

Lesson Plan

Teaching Empathy to Young Children

Main Idea: When someone is hurting, I can share God's love.

Key Verse: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."
Luke 6:36 (NIV)

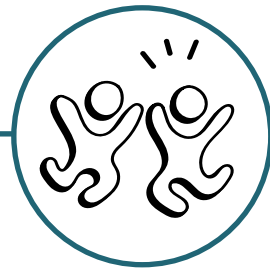
1 Let's Play!

Feelings Charades

SAY: All right, friends, let's come sit down.
We are going to play a game together.
(Wait for kids to sit down quietly.)

This game is called "Feelings Charades."
Has anyone ever played charades before? In this game, I'm going to tell someone a feeling, and they're going to act out the feeling.

Everyone else has to guess which feeling they're acting out!



Read all the parts in **bold** out loud!

Is there someone who would like to go first? (Choose a child to go first.)

Okay, [name], come on up to the front. Here's the feeling you're going to act out. (Whisper a feeling from the box into the child's ear.)

Are you ready? Okay, [name] is going to act out the feeling. If you think you know which feeling he/she is acting out, raise your hand. Okay, go! (Encourage the child as he/she acts out the feeling.)

Okay, who thinks they know which feeling that was? (Call on children until someone gets the correct answer.)

Good job! Would somebody else like to try acting out a feeling? (Continue the game until three or four children have had a turn to act out a feeling.)

Wow! You are all such great guessers. But *all* of us have feelings. So, I'd like to see the rest of you act out some of those feelings. Everybody stand up! (Wait for everyone to stand.)

I'm going to say the name of a feeling, and I want *all* of you to act it out! See if you can act it out using your *whole* body. Ready? Show me how you look when you're [feelings word].

(Have them act three or four more feelings. Make sure to end on "sad" [even if you need to skip some]. As you go, commend the kids on their acting skills.)

Good job everyone! Let's all have a seat now. (Wait for them to be seated.)

Feelings

Happy

Nervous

Shocked

Tired

Jealous

Brave

Embarrassed

Confused

Proud

Excited

Disappointed

Scared

Angry

Sad (Save this one for last!)

› Next up: Let's Hear!



2 Let's Hear!

Luke 6:36

Wow! You all did such a good job acting out your feelings. Did you notice that there are so many *different* feelings? Sometimes, our hearts are happy! And sometimes our hearts are *hurting*. We feel sad, or angry, or scared.

But we're not the only ones who feel that way. Sometimes, our friends are hurting. Sometimes, our brother or sister is hurting. And sometimes the other kids at school or at church are hurting. So, what can we do when someone is hurting? Let's see what the Bible says about that...

(Turn to Luke 6:36.) In Luke chapter 6, Jesus is talking to his followers. And he's teaching them how we should treat other people. Jesus tells his disciples what's most important: LOVE.

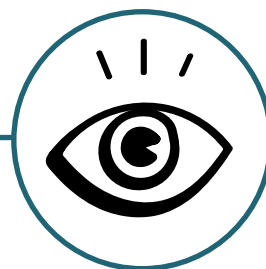
Here's what Jesus says: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." When he says "Father," he's talking about our God, our heavenly father.

Jesus teaches us to be merciful just like God is merciful. Does anyone know what it means to be "merciful?" (Take a few responses.)

That's right! Being merciful means being kind to someone when they are hurting. It means that you care about their feelings. And that you share God's love with them.

"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."
Luke 6:36 (NIV)

When someone is hurting, we can share God's love. I want you to say that after me: "When someone is hurting, I can share God's love." (Have them repeat it.) Let's say it again: "When someone is hurting, I can share God's love." (They repeat.) Let's see how *loud* you can say it: (shouting) "When someone is hurting, I can share God's love!" (They repeat.)



3 Let's Watch!

Zadie and Maegan

We're going to watch a video to learn more about how we can share God's love when someone is hurting. During the video, I want you to be very still and very quiet so everyone can hear. Are you ready? Okay, let's take a look... (Play video.)

I'm so proud of you all for being such good listeners during the video. Who can tell me what happened in the video? (Take a couple of responses.)

Good! In the video, Zadie told Maegan about a boy at her school. Do you remember how the boy was feeling? (Take a couple responses.)

That's right! He was feeling sad. His heart was hurting. Then Maegan told Zadie three ways that we can share God's love when someone is hurting. Does anyone remember what they were?

(Take a few responses. Elaborate as they remember the responses from the video.)

Video Link



- That's right, we can be a good listener. If your friend wants to talk, just listen and let them share their feelings.
- Right! Give them a hug. Hugs can make people feel loved and comforted.
- Of course! Saying kind words. Kind words are like little hugs for the heart.

Here are some example responses to the kids' answers (being a good listener, giving hugs, saying kind words).

Good job! These are all ways that we can share God's love when someone is hurting. Remember, when someone is hurting, we can share God's love!

Let's pray together! Can everyone close their eyes and bow their heads with me?

God, thank you that you care about us when our hearts are hurting. Help us to share your love with other people when *their* hearts are hurting. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Great job, everyone! Now we're going to go to our small groups to talk about this a little more...



4 Let's Talk!

Small Group Discussion

(If the children in your group like to color, have them color the attached coloring page while you ask them the small group questions.)

To start off our time together, I want to know how your hearts are feeling. When it's your turn, I want you to show me with your thumb how you're feeling today.

Thumbs-up (demonstrate) means that your heart feels happy. **Thumbs-down** (demonstrate) means that your hearts is hurting.

Who wants to go first? (Choose a volunteer to go first.) **[Name], can you show us with your thumb how your heart is feeling today?** (Let them respond.)

Do you want to tell us why your heart is [happy/hurting] today? (If they don't want to elaborate, move on to the next person.)

Thank you all for sharing your hearts with me today! Now I'd like to talk a little bit about other people's feelings...

1. Have you ever seen someone sitting all by themselves. How do you think they might be feeling?
2. Have you ever seen someone get teased or picked on? How do you think they felt when that happened?
3. Have you ever seen someone get left out? Nobody wants to play with them? How do you think they felt when that happened?
4. What are some ways you can show God's love to someone who is hurting?



Next up: Let's Pray!



5 Let's Pray!

(Ask your small group if there are any concerns they would like to pray about this week.)

Thank you for sharing, friends. Let's pray together:

God, we are so thankful for your great love. Thank you for the friends around us who have shown us your love when we have been sad or hurting. We pray that you will help us to hear your voice and show your love to those around us this week. Help us to be merciful as YOU are merciful. In Jesus name, Amen!

About Us



Reach Hurting Kids Institute provides evidence-based, trauma-informed children's ministry resources that empower the Church to reach the hurting kids in our congregations and communities.

reachhurtingkids.com



Maegan's World exists to point to our Creator through creativity. Using puppetry, ventriloquism, story and fun, Maegan specializes in live family events and content creation to help kids feel seen and Jesus known.

maegansworld.com

