them very happy, and things they do that make others happy.
2. Read "Jesus Lived the Beatitudes" and conclude that Jesus is with us today in each other.
3. Read "What Do You See When . . ." and describe their feelings in each situation.
4. Finish unit project—party preparations.

Procedure

1. As students enter, praise them on something they contributed to the class during the past year. (John, you were our best printer this year. Our charts and signs really benefited from your careful efforts.) Check homework.

Start class with a prayer. (10 min.)

2. Begin the lesson by asking the children to recall any of the teachings of Jesus. Introduce today's lesson by announcing that today the class is going to learn a lesson Jesus taught one day while he was preaching to a large crowd. Have students open to page 158, and read "The Happy Ones . . ." Discuss the idea of "If I could just . . . I would be happy," and have the children give their own "if's. You may wish to follow the reading of the Beatitudes in the text by reading them from the Bible. Have the children give their own understandings of each beatitude and allow for questions to be answered. (15 min.)

3. Read "Jesus Lived the Beatitudes" to the class and emphasize the understanding that Jesus is with us today in each other. Relate this to the previous lesson's story, "Are You Jesus?" (15 min.)

4. Have students read “What Do You See When . . .” to themselves or aloud and discuss each part of the first section. Let the children comment on the last section about how love can be confusing. Ask them to summarize the idea of the story. (15 min.)
5. Unit project work: List what each child will be responsible for bringing in. Get all things ready for the party. (5 min.)
6. *Homework*: Bring in all the items needed for the party! End with prayer.

Extending the Lesson

1. Review the year’s work through games such as hangman, crossword puzzles, redoing some of the activities, or flipping through the text.
2. Have students write a paragraph on the Beatitudes.
3. Have students memorize one or more of the Beatitudes.

Session 4—Love One Another

Key Concept

We share in God’s Kingdom even now in an everlasting covenant with him and with others by loving one another as Jesus loved us.

Objectives

Students will

1. Read the story, “Love One Another,” and discuss ways we can love one another.
2. Have the end-of-the-year party.

Materials Needed

- Party materials the children have prepared in previous weeks and things they have brought from home.

Procedure

1. As students enter, tell each how much you have appreciated him/her in your class this year. Have children put homework (party foods) aside until party time. (5 min.)
2. Have students read the story, “Love One Another,” and discuss ways we can follow the commandment of Jesus and keep the covenant. Talk about ways we can love one another. Discuss who the “one another” are—friends, family, neighbors, strangers, enemies, people we don’t even know.

Read the excerpt from I Corinthians 13 on love and end class by having children hug each other and tell how they have been like Jesus to them this year. (You have been like Jesus to me by always being willing to listen to what I had to say. You have been like Jesus to me by being patient with me. You

- have been like Jesus to me by forgiving me for saying unkind things about you, etc.) (10 min.)
3. Set up for the party. After the party, have the children clean up. Class isn’t over until all is cleaned up and the last prayer is said. (40 min.)
 4. End with a prayer that each child can add a line to. If parents are present, they should be invited to add to the prayer if they wish.

Lord, Jesus, we are ending our class today, but we are not ending our relationship with you or with one another. We promise to always follow your commandments to love one another as you have loved us. Be with us always, God, to help us remember your teachings when we want to forget them. Thank you for giving me (say the name of each child in the class) to teach this year. Thank you for letting them help me grow in my knowledge and love of you.”

Now have students say their own prayers. If any child is hesitant or uncomfortable, you may have the child say, “God, help me always to follow your teachings,” or another sentence more appropriate to the student. (5 min.)

Extending the Lesson

Give a short oral quiz on the year’s work. Divide the class into teams and ask the questions giving points for correct answers. See which side wins!

Notes
