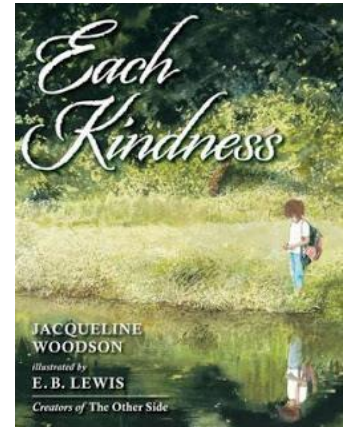


Each Kindness

By Jacqueline Woodson

Book Summary: “Each kindness makes the world a little better. Chloe and her friends won't play with the new girl, Maya. Maya is different--she wears hand-me-downs and plays with old-fashioned toys. Every time Maya tries to join Chloe and her gang, they reject her. Eventually, Maya plays alone, and then stops coming to school altogether. When Chloe's teacher gives a lesson about how even small acts of kindness can change the world, Chloe is stung by the lost opportunity for friendship, and thinks about how much better it could have been if she'd shown a little kindness toward Maya.”



Note: This book is a good choice for the beginning of the Sunday school year as we are thinking about a new start and how to welcome people we don't know.

Sunday Morning...

Welcome everyone warmly! Children can make name signs for the door or do some other simple activity to stay busy while waiting for everyone to arrive. About 10 minutes into the session, gather the children around you. You can sit on the floor or a slightly higher spot; the kids can sit on the floor or benches.

Icebreaker: Have each child share their name and maybe a special detail about themselves ("What is something you do really well?" or "What's your favorite thing to do?"). Once around the circle, you could go back around the circle (faster) and see how much the kids remember about each other. Who can remember everything?

Introduce the Book: “How does it feel to be in a new situation like the first day of Sunday school? As you look around you might see new faces, maybe a lot of people you don't know... If you are new, it takes a lot of courage to come into this room!”

Show the book cover. “I'm going to read a book about someone who is new, listen closely to get a sense of how she is feeling.”

Read the Book: Read “librarian style” by holding the book out to your side to show the pictures. Make sure everyone has seen the pictures before turning the page.

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder how Maya [the new girl] felt while she was at school?
- I wonder why Chloe treated Maya the way she did?
- What do you think Chloe will do differently in the future? What has she learned?

- What can we do here at church (or at school) to make others feel welcome? What small kindnesses can we do in our lives to make a difference? *Write these down on white board or flip-chart page.*



Hands-On Bible: What does the Bible say about being kind to others, especially those who seem different or strange to us?! What would Jesus have said to Chloe?

Pass out Bibles (may need to share, pairing older children with younger). Say something to the effect of:

- We are going to find a passage of the Bible – but how do we do that?!
- Go to the Table of Contents
- The Bible is divided into two big sections, do you know what those are? (Old Testament/New Testament) The Old Testament is the old stories - before Jesus' life. The New Testament is the story of Jesus' life and teachings.
- There were four people who told the story of Jesus' life in the New Testament and they are: Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.
- Let's find the Book of Matthew – what page does that book start on? (page 939) [Wait until everyone finds that page before moving on.]
- Now find Chapter 22 – see the big numbers in blue at the top of the page?
- The tiny numbers in the text tell you the verse and we are looking for verse 37...
- Will someone read that paragraph aloud?

Matthew 22: 37-40

The Most Important Commandment

³⁷ Jesus replied, “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” ⁴⁰

Bible Follow-Up:

Who is “our neighbor”? Do we get to decide who we are nice to and who we are not nice to?... As Christians, we love everyone – even those who seem difficult to love.

Craft/Activity:



Decorate “Kindness Jars.” Have a jar for each child and an assortment of papers/markers/ribbon/etc. Scissors and glue should be handy.

Print out one or two copies of the following suggestions for “Acts of Kindness for Kids.” Put them in the middle of the table(s) where the kids are crafting.

Give each child blank slips of paper. They can select ideas from the “Acts of Kindness for Kids” list or refer to the “small kindnesses” that are listed on the whiteboard or flip-chart page. They should put each kindness on a single slip of paper and drop it in the jar.

Tell the kids that they can select an act of kindness for every day and encourage their family members to add suggestions and to select acts of kindness as well.

Acts of Kindness for Kids...

Hold the door open for someone.

Introduce yourself to someone new.

Listen without interrupting.

Do a chore for someone without them knowing.

Return someone’s cart at the store.

Feed the birds.

Leave happy notes around town.

Smile at someone you don’t know.

Call your grandparents to say hello.

Pick up litter.

Let someone go ahead of you in line.

Compliment a friend.

Wash someone's car.

Write a thank you note for your mail carrier.

Plant something.

Bake dessert for a neighbor

Talk to an elderly friend at the church coffee hour.

Set the table for dinner.

Leave bubbles on someone's doorstep.

Tell someone why they are special to you.

Donate outgrown clothes.

Pass out stickers to kids waiting in line.

Talk to someone new at school.

Write chalk messages on the sidewalk.

Weed or shovel for a neighbor.

Donate food to the food pantry.

Bring flowers to your teacher.

Donate socks and supplies to the homeless shelter.

Read a book to someone.

Leave heads up pennies on the sidewalk.

Tell someone how much you love them.

Invite someone to play on the playground.

Bring cookies to the custodian.

Make a get well card for someone.

Bring your neighbors' garbage cans up for them.

Take care of someone's pet while they're away.

Share a special toy with a friend.

Clean up your room without being asked.

Give a candy bar to the bus driver.

Give spare change to the food pantry.

Buy extra school supplies for a teacher.

Give someone a hug coupon.

Write a note for someone's lunch.

Collect money or items for your favorite charity.

Write a poem for a friend.

Ask for donations instead of birthday gifts.

Help someone unload groceries at the store.

Collect books for the library.

Make a homemade gift for someone.

Deliver water bottles to the homeless shelter.

Give high fives to a friend.

Make a thank you card for your librarian.

Dry the slides at the park with a towel after it rains.

Make play dough for a preschool class.

Send a postcard to a friend who's moved away.

Smile at everybody. It's contagious.