

GOD MADE ME TO BE GENTLE

3-4

BIBLE VERSES: 1 Samuel 21 - 2 Samuel 1, Proverbs 15:1, Matthew 11:28-30 & 19:13-15.

In this session we'll explore what it actually means to be gentle and think how we can be!

LEADER'S NOTES

Gentleness is one of those concepts we don't really understand because of the connotations of the word in the English language. A gentle person is often seen as a bit of a wimp, but I think the Biblical idea of gentle is someone who uses their strength appropriately. A gentle person knows their own strength but judges well how to use it and for what ends. A gentle person doesn't scream and shout to get their own way but is firm in their own mind.

We all have the capacity to hurt others tremendously - both emotionally and physically, but we learn to be gentle in order to preserve the lives of others. Jesus, the God-man was, undeniably, full of more power than we can ever grasp, yet he chose to be gentle for our sakes - to love us into His Kingdom not drag us there kicking and screaming.

Welcome Activities: If this session is being run as a 'Sunday School' session then the idea is that all 3 activities are provided, allowing the children choice. If it is being run as part of a Toddler Group then these activities can be provided as part of the all the other activities on offer. If it is part of a short Toddler and Parent worship session (e.g. Pram Service) then it may only be practical to offer one of the activities.

Story Time: Choose whichever Story Time activity best suits your circumstances. It would be best to use the same area and seating arrangement each time. Probably helpful if it's separate from other distractions. Perhaps with a special chair for the story teller to sit on.

In this session I have looked at David choosing to use his strength appropriately in his dealings with Saul. I've also looked at Jesus' gentleness with children and the idea that a gentle answer turns away wrath.

Get Creative: A choice of 3 activities reflecting the Bible Story in some way. If you have lots of time and space then you could offer all 3, but just to offer 1 is fine. Children of this age are exploring their own ideas and ways of creating so may go off on their own tangent e.g. if you ask them to make a sheep they may well turn it into something else – don't be anxious about this – 3 year olds especially are much more interested in the 'doing' than the finished product.

One of this week's activities is the opportunity to move to music.

The fourth Get Creative Activity will be a suggestion for a creative prayer activity. This is specifically for any parents/carers who are staying with their children. If you are in a Sunday School setting where no parents stay then you would not need to organise this activity.

Revisiting The Story: Similar to the three welcome activities and may well include some of those. An opportunity for the children to revisit and retell the story themselves using small world figures, dressing up etc. The idea would be that if you chose a making activity in the Get Creative section then the children could move on to the Revisiting The Story activities when they've finished – there is no need for the whole group to finish together.

The fourth activity “Time To Go Home” in this section suggests a take home activity and also a short prayer or song which you can use if you want to round up the sessions with all the children together again. If you want to you could adopt your own special good bye song. In other circumstances it may be better to have an informal ending with parents collecting children as the children are continuing to play.

BE GENTLE

GAME |  WELCOME ACTIVITY

Let the children play with the dolls and their paraphernalia.

The Point: A welcome activity.

EQUIPMENT

Dolls and their equipment - buggies, highchairs, etc.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

TRAFFIC

GAME |  WELCOME ACTIVITY

Set up an area with cones so that children have to drive around them or in between them.

The Point: A welcome activity.

EQUIPMENT

Ride-on toys and traffic cones or something similar.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

TREAT ME NICE

GAME | 📖 WELCOME ACTIVITY

Let the children play at beauty salons or hairdressers. (Clearly, don't provide scissors or you might end up with a Topsy & Tim moment!)

The Point: A welcome activity.

EQUIPMENT

An area that can be set up as a beauty salon or hairdressers', relevant props.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

WHAT SHOULD HE DO?

STORY | 📖 STORY TIME

You might have done the story about David & Jonathan in the Faithfulness session - if so, that will give the children a bit background for today's story. If you didn't do that story, say to the children that there was once a man named David who was friends with God. God had decided that he would be the next King, but at the moment someone else was still King - that man's name was Saul. Saul was out to get David. This story is about what happened.

Read the story 'The Outlaw' from page 206 of The Lion First Bible. At the end of pages 207 and 210 ask the children what David should do before you read on. At the end of the story ask the children if they would have done what David did or would they have attacked Saul?

Say that David chose to be gentle because he trusted that God would do what he had said and make him King when the time was right. Say that God wants us to be gentle too. How might we choose to be gentle with our brothers and sisters and with our friends?

The Point: To look at what gentleness can look like.

EQUIPMENT

The Lion First Bible (lion)

DURATION: 10 MINS.

LET THEM COME

STORY | STORY TIME

Set up a barrier between you and the children. Say that you are a very important person and that means that no one is allowed near you. What sort of people are important and don't let you near them?

Say that Jesus is a very important person. When he was on earth, lots of people wanted to get near him but his special friends didn't always like that and tried to keep people away. One day lots of children came to see Jesus, but Jesus' friends said that they couldn't come close. They were rough and kept the children away. Get the children to come up to stand at the barrier. Ask them how they would feel if they wanted to see Jesus but someone was stopping them.

Say that Jesus wasn't very pleased with his friends: he didn't want them to stop the children coming to him. Take down the barrier and invite the children to come and sit close to you. Jesus was gentle with the children; he talked to them and told everybody that the children were really important and that all of God's Kingdom belonged to them. Ask the children how they would feel now.

Say that Jesus is really important but he is always gentle with us and wants us to come close to him. Because we are made to be like him, we are made to be gentle to other people too. How can we be gentle and not rough?

The Point: To think about how Jesus is gentle with us and how we can be gentle with others.

EQUIPMENT

Traffic cones, crime tape or something else to form a barrier.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

A GENTLE ANSWER

DISCUSSION | STORY TIME

Ask everyone to make a grumpy face. Ask if they ever feel like this. Ask if they ever have arguments with other people because they are grumpy. Are other people ever grumpy with them? Are they grumpy back? Ask everyone to find a partner and practice being grumpy with them.

No ask the children to sit down. Get another adult volunteer and play out a little scene along the following lines:

1: Would you like to play on your scooter with me?

2: No I wouldn't, that's a rubbish idea.

1: It's not a rubbish idea. It's a great idea. I'm not going to be friends with you anymore. I'm going to find someone else to play with.

Now play out the scene again and ask the children to spot the difference.

- 1: Would you like to play on your scooter with me?
- 2: No I wouldn't, that's a rubbish idea.
1. Okay, no problem, is there something you'd rather do?
2. Actually maybe we will play on our scooters.

Ask the children what made the difference? It was the way that the first person responded to the other's grumpiness! Say that the Bible tells us that if we give a gentle answer, it will help the other person not to be angry. (Proverbs 15:1)

Ask the children how they can practice that this week.

The Point: To think about gentle answers.

EQUIPMENT

None.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

GENTLENESS LEAF

DISPLAY PICTURE | 🙏 **GET CREATIVE**

Let the children cut out a leaf and help them to write gentle on them - or get the adults to. Add them to your tree display.

The Point: To build a series reminder.

EQUIPMENT

Paper in leaf colours, scissors, pens.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

ANGRY?

MUSIC | 🙏 **GET CREATIVE**

Use this song to have some fun with the children - they can stamp and stop during the angry choruses! I have posted a video using the song here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OoIDvyZxpA&feature=youtu.be> that you may like to show the children before you get them to interact with the song.

The Point: To think about whether we are angry or not.

EQUIPMENT

The song 'Angry' from 'It's a Noisy World' by Stephen Fischbacher.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

GENTLE

CRAFT IDEAS |  **WATCHER** |  **GET CREATIVE**

[!\[\]\(950a62bbddad88d64435fd35607dfc42_img.jpg\) Download activity worksheet](#)

Let the children fill up the letters on the page by sticking soft and gentle objects such as craft feathers or pom-poms in them.

The Point: A teaching reminder.

EQUIPMENT

The attached sheet, lots of soft bits and bobs - feathers, pom-poms, fabric, glue.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

GENTLE & HUMBLE IN HEART

PRAYER |  **WATCHER** |  **GET CREATIVE**

[!\[\]\(104fbf564e2e5a8fbd84f31656d114c7_img.jpg\) Download activity worksheet](#)

Allow adults some time and space with the attached sheet.

The Point: To respond to God.

EQUIPMENT

The attachment, pens.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

BE GENTLE

GAME | ↻ REVISITING THE STORY

Let the children play with the dolls again. Hopefully they will think about being gentle!

The Point: To revisit the ideas in the session.

EQUIPMENT

Dolls and their equipment.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

A GENTLE ANSWER

DRAMA | ↻ REVISITING THE STORY

Do a short role-play session with any children who would like to practice a gentle answer. Get the children to work in pairs and act out some scenarios. Get them to think about how they might want to respond in each scene and then think about what the gentle way of responding might be. You might find it helpful to have the parents/carers alongside them in this.

Role-play ideas:

One child doesn't want to play with another.

One child doesn't want to share with another.

A sibling is being annoying.

A parent is cross about something.

The Point: To practice some of the ideas from the session.

EQUIPMENT

An adult to lead the activity.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

TREAT ME NICE

GAME | ⌂ REVISITING THE STORY

Let the children play at beauty salons/hairdressers' again. Hopefully they will be thinking about being gentle.

The Point: To revisit the session ideas.

EQUIPMENT

The beauty salon/hairdressers' set-up.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

GENTLENESS LEAF

ACTIVITY | 👁 WATCHER | ⌚ TIME TO GO HOME

🔗 [Download activity worksheet](#)

This activity adds to those in previous weeks. Have the sheet with the instructions for making the tree available for those who missed the first session. Give everyone a gentleness leaf to take home, cut out and colour and put on their tree.

The Point: A take home activity.

EQUIPMENT

The attachment - one leaf per child.

DURATION: 5 MINS.
